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## Art Exhibition “The Shape of Life” Media Advisory

Greece - Five migrants and refugees currently living in Greece, are joining their talents and present their artworks in the framework of the art exhibition “The Shape of Life”, organized by IOM, the UN Migration Agency.

On **Friday 1 June at 18:00**, an **opening event** will take place with the five artists being available to discuss their art. The exhibition which will run until 7 June 2018 features works by Syed Mostafa Seyyed al-Dini (Iran), Majed Ebraheem (Syria), Mehrdad Mehrabpour (Iran), Elias Saffarzadeh (Afghanistan) and Emal Niazi (Afghanistan).

The artwork on display will be a combination of contemporary styles and techniques such as watercolor, oil color, paper. The aim of the painting exhibition is to empower the artists in pursuing their talent and aspirations while also introducing the local audience to the migrant communities through art.

IOM’s initiative for the painting exhibition is part of the European Commission-funded programme “Humanitarian and recovery support to the affected population in Greece” aiming to empower migrants and refugees, to provide adequate living standards and services, as well as to promote community based practices.

### Info about the Exhibition

**Opening: Friday 1 June at 18:00**

Duration: 1 - 7 June 2018

Every day: 10:00 - 20:00 (\*Closed on Monday 14:00-19:00)

### Free Entrance

Vrysaki, Living space of Art and Action

Vrisakiou 17, Plaka, Athens

### About the artists

#### **Syed Mostafa Seyyed al-Dini (Iran)**

“From as far as I can remember, I was painting. I studied next to one of the best art professors in Iran, Reza Mahdavi, then to the Academy of Design and Visualization and to Hadi Tagizadeh’s Academy where I was introduced to Gestalt and the effects of each form on another. I try to extend my response to emotions that surround me at my artwork, but in the shape of formal structures”.

#### **Majed Ebraheem (Syria)**

“I started painting since I learned how to hold a pen. Then I studied at the Fathi Mohamed Institute of Fine Arts in Aleppo, Syria. I like to paint what I think and feel. I try to form poetic and philosophical ideas visually. I like abstract art because it reflects the spirit of the present, and allows the exchange of ideas. It gives me great freedom in dealing with color”.



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**Emal Niazi (Afghanistan)**

“I began painting since I was a small child. I learned it on my own and then taught my whole family. I am alone in Thiva’s open accommodation center, where I facilitate painting lessons for adults and children. I have painted the walls of the school and common areas. Painting makes me feel happy and teaching other people makes me even happier. I started by drawing faces and now I enjoy painting beautiful landscapes”.

**Mehrdad Mehrabpour (Iran)**

“Back in Iran I was a construction contractor and I was designing sometimes. But I started painting when I was in detention in Thessaloniki. Now that I am living in Malakasa’s open accommodation center, I continue to paint, sing and play music. I play the piano and the setar, an Iranian music instrument”.

**Elias Saffarzadeh (Afghanistan)**

“I was already in Greece, at Oinofyta’s open accommodation center when I painted for the first time. I painted flowers on the walls to decorate the space, make it look nicer. Then I started making things out of paper and I enjoyed it very much. I feel creative when I make my artworks. I also like making paper flowers and include them in paintings”.

*The artists and IOM are **available for interview by request**. For more information and for interviews please contact: Christine Nikolaidou at IOM Greece, Tel: +302109919040 ext. 248, Email: [cnikolaidou@iom.int](mailto:cnikolaidou@iom.int)*