

# Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - Evaluation Report

AFGHANI

WAR

RUGS

RE-

IMAGINED



# Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - Contents

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*Yorkton Workshop, venue of Afghani War Rugs Reimagined©Pearson Loyd*



# Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - What people said

I asked: What was your biggest takeaway from the event?

I much appreciate the opportunity to learn about the tradition of afghani rug making and its historical and political relevance through Ghaf's work.

The artworks displayed have an enigmatic and alluring presence to them, uncovering many layers of meaning within a visual system very

The diversity of experiences of Afghans

How textiles can reflect the healing and scarring

"Really enjoyed the workshop and how textiles" are in all cultures

Being in the afghan community was great experience for me.

It made me think about not just the experience of Afghans, but their experience in the UK in relation to others' assumptions about Afghanistan.

Learning that early war rugs depict Russian guns, tanks etc and in turn learning about the Soviet invasion which I had no knowledge of prior to visiting this exhibition.

'very talented multimedia artist with socially engaged practice'

'My main takeaway was what high quality work I encountered, really great!'



## Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - Project aims

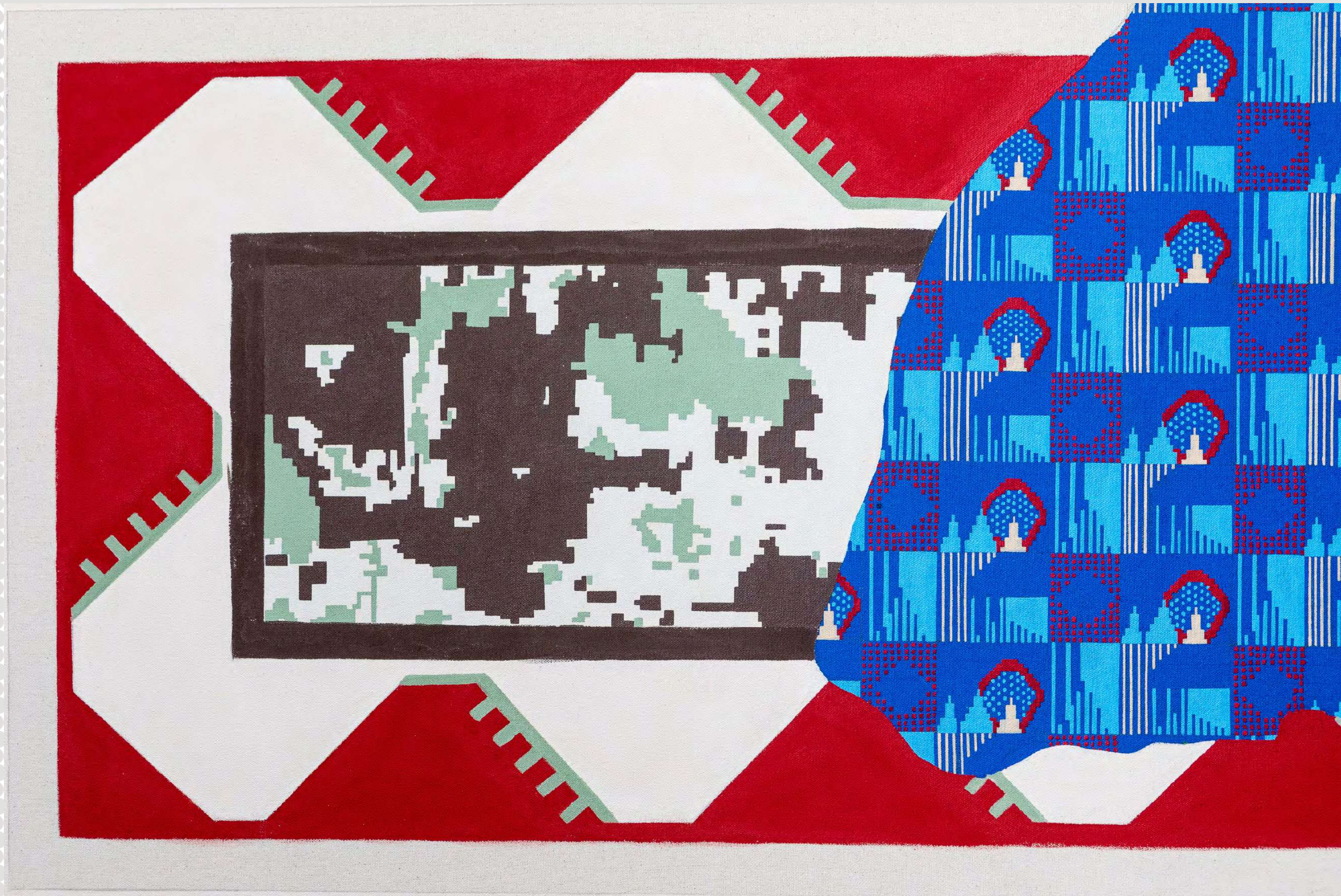


- Participatory workshops for the Afghan diaspora community. and General public this project
- Developing my artistic practice in painting and textile during studio time
- Producing new artworks centered on Afghan diaspora's lived experiences being in the UK during Fall of Kabul, 2021
- Showcasing work in an exhibition as my first solo exhibition with partnering organisations

*Afghani War Rugs Reimagined exhibition, centre: Homage to Najia, right: Oral history stories Photograph © Maryna Sulym*



# Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - Development and Funding



- ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND  
£ 12,905 funding
- a-n The Artist Information Company  
£790 funding
- COUNTERPOINTS ARTS  
£1000 commission  
£1800 In-kind
- YORKTON WORKSHOP  
£4,200 In-kind (venue)

a·n



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

**Yorkton Workshops  
COUNTERPOINTS.**



# Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - Selected Exhibition Contents



*Homage to Naseer*



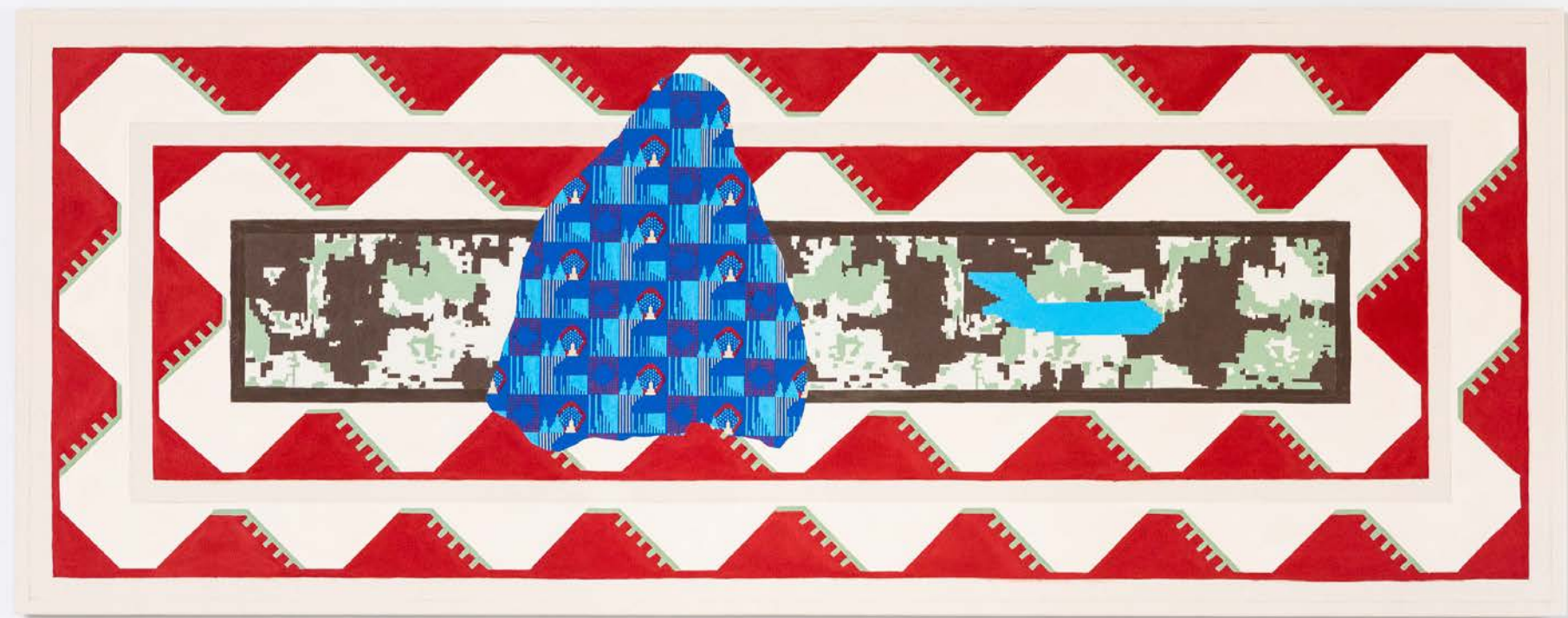
*Homage to Unittled*



*Audio transcript: Najia*



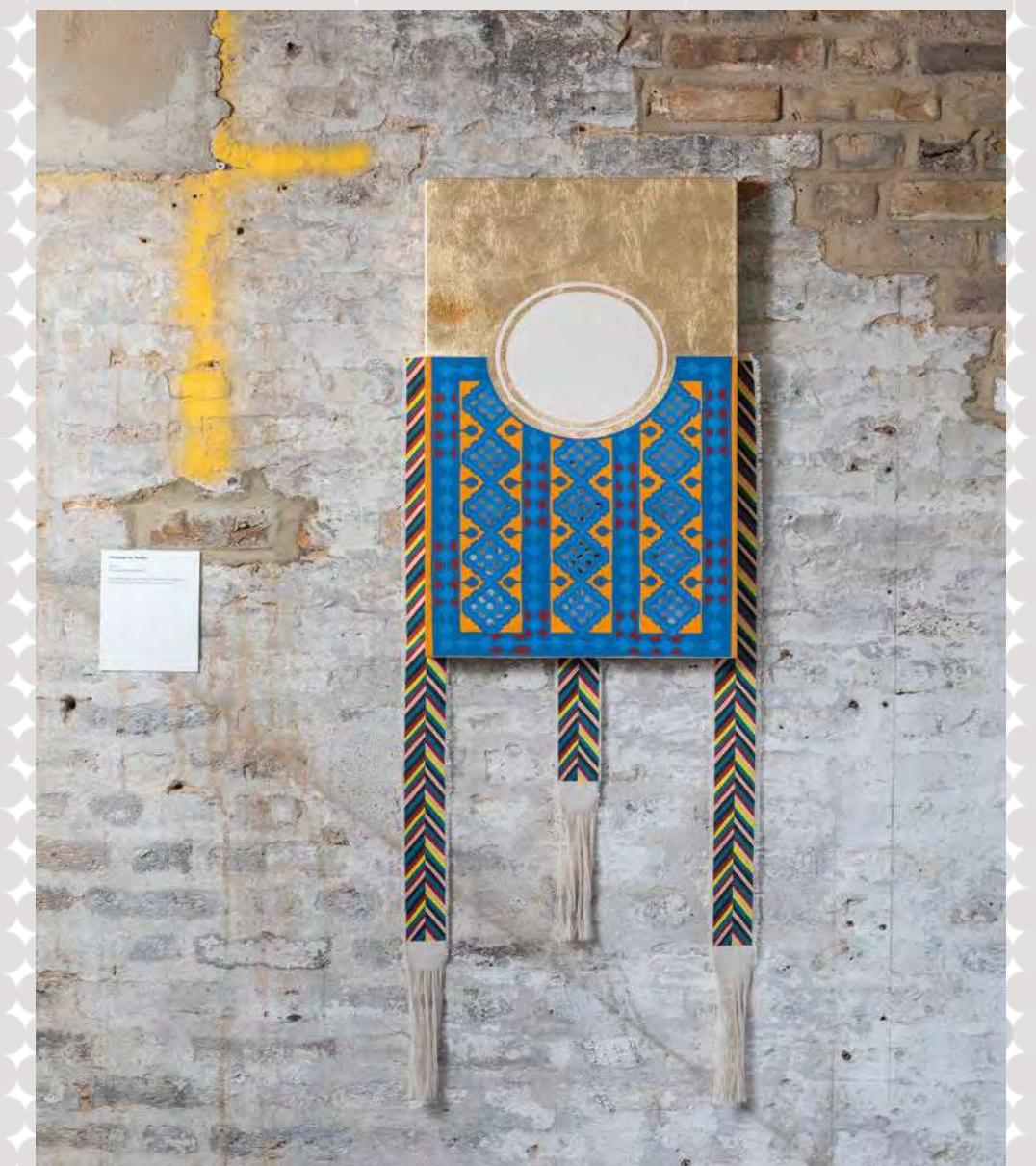
*C 17*



*Homage to Najia*



*God Willing*



*Homage to Nadia*



# Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - Conflict Textiles Event




## CONFLICT TEXTILES

**Workshop: Afghani War Rugs Reimagined**  
19<sup>th</sup> June 2023  
[Photo gallery](#)

The exhibition [Afghani War Rugs Reimagined](#) was [Ghafar Tajmohammad's](#), personal reinterpretation of Afghan War Rugs. It showcased expanded paintings, handwoven rugs, and engaging audio and text narratives from the Afghan diaspora in the UK. A poignant response to the events surrounding the Fall of Kabul in August 2021, it aimed to preserve memories and encourage dialogue between cultures.

As part of the exhibition programme [Conflict Textiles](#) curator Roberta Bacic facilitated a 'hands on' textile workshop in which participants were invited to 'dress' a cardboard silhouette figure within the context of [Refugee Week 2023](#) (19 - 25 June),

This collaboration with Conflict Textiles developed through Ghafar's participation in several recent Conflict Textile led initiatives: a workshop at the London School of Economics [Anticolonial Archiving as Method](#) (March 2023) and [workshops](#) in Belfast and Derry (April 2023), connected to the [Mujeres Disruptivas / Disruptive Women](#) exhibition.



Conflict Textiles curator Roberta Bacic preparing to display some arpilleras from the Conflict Textiles collection.

My partnership with Conflict Textiles resulted in a single workshop held during the opening of my solo exhibition. The workshop was run and facilitated by Roberta Bacic, the Senior Curator. Participants spent three hours stitching together a handmade doll using sentimental fabrics.

Roberta brought textiles from Conflict Textiles that explored conflicts from other communities, such as Latin America through Arpilleras.

Number of Participants: 20



# Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - Counterpoints Arts

# COUNTERPOINTS.

## AFGHANI WAR RUGS REIMAGINED

**START:**

19 June @ 12:00 pm

**END:**

24 June @ 5:00 am

**EVENT CATEGORIES:**

Community & Participation, Visual Arts



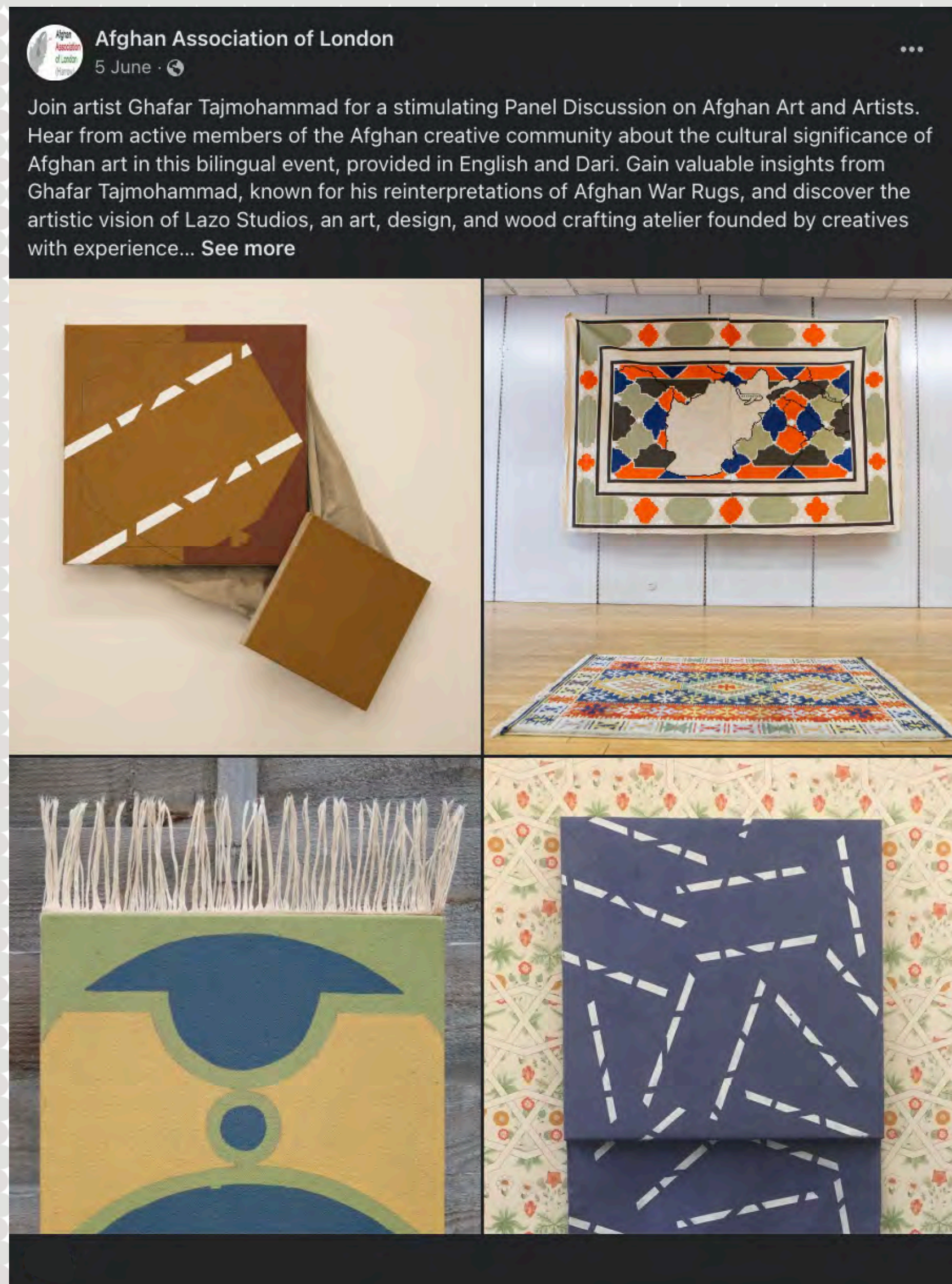
“We have worked with Ghafar for several years and this project represented a significant step in his development as an artist. He delivered an ambitious creative and participatory programme with great success. The exhibition was hugely impressive, along with an extensive series of events. Feedback from everyone we spoke to was strongly positive. We are already looking forward to his next project!”

-Tom Green (Senior Producer)





# Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - Afghan Association of London (Harrow)



My partnership with the Afghan Association of London (Harrow) focused on engaging the Afghan Diaspora in the exhibition through a talk conducted by Lazo Studio, an Afghan-founded bespoke furniture maker.

Following the talk, we shared a community meal featuring Afghan cuisine (*Kabuli Pilau*). No pictures were taken as audience members requested not to be photographed

**Art project**

Date: June 24th, 1pm (ticketed, free)

London, 24th June – “Afghani War Rugs Reimagined,” a thought-provoking visual art exhibition by artist Ghafar Tajmohammad will run at the Yorkton Workshop in Hackney from June 19th until June 25th, commissioned by Counterpoints Arts, supported by Arts Council England and partnered with Afghan Association London Harrow.

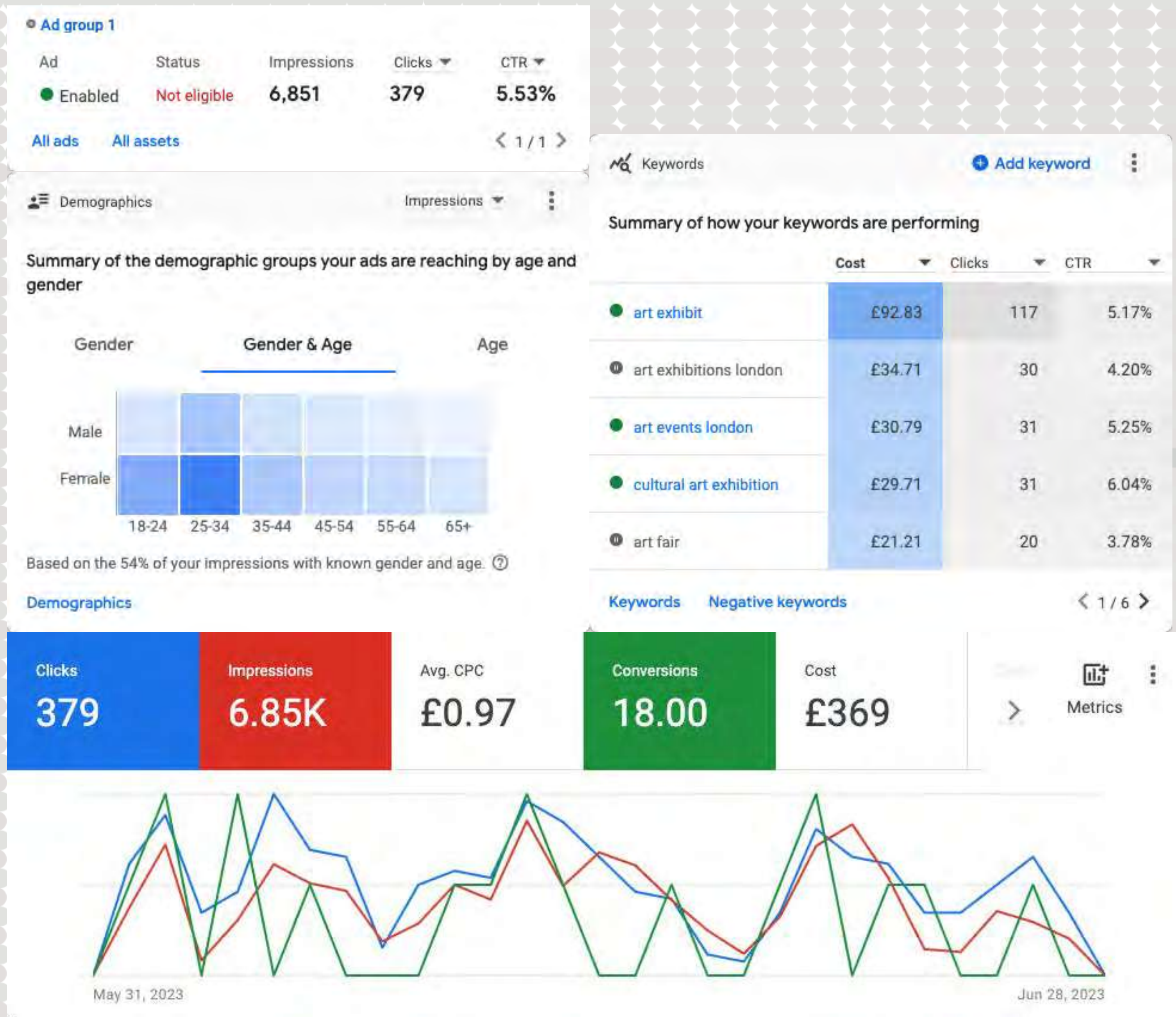
The exhibition invites visitors to explore Ghafar Tajmohammad’s personal reinterpretations of Afghan War Rugs. Through a unique blend of art and oral history the exhibition showcases expanded paintings, handwoven rugs, and engaging audio and text narratives that go beyond the pictorial symbols of conflict and violence, to examine instead the lived migration elements of the Afghan diaspora in the UK.

Delve into the rich tapestry of Afghan culture and gain insight into the experiences of the multigenerational Afghan diaspora living in the UK. This exhibition serves as a response to the recent events surrounding the Fall of Kabul in August 2021, aiming to preserve memories and encourage dialogue between cultures.

Ghafar Tajmohammad is a visual artist who works primarily in painting, but extends beyond the conventional painting display and into the realm of expanded painting. Where the artwork discards the conventional wooden stretcher bars in favor of existing as expanded paintings. This approach allows the artist to stress the inherent textile materiality of raw canvas and connect with the rich culture of textiles and carpet weaving. Where recognisable motifs, imagery, and geometry fuse to form narratives suggestive of dual identities. Conceptually, the artist practice reflects upon the idea of home for migrant communities. It expresses the abstract search for belonging and the lived experiences of those made to relocate. As a British Afghan who was displaced as a child, Ghafar’s work is community-oriented focus and in his first solo exhibition chooses to advocate for the Afghan diaspora voices so often unheard.



# Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - Google Ad Campaign Analytics



**Overall Impressions**  
6,851

**Top 3 Demographics**  
 Female aged 25-34 = 28.83%  
 Female aged 18-24 = 15.23%  
 Male aged 25-34 = 10.88%

**Engagement**  
 379 clicks  
 18 conversions

**Search keywords Click-through rate**  
 Cultural art exhibition = 6.04%  
 Art events London = 5.25%  
 Art exhibit = 5.17%  
 Art exhibition London = 4.20%  
 Art fair = 3.78%



# Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - Artist Website Analytics

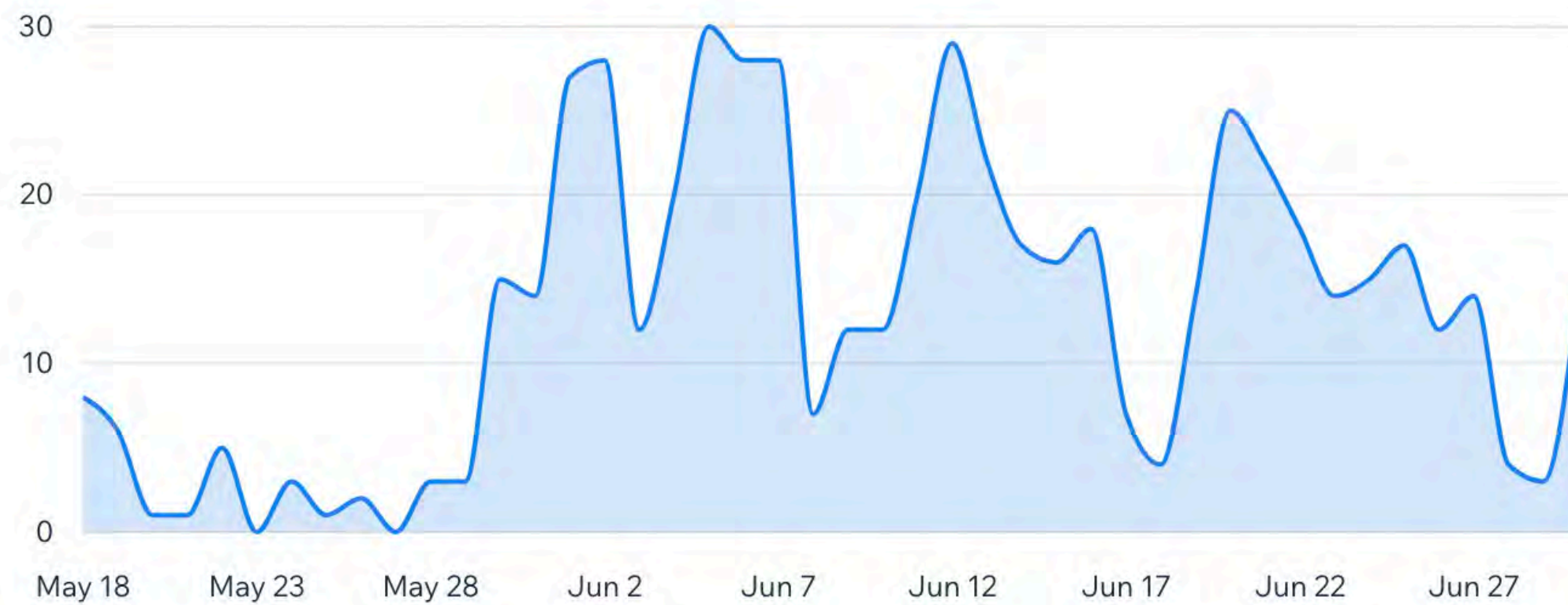
## Traffic Overview

May 18 - Jun 30, 2023 compared to previous period (Apr 4 - May 17, 2023)

Site sessions  
571 ↑ 501%

Unique visitors  
493 ↑ 575%

### Sessions over time



[See Full Report](#)

### Sessions by traffic source

Traffic Source	Change	Sessions
Google	↑ 3,092%	415
Direct	↑ 97%	118
Instagram	↓ 15%	11
cain.ulster.ac.uk	↑ 167%	8
refugeeweek.org.uk		6

[See Full Report](#)

### New vs returning visitors



[See Full Report](#)

## Traffic Overview

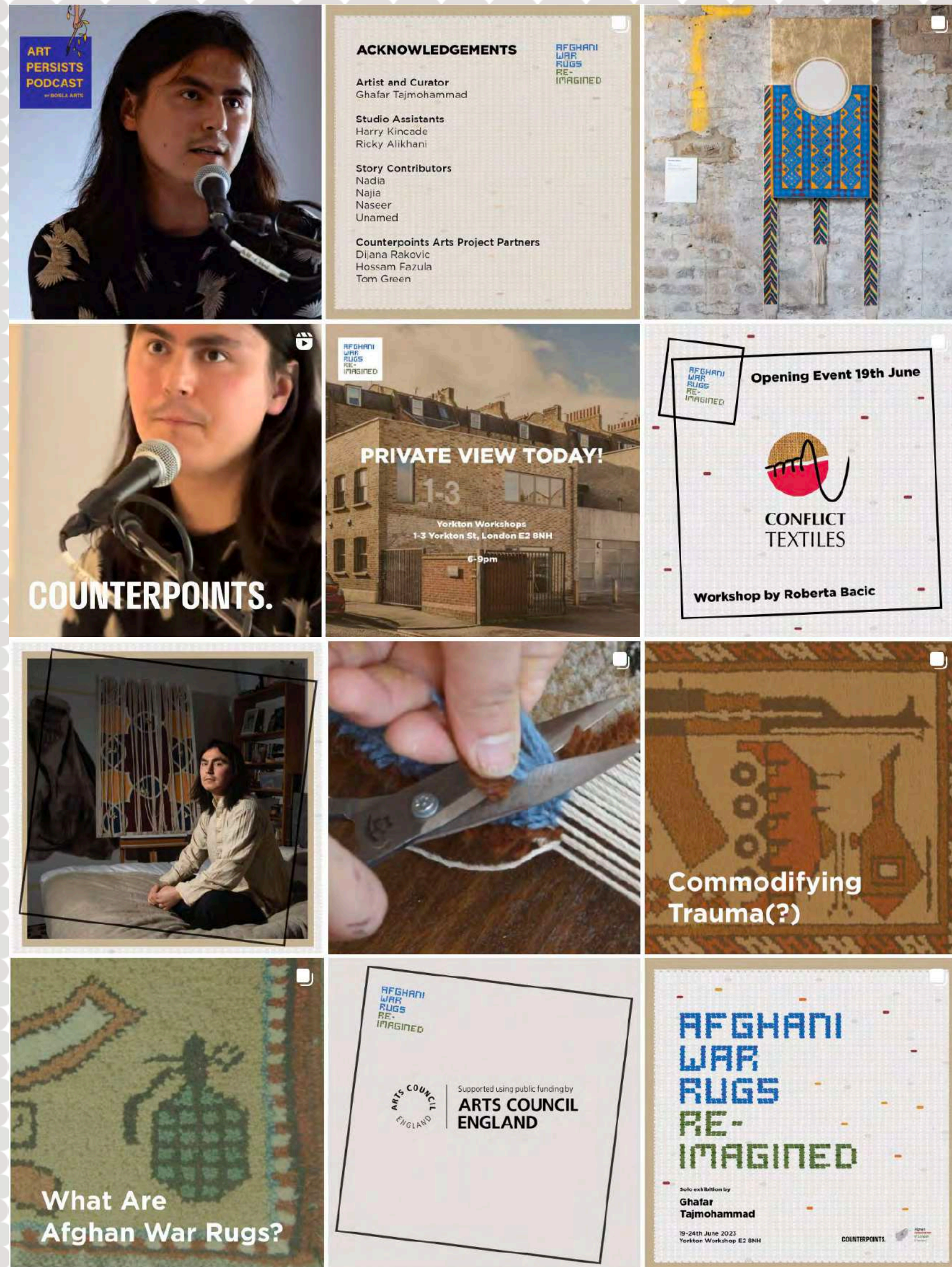
501% increase  
493 Unique visitors

## Traffic Source

Google = 415  
Direct (website) = 118  
Instagram = 11  
Cain.ulster.ac.uk (conflict textiles) = 8  
Refugeeweek.org.uk (counterpoints Arts) = 6



# Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - Social Media Campaign



ghaf.tm

victoriahelenastudio also the ethical implication of commodifying trauma is a far reaching topic... Ai Wei Wei is the king of it and making millions.... Alfredo Jaar may be a close second only financially but not in subject matter by any means. But they will hide behind the liberal notion of 'bringing awareness' to suffering or some rather superficial response. I mean the Barca Nostra is the closest thing to a public questioning of artists doing this, but even that outrage was merely based on it not being labeled properly. The lack of labeling meant the public didn't get their awareness to wax poetically in full pearl clutching fashion about the tragedy of migrant deaths and instead got caught out taking selfies with what they thought was just a rusty ship at the biennale. Don't even get me started on the complete financial fuckup on the artist and project manager's part for that piece 🤔 But I digress... it is a topic I'm very close to because my work was all political before they beat it out of me in my MA, but I feel there is a difference between making work about suffering an artist is relating to through their own lived experience brought on by current events vs blatant exploitation. Where that line is drawn can probably get very blurry. And perhaps maybe that difference that I just pointed out is something clouded by my own personal justification as well, who knows. There is

maryamhinahasnainstudio This is very exciting! Congratulations 🎉  
31 w 1 like Reply

— View replies (1)

victoriahelenastudio oooh I can't wait ghaf!!!  
31 w 1 like Reply

awornf you know ill be there!!!  
31 w 1 like Reply

studio.j.burke Looking forward to seeing the work!  
31 w 1 like Reply

anniejewis Congratulations!  
31 w 1 like Reply

tasalla.tabasom So sad to miss looks awesome  
25 w Reply

oh.saray 🥳🥳🥳🥳🥳 amazing work!!! Congratulations @ghaf.tm  
24 w Reply

iolanda.chirico Amazing artwork and incredible designs!  
25 w 1 like Reply

Total rate  
3838

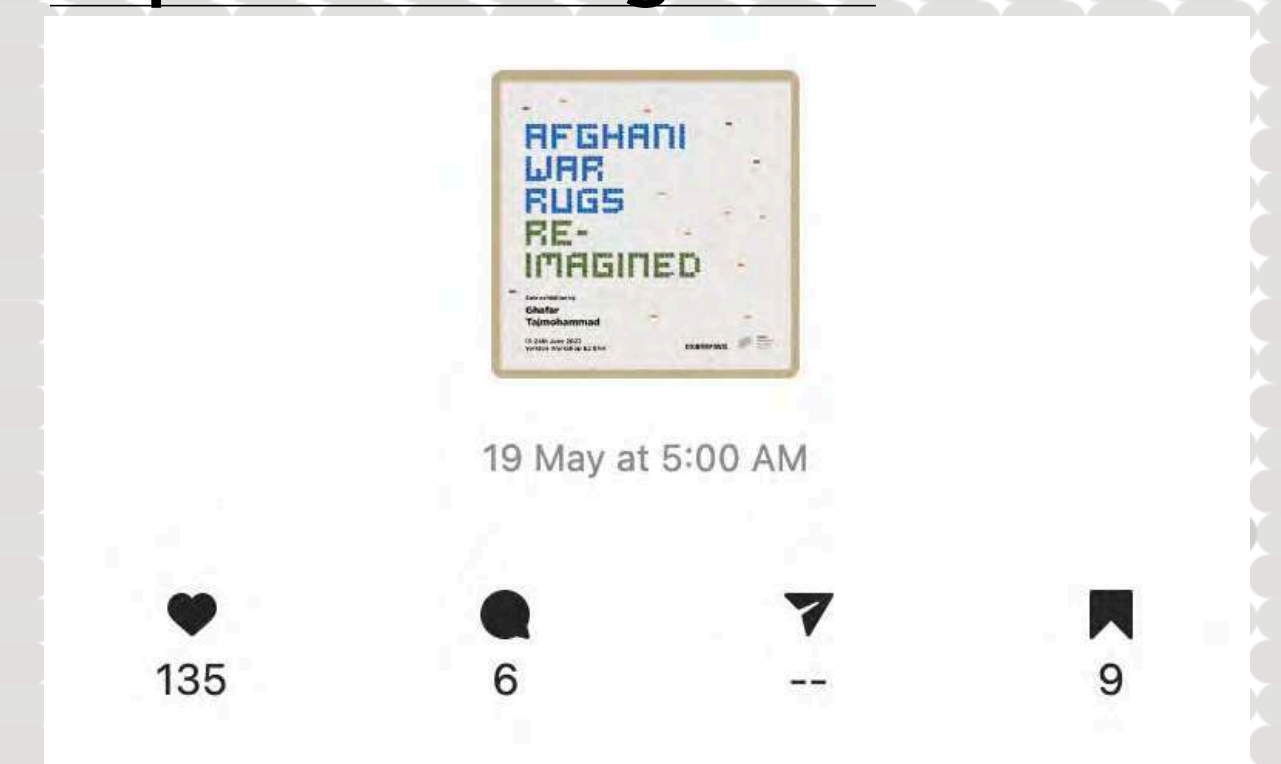
Total Likes  
782

Total Comment  
49

Total Profile Activity  
113

Reach to Non-followers  
1117

Top Performing Post





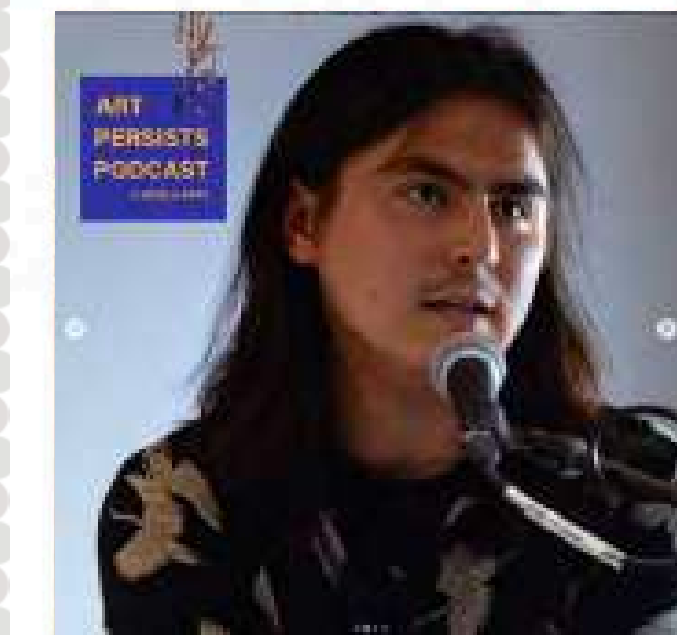
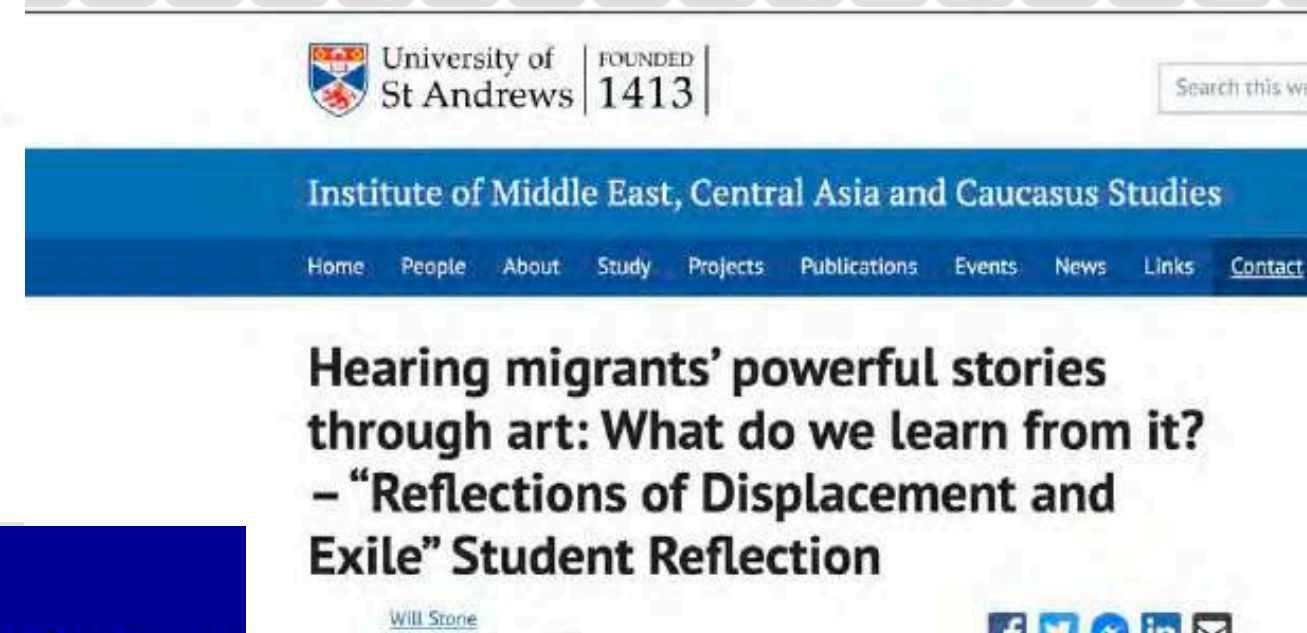
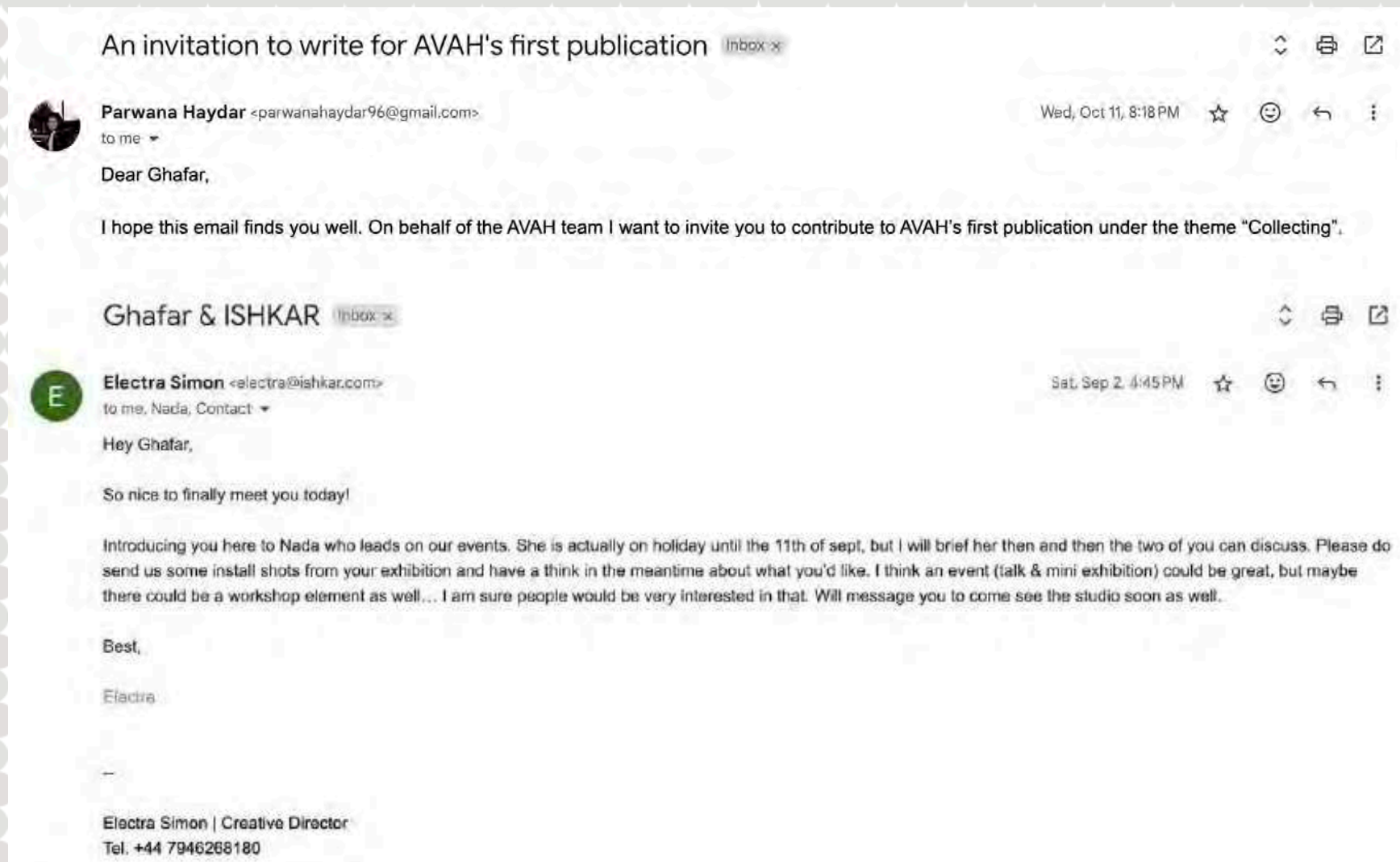
# Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - Post Exhibition

Following my solo exhibition I received interest from the following organisations

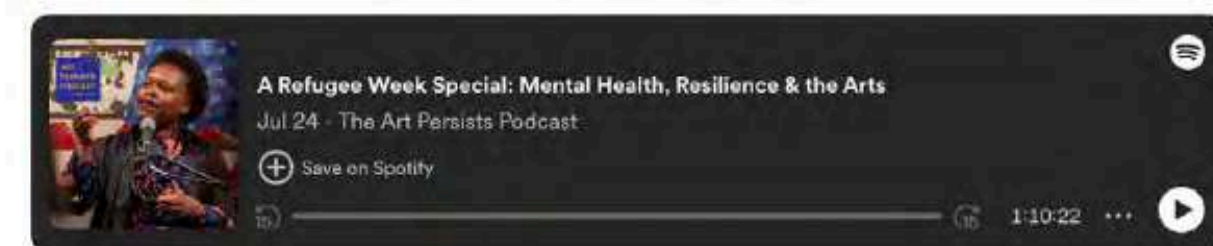
- Ishkar
- Christopher Farr
- AVAH (Afghan Visual Arts and History)
- Afghan Aid HQ

On top of this:

- I held a podcast talk with Bosla Arts
- I held a live artist talk with Chelsea College of Arts
- Had my exhibition written about by University of St Andrews



## Episode 19: A Refugee Week Special: Mental Health, Resilience & the Arts



We launch Season 4 with a special episode recorded live during Refugee Week in collaboration with Counterpoints Arts! The conversation brought together 3 renowned artists Laura Nyahuye, Ghafar Tajmohammad, and Olga Tkachenko, together, we spoke about the place of art in mental health recovery, along with resilience and it's limitations in each of the artists' contexts; from addressing social issues through art, to the Afghan diaspora experience, and finally escaping war in Ukraine.



The author (left) with the artist (right) at the 'Afghani War Rugs Reimagined' exhibition in London in June 2023. Photo: Maryna Sulym.

### TALK AND WALK

Public Programmes of the Exhibition  
Woven Expression: Narrating Stories Through Patterns

**(Un) Weaving Stories**  
In-Conversation with  
**Raisa Kabir & Ghafar Tajmohammad,**  
Moderated by  
**Manmeet K Walia**

A Panel Discussion  
**Date:** Thursday 6 July  
**Time:** 6.30PM - 7.45PM  
**Location:** Banqueting Hall, Chelsea College of Arts  
**Speakers:** Raisa Kabir and Ghafar Tajmohammad  
**Moderator:** Manmeet K Walia



**Raisa Kabir**  
Artist & Weaver



**Ghafar Tajmohammad**  
Artist



**Manmeet K Walia**  
Curator





# Afghani War Rugs Reimagined - Acknowledgements

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

AFGHANI  
WAR  
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### **Artist and Curator**

Ghafar Tajmohammad

### **Studio Assistants**

Harry Kincade

Ricky Alikhani

### **Story Contributors**

Nadia

Najia

Naseer

Unnamed

### **Counterpoints Arts Project Partners**

Dijana Rakovic

Hossam Fazula

Tom Green

### **Afghan Association Project Partners**

Karim Shirin

Noor Mohammed Sultani

Sohail Shirzad

### **Conflict Textiles Workshop Facilitators**

Breege Doherty

Roberta Bacic

### **Translator**

Asad Shayan

### **Graphics Design**

Jordi Rovira

### **Social Media Content Creators**

Kenna Lau