

## mahan gallery

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### PRESS RELEASE

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### **Mahan Gallery Opens New Exhibition, Falah Shwan: Iraq in Black and White, benefit reception June 30, 2004.**

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Falah Shwan, a Kurdish refugee and resident of Columbus, will be exhibiting his work at the Mahan Gallery in a special benefit for the Columbus Literacy Council.

Shwas was born in Kirkus located in Northern Iraq. He studied art at the Suleimaniyah Fine Arts Institute and graduated with degree in fine art in 1988. The same year as the bombing of the Northern Iraq town of Halabja which killed thousands of Kurds.

Shwan and 4 million other Kurds fled Iraq on foot to Iran. They knew Saddam's forces would be brutal so they left with only what they could carry. Falah witnessed horrors and atrocities he still has difficulty speaking about. During his family's escape, Falah met his future wife. They sought sanctuary in a safe-area for Kurds. Two years later, unable to find work, Shwan and his new wife moved to Syria. In Syria, Shwan worked as a political cartoonist. His cartoons have been printing in many news publications. Shwan uses cartoons as a way of expressing his anger and hurt for the way Kurds have been treated in Iraq, and his hostility toward Saddam Hussein's regime.

"Iraq in Black and White" is a statement on morality. While some moral issues have a gray area, Shwan is commenting on those where the distinction between right and wrong is clear. This is Shwan's first show in the U.S. Mahan Gallery will be showing a combination of enlarged pen and ink political cartoons as well as paintings, some of which he carried with him during his escape from Iraq.

Shwan, his wife and oldest son moved to Columbus as refugees in 1999. They are now permanent residents and have since added to the family with the birth of their second son.

Shwan's benefit reception will take place Wednesday, June 30, 7-9pm. His work will be in display from June 28- July 5.

Tickets are \$25. Proceeds benefit Columbus Literacy Council. Call 614-221-5013 for tickets.

The Mahan Gallery focuses on emerging and mid-career artists working in a variety of media, including painting, photography, and sculpture. Gallery hours are Monday-Friday from 11 am-7 pm; Saturday-Sunday 12 pm- 6 pm. The Mahan Gallery is located at 1042 N. High St.

\*Please note our hours have changed.