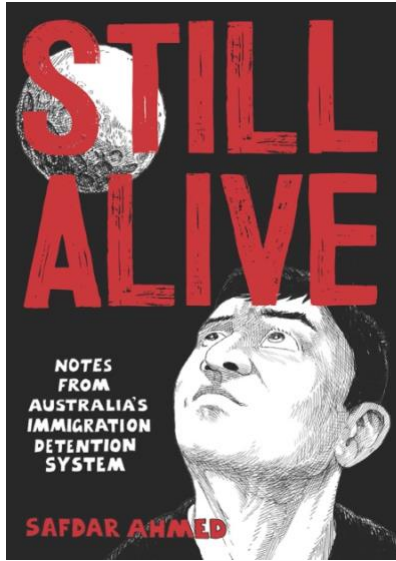


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Still Alive

a graphic novel by Safdar Ahmed
published by Twelve Panels Press



In Villawood you cannot record audio or video, but the subversive act of making comics gets through the electric wire and past the security cameras.

Safdar Ahmed's collaborative graphic novel brings stories and experiences out of the Australian gaols in which innocent people are imprisoned.

Meet these people. Learn from their stories. They are still alive.

In early 2011, Safdar Ahmed – artist, musician and educator – visited Sydney's Villawood Immigration Detention Centre for the first time. He brought pencils and sketchbooks into the detention centre and started drawing with the people detained there. Their stories are told in this book.

Interweaving journalism, history and autobiography, *Still Alive* is an intensely personal indictment of Australia's refugee detention policies and procedures. It is also a searching reflection on the redemptive power of art. And death metal.

'This is a book about resilience, a rollercoaster that takes us through pain, shame, rage, sadness and, against all odds, hope. Will there be a happy ending?'

– Ahmad Hakim, Refugee Voices

'This book brought me to tears – it is a moving and profoundly important work of art. *Still Alive* documents the experiences of people seeking asylum in Australia but its deepest power lies in the fact that it is presented as our story. Because what we do or allow to be done in our name is what we are.'

– Isobelle Carmody, writer and activist

'More than an excellent introduction to a nation's disgrace, Safdar Ahmed's *Still Alive* is about the humble power of writing and drawing, by anyone brave enough to hold a pencil, to subvert the silence that others would wish to impose upon us.' – Shaun Tan, artist and writer

'A raw, gripping, heart-wrenching and harrowing account which shines a piercing light on the daily deprivations and hidden abuses inflicted on people detained in Australia while seeking asylum.'

– David Manne, Human Rights Lawyer

Safdar Ahmed won a Walkley Award in 2015 for his web-comic *Villawood: Notes from an immigration detention centre* from which this book evolved. In addition to documenting the stories of those seeking asylum, *Still Alive* includes the author's own self-reflective thoughts on the ethics of telling other people's stories, the aesthetics of comics and heavy metal, and the way art can be used for catharsis, healing and redemption after trauma.

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To request an interview with the author or for further information, please contact:

twelvepanelspress@gmail.com 0413 993 899 www.twelvepanelspress.com