

The Time While Waiting

Mohamad Hafeda

This exhibition is called **The Time While Waiting**. It is by the artist Mohamad Hafeda. He is also a writer and a teacher in a university.

Mohamad spends his time between London in the UK, and Beirut which is the capital of Lebanon. Lebanon is a country in the Middle East.

Mohamad made a film called **The Time While Waiting**. It took 3 years to make. It explores the story of 3 asylum seekers who had arrived in Wakefield.

Asylum seekers are people who have fled their own country because they do not feel safe. This might be because their country is at war, or they do not have the same beliefs which their country enforces on people. They must wait for a new country to accept them as citizens. This can take a long time whilst a decision is made.

The video was filmed in an initial accommodation centre. This is where asylum seekers are placed until a decision has been made whether they can stay in the UK. Sometimes they are made to go back to the country they've fled from. This can be frightening for them.

There is an initial accommodation centre in Wakefield. It is next door to Wakefield's prison. Some people find this intimidating and scary.

In the film Mohamad asks 3 participants what they do with their free time whilst they wait to hear if they can stay.

One man goes walking and helps with gardening. One woman learnt to sew and make bags. One woman makes drawings and artwork. Some of the objects from the film are in the viewing table.

Asylum seekers are not allowed to work or earn money. The people in the Mohamad's film volunteer within their community to share their skills.

It can take a long time for an asylum seeker to be given an answer whether they can stay in the country. It can be a lonely and scary process. It can also have a bad impact on people's mental health.

Often people can feel trapped. There are lots of boundaries that can prevent an asylum seeker from being able to stay in the UK. The film shows some of the laws that asylum seekers have to obey.

The laws are made by the government and can be very restrictive.

If an asylum seeker is allowed to stay in the UK, then they are given the status of a refugee. They must find a place to live and a place to work. They have to apply again to stay in the UK every 3 years. This can be very stressful each time.

After 10 years the government might decide to give the refugee citizenship in the UK. This means they can stay in the country, and are given more freedom.

Mohamad has made a large timeline. It is very detailed and shows what the newspaper's headlines have wrote about asylum seekers.

Some of the information from the newspapers are hard to understand and sometimes not correct. They can be unfair in their judgement or opinion about asylum seekers. This can lead to some people having a negative view of them.

Mohamad wants to highlights the struggles asylum seekers go through. The Art House tries to be a safe and welcome space for everyone.