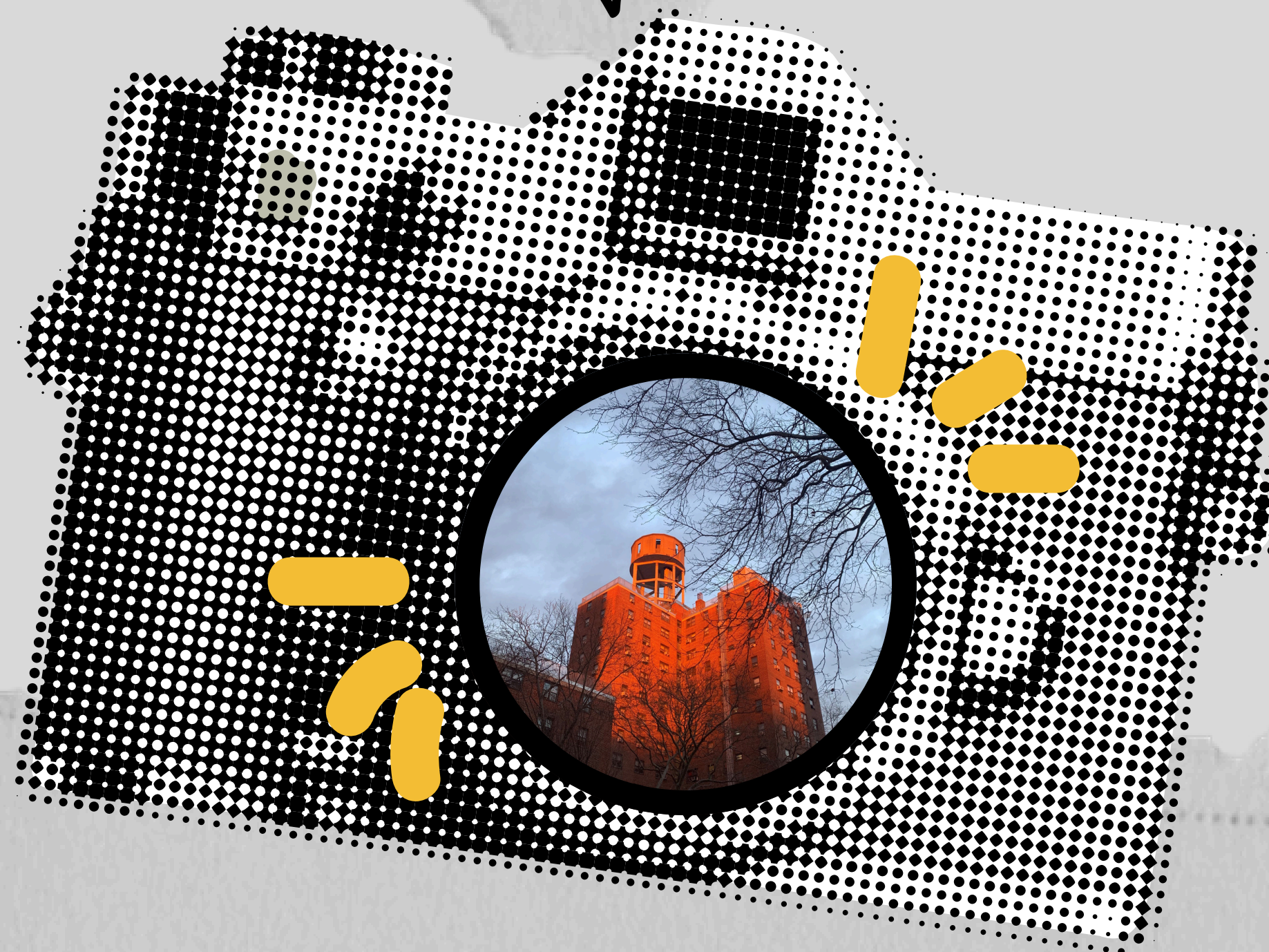


VISUAL STORYTELLING THROUGH A PLACE-BASED LENS:

*Focusing on the **Gowanus** Neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York*



GOALS:

- Understand the importance of storytelling and sharing your work in the Long Island Sound
- Learn the significance and impact of images
- Learn about the different media to tell stories
- Benefits: archiving stories/images, stronger proposals, recognition of your work

DISSECTING THE PHOTO:

Assessing a Photo's Essence, Meaning, and Purpose

Keeping her Memory Alive: My Grandma, Rosa Leyda



- **What do you see? What stands out to you?**
- **In what ways does this photo capture the subject's essence?**
- **Overall, how does this picture make you feel?**

TURN TO YOUR NEIGHBOR:
(5-7 MINUTES)

Do you have a special memory, story, or tradition from your family or community? What is it and why is it so special to you?

REFLECT/SHARE

Did you connect with your neighbor's story? Any similarities to yours? What was your story?

History of the Gowanus: Gowanus Canal





- The landscape dramatically changed
 - Indigenous Land → colonization → Industrial period (mid-1800s)
- Lenape Tribe
 - Painting by Mario Martinez (based in Gowanus), Yaqui descent, reimagining the Gowanus Canal

The Gowanus Canal Today



- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated the Gowanus Canal as a Superfund site in **2009**
- Superfund site – contaminated site caused by hazardous waste
- Dredging
- Combined Sewage Overflow

The Gowanus Houses



- New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)
- Gowanus Public Housing - built in the 1940s
- Close to the canal
- Hurricane Sandy in 2012
- Lack of green space and access to the waterfront

My Family History.

My grandmother was born in Jimaní,
Dominican Republic.

1944

My mother was born in Santo
Domingo, Dominican Republic.

1971

My family moved from the
Dominican Republic to
East New York, Brooklyn, New York

1988

1989

My family moved to the Gowanus
Houses (public housing) shortly after

My Family History.

cont'd

I was born in Manhattan, New York.

1998

After years of moving around, I settled in Gowanus, Brooklyn, where my family originally established their roots.

2010

I started my photography project in High School. I continue to document my family and community's history.

2014 - NOW

WHY AM I SHARING MY TIMELINE?

- Trace back to understand the now
- My family's place in the Gowanus neighborhood
- Our contributions matter
 - Helps to understand our story within the larger community
- To help you understand that archiving starts with us - the community

WHY IS STORYTELLING SO IMPORTANT?

- Our histories are being erased
- Countless negative headlines
- Form of resistance
- Persistence and presence
- Dignity, honor, and respect
- Storytelling
 - Our own terms and words
 - Showing others how we are to be treated

HOW TO TELL YOUR STORY

A Good Photo

- A phone camera is enough
 - Your vision is enough
- An ethical lens
 - Ask for permission to take a person's photo.
- Pre-existing rapport



Telling a Story



- What do you want to say about a setting, group, or individual?
 - Focus on your storytelling vision
 - Joyous moments
 - Serious or difficult moments

**CAPTURING THE LONG ISLAND SOUND
COMMUNITY IMPACT FUND PROGRAM**



Mill River Wetland Committee, 2025

- **What stands out to you? What do you see?**



Alliance for the Mystic River Watershed, 2025

- **What stands out to you? What do you see?**



Groundwork Bridgeport, 2025

- **What stands out to you? What do you see?**

**MY STORYTELLING PROJECT:
GOWANUS HOUSES, 2014 TO NOW**

How I Tell My Story

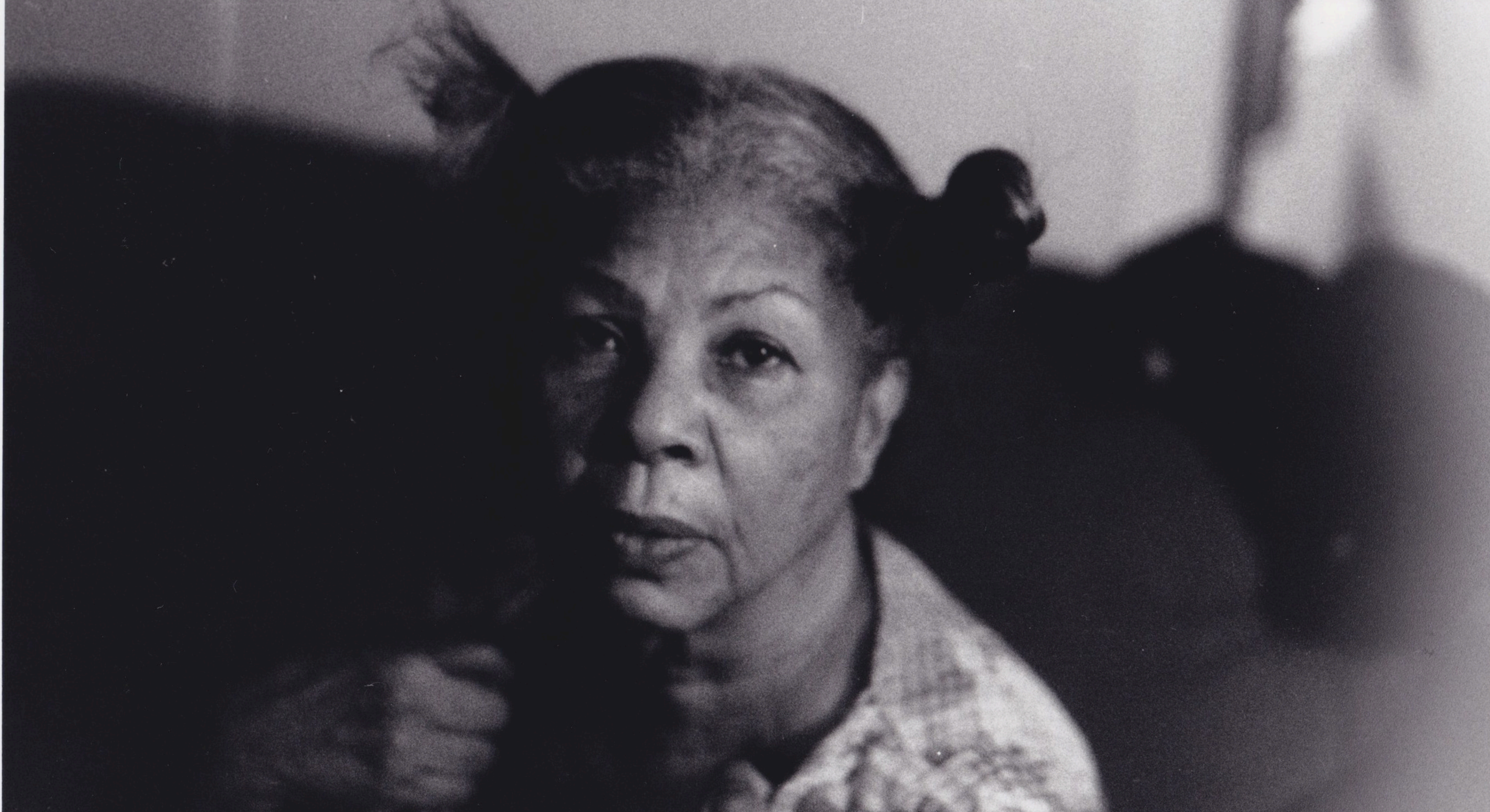
Tip #1: Angles say a lot





2022/23 - Grandma

2016/2017 - Gowanus Houses Apartment



Tip 2: Experiment with Lighting





2022/23 - Gowanus Canal Map Drawing on the Window of the Smith - 9th Streets Train Station

2016/2017 - Mom, Gowanus Houses Apartment





**2014/2015 - Gowanus Houses
Apartment Hallway**



**2014/2015 - Gowanus Houses
Apartment Hallway**



2013/2014 - Gowanus Houses Apartment

Tip #3: Create a diverse array of shots and
mediums





2025 and 2026 - Image and oil pastel depictions of the Gowanus Houses Projects



**2015 - Gowanus Houses Apartment,
Grandma's Room**



**2025 - Grandma at the Gowanus Houses
Apartment**



**2025 - Looking in the Construction
Scaffolding Window**



2026 - Neighbor Looking in the Construction Scaffolding Window

2024 - Grandma's Home Attendant





2025 - Neighbors visiting Grandma's Home Attendant

2024 - My Grandma's Home Attendant





Grandma in the Gowanus Canal - 2025 Zine

Rosa Leyda:
Nuestra Matriarca
Our Matriarch

[View the video here.](#)

OTHER WAYS TO TELL YOUR STORY

- Videography
- Audio Recording
- Preserve Zines/Sketch Designs/Paintings digitally
- Get Creative! The sky is the limit
 - Other ideas: intergenerational collective storytelling projects, collaging, origami, etc.

At-Home Preservation and Conservation Basics

At the Ives Main Library, New Haven, on March 24th

6-7PM

[Register Here](#) or Scan QR Code to Register:



New Haven Memory Lab | New Haven Free Public Library



**New Haven
Memory Lab**
Photo and Document Scanning

 **IVES
SQUARED**
NEW HAVEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Yale UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

nhfpl 
NEW HAVEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Check it out [here](#)

STORYTELLING IS ABOUT KEEPING A COMMUNITY AND ITS CULTURE ALIVE.



I WELCOME YOU TO "COME DRAW" AND CONTINUE SHARING YOUR COMMUNITY'S LEGACY.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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