

The wall installation, designed for CUNY Law School in 2017, celebrates its mission “law in the service of human needs” and stories of people throughout Queens, paying homage to Emma Lazarus’ sonnet *The New Colossus* on the Statue of Liberty. The installation features an excerpt from the libretto of *1001 Voices: A Symphony for a New America* (music Frank London, libretto Judith Sloan, animation Warren Lehrer).

“My re-envisioning of Emma Lazarus’ Statue of Liberty poem is a kind of *New New Colossus* for our shared histories and continued witnessing of pain, misdeeds, joy, love, and resilience,” says Sloan. Her text for the full symphony was inspired by *The Arabian Nights* and listening to stories of people throughout Queens, in theatre workshops at the International High School and for *Crossing the BLVD: strangers, neighbors, aliens in a new America*, a book and project by Sloan and Warren Lehrer.

Lehrer designed animated projections for the *1001 Voices* symphony (which The Queens Symphony Orchestra premiered in 2012). Known for capturing the shape of thought and speech on the printed page, his expressionistic supertitles fused typography with image and functioned as a visual counterpoint to the music. The panoramic dimensions of the screen paralleled the panoramic sweep of the piece itself, spanning centuries of America’s story as manifest in what is today its most ethnically diverse locality—Queens, NY.

For the Sorensen Center collaboration, Lehrer continued with a panoramic format, setting discrete phrases within the poem into their own panels—through typography, photography, color, shape, metaphor. Viewers experience the wordscapes as a field and as single panels in whatever direction they/you/we may be heading.” Lehrer/Sloan envision a potential larger collaboration with the Sorensen Center and CUNY Law School for a public installation of the full poem which would include 18 panels. This wall installation features an excerpt of the poem, consisting of ten smaller scale panels.

The *Justice Through Art* initiative is a collaboration between CUNY Law’s community and artists to bring new perspectives and depth to social justice issues and legal challenges. The initiative was launched in 2016 with the pop-up exhibition, *Weights and Measures*, by Bradley McCallum. “At this crucial moment in our country — and as our CUNY Law community steps up to act boldly for justice and freedom — the *1001 Voices* art installation aptly conveys a hopeful message from our community and to our community,” notes Camille Massey, Founding Executive Director of the Sorensen Center.

SORENSEN CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND JUSTICE

The Sorensen Center for International Peace and Justice, named after Ted Sorensen, was founded at CUNY Law School in the fall of 2014 as the first named center with Camille Massey as Founding Executive Director. The Sorensen Center's mission is to train social justice lawyers to work from the local to the global levels, protecting the rights of those affected by instability, conflict, and repression; and advance scholarship, intellectual exchange, and advocacy for international peace and justice. www.sorensencenter.org

The City University of New York

CUNY SCHOOL OF LAW

Law in the Service of Human Needs

CUNY School of Law is the premier public interest law school in the country. It trains lawyers to serve the underprivileged and disempowered and to make a difference in their communities. Founded in 1983, the CUNY School of Law consistently ranks among the top 10 law schools in the country in clinical training. CUNY Law pioneered the model of integrating a lawyering curriculum with traditional doctrinal study. www.law.cuny.edu



EarSay is a Queens-based artist-driven non-profit dedicated to uncovering and portraying stories of the uncelebrated. Founded in 1999, EarSay projects bridge the divide between documentary and expressive forms in books, exhibitions, on stage, in sound & electronic media. EarSay is committed to fostering understanding across cultures, generations, gender and class, through artistic productions and education. www.earsay.org



CUNY School of Law wall installation made possible in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and the Sorensen Center

The full poem realized in 18 panels



Here,
everybody,
comes inside, to my table



Even

if they were at war

with each other

somewhere else



Here,
everybody,
starts again,
in a new tongue
hanging on, letting go

What's lost, is gone

close

a

door

a window flies open.



Give me
your children
orphaned by war



They're free
and they're brave
and they're tired
and poor



**Sons
and the fathers
together
alone**

Making a life
where the
future's
unknown



Mothers foreclosed on,
tossed out the door

Yearning to breathe where we're taught to want more.



Here, everybody,
has a **shout** deep inside them



Crossing borders

Crossing

paths

aching for, eager to...

Give me
your
Night
mares
harbored inside

The
kings
and the
queens
stole
the truth
in the
night

Our (k)nights
are all restless where dreams can be
born

refused and forlorn

Give me your losers and lovers,



A thousand one voices
sing out to survive

I'm going to enjoy the life now, because I have the human right now. I have the right now. I'm hungry for peace but I'm too realistic. Hungry for safety but don't have the right now. I wasn't ready to leave my country, but life suddenly change my mind. I'm hungry for revenge. I used to listen. To birds, to the wind in the trees. I could see them if you work hard / America doesn't care where you from. Oh the boat from Greece papers? A bomb dropped on our house, I wasn't thinking. Silence of the forest, taste the color of the sky, touch the sound of the ocean. If I Sons, and the fathers together alone with our suitcase and no money. Oneskirt, one pair of shoe. We worked as stock oh, let me go get my birth certificate." All of a sudden listen now, I see the cries of my neighbors. Smell the silence of the city. Taste the Making a life where the future's unknown boy and stock lady in a fabric shop. Our first gift the son gives us an old car. We got a knock on the door I was hidden in a haystack, In a color of the sky. All my senses are confused. There is no quiet here. Mothers foreclosed on, tossed out the door a job delivering food. My mother writes. "You work delivering food? this is the life basement. Under a house, I came on a coffin ship From I'm from a black tent. I'm from a white tent. Yearning to breathe where we're taught to want more. From a long walk. Ireland, Senegal, Russia, France In 1883, In 1870, In 1918, I'm from h dumplings place where after a thu Mediterr

Tell me your stories I'll keep them alive.

In 1952, In 1965, In 1988, In 1991 after the slave ships A long story. A long song. A long line of hard workers. heart. Who I'm from hotness. I'm from the place of rice and I'm from a black tent. I'm from a white tent. From a long walk. A long march. A dumplings. Where it is, the place I'm from, the long story. A long song. A long line of hard workers. Dockworkers. Day laborers. The barrio. Streams After the war came After my cousin came, it The hood. The village. The mountain. The river. The mudslide. place where I just came from...the war. The calm Steinway piano makers. The barrio. The hood. The village. The mountain. The river. after a thunderstorm. Samba is where I'm from The mudslide. I'm from where mangos fall to the ground. The Carpathian mountains. Scheherazade's Castle. Yak butter in front of a palace. It was here, I had no choice, I made a home I'm from shells and make a necklace. Playing baseball with carpets for bases. Mediterranean Sea. I'm from a warm place. My mother's where the Algonquian language once lived I'm from the A beautiful land. The smell of sand after raining. heart. Where I come from, you wouldn't know. Right Playing cricket with garbage cans and sticks. Being carried to Machu Pichu, swampland filled in by dirt I'm from the place where the 100f Stories to keep me alive. I'm from Babylon. Aren't we all? here in this country from the drone of cicadas and dry- by my father. Michael Jackson's Thriller, on vinyl. The

1001 Voices: An Anthem for a New America

Here, everybody, comes inside, to my table
Even if they were at war
With each other, somewhere else

Here everybody, starts again, in a new tongue
Hanging on, letting go
What's lost, is gone
Close a door, a window flies open.

Give me your children orphaned by war
They're free and they're brave and they're tired and poor
Sons and the fathers together alone
Making a life where the future's unknown
Mothers foreclosed on, tossed out the door
Yearning to breathe where we're taught to want more.

Here everybody has a shout deep inside them
Crossing borders, crossing paths
Aching for, eager to...

Give me your nightmares harbored inside
The kings and the queens stole the truth in the night
Our (k)night's are all restless where dreams can be born
Give me your losers and lovers, refused and forlorn
A thousand one voices sing out to survive
Tell me your stories I'll keep them alive.

Judith Sloan

2012

The New Colossus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame,
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

Emma Lazarus

1883

About the Artists

Warren Lehrer is an artist and writer known as a pioneer of visual literature and design authorship. His books, acclaimed for capturing the shape of thought and reuniting the traditions of storytelling with the printed page, include: *Crossing the BLVD: strangers, neighbors, aliens in a New America* (with Judith Sloan); *The Portrait Series: a quartet of men* (four book suite); *GRRRHHHHH: a study of social patterns* (with Dennis Bernstein and Sandra Brownlee); *French Fries* (with Dennis Bernstein); *i mean you know*; and *versations*. His newest book, *A Life In Books: The Rise and Fall of Bleu Mobley*, is an illuminated novel with 101 books within it.

Lehrer has received many awards for his books and multimedia projects including: the Brendan Gill Prize, the IPPY Outstanding Book of the Year Award, the Innovative Use of Archives Award, The International Book Award for Best New Fiction, three AIGA Book Awards, two Type Directors Club Awards, a Media That Matters Award, and a Prix Arts Electronica Award. He's received fellowships and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council and Foundation for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Greenwall Foundation and others. He is a 2016 Honoree from the Center for Book Arts (NYC) for his "pioneering work" and for "extending the field of book arts to the broader worlds of contemporary art and literature." His work has been exhibited widely and is in many collections including MoMA, LA County Art Museum, Walker Arts Center, The Getty Museum, Georges Pompidou Centre, and Tate Gallery.

Lehrer is also a performer, and has co-written four plays, one opera, co-composed two audio CDs, and he co-produces public radio documentaries and audio works with Judith Sloan. More recently, Lehrer has been setting stories and text into animation, video, and interactive media. Lehrer received his BA from Queens College, CUNY, and an MFA from Yale University. He is a full professor at the School of Art+Design at Purchase College, SUNY, and a founding faculty member of the *Designer As Author* grad program at the School of Visual Arts (SVA). He is also a frequent lecturer, keynote speaker, and presenter at conferences, universities, festivals, bookstores, and art and literary centers throughout the U.S. and abroad.

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Judith Sloan is an actor, audio artist, and writer, whose work in theatre and human rights combines humor, pathos and a love of the absurd, portraying voices often ignored by the mass media. Her solo performances and plays include: *Yo Miss!*, *Denial of the Fittest*, *Responding to Chaos*, *A Tattle Tale: eyewitness in Mississippi* and *Crossing the BLVD: strangers, neighbors, aliens in a new America* (based on the book written in collaboration with Warren Lehrer). Her multi-layered theater work has been produced in theatres and festivals throughout the U.S. and abroad including: LaMama E.T.C, The Public Theatre, The Theatre Workshop (Edinburgh, Scotland), The Smithsonian Institution, the Market Theatre (Johannesburg, SA), etc. The New York Times described her performance of *Crossing the BLVD* as “a whirlwind tour and love poem of what has often been called the most racially and ethnically diverse county in America.” Sloan wrote the libretto for *1001 Voices: A Symphony for a New America*, with music by Frank London, animations by Lehrer.

Sloan’s commentaries, plays, poetry and documentaries have aired on National Public Radio, New York Public Radio, WBEZ Chicago, PRI, BBC, and listener sponsored stations throughout the U.S. She has received numerous awards for her audio mixes and documentary works including a New York Foundation on the Arts (NYFA) fellowship in Sound/Music, grants from the New York State Council on the Arts, the Queens Council on the Arts, the Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation among others. Sloan is a member of the Adjunct faculty at Gallatin School at New York University and is a frequent guest speaker and performer in universities throughout the country. In 2009 she received the Partnership in Education award for EarSay’s theatre program for immigrant youth in partnership with the International High School at LaGuardia Community College in Queens, NY. Sloan received an honorary Civil Rights Award from CUNY Law School for her work on *A Tattle Tale: eyewitness in Mississippi*, and participation in CUNY Law School’s Mississippi project in 1994.

In 2016, Sloan was commissioned to write site specific poetry for large scale window installations in White Plains for the *Art In Vacant Spaces* project, a collaboration with the White Plains BID and Purchase College, SUNY.

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Together, Lehrer and Sloan founded EarSay,

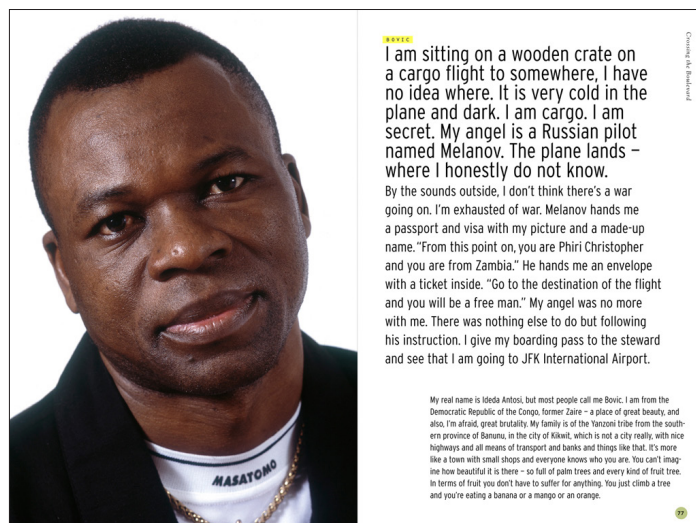
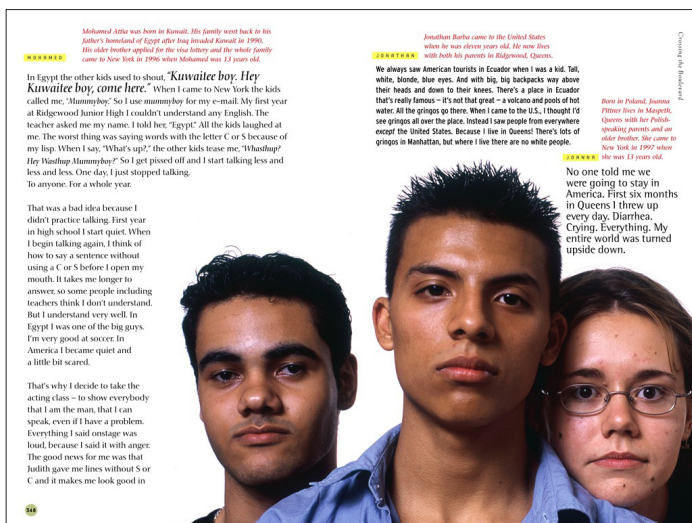
a non-profit arts organization dedicated to uncovering and portraying the lives of the uncelebrated in print, on stage, on radio, in exhibitions, electronic media, and through educational programs in public schools, community centers, and prisons.

www.earsay.org info@earsay.org

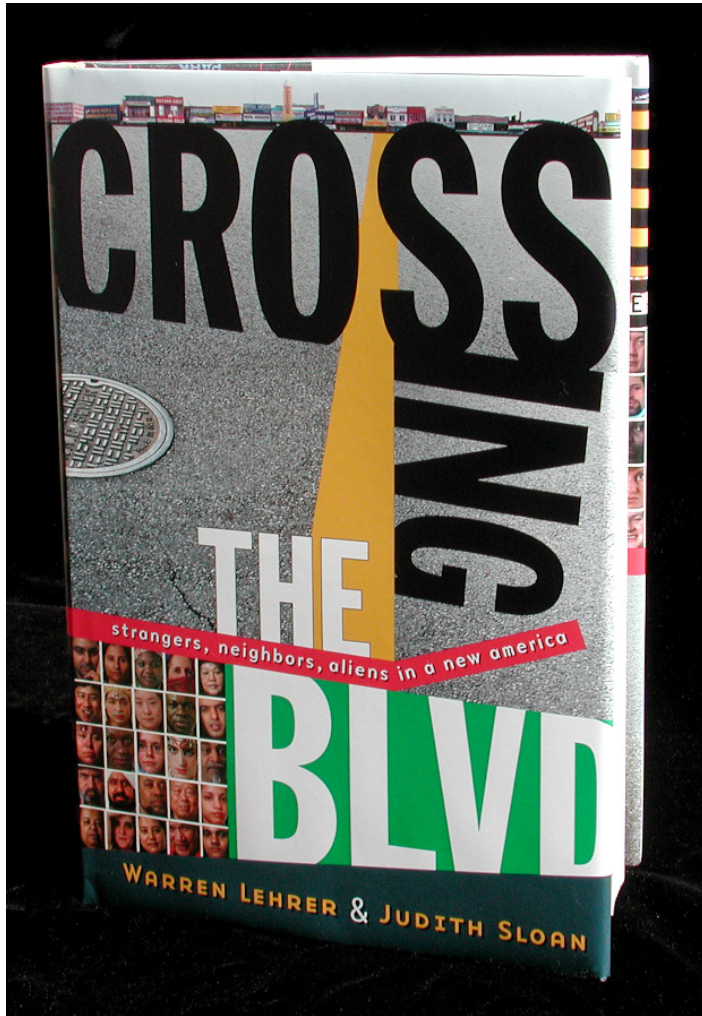
The *1001 Voices* project is one of EarSay's art and social justice projects that grew out of ***Crossing the BLVD***, a multi-media project that includes a book, museum exhibition, audio CD and performance.



As immigration is hotly debated around the world in terms of national and cultural security, ***Crossing the BLVD: strangers, neighbors, aliens in a new America*** powerfully and intimately documents U.S. immigration through the stories of new immigrants and refugees living in Queens, NY—the most ethnically diverse locality in the United States. This multimedia project creates a richly creative look at world events and the latest wave of immigration reshaping American culture. From 1999 to 2002, Lehrer and Sloan traveled the world by trekking the streets of their home borough in search of migration stories and a deeper connection to their diverse community. The result is an extraordinary book of stories and photographs, an audio CD, and a traveling performance and exhibition that toured throughout the U.S. from 2004 to 2013. *Crossing* focuses on new immigrants, documenting people who came to the United States after the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act mandated an end to quotas that favored white Western Europeans. The photographic portraits, images of personal objects, stories, and recorded sounds of 80 people who have passed through this modern-day Ellis Island, reveal the human toll wrought from post-colonial empires, played out in the hot zones of a cold- and post-cold war world, and from the events of September 11, 2001. The project's multiple perspectives form a portrait of a prismatic, paradoxical and ever-shifting America, bringing to life the voices of village and planet, and fostering a complex discussion on immigration, community, geopolitics, and democracy.



The Book



The 400-page, full-color book (WW Norton) is Lehrer's ninth book and his first in collaboration with Sloan. First-person narratives, crafted from recorded interviews, are illuminated by Lehrer's photographic portraits and images of personal objects belonging to the storytellers. Inspired by the style of texts such as the Talmud and Koran, the book juxtaposes multiple perspectives (sometimes on a single page) of neighbors who come from opposite ends of the earth. Symphonic in scope, the book is divided into five movements—New Pilgrims, Run For Your Life, Ties that Bind, Neighborhood Stories and Unlikely Bedfellows. It captures the good, the ugly, and the unexpected in the stories of those who have crossed—oceans, borders, wars, cultural divides and economic hardship. *Crossing the BLVD* investigates what brings people to America and the obstacles, ironies, and triumphs they experience once they get here. The narratives are punctuated by the authors' personal observations and historical notes, bringing the stories into a national and global context.

- Winner 2004 **Brendan Gill Prize**
- Winner 2003 **Innovative Use of Archives Award**
- Winner 2004 **Best of the Best Award New York Book Show**
- Selected **Best Books of 2003 *Publisher's Weekly***
- Selected 2004 **Best Books & Audio CDs of Indie Culture Utne Reader**

INTERVIEW

I'm not a person politically driven. I love the homeland from my childhood. But when you see something different from what the government has been telling you, it is a shock. I was in New York to study for an advanced degree in International Relations when June 4th, 1989 took place. What would you feel if you see on TV your own government crushing the innocent people and students? Right away we ran to the street in front of the Chinese Consulate to protest what was happening in Tiananmen Square. Everyone was crying.

When I finished my degree I had to decide whether to stay in America or go home. I wanted to go back but I realized I wouldn't fit into that society anymore. During the past ten years I've been searching to find a career that I would really enjoy. I tried many things. Foreign affairs. Real estate. Insurance. I was lost. Spiritually.

Janet Xiang is the co-ordinator of Queens Falun Gong practice. She says she didn't have a religious practice in the central Chinese province of Hunan. "Communism was my religion," she works as a legal researcher for a New York City public entity.



TRANSCRIPT


A poster of Li Hongzhi on the wall of Janet's apartment. Regarding his whereabouts, and his role in the lives of her followers, Janet says: "We are told that Li Hongzhi lives in Queens, but I cannot say for certain. I've never been to his house. Sometimes when we have an Experience Sharing Conference, he will come out and answer questions. He doesn't want to be seen or signed. If we call him on the wall, it's only out of respect for everything his teachings have done for us. He won't take our money, so we show our gratitude in other ways."

真 Truth
善 Compassion
忍 Forbearance

INTERVIEW

My husband had a serious problem with his back. Sometimes he had to lay in bed for days at a time. All the doctors told him there was nothing they could do. So he went on the Internet and found something called Falun Gong. He tried it and started getting better. At that time I was very suspicious of everything. After my husband fully recovered, I figured maybe I should give this Falun Gong a try. We started going to seminars at the YMCA on Queens Boulevard. Now a group of us go to each other's apartments to do exercises and read the book. Sometimes we go to the park. If you practice every day you discover a lot of phenomena.

We call it Human Body Science. Just imagine for five years of practice you become a very healthy person without any medication. Through the principles of Truth, Compassion, and Forbearance you begin to discover the true meaning of why you are a human being. You begin to discover the existence of different dimensions other than what we see with the naked eye. Many scientists in physics believe in four dimensions, even five and six dimensions. This is what we're trying to explore in Falun Gong. When you are sick you think, I can take some pills to make it go away. Falun Gong teaches you the reason you are sick is because of karma built up from the past. In this life or in past life. Once you endure the hardships from your past, the pains will be removed little by little. As long as you keep practicing, all the myths of life will be revealed in front of you. Are we the only intelligent beings in the universe? There are many Americans urging the government to release documents about aliens visiting the earth. Can we deny all those people their own experiences with aliens? Sometimes I look at ants creeping on the floor. To the ants we must seem to have super-power capabilities. We're living on the same surface but in another sense we are in different dimensions. There are still so many phenomena science can't explain. Hundreds of years ago when the microscope was not yet invented, some people told the Queen of Britain that there were viruses and bacteria smaller than insects inside our bodies and she had their heads cut off. Nobody believed such a thing was possible. Nowadays people take for granted that bacteria and viruses are facts. It tells me to keep my mind open. To study and explore what is the truth of this whole universe.

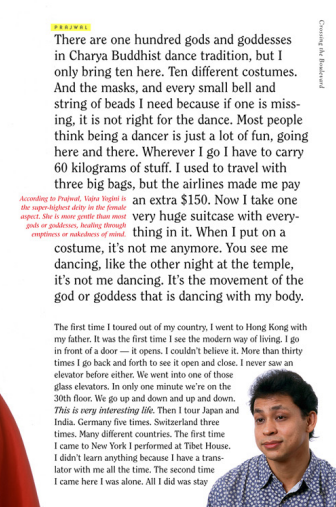


INTERVIEW

There are one hundred gods and goddesses in Charya Buddhist dance tradition, but I only bring ten here. Ten different costumes. And the masks, and every small bell and string of beads I need because if one is missing, it is not right for the dance. Most people think being a dancer is just a lot of fun, going here and there. Wherever I go I have to carry 60 kilograms of stuff. I used to travel with three big bags, but the airlines made me pay an extra \$150. Now I take one very huge suitcase with everything in it. When I put on a costume, it's not me anymore. You see me dancing, like the other night at the temple, it's not me dancing. It's the movement of the god or goddess that is dancing with my body.

According to tradition, Vajra Light is the super-light deity in the female aspect. She is more gentle than most gods or goddesses, healing through compassion or kindness of mind.

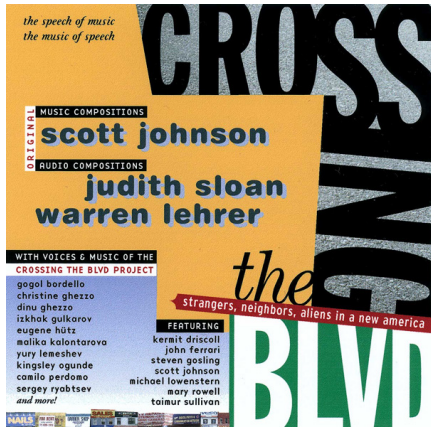
The first time I toured out of my country, I went to Hong Kong with my father. It was the first time I see the modern way of living. I go in front of a door — it opens. I couldn't believe it. More than thirty times I go back and forth to see it open and close. I never saw an elevator before either. We went into one of those glass elevators. In only one minute we're on the 30th floor. We go up and down and up and down. This is very interesting life. Then I tour Japan and India. Germany five times, Switzerland three times. Many different countries. The first time I came to New York I performed at Tibet House. I didn't learn anything because I have a translator with me all the time. The second time I came here I was alone. All I did was stay





Performances

In *Crossing the BLVD* performances, the stories of immigrants and refugees are brought to life through character portrayals, projected images and a soundtrack of original music, sounds and voices. Solo performances and multi-ethnic cast performances have been presented at New York Institute of Technology, Purchase College, SUNY, NYU, Dartmouth College, Hawaii Humanities Conference, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, Queens College, Riverside Community College, CA, M.I.T., University of Tennessee Knoxville among other universities and theatres throughout the U.S.



Audio CD

A rich and original musical soundscape, the CD stands out as a necessary and beautiful component of the multisensory experience of *Crossing*. Produced by Judith Sloan, the CD features 19 cuts, including text-based audio compositions by Sloan and Lehrer with original music by Scott Johnson. Blurring the boundaries between music and speech, journalism and expressionism, tradition and the avant-garde, the CD also includes music by *Crossing* participants such as gypsy-punk-cabaret band Gogol Bordello, Nigerian gospel singer Kingsley Ogunde, and Romanian-American musicians Christine and Dinu Ghezzo. Several audio pieces from the CD have aired on Public Radio stations nationwide.



Exhibition

An exhibition of photographs, sounds, and stories uses the tools of contemporary art to create a multimedia experience reflecting the changing face of America. 90 photographic portraits by Warren Lehrer portray the pride, beauty, struggle and colorful humanity of individuals who have crossed through war zones, borders, oceans, and cultural divides. Portraits are paired with short narrative excerpts of the subject's own words; contextual maps of the country or countries of origin overlaid with maps of Queens neighborhoods; panoramic landscapes of Queens and images of important objects that *Crossing* participants carry/carried with them from home to home. Audio sound stations produced by Sloan enable visitors to hear the voices, sounds and music of those portrayed in the exhibition. Audio pieces include compositions made specifically for the exhibition as well as public radio documentaries produced by Sloan and Lehrer. An ambient soundscape of people praying, voices on the streets, found and composed music, bring visitors into this crossroad of the world upon entering the exhibition. The *Crossing the BLVD* Mobile Story Booth invites exhibition visitors to contribute their photographs and their own (or their parent's or grandparent's) migration stories to the *Crossing the BLVD* online collection of first-person narratives recounting immigration experiences of Americans.



Crossing the BLVD exhibited has visited:

Queens Museum of Art, Queens, NY • Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, NY • Queensborough Public Library, Gallery, Main Branch, Queens, NY • Hudson Museum, University of Maine at Orono, ME • Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD • Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, Purchase, NY • Art Museum of the University of Memphis, Memphis, TN • Godwin-Ternbach Museum, Queens College, Queens, NY • Ewing Gallery, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, Elizabeth Dee Gallery Weber State University Utah, Urban Arts Space, Ohio State University Columbus Ohio, Paul Robeson Gallery, Rutgers University NJ, Tyler Art Gallery, SUNY Oswego, Oswego NY.



If you have questions or are interested in the *Crossing the BLVD* exhibition for your exhibition space, contact: info@earsay.org