Refugees and local Scots to document Glasgow's housing heritage

14/08/2013

Scottish Refugee Council is excited to announce a new multi-disciplinary arts project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Glasgow Housing Association and New Gorbals Housing Association, which will document the heritage of the high flats in two iconic districts of Glasgow.

Following on from the success of Scottish Refugee Council's highly acclaimed participatory arts project, Here We Stay in collaboration with the Citizen's Theatre in 2012 / 13 (4 stars, so charged with energy….it fairly takes the breath away" – Scotsman), the project will explore and capture Glasgow's changing housing heritage.

Using oral testimonies, historical documents and photographs, spoken word, theatre, film and photography, it will look at the shared and disparate experiences of asylum seekers, refugees and local Scots housed across the city.

Following a series of artist-led workshops facilitated by theatre director Carrie Newman, visual artist Jan Nimmo and filmmaker Basharat Khan, the group will create a unique story-based performance in November 2013.

An exhibition of photography, object and film will also be launched in 2014.

Suzi Simpson, Arts and Cultural Development Officer at Scottish Refugee Council said: "It is important for us to capture this heritage and give voice to the experiences of asylum seekers, refugees and the local Scots who have lived in these flats and communities. We also want to highlight the future hopes and dreams for them and their communities during this time of change.

"This is a heritage soon to be lost as many of the high rise flats in these areas are soon to be demolished and tenants dispersed. We are delighted to receive support from Heritage Lottery Fund to embark on this ambitious new arts and heritage project."

Carrie Newman, Heritage Learning Facilitator (performance), said: "Glasgow's housing journey and the story of each and every individual who has lived in the high flats is fascinating and it is these stories that bring bricks and mortar to life.

"The intangible heritage of daily life, strife and laughter reveal the relationships, communities, beginnings and endings that have been lived within the walls. The stories, the songs sung, the food cooked, the view from here tells us not what the high flats are or were, but what life is like living in them.

"I am particularly excited about threading together these experiences with the participants through visual art, photography, film, song, dance and storytelling in order to remind Glasgow of the richness of culture and the tenacity of the human soul, years after the flats have been removed."

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: "The View from Here project will document an important area of Glasgow's social history. It will be a catalyst for people from very different backgrounds and with very different experiences to come together to forge new friendships, learn new skills and capture vital memories. Heritage Lottery

Fund is delighted to be able to help make this happen."

Notes to editors

Scottish Refugee Council is an independent charity dedicated to providing advice and information to asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. We campaign for political change, raise awareness about issues that affect refugees and work closely with local communities and organisations. Scottish Refugee Council encourages and develops arts and cultural projects that celebrate the contribution of refugees to Scotland and promote better understanding between communities. For more information visit the Scottish Refugee Council website.

GHA, Scotland's largest social landlord with 43,000 homes, is a not-for-profit organisation and a registered charity, monitored and regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator. It has invested £1.3billion pounds in Europe's largest house-modernisation programme in the 10 years since stock transfer. It is part of Wheatley Group. GHA website.

New Gorbals Housing Association is a non profit making, community based organisation formed in 1989 by a group of local residents committed to the successful regeneration of the Gorbals. Central to all aspects of our work are the key aims: to provide the best possible housing, environment and services to our customers; to do as much as we can towards the overall regeneration of the Gorbals, meeting the needs of disadvantaged people in the community wherever we can. For more info visit the New Gorbals Housing Association website.

Carrie Newman is Artistic Director of Found Arts Limited and has created theatre pieces for Refugee Week each year since 2007. She originally trained as an actress and worked professionally in this field until returning to University to focus on international plays and human rights, as a theatre director. She recently co-designed the Curious Learning Programme (educating in positive intercultural dialogue) for Glasgow Museums and was curator on Migration Through Children's Eyes , an exhibition at Scotland Street School Museum.

Jan Nimmo is an artist and filmmaker who has travelled and worked extensively in Latin America and facilitated many participatory arts projects throughout Scotland.

Jan works in a variety of media, using portrait, testimony and film to tell the stories of working people, from banana workers and cork cutters to Scottish coalminers. She has exhibited regularly since leaving Glasgow School of Art and her award-winning documentaries have been screened internationally.

Basharat Khan is a Scottish-Asian documentary filmmaker based in Glasgow. With a background in photography and film, his work focuses on themes of migration, identity and home and is constantly inspired by the people he works with and the stories they tell.

Further information

For further information about A View from Here or to arrange interviews, please contact Pauline Diamond or Karin Goodwin on 0141 223 7927 / 07850 930 418, email: media@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk.