

Bio

Ivan is a photojournalist and designer based in Portland, Oregon. His essays have been featured in [ESPN: The Undefeated](#), [Dazed](#), [Atmos](#), [Modern Huntsman](#), [Huck](#), Fast Company, and Juxtapoz. Ivan has led creative projects for Apple, [Wrangler](#), [Stetson](#), [Boot Barn](#), [Tecovas](#), Nike, Adidas, U.S. National Soccer, Oregon Ducks, and Disney. His work has been displayed in museums and galleries across the country including, [Buffalo Bill Center of the West](#), [Booth Museum](#), B.J. Spoke Gallery, ilon Art Gallery, and The New York Center for Photographic Art. He has spoken on The Moth mainstage and appeared on the [Mountain and Prairie](#) podcast and [The Real Photo Show](#). Ivan is a husband and father of two children.

About This Project (Eight Seconds)

I was born and raised in a working-class neighborhood in Kansas City, Kansas. My upbringing was like many other black people. My mama took care of my sister and me by herself with very few resources. She worked 2 jobs and tried her best to protect us from gang violence, police, pregnancy, and other poverty traps.

When I turned 17, I was determined to escape Kansas and managed to get accepted to an acting conservatory in NYC. I studied acting, writing, and stagecraft then spent the next 6 years performing across the country. I left acting and taught myself design which brought me to Portland and a second career in advertising.

In 2015 I was drunk at a birthday party and my friend Charles asked me to go with him to a black rodeo in Oklahoma. I said sure and showed up on a sweltering and humid August day to find tons of black cowboys and cowgirls on horseback competing at a Bill Pickett Rodeo. As we talked, I learned that some of them lived in Kansas City, even went to the same schools, attended the same church, and lived on the same block where I grew up.

This was a transformative moment for me. To shift the narrative of my home from a place of poverty and violence to one of ownership and pride.

I come from a place where black folks work the land, tend to animals, rope, ride horses, and identify as cowboys. This is a narrative rarely told by media. People of color are mostly presented as victims, criminals, rappers, or athletes.

I'm now singularly focused on this subject. My aim is to expand the cowboy icon to include people of color. To saturate the world with this image so my kids will draw a cowboy with brown skin.

This work has taken me across the country. I've met so many interesting people who are open and eager to tell their stories. I plan to go even deeper as there is much I still don't know. Always mindful to stay curious, non-judgemental, and to keep my vision sharp.

