



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### **Lowell author Mehmed Ali to hold a book signing and lecture at the Whistler House Museum of Art**

Lowell, MA, April 14, 2016 – The Whistler House Museum of Art is pleased to host local author and Lowell City Historian Mehmed Ali for a lecture and book signing on Thursday, May 5 starting at 6:30pm. Ali's latest book, **Yousuf Karsh & John Garo - The Search for a Master's Legacy**, introduces the reader to the little known story of photographer John Garo. This event will be held in conjunction with Downtown Lowell First Thursdays.

When President Calvin Coolidge was asked to choose between the artist John Singer Sargent or the photographer John Garo to make his official presidential portrait, Coolidge chose Garo. In the early years of the twentieth century, Garo was a nationally acclaimed photographer and a leader in the thriving Boston photographic community. Cultured and charming, Garo also painted watercolors, wrote poetry and counted among his friends luminaries in the worlds of music and theater. It was to this humanistic atmosphere of Garo's sky lit studio that the fledgling photographer, Yousuf Karsh, a survivor of the 1915 Armenian Massacres, was sent by his uncle, George Nakash, to be Garo's apprentice.

Garo was a nurturing and encouraging mentor. His three years with Garo transformed young Karsh's life and influenced his original desire to portray those personalities who made a positive impact on our world. Garo died in 1939, and was a victim of the Great Depression, ill health and changing photographic taste. Karsh, then still a struggling photographer in Canada, was devastated to discover Garo's studio ransacked, and many of his portraits missing. Thus began a forty-year odyssey by Karsh to discover his mentor's portraits, and preserve them for posterity.

Drawing on meticulous research and on Karsh's personal correspondence, **Yousuf Karsh & John Garo - The Search for a Master's Legacy** brings to life this intensely human journey, and the little known story of Garo's stellar role in the history of photography in New England. Full of breathtaking photographs and meaningful advice for future photographers and artists, this story illustrates how to persevere through life's challenges, how to establish oneself as a leader in the art community, and how experiencing all life has to offer can enhance one's ability to create meaningful art.

Mehmed Ali hails from Lowell, Massachusetts where he currently works at the University of Massachusetts Lowell Library. He received bachelor's and master's degrees in political science from the University of Hawaii, and his doctorate in history at the University of Connecticut. Ali has served as a U.S. Marine, postman, National Park Service ranger, and diplomat, but relishes his role as the father of daughter "Lom" Evelyn best of all.

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