



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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***Painting Brooklyn Stories of Immigration & Survival***  
New Exhibit Portrays Immigrants' Lives through Paintings, Poetry and More  
Opens Sept. 17 at Brooklyn Historical Society



**Brooklyn, NY** –The exhibition ***Painting Brooklyn Stories of Immigration and Survival*** tells the stories of diverse individuals who have immigrated to Brooklyn. The people featured in the exhibition share their personal narratives that highlight the process of creating a new home in a new land and how they've incorporated their cultural traditions into their New York lives. Their stories speak of hope and despair, embrace and discrimination. The exhibition will be open at the Brooklyn Historical Society from Sept. 17, 2010 – Feb. 27, 2011.

Curated by Nina Talbot, painter, in collaboration with Rachel Bernstein, public historian at New York University, the exhibit presents striking stories of Brooklyn residents through paintings, oral histories, poetry and personal effects. These different modes of expression offer multiple perspectives on this complex issue.

Visitors to the exhibit meet a range of people, including an Iranian Jew with a jewelry shop in Newkirk Plaza; a Tuskegee Airman originally from the Caribbean whose mother worked as a servant for a family on Rugby Road; a phlebotomist from Dhaka, Bangladesh who lives in Midwood; a writer from Haiti with violent memories of the tonton macoute, now living peacefully in East Flatbush; a musician from Park Slope whose 96 year old mother remembers arriving in New York from Hangzhou, China in 1938; a Pakistani Muslim woman living in West Midwood; and a woman who survived the Mauthausen concentration camp now living in Borough Park.

Artist Nina Talbot painted portraits of the storytellers for the exhibition. The paintings portray life in vivid colors, and trace the international routes of some of the people who now live in Brooklyn. Talbot depicts the Brooklynites as they are today, with the backgrounds and borders of the portraits containing images from the subject's past experiences.

Talbot has come to know many people in her own neighborhood in the process of creating these portraits: "Each morning I exchange a glance with the grocer, or share a smile with the barber. Their visages hint at their past and their present. These paintings provide a map to what is beyond everyday faces, and tells the stories of what these faces have seen."

The exhibition features audio from oral history interviews with individuals in the paintings. Poet Esther Cohen has written poems based on the individual narratives that inspired the paintings. These elements, combined with photos, student interpretations, and objects add depth to the lessons these individual lives can teach about struggle, survival, success and heroism. **CONTINUED**

In conjunction with the exhibition Professor Bernstein and Nina Talbot will run a family workshop **Sunday, November 14<sup>th</sup>** in which participants will conduct focused interviews to elicit stories from each other and create mixed media artwork based on the stories.

**WHEN: Opening Reception, Thursday, September 16. 5:30 - 7:30 pm.**

**Exhibit dates:** September 17, 2010 – February 27, 2011

**WHERE:** Brooklyn Historical Society; 128 Pierrepont St. (at Clinton St.); Brooklyn, NY 11201.

**About the exhibition series:** *Public Perspectives* provides a creative forum for Brooklynites to have an active voice at the Brooklyn Historical Society by presenting community-curated exhibits selected from our open call for exhibition proposals. The awardees collaborate with BHS staff to develop and mount their exhibitions. *Public Perspectives* is made possible through the generous support of the Lily Auchincloss Foundation and FHL Bank, with additional support provided by the Kress Foundation and HBO.

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*The mission of the Brooklyn Historical Society is to connect the past to the present and make the vibrant history of Brooklyn tangible, relevant, and meaningful for today's diverse communities, and for generations to come. Founded in 1863, BHS is a nationally recognized urban history center, comprised of a museum; scholarly research library; and educational center dedicated to preserving and encouraging the study of Brooklyn's extraordinary 400-year history. [www.brooklynhistory.org](http://www.brooklynhistory.org)*