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High-resolution images available upon request.

Searching for Home: New Traveling Exhibition **Reveals the Untold Stories of Displacement and Survival**

Washington, DC (September 10, 2020) — International Arts & Artists (IA&A) is pleased to announce a new traveling exhibition, *Searching for Home: Stories of Displacement and Survival by Humaira Abid*, organized by the Center for Art in Wood, Philadelphia, PA, in partnership with the Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA.

With nearly 80 million people currently displaced from their homes by conflict, persecution, or other perils, the world is witnessing an unprecedented global refugee crisis. In *Searching for Home*, artist Humaira Abid presents life-sized depictions of everyday objects and figures that illuminate and humanize some of the most provocative, challenging issues facing the world today. Through her chosen medium of wood, Abid unleashes the innate properties of the material to suggest the ineffable weight and gravity of this continuing humanitarian crisis.

Born and raised in Lahore, Pakistan, Humaira Abid immigrated to the US in 2008 and is now based in Seattle, WA. As an art student, Abid chose to study sculpture and wood, emboldened by the challenge of pushing against the gendered norms of a male-dominated discipline. The supple but demanding processes and materials of her chosen medium bring to vivid life her haunting, uncompromising vision of the stark dilemmas faced by women, children, and refugees in today's fractured global community.

Inspired by real accounts of displaced people—all personally researched and documented by Abid—*Searching for Home* hints at untold tragedies surrounding the collateral victims of persecution, political conflicts, ethnic cleansing, and natural disasters, a disproportionate number of whom are women and girls. Abid's complex feelings surrounding her own experiences as a mother, immigrant, and female artist have shaped her empathy and worldview, which in turn provide the inspiration that galvanizes her powerful perspective. "I believe when issues are discussed openly, we take steps towards realization, resolution, and change," says Abid. "The stories make me emotional and the situations are sometimes frustrating but using art to raise awareness [...] the satisfaction that comes from that cannot compare to anything else."

Curated by Jennifer-Navva Milliken, artistic director at the Center for Art in Wood, the exhibition features ten sculptural installations. "I am thrilled that IA&A will be making it possible for many new audiences to experience the extraordinarily human-centered stories embedded in *Searching for Home*," says Milliken. "The seductive power of Humaira Abid's exquisite detail, verisimilitude, and emotion

compels a deeper look into the ongoing refugee crisis, while her expert manipulation of the material of wood grounds the contemporaneity of these stories with permanence, dignity, and universality.”

In *Searching for Home*, the historic, highly refined disciplines of detailed woodcarving and miniature painting—for generations the domain of nobility and the elite classes—are mobilized to rouse compassion for the downtrodden and to call the modern viewer into action. In her passionate evocation of these stories, Abid urges us all to look beyond our personal circumstances, privileges, and prejudices—and consider our own stake in the welfare of humankind.

“IA&A is honored to tour this exhibition in partnership with Humaira Abid and the Center for Art in Wood,” says Lise Dubé-Scherr, executive director of IA&A. “While our country and the world are facing a myriad of challenges, many of the issues we faced pre-pandemic continue to exist, and *Searching for Home*, through Abid’s beautifully rendered, poignant work, serves as a timely and important reminder of the ongoing plight of immigrants.”

Searching for Home: Stories of Displacement and Survival by Humaira Abid is organized by the Center for Art in Wood, Philadelphia, PA, in partnership with the Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA, and toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC.

Searching for Home will tour both nationally and internationally from September 2021 through January 2025. For more information, visit [ArtsandArtists.org](https://www.ArtsandArtists.org)

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR ART IN WOOD [centerforartinwood.org](https://www.centerforartinwood.org)

Since its inception in 1986, The Center for Art in Wood, formerly the Wood Turning Center, has been widely recognized by artists, collectors, scholars, and the public as one of the most valuable resources for the education, preservation, and promotion of the field of art made from wood. The center’s mission is to interpret, nurture, and champion creative engagement and expansion of art, craft, and design in wood to enhance the public’s understanding and appreciation of it.

Through on-site and traveling exhibitions, the Center mounts 4-5 exhibitions each year, which serves as the central programming focus during the time of their presentations. The Windgate ITE International Residency Program has involved over 150 international residents as it continues through its third decade. The Museum Collection contains over 1,100 objects from around the world, ranging from functional, everyday objects to contemporary sculptures. The Fleur & Charles Bresler Research Library consists of over 25,000 images, artists’ files, and books that help preserve the exciting history of woodturning and woodworking, as well as their continuing evolution as a contemporary art form.

The Center has also maintained a commitment to the documentation of its programs and research. The results of these efforts are now accessible in many forms, from catalogues and books to digital media and online resources that are available to the public.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ARTS & ARTISTS

artsandartists.org

International Arts & Artists (IA&A) is a nonprofit arts organization dedicated to furthering cross-cultural understanding of the arts nationally and internationally. Since 1995, IA&A has fulfilled its mission by providing programs and services to artists, arts institutions, cultural organizations, and the public—reaching over 2.1 million people.

IA&A's **Traveling Exhibition Service** develops and circulates a broad range of premiere visual arts exhibitions in the US and abroad. With over 100 unique exhibitions and over 730 presentations, IA&A's exhibitions have toured all 50 US states as well as 24 countries, helping organizations both large and small to engage their communities, increase public awareness, develop meaningful programming, and foster enhanced support.

IA&A's **Cultural Exchange Programs** support the next generation of creative leaders by providing exchange opportunities and visa assistance for students, professionals, artists, and researchers from around the world participating in programs across the US. IA&A has connected over 1,850 exchange visitors from more than 95 countries to over 650 host organizations.

IA&A at Hillyer is a contemporary art center based in Washington, DC. Committed to serving the public and supporting artists at all stages of their careers, Hillyer has presented over 300 exhibitions featuring local, regional, and international artists, reaching over 97,000 visitors.

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