

MULTICULTURE : ELGIN

Photojournalist
Marina Makropoulos explores the culture
of Elgin, Illinois, with black & white
medium format portraiture.

"I love Elgin, everything is here." Artist
Trinidad Armenta, a first-generation Mexi-
can and oldest of 12 siblings born during
the depression, finds Elgin very
inspirational.



"I have been told that coming to the United States is like seeing a small version of the world."

By Marina Makropoulos

I have chosen to capture the spirit of those naturalized citizens, first or second-generation immigrants and international students residing in the 24-mile radius that makes up the city of Elgin, Illinois. Through the close magnification of black & white portraiture, I have created an essay to stand as an example of the diversity that this All America city has to offer.

There are approximately 100,000 individuals shifting, moving, working, learning and living within the perimeters of Elgin. I have been told that coming to the United States is like seeing a small version of the world. With that in mind,

I set out to create a representation of those words.

Our foreign-born citizens amount to nearly a quarter of our population at 23.7%. What does this mean? Well, I have gathered that we have embraced multicultures and their individuality as our own city's culture. We embody what is truly the United States, a country made of hard work and perseverance by the hands of immigrants. The trend started when Columbus reached the Americas in 1492, which led the way for other European explorers to lay the groundwork for our country. The metropolitan city of Elgin just proves to be as unique as

any other city that has sprouted in the US. Cultures have met thanks to the creation of transportation networks, advances in communication and economic globalization making travel, stability and progress possible.

The photographic essay includes 20 portraits that will be exhibited in the Gail Borden Public Library of Elgin through the month of April. Please join me as I speak about the project Thursday April 3, 2008 at 7 p.m in community rooms A&B. This project has been fully funded by the Cultural Artist Commission of Elgin through the Mini-Grant Program.

Photojournalist, thinker, neighbor:

Marina Makropoulos

Marina Makropoulos resides in Elgin, Illinois and works as a photojournalist for the Courier News. Marina's interest in people and their spaces have encouraged her to explore Elgin for the past two years. She shared her vision of the city during a Courier News Photographers joint exhibition at the Elgin Art Showcase in April of 2007.

Marina also was a finalist in the 2007 Women In Photojournalism Exhibit : Expanding Our Vision for an image made in Elgin, becoming 1 of 30 women selected out of 900 entrants for her photographic vision. In October of 2007 she was awarded a Mini-Grant through the Cultural Arts Commission to complete a photographic portraiture project on the culture of Elgin. Marina has studied fine arts at Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Visual Journalism at Brooks Institute of Photography in Ventura, California. Originally from New Jersey, the photographer and artist has been raised in Greece and the U.S. to an American mother and Greek father. Her background has encouraged her to pursue portraiture with the theme of culture.

