



ARIF

“I like being in school again. My teacher says my German is really good. My

mother asks me to make the phone calls and brings me to important appointments to translate. I must be strong for her. She worries a lot and gets tired. While she sleeps, I play games on her cell phone.”

- Arif, Syria



NORINA

“ ... We laugh a lot, but I also worry. My mother and I have been told we won't be [sent back to Iran] for now, but my three

older brothers were told that they would [sent back] within thirty days. We had to quickly find a lawyer to help us change the German government's mind. Now we pay a lawyer every month to help us, but it is worth it, because if my brothers have to go back, it will be very dangerous for them.”

-Norina, Afghan from Iran



NOODA

“I came on a boat. It was a big boat! It had so many people on it. The men who took our money who said they would help us jumped into the water and left us alone. Water started coming in the boat. We were getting wet. My Papa started to drive the boat. He was worried about all of us and wanted to help.”

- Nooda, Syria



MADINA

“I just want to live in a safe place where everyone can live united and in peace, whether they be Shia (religion), Sunni (religion),

Christian(religion) or whatever.”

-Madina, Afghanistan



SHURANGEZ

“My sisters and I were in school in Afghanistan. Some people in our neighborhood were not happy about this. They say girls have no right to study or work.

They tried to keep us from going. Sometimes we didn't feel safe at school and so our mother kept us home. She brought us out of Afghanistan to go to a better country where we can continue our education and be safe. I can't go to school right now. But someday soon I hope to be in a country where I can.”

-Shurangez, from Afghanistan



DANIAL

“I like chemistry so much! I’d like to be a famous chemist in the future. My parents brought me here despite all the problems and difficulties so I could have a future.

I want to be a useful person and follow my dreams. I’m sure I will do that. From now on, I have to do my best.”
-Danial, Afghanistan



FIROZ

"I am 13 years old, and I am worried about my family. In Syria we were very happy. Our relatives were close and we were in and out of each other's houses all the time. Our village was very quiet. After ISIS came to the village, it was destroyed. ISIS also didn't allow you to wear a shirt with any writing or drawings on it. You had to wear what they want. Everything is according to what they want. If you want to open a store, you must sell what they want. Sometimes men came and took 14 and 15 year olds into the army. I didn't

know why. Things got so bad we left for Turkey so we could work. I thought I wanted to stay in Turkey. But then I decided I wanted to go to Germany. When I told that to my dad, he said, "Get your things ready, let's go." He took me to my aunt's house and I left with her and her children. My parents did not come with us. We had to cross the sea to get to Greece before we could get to Germany. We brought things with us to put in the boat but the Turkish smugglers didn't let us take them. They had stopped us and took everything. At sea, the waves were crashing on us and there was rain and wind. The smugglers took us half the way and then pointed and told us to go to that light in the distance. We got to an island. The island was just trees, no people. We remained there two days. We made a fire to warm up. There were fishermen with fishing nets and they could see us. Those fishermen came and helped us get to the right beach where a woman from Greece came and gave us blankets to get warm and food. She took us to the police station. They gave us papers so we could travel. Then we traveled a long way to Germany. Every time I talk to the rest of my family I cry. I was happy in Syria. My family loves me. It's hard without your family."

-Firoz, Syria

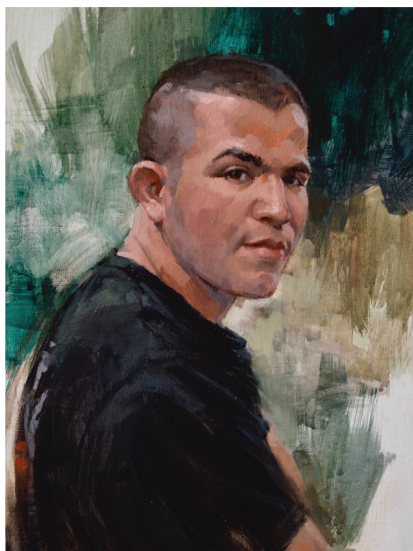
ALI



“Ali lived in Afghanistan. One day while walking to school a bomb exploded near him. His leg got hurt in the explosion. So he got a new leg made out of plastic to help him walk. It’s called a prosthetic leg. It didn’t fit him very well, though, and sometimes it hurt when he walked. When his village got destroyed, he left Afghanistan with his family

to be safe. They had to walk across the mountains. He helped his younger family members, sometimes carrying his nephew on his back. Sometimes his prosthetic leg would break, and he would have to fix it with tape and sticks. He and his family went to Greece to live in a refugee camp. While he was there, he helped everybody he could. Everybody liked him. Ali lives in France now. Some people who work with refugees heard about his story, how he walked from Afghanistan to Greece with a broken prosthetic leg that hurt him, so they helped get a new leg that would fit him better and make it more comfortable to walk. Ali got his new leg in 2016, and also started taking French lessons so he can find a job in France and make money to buy food. His life is still hard, but he still helps people whenever he can.”

- Ali, Afghanistan



KAMIL

“Kamil lived in Damascus, a city in Syria. From the time he was 10 years old, Kamil worked with his father in their family’s stone cutting business. They would order stone from far away places and create beautiful staircases, tables, countertops and tile flooring. When he wasn’t working, Kamil liked to play in his family’s orchard, where he rode his

motorcycle and played with goats and chickens and trained his dogs. But everything changed when war started in his country. It wasn’t safe to stay, so Kamil and his family left Syria and went to a camp in Lebanon. They stayed there for three years, hoping that the war would end and they could go back to their home. But then they realized that their home had been destroyed in the war, and they had to find a home somewhere else. So Kamil and his father made the long journey from Lebanon to Germany, 2000 miles away. Now their family lives in Germany, waiting for permission to stay there forever. Kamil and his father started working as stone cutters again. They don’t have their own business yet but they are happy to be working again.”
-Kamil, Syria



ROKSANA

Roksana lived in Kabul, Afghanistan. She had a lot of ideas of how she could change things for the better for girls in Afghanistan. Many girls didn't go to school, but Roksana did. She studied law. She also worked in a grocery store, where men sometimes weren't very nice to her.

Roksana wanted to bring the idea of change to her country, so she got involved in politics. She fought for free elections, women's rights, and freedom of speech. Many people didn't

like her ideas, and it got too dangerous for her to stay in her country. When Roksana was 19, her family decided to leave and go to Iran. Roksana's mother knew it was dangerous for a young woman to cross the border. So Roksana stayed in Afghanistan to wait for her visa, a document that would give her permission to legally enter Iran, while her mother walked to the border with her 4 younger siblings. Along the way Roksana's family got kidnapped and the kidnappers demanded a ransom. Roksana had to sell everything she owned and even sell her house to raise the money to pay for her family's release. When they got the money, the kidnappers let her family go. Roksana worked for months to earn enough money for a plane ticket, and when she finally got her visa, she was reunited with her family in Iran. Roksana's family then went on a very long journey again, taking many buses and cars and walking many miles to finally get to Germany, where they had to start all over with nothing. But now her brothers and sister can all go to school, and they can live in peace and build their future.

-Roksana, Afghanistan



NASIRA

“We are Qashqai Turks, Shia Muslims from Iran. Because of our religion and ethnicity, the government of Iran discriminates against us and will not allow us to study at a university, obtain a job, or to own a home. My husband and I were very sad to leave our home

because our families have been living there for many generations. It was a difficult decision [to leave our home,] but the future for our children is very important to us. We have two children, and soon we are expecting another child. We are sad that we can never go back to our home and families because if we did, we would be punished like many other brave people have been punished. We do this hard thing [leave our home] because we must think about the future of our children.
-Nasira, Iran



HOLDING ON

“Saedah left Syria among the eleven million Syrians who fled their home to leave war and find peace. She resettled to a home in Germany where twenty-six other women and children lived. They all lived together, because they had been separated

from their fathers and brothers and were waiting, hoping to reunite with their families and start their lives again. In spite of the upheaval and turmoil, so many of these young people are cheerful and resilient in uncertain and bad conditions because they hold on to the things that matter most - loved ones, faith, and hope.”



A MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

“These three boys fled violence and persecution in Afghanistan. They took dangerous journeys with their families, and landed in a refugee camp in Greece. They are like so many boys, they love to play, scuffled in the dirt, take turns

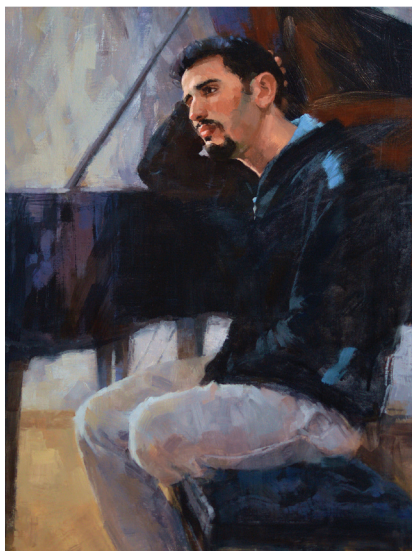
riding the one bicycle in the camp, boss the younger children, annoy the teenage girls, and strike endless ‘peace’ and ‘love’ poses for the camera. While their precarious position and uncertain future is shared by tens of millions of refugees and asylum seeking children all over the world, it is the children who are first to see magic, and the last to lose hope. The camps are uncomfortable and not safe, and can be places of despair, but these children teach adults how to rise above fear and unfairness, how to show humanity, and how to trust and make a new friend.”



HUSNA

“I walked 3200 miles so I can go to school. The borders are closed. It’s been 3 years . . . I am still waiting.

-Husna,
Afghanistan



AEHAM

Aeham Ahmad is a classically trained pianist. During the bombings of Damascus, Syria, he and his friends would roll a piano around the streets on a rusty green vegetable cart. Wherever they stopped, families looking for relief from the endless war and fighting

would join them. Children would sing along, and their parents would nod to his music. Aeham said, “I couldn’t make falafels for 100,000 people, but I could play music for 100,000 people. When the children saw the piano, I played, and it made them happy.” Aeham’s music became a symbol of hope and humanity, but his music made other people mad, and they burned his piano for disagreeing with the war. Aeham had to leave Damascus to stay alive, and took a dangerous sea journey followed by a long walking journey to arrive in Germany. He now plays with orchestras in Stuttgart, Hamburg, Munich, and Berlin, but he misses his home, and feels pain for his people.”



RUNNING WATER

“Comfortable homes, communities, families, studies, steady jobs, and hopes for the future were all left behind as they ran away from war and fighting. Now they wait in a refugee camp in Greece. This camp has a small schoolroom,

a medical unit, an electric strip for taking turns to charge phones, rows of port-a-potties, a shower unit . . . and running water from a hose for drinking and for washing. Before they came to the camp, running water was a common convenience that they took for granted in their own homes. Now, like the hope that keeps them going day in and day out, the running water is a precious, sustaining necessity. In the words of Hamed, “Other than hope, we don’t have anything else. Every day the refugees keep praying and nobody hears their voice except God. They are still waiting. But still, we have hope.”



OMAR

“I am from a family of seven children, three boys and four girls. When the Taliban came to our village, my mother took us into the mountains to hide for days. This happened many times. My mother’s family was living in Germany

and sent us money to help us survive, and escape.” Some of Omar’s family made it to Greece. They lived in a tent camp near Athens, until Omar made his way to Germany. He made contact with his uncle and started going to school and has learned to speak German. There are many people in Germany who are trying to help him. Omar says, “Because I am almost fourteen and the oldest son, I am responsible for our family. I hope our family will be together again soon.”