



Santiago Arau

South border.

Our Voice

The first border is inside us, in the split between our psyche and our soma. Although connected, the mind and the body do not always operate in harmony, so this first division exists in each one of us. The next frontier extends to the skin that contains us; that is the first boundary that separates us from others. It offers different responses to aggression, fear, love; it is the basis on which we define and identify ourselves.

However, very probably, when we hear the word “borders,” we think of the national spaces contained by them, territories; the times we live in make this obvious. I referred elsewhere to the paradox of North America today when products flow freely while many, many human beings are detained at the edges of the countries of the region, making border crossings a kind of limbo.

Racist and anti-immigrant discourses that divide one population from another have been built around the border, around its hundreds-of-years’ old history. But strategies have also been devised that allow the human beings separated by them to meet again, even if only by voice or virtually. The threat of continuing Trump’s wall has prompted creative responses by inhabitants of one and the other side, artists, and civil society.

The articles in this issue of *Voices of Mexico* explore all these details: from the individual to the communities, from the past to the urgency of today, from academic reflection to artistic expression, the multiple meanings of the border are posited here by researchers, writers, and creators.

I want to thank all those who have allowed us to disseminate their conclusions about what borders mean today, where mottos like “Build Bridges, Not Walls” take on special importance. They help us become aware that, very often, the barriers exist in our minds in the form of prejudices and contribute to the concrete walls becoming promises sustaining the discourse that, in turn, reinforces political power. In the end, that political power affects all of us, both individuals and communities.

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The Border between Mexico And the United States

Relations between neighbors are always a foreign policy priority, even though they are also often conflictive. For historical and cultural reasons, relations between Mexico and the United States are even more complex because the two countries are the border between Latin and Anglo America and personify the clash between two antagonist cultures: the first, Catholic and idealistic, the other, Protestant and pragmatic.

As the Latin American border, Mexico had to contend with U.S. expansionist ambitions and its imperialist eagerness to occupy the place that Spain had held in the hemisphere.

Due to its being the border between the two realities as a result of the territorial conquest in which Mexico

was deprived of more than half its territory, mutual relations have been tense, with more clashes than coincidences. Along a 3 117-kilometer border, one of the world's longest, conflicts have been a constant. By 1823, establishing military outposts along our border with the United States to protect our national territory had already been proposed; that proposal was repeated in 1837, 1840, 1846, and 1848.

After multiple failed attempts to purchase Mexican land, President James Polk lied to the U.S. Congress to obtain authorization to invade our country. He sent troops south of the border and said that U.S. blood had been spilled on U.S. soil, a lie that was debunked by Abraham Lincoln himself.

The 1846 U.S. invasion of Mexico included a nine-month occupation of its capital and led to the loss of more than one-half the country's territory, to thousands of compa-

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triot's losing their nationality or their property. This left an indelible scar on the citizenry.

The group of moderates responsible for the negotiations on that occasion signed a peace agreement convinced that if they did not settle, the entire country would be lost. The U.S. "All Mexico" annexationist movement was very strong. However, racism defeated the idea because some considered the Mexican population to be a mix of many peoples and therefore, their degradation. Plus, they argued, Mexicans had been evangelized by the corrupt Church of Rome.

On February 2, 1848, the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits, and Settlement between the United States of America and the Republic of Mexico, better known as the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, was signed. With this treaty, Mexico lost Texas, New Mexico, and Upper California, making up what today are the U.S. states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, California, and parts of Wyoming, Nebraska, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado. In compensation for damages incurred, Mexico was to receive Mex\$15 million, which were never fully paid.

This treaty continues to be in effect, although with modifications. However, it was not a definitive solution to the border. The only part that fully complied with was the part that affected Mexico, that is, the loss of 2.4 million square kilometers of land. The articles that contravened U.S. government interests were not respected or were simply rescinded. The guarantees to the rights of Mexicans who remained in the annexed territory, stipulated in Article VIII, were not respected either.

Measures were taken to benefit our neighbor to the north: in New Mexico, Mexican citizens were forced to take on U.S. citizenship because their labor was required. In contrast, in California, with the Gold Rush, they were thrown off their lands and even lynched. Forays of nomadic indigenous tribes into Mexican territory were also not prevented, as stipulated in Article XI; these incursions continued, pushing local residents off their lands and forcing them to live further and further south. The agreed-upon neutrality to stop the entry of filibusters, adventurers intent upon setting up their own states, was never put into practice, and the complaints lodged by Mexicans were ignored. Pressure was brought to bear, however, to deal expediently with those presented by U.S. Americans.

After the war, since the peace treaty did not include either the Baja California peninsula or the Isthmus of

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Tehuantepec, expansionist pressure continued. In 1848, Mexico considered militarizing the border in self-defense.

During the last administration of General Antonio López de Santa Anna, in 1853, the United States once again pressed to acquire Mexican land, which would again be diminished through the Treaty of Mesilla, concluding the Gadsden Purchase that the United States wanted to ensure the building of its transcontinental railway. To that effect, it mobilized troops along the border as a threat.

Through this treaty, Mexico lost an additional 100 000 square kilometers in territory, affecting the states of Sonora and Chihuahua. In addition, the United States was relieved of the obligation of stopping incursions of nomadic indigenous tribes into Mexico, and free passage was given to U.S. ships along the Gulf of California and the Colorado River.

The Treaty of Mesilla's Article VIII specified that a specific treaty would be drawn up to deal with the passage of persons, merchandise, and troops along the road that would be built on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. This left open the possibility that the United States could "protect" the works if it considered it in its interest. It should be pointed out that it was not until 1937, during the administration of Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas, when Francisco Castillo Nájera was ambassador of Mexico in the United States, that this article was rescinded.

The sale of the La Mesilla Valley was Santa Anna's downfall: he was brought down and accused of treason. This legal instrument concluded the period of land-grabbing, but not of problems along the border.

In 1870, the United States militarized the border as a result of Apache invasions, and Porfirio Díaz ordered that his troops repel any incursion. After the Mexican Revolution broke out, William Taft sent 20 000 men to the border and to Mexico's ports in 1911. In 1914, Woodrow Wilson occupied the port of Veracruz by force from April to November, under the pretext of preventing shipments of German arms sent to the Huerta dictatorship. From March

1916 to February 1917, Washington sent a “punitive expedition” that rose to as many as 10 000 soldiers, all to seek out Francisco Villa. However, they failed and the U.S. troops left Mexico on February 5, 1917.

When the United States entered World War I, they forcibly drafted Mexican citizens, who were sent to the front even though Mexico had declared its neutrality in the conflict.

In addition, in 1924, the United States created a border patrol to combat Chinese immigration and smuggling; from then until now the military has mobilized innumerable times in the area. Let us review the most recent cases.

In 1986, Ronald Reagan deployed his military alliance against drug trafficking operation. In 1994, President William Clinton staged Operation Guardian and built a wall along the border between Tijuana and California. One of the most highly publicized cases of people murdered in this campaign was that of Esequiel Hernández, a young U.S. citizen who was herding his family’s goats and was killed by a Marine patrol in 1997.

Since September 11, 2001, security measures have toughened up. In 2006, George W. Bush sent 6 000 National Guard troops to support the Border Patrol to complement the legislation that ordered the construction of a double wall along several stretches of the border.

In 2010, President Barack Obama sent 1 200 National Guardsmen to surveil the border in light of increased violence linked to drug trafficking.

In April 2018, Donald Trump announced that he would send between 2 000 and 4 000 more troops to reinforce the area and stop Central American migrants from enter-

ing the country. It should be pointed out that migration to the U.S. has dropped considerably during the current administration.

Another issue that creates conflict in bilateral relations has been the changing course of rivers, whereby nature has favored our neighbor to the north. Salinity in the Colorado River, polluted by waste since the nineteenth century, has also been an important problem.

One of the few circumstances that favor Mexico in our relations with the U.S. has been the recovery of the 2.43 square kilometers in an area called El Chamizal; when the river changed course, this area had been left on the U.S. side. After a century of complaints, initiated by President Benito Juárez, and an international decision handed down in favor of Mexico (which the United States refused to recognize), on June 18, 1963, the land was recovered. The administrations of Presidents Adolfo López Mateos and John F. Kennedy signed the agreement returning the land to Mexico.

Although it has had a tragic history, since we cannot change our border, we must remember Benito Juárez’s words: “It’s enough not to be your neighbor’s enemy.”


As Andrés Molina Enríquez, the author of *Los grandes problemas nacionales* (The Great National Problems), wrote, “We can undoubtedly only retain our national dignity” living near the world’s first military power “as long as our society is strong.”¹ **MM**


Notes


¹ Andrés Molina Enríquez, *Los grandes problemas nacionales* (Mexico City: Imprenta de A. Carranza e hijos, 1909), p. 357.


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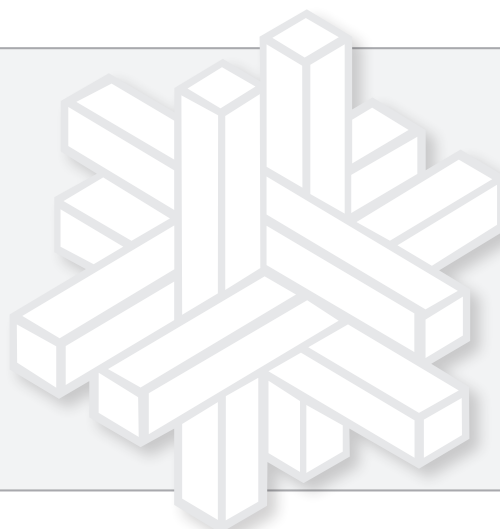
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Mónica Vereá*

Trump's Racist Wall: An Icon of His Anti-immigrant Agenda¹

Immigration has always been an emotional issue and caused bitter debates among members of Congress and with the executive. U.S. immigration policy in recent decades has included different approaches such as apprehending undocumented migrants at the border, deporting them (preferably individuals with criminal records), measures to prevent the hiring of undocumented migrants, expanding opportunities for the economy by hiring high- or low-skilled legal immigrants, and accepting refugees for humanitarian reasons, among many other directives. As part of immigration policy, the border

security debate has always been highly divisive and seen different proposals, such as hiring more border patrol agents; building a wall, fences, and barriers; and establishing high-tech surveillance to detect humans and drug traffickers. And many of these approaches have been transformed into policies.

Border security became one of Donald Trump's main targets when he was a presidential candidate in 2015. Since then his position has been to build a wall to more effectively monitor the flow of "illegal" immigrants, who, in his view, constitute a significant national security threat. He has manufactured a crisis along the border based on false premises, which plays very well with his base, and he has used violent rhetoric and promoted hate speech

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There has been an important decrease in asylum admissions and a marked increase in cases in which border agents have rejected applicants at the border using tactics outside the law as well as lowering the number of interviews per day to stall.

against immigrants, especially Mexicans. During his presidential campaign, he stereotyped Mexican migrants as rapists, criminals, and drug traffickers who attempt to cross the border: “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best....They’re sending people that have a lot of problems, and they’re bringing those problems to us....They’re bringing drugs....They’re bringing crime.... They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.”² These anti-Mexican arguments were widely perceived as xenophobic and racist. Trump’s destructive anti-immigrant and “Mexican-phobic” rhetoric has been the common denominator justifying the highly punitive directives he has established as part of his hardline immigration policy.

During his two years as president, he has signed several executive orders and asked Congress several times for funds to build a 2 000-mile wall along the southern border with Mexico to add to the 653 miles of already-existing fence.³ His request has been consistently rejected by congresspersons, mainly Democrats. Also, he has repeatedly harassed and threatened the Mexican government, demanding it pay for the wall, despite the fact that Mexico has refused multiple times. Trump has reiterated several times that eventually Mexico is going to pay for it through the revised NAFTA, which has been renamed as the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement, or even by taxing remittances.

Since 2006, the government has built about 700 miles of walls and fences on federal land where the terrain does not provide a natural barrier, mainly concentrated in highly populated areas. Drones, cameras, and other surveillance tools reinforce the physical wall, but Trump is demanding “a long and beautiful wall,” a sick fixation. Through 25 official entry points, approximately one million people cross the border each day, making it one of the most dynamic and heavily traveled in the world. Crucial economic ties depend on important bilateral cooperation to move goods and control the entrance of people, an intense interaction that has been under threat since the

beginning of the Trump administration. Building an extension of the wall is not a solution in terms of national security, but it has become an icon of Trump’s anti-immigrant rhetoric. Specialists in the issue, Democrats, and many Republicans in Congress have argued that its construction, besides being extremely expensive, would divert—rather than prevent—unauthorized flows as has happened during the last decades. Also, its construction represents a very hefty environmental cost as well as a negative impact on bi-national communities, dividing “us” from “them,” and on private property rights, since only 30 percent of the land is owned by the federal government. Even some hard-liners in the extremist, anti-immigrant movement do not regard the wall as their highest priority. Democrats and Republicans agree that there is need for more staff, better technology, and some fencing, as well as more humane asylum policies, among many other measures. However, Trump’s aggressive wall obsession has jeopardized dialogue among them.

The wall has proved ineffective since almost half of the unauthorized migrants living in the United States did not enter clandestinely through the border, but on visas: an estimated 42 percent of the undocumented population entered the country with some type of visa. These people later exceeded their allowed time of stay, becoming visa abusers or “overstayers,” something Trump seems to overlook. Also, the president issued another executive action to hire 5 000 additional border patrol agents, a 25-percent increase to the current 19 828. Instead, a large number of their staff has left the service, and at the end of 2018, they still had many vacancies.

Trump also seems to be unaware that the net flow of undocumented Mexican migrants has dropped substantially since the 2008 economic crisis. There were 10.7 million unauthorized immigrants living in the U.S. in 2016, down from a peak of 12.2 million in 2007. Even though Mexicans have long been the largest group among unauthorized migrants (6.9 million in 2007, 57 percent of the total), their number has decreased to 5.6 million in 2017

(51 percent of the total). That is to say, many fewer new Mexican migrants arrive and more have been apprehended, deported, or voluntarily returned, reaching an equilibrium: the “zero net migration” point. Due to the extreme reinforcement at the border and also in the interior, increasingly, unauthorized immigrants are likely to be long-term U.S. residents: two-thirds of adult undocumented immigrants have lived in the country for more than 10 years, ending the previous temporary migration pattern. By contrast, the number of unauthorized immigrants from Central America has increased by 375 000 over the same 2007-2016 period.⁴ Therefore, those who would get rich from building the wall, in addition to construction companies, are mainly the human smugglers or traffickers who have substantially increased their profits by bringing undocumented immigrants into the U.S.⁵

Initially, Trump asked Congress to approve US\$18 billion in additional funding to start construction work. The Omnibus Spending Bill of 2018 assigned no funds for the wall, but only for new technologies and repair of the existing barriers, explicitly prohibiting the building of a concrete wall. Trump’s fixation with building a wall demanded Congress authorize US\$5.1 billion in December 2018, but Democrats have offered US\$1.3 billion to that end. His discontent has grown significantly, and in reaction Trump has launched the third partial shutdown during his presidency, rejecting a deal offered by members of both parties to open up the government. This is the longest funding lapse in modern history, surpassing a 21-day record set during the Clinton administration. Given Trump’s anti-immigrant and xenophobic position, so far, the border wall has not been negotiable since it is based on the racist ideology supported by his entire base, white supremacists, and nationalists who have not abandoned him. It is important to mention that in all shutdowns, Democrats have offered support for the construction of the wall and the appointment of more border agents mainly in exchange for a solution for the Dreamers, but also for foreigners with Temporary Protected Status (TPS), an initiative that

has been consistently rejected by Trump and hard-liner Republicans. This situation has left 800 000 federal employees in limbo. Trump is constantly using any public ceremony to aggressively denounce Democrats for refusing to build the wall and frequently threatens to close the border and cut off aid to Central America and Mexico if Congress continues to deny the funds demanded.

Trump’s anger against “illegals” intensified significantly due to the arrival of the “caravan” from Central America. Several hundred asylum seekers started crossing through Mexico in April 2018, and Trump accused the Mexican government of not doing anything to stop them from reaching the U.S. border, once again threatening to withdraw from NAFTA if Mexico did not act. As an answer to this “invasion” and in the midst of the mid-term elections, Trump flashily dispatched 5 200 troops to the U.S.-Mexico border, the largest deployment in recent years, to address what he perceives as a “crisis” along the border until the wall is built. Governors of border states agreed to guard the border to differing degrees. Simultaneously, Trump adopted an immoral “zero tolerance policy,” whose main purpose was to separate parents from their children when crossing the border “illegally” into the United States. Even though the law allows families who cross “illegally” to remain together while their case is decided, approximately 2600 children were forcibly separated from their parents under Trump’s policy until June 2018.⁶ While parents were prosecuted, children were placed in the custody of the Health and Human Services Department. Trump was forced to reverse this highly controversial policy, signing an executive order amid a national and international outcry demanding that families remain together. As part of his anti-immigrant agenda, Trump instructed government officials to keep up with the “zero-tolerance” policy, prosecuting all immigrants who enter the U.S. illegally and declaring that people who crossed the border not at official U.S. ports of entry would be ineligible for asylum; but this was almost immediately blocked by a federal judge in California. Fortunately, the

Trump has manufactured a crisis along the border based on false premises, which plays very well with his base, and he has used violent rhetoric and promoted hate speech against immigrants, especially Mexicans.

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Trump administration has faced a number of setbacks by local and federal courts in response to immigration initiatives and executive orders that have been part of his toughening migration policy. In fact, there has been an important decrease in asylum admissions and a marked increase in cases in which border agents have rejected applicants at the border using tactics outside the law as well as lowering the number of interviews per day to stall. During FY2018, 22 491 refugees were admitted, the lowest number since the 1980s. This heartless policy is an absolute violation of human rights that should be taken into consideration by Congress members and multilateral institutions, who should push to end Trump's perverse, harmful actions.

In order to justify the wall, Trump falsely claims that apprehensions at the border have grown significantly. According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection statistics, border apprehensions grew only 14 percent, from 310 531 in 2017 (the lowest percentage since 1971) to 361 993, in 2018, but were down from 2016's 415 816. I believe that this was the result of the fear encouraged by Trump's aggressive rhetoric since the beginning of his presidency. Fewer Mexicans and an increasing number of Central Americans are apprehended at the border individually and as families (33 percent of the total).

Trump's proposal to return undocumented migrants apprehended at the border to the place where they entered, regardless of their country of origin, even while awaiting legal proceedings in the United States, is a highly sensitive issue. The former Peña Nieto administration repeatedly stated that Mexico will not admit people of other nationalities if the United States tries to send them back to the Mexican side of the border. From my point of view, this policy is an aggression against Mexico and constitutes another point of tension. During the Peña Nieto administration, Mexico stepped up enforcement efforts along its southern border for the benefit of the U.S. government, reaching levels not seen in more than a decade.⁷

At a time when some areas of Mexico's northern border have become increasingly problematic and conflictive, since many Central Americans and other nationals are waiting either to enter U.S. territory or have been returned, the Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) government has taken another attitude, adapting detention centers, mainly in Tijuana, for the refugee petitioners, who could spend months or years in quite an insecure situation. AMLO is playing the role of a "safe third-country" without having signed a bilateral agreement, demonstrating his total lack of knowledge or his anti-institutional stance. He has adopted a non-confrontational position vis-à-vis the Trump administration, and hopefully the bilateral proposal to invest funds in impoverished areas of Central America and southern Mexico so that people do not feel forced to leave, will benefit the region's economic development. **NMM**

Notes

- 1 This article is based on a longer version, found at <http://www.revisitanorteamerica.unam.mx/index.php/nam/article/view/335/376>.
- 2 Michelle Mark, "Trump Just Referred to One of His Most Infamous Campaign Comments: Calling Mexicans 'Rapists,'" *Business Insider*, April 5, 2018, <http://www.businessinsider.com/trump-mexicans-rapists-remark-reference-2018-4>.
- 3 On January 25, 2017, Trump issued the Border Security and Immigration Enforcement *Improvements* executive order to reinforce the border. The same day he signed another executive order to reinforce deportations: *Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the US* (EO).
- 4 According to the Pew Hispanic Center (PEW), 1.85 million Central American unauthorized immigrants in 2016 came from the three Northern Triangle nations (Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador).
- 5 In November 2016, smugglers were charging approximately US\$3 500 per crossing. According to the Department of Homeland Security, the cost has increased to anywhere from US\$9 200 to US\$12 500 to travel from Central America.
- 6 In November 2018, nearly 150 children remained separated from their relatives. A record 14 000 migrant children, the vast majority unaccompanied minors, are now in the custody of the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which is responsible for the facilities where child migrants, including those separated from their families, are being held. Michelle Mittelstadt, "Top 10 of 2018— Issue #4: Children on the Frontlines," Migration Policy Institute, Washington, D.C., December 18, 2018, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/top-10-2018-issue-no-4-children-frontlines>.
- 7 It has been calculated that the flow of undocumented crossings—counting crossings, not people—from Central America to the United States through Mexico ranges between 350 000 to 400 000. Sandra Dibble, "Mexico Reshaping Approach to Central American Migrants As Caravans Push North," *The San Diego Union Tribune*, November 11, 2018, <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/border-baja-california/sd-me-mexico-immigration-20181111-story.html>.



Roberto Zepeda*

Transborder Paradiplomacy And Global Problems

Introduction

The twenty-first century is characterized by a complex international system that presents new forms of governance in which subnational governments actively participate in international relations. Their aim is to defend their interests through different kinds of cooperation with their counterparts abroad to deal with global problems like climate change, migration, and security, among others.

These governments have discovered their economic clout amidst globalization. This has allowed them to participate in decision-making and the negotiation of international treaties. Therefore, they have been able to influence the positions taken by their federal governments around issues as important as free trade, security, migration, human rights, and the environment.

For example, these subnational entities, together with a series of other actors such as U.S. business chambers, played a decisive role in the outcome of the negotiations for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). When Donald Trump said that the best road was to abandon NAFTA, states like Texas and California and the American Chamber of Commerce warned him of the negative consequences of an eventual breakdown of the agreement.

Thus, subnational states conceive of themselves not only as a territory, but as a space where global flows of capital, individuals, goods, and services, among other things, move, creating networks and interconnecting. Because of all this, border states take on particular importance because they become the point of entry for international trade; and they store products and distribute them to the rest of the country.

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The Economic Importance Of the Border Region

The U.S.-Mexico border region is made up of 10 states: California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas on the U.S. side; and Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas on the Mexican side. This region taken together constitutes the world's fifth-largest economy. It has almost 90 million inhabitants and is the center of economic, political, and trade activities among government and social actors. It becomes a space where people, goods, and services flow. But it also has a dark side, since illicit drugs and criminals also operate there; people are trafficked; and undocumented migration takes place. For this reason, cooperation by both sides of the border is indispensable.

Trade relations between Mexico and the United States are even more intense in the border region. The four U.S. states export 55 percent of all U.S. exports to Mexico. They also facilitate the storage and transportation of most Mexican exports to the United States (about 80 percent of the total), among other logistical services, to the four corners of our neighbor to the north's territory. All of this has been strengthened by NAFTA, and millions of jobs depend on this trade relationship, plus cross-border trade and tourism.¹

So, one of the United States' most important relationships is with Mexico, its third trade partner after China and Canada; the second-largest destination for its exports;

Figure 1. STATES OF THE MEXICO-U.S. BORDER REGION



Source: César Huerta, "Zona fronteriza México," *Polemón*, <https://polemon.mx/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Zona-Fronteriza-México.png>.

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and the second-largest country of origin for its imports. Recent data show that Mexico is the main destination for the products from six states, four of them border states: California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Kansas, and Nebraska. In addition, it is the second destination in importance for 22 states of the Union, and the third for five more. That means that 33 out of the U.S.'s 50 states count Mexico among its three main trade partners.

It is important to underline that the four U.S. border states represent one-fourth of the whole country's economy, while the six Mexican states represent approximately one-third of Mexico's national economy. All together, the GDP of the region's 10 states is one of the world's largest, surpassed only by that of the United States as a whole, China, Germany, and Japan.

In addition, the United States' two richest states, California and Texas, share a border with Mexico. If California were a country, it would be the world's sixth-largest economy, and Texas, the fourteenth. Also, Mexico ranks first as the country of origin for imports by states like Texas, Arizona, Utah, Michigan, and Wisconsin. This is due to the integrated supply chains of several industries, first and foremost the auto industry. That is, Mexico plays an important role in the economic prosperity and the creation of tens of thousands of jobs in a large number of our neighbor's states.

Transborder Paradiplomacy

Mexico-United States

Paradiplomacy is carried out parallel to traditional diplomacy. The latter comes under the aegis of the central government, and the former, of the non-central governments. Diplomacy is defined as the practice of international relations conducted by representatives of states centering on a series of matters catalogued as high-level political

Figure 2. STATES OF THE U.S.-CANADIAN BORDER REGION



Source: *The Economist*, "Undefended No More. Violence Has Thickened the Once-Seamless Border between the US and Canada," November 8, 2014, <https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2014/11/08/undefended-no-more>.

issues, like security, war, and international treaties. Paradiplomacy runs parallel to this: the fundamental difference is that it is exercised by representatives of subnational states and focuses on low-level issues like education, science, technology, and the environment, among others, as long as they do not clash with the central government's diplomatic positions. Its systems for collaboration consist of cooperation agreements and memoranda of understanding, not international treaties.

Regional transborder paradiplomacy is carried out by formal and informal institutional transborder contacts among neighboring subnational bodies. The relations between the border states have intensified through a series of forums, conferences, and cooperation schemes between the neighboring states from both countries. In this case, the border, more than a point of geographical division, is a place of interaction and cooperation to deal with common problems, including trade and flows of migrants. A large part of the trade relationship between Mexico and the United States occurs between border states and represents an essential part of the link between the two countries.

More than barriers, the borders are being redefined as bridges or channels for communication and points of convergence. That is where subnational entities agree on and deploy different forms of cooperation.

In some cases, relations between subnational governments of the United States, Canada, and Mexico have become institutionalized. Economic and trade integration fostered by NAFTA increased transborder links among subnational states in the region, involving them in different issues, like trade, border security, migration, and environmental problems, among others.

Some border states facing common problems have created forums and permanent working groups; the four U.S. states and the six northern Mexican states meet periodically to negotiate cooperation agreements about a wide range of issues as varied as economic development, commercial ports, education, health, and security. In this context, a cooperation forum known as the Border Governors Conference (BGC) was formed.

The first BGC meeting was held in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, in 1980. This formally opened up lines of communication among the 10 border states. Other similar examples of cooperation are the Arizona-Mexico Commission, the Border Legislative Conference, the New Mexico-Chihuahua and New Mexico-Sonora Border Commissions, and the Commission of the Californias.²

The most noteworthy effort is the Arizona-Mexico Commission, founded in 1958. For six decades, its work has helped build a transborder community that brings together the industrial and professional sectors, even though its mission also focuses on the Arizona governor's public policy priorities. Bi-national committees are part of this commission and serve as representatives of industrial,

Border-state relations have intensified through a series of forums, conferences, and cooperation schemes between the neighboring states from both countries.

producing, social, and academic actors from the region. The commission also acts in concert with the Sonora-Arizona Commission headquartered in Hermosillo.

The Arizona-Mexico Commission recognizes the importance of international relations for an increasingly interconnected economic and social global world. Arizona's shared border with Mexico offers the opportunity for coming to agreements on cooperation to achieve common goals and create an environment in the region that will attract international investment.

The United States and Canada

The U.S.-Canadian border is the site of different mechanisms and agreements for cooperation between Canadian provinces and the northern U.S. border states. A greater number of transborder organizations exist here also; for example, the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/ECP); the Conference of Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers, the Idaho-Alberta Task Force, the Montana-Alberta Bilateral Advisory Council, the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, and the annual meeting of Canada's Western Premiers with the Western Governors Association.

That is, transborder paradiplomacy between Canada and the United States is even more intense than that which exists between Mexico and the United States. Central governments have not resolved the problems that reach beyond borders, like migration, security, the environment, and climate change, among others. The subnational states have emerged as international actors, becoming facilitators of solutions and proposals for the most serious, complex global problems.

Spaces have also been created so the subnational governments can develop and formulate alternatives, proposals, and forms of cooperation through transnational networks. They are increasingly significant centers for global interaction and exchange, gaining power and maneu-

vering room, while nation-states are losing efficiency. That is, the regions are taking on some of the roles that nation-states used to play.

In a context of free trade and integrated markets, borders are being redefined as bridges for communication more than as barriers. This presents economic opportunities, so the transborder regions benefit from the discussions and advances in the different forums that accompany paradiplomacy, as mentioned above. In these cases, the border becomes a space that encourages cooperation, congregating the subnational states of neighboring countries. That is, more than creating division, the border facilitates cooperation for dealing with a series of challenges and problems, and makes it possible to take advantage of development opportunities and economic prosperity.

Final Comments

We have seen that paradiplomacy by subnational states is even more intense in border regions, as is the case in North America. More than barriers, the borders are being redefined as bridges or channels for communication and points of convergence. That is where subnational entities agree on and deploy different forms of cooperation with their neighbors, seeking solutions for security, migratory, and environment problems, as well as prosperity and economic development for both parties.

The border thus encourages trade and political and cultural interaction between public and private actors as well as social organizations in both countries, creating a specific form of regional governance. The economic relationship between Mexico and the United States is strong and is even more intense in the border states, although international cooperation between the subnational states of the United States and Canada continues to be in the forefront. ■■■

▼
Notes

1 Christopher Wilson, "A NAFTA Update for the Border Region," August 18, 2018, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/nafta-update-for-the-border-region>, accessed in November 2018.

2 Samuel Lucas McMillan, *The Involvement of State Governments in U.S. Foreign Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and Earl H. Fry, "The Role of U.S. State Governments in International Relations, 1980-2015," *International Negotiation* vol. 22, no. 2 (2017), pp. 205-238.

Janeth Hernández Flores*

Women's Access to Criminal Justice on the San Diego-Tijuana Border

The Context: Violence, Impunity, And Women's Re-victimization

The San Diego-Tijuana bi-national area is an urban space that makes the border expand or retreat, an idea that Maringo Camacho calls an “elastic border.”¹ This strip is a “shared, interdependent transborder reality.”² The continual dynamics and interaction between both sides is due to multiple factors,³ like commuting workers or national and transnational mobility phenomena like migration.

Gender violence is a serious, common, complex structural problem that has an impact on all spheres of women's lives. On the Mexican side, it has been worsened by the high levels of violence in the country overall and by the perception that Tijuana “is an exceptional space,” a city with flexible rules that operates in different dimensions.⁴ In San Diego, this violence continues to be invisible in certain social sectors. All this makes it systematically impossible for women to enjoy all the human rights recognized under international law.

In this context, one of the most frequent problems is the impunity permeating existing institutions for the administration of justice, categorically violating women's right to justice in accordance with parameters consisting of an equality- and a human-rights-based approach. It is common in this region for the phenomenon to be minimized, which makes for re-victimization and the violence escalating toward what has been called “femicide violence.”

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The Legal Framework: Hyper-regulation, Fragmentation, and the Role of Criminal Law

The possibility of accessing the appropriate jurisdictional bodies to ensure a legitimate interest is recognized as the right to access to justice; this is pluri-dimensional: it covers the justiciability, availability, access, good quality, the supply of legal resources for victims, and the accountability of justice systems.⁵ This fundamental prerogative is laid out in Article 17 of Mexico's Constitution and recognized by several international instruments signed by Mexico; the Preamble of the United States Constitution states that it is written and ordained to “establish Justice” for its inhabitants.

Article 1, Section 28 of the Constitution of the state of California stipulates that the rights of the victim to justice shall be preserved and protected.

On a regional level, Article 8 of the American Convention on Human Rights also cites the right to access to justice. However, this instrument is not binding for the

On the Mexican side, gender violence has been worsened by the high levels of violence in the country overall and by the perception that Tijuana “is an exceptional space.”

United States since it is not part of the inter-American system for the protection of human rights. This means that the legislative impact in the San Diego-Tijuana area is complicated. The local, national, regional, and international legal framework is excessive, and its competency is different on either side of the border. Mexico, for example, accumulated a total of 140 international recommendations from 2000 to 2006 on women’s rights issues alone; of those, 63 involved femicide.

Criminal legislation is also different on the two sides of the border. California’s Criminal Code does not include the crime of femicide; its Article 187 only deals generally with homicide. However, it should be mentioned that Article 189 describes first-degree murder, taking into consideration factors such as torture, any other kind of deliberate harm, premeditation, and rape, among other issues to determine whether it has been committed. If the offense is classified as first-degree murder, Article 190.03 stipulates that a hate crime will be punished with life in prison without the right to parole.

Femicide is mentioned by the Baja California state Criminal Code. Article 129 states that a femicide has occurred when one or more women have been killed due to their gender. The penalty is 20 to 50 years in prison, plus a fine of up to the equivalent of 500 times the daily minimum wage.

In Mexico, the June 18, 2008 reform of the criminal code establishes the new adversarial accusatory criminal justice system. The changes in procedures aimed to ensure guarantees. However, the legal rigor in determining what is necessary to bring charges against a detainee, the burden of proof laid on the accusing party (the victim), a bad interpretation of the recognition of a series of the accused’s procedural rights (due process), and judges’ lack of knowledge about the gender perspective, among other issues, have made it possible for re-victimization and impunity to continue.

In the end, the creation of Centers for Justice for Women and classifying as specific offenses family violence,

femicide, political violence against women, etc., have not been enough for women to live in peace and exercise their rights.

In San Diego, the Violence against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA) and its reauthorized 2013 version are in force. The law deals with the investigation and trial of violent crimes against women, imposing automatic, obligatory restitution by convicted perpetrators, and allows for bringing a civil suit in cases in which district attorneys opt not to prosecute. It also authorizes funds for shelters for battered women and rape-prevention training.⁶

The enforcement of this law is limited, however. Among the problems with VAWA are the need for trustworthy, complete indicators of domestic violence and an analysis of the important data for decision-making, since agencies need to know more about the characteristics of perpetrators and victims to be able to channel resources appropriately, etc. Thus, despite the complex interaction in this bi-national area, the security challenges are examined in an isolated and unilateral fashion.

CEDAW General Recommendation 33

The international community has adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its protocol. As a specialized body, the CEDAW Committee calls on the states to take harmonizing measures that should be implemented nationwide. The convention and its protocol are obligatory for the Mexican government since it signed the former and recognized the competency of the latter; this is not the case of the United States, which only signed the convention.

Regardless of whether the committee’s recommendations are mandatory or not, it is important to implement CEDAW General Recommendation 33 about the access of women to justice. This is precisely the document that goes into detail about the obligations of signatory states with regard to this fundamental right.

In the border area under consideration, certain sectors are more vulnerable to gender-based violent crime and femicide: migrant, young, poor, illiterate, and/or indigenous women. Using an intersectional paradigm, the CEDAW Committee has recognized this situation as follows: “Women belonging to such groups often do not report violations of their rights to the authorities for fear that they

will be humiliated, stigmatized, arrested, deported, tortured, or have other forms of violence inflicted upon them, including by law enforcement officials.”⁷

Thus, many women are vulnerable to violence, marginalization, objectification, and even death. This lack of guarantees for exercising their rights, as well as government inaction, translate into different forms of violence and lead to perpetrators not being punished or sanctioned in any way. It should be underlined that the impunity index in Tijuana alone is 78.08 percent.⁸

During the pre-trial stage, government bodies involved in the administration of justice use different tactics to prevent women victims from accessing justice. For example, in cases in which a complaint has been lodged (when the issue is violence) or when investigation follows *ex officio* (in the case of femicide), the authorities do not arrest the suspect and file away the investigation results due to a lack of evidence, or they simply decide not to bring charges.

In the case of the United States, the document “When Men Murder Women. An Analysis of 2014 Homicide Data” states that in 2014, 1 613 women were murdered by men.⁹ The rate is higher among African-American women. This study could not determine what the murder rate for Hispanic women is since these victims are not identified in the data bases. This “little detail” shows the level of exclusion and discrimination that permeates U.S. society, where 55.2 million people are Latinos, that is, 17 percent of the country’s total, most of whom (63 percent) are of Mexican origin.

As a result, many women who are victims of a crime in this bi-national area do not have the right for their complaints to be taken to the legal system, do not have the legal means to ensure that the authorities in charge offer them due process, and cannot enjoy the rights stipulated by law; this means that comprehensive restitution and effective legal protection are not available to them.

Conclusion

In a bi-national scenario in which a complex symbiosis of gender violence occurs, a comprehensive trans-border agreement to guarantee the viability and effectiveness of the prerogative of women victims’ access to justice is needed. This constitutes the substantial core of women’s

In San Diego, violence against women continues to be invisible in certain social sectors. All this makes it systematically impossible for women to enjoy all their human rights.

human rights because it counters impunity and inequality. This kind of agreement would make visible and empower this sector of the population by safeguarding its guarantees and protection. Along this same line of thinking, harmonization, implementation, and monitoring of General Recommendation 33 by institutional means is fundamental to make it possible for them to obtain justice.

These citizens suffer from discrimination by reason of their gender, and in some cases, among other obstacles, they do not even have translators nor can they pay the fees involved in the process. Therefore, the demands of the inhabitants of this border area are a quality justice system, efficiency, and sensitivity to gender issues. **NM**

Notes

- 1 Jorge Marengo Camacho, “Fronteras elásticas, hegemónicas y teoría del discurso: la frontera sur de México,” *Revista CIDOB d’Afers Internacionals* no. 111 (2015), p. 9.
- 2 José Ángel Gurriá, “La región transfronteriza de Tijuana-San Diego como motor de emprendimiento e innovación,” speech by the OCDE general secretary at the “Tijuana innovadora” forum held in Tijuana, Mexico, November 10, 2016.
- 3 Tito Alegría, “Metrópolis transfronteriza. Revisión de la hipótesis y evidencias de Tijuana, México y San Diego, Estados Unidos,” in Alejandro Mercado Celis, *EURE* vol. 37, no. 164 (April 2011), pp. 163-165.
- 4 Interview with Norma Iglesias as part of the “Social Violence in Tijuana” project, implemented by Conavim, IncideSocial, and El Colegio de México (2009).
- 5 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), “General Recommendation on Women’s Access to Justice,” United Nations, July 23, 2015, p. 3, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/cedaw/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/cedaw_c_gc_33_7767_E.pdf.
- 6 Faith Trust Institute, “Working Together to End Sexual & Domestic Violence,” <http://www.ncdsv.org/images/historyofvawa.pdf>, accessed March 10, 2018, p. 1.
- 7 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *op. cit.*, p. 4.
- 8 Saúl D. Martínez, “Es BC tercero en impunidad en todo el país,” *Frontera Info*, April 5, 2018, <http://www.frontera.info/EdicionEnLinea/Notas/Noticias/05042018/1324740-Es-BC-tercero-en-impunidad-en-todo-el-Pais.html>.
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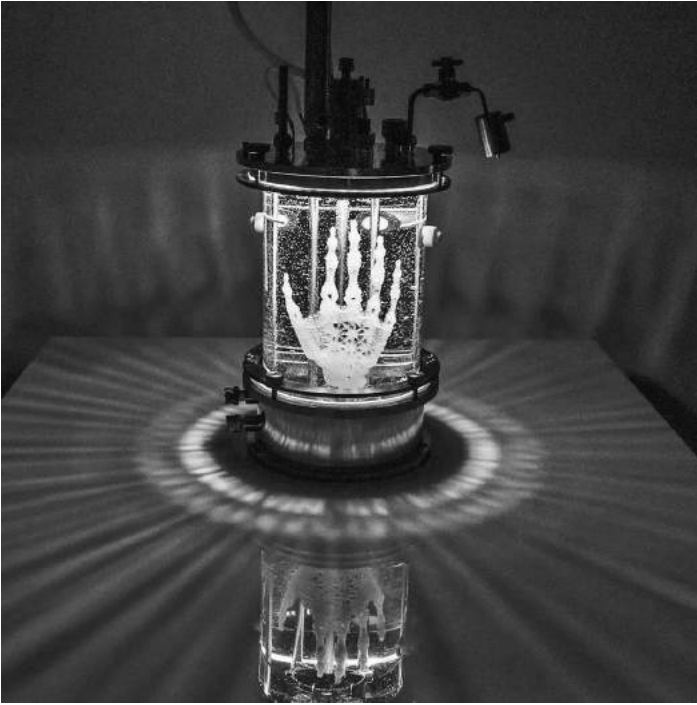


Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Regenerative Reliquary, 2016. (3-D printed sculpture of hand/bioprinted microscopically out of pegda hydrogel).

The Imagination: Where Art and Science Meet

Jorge Reynoso Pohlenz*

In his short story “The Exiles” (1949), Ray Bradbury describes a relatively near future in which Edgar Allan Poe lives in off-world exile with other great authors of fiction and their imaginary creatures, among them, the witches from *Macbeth*. While the literati and their fearful fantasies lament their increasingly tenuous existence, an interplanetary flight crew experiences nightmares, hallucinations, and unexplained deaths for the first time. Their ship is transporting strange relics: books that, despite not having been read in almost a century and being alien to a global rationalist culture that condemns superstitions, are the cause of terrors and disquiet. All of the latter disappear when the books are consigned to a bonfire . . . , something that also definitively snuffs out the ghosts of Poe and his companions.

Bradbury allegorical premonition did not turn out to be very precise. While the technological application of scientific development has grown throughout our lives and is more and more intimately linked to them, fan-

tasy and horror literature continues to prosper, as do its derivatives in other media. It would even be devoutly to be wished that the popular dissemination of science had a media presence comparable to that of fantasy fiction or the huge influence of science itself in our development. However, despite the fact that the premonitory content of the story of a future devoid of fantasies is out of date, what continues to exist is a concern that has haunted the imagination of many since causal determinism was proposed as an implicit component of scientific progress.

A couple of research projects in recent years that involve art works can illustrate this concern a little more. Lior Shamir, a computer scientist from Lawrence Technological University, has developed an algorithm based on the analysis of abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock’s work. This algorithm can not only identify to a high degree of certainty the authenticity of Pollock’s work, but can also replicate it.

Parallel to this, Alex Forsythe, a psychologist from the University of Liverpool, has collaborated with specialists in fractal geometry to study the late work of Arshile Gorky and other painters afflicted with mental deterioration, seeking to identify patterns that help us understand diseases like Alzheimer’s from a non-linguistic perspec-

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The very personal, complex work of artists like Pollock or Gorky can be analyzed and predicted just as our tastes and aspirations can, processed by social network platforms' algorithmic systems.

tive. Shamir's and Forsythe's publications have been both applauded and debated by different scientific communities, showing that the pioneering terrain of science is rough going and unanimous scientific consensus is by no means easily arrived at. However, from the viewpoint of a non-specialist, both studies suggest that the very personal, complex work of artists like Pollock or Gorky can be analyzed and predicted just as our tastes and aspirations can, processed by social network platforms' algorithmic systems. At the same time, we suspect that some of the current musical hits are not the product of a composer, but were made by machines fed by the statistical variation between consumption and taste.

We ought to regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its antecedent state and as the cause of the state that is to follow. An intelligence knowing all the forces acting in nature at a given instant, as well as the momentary positions of all things in the universe, would be able to comprehend in one single formula the motions of the largest bodies as well as the lightest atoms in the world; provided that its intellect were sufficiently powerful to subject all data to analysis; to it, nothing would be uncertain; the future as well as the past would be the present in its eyes.¹

This description on the bases of causal determinism by Pierre-Simon Laplace (1749-1827) can be interpreted as the beginning of a human adventure. But it can also be understood as the declaration of a valiant advance of rationalism into the territory of uncertainty, in which the death of superstition is considered a justified execution, and the undermining of fantasy just collateral damage. But finally, its main victims are subjectivity and free will.

Admitting that an unequivocal objective of science is to follow a process to make reality more intelligible, we would not necessarily have to see determinism as something that reduces the territory of the subjective imagination. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, at the time when the bases for the scientific method were being consolidated, thinkers like Giordano Bruno and Francis

Art, Science, and Technology at the UNAM*

In 2018, the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the Ministry of Culture launched an initiative to stimulate the dialogue, exchange, and collaboration among science, the arts, and the humanities in Mexico. The aim was to connect areas of knowledge to deliver research results to broader audiences and to publicize existing artistic and scientific treasures and foster collaborative efforts.

The Art, Science, and Technology (ACT) Project is a platform for consolidating and fostering research projects and multi- and inter-disciplinary production, strengthening the creation of artistic-scientific works, and fostering cultural policies to encourage and disseminate projects linked to this kind of topic.

The ACT Program has four axes for action:

- A call for production, research, and dissemination
- An International Conference on Art, Science, and Technology
- Launching projects
- Publications

Some of the actions that have already been carried out include

- live coding and registry of deep space sounds;
- artistic conceptualizations of anti-matter;
- projects to build bridges between science and science fiction;
- a series of lectures and round table discussions about the links between neuroscience and the performing arts and their possibilities;
- an international colloquium about notation;
- overlapping and contemporary practices in a dialogue between Latin America and Europe;
- the Zero Degree Seminar and theoretical-practical art and science interventions;
- Festival N, Art, Science, and Technology, made up of an international collective exhibit, "Spaces of Species"; the international TTT (Taboo, Transgression, and Transcendence) Congress; and the LabCet Laboratory of Transdisciplinary Performing Creation.

Festival N is an initiative of Art+Science (UNAM) and Bioscénica, with special support from Cultivamos Culture (Let's Cultivate Culture) (Portugal), to exhibit the knowledge of different international bodies and collectives, led mainly by women, that work on the intersection of art, science, and philosophy in the academic and artistic spheres, in a festival format that will be presented in the Digital Culture Center and the UNAM as part of the theme of epigenetics and multiple spatialities.

Bacon did not understand the vistas opened up by the development of science as shrinkage, but as a spectacle offered to the imagination of the size of the universe. With our nature, keen on contradictions and dichotomies, we are intimidated by the possibility that Pollock's apparently irrational work could be algorithmically predictable, but we are inspired by a future in which seismic movements could be systematically anticipated.

On the other hand, the idea that the meaningful value of art lies in subjective talent is relative new, modern. It emerged at the same time as the process of consolidation of the scientific perspective as a valid, authorized way of interpreting the world and its use as a technological application, as well as the recognition of science in modernity, which is why it began to identify the creator of art as an individual genius, whose work tended to be freed from its functions as a representation of the divine and secular powers. Ancient Greek sculptors like Phidias or Praxiteles would have been overjoyed with the proposition that their creations corresponded to universal, general, regular principles, distilling from them a formal economy inscribed in nature and that could be fitted to a harmonious progression of numerical reasons. The recognition of the ancient artists was not based on the inimitable originality of their creations, but in those works' ability to represent common values and serve as models to be imitated. Originality was a privilege, a gift offered by the muse: the artist was possessed, a mediator in whom dwelled a transpersonal genius. Some promoters of the existence of harmony between art and science dodge Plato and Aristotle's reservations about art's morally perturbing power and concentrate on the formal harmony of the Greek and Roman visual arts to propose an ancient sympathy manifested in proportional relations and the correspondence between the micro- and macro-cosmic. That is to say, a dialogue between a rational soul and the beautiful form of the senses, good, and the seed of wisdom that was preserved in medieval scholasticism and would re-emerge freed of theology in the Renaissance: the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles's Eros, supplanted first by Divine Grace and later demystified under the name of Nature or Reason. In this cordial understanding of art and science, Leonardo da Vinci's sketch is presented as an emblem that restores a past that projects into the future. While Da Vinci and his work comfortably adjust to the imaginary of the meeting between art and science, we must

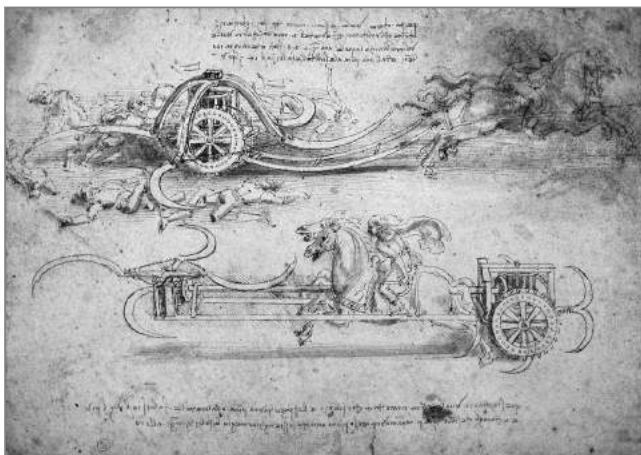


Andreas Vesalius, *De humani Corporis Fabrica*.

remember that this Tuscan genius was also the author of experiments gone wrong, the actor in and witness to power games, the man who suffered in terrible wars, and the architect of death machines. In the illustrated chapter on the Renaissance in the story of modernity, the *Vitruvian Man* rubs elbows with Andreas Vesalius's treatise on anatomy, graphics of bodies cut apart by the new military technologies, and cannibal festivities in the West Indies.

Beyond the diversity of its fields of study and the variety of its applications and technological innovations, in the last four centuries, science has refined a methodology and a system of certification that are common to all its activities and are essentially alien to the practice of art and its cultural validation. We could even propose the

The development of the sciences and the emancipation of the arts are essential components along a road toward the realization of humanity.



Leonardo da Vinci, *Studi di carri d'assalto falcati*.

idea that, in modernity, art has become a territory partially defined that harbors heterogeneous forms of expression and aesthetic experience that it has not been possible to incorporate into other spheres of human endeavor and that tend necessarily to disciplinary confusion and indiscipline. With its great capability to cover all things, science may orient its field of study toward art, just as the practitioners of art can resort to science as a theme and to the most recent technologies derived from scientific development; but the conceptual differences between art and science make an exercise of equivalencies impossible: nothing forces them to commitments, to convergences or divergences, conspiracies or antagonisms.

We could, however, propose a basic divergence: the artistic experience is obliged to manifest itself as a phenomenon accessible to the senses. A Euclidian geometric proposition can last beyond the sand, the wax, the parchment, or the blackboard on which it has been drawn to explain or demonstrate it. Art, on the other hand, is conditioned to its supports, portability or mobility, to scales, to what is lost and won in interpretation, to novelty or decrepitude, to the state of the weather or the affects. While the scope and validity of a scientific law are subjected to its periodic proof in light of new observations, that law aspires to universality, to the coherence and impersonal unconditional character of its proposition in any place and time, within the parameters that it enunciates. For its part, the work of art shows, as Ortega y Gasset points out, an intimate solidarity with the historic moment in which it was created; this solidarity is so close that we identify what we suppose are the most eloquent remnants of a culture from the past as artistic. What we

conceive of as universal or lasting art consists of the re-creation, re-interpretation, or re-contextualization of a work from another time or place to give it meaning today or to give an updated sensorial representation to cultures of the distant past or that are far removed.

Among the common points of art and science as co-inhabitants of modernity, one is very important: both have the ability to contravene common sense, dogma, and convention. Shakespeare's agnostic, existentialist, and fatalistic soliloquies in *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear* debuted very nearly at the same time as Francis Bacon's pioneering technical-scientific program, while Laplace was a full contemporary of Francisco de Goya, a painter whose sympathy for the Enlightenment did not prevent him from violating the conventions of beauty and disturbingly portraying both heretics and nightmares of the dream of reason and the disasters of a war motivated by Napoleon, Laplace's patron. For its part, certain formulations and verified models of science have distanced themselves counter-intuitively so much from day-to-day conventions and experiences that, when scientists want to disseminate them to a non-specialized public, they have to resort to the metaphors of fables, myths, and poetry, from the cosmography of Hinduism to the sub-atomic strings whose vibrations weave the texture of the universe: the reflection and representation of reality requires an enormous exercise of the imagination. The development of the sciences and the emancipation of the arts are essential components along a road toward the realization of humanity, interpreted as a group of beings increasingly conscious and free. We cannot blame science for the shrinking space for the imagination, but rather, a system that appropriates rationalism shored up by technocracy, reducing the dimensions and relationships we establish with the world, and, in order to do so, inhibiting both access to knowledge, understood as diversity, plurality, and skepticism, and the spaces for experiencing and practicing the arts, which, in their conditions as exiles, are the hosts for some very uncomfortable, but fabulous, heretical beasts. **MM**

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Notes

¹ https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/324846.Pierre_Simon_Laplace.

* The source for the information in this article is <http://artecien.ciattecnologias.mx/es/inicio>.

LETTERS BECOME CLEAR WITH IMAGES

THE IMAGES IN LETTERS, LETTERS IN IMAGES COLLECTION

Alberto Vital*
Alfredo Barrios**

If we looked for two artistic disciplines that seem to clearly delimit their borders, we could point to photography and literature: one is visual, the other verbal. However, this perception might change if we go back to the history of writing, where images and letters have clearly been symbiotic: suffice it to think about the historic relationship between pictographs, hieroglyphics, or ideographs, which some cultures still use to this day. Some members of the avant-garde, like Guillaume Apollinaire, José Juan Tablada, or Vicente Huidobro, sought an iconic-textual reencounter through their calligrams, poems that form a drawing through the typographical lay-out of the words.

The image and literature have a long tradition of coexisting that ranges from the trope of the poetic image, whose aim is to cause a sensorial effect, whether visual, auditory, olfactory, or tactile, to the ekphrasis, a detailed description of figures, objects, places, characters, or situations, whether real (referential) or fictitious (notional). The image and literature are so closely linked that they can even share genres, such as in portraiture or stamps.



The image has gone through a long evolution, from sketching and the painting to photography and cinematography (a sequence of photographs). In the case of the art of photography, from the old daguerreotypes from the XIX century to digital photography—which we now carry with us in our cellular devices—, it has gone beyond mere documentation and has become comparable to works of literature. One good photograph not only tells a story, but also speaks to us about the era and the personality, the point of view and the beliefs system of whoever pressed the button. Julio Cortázar com-

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pared the short story with a photograph in his famous 1962 lecture in Havana, when he said that “a good photograph cuts out a fragment of reality, fixing certain limits, but in such a way that that cut acts as an explosion that completely opens up a much wider reality.”¹ And he finished with his vision of professional photographers: “I’ve always been surprised that they could express themselves just like a short-story writer could.”² Our literary history includes innumerable cases of very important writers who embraced photography as another form of expression: Juan Rulfo, J. M. Coetzee, or Cortázar himself are examples.

The “Imagen en letra: Letra en imagen” (Images in Letters, Letters in Images) project was created in the Coordination of Humanities Department thanks to support from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. It attempts to transcend the frontiers within art by encouraging an open dialogue among the more than 70 writers and 3 young photographers published in the first two volumes. It is an anthology that reveals, through literary (fictional) fragments and fragments of reality (photographs), the inflection points between the pens of Juan Rulfo, Carlos Fuentes, José Emilio Pacheco, Octavio Paz, Elena Garro, José Revueltas, Fernando del Paso,

Ricardo Garibay, or Roberto Bolaño and the cameras of Clara Araujo, Omar Reyes Solórzano, and José Alfredo Rodríguez.

The university bookstores already offer the first two volumes: 1968/50, made up of fragments of literature contextualized in Mexico’s 1968 student movement and photographs by Clara Araujo that look into what has happened in those places half a century later; and *De imágenes y relatos. Ciudad de México* (Of Images and Stories. Mexico City), which unravels the most diverse dramas played out in many corners of our country’s capital. These first two volumes are only the entryway for the future publications: iconographic reencounters in Mexico and poetry in different First Nations’ languages to commemorate the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

From 1968/50

“El descubridor” (The Golden Cockerel); text by Juan Rulfo. Photos by Clara Araujo.

From *De imágenes y relatos. Ciudad de México* (Of Images And Stories. Mexico City)

“Ensalada de pollos” (Chicken Salad), by José Tomás de Cuéllar. Photos by José Alfredo Rodríguez.

“Poética de la crónica” (Poetics of the Chronicle), by Vicente Quirarte. Photos by Omar Reyes. *Santa*, by Federico Gamboa. Photos by Clara Araujo.

Notes

¹ Julio Cortázar, “Algunos aspectos del cuento,” *Teorías del cuento I. Teorías de los cuentistas*, Lauro Zavala, comp. (Mexico City: UNAM, 1995), p. 309.

² *Ibid.*

THE GOLDEN COCKEREL (fragment)¹

by Juan Rulfo

Photos by Clara Araujo



Candelario Lepe, with his *tejano* hat always under his arm, took the sheet that was single-spaced and with two columns. He took his time reading the names listed there as if that had some meaning. After a good while he said, “These are just names.”

“All of them were in the Attorney General’s office yesterday. They might still be there, but I want you to do something before they move them to Lecumberri prison. You say that you’re good at this type of trouble.”

“What have they been accused of?”

“Of all sorts of things: disturbing the peace, resisting lawful authority, sedition, inciting disorder, and they’re saying something about an attempt to overthrow the government. All of that and more; you know how they can pile on offenses when they want to charge someone.”

¹ Juan Rulfo, “The Discoverer,” *The Golden Cockerel and Other Writings*, Douglas J. Weatherford, trans. and “Introduction,” (Dallas: Deep Vellum Publishing, 2017), pp. 185-189. Reprinted by permission of the Juan Rulfo Foundation.

CHICKEN SALAD

by José Tomás de Cuéllar

Photos by José Alfredo Rodríguez

Dark Chicken tried to get White Chicken to settle the matter, offering not to see Concha again; but White Chicken wouldn't budge and Arturo got more and more furious.

The altercation in the middle of the night drew the attention of the guards, who rushed toward the chickens. But the chickens, who had a sparrow hawk as a look-out, slipped out prettily, quietly taking Plateros Street.

Half an hour later, the four chickens were in the Arquitectos Neighborhood.¹



Finally, the chickens fulfilled their duty of the posthumous honors, and undoubtedly, this was when poor Arturo enjoyed the best reputation of his whole life.

One paper announced the news the next day, and then the others published it, some with this or that moral to their stories; the burial was in the afternoon in the San Fernando Cemetery, since the entire family agreed that it would have truly been a calamity if the body had been buried in Santa Paula, a very discredited and inelegant graveyard.²

¹ José Tomás de Cuéllar, *Ensalada de pollos y Baile y cochino...*, 3rd edition, Antonio Castro Real, ed. and "Prologue," Mexican Writers Collection 39 (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1977 [1946]), p. 142.

² *Ibid.*, p. 149.

“POÉTICA DE LA CRÓNICA” (POETICS OF THE CHRONICLE) (fragment)¹

by Vicente Quirarte

Photos by Omar Reyes

On June 21, 2015, the roof of a dwelling on Perú Street collapsed, resulting in the evacuation of all the tenants and the building’s closing. This took place in what is called Mexico City’s Historic Center. We natives prefer to use the plain, essential, well-loved noun “downtown.”

It’s the old house at #48 Allende Street, at the corner of Perú, in the heart of the Lagunilla Neighborhood, where I spent my childhood and early teens. The immediate sensation was that the enemy had taken a step forward: memory —and not the weight of the past— was under threat, the same way we’re deprived of other values in an increasingly violent, inhuman Mexico. . . .

The media called the building where I was born a *casona*, a big, old colonial-style house, when it stopped being a heritage in our individual memory and became news. *Casona* is a superlative that gives the noun “casa” (house) prestige. We instinctively call the space we’ve been given in our brief stay on the planet “my house.” And when we’re referring to it among the other members of the tribe, it is “the house.”

¹ Vicente Quirarte, “Poética de la crónica,” *Coordenadas 2050*, Cuadernos de la Coordinación de Humanidades, no. 12, October 2017 (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/Coordinación de Humanidades), p. 5 (translated by Heather Dashner).



And she actually sat down on the second step of a half-spiral stone staircase few paces from the door. The concierge, humanized when faced with Santa's beauty, first smiled a simian smile, and then subjected her to a malicious interrogation. Was she going to stay with them in that house? Where had she been before?

"You're not from Mexico..."

"Yes, I am. I mean, not from the capital, but, yes, from very close-by. I'm from Chimalistac . . . below San Ángel," she added, by way of explanation. "You can go there on the train.... Do you know it?"

SANTA (fragment)¹

by Federico Gamboa

Photos by Clara Araujo



The concierge had only been to San Ángel for its annual fairs; she had sometimes accompanied the "*patrona*," her mistress, who was crazy for playing Spanish Monte. And, captivated by Santa, with her innocent, simple exterior, she approached until she rested an elbow on the railing of the staircase itself; almost sympathizing with her, seeing her there, inside the dive that gave her her living, a dive that in no time at all would devour that beauty and that young flesh that was surely unaware of all the horrors in store for her.

"Why are you going to throw yourself into that life?" **NM**

¹ Federico Gamboa, *Santa*, Biblioteca Universitaria de Bolsillo Collection (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006), p. 27 (translated by Heather Dashner).

Graciela Martínez-Zalce-Sánchez*

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE “PARADISE”?

Interview with
Matilda Aslizadeh

MATILDA ASLIZADEH is a Canadian visual artist who uses media like video, animation, and photography to re-signify the narratives that are the basis for today's thinking.

Resort, the work this interview deals with, is a video projected on a panoramic screen that literally envelops the viewer, a metaphor for the isolation we live in today without realizing it, which establishes limits and borders between ourselves and others; in other words, between ourselves and our fears.

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All photos, courtesy of the artist.



GRACIELA MARTÍNEZ-ZALCE: *Could you please tell us about the genesis of your piece of art, Resort? Can you share the most important formal characteristics with our readers?*

MA: Unsurprisingly, the idea behind the piece originated while I was visiting a large resort. I was struck by how the landscaping and design of the facility reflected an idealized view of nature, with plants in perpetual bloom and animals living peaceably side by side, and how this idealized view had so many precedents in both religious and secular concepts of paradise/Utopia. I became interested in the destructive aspect of this desire for a perfect space. In a literal sense, real ecosystems and people are displaced in order to create these contemporary resort spaces, and, on the level of ideology, that push for perfection generates a vast array of small and great acts of violence and exclusion.

In terms of the formal characteristics of *Resort*, it consists of three video channels projected on a circular wall and blended to create a seamless cinematic image. The video image is created by collaging a combination of actors shot against a blue screen, location footage, and a wide range of found/archival stills and moving imagery. For me, the visual style collapses non-Western and pre-Renaissance painting traditions with narrative cinematic conventions. There is also an immersive aspect to the video that envelops the viewer in its world, much as the characters in the narrative are immersed in the resort.





Real ecosystems and people are displaced to create resort spaces, and that push for perfection generates a vast array of small and great acts of violence and exclusion.

GMZ: At first glance, *Resort* makes us think of what “exclusive” means. Were you addressing, in first place, a question of class? Class related to what?

MA: Yes. Both the narrative arc and the collage aesthetic of *Resort* emphasize how class is increasingly transcribed in spatial terms, with the primary indicator of privilege being access: access to sustenance, access to pleasure, and access to safety.

Furthermore, the world of *Resort* mirrors the neoliberal present where there is simultaneous erosion of class consciousness and escalation of economic inequality. The characters, whether they are consumers or laborers, are neoliberal subjects operating under the belief that they are individual agents with ultimate responsibility for their happiness and well-being. It is this belief or narrative—the pursuit of happiness—that sustains the resort.





GMZ: Inside the resort, your characters are confined. Can you talk about the sense of borders in your work?

MA: The border in the film physically marks the threshold between the ideal space of the resort and the space outside, which is full of violence and disaster. It's also a metaphor for the historical tendency in Western philosophical thought to divide the world into oppositional binary concepts (good/evil, civilized/savage, rational/emotional) and to define progress as the eradication or containment of the perceived negative term in the binary relationship. It's precisely this tendency to separate and isolate that which is perceived as desirable from that which is perceived as undesirable —as opposed to acknowledging their complex, interconnected relationship— that engenders violence.

The border is omnipresent in *Resort*, but it is never explicitly policed or enforced: it is simultaneously internalized and psychological as well as external and literal.

The border in the film physically marks the threshold between an ideal space and the space outside, which is full of violence and disaster.



GMZ: Do you see yourself as part of the science fiction tradition in the dystopian sense?

MA: I would locate *Resort* within the generic boundaries of dystopian film and literature, particularly the literary tradition of dystopias that appear Utopian at first glance. However, I think there is greater moral ambiguity in *Resort* than in the classics of the genre, because it eschews the plot structure of an individual caught in the machinations of a powerful state. The resort in my film is more like a corporation and everyone holds a share in it.

I have also described *Resort* as science fiction in the past, but I'm now leaning toward the term "speculative fiction," coined by Margaret Atwood to describe her novels set in the future, since it contains less emphasis on crises caused by technological shifts and more an exaggeration of aspects that are already present in the contemporary political landscape.

GMZ: As you know, in Mexico the wall is a vivid and ominous topic; it's surprising for a Mexican viewer to recognize the wall as a protagonist in a Canadian work of art. Can you talk about the border you are creating a metaphor about?

MA: Actually my interest in borders is at least partially influenced by the time I spent in San Diego completing my master's of fine arts. There, I was introduced to a range of artists and thinkers who interrogated the concept of the border. I began the MFA program in 2000, which coin-

cided with InSite, a visual arts festival that commissioned site-specific work in the San Diego/Tijuana border region. So, my first introduction to San Diego was inextricably linked to its relationship to Tijuana.

There have also been other borders in my life and family history. My family emigrated to Canada from Iran after the Islamic Revolution, so the stresses of managing our relationship to various national boundaries—getting out and getting in—very much marked my early childhood. Going further back in history, my family were ethnic minorities in Iran, and my father's side is from New Julfa,

My interest in borders is influenced by the time I spent in San Diego completing my master's of fine arts.





the Armenian Quarter in Isfahan, established in 1606. This was a geographically contained area that simultaneously permitted the preservation of a distinct identity and religion. Finally, in Canada, I grew up in a fairly affluent neighborhood in the 1980s, adjacent to two indigenous reserves. Despite the absence of a physical border, there was little interaction between these two spaces (Thankfully, this is slowly changing.).

So, to answer your question, I am referring to all these personally experienced borders, as well as the most politically charged ones —Gaza, for example— and finally to the most apparently banal ones, such as gated residential communities. **MM**

The reader can see the full *Resort* video at the following site: <https://vimeo.com/matildaaslizadeh/matilda-aslizadeh/video/157336197>.





Yunuén Sariego*

FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER

The Free Art of Carmen Giménez Cacho

All art is like allowing the advent of the truth of the being as such to happen, and for that reason, it is, in essence, poetry. The essence of art, upon which . . . both the work of art and the artist rest, is putting truth into operation.¹

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All photos, courtesy of the artist.



In a Sea of Words, 61 x 1.88 cm, 2011 (triptych, oil on canvas).

In her works, the figures appear vacillating between continents and genders; they are placed amidst phrases and groups of words tattooed in the background of the canvas.



Not That Sure, 22 x 24 x 22 cm, 2017/18 (stoneware with oxides).



A Drag, 90 cm, 2010
(acrylic on canvas).

Objectness clearly shows how the separation of the skin, intimately related to the separation of worlds, of maps, of genders, opens up a space for other textures, other substances.

Carmen Giménez Cacho (Mexico, 1957) understands art as freedom. It is through it that she has brought into play the word in her work: explosively, abruptly, poetically.

Language bursts into her work, crossing the medium. This arises out of a process of internal struggle in which duality seeks to connect and create links that translate into new visions of identity. Texts appear in her work, emerging from that which has been marked inside, on the skin, in the psyche, and that suddenly breaks the fabric to emanate in cascades of words and create an evocative, intriguing, disconcerting visual image.

The phrases, often underneath the corporeal image or written on the surface of her sculptures, are only sometimes legible. The reason for this is that for the artist, words have the power to injure, to erode, to mark, and to crush, and that's why they have been put away. However, speech inevitably bursts in as part of a quest for identity, the product of a reaction to those introspective migratory processes that are a constant in her



Never without You, 70 x 40 x 40 cm, 2018 (stoneware and oxides).

life —after all, she has lived alternately in Spain, Mexico, and Canada. She expresses these processes in her work as an affirmation of her femininity, of her tri-national identity, and of her condition as an artist, situated above the rationality characteristic of the first years of her career.

The power and great expressiveness of these outbursts can be seen from her earliest works, which she developed with photographs of cracks and trees from which plants, mushrooms, and living organisms emanated, with structures that she used later to create sculptures and paintings.

While in the first years of her career, Carmen Giménez Cacho worked from abstraction, today,



Urban Patterns, 2006 (mixed media).

These creatures bring with them autobiographical stories seeking



Not Alone, 35 x 25 x 25 cm, 2017 (stoneware with oxides).

elements to integrate into themselves, while others carry a burden.



Here and There, 40 x 50 cm, 2016 (acrylic on canvas).

she is making figurative pieces in which the human figure abounds: beings that are (initially) androgynous, often hairless, that might represent any subject, but that speak imminently of her. These creatures bring with them autobiographical stories seeking elements to integrate into themselves, while others carry a burden. They are represented as bearers or beings pulling something. What is it they are transporting? Perhaps it is the weight of what you carry with you when you migrate; in a broad sense, culture, and in a more intimate sense, the past that every subject carries with him/her.

The weight that the beings in Carmen's works bear, both in sculptures and pictures, is repeatedly expressed using language. Words are a fundamental part of what subjects carry within themselves in their bodies when they migrate, and they allow them to both transform their surroundings and build an identity. That is why the figures also pull on something: they are pulling it toward themselves.

In these works, the figures appear vacillating between continents and genders; they are placed amidst phrases and groups of words tattooed in the background of the canvas, a part of the environment: a context of confusion between physical and semantic places. The fragmented words and phrases, which sometimes become hieroglyphics, are the result of a self-therapeutic,



Untitled, 46 x 36 x 28 cm, 2017 (stoneware, porcelain, oxides, and glazes).

The vacuum left by the incompleteness of the subject is linked in her work with the encounter with and affirmation of femininity.



On the Go, 30 x 90 cm, 2010 (glazed monoprnt on clay).



Traffic, 2016 (digital image).

autobiographical, healing, creative exercise, a process similar to automatic writing, rendering rich textures and patterns.

Over the last 20 years, Carmen has produced a wide-ranging body of work based on a process of constant experimentation with different media like painting in acrylics and oil; sketching in pastels; both analogue and digital collage; sten-

cil; and photography, among others. It is precisely based on photography that her work has become sculpture. Objectness clearly shows how the separation of the skin, intimately related to the separation of worlds, of maps, of genders, opens up a space for other textures, other substances, and constructions of a self to emanate.

Carmen Giménez Cacho has recently made ceramic sculptures that play with bright and dark tones; pieces from whose empty spaces emerge intricate guts and cables that unite and demand their own liberation. Often these pieces come in threes, speaking to us of processes and analyses about subjectivity. The gap opened in her pieces in the last analysis relate to the awareness of the mutability and process-based nature of the self. The vacuum left by the incompleteness of the subject is linked in her work with the encounter with and affirmation of femininity: today, the beings that at first were androgynous and hairless have taken on a more patently feminine charge, as they are containers, receptacles, figures that embrace the vacuum. This is how language's connecting function plays a relevant role in the artist's work, since at the same time that it asks about identity in its evocative, constant production, it forms networks in the apparent schism of subjectivity. **MM**



Cracked, 2003 (digital photograph).

Notes

- 1 Martin Heidegger, *El origen de la obra de arte* (Madrid: Alianza, 1996), pp. 111-112 (translation by Heather Dashner).



Frontera Corozal, Chiapas. Usumacinta River, the border between Guatemala and Mexico.

Santiago Arau Pontones*

BORDERS FROM ABOVE

Text by Graciela Martínez-Zalce

* Director and cinematographer. Throughout a 15 year he has participated in individual and collective exhibitions. His aerial photographs have been published by international and national media. <https://santiagoarau.com>.

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All photos, courtesy of the artist.



Santa Cruz, Sonora.

The border can be a couple of lines that contain the nation's territory. The nation, however, spills over them, generally toward the north, taking with it what Monsiváis called "the portable border."

The photographic essay we have the privilege of presenting in this issue denotes the former, and by connotation, relates to the latter.

The photographs Santiago Arau takes with his drone offer us the gift of a perspective impossible for those who live with two feet firmly on the ground. They give us a frankly plummeting perspective, a bird's eye view, or a view like God's; the view of the omniscient narrator who can take in much more than we simple witnesses can.

What Arau's camera achieves is to make concrete a place that in our eyes only exists in the imagination. His composition/description/re-creation of border spaces that contain Mexico refresh the discourse about the line (north and south) that is more than walls, wire fences, guards, sentry boxes, discord, or separation.

As Arau presents them to us, Mexico's borders are also shared natural spaces that an anti-immigrant discourse is willing to destroy.

From very high up, the images presented here refute the stereotypes and help us build the possibility of a region. ■■■



Sonora, Mexico.



Cuatro Poblados, Tabasco, on the border between Guatemala and Mexico.



San Luis Río Colorado, Sonora.



Dulzura, California.



Tijuana, Baja California, the border between Mexico and the United States.



Sonora, México.

Eduardo Parra Ramírez*

THE HERO, THE BORDER

Illustrated by Armando Fonseca**



She was blond, but she didn't act blond. When she walked by there was a light echo of perfume from very far away. She told stories like few could. And her clothing clung to her in a way that my 12 years greeted devotedly three times a week. She was my Spanish teacher. Seen from afar, she offered the hostilities of her looks. From up close, she was a day in the country with cheese and grapes. She was the first to speak to me of Don Quixote. She made me want to read it as much as a landscape filled my eye, the nylon learning underneath the desk in the classroom, the drop of honey for those damned by desire. She said her name was Gloria. That's what she said. And she wanted us to be readers. One day, aware of the humble origins of the students at León Felipe Middle School, she asked us for a list of the books in our home libraries. A list she supposed would be short, and rightly so. After reviewing them, she entrusted us with reading our books. She introduced us to the inhabitants of our own homes, one by one. And Gloria, unsuspecting of the fiery animal she was unleashing, recommended that I read *El poema de Mío Cid* (The Poem of My Cid) and then she gave me a written opinion. Oh, Gloria, I never thanked you. The days when I was Álgar Fáñez, the one sent by Zorita, and Martín Antolínez, the worthy Burgalese. Shortly after that, as happens when one book leads you to another, the *Poema de Gilgamesh* (The Epic of Gilgamesh), a new threshold of those that postpone true truth. I would sit reading in the schoolyard. The balls would whiz by my head centimeters away. The beef tacos were rapidly disappearing. All the girls, open white notebooks on their knees, were waiting. And I only wanted to receive the stampede of words. And it was 11 o'clock and here she was arriving: in the previous chapter, our hero was in trouble and Enkidu

, time is the border,

appeared. How is Gilgamesh going to fight Humbaba without his friend? I mean, knowing that you're full of death and sharing your own heroic consciousness when only your friend believes in you. I have the book open before me, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, and my adolescence is suddenly upon me. The foundations of my love for the written word. Am I weeping? I feel that same moisture in my eyes, that ancient warmth that enveloped me when I met he who had girt on the sword in a good hour. And it does not abandon me. I read in the subway in a diner in the study in the classroom and the feeling persists. I hope it never ends. That Enkidu will not go to the underworld. That it doesn't go away

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like adolescence. I re-read, I take my time with the footnotes, I pretend I don't understand. That my delaying tactic will get me the result I want. One day I dream that I write the beginning of an essay about the condition of being a hero. And I want to believe, as Paz said, that we burn and don't leave a trace. And I want to believe that I know what I'm saying

, before the border is the awakening,

when, already asleep, I write, "Vehicle for heroic deeds, for epics, the poem registers a relationship of a voyage." The myth has survived in the visceral form of a poem. All mythology aims to trace the route of the origin, the clarifying genesis that orients us; it

also aims to establish the logics of a much-needed cosmogony, with the impetus of a fantastical breath and the rigors of a body of provable knowledge. That cosmogony will be the basis on which science will be built. All mythology offers patterns based on which behavior takes shape, is molded. It determines the hero's rewards and the transgressor's punishments. It nourishes the will to carry out its own worship, ensuring its continuation by introjecting the sacred idea of tradition. It postpones reflexive investigation into



the unexplored mystery of the abyss in favor of the monolith of faith. All mythology represents the unifying idea around which social wills, by nature divergent, aggregate. The theme with which mythology offers us its version of history is the perpetual confrontation of Good and Evil. The Homeric poems, the Cid, Gilgamesh lavish the reader with heroic actions, offering testimony of sacrifice. They notify us of the will of he who abdicates his individuality in favor of the collective good. In that sense, poetry has been able to establish itself in the collective consciousness, to belong to history, and testify to it. Anyone who reads knows that he is fulfilling the cycle that it launched millennia ago. A cycle in which the work is fulfilled, time is concentrated, and the human is witnessed. He who finishes the book closes its pages

and the border is consciousness because

, encompassed by a feeling of recovery, I close the pages with the impression that a wild part of me has been returned. I am a version of that same adolescent, without Gloria, with glorious interiors. A life of books. The joyous weight of the ink. I have Enkidu, Gustavo, Álvar Fáñez, Paco the Alchemist, Cruz the Gaucho, Dán Lee, Sancho Panza. I'm not alone in the schoolyard. And I return, as a teacher, to the schoolroom. Now there are young poets trying their luck at the same incandescent bonfire in whose crimsonness I also was able to pronounce my own word. I receive the young letters; I host them in my silence if there is still some significance in that fact. I will read them as if they were desperate messages from the shipwrecked of many centuries ago, just as I wanted to be read myself,

, the border is oblivion,

but not skimming like forgettable texts are read. What miracle of balance is it that makes a text remain trapped in the folds of memory? Is it the merit of a text that was able to survive time or of fate that opens the door to books that arrive just at the right moment when you need them? The fact is that Gloria never gave me a comment on my paper. She didn't ask me why I signed it Martín Antolínez or why in my report Ximena was called Gloria or why I wept when I read. That's okay, Gloria. Although incomprehensible, certain silences are not uninhabitable. There's something heroic in not saying everything. In today's times, there's increasingly little room for heroes. Perhaps, today, the heroic is not resisting, like Gilgamesh, or returning, like The Cid, but escaping. Fleeing from blather, getting outside the self, abdicating the adult life, emerging from forgetfulness. **MM**

Luigi Amara*

Intestine Insurgency

Illustrated by Amanda Mijangos**

Dissatisfaction, rage, or the need for change have often led to a bomb going off. At the end of every lit fuse is the flame of indignation, which after accumulating too much pressure cannot but produce a racket that is easy to confuse with the absurd, with an excessive —if not double-edged— temper tantrum, particularly when it has criminal repercussions. Despite the categorical nature of its negation, the echo of a libertarian bomb is rather a hollow sound, a question: what for? Why against them? Why in that way? Dynamite establishes an unequivocal “no” that tries to boom over all things and thus annul with terror the efforts of words and the attempts of the imagination.

The world that flies through the air has ended by being an aesthetic phenomenon: the shards and landscapes of rubble and twisted iron, the fire and the bodies reduced to pieces of jigsaw puzzles are the delight of the mass media, which reproduce them ad nauseam and without the slightest blush, perhaps because that way they run them into the ground and neutralize them, making them entertainment. The explosion of a bomb is the ideal pretext for exploitation by the media. Transfigured into a pop event, the explosion is offered up on a platter to the retina, perhaps achieving the status of a work of art, as Stockhausen said about the razing of the Twin Towers, but without any effective practical consequence except to make the situation worse, to further deteriorate the conditions that created the need for dynamite in the first place: more surveillance, more repression, more arbitrary behavior, great incentives for the police. . . . Molotov’s strategy has become senseless, not because the spirit behind it is obsolete or because the explosions should be bigger, but because it promotes and even justifies the system’s intransigence. For every homemade bomb, there is a projectile made with the latest technology waiting to counter it. And a network of prophylactic, persecutory, totalitarian measures that will soon make daily life something very similar to a picnic at a military base.

The bomb has lost its effectiveness as a tool for confrontation because it is too conventional a device. There’s nothing more hackneyed than using explosives and, at the same time, nothing more inane, more *démodé*. If the powerful have depend-


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I demand the right to piss and shit in different colors.

TRISTAN TZARA





ed on gunpowder to keep the system that benefits them in place, what is the sense in playing a game of explosions with them that is clearly uneven? Isn't it contradictory that the means for producing a real change have let themselves be beaten by paralysis and the lack of inventiveness? How will a radical transformation of daily life be made if we try to achieve it using routine tools and explosives?

From the moral point of view, bombs are reprehensible because they are murderous, but the biggest condemnation of their antiestablishment use is their symbolic fatigue. Creative paralysis in methods of insurgency is a pathetic way of contributing to their failure, a pyrotechnic enthusiasm that results in strengthening the other side.

The perfect bomb is the one that seems the least like one. The latent, unexpected bomb, situated anywhere. Everyday things, a laugh, a dance, a yawn, are all loaded with dynamite; day-to-day acts, art, standing in a line, even shit—especially shit—are brimming with fiery material. Suffice it to find the end of the fuse for them to blow up in the face of those who never expected it. Suffice it to find that fuse. And light it.

Old Forms of Dynamite

Defecating, for example, can be a subversive act. Extroversion with regard to bowel movements has its provocative, liberating side, above all when it is authentic extroversion, a deliberate, iconoclastic form of behavior, and not the simple satisfaction of an imperious need at an unfortunate moment. From our childhood, once we have understood that having a bowel movement in just any old corner of the house is frowned upon and will prompt a scolding, we feel the uncontrollable urge to do it—a spontaneous and perhaps unconscious urge, which in any case is interpreted as a challenge. So, without really knowing why, we leave our turds strewn here and there as though they were gifts, behind the armchair or on the couch or in the middle of the hall, in the manner of the criminal who, not content with his misdeeds, leaves behind signs so that later the authorship of “his oeuvre” can be recognized and not go unnoticed.

Although I don't remember fully, I have it on good authority that my preferred places for this elementary form of rebellion were drawers. Perhaps I intuited that the artistic effect upon discovery would be more subtle and long-lasting (the surprise could be effected many days or months later and, for that very reason, it could also envelope me with that boosted wonder reserved for us by having forgotten). But perhaps my behavior was simply due to that satisfaction that we have all felt in the face of the solidity and roundness of our own stool, a satisfaction that at an early age can very well be confused with a narcissistic achievement, with the feat of creation, even if discovered in your own vital functions. And then, it must have seemed natural to me to put those treasures safely away, preserving as they deserve those small works that I gave the world—not without

difficulty. I don't know to what complexity or superstition my behavior could be attributed, but what is certain is that, years later, during a move, my parents came across one of these pieces of mischief, dried out and white, in a desk drawer behind some important documents, and almost fossilized. It was not until that day that that usual, intimate mass (which does not hide its similarity to a projectile and in all probability foreshadowed the aerodynamic form of the bullet and the torpedo) threw in front of my open mouth the irresistible shadow of a time bomb. It was precisely in that long-ago afternoon, when the scandal of a piece of ammunition made of shit in an unexpected place presented itself with the exaggeration of a kind of triumph, that I glimpsed for the first time the explosive profile of excrement. And the unlimited possibilities of what I now am pleased to call "Intestinal Insurgency" opened up before me, like the doors to the bathroom after anxious hours of urgency and holding it.

In the Beginning There Was The Bowel Movement

Beyond the undeniable pleasure of urinating outside, an act that mixes joys of very different orders, defecating al fresco, when it is not the result of getting the chills and desperation, takes on a certain political tenor, becoming a silent proclamation, as powerful as it is primal. The acrimoniousness of showing others the moment in which we yield to the pressure of the body, a completely animal moment, familiar to all of us and that nevertheless is repulsive or insolent when it escapes the limits of the strictly private, has symbolic repercussions depending on the place, the circumstances, and even the surfaces on which it is performed.

Crap is ideal as an affront because it is at the same time tangible and emblematic—in addition to smelly. In contrast with an insult, which may go in one ear and out the other, a caca cake offered on a platter has the—let us say—"conceptual" vigor of an offense, but also the "physical" material consequences of a punch in the face, in the sense that it marks the enemy in a more flagrant, insidious way than a simple bruise or swelling lump. And while it well could be thought that the mark left by shit is ephemeral and has limited scope, suffice it to consider the commotion waiting for us in its mental wake, in that trail that will wander through the corridors of the imagination down through many years, less pestilent than obsessive.

Although the lacerating force of excrement has always been recognized by language and there seems to be no more archaic form of scandalizing than recurring to the subterfuge of the scatological, it is well known that a single brick laid says more than a thousand words. Verbal shit does not stink and, of course, neither can it be smeared. No matter how explicit and daring it manages to be, no matter if one of its motivations is to destabilize those of "good conscience" in the name of excrement-based insurgency, the only thing that copro-terrorism limited to the sphere of linguistics, the subversive literature revolving around bowel movements, will produce is a second-rate, derivative, lukewarm fit of the heaves, an abstract jolt.

In this sense, I think that the authentic modern pioneer of the excrement-based attack, the more or less muffled initiator of this old form of insurgency, who dared to take the leap from the merely symbolic to the material concretion without subterfuges of any kind, was the Italian artist Piero Manzoni. In 1961, as an affront in the core of the art system, he was daring enough to can his own shit in 30-gram containers to sell it, no less, at the price of its weight in gold.

This truly genius piece describes the general state of art and at the same time implies an improvement on it or its reduction to the absurd through the clever move of using the very postulates and practices that have led to that general state, where one's own shit preserved *au naturel*, if presented in the proper manner, can be sold for as much money as gold. The piece, I was saying, may not have taken on its definitive form, may not have unleashed all its subversive and paradoxical potential until the artist's shit revealed itself in all its indissoluble, fetid materiality as an authentic time-bomb. Fermented by the heat, accumulating flammable and undoubtedly toxic gasses that swirled around in the can, one fine day, the shit exploded like a stick of dynamite planted on the foundations of the art market. The unfortunate collector had paid its price in gold, but now that oh-too-famous shit slipped around on his suit lapels, once again converted into simple shit, in coagulated caca, stinky, ordinary, and —what is even better— no longer saleable.

The Dove of Peace

Because it leaves a mark and is in itself synonymous with stain, because it degrades everything it touches and extends its excrement-based domain to several yards around it, shit is a weapon of war unsurpassed in elegance and power, despite several millennia of arms races. When conventional weapons have stopped impressing the imagination, when the revolver makes a child smile and the atomic mushroom cloud is depicted as the background in entertaining commercials in which bottles of Coca-Cola are used to make a toast, that's where the white dove appears, flying, obese and rather a show-off, through the air, sick to death of its peaceful, inoffensive, sixtyish, hokey image, and lets fall on our head its almost liquid, greenish-white guano, the oldest bomb in the world, but still the most effective.

A good or bad omen, an easy divine joke, dove caca is the best reminder that excrement-based ridicule still allows for certain types of refinement. And every time I hear of a dynamite attack in the world, every time that the news talks about nitroglycerine and fuses and detonators and innocent victims, my mind by pitiful automatic reflex goes back to the white dove; yes, to the white dove, but the dove that joyfully defecates during its flight. And then, in place of the images of horror and killing, I counter with the delicate, almost poetic free fall of its equally white dribble of ordure, that inoffensive blob that, in its own way, oh how it stings and disgusts and embarrasses.

Those discontents of our time have not been able to find in shit the key that allows them to raise their indignation to a form of street art. After all, a projec-

tile made of shit leaves scars that are hard to close, and their effects are as plastic and photogenic as those of blood and twisted iron. I would have no hesitation in classifying the substitution of shit for dynamite as revolutionary, since it would make terrorism a highly creative activity, worthy of aesthetic applause. Instead of being universally repudiated for their murders, terrorists would be able to introduce a joyful excrement-based terror, foul, absolutely caca-osmic, which would immediately provoke an endless number of symbolic connotations. Shit explosions, guano bombs, threats with unbearable gasses, booger sharpshooters. . . . This would be a kind of jovial, imaginative, contagious terrorism—anybody would swear that it was sketched by cartoonists Jis and Trino—that would also be victimless, although of course, not completely clean. . . . Who would not celebrate that here and there our unrepresentable authorities fell into dun-colored, liquid shit traps? Who could suppress a little smile when they found out that the toilets in the Stock Market were “on the rise,” suddenly turned into bubbling fountains?

To a great extent, dynamite attacks are repudiated because they are obsolete forms of rebellion that correspond to a stagnant, deadly idea of intervention. Obsessed with fundamentalisms and ideologies, blinded by the mists of their own anger, terrorists have not taken the time to sit down on a park bench to think placidly about the pigeons with the close attention they deserve. This is already suspicious in and of itself, since it denotes I don't know what fondness for the hideouts and the shadows that makes it impossible for them, like authentic curmudgeons, to take the sun amidst our fellow men like any truly self-respecting subversive. But this kind of behavior, more than suspicious, is obtuse, above all if we realize that parks and public plazas in all the world's cities are invaded by the plague of pigeons, those ubiquitous winged rats, disguised as tame. And the thing is that, it's never an excess, above all if you're a terrorist, to stop and reflect on how such an ungraceful bird, which cannot keep its head still on its neck for more than two seconds and which only with great difficulty grovels toward you to thank you for a few crumbs, could have been turned into the unmistakable symbol of peace!

If one carefully observes pigeons, if, like dilettante ethologists we follow their flight and we don't take our eyes off them, we will notice the most noteworthy of their gastro-intestinal habits: we will discover that pigeons have made the statues of national heroes the perfect target for their shooting practice. Encouraged by the significance of this animal behavior and sharpening the scientific eye a bit more, we will note that pigeons have a predilection for the bald spots of our national heroes, perhaps because the bursting of their bombs is much more thunderous on a smooth surface, and, also, if we are to concede some aesthetic sensibility to these nervous creatures, a much more rotund surface. Shit bombs falling right on the thick heads of our bald authorities! What a source of inspiration for the seditious spirit! What a delicious irony that the key to the renovation of the dynamite attack, of the new art of copro-insurgency is on plain view of all precisely in the universal emblem of peace! **MM**



Alberto Palacios*

I FEEL, THEREFORE I AM

With the return to standard time after daylight savings, the afternoon loses its uniformity and sooner than expected the shadows envelope us. I apologize nonchalantly and get up to light the floor lamp, ensuring that I maintain dim lighting in my consulting room, so as to not distract her from her fabulation. Up until now, I have maintained a kind of floating attention—as we say in boasting—without interrupting her story, which, after several months is beginning to take on life. That is, it is inserting itself into the crossroads of consciousness and a dreamlike perception, where borders are blurred and the body and mind blend with each other.

I observe her for a few moments, lying there on the couch. Alma is a mature, single woman with a daughter born of a failed courtship who is now brushing up against adolescence. Alma herself is still slender, looking younger than her years, although the wrinkles begin to populate her face, and her arms betray a loss of firmness. She dresses carelessly, as though she had picked up the first thing that came to hand, and wears only a minimum of make-up, turning herself out with the least possible effort: a simple silver band, thin hoop earrings that get caught in her hair, which she is wearing straight this afternoon, although it was usually tied in a ponytail with no further pretensions than neatness.

She gestures very little and only occasionally; when she touches a sensitive chord, she breaks into tears rather reticently, wiping them away discretely, ignoring the face tissue sitting beside her. She crosses her legs for short periods, but then she uncrosses them, as though deep down inside her body she was carrying on a parallel conversation.

In February, a colleague of mine referred her to me after a disquieting episode of weight loss and gastrointestinal symptoms that made little sense. He ended by concluding that she was suffering from a nameless inflammatory disease of the digestive tract. This preliminary diagnosis led to a series of biopsies and inconclusive blood tests, but which were enough to prescribe mesalazine, steroids, a low-gluten diet, and rest. I seriously doubted that that particular regime was at all warranted.

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Carmen Giménez Cacho

Carmen Giménez Cacho, *Nets*, 2011, 137x 107cm (oil on canvas). Photo, courtesy of the artist.

My friend referred her because she was profoundly upset by the vague prognosis and asked for emotional support.

At our first appointment, she was reluctant to accept that something emotional had set off her symptoms, even though she came with her mother and asked her to leave us alone when she began going into detail. She also resisted telling me about her childhood, which I usually ask about as a kind of narrative; but she did agree that last year she had taken on responsibilities that had been too much for her and that that had caused her “defenses to weaken,” negatively affecting her physical integrity and health.

Formulated that way, I could not avoid the symbolic resonance: like a boxer who lowers his guard and receives an uppercut that turns into a tragedy.

Those first 45 minutes were enough for her to tell me about a recently broken-off romance that she decided to end after almost three years of false promises, tired of dealing with her fiancé’s passiveness. She explained in greater detail the ups and downs of her different jobs, and particularly her current position, where she is a financial advisor in an important multinational company.

I was sorry to have to postpone our second appointment; but when we did meet, Alma was pale and

upset. She had suffered a relapse of her ulcerous colitis, and, among other things, she had had a blood transfusion and paid a visit to a very sadistic surgeon who had proposed a complete colectomy, that is, removing her entire intestine, which is what I explained to her it meant when she mentioned it.

“I ran out of there, doc,” she said tearfully, appealing to our familiarity. “How can quacks like that just roam around?”

“It’s not just a rhetorical question,” I replied. “That encounter must have awakened something else in you.”

I found her even more fragile, childish in her search for a place where she could externalize her fears. I had tried to find a free hour, and all I could do was to make her appointment earlier, when the noise of the city and the neighbors’ barking dogs can be irritating. However, she expanded upon everything with more self-confidence and gave me a glimpse of a quite unhappy childhood due to her father’s abandonment when she was still too small to make any sense of it.

Those of us who have witnessed the zigzags and impact of these afflictions in the sphere of the emotions and how they parallel the evolution of somatic complaints and their pathological complications, can’t fail to think about the interdependence of the body and a tortured soul. Nevertheless, it has been very difficult to convince physiologists and purists that paracrine or molecular connections are not needed to explain that link, just as it is not necessary to draw a neuronal map to discover the id or aspects of a phobia. The body—which here is cannon fodder—speaks, screams, sobs.

A digestive intolerance that appears during breast feeding is evidence of a fragmented or interrupted dyad (pair), in which the mother does not echo the child’s already ambivalent affective release; and that recurring, silent complaint seeks escape where it can attract constant attention or where it will serve to alleviate ceaseless anxiety. In greater detail, it speaks

of the continuum, of the non-differentiation that connects the skin with someone on the outside that cannot be shaken off in the earliest stages of life. Thus, a phenomenology of the amorphous may be considered, given the violence spread through a body that cannot account for the nascent subject, for an impending individuation.

It is quite obvious that the construction of what may be called “self” begins with that first driven exchange (for example, an instinct charged with affection) that distinguishes us from other species. Let us think about all the mechanisms and stimuli that come about at that early stage of life. The mother’s skin on the suckling infant’s hyper-sensitive lips, her smooth fingers holding the body, which give it weight and shape the muscles. A recurring, modulating message: the warm spilling of nutritious milk that floods the mouth, descends along the esophagus, and reaches the stomach, which, when distended, shoots out its messengers to secrete the biliary and pancreatic juices. All of this brings on a resounding autonomous response of pleasure and sufficiency. And all this happens before any articulation or language allows us to express it.

This is a foundational period. The body manifests all subjectivity, from the cry of hunger to the anal pleasure of periodic evacuation. Smell, an archaic sense *par excellence*, allows us to trace the mother’s natural perfume and the elixir of her breasts, as well as the decomposition (strange and hideous then and forever) of our own excretions.

Little by little the visual horizon broadens out in an explosion of lights and reflections: our mommy’s eyes, paired with her voice (that precise, soothing murmur) emerge from the shadows and gradually give form to desire.

That first image is complementary and conveys all perspective, every volition, and all discernment. The baby learns how to wait, to subject itself to differ-

It is clear that the construction of every individual begins
with that first driven exchange (that is, an instinct charged with affection)
that distinguishes us from other species.

I say goodbye to her without having resolved the dilemma.
It's pretty obvious: we have boarded a galleon that has promised
to return her to Ithaca. When? Neither Alma nor I know.

ent times, to yearn, to see its desire fulfilled, and, at the same time, to reduce the anxiety that repeatedly emerges from its avid, empty bodily organs.

As we know, the insertion of fantasy and desire is the natural product of this process, just as are anxiety and the feeling of abandonment, analogous to the god Janus who opens all gates. Nutrients evolve simultaneously in the infant's somatic and psychic spheres. One is just as amorphous and malleable as the other, and both susceptible to tearing and changing.

But I have been sidetracked by my own fantasies—I admit it, as I return to my patient's monologue. She remains immersed in her dream, trying to tie up the loose ends of her story. The product of her failed love interest, she seems to have gotten to the core of her abdominal pain and bleeding.

"I think it's profound dissatisfaction," she says, appealing to me for an answer, which today isn't enough. "My father's abandoning us, my mother's non-responsiveness, when she sank into her sadness and left us alone, failing to understand that she was magnifying that sense of abandonment and mourning."

I listen and, keeping up with her, meditate on disappointments in love, such fertile ground for all frustration and—why not?—for every spasm. Alma continually surprises me with her lucidity, her avid interest in finding the source of her pain and internal rending.

I say goodbye to her without having resolved the dilemma. It's pretty obvious: we have boarded a galleon that has promised to return her to Ithaca. When? Neither Alma nor I know. We will have to face down Cyclopes and Laestrygonian man-eating giants, the song of the sirens (which, in this order of things, is one's own resistance to delving more deeply), but what awaits us, even though we sometimes doubt it, is the reward of lost love, the loom where our hopes were left to be woven and were originally interrupted by an emotional abyss that has not yet revealed its depths.

When I go over to my garden's half-open window, I am struck by a strange pain in the middle of my abdomen.

"Is that hunger or fullness?" I ask myself, bent over by a cramp that brings me to my knees, overwhelmed.

That was a few days ago. I've lost count. Naturally I called my wife and cut short my daily activities. I went to see a friend who did tests on me at the emergency room and decided that a colonoscopy was in order. There was something unspeakable in all this, which caught me off-guard. I took my wife's hand as though my life depended on it. I was panicked in the face of the uncertainty and suddenness of my symptoms; something very primal was crawling inside me, tormenting my inner self.

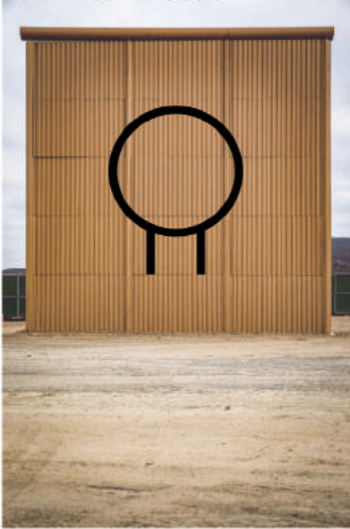
I will not write the result of that delirium here because it is ongoing and I will have to sort it out in due time. In addition, Alma has arrived on time for her session, and I have to receive her. I get ahold of myself and, as well as I can, supporting my inert leg with my cane, I greet her with a genuine smile.

"Welcome. It's a pleasure to see you again." **NM**

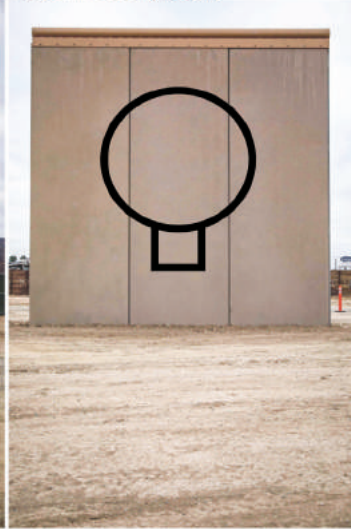
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W. G. Yates & Sons
PROTOTYPE COST: \$458 103



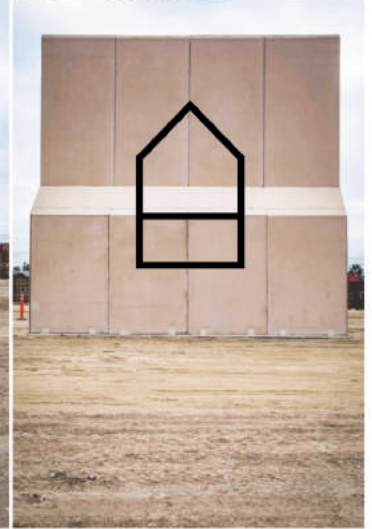
W. G. Yates & Sons
PROTOTYPE COST: \$453 548



ELTA North America
PROTOTYPE COST: \$406 318



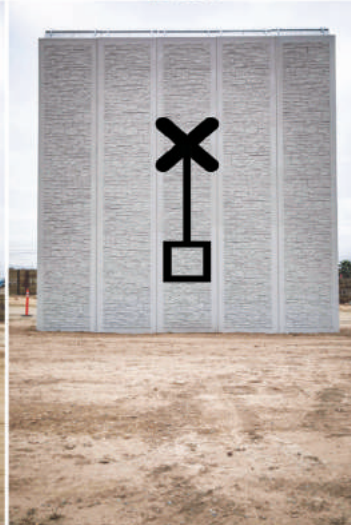
Caddell Construction
PROTOTYPE COST: \$344 000



Caddell Construction
PROTOTYPE COST: \$320 000



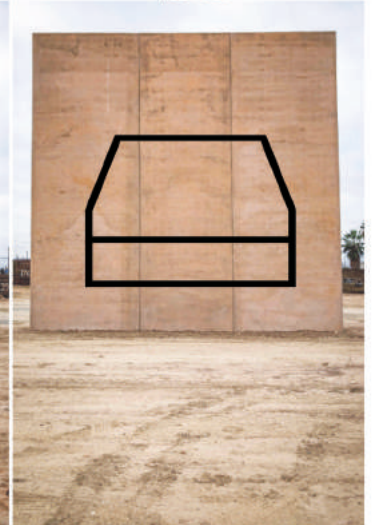
Texas Sterling Const.
PROTOTYPE COST: \$470 000



KWR Construction
PROTOTYPE COST: \$486 411



Fisher Sand & Gravel
PROTOTYPE COST: \$365 000



Ramón Jiménez Cárdenas*

MENDING WALL is a series of eight grappling hooks, each designed to overcome a corresponding prototype of President Trump’s proposed border wall between the United States and Mexico. The title is a reference to Robert Frost’s poem, also named “Mending Wall,” which narrates a relationship between two neighbors who meet yearly to repair a wall that divides their property. Linking Frost’s poem with the contemporary issues that these eight grappling hooks bring to light allows discussion of divisive global borders both poetically and politically.

* Project by artist and designer Ramón Jiménez Cárdenas at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (see <https://r-j-c.me/>). All photos, courtesy of the artist.



Inspired by the federally funded border wall prototypes constructed in 2017 separating San Diego, California, and Tijuana, Mexico, the grappling hooks explain the practicality of climbing a wall and overcoming borders. Global trade systems like NAFTA influence crop exports and directly impact migration between the United States and Mexico. While the relationship between the two countries has rarely been easy, the border has also allowed for many years of successful bilateral relations. Despite the threat of physical barriers, the two countries are forever entwined. **MM**



The grappling hooks explain the practicality of climbing a wall and overcoming borders.





Jorge Francisco Sánchez-Jofras*

IN RESPONSE TO TRUMP'S BORDER WALL

June 3, 2017

A group of people gathers at Obelisk 258, next to the Tijuana Beaches lighthouse, across from Border Field State Park in what is called Friendship Park. Down through the years, this has been the venue for different actions rejecting the emblem of the territorial division between the United States

and Mexico through artistic events and transnational activism.

A few tourists wander through the little plaza from where you can see the border wall stretch out into the sea. However, most people have come to listen to the musical program by the Dresdner Sinfoniker (the Dresden Symphony), “Mr. Trump, Tear Down This Wall!”

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All photos, courtesy of the author.

The slogan is reminiscent of Ronald Reagan's speech in West Germany at the end of the Cold War. Musicians from Europe, the United States, Mexico,





and Guatemala came together to send a message of unity and hope in times of animosity. Before their part of the program came bands like Tijuana No, Pucha Lucha, and Lengua Abierta (Open Tongue),

and jazz singer Coral MacFarland. To finish the program, conductor Markus Rindt led the city's youth orchestra and choir in performing *Beyond*.

On the other side of the wall, at least 10 people harangued in favor of President Donald Trump and the construction of the wall all along the border. But they were drowned out by the percussions and the piece *The Big, The Bug, The Cricket and The Quack*, which used the metal fence as a musical instrument that sang out when played with construction tools.

November 21, 2017

Since a group of activists discovered where the prototypes of the new wall were being built, near the Otay Towers housing estate, across from the old corrugated sheet metal wall, the area has become a popular spot for the curious visitor. Jill Marie Holslin, an academic, artist, and member of Borderlands Sierra Club, organized an intervention using lights on the prototypes. With help from San Diego's Overpass Light Brigade and with a projector, she "imprinted" sketches and slogans on the over-nine-meter-tall sections, reading "Build Bridges, Not Borders," "#Refugees Welcome," and "#NoOneIsIllegal."

This was followed by a group of painters who tried to completely cover the border fence, from the Pacific Coast to the Otay area. Across from the prototypes can be seen graffiti that read "#No Walls/ No Muros," and "Hecho en México (Made in Mexico)."



May 25, 2018

Music has accompanied peoples in their transit through the world. It sometimes creates opportunities for the meeting of different trajectories, like Afro-Latina music, which came out of the colonial period in the Caribbean. Similarly, the medieval instruments brought to New Spain were re-interpreted by indigenous artisans, who created new artifacts, like the *jarana*, used in popular *fandango* celebrations.

The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra of New York traveled to Tijuana together with other guest musicians to make a CD under the baton of Mexican conductor Arturo O’Farrill. The material was recorded live at the tenth anniversary celebration of the Fandango Fronterizo (Border *Fandango*), an event without borders that invited musicians, singers, and dancers to meet and play *son* music from Vera Cruz, with the U.S. Border Patrol monitoring. For festival creator Jorge Castillo, this was a cultural and political act, since the border goes right through the middle



of it. O’Farrill, who has been critical of Trump’s policy, above all with regard to building the wall, thanked Castillo for allowing them to be in Tijuana. Among the conveners were Grammy winners like violinist Regina Carter, and Mexican musicians living in the United States, like percussionist Antonio Sánchez and the Villalobos Brothers.

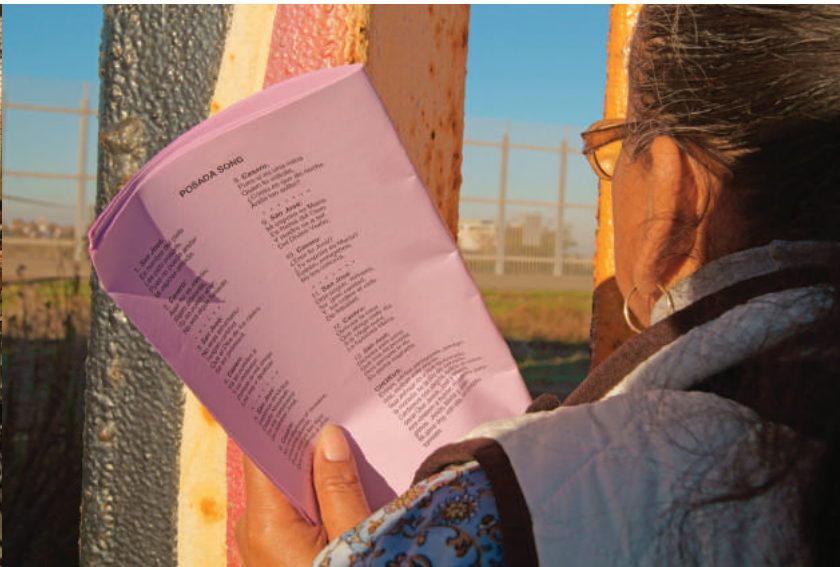
Last December, about 250 *posada* pilgrimage participants on each side of the border had to sing at a distance of 50 meters. Although it was hard to follow the sequence of the singing, the will to be together prevailed.

June 30, 2018

In June, thousands marched in several U.S. cities against the Zero Tolerance policy that led to the separation of more than 2000 migrant children from their families. When apprehended, the adults were processed in federal jails and the children were put in the custody of different institutions. These actions were part of a hardline policy against migrant populations, particularly from Central America.

Former Attorney General Jeff Sessions said that fleeing from the violence in their countries of origin was insufficient reason to request political asylum. In Tijuana, local organizers Espacio Migrante and Dreamers Moms USA/Tijuana called for a protest on the West Pedestrian Crossing at the San Ysidro border station. Next to them was a group of families standing in line to present their asylum applications.





December 15, 2018

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Borderless *Posada* Procession was celebrated in the same place, next to the Tijuana Beaches lighthouse. These festivities are Catholic in origin, representing the nights before Jesus’s birth, when his parents, Joseph and Mary, searched for a place to stay on their way to Bethlehem. The word “*posada*” in Spanish means “inn.” They later fled to Egypt to escape the infanticide ordered by Herod.

In 1993, racist and anti-immigrant discourses preceded the building of the first border wall. In a context of abuse of migrants, both by the Border Patrol and by civilian vigilantes, Roberto Martínez, the founder of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), used the epic of Joseph and Mary to create awareness and ask for decent treatment of migrants.

This *posada* brings together people of different creeds to sing the traditional *villancicos* (carols) on both sides of the border, in remembrance of how those Biblical migrants went door to door seeking lodging. The pilgrims were represented on one side, and the hosts on the other:

Voices Outside: “In the name of heaven I ask you to welcome us in, since my beloved wife cannot continue.”

Voices Inside: “This is not an inn. Go on your way; I cannot open; don’t be a scoundrel!”

Voices Outside: “Don’t be inhuman. Be charitable. God in his Heaven will reward you.”

Voices Inside: “Go away and don’t bother us here, because if I become angry, I will beat you.”



Last December, the participants —about 250 on each side of the border— had to sing at a distance of 50 meters, since security measures were ratcheted up in coordination with Operation Faithful Patriot. Although it was hard to follow the sequence of the singing, the will to be together prevailed. The participants sent each other greetings and blessings across the border, and feelings of fraternity between natives and foreigners flourished.



One of the Most Important Corridors for Migration

Until the 1990s, the Tijuana-San Diego border was one of the most important corridors for undocumented migration to the United States. Then came Operation Guardian, which greatly reduced traffic by using new, more abundant technologies and infrastructure for border surveillance.

The local landscape changed during President Bill Clinton's administration (1993-2001). He increased the Border Patrol budget and established a court in

San Ysidro to facilitate deportations. Under George W. Bush (2001-2009), the Department of Homeland Security was created and the Secure Fences Act passed to reinforce 1 100 kilometers of the border. This made it possible to build a double wall in the Tijuana-San Diego section and to reinforce the posts in the area of Tijuana Beaches. Both presidents received funds from Congress for this. Donald Trump has demanded US\$5.7 billion for building 3 200 kilometers of wall along the border, but up until now, he has received barely enough for developing the prototypes and replacing certain portions of the already existing wall. Starting in September 2018, at the Tijuana-San Diego border, some contractors began replacing corrugated sheet metal with steel columns between five and nine meters high.

Epilogue

To pressure Congress and keep his campaign promise, Trump caused the 35-day federal government shutdown from December 22, 2018 to January 25, 2019. Despite that, at the close of this edition, the parties have come to no agreement to finance the wall. **MM**





Juan Humberto Vital Vergara*

Transcending Communication Barriers

It was a discovery: “America”—in the U.S. meaning of the word: that is, their country— had been silently invaded by Mexicans. Their numbers growing over the years, people from Michoacán, Jalisco, Zacatecas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Durango, just to mention the best known, added another color to the map of the 50 states of the Union. Neither white nor black were dominant anymore; the color black had burst onto the scene only four decades ago after being ignored, despite the fact that a bloody civil war had been fought in their name. Now was the multicolored time of those born south of the Rio Grande.

The 2000 census was the revelation. For the U.S. mainstream, the data were a surprise and the Hispanic nation emerged. This prompted the big corporations to take a look at this minority, since it was larger than the population of African-American origin. And the surprise was even

greater when it became clear that they were not the Cuban favorites who had had the doors opened to them after Fidel Castro’s revolution, or the Puerto Ricans associated with the Union, much less the Dominicans or Panamanians: the majority were Mexican.

The banks, insurance companies, health services, and, with surprising alacrity, also radio and television began making adjustments. The saga of the communications media began to become visible: in Mexico, this included the heroic efforts of figures like Emilio Azcárraga Milmo and his different attempts to dominate Spanish-language television in the face of Cuban and Venezuelan magnates like the Alarcón and Cisneros families. The radio stations that served the Spanish-speaking communities and were considered marginal by the big advertisers began to receive significant amounts of publicity income. The avalanche of dollars attracted the big radio groups, who began to acquire stations or convert others to Spanish-speaking programming. In less than five years, significant players were consolidated: Hispanic Broadcasting Cor-

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poration (HBC), Spanish Broadcasting System (SBS), Liberman Broadcasting, and Entravision, just to mention a few.

The appetite of Hispanic audiences, especially Mexican ones, certainly kept up: studies from 2004 revealed that Spanish-language radio listeners spent more than 23 hours a week of their time listening, 7 hours more than the English-language audience.¹

It was in this context that many communicators emerged and developed that we could baptize as Chicanos, bi-cultural, or Mexican-American. They have sought to foster communication that would erase or at least transcend the barriers of language, of cultures, and, of course, of the discrimination that had built symbolic borders down through history.

* * *

Martín Díaz Samaniego discovered “Los Temerarios” (The Reckless Ones, a Mexican music group). He was already a well-known radio announcer in his native Zacatecas, when in the 1980s he began as the voice of B15 radio group and began building his reputation as a promoter of regional musical groups. One of these was “Los Incontenibles Temerarios” (The Irrepressible Reckless Ones), Mexico’s youngest group, originating in Fresnillo. Almost a quarter of a century later, he pioneered bi-national radio connections to broadcast live for the first time the program *Closer Now* from XEMA 690 am, “La Madre de Todas” (The Mother of All Stations), from Fresnillo and from WRTO am in Chicago, simultaneously.

“Martín can convene 2 000 people and fill Fresnillo’s central plaza in an hour,” said station head Adolfo “Fito” Bonilla, a MÁS Comunicación partner (together with Carlos de Córdova and the author).

“The broadcast signal isn’t very strong, but they’re listening very far away, way up there in Chicago,” said Martín Díaz Samaniego to a surprised audience. In the Windy City, Aileen Ocaña, at that time a host at the most listened-to Spanish-language radio station in the region, said hello to Martín and then invited the audience to send their families greetings in their hometowns. “Friends, welcome to *Closer Now*, a MÁS Comunicación program that brings together Mexicans on both sides of the border. . . . My friend Martín Díaz is with us from Fresnillo.” It was 12 noon at both poles of the migratory route, since they share the same time zone, on August 3, 2003.

“Great to be here, Aileen, even if it’s through the magic of telecommunications, we’re ‘closer now’. . . . That’s why I want to invite my friends to send their relatives on the other side of the border, to call here to the studio, and you’ll be heard all the way there, all the way in Chicago.”

In Fresnillo, broadband was just a project, so the Internet link had to be complemented with a phone call from Chicago, which meant that “The Mother of All Stations” had to free up the management’s phone line to take calls from the audience. “Aileen, while we’re waiting for calls, tell us, what’s the weather like up there in Chicago?” And, when she began to describe the summer heat, the first call came in: “I want to say hi to my mom in Río Grande, Zacatecas. . . .”

Starting with that conversation and for eight more years, Martín and Aileen called on their audiences to “erase the borders between Mexicans” and foster other live radio hook-ups that followed the reality of the migratory corridors: Zitácuaro, Michoacán, with Chicago; Fresnillo with Los Angeles; Zitácuaro with Los Angeles; Apatzín with Los Angeles; and Veracruz, with Raleigh, North Carolina.

* * *

Señora Maru heard the first link-up between Zitácuaro and Los Angeles, but couldn’t get through to the XELX studio. But, encouraged, she went down to the station to wait until announcer Nacho Proa came out. He took the Sunday morning shift and was in charge of *Closer Now* for that region, which was not limited to the state, but also covered what is called “Tierra Caliente” (Hotlands) of Guerrero and the State of Mexico.

“Help me find my son,” Maru begged.

Nacho Proa took the search personally. He promised her that every Sunday he would make the plea. “Friends, Señora Maru reiterates her message: help her find her son. She doesn’t know his name because when the father took the child he told her he would change his name. He

Studies from 2004 revealed that Spanish-language radio listeners spent more than 23 hours a week of their time listening, 7 hours more than the English-language audience.

Martín and Aileen called on their audiences to “erase the borders between Mexicans” and foster other live radio hook-ups that followed the reality of the migratory corridors.

was 5 then and it’s been about 20 years since she saw him last.”

Six weeks later, Señora Maru went to the station to say, “Nacho, I’ve come to thank you because I finally found my son.” She said that a listener in Los Angeles had begun to spread the word among his fellow migrants from Michoacán, because he had already heard the story of a boy whose father had brought him to live with him and his new partner. When the listener found him, he invited him to listen to the program. The young man had recently been married, and he decided to travel to meet his mother and introduce his wife to her. He arrived in Zitácuaro, found her address, and knocked on her door. They all cried a lot.

* * *

He had a strong, hoarse voice. It was already cold in Chicago. The bi-national broadcasts didn’t include musical interludes. But there was one exception: the first few bars of *Las mañanitas* (Good Morning, Mexico’s equivalent of *Happy Birthday to You*). “Welcome to *Closer Now*. Where are you calling from?” He said he was a construction worker and he lived in the outskirts of Chicago, that he had arrived several years before, and that that Sunday was his daughter’s fifteenth birthday. “I want to send greetings and a kiss. And ask her forgiveness because I can’t be there with her, but I sent her a little money for the dress and the quinceañera fiesta.” He wept. The host’s voice broke, too, when she introduced the music and the commercials.

For Aileen Ocaña, the Sunday program was a platform that fostered her professional growth and leadership in Chicago’s Mexican community. She began to receive invitations from hometown-based clubs to go to their meetings, host their events, and judge their beauty contests. She was even doing some television.

In addition to being an announcer at Los Angeles’s *La Ranchera*, Joaquín Maldonado was a real estate salesman and a promoter and singer in a music group. When the

link-up with Apatzingán, Michoacán, began, he was skeptical about audience participation because it was early on Sunday morning. But for the first broadcast, the phones were overloaded. “The switchboard lit up like a Christmas tree,” he blurted out, surprised.

* * *

The discovery of that “new” Hispanic country was also a surprise for Mexico’s government, which developed a specific policy to deal with migrants and their organizations. Josefina Vázquez Mota and José Ángel Córdova were the ones who, as ministers of Social Development and Health, respectively, realized the potential for the link-ups for communicating with the audiences about their programs without it seeming like propaganda.

The National Savings and Financial Services Bank (Bansefi) did the same, with its program *La red de la gente* (The People’s Network), sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), to broaden out the possibilities for sending remittances to rural areas of Mexico.

The link-up was even used by the U.S. remittance-sender Western Union/Orlandi Valuta and its Mexican counterpart Elektra/Banco Azteca. The broadcasts from the Elektra store in downtown Fresno put a stop to the decline in remittances at that venue and generated real growth in the space of two weeks.

* * *

These link-ups stopped broadcasting in 2011. The consolidation of the radio groups in the United States, pressured by the drive for profitability and the economic asymmetry between the two migratory poles, could be seen in the airtime rates in markets like Los Angeles and Chicago, compared to Fresno, Zitácuaro, or Veracruz. This created a situation that was difficult to deal with.

The possibilities of opening up the social networks have also shortened the distance, and the new generations have changed. ■■

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Notes

1 Arbitron, 2004 US Hispanic Consumer Study.

Filmography



Photos of *The Golden Dream* courtesy of Machete Films.

Ana Luna*

Mexico Movies about the Border

Al otro lado [To the Other Side]. Dir.: Gustavo Loza. Mexico: Adicta Films/Imcine/Matatena Films, 2004.

Babel. Dir.: Alejandro González Iñárritu. United States/France/Mexico: Anonymous Content/Paramount Pictures/Zeta Film/Central Films/Media Rights Capital, 2006.

Backyard [Traspatio]. Dir.: Carlos Carrera. Mexico: Tardan/Berman/Inbursa/Coppel/Foprocine/Argos Comunicación, 2009.

Bajo California: el límite del tiempo. Dir.: Carlos Bolado. Mexico: Imcine/Sincronía Films, 1998.

Bajo Juárez: la ciudad devorando a sus hijas. Dir.: José Antonio Cordero and Alejandra Sánchez.

Mexico: Foprocine, Imcine, UNAM, Pepa Films, 2006.

De ida y vuelta [Back and Forth]. Dir.: Salvador Aguirre. Mexico: CCC/Conaculta, 2000.

El callejón de los milagros. Dir.: Jorge Fons. Mexico: Alameda Films/Conaculta/ Imcine, 1994.

Espaldas mojadas. Dir.: Alejandro Galindo. Mexico: ATA Films/Atlas Films, 1955.

Espiral. Dir.: Juan Pérez Solano. Mexico: CUEC/Foprocine/Imcine, 2008.

The Girl. Dir.: David Riker. United States/Mexico: Journeyman Pictures/ Axiom Films/Goldcrest Pictures/Bonita Films/Lulu Producciones/Sin Sentido Films, 2012.

Hasta morir [Til Death]. Dir.: Fernando Sariñana. Mexico: Imcine/Estudios Churubusco/ Fondo de Fomento a la Calidad Cinematográfica/Oxicem Producciones/ Universidad de Guadalajara/Vida Films, 1994.

* Staff member. The article is based on Graciela Martínez-Zalce, *Instrucciones para salir del limbo. Arbitrario de representaciones audiovisuales de las fronteras en América del Norte* (Mexico City: CISAN/UNAM, 2016); luna_lost@hotmail.com.

El infierno. Dir.: Luis Estrada. Mexico: Bandido Films/Imcine/Foprocine, 2010.

El jardín del Edén [The Garden of Eden]. Dir.: María Novaro. Mexico: Fondo de Fomento a la Calidad Cinematográfica/Imcine/Macondo Cine Video/Ministère de la Culture de la République Française/Ministère des Affaires Étrangères/Sogic/Téléfilm Canada/Universidad de Guadalajara/Verseau International, 1994.

La jaula de oro. Dir.: Diego Quemada Diez. Mexico: Animal de Luz Films/Kinemascope Films/Machete Producciones, 2013.

La misma luna [Under the Same Moon]. Dir.: Patricia Riggen. Mexico/United States: Creando Films/Fidicine/Potomac Pictures/Weinstein Company, 2007.

La vida precoz y breve de Sabina Rivas. Dir.: Luis Mandoki. Mexico: Churchill y Toledo/Fidicine/Gobierno del Estado de Chiapas/Eficine/EPD, 2012.

Los que se quedan [Those Who Remain]. Dir.: Juan Carlos Rulfo and Carlos Hagerman. Mexico: La Sombra del Guayabo, 2008.

Mi vida dentro. Dir.: Lucía Gajá. Mexico: Imcine/Ultra Films, 2007.

Miss Bala. Dir.: Gerardo Naranjo. Mexico: Conaculta/Eficine, 2011.

Mujeres insumisas [Untamed Women]. Dir.: Alberto Isaac. Mexico: Telecine/Claudio Producciones/Universidad de Colima/Universidad de Guadalajara, 1995.

Norteados [Northless]. Dir.: Rigoberto Pérezcano. Mexico/Spain: Foprocine/Mediapro, Imcine, TVE, 2009.

Perdita Durango. Dir.: Alex de la Iglesia. Mexico/United States/Spain: Lolafilms, Canal+ España/Imcine/Mirador Films/Occidental Media Corp./ Sogetel, 1997.

Piedras verdes [Green Stones]. Dir.: Ángel Flores Torres. Mexico: De Cuernos Al Abismo/Videocine, 2001.

Santitos [Little Saints]. Dir.: Alejandro Springall. Mexico/United States/France/Spain/Canada: C.o.r.e. Digital Pictures/Cinematográfica Tabasco/José Pinto Mazal/Fondo de Fomen-

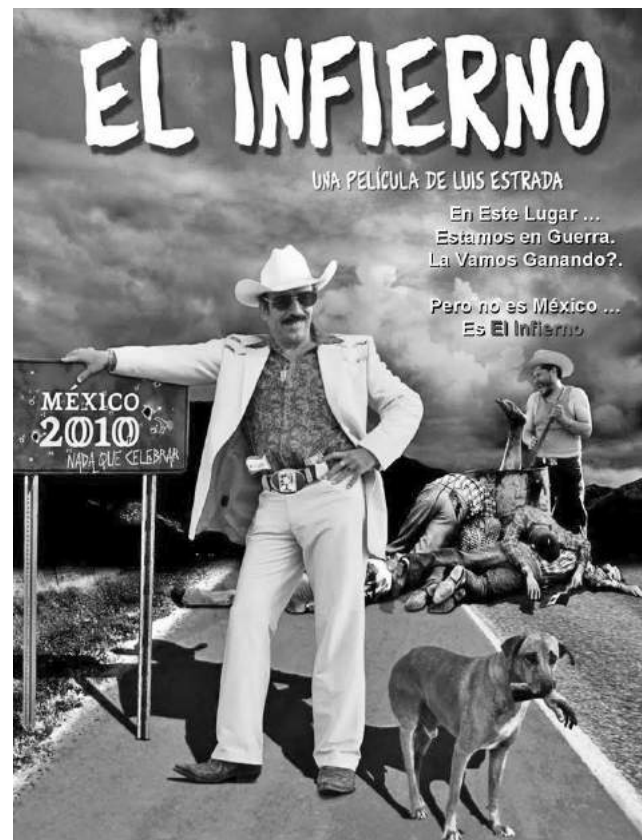
to a la Calidad Cinematográfica/Fonds Sud/Goldheart Pictures/Guillermo Springall/Imcine/Latin Universe II, Llc./Lourdes del Villar/mact Productions/María Teresa Argüelles/Sogepaq/Springall Pictures/Tenoch Ochoa Fernández, 1999.

Señorita extraviada [Missing Young Woman]. Dir.: Lourdes Portillo. Mexico: Xóchitl Productions, Women Make Films, 2001.

Sin dejar huella [Leaving No Trace]. Dir.: María Novaro. Mexico/Spain: Tabasco Films/Altavista Films/TVE/Tornasol Films/Vía Digital, 2000.

Sin nombre. Dir.: Cary Joji Fukunaga. Mexico/United States: Primary Productions, Scion Films/Canana/Creando Films, 2008.

Sólo Dios sabe [Only God Knows]. Dir.: Carlos Bolado. Mexico/Brazil: Imcine/Sincronía Films/Churchill y Toledo/De Cuernos Al Abismo/Dezenove Filmes/Equipment & Film Design/Miravista, 2006. **MM**



Reviews

“Building Bridges. Chicano/Mexican Art From L.A. to Mexico City”

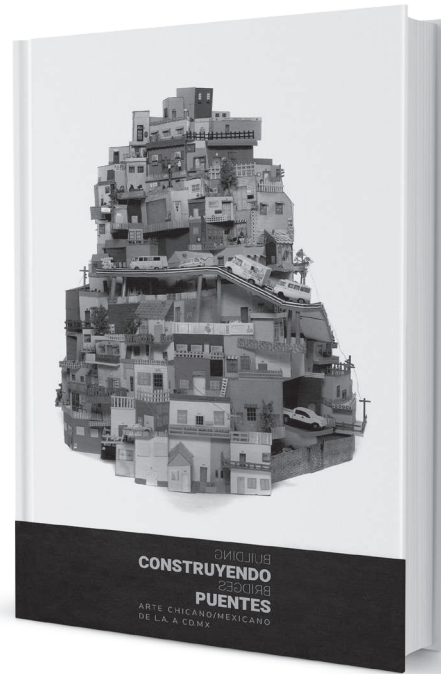
Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes
And Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil
Mexico City, 2018, 96 pp.

From September 21, to November 25, 2018, the Carrillo Gil Art Museum hosted the exhibition “Construyendo puentes. Arte chicano/mexicano de L.A. a CDMX” (Building Bridges. Chicano/Mexican Art from L.A. to Mexico City). The exhibit included graphic art, sketches, photography, performance, and paintings created over the last 50 years by a multi-generational group of Chicano artists. It was made possible thanks to the good offices of the Ministry of Culture through the National Fine Arts Institute, the Ministry of Foreign Relations, and Cástulo de la Rocha, president and CEO of AltaMed Health Services, a health care system serving marginal communities in Southern California.

In this diverse, multi-disciplinary exhibition, artists expressed their visions of existing racial and cultural stereotypes about the Latina population in the United States and about the conflicts arising with their border identity. The museum published a bilingual catalogue, including contributions from some of the authorities who made the exhibition possible, plus others by renowned specialists in Chicano art. Five crosscutting themes structured the exhibit, each of which was deserving of a brief chapter in the catalogue.

Exhibition curator Julián Bermúdez asks himself in the chapter “Rebel Diamonds from the Sun” how a countercultural, marginal art of resistance became, over the decades, a noteworthy current in the U.S. canon. Chicano art was born in the context of mid-Cold-War worldwide political ferment, at a time when U.S. minorities were demanding their rights and visibility. A contemporary of Black Power and the protests against the war in Vietnam, Chicano art sought to reconnect with its Mexican roots and formulate a consistent political critique. To do that, the artists used public spaces, and, with time, were able to place their pieces in art galleries.

The diversity of the pieces in this first section combines to present a Los Angeles urban landscape that includes social criticism: Ramiro Gómez’s sculptures of farm



workers, domestic workers, and janitors; *Paleta Cart* by Gary Garay; Frank Romero’s canvas *MacArthur Park*; Salomón Huerta’s paintings *Untitled House*; and Ana Serrano’s *Cartolandia*, which appears on the catalogue cover.

For Bermúdez, Chicano art is linked with what Umberto Eco called “semiological guerrilla warfare,” that is, taking the side of analysis and a critical outlook against mass culture. Its relevance today resides in the fact that it shows up the contradictions and conflicts of U.S. Anglo-American society, denouncing the marginality of Chicanos and Latinos in it. “They are Rebel Diamonds from the Sun, forged by the intense pressures of injustice and marginalization, only to emerge white hot and nigh unbreakable, as their creative expressions and processes expand, deepen, and mature.”¹

In the chapter “Imagining Paradise,” academic Chon Noriega of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center notes that L.A., the City of Dreams, developed thanks to the labor of Latinos. He says, however, that they rarely play leading roles in Hollywood movies. The minorities had to seek other spaces, and for that reason, Chicano art played a role in the struggle to make civil rights demands visible.

Chicano artists are therefore committed to a cause, and their work generally includes two concepts: community and the world of art. Both, the specific and the universal, converge in an urban space characterized by segregation and critically recreated by the artists: in the

Exhibition curator Julián Bermúdez asks himself how a countercultural, marginal art of resistance became, over the decades, a noteworthy current in the U.S. canon.

urban landscapes of Carlos Almaraz, Gil Garcetti, and Cindy Santos Bravo; in the facades of Californian bungalows by Ana Serrano and Salomón Huerta; and in Patrick Martinez's neon lights reminding us that "America Is for Dreamers." Noriega argues that the demand for a City of Dreams, an imaginary paradise, where everyone has a place, persists in these works.

"Outsiders in Their Own Home" is how Rita Gonzalez, the curator of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, defines the Chicano artists. In contrast with Latin American artists exiled in the United States, whose identity is clear despite their being displaced, the Chicano artists live in permanent tension due to their bi-national identity, since they are "neither from here nor from there." And, perhaps because this conflictive hybridization is difficult to represent, all the works in this section are abstract: the brothers Einar and Jamex de la Torre, for example, offer a border version of Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*; Gary Garay uses street images and signs to create a personal aesthetic of the border; Viviana (Viva) Paredes, for her part, uses recycled materials to imagine ceremonial venues; Frank Romero suggests disturbances and repression in urban canvases; Ramiro Gomez's paintings and sketches, which include magazine cuttings, reflect the difficulties domestic workers face in integrating into U.S. families; Patssi Valdez paints domestic scenes with revealing windows; and Eloy Torrez uses large-scale photo-realism to present international migration.

The heterogeneity of the works may be linked to the artists' not belonging to a specific space and culture. In the words of Rita Gonzalez, this is something Chicanos experience as a permanent condition of being "foreigners."

"Mapping Identity" includes works created from 1980 until now. Pilar Tompkins Rivas, the director of the Vincent Price Art Museum, says that identity or the lack of it is a huge theme in Chicano art, and although noteworthy differences do exist between generations and decades, the feeling of "being in the middle" can generally be noted throughout the history of the current. Thus, the

works from after the 1980s move ahead toward the reaffirmation of community and a sense of resistance. And that is why it comes as no surprise that some of the artists from this section of the exhibition have also worked in art collectives. This is the case of Patssi Valdez and Gronk, members of the art collective Asco (Disgust), and Judith Hernandez, a member of Los Four. Here we see Gabriela Ruiz's domestic spaces intervened with isolating foam and color; figures darkened by anonymity in portraits by Roberto Gil de Montes, Yolanda Gonzalez, and Salomón Huerta; the playful images of Camille Rose Garcia; statistical data making up images in Linda Vallejo's *Brown Dot Project*; and Enrique Castrejon's multi-media collage.

Finally, in "Cruising the Hyphenate," Julián Bermúdez takes as his starting point the simple image of a hyphen, an apparently inoffensive punctuation mark, to remember its powerful meaning when it joins and at the same time separates places of origin and identities: Mexican-American, Latin-American, etc. In Chicano art we find such simple and powerful signs, like the automobile. In the paintings of John Valadez, the creator of the first Chicano murals, cars personify freedom, mobility, and refuge. For Johnny "KMNDZ" Rodriguez, a stalled car operates as a reason to express the profound, explosive passion of its drivers; Frank Romero, for his part, shows L.A. as a city made to drive in: free, open, and borderless.

"Construyendo puentes" came at a particular moment in relations between Mexico and the United States when we should remember the long road traversed by our two countries living together. Amidst the multitude of speeches about this, few are as free, critical, and frank as what art has to offer. Perhaps only art is capable of crossing the language and cultural barriers to offer us a deeper, more human look at our shared history. This exhibition of Chicano art was a clear example of how hybridization can create complex and profoundly significant expressions. The catalogue is proof of that. **MM**

Óscar Badillo

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Notes

1 Exhibition catalogue, p. 71.