

Hanifa

Through the Eyes of a Woman

Alizada



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THE WORLD BANK

Through the Eyes of a Woman: I Am the Girl Who Has Learnt.



Die to Remain Alive, 2012

"To please their relatives and husband, the majority of women have to enhance their appearance to be closer to the ideal of beauty—big eyes, long nose, white skin and black hair. I believe that not being allowed to be yourself is equal to death."

—Hanifa Alizada

"Through the Eyes of a Woman" is the seventh in a cycle of World Bank exhibitions to celebrate work of present-day women photographers; the solo show *I Am the Girl Who Has Learnt*, features artist Hanifa Alizada from Afghanistan.

"Through the Eyes of a Woman" is open to women photographers whose subjects are women and/or children. The series has addressed intense topics such as women' trafficking, children and women in refugee camps, child labor, pressure to conform on women in a migratory situation and more. The works are never photo-journalistic, but strive to capture the universality of human conditions seen through the particular angle of women as artists as well as subjects.

The current show is born out of the Bank's relatively recent entry in the field of gender-based violence, expanding on twenty years' work on gender equality. In fact, individuals, governments and non-governmental organizations have fought dramatic battles against this plague for a long time, building up to a concerted international effort.

The title of this exhibition comes from Hanifa Alizada's own poem, which tells her story of having to learn how to suppress her true feelings in order to avoid negative judgments of those who can hurt her, physically or otherwise.

Ms. Alizada is now in her mid-20s, the youngest female photographer ever to exhibit at the World Bank. She is a recent university graduate at the start of her career, and very different from the seasoned artists we usually invite for solo exhibitions. Yet her undeniable talent, her

relentless commitment to her profession and maturity of her work have left us without a doubt about including her in the same exhibition cycle that introduced World Bank audiences to the work of such distinguished photography artists previously featured in the series, as Laura Salvainelli (Italy), Angele Essamba (Cameroon) and Cecilia Paredes (Peru).

Alizada's work first came to our attention in 2012 during the preparatory stages of the group exhibition *South Asia Artists: Imagining Our Future Together*. Responding to our open call for entry, Alizada submitted two photographs for the panel of judges. These austere, minimalist images and executed to perfection pieces with strong anti-violence message, clearly demonstrated the artist's impeccable sensibility for beauty and originality of her thinking. Alizada's winning photo for that exhibition "The Distance Between Us" got the highest mark of the judges.

In the current exhibition we present Alizada's work produced during her studies at the Beaconhouse National University at Lahore, Pakistan as well as her most recent works. In this show, the artist explores oppressive effects of the situation when a young woman's desire to express her natural self comes into conflict with norms accepted in an ultraconservative male-dominated society.

Although the poem ends on a seemingly pessimistic note, "I have learnt how to be careful, Not to step on anyone's tail—Yes, I am the girl who has learnt," this exhibition proves that it is an ironic statement. Alizada's artworks make it clear that the girl has not only 'learnt' to stay silent for her safety's sake but that she also has a way to speak up through the medium of photography.

Alizada's imagery differs from photography one typically expects to see in Afghanistan today. There are no documentary images, no scenes of devastated cities or exotic beauty. Instead, we are presented with—in the artist's own words—"a lot of White and Black. White, for the desires that I could never fulfill and Black for the war that affected the place I was born [...] These layers create a gray tone that hides a girl behind it." Against this soft grey tone the artist has staged scenes featuring gestures that are associated with violent repression and passive acceptance. The most striking of them, both visually and conceptually, are the images of distortions forcefully applied to a delicate female body. They can be seen as a metaphor for the unexpressed sufferings of women who sacrifice their identity not to be ostracized by the society.

As we applaud to what promises to further solidify this strong and talented artist's international success, we also wish that her dream—to show her art openly in her country, that she voiced in her interview to the Wild magazine in 2013—comes true.

The World Bank Art Program



Look at Yourself, 2012

"Men are accepted as dominant and women as submissive. It is commonly believed in Afghanistan that men own women. The word for husband in Afghan culture is OWNER."





The Distance Between Us, 2011

This photo was inspired by the artist's childhood memories of displacement. It illustrates the principle "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" but the character that personifies hearing is missing. The empty space between the two women is a symbol of the artist who is learning not to be affected by negative words.

Gender Voices

Violence against women and girls is a disgraceful reality of societies worldwide, in rich countries and in poor, but in South Asia, these acts of violence are particularly outrageous. Every week in Bangladesh more than ten women suffer from an acid attack; in India, 22 women are killed every day in dowry-related murders; in Sri Lanka, 60% of women report having suffered physical abuse; more than 450 women and girls die every year in so-called "honor killings" in Pakistan; and the practice of enslaving young girls, whereby parents virtually sell their young daughters—usually around age 6–7—to be girl servants is still widely practiced in Nepal. In Afghanistan, home to Hanifa Alizada, gender based violence is all too familiar and as young girls are forced into marriage, wives and daughters are abused, and women are dealt harsh punishments for 'moral crimes'.

Violence against women in South Asia gained global public attention following the horrific gang rape and subsequent death of a 23-year-old New Delhi student in December 2012. The outrage in India and beyond ignited an international conversation about rape and

violence against women worldwide and sparked a movement called "1 Billion Rising," with rallies and events in India and around the world. In October of the same year, Malala Yousafzai, 15 years old at that time, was shot in the head and neck in an assassination attempt by Taliban gunmen while returning home on a school bus in the Swat Valley in northern Pakistan—a grim reminder of the real danger that women and girls in South Asia face when they speak out on women's rights.

The World Bank is a relative newcomer to the issue of gender based violence. The World Development Report 2012, on Gender Equality and Development, shed light on the issue and its relationship to

1400 Years of Sameness, 2012

This is the artist's self-portrait. It represents the battle of her inner world with barriers put in her way, such as the burqa or being kept indoors.



women's role in development. Another recent World Bank publication on norms and agency provided evidence on the role of attitudes and norms across 20 countries on gender-based violence. And several research papers are currently underway to deepen our understanding on violence against women, with efforts focused on generating evidence on the underlying causes and what works to prevent it. The World Bank also supports initiatives around the world to prevent gender-based violence and to support survivors. In Brazil, for example, we work with the government to promote, implement, and monitor laws, and in Bangladesh, we are supporting on-stop-centers to help the victims of gender-based violence in the context of social protection programs.

In South Asia, a new program has been launched in 2013 aimed at improving the Bank's response to violence against women in the region. As a first gesture, the World Bank and its partner Oxfam International, convened government officials, civil society leaders, experts, and other stakeholders from across South Asia at a youth hackathon and symposium on violence against women in Nepal. The premise of the conference is that no single actor is equipped to address this complex, deep seeded and multi-faceted problem.

The road to end gender violence is a long one: twenty years after the United Nations declared violence against women to be a violation of women's human rights, we are not even nearly there. The World Bank's Gender and Development team is grateful for the opportunity to support this exhibition of Hanifa Alizada's work, which represents but one woman's efforts on this long road to make the world a safer place for women and girls.

*South Asia Social Development Unit
PREM Gender and Development Group*

Mona Lisa, 2012

Mona Liza is about self-censorship. Hiding yourself is always a good way to remain safer.





Zeal—Good Enough Protector, 2013

A man seen through the thick burqa worn by the woman. "This is the only image in color in the exhibition. It is a symbol of a man's life—he can enjoy a life free from the limitations women are subjected to."



Wedding, 2013

All but one photo in this series are black-and-white. This reflects the colorless ways in which a woman sees herself and her life—there is no feeling, no power of decision.

Biography

Hanifa Alizada was born in Ghazni, Afghanistan in 1989. When she was 8 years old, her family migrated to Tehran, Iran as a result of civil wars and deteriorating conditions in her country at the time.

Alizada studied at a Tehran school for Afghan refugees. Since schooling beyond grade 7 was not available to Afghan refugees in Iran, Alizada's parents returned to Afghanistan and settled in Kabul in 2002, in search for further educational opportunities for their children.

Back in Kabul, Alizada completed her high-school education. For her achievements, she was awarded UNESCO's Madanjeet Singh Institute for South Asian Arts scholarship, which allowed her to go to Pakistan to study at the Beaconhouse National University. This liberal arts school, established in 2003, is known for incorporating the best in both contemporary and traditional Asian art education in its curriculum. During her student years Alizada tried her hand at fine arts, product design and other disciplines, finally discovering that her true calling is photography.

After graduating from Beaconhouse University, Alizada returned to Kabul where she is lecturing at the Fine Arts Department of Kabul University, works as photographer at 3rd Eye Photojournalism Center and teaches photography workshops.

Alizada was selected as one of the 25 winning South Asian artists to participate in the World Bank's *Imagining Our Future Together* exhibition, showing her work in Bangladesh, India and the USA. She is a winner of the Redirecting: East artist residency in Warsaw, Poland in Fall 2013.



Proposal, 2013

"The path to a woman's married life begins with a proposal from a man who has never seen her."

خشونت علیه زنان و دختران یکی از حقایق نامطبوع در جوامع فقیر و ثروتمند جهان است که این اعمال ناخوشایند در کشورهای آسیایی تشدید میابند. در افغانستان، سرزمین حنیفه علیزاده، تبعیضات جنسی مفهومی کاملاً عام است: دختران خوردسال وادار به ازدواج های اجباری شده، و تحت عنوان «جرم های اخلاقی» مورد سو استفاده و ضرب و شتم قرار میگیرند.

تبعیضات جنسی مفهومی نسبتاً جدید برای بانک جهانی است. برای تعمق بیشتر درین بخش، بانک جهانی برنامه های مختلف تحقیقاتی برای بررسی عوامل و راه حل های خشونت علیه زنان را روی دست گرفته است. همچنان، بانک جهانی حامی بزرگ قربانیان خشونت های جنسی و انانی که اقدام به مبارزه علیه این خشونت ها میکنند، است. به طور نمونه، در اوایل سال ۲۰۱۲، اقدامات ویژه یی برای موثرتر شدن برنامه های محوخشونت علیه زنان در اسبای جنوبی روی دست گرفته شد.

تیم توسعه و مبارزه با خشونت های جنسی و بخش هنری بانک جهانی از تلاش های حنیفه علیزاده در راستای بهبودی وضعیت زنان و دختران جهان قدرانی مینماید.

حنیفه علیزاده در سال ۱۹۸۹ در شهر غزنی افغانستان متولد شده، تحصیلات ابتدایی خود را در ایران و افغانستان تکمیل نمود و تحصیلات عالی خود را در دانشگاه ملی بیکن هاوس در پاکستان به اتمام رساند. از ۲۰۱۲ بدینسو، علیزاده به عنوان عکاس و استاد در دانشکده ی هنرهای زیبای دانشگاه کابل ایفای وظیفه میکند. قبل از نامزد شدن به عنوان هفتمین عکاس زن موفق و راه اندازی نمایشگاه «من، دختری که یاد گرفته ام» در مجموعه ی هنری از دید زن، حنیفه علیزاده یکی از ۲۵ هنرمند جوان بود که در نمایشگاه بانک جهانی «آینده را باهم تصور کنیم» کارهای هنری خود را در بنگله دیش، هند، و امریکا به نمایش گذاشت (۲۰۱۲-۲۰۱۳).

از دید زن مسابقه ی بین المللی عکاسی برای عکاسان زنی است که زنان و کودکان موضوع اصلی کارشان میباشد. مجموعه ی مذکور موضوعات مختلفی از قبیل قاچاق زنان، وضعیت زنان و کودکان در کمپ های مهاجرین، اطفال کارگر، مهاجرت مشقت بار زنان و غیره را به تصویر کشیده است. کارهای مذکور جنبه ی فوتوژورنالیستی نداشته بلکه تلاش میکند تا شرایط عام انسانی زنان را از دید زنان توسط هنرمندان زن ثبت و به نمایش بگذارد. تا کنون، علیزاده جوان ترین عکاس زن است که در بانک جهانی کارهایش را نمایش میدهد.



A Monument (back photo)

"This photo depicts a woman's suffering when her life is summarized in how a man wants her to live it."

Circumstance, 2013 (front photo)
The Way They Look at Me, 2013
(inside the small box)

"This image reflects the inner feelings of a woman who has been exchanged for valuables."