



Quiet courage beyond media glare

'Voices on the Rise' chronicles inspiring work of prominent Afghan women

SHEILA DABU
LIVING REPORTER

If all Canadians ever hear or see about Afghanistan are stories of suicide bombings and despair, journalists Jane McElhone and Khorshid Samad say it's time to look through a different lens.

At the June opening of "Voices on the Rise: Afghan Women Making the News" at Alliance Française de Toronto on Spadina Rd., co-curators McElhone and Samad unveiled 44 photographs of Afghan women journalists, politicians and human rights activists.

These are the women playing leading roles in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, but their efforts are hidden from the glare of the media spotlight, the co-curators say.

The photo exhibit, which features the work of Afghan, Canadian and international photojournalists, will be up until Thursday.

It moves to the Toronto Public Library's City Hall Branch on July 9, where it will hang until the end of August.

"Women who work in media, who have microphones, pens and cameras to make documentaries or take photographs, they are documenting women's lives," says Canadian journalist and international media development specialist McElhone. "But it's also women politicians and women who are fighting for human rights for women, to change the lives of women, who are using me-



LESLIE KNOTT PHOTO

Rona Sherzai, station manager of Radio Quyaash in Maimana, interviews provincial director of agriculture.

dia to get those stories told as well."

McElhone, a former CBC journalist, was based in Kabul for two and a half years. She met Samad, then Kabul bureau chief for Fox News, while working with Afghan women journalists. Samad is now married to Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada.

"I think Canadians need to get a

more balanced picture presented to them. I think the media have not been doing a good job on that," Samad says. "They're focused on the negative stories, the easy headlines."

The exhibit includes photographs of prominent Afghan radio journalist Zakiya Zaki, who was murdered this month. Three years ago, Zaki

started Peace Radio, thought to be the first independent radio station in the country. According to local reports, she was shot seven times while she and her six children were sleeping in their home.

In one of the photos, Zaki sits in a room at radio Sohl, holding a pencil, as her husband looks on. The photo beside it is of Zaki's funeral: Veiled

women, some so overcome with grief they cover their mouths with their hands as they cry. The body of the journalist lies covered in a white cloth strewn with flowers.

Just a few metres away from Zaki's photos, McElhone describes the pictures she took of journalist-turned-politician Sharifa Zurmati Wardak. In the shot, Wardak is part of a scrum of reporters, holding out a microphone to interview one of the journalists of a newly launched radio station. Wardak won a seat in the parliamentary elections in 2005.

"Not only was she being revolutionary and using media to tell women's stories," McElhone says, "now she's serving as this tremendous role model."

It's women like Wardak who are "fighting to improve other people's lives . . . and making sure those stories are being told in the media," she says.

For Samad, it's an all-consuming passion. She completed her master's thesis on Afghan women, media and democracy just two weeks before giving birth to her son.

One of the exhibit's goals, Samad adds, is for Canadians to see Afghan women beyond the burqa.

"Look at these women. They're so inspired, they're so courageous," Samad says, pointing out pictures of an Afghan journalist and mother of four whose husband is supportive of her career. "You could see these women walking the streets of Toronto, couldn't you?"

thestar.com

For more photos of Afghan women leaders, visit thestar.com/living.

RECIPE

Pea salad in a snap

SUSAN SAMPSON
FOOD REPORTER

Here's a seasonal addition to your picnic basket for Canada Day. Ontario's pea crop is at its peak from late June to mid-July.

Shrimp & Snap Pea Salad

✓ Star Tested

Adapted from *Sara Foster's Casual Cooking: More Fresh Simple Recipes From Foster's Market*.

1/2 tsp sea salt + more to taste
1/4 cup each: cilantro stems, leaves
1 lime, halved
2 lb (900 g) large shrimp, peeled, deveined
1/2 lb (225 g) sugar snap peas, trimmed, strings removed
1 large cucumber, peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded, sliced 1/2-inch thick
2 green onions (white and green parts), chopped
3 tbsp white wine vinegar
2 tbsp honey
1 tbsp ground cumin
1 clove garlic, smashed
Freshly ground pepper to taste
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

PREPARATION: Fill large pan with 12 cups water. Bring to boil on high



heat. Squeeze lime, reserving juice and lime halves. To boiling water, add salt to taste, cilantro stems and lime halves. Add shrimp. Cook 1 minute, until pink and just tender. Do not overcook. Drain. Rinse under cold water until cooled. Drain. Discard lime halves and cilantro stems.

Fill same pan with water. Bring to boil on high heat. Add salt to taste. Add peas. Cook 2 minutes, until just tender. Drain. Run under cold water until cooled. Drain.

Put cucumber in sieve to drain. In blender, purée cilantro leaves, onions, vinegar, reserved lime juice, honey, cumin, garlic, 1/2 teaspoon salt and pepper. With blender running, add oil in slow, steady stream.

Pat dry shrimp, peas and cucumber. Place in large bowl. Drizzle with half the dressing. Toss to coat. Add more dressing as desired. You may have some left over. Adjust salt.

Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate up to 1 day.

Makes 6 servings.
ssampson@thestar.ca

OBSERVED

Makeup line targets little girls

After Mattel's wildly successful adult-cosmetic collaboration, "Barbie Loves MAC" with Estée Lauder-owned MAC Cosmetics, Barbie is making friends with another makeup company.

Barbie and Bonne Bell are becoming BFF in a partnership that will market a new makeup line set to launch in 2008.

What kind of cosmetic and beauty products can girls expect from 47-year-old Barbie and 80-year-old Bonne Bell? Lip gloss, glitter,

anti-aging creams? Will the packaging be pretty in pink? Will the combination of "Barbie-Bonne Bell" tongue-tie 6 year olds?

"We cannot answer, at this point, any specific questions about product," says Hilary Bell, executive vice-president of strategic ideation at Bonne Bell.

"All we can say is that we are in a relationship with Mattel for Barbie and we have come together because we both encourage and empower and understand girls. It is

a great meeting of the minds."

Although Mattel says the companies are, "coming together to launch an unprecedented girl-focused beauty initiative," it is not exactly a novelty item.

For years, Mattel has offered Barbie dolls that come with small makeup and perfume samples for girls.

Barbie's archival, Bratz, has already developed its own makeup line that includes eye shadow, lip gloss and hair extensions.

Pink nails drive point home

NAILS from L1

to discover the same thing.

"Being an industrial designer, I didn't want to just create another tool. I didn't want to create another ergonomically correct product to support women, because I thought there was another issue to be resolved," she says.

At 5-foot-3 and 110 pounds, Werbel is proof that there is no physical reason women can't handle the same workload on a construction site.

"It's not about small hands and little force. It's about breaking the stereotypes and the stigma in society and showing that we are capable and able to do the work."

She's already convinced the management at Dudley Hardware, an independent store in the Gay Village, to set up a display, complete with massive pink nails, in the store window.

Manager Steve Dawson says pink

nail purchasers have been split equally among men and women.

And if the pilot project at Dudley works out, Werbel hopes to partner with a major renovation chain such as Home Depot and a home-building charity such as Habitat for Humanity. She thinks the women in Habitat for Humanity's Women Build program, where all-female crews build houses for themselves and for low-income families in the community, are perfect candidates for Pink Nail Campaign school bur-saries.

She's also joined forces with the Canadian Institute for Advancement of Women, as well as several smaller women's organizations in order to create a Pink Nail network.

"I'm getting this wonderful vibe that this could be an umbrella to thread all these different associations together and there would be power through numbers. They can collectively say, "Yes, we are a part of this."

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