Iranian-born artist Hesam Fetrati considers the fate of people forced from their own country in his moving series of works, SEVERED ROOTS. Fetrati’s meticulous pen and ink drawings capture the plight of those who have suffered from cultural dislocation through acts of war, terror and cataclysm.
The SEVERED ROOTS series is my interpretation of the distress caused through this harmful and common global activity of displacement. The severed trees highlight harmful acts of separation, distress, dilution and loss, of people who have been cut off and forced from their cultural heritage, their motherland and their geographic place. I use satire in this collection of drawings to comment on issues of forced migration. The SEVERED ROOTS series starts with a narrative form into which I attempt to weave my understanding of the mental states of mind and physical hardships endured on the journey from one state mind/place to another. My drawings seek to give voice to the ‘speechless’ members of society—the refugee the displaced. I see myself as part of this situation and at the same time I try to position myself outside of it in order to look at it more objectively.

In an effort to avoid repetitive imagery which would just show the Dickensian life of displaced people, I have pursued the inclusion of a balance of subliminal narratives and hidden text. I have tried to avoid making a series of work to reflect the anger and compassion of the victim and the viewer but instead I have tried to reflect more on the context surrounding the situation and allow the viewer to pass their own judgement on the situation.

I have chosen to use black ink on paper for this series in reference to an ancient mode of communication and broadcasting.