

# Diversity

## LIBERTAS

CULTURAL DIVERSITY / SEPTEMBER 2009



# editorial contents



In a world where information is power and people are every time more alienated from each other, we decided to create Libertas as an effort to show that youngsters today are as active as they always were, uniting different people from different parts of the world who share, above all, the will to change it and make it a better place for us to live in.

Young people have always been the breast of revolution, but since the big demonstrations of the late '60s, the always more self-centered society has been creating persons who are completely focused on themselves, not paying attention to things that exploded today as big concerns like global warming or, even worse, to the well-being of others. Wanting to reverse that situation, our purpose is to share information with everyone who is interested and doing something else. This is a place for people who want to know what is going on around the globe, and to show that any act, as small as it is, makes a difference.

Like Margareth Mead would say: **“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has.”**

by [Daniel Nunes](#)



Photo: Maxime Reumaux / CC

## ARTICLES

FREE EYES	P.04
THE KUSI WASI	P.06
CULTURAL SHOCK	P.10
FARAFRA PROJECT	P.14
MUSIC AND CULTURE	P.20
CULTURAL DIVERSITY	P.22
VOLUNTEERING FOR THE CAUSE, ...	P.24

## BOOK REVIEW

GIRL OF RIYADH BOOK REVIEW	P.28
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## TRAVEL DESTINATION

FERNANDO DE NORONHA	P.32
---------------------	------

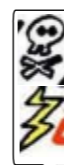
## INTERVIEWS

LUIZ FREITAS	P.34
--------------	------

ABOUT LIBERTAS	P.36
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# FRESH EYES

by Sophie Yeoman



## events

“ This place is the heart of Wellington, where life takes place.”

The plane cruises slowly in. It is a miraculously still day for Wellington. No turbulence, and the view as I peer out my window is of the calm waters of the harbour. The tall skyline of the Central Business District, the greenness of the surrounding hills, all is as I remember it. The machine takes us safely over the harbour, and we make the final descent to the runway. I grit my teeth and fix my eyes on the waves at the beach next to the airport as we hit the ground. Watch them, as we glide, slowing, to a halt.

This is Wellington, the small capital city of New Zealand, a remote country in the vastness of the South Pacific Ocean. This is where I was born, and where I've spent most of my life so far. But wanting to experience something different, a year ago I left for Europe. There I lived in a city which had been inhabited for hundreds of years before humans even arrived in New Zealand. I was able to experience the culture and history of the place, its many layers, built upon by time. I had an amazing time, filled with rich experiences and new people, who through the year became close friends. But after a year away, it was time for me, rather resentfully, to return home.

In the process of rediscovering the city I had been so long away from, I had to start by visiting Cuba Street. Cutting through it near its top is the main motorway going North, and then going down it becomes one of the main shopping districts, an open-air mall. The buildings are a mixture of two- or three-storey stone and wood from the 1800's when Wellington was settled, and taller modern buildings built in the last thirty years. This place is the heart of Wellington, where life takes place. Although the businesses and shops here come and go, its relaxed feel has been the same since my parents were students at the University where I now go. The centre of bohemian-, punk-, emo-, goth-, hippie-, greenie-, youth-, student-, everything-culture, you always see at least three people you know walking its length.

My first few days home, I avoided Cuba, and stuck to the outer suburbs of the city. Cuba Street is a place of encounters, and I wasn't ready to see all the familiar faces again. After a year of anonymity, where you are simply your current self, it's difficult to return to a place where you can walk into childhood friends, old classmates, the bully from when you were five, the boy you liked when you were thirteen, and distant relatives all just by walking down the street. They say that everyone in the world is related by six degrees of connection; we say that in New Zealand it's two degrees. Although we have a population a little over 4 million, this intense connectedness makes the country feel much smaller. In a week's classes, I've

struggled to meet anyone who isn't at least the acquaintance of an acquaintance, and I've met a girl who was in the same class as me at primary school (we didn't remember each other) and a third cousin I didn't know I had. The intricate social web here is something I'm still adjusting to. But it's one of the things visitors to the country often like the most, and as I adjust I'm starting to see the good side of no-one ever being truly a stranger. These people and connections are roots, which no matter where you travel, will always give you a home here. Whether you want it or not.

Also on Cuba you see Wellington's diversity. This city has always been like this, but I don't think I ever noticed or appreciated it as much before. Diversity here is a Maori kapahaka group performing on the street. Women wearing burkhas on the bus. Hearing Chinese international students chatting as they walk down the street, the servers at a café giving directions to each other in French, Italian, Thai. A Hare Krishna group chanting and singing down Manners Mall, the masses of parked cars in the streets by the Synagogue on Saturdays. Large celebrations for Chinese New Year, Matariki, and Diwali. Wellington is made from people from different backgrounds. Without diversity, this city wouldn't exist. There is another side to this diversity though too. I know at Christmas I will miss the unashamedly Christian celebration of European cities, the giant decorated tree in the main square, while people here wish each other 'Happy Holidays' and schools search for non-denominational songs for the children to sing at the end-of-year concert. While accepting diversity as normal, we struggle to find ways to avoid excluding some when celebrating cultural traditions.

Slowly adjusting, I talk to everyone in my classes, discovering connections everywhere. I meet up with old friends, visit all our usual places again. Eat my favourite Malaysian food, which I couldn't find anywhere during my year away. I look again at the mix of old and new in my city, try to appreciate the modern architecture and high-rises, while I smile at the old stone buildings that remind me of Europe. Some moments bring me clarity about what I am doing here. A party with old schoolmates, where I realise that although I cannot escape the history we have with each other, we can still learn to see each other in different ways. A walk down the main street with a group of Hare Krishna dancing and singing just behind, impossible not to be affected by their openness and joy. Sitting at night with a friend on the waterfront, where we look out over the lights of the city. Wellington is a beautiful, alive, growing city, which as long as I live here I will never stop rediscovering.



The 2009 Sydney Underground Film Festival will take place from Thursday 10 September to Sunday 13 September at Sydney's popular underground haunt, The Factory Theatre.

The Sydney Underground Film Festival provides a platform for exhibition, exposure and critical discussion and is organised by a committed group of filmmakers, who understand the need for a sustainable and thriving alternative film culture. The organisers are devoted to renewing local interest in independent and experimental film as part of an international underground film culture.

The festival will only program unique, quality independent films that transgress the status quo and challenge the conservative conventions of filmmaking. The festival aims to change an engrained culture of cinematic complacency and revitalize an enthusiasm for cinema.

**Sydney Underground**  
Film festival

**When :** 10-13 September 2009

**Where :** The factory Theatre  
Marrickville \_ Sydney -

Australia.

**Website:** <http://www.sydneyundergroundfilmfestival.com>



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Photo: Gary A.K / CC-by-nc-sa / Flickr

## Articles

# THE KUSI WASI...

## A cultural center in the sacred valley of Cuzco : Peru

by Maxime Reumaux



events

“Majority of tourists who live in their own little world, just come to “consume” this place”



This article retells the human and artistic experience that the Kusi Wasi collective lived during almost 2 years, from February 2007 to November 2008, immersed in the Andean and Quechua culture. At the beginning, we were a group composed of 6 people, coming from Europe and Latin America, who wanted to make an artistic and social project in a population which doesn't have a lot of access to culture, and especially to circus arts. It's thanks to this that we created the cultural center Kusi Wasi (that means happy house in the Quechua language) in Harin, a village in the sacred valley in Peru.

Situated at a remarkable altitude of 3000 meters, in the heart of the Andes Cordillera, the sacred valley of the Incas is a unique and magic place because of its historic reality and the impressiveness of its landscape. It stretches from Cuzco, cradle of the Incas civilization, until the Machu Picchu, previous military fortress and sacred place of worship until the arrival of the Spanish in the XVIth century. The numerous ruins and vestiges of this civilization, make this area one of the most touristic in Latin America. There are a lot of ruins everywhere in the valley, like Pisac and Ollantaytambo, which are visited every day by dozens of tourist buses. It is really necessary to realise that this touristic activity doesn't benefit the local community, who is for the most part Indian people, and that the majority of tourists who live in their own little world, just come to “consume” this place, without really seeing or even worse without being interested in the social, politic, economic, and cultural reality of these local populations.

Because of this there exists a certain resentment against this massive tourism and against the picture of the occidental tourist. So we had to fight against this picture to live and work in trust with the local community of harin. Because of our different origins and the different nationalities of the members of the Kusi Wasi, we learned and worked a lot with the Harin

community, about cultural diversity, prejudices, and differences between countries, nations and cultures. We could learn, grow, and share with the people of the village and with all the persons who came to Kusi Wasi during these 2 years, and who became, because of that also, the actors of this project.

So from February 2007, we rented a house, rustic and spacious that we quickly began to organize into a cultural center. We also began to collect books to create a little library in the kusi wasi and began to organize workshops for the kids of the village: circus, theater, craft, language lessons, painting, puppets, music,... These workshops were opened for the kids of any ages from Harin, from the community of the valley, and more generally for everybody, child or adult, who wanted to participate. The aim was to offer to children the possibility to discover new activities, which were not school activities or farm or field work, to develop their physical, psychomotor and intellectual skills and capacities, and to leave a collective experience which opened for them other perspectives, new ways of seeing things and other horizons. The workshop was something different due to the skills and aptitudes of the people who were living in the Kusi Wasi (our number fluctuated between 5 and 20 people depending on the period). Furthermore the number of books, school and educational books, novels and tales has began to increase, and it offered us the possibility to create a space where children could see and arrange books.

The organization of the Kusi Wasi was done in a self-managed and collective way these 2 years, only through the collaboration of the persons who were living there, and the persons who were participating. At the same time, we proposed and realized several cinema evenings in the open air, numerous collections and redistributions of clothes and also a lot of free shows and performances for different occasions like artistic, cultural and social activities for the people of the valley. For instance, we



2009 Brazil Day Festival in Frederick Maryland

The third of its kind, the 2009 BRAZIL FESTIVAL is prepared with you in mind Created and produced by MissionServ International, it honors the official sisterhood between Frederick and Aquiraz, Ceara – Brazil and brings to the heart of Frederick, BAKER PARK, a wonderful spectacle of culture on September 13th, 2009.

It is the “Brazilian way of life” brought back to you So, get ready for a fun event where tastes, sounds, touches and mesmerizing dances will entertain the whole family Please keep in mind that this event helps build awareness and friendship amongst cities and nations, engaging people in citizen diplomacy, making, therefore, a difference in the communities we live and work in Be, you too, a part of it.



Photo: Maxime Reumaux / CC

Articles

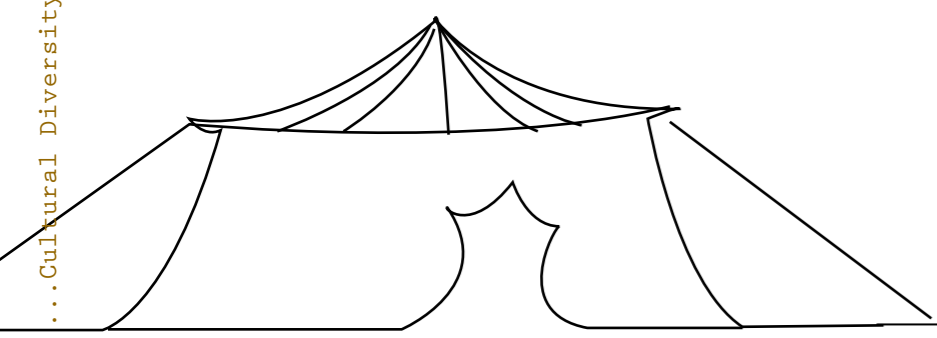


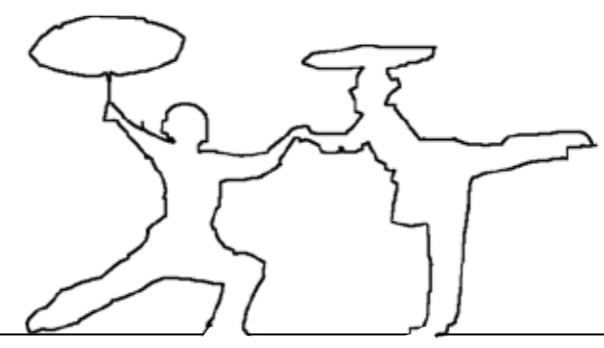
Photo: Maxime Reumaux / CC

“We organized an international circus convention which was the major event we realized in Harin.”

played and presented different shows for educational campaigns for dental hygiene and for vaccines proposed by the hospital of Calca, and during the Coya carnaval for Harin, Urquio and Calca School, for the community of Rayan Pata and for the foundation Arco Iris of Urubamba, and more generally in public places, market and villages of the sacred valley. We also worked in collaboration with a center for disabled children in Cusco “the Chaska Wasi” who has also created a center in the heart of Amazonia, in the region of Manu, where we were invited to present and perform our show for 2 weeks and also to give workshops in the social center of the Chaska Wasi. This trip in the Selva in vans was a really magical and unforgettable experience.

In addition to the workshops and the activities mentioned, we organized an international circus convention which was the major event that we realized in Harin. This multicultural festival, which took place the 4-5-6th of July 2008, mixed show and circus, theater, and puppet workshops and a musical stage with artists and Bolivian and Peruvian bands who gave Wayno and Andean music concerts. We also wanted to give a political dimension to this convention, especially on the topic of the resistance of the Indian people by inviting the organizations, communities and NGOs concerned. These organized projections, debates, and informative stands during all 3 days of the festival.

It was fundamental for us to take as a point of beginning the Andean and Peruvian culture, by heavily involving the Harin population and the population of the sacred valley in the organization and the sequence of the festival. Parallel to the preparation of a such event, which gave work for the local community during the preceding month (installation of big tops, development of the spaces, advertising and communication,...) and during the month of the festival (shops of the village, security service...), the festival wanted to give a big space for the promotion of the local culture by the installation of traditional craft



stands, but also food and local products, and Andean music instrument stands.... To organize such an event, we have had a grant from the French cultural ministry which gave us the possibility to allow access to the festival in exchange for one book per person and to collect, like this, more than 2000 books which generated the idea for the construction of a library in the heart of the village. We also created a lot of links with different artistic groups from Lima, one of which was the famous circus school La Tarumba and the Circo Clown, who gave us precious help in the festival's organization. This festival invited a lot of Peruvian and South American artists to try to mix the different cultures from where we all came, to develop and dynamize a community and to contribute to social, artistic and culture development of the sacred valley, more than the library who was by itself a important social progress in the local level.

After the month of July and the magic of this festival, the Kusi Wasi group decided to dissolve itself to continue to create and to learn in other countries. The transition was done in several months, the time to close the circle and to give to all the community of Harin all the material things and the space of the Kusi Wasi, where now 2 teachers of the communal school live. The library was inaugurated in the begin of 2009 and receives now the kids of Harin.

For us it has been very enriching to have the opportunity to insert ourselves in the heart of this culture, to discover its Quechua dialect, to travel with its sacred mythology and to learn how they work the land... and also to make our knowledge grow and to mix our cultures and our seeds with colours of solidarity and, most importantly, to create solutions in a collective to the different problems which appeared in the community. With our art, we have created a space which gave us the possibility to exchange our customs, ways of life, social representations, and to create cultural, economic and social progress in the Harin community.

# events

Special thanks are here offered to sponsors and volunteers alike, who are measuring no efforts to bring to Frederick the warmth, the charm, the emotions, the passion, the magical culture and the life vibration of Brazil. To you all, UM GRANDE ABRAÇO

**Brazil Day Festival in Frederick Maryland**  
**When:** Sunday, September 13th, 2009  
**Where:** Baker Park located at No. Bentz Street, Frederick, MD, Brazil  
**Website:** <http://brazildayinfrederick.com>  
**Call:** Dirci 240-315-2112



**Onam Festival - INDIA**  
Onam Festival is celebrated throughout the state of Kerala.



# CULTURAL SHOCK

by Quinn Porter

by Adam Gazda

by Marion André



# SHOCK

# events



Photo: EQUA013 / CC-by-nc-nd / Flickr

**M**y personal story that I have to share with you about this topic, comes from my trip to Brazil. In July of 2008, I went to Salvador, Brazil for an international summer camp with the program CISV. Being that I am only 15 years old (14 when I went to Brazil), I haven't seen much cultural diversity. Salvador is located in the state of Bahia. Its culture is adapted from African roots, and it's rich in that culture. Unfortunately in Salvador, there is a very small middle class. You usually are either very wealthy or very poor. I am not used to that thought. In Michigan City (The city that I live in), most of the population is middle class. That's where the cultural diversity comes in.

Seeing that people in Salvador have to try to get money anyway they can, was something I won't forget. When I saw at first, that children would come up to your car and wash your windows for spare change or nothing at all, I was scared. Then I thought about how that spare change could make a difference if their family eats that night or not. Another thing is when I saw outside of the Church of Bonfim, people trying to sell you Brazilian Wish Bracelets because they can't get a job. It makes you more grateful for what you have, and it definitely makes you more humble. That was my personal story of my first experience seeing cultural diversity. I hope you enjoyed reading my first article, as much as I enjoyed writing it.

**“I felt like in a strange country, not like at my home”**

by Quinn Porter

**F**irst of all I would like to define what is 'cultural shock'. I didn't read any definition about it so all I can do is write my opinion. I think cultural shock is a situation when we cannot adapt to a new place (region, country), new environment, new kind of living or just a community of people which are (totally) different from the one we are used to. That can cause that we are reserved, don't communicate with the people around us, eat and sleep badly etc. which can also lead to depression.

I had possibility to live 8 months in Macedonia. Honestly, I didn't have any cultural shock when I arrived there (at least according to my lay definition). I think one of the reasons can be that culture, people and also language are a little similar as in my country and my expectations about the situation and way of living in Macedonia were pretty much the same as the reality there.

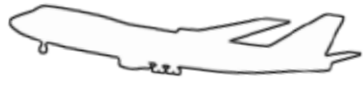
However the situation was quite different when I came back to Czech Republic. I somehow got used to living in Macedonia and I like it more than the way of living in Czech Republic (except for the strong tradition of drinking beer in Czech Republic which I missed in Macedonia, but anyway local beer number one, Skopsko, is also a good one). Before coming back to my country I again knew what to expect and I was little afraid of this. Nevertheless, the day when I arrived back, and few days after, I felt like in a strange country, not like at my home. I didn't have any problems with eating, communication or whatever but the feeling that everything is different was stronger than when I arrived to Skopje 8 months before.

Before I came to Macedonia I was kind of prepared for a new environment and culture. Somebody gave me the advice that it isn't good to compare things which are there different too much but rather just to accept them as the reality. I tried to do it at least in my mind and it worked pretty well.

One of the most important harvest festivals, it falls in the Malayalam month Chingam (August-September). All the celebrations of the Onam Festival revolve around worship, music, dance, sports, boat races and good food. It is the time to thank God for the abundant harvest and enjoy the reward of a year of hard work.

People pray to Lord Vishnu and seek his benevolence. A convoluted procession of Trichur and the entertaining boat races on River Pampa are some of the attractions of the Kerala Onam Festival. One of the most popular boat races is that of "Vallamkali" or a great boat race. This race involves hundreds of men rowing the boats to the beat of drums and cymbals.

The legend attached to Onam goes that it is celebrated in the memory of King Mahabali, the erstwhile ruler of Kerala. Infact, it symbolizes the peaceful reign of the King and the freedom enjoyed by the people under his rule. It is also believed that during Onam, King Mahabali returns to Kerala to pay a visit to his people.



# events

“ Poleka Poleka Ima vreme! ”

I forgot about it when I came back to Czech Republic. I compared many things especially things which I either didn't see before, or just didn't find them interesting, and I saw them differently (i.e. the bigger personal distance between people, ways of meeting friends, different gesticulations, the different disposition towards time, the strict rules for many things which were not important in Macedonia – one good and very visible example is driving on the roads, the rules being much more 'flexible' in Macedonia, etc.) and in some cases it was hard for me to accept my new (Czech) reality which I liked less than before. It isn't maybe cultural shock but still some kind of strong confrontation with reality which can be useful in order to live through and to recognize something new in our domestic culture. After a few days of comparing I just accepted the way of living here and how it is. It gives me ideas about other travels, maybe also with some interesting cultural shock.

by Adam Gazda

« Poleka poleka! Ima vreme! » (Slowly slowly! We have time!). When I arrived in Macedonia, I had to learn quickly these words, because during my Macedonian life I would hear them very often. For me, these words mean a kind of culture shock: a different way of life. In France, we are used to do things in a hurry without speaking with the others (in daily life or in the professional domain). My first reaction was to be surprised, and at the same time it taught me to get to know Macedonian culture better: human and interpersonal relationships are important. It was a positive experience to take time to live and to have time to meet people.

by Marion André



Photo: Lucie Ferlin / CC



Photo: Lucie Ferlin / CC / Skopje Macedonia

At the time of the festival, women dress up in all their finery and ornament themselves with heavy jewelry. Also, they decorate the entrance of their house with intricate designs of Rangoli (colorful drawings on floor)

Though Onam Festival is celebrated throughout Kerala, but the celebrations at Thiruvananthapuram, Trichur and Kottayam are the most magnificent ones. Especially, the Kakkai or Thiruvathirakkali performed by girls, around the traditional brass lamp, leaves you mesmerized.

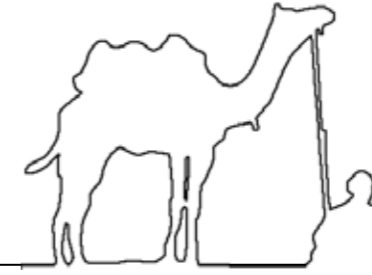
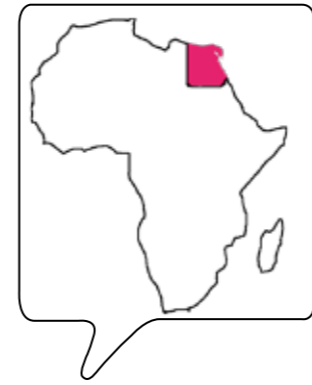
On an individual basis, the celebrations include cleaning up of the houses by the family members. All the members of the family wear new clothes and decorate the house. The celebrations include preparing delectable sweets and dishes and serving them on the banana leaves. Also, you will see a Pookalam, a flower mat, outside every home. This mat is a symbolic gesture of welcoming King Mahabali.

**Onam Festival**  
**When:** 02-Sep-2009  
**Where:** Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram  
**India**

# FARAFRA PROJECT

## A unique approach to development

by Roman El Shimi



events



With the theme “Ana motatawe3, Ta3ala sa3edny” which translates to “I am a volunteer, come give me a hand”, the five young Egyptian staff members responsible for this project attempted to make a difference and develop Farafra and its community through unconventional development methods. With a group of around thirty international and Egyptian participants volunteering from nine different countries, and a goal to motivate and empower the people of Farafra to develop their own community, build a civil society and cultivate the spirit of volunteerism throughout the small often-neglected Oasis, this is just what they managed to do.

The volunteers and staff did not want to fix all of Farafra’s problems and present it to them on a platter, on the contrary, they wanted to present the people of Farafra with the necessary attitudes, skills, knowledge and motivation to identify their problems and actively seek and work on the solutions themselves.

“As much as we could, we were trying to steer clear of the idea of ‘hi, we are the first world trying to come to the third world and fix all of your problems for you’.” Heba El-Sherif, one of the five staff members said.

### Preparation for the project

Before the project started the five staff members visited Farafra three times to conduct a needs assessment with the community and see what the people of Farafra actually wanted to challenge and change. They also wanted to be very culturally sensitive and not attempt to change the culture and challenge the norms of the community. It was important to visit Farafra to get to know the youth they would be working with, meet key players in the administration of Farafra and figure out the logistics of when the international participants would start arriving in the end of December. It was also vital for the staff to clarify that what they had to offer Farafra, through the project, was people and knowledge, not money, as this is usually the misconception that comes with almost every development project in Egypt.



Photo: hiro008/ CC-by-nc-sa / Flickr



Photo: [john] / CC-by-nc / Flickr

“HI, we are the first world trying to come to the third world and fix all of your problems for you”

During these visits to Farafra, prior to the project, the staff were able to find out that the people of Farafra wanted to make their town more beautiful by planting palm trees in the main street of the city and making shaded areas for people to sit, away from the strong sunlight. The female staff and some people who came to help them out also sat with the women from Farafra and found out that they wanted to have a hairdresser and learn how to apply make up, learn about nutrition and exercise and have a place to sit together like the male youth of Farafra do in the Youth Center (Markaz El Shabab). The staff approached the City Council and managed to secure Tuesday and Thursday afternoons in the public library to be an official place for the women of Farafra to meet. In the last visit to Farafra two weeks before the project would start, the staff members went to Farafra to hang banners along with the youth from Farafra establishing that this project was happening, they motivated people about the arrival of the international participants, they passed by the City Council President to make sure everything was in place, and they also finalized the logistics concerning food, accommodation and transportation for the duration of the project.

### Starting the projects

Following the months of planning and goal setting, the international participants arrived, spending the first two days of the two weeks in Cairo with the staff members to prepare them for the project. They had sessions about the Farafra culture and how to be sensitive towards it, divided into groups working on the parallel projects that were going to happen, sessions on goals and expectations, group building and dynamics as well as inviting external speakers to come to talk to the participants about development projects in Egypt and their impact.

At six in the morning, on the day the participants were going to Farafra, they woke up in Cairo, packed and loaded the materials they would be using throughout the project on trucks and headed west to the Farafra oasis. Upon arrival, the staff,



### The 4th World Festival of the Circus Art - MOSCOW

**When:** From 15 to 20 Sept

**Where:** Moscow

**Russia**

**Website:** <http://www.festival.circus.ru/>



### Hermanus Whale Festival - SOUTH AFRICA

There aren't too many world-renowned festivals for the animals lovers out there, making the Whale Festival in Hermanus, South Africa (which takes place during the last week of September) that much more special.

This week-long event celebrates the return of the Southern Right whales to South African waters.

knowing the importance of making a statement in Farafra that they had arrived, and wanting to start on the right track and get everyone excited about the coming ten days, had organized a Welcome Sports Festival inviting the people of Farafra to introduce them to the international volunteers. The festival included several football games between Farafra locals and international volunteers, they also had between 40-50 women attending so they introduced them to the beauty parlor day they had planned in the next two days and they played games with the 150 kids that came to the festival “And yes, it was almost impossible to control 150, over-excited children,” Ali Azmy one of the five staff members joked.

After the Sports Festival, the international participants and the staff took an excursion out to the white desert for a new years party and in order to visit another part of the western desert and experience camping, as in Farafra they were staying in a hotel in town.

Other than the Sports Festival, there were Cultural Festivals prepared by each delegation of the participants about their country, and the people of Farafra would also contribute to them by singing songs, sharing poems they wrote and announce the coming work of the project encouraging people to come help out. There were around 150-200 people from Farafra attending the festivals.

**Empowering the Farafroni women**

On the first day of 2009 the project and hard work of the days ahead officially started with the first parallel project of working with the women of Farafra. They started the first of the three sessions, as a beauty party where the international female participants set up three stations for nails, hair and make up and the women from Farafra would go around excitedly learning how to do each and taking notes. According to Heba El-Sherif, the exchange of beauty tips between the local Farafroni women and international participants helped in building a trusting relationship and the language barrier did not seem to be a problem at all, even though there were four Egyptian staff and participants there to help with the translation.

The second session that took place involved learning about nutrition and exercise upon the request of the Farafroni women, as well as how to recycle garbage into interesting things like boxes and frames so they could sell them and have some income as a form of empowerment, which the women absolutely loved and started implementing right away.

“ it was almost impossible to control 150, over-excited children”



Photo: superblykymac/ CC-by-nd / Flickr



Photo: Argenberg/ CC-by / Flickr



Photo: | dak / CC-by-nc-sa / Flickr

In the third and last session, they sat with the women in the library and had an informal discussion on volunteerism and how you can be studying or have a job and still be volunteering. They also brainstormed on things they wanted to learn and how they can contribute to the development of society. Some of them wanted to learn how to speak English and use computers, resulting in one of the young women, Walaa, to volunteer to give English classes saying “I am taking an English course, so I can pass on what I learn to the rest”.

Upon reflection on this part of the project, one of the Italian participants Giullia Minerdi said, “What I most appreciated from the women project has been their enthusiasm in sharing their lives with us. Since the first meeting they treated us like part of daily life, they shared hopes, they wanted us to share advice about make up so they could prepare themselves for weddings and beautify the brides.”

During the last day of the project, Abeer, a 16 year old girl from Farafra who was very active in the project, invited all the female participants to her house for a meal, and the evening was spent in laughter, dancing and cultural exchange which shows the close relationship that was build among the group in spite of diversity in language and culture. “This is one of my best memories of the few times we spent with the women.” Guillia Minerdi commented.

**Construction Project**

Parallel to the project with the women, also upon the request of the volunteers of Farafra they were working on making shades and planting palm trees around the city.

The international participants and staff were going around the city and working during the day in t-shirts that say “Ana Motatawe3 ta3ala Sa3edny”. This was to get the people of Farafra passing by to volunteer to help out themselves.

The construction started with a majority of the participants working on it then each day more people from Farafra started joining and helping out and, according to the staff, by the last day of the project the people from Farafra outnumbered the participants of the project and people were very motivated and open to the concept of volunteering.

Working on the shades, the participants included a civil engineer, an architect, a son of a carpenter and someone with a lot of volunteer experience and input. These people were a very

It also heralds the arrival of spring to the region, as these amazing creatures head into Walkers Bay ready for the upcoming mating season.

And the whales bring with them a general mood of celebration too.

The festival itself features food and craft stalls, and theatrical productions from across the country, as well as a range of live music from jazz to blues and rock.

But these are really side projects: it's the whales that are the main draw, and the festival is all about getting out and seeing these amazing creatures. It may not have quite the wild party vibe of other festivals, but the Whale Festival has its own, very unique charms.

**Hermanus Whale Festival**

**When:** 24 Sept 2009 - 28 Sept

**Where:** Hermanus

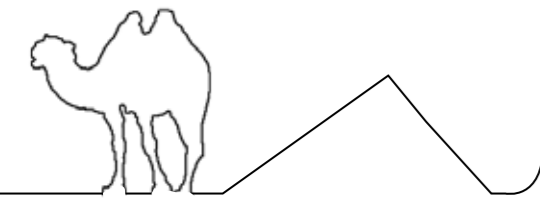
**South Africa**

**Website:** <http://www.whalefestival.co.za/>



**The Hindu Goddess Rama Dussehra - INDIA**

One of the most significant Hindu festivals in India, Dussehra



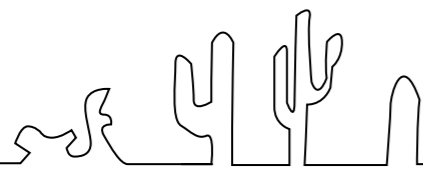


Photo: .ash/ CC-by-nd / Flickr

“ This project was part of a program in CISV, a volunteer organization promoting peace education ”

important asset to this part of the project as they managed to alter the designs of the shades a bit to make them more sustainable.

During the project the people also said they would like to make signs around the city helping people get around. They approached a Farafra artist Badr who used to be a social studies teacher and later got into art so he was helping with the signs as well. They were making the signs out of natural resources around them like rocks from the white desert, colored sand and trunks of palm trees.

The project ended with eight palm trees along the main road in Farafra as well as two shaded areas there for people to sit, and one off the road in front of a school.

Informal learning with the children

Three sessions of informal education and playing games with the children of Farafra and schools took place during the project, one with children between three and six, one with eleven year olds and one done with the whole school.

The idea was to make activities and put hidden messages in them so the children can learn in an indirect way while having fun, which is the approach of learning by doing. They played games geared towards communicating, cooperating, building leadership and team work.

In the part where they did something with the whole school there were between 300-400 kids so it was very chaotic, however the smaller activities with specific age groups were much more successful.

They also talked to the teachers in school about informal education and translated a gamebook, that is full of activity suggestions and how to run them, into Arabic for them to use in order to sustain the project and have it a part of their education.

The teachers had developed a close relationship with the participants and invited them to some feteer meshaltet [an Egyptian pastry] and used to come to the cultural festivals to see how they are doing.

According to Ali Azmy the teachers were impressed with the simplest things like getting the children to stand in a line without hitting them and shouting at them, so that was an in-

teresting learning experience for the teachers as well as the children.

Results, impressions and reflections

The international volunteers left Farafra in a good spirit of motivation to make a difference in their town, and also left five Farafroni volunteers who are organizing meetings every Friday after prayer in the Youth Center to volunteer and work on projects. The women also had a place and time to meet regularly to see what kind of things they want to learn or do, with Hanaa in charge to make sure everyone meets and works on things together. They also managed to leave the teachers in the school a valuable tool to get them to teach children things in an alternative and creative way and find a more peaceful way of teaching them.

History of the Farafra Development Project

This project was part of a program in CISV, a volunteer organization promoting peace education, cross cultural friendship and empowering people to be active and contributing members in their society, called International People's Project (IPP). The idea is that between 7-8 delegations come from all around the world to work on a development project in one place, in this case Farafra, Egypt. This is the second IPP that took place in Farafra under the umbrella of CISV Egypt, the first one being in December 2006.

After the success of the first project in Farafra a group of people decided to take it further and make it into a bigger development project including other organizations and bigger funds. They worked with those other organizations in between both IPPs and EECA (Egyptian Earth Construction Association) gave a workshop in Farafra in March 2008 about strategic development theories.

This project was funded by sponsorship from Hienz Corporation and donations made by families involved in CISV Egypt. The staff expressed that they would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their support and in making this project such a success.

Moral of the story is, with motivation and the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge we can all make a difference, develop our society, our country and the world, just like the Farafronis will do from now on.

...Previously published by the youth magazine Campus,



events

celebrates the victory of the god Rama over the demon-king Ravana. The week-long festival in October is celebrated across India in a variety of different ways but in Mumbai it most closely resembles Guy Fawkes' Night in Britain with the burning of effigies.

Many of the bonfires take place in private but there are also some huge public fires which provide a focal point for locals and visitors alike to take part in the festival. Places such as Chowpatty Beach and the Shivaji Park come alive at night with huge bonfires lighting the sky.

Some places stuff the effigies with fireworks providing a wonderful, if occasionally slightly hairy, display for visitors. Pyrotechnic displays take place across Mumbai throughout the festival and the celebrations are taken very seriously by the locals

The Hindu Goddess Rama

When: from 26 to 28 Sept

Where: Kota

India

Website: http://www.rajasthantravelguide.com/rajasthan\_fair\_festivals/dussehra.html



Night Procession ENGLAND

# MUSIC AND CULTURE

by Anna Valentina Ferrari

“MUSIC is culture as much as culture is music”

“ Make and is made by . That is the relation between music and culture, a circle. In which at the same time music makes and is made by culture. As soon as man could talk he started to sing, and even before that man was already making noises, making music. Since we are born music walks with us throughout our life. It is present in almost every moment. But how, in fact, is it that music relates to our culture?

In Africa tribes would use the leather of what they hunted to make drums, which they afterwards used in rituals. That is an example in which music was made by culture, the drums were made with tools obtained through cultural habits such as hunting. On the other hand those drums also helped building, and were part of the tribe's culture when participating in all sorts of rituals and festivals of the tribe.

In most of the ancient societies music played an important role in their culture. Music was used by the elders to pass on knowledge, tales, to transmit to the young ones the story of their ancestors. It was also used as a way of praying, of making offerings and in sacred rituals. By then music was much more than entertainment, it was a way to communicate, to maintain the culture alive, passing from generation to generation. So since the beginning of human societies music was already embedded in our culture.

In fact there is no register of any civilization that hasn't got any musical manifestation. And while we may think that nowadays music has become just a form of entertainment, the exact opposite has happened. The numerous music styles reflect the multi cultural society we live in today. Where every style develops its own subculture, it is more than just listening to hip hop, rock, or any other music, its about embracing all of its



Photo: Marija Stojanova/ CC



baggage. And by that I mean understanding where this style came from and all that it means. And music has become a tool to diffuse, unite and understand different cultures. Nowadays styles that were once rejected by the majority of the audience and that were exclusive of any sector of society are now more diffused than ever.

And that is the beauty of music. Apart from all the great songs. To know that we are all connected we are all enjoying the same song the same background the same style, and therefore in some measure the same culture and/or subculture. Blues, Reggae, Rock, Hip hop and all the others are now enjoyed by everyone that wants to listen to it. It is an indirect cultural exchange. As I said before music is culture as much as culture is music. So cultural diversity is also musical diversity. As culture gives us a background of how to act, and influences how we see the world, so does music.

It has also become essential in the modern men society, or way of life. It is everywhere, restaurants, stores, gyms, shopping malls and even parking lots have background music playing all the time. Taxis always have the radio on. We go to dance clubs, we take dance lessons, we go concerts, we watch MTV, so it is literally all around us. And if we ever manage go to same place where there is nothing playing, we have our ipods or mp3 players to help us.

So on the one hand we have globalization, making everything just one, blending it all together. On the other we have cultural diversity, thousands of different ways to think, of habits, of ways to see the world. And in the middle, music. A mediator between both. Something that is now essential in our everyday life, even if we don't realise it.



## events

Victoria Embankment, travelling east, over Blackfriars Bridge and west along Upper Ground, finishing behind the National Theatre.

Key London roads are closed to traffic for the festival's spectacular Night Procession. Over 2,000 musicians, dancers, performers and masqueraders come from across the country and the world with their amazing lanterns, illuminated costumes and fantastic structures - an incredible and un-missable display of international street arts.

The Night Procession has become hugely popular with many more groups wanting to take part than we have capacity for. The applications for 2009 are now closed and the groups that have been selected to present their work this year are: APPLE, ArtStart, Bloco do Sol Nascente, Blocofogo, Bolivia Sin Fronteras, Brunel Engine House Museum, Cardboard Citizens, Emergency Exit Arts, First Chance Project, Fox Carnival Band, Imagineer Productions, In Toto Theatre, Inspiration Arts, Inspire Centre, Kinetika .

Bloco, Little Light Sparks, London School of Samba, Mandinga Arts, New Generation, Pa-Boom, Paddington Arts Elimu, Paraiso School of Samba, Same Sky, SE1 Utd, Shademakers Carnival Club, South Connections,

# CULTURAL DIVERSITY

## My point of view

by Filip Ilievski



“ we are different, all of us, but mainly because of our style of life, and that is our own culture”

Since the world knows about itself, since the old civilizations appeared, their main purpose was to maintain their life for as long as possible, and than to leave a mark for their existence. I shouldn't number them for you – I suppose you know them, but still I'll be kind enough to mention some of them – the Latins, the old Romans, Mayas, Aztecs.... From these civilizations we, today originate from. Thus, the question is how can we be so same and so different?

If you ask me, connected with the topic, the answer is cultural diversity. In today's multicultural society, differences are the main thing which people think of themselves. 'We are different, there is nothing common between us' – the main thought just because of the skin colour, mother tongue, religion and lifestyle. Well let's face the facts – we are different, all of us, but mainly because of our style if life, and that is our own culture. You say we're different, and I'll agree with you. Even in this Libertas magazine, it's staff and all the people somehow connected with it differ from each other – not just the age or sex, but the origin, habits style of living.

We came form far away countries, we speak different language, we're not same by race or religion. Oh those so many differences! I'd bet there's nothing similar with each other, we are all strangers, nothing in common you see. But I am certain that you're bright enough to tell me I am terribly wrong. Because there are as many differences as similarities between all the people around the world. We are all people. We have feelings, we know how to love and hate, laugh and cry, help each other and stab knife in the back. Now let's find connection between ourselves by the culture. For instance, take a look at the religion. Yes, all the religions are part of a culture, they are different, but the all teach us to believe in one God, Alah, Buda,



Photo: Sweet Trade / CC-by / Flickr

and many more. They teach us how to care, how to take care of each other and cooperate, they all preach peace and love, to hope for the best no matter of the all hardships and evils on this world, and not to make sins.

Another part of our culture is the artistry. We know from the past and from the masterpieces of the great artists that artistry is representing the way of life, thoughts and feelings of the people in that certain period. The cultural heritage is important for a nation to identify itself and to connect with other nations, to unite with them. And there is the music. The great musicians show their feelings of love and hate, happiness and sadness, bitter.... Even though the pieces of music you've listened are different, they send message – which is their main point as the writers do in their novels.

Let's take a look at the sport. Football – the most important sideline in the world connects all the different cultures. Since it originates from the ancient civilizations ( ancient China ) , today you can find all the world known clubs have players from totally different race and religion, but what's more – different culture.

That's the same with us in the Liberats magazine here. Even though we're different, our love for freedom, writing, communicating with the world and being a bit of wacky is what connects all of us here, if I can call the 'Libertadors' , and is the key thong which keeps the Libertas together. All in all, despite all the differences between us people and youngsters, our diversity is what should keep us together and make ourselves to respect each other. We all should stay 'united in diversity'.

## events

Sunshine International Arts and Taru Arts

### Night Procession

When: Sun 13 Sept -

7.15pm - 9.30pm

Where: London

England

Website: [http://www.thamesfestival.org/weekend/detail/night\\_procession/](http://www.thamesfestival.org/weekend/detail/night_procession/)

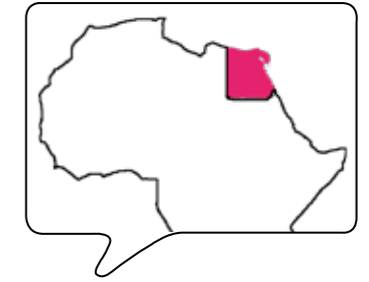
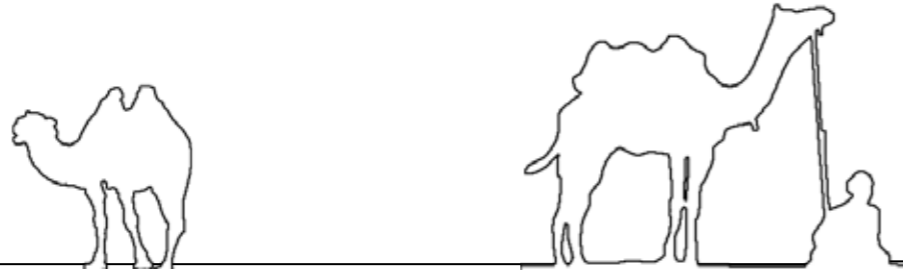


### Tokyo Game Show - JAPAN

The Tokyo Game Show is an annual trade show for video game developers held at Makuhari Messe Convention Center outside of Tokyo in Chiba Prefecture. Held since 1996, it is one of the world's biggest game shows, which companies use as a venue to launch new products and show off their latest innovations and technology.

# VOLUNTEERING FOR A CAUSE, WHY NOT?

by Roman El Shimi



## events

**A**s I sat there in a small village in Nubaria, located just before Alexandria, baking bread and traditional Egyptian pies with some of my girlfriends from Cairo and some of the women of Nubaria, I couldn't help but feel a wave of awe over the culture exchange that was happening through something so simple as teaching someone how to bake bread.

My volunteering experience in Nubaria came when a friend suggested we start helping the children in the public school of that village learn, as the school's capacity is not enough to focus on the children's development and needs. We started this project during visiting Nubaria, seeing how people live and what their culture is like to see where we can contribute to the society. We were very transparent and honest with the people we met from the community on what we wanted to do and what we could do, bearing in mind that we respect their culture and are not trying to change it but rather help the children develop in their academic life while incorporating some personal development skills.

I think this is why I keep volunteering, for the personal experience and cultural exchange. I volunteer for the chance to be subjected to diverse people from all kinds of backgrounds and societies as I believe anyone we encounter will add something to our lives, expose us to something new and vice versa.

Volunteering is working just as hard as you would for a paid job except you do not get paid. Volunteering can be just as rewarding as a paid job or even more because you do the work you are doing for other reasons and different satisfac-

tions. When you volunteer for a certain job or cause it is usually something you care about, so the motivation to work comes not from making money but from ownership and wanting to self develop which is usually so much more of a rewarding experience than doing it for a living.

People who volunteer generally get exposed to many different people, situations and ideas that they may not have come across in their everyday life, and through these different experiences they can develop their characters. Volunteers also get the chance to work in many various fields. This would be beneficial for students especially to help them figure out their interests and what they would like to do with their life upon graduation.

In a country like Egypt, where manpower is available due to its constantly growing population, volunteerism should be practiced a lot more and promoted a lot better. Through volunteering, individuals strengthen many skills and acquire a lot of knowledge which helps them become active members of the society they live in and raise their awareness, producing a generally more advanced society.

Several empirical studies have been made on volunteer work and economic development. According to these studies, countries that give people the opportunity to volunteer more, have an 8% - 14% growth rate in the Gross Domestic Product of the economy. This means that the economy grows and prospers just by encouraging people to volunteer and be productive within their society.



Photo: Paulo Ribeiro / CC-by-nc-sa / Flickr

The Tokyo Game Show is held over four days, of which only the last two are open to the general public. The first two days are business days attended only by invited members of the industry and the media. The 2009 Tokyo Game Show will be open to the general public on September 26 and 27.

**Tokyo Game Show**  
**When:** 26 - 27 Sept  
**Where:** Tokyo  
**Japan**  
**Website:** <http://expo.nikkeibp.co.jp/tgs/2009/en/>



**Prague Theatre - CZECH REPUBLIC**

A visit to a Prague theatre is a typically Czech experience. .

Marionette Theatre (Puppet Theatre) enjoys a long tradition. Black Light Theatre & Laterna



“  
**Volunteering**  
**is working**  
 just as  
**hard** as  
 you would for  
 a paid job  
**except**  
 you do not get  
**paid.**”

So if a concept helps the volunteers' personal development, has a direct impact on lives and helps develop not only the society as a whole but even the economy of the country, then why are most of our youth keeping themselves sheltered from such an experience? Or more importantly whose role is it to make people aware of the importance and benefits of volunteerism? Is it a governmental role? Should schools and universities be the ones encouraging it? Should non-governmental organizations (NGOs) be the ones highlighting it? Or maybe it should come from parents? The questions are endless.

My answer to all of these questions is a simple “Yes”. All of these entities within a society should encourage students and youth to volunteer as the lack of volunteerism is coming from a lack of awareness of the benefits that come with the concept. The government has a role in pressuring educational entities to hold employment fairs, bring guest speakers and make students want to work within their societies. Educational entities also need to encourage students to develop a positive attitude towards volunteering, maybe even giving them credit hours or some sort of compensation for their efforts outside. NGOs also need to reach out beyond their close circle and provide opportunities for youth to volunteer in as many fields and interests as they can provide, and that is needed for whatever projects they are working on. Parents and families also play a role in this as they have the power to foster and empower their children to think outside the confines of their own personal life and give a fraction of their time to development and life education that would help them in their future careers.

Communication between all of these entities is essential. This is possible through various means, for example the Internet. There should be a unified online database of existing organizations, projects and movements where people can go and find opportunities to volunteer or for internships. It can also be done through advertising in magazines and newspapers at reduced advertising prices since most of these organizations have limited budgets. Promotion could also be done through

organizing events where people can go approach organizations in booths and have one-on-one talks with them about what they can contribute to their projects. For example, Vodafone's “SOS Save our Music” project had a volunteerism theme for one of their 2008 concerts where they got a group of organizations to come set up booths and people attending their concerts were able to see what kind of things were happening around the city.

In the end it is really up to us as youth to make this movement a reality. It is up to us to volunteer to develop our society and country, learn skills and much needed knowledge in the process. So I ask, should we make this concept a reality and a norm? Why not?

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Photo: Davis denis / CC-by-sa / Flickr

Magika mix ballet, animated film, illusions and puppets with mime artists. Shows are highly visual and appeal to adults and children of all nationalities. As with opera & concerts, advance reservations are recommended.

**Prague theatre**  
**When:** All September  
**Where:** Prague  
**Czech Republic**  
**Website:** <http://www.pragueexperience.com/theatre/theatre.asp?EventYear=2009&EventMonth=09>



# GIRLS OF RIYADH BOOK REVIEW

## Saudi's very own Sex and the City

by Roman El Shimi



events

“ Much like Carrie Bradshaw's column portraying the lives of her three single girlfriends and herself in New York City, comes this revolutionary book putting the love lives of four Saudi girls with their trials and tribulations into public eye.

This book, which was first published in Arabic during 2005 in Lebanon, was, needless to mention, banned straight away in Saudi Arabia. Of course since people desire what they cannot have that caused the black market sales of the book to soar, especially with the lawsuit filed against the author Rajaa Alsanea which attracted a lot of media attention since Alsanea is a young unmarried Saudi woman. The book was published in 2007 in English and hit the best-seller charts in the western world in no time.

Girls of Riyadh is written in the form of emails that the author was sending anonymously on an e-group every Friday after prayers for a year straight. That is actually how the book came together for real and the publishers kept the email format. Each chapter starts with an introductory email by the author who never gives out her identity during the entire course of the book and uses her introductions to quote some of the people who emailed her that week either denouncing what she was doing or encouraging her to put the truth out there. Her replies to those people are usually accompanied by a lot of sarcasm and wit and she often discussed taboos such as sex, homosexuality and making fun of the dating scene in Saudi Arabia. Often the chapter started with a variety of quotes from diverse sources such as the Holy Qura'an, Arabic songs (she has a bit of an obsession with Kazem El Saher), Arabic poets as well as philosophers and famous people from the west such as Mark Twain, Aristotle and Elanor Roosevelt. At the time, these emails were causing a stir in Saudi Arabia and she mentions making the news on more than one occasion with everyone wondering who the mysterious woman was.

Even though the book does not have a necessarily new or interesting plot with themes that have all been done before about falling in love, losing love, heart ache and being separated from that loved one against ones will, the fact that it takes place in Riyadh gives it a new edge. The book discusses openly how men and women interact in Saudi Arabia, marriage traditions and how young men and women get around them using technology such as mobile phones and the internet chat rooms.

The four main characters and childhood friends Ghamrah, Sadeem, Michelle and Lamees each have a story of their own. Ghamrah is the most traditional of all four girls; the book starts at her wedding. Her parents married her off to a Saudi businessman living in the United States who she went to live and then he refused to sleep with her and abused her constantly. Later she finds out that he had a girlfriend and was forced into marrying her himself. After getting pregnant against his will he divorces her and Ghamrah is forced to return to Riyadh to live her life in the shadow and shame of being a divorced woman in an ultra-conservative society. Sadeem meets a man when he gave her his number at a mall and falls in love via phone calls and later after meeting her father and signing a marriage contract he is allowed to visit her in her house until the wedding date. She makes the mistake of giving herself to him one night after his begging for her to sleep with him and he divorces her, as to him she has become damaged goods. She ends up living in her father's apartment in London to work in a bank for a while where she meets Faisal an open-minded successful Saudi business man who she meets a few times in London and runs into him on the plane back to Riyadh, where they both have to change from their western look to their Saudi attire before landing. After months of phone calls, Faisal also breaks her heart and refuses to marry her in spite of his love, since his family do not approve of him marrying a divorced woman. Michelle is half American and considered the rebel of the group who would do things such as challenge society and



Photo: IMP1/ CC-by-nc-nd/ Flickr



Photo: BBC News

- Humanity Festival - FRANCE**  
**When:** 11 - 12 - 13 Sept  
**Where:** Paris  
**France**  
**Website:** <http://www.humanite.fr/fete.html>
- MUSIC — Summer in Tuzla Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
**When:** June 21- September 30,  
**Where:** Tuzla  
Includes concerts, theatre plays, entertainment, exhibitions, etc.
- MUSIC — Festival "Flute always and everywhere" Serbia**  
**When:** August 01 - October 01,  
**Where:** Belgrade  
Concerts, masterworkshops, exhibitions of instruments and other attractions. Promoted by the Cultural Centre of Belgrade. Held in the period August-September, at the halls of Cultural Centre of Belgrade and Foundation of Ilija M. Kolarac, as well as outdoors.
- DANSE-THEATRE — FIAT - Festival of International Alternative Theatre Montenegro**  
**When:** Sept 01 - September 30,

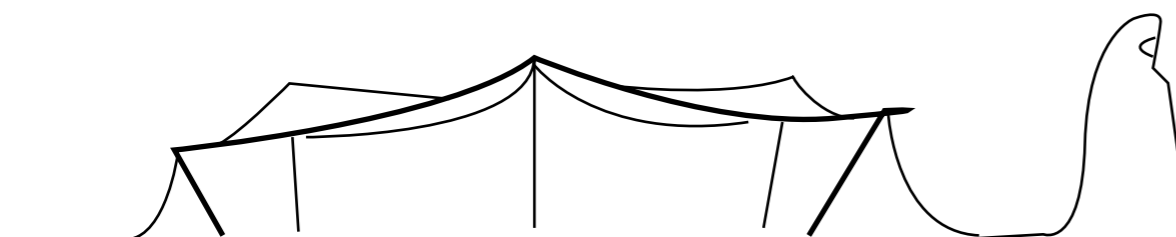
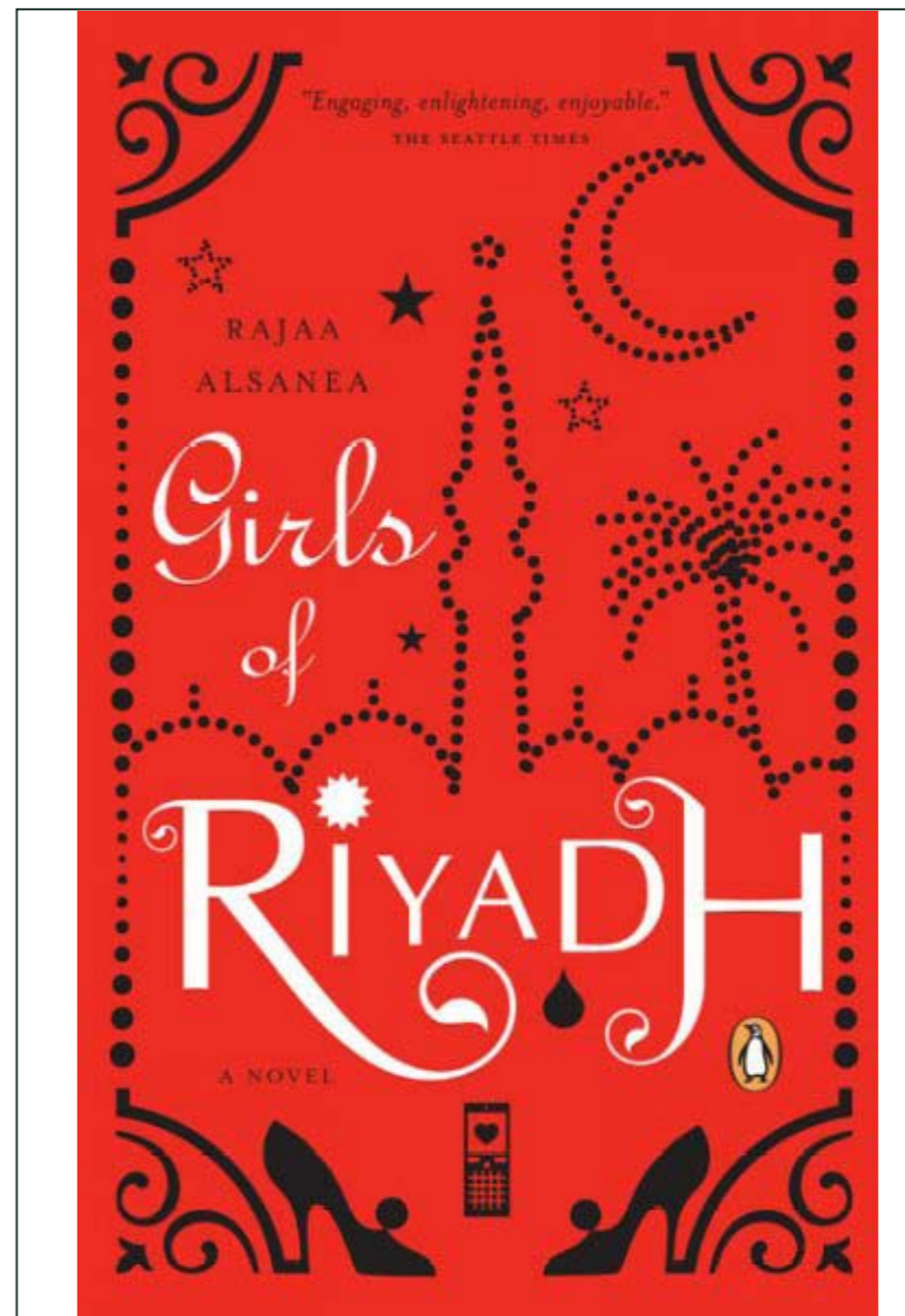
# events

**Where:** Podgorica  
 Festival of theatrical experiments, ideas, actions and the game, accompanied by visiting domestic, former Yugoslav and European theatre groups in Podgorica.  
 Secretariat for Culture and Sport of the Capital with local institutions of culture  
[www.podgorica.travel](http://www.podgorica.travel)

**ART** — Festival of Comics  
**Montenegro**  
**When:** Sept 01 - Sept 30,  
**Where:** Herceg Novi  
**Organiser:** Association of strip fans "Herceg Novi Strip Festival"  
[www.hercegnovi.travel](http://www.hercegnovi.travel)

**SPORT** — Montenegro Open  
**Montenegro**  
**When:** Sept 01 - Sept 30,  
**Where:** Budva  
 Tennis tournament in the tourist complex Slovenska Plaza.  
[www.budva.travel](http://www.budva.travel)

**FILM** — Manaki Festival of Film and Camera  
**Macedonia**  
**When:** Sept 01 - Sept 30,  
**Where:** Bitola  
[www.manaki.com.mk](http://www.manaki.com.mk)



“  
**Discussing unfairness openly is the first step to development**  
 ”

dress up like a man to drive her BMW since women are not allowed to drive. She falls in love with a man from a wealthy well-known family whose mother objects to their marriage since she is not “pure blooded” because of her American mother. Lamées focused mostly on her studies of medicine and was not as emotional as Sadeem or Ghamrah and not as rebellious as Michelle. She was also looking for love but was more concerned with finding it “the right way”.

The story unveils the dating habits, family traditions and societal norms of elite upscale Saudis. It sheds light on how that social class is exposed to the western freedom on TV and on their shopping travels in Europe and the United States, and yet forced to live under tribal traditions in a sexist society that does not recognise a woman’s right to choose her life partner, drive or travel alone. The women of this class are encouraged to seek high education then forced to live a limited life where their roles have been dictated to them since the day they were born female.

In one line in the book, Alsanea writes on behalf of Sadeem, “Why was it that young people had no interest in politics? If only she had a particular cause to defend or one to oppose! Then she would have something to keep her occupied and to turn her away from thinking about Waleed the beast...” These women are trapped in their roles of having to find a husband and start a family and are sheltered from any other way of living or alternative causes to live for.

This story, even though tragic at most times is mostly a story of hope. Alsanea was a pioneer and wrote the truth outraging Saudi officials but revealed the underground sheltered life of Saudi elites to international eyes. Discussing unfairness openly is the first step to development, this is just what Rajaa Alsanea managed to do in Girls of Riyadh. ”

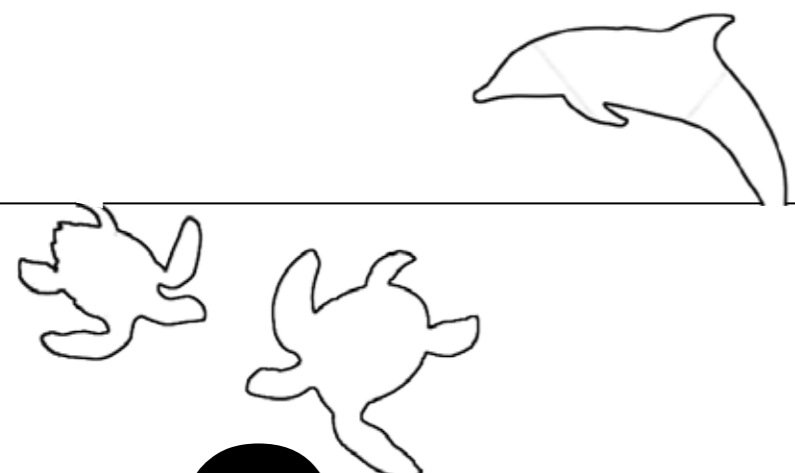
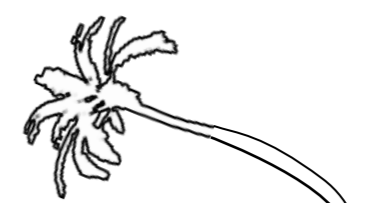
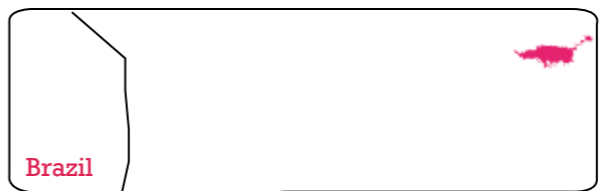


Photo: Island Spice/ CC-by-nd/ Flickr

# FERNANDO DE NORONHA

## A natural paradise

by Pedro Vianna



## events

“ Once a pirate warehouse, then a prison ”

Once a pirate warehouse, then a prison, Fernando de Noronha Island has become a small piece of heaven in Earth. 2 hours away by plane from Recife, the 26km<sup>2</sup> island is full of wildlife ready to be discovered wheter you dive or walk around the beaches on the island.

Usually, people stay from 5 to 7 days in the island, time enough to enjoy a vast range of activities available there. The first thing you should do (after getting to your hotel and unpacking your stuff) is the Island Tour (“Ilhatur”), a program that lasts all day long. During the Tour you’ll be taken to many beaches, where you can dive and find different kinds of animals, including sharks (don’t worry, they won’t bite you). You’ll also have the opportunity to take unbelievable pictures from the top of old forts, built by Portuguese men in the 18th century. There are many other activities, from diving on the small nearby islands (scuba diving) to trekking to Atalaia Beach.

### How much money should I take?

- First of all, 1 dollar (USD) is worthy approximately R\$2,00 (BRL).
- The flight from Recife (REC) to Fernando de Noronha (FEN) costs R\$499,00.
- After arriving at the airport, there’s a R\$33,00/day tax, to help the island preservation.
- Staying at a Standard Hotel costs R\$190,00/day.



Photo: Andras Jancsik/ CC-by-nd-nc/ Flickr

- Bring at least R\$100/day excluding the money to pay the activities. It’s recommended bringing an international credit card (Visa and MasterCard accepted), because the few cash points are often broken.
- The activities ranges from R\$45,00 (Atalaia Beach trekking) to R\$250,00 (diving with oxygen).
- Don’t forget money to buy souvenirs!

### Useful information available at

- <http://www.noronha.pe.gov.br/ingles>

If you are keen on environment and sustainability, don’t waste the opportunity to watch the daily lecture at Tamar auditory, where you’ll become aware of the efforts to help local species, like marine turtles, away from extinction. Just in front of the auditory, there is the Tamar Shop, where you can help the projects developed by Tamar, buying one of the souvenirs available.

Although Fernando de Noronha may be an expensive destination (almost everything comes from the continent), it’s a great opportunity to get in contact with natural life, in one of the most preserved places in Brazil, taking a time to think about human relationship with nature and observing how local people live in a sustainable way, without destroying the environment and helping endangered species to survive.

ART — Biennale Skopje 2009  
**Macedonia**  
**When:** Sept 03 - Sept 12,  
**Where:** Skopje  
[www.bjcem.org/dettagli\\_edizione.asp?id\\_edizione=28](http://www.bjcem.org/dettagli_edizione.asp?id_edizione=28)

DANSE-THEATRE —Belgrade  
Tango Festival  
**Serbia**  
**When:** Sept 04 - September 07,  
**Where:** Belgrade  
During the day master classes of famous dancing couples from Argentina and other countries. In the night, concerts and milongas in interesting places.

MUSIC — Days of Mokranjac  
choir festival  
**Serbia**  
**When:** Sept 14 - Sept 19,  
**Where:** Negotin  
This annual festival, held in memorial to Serbia’s most famous composer Stevan Stojanovic Mokranjac, will host performers from all across Serbia, from other former Yugoslav countries, as well as world-known pianists and choirs. Visitors will be able to enjoy numerous art

# INTERVIEW WITH LUIZ FREITAS

by Daniel Nunes



Photo: Joaquim Prado/CC

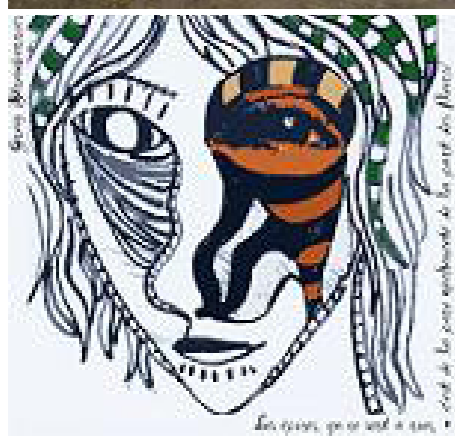


Photo: www.myspace.com/graystrawberries  
http://www.sinewave.com.br

**Luiz Freitas, quickly, just so we know you a little before getting deep in the interview.**

*I'm 20 years old, was born in Indaiatuba, a small city in São Paulo State. I moved alone to the capital, where I'm now studying Italian language at the Universidade de São Paulo and I work as a train conductor on the subway. I started playing drums when I was 14 years old and I formed Gray Strawberries with some friends in my home town in 2006.*

**You started out as a drummer for Gray Strawberries, how is it for an independent band to survive in Brazil? How did you see the country's music scene at that time?**

It depends on many things. In Brazil, unless you're friend of the right people or you have money enough for it you'll face many difficulties to make your music get noticed. The press will simply ignore your work if you're not a famous guy from their circle. These facts are even worse when you play a kind of music that is considered "strange" even in Europe. Looking forward to these facts, we saw that we needed to do the best we can do if we didn't want to play for our friends for the rest of the days. About the Brazilian music scene, it isn't any different from it was before here, or from what it is now in any other emerging country. We have our issues about lack of money, infrastructure and attendances, also considering that if even rock isn't popular in Brazil, what can we say about alternative rock, and even more, about post rock? We know that we have many problems that keep the music scene from developing, but first we need to think if it isn't our fault. Everything is wrong with the Brazilian indie music scene, the music itself, the press, the government help, the festivals... I think that we're losing a great

opportunity to change the situation.

**When and how did Sinewave start? How did it develop?**

**Today you can be considered the biggest Brazilian net label for experimental music, how is it with getting new artists?**

As I said, we have realised that things wouldn't work for us for free. Since we didn't have the right friends at the press or at the clubs, we had to face our difficulties and publish our work using the weapons that we had, and all we have is the internet. Elson, from Herod Layne, was the mentor. He used to work in the computing and internet area, where he learned a lot, from technical issues up until what a site needed to do to get noticed. We started as a net label, but the goal is, one step at a time, to become something close to a collective, a band syndicate. Our aim is to help not just the career of our bands, but the Brazilian music scene and culture as a whole.

**Did you see any difference in the scene with Sinewave's opening?**

Yes. I think we're on the right track. Despite our results still looking modest for most people, in less than one year all our bands had good results from Sinewave, like being invited to festivals, some media buzz or at least a few more plays on last.fm. We made our first festival, and, once more, despite the magazines and newspapers saying nothing, we saw the house crowded. We see that more experimental and instrumental bands are appearing, people are endorsing the scene. We still have lots to do but we are proud of what we got already.

## events

exhibitions, book promotions and literature evenings.  
[http://www.mokranjcevi-dani.com/eng\\_ver/last\\_festival\\_eng.html](http://www.mokranjcevi-dani.com/eng_ver/last_festival_eng.html)

LITERATURE — Belgrade International Meetings of Writers


**Serbia**  
**When:** Sept 15 — Sept 30,  
**Where:** Belgrade

Participants offer papers on determined topics. The meetings include literary evenings and presentations by writers. Held in the second half of September, at the Writers' Guild of Serbia and the National Library of Serbia.

ART — Literary Colony  
**Serbia**

**When:** September 15,  
**Where:** Belgrade

The event is of international, workshop type, where the works are presented for introduction and experiences of literary creators exchanged. The founder is the Serbian Literary Club. Held at the middle of September in Cortanovci and the platform presented in Belgrade.



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\* Have you signed up? Send an empty message to [libertas@cre-act-ive.org](mailto:libertas@cre-act-ive.org) and receive your personal copy of LIBERTAS by e-mail every 1st in the month!

\* Have something to say? Contact us at [libertas@cre-act-ive.org](mailto:libertas@cre-act-ive.org) and read your article in the next edition!

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