

HOW ARE YOU TODAY, 2018

MANUS RECORDING PROJECT COLLECTIVE

Since 2013, nearly two thousand men have been indefinitely detained on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea, by the Australian Government – after arriving in Australia seeking asylum. This artwork is a collaboration between some of these men – Farhad Bandesh, Behrouz Boochani, Samad Abdul, Shamindan Kanapathi, Kazem Kazemi and Abdul Aziz Muhamat on Manus – and Michael Green, André Dao and Jon Tjhia in Melbourne. It was commissioned for the Eavesdropping exhibition at the Ian Potter Museum of Art in 2018. Every day for the duration of the exhibition, one of the men on Manus made a sound recording – of anything they liked or nothing much at all – and sent it ‘onshore’ for swift upload to the gallery. There are 84 ten-minute recordings. When you press the button, you will hear one of those recordings, randomly selected. You can find the full 14 hour archive below and at: manusrecordingproject.com

ABDUL AZIZ MUHAMAT is a 26-year-old man from Darfur, Sudan. He is from the Zaghawa ethnicity, and with his family, he fled his village to a refugee camp. He arrived in Australia by boat in 2013 and was taken to Manus Island. He has become one of the primary public voices among the men there, including through the multi-award winning podcast, The Messenger.

FARHAD BANDESH is a 37-year-old Kurdish musician, painter and poet who has been detained on Manus Island for over five years. Before seeking asylum, he worked as a guitar maker, and has no formal art training. Whilst in detention, he has produced solo and collaborative works of music, art and writing. He loves nature and is a keen gardener; his sisters now look after his plants.

BEHROUZ BOOCHANI is a Kurdish-Iranian writer, journalist, scholar, cultural advocate and filmmaker. He was writer for the Kurdish language magazine Werya. He writes regularly for The Guardian and several other publications. Boochani is also co-director (with Arash Kamali Sarvestani) of the 2017 feature-length film Chauka, Please Tell Us the Time, and author of No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison. He has been held on Manus Island since 2013.

KAZEM KAZEMI is a 37-year-old Kurdish musician, heavy metal and rock songwriter and poet. Before seeking asylum in Australia, he lived in Khorramshahr, Iran, and worked as an electrician.

SHAMINDAN KANAPATHI is a Sri Lankan Tamil refugee. In Sri Lanka he was a marketing executive and a student.

SAMAD ABDUL has been detained in an Australian run offshore detention centre on Manus for the last five years. He loves cricket and his only dream was to be a professional cricketer but politicians have taken his dream and used him as a political prisoner. Although his five years will not come back, he now wants to be a social worker to help those who are in pain.

MICHAEL GREEN is a writer, radio-maker and producer. He is the host of The Messenger podcast. He has travelled to Manus Island twice.

ANDRÉ DAO is a writer of fiction and non-fiction, and the co-founder of Behind the Wire, a literary oral history project.

JON TJHIA is a radio-maker, musician and writer. He led the Wheeler Centre's collaboration with Behind the Wire to produce The Messenger. He's a co-founder of Paper Radio and the Australian Audio Guide.