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HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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1 Vermont artist Elliott Katz explores migration and
2 heritage in first solo museum show at BMAC

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5 TEXT BODY:

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6 Two long-handled shovels twist together like strands of
7 DNA. Drawer pulls take the form of a barber's scissors and
8 combs. In the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC)
9 exhibition "The Purpose of Your Trip," artist Elliott Katz of
10 Burlington transforms familiar tools and heirlooms into sculptural
11 reflections on migration, family history, and the ways personal
objects carry memory across generations.

12 Katz's first solo museum show is on view at BMAC
13 through March 6. Curated by DJ Hellerman, the exhibition is
14 supported in part by BMAC's Wolf Kahn & Emily Mason
15 Exhibition Endowment Fund.

16 "The objects in 'The Purpose of Your Trip' reflect the
17 complexity of Katz's grandparents' lives, shaped by war,
18 displacement, and a deep commitment to human dignity," said
19 Hellerman in a news release. "At the same time, they speak to the
20 life Katz is actively building today—one rooted in care, creativity,
21 and the ongoing pursuit of a world that values big, open, and
22 independent thinking."

23 Katz's artistic practice bridges traditional craftsmanship
24 and contemporary technology, "drawing on his Japanese
25 American family's history to create charged, human-scaled
26 sculptures from everyday materials." The exhibition traces his
27 family's journey across North America—from immigration in the
28 1920s, to incarceration during World War II, to the building of a
29 life in Vermont — while reflecting on the ongoing process of self-
30 invention.

31 Installed in the former ticket office of BMAC's historic
32 Union Station building, "The Purpose of Your Trip" explores
33 themes of transit, borders, and passage. The site-specific
34 installation "allows the 1915 building's windows and shifting
35 light to evoke movement and impermanence," wrote organizers.
36 It includes a large-scale reproduction of a 1942 photograph of
37 Katz's ancestors, taken by photojournalist Dorothea Lange as part
38 of her effort to document Japanese American incarceration camps
39 for the War Relocation Authority.

40 Throughout the exhibition, Katz reimagines tools and
41 heirlooms as sculptural forms. A replica of the suitcase carried by
42 his great-grandfather into the Manzanar incarceration camp is
43 rendered in alternating bands of black walnut, sapele, and ash,
44 "transforming its original fabric pattern into precious material,"
45 organizers wrote.

46 Bronze drawer pulls molded from his grandparents'
47 barber tools temporarily replace the gallery's existing hardware,
48 subtly weaving family history into the physical fabric of the
49 space.

50 Other works reflect Katz's present-day experience of
51 cross-border family life. The title of the exhibition references the
52 question Katz routinely answers while crossing the U.S.–Canada
53 border to visit his partner and son in Montreal. Sculptural replicas
54 of a passport and a soccer ball, repaired using the Japanese
55 technique of kintsugi — a method of ceramic repair that
56 incorporates powdered metal in lacquer used to fill cracks —
57 highlight themes of separation, connection, and reparation.

58 Together, the works in "The Purpose of Your Trip" weave
59 past and present into "a meditation on displacement, resilience,
60 and the quiet conviction required to build a meaningful life."

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