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## HIDDEN STATEMENT

### ART IN AFGHANISTAN

May 30, 2023 – Ongoing

## 15 DIGITAL EXHIBITIONS

**DIGITAL:** <https://www.kunstverein-wiesbaden.de/en/hauptnavigation-nkv/exhibitions/digital>

On May 30, 2023, the digital exhibition series **Hidden Statement – Art in Afghanistan** opened with eight exhibitions of artists who are still in Afghanistan. A special feature is that all artists show their works under a self-chosen pseudonym to ensure their safety. The presentations are accompanied by curatorial statements and guest contributions, which flank the exhibitions in order to initiate a transcultural discussion of contemporary Afghan art.

Two years after the takeover by the Taliban, exhibitions by an additional fifteen artists will be mounted as a tribute to the strength and resilience of Afghan culture. The works presented are steeped in allusions to the current socio-political situation in the country. In addition to paintings and digital drawings, the focus is on photographs that depict various real, everyday longing as well as fictional situations.

Afghanistan is not only dominated by poverty and natural disasters, but also by terror, arbitrary rule, massive corruption, enormous restrictions on freedom, and increased attacks. This threatening situation complicates the everyday life of the people — already characterized by violence, permanent concern for people close to them, fear, flight, and resistance — and brings artistic creation to a virtual standstill. On top of that, the Taliban have completely banned the artistic depiction of living beings, particularly humans. Works of art are being destroyed by the artists themselves for security reasons, falling victim to looting and targeted destruction during house searches, or had to be left behind when people fled. However, many works still exist in secret, others only in documentation. At the same time, artists are still resisting, expressing their opinions through their work — against all obstacles and prohibitions.

To help art in Afghanistan regain visibility, artistic visions — which have been made anonymous for security reasons — will be presented to the worldwide public in continuous, digital, solo exhibitions under the title **Hidden Statement – Art in Afghanistan**. After two years, they will finally regain artistic visibility and recognition, as well as the opportunity to participate in international art discourse once again.

Following the idea of the *Central Collecting Point* Wiesbaden as a hub for a reconstruction of the museum landscape after WWII, a digital archive of Afghan art is being created to prevent further irreplaceable losses of Afghan culture. For the ongoing digital **Hidden Statement** exhibitions, Nassauischer Kunstverein

Wiesbaden cooperates with the **German Academy Rome Villa Massimo**, the **Goethe Institute Rome**, the **HFG Offenbach – University of Art and Design**, **Walter's Cube New York**, and the **weißensee school for art and design** in Berlin.

For the digital exhibitions **Hidden Statement**, Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden makes available its Belle Etage, digitized by **Walter's Cube**. More than 150 artists in Afghanistan will be given the opportunity for a digital solo exhibition to save their artworks from total erasure. For security reasons, the names of the artists will not be disclosed until they are safe. The exhibitions will be compiled by various artists and curators and will be published on the website of the Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden at regular intervals.

The **Goethe Institute Rome** and the **Deutsche Akademie Rom Villa Massimo** are jointly organizing a roundtable discussion with Afghan, Italian, and German participants on May 30, 2023, in which the current situation in Afghanistan will be examined from different perspectives. Contemporary art production has been a difficult endeavor in Afghanistan for many years. Thanks to the successful evacuation of **Rahraw Omarzad** (director of **CCAA – Center for Contemporary Art Afghanistan**) and his family of four to Rome, which is mainly due to the tireless efforts of **Carolyn Christov-Barkagiev**, we have been able to hear a little of the Afghan scene in 2021 Rome. Villa Massimo is following the development of **the CCAA in Exile** with great interest, recently founded in Frankfurt at the impetus of Omarzad, and is committed to maintaining the link between Afghanistan, Germany, and Italy. The Hidden Statement opening with an event at the Goethe Institute in Rome is an important step in this effort to keep the Afghan art scene internationally connected. The Goethe Institut plans to continue this cooperation in Germany as part of the Afghanistan focus of its project "Goethe-Institut in Exile" in autumn 2023.

Already with its campaign 'To Be in a Time of War', based on the initiative of **Yama Rahimi** from the **Offenbach University of Art and Design** has collectively expressed its awareness and sympathy for the situation of the people, especially the art students, in Afghanistan. The appeal for donations enabled seven art students from Kabul to make their way to Germany. In close cooperation with the **institute for spatial strategies of weißensee school for art and design**, concepts of presentation are developed in a workshop. Walter's Cube New York supports the humanitarian project by conducting workshops on creating digital exhibitions within the platform and providing technical support.

**Walter's Cube** is a digital platform that aims to democratize access to art and exhibitions by eliminating physical and temporal boundaries between art spaces and their potential audiences. **Walter's Cube** scans institution spaces and creates their digital twin to make them accessible 24/7 from all over the world. Having digitized over 1,000 exhibitions, **Walter's Cube** provides new opportunities for artists and curators to realize exhibitions in a digital format by archiving existing exhibitions or creating and publishing new exhibitions that don't exist in real life. Proudly taking part in **HIDDEN STATEMENT** — a project that shines light on the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan — and standing in solidarity with the Afghan people, we provide underrepresented and silenced Afghan artists the platform to showcase their work in the digital twin space of the Nassauischer

Kunstverein Wiesbaden, recognizing the impact of art in uniting people by transcending cultural and societal barriers.

**Aid – A** helps artists from all over the world who are persecuted in their home countries because of their personal commitment to freedom of expression, human rights, and democracy, and who are prevented from working in the fields of theatre, visual arts, literature, film, and music. The artists are often forced to leave their countries and build a new existence in exile.

The project **Hidden Statement** is made possible by the support of the **Cultural Office of the State Capital Wiesbaden – FLUXUS SEX TIES Kunst Sommer 2023**



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## **DATES /**

### **ADMISSION /**

Access to the digital exhibition is free of charge at any time and from anywhere.

### **DONATIONS /**

**Aid – A** for direct support of the artists — inside on site in Afghanistan:

IBAN: DE14 4306 0967 2071 1467 00

**Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden** for the realization of further digital exhibitions within the project **Hidden Statement**.

IBAN: DE 7951 0500 1501 0000 0997

## Press Images /

Please consider the copyright. The use of the images in connection with the news coverage of the exhibition is permitted. We will gladly provide you with the requested pictures in printable solution. In return, we look forward to receiving a specimen copy/document link.



**Hidden Statement –  
Art in Afghanistan**



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**weißensee**