

# 'We never chose this': refugees use art to imagine a better world - in pictures

**London will be the setting for a January exhibition and auction of art by people living in Moria camp, on the Greek island of Lesbos. The proceeds will go to the Hope Project, an initiative that promotes greater dignity for refugees and aims to transform the way they are seen**

● **Nine paintings will be exhibited in St James's Church, Piccadilly, from 6 to 17 January 2020, while a charity auction will take place at Christie's on 13 January**

Global  
development is

supported by

**BILL & MELINDA**  
*GATES foundation*

About this

content

Wed 25 Dec 2019 07.00 GMT

● A part of Moria refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos. In the distance is the Turkish coastline. In October, the UN said 12,600 people were living in the camp, five times its capacity

Photograph: Alessio Mamo/The Guardian



• **Mirror of humanity, by Joseph Kangi, South Sudan, 2019**

‘The painting is about unity. People from different countries, different religions and different tribes need to accept each other. We need to put our hands together to build a better world, one that does not see colour or differences, only what unites us. We should see others as we see ourselves in the mirror, as human beings. Humanity should take precedence over everything’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s



• **The service of a mother to a daughter, by Jean Paul Waroma, Congo, 2018**

‘My painting portrays the relationship between mother and child. It depicts the simple, maternal act of a mother brushing her daughter’s hair, showing the invisible bond a child

will always have with its mother'  
Photograph: Courtesy of Christie's



- **Dreams Lost, by Atefeh Fayazie, Afghanistan, 2019**

‘I have a family of five. I started my journey in [the] autumn of 2018, when we landed in Greece. I went to a wonderful art class, which gave me the opportunity to express my feelings by painting. This is one of my dreams - it shows a refugee who is struggling with death, and losing her dreams of coming to Europe to achieve her goals’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s



• **Complicated Minds, by Murtaza Safari, Afghanistan, 2019**

‘We can never judge others by outward appearances. We all have our inner struggles and complicated minds’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s



• No Voice, by Masoumeh Jafari, Afghanistan, 2019

‘Setayesh was a little Afghan girl living in Iran as a refugee. She was kidnapped, raped and killed by an Iranian man. I was really upset about her and her family. There are many girls like Setayesh who had the same experiences and cry in silence because justice didn’t defend them. I decided to paint this picture to honour her memory, and show the pain and heartbreak I feel about what happened’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s





• **Free, by Mohammad Jafary, Afghanistan, 2019**

‘This painting is in the style of cubism and abstraction, and the theme is freedom. I have been living in Moria camp for 10 months and I have been painting at the Hope Project for seven months’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie's



• **Forced Hijab, by Nazgol Golmuradi, Iran, 2019**

‘The woman in the painting is covered by the full veil. The woman is falling but the birds come to help her. In my country, the hijab is compulsory and women who do not comply face severe punishment. The woman is depressed and feels dead inside. The birds represent God. God is always there and helps everyone’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie's



• **Hoping To Survive, by Razieh Gholami, Afghanistan, 2019**

‘The journey to safety is hard. Europe doesn’t want refugees. We thought we had arrived to safety but Europe is trying to make us struggle more and send us back to danger’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s



• **Embrace God, by Alireza Hosseini, Afghanistan, 2019**

‘I was a man who did not know a god. I went to a sage and he told me to imagine two chairs: one for me, the other for God. I followed his advice and opened my mind and heart to God. And of course, I felt someone was sitting there listening to me. Peace and love’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s



• **A man from the body of fish, by Abdullah Rahmani, Afghanistan, 2019**

‘The man in the painting wants a peaceful world, with a clean sky and lots of fish. Because fish are silent, even when they die’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s





• **Broken Human Rights, by Senait Moges, Ethiopia, 2019**

‘A long time ago I believed in law and justice. We look to the law in the face of adversity and injustices, as nobody is above the law. But today, the law is corrupt. It’s a haven for the rich and powerful. A place where they can hide their evil doings. The law has turned its back on the oppressed. We patiently wait for the law to return from its journey of injustice’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s





Seni  
MORIZA REFUG

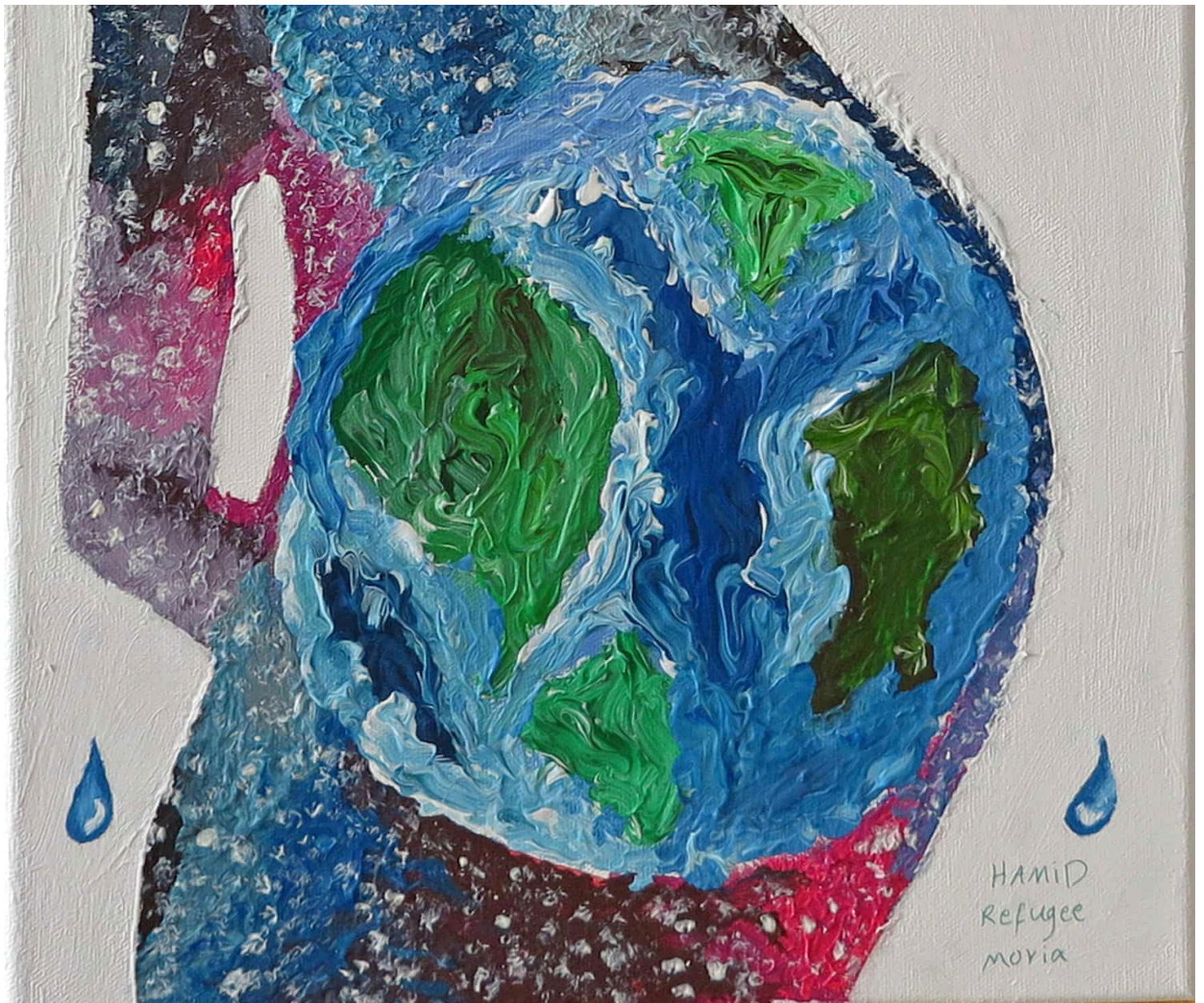
- **Mother earth, by Hamid Heidari, Afghanistan/Iran 2019**

‘This painting shows you that a mother carries the world in her belly. We have a world full of war. It would be better to have a world full of peace and safety’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s







- Tents in the Moria refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos.  
Photograph: Valery Sharifulin/TASS



• **#FortressEurope, by Eric Kempson, co-founder of the Hope Project, 2019**

‘In 2015, the north coast of Lesbos, a stretch of coastline just 20km long, reportedly received 600,000 refugees. This coastline was in front of our house. This Syrian child was one of those 600,000’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s





• **Women's Power, by Nazgol Golmuradi, Iran, 2019**

‘This painting shows the power of women. Unfortunately, in some countries women have no rights in society and live with the threat of being stoned to death. In this painting we see the power of women. No one should know a weak woman. Men and women are both human and must enjoy the same rights’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie's



• **Kids Hope, by Artif Akari, Afghanistan, 2019**

‘The children in Moria camp still try to have hope. They hope for a safe and bright future. Unfortunately, their hope does not last as they are caught in the powerful hands of the government and forced to live in a dangerous and unsafe camp. The doors that lead to a bright future are closed to them’

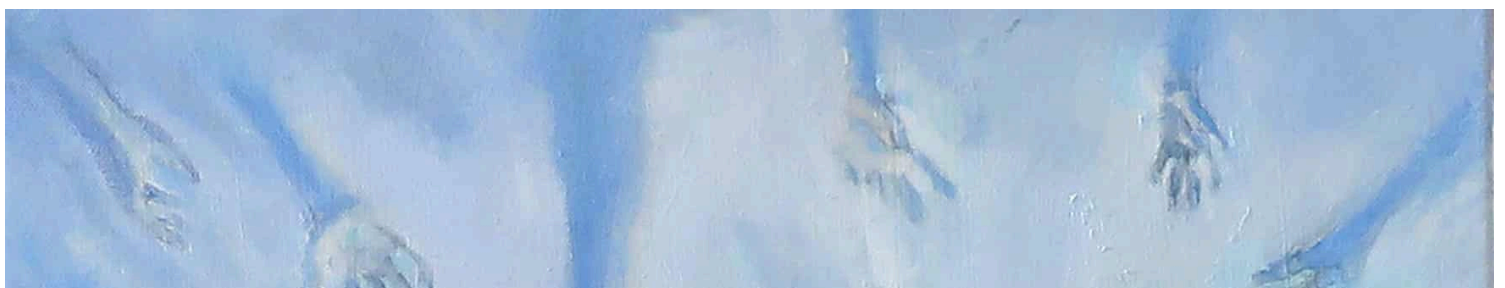
Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s



• **Died, by Eisa Hashemi, Afghanistan, 2019**

‘These are the silent voices of people who died and who did not see the truth. I am the silence of a nation. I am the pain of a nation. I am Eisa’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s







• **Poverty, by Javad Karimi, Afghanistan, 2019**

‘This painting shows the poverty of immigrants, their misery, and my hopes for a better life’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s



• **My Family, by Fateme Hossini, Afghanistan, 2019**

Fateme is 15 years old and has no formal art training, just natural talent. She is currently



living in the Moria camp with her family. This is a portrait of her family

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie's




• **We never chose this situation, by Senait Moges, Ethiopia, 2019**

‘As refugees our lives have become a game of football in Europe. The UN claim to protect us and yet they play the same game. We never chose this situation’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie's







Seni

MORIA REFUGEE

• **Dangerous journey, by Raha Amiri, Afghanistan, 2019**

‘This painting has great meaning: after terrible hardships and hard work, we succeed. This painting conveys the message of success. You can get what you want only if you try. This girl is a friend of mine, one of the successful women I met when we were on the boat in the Black Sea’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s



• **Child, by Murtaza Safari, Afghanistan, 2019**

‘On every step of our journey we have been faced with violence, often from those in

authority. What motivates these people to harbour hate for others, to follow orders blindly or to take pleasure in the violence inflicted on others?’

Photograph: Courtesy of Christie’s



- Refugees and migrants wait to be registered at Moria refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos in November 2015.

Photograph: Alkis Konstantinidis/Reuters



- 
- Topics
- Migration and development
- Refugees
- Greece
- Europe