

Red light for human trafficking

THE ARTos Foundation in Nicosia will celebrate International Women's Day on Friday with debate, film and theatre.

International Women's Day, which marks its 100th anniversary this year, is officially celebrated across the world on March 8 with hundreds of events honouring the anniversary throughout March. Some use it to highlight the abuse of women's rights across the world and to emphasise sisterhood against women's oppression. For others it is a chance to celebrate women's achievements and celebrate the central role that women play in creating a fairer and more just world.

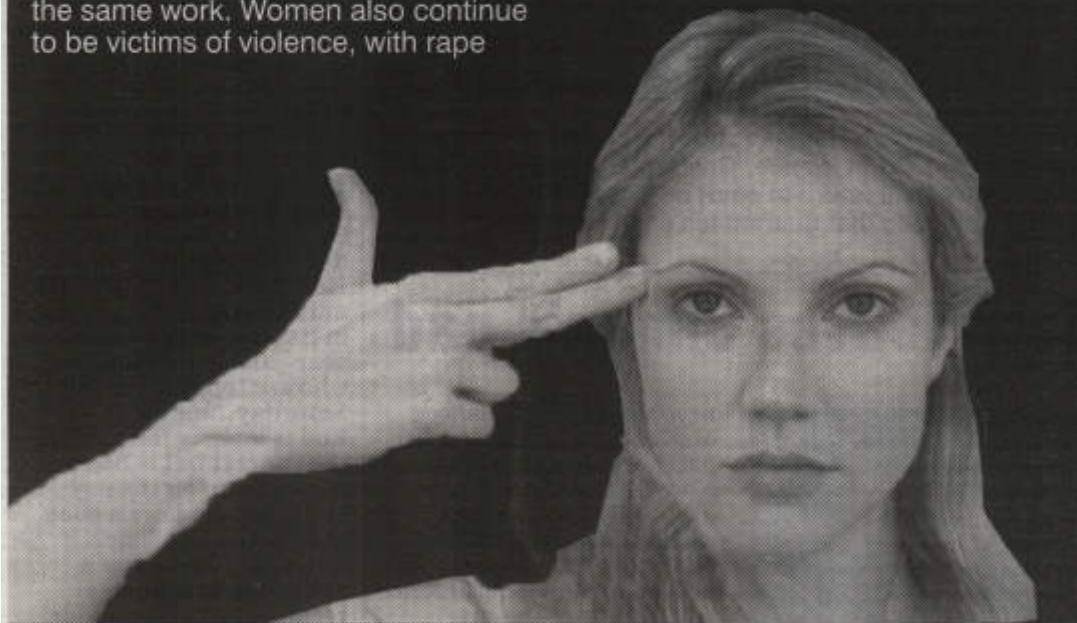
Everyone agrees that women have come a very long way since the first International Women's Day in 1911. Its history is one of working women joining with working men to fight oppressive employers and the system. Much progress has been made to protect and promote women's rights in recent times. However, nowhere in the world can women claim to have all the same rights and opportunities as men, according to the UN.

The majority of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor are women. On average, women receive between 30 and 40 per cent less pay than men earn for the same work. Women also continue to be victims of violence, with rape

and domestic violence listed as significant causes of disability and death among women worldwide.

This Friday, the ARTos Foundation is organising an event with the European Parliament Office in Cyprus and the Press and Information Office, entitled A4* Action Against Trafficking, an event that hopes to reflect on the challenges that remain. The evening will begin with a number of presentations by guest speakers and experts, each about three to five minutes long that will attempt to shed light on the faces of modern-day slavery and on new facets of this global problem. The human trafficking phenomenon affects virtually every country, including Cyprus. The presentation will be conducted in Greek and will be followed by a discussion wherein everyone is encouraged to take part.

Taking place simultaneously with the presentations will be screenings of a video-collage by women artists of FemLink 2010. The idea behind Femlink, was born between two artists, Véronique Sapin (France) and CM Judge (USA) over five years ago to recognise female video artists. The structure is simple: one artist from



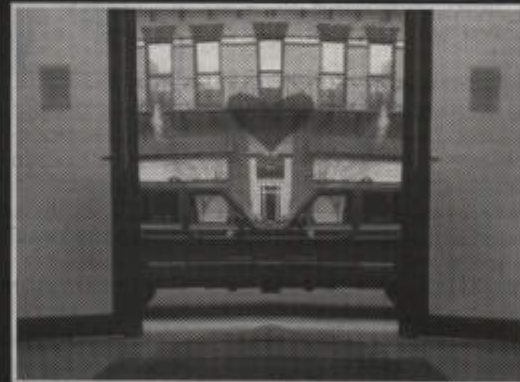


each country is invited on an annual basis to respond artistically by creating a short (2min max.) video around a common theme. As videos are collected for the project they are added to the collage sequentially as they are received without regard to content. Pairing art and culture, Femlink attempts to promote peace and acknowledgement of others by expressing the chosen theme in a unique way, giving crowds an insight into the artist's own personal vision and ideals. The first theme in 2006 was fragility, while the upcoming screening of Femlink in Nicosia will embody last year's themes of aggression, wonder and vital.

Following the presentations and discussion crowds can look forward to a one-woman play, *Beauty is Prison Time*, written and performed by Zoe Mavroudi and directed by Terra Vandergaw. The production wowed audiences at the recent Edinburgh Festival Fringe, in festivals in New York as well as at the prestigious Tron Theatre in Glasgow, where it was performed by special invitation from Scotland's Women Support Project.

The story follows Lyudmilla, a young inmate of a Siberian prison, who competes in the annual prison beauty pageant in hopes of winning the coveted grand prize: parole. As she sews her costume and rehearses for the big day, Lyudmilla weaves together her dreams for the future with her memories of being trapped in the merciless web of the Moscow underworld and reveals the heart-breaking truth behind her incarceration.

This English language show tackles difficult political issues in a confident yet deeply emotional way. Interest is captured from the very beginning as the likeable and intriguing protagonist invites the audience to get to know her. Reaching a poignant climax, this provocative piece raises political questions in a truly endearing manner and is definitely worth a watch.



A4* Action against Trafficking
European Parliament Office in Cyprus and the Press and Information Office organise event that includes a theatre performance, a video-collage by women artists of FemLink and presentations and discussion. March 11. ARTos Foundation, 64 Ag. Omologoyites Avenue, Nicosia. 6pm. Tel: Tel: 22-445455/22-870500

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