

THE PROMISED LAND: Zomi Diaspora in Tulsa

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ABSTRACT

"The Promised Land: Zomi diaspora in Tulsa" is a photographic essay that examines the entrepreneurial spirit, rituals and faith of the Zomi community in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Zomi people are the second largest ethnic diaspora among the Burmese refugees in the US. It is estimated that about 6,000 Zomi people have resettled in Tulsa, which is now known as "Zomi town" among the Burmese population.

Since this exodus is fairly recent and Zomis started arriving in Tulsa post 2007, the community is transitioning. Due to this, it is crucial to document the cultural and human landscapes of Zomis in Tulsa, in order to explore their cultural lifestyle and relationship within the community.

SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL ANALYSIS

Seven photographers were interviewed using in-depth, open-ended interviews to explore their role as an insider to the stories they have covered. These seven people

include Kholood Eid, Josué Rivas, Gabriella Angotti-Jones, Jessica Chou, Amr Alfinky, Wing Young Huie and Wesaam Al-Badry. The interviewees discussed their long-term photographic project of documenting their own communities in the United States. All seven interviewees talked about the advantages and downfalls of being an insider. The photographers expressed how due to their unique position, they were able to dig deeper beneath the cultural and social layers to produce quieter, more nuanced work.