



NEWS RELEASE

2200 Dodge Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102 Phone: 402-342-3300 Fax: 402-342-2376 www.joslyn.org

For Immediate Release
June 7, 2018

Contact: Amy Rummel, Director of Marketing & Public Relations
(402) 661-3822 or arummel@joslyn.org

Joslyn Art Museum Hosts Omaha World Refugee Day 2018

(Omaha, NE) – On Saturday, June 16, from 10 am to 2 pm, the public is invited to celebrate Omaha's rich diversity while learning about issues facing the city's refugee population at Omaha World Refugee Day (WRD). Held at Joslyn Art Museum, the day honors and celebrates the courage, strength, and determination of women, men, and children who are forced to flee their homeland under threat of persecution, conflict, and violence. This **free event** will feature:

- a naturalization ceremony welcoming new citizens (*10 am, Witherspoon Concert Hall*)
- cultural music, dance, visual art, and fashion presentations
- special guest speakers (details below)
- gallery viewing and art-making activities
- for refugees only, a health fair

Refugee Voices Speaker Series

Yazidis (Iraq) – Laila Khoudeida was raised in a refugee camp in Syria, after her family fled Iraq during Saddam Hussein's regime, then came to the U.S. in the 90s. A graduate of Wesleyan University, she became an activist after the Yazidis were targeted for genocide by ISIS in 2014. Khoudeida co-founded Yazda, a global Yazidi organization that helps Yazidi victims in the aftermath of the fall of Sinjar, Iraq. In 2015, the National Association of Social Workers named her Public Citizen of the Year. (*11 am; Abbott Lecture Hall*)

Democratic Republic of Congo – Jean Claude Ashimwe will talk about the increasing violence and human abuses along the eastern border of the DRC conflict, his journey to the U.S., and the experiences of the Congolese refugee community here in Omaha. Ashimwe worked as senior logistician at International Medical Corps in Congo, Burundi, and Rwanda until his family was forced to flee to Uganda. In Nebraska since 2016, he works for Omaha Public Schools as bilingual (Swahili) liaison. (*11 am; Omaha Steaks Conference Room*)

Afghanistan – Feroz Mohmand rose from being a refugee within his home country of Afghanistan to become press coordinator for Afghanistan's president, Hamid Karzai. He was also a liaison officer between embassies, NATO, and the international media. Mohmand, his spouse, and their family became refugees after he uncovered a plot against American diplomats and military officers. Today, military officers knowledgeable of this plot believe Mohmand's actions saved American lives. (*12:10 pm; Omaha Steaks Conference Room*)

South Sudan – Abeny Kucha will return, back by popular demand, to recount her family's experience of surviving seven years of civil war and genocide in South Sudan in a talk that is both heart-wrenching and hopeful. Kucha has published a book, *Tears of a Mother*, and appeared on TEDxLincoln. (*12:10 pm; Abbott Lecture Hall*)

-more-

New American Dish @ Café Durham

Joslyn welcomes Aisha Al Saleh as culinary collaborator on the New American Dish project, an exchange of food and culture. Staff from the Museum's Café Durham worked alongside Al Saleh to feature a signature dish highlighting the flavors of her home country of Syria. From **June 12 through June 16, 11 am to 2 pm daily**, Al Saleh's recipe will be on the lunch menu at Joslyn, with ten percent of the dish's proceeds benefiting Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska. Special thanks to Abraham Catering for their partnership.

Al Saleh was born in Syria where she worked as a chef but, due to political instability, was forced to leave her home country, making her way to Omaha with her family a year and a half ago. Al Saleh loves to cook and has started her own catering business in Omaha that specializes in Middle Eastern cuisine.

Fill the Cupboard

Guests attending WRD or New American Dish are encouraged to bring culturally appropriate food donations (i.e. beans, lentils, canned fish, and rice) for the International Center of the Heartland pantry. For a complete list of suggested items, and other details about WRD at Joslyn, visit www.joslyn.org/worldrefugeeday.

Omaha World Refugee Day is hosted by Joslyn Art Museum and brought to you by the Omaha Refugee Task Force.

Community Exhibitions

The following photography exhibitions highlight the personal stories of refugees. Both are featured in Joslyn's community gallery (Memorial Building, southwest lower level).

What We Carried: Lincoln

See a storytelling project by Jim Lommasson, freelance photographer and author living in Portland, OR, and the Yazidi community of Lincoln, NE, home to the largest population of Yazidi peoples in the United States. This project highlights their immigration from Northern Iraq to the United States with a focus on the items brought with them on their journey. Each item was photographed individually and then written reflections by Yazidi participants were added directly to the printed work. A selection of photographs from the exhibition (originally on view, in its entirety, at the Nebraska History Museum) is on view at Joslyn through June 30.

Special thanks to Jim Lommasson and the Nebraska History Museum for making this exhibition available at Joslyn.

100cameras

Joslyn recently joined with Lutheran Family Services to welcome the 100cameras project, a New York-based nonprofit that partners with local organizations around the world to offer storytelling and technical photography skills to kids, ages 10–18, who have had traumatic experiences. Students tell stories from their past and present, and imagine their future, through the lens of a camera, culminating in a photography exhibition. This past April, Joslyn was the 100cameras workshop site for 14 refugee students attending Central High School, led by local photographer Alex Matzke. The students' photographs are on view at Joslyn through June 30.



Our Mission — Joslyn Art Museum collects, preserves, and interprets the visual arts of the highest quality, fostering appreciation and enjoyment of art for the benefit of a diverse audience.

Our Vision — To be cherished and respected as a premier art museum.

Joslyn Art Museum showcases art from ancient times to the present. The Museum was a gift to the people of Omaha from Sarah Joslyn in memory of her husband, George, who made his fortune as president of the Western Newspaper Union. The Museum's original 1931 building is one of the finest examples of Art Deco architecture in the nation, with 38 types of marble from seven countries. The Walter and Suzanne Scott Pavilion, a 58,000-square-foot addition built in 1994, was designed by renowned British architect Norman Foster as his first U.S. commission. The Museum features galleries, a 1,000-seat concert hall, fountain court, education technology gallery, lecture hall, classrooms, sculpture garden, café, shop, and Art Works, an interactive space for art exploration.

General Museum Admission: Free (additional charge for some special exhibitions)

Regular Museum Hours: Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am–4 pm; late 'til 8 pm on Thursday; closed Monday and major holidays.

www.joslyn.org | (402) 342-3300 | 2200 Dodge Street | Omaha, NE 68102