

American Dream

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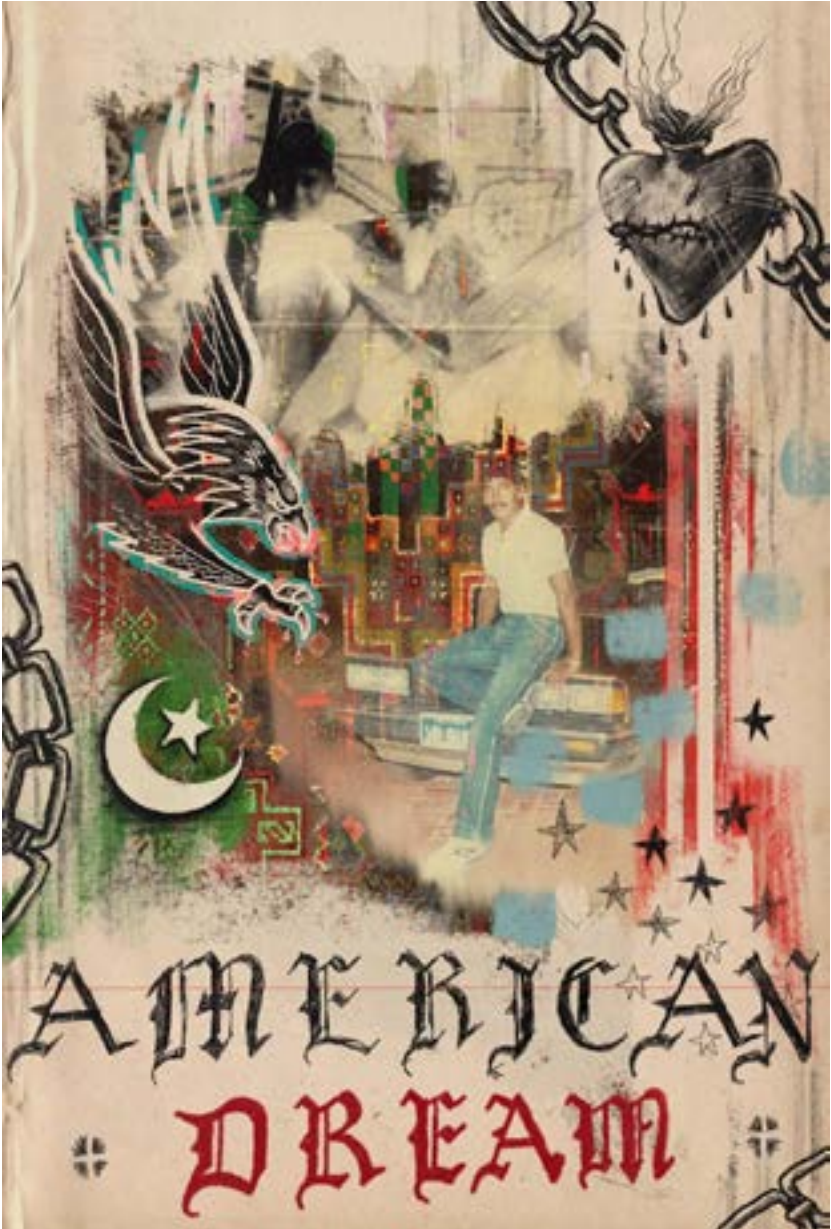
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American Dream

By Imran Rashid



Courageous Cuentos

My father uses his belief of Islam as a way to connect with his parents and culture. In my piece, the flag of my father's country has the crescent moon and star which is also an Islamic symbol. I made it appear like it's being erased, with the white colonial American dream which is the white space forming around the center and background. The reason I picked white is because to me white represents nothingness and no cultures, no identity. The bald eagle which has always been the national bird of the United States since 1789 is shown attacking my father and all the symbolism of my culture, the flag and the Pakistani rug in the background. The title of the piece is the "American Dream" which reflects on the idea of the U.S. being a place of liberation and freedom when to me and my own journey with my family has caused a lot of sacrifice, health issues and struggle. Those privileged do not struggle to get their basic resources met and do not have to worry about landing a job because they are educated here and don't have to face any form of discrimination especially if they are white. My father lives in a nice area but surrounding us are white upper-class Americans who support republican politics and embrace forms of racism. He continues his life in a positive manner in order to feel at peace and tries his best to not forget about his culture. His culture keeps his peace and allows him to reflect on all the memories he had with his own parents. Embracing this makes him understand his own history and feelings of joy and passion.

Reflecting on the deep of history we all have and how it is ingrained within the ground we walk on it made me realize how much it impacts my own history and my ancestors. Learning to decolonize the world, especially the western ideology, is the only way we can make sure everyone is given a chance of equality and not have to face the struggles that my family and others have gone through. The land we walk on is different from what our ancestors walked on and finding ways to connect to our history and understanding the sacrifice, health, and struggle of people will make us appreciate the world more. The way we can connect to different people is with art in different mediums. It has the ability to convey a message

about one's history and in a way is a voice. For that reason, I decided to do a piece with photos of my culture and family while incorporating my idea of western colonial power, this being the "American Dream." The culture in the piece is shown slowly fading and becoming lesser than the original size. The red and blue colors along with the stars to represent America are overtaking the foreground just like how the west has erased many cultures throughout history and how our society is set up against Black, Indigenous, People of Color. The shackles wrap along the borders with the white taking over the canvas and the center point. The center shows a culture that has history and family ties. Lastly, the sacred heart represents hard work and determination to survive even through health issues. The "American" part of the title is crossed off because the representation of the west being a dream and a place of happiness is false in my eyes. Along with the concept of that comes the issues of sacrifice, health and struggle.

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