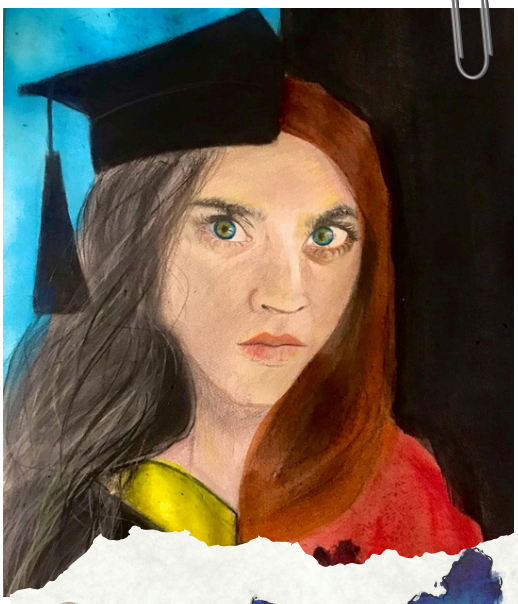








...A LONGING FOR EDUCATION THAT FUELS THEIR HOPE FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE



Emerging Voices:

YOUNG AFGHAN ARTISTS FOR PEACE

Introduced by Rukhsar

These artists are a group of gifted young women from Afghanistan, each filled with creativity and ambition. Despite facing significant obstacles that prevent them from pursuing formal education, they actively work towards building a better future for themselves and their communities. Engaged in peacebuilding initiatives, these artists dedicate their efforts to support others while seeking opportunities for self-education. Their determination and resilience shines through as they use art as a powerful medium to express their hopes and dreams.

The artwork created by Shabnam, Zainab, Sana, and Mursal embodies their unique experiences and shared aspirations. Each piece reflects their strength and creativity, portraying vivid imagery that speaks to their struggles and desire for peace and education. Through their art, they convey a common dream: a longing for education that fuels their hope for a brighter future. Each exhibit serves as a powerful reminder that education is not just a personal pursuit, but a vital pathway to empowerment and change. Their creations depict not only their individual journeys, but also the collective voice of countless Afghan girls yearning for the opportunity to learn. In every brushstroke, they express their determination to overcome barriers and their belief that, with education, they can transform their lives and communities. Their art inspires others to recognize the importance of education and the transformative power of creativity in overcoming adversity, making each piece a beacon of hope and resilience.

Mursal

01

Look closer.
This isn't calm. It's deliberate strength.
Each hand knows exactly what it's holding—history, weight, and violence.
And still, they choose to hold.
Not for power, but for each other.
Not to win, but to heal.
To remember that before the borders, before the flags, before the wounds—we were human.
We still are.

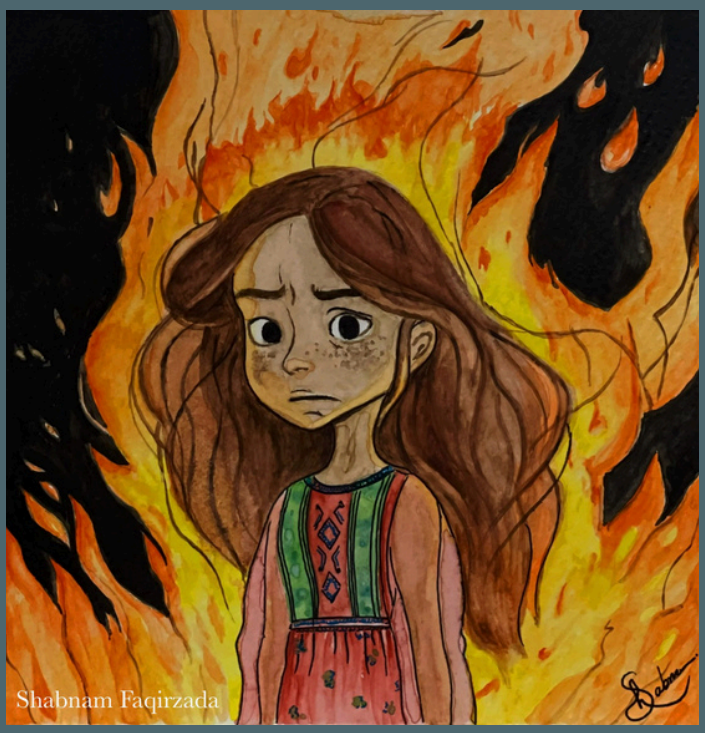
"When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace." — Jimi Hendrix



Shabnam

02

She stands in flames—not to burn, but to be remembered.
This artwork is inspired by girls like Abida, who was taken from this world too soon. It's for every Afghan girl whose life was set on fire by injustice. Her eyes are filled with questions no one dared to answer—but her presence in the flames is a symbol of resistance. She is not gone. She is the fire.



Shabnam

03

A girl with nothing but a dream on her shoulders.

This child stands in front of a mirror, not to see who she is—but who she can be. Despite the torn clothes and the heavy bag of survival, her eyes see hope. Her reflection wears a white coat, a badge of healing, and dignity. This is not just a drawing—it's a declaration: Dreams have no borders, and no one can steal the future from a girl who believes.



Shabnam

04

Even with blood on her face, she dares to rise.

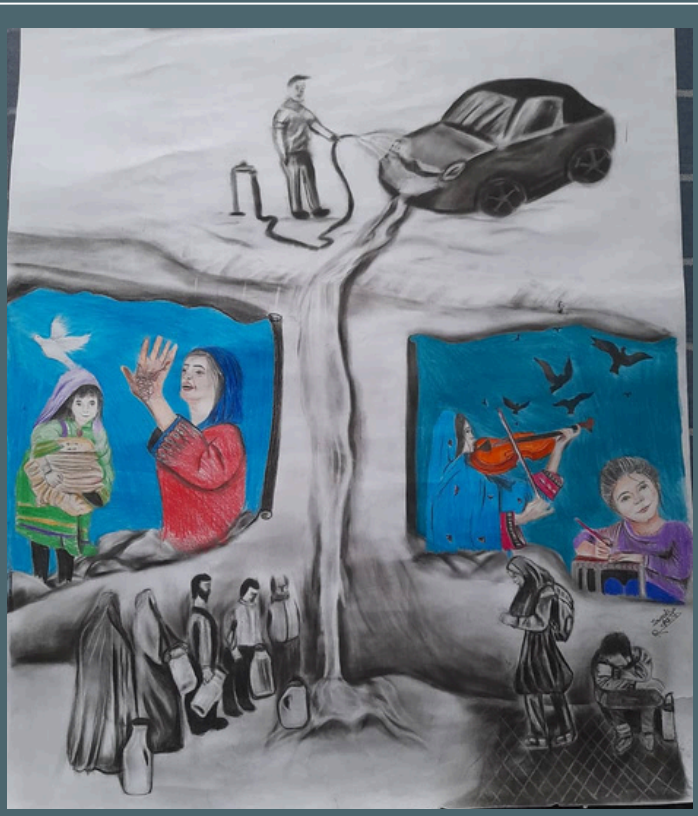
This is the voice of Afghan girls, who have been denied education for several years —stripped of their basic rights, yet never stripped of their courage. Her wounds are real, but so is her strength. The red of her palm is a scream for justice. She holds a book like a torch in the dark, and though she's been silenced, her story shouts through every line. She is not broken—she is unshakable. She is not alone—she is every girl still dreaming under closed school doors.



Zainab

05

Peace and calm mean the paths of life are open. People try to live, but with peace, they can work for both today and the future. When there is peace, even dry bread can feel like a delicious meal. With peace, everything grows, and life becomes more beautiful.



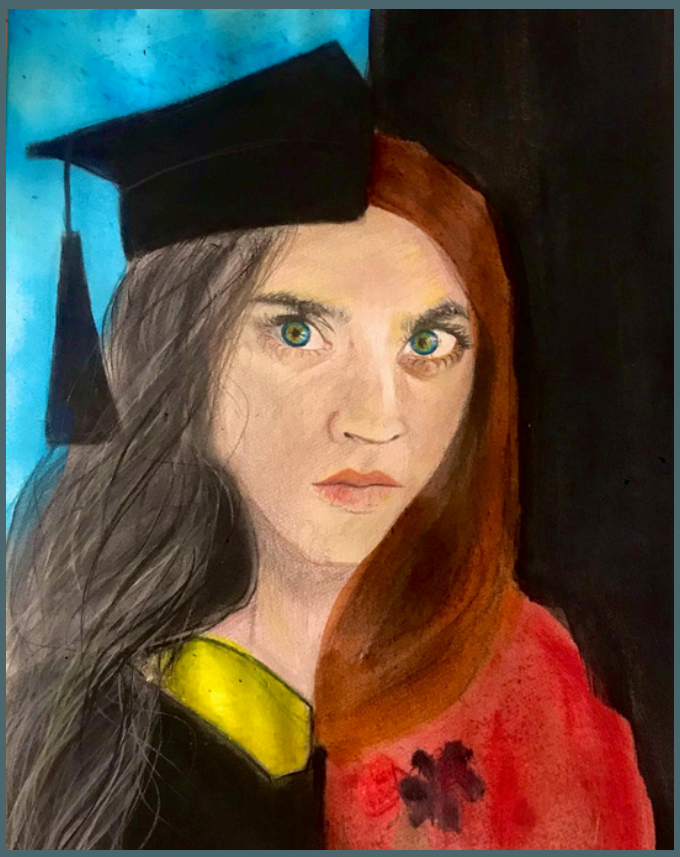
Sana

06

She is not just a painting...she is thousands of voices.
This girl represents countless women standing between dreams and reality.
On one side, there are hopes; on the other, restrictions.

Her image speaks beyond appearances—
the pain in her eyes,
the black flower blooming in her heart,
the silent screams,
and the courage flowing through her quietness.

She is more than a painting; she is a statement—
a testament for all girls living dual lives:
the one they are expected to live,
and the one they wish to live



On the right side:
A dark, cold sky.
A girl, eyes filled with fear, forced to wear a veil
even as a child.
She must not be herself,
must be a housewife,
caring for children and home, and nothing more.

The black flower on her dress,
above the faded red flowers,
right over her heart—
as if her own heart has turned black.

She is not herself.
Even if she wants to be, she can't.
She must keep going,
stay silent,
even if pain pours from her eyes...

On the left side:
A blue sky—
symbolizing peace, freedom, calm, and hope.

Below, a girl as strong as a mountain,

as steady as an oak,
as powerful as a silent storm,
brave and proud,
with the boldness of light in darkness.

Her eyes shine with passion and excitement,
looking at the dreams she has achieved.

She wears a graduation cap and gown,
because she is now an educated woman.

Today, she has shown herself,
proven that being a girl means being capable;
that her choices belong to her.

The artist
My painting is finished...
When I looked at it,
I saw she wasn't another girl...
She was me.
I found myself in her.
She was truly me.

In every line,
a piece of my soul remains;
my feelings, my tears, my beliefs...

She isn't just me,
she is you too.
She tells the story of thousands of young girls in
my country.
She is you...
If you place yourself in her shoes for a moment,
you will feel it...
you will understand the pain.