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## Press Release

### Refuge

***Refugees And Asylum Seekers - Photography and Personal Stories***

Supported by 'Refugee Action'

Ilham Hamood, Claudia Janke and Robin Taudevin

**Private view:** 18<sup>th</sup> June 6pm-9pm

**Exhibition:** 19<sup>th</sup> June – 21<sup>st</sup> July

**Open:** Mon- Sat  
10:00am – 6.00pm

**Entry:** **FREE ENTRY**

**The Novas Contemporary Urban Centre presents a show of three portfolios of powerful images of refugees and asylum seekers held to coincide with Refugee Week.**



Leaving home is difficult even when it is to another postcode so imagine how difficult it can be when you have no choice but to leave your country in order to seek asylum or refuge in another society and culture.

Being in a strange society and having to learn a different language are just some of the obstacles and challenges asylum seekers and refugees face - all of which leave many feeling isolated and depressed.

The word asylum has wrongly acquired a negative connotation, however, rather than the tabloid headlines that are often seen Refuge finds the truth behind the myths, and documents actual first hand stories from a community of people who are often vilified and confused with illegal immigrants.

The exhibition explores the everyday lives, challenges and aspirations of refugees that have travelled to foreign shores, and the reasons behind leaving the land that they called home.

The exhibition will feature a collection of photographs from photographers, Ilham Hamood, Claudia Janke and Robin Taudevin.

Ilham's collection entitled 'Exile on Hope Street' vividly captures the emotion of humanity with great resonance, and the intensity that often develops between subject and photographer can be clearly seen in every image. Ilham although born in Yemen now calls England home, it took her twelve months to create her entire collection, visiting and engaging with all her subjects during this period.

*I wanted to be able to deliver an exhibition that went some way to highlight the humanity of the people caught up in circumstances beyond their control, causing them to be in a situation that results in being, stateless, their lives often indefinitely on hold.*

#### **Ilham Hamood**

Ilham's' creative talent were harnessed and developed on the Novas accredited Photography Training Programme which targets people from culturally diverse backgrounds experiencing social exclusion. Novas Arts have supported Ilham over the last year with the production, the exhibition and by nurturing her precocious natural talent.

For more information contact:

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## Notes To Editor:

### **Ilham Hamood – Exile on Hope Street**

Emerging female photographer Ilham Hamood was born in Yemen but now calls Liverpool home. She is bringing her exhibition to London after the success of her first exhibition in Liverpool. Ilham took twelve months to create her collection, visiting and engaging with all her subjects and getting personal testimonies as well as powerful photographs. Ilham's' creative talent was harnessed and developed on the Novas accredited Photography Training Programme which targets people from culturally diverse backgrounds experiencing social exclusion. The Novas Group have supported Ilham over the last year with the production of the exhibition.

### **Claudia Janke – Integration and destitution**

<http://www.claudiajanke.com/>

Claudia Janke, a German photographer living in London, focuses on social documentary photography working with aid agencies and social justice organisations all over the world, portraying people living in difficult situations with compassion and dignity. Her striking photographs for Refugee Action reveal the complex nature of asylum. To some, gaining refuge in the UK is exactly that – a chance to live safely free of persecution. Claudia's pictures highlight the positive relationships many form with local people and the contribution they make to UK society. Many of these are accompanied by moving testimonies explaining why the individuals came to the UK and their experiences living here. Alongside these pictures are a selection of others which capture the fear, rejection and destitution that some asylum seekers experience, particularly those who are refused asylum but are unable or terrified of returning home. These were commissioned by Refugee Action to illustrate research published last year, 'The Destitution Trap'.

### **Robin Taudevin – The reality of dawn raids and deportation**

<http://www.robintaudevin.com/>

An independent, international photographer who died tragically aged 29 last year. He photographed issues of social justice all over the world, but in the last year of his life he made a huge impact with his photographic work of asylum seekers living in Glasgow. His pictures document the experience of asylum families in the UK, including the first and only pictures of dawn raids – following families as they were taken from their homes early in the morning to detention centres in order to be deported. Pictures of the Vucaj family as they are taken from their home in terror, followed by pictures of their abandoned possessions after they've left, are particularly moving.

Robin's photos are now an important and unique resource and his sister Alli Taudevin is tireless in the promotion of his work in order to raise awareness of the injustice he found that asylum seekers faced in the UK.

*“Photographs can inspire. For this reason alone, they are worth viewing. However photographs can also inform. When photographs both inspire and inform, this seems to me a compelling reason to view photography. It becomes significant and valuable. I believe in the need to strive for a broad understanding of complex issues. Although most forums for viewing photography are necessarily restricted in scope, photographs do have the potential to inspire compassion. This crucial affectation may in turn encourage learning and greater understanding. Through understanding ignorance and injustice might be combated.”*

Robin Taudevin, 1977-2006

During the exhibition there will also be live music sessions by several respected refugee performers in the café.

**ABOUT NOVAS:**

*The novas Contemporary Urban Centre is part of novas arts a subsidiary of the Novas Group, where we aim to change lives through arts, enterprise and support.*

*The Group has developed a strong reputation for the delivery of quality housing and community-based services, and for new and innovative approaches to working with people who experience inequality, exclusion and discrimination.*

*More recently we are developing extensive work, learning, social enterprise and cultural services to support our core work and to match and stretch the diverse aspirations of the people we support.*

*The **Novas Contemporary Urban Centre** is a new idea for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. An Arts, Cultural and Social enterprise, the Novas Contemporary Urban Centre will reflect the themes of contemporary life in the urban environment, particularly from the point of view of marginalised and excluded communities. By celebrating, exploring and engaging with the vibrant yet latent talent of the dispossessed, Novas aims to break the cycle of poverty and exclusion.*

*Few social problems have had so visible a place on the urban landscape as homelessness and exclusion and **novas arts'** mantra is dedicated to exposing broad and diverse audiences to its themes. A goal for novas arts is to provide a creative forum for participants to express their feelings and use their experiences to create better understanding of the themes and issues involved. Another goal is to help generate compassion for people who truly need and want help to change their lives and engage with the world around them.*

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