The Oregon Historical Society’s new exhibition with The Immigrant Story and the “What We Carried” project features the stories of undocumented Portlanders

DREAMs Deferred is on exhibit January 10 – April 12, 2020

Portland, OR – January 10, 2020 – The newest exhibition at the Oregon Historical Society, DREAMs Deferred, represents a collaboration with The Immigrant Story and acclaimed Portland photographer Jim Lommasson and his powerful storytelling project, “What We Carried.” The exhibition amplifies the voices of undocumented immigrants from Mexico and Central America who came to the United States as children or young adults and grew up navigating school, work, and social life without official papers.

In this exhibit, The Immigrant Story has produced short-form stories of six undocumented immigrants, capturing each person’s continued resilience in the face of unique obstacles. Stunning portraits accompany the stories of these individuals and their journeys.

Adding a layer of intimacy to the exhibition is Jim Lommasson’s visual storytelling project, “What We Carried.” This long-standing project asks immigrants, refugees, and genocide survivors to share items they carried throughout their journey to the United States. His work captures the result of a split-second decision these individuals must make when fleeing their homelands: What do I leave behind, and what do I take with me? Lommasson then photographs the object, prints the image, and has the owner write directly on the photograph, reflecting on the carried object and the journey that brought them to the U.S. This process allows the participants to tell their own story in their own language and with their own hands.

For DREAMs Deferred, Lommasson extends “What We Carried” so that it includes undocumented migrants traveling across the U.S.-Mexico border that are part of the group referred to as “DREAMers.” The objects are further contextualized by portraits and
stories provided by The Immigrant Story within the exhibition. The combination of the story, portrait, and treasured item of each individual allows viewers to look into that person’s eyes, read intimate details about their life, and see a meaningful artifact of their life history. The result is the recognition that behind the terms “undocumented immigrants” or “alien” lies an individual with a story.

*DREAMs Deferred* will be on display in the Oregon Historical Society’s Community Mezzanine Gallery from January 10 – April 12, 2020. The Oregon Historical Society’s museum is located at 1200 SW Park Avenue in downtown Portland and is open seven days a week, Monday – Saturday from 10am – 5pm and Sunday from 12pm – 5pm. Admission is $10, and discounts are available for students, seniors, teachers, and youth. Admission is free every day for OHS members and Multnomah County residents.

---

**About the Oregon Historical Society**

For more than a century, the Oregon Historical Society has served as the state’s collective memory, preserving a vast collection of artifacts, photographs, maps, manuscript materials, books, films, and oral histories. Our research library, museum, digital platforms & website ([www.ohs.org](http://www.ohs.org)), educational programming, and historical journal make Oregon's history open and accessible to all. We exist because history is powerful, and because a history as deep and rich as Oregon’s cannot be contained within a single story or point of view.

**About The Immigrant Story**

The Immigrant Story is a nonprofit created by Sankar Raman in 2017 in Portland, Oregon. Raman came to the United States for graduate school as an immigrant from India. After the 2016 presidential election, he decided to use his photography and his passion for immigrant stories to create an organization that works to counter the climate of anti-immigrant rhetoric and violence.

TIS documents and archives the voices and stories of immigrants in short, accessible, visual and written formats. It is run by 33 volunteer writers, editors, artists and photographers. Additionally, TIS started a scholarship program to give aspiring writers the opportunity to work with experienced journalists to edit and publish their work.

The Immigrant Story’s vision is to provide curated and relevant content to enhance empathy and to create a more inclusive community. The organization’s goal is to advance a national dialogue about immigration and dispel myths about new Americans through storytelling, reporting, and dramatic narratives.

For more information, contact [monica@theimmigrantstory.org](mailto:monica@theimmigrantstory.org).