

**Chapter 1 : Farzana Wahidy | New Internationalist**

*Farzana Wahidy Home Home; Portfolios; Bio; Contact; Powered by liveBooks.*

The film follows four Afghan photojournalists as they navigate an emerging and dangerous media landscape and for me personally was a real eye opener. *Frame by Frame* is a film I would urge everyone to watch, if only to get an understanding of the Afghan way of life. It is still a huge risk for photographers to carry out their work, however, the people followed in the film are passionate about highlighting the good and bad of their country through their craft. They are making a courageous stand for their rights, for which you can only have huge admiration. This film completely captivated me. Not only that, it was an education and a complete eye opener, it taught me more about life in Afghanistan, especially for women, than anything else I have ever seen. For this reason, we felt it was our responsibility to share some of the information with you. Did you know? When the Taliban ruled Afghanistan, taking a photo was a crime? Can you even imagine that? After the regime fell from power in 2001, a fledgling free press emerged and a photography revolution was born. Now, as foreign troops and media withdraw, Afghanistan is left to stand on its own, and so are its journalists. Prior to the Taliban rule, life for women in Afghanistan was very different. Women had many more rights and far more freedom than they do now? This for me was probably the biggest surprise, I had assumed women in Afghanistan had always been oppressed, but just look at the photographs below source [http: Women received the right to vote in the 1970s; and as early as the 1960s, the Afghan constitution provided for equality for women. There was a mood of tolerance and openness as the country began moving toward democracy. Women were making important contributions to national development. Afghan women had been active in humanitarian relief organizations until the Taliban imposed severe restrictions on their ability to work. These professional women provide a pool of talent and expertise that will be needed in the reconstruction of post-Taliban Afghanistan. They were forbidden to work, to leave the house without a male escort, to seek medical help from a male doctor. Under the Taliban regime, women were also forced to cover themselves completely from head to toe, even covering their eyes. Women who were doctors and teachers suddenly were forced to be beggars and even prostitutes in order to feed their families. Women accused of prostitution were publicly stoned to death in the soccer stadium in Kabul. Has life for women in Afghanistan improved since the fall of the Taliban? Since the fall of the Taliban in late 2001, women have gained political rights. Since 2001, the number of girls attending school increased by over 30 percent; however, an estimated 1. UNICEF reported that 34 percent of children enrolled in school are girls, although this figure hides large disparities from province to province, with enrollment as low as 15 percent in some areas. The Afghan government recently changed the legal age for marriage for girls from 16 to 17. Men who want to marry girls under 17 are not entitled to obtain a marriage certificate, although many men simply do not bother with officially registering their marriages. However, it seems that fewer girls are getting married. But with high unemployment rates, some feel employing women takes jobs from men. Extremists still believe that if girls are visible outside the home, they lose respect and are at risk of dishonoring the family. Engaged or married girls, even if they are young, are often kept behind closed doors. Young abused wives often feel they have no way out but self-immolation. Child mortality has been decreased by half! Though the rate is still high, improvements in access to clean water, electricity and sanitation, as well as better educated mothers, have helped to save the lives of thousands of Afghan women. Though these gains for girls and women may seem small from an outsiders perspective, they are real. All change "if it is to be permanent" cannot be imposed by Western outsiders on this tribal, Islamic, post-conflict society. It has to emerge through education within the context of the culture. One disturbing part of the film is when Farzana visits a hospital to find out more about self-immolation, a male doctor talks to her about a particular patient who has been admitted with burns, when Farzana pushes to see the girl he refuses her admission and, in my opinion, tries to deny the burns were caused by self-immolation. The very fact this horrific act happens is bad enough, to think it is being covered up by doctors is incomprehensible. He implied if they take over things would be worse than ever before. Every day there are more threats. If we leave and forget it will become a safe haven for terrorist organisations again, Britain was the second biggest help to them after the U.S. Being British](http://www.farzanawahidy.com)

hearing those words made me feel shame. It is as if we have simply turned our backs on the good people of Afghanistan. Women for Women International is an incredible charity, headed in the UK by their executive director Brita Schmidt, who was present on the evening and had such a wonderful aura, you could feel the passion she has for the charity. They need any support you can give them, to enable them to continue and grow their charity work in the worst countries in the world for women to live in, Afghanistan is just one of them. Please do all you can to help.

**Chapter 2 : UNESCO Youth Eyes on the Silk Roads Photo Contest: Jury Members**

*Farzana received a Gold Award in the Portrait category in the College Photographer of the Year competition at the University of Missouri. In Farzana was an Open Society Institute grantee for her documentary project on Afghan Women.*

A way in the dark: November 15, Afghanistan of that time reeled under extremist prohibitions. Several creative pursuits, including photography, were prohibited. But under the Taliban regime, he had no option but to give up his passion. We had managed to escape before a rocket hit our home. But her impersonal relationship with the camera began to take a new shape. As a young girl of 17, deeply affected by the world she found herself in, photojournalism appeared to be an obvious career option. As the Taliban regime ended in , the camera was no longer a restricted item. Wahidy was one of the 15 students who enrolled at Aina, a photography institute run by Iranian- born photographer brothers Manoocher and Reza Deghati. A few years later, she emerged as the first female professional photographer from the complex, and often dangerous, contemporary photography scene in Afghanistan. Out on the streets, be it in Kabul or in remote provinces, the exposure felt infinite, as opposed to the strictly private photo sessions that her family had indulged in. Shahbib, a young Afghan singer in her house in Kabul, Afghanistan. Photo by Farzana Wahidy The involvement of Aina was tremendous, culling out some of the best known faces from contemporary photography scene in the country – including the Pulitzer Prize winner Massoud Hossaini who is also her husband. The students started with the traditional box cameras, and then progressed to Zenit, the Russian brand of 35 mm SLR. Working with various international media organisations, these photographers found themselves risking their lives to present their war-stricken country to the rest of the world. Female photographers, especially locals, were hard to come by. Female subjects, even more so. Which was why when, in , Wahidy stepped out to take photographs of the streets, a few people began to pelt stones at her. Another trip in took her to northern Afghanistan, where she was chased by a woman with a stick for taking too many photos of her. Her portraits come from her own sense of belonging, yet the need to uproot herself from that claustrophobic space gives it a sharp focus. Interestingly for me, it helped me travel, which made me feel free. Under the Talibans, I felt like a prisoner. She returned to Afghanistan in Her first international story came in The Sunday Times UK in on a girl who was exchanged for drugs. With no formal documentation of the history of photography in Afghanistan, there are massive efforts to create a wholesome narrative, almost from scratch, to understand the medium and its context in the country. This holds importance especially for those who want to learn about the form. Wahidy is one of the frontrunners in this mammoth task. She is also involved in training young photographers, creating manuals on the methods of the medium and reviewing and lobbying laws such as the copyright law in Afghanistan, that has restrictions, punishments and ambiguous rules for those in the creative industry. Afghanistan is still a risky terrain, especially in the provinces. Wahidy says she has faced threats, as recently as in He kept calling and demanded a dialogue in private, but I insisted that the talks should happen through a union, which eventually Drawing Up the Capital took place. This profession has its ups and downs.

**Chapter 3 : List of women photographers - Wikipedia**

*Farzana Wahidy (born ) is an award-winning Afghani documentary photographer and photojournalist, best known for her photographs of women and girls in [www.nxgvision.com](http://www.nxgvision.com) was the first female photographer in Afghanistan to work with international media agencies such as the Associated Press (AP) and Agence France-Presse (AFP).*

Born in in Kandahar, Farzana has been based in Afghanistan most of her life, primarily focusing on documenting the lives of women and girls in the country. She was a Open Society Institute grantee with her documentary project on Afghan women. How did you get started in photography? The life I had under the Taliban regime as a young girl was very tough. Education was forbidden for women, so we had to take a huge risk to attend classes in underground [secret] schools. It was a lot of pressure and I wanted to find a way to let my feelings out. I studied photography because I thought it would help me learn how to write better too. But, as I was learning, I started falling in love with it. It has become the best way to express myself as a woman here, and also try to help other women in my community. When and why did you start focusing on women? Sometimes, being a woman in this country means dealing with a lot of pressure, a lot of pain, and this forces me to take pictures. I find photography to be the only way to let it out and feel a little relieved. Especially these days, with so much going on in my country [the interview was conducted right after the May 31, attack in Kabul, that killed over people], the only thing that gives me hope to continue my life here is photography. How was it to start working as a woman photographer in your country? It slowly became a bit more common, and now we have a lot of young girls who take pictures. When I started though, since women photographers were not that common in Afghanistan, there was a very high demand for us. You decided to stop covering news to do more documentary and personal work. What made you change direction? One time, I think it was in , there was an attack in Kabul. Another reason was that a lot of photographers were covering the news, so I thought I should just focus on women in Afghanistan. In countries where a war is going on, the media always focuses on the war. And then women often get forgotten. I think I felt responsible for them, and I still do. My last experience was two days after the attack that happened last Wednesday May 31 , during the demonstration that took place at the bomb site. There was a group of women protesting during the demonstration, but because the protest got violent and there were casualties, no one talked about the women. What are the main challenges and goals for you as an Afghan woman photographer? When I studied in Canada [Farzana received a scholarship to attend the two year photojournalism program at Loyalist University in ], I realized how photography in Afghanistan was behind, and how much we â€” Afghan photographers â€” still had to learn. So I decided to come back to Afghanistan and try to teach. I created a project and for the first time there was research on photography in Afghanistan. We realized that everything in Afghanistan had been photographed by foreign photographers, and only in a small part by Afghan male photographers. When you come from outside, you see things differently from someone who has been raised and living in a culture. If you study the history of Afghanistan at school, you only read about women from a very long time ago. As an Afghan woman photographer, I feel responsible to do something about it. Now, I know that with photography I can do something for Afghanistan too: I have to record the lives of Afghan women at this sensitive time. I decided I will photograph Afghan women, not only in Afghanistan but also around the world, to bring a deeper understanding to the world of Afghan women. Women who have done something, who are recognized, but also who have a normal life, who are refugees. I want to record their lives so future generations have examples to look at. I want to make them part of our history. Do you think that photography can help bring change? No matter what you do, if you do it well you can bring change. And you know why? Started as a website in , today SDN works with thousands of photographers around the world to tell important stories through the visual medium of photography and multimedia. Since , SDN has featured more than 2, exhibits on its website and has had gallery exhibitions in major cities around the world.

## Chapter 4 : Interview with Farzana Wahidy

*At age 13, Farzana Wahidy was beaten in the street for not wearing a burqa. To have carried a camera then would have been unthinkable. But she went on to become a pioneering photographer and.*

But no childhood memory beats that of the night when the Taliban took control. Our house was near a police checkpoint. That night there were nearly 30 of us together. Later, as we walked back to our home I could feel the Talibs standing around giving us strange looks. My mother said that from now we would have to be careful about our headscarves. But her exploration of the subject goes further. It was like being in prison. Women taught in universities and moved around without headscarves. One of my neighbours a teenager then had lots of lovely clothes. I still remember her dressing up to go out," she says. For Wahidy coping was easier because her father was a liberal. He believed in educating his daughters," she says proudly. This was easy to do in those days. They beat father badly. When we heard they were looking to lock him up again, we knew we had to escape. It was a programme on BBC Radio that told them about these secret schools that were operating for girls. Then I got sick and the doctor said the only way to cure me was to make me happy. My cure lay in school. Travelling for 45 minutes to class held in an apartment was tough. They had to hide their books. If the Taliban saw what they were carrying they could be publicly flogged. The final straw was their dad losing his job. The girls now had to help at home. At age 14, Wahidy became a teacher. Several times the Talibs would get suspicious and come to check. The children would quickly hide their books. We would say we were learning the Koran. We were lucky no one sold us out. Everything like Math and English was taught. We would change our clothes and pretend to be different teachers to keep things lively," she says. When the Taliban was finally overthrown Wahidy and everyone else around her rushed to do the various bridge courses that would help them carry on their education. We were a large family. So I started working again," she says. One day at the institute she worked she heard some colleagues talking about a photojournalism course. The deadline was close and she filled out the form in pencil. The scholarship she won to study in Canada exposed her to a whole new world. Here I was directly exposed to a market that appreciated your work. I was so pleased when I won the Gold award in the Portrait category in the College Photographer of the Year competition held by the University of Missouri [the competition is open to students from USA and Canada]," she says. After nearly four years in the field she says shooting suicide bombings and attacks are still tough. Wahidy loves all her pictures. But some experiences are truly unforgettable. One woman who had set herself on fire was bought in. Being a woman in this field comes with its own set of disadvantages. But what keeps her going is the unbridled enthusiasm she gets from her women subjects. It was during their time that disregard for human rights hit an all time high. They have caused so much harm that it will take years for things to get normal again. By arrangement with WFS.

## Chapter 5 : Massoud Hossaini | World Press Photo

*Farzana Wahidy is an award-winning Afghan documentary photographer and photojournalist. Born in in Kandahar, Farzana has been based in Afghanistan most of her life, primarily focusing on documenting the lives of women and girls in the country.*

## Chapter 6 : A way in the dark: Meet Afghanistan's first female professional photographer | The Indian

*Farzana Wahidy is an award-winning, Afghani documentary photographer and photojournalist, best known for her photographs of women and girls in Afghanistan. She was the first female Afghani photographer to collaborate with international media agencies including the Associated Press (AP) and Agence France-Presse (AFP).*

## Chapter 7 : About Farzana Wahidy | UpClosed

*At the age of 24, Farzana Wahidy has been a photographer for Agence France-Presse and the Associated Press. She was born in Afghanistan but now resides in the United States.*

### Chapter 8 : Looking at Afghani Women through Wahidy's Lens by Paromita Pain

*The intrepid photographer, Farzana Wahidy, is one of four profiled in Alexandria Bombach and Mo Scarpelli's snapshot of photojournalism in today's Afghanistan. Press freedom has grown there.*

### Chapter 9 : NPR Choice page

*A way in the dark: Meet Afghanistan's first female professional photographer Afghanistan's first female professional photographer, Farzana Wahidy, on learning to become her own person in a troubled country, shooting under perilous conditions and why she focuses exclusively on women.*