

FINDING COMMON GROUND

REFLECT

As you begin to explore this exhibition, take a moment to reflect on these core questions about your own experiences of home, place, and displacement.

- What do you think of when you think of home? Does the idea of “home” evoke a place, a relationship, a feeling, an image, a scent, or a sound?
- How long have you lived in Portland (or wherever you currently live)? Would you consider yourself “a local” in this place?
- When have you felt uprooted, isolated, or displaced in your own life?
- Have you ever offered another person refuge? What does it mean to be a place of refuge?

LOOK CLOSELY

Choose a few photographs in this exhibition that spark your interest, and spend a few minutes or more looking closely at each.

- What do you learn about the person or people represented just from looking? What more can you learn by reading the label as well as other texts provided in the gallery?
- How do you see yourself in this person? How do you see them in you?
- What might these photographs reveal (or conceal) about these people and their experience of displacement? What is outside the frame? Think about what can and cannot be conveyed in a photograph.
- How might these photographs help us to better connect with and understand the individuals depicted in them? In what ways might they be keeping us from connecting with or understanding them?

LEARN MORE

Who is a refugee?

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee is unable or unwilling to return home due to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

Who is an internally displaced person?

Internally displaced people have been forced to flee their homes but have not crossed an international border. These individuals seek safety anywhere they can find it—in nearby towns, schools, settlements, internal camps, even forests and fields.

More than 65 million individuals are currently displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations, including nearly 22.5 million refugees. We are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record.

Since 1975, the U.S. has welcomed more than three million refugees from all over the world, and these refugees have built new lives for their families in all 50 states, including Oregon.

Learn more by visiting the United Nations Refugee Agency: unhcr.org

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide includes a few suggestions to spark thinking, reflection, and conversation in the special exhibition *Common Ground*. Take some time to experience the photographs and personal testimonies in this exhibition. Think about your responses to some of the questions included here, and have a conversation with someone else in which you share your perspective and listen to theirs. On the back, you'll also find ways to get involved and take action here in our local communities.

PORTLAND MEET PORTLAND

We often think the refugee crisis is too large for us to have any impact. We don't do what we can do because we are paralyzed by what we can't do. Yet, the powerful ways we can walk with refugees in our own Portland communities is only limited by the number of refugees that live here and our willingness to engage.

When we challenge our own fears and expectations, when we move past the feeling of inconvenience and open up our lives to others with vastly different lived experiences than our own, we learn and we grow. We are enriched and happier together.

Instead of seeking to serve refugees, seek friendship. Instead of a transaction, seek to build understanding and trust. There are many ways to do this through local organizations and on your own. Refugees are not simply the recipients of services and resources. They are our neighbors, classmates, and employers, too. We worship with them, eat their food, benefit from their labor and ideas. They are us and we are them. Refugees have spaces all their own where you might be invited to participate and celebrate with their community.

So, reach out through an organization or reach out to the person next to you. Look at each other and smile. Say hello. Portland, meet Portland.

—Manuel Padilla, Executive Director,
Portland Meet Portland

The Portland Art Museum has partnered with Portland Meet Portland to co-create the “Portland Meet Portland” community gallery along with much of the educational programming and resources for this exhibition.

Portland Meet Portland is a local nonprofit organization working with refugee, immigrant, and mainstream communities to cultivate cross-cultural learning, friendship, and trust. Portland Meet Portland projects are rooted in mutual mentorship and accompaniment, blurring the lines between newcomer and local through dialogue.



GET INVOLVED

Learn more about some of the organizations working to support refugees and immigrants here in Portland and Oregon, and find ways to get involved.

- **Catholic Charities**
catholiccharitiesoregon.org
- **Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization**
irco.org
- **Lutheran Community Services Northwest**
lcsnw.org
- **Muslim Educational Trust**
metpdx.org
- **New Portlanders Program**
portlandoregon.gov/oni/62226
- **PDX Friends of Refugees**
pdxfriendsofrefugees.com
- **Portland Meet Portland**
portlandmeetportland.org
- **Refugee Care Collective**
refugeecarecollective.org

Please visit Refugee Volunteer Organization (refvol.org) for more complete information on organizations that provide services to refugees in Oregon.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Learn more about upcoming programs and events at portlandartmuseum.org/common-ground.

Learn more about Fazal Sheikh at fazalsheikh.org