



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, June 6, 2024

City of San Diego Arts and Culture Launches Photo Exhibits During Immigrant Heritage Month

MUNICIPAL PHOTO FELLOW COLLABORATES TO PROVIDE A PHOTOGRAPHIC TRIBUTE TO SAN DIEGO IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

SAN DIEGO – Artist and photographer John Raymond Mireles, the City of San Diego’s municipal photo fellow through the [Exposure](#) program, has teamed up with the City’s Office of Immigrant Affairs and Arts and Culture to create a series of unique photographic exhibitions based on the City’s [Welcoming San Diego](#) strategic plan. In recognition of Immigrant Heritage Month, these exhibitions, celebrating our diverse immigrant communities, will debut in public spaces across the City in June.

Drawing inspiration from a poem at the base of the Statue of Liberty, Mireles titled his photo project “The New Colossus: A Photographic Celebration of San Diego’s Immigrant Communities.” The project aims to capture the lives of San Diego’s immigrants through portraits taken in their everyday surroundings.

“The exhibition itself serves a similar purpose as the Statue of Liberty - to welcome immigrants into our homeland. Instead of molded copper, this series of installations uses photography - but its purpose remains the same,” said Mireles. **“The title ‘New Colossus’ implies that there exists an old one or multiple old ones. The reality is that immigration, and our discussion of it is an issue older than our country itself. However, it’s also forever a new topic, fraught with both celebration and controversy. By adopting this title, this exhibition acknowledges America’s history of immigration while also welcoming its place in our present and future.”**

Mireles’ temporary exhibitions and his latest collection of photographic artworks represent the final work of his Exposure fellowship. This program has been partially funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, which runs through the fall of 2024.

“The Exposure Photo Fellowship is an innovative program and the first of its kind offered by the City of San Diego. It’s a unique opportunity for artists to explore San Diego’s civic and social issues through the powerful art of photography,” said Christine E. Jones, Chief of Civic Art Strategies. **“In this program, we match artists working in the medium of photography with a City department or program to promote creativity, community involvement and new perspectives that support the**

City's goals, said Jones. "As the first photo fellow, John has created 'The New Colossus,' a project that vividly captures the rich cultural diversity and distinctive immigrant stories, all through the lens of photographic art.

"The New Colossus" is a free exhibition open to the public, presented as a sequence of displays across San Diego. These exhibitions are hosted in traditional venues, such as libraries and City Hall, and innovative public spaces throughout the city. The exhibit lineup includes "Homage," a tribute to immigration stories; "Duality," which examines the immigrant experience; "The Golden Age," a reflection on a traditional narrative of immigration to the United States; "In Their Own Words," featuring personal stories; "Main Street USA," depicting foreign-born individuals in work environments; and "Colonnade I" and Colonnade II, presenting larger than life portraits.

"As the Exposure photo fellow, John immersed himself in research and engagement with our office," said Matthew Griffith, Program Coordinator with the Office of Immigrant Affairs. "He learned about the ongoing activities of Welcoming San Diego, which ensures the City of San Diego addresses the needs of our diverse immigrant and refugee communities and develops resources and inclusive policies for immigrants," Griffith said. "This series of exhibitions is the culmination of his efforts to engage and build trust with both immigrant and host communities, and we look forward to welcoming all San Diegans to share in these immigrant stories."

A Meet the Artist event open to the public is scheduled for Friday, June 21, from 2 to 3 p.m. in the City Administration Building lobby. This event offers attendees a unique opportunity to engage with Mireles, hear his insights, and enjoy the inaugural viewing of the exhibit.

For a full schedule of "The New Colossus" exhibitions and more information, visitors are encouraged to visit the City's [Exposure webpage](#).

The City of San Diego advances and drives an equitable, inclusive and creative economy by investing in the work of artists and creatives and the institutions and systems that amplify creative work and experiences. To learn more, visit sandiego.gov/arts-culture.

###