Art exhibition 2016 Edition

In her welcoming speech, the Executive Director of WACOL/Tamar SARC, Mrs. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo appreciated all dignitaries present especially the students for the works displayed at the event. She stated that the launching of the art exhibition was planned to coincide with the commemoration of International Women’s Day, March 8th, 2016 as well as serves as a reminder to all to continue the fight for the rights of the countless voiceless victims in the state.

Ezeilo averred that the situation with regard to sexual violence, especially rape and defilement of women and children, has reached an epidemic level; and it is undeniably the most surreptitious form of violation of human rights of women and girls: the impunity with which the perpetrators commit this heinous crime is alarming and calls for urgent action to protect all victims. Women and girls experience sexual violence in their homes, communities, schools, workplaces, streets,
markets, police stations and hospitals. The National survey on torture in Nigeria carried out by Women's Aid Collective (WACOL) indicated that rape and sexual abuse are forms of torture mostly experienced by women. The survey puts the rate at which women are raped and sexually abused at 65.4%, which presents a high risk to women's development. In addition to serious psychological effects, sexual violence creates heightened vulnerability, unintended pregnancy, and life-threatening sexually transmitted disease, including HIV and AIDS. She stressed that despite the physical, mental torture, and the trauma experienced by the victims of sexual violence, they hardly speak out about their victimization for fear of stigmatization and discrimination. Hence, the culture of silence that allows rapists/criminals to go unpunished.

Highlighting the importance of the exhibition, she said that it is part of the “Stop Rape Now Campaign” was aimed at creating awareness about sexual crimes and also about services provided by Tamar SARC/WACOL to aid the recovery of victims of rape and child sexual abuse. It is intended to build new momentum for the adoption of Violence Against Persons Prohibition bills across the states of the federation of Nigeria, as well as to underscore the need for support for victims of sexual violence, including access to comprehensive health care and psycho-social assistance that will aid their recovery and reintegration. While congratulating the students of the various Universities that attended the exhibition, Ezeilo stated that the one week event would feature a competition amongst the outstanding entries and identify talents. She hinted that apart from the prizes to be awarded to the various winning artists, their presentations would be recognized nationally and internationally.

Also speaking at the exhibition, the HOD of Fine and Applied Arts UNN, Dr. Krydz Ikwuemesi expressed his joy at being invited to judge the competition and for the opportunity afforded UNN art students. He stressed the importance of this event in enlightening the community about the plight of sexual violence occurring in Enugu state. He exalted all the students’ work and urged everyone to continue spreading the message after the day’s event in order to create a better society for those present, their children and future generation. He also congratulated WACOL for organizing the event, and challenged government at all levels to take action, “This shouldn’t be the usual tokenism where we just do it, and everyone goes away: There has to be follow-ups so that people can get the message and allow it to be driven home beyond this exhibition hall, so that we can build a better society for ourselves, and for our children”.

Addressing the audience, the Director Alliance Francaise Mr. Olivier Mouginot said that the center is happy to be associated with the art exhibition; he noted that the French government through the center has been at the vanguard of promoting languages, art and culture. He stressed that in the past, the Centre use to organize events, but this seems to be a shift from the old way, he believes that this partnership is the first step to more collaborations.

In her remark the Regional Coordinator for Justice for All (J4A), Mrs. Josephine Onah, expressed her pleasure on attending what she described as one of Tamar SARC’s most impactful events. She explained that the event had opened people’s eyes and helped prevent people from just being onlookers to injustices occurring every day in society. She expressed her joy that J4A was a part of this campaign and laudable project, which took on various dimensions and sensitized a large, mixed audience by exploring enduring partnerships. She stated that it was her prayer and wish that it would be sustained and urged the Enugu state government for their support.

The Honourable Commissioner for Youth and Sports, Mr. Eze, leaned his voice in appreciating the work of the Centre but stressed that the growing momentum of the modeling/pageantry industry, alcohol abuse, etc in today's society are alarming and could be attributed to the cause of sexual violence. He urged everyone in attendance to observe what is going on in society especially in regards to morals, language, and other forms of cultural decay and seek lasting solution to help curb this menace. Numerous students who presented their artworks were opportune to describe their respective pieces and the inspiration behind them. Most of the pieces depicted the evil seed sown by committing rape and the damages it cause, while emphasizing that the act does not detach from the victims mind after its occurrence.

Highpoint of the event was the presentation of certificates to the artist who emerged winners for the competition.

1. Uchenna Onyibor, a student of Painting, Fine Arts Department, IMT, received the third place price of 15,000 Naira for his oil on canvas piece entitled “Regret” depicting a raped female and her remorseful rapist.

2. Sunday Odoh, a UNN Department of Fine and Applied Arts’ sculpture student who came in second place, received 20,000 Naira for his multimedia sculpture entitled “Under duress”. The elaborate sculpture formed from wood, metal, and belt strap represented a wooden female being intertwined by her metallic rapist.

3. Celestina Enchukwu, an IMT student, received the first place prize of 30,000 Naira for her photographic work entitled “Environmental Insecurity” depicting a male who was peeping at a lady taking her bath in an uncompleted bathroom situated in an insecure environment. This she explains could lead to immoral thought and eventually rape.
ED WACOL Tamar SARC at the Art exhibition

ED exchange pleasantries with dignitaries

ED and Commissioner for youths and sports

Juries and ED WACOL Tamar SARC

ED WACOL Tamar SARC & Director Alliance Francaise

Tamar SARC staff exchange pleasantries with dignitaries

Dr. Kridz Ikwemesi speaking at the function

Center Manager Tamar SARC speaking at the exhibition

Female artist explaining her work

Stop Rape Now! Stop Rape Now!
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[Images of people at an art exhibition, including: Artist explaining his work to audience, ED presenting certificate to one of the winners, ED presenting certificate to another winner, Regional Director J4A presenting certificate to one of the winners, Some of the artworks, Participants appreciates artworks works, Cross section of participants.]

**DON’T DIE IN SILENCE:**
Report Rape

Lean on TAMAR SARC
Now for free medical, counseling and support services.

Break the Silence

Don't be afraid of reporting rape and other acts of sexual violence and abuse

Wacol/Tamar Sarc Team

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Located at the FSP Medical Center, Opposite Former IMT and near GRA Police

TAMAR SARC is managed by Women’s Aid Collective (WACOL), in collaboration with Enugu State Government - Ministries of Health, Gender Affairs and Social Development, with support from OFID/J4A Programmes.