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The Journey of Memories Arrives at Hartford Public Library
On display now through September 30th

(Hartford, CT) – Hartford Public Library (HPL) has the honor of hosting the art show, *Journey of Memories*, for the month of September. *Journey of Memories* is a heartfelt tribute to the cherished moments and cultural treasures that women forced to leave Afghanistan, Syria, and the Congo have carried with them to Hartford. Despite being unable to bring all their belongings to their new homes, these resilient women have captured the essence of their memories through their evocative artwork.

Each piece of art in *Journey of Memories* is a window into the vibrant tapestry of their past, every stitch embodies a treasured memory from their homeland. These artworks serve as a poignant reminder of the beauty and richness of their cultures, preserving fragments of their valuable time spent with family and friends.

Journey of Memories aims to promote art and culture as powerful mediums for storytelling and expression, emphasizing the value of memory in preserving one's identity and heritage, as women begin new lives. By sharing their memories through art, these women honor their past and inspire others to appreciate the beauty and resilience found in diverse immigrant communities across the world, while giving us unexpected appreciation for our new neighbors and friends.

Forced displacement, an increasingly common and permanent condition--due to war, conflict, violence, and climate disasters--unsettles the lives of millions, provoking unexpected journeys. Over 117.3 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide, as of December, 2023, and this number has increased every year over the past decade, according to the UNHCR. Consequently, one in every 69 people in the world has been separated from the "familiar"—their homes, families, communities, and livelihoods. They bring with them unique skills and insights, ready to start rebuilding their lives and raising their children in new places--like Greater Hartford. In doing so they are woven into the fabric of our communities (<https://www.unhcr.org/us/global-trends>).

Journey of Memories was guided by the compassionate leadership of Neda Izadi and Isabella Daou, with assistance from Trinity College students.

Neda Izadi, an Iranian artist residing in the US with a background in puppetry, utilizes art as a medium to reflect human rights issues, especially immigrant rights. She received her M.F.A. in Dramatic Arts with a focus on puppetry from the University of Connecticut in 2020.



Isabella Daou is the Manager of Education Services for IRIS in Hartford. She creates and runs educational programming for youth and adults, including ESOL courses, tutoring services, college preparation, and summer programming. She completed her undergraduate studies at UConn in Political Science and Human Rights in 2018 and specialized in migration studies while abroad in Morocco. She is Lebanese-Dutch and has engaged in human rights work with refugee and immigrant communities both in Lebanon and the Netherlands.

Journey of Memories ensures that every woman's story is honored and celebrated, providing a platform for their voices to resonate and their memories to come to life through their exquisite artwork.

Janet Bauer (Ph.D. Anthropology, Stanford University) has worked with, and written about, immigrant communities in Greater Hartford and transnationally for more than thirty years, examining the critical role of community based voluntary organizations and programs in supporting refugee and immigrant resettlement and incorporation in Europe, North America, and the Middle East. She has served on Hartford's Commission on Refugee and Immigrants Affairs since 2014.

Zeynep Su Oğuzer is a sophomore double majoring in Human Rights Studies and Psychology with minors in Urban Studies and Philosophy.

Yael Rubin is a sophomore majoring in Human Rights.

Yael and Zeynep spent many hours helping women craft their stories to create their memory projects.

Roo Xing is a junior majoring in psychology and studio art. She is working on an ebook of these art/memory objects that will be available online.

About Hartford Public Library

Founded as the Library Company in 1774, and over its 250 years, Hartford Public Library has remained at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience in the 21st century. The Library has seven locations throughout the city and annually provides education, intellectual enrichment, and cultural development for thousands of children, youth, and adults. Hartford Public Library has also gained local and national recognition for its wide range of new initiatives and partnerships designed to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic city and region, including immigration services, employment assistance, and youth leadership training. For more information, visit hplct.org, and follow us on social media ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [X \(Twitter\)](#)).

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