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U.S. Citizenship
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FILE: [REDACTED]
SRC 05 002 92150

Office: TEXAS SERVICE CENTER Date: **OCT 14 2005**

IN RE: Petitioner: [REDACTED]
Beneficiary: [REDACTED]

PETITION: Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker as an Alien of Extraordinary Ability Pursuant to Section 203(b)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(1)(A)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:

SELF-REPRESENTED

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All documents have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

Mari Johnson

2 Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The employment-based immigrant visa petition was denied by the Director, Texas Service Center, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner seeks classification as an employment-based immigrant pursuant to section 203(b)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(1)(A), as an alien of extraordinary ability. The director determined the petitioner had not established the sustained national or international acclaim necessary to qualify for classification as an alien of extraordinary ability.

Section 203(b) of the Act states, in pertinent part, that:

(1) Priority Workers. -- Visas shall first be made available . . . to qualified immigrants who are aliens described in any of the following subparagraphs (A) through (C):

(A) Aliens with Extraordinary Ability. -- An alien is described in this subparagraph if --

(i) the alien has extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics which has been demonstrated by sustained national or international acclaim and whose achievements have been recognized in the field through extensive documentation,

(ii) the alien seeks to enter the United States to continue work in the area of extraordinary ability, and

(iii) the alien's entry to the United States will substantially benefit prospectively the United States.

As used in this section, the term "extraordinary ability" means a level of expertise indicating that the individual is one of that small percentage who have risen to the very top of the field of endeavor. 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(2). The specific requirements for supporting documents to establish that an alien has sustained national or international acclaim and recognition in his or her field of expertise are set forth in the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3). The relevant criteria will be addressed below. It should be reiterated, however, that the petitioner must show that she has earned sustained national or international acclaim at the very top level.

This petition, filed on October 1, 2004, seeks to classify the petitioner as an alien with extraordinary ability as a [REDACTED]. In support of the petition, the petitioner submitted eight photographs of what are alleged to be her creations. This evidence, however, was not sufficient to demonstrate the petitioner's sustained national or international acclaim, or that her achievements have been recognized in her field of expertise. On November 10, 2004, the director denied the petition, finding that the petitioner's evidence did not satisfy any of the criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3).

The regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(3) indicates that an alien can establish sustained national or international acclaim through evidence of a one-time achievement (that is, a major, international recognized award). Barring the alien's receipt of such an award, the regulation outlines ten criteria, at least three of which

must be satisfied for an alien to establish the sustained acclaim necessary to qualify as an alien of extraordinary ability. On appeal, the petitioner has submitted evidence pertaining to the following criteria.

Documentation of the alien's receipt of lesser nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards for excellence in the field of endeavor.

The petitioner submits a Certificate of Honor (dated December 1997) with an accompanying English language translation indicating that she received a "First Class Award of National Grand Design Contest." The record, however, contains no evidence of publicity surrounding this contest or evidence showing that the petitioner's award enjoys a significant level of recognition. Simply receiving an award certificate with the word "national" in the title does not satisfy this very restrictive criterion. The petitioner must provide evidence showing that her award enjoys significant national or international stature. In this case, the record contains no documentation from the awarding entity or print media to establish that the petitioner's Certificate of Honor is a nationally recognized award. Furthermore, pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(3), any document containing foreign language submitted to Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) shall be accompanied by a full English language translation that the translator has certified as complete and accurate, and by the translator's certification that he or she is competent to translate from the foreign language into English. The translation accompanying the petitioner's Certificate of Honor was not certified as required by the regulation.

Published materials about the alien in professional or major trade publications or other major media, relating to the alien's work in the field for which classification is sought. Such evidence shall include the title, date, and author of the material, and any necessary translation.

In order for published material to meet this criterion, it must be primarily about the petitioner and, as stated in the regulations, be printed in professional or major trade publications or other *major media*. To qualify as major media, the publication should have significant national or international distribution. An alien would not earn acclaim at the national or international level from a local publication or from a publication with limited distribution. Some newspapers, such as the *New York Times*, nominally serve a particular locality but would qualify as major media because of significant national distribution, unlike small local community papers.¹

The petitioner submits a brief article (only three paragraphs) entitled "The Artful Teapot: 20th-Century Expressions from the Kamm Collection." Aside from the petitioner not providing the name of the author of this article (as required by the regulation), it has not been shown that the publication in which this article appeared has a substantial national readership. Furthermore, we note that the petitioner herself is not the primary subject of this article.² The plain wording of the regulation, however, requires "published materials about the alien." If the petitioner herself is not the primary subject of the material, then it fails to demonstrate her individual acclaim. We find no evidence to support the conclusion that the petitioner been the primary subject of sustained national or international media attention.

¹ Even with nationally-circulated newspapers, consideration must be given to the placement of the article. For example, an article that appears in the *Washington Post*, but in a section that is distributed only in Fairfax County, Virginia, cannot serve to spread an individual's reputation outside of that county.

² In the second paragraph, the petitioner's name was listed along with eleven other teapot artists.

Evidence of the display of the alien's work in the field at artistic exhibitions or showcases.

The petitioner re-submits the eight photographs of what are alleged to be her teacup creations, stating that the items were displayed at her "individual exhibition of 1999." The record, however, contains no evidence showing that such an exhibition ever took place. Going on record without supporting documentary evidence is not sufficient for purposes of meeting the burden of proof in these proceedings. *Matter of Soffici*, 22 I&N Dec. 158, 165 (Comm. 1998) (citing *Matter of Treasure Craft of California*, 14 I&N Dec. 190 (Reg. Comm. 1972)).

It must be stressed that an artist does not satisfy this criterion simply by arranging for his or her work to be displayed or sold. In this case, the petitioner has not shown that her exhibitions enjoy a national or international reputation, or that she has regularly participated in exclusive exhibitions devoted solely or largely to the display of her work alone.

We find that the petitioner has failed to demonstrate that she meets at least three of the criteria that must be satisfied to establish the sustained national or international acclaim necessary to qualify as an alien of extraordinary ability.

Review of the record does not establish that the petitioner has distinguished herself to such an extent that she may be said to have achieved sustained national or international acclaim or to be within the small percentage at the very top of her field. The evidence is not persuasive that the petitioner's achievements set her significantly above almost all others in her field at the national or international level. Therefore, the petitioner has not established eligibility pursuant to section 203(b)(1)(A) of the Act and the petition may not be approved.

Beyond the decision of the director, the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(h)(5) requires "clear evidence that the alien is coming to the United States to continue work in the area of expertise. Such evidence may include letter(s) from prospective employer(s), evidence of prearranged commitments such as contracts, or a statement from the beneficiary detailing plans on how he or she intends to continue his or her work in the United States." The record contains no such evidence.

An application or petition that fails to comply with the technical requirements of the law may be denied by the AAO even if the Service Center does not identify all of the grounds for denial in the initial decision. *See Spencer Enterprises, Inc. v. United States*, 229 F. Supp. 2d 1025, 1043 (E.D. Cal. 2001), *aff'd*, 345 F.3d 683 (9th Cir. 2003); *see also Dor v. INS*, 891 F.2d 997, 1002 n. 9 (2d Cir. 1989)(noting that the AAO reviews appeals on a *de novo* basis).

The petition will be denied for the above stated reasons, with each considered as an independent and alternative basis for denial. In visa petition proceedings, the burden of proving eligibility for the benefit sought remains entirely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. Here, that burden has not been met.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.