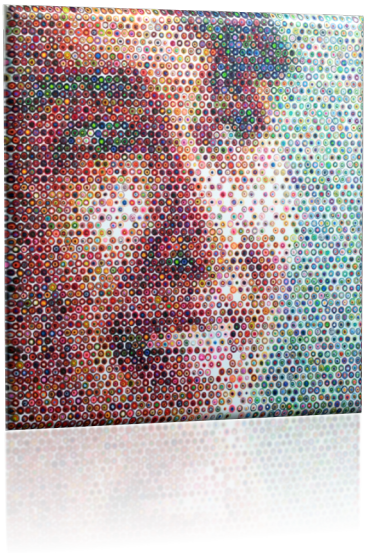
THE BURMA CAMPAIGN IS GIVEN A PORTRAIT OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI

"Continued support for the Burma Campaign UK is of paramount importance now. International pressure - a major factor in bringing the generals to negotiate - must not be eased."

UNISON



The Burma Campaign UK, working with partners worldwide to promote human rights in Burma, has been given the artist Gavin Rain's iconic pointillist portrait of Burma's democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

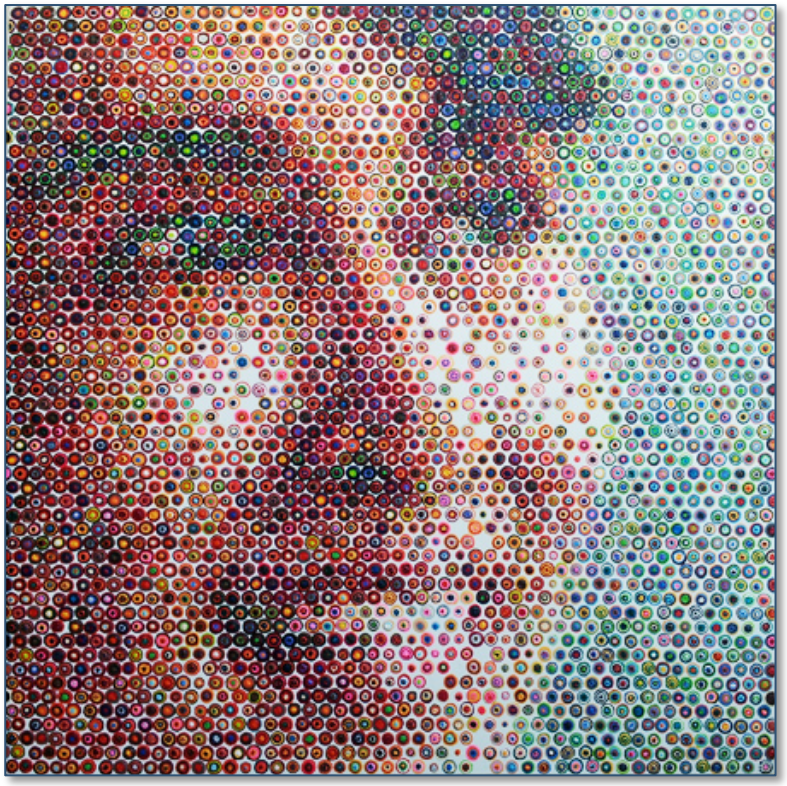
In order to make the most of this generous gift, The Chandos Foundation is working with the Burma Campaign to consider various options for using the image to promote international understanding and cultural cooperation for the cause of peace.

THE ARTIST

Gavin Rain

The artist was born in South Africa and studied Art and Neuropsychology at the University of Cape Town in the 80s and 90s. Though having painted all his life, his style became pointillist around 2003 and 2004. His influences are Seurat, the Russian avant-garde art of the 1900s and also many architects. He has exhibited worldwide, including South Africa, Italy, the Netherlands and the United States.

THE PAINTING



Aung San Suu Kyi by Gavin Rain

The three quarter, close up of Daw Suu Kyi's head is 5 foot square and painted in acrylic on an unframed canvas. Each of the meticulous dots that represent her smiling face denotes a flag of the world.

Similar works by the artist have sold for around $10,000.

Aung San Suu Kyi speaking of the Burma Campaign UK:

"*Thank you for all that you have done to help the cause of democracy in Burma*."

THE BURMA CAMPAIGN

Baroness Kinnock has described the Burma Campaign UK as "*The world's leading organisation dedicated to campaigning for freedom and democracy in Burma.* It is an award winning independent organisation working for the promotion of human rights, democracy and development there. Founded in 1991, it plays a leading role in raising awareness and pressuring the international community to take action in support of the people of Burma.

Mark Farmaner and Zoya Phan of the Burma Campaign UK with Libor Rouček MEP, Vice-President Of European Parliament and Kristina Prunerová, PIN, at the European Parliamentary in September 2010

Key achievements include;

- As part of a global campaign, persuading the United Nations Security Council to discuss Burma for the first time. The Security Council continues to be engaged on Burma.
- Persuading the British government to double aid to Burma and to fund cross-border aid in order to reach ethnic people that the regime doesn't allow aid to be delivered to.
- Generating thousands of stories about Burma in the media, ensuring the world does not ignore the crisis there.
- Persuading many large multi-national companies providing revenue to the dictatorship to end their involvement in Burma.
- Meeting with the British Prime Minister, and many other senior politicians around the world, ensuring the message of Burma's democracy movement is heard by global decision makers.
- Providing support and training to Burmese exile organisations and individuals, and building the capacity of people from Burma to speak out and influence the international community.

THE CHANDOS FOUNDATION

The Chandos foundation is a small independent, non-political, organisation committed to promoting the culture of peaceful coexistence through dialogue and the arts. Founded in 2011, The Chandos works with the government, NGOs, charities and like-minded individuals to clarify the definition of civilisation and promote a culture of peace worldwide.

The founder Anthony Russell with Tun Khin, President of the Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK) at the Houses of Parliament

Projects include:

- An ongoing international lecture series on the arts and cultural history
- The creation of an umbrella peace organisation in the UK
- Initiating a UK 'Homeshare' scheme for the elderly and homeless
- The promotion of citizen engagement in urban tree care for South East London
- Encouraging participation in the arts through drawing in cooperation with the British Museum
- Working with other organisations to promote genuine democracy in Burma

The founder of The Chandos has recently published the book *'Evolving the Spirit – From Democracy to Peace'*, praised by Aung San Suu Kyi as meaning a great deal to her and by the BBC's John Simpson as *"Remarkable and heartening stuff"*.

THE INTENTION

Since the recent lifting of almost all the remaining sanctions on Burma, the international community has to a great extent assumed a fait accompli there. Anyone involved with Burma knows that many of the old problems still persist including widespread human rights abuses. It is therefore crucial to reignite popular awareness of the plight of the Burmese people with engagement in the democratic process. These aims are personified by Aung San Suu Kyi, who therefore makes an appropriate rallying point for progress.

The directors of the Burma Campaign are extremely grateful to Gavin Rain for this generous gift. In cooperation with the Chandos Foundation, it is hoped to use the image to promote the work of many organisations working for human rights and lasting stability to Burma.

Rather than simply sell the painting to raise funds to support human rights in Burma, it is hoped to use the image to raise awareness. Aung San Suu Kyi is now a worldwide icon representing a long-term commitment to the principles of mature democracy through the nonviolent means of dialogue, understanding and cooperation.

It would therefore be important to find a prominent location where the portrait could hang. Possible locations are under consideration, including organisations with a specific agenda that echoes these principles. It could also be a public space with a mission to reach out for a more general cultural dialogue.

It is also hoped to reproduce the image in various saleable forms, including post cards and larger print runs as an on-going fundraising opportunity.

The portrait would then make a suitable centrepiece for an exhibition or major event, possibly in London.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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