



CONTACT INFORMATION:

Colleen Fitzpatrick, *Executive Director, Rotary Centre for the Arts*

Email: director@rotarycentreforthearts.com

519-501-9673

Hanna Karin, *Art For Freedom*

Email: hanna@atutu.ca

778-583-4828

For Immediate Release – May 7, 2021

New Outdoor Art Wall at the Rotary Centre for the Arts calls attention to the Military Coup in Myanmar

(Kelowna, BC) - The Rotary Centre for the Arts (RCA) is making the arts even more accessible with a new outdoor art exhibit space adjacent to the entrance of its building. The first exhibition to be shared with the public on the new outdoor art wall is the *Art For Freedom* exhibit, which tells the story of the military coup in Myanmar through the eyes of the Art For Freedom artists.

Andrew Stauffer, Community & Education Program Coordinator for the RCA, says, “we are thrilled to be able to offer more outdoor art experiences at the RCA. The art wall provides highly visible space for artists to showcase meaningful work and the community to experience this work in an easily accessible, Covid-safe environment. We hope that the *Art For Freedom* exhibit inspires community dialogue around democracy, and in particular in Myanmar at this critical time.”

On February 2, 2021, Myanmar’s fragile democracy was crushed by a military coup. This was not accepted by the vast majority of the 54 million people living in this primarily Buddhist country. And so began the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), a nonviolent protest where people have walked off their jobs and onto the streets.

Art For Freedom is an example of the power of artists in creating positive change in society. The Art For Freedom group immediately began creating art to promote the people’s revolution. The art is diverse in styles and media, free for use, and a powerful weapon of solidarity, worn and shown by the millions gathering on the streets. While Burmese is the commonly spoken language, much of the art has English messages in the hopes of garnering international attention. Recycled materials that withstand the elements of the weather were used in the creation of these pieces.

Kelowna Visual and Performing Arts Centre Society 421 Cawston Avenue, Kelowna, BC V1Y 6Z1 p: (250) 717-5304 f: (250) 717-5314

info@rotarycentreforthearts.com www.RotaryCentrefortheArts.com



The *Art For Freedom* exhibit was designed by Hanna Karin, a Kelowna artist who worked in Myanmar for two years as a Cuso International Design Advisor for the environmental, social enterprise in ChuChu, near Yangon. Hanna returned to Kelowna in May 2020, intending to draw awareness to what is happening to the people of Myanmar.

Hanna Karin states, “in Myanmar, police and military brutality have increased dramatically since the first month of the junta. And yet, the people continue to say no to the military rule. Most of the people I worked with have fled to the mountains, which are only marginally safer due to the terrain. But even in these remote places, the villagers are united with their urban communities and band together for demonstrations.”

“I am grateful to the RCA for showcasing the work of these brave artists. I hope this exhibit brings a greater understanding of the situation in Myanmar and a greater appreciation for how lucky we are to live under democratic rule.”

The Art For Freedom Exhibit can be viewed online [HERE](#)

For more information about Raise Three Fingers for Democracy [HERE](#)

Learn more about the Rotary Centre for the Arts [HERE](#)

- 10 -

About the Rotary Centre for the Arts

Located in the heart of Kelowna’s Cultural District, the [Rotary Centre for the Arts](#) is a multidisciplinary visual and performing arts centre. The RCA continually strives to improve the economic, cultural, and social quality of life in the community by fostering participation in, and appreciation of the arts. As a world-class venue celebrating creative expression through diverse art forms and disciplines, the Rotary Centre for the Arts is a unique City of Kelowna facility in which individuals of all ages and backgrounds come together to share in the excitement of strengthening art and culture in the Okanagan. The Rotary Centre for the Arts respectfully acknowledges that it is located on the unceded, traditional territory of the syilx (Okanagan) people.