



Last October, 40 cameras were delivered to students at two girls' schools in remote Badakhshan Province by an American woman – a photographer on assignment in Afghanistan – who made the difficult trip on behalf of the UN Committee of New Canaan.

Using the simple point & shoot cameras provided, these first-time photographers (some of whom are pictured above) captured the austere beauty of their homeland as well as the engaging smiles of friends and family. Their images have a disarmingly fresh and candid quality. The vibrant color and dramatic, complex compositions make these amateur photographs all the more striking as they illuminate these lives.

Students at New Canaan High School and St. Luke's School have undertaken a similar photo-documentary project. Their images will be sent to the Badakhshan schools after this exhibition.

ROSHAN: Light & Promise

Photographs by Young Women in Afghanistan

A cultural exchange project by students at
two girls' schools in Badakhshan Province
and at two New Canaan high schools

MARCH 12 – APRIL 15, 2006

OPENING RECEPTION
Sunday, March 12th, 3-6 pm

Carriage Barn Arts Center • Betty Barker Gallery
Waveny Park • New Canaan, CT
203-972-1895 • www.carriagebarn.org

This Exhibition and Programs are Sponsored by The New Canaan Society for the Arts,
The United Nations Committee of New Canaan, and Voices of September 11th

This premier exhibition offers an extraordinary glimpse into the lives of Afghan students at two new girls' schools in Badakhshan Province through a remarkable series of photographs taken by the girls and young women themselves.

In 2004, the United Nations Committee of New Canaan focused on the plight of war-torn Afghanistan, and specifically that of young women who had been deprived of any education during the seven-year rule of the Taliban. In March 2005, the Committee's Aid Afghanistan School Project, with funds generously contributed by community organizations, schools, churches, and individuals, enabled our Afghan partner to open two schools in Badakhshan Province where 500 girls and young women are learning the three "r's" for the first time.

This Exhibition celebrates the successful completion of the first year's schooling and the establishment of a direct connection between our community and the young Afghan women being educated. Forming the basis of the connection are the pictures taken by the Afghan students with cameras provided by the Aid Afghanistan School Project. Based on these pictures, New Canaan students have been motivated to create a complementary photo-documentary of their lives to share with the Afghan students, resulting in a cultural exchange program and a means of teaching us all more about Afghanistan. – *The United Nations Committee of New Canaan*

Voices of September 11th, an internationally recognized leader in providing support and advocacy in response to the 9/11 attacks, is painfully aware of the outcomes associated with the lack of understanding of cultural diversity. An important part of our mission is the Building Bridges Program created to foster improved relations with all countries confronting terrorism. Photography is an international language that bridges linguistic and geographic differences, allowing us to see the human similarities that bind us all together. This exhibition and exchange project are opportunities to increase respect, acceptance, and open-mindedness to another culture.

– *Voices of September 11th*

Roshan means 'light' in Dari, the language of Northern Afghanistan. It also means 'clarity' and 'understanding'. It's a fitting title for an exhibition of photography – the medium of light – one we hope will create a bridge between two cultures.

For more information, please visit www.uncommitteeofnc.org and www.voicesofsept11.org

Please join us for these special, free programs in connection with this exhibition:

Thursday, March 16th
7:00 pm
Perspectives On Women and Islam
with Daisy Khan
and Dr. Marilyn Walker

Ms. Khan is Executive Director of the American Society for Muslim Advancement. She lectures regularly and has been featured in PBS and National Geographic documentaries on Islam. Ms. Khan counsels Muslims on dual cultural identity, gender relations, and the challenge of integrating Islam with modernity. Dr. Walker is an adjunct Associate Professor in Columbia University's Department of Middle Eastern and Asian Language and Cultures, where she teaches comparative religious history. Her research focuses on Medieval Islam. In courses on Middle Eastern topics, Dr. Walker connects current issues to their historical and cultural contexts.

Sunday, March 26th
3:00 pm
To Badakhshan and Back
with Andrea Camuto,
Photojournalist

Hear Andrea Camuto's account of her trip to Badakhshan Province to deliver the cameras, her impressions of the girls, their schools, and their lives. A graduate of Oberlin College and the photojournalism program at New York's International Center of Photography, Ms. Camuto covered the Afghan elections for the Winter 2006 issue of *Ms. Magazine*. She will also discuss her other photography projects, including her work in Cambodia and West Africa, and show slides of her images.

Date To Be Announced
Beyond the Burkha: Afghan Women Today
with Sima Wali,
CEO, Refugee Women
in Development

A native of Afghanistan, Sima Wali's personal experience as a product of war inspires her work with RefWID, an international non-profit institution focusing on women in conflict, post-conflict reintegration, and human rights. She works to advance the status of women in Afghanistan, secure their full participation in its new democracy and make them equal beneficiaries of development funds. Ms. Wali, who has received several humanitarian awards, has traveled extensively in the region and will give an account of the current state of affairs for women's rights, human rights, and the rebuilding of civil society in Afghanistan.