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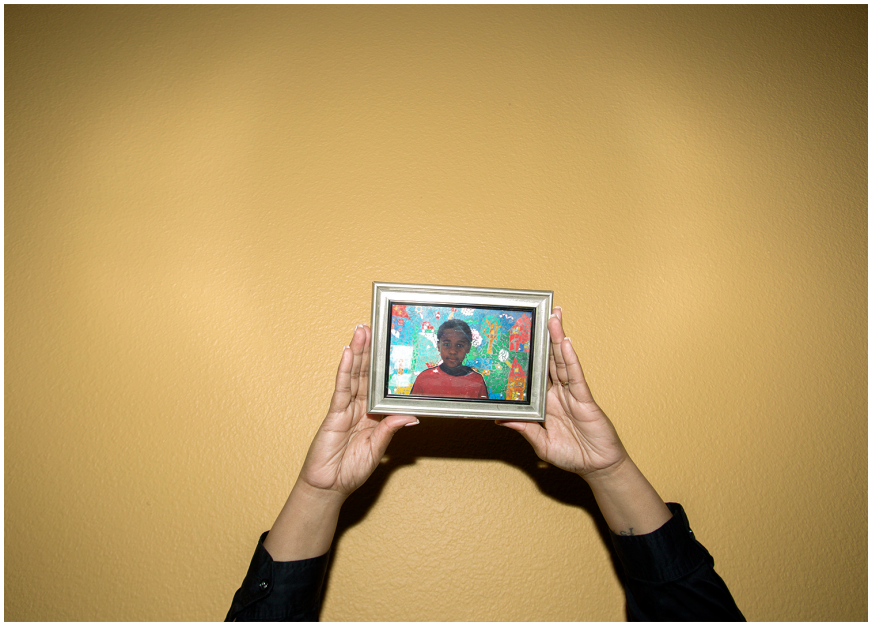
WESSAAM AL-BADRY: *OUR SONS*
Exhibition Dates: May 11 – July 1, 2017
Opening Reception: Thursday, May 11, 2017, 6 – 8 PM

SAN FRANCISCO, March 2017 – SF Camerawork is proud to present a new body of work by rising photography star Wesaam Al-Badry. *Our Sons* will be on view in the gallery's Project Space from May 11 through July 1, 2017.

Our Sons is a documentary project about Bay Area mothers who have lost their sons to gun violence. Over the course of 2 years, Al-Badry photographed mothers, in their homes and with their son's belongings, to create this personal, intimate portrayal of the tragedy and suffering caused by gun violence in our communities.



Wesaam Al-Badry, *Pam Saucer holds a photo of her son David Saucer II*

Al-Badry began the project as response to the recent increased gun violence, and an increased awareness of the violence, in the Bay Area. Though Al-Badry grew up during the war in Iraq, where it was not uncommon for mothers to lose their children to violence, he was alarmed to see young African-Americans being murdered at an increasing rate and wanted to find a way to tell their story.

He found a resemblance between how mothers in the U.S. and mothers in Iraq mourned their murdered children, remembering that when his grandmother died, the family found

she had held onto his uncle's belongings after he was murdered, at the age of 19, during the Iraq-Iran war in 1989. His grandmother had kept his cassettes, shirts, and toothbrush as a way to keep his memory alive. In working with Bay Area mothers, Al-Badry found that they also are holding on dearly to their son's belongings, often leaving their rooms, and possessions undisturbed. *Our Sons* presents a combination of portraits of the mothers, along with photographs of their son's belongings, and makes a powerful statement about the reality of gun violence to the individuals who are suffering its consequences. In Al- Badry's words: *"The project shows that a mother's pain of losing of a child, no matter what country, race or ethnicity, is universal."*

Wesaam Al-Badry, *Pam Saucer shares a moment about the last day she got to see her son right before the murder. "I should never dropped him off at the Bart station."*

ABOUT WESAAM AL-BADRY:
Wesaam Al-Badry was born in Nasiriyah, Iraq, and lived at a refugee camp in Saudia Arabia until his family was relocated to Nebraska in 1994. He began photographing while still at the refugee camp, and has worked on many journalistic and documentary projects addressing social issues. He is currently photographing for CNN and Al-Jazeera America while pursuing his BFA in Photography at the San Francisco Art Institute.

ABOUT SF CAMERAWORK:
Founded in 1974, SF Camerawork's mission is to encourage and support emerging artists to explore new directions and ideas in the photographic arts. Through exhibitions, publications, and educational programs, SF Camerawork strives to create an engaging platform for artistic exploration as well as community involvement and inquiry.