

Exhibition Statement

Naser, is a Hazara man who is seeking asylum. Through his evocative and stunning work, he portrays his journey from Afghanistan to Australia, and the time he has spent painting his freedom from inside the cage of Broadmeadows Immigration Detention Centre .. the journey and waiting which represent '**Looking Up**' to a new hope. Naser writes:

**How can I get Freedom?
Please ...
Open your heart
And open the door of this cage
Life is not forever
And our time to be young
Is very short.
We are human
Just like you.**

Naser would like thank everyone for coming and supporting him. It is deeply upsetting that he can't be with us to enjoy this exciting exhibition with his friends. However, he has asked me to share with you how happy and full his heart feels knowing that his art work is making other people happy and raising awareness about Asylum Seekers in Australia. He would like to thank all of his friends who have supported him from detention, and the would especially like to thank MAFA - Melbourne Artists for Asylum Seekers for their support in including him in such a special exhibition for all Asylum Seekers.

I would like to mention that Naser has had no formal education or art training, he began painting in 2016 using the dregs of coffee from his cup. AS you can see he clearly possess a natural talent, a true gift. His work speaks of truth filled with raw emotion and every painting tells its own unique story. He is resilient and has an amazing inner strength which he has risen above despite his tormented existence. He has never given up hope for freedom, always '*Looking Upwards*' towards the light. This hope shines through in his paintings, which stem from his journey from Afghanistan to Australia and the time he has spent waiting for his freedom. Through all his adversity he reveals a positive attitude, a hope for freedom and a better life, a future where he can fly free like a bird from the cage that contains him. this is his wish, his dream. Not only for himself but for everyone as this is a human right. Naser's paintings all reflect his beautiful dream and hope for a better future here in Australia. Ultimately his message to us all is that whatever transpires there will always be hope and we must continue to '**LOOK UP**'. *That from **darkness** there comes **light**. From **adversity** there comes **strength**.*