

For Immediate Release
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Humaira Abid: Searching for Home

Curator: Jennifer-Navva Milliken
February 7 – April 18, 2020

Philadelphia PA: The Center for Art in Wood is pleased to present *Searching for Home*, the first solo museum exhibition for Seattle-based, Pakistan-born artist Humaira Abid. Abid is well known for her unique visual language, which blends the discipline of traditional Mughal miniature painting and sculpture in wood. Her career-long decision to specialize in woodcarving, a male-dominated field, reflects her commitment to challenging stereotypes and exposing taboos. The beauty and mastery of Abid's to-scale carvings of seemingly benign objects, ripe with subtext, belie the violence, cruelty, upheaval, and instability in society, especially that to which women are subject.

First shown at Bellevue Arts Museum in Seattle, Washington, *Searching for Home* presents a human-scaled look at the worldwide refugee crisis and the and displacement. The exhibition focuses on the plight of women and girls, who make up a disproportionate percentage of the millions of people who have fled their home countries as a result of political conflict and strife, ethnic cleansing and persecution, domestic abuse, and crimes against humanity. *Searching for Home* premieres works by the artist that were created following months of research and interviews with refugee women who have been resettled in both the Pacific Northwest and Pakistan from nations including Somalia, Syria, and Afghanistan.

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The works in *Searching for Home* demonstrate the artist's ability to tread a narrow line between evocative (and often *provocative*) content and mastery in a material discipline. The Center for Art in Wood's presentation includes never-before-seen works that reflect the lack of resolution to this crisis. Among them, an interactive piece invites the visiting public to participate in storytelling and the sharing of personal narratives as a tool for understanding the ways that place and migration influences individual identity.

The Center invites the press for a preview of *Searching for Home* with Humaira Abid and the Center's Artistic Director and curator Jennifer-Navva Milliken on Friday, Feb 7, 2020, 10 am – 12 pm. A reception will be held 5 – 9 pm that evening; a gallery talk will be held 6 – 7 pm. Several programs are planned in conjunction with the exhibition, including a Young Artists Speakers Series lecture given by Wit López on March 4, 2020, at 6 pm; an International Women's Day Celebration; and a lecture and panel discussion with the artist.

EVENTS

First Fridays | Feb 7, March 6, April 3 | 5 – 9 pm at the Center

Gallery talk with the artist and curator | Fri, Feb 7 | 6 – 7 pm followed by opening reception at the Center

A Conversation with Humaira Abid, Jennifer-Navva Milliken Artistic Director, (The Center for Art in Wood), and Jodi Throckmorton, Curator of Contemporary Art (PAFA) | Sat, February 8 | 3:30 – 4:30 pm Arts | \$15, free for members of the Center and PAFA at the Rhoden Arts Center, Samuel M.V. Hamilton Building, Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts

Young Artist Speakers Series: Wit López | Wed, March 4 | 6 – 8 pm at the Center

International Women's Day at the Center | Sat, March 7 | 2 – 4 pm at the Center

Closing Event for *Searching for Home* | Sat, April 18 | 2 – 4 pm at the Center

For more information please contact Katie Sorenson, at 215-923-8000 or katie@centerforartinwood.org.

Humaira Abid: Searching for Home was organized by Bellevue Arts Museum and curated by Jennifer-Navva Milliken. Works in this exhibition were made possible in part by grants to the artist from 4Culture and Artist Trust, with support from Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA) of Seattle.

The exhibition program at the Center is generously supported by members of the Cambium Giving Society of the Center for Art in Wood, the Bresler Family Foundation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Philadelphia Cultural Fund, William Penn Foundation, and Windgate Foundation. Corporate support is provided by Boomerang, Inc., Penn State Industries, and Sun-lite Corporation.

Pictured from left to right: Humaira Abid, *Searching for Home* (detail) and *Leila*, 2016-17; *Sana, Age 7, Afghanistan*, (detail), 2017; *Borders and Boundaries* (detail), 2017. Photo: Adeel Ahmed

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