



Minnesota International Center  
A World Affairs Council  
711 East River Road  
Minneapolis, MN 55455

# Communique

MARCH – APRIL 2008

MINNESOTA INTERNATIONAL CENTER • Inspiring our Community to Understand Global Issues and Cultures in an Ever Changing World

**THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2008**

## MIC Copresentation: *Shadows*

Cosponsor: Walker Art Center

**WHEN** . . . . . Thursday, March 13, 2008; Performance 8:00 P;  
private reception (cash bar) following the program

**WHERE** . . . . . Walker Art Center, McGuire Theater, 1750 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis

**COST** . . . . . MIC and Walker Art Center Members **\$16**; Non-members **\$20**  
Discounted tickets may be purchased by calling the Walker Art Center at **612.375.7600**  
or in person at the Walker Box Office and identifying yourself as an MIC member.

On March 13, join MIC and the Walker Art Center for a special performance of *Shadows*. Through the deceptively simple format of a slide show, **William Yang**, one of Australia's great photographers/performance artists spins an engrossing web of stories about two communities that have suffered under ignorance and fear—Australia's aboriginal peoples and its migrant Germans. *Shadows* is part social documentary and part personal storytelling, illuminating the lives of other "outsiders" through the eyes of a gay Chinese Australian. Yang's understated language and arresting imagery come to life along with a haunting live score by Australian multi-instrumentalist Colin Offord.



Following the performance, MIC and Walker members are invited to a private reception with the artist at Wolfgang Puck's 20:21 restaurant. Attendees are also encouraged to take advantage of Target Free Thursday Nights at the Walker when admission to all galleries is free beginning at 5:00 P.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 2008**

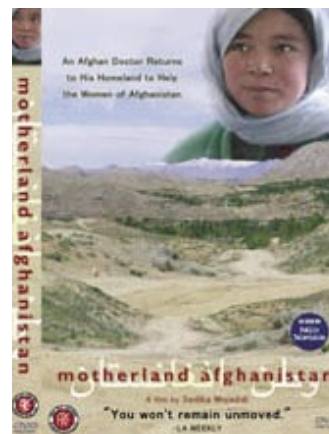
## Motherland Afghanistan

Cosponsors: Americans for UNFPA and the Deborah E. Powell Center for Women's Health

**WHEN** . . . . . Friday, April 4, 2008; Reception 6:00 P – Dolly Fiterman Riverview Gallery  
Screening 7:00 P; Panel Discussion 8:30 P – William G. Shepherd Room

**WHERE** . . . . . Weisman Art Museum, 333 East River Road, Minneapolis

**COST** . . . . . MIC members/students and members of cosponsoring organizations **\$10**;  
Non-members **\$25. Space is limited; advance registration is required.**



On April 4, MIC and Americans for UNFPA will be screening the documentary film *Motherland Afghanistan* at the Weisman Art Museum. Set against the backdrop of a land in turmoil and transition, this inspiring film reveals the devastating stories behind a reproductive health crisis essentially neglected by the Western media, and provides a rare glimpse into the heart of humanity through the quiet deeds of those who attempt to heal.

The screening will followed by a panel discussion with **Sedika Mojadidi**, the filmmaker, and **Anika Rahman**, Americans for UNFPA president. Prior to the screening, a reception (complimentary hors d'oeuvres and cash bar) will be held in the Weisman's Dolly Fiterman Riverview Gallery.

**MONDAY, APRIL 14, 2008**

## Franco-American Relations – The Current State of Affairs

Cosponsors: Alliance Française, the French-American Chamber of Commerce, the Marquette Hotel and Northwest Airlines

**WHEN** . . . . . Monday, April 14, 2008; Registration 11:30 A;  
Luncheon and Program 12 noon – 1:30 P

**WHERE** . . . . . Galaxy Room, Windows on Minnesota, 50th floor, IDS Tower,  
80 S 8th Street, Minneapolis

**COST** . . . . . MIC members/students and members of cosponsoring organizations **\$30**;  
Non-members **\$45. Advance registration requested**

On Monday, April 14, MIC will host a luncheon forum with His Excellency **Pierre Vimont**, French ambassador to the U.S. At this luncheon, Ambassador Vimont will also present local French Honorary Consul Alain Frécon with the Légion d'Honneur from the French Government.



A member of the French Foreign Service since 1977, Ambassador Vimont was named Ambassador of France to the United States by President Nicolas Sarkozy on August 1, 2007. Prior to his present appointment, Monsieur Vimont held several prominent posts including ambassador and permanent representative of France to the European Union.

Join MIC & the World



# Letter from the President

Carol Engebretson Byrne

*“At no point in history has our national security depended as much on our ability to be a respected and integral part of the world community....Government packaging cannot do what ordinary citizens can do: build understanding and mutual respect ...”*

Washington Times editorial

As you will see in this issue of the Communiqué, MIC’s reach continues to be broad, deep and varied. From public programs on Afghanistan and France to sending international speakers from 17 countries to schools in Fairmont, we try to cover the world and the state.

Like many nonprofits today, MIC continually faces the uphill challenge of funding. The International Visitor Leadership program – identified by U.S. ambassadors as their number one tool in improving the U.S. image abroad – is supported only in part by the State Department and MIC regularly has to seek additional funding in order to ensure a quality experience for our visitors. We are fortunate to have strong and committed corporate members and foundations which support our organization. But the cornerstone of MIC support is individual members, without whom we would not be able to extend such a warm, personal welcome to all our international guests in Minnesota – be they professional visitors, international students or diplomats

Ordinary citizens are the life-blood of an organization such as the Minnesota International Center, and I would like to ask you to act as an ambassador for MIC by encouraging a friend or colleague to support our organization. It’s so easy to join MIC through our secure website, and it’s that much harder for us to continue to build understanding and mutual respect in our world without the assistance of people like you.

Sincerely,

*Carol Engebretson Byrne*

## MIC THANKS OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

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The Marquette Hotel  
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# Visit Me



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*Thank You for Your Support*

# Means The World to Students

Bill Cahalan, *Sentinel* Staff Writer. Excerpt from *Sentinel*, January 8, 2008



Hundreds of Fairmont children met people from across the world on Monday without having to leave town. The opportunity to learn about other nations and cultures was provided by the Minnesota International Center, whose 22 international speakers gave presentations about their 17 countries when they visited classrooms at the Five Lakes and William Budd Elementary and Fairmont Junior/Senior High Schools.

*"My students were very excited about the visits and they asked lots of question of our guests."* said Rochelle Frazen, a fifth-grade teacher at Five Lakes. *"When the world can come to your school in one day, it's exciting. Our students learned about other nations' languages, beliefs, clothing and food."*

The group's visit to Fairmont was overseen by George Hornik, MIC's K-12 Education program manager, and was financially sponsored by 3M and the Education Minnesota Foundation. The group has also given presentations at schools in other 3M communities in Alexandria and Staples.

*"At the schools we visit, the children enjoy the face-to-face visits with the college students and hearing their life stories,"* Hornik said. *"We do the visits in a personal way, so that the visits stay in the children's mind and they retain the information better. It's better than reading about a country in an encyclopedia."*

*"Rural communities in Minnesota and the Twin Cities and its suburbs are changing,"* said Hornik. *"There is an influx of new immigrants and cultures coming from other countries. In 20 years the cultural landscape could be much different in Minnesota."*

## Minnesota's Door to the World Swings in Both Directions



I am really grateful to MIC for this fantastic opportunity. Two weeks ago, I could not imagine playing ping-pong with a Nepali guy; listening to a Dutch person who experienced the Vietnam War; and trying to get some rest in a Russian-styled bedroom. Every minute of these two days carved an unforgettable experience for these speakers who have become the best ambassadors of their native nations. What else is world peace about other than listening to one another regardless our beliefs?

— DIEGO LUIS ZAPATA, COLOMBIA



I recently participated in this MIC program for the first time. I am an old-fashioned speaker, a former high school teacher (English as a foreign language in my native the Netherlands), I don't do PowerPoint or show flashy computer-generated graphics. I just stand in front of the classroom, talk, wave my hands and scribble on the blackboard. But even the fourth graders were wide awake during my presentation and I had a spirited debate about the differences in what kids their age can do and cannot do between the U.S. and the Netherlands.

Most amazing experience...after feeding me for two days, providing a comfortable bed and driving me around, they thanked me for visiting.

— BENNO GROENEVELD, THE NETHERLANDS



As a first experience with MIC, I didn't know what to expect. Yet, from the moment when we started to introduce ourselves I had the impression that it was going to be a challenging but certainly a great experience — and lots of fun getting to know other cultures and people. Now I know that an Indian sari is difficult to wear but at the same time amazing; how to wear a Nepali scarf; how Colombia is such a beautiful country with lots to see; how to wear the headdress in Nigeria etc. etc. But the greatest reward would come from the enthusiasm of students and their teachers. I saw in them the same curiosity that I had when I first came to the U.S.

— ESTELA SHABANI, ALBANIA

