

\*\*\*\*\* MEDIA RELEASE \*\*\*\*\*

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**True stories of seeking sanctuary performed across the UK during Refugee Week 2011**

- WHAT:** Performances of *Asylum Dialogues* and *Asylum Monologues*  
**WHEN / WHERE:** V&A Museum & Arcola Theatre London and across UK
- LONDON:** *Asylum Dialogues: 24<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm @ V&A Museum, Hochhauser Auditorium, Sackler Centre.*  
Free event. Enquiries visit [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)
- LONDON:** *Asylum Monologues: 26<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm @ Arcola Theatre, 24 Ashwin St, London E8 3DL*  
Post show discussion with **Nick Scott Flynn** (Head of Refugee Services, British Red Cross). Free event. Bookings required [asylummonologues@redcross.org.uk](mailto:asylummonologues@redcross.org.uk)
- BEDFORD** *Asylum Monologues: 22<sup>nd</sup> June @ 7pm @ St Peters Church, De Parys Ave, MK40 2TX.*  
Free event. Hosted by [British Red Cross](http://British Red Cross).
- LINCOLN:** *Asylum Dialogues: 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 1pm @ The Showroom, Tritton, Rd, Lincoln, LN 6 7QY.*  
Free event. Bookings required: [paul.elliott@just.lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.elliott@just.lincolnshire.gov.uk)
- PONTEFRACT:** *Asylum Dialogues: 24<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm @ Pontefract Town Hall, Bridge St, Pontefract, WF8 1PG*  
Free event, all welcome.

Acclaimed theatre company iceandfire will be performing readings of their flagship plays *Asylum Monologues* and *Asylum Dialogues* in seven venues around the UK during Refugee Week (June 20-26). Iceandfire's outreach network Actors for Human Rights, which performs the readings, celebrates their five year anniversary this Refugee Week, having reached approximately 50,000 people across the UK to date.

**Asylum Dialogues**

Before an unlikely friendship developed between John Catley, a 66 year-old Birmingham accountant, and Angela, a 40 year-old Jamaican woman who cleaned his office, John admitted to believing the spin about asylum seekers:

*"I honestly used to say - send them all home. They shouldn't be here. Taking all our money."*

John admits that he was considering voting for the BNP. But, he continues,

*"Then this woman Angela turned up to clean my office and turned the world upside down."*

Scripted by award-winning playwright Sonja Linden, John and Angela's story is part of **Asylum Dialogues**, a documentary play about real-life friendships between British people and asylum seekers exploring positive transformations created by their encounters with each other.

BAFTA Award-winner **Juliet Stevenson**, patron of iceandfire;

*"We regularly hear about the terrible hostility that asylum seekers and refugees face. But we rarely hear the stories of British people who are standing shoulder to shoulder with those seeking sanctuary in the UK. Asylum Dialogues tells these inspirational stories and shows how small gestures of welcome can make a big difference"*

**Asylum Monologues**

A first-hand account of the UK's asylum system in the words of people who have experienced it. Including testimony of UK Border Agency whistleblower Louise Perrett and a 12 year -old girl detained twice in Yarl's Wood Detention Centre, this play reveals what it truly means to be displaced in the UK today.

*"This waiting for the Home office to decide – I call it a diplomatic form of torture. They are not raping us, they are not burning us with cigarettes, but they are torturing us mentally, and that's the worst.."*

**Interviews** available with Christine Bacon Artistic Director of iceandfire, and John Catley, whose story features in *Asylum Dialogues*.

**NOTES:**

**iceandfire** explores human rights stories through performance. Since their inception in 2003, they have become a theatre company with a distinct, contemporary voice creating work of excellence across their four work strands: production, outreach, education and participation. [www.iceandfire.co.uk](http://www.iceandfire.co.uk) **Actors for Human Rights** is iceandfire's national outreach network, made up of over 500 professional actors who are dedicated to drawing public attention to a range of contemporary human rights concerns. The performers involved donate their time and their profile to encourage public acceptance of human rights and to give voice to people whose basic human rights have been violated. **Juliet Stevenson, Simon Callow and Louise Jameson** are just some of the professional actors that support the network. [www.iceandfire.co.uk/afhr](http://www.iceandfire.co.uk/afhr)