

From Basement to Archive: Rolando Jr. Pepano launches BOYVAULT™, a visual institution preserving men's legacy

More than an archive, BOYVAULT™ is developing as one of the world's first visual institutions that reconstructs overlooked masculine histories while also documenting and celebrating the everyday lives of men today.



Calgary, Alberta Dec 24, 2025 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Some histories are never formally archived. They live in memory, in family narratives, and in the quiet, unrecorded labour of men whose contributions sustained households, communities, and generations — yet rarely entered institutional collections.

Filipino-Canadian cultural archivist **Rolando Jr. Pepano**, a former Temporary Foreign Worker who spent most of his 15 years in Canada working in the food service industry — an experience that shaped his understanding of labour, dignity, and memory — is introducing **BOYVAULT™**, a developing visual research institution dedicated to reconstructing overlooked masculine histories and documenting the lived experiences of men today across migration, work, identity, and culture.

[BOYVAULT FACEBOOK PAGE](#)

Publicly introduced in Calgary and currently in its development phase, BOYVAULT™ is a long-term cultural initiative focused on building research, digital, and archival infrastructure to responsibly preserve narratives that traditional archives have historically overlooked. The project was self-funded at inception and is being built slowly and intentionally before moving toward future public programming.

The origins of BOYVAULT™ are deeply personal.

In 2023, Pepano lost his job after years of employment — a moment that reshaped how he understood precarity, value, and disposability in modern labour. In that same year, he also lost his mother, prompting a difficult reckoning with grief, memory, and the question of what disappears when a person's life is never documented.

He also reflects on his late father — remembered not for wealth or titles, but for quiet generosity. Years after his passing, strangers continued sharing stories of help and kindness offered without recognition.

“Those stories arrived late,” Pepano says. “All I have now is memory — and I realized how many lives vanish from history in the same way.”

BOYVAULT™ was conceived as a response to that absence — a future cultural archive in progress, created to recognize men whose histories rarely reached institutional collections, including migrant workers, immigrant fathers, labourers, caregivers, Indigenous stewards, and queer and trans men.

“This is not about nostalgia,” Pepano explains.

“It is about responsibility — about ensuring that the men who crossed oceans, built railways, cooked meals, cleaned floors, and lived quietly with dignity are not lost to silence.”

The project's first major research focus, The Dominion Series, explores migrant and working-class masculine histories across what Pepano describes as Canada's “silent century.” Planned outputs include museum-grade photobooks, reconstructed archival imagery, and a proposed digital platform designed to expand access beyond traditional institutions. These works remain in development as part of BOYVAULT™'s foundational phase.

<https://youtu.be/AwfN5axR5xI?si=FJ4P1dgTzVW6h0gf>

BOYVAULT™ has been recognized with the **2025 Global Recognition Award**, and its founder has been nominated for the **2026 Dan David Prize**, reflecting early international attention to the project's emerging cultural vision.

Pepano emphasizes that BOYVAULT™ is being built “slowly, intentionally, and with care,” noting that the institution is not yet operational, but focused on responsible groundwork, ethical documentation, and long-term sustainability.

"If this archive matters," he says, "it is because every life deserves to leave a trace."

BOYVAULT™ will continue its development into 2026, including the forthcoming MEN OF LEGACY initiative — a future public call inviting families and communities to nominate men whose lives deserve remembrance.

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About BOYVAULT™

BOYVAULT™ is a developing visual research institution dedicated to preserving masculine identity across migration, labour, heritage, and lived human experience. Currently in its foundational phase, BOYVAULT™ is focused on building archival, research, and digital infrastructure for future public access — while also documenting and celebrating the lived experiences of men today.

Website: www.boyvault.com (launching soon)

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https://youtu.be/qUCW83M_bWQ?si=tp_dMYFCrvgcQ-ic



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