

# TWELVE PANELS PRESS

## RIGHTS INFORMATION

**TITLE:** Still Alive: Notes from Australia's Immigration Detention System

**AUTHOR:** Safdar Ahmed

**GENRE:** graphic novel journalism

**FIRST PUBLISHED:** 1 April 2021

**FORMAT AND PAGE EXTENT:** Paperback, 240 pages

**TRIM SIZE:** 240 x 170 mm

**RRP:** AUS \$30

**RIGHTS SOLD:** World English ex ANZ (Fantagraphics, US), French (Cambourakis)

## KEYNOTE:

A searing, deeply moving account of Australia's immigration detention system.

## DESCRIPTION:

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

**'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

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.

## SALES POINTS

- For readers of graphic journalism, migration studies.
- Themes include: Asylum seekers and refugees, Australian history, history of migration, nationalism, racism, human rights, politics.
- The first full-length book in graphic form that tells the stories of refugees in Australian detention centres in their own words, and through their own art.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Safdar Ahmed is a Sydney-based artist, musician and educator. He is a founding member of the community art organisation Refugee Art Project, and member of eleven, a collective of contemporary Muslim Australian artists, curators and writers. He is the author of *Reform and Modernity in Islam* (IB Tauris, 2013) and the Walkley Award-winning documentary web-comic *Villawood: Notes from an immigration detention centre* (2015). He also sings and plays guitar with the anti-racist death metal band Hazeen.

## REVIEWS AND RESOURCES

**‘An arrestingly powerful use of the graphic novel ... Sensitive, heart-breaking, stippled with dark humour, it’s hard to imagine a more potent indictment of Australia’s immigration detention, nor a clearer call to change it.’** Cameron Woodhead, the *Age* ‘Pick of the Week’

**‘I want you to know how profound an experience this graphic novel offers its readers. Read it, feel it as deeply as the content demands – and then share it with anyone who still needs convincing that immigration detention must end.’** Ele Jenkins, Readings Carlton

**‘Still Alive exemplifies the graphic novel’s capacity for juxtaposition as resistance. [Ahmed’s] intricately layered pages demonstrate the effect of government policies on real people.’** Eloise Grills, *The Saturday Paper*

[Still Alive Teachers Notes](#)

[Author Notes and References Still Alive](#)

[Still Alive hi-res cover](#)

Watch [Safdar reading from and discussing Still Alive](#)

Watch [Safdar in conversation with Maria Tumarkin](#)

Listen to [Safdar being interviewed by Richard Watts](#) ‘Smart Arts’ on RRR (listen from the 1.04 to 1.22 )

Read [5 Questions with Safdar Ahmed](#) from Liminal Magazine

All the above are accessible from [www.twelvepanelspress.com](http://www.twelvepanelspress.com)