



Rally for Iraq Partners with Artist Wafaa Bilal to Raise \$100,000 for Iraqi Students

When: 8pm March 8-8pm March 9, 2010

Where: Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts

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Rally for Iraq, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is partnering with an Iraqi-American artist and New York University professor, Wafaa Bilal, for a fundraising event and artistic exhibit entitled *...and Counting* starting on March 8th, 2010 at 8pm at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts. The event will be broadcast globally via live webstream on Wafaa Bilal's website (WafaaBilal.com) as well as on Rally for Iraq's website (RallyforIraq.org).

Together, RFI and Bilal aim to raise \$100,000 in charitable donations dedicated to the Rally for Iraq Scholarship Endowment. The fundraiser will consist of Bilal tattooing 100,000 dots on his back to commemorate 100,000 Iraqi and American lives lost during the war. The tattoo-ing will be done in a 24-hour sitting at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts in New York City. Bilal is asking participants and donors to match each tattoo with a one-dollar contribution to Rally for Iraq. A diverse group of people will be invited to read aloud the names of Iraqi civilians who have lost their lives while Bilal is being tattooed. Footage of the event will be on display at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts throughout the entire month of March, 2010.

Bilal, a former Iraqi refugee who made his way to the United States after the first Gulf

War, approached Rally for Iraq at the end of 2009 to discuss ways that this exhibit to raise awareness could also be a fundraiser to benefit Iraqi youth. In hopes to encourage maximum involvement, viewers (both in attendance and via live webstream) will be asked to contribute at least \$1 to RFI's Scholarship fund. As Iraq is slowly slipping out of the consciousness of mainstream media, this event is designed to serve as a reminder of the continuing struggles of Iraqi reconstruction. It will simultaneously encourage viewers to think about and invest in Iraq's most powerful resource, its people.

The Rally for Iraq Scholarship Fund was founded in March of 2008 by a group of young Iraqi-American volunteers and their friends. As college students, the founders aimed to offer a grass-roots opportunity for people concerned with the humanitarian hardships facing Iraqis to contribute to the education of Iraq's youth. In its early stages, RFI established a presence on college campuses, at educational, film, and cultural festivals, and on the torsos of hundreds of Americans, Arabs and other world citizens. It did so by selling (incredibly soft and flattering) vintage Iraq-themed t-shirts and donating proceeds to RFI's scholarship endowment. Though they continue to sell these shirts, Rally for Iraq's founders have expanded the organization, recruited a highly talented Iraqi-American Advisory Board including former UN Ambassador, Feisal Istrabadi, and are now focused on building an endowment that will serve as a perpetual resource to the Iraqi nation.

To learn more about the *...and Counting* Project, Rally for Iraq, or Wafaa Bilal, please feel free to get in touch using the contact information provided above. All parties are available for interviews.