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News Release  
December 11, 2018

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### **“What We Carried” Exhibit Examines Immigrant Stories and Mementos**

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum hosts the exhibit “What We Carried: Fragments and Memories from Iraq and Syria” from December 16, 2018, to April 15, 2019.

Photographer Jim Lommasson’s project showcases the significant personal items that Iraqi and Syrian refugees brought with them when they immigrated to the United States. Along with their mementos, these refugees share their stories, telling what it really means to have to leave one’s homeland forever. In their search for a better future for themselves and their families, these small objects, images, and memories represent what they left behind and what brings people together: love for family, friends, and home.

Lommasson will be traveling from Oregon to spend the week leading up to the exhibit opening in Kalamazoo. During this time, he will meet with local Syrian refugees and photograph some of the items they brought with them from Syria to Kalamazoo. These images will supplement the core exhibit and open a doorway into the experiences of the local community. Lommasson will give a free public presentation about his work on December 16 at 1:30 p.m. in the Mary Jane Stryker Theater.

The “What We Carried: Fragments and Memories from Iraq and Syria” traveling exhibition is a collaboration between photographer Jim Lommasson and the Arab American National Museum. The exhibition is funded by the Oregon Regional Arts Council, the Oregon Arts Commission, Ruth Ann Brown, and the Arab American National Museum.

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum is operated by Kalamazoo Valley Community College and is governed by its Board of Trustees.