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**New England Foundation for the Arts’
Creative City Program Announces
IMMIGRATION NATION
An Art Installation Featuring 400 Suitcases Showcasing
Journeys of American Immigrants**

**May 24 through July 31, 2017 | Urbano Project, Jamaica Plain
Opening Reception, May 24, 2017 | 6-8pm**

The Exhibition will also be part of Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation’s “Bash at the Brewery” on Saturday, June 17, 2017 | 12 to 3pm

Part of Creative City Grant Programs throughout Boston Neighborhoods
Email for interviews, high resolutions, and more information.

[Boston, MA—May 9, 2016] The New England Foundation for the Arts’ Creative City program announces **Immigration Nation**, a public visual art installation by Dorchester artist Nora Valdez. The exhibition, consisting of 400+ suitcases, will be on view at the Urbano Project located at 29 Germania Street in Boston’s Jamaica Plain neighborhood, May 24 through July 30, 2017. The opening reception, free and open to the public, takes place Wednesday, May 24, 2017 from 6-8pm. In addition, Immigration Nation will also be part of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation’s “Bash at the Brewery” 40th anniversary celebration on Saturday, June 17, 2017 from 12non to 3pm.



“This project,” shares Valdez, “is to show that this nation is made mostly by immigrants, and for us to feel proud of where we come from and to celebrate the diversity that makes this country great.

Immigration Nation is a vehicle for immigrants to share their individual journeys using suitcases. Each suitcase will be transformed into a work of art that celebrates individual stories and represents a collective American experience.”

Over the past several months Valdez held workshops where community members, young and old, were invited to create their own suitcase, showing his/her own immigration story. Workshops were held at Urbano Project, Boston Evening Academy in Roxbury, The Woods Mullen Homeless Shelter in Dorchester, The Fenway High School, her own studio, and throughout Egleston Square. Suitcases were painted on, some on the outside some also on the inside, and showcase words, maps, patches, flags, and other graphics. Further, participants were encouraged to interview family members, use travel documents, and assemble the story of his/her family’s journey to America.



Immigration Nation workshops creating suitcases with the community. Photo: Chantelle Bacigalupo

Valdez worked with dozens of first and second generation immigrants from countries including The Dominican Republic, Vietnam, China, The Philippines, Puerto Rico, Poland, Palestine, Germany, Iran, Colombia, India, Jamaica, Trinidad, Venezuela, Chile, Honduras, El Salvador, Argentina, Greece, France, Spain, Brazil, Cuba, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Scotland, Ireland, Mexico, England, Peru, Bolivia and Israel.

“I was surprised that so many participants were so willing to tell their own stories and pay homage to their parents and families who made the journey to the U.S. So many who participated were proud to create their own suitcase, sharing their family’s unique culture.” Further, **Immigration Nation** will feature a series of 100 photographic portraits of local immigrants, installed in the shape of a suitcase at the exhibition.



About Artist Nora Valdez

Nora Valdez is an Argentine-born artist working and exhibiting since 1977. In 1982 she graduated from the College of Fine Arts (Mercedes San Luis, Argentina) with the title of Professor of Fine Arts. Her work has been exhibited in a variety of venues in Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Italy, Spain, Germany, Greece, Belgium, Japan, China, Canada and the United States. From the beginning, Valdez has utilized sculpture and installations to create images that reflect on the nature of change, the life of the individual and the natural or societal forces that buffet our souls. Most recently her focus has been on the nature of home, the immigrant experience and roots/rootlessness. While her earlier installation work explored the effects of alienation caused by various forms of repression, her stone work seeks to make more subtle comments on these concerns. Her thematic concerns are also reflected in her involvement with the community: doing public art projects and giving workshops at a variety of urban institutions. Art becomes not just a way to explore issues of human rights but to have a direct effect on them as well. <http://www.noravaldez.com>

About Community Partner Urbano Project

Founded in 2009, Urbano is a non-profit community art studio that fosters participatory art as a vehicle for personal transformation, community cohesion, and social change. <http://urbanoproject.org/>

Further Creative City projects extend into Boston neighborhoods including East Boston, Allston, and more, and feature creative expression of many disciplines including theater, music, dance, visual art, and culinary culture. Programs offer a variety of opportunities for community participation, including performances, workshops, receptions, and more.



Lemonade Stand (East Boston)



In Transit (Citywide)



The Pineapple Diaries: Season Two (Jamaica Plain)

Creative City was launched in 2015 by New England Foundation for the Arts with hopes to support individual artists to enliven neighborhoods and engage communities. The grant program has awarded \$318,500 to 33 projects in four rounds of applications. In addition, Creative City has also awarded \$20,000 to 20 community partners (\$1,000/each) to support/collaborate with the individual artist project (more partner applications are in process now). The deadline for the fifth invitation for individual artist applications will be in September 2017; the date will be announced in late spring. For grant eligibility and criteria, visit <https://www.nefa.org/creative-city-grant>. Creative City is made possible by the Barr Foundation with additional funding from the Boston Foundation.

“Artists who receive Creative City grants engage in important conversations in their communities around displacement, immigration, identity – timely issues that impact all of us,” said Cathy Edwards, NEFA executive director. “Supporting local artists’ visions is critical, and this does that through surprising ways and locations.”

“Creative City is about taking the life and stories of communities and, through the powerful synergy of artists and residents, examining and retelling those stories in fresh and provocative ways,” said San San Wong, Barr Foundation’s senior program officer for arts and creativity. “We continue to be excited to see the varied scope of these engagements in communities across Boston. It has been our privilege to partner with NEFA in supporting so many talented artists and see new stories of neighborhoods come alive through this program.”

Creative City Artist Grantees: Round Three

PROJECT TITLE/GRANTEE NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE PROJECT OCCURS
<i>Immigration Nation</i> Nora Valdez	Jamaica Plain
<i>Humanity Not Statistics: Leadership through Theatre</i> Molly Gilbert and Zahra A. Belyea	Dorchester
<i>The Table/La Mesa: the Welcome Project/Projecto Bienvenido</i> Melissa Nussbaum Freeman	Dorchester
<i>Stitched into Memory</i> Stephen Hamilton	South Boston
<i>MassQuerade Ball</i> Daniel Callahan	South End
<i>Indigo Project</i> Ife Franklin	Roxbury
<i>Latin Quarter Mosaic Project</i> Richard Youngstrom	Jamaica Plain

Creative City Artist Grantees: Round Two

PROJECT TITLE/GRANTEE NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE PROJECT OCCURS
<i>Dancing Elotes</i> Veronica Robles & Carolyn Lewenberg	East Boston

<i>El Gato con Botas</i> Christie Lee Gibson & OperaHub	Roxbury/South End
<i>Everyman Revisited - Social Issues in Today's World</i> Rosalind Thomas-Clark	Dorchester/South End
<i>Lakou Ayiti</i> Jean Appolon	South End
<i>Lemonade Stand</i> Elisa H. Hamilton & Silvia Lopez Chavez	Dorchester/Jamaica Plain/Mission Hill
<i>Running in Stillness</i> Marsha Parrilla & Danza Orgánica	Roxbury
<i>Sound Sculpture</i> Ryan Edwards	South End
<i>Teatro en el Parque/Theater in the Park</i> Escena Latina Teatro	Jamaica Plain
<i>The Pineapple Diaries: Season Two</i> Paloma Valenzuela	Jamaica Plain
<i>Urban Folds</i> Jillian Wiedenmayer & Mathew Martin	Allston

Creative City Artist Grantees: Round One

<u>PROJECT TITLE/GRANTEE NAME</u>	<u>NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE PROJECT OCCURS</u>
<i>Invisible: Imprints of Racism</i> Anna Myer	Roxbury/Dorchester
<i>City Journalist</i> Lina Maria Giraldo	Jamaica Plain
<i>Night Songs</i> Ashleigh Gordon	Roxbury
<i>Up Walls</i> Cedric Douglas	Roxbury/East Boston
<i>The Makanda Project</i> John Kordalewski	Jamaica Plain
<i>Bodega Signs & Wonders</i> Denise Delgado	Jamaica Plain
<i>InTransit: Voice & Vision</i> Lisa Link	MBTA Orange/Red Lines

Home Town: Re-presenting Boston's Chinatown as Place of People - Then and Now

Wen-ti Tsen

Chinatown

Plenazo-Bombazo Festival

Jorge Arce

Jamaica Plain

About Creative City

Creative City supports individual artists, artist collectives, and artistic collaborations in all disciplines and with roots in diverse cultures, forms, and aesthetics. Grants range from \$2,500-\$10,000, and an additional stipend will be available for community partners to help support presentation costs. Creative City is made possible with lead funding from The Barr Foundation with additional support from the Boston Foundation. For more information about funding priorities, eligibility, and criteria, visit www.nefa.org/creative-city-grant.

About New England Foundation for the Arts

The New England Foundation for the Arts invests in the arts to enrich communities in New England and beyond. NEFA accomplishes this by granting funds to artists and cultural organizations; connecting them to each other and their audiences; and analyzing their economic contributions. NEFA serves as a regional partner for the National Endowment for the Arts, New England's state arts agencies, and private foundations. Visit nefa.org for more information.

About the Barr Foundation

The mission of the Barr Foundation is to invest in human, natural, and cultural potential, serving as thoughtful stewards and catalysts. Based in Boston, Barr focuses regionally, and selectively engages nationally to elevate the arts for vibrant, vital, and engaged communities; to advance solutions for climate change; and to expand educational opportunity. For more information, visit www.barrfoundation.org.

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