

The **AMERICAN DREAM**



IMMIGRANTS | WALKING THE WALK
!NO HUMAN BEING IS ILLEGAL! REFORM NOW!

Oscar Muirallana

A DREAM Deferred:

UNDOCUMENTED
IMMIGRANTS AND
THE AMERICAN
DREAM

A **SPACE** for **DIALOGUE** 106

HOOD MUSEUM OF ART, DARTMOUTH

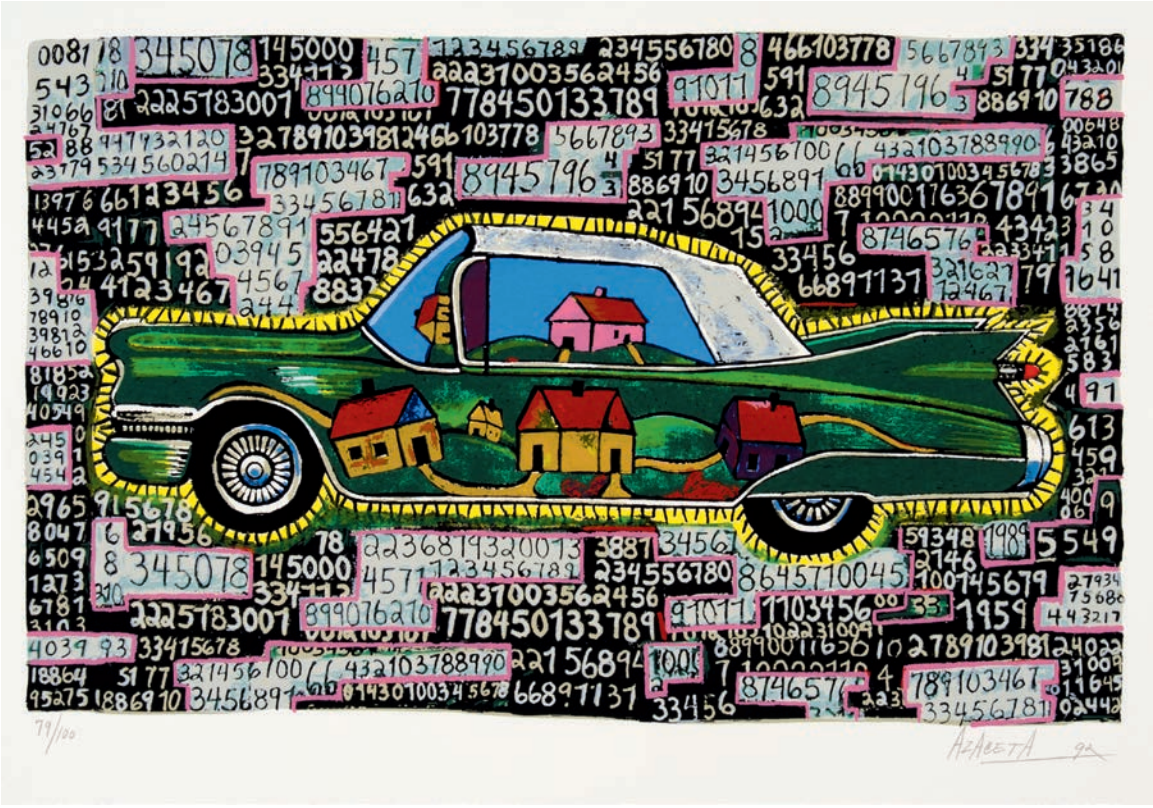
There are currently over 42 million immigrants in the United States, and about 11 million of them are undocumented. People choose to leave behind everything they have known for numerous reasons: fleeing oppression, escaping dangerous living conditions, or searching for better education and opportunities for their children. Many people immigrate to the United States to live the American Dream.

The term "American Dream" has existed for over a century, and it means something different to everyone. However, undocumented immigrants are confronted with a much longer and harsher path to the American Dream than native-born citizens. Often, they are immediately labeled by US citizens as undocumented, illegal, or alien, and their livelihoods are under constant threat. They live each day with a future of uncertainty, hoping that today is not the day they get deported.

Artists like Luis Azaceta complicate and critique the notion of the American Dream by highlighting inequitable practices, such as redlining, that affect the livelihoods of minorities. Azaceta centers his work around lottery numbers to comment on the arbitrariness surrounding

the American Dream. His *Lotto: The American Dream* features a car filled with colorful houses and set against a backdrop of black-and-white numbers that appear to be grouped arbitrarily. A lotto, or lottery, involves the random drawing of numbers for a chance to win a monetary prize. Azaceta's title thus seems to suggest that these numbers are similarly random. However, on closer inspection, the viewer might recognize these numbers as zip codes and see the traces of red and green across them. They allude to the discriminatory practice of redlining, which designated certain neighborhoods—most often those where people of color reside—as "high risk."

Some undocumented parents bring their children to the United States hoping to give them the American Dream, but currently there is no legal pathway to US citizenship for their children. In 2001, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was introduced to Congress, which has seen at least eleven versions of the DREAM Act over the past twenty years. If passed, this bill would provide a pathway to legal status for undocumented people who came to the United States as children. To date, no



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iteration of this bill has succeeded, but due to the publicity surrounding the proposed DREAM Act, young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children are commonly referred to as Dreamers. In most cases, Dreamers identify as American, and this is the only country they have ever known.

While the DREAM Act remains pending, the Department of Homeland Security enacted a policy called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in 2012, providing temporary relief from deportation. But while there are over 3 million Dreamers living in the United States, only about 800,000 Dreamers are currently protected under DACA.

DACA recipients are doctors, nurses, business owners, and first responders. Amid the coronavirus pandemic, they are on the front lines, ensuring that food is being grown, packaged, and stocked on store shelves; children are being educated; and patients are being cared for.

Unlike federal legislation, DACA does not provide permanent legal status, and their eligibility must be renewed every two years. In 2017, President Donald Trump ordered an end to the program. This decision meant that about 800,000 individuals who were brought to the United States as children would be eligible for deportation and would lose access to education and work visas. While a Supreme Court ruling blocked this attempt to end DACA, the ruling left open the possibility that a presidential administration could end DACA in the future.

The artists in *A DREAM Deferred: Undocumented Immigrants and the American Dream* call attention to the broken US immigration system. In Oree Originol's vibrantly colored print *Stop the Raids, Stop ICE*, he focuses on actions conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, where home raids have become a common occurrence. Originol depicts a *palatero* (ice cream vendor) passing a home where an ICE raid is in progress. "STOP ICE" appears in bold letters on the *palatero*'s cart.

In Oscar Magallanes's print *The American Dream, Immigrants, Walk the Walk, No Human Being Is Illegal! Reform Now!* (cover), he depicts a man in an orange shirt similar to that of a prison uniform, with his arm raised high, holding a bag of oranges while walking the streets of California. The raised arm echoes the raised-fist gesture,



a symbol of political resistance. Like Originol, Magallanes makes use of the ubiquitous street vendor as the focal point of his composition. While street vendors are regularly scapegoated by political commentators for hurting the economy, Magallanes sees them as the "hardest workers" and often the most disenfranchised.

The exhibition includes ten prints and one photograph made between 1992 and 2020 that present different perspectives on Dreamers and the American Dream. The majority of these works are poster prints that were created digitally. Posters have been a popular medium for political rebellions globally since the 1960s, making this a fitting medium for the activists in this show. Since in the 1980s, the digital revolution has brought influential technological advances and has changed the nature of art making. Like the other artists in this show, Karla Rosas creates her prints using both traditional and digital tools. In *Yo Tambien Tengo Sueños* for International Worker's Day, Rosas celebrates and honors all forms of labor, demanding the passage of laws and policies to improve working conditions for undocumented immigrants. Digital art allows artists like Rosas, Magallanes, and Originol to draw attention to the unjust immigration system in the United States in new ways.

Yliana Beck '22
Conroy Intern

CHECKLIST

Luis Cruz Azaceta, Cuban, born 1942. *Lotto: The American Dream*, published 1992, nine-color serigraph. Purchased through the Anonymous Fund #144; 2008.53.2

Javier Cintron, Puerto Rican, born 1967. *Downward Turn*, from *Portfolio 2008*, about 2008, linocut on chine collé. Purchased through a gift from the Class of 1935 Memorial Fund; 2009.37.7

Oree Originol, American, born 1971. *Stop the Raids, Stop ICE*, 2012, silkscreen, letterpress. Purchased through the Contemporary Art Fund; 2013.46.25

Oscar Magallanes, American, born 1976. *The American Dream, Immigrants, Walk the Walk, No Human Being Is Illegal! Reform Now!*, 2012, silkscreen, letterpress. Purchased through the Contemporary Art Fund; 2013.46.19

Molly Fair, American, born 1982. *Immigrants' Rights Are Human Rights . . .*, 2012, silkscreen, letterpress. Purchased through the Contemporary Art Fund; 2013.46.13

Colin Matthes, American, born 1978. *Smash ICE, Alto al Terror de la Migra! Stop ICE Terror!*, 2012, silkscreen, letterpress. Purchased through the Contemporary Art Fund; 2013.46.21

Raoul Deal, American, born 1956. *Stop Breaking Up Families, Dream Act Now!*, 2012, silkscreen, letterpress. Purchased through the Contemporary Art Fund; 2013.46.19

Pete Yahnke Railand, American, born 1975. *El Paso / Juarez Train Bridge*, 2012, silkscreen, letterpress. Purchased through the Contemporary Art Fund; 2013.46.35

Stephanie Syjuco, Filipino, born 1974. *Total Transparency Filter (Portrait of N)*, 2017, archival pigmented inkjet print. Purchased through the Robert J. Strassenburgh II 1942 Fund; 2019.37

Karla Rosas, Mexican, born 1992. *Yo Tambien Tengo Sueños*, 2019. Purchased through the Stephen and Constance Spahn '63 Acquisition Fund; 2022.11.1

Álvaro D. Márquez, American, 1981. *Your Presence Counts / Tu Presencia Cuenta*, 2020, serigraph. Purchased through the Stephen and Constance Spahn '63 Acquisition Fund; 2022.9

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The exhibition *A DREAM Deferred: Undocumented Immigrants and the American Dream*, part of the museum's student-curated *A Space for Dialogue* series, is on view at the Hood Museum of Art, April 30–June 18, 2022.

A Space for Dialogue: Fresh Perspectives on the Permanent Collection from Dartmouth's Students, founded with support from the Class of 1948, is made possible with generous endowments from the Class of 1967, Bonnie and Richard Reiss Jr. '66, and Pamela J. Joyner '79.

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Cover image: Oscar Magallanes, *The American Dream, Immigrants, Walk the Walk, No Human Being Is Illegal! Reform Now!*, 2012. © Oscar Magallanes

Inside left: Luis Azaceta, *Lotto: The American Dream*, 1992. © Luis Azaceta

Inside right: Oree Originol, *Stop the Raids, Stop ICE*, 2012. © Oree Originol

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