

archive 2021

year end review



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Credits

Designer
Editor
Editor

Hammed Chenzaie
Gazelle Samizay
Leila Nadir

Art Credits

LISTED IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

All images are the work of the listed individuals who consented to have these images used in a digital zine AAAWA compiled as part of its "Fragmented Futures" Exhibit in 2019.

Untitled55
The Garden of Happiness
MR 6534
The Explosion Hour
Untitled
Photograph
3
Untitled57

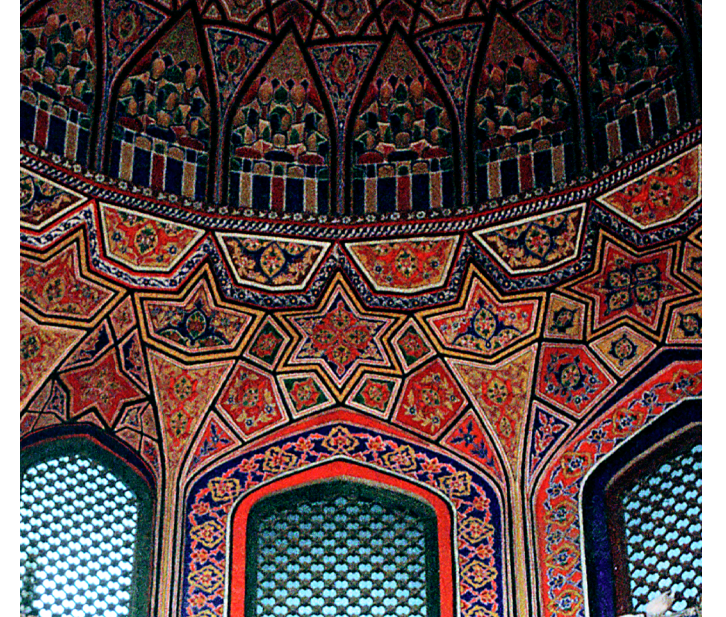
Rafi Samizay
Hangama Amiri
Reza Hazare
Sara Rezaie
Zuhal Feraidon
Labkhand Olfatmanesh and Gazelle Samizay
Rafi Samizay
Rafi Samizay

Welcome.

Welcome to AAAWA's year end recap. We would like to start this program by acknowledging the ongoing plight of Afghans in Afghanistan and in the diaspora, and the tragedy of the events that unfolded in the early parts of last autumn, the full ramifications of which continue to be felt. We hope that through ongoing work we can continue to aid where possible and to use our collective voices as a vehicle for driving attention to these matters.

Below you will find an outline of significant developments, initiatives, and projects that our organization and members are involved in, as well as informational pieces with respect to other groups, and organizations that work in the diaspora. We hope you find this information useful, and we look forward to sharing our successes with you in 2022.

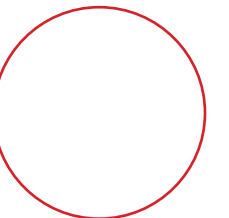
—Afghan American Artists & Writers Association



UNTITLED 55 BY RAFI SAMIZAY

Contributors.

- Helena Zeweri
- Sahar Muradi
- Gazelle Samizay
- Seelai Karzai
- Leila Nadir
- Wazhmah Osman





THE GARDEN OF HAPPINESS BY HANGAMA AMIRI

The Afghan Literary Futures Project

BY SEELAI KARZAI

A series of free monthly creative writing workshops in Spring/Summer 2021

Rooted in an anti-racist decolonial politics, the Afghan Literary Futures Project was designed to cultivate a unique literary space for Afghan Americans to study, create, and workshop Afghan diasporic writing in community over the course of five sessions from March-July 2021. Open to emerging writers from across the Afghan diaspora, both inside and outside of the United States, the workshops were taught by teaching artists from the Afghan diaspora.

The Project comes off the heels of AAAWA's "Fragmented Futures: Afghanistan 100 Years Later" multimedia exhibit, which used Afghanistan's centennial as a guiding theme to explore the ongoing consequences of foreign intervention and ran from 2019-2020 at the ReflectSpace Gallery in Glendale, CA. Over the course of five months, we polled participants on the types of support they would like for their writing, such as publishing, zine-making, and more. Each participant had the opportunity to grow in a group of fourteen other emerging writers in a long-term creative community and meet with potential editors and mentors.

While the workshops were conducted primarily in English, multilingual expression was encouraged. Prompts were translated and workshop participants were encouraged to write in whichever language they chose and/or were most comfortable expressing themselves in.

Fundraising & NGO Status

BY HAMMED CHENZAIE

Together, we have now met and exceeded our fundraising goal of 2,400 USD to file for non-profit status! Thank you all so much for believing in our mission of amplifying creative and scholarly voices in the Afghan diaspora!

Your contribution will help AAAWA apply to become a 501(c)(3) non-profit. By achieving non-profit status, we will be able to sustain our public-facing programming, create collaborative artistic and social justice initiatives, and develop the financial infrastructure to continue advocating with and for the Afghan diaspora. We are looking forward to the next steps and will keep you updated!



We are looking forward to the next steps and will keep you updated!

Non-profit status will allow us to generate new content and programming, as well as giving us the opportunity to support other initiatives in the diaspora.



MIR 6534 BY REZA HAZARE

UVA Global Mentors Program

BY HELENA ZEWERI

Mentorship program in association with the University of Virginia.

This past spring, AAWA members Gazelle Samizay and Seelai Karzai participated as Global Mentors as part of the University of Virginia's Global Mentors Program. The program is designed to give students a window into global conversations, from migration to social justice to human rights through the lens of artists, activists, and creators from around the world. Gazelle and Seelai worked with students in fellow AAWA member Helena Zeweri's course, "Migrant Women's Political Activism: Global Perspectives." They reflected on their own creative and activist work as first-generation immigrants and mentored students on their own projects about migration and activism.

"This was a really interesting collaboration because Helena's research on migrant women's activism was carefully funneled into a potent syllabus for undergraduate students from varied backgrounds. This was then augmented by my and Seelai's experience as an artist and writer and educators. It was great to challenge students to move beyond their academic research into creative expression. Based on the feedback, students really enjoyed the multidisciplinary approach and found the artistic presentations helpful in understanding migrant women's activism in new ways."

—Gazelle Samizay

THE EXPLOSION HOUR BY SARA REZAIIE



UNTITLED BY ZUHAL PERAIDON

Timeline

BY HAMMED CHENZAIE



Our members were involved in the following public programs this past year.

- FEB 18-20** **Desert Nights, Rising Stars**
Seelai Karzai
- FEB 27** **Forms of Liberation: The Ghazal and Landay in Perspective**
Sahar Muradi
- MAR 08** **Paper Lithography Online Workshop**
Laimah Osman
- MAR 18-19** **Nowroz Events**
Various Members
- APR 10** **Encounters**
Gazelle Samizay
- JUN 08** **The Multiple Lives of the "Afghan Girl"**
Gazelle Samizay & Helena Zeweri
- DEC 28** **Shabe Yalda**
Zohra Saed



BY LABKHAND OLFIATMANESH & GAZELLE SAMIZAY
PHOTOGRAPH

Bi-Lingering

BY GAZELLE SAMIZAY

Exploring the power of language and the duality of existing between cultures.

Bi-Lingering explores the power of language and the duality of existing between cultures. Artists Labkhand Olfatmanesh and Gazelle Samizay investigate the way memories and trauma express themselves differently in one's native language versus a second language.

The project invites bilingual people to share their stories of expressing themselves in more than one language by writing a letter to "Dear Bi-Lingering." From the submitted letters, Labkhand and Gazelle create visual art that captures and celebrates the experience of being a Bi-Linger. As a thank you, participants are mailed a limited-edition art card created by the artists with love.

Bi-Lingering is an extension of Labkhand and Gazelle's ongoing collaborative project Woven, which uses their experiences as women of Iranian and Afghan heritage to look at the way cultural expectations and the effects of war transcend borders. This is part of a three-month residency program in collaboration with Side Streets Projects.

■ To participate visit www.bilingering.com



BY RAFT SAMIZAY

The Afghanistan Crisis

Updates to our ongoing GoFundMe Campaign, as well as a directory of Afgan American and Afghan Canadian organizations.

**GoFundMe
Campaign**

**Crisis
Resources**



GoFundMe Campaign

BY GAZELLE SAMIZAY, SAHAR MURADI & SEELAI KARZAI

AAAWA'S GoFundMe campaign "Emergency Funds for Afghan Artists" raised over 40,000 USD

In August, in response to the crisis in Afghanistan, AAWA launched a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds for vulnerable Afghan artists and cultural workers. These included artists that the collective or individual AAWA members have worked with in the past and who found themselves, their families, and their livelihoods at grave risk under Taliban control. We had initially set a goal of 30,000 USD to help nine families leave the country and find safety. The money raised went toward securing necessary documents (such as passports, national IDs, visas, etc.), cost of travel, cost of food, and other daily expenses associated with emergency relocation. Being responsive to the situation on the ground, we then expanded our goal to include other pathways, including applying for artist visas and Humanitarian Parole applications, unemployment assistance, medical emergencies, and relocation to a third country while awaiting immigration applications.

By the close of our campaign in January 2022, we raised a total of 41,620 USD through our GoFundMe campaign.

Initially, when the crisis hit, we were in daily, sometimes hourly, contact with our affected artists and cultural/civil society workers to coordinate efforts and to maintain transparency on fundraising and vigilant support.

In attempting to aid people, we submitted the names of all our vulnerable artists, writers, and cultural workers to over ten

evacuation flight lists. This was a lengthy process that often included sending documentation for each family member, providing substantial biographical data in new formats and forms each time. We also coordinated bus pickups for the artists and their families in the middle of the night, liaising between the families we were assisting and the entities or affiliates organizing the evacuations. Unfortunately, these buses were unable to enter the airport due to the chaos there. We corresponded with additional at-risk artists and their families, whom we added to the abovementioned evacuation lists.

Senator Cory Booker's office (NJ) assisted with our evacuation and resettlement efforts. Through his office, we made contact with the law firm, Greenberg Traurig, which helped us file Humanitarian Parole applications on behalf of nine vulnerable families. Humanitarian Parole offers admission for people otherwise ineligible to stay in the United States for a temporary period of time due to an emergency. The application process was very lengthy, including identifying U.S.-based financial sponsors for each applicant, gathering financial information and documents from each sponsor, getting translations of Dari/Pashto documents for applicants, and securing signatures from each person over the age of twelve. Also, applications must be submitted per individual and cost 575 USD per application. We were fortunate to negotiate with the firm to pay for half the fees, and we covered the other half, allowing us to submit appli-

cations for a total of nine families consisting of 44 individuals.

These families included: 3 filmmakers/theater artists, 2 educators, a journalist, a visual artist, and a civil society worker. Two of the families are headed by widows and are female-only. Four of the families are Shiite. If the application is accepted, the families must travel to a third country for their case to be processed—a challenge for most families. As of this writing, USCIS has received over 30,000 Humanitarian Parole applications. Since our filing, they have also altered the qualifications to include prohibitive elements, such as third-party evidence of danger to the applicant. Advocacy is currently underway to pressure Congress and President Biden to expedite these cases and to do away with the sudden change of rules.

In addition to this legal support, we have also provided direct assistance to several artists:

M, Visual Artist

M is a visual artist AAWA has worked with in the past. We assisted him and his wife to evacuate to Pakistan, while we helped them explore various artist/scholar visa opportunities. Ultimately, they were able to secure a UK visa and fellowship as a visiting artist scholar at a prestigious university in London. AAWA paid for their temporary housing and basic food costs in Pakistan, their Covid testing kits for travel to UK, their UK flight tickets, initial needs in the UK until their fellowship funds arrived,

including food, medicine, as well as a laptop and arts supplies.

Z, Filmmaker/Theater Artist

Z is an artist that AAWA member Sahar Muradi has worked with on social theater projects in eastern Afghanistan. He is also an award-winning filmmaker, whose work is popular on both sides of the border. AAWA helped him, his wife, and three young children evacuate to Pakistan and secure housing in Peshawar, while he awaits his Humanitarian Parole application, as well as a P-2 visa application, which assisted with. Along the treacherous land journey, Z's infant son became badly ill and had to be hospitalized for a few days. Additionally, they have been struggling financially as it's very difficult to find work as an Afghan refugee.

Z says:

"I don't know anyone here really and I'm unknown here. There's a tea stand outside a hotel where I started working. I come early in the morning and work until 10:00 PM. I earn 300 Pakistani Kaldars (1.75 USD), and 60 Kaldars (0.35USD) goes to transportation, so I bring home 240 Kaldars (1.40 USD)."

While he earns less than 2 USD a day, Z estimated his monthly living costs to be about 350 USD, so AAWA has provided him with funds for the coming year.

N, Journalist & Filmmaker & Theater Artist

N is also part of the same theater group as Z above and also worked as a state journalist for Afghan Radio & TV. Because of his work as a reporter who covered NATO operations, he spent many weeks in late 2021 in hiding. We assisted N and his family of five (including a pregnant wife) to secure new national IDs, to apply for new Afghan passports, as well as to make several attempts at crossing the border to Pakistan. It took five months before they were finally able to evacuate to Pakistan. We were able to support them to secure housing in Peshawar, as well as

basic household items, like mattresses, pillows, blankets, and a rug. The family also welcomed a new baby boy after a few health scares and a hospitalization. N received confirmation of his P-2 visa application with the US State Department and received a referral record number. AAWA provided him and his family additional funds to cover their living costs in Pakistan while they await their P-2 and Humanitarian Parole cases.

S, Theater Artist, Voice Actor & Writer

S is a well-known writer for theater and radio, as well as a recognizable voice actor in a popular national radio drama. He is also the father of seven children and the sole breadwinner in his home. He has been without stable work for months. He was assisting a friend with dubbing English-language films into Dari and Pashto—clandestinely in a makeshift home studio in eastern Afghanistan—until Taliban searched the premises for an unrelated local incident. AAWA has provided him with funds to cover basic expenses and to secure passports for his family.

R, Civil Society Worker

R worked for the civil society organization that hosted an all-women's theater project that AAWA member Sahar Muradi worked with in 2012. He has been out of work since August and is also the sole breadwinner for a family of nine children and his ailing mother. AAWA has provided the family with funds for unemployment aid, basic subsistence, to secure passports, and to cover the fees for English courses for his three elder daughters, who remain out of school since the Taliban takeover and their suspension of school for girls grades 6 and over. Recently, we also assisted his eldest son, who is studying journalism in college, to apply for a journalism fellowship in Hong Kong.

While we officially closed the fundraiser at the start of 2022, we will keep the campaign page up and will continue to share updates on the families. We thank each and every one of our supporters for their generosity and for their commitment to supporting Afghan artists and cultural workers.

Highlights

- We helped evacuate three vulnerable artists and their families from Afghanistan
- We filed Humanitarian Parole applications on behalf of nine families or 44 individuals
- We worked with policy organizations that are campaigning for the safe and immediate evacuation of Afghan nationals and the streamlining and expediting of US SIV, P1, & P2 visa applications
- We were in contact with several institutions in the US and abroad about the possibility of inviting these artists as artists-in-residence.
- We assisted organizations in preparing P-2 US visa application on behalf of three families
- We submitted the names of all of our vulnerable artists, writers, and cultural workers to over 10 evacuation flight lists

Crisis Resources

A directory of American and Canadian based Afghan Organizations.

Non-Governmental Organizations Canada











Below is a list of Afghan advocacy groups based in Canada that are either founded by Afghans, or work in concert with the Afghan Canadian community to advance Afghan causes.


































Organization name	Website & email	Telephone	Social media
Afghan Association of Ontario	www.aaocanada.ca info@aaocanada.ca	+1(416) 744-9289	
Afghan Canadian Islamic Community	www.afghancanada.com info@afghancanada.com	+1(416) 757-2553	
Afghan Canadian Response	Unavailable afghancanadianresponse@gmail.com	Unavailable	
Afghan Society of Halifax	www.afghansocietyofhalifax.ca info@afghansocietyofhalifax.ca	+1(902) 406-0404	
Afghan Women's Centre Montreal	www.awcm.ca info@awcm.ca	+1(514) 321-2194	
Afghan Women's Organization Refugee & Immigration	www.afghanwomen.org receptionhd@afghanwomen.org	+1(416) 588-3585	
Afghan Youth Engagement & Development Initiative	www.ayedi.ca team@ayedi.ca	Unavailable	
Amnesty International Canada	www.amnesty.ca Unavailable	+1(416) 363-9933	
Calgary Hazara Cultural Association	Unavailable Unavailable	Unavailable	
Canadian Council of Muslim Women	www.ccmw.com info@ccmw.com	+1(416) 999-6059	
Canadian Hazara Humanitarian Services	www.canadianhazara.org contact@canadianhazara.org	+1(647) 281 4748	

Organization name	Website & email	Telephone	Social media
Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan	www.cw4wafghan.ca community@cw4wafghan.ca	+1(403) 244-5625	
Canadian Women's Foundation	www.canadianwomen.org info@canadianwomen.org	+1(866) 293-4483	
Children Without Borders	www.childrenwithoutborders.ca info@childrenwithoutborders.ca	+1(905) 903-8407	
International Development and Relief Foundation	www.idrf.ca office@idrf.ca	+1(866) 497-4373	
Islamic Relief Canada	www.islamicreliefcanada.org info@islamicrelief.ca	+1(905) 320-4673	
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants	www.ocasi.org generalmail@ocasi.org	+1(416) 322-4950	
Oxfam Canada	www.oxfam.ca info@oxfam.ca	+1(800) 466-9326	
The Afghan Collective	www.afghancollective.org info@afghancollective.org	Unavailable	
Ummah Nabawiah Afghan Children's Charity	www.unacc.ca info@unacc.ca	+1(647) 929-0757	
War Child	www.warchild.ca info@warchild.ca	+1(866) 927-2445	

Non-Governmental Organizations United States of America

Below is a list of Afghan advocacy groups based in the U.S. that are either founded by Afghans, or work in concert with the Afghan American community to advance Afghan causes.

Organization name	Website & email	Telephone	Social media
Afghan American Artists & Writers Association	www.aaawa.net info@aaawa.net	Unavailable	  
Afghan Diaspora for Equality & Progress	www.aidepress.org Unavailable	Unavailable	  
AFG Diaspora Hub	www.afgdiasporahub.com afgdiasporahub@gmail.com	Unavailable	
Afghan American Community Organization	www.aa-co.org info@aa-co.org	Unavailable	  
Afghan American Foundation	www.afghanamericans.org info@afghanamericans.org	Unavailable	  
Afghan Coalition	www.afghancoalition.org afghanwellness@afghancoalition.org	+1(510) 745-1680	
Afghan Refugee	www.afghanrefugee.net info@afghanrefugee.net	Unavailable	
Afghan SIV Legal Help	Unavailable Unavailable	Unavailable	
Afghan-American Coalition	www.afghanamericancoalition.com Unavailable	Unavailable	 
Afghans for A Better Tomorrow	www.weareafghans.org afghansforabettertommorrow@gmail.com	Unavailable	  
Afghans In Solidarity	Unavailable Unavailable	Unavailable	 
American Immigration Lawyer's Association	www.aiala.org membership@aiala.org	+1(202) 507-7600	  
Artist Protection Fund	www.iae.org apf@iae.org	Unavailable	  
Artistic Freedom Initiative	www.artisticfreedominitiative.org ashley@artisticfreedominitiative.org	+1(929) 294-9226	  
Asylum Clinic Kansas City	www.asylumclinnkc.org info@asylumclinnkc.org	+1(816) 695-8645	  
Equality Labs	www.equalitylabs.org Unavailable	Unavailable	  
Free Women Writers	www.freewomenwriters.org Unavailable	Unavailable	  
Human Rights First	www.humanrightsfirst.org info@humanrightsfirst.org	Unavailable	 

Organization name	Website & email	Telephone	Social media
Internation Refugee Assistance Project	www.refugeerights.org inquiries@refugeerights.org	Unavailable	  
International Rescue Committee Community Organization	www.rescue.org Unavailable	+1(212) 551-3000	  
Miles4Migrants	www.miles4migrants.org Unavailable	Unavailable	  
National Immigration Legal Services Directory	www.immigrationadvocates.org support@immigrationadvocates.org	Unavailable	 
No One Left Behind	www.nooneleft.org info@nooneleft.org	Unavailable	 
Rights in Exile Programme	www.refugeelegalaidinformation.org Unavailable	Unavailable	
Rukhshana Media	www.rukhshana.com Unavailable	Unavailable	 
Salaam Foundation	www.salaamfoundation.org hello@salaamfoundation.org	Unavailable	 
Scholars at Risk	www.scholarsatrisk.org Unavailable	+1(212) 998-2179	 
South West Asian/North African-LA	Unavailable Unavailable	Unavailable	 
Threatened Scholars Integration Initiative	www.bard.edu osun-tsi@ceu.edu	Unavailable	
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants	www.refugees.org uscric@uscridc.org	+1(703) 310-1130	  
USAHello	www.usahello.org hello@usahello.org	+1(503) 468-5474	  
War Child	www.warchildusa.org info@warchildusa.org	+1(646) 661-4372	  
Wise Afghanistan	www.wiseafghanistan.org Unavailable	Unavailable	 
Women for Afghan Women	www.womenforafghanwomen.org office@womenforafghanwomen.org	Unavailable	  

Thank you

Afghan
American
Artists &
Writers
Association

