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On The Cover

The cover of this issue of IJCA is "String Theater," drawn from the Russian Prison Series by Russian-born American artist Yana Payusova. Classically trained at St. Petersburg's Fine Art Lyceé, she also volunteered in St. Petersburg's prisons, working with incarcerated teenagers, victims of the chaos that followed the economic collapse of the Soviet Union. Many became street children or were trapped in highly dysfunctional families. The experience inspired the series and transformed her thinking about traditional punitive criminal-justice models, which often fail to analyze the most fundamental incentives for youth to resort to crime, such as hunger and shelter. Additional images from this compelling series can be viewed at <http://payusova.com/> Payusova later immigrated to the U.S., earning an MFA from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her paintings blend the styles and symbols of folk art, Russian icons, graphic poster art, illustration, and comics. Payusova exhibits both nationally and internationally. "String Theater" is reproduced with her permission.

From the Executive Editor

By Markus Zimmer



Seven Billion Human Beings

On 31 October 2011, the United Nations estimated that the earth's population reached seven billion souls. Of that number, one quarter or nearly two billion human beings live in the 60 states that have failed or are on the brink of failure according to the 2011 Failed States Index.¹ Ours is the world of the fragile state – a grim reality for an alarming percentage of the earth's population. These states are characterized largely by their negative aspects – poverty, insecurity, a disregard for human dignity and rights, and the inability or refusal to focus resources on improving the lives of those who suffer. As families struggle to survive, political regimes purporting to serve citizens divert public revenue to invest in armed forces and weapons systems deployed to sustain their influence and control.

The judicial power in such states often adjudicates a perverted justice, one that reflects less the rule of law and more the privilege of regime. Freedom of expression morphs into criminalization of dissent as those who refuse to indulge figment and chimera are rounded up, imprisoned and beaten. Common to the most vulnerable in human political enterprise is the partnering of poverty and marginalization to the end that justice is retracted from a right to an indulgence grounded in influence. The disenfranchised persist as victims, as refugees, as expendables in these failed states.

Better hidden but nonetheless persistent, the underprivileged also cling to lives of need and want in more stable, even highly developed, states. Hunger and inadequate shelter among children have reached epidemic proportions even in elite states contrived as world powers. There, sufficient capacity surely exists but the will thereto miscarries, leaving national legacies strewn with the bitter fruit of profligate indulgence by the few and declining fortunes of the many, the downward spiral of defensible political and economic frameworks. There, too, the promise of justice has slipped as access diminishes, increasingly restricted by creative criminal justice fee schedules, protracted and inhumane detention, and ill-conceived legislative initiatives contrived by narrow thinking anchored in cliché and fear about what motivates poverty and crime. Incompetent governments have provoked a global tsunami of protest across diverse political and economic systems, indicative of widespread failure by states to plan and to manage. These are the long nights of the global justice-building enterprise, long nights that call for persistence and commitment to the ideals of just societies and the effective rule of law for all. As we navigate the sometimes treacherous waters of those long nights, may we persist.

¹ See *Foreign Policy*, <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/failedstates>