



*Empowerment through storytelling*

**LOOK AROUND!** Art, poetry and statistics resound with a single message: **STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.** Worldwide 1 billion women have been seriously harmed or killed by their partners. Every year two million girls under 15 are forced into prostitution. Many women are suffering in our midst, and their attackers are here too. Look around!



## The Persuasion of Art

When I first agreed to be the editor and curator of the collection of digital reproductions of United Nations anti-domestic violence posters from around the world, I had little idea of the value of the gift we received.

My quick look at the posters left me thinking they had some pretty simple imagery and the entire idea of a persuasive poster seemed a little antiquated. But after a closer look, I realized that I was thinking of them from a limited point of view. With humble budgets and in spite of styles of illustration (and languages) that were strange to me, they offer very strong communications and a wealth of content.

A first step in realizing the success of these works is considering the vastly more important role of the poster in most other countries. We often think of posters as art that hangs in our childhood rooms or framed on an interior wall, not as a persuasive medium. But in places where people spend more time in public places or riding mass transportation,



Lance Kozlowski

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## Learning from Art

The StoriesWork art exhibit, *Domestic Violence is a Global Concern*, portrays in graphic clarity the widespread horrors of abuse against women.

Why have artists around the world chosen to participate in a public health/human rights campaign to stop the abuse of women? What can we learn from this exhibit?

Perhaps a Japanese folk story has the answer.

### *The Boy Who Drew Cats* (an old Japanese story)

*A very poor couple had a young son who was frail and small and could do very little to help them. But he was clever and he loved to draw, especially cats. His parents decided he would do well as an acolyte in the local temple.*

*At first, the priest was happy because the boy learned very quickly. But when the boy began to draw cats on the temple screens, on the pillars, on the walls and in the books, the priest said he would have to go.*

*Not wanting to be a burden to his parents again, the boy ran away and came to a different village with a large temple. He decided to try his luck there. No one told him that the temple was haunted by a fierce goblin who had scared away the priests and the local people. When the boy entered the temple, he found it empty, dark and quiet. While he waited for the priests to come, he be-*

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"Persuasion"...continued from previous page

the poster is a common and effective way to inform the public dialog.

Picture a Philippine woman waiting for a bus to work in the morning. The night before, she was abused by her partner, the most recent in a series of battering. She looks up from her seat and is faced with a poster like the one pictured here.

In the fifteen minute wait, she ponders again and again the familiarity she feels with the agonized face of the woman pictured, and repeatedly reads the line that inspires her to change her circumstance, that she has the RIGHT to live free from the pain she feels whenever she touches her swollen jawline.

Yes, these posters are shockingly truthful, and their medium stands still, allowing serious messages to be digested and providing inspiration for change. How often can we say that about spots we see on television?

To share these strong messages, I created a series of panels that allow thirty of the colorful posters to be easily viewed in public spaces, and stay protected under lamination. Also, a translation sheet is provided for foreign language texts. StoriesWork has shown this display in a range of situations, and we have talked to viewers about their reactions. People are drawn in by their humanity and attractiveness, and then are often surprised by the depth of the messages and the honesty of their portrayal.

*StoriesWork makes the display available for other organizations for a small fee and shipping charge (see pg. 5).  
**Employ the power of the poster for your own anti-domestic-violence event!***



"Learning"...continued from previous page

*gan to draw many cats on the white screens that were all around. Finally he grew tired, crawled inside a cabinet and fell asleep.*

*Later, he was awakened by terrible shrieks and banging noises. Terrified, he stayed in the cabinet until it was quiet. Then he cautiously opened the cabinet door and was startled to see a huge dead goblin-rat torn to pieces on the floor. Who could have done that? No one else was in the temple. He looked at the cats he had drawn the night before. They all had blood dripping from their jaws. His cats had freed the priests and the townspeople from the goblin-rat, and the boy was honored as a great artist and savior of the town.*

**Why did the parents think the boy should work in a temple?**

- *He would not have to do any heavy work there.*
- *They wanted someone else to take care of him since he could not really help them.*

**Why did he draw on surfaces that he knew would not please the priest?**

- *He didn't even notice because he was so motivated to draw.*
- *No, that is only an excuse some artists use to get out of responsibility for their actions.*

**What do we learn from the incident in the large temple?**

- *Art interacts with issues in the wider community, sometimes in unexpected ways.*
- *Artists can contribute startling images that introduce new views of the world.*

**What lessons can we learn from the StoriesWork international poster exhibit?**

- *The abuse of women, the most widespread and outrageous attack on human rights, surrounds us.*
- *Art can remind us that we are responsible for ourselves and for one another.*

**BREAK THE SILENCE. DO SOMETHING NOW.**

## posters and poetry that go together

Note how posters and poetry fit together regardless of country of origin.  
Time and place may be irrelevant but abuse is not.

Written by a teenage girl in India

Too many women  
In too many countries  
Speak the same language  
Of silence



Spain

An excerpt from *Divorce* by Anna Wickham. Born in Australia, Anna Wickham published *Divorce* in her privately printed volume of poetry around 1911. Her husband's reaction was to place her in a mental institution.

A voice from the dark is calling me  
In the closed house I nurse a fire  
Out in the dark cold winds rush free  
Rock heights of my desire  
I smother in the house  
In the valley below  
Let me out to the night  
Let me go! Let me go!



Belgium

Excerpt from *Apples and Smiles* by Carol Lautier, an American woman sexually abused at age seven and continuing until she was fourteen...

When I was seven years old I became  
a mistress of silence and a fugitive  
from myself  
Afraid someone else might discover the  
things I could do in dark places.

When I was seven years old,  
I was betrayed and alone and I was  
never innocent again.

But I am healing to remember  
When I was seven years old  
I loved apples  
And I could make everyone smile.

Hong Kong



# The Worldwide Struggle

In 2002, Lenora Ucko was invited to speak at the annual conference of the United Nations Committee on the Family and the UN Commission on the Status of Women. At that time she learned of the UN poster collection which now forms the basis of the StoriesWork art exhibit, *Domestic Violence is a Global Concern*.

Here are edited excerpts from Lenora's UN presentation:

Over the past century in many parts of the world, women have made great strides in education, occupation, and political opportunities, but their position in the home has not appreciably changed. The expectation that men should dominate and women should be subservient is openly advocated in some countries and in others covertly accepted and followed. This worldwide subjugation of women is reflected in the high incidence of domestic violence across the globe.

Throughout their lives, women are subject to abuse and human rights violations. Pre-birth abortion, female infanticide, child marriage, female genital mutilation, incest, rape, forced prostitution, and domestic violence plague women from conception to death. When you add war, economic exploitation, educational inequality and social subjugation, hardly a woman in the world escapes some form of victimization. The list is formidable and the picture chilling.



The dangers of gender hierarchy have long been recognized - by ancient Greek playwrights, by the 14th century English poet, Geoffrey Chaucer, by the 18th century German historian, Von Hippel, among many others. In more recent times, psychologists Nick Stinnett and John De Frain helped American couples to establish egalitarian relationships. Spouses who could overcome their entrenched personal and cultural attitudes were amazed at the happiness and fulfillment they found. Israeli therapists Zvi Eisikovitz and Eli Buchbinder urged changing the culture of inequality in the home as the most important way to improve the status of women and to reduce domestic violence.

Aster Zaouda, Senior Gender Advisor at the UN, has written "gender inequalities are embedded in institutional principles and processes that need to be transformed, not patched over." The dysfunctional aspects of the traditional family need to be acknowledged and eliminated. We need to forge new and wholesome relationships, to develop a vocabulary that ennobles equality and degrades dominance and subservience, to create models of strong egalitarian marriages and to find ways of reaching families with these new ideas. Our children deserve models of good egalitarian marriages. We need new stories, new relationships, and new gender models. This is the challenge for the 21st century.

## StoriesWork Traveling Art Exhibit

World wide posters – graphics and text about women’s rights, domestic violence, combating domestic and sexual abuse

Six large panels (30” X 40”)—5 colorful posters on each panel

Texts in English and in other languages; translation page supplied

Self-standing frame or wall display

Local delivery, hanging and removal available through StoriesWork

Renter pays rental fee and round trip shipping costs

Fees: \$100 per week plus round trip shipping costs

Local delivery, hanging and removal \$35 each way

**For rental arrangements or for more information, contact StoriesWork 919-321-8969 [info@storieswork.org](mailto:info@storieswork.org)**



## Hasta la Vista, Lance

Graphic designer, professional photographer, website manager, sensitive writer, willing helper ... there’s a job description destined to go wanting! Unless you know Lance Kozlowski – the man who put the public face on StoriesWork for the past four years.

We write this tribute to Lance, who will soon be relocating to Mexico, with mixed emotions. We all wish him the best in this exciting new venture. And we are greatly saddened by his loss.

Lance’s contributions to StoriesWork are immeasurable. He designed the StoriesWork newsletter, *The Seeing “I”*; created the StoriesWork art exhibit, *Domestic Violence is a Global Concern*; designed and built the traveling display unit for the exhibit; accompanied the exhibit innumerable times to local venues to insure its safe handling and showing; designed invitations, announcements, programs, brochures, flyers, and contributed texts; spoke at StoriesWork presentations; photographed our events; maintained the Website; and provided constant support and encouragement to us all. Don’t even ask how we will get along without him!

*To Lance:*

Our heartfelt gratitude for the enormous role you’ve played in the success of StoriesWork. Your efforts and your spirit are a constant reminder of all that is best in professional expertise and in personal caring and concern for us and our organization.

May you experience only the best of everything in your adventurous future.

We love you and we will miss you.

Tonya Krout,  
StoriesWork volunteer  
database manager,  
holds the award she  
received at the Volunteer  
Center of Durham  
Awards Luncheon on  
April 25, 2006.



*Thank you for all your  
good work, Tonya!*

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Dated Material

**the Persuasive Power of Art  
in the Fight Against  
Domestic Violence**



**Somebody's Life  
Everybody's  
Business:  
Stop Violence  
Against Women**

**FIJI WOMEN'S CRISIS CENTRE**

