



For Immediate Release

## **Alfstad& Contemporary Unveils *Shine the Light* as Inaugural Exhibition in 2018**

### **Gallery's Fourth Year Involved in Sarasota Art Glass Weekend**

**Opening Night Reception: Jan 10 | Wed, 5:30-8:00pm**

**Exhibition Dates: Jan 11–Feb 2 | Tues-Sat, 11-5pm**

**Special Event: 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Art Glass Weekend**

**Welcome Reception: Jan 26 | Friday 5:30-8:00pm**

SARASOTA, FL – Alfstad& Contemporary presents, *Shine the Light*, a three-tier, multi-media exhibition that focuses on the current and historical aspects of refugee displacement, persecution and the struggles of finding home. Opening on January 10, the show features a glass installation by Laura Donefer, photo essay exhibition by Charlotte Schmitz and a short film preview by director Dave Marshall and Deborah Haber. The show runs through February 2<sup>nd</sup>

*Shine the Light* is curated under the direction of Deborah Haber, Executive Artistic Director of DEEP Arts, a non-profit arts organization whose mission focuses on the promotion of new works.

“By bringing these three separate works under one roof, Deborah Haber has curated a thought provoking exhibition that presents viewers with a powerful meditation on difficult past and present events,” say Sam Alfstad. “Laura Donefer and Charlotte Schmitz’ work blend together to authoritative stories. One using ghost images of millions lost and the other with individual faces and words. Marshall and Haber’s film trailer of their feature documentary is also a powerful component to this exhibition.”

Laura Donefer’s masterwork *Todesmarche Revisited* is a 15-foot long installation of approximately 800 casts of bare, upturned, glass and cement feet. Feet cast from real people, including Holocaust survivors. The piece honors those who died in the death marches during the Holocaust. *Todesmarche* is German for “Death March,” a name for those Jewish prisoners who were forced by the Nazis to walk barefoot from their concentration camps to other camps, and to their deaths.

Donefer’s inspiration for this installation was her father’s research into the fates of their own family members. The records were surprisingly straightforward: “Deported to Auschwitz and gassed,” is how Donefer has said they typically read.

Laura delved into the research,” Haber says. “It’s quite shocking in how it affected her,

she was essentially getting her feelings out through this.”

Ms. Haber was watching a CNN documentary when she first heard of German photographer Charlotte Schmitz. Schmitz wanted to see the crisis with her own eyes. Her work in the exhibit, titled *Take Me to Germany*, was shot among the refugee populations in Turkey internment camps.

"It was something else to be there and to see people arrive to the island and kiss the ground and thank their God or friends that they made it," she says. "Because, of course, so many people didn't make it."

Schmitz used a Polaroid camera, chronicling the people she encountered, and asked them to write something on the photos she'd taken. Many wrote of their struggles, their feelings of loneliness and despair.

"Instant photography gives people the possibility to write on the actual paper," she says. "That's why I decided on it -- so everyone could tell freely what he or she thinks or feels."

A young man in Eidomeni wrote: "I see only Humans, not Humanity" on his pictures – surmising the whole crisis in just one sentence.

"*Take Me to Germany* is about telling a story and making its characters co-authors," says Schmitz. "I want people to see and to think more about every individual person."

Also featured in the exhibition is Emmy-award winning documentary film director Dave Marshall and DEEP Arts Artistic Director Deborah Haber's film trailer of the documentary feature *FINDING HOME*. Currently in-production, the film follows the development of the new musical *Moses Man: Finding Home* the true story of Ms. Haber's father, a Holocaust survivor, and his story's collision with those of contemporary refugees. The film features interviews and work of notable artists whose work relates to displacement including Ms. Donefer and Ms. Schmitz.

### **Viewing the Exhibition**

Laura Donefer's 15-foot long glass installation is placed in the center area of the floor, extending nearly from the front of gallery to the rear, with space for patrons to walk completely around. Schmitz' photographs -- now 40" x 60" and printed on canvas -- are hung on the walls surrounding the installation.

As viewers enter the gallery they will immediately be confronted with Laura's image honoring those who perished in the Holocaust, some 70 years ago, and Charlotte's images of those struggling to survive the horrors of war in Syria today. The two art works, in conjunction, make the hollowness the phrase "Never Again" more vivid and poignant than any words.

The Opening Night Reception is Wednesday, January 10 from 5:30-8:00pm The exhibition runs through February 2. There will also be a Special Welcome Reception for Art Glass Weekend attendees on Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-8:00pm.

For more information about artists Laura Donefer, Charlotte Schmitz, Dave Marshall and

Deborah Haber, please visit [www.alfstadand.com/?????](http://www.alfstadand.com/?????)

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### **Sponsors**

**The Art Alliance for Contemporary Glass** is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to further the development and appreciation of art made from glass. The Alliance informs collectors, critics and curators by encouraging and supporting museum exhibitions, university glass departments and specialized teaching programs, regional collector groups, visits to private collections, and public seminars.

**The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee's** mission is strengthen Jewish life and identity in our community, provide for Jewish people in need, and promote support for Israel. We are committed to Holocaust education, raising awareness, and support for our Survivor community. Through our sponsorship of events such as *Shine the Light*, we can share the lessons of the Holocaust with the community at large. For more information, call [941-371-4546](tel:941-371-4546) or visit [www.jfedsrq.org](http://www.jfedsrq.org).

### **Third Annual Contemporary Studio Glass Weekend**

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Sarasota Art Glass Weekend, a collaboration of Longboat Key Center for the Arts, a division of Ringling College, and Habatat Galleries of Michigan, is designed to entertain and excite seasoned collectors, as well as anyone who enjoys the medium of glass. Highlights of the weekend include the "Master in Glass" Auction and Strolling Dinner on Thursday, Jan 25, the opening of the new Kotler/Coville Glass pavilion at the Ringling Museum and a variety of tours of art collector's homes, glass artist talks and gallery visits in Sarasota and St. Petersburg. For information, schedules and registration: <http://www.habatat.com/event/9969-sarasota-glass-weekend-2018/>

### **Events Schedule:**

#### **Thursday, January 25**

3–5pm Opening of the Coville/Kotler Pavilion at the Ringling Museum.  
5:30–7pm Strolling dinner and preview of the art to be auctioned.  
7–9:30pm "Master in Glass" auction.

#### **Friday, January 26**

9:30–10am Tour of Richard and Barbara Basch Gallery at the Ringling College of Art and Design.  
10:30–11:30am Talk by internationally noted artist\* at the adjacent auditorium.  
11:30–12:15pm lunch at the Ringling College.  
12:15pm Tour and demo at the new Basch Visual Arts Center.  
2:00pm Grand Opening of Trends and Currents Exhibition curated by Habatat Galleries.  
5:30 to 8:00pm *Shine the Light* exhibition & reception at Alfstad & Contemporary gallery.

#### **Saturday, January 27**

9:30am -12:00pm Visits to collector homes.  
12:00 to 1:30pm Travel to St Pete lunch provided.  
1:30 to 2:30 Visit the Duncan McCloud Gallery.  
3:00 to 5:00 Visit Chihuly Museum, a collector Dali Museum.  
5:30 to 9:30 Grand opening and presentations at the Imagine Museum.

**Sunday, January 28**

10:00 to 1:00 Brunch at the Habatat Art Space to meet the artists.

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**About Alfstad& Productions:**

Founded in 2013 in Sarasota, Florida, Alfstad& Contemporary explores new ways to produce art, collaborate with artists and promote multidimensional art exhibitions. Its goal is to reimagine how to make and market art, and – in the process – create an art brand recognized worldwide. Located at 1419 5th Street in the Design District. Gallery hours are Tuesday – Saturday 11:00 – 5:00 pm.

Follow our exhibitions at [www.alfstadand.com](http://www.alfstadand.com).

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