



# MEDIA RELEASE

8 May 2009

## Love Burma Love Freedom

Visual Arts Exhibition

**Exhibition Opens: Tuesday 16 June, 5.00pm – 7.00pm**

**Exhibition Runs: 16 June – 27 June 2009**

**Gallery: fortyfive downstairs, 45 Flinders Lane Melbourne 3000**

“**Love Burma Love Freedom** is...about the rich culture of the South East Asian country...the people and culture of Burma.” Andrea Draper, digital artist

For more than five decades, Burma has been caught up in political and armed conflict between the ruling military regime, political opponents and ethnic groups, which has resulted in the displacement of millions of Burmese. More than 100,000 Burmese people are living as refugees in the nine camps along the Thailand Burma border.

Although Burmese refugees have settled in Australia since the 1960s, recently the Australian government is accepting a larger number of Burmese refugees. As a result, Australia, and particularly Victoria, has seen a growth in new arrivals who have added to these vibrant Burmese communities.

**Love Burma Love Freedom** brings together three creatives working in different disciplines;

**Andrea Draper** a digital artist with Burmese origins, **Saw Chu Cil** a refugee painter who lives on the Thailand Burma border and **Timothy Syrota** an author, photographer & film maker whose work has focused on Burma since first visiting the country in 1997.

Through different styles, this exhibition explores preconceived ideas about the people of Burma, looking at more than just the political problems of the troubled nation. From three different view points, this is an exhibition that celebrates the people and the spirit behind the news headlines.

The exhibition will be presented as part of **Multicultural Arts Victoria's Emerge Festival** which commemorates UN World Refugee Day, occurring in Refugee Week to celebrate and showcase the contributions of newly arrived refugee communities to Victoria's cultural life.

This project is supported by City of Melbourne, Victorian Multicultural Commission and Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria.

### Media inquiries:

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# The Artists

**Andrea Draper** is inspired by the indigenous people, architecture, language and mythical spirits of her ancestry to create the digital art. The new media work has been made in Adobe Illustrator and produced as limited edition prints. The theme of her work interweaves the dreamlike imagery of the people and traditions of Burma which results in a unique combination of the traditional and contemporary.

**Timothy Syrota** is the author of 'Welcome to Burma and Enjoy the Totalitarian Experience' and has had solo photographic exhibitions in Australia, England and the Foreign Correspondents' Club, Thailand. Exhibitions have been opened by dignitaries including former Australian Governor General, Sir Ninian Stephen, Nobel Peace Laureate, Jose Ramos Horta, and former Australian Ambassador to Burma, Professor Garry Woodard. Timothy lived on the Thailand-Burma border from 2004-2008, is the founder and co-ordinator of the Thailand-Burma Border Migrant Children's Art Project and continues to spend significant time on the border in order to facilitate ongoing work in South East Asia.

**Saw Chu Cil** is an ethnic Karen artist who trained at the Rangoon School of Fine Art in Burma from 1982 to 1985. He was arrested on a number of occasions, leading to him becoming a refugee in 2000. Chu Cil, however, continues to work as an artist, teaches art both in the refugee camps and to the migrant community on the border, and has had exhibitions in Thailand, Burma, the United States and New Zealand.