

Introduction

Welcome to the first seasonal newsletter of the Afghan American Artists & Writers Association (AAAWA). We are excited to share with you our recent events and upcoming public programming, and to highlight the exciting new work of our members!

Upcoming Events

REIMAGINING QUEER FUTURES

AFGHANS AND ART IN THE DIASPORA

▶ FRI. 10/30: 11 AM PT / 2 PM ET ◀

FEATURING ACTIVISTS, WRITERS & ARTISTS:

Jorj Chisam-Majid
Ahmad Qais Munhazim
Bobuq Sayed
Wazina Zondon

Moderators:
Seelai Karzai & Wazmah Osman

REGISTER: [BIT.LY/QUEERFUTURES](https://bit.ly/queerfutures)



**Afghan American Artists
& Writers Association**

Date: October 30, 2020

**Reimagining Queer Futures:
Afghans and Art in the
Diaspora**

We are proud to present this online interdisciplinary panel discussion on how creativity and the arts are being mobilized by the LGBTQ Afghan diaspora as a form of resistance and community-building.



Date: [October 28, 2020](#)

Afghan Americans in the Arts: A Panel Discussion

The Samovar Network (TSN) will be in conversation with AAAWA about the role of art in the Afghan diaspora on Wednesday, **October 28, 2020** at **5:00 P.M. PDT/8:00 P.M. EDT**.

Tune in as we engage in conversations about what it means to be an "Afghan American" artist with TSN's Almas Farooqi, and Weiss Hamid, as well as AAAWA's Sahar Muradi and Gazelle Samizay. We will also talk about navigating being a working artist in both the western art world and the Afghan community, and how our identities have informed our practices. You can tune live into this event in via Facebook Live.

[Connect](#)



Date: [October 29, 2020](#)

Sketch Memory: Impressions, Inspirations and Aspirations

Labkhand Olfatmanesh and AAAWA member Gazelle Samizay will be leading a free virtual collage workshop inspired by their collaborative artistic process, created for the exhibit programming of After Hope: Videos of Resistance, which will show at the Asian Art Museum.

This is a two day workshop imagined as a call and response between participants through writing and images, and stories and impressions. The program will be a chance to reflect on impactful moments, shared through postcard length stories. Join the second part on **October 29, 2020 9:00 A.M. PDT/12:00 P.M. EDT**.

[Connect](#)

Black Lives Matter

Mission Statement As members of the Afghan American Artists' and Writers' Association, we have been wrestling with a number of questions since the extraordinary uprising in response to the recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, David McAtee, and the countless other victims of systemic racism in the U.S. How can the Afghan diaspora, particularly in the United States, actively support the Black Lives Matter movement in its mission for freedom and justice? How can we take responsibility for our complicity in the anti-Blackness and white supremacy

that manifest within our Afghan American communities and families? Additionally, as relatively new immigrants from a Muslim-majority country in the age of the War on Terror, what are the connections between white supremacy's oppression of our own communities and Black communities? We, the Afghan American Artists and Writers Association, affirm that Black lives matter. **Please find the link to [our full statement](#)**. We see this statement as not only a declaration of solidarity; it is also a commitment to sustained allyship with Black communities and an invitation to other members of the Afghan diaspora to commit to doing the same.

Actions

We vow to adhere to the above statement through a range of projects we are organizing. We also ask our fellow Afghan Americans to take specific actions now.



Long-Term

Undertake a rigorous examination of the intersections between Black communities and Afghan American communities in the U.S. This includes educating our communities about the history of African Americans in the U.S, and drawing connections between the domestic police apparatus and U.S. militarization abroad (including of Afghanistan).



Immediate

Sign petitions such as the [Justice for Breonna Taylor Petition](#), and the [Reclaim the Block](#) that call for defunding and abolishing the police, and redistributing money to services.

[Write emails](#) and make calls to our local council members, representatives, and senators at the state and federal level that directly address the above.



Donate

- [National Bail Fund Network](#)
- [LGBTQ Freedom Fund](#)
- [Local bail funds throughout the U.S.](#)
- [Black Immigrant Collective](#)
- [Black Trans Femmes in the Arts](#)
- [Black Visions Collective](#)
- [For the Gworls](#)
- [Trans Women of Color Collective](#)

Event Recap: Migrants Resist Detention

BEYOND REFUGE: MIGRANTS RESIST DETENTION

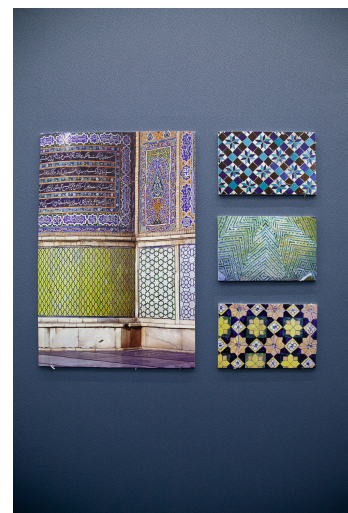


Event Review AAWA and the [Afghan Diaspora for Equality and Progress](#) presented “*Beyond Refuge: Migrants Resist Detention*”, a virtual panel discussion about refugee experiences featuring activists, lawyers, and human rights advocates, on July 24, 2020. The panel featured refugee rights activists Parwana Amiri, Nasim Lomani, and Maryam Janikhushk, who have personal experience navigating the injustices of the Greek asylum system, and legal advocates Ann Garcia and Eloy Gardea.

This panel discussion focused on how migrants resist the violence of the states in which they are seeking protection through innovative political strategies of resistance. The discussion sought to move beyond the narrative that migrants are simply passive victims of humanitarian aid.

Please visit this [list of readings and actions](#) for further information.

Fragmented Futures: Afghanistan 100 Years Later

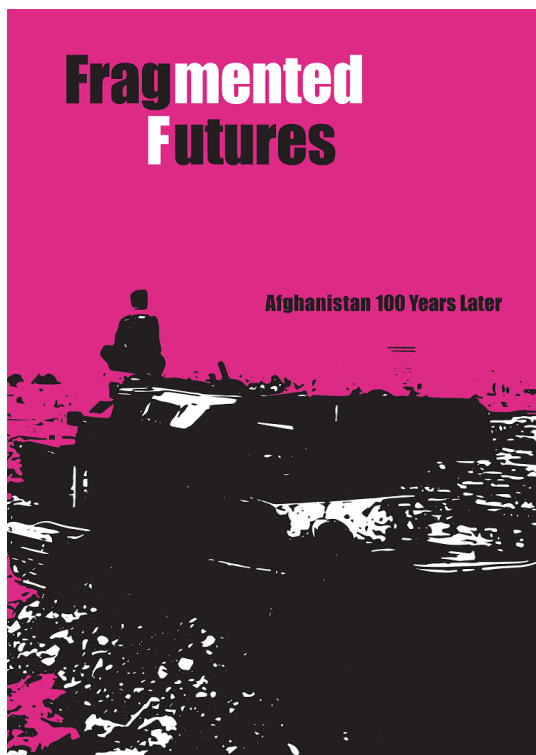


Event Review On November 16, 2019, Gazelle Samizay and Helena Zeweri launched AAWA’s first large-scale exhibit called [Fragmented Futures: Afghanistan 100 Years Later](#) at the Glendale Central Library’s Reflect Space

Gallery in Glendale, CA. Featuring performances by [Wazina Zondon](#) and [Yusuf Misdag](#), the opening night of *Fragmented Futures* brought a diverse array of attendees from the Los Angeles area and beyond. The exhibit, which ran until January 14, 2020, was designed to shift the conversation on Afghanistan and its diaspora to people's everyday lived experience of extraordinary historical events. The exhibit showed how Afghans are so much more than one dimensional characters in spectacular narratives of empire and war that have been perpetuated for much too long. Instead, the exhibit showed how Afghans live in their full humanity— experiencing joy, trauma, family, displacement, belonging, individuality, and community. Several artists and writers were invited to contribute to a [zine](#) created especially for the exhibit, bringing together art, short stories, essays, poetry, and scholarship. The zine serves as a unique creative artifact illustrating the vibrant public life and community building that takes place in the Afghan diaspora.

The exhibit concluded on January 14, 2020 with a screening of Fazila Amiri's [Unknown Artist](#) and Mariam Ghani's [What We Left Unfinished](#) and a panel discussion with filmmaker [Ariel Nasr](#) and architect and photographer, Rafi Samizay.

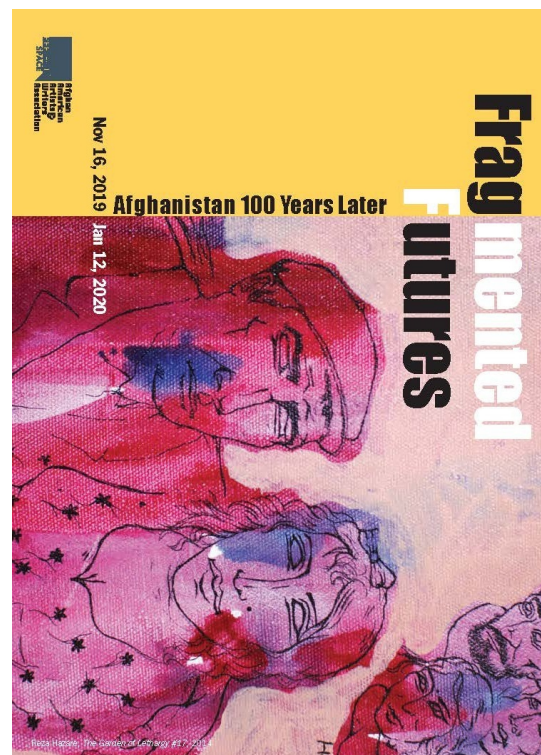
You can purchase the associated zine and exhibit catalog via the links below.



Fragmented Futures: The Zine

15.00 USD

Purchase



Fragmented Futures: Exhibition Catalog

7.00 USD

Purchase

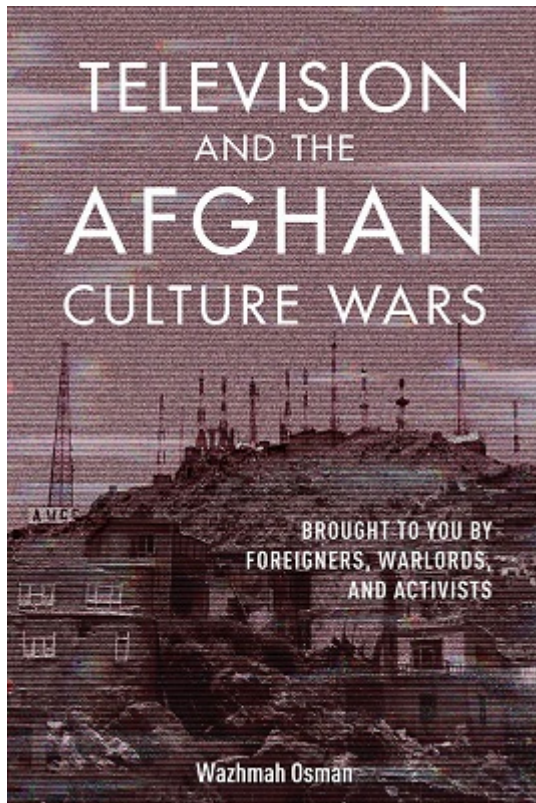
Meditation on Migrations and Borders

Event Review On February 9, 2020, AAAWA collaborated with the Soul Force Project, located in Los Angeles, CA, in an event themed around fluid cultural borders to promote peace and historical precedents for non-violence. This event took place in the beautiful sanctuary of Church of the Epiphany in a historic 107 year-old setting, and featured the following:

- Live santoor and improvisation by Iranian American musician and composer Sahba Sizardkhani inspired by both 1960s free jazz and Persian traditional music channeling fire-energy and longing for connectivity.
- A poetic presentation by independent scholar Safoora Arbab of Pashtun poet Ghani Khan's writing exploring how nonviolence was embodied by the Khudai Khidmatgar movement led by his father, Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the northwest frontier of colonial British India.
- Contemporary fiction by Malahat Zhubin and the work of Afghani poet Qahar Asi translated from Dari by Farhad Azad in partnership with AAAWA.

Presented in partnership with community partner Lincoln Heights Youth Arts Center and AAAWA. It was guest produced and programmed by Maryam Hosseinzadeh for Soul Force Project.

Member News: Television and the Afghan Culture Wars



Release Date: [December 20, 2020](#)

A new book by Wazmah Osman

Member News We are excited to announce the release of AAAWA member [Wazmah Osman](#)'s new book *Television and the Afghan Culture Wars*.

The book will be available for purchase on December 20, 2020, through the [University of Illinois Press](#).

"Portrayed in Western discourse as tribal and traditional, Afghans have in fact intensely debated women's rights, democracy, modernity, and Islam as part of their nation building in the post-9/11 era. Wazmah Osman's *Television and the Afghan Culture Wars*

places television at the heart of these public and politically charged clashes while revealing how the medium also provides war-weary Afghans with a semblance of open discussion and healing. After four decades of gender and sectarian violence, she argues, the internationally funded media sector has the potential to bring about justice, national integration, and peace."

— University of Illinois Press

Poetry Foundation Seed Grant

Member News Recently, AAAWA member [Seelai Karzai](#) was the winner of a Poetry Foundation Seed Grant on behalf of AAAWA. The grant provides poets and writers the opportunity to develop workshops around writer and poet development for the purposes of social change. Congratulations to Seelai! Stay tuned for the upcoming workshops!

Afghan American Artists and Writers Association

CA, United States



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