

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 3, 2017

EVENT: Towers and Other Thoughts in Performance: A Fundraiser for Refugees in Gloucester

DATE / TIME: Wednesday March 29, 2017, 7:00 – 8:00pm

LOCATION: Floating Lotus, 169 Main Street / Gloucester MA 01930

COST: \$15 suggested minimum donation

TICKETS: available at <https://www.floatinglotus.net/products/fundraiser-for-refugees-in-gloucester> or at the door on the night of the event.

Contact: Sarah Slifer Swift, TLAS-Director@tridentgallery.com, 978-394-5797

An art show and performance to benefit recently resettled refugee families in Gloucester will be held at Floating Lotus on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, from 7:00 to 8:00pm. Projected images of art from Susan Erony's recent exhibition at Trident Gallery, *Towers and Other Thoughts*, will accompany a performance piece inspired by Erony's art and produced by Trident Live Art Series Director Sarah Slifer Swift and Trident Gallery Director Matthew Swift.

Erony's art, in turn, takes particular inspiration from Franz Kafka's *Parables* and often includes hand-written text transcribed from Kafka's writings. Erony writes that

Kafka's words have always made me feel safe, because he clarifies the deep and complex natures of modernity and human behavior. He has helped me make sense of the world as a frustrating, absurd, but wondrous place.

Kafka retells and refers to the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel in several of his writings. Erony finds these writings particularly illuminating to our current socio-political climate:

The body of work in *Towers and other Thoughts* reflects ... concerns about the human lack of understanding of each other, and even desire to try to understand. The Tower of Babel seemed a right theme for our times in America, when many people are screaming and few are listening.

Choreographer Sarah Slifer Swift has made a dance performance piece in response to both the *Parables* of Kafka and to Erony's powerful imagery. The performance explores themes of division, unity, and ultimately the power and beauty of diversity through dance and sound. Matthew Swift has contributed textual imagery and performance elements. Visual art, dance, sound, and text come together as powerful intermedia experience appealing to all the senses. Slifer Swift says that

in the Tower of Babel, we have the story of how we all became refugees, going from a unity to being split apart by language and distance. In the performance, we take the perspective that the diversity that came from the split is not a weakness but a humble strength, our humanity.

Dance performers in the work are Reg Edmonds, Alison Fornes, Barbe Ennis-Abramo, Nome Graham, Jane Justice, Philip Story, Ziggy Hartfelder, and Sarah Slifer Swift. All the artists are donating their work to this event, and Floating Lotus is donating the use of their space as well as administrative assistance.

This event will provide an opportunity to learn more about the refugee families who have settled in Gloucester and how the community can support them. Peggy Russell, who heads the efforts to settle the refugees, will speak about the families, the work being done, and how people can help. Susan Erony will also speak about her work with the refugees and about the role of artists in political and community actions.

There is an ongoing fundraising effort to help with the costs of settling the families. At the event, there will be a place to make tax-deductible donations by check, payable to the WGTCC (West Gloucester Trinitarian Congregational Church) with “refugees” in the memo line. There is also a GoFundMe campaign online at <https://www.gofundme.com/RefugeesGloucester>.