

## THE LUMINARY

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January 2024

*Moving Stories in the Making: An Exhibition of Migration Narratives* brings together the work of artists who craft stories of migration. The work of eight artists coalesces in this exhibition: Janna Añonuevo Langholz, Zlatko Ćosić, Mee Jey, and Kiki Salem live and work in St. Louis; Arleene Correa Valencia, Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya, Rafael Soldi, and Laurencia Strauss bring their perspectives to The Luminary from elsewhere. The moving stories assembled here converse with borders and border-crossings, climate survival, geopolitical conflict, indigenous experience, and queerness, among other concerns. They range video, photography, sculpture, and textile, broadening narrative conventions across media. *They speak for themselves.*

*Moving Stories in the Making* takes a global approach to migration narratives, but the exhibition is more than a simple survey. The project reflects the infinite particularity of these moving stories, juxtaposing many experiences of physical and cultural re-location that constellate around an artwork as a narrative vehicle. The perspectives reflected in the exhibition are wide-ranging but are not exhaustive, and could never be. Accounts of “journeys” or “crossings” play important roles in the exhibition, as do artistic interpolations of the trauma that often necessitates or accompanies experiences of migration. We honor these very real experiences of loss, fear, and misrecognition. We also made a conscious effort in planning the exhibition to complicate predigested narratives and hypermediated violence by amplifying stories of joy, connection, and found family.

St. Louisans – and collaborations with St. Louis-based organizations – are fundamental to *Moving Stories in the Making*. Participatory and distributable artworks bring local stories and objects into the space of The Luminary, co-enacting the exhibition alongside the works of participating artists. A web app purpose-built for the collection of migration stories invites interested visitors to anonymously document their experiences of migration in their own words. Moving Stories is proud to partner with The Luminary, a hub of creative community and radical worldmaking in St. Louis, in bringing *Moving Stories in the Making* forward. Listening Sessions with local migrants, artists, arts workers, scholars, and advocates from the Migrant and Immigrant Community Action (MICA) Project, the Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA), and Welcome Neighbor inform the exhibition and programming.

*Moving Stories in the Making* marks an experiment in collaborative curating: a quietly radical prospect that poses real challenges, pragmatic and conceptual. Moving Stories, a transdisciplinary creative research team based at Washington University, developed this exhibition as an organizational partner to The Luminary. Lisa Bulawsky, Tabea Linhard, Ila Sheren, Karla Aguilar Velasquez, and I made collective curatorial decisions in organizing *Moving Stories in the Making*, with ongoing guidance from Ariela Schachter on the

implementation of the story collection app in the gallery. The team combines research perspectives from the study of global languages, comparative literature, art practice, art history, and sociology with the support of the Incubator for Transdisciplinary Futures at Washington University, working to leverage exhibition-making as a transdisciplinary tool of migration studies. The Luminary's Executive Director Kalaija Mallery and Gallery Manager Kellen Wright contributed invaluable labor and guidance throughout the exhibition development process. Liz Glastetter helped us realize the exhibition as our preparator; Kevin Harris advised on exhibition production and media technology.

*Moving Stories in the Making* is a space for learning, sharing, and questioning. How are migrants and those affected by migration using contemporary art practices to tell their stories? How can narratives – visual, textual, and oral – forge bonds and bridge divides between migrants and the communities in which they settle? How can art build communities? Sustain them? The works animating narratives in this exhibition act as an opening for further examination of these questions.

- Jay Buchanan, for the Moving Stories team