

# Press Release

13 May 2009



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## 2009 Freedom to Create Prize Launch

International Prize for Artists on the Frontlines Enters Second Year.

13 May 2009, London – Following the success of last year's inaugural prize, the 2009 Freedom to Create Prize is announced today in London. This unique prize highlights the talent and courage of artists on the frontlines of the developing world. Zimbabwean playwright Cont Mhlanga, winner of the 2008 Freedom to Create Prize, will be in London this week to assist with the Prize launch.

Commenting on the launch Freedom to Create Prize Founder, Richard Chandler, said: "History shows that prosperous societies are founded upon creativity. Societies that encourage artistic expression build strong foundations for economic, political and cultural development. They will lead tomorrow's world".

He added: "The Freedom to Create Prize celebrates the talent of artists who bring messages of hope to places of turmoil and despair. It also recognises their courage to confront injustice in circumstances where there are visible costs and less visible rewards. They inspire the human spirit and nourish the creativity needed for progress."

The Freedom to Create Prize is an international award established in 2008. The Prize consists of three categories: the Main Prize, open to individuals or artistic groups in all creative fields; the Youth Prize, open to artists under the age of 18; and the Imprisoned Artist Prize, focusing on artists who are currently imprisoned for their artwork. The total prize fund is US\$ 125,000 which will be divided between the winning artists and their nominated advocacy organisations to further the cause their artwork has highlighted.

The winner of the 2008 Prize was Cont Mhlanga, a controversial Zimbabwean playwright who has risked his life challenging the Mugabe dictatorship for over 25 years. His winning submission was a politically charged satire 'The Good President', presents a fictionalised account of a ruthless dictator, but closely mirrored recent events in Zimbabwe.

The 2008 Imprisoned Artist Prize winner was Burmese satirist Zarganar, imprisoned for 35 years for mocking the Burmese government in the wake of Cyclone Nargis. The Youth Prize was awarded to City of Rhyme, a hip-hop group from the Brazilian favelas.

Open to all artists, the closing date for entries is 14 August. A shortlist will be announced at the beginning of September and judging will take place over the following weeks. This year's Prize will be judged by a panel of high profile artists, opinion leaders, and human rights lawyers.

Details of these panellists will be announced shortly. The award ceremony will take place in London in mid-November.

### **About Freedom to Create:**

Freedom to Create ([www.freedomtcreate.com](http://www.freedomtcreate.com)) is an initiative that seeks to improve lives by addressing society's ability to support and sustain creativity. The initiative focuses on those societies in greatest need.

For creativity to flourish, it's critical to have certain foundations in place – things like education, trust, and freedom of expression. The Freedom to Create initiative concentrates on these foundations. Through our ArtAction arm ([www.artaction.com](http://www.artaction.com)), we support arts-driven projects that try to strengthen those foundations where they are weak. Through our annual Freedom to Create Prize ([www.freedomtcreateprize.com](http://www.freedomtcreateprize.com)), we celebrate artists who are beacons of inspiration for social change working in the most challenging conditions around the globe. Collectively our efforts seek to drive future prosperity by enabling creativity to flourish.

Freedom to Create is backed by R.F. Chandler ([www.rfchandler.com](http://www.rfchandler.com)), a Singapore-based private investment group with more than 20 years' experience investing in emerging markets.