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**USELESS MOUTHS: INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OF ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Arturo Casciaro, a Gibraltar born artist living in Hampshire, is exhibiting 100 books made by artists from around the world. The Exhibition will be held at Gibraltar House, 150 Strand, London, and runs from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2012. Arturo's choice of venue for the exhibition falls in line with the Government's policy of using the facilities at Gibraltar House for cultural events that will help spread awareness of Gibraltar's diverse culture. The Exhibition, a first for Gibraltar House, will be officially opened by the Chief Minister, the Hon Fabian Picardo MP, at a private viewing on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October.

Artists' books are works of art made using the book format as the medium. Though different artists interpret the medium in different ways, a common thread in all of them is intimacy: the artwork can be held, explored and experienced.

The artists are from England, Gibraltar, South Africa, Iran, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, Spain, Puerto Rico, USA, Brazil, Czech Republic and Scotland.

"I own 100 artists' books made by different artists," says Arturo Casciaro. "Each book has been acquired in the last 12 months through exchange with other artists. I have made a book and given it to one of the artists; they in turn made a book and gave it to me. No money has changed hands and no contracts have been entered into. As well as face to face book exchanges between friends and family, there are also exchanges with individuals I have never met.

The title of this exhibition is Useless Mouths.

'Useless', because art has no practical use: it just is what it is. Of course, there are occasionally important messages, things that just need to be said or just universal feelings and emotions that we all get at some time in our lives.

'Mouths', because each book contains within it the voice of the artist.

I chose this as the title of the exhibition because the exchange process has made me remember who I am and where I am from as a Gibraltarian. I come from a place whose

very existence and status is constantly questioned, with the backdrop of a history wrought with confusion, alienation and a struggle for identity and recognition.

The expression 'useless mouths' was freely bandied about when the British Government was looking to clear the decks in the colony of Gibraltar as part of the WW2 war effort. The useless mouths were packed off to "anywhere but here": Sent to London to stay in houses evacuated by blitzed English families, Madeira and Jamaica.

Of course the majority of these useless mouths were women, the elderly, infirm and children.

This exhibition is important to me because the generosity and sincerity shown by all the artists involved in these exchanges is in sharp contrast with the pragmatism of others. I think everyone should have a voice, no matter how unimportant they may be to others."

Commenting on the forthcoming exhibition, Peter Canessa, the Director of Gibraltar House said, "When Arturo Casciaro approached me about using Gibraltar House as the venue for his exhibition, I immediately embraced the idea. Using these premises in the heart of London for events such as this one allows us to introduce the cultural aspects of Gibraltar to a new audience. We hosted a successful guitar recital earlier in the year and I hope we will host more cultural events at Gibraltar House in the future."

'Useless Mouths' will be open daily from Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> to Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October, from 12.00noon to 5.00pm.