

# firstdraft

Gallery 1

2 June 2023 – 9 July 2023

## Threads: a group exhibition by Refugee Art Project + Taring Padi

Leila Beigli; Tabz A; Mohammad; Majid Rabet; Hazeen; Taring Padi

*Threads* explores the tangible and intangible connections, ties of friendship, shared practices and emerging collaborations – all of which play a vital role in sustaining the community organisation Refugee Art Project. The exhibition will feature five collections of work by the artists: Tabz A, Leila Beigli, Mohammad, Majid Rabet in collaboration with the Australian Muslim deathmetal band Hazeen, and the Indonesian art collective Taring Padi. The latter's inclusion speaks to the initial steps in a process of collaboration and knowledge sharing between Refugee Art Project and Taring Padi, who are based in Yogyakarta. Both organisations participated in last year's Documenta 15 exhibition, which took place in Kassel Germany, and are committed to practices of informal knowledge sharing and creative partnership, encapsulated by the concept of 'lumbung' (denoting a communal rice barn or shared pool of resources). *Threads* foregrounds themes and practices which unite us as individuals and as organisations, reflecting critically on art in process and what is to come.

Gallery 2

**Staging Portraits: Queer  
Community photos at the  
Bearded Tit**

Dorcas Tang 邓佳颖

Gallery 3

**Body Says, No**

Danica I. J. Knežević

Gallery 4

**Main Drag**

Easton Dunne

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**Refugee Art Project** is a volunteer-run, not for profit community art organisation that supports people of an asylum seeker or refugee background. The organisation began in 2011 through regular art workshops conducted in Sydney's Villawood detention centre, before expanding to community-based studios in North Parramatta (2011-2018) and Ashfield (2019 to 2023). The collective aims to foster the creative self expression and cultural agency of people of a refugee background through art workshops, creative collaborations and community events.

**Taring Padi** is an art collective based in Yogyakarta, Indonesia that uses art as a tool for political expression and education for all. Untitled2Taring Padi (TP) proclaimed its existence in the political-cultural realm of Yogyakarta, declaring and announcing its mission statement (Preamble) and the "Five Evils of Culture" at the Yogyakarta LBH office on December 21, 1998. As a progressive cultural organisation, Taring Padi outlined its mission to revive "People's Culture," and to advocate and strategise for a united front supporting democratic and popular change in Indonesia. Taring Padi's statement was signed by a group of cultural activists, students, artists, and self-taught artists.

**Leila Beigli** came to Australia from Iran as a refugee in 2013. She was held in the offshore detention centre of Nauru before being brought to Sydney under the short-lived Medevac legislation in 2015. She and other refugees have been left in a state of limbo by the Australian government. She is not allowed to study but has enjoyed developing her art practice over the last five years.

**Tabz A** is a self-taught artist and graphic designer. Since she was twelve, Tabz has developed a practice of drawing that is influenced by diverse traditions of art, including Japanese Manga and European fantasy illustration. In 2016 her work was displayed at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, as part of Refugee Art Project's submission to the group exhibition Telling Tales: Excursions in Narrative Form curated by Rachel Kent. At the age of twelve, she had her first solo exhibition at the Thirring Villa Gallery in Ashfield, Sydney, entitled Aspects, which sought to capture experiences and moments in time that are vividly evocative, transient and haunting. Tabz' work alludes to personal experiences of trauma and injustice, which are refracted through the lens of fictional, genre horror and fantasy.

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**Mohammad** is a Rohingya man from Myanmar who lived in Malaysia for twelve years before coming to Australia as an asylum seeker in 2009. From a young age he wished to make art but had no tuition or opportunity to do so. He started drawing for the first time in 2012, inside Sydney's Villawood Detention Centre, where he was held in indefinite detention for five years. In that environment he mastered the technique of painting with ground coffee on paper. He now works as a professional tiler and last year took up painting with acrylic on canvas.

**Majid Rabet** is a multidisciplinary artist and inventor whose skills range across sculpture, painting, installation, and electrical and mechanical engineering. He came to Australia from Iran in 2010 and took up art for the first time inside Sydney's Villawood Detention Centre in 2011. He built his first guitar in 2018, at Refugee Art Project's community studio in Parramatta, for the Australian Muslim death metal band Hazeen. In 2022 he built an innovative solar and wind derived power generator in his back garden and many such pieces have been acquired by the Powerhouse Museum. These days he wishes to focus more on art than scientific innovation although his practice combines principles of both.

**Hazeen** is an anti-racist Muslim death metal band comprised of Safdar Ahmed (vocals and guitar), Can Yalcinkaya (drums) and various guest musicians. In 2022 Hazeen released their debut record Sovereign Murders on vinyl LP through Piranha records. Elements of that record contributed to the installation artwork Border Farce by Safdar Ahmed, Alia Ardon and Kazem Kazemi, which was featured in Documenta 15 in Kassel, Germany. In 2023 Hazeen performed at Mona Foma in Launceston, Tasmania.

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**Artworks** (clockwise from left, and top to bottom)

For sales enquiries, please

email [safdarnama@hotmail.com](mailto:safdarnama@hotmail.com)

Tabz A.

*Neverending*, 2022

animation - single-channel HD

4 minutes and 24 seconds

director/writer: Tabz Jebba; animation: Jin Hien

Lau; editor: Alia Ardon

Tabz A.

*Neverending*, 2022

graphite and pen on paper

Taring Padi - Yusuf

*Keep the fire on*, 2019

lino block print reduction

Taring Padi - Nur Seto S.

*DOA IBU*, 2019

MDF cut

Taring Padi - Bulan Fi Sabilillah

*Trapped*, 2021

woodcut reduction

Taring Padi collective

*Terompet Rakyat*, 2019

woodcut print

Taring Padi - Deni

*Free Palestine*, 2023

woodcut print

Taring Padi - Fitri Dk

*Women's March #2*, 2018

hardboard cut

Mohammad

*Rohingya Refugees 1-7*, 2023

acrylic on paper

Majid Rabet

*Frankenstein*, 2023

process photos, homemade guitar made from found objects

Majid Rabet,

*Hazeen guitar*, 2018

homemade guitar made from found objects

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Safdar Ahem and Can Yalcinkaya,

*Hazeen, 2022*

band shirt, vinyl, record and zine pages (Alien Citizen)

Safdar Ahmed and Alia Ardon

*Border Farce, 2022*

single-channel HD video

15 minutes and 55 seconds

key cast: Kazem Kazemi; cinematographer/editor:

Alia Ardon; set director: Majid Rabet

Leila Beigli

*My son on Nauru, 2023*

acrylic on canvas

Leila Beigli

*Women, Life, Freedom, 2023*

acrylic on canvas

Leila Beigli

*The Return of the Queen, 2019*

comic pages and watercolour on paper

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