

MEDIA RELEASE



THE SOMALI PEACE BAND — PUBLIC PROGRAMS

BITTER AND SWEET: SOMALI LANGUAGE AND POETRY

GERTRUDE CONTEMPORARY AND MELBOURNE FESTIVAL

BITTER AND SWEET: SOMALI LANGUAGE AND POETRY: THURSDAY 24 OCTOBER, 6 – 8PM, FREE, NO BOOKINGS NECESSARY
THE SOMALI PEACE BAND EXHIBITION DATES: 12 – 26 OCTOBER 2013

Gertrude Contemporary is delighted to announce an evening of Somali language and poetry readings presented by artist and Director of Burji Arts Nadia Faragaab.

The migration of many Somali from their homeland has created a need to recognise the importance of Somali language as a living cultural record. Because of the nation's love of oral communication Somalia is also known as a nation of poets. Today, the Australian Somali community faces the challenge of reconciling Somali and Australian language and culture.

Nadia Faragaab is currently developing the Somali English Dictionary application through the Burji Arts Somali Language Preservation Project. This major linguistic project involves the collection of Somali words from all dialects. This initiative has recently been awarded the Vice Chancellors Award from the University of Melbourne. In her discussion Nadia will reflect on cultural archiving and the shifting nature of contemporary Somali language in the context of changing communities. Poems will be read during the evening by Australian Somali poets Said Farah AKA Shirwa and Munira Jate.

Burji Arts is an organisation dedicated to celebrating Somali art and culture through visual art, performance and Somali language. www.burjiarts.com

FOR ALL MEDIA ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

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Presented by Gertrude Contemporary and Melbourne Festival, The Somali Peace Band is a project by Australian Chinese artist Royce Ng. The exhibition presents Ng's new immersive three-channel video installation and a series of public programs that build on his work in Australia and Kenya with Somali musician Abdi Mohamed Abdi and members of the Somali Peace Band.

Today Abdi lives free in Melbourne while his bandmate Daacad lives in Nairobi, in constant fear of persecution while awaiting the outcome of his application for asylum in Australia.

Using the poignant beauty of the music of Abdi and his bandmembers as a vehicle, The Somali Peace Band project pushes the limits of activism and advocacy within the context of art and explores the various forms of 'the law' that bind individuals across history, cultures and geography.

During the Melbourne Festival the Front Gallery at Gertrude Contemporary will be an open social space with events programmed by the Somali community. As well as Bitter and Sweet: Somali Language and Poetry, other events will include The Somali Kitchen: Talk and Tasting, a beat-making workshop, and the Social Utopias and the Social Agency Panel Discussion.

For more information about The Somali Peace Band project and to find out about the associated public programs at Gertrude Contemporary please visit www.gertrude.org.au