



Khaled Fazl, 1996. *Miniature.*

1993, and its collection of European and Asian artifacts were being lost to war damage and looting. Under the Taliban's 2001 edict, many artistic and religious works were deliberately destroyed, including ancient Buddhist temples and statues.

Even since the fall of the Taliban, contemporary art in Afghanistan has been having trouble making a comeback. Fazl states that this is due to beliefs, personal poverty and a broken economy.

Today, Fazl lives in Vancouver with his wife and two-year-old son. He is completing his industrial design studies at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, while he continues painting. He paints for his family, for exhibitions and for buyers — when he knows they are committed to taking care of his work.

Fazl says that people in Western

countries have a narrow view of Afghanistan and its people, based on only a few stereotypical images from magazines and television: mujahedeen wielding AK-47 rifles, or women rendered anonymous and mute beneath burqas. He hopes to counteract that preconception, expanding his subject matter to include more peaceful portrayals of everyday life in his homeland, such as people at marketplaces or men playing buzkashi, a traditional sport. These are aspects of Afghani life that people have struggled to keep alive, despite generations of war and repression.

Fazl's other passion is industrial design. He is particularly drawn to designs based on the organic form movement that followed World War II, such as the work of Alvar Aalto, who was inspired by landscape in his domestic design work.

Despite his personal history and the grim subject matter of some of his paintings, Fazl has strong humanist beliefs, influenced by Sartre. "My idea is, respect human life, human society, and do ... something so that, after you are gone, your name still remains."

Peter Tupper
Freelance journalist
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On call

At four am
the ward computer
gives up on me
and strings of numbers
merge
like autumn rain.

A nameless man
has died.
His next-bed neighbour's
still trying
to make sense of life.

There are five
still waiting
to be seen.
And eight more hours to go
before I sleep.

The next is eighteen
and blue.
Her mother knows about CF
more than we do.
Years of fear and pain
have now become
an overwhelming anger.

And I, about to lose
the last of my compassion,
pretend
for the billionth of a second
that I can hear the rain.

Katerina Pavenski
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