

CultureStrike to Host Event on Central American Migration



Migrants ride on top of a northern bound train toward the US-Mexico border in Juchitan, southern Mexico, Monday, April 29, 2013. Migrants crossing Mexico to get to the U.S. have increasingly become targets of criminal gangs who kidnap them to obtain ransom money. (AP Photo/Eduardo Verdugo)

The pro-immigration magazine [CultureStrike](#) in collaboration with [Verso Books](#) and [Impact Hub Oakland](#) will be hosting “Before the Destination: Migrations from Central America to the United States,” in an effort to shed light on the dangers that Central American immigrants face on their journey to the United States. The multidisciplinary event scheduled for Saturday, December 7, 2013 will feature the work of award winning journalist Óscar Martínez, photographer Edu Ponces and artist [Favianna Rodriguez](#).

Martínez, author of “The Beast: Riding the Rails and Dodging Narcos on the Migrant Trail,” will be doing a reading from his book. In October 2013 he was featured in NPR’s [Alt.Latino](#) show for his work in documenting the story of Central American’s who

travel through Mexico to the U.S. border on freight trains known as *La Bestia*.

Ponces is an award winning, Spanish, photojournalist whose work has centered largely on the topic of migration. He co-authored the book "*En el Camino: Mexico, la Ruta de los Migrantes Que no Importan* (On the Way: Mexico, The Route of the Migrants Who do Not Matter)." Ponce's exhibit will focus on the experiences of women on the Train, who face additional risk factors.



Artist Favianna Rodriguez at the pro-immigration event "Face to Face: Action. Healing. Solidarity" in collaboration with French artist JR and his project Inside Out, on Thursday, July 25, 2013 in Oakland, Calif. (Photograph by: Natalie Rodriguez)

Rodriguez is an interdisciplinary artist and activist. She is an international lecturer, coordinator of CultureStrike and co-founder of the national organization, Presente.org. Her work will be present via an art installation.

Despite the many dangers of making the trip from Central America to the U.S. through Mexico via freight train, according to [The New York Times](http://TheNewYorkTimes), the number of American arrests of

undocumented immigrants from Central American countries increased from 46, 997 in 2011 to 94,532 in 2012.

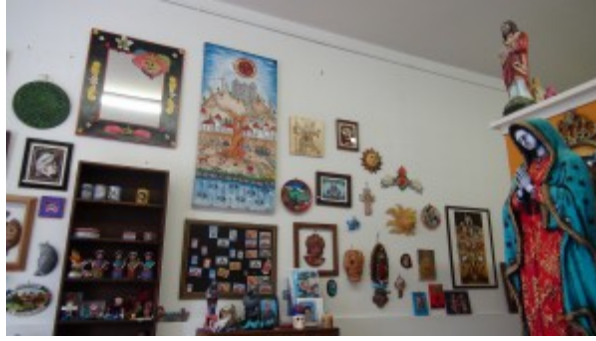
The event will take place at The Hub Oakland located at 1423 Broadway Ave., Oakland, Calif.; from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Admission will be free. Register for the event via the [Facebook Event](#) page or through [Eventbrite](#).



A group of Central American migrants read the news of their ordeal from a local newspaper outside of a shelter after they were attacked on the freight train they were riding through Mexico, in Acayucan, Mexico, Thursday, May 2, 2013. The United States-bound migrants had hopped on the train in southern Mexico and were traveling through the Gulf Coast state of Veracruz when attackers shot and cut them with machetes. Some jumped from the train to escape and others were thrown off, said migrants' rights activist Tomas Gonzalez Castillo. At least 10 Honduran migrants are recovering from wounds suffered in the attack. (AP Photo/Felix Marquez)

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Tu Tienda Azteca is located at 3104 Fruitvale Ave., Oakland, Calif. 94602. Art work as seen on Sunday, November 3, 2013 in Oakland, Calif. (Photograph by: Natalie Rodriguez)

[Tu Tienda Azteca](#), a Mexican Folk Art store opened in Hayward in 2007 as a collaboration between Oscar Cisneros and his mother, Rosario Cisneros. Oscar is a self-proclaimed, self-taught artist who was born and raised in Oakland. In 2013 the shop relocated to the Fruitvale District in Oakland and along with art, brought a desire to work together with the community.

The Cisneros family not only bring traditional Mexican artwork to the communities they work in, they also share their knowledge with them. When they were located in Hayward they collaborated with [Tennyson High School](#) on their Día de los Muertos event. This year, they have collaborated with [La Clinica de la Raza's](#), Casa Che department's Youth Brigade in creating traditional *nichos*, or shadow boxes for their altar.

In addition Tu Tienda Azteca has also been busy with Día de los Muertos celebrations such as [The Unity Council's](#) yearly community



Oscar Cisneros of Tu Tienda Azteca and his assistant's work at the Unity Council's yearly Día de los Muertos Festival in Oakland, Calif., on Saturday, November 2, 2013. (Photograph by: Natalie Rodriguez)

celebration and hosting workshops at the store. On Sunday, October 13th, they hosted Miguel Quintana, a sugar skull artist from Puebla, Mexico who had a live demonstration and sale. Local artist [Leanne "Elrod" Rodriguez](#) also recently hosted a "Glitter 101 Día de los Muertos Edition" workshop. Workshops are open to the community.

By making a purchase at Tu Tienda Azteca you are not only supporting local artist and merchants, you are also supporting community enrichment for the youth.

Visit Tu Tienda Azteca:



Friend
them
on



STORE HOURS
TUES-FRI 12:00 - 6:30
SATURDAY 11:30 - 6:30
SUNDAY 12:00 - 4:30
CLOSED MONDAYS

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Not all Supporters

In a recent anonymous survey conducted by NatyRockdriguez.com, results demonstrate that while Californian's who participated may be in favor of immigration reform, not all are in favor of guest worker programs. Social media conversations through [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) shed light on the fact that not all supporters are aware that the immigration reform bill that passed the Senate, [S. 744](#), includes guest worker programs.

of Immigration Reform Support Guest Worker Programs



Infographic by Natalie Rodriguez

While the majority of participants in the survey are have never been undocumented, the majority have family members who are either currently undocumented or who have been. All are in favor of immigration reform; agree that a reform would strengthen the economy, and that that the reform should be a priority.

When asked about what makes an immigration reform plan comprehensive, some of the more popular responses included: taking into account family unity, length of time in the country, criminal backgrounds, and equal opportunities for all.

Responses on guest worker programs as a part of the reform showed concerned for the families of the workers and the workers themselves. One anonymous response was “I feel the guest worker program should not be included because what would happen if workers find someone here in the states and then form a family, would the government then separate families just like what’s happening currently?” In a [Twitter conversation](#), one response was that “It’s the problem of people overstaying and becoming undocumented in the process.”

[\[View the story “Support for Immigration Reform” on Storify\]](#)

This week, President Obama has once again called on the House to pass a reform before the end of the year and encouraged the

public to petition. [FWD.us](#), the pro-reform organization, lead by technology industry leaders, continues hosting events and social media campaigns in support. The [survey](#) will remain open until the end of the year as the conversation on immigration reform continues.

Immigration Reform Survey

Immigration reform continues to gain momentum with the government reopening, however there is still much debate not only in regards to whether or not there should be an immigration reform, but also in regards to what makes a reform plan comprehensive. President Obama has [urged House Republicans](#) to support a reform plan before the end of 2013 and during the government shutdown the House Democrats introduced an immigration reform plan on October 2, 2013. Mark Zuckerberg's organization [FWD.us](#) recently announced that in collaboration with LinkedIn and its founder Reid Hoffman, it will be hosting a [DREAMer Hackathon](#) in which undocumented students will work hand in hand with top Silicon Valley programmers in an effort to draw attention to the need for Immigration Reform. Meanwhile, political movements such as [Yo Soy 132 Bay Area](#) and [By Any Means Necessary](#) (BAMN) continue to take action in marches asking Obama to end deportations and demand full citizenship rights for all.

According to the Pew Research Center, California is the state with the [largest population of](#)

undocumented immigrants. This survey is an opportunity for you to express your thoughts and opinions on immigration reform and what makes a plan comprehensive or not. Where do you fall in the immigration reform debate, and would an immigration reform affect you?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey on immigration reform. Your insight will be compiled into an article in which any questions and concerns that arise will also be addressed. Stay tuned for more on immigration reform at NatyRockdriguez.com.

Milli Atkinson : Immigrant

Milli Atkinson of [Centro de Ayuda Legal para Inmigrantes \(CALI\)](#) from [Natalie Rodriguez](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Milli Atkinson is an [Immigration Attorney](#) for the *Centro de Ayuda Legal para Inmigrantes*, [CALI](#), who believes that although the proposed immigration reform [S. 744](#) is not perfect, it is a start to give undocumented immigrants an option to legalize their status in the United States. To her, the idea of having an open border is unrealistic, yet she believes that “we created a system that businesses welcome [undocumented immigrants] and then the government turns a blind eye, and then we’ve kind of created our own problems.”

Through her career as an

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immigration lawyer Atkinson has been able to reunite families who had not seen each other in up to ten years as well as work in removal defense. Through Governor Jerry Brown's recent signing of [AB 60](#) and the [Trust Act](#) in California, she believes that undocumented immigrants will be more willing to collaborate with law enforcement when they are victims of crimes and be less likely to become involved in deportation procedures. According to Atkinson, "a lot of people got caught up in the deportation process just for stupid things and some times even when they weren't charged with anything." Being able to drive legally in the state will change that for some of the more than two million [undocumented immigrants in California](#).

Atkinson obtained her Bachelor of Science degree from [Pepperdine University](#) in accounting in the year 2000. In 2003 she obtained her Juris Doctor degree from the University of California, [Hastings College of the Law](#). In 2009 she began practicing full time immigration law through a private practice. Four years later, in February of 2013 she became CALI's lead attorney.

Before becoming a full time immigration lawyer Atkinson was working in finance and volunteering and interning part time in immigration law. She interned at the [International Rescue Committee](#) and the [Office of Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi](#).

It was learning about human trafficking and international human rights that led to her

interest in immigration law. While interning at non-profits, she learned about [U-Visas](#), which are specifically for victims of human trafficking and other crimes. She found immigration law to be rewarding and personal. "You kind of get involved in someone's entire family and their life history, in their story in a way that other areas of the law is not." Originally, Atkinson wanted to be a tax accountant.

Find CALI on [Facebook](#).

Find Milli Atkinson on [LinkedIn](#).