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Fazal Sheikh: *A Camel for the Son* • *Ramadan Moon* • *The Victor Weeps* Opens at the Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College February 13

Wellesley, MA—An exhibition of three series of photographs by American artist Fazal Sheikh entitled *Fazal Sheikh: A Camel for the Son • Ramadan Moon • The Victor Weeps* opens on Thursday, February 13, 2003 at the Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, Mass. and will be on view through June 8, 2003. An opening reception will be held on February 13 at 6:00pm with a presentation by the artist in the Collins Cinema adjacent to the Museum.

This exhibition presents three series of moving photographs by artist and human rights activist Fazal Sheikh rendering refugee communities from Somalia and Afghanistan. *A Camel for the Son* (1992-2000) portrays Somali women refugees in northeastern Kenya, first, as they struggle to nourish their children after enduring physical and sexual assault and, later, as some seek justice against their assailants. *Ramadan Moon* (2000) combines portraits, music, and texts to illuminate the experiences of one Somali woman who, after enduring intense trauma during the Somali civil war, attempts to celebrate Ramadan under threat of eviction from an asylum-seekers' center in the Netherlands. *The Victor Weeps* (1996-1998) depicts Afghan families who have lived for decades as refugees in northern Pakistan, offering a multifaceted view of the Afghan people that resonates deeply in the aftermath of September 11, 2001.

These series, which span Sheikh's career, are also grounded in his pursuit of his cultural heritage in Kenya and Pakistan—his father was born and grew up in Kenya, while his paternal grandfather and namesake hailed from present-day Pakistan. The artist began working in Kenya in 1992 and has since collaborated with displaced communities from across east Africa, Afghanistan, Cuba, and Brazil.

Sheikh documents displaced communities and their experiences by collaborating with them in the creation of formal portraits and landscapes. By using his subjects' names as titles, bearing witness to their traumatic experiences as well as their hopes, and distributing his work as activist art rather than photojournalism, Sheikh challenges the

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anonymity and clichés of mass-media representations of refugees. His photographs and texts are respectful, graceful meditations on human gazes, gestures, and beliefs. They assert the dignity of those pictured while broadening our vocabulary for understanding ongoing global conflicts.

The three series comprise parts of the artist's *International Human Rights Series*, a group of exhibitions, books, online work, and multimedia publications intended to spread awareness of international human rights issues while exploring alternative methods for distributing visual arts materials. Thousands of Sheikh's books and DVD's have been distributed free of charge to promote awareness of refugee issues. Four publications are available in conjunction with this exhibition.

Fazal Sheikh has received a number of prestigious awards, notably the Infinity Award from the International Center of Photography, the Leica Medal of Excellence, and fellowships from the William J. Fulbright Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. His photographs are in the collections of Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. He has worked with human rights organizations including the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Doctors without Borders, and the International Rescue Committee.

Related Public Programs:

Thursday Feb 13 6pm Collins Cinema/Museum Lobby

Opening Reception with Fazal Sheikh presenting *Seynab's Ramadan Moon*.

Tuesday Feb 18 7:30 pm Jewett Auditorium

Artist's Lecture: Fazal Sheikh

Artist-in-residence Fazal Sheikh will discuss his work with African and Afghan refugees and the complexities of rendering displaced communities.

Tuesday, Mar 4 7:30pm Collins Cinema

Lecture: The Somali Civil War and the Responsibilities of Witnessing

Wellesley College Professor of History Lidwien Kapteijns shares her knowledge of the Somali civil war and raises questions how educational communities struggle with the responsibilities of knowing about and responding to the disasters of our times.

Thursday, Mar 13 1:30 – 2:40pm Contemporary Gallery

Open Class Session: The Sociology of International Justice

Professor Thomas Cushman and his class discuss Fazal Sheikh's photographs and the relationship between visual representations of injustice and efforts to mobilize against such injustice.

Thursday Mar 27 11:10am – 12:20pm Contemporary Gallery

Open Class Session: The Middle East in Modern History

Professor of History Lidwien Kapteijns and Museum Associate Curator Dabney Hailey lead a discussion on Somali (Muslim) women.

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Thursday Mar 27 7pm Collins Cinema

Panel Discussion: Refugee Rights and Reconstruction in Afghanistan

Najim Azadzoï, Society of Afghan Engineers; Dr. Connie Chow, Amnesty International USA; Dr. Westy Egmont, International Institute of Boston; Joung-ah Paula Ghedini, U.N. High Commission for Refugees; and Dr. Ghulam Farooq Parwani, former government official in Afghanistan will discuss international policy on repatriation, economic and human rights challenges facing refugees, and the impact of repatriation and rebuilding in Afghanistan.

Friday Apr 11 1:30 – 2:40pm Contemporary Gallery

Open Class Session: Short Narrative

Marilyn Sides, Senior Lecturer in the English Department and her student writers will discuss the relationship between text and image in Fazal Sheikh's work.

Wednesday Apr 16 7:00-9:30pm Contemporary Gallery

Open Class Session: African Women: Social Transformation and Empowerment

Africana Studies Professor Filomina Steady and her students will discuss the imaging of African women in Fazal Sheikh's work and the concurrent exhibition *The Space Between: Artists Engaging Race and Syncretism*.

Wednesday Apr 23 12:30pm Contemporary Gallery

Gallery Discussion: *Fazal Sheikh*

Wellesley College Art Department and other faculty discuss the exhibition in relation to critical discourses on portrait photography, the representation of trauma and other issues engendered by the work.

For updated program information and a complete schedule of Museum events please visit:

www.davismuseum.wellesley.edu.

The Fazal Sheikh exhibition, the artist's residency, and additional programs are made possible by the Wellesley College Friends of Art, Wellesley College Multicultural Education and Research Initiative, the Kathryn Wasserman Davis '28 Fund for World Cultures, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. *The Victor Weeps* is organized and traveled by the Fotomuseum Winterthur/Switzerland. The DVD version of *The Victor Weeps* is supported by the Volkart Foundation, Switzerland. *Ramadan Moon* is organized and traveled by the Dutch National Institute for Photography, Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Davis Museum and Cultural Center Hours

The museum is open Tuesday, Friday and Saturday from 11am to 5pm, Wednesday and Thursday from 11am to 8pm and Sunday 1-5. Admission and parking are free. Recorded information about museum exhibitions, events, and driving directions is available at 781-283-2051 or on our web site at: www.davismuseum.wellesley.edu.

For tour information, please call 781-283-3382. Tours are generally available Wednesdays from 11am to 12noon and Sundays from 1 to 2pm. The Museum's Collins Café, recognized for its fresh and innovative cuisine, offers a daily menu and is open weekdays until 3:30pm.

The Museum, Collins Café and Collins Cinema are wheelchair accessible and wheelchairs are available for use in the Museum without charge. Special needs may be accommodated contacting the Director of Disability Services, Jim Wice at 781-283-2434 or at jwice@wellesley.edu.

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