

# 'VOICES'

**Mauritius participates at the international art project WOMEN IN THE DARK**

**Franziska Greber, Switzerland  
In Collaboration with the National Women's Council of Mauritius**

## **ABOUT THE EXHIBITION**

Speaking and Silence are often in conflict with different interests. When, why and what women express depends on many factors and is also country- and culture-specific. Values are an important reference, as is safety. It's a thin line whether the raised voices are resonant and impactful or fall silent again.

The World Heritage Site Aapravasi Ghat and the historic building of Cerne Docks form the frame of reference for the exhibition 'VOICES'. Only on the background of history, its diverse culture and ethnicity the specific of Mauritian women can be understood.

The huge halls are – at the first sight – inhospitable and dark. Wind and weather whistle through cracks and holes in the roof. Birds fly through glassless windows. These spaces are filled with thoughts and feelings of women surround us and share with us different facets of women's life. The 'COLUMN OF RESPECT' symbolizes the concentrated power of courage that illuminates the dark. Mauritian Women conquer the space with sorrow and pride. These voices are out in the light, but many are still silent. It raises the question of how the concerns and wishes can be heard and implemented and how more women can be encouraged to get involved in Mauritian society.

## **ABOUT 'WOMEN IN THE DARK'**

The international art project WOMEN IN THE DARK about discrimination and violence against women was initiated in 2016 by Franziska Greber. In collaboration with organizations in each country, women get the opportunity to write their experiences, pain, wishes and hopes on white shirts (in India on Dupattas/Scarfs) with red permanent markers.

So far eight countries are participating: Zimbabwe, Seychelles, China, India, Switzerland, Chile, Germany and Mauritius. The writing flows into the artistic process, which focuses on the messages of women's voices and leads to various installations that are shown to the public. Reaching this goal is only possible in collaboration with organizations and local women that are well-connected in the respective country. Project-Representatives oversee the project in their countries and communities. They are the basis for a successful implementation in the specific culture.

WOMEN IN THE DARK consist of 4 phases:

### **Cooperation**

A strong network and contact with women that might participate are key elements for organizations to collaborate.

### **Writing Process**

The writing process with the women is the responsibility of the collaborating organizations.

### **Exhibitions**

The written shirts, texts, photos and video-documentations are shown as art installations to the public.

### **Sustainability**

All, in the process developed materials are available to the organizations for further use.

More Information about WOMEN IN THE DARK: [www.womeninthedark.org](http://www.womeninthedark.org)

## EXHIBITED INSTALLATIONS

### **'COLUMN OF RESPECT'**

Metal Construction, 317 written Shirts of Mauritian Women, 600x300cm, 2 red Carpets, 1300x200cm, 2019

### **'WOMEN'**

Photos of the Writing Process of Mauritian Women, taken by Mehreen Rughony and Foolchand Gangaswaree, different Sizes, 2019

### **BOOKS**

2 Books contain all 317 Texts, written on the Shirts by Mauritian Women, 2019

### **VIDEO**

9 Women that participated in WOMEN IN THE DARK Mauritius speak out, 2019

### **'MAKING OF'**

Photos of the Working Process of the exhibition VOICES, 29x42cm, 2019

## ABOUT THE ARTIST



Franziska Greber, Switzerland

For the past four decades, she has been devoting herself to studies and projects related to domestic and other forms of violence and discrimination, Human- and Women's Rights.

She was Co-Head of the Intervention Center against domestic violence at the Directorate of Justice and Home Affairs in the Canton of Zurich, worked as a psychotherapist, taught at Universities and Colleges, had written numerous articles in academic journals and books and was a Speaker at UN Events in Geneva and Vienna.

Franziska Greber was involved in many Theater Projects (one in a Swiss prison), worked as a Script-consultant for a documentary movie about depression and for a fictional movie about domestic violence.

In 2016 she put her focus on Women's Rights – with using art – and initiated the international art project 'WOMEN IN THE DARK' in Zimbabwe.

Her artworks are based on a variety of Media, including Installations, Photography, Videos and Texts. She had several Solo- and Group Exhibitions in India, China and Switzerland.

## **PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES & PROJECT-COORDINATORS**

### **Zimbabwe**

Precious Goboza  
Victoria Falls

### **Seychelles**

Christine Chetty Payet  
Artist  
Director  
SEYCHELLES INSTITUT OF ARTS &  
DESIGN SIAD  
Anse Royale  
Mahé

### **Mauritius**

Koomatee Fowdur  
Secretary  
NATIONAL WOMEN COUNCIL  
&  
Mehreen Rughony  
Acting Manager  
NATIONAL WOMEN COUNCIL  
Ministry of Gender Equality  
Child Development and Family  
Welfare  
Port Louis

2016-2017  
Kate Ah Nien  
Secretary  
NATIONAL WOMEN COUNCIL  
Ministry of Gender Equality  
Child Development and Family  
Welfare  
Port Louis

### **China**

Li Xinmo  
Artist and Curator  
Beijing Geely University  
Beijing

2016-2017  
Li Dan  
Director  
Crossroads Center  
Women Film Festival China  
Beijing

### **Switzerland**

Andrea Wechlin  
Director  
Correctional Facility Grosshof,  
Canton Luzerne  
President  
AETAP Association of European  
Threat Assessment Professionals  
Lucerne  
&  
Judith Hanhart  
Musician  
Head of Department Social Policy &  
Advocacy AGILE.CH – The  
organizations of people with  
disabilities  
Bern

### **India**

Anuradha Kapoor  
Director  
SWAYAM  
Member of UN Women Advisory  
Group for India, Maldives, Sri Lanka  
and Bhutan  
Kolkata

### **Chile**

Verónica González  
Actress  
Santiago de Chile  
&  
Malucho Pinto  
Director  
FUNDACIÓN ARACATACA  
Santiago de Chile

### **Germany**

Patricia Kielinger  
Coordinator  
Berliner Initiative gegen Gewalt an  
Frauen (BIG e.V.)  
-BIG KOORDINIERUNG-  
Berlin  
&  
Antje Krüger  
Referentin Frauen/Familie  
Der Paritätische  
Munich



Promote Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality

#### **ABOUT THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S COUNCIL**

The National Women's Council (NWC), a parastatal body operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, works towards the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality.

Objects of the Council as per National Women's Council Act 2016

- Promote women's empowerment and gender equality
- Ensure and promote the active participation of women in the social, economic and political fields in order to further their overall empowerment; and
- Provide a platform for women to voice their needs, concerns and aspirations.

The National Women's Council collaborated with Mrs. Greber to successfully implement this project throughout the island and 317 women have been reached. It is noted that through this project, women have been voicing out their concerns fearlessly.