

VOCAL صدای من

Aref Ghorbani

The *Refuge* series is supported by
British Council, Edinburgh Futures Institute
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Claire and Mark Urquhart

Made possible through the
PLACE Programme
In collaboration with
Scottish Refugee Council

13 August 3pm

THE STUDIO

The performance lasts approximately
1 hour with no interval.

Please ensure that all mobile phones
and electronic devices are switched off
or put on silent.



REFUGE

**A celebration of the profound contribution to arts and culture
given by the movement of people across the globe**

Artists are often the vanguards of community life and social justice. This is why they play such an important role in illuminating the commonalities and the complexities of humanity, wherever they find themselves rooted or uprooted in the world. Yet they are especially at risk of censorship, harassment, criminalisation and persecution when their work gives voice to ideas, imagination and freedom of expression, and when they inspire others to do so too.

Refuge invites and weaves together the perspectives of artists who have taken different journeys. Perspectives and journeys that remind us that people are often carrying more than we can see or know. They are always listening, attuning, questioning and making: these are exceptional minds. This series is a rich tapestry of experiences, stories, poetry, performance, challenges and resistance.

Soizig Carey
Arts and Cultural Development Officer
Scottish Refugee Council

Scottish Refugee Council is honoured to collaborate with the Edinburgh International Festival and mark this very special anniversary year. This has been a year of terrible stories. War in Ukraine, unrest in Afghanistan, families stranded and separated by bureaucracy, Rwandan detention centres and people left with no option but to risk their lives on dangerous journeys in a desperate bid to reach a place of safety. In this relentless fight for human rights and freedoms, we must not forget to reflect on hard won triumphs as well. Had Rudolf Bing not sought and been granted refugee protection here 75 years ago, this world class festival may not exist. The cultural fabric of Scotland would be very different. We are in awe of his legacy, and of the exceptional artists performing as part of *Refuge*.

Sabir Zazai
Chief Executive
Scottish Refugee Council

SCOTTISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

Scottish Refugee Council is Scotland's leading independent charity dedicated to supporting people in need of refugee protection. Since 1985, it has supported refugee integration and inclusion through provision of specialist advice and advocacy to people seeking protection in Scotland.

The people it works with have fled horrific situations around the world and come from countries where conflict is rife and human rights abuses common. When people arrive in Scotland, a new journey begins. The UK's asylum system is tough and takes its toll on individuals and families. Settling into a foreign country and a whole new system can be disorientating and challenging.

Through its direct services it provides practical support, advice and a listening ear to help people rebuild their lives in a sustainable and meaningful way. It speaks out against an unjust asylum system and campaigns for changes that make a positive difference to people's lives. To date it has supported more than 25,000 refugees arriving and living in Scotland.

Find out more about its work:
www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

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Join Aref Ghorbani and Zozan Yasar as they reflect on experiences of state censorship and the everyday restrictions placed on cultural leaders and communities.

AREF GHORBANI

Aref Ghorbani was born in Iran, where he gained an MSc in Animal Genetics and Breeding before becoming a refugee in Europe; he started working in the refugee sector in Greece in 2016 and came to Scotland in 2018. Since then, he has worked on various projects with refugees. He recently completed his studies in Global Migrations and Social Justice at University of Glasgow and is currently Destitution Coordinator with the Refugee Survival Trust. Since 2018 he has also been a facilitator of Musicians in Exile, a community project for asylum-seeking and refugee musicians formed by The Glasgow Barons. In 2019, alongside Musicians in Exile, he was awarded the National Diversity Award and an EPIC Award. Last year they performed on the opening day of COP26. Ghorbani is the director of the Iranian Scottish Community artists network, which he founded in 2019 to focus on integration, increase social inclusion and address issues of integration among artists from refugee backgrounds in Scotland. He has collaborated with numerous Scottish artists and has performed at numerous festivals, including Refugee Festival Scotland, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, the Mela Festival and Solas Festival.

ZOZAN YASAR

Zozan Yasar is a Kurdish journalist, photographer, storyteller and human rights activist concentrating on women, minority rights, humanitarianism and Middle Eastern politics. She has a BA in Political Science and International Relations from the University of Istanbul. She is the co-founder of the Kurdish Women Podcast, which aims to promote transnational feminism between women all over the world. Her social and political interests have led her to work with a wide variety of organizations and initiatives, including Voice of America in the Middle East, Witness Change Project and media outlets in the UK. Her writing has been published in The Guardian and Vice News, and by the Humanitarian Practice Network. Her recent work includes contributing photography for an illustrated book documenting 'The Long Walk with Little Amal', an epic festival that follows the journey of a giant puppet 5,000 miles across Turkey and Europe to bring attention to the plight of refugees and displaced children worldwide.