

Filmmakers look at immigration from different angle

*By Sara Inés Calderón
The Brownsville Herald*

September 4, 2005 — If it weren't for an unforgettable little girl in Sonora, Rudy Adler, Victoria Criado and Brett Huneycutt would have never thought of the idea that's consumed their summer.

They only knew that she was about 8 years old and was clinging to her family as they readied to cross into the United States.

What, the filmmakers wondered, would the journey across the border look like through her eyes?

As a result, the three filmmakers passed out more than 100 cameras to mostly Mexican and Central American would-be migrants in Mexico. So far, they've been all along the border between Arizona and Texas. The hope is to pass out a total of 250 from Tijuana to Brownsville by the end of the summer.

The camera project, "Documenting the Undocumented," sprang out of a series of short documentaries the group began to film this summer. Some of the films related to immigration, some did not, and by the time the 50-plus hours of footage are edited, they hope to have five to six short films.

Realistically, they expect to get 10 percent to 20 percent of the cameras back. Once the prints are done, they will send copies to the migrant photographers, and make selections for a traveling show.

Galleries in Phoenix and Scottsdale, Ariz. have already promised to host the show, they said.

"This journey is something that we can't document, but think the migrants can best document themselves," said Huneycutt, who is from Arizona and has seen the way immigration transforms communities first-hand. The primary goal of this project is to raise awareness about what migrants go through to come to this country, he said.

They've already received a few cameras.

They distributed disposable cameras with 27 exposures and placed them in a stamped, addressed envelope with an information card, and that package was placed inside of a plastic bag, to avoid water damage. Migrants are to put the camera in the mail once they cross, and receive \$25 in return.

"They (immigrant photographers) actually seem really interested in the political ramifications this could have," said Criado, whose family migrated from Argentina to Puerto Rico to New York. "They are just as aware of the issues as we are."

Adler has the most experience in film of the three, having worked on a film project in Portland, Ore. in the past year. He plans to move to New York City at the end of September, upon the project's completion.

Criado was working on Wall Street when she decided she needed a change. She e-mailed Adler, dropped everything, quit her job, put her things in storage and has been on the road since. She'll head back to the city at the end of the project.

Huneycutt met Criado when the two attended school in Boston. He is set to begin a master's program at Oxford University in economics. He and Adler have known each other since elementary school.

Although their process wasn't strictly regimented, none of them seemed too worried about the result.

"It was a very serendipitous summer," Huneycutt said. "It was just about showing up places and giving people calls."

For more information, visit www.borderfilmproject.com or e-mail borderfilmpro-ject@gmail.com
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Posted on Sep 04, 05 | 12:00 am

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