FIVE OAKS MUSEUM

SOCIAL MEDIA TAKEOVER:
THE IMMIGRANT STORY

SEPTEMBER 20, 2021

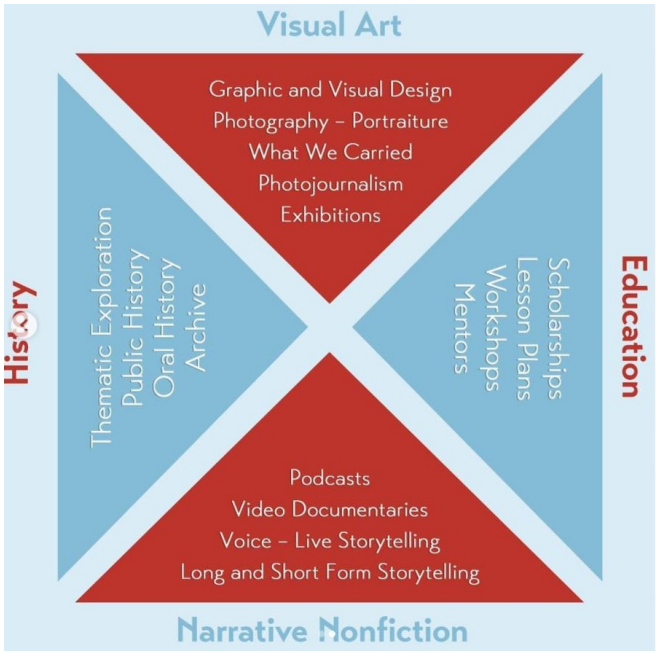
DAY 1:

Welcome! We are @TheImmigrantStory and this is our Instagram takeover for @FiveOaksMuseum!

Our mission is to document and tell immigrants' real-life stories, in order to promote empathy and advance an inclusive community. We are a big team of 60 volunteers spread across the country; we have helped almost 200 immigrants share incredible stories of courage, resilience and fortitude, and we hope to tell many more.

We love to work across a broad range of media, from podcasts to exhibitions to live storytelling events. You can see some of the main interests that make up our work in the second graphic.

Over this week we are going to be showing snippets of the work we do, and introducing you to some of the incredible people we have met along the way. Stay tuned!



SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

DAY 2:

@TheImmigrantStory was born out of the urge to document, bear witness to, and share the stories of immigrants. We interview immigrants and survivors, and write up their stories in long- and medium-form articles, placing the voice of the immigrant front and center. We also take photographic portraits to represent the person they are today—like this image of Faiza Jama, who started challenging her nay-sayers as a child in Somalia. Now an adult, she's helping to instill confidence in youth in Portland. Visit our website to read her story!

Now, we are working in collaboration with @OregonHistoricalSociety to formally archive these stories.

We have also created lesson plans to support teachers in running storytelling projects in schools. This photo shows teachers at Lincoln High School in Portland, who helped students to develop stories and portraits of immigrants to tell their stories in their own communities.

We want to hear from you! What are your experiences with immigration, recent and historical? How has it touched your life? Please share your stories in the comments!

SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

DAY 3:

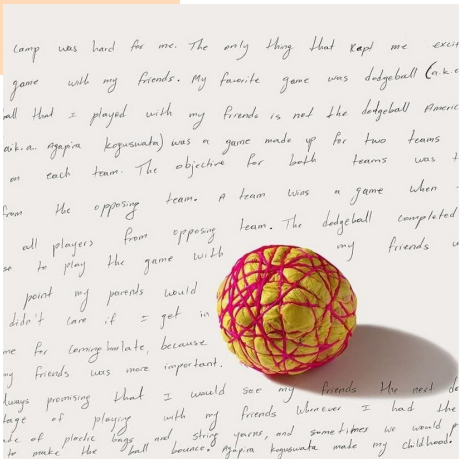
@TheImmigrantStory produces a podcast called #ManyRoadsToHere in collaboration with @PDXRadioProject, in which you can hear the voice of one of our amazing subjects, telling their incredible story. Each episode features one immigrant's story of the journey that led them to the U.S., and highlights the various criss-crossing paths they each have taken to America. Every story is different, and every one is an amazing journey!

Recently we added #ManyRoadsInConversation, in which we deep-dive into issues affecting ethnic and migrant communities within the United States. We started this in part as a response to the disturbing rise in anti-Asian rhetoric and violence that surged during the pandemic, and in this first series we bring together Asian-American community leaders to understand the roots of anti- #AAPI violence. We work on this project with @oregonrisesabovehate.

In this clip, you can hear @jenniferyfang of @jamopdx talking about the impacts of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The podcast addresses the wave of anti-Asian American violence and the public response, in conversation with Eliza Canty Jones of @OregonHistoricalSociety.

We see ourselves as working at the intersection of art and activism. By bringing these stories and histories to the light, we can work together to create a more just, empathetic and tolerant country.

SEPTEMBER 23, 2021



DAY 4:

At @TheImmigrantStory, we believe in the power of an image. We also share stories through exhibitions. Right now until October 31st, we are showing #IAmMyStory: Voices of Hope at @uccportland, highlighting the experiences of six young women from Africa, survivors of genocide and war, who have made their homes in Oregon. For this exhibition we collaborated with the incredible @lommassonjim, who documents the objects that people bring along with them, and the stories they tell.

In the photos you can see a portrait of the amazing Divine Irambona, taken by our founder, Sankar Raman. Divine was born in Kanembwa, a refugee camp in Tanzania, and has faced incredible odds all her life—and overcome them. You can also see the image taken by @LommassonJim of the home-made ball she brought with her from the refugee camp.

SEPTEMBER 24, 2021

DAY 5:

@TheImmigrantStory is also branching out into video, to document the amazing lives of our participants. Right now we are producing six short docu-series films by well-known video producers from the Pacific Northwest, in collaboration with @NWDoc. The powerful, visceral personal stories featured in these short films will emphasize the individual humanity of genocide survivors, forcing viewers to look beyond cold facts and statistics and confront the immense emotional, spiritual, and physical violence that genocide inflicts.

Please enjoy this short clip as a taster of one of the films we will be premiering at #ToBearWitness: Extraordinary Lives at @OJMCHE, opening December 9th. This will be a multimedia portrait of 14 survivors of genocide, the Holocaust and the atrocities of war. The project is an extensive body of work that will be an intersection of oral history, visual and literary arts, and audio and video storytelling. We believe that giving a platform to these voices is the best way to ensure that these awful events are not repeated.

In this film, produced in collaboration the amazing @NWDoc, we hear the incredible story of Tsering Dolma Choephel; she recalls the night her family left their village in Tibet and walked across the mountain passes into Nepal to escape the Chinese Army, which had been gradually moving into Tibet.

SEPTEMBER 25, 2021

DAY 6:

Mariamou Abdoulye tells her story at The Immigrant Story Live!

At @TheImmigrantStory we put on live storytelling events, in the style of @MothStories, hooking up amazing people with storytelling coaches to put on events that celebrate their lives and offer hope and inspiration.

This video is from our very first storytelling event in 2019; Mariamou Abdoulye tells of the struggles she faced during her life, not least of which was the racism she experienced on arriving in the U.S.A.

We want to thank you all for following our work this week, and also Five Oaks Museum for giving us this platform! If you'd like to know more about our work and the projects we have coming up, please follow us on Instagram and/or visit our website. We also want to thank our whole team of volunteers, and also all of the incredible people who have shared their stories with us and with the world--here's to many more!