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# BORDERWALL URBANISMS

DISPATCHES FROM THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER



2018 Advanced Research Studio  
Global Urban Humanities Initiative



**Borderwall Urbanisms: Dispatches from the US/Mexico Border**

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# BORDERWALL URBANISMS

DISPATCHES FROM THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

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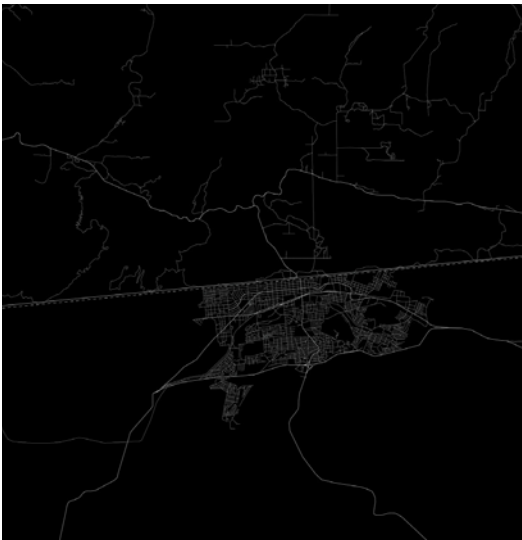
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# SPECIAL THANKS

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*...to professors Ronald Rael and Stephanie Syjuco, who made this all possible...*







# 01 MICHAEL DEAR

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*THE US-MEXICO BORDERLANDS*







# THE US-MEXICO BORDERLANDS

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*Micheal Dear*

## *A BRIEF INTRODUCTION*

During the first five months of 2018, I was invited to participate in the 'Borderwall Urbanism' class led by Ronald Rael and Stephanie Syjuco, with Matthew Palmquist. I gave an introductory talk to the students, attended several guest lectures during the semester, accompanied the group for part of their field research in El Paso-Ciudad Juárez, and contributed to the mid-term and final crit sessions. In this short essay, I recall remarks that I offered during the first week of class, as participants contemplated the tasks ahead.

In 2002 I began traveling the entire length of the US-Mexico border, on both sides, from Tijuana/San Diego on the Pacific Ocean, to Matamoros/Brownsville on the Gulf of Mexico, a total of 4,000 miles. During the subsequent years of my explorations, the US began to seal and fortify its southern boundary, and I became an unintentional witness to the border's closure. As time passed, I became absorbed in the lives of border people living in the spaces between the two nations, realizing that these in-between communities formed a 'third nation,' not separating Mexico from the US, but instead acting as a connective membrane that united them. This change of perspective completely altered the way I understood the border wall and border peoples.

### **Border walls**

Today, much of the US-MX borderland resembles a zone of military occupation, what some Arizonans refer to as a "police state." The ubiquitous presence of the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is announced most directly in the form of fences and walls, surveillance towers, official ports-of-entry, and border patrol stations. However, the detritus of occupation is also manifest in new stadium lighting, diverted drainage channels, landfills, dams, airborne surveillance, custom-built access roads, staging areas, parking facilities, internal checkpoints, endless vehicular patrols, heavily-armed foot patrols, large-scale earth removals, warehousing, acres of trash, drones, and the ubiquitous signage of prohibition.

By January 2013, DHS contractors had installed a total of 651 miles of fencing along



the border: 352 miles to stop pedestrians, and 299 miles to block vehicles. This total was only two miles short of the distance identified by the US Border Patrol as “appropriate” for barrier construction (some terrain is simply too steep, and fencing water boundaries is impractical).

How effective has the border wall been? No-one can say for sure. The federal government collects information on many immigration measures, but none explicitly measures the most significant indicators, namely, the volume of undocumented border crossings, and the extent to which the border is in fact ‘secure.’

What we can conclude is that between 2005 and 2011, the number of migrant apprehensions fell to its lowest levels since the 1970s, and deportation rates reached record high levels. Not surprisingly, the unauthorized migrant population living in the US dropped from an estimated 12.4 million in 2007 to 11.1 million in 2011. DHS enforcement actions contributed to these trends, but many other factors were causally related, including rising deaths and injuries incurred by border-crossers; their increased exposure to personal violence, such as kidnapping for ransom; and the spiraling costs of assisted border passages. In addition, declining job opportunities in the US caused by economic recession were slowing the ‘pull’ factor of migration to the US, just as improvements in the Mexican economy were reducing the ‘push’ factors encouraging Mexicans to migrate. DHS officials themselves adjusted their message, claiming that the border wall was never intended to stop migrants, but merely to slow their progress so that they could be apprehended by other means.

In short, the 651-mile, post 9/11 wall did not work as a deterrent to undocumented migration. There is no reason to assume that a second wall would be any more effective than the first. Nevertheless, the threat of new construction to completely

seal the border is an ever-present shadow over the future of border dwellers.

### **Border People**

Residents on both sides of the line frequently tell me that they have more in common with each other than with their host nations. This sentiment is based in a shared identity, common history, joint traditions, languages, and lives. It represents a ‘third nation’ consciousness goes beyond cognitive awareness. People on both sides are also materially connected through trade, family, leisure, shopping, culture, education, and legal obligation. Border-dwellers’ lives are interwoven through these everyday connections, and buttressed by myriad formal and informal institutional arrangements. It’s been this way for centuries.

Not long ago, I was on the Mexican side of the border in Nogales, Sonora, where the earliest types of border fencing had appeared during the mid-1990s. A teenager asked me what would happen if the walls came down, and I replied: “It will be like it was in the old days.” Hesitatingly, she asked: “And what was it like in the old days?”

At that moment, realized then that her generation had lived most of their lives in the shadow of walls. Their parents remember a different time when they crossed over the line without hindrance to graze animals or join a weekend softball game, and when crossing the border was as easy as crossing a street.

Today, despite the wall, large numbers of borderlanders continue to cross the line daily through official ports of entry. They have become accustomed to delays imposed by the wall, and tune into media reports to factor them into their commutes. You might see agricultural workers lining up at 4 a.m. to cross from Mexicali to the fields in California’s Imperial Valley. Or, a few hours later, Mexican parents in organizing carpools





ferrying their kids to school in Calexico, using special SENTRI passes to speed their commute. Border crossers have learned how to cope with the wall.

But make no mistake: borderlanders are fiercely independent, and they want their lives back. They demand that the damage caused by the walls, fences, and security forces be repaired; that no more walls be constructed; and that the billions of dollars requested for more walls be diverted instead to increasing the number and capacity of official ports of entry. They insist on the right to manage their own destinies without interference from outsiders in Washington DC.

A 2016 survey of residents in the border 'twin cities' confirmed the widespread impression that the borderland is increasingly becoming one "giant economically integrated, bicultural society." US Representative. Beto

O'Rourke, a Democrat from El Paso, commented: "It says something really beautiful that the border, two countries, two languages, two cultures, at this point become essentially one people."

### **Borderwall Urbanisms**

Let me be frank. The students in the Borderwall Urbanisms class were invited to confront a geopolitical and humanitarian problem that so far has defeated every expert and politician: How to manage a vital, integrated, binational urban ecology along the US-Mexico border that is being jeopardized by the introduction of infrastructures of occupation and a national security apparatus that prioritizes policing and militarization of the border over the well-being of borderland communities and economies.

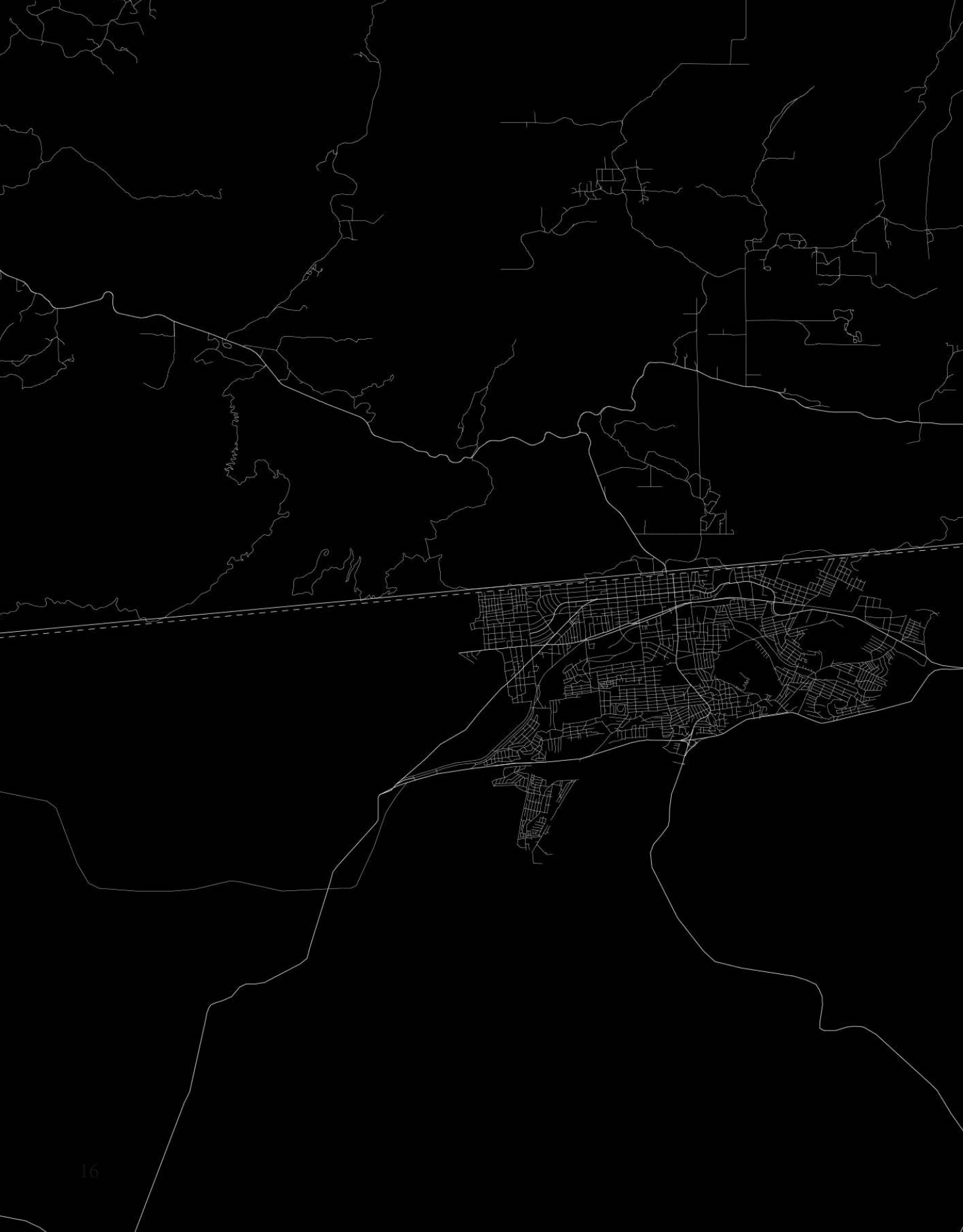


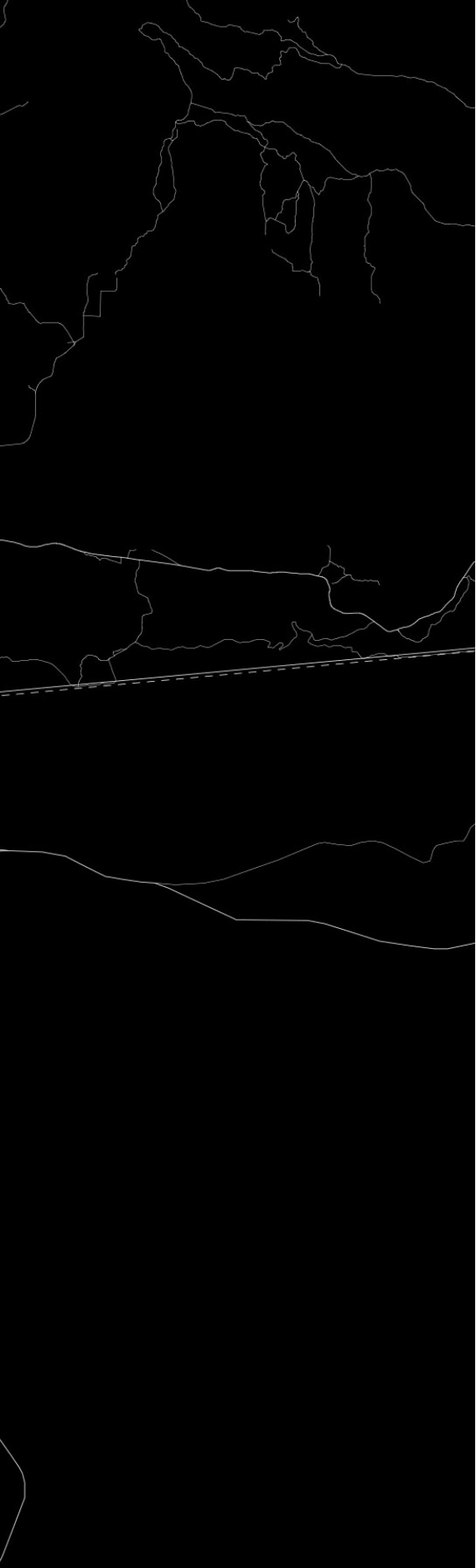


In various forms, this issue is being replicated on a global scale. Many countries, large and small, are confronting the realities of porous borders and massive international and domestic migrations brought about by global insecurity, acute economic inequality, war, and the persecution and murder of minorities.

The specific challenge confronting students in *Borderwall Urbanisms* was to imagine the future of communities straddling the US-Mexico border, whose well-being and prosperity is threatened by unprecedented levels of fortification and militarization. Over 10 million people live in the major ‘twin cities’ of the borderlands, and more than 400 billion dollars’-worth of trade crosses the line every year. This is not an ecology of insignificance that can be ignored or jeopardized.

The students’ responses to this challenge are recorded in this document. They worked collaboratively, bringing to the studio skills honed mainly in art practice and environmental design. They deployed an impressive array of analytical and representational tools and techniques that included video, performance, installation, land art, mapping, design, fabrication, and a drone. Their projects imagined solutions that encompassed practical proposals (relating to land management, refugee assistance, human rights, food supply, and historical preservation, for example), as well as fundamental reconceptualizations of site, space and place in a borderland ‘third nation.’





## 02 MAPPING

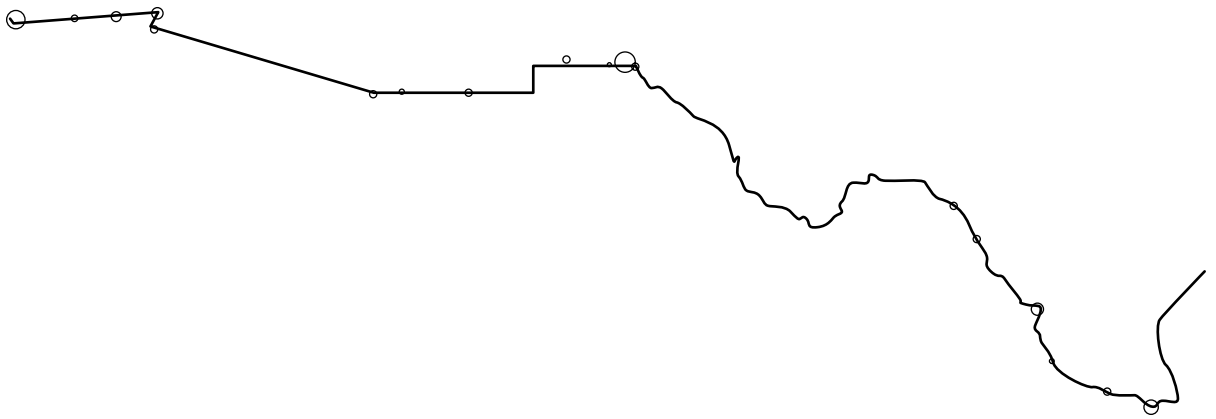
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*BORDERWALL URBANISMS*

SAN YSIDRO, US/TIJUANA MX; TECATE, US/TECATE MX; CALEXICO, US/

MEXICALI, MX; YUMA, US/SAN LUIS RIO COLORADO, MX; NOGALES, US/NOGALES,  
MX; NACO, US/NACO, MX; DOUGLAS, US/AGUA PRIETA, MX; COLUMBUS, US/PUERTO  
PALOMAS, MX; SANTA TERESA, US/SAN GERONIMO, MX; EL PASO, US/

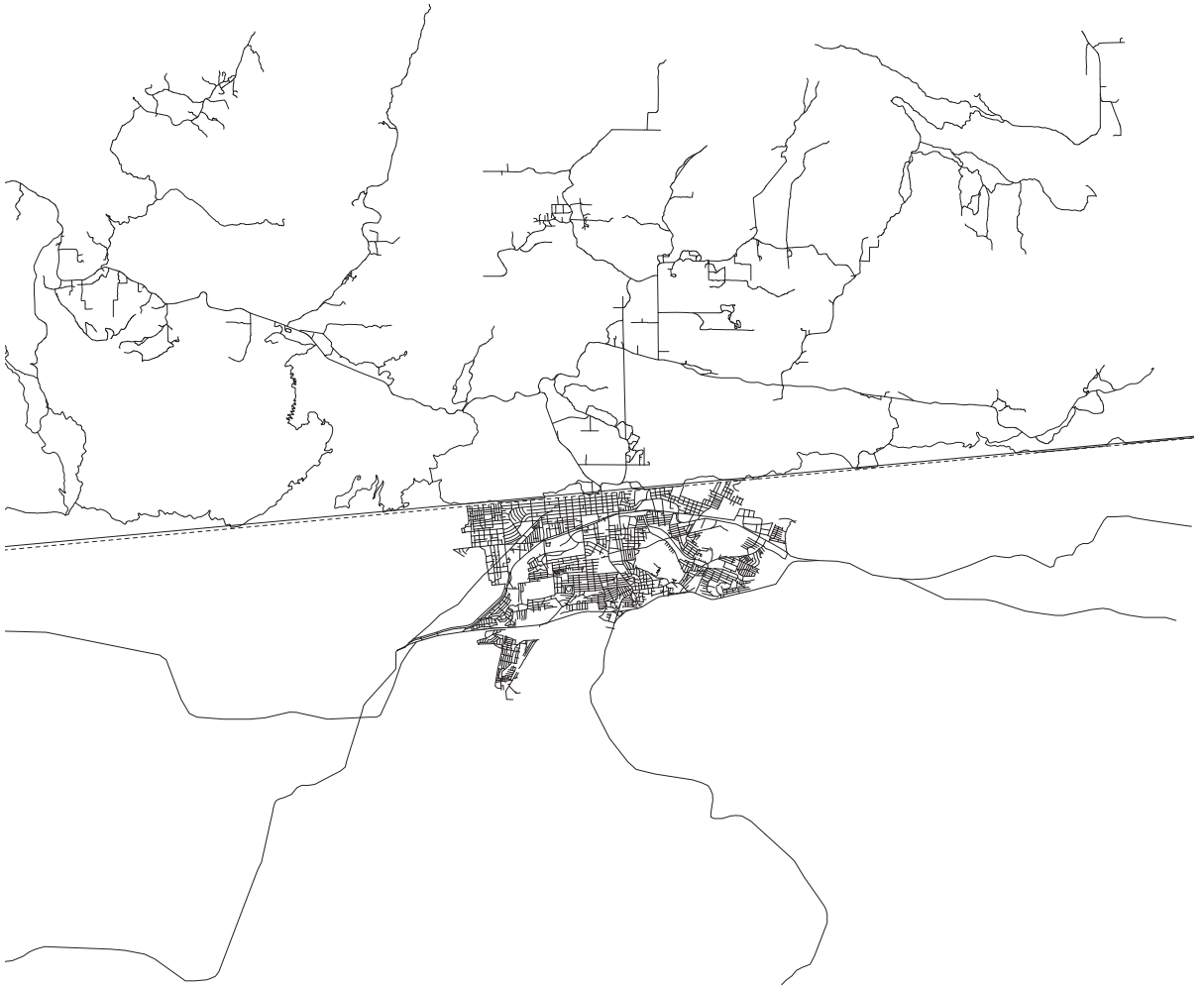
CIUDAD JAREZ, MX; PRESIDIO, US/OJINAGA, MX; DEL RIO, US/CIUDAD ACUÑA,  
MX; EAGLE PASS, US/PIEDRAS NEGRAS, MX; LAREDO, US/NUEVO LAREDO, MX;  
MCALLEN, US/REYNOSA, MX; BROWNSVILLE, US/MATAMOROS, MX.



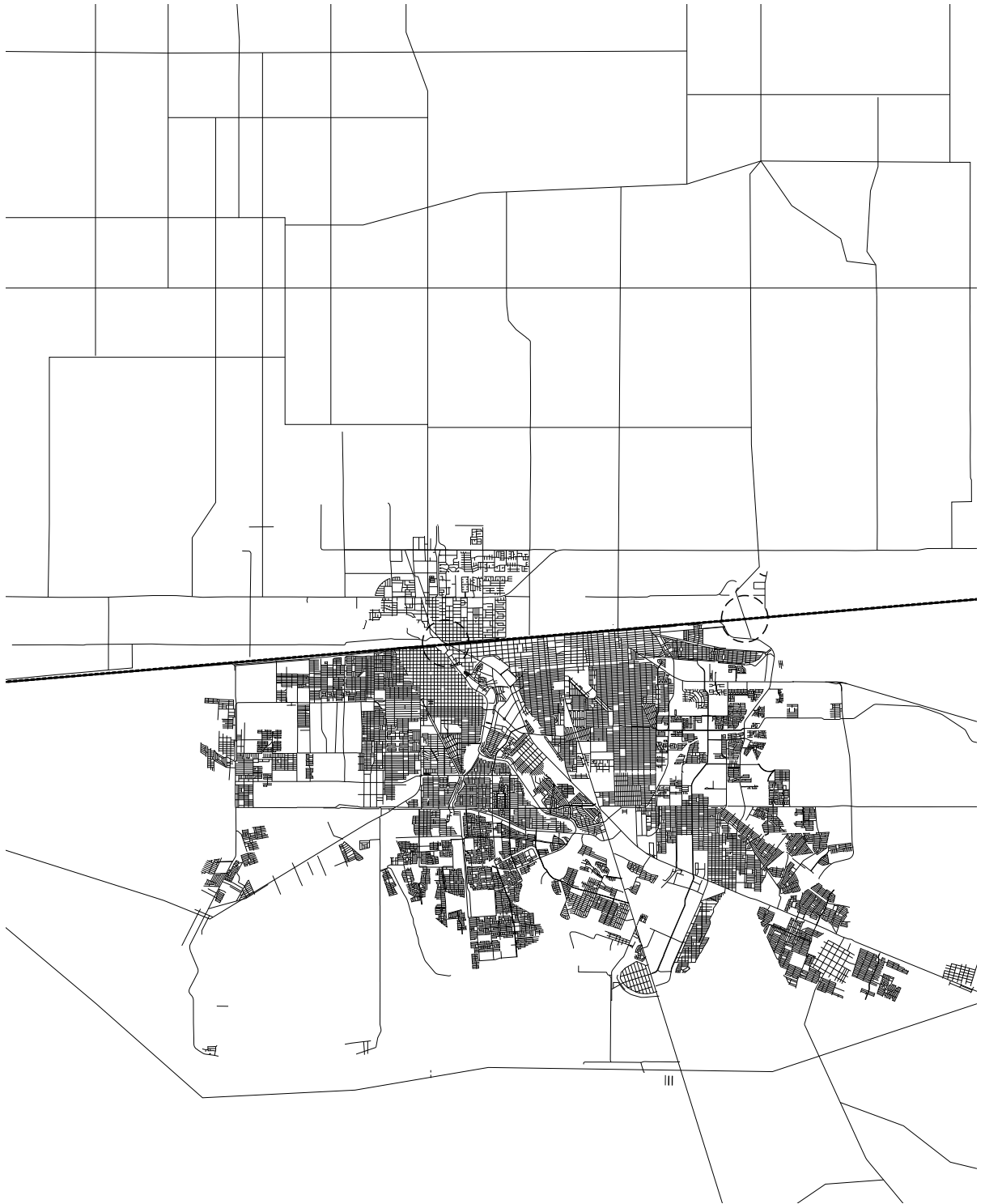




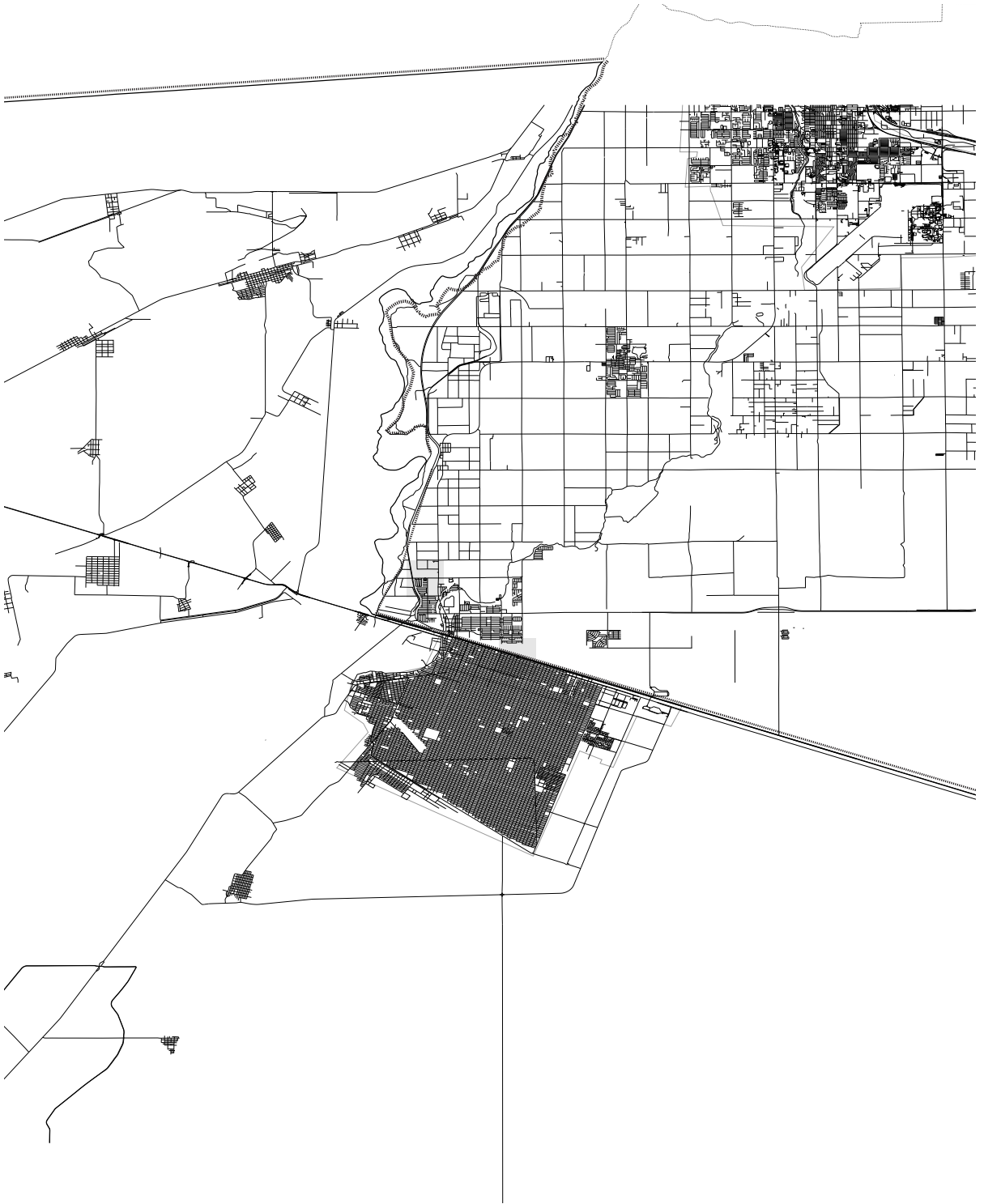
SAN YSIDRO, US. - TIJUANA, MX.



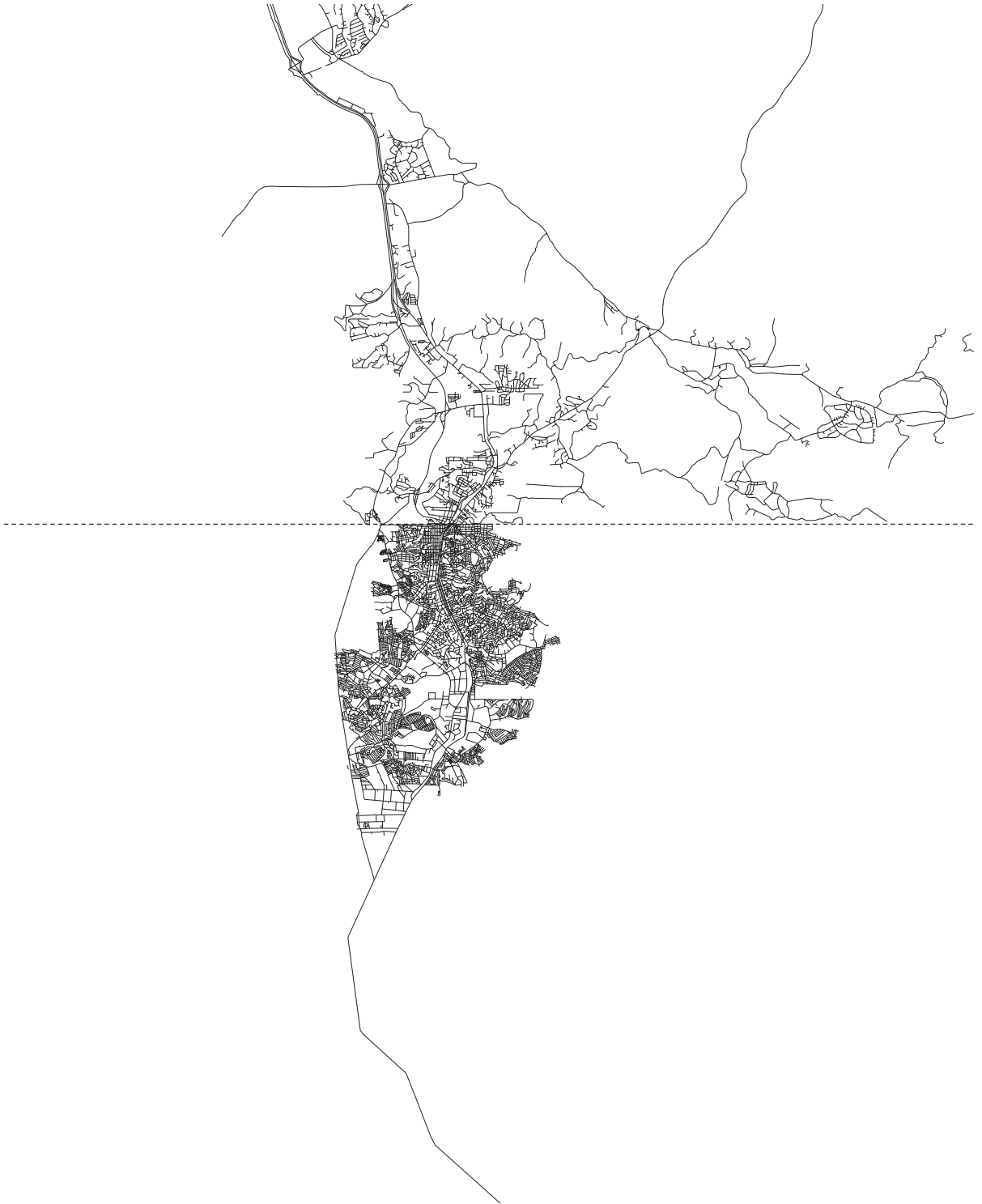
TECATE, US. - TECATE, MX.



CALEXICO, US. - MEXICALI, MX.

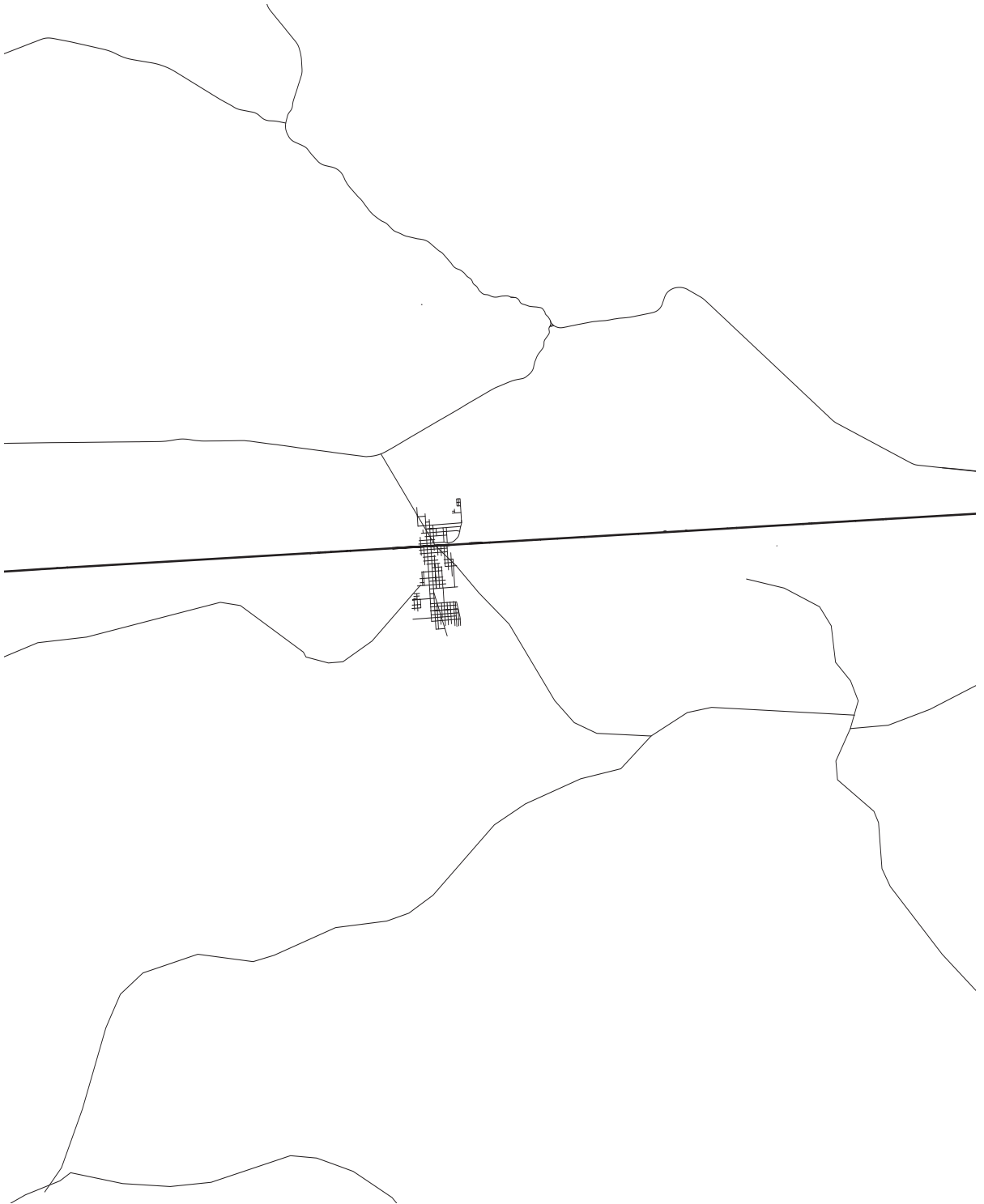


YUMA, US. - SAN LUIS COLORADO, MX.

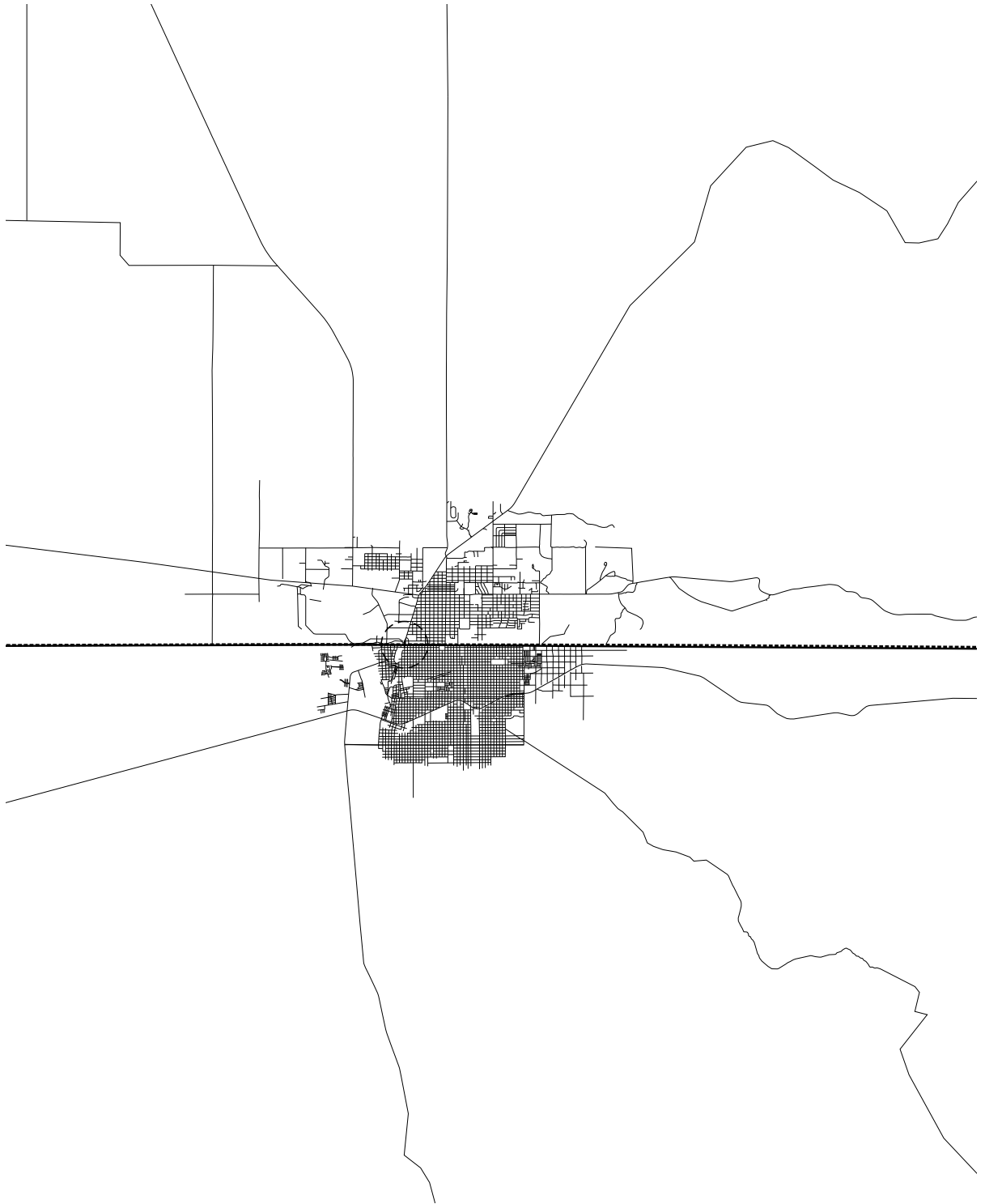


NOGALES, US. - NOGALES, MX.

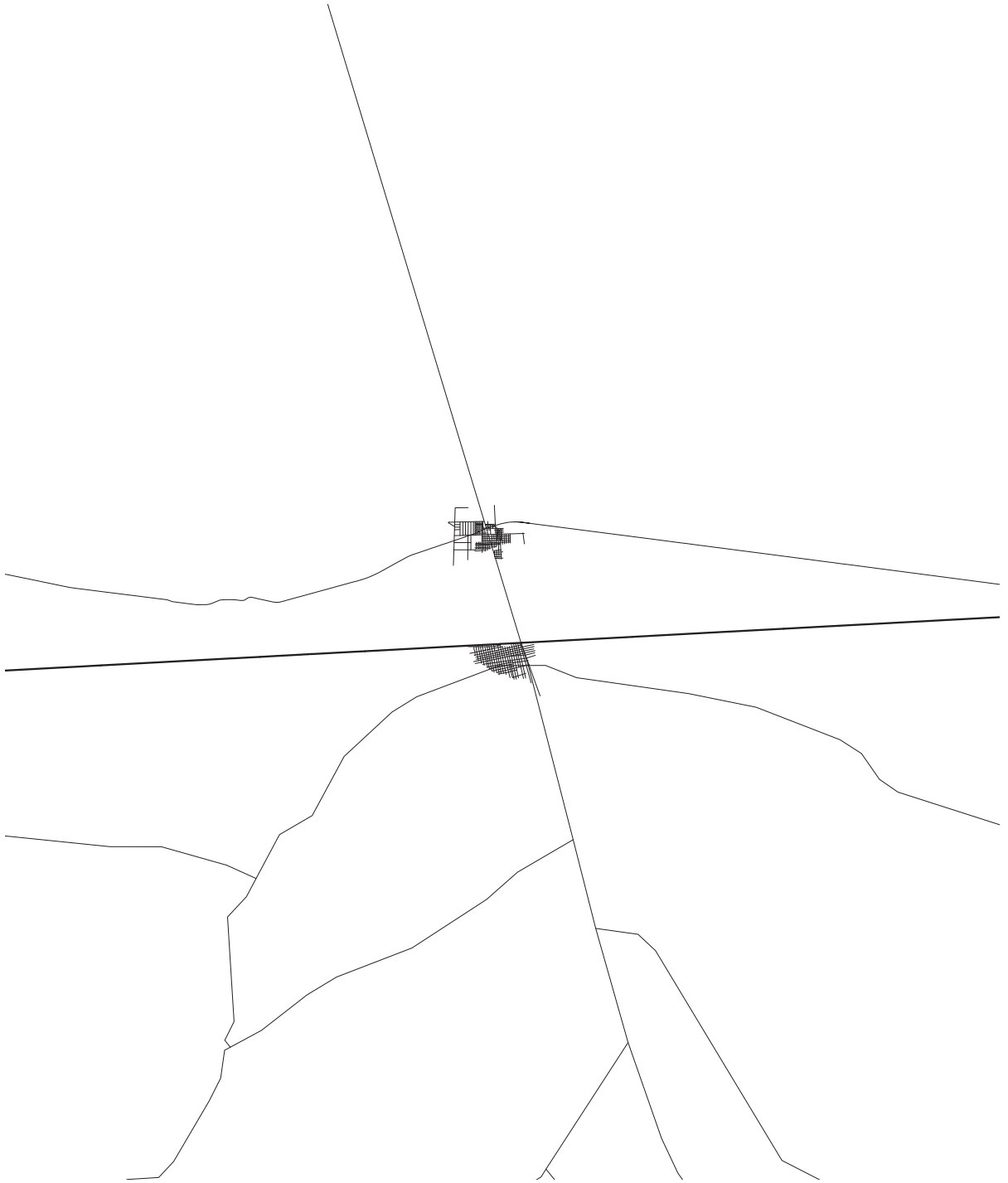




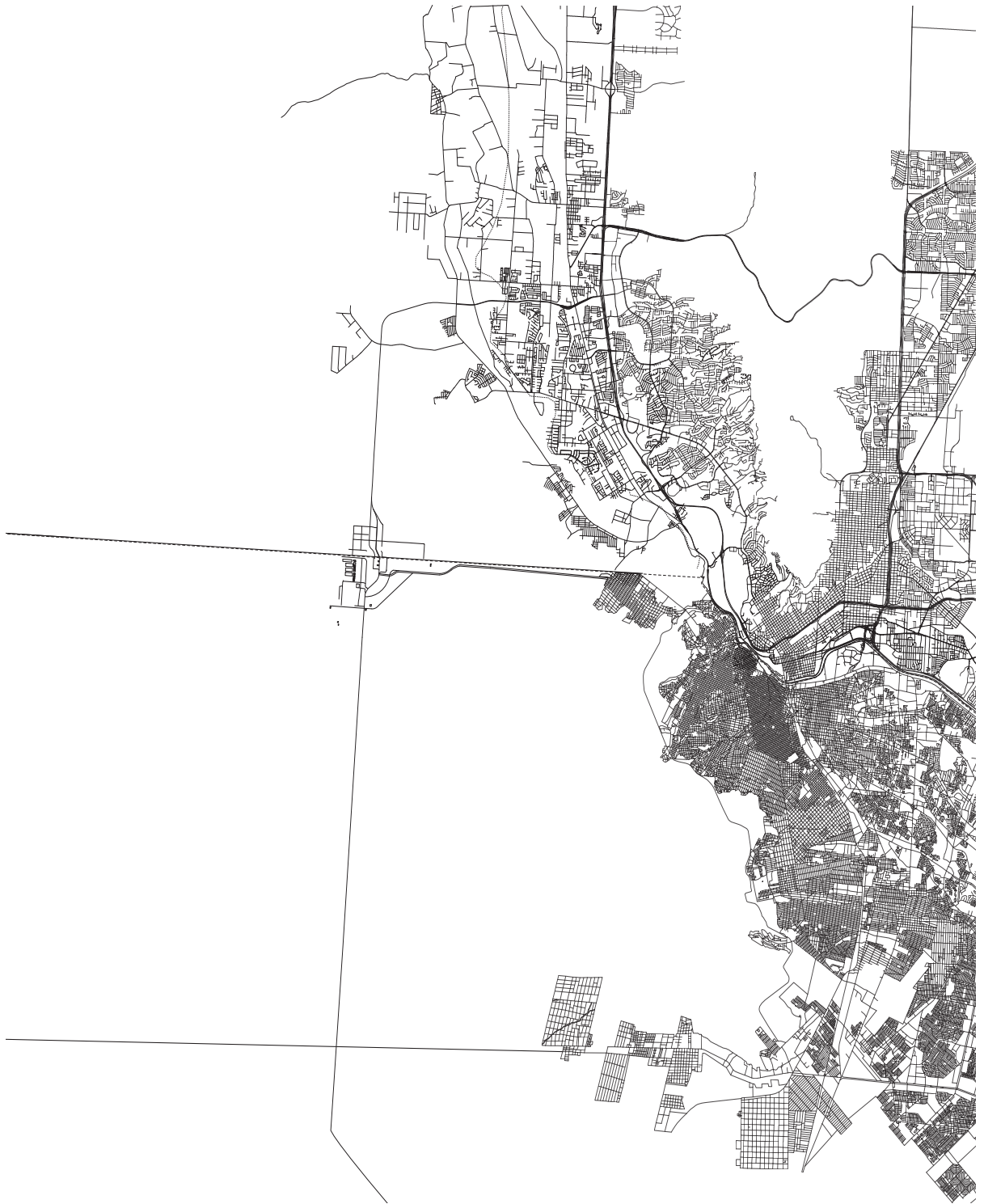
NACO, US. - NACO, MX.



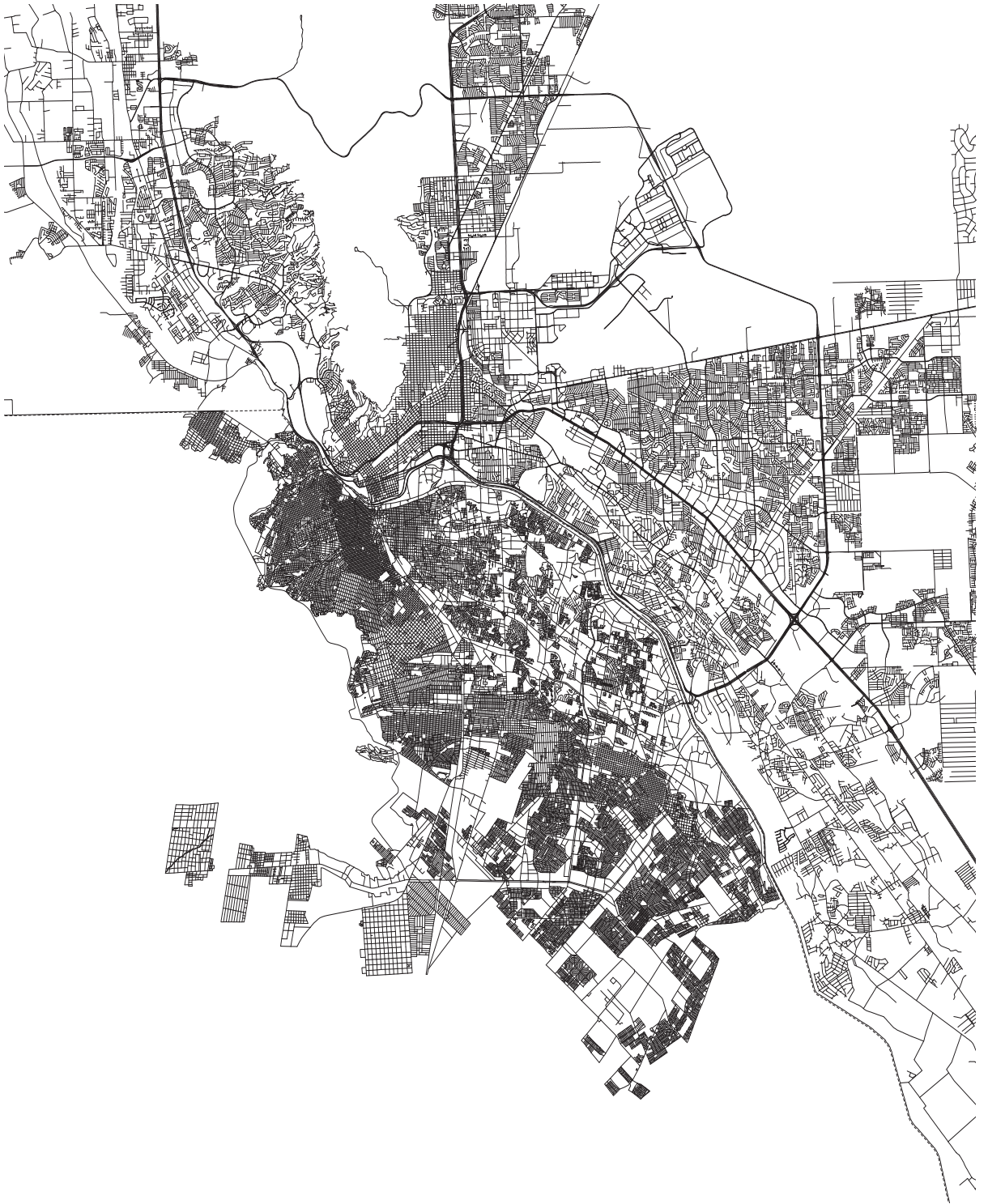
DOUGLAS, US. - AGUA PRIETA, MX.



COLUMBUS, US. - PUERTO PALOMAS, MX.



SANTA TERESA, US. - SAN JERONIMO, MX.



EL PASO, US. - CIUDAD JUAREZ, MX.





DEL RIO, US. - CIUDAD ACUNA, MX.



EAGLE PASS, US. - PIEDRAS NEGRAS, MX.



PRESIDIO, US. - OJINAGA, MX.



LAREDO, US. - NUEVO LAREDO, MX.





MCALLEN, US. - REYNOSA, MX.



BROWNSVILLE, US. - MATAMORROS, MX.











## **03** DISPATCHES

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*TIJUANA + SAN DIEGO*





UC BERKELEY

Nevada

California

Arizona

SAN DIEGO

TIJUANA





Wyoming

Nebraska

Utah

Colorado

Kansas

na

New Mexico

Oklahoma

Texas





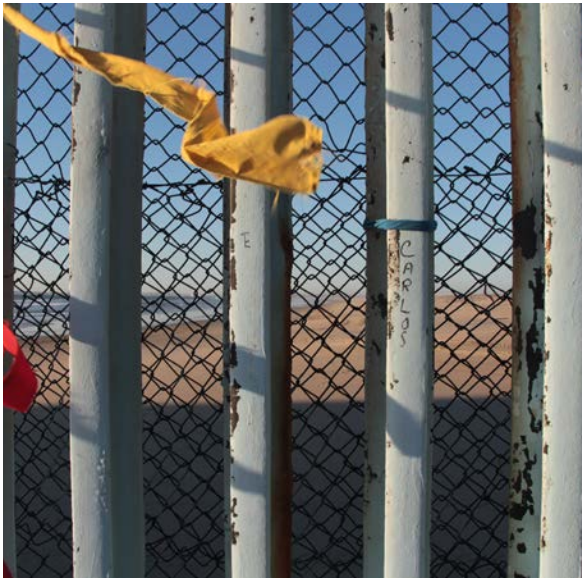


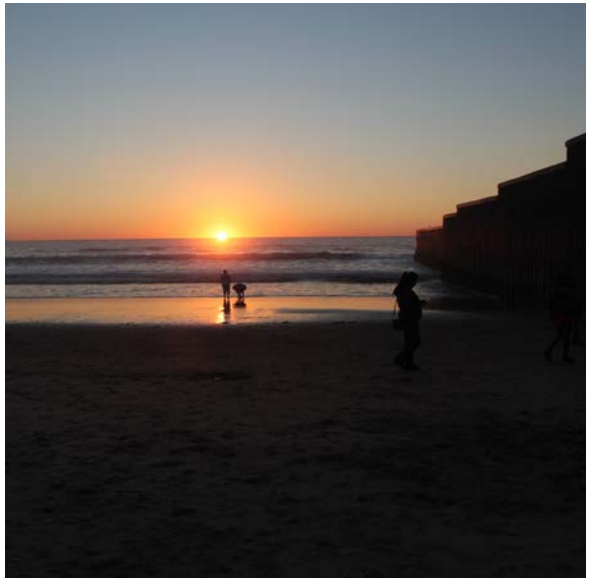


















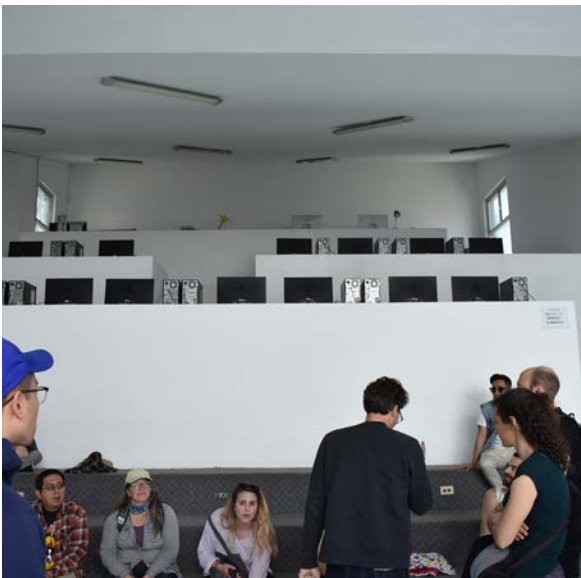














e & Bi-National Garden  
undays 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
quiries please contact  
(9) 216-4182

**MAXIMUM  
OCCUPANCY  
10**

**THIS AREA  
UNDER 24 HOUR  
SURVEILLANCE**

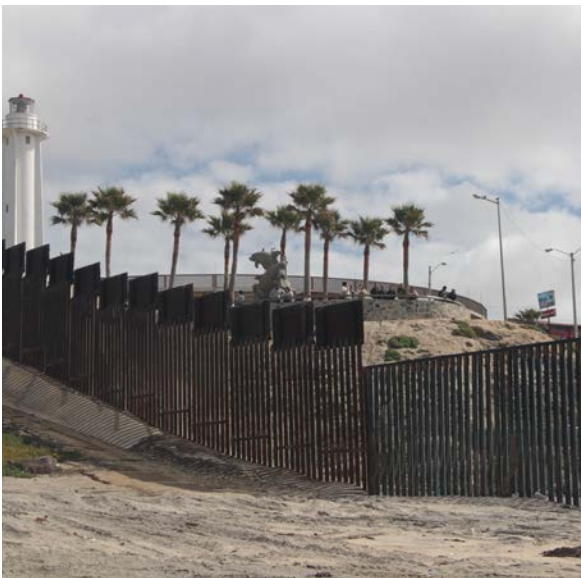




















# ARTURO ORTIZ

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## REFLECTIONS

*San Diego - Tijuana Dispatch*

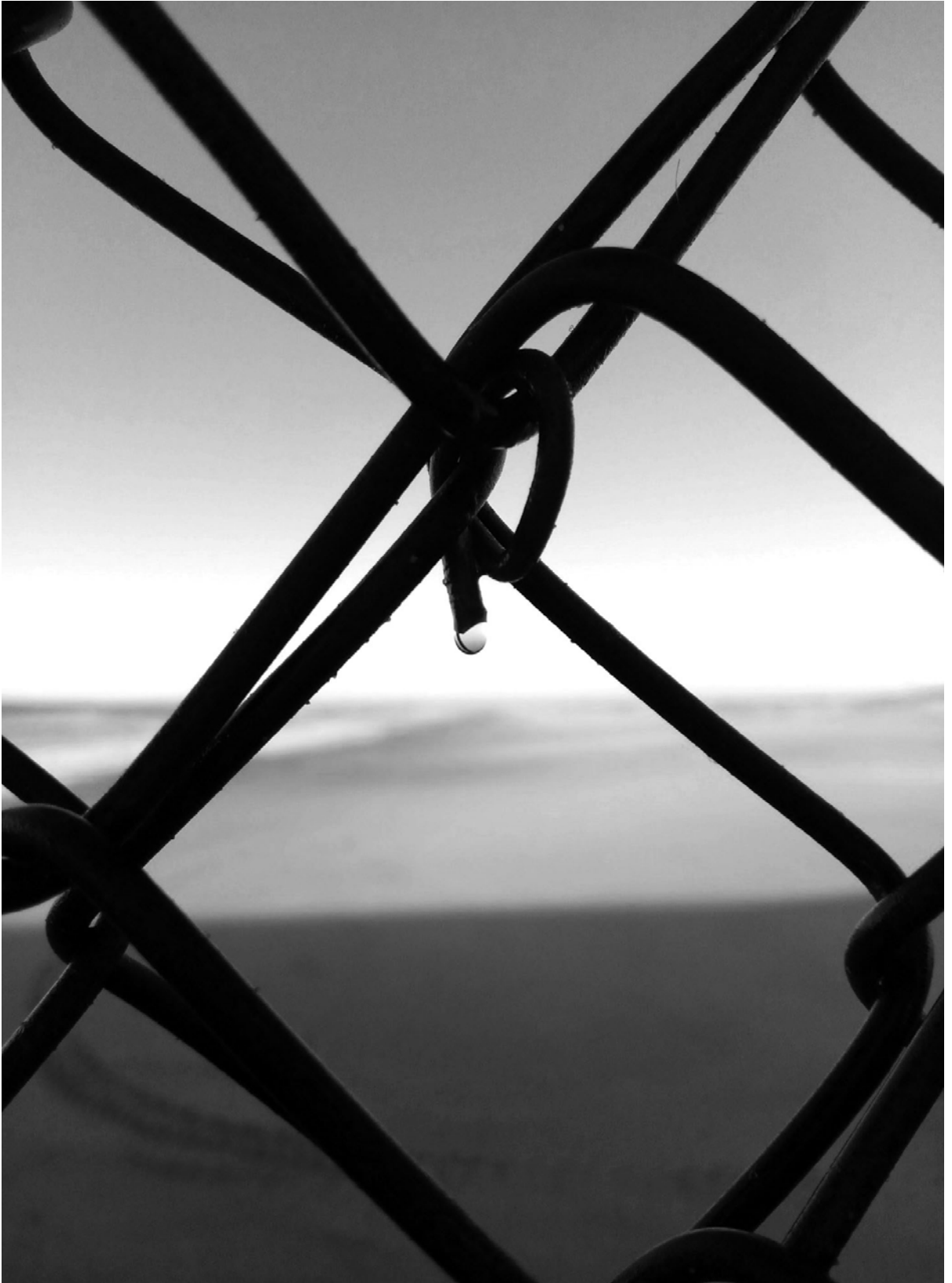
In order to understand my position throughout this journey as we embark collectively as a class this semester, I will first state my own positionality and how I identify. Like Norma Prieto explained, there are different identities that derive from the borderlands. For me, it is important to understand my identity, and how it is part of a larger spectrum of identities. Under Norma's research, I would fall under the Mexican-American Chicano identity: an identity that succumbs to the notion that you don't belong from here nor from there. Growing up in Oaxaca, Mexico I had no clear understanding of the "States" despite being born there. I didn't understand the land nor the demarcations, but I was always aware that there was *el otro lado*, the 'other side.' All my cousins, uncles, aunts and my mom crossed that border. They all crossed for better opportunities and a better way of life. Growing up, I hated that border and now I remain ambivalent about it and all of its complexities. The border is more than a physical barrier

for my family and friends; it is a symbol. Its symbology is extremely ingrained in our psyche in the sense that I grew up with fear and deep hatred towards the border that was heavily militaristic and xenophobic. My reflections are personal and the personal is political, which enrich my reflective topics below: My Family and Their Border-Crossing Journeys, Rasquachismo, and Designers in the Borderlands.

### #1

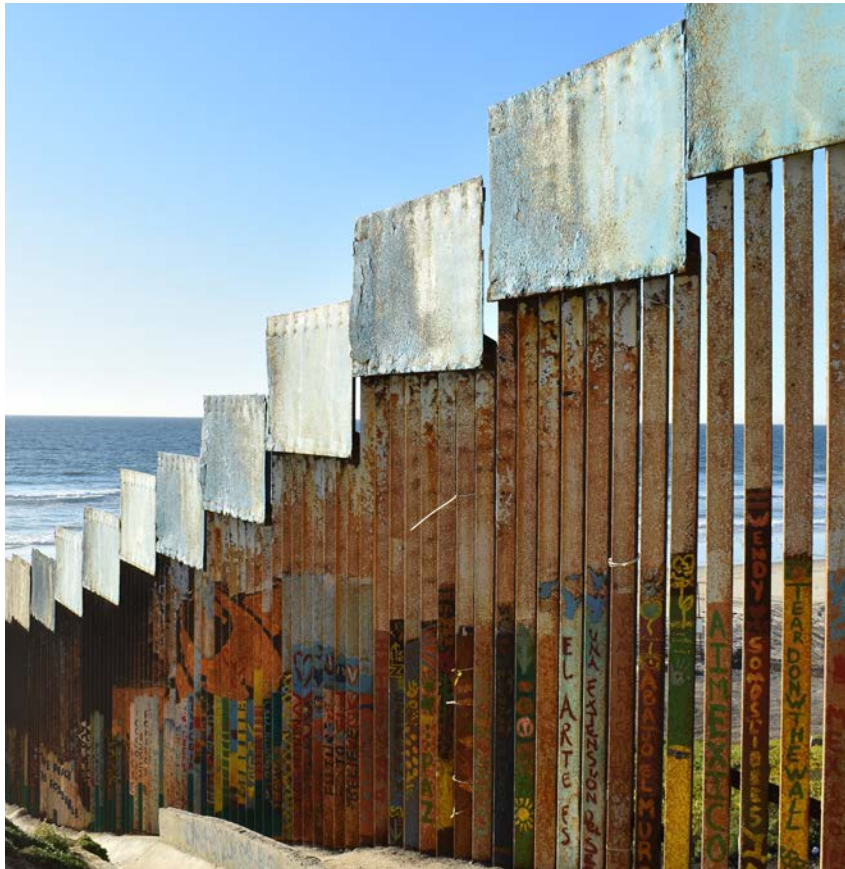
I decided not to tell any of my family members that I am a part of this class. I reflected on it and thought that by not telling them or them not knowing would be best since it is a very traumatic topic to revisit.

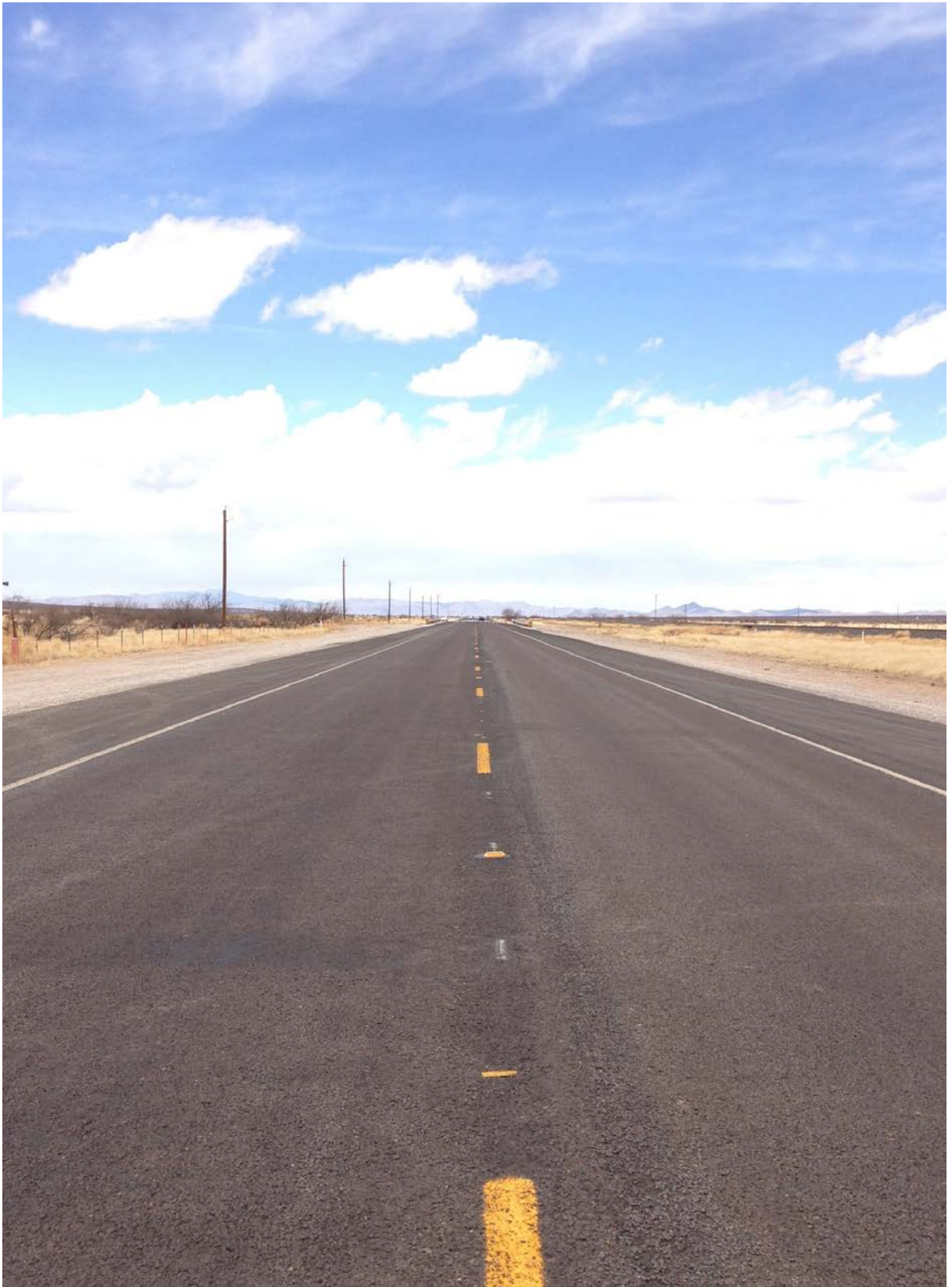
I remember when I was 7 years old and my mom had a gathering at our house here in the States in Petaluma, CA. All of my family members that had crossed were there. My uncle Pato, my Tia Chajo, my uncle Gabriel, mi Mami-Tia, my Abuelo and Abuela, mi Ama, and my











cousins. There were around 16 of us (including kids) hanging out, eating, and conversing in the living room and kitchen. Then Primer Impacto (a popular news channel in Mexico) came on TV. Suddenly las noticias started to talk about the border and everyone in the room stopped their conversations and payed attention. It was a video of a man attempting to cross the border by swimming across a river. The video showed this man as he swam across when suddenly he stopped halfway and started to scream and panic. It seemed as something was pulling him down. He ended up disappearing into the water and drowned to death. As I watched, I looked around the room and saw most of my family crying silently. I was so bewildered and I didn't understand what happened, but it deeply affected my family.

The picture with the parent and child (preceding page) is when I thought about my family. Some are in Mexico and others are in the States. Some have accessibility to travel and others don't. Some are from here and others are from there.

### #2:

Rasquachismo for those who don't know, was originally meant to be demarcated as a negative thing. It was looked down upon if you were rasquache. It was and is often still seen as a classist way of demonizing the poor. Rasquachismo "stems from the word rasquache, which is used to describe an attitude that is lower class, in bad taste or too frugal" (Art, History, and Culture). People before the 1950s-60s or even today, would not like to be called rasquache. Until the Chicano Art Movement, a lot of young activists started to reclaim the word and use it as a positive identifier. This is important in case someone ever tells you it is something bad, which in part is true. It is also important to understand the origin and intention of the word, and the way it is reclaimed as a source of agency.

### #3:

How do designers play a role in the borderland landscapes and how can design be used as a form of activism? As a designer now, I'm

diving into this "other" world. The world that has the ability, the privilege, and the resources to physically change our environment dramatically. One of the things that resonated with me was when Norma Prieto said, "you can design even if you don't have a transborder experience." What I was able to take away from that, is if you have the ability to help, then help. Another thing she said that resonated with me before she was talking about identity was, "juntos pero no revueltos," which means we're together but not mixed. The reason this was powerful to me, is that it spoke deeply to the ambivalence I have about my own identity. Even if I am Mexican-American, which may be different to those who are the other side of the border, this border is still a wound to the land and people. Although we may have distinct identities, we are still in this struggle together. Same goes to designers. We are all together but not mixed. Everyone has their own identity and role in the landscape, therefore we all have ways we can contribute to this built environment.

Having a diverse set of lecturers was very critical to my understanding, interest, and my capabilities. From Teddy Cruz/Fonna to Norma Prieto in San Diego to Erre, Jill, and Mercel in Tijuana, this trip had a variety of people doing different types of work at different scales. It was great to see how different people had a role in the borderlands and whether I agreed with them or not, they are physically embedded in the community and environment.

What I took out of these lecturers as a future designer is to question the projects:

1. Who does it benefit?
2. Acknowledge when you should or shouldn't intervene
3. Understand the scale in which you work in
4. Understand the history and legacies of the place.
5. Educate oneself of the people already doing work in those environments.



# LUARA BELIK

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*NOT FROM HERE, NOR FROM THERE*

*San Diego - Tijuana Dispatch*

## **Introduction**

Reflecting on our latest visit to San Diego and Tijuana got me thinking about two different scales I would like to approach when it comes to border issues. First, the specifics on each case-study we had/will have the opportunity to visit, and second, a broader discussion on border spaces worldwide, including physical and abstract understandings of what those boundaries are/mean. Observations on the U.S-Mexico border towns gives us the opportunity to see both a concrete example of what these divisions can be, as well as it introduces a theoretical framework on discussions around power through spatial and social organizations. The reflection topics presented below are some ideas that caught my attention while in SD-TJ, but that I believe can be general topics of discussion beyond this specific case-study as well.

I woke up that morning earlier than the others at Tío Jaime's house and sat by the entrance porch. Our house, such as many other middle-upper class

condominiums in that part of Tijuana "came with a view". At far, San Diego and its tall buildings by the water. Before that, a U.S. ecological reserve that serves as a park. And right by our porch, the wall. What did that mean? The relationship different groups of people have with borders can sure be quite different. While idealizing that the fancy/good view is the "others view", one is only perpetuating a stigma/status to that place that might not necessarily be what they wish for. Nevertheless, it is interesting to think how those condominiums not only isolate their selves from the rest of the city but also literally turn their back to Mexico. San Diego, on the other hand, separated by San Ysidro and the Border Field State Park, not only isolate itself from a daily contact with the border but has a limited view of the other city as well.

## **Marcel Sanchez's comment**

Marcel mentioned that he lived right by where we were staying, also having the back of his apartment facing the wall (or the view, apparently), and that he was







approached before by people that would like to escape to the U.S. side through his back window. (That might justify the extra security control by the entrance of our condominium I suppose.)

I wonder how is this relationship between the homeowners and the border-crossers, and how to know more about this.

### **City of Walls**

UC Berkeley professor Teresa Caldeira has an important publication called “City of Walls: Crime, Segregation and citizenship in São Paulo”, where she discusses the relationship São Paulo’s inhabitants have with their city spaces, and how the “walls” between us might not be just physical. I see Tío Jaime’s condominium as the apotheosis of what we could understand as a city of walls, and for me, maybe the psychological effect of the physical isolation by power was the strongest factor of it.

### **Erre**

I could not help but think about the ideas of imprisonment and opportunity. Jill Holsin mentioned her path moving to San Diego as a U.S. citizen and having a much better quality of life in Mexico (considering her income in dollars, and being an expat within a specific community, also working in that location). This common move happening globally means something and get us thinking of ideas of privilege. But on the other hand, it also shows us a different story, of what “opportunity” means and to whom. Marcos Erre’s life story, quite similarly, touches upon the same issues. His family stayed in Mexico, he went to college, pursued a career and so forth, while the cousins that moved to the U.S. side became uninstructed blue-collar workers. Of course, I am not in the position of telling what necessity really means, and how people try any opportunity it might show in order to get out of their specific situation. For good or for bad, I am the person inside of the white van, and I

recognize that. Nevertheless, as a scholar, I believe bringing up topics as such– and understanding them better– is important. So I get inside of the white van. My personal research, similarly, works with ideas as displacement in that sense.

The shock of going to Friendship Park on both sides was striking (crossing and realizing we were at Tío Jaime’s backyard was an important point to be noticed). Tijuana seemed much more friendly. Bands playing, people running on the beach, kids hanging out by the sand, gymnastic equipment, snack stands... Quite a pleasant place for community gathering. Independently of the problems around and what that space represents, I kept on thinking about the idea of freedom. The restriction of not going to the U.S. seemed small compared to being at home; being able to do anything in your country’s land, and not being arrested just for the sake of “being”. The imprisonment felt much stronger on the U.S. side. Those that choose a path of opportunity, many times also choose a path of isolation. As we were walking through the Border Field State Park in order to get to the “friendship” area that looked like a prison, this very young family was in front of us with a stroller. The walk until the park was muddy and extensive. Once the family reached the Friendship Park, they got in a line. When their turn came, they walked fast towards their relatives on the other side and showed them their baby. “Look how it is growing!”. That was sad. That was beautiful. I guess today you can do that through a webcam. I think about my virtual relationship with my mother. I think about everyone else that is in a country that is not theirs, and that is also physically unreachable by foot.

Nevertheless, I also take into consideration how this situation that I was facing was such a specific one, being a border town, or as Norma Iglesias reminded us, the strong aspect of it being a “regional” space on top of everything else. The absurdity

of the situation comes exactly because of this condition, and the lack of porosity this area has. The sad part is not so much not being able to physically see your family, for me at least, but on the inhumane (post-colonial theory discussions) aspect of how the border is organized like that. Ten people per time, a wall within a wall within a fence, barely seeing the other side...The irrational idea of being abroad in your own region.

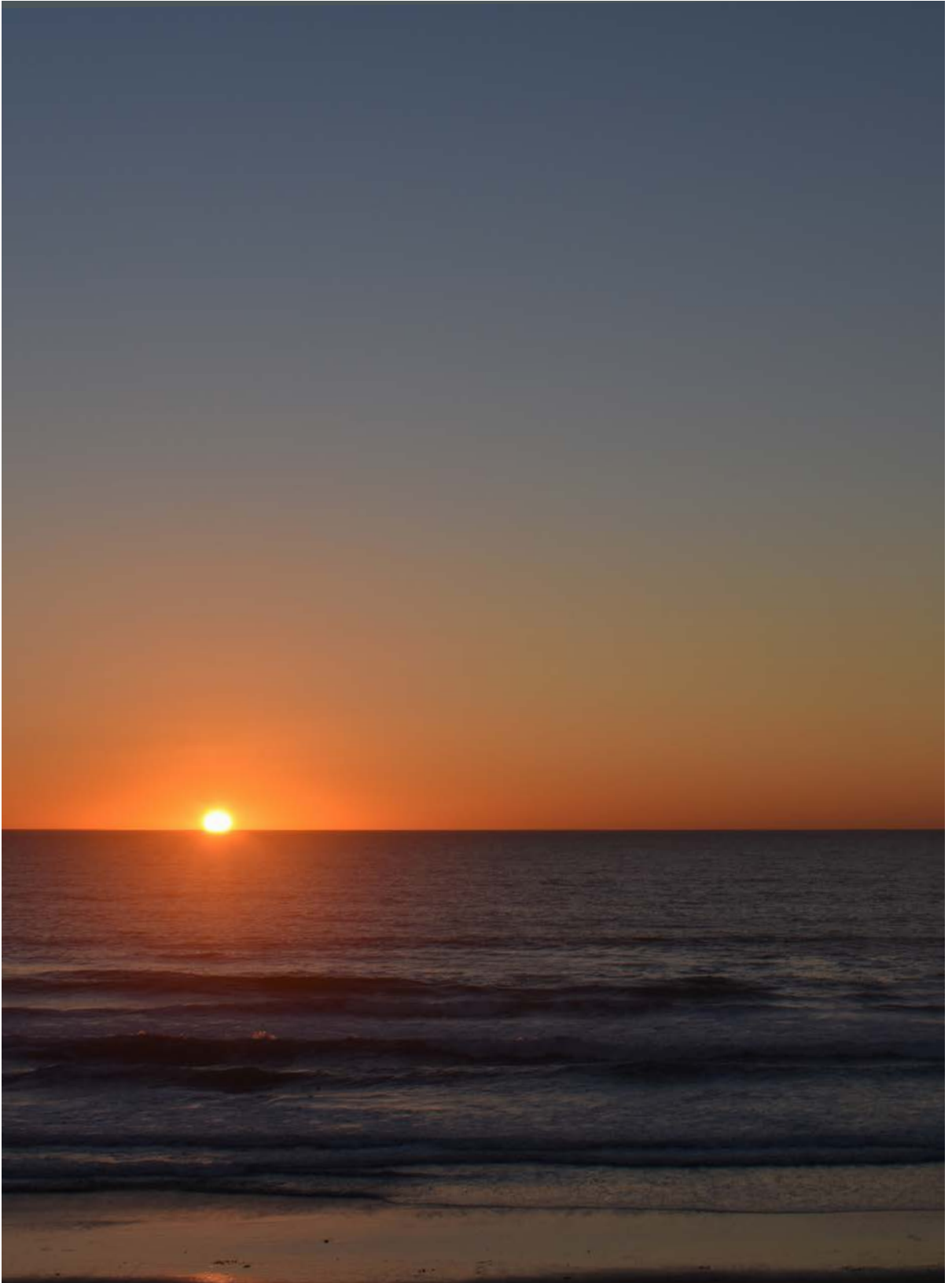
I am still trying to grasp how I feel about our visit to the wall almost as a touristic site. The iconic image of the obelisk being bypassed by the wall might say a great deal about this. The guy shouting “go home to your country”, might contribute to it as well. Thinking how people actually have paid to tour and see the prototypes (models) of the new walls, and how those models are left there after their tests as part of a bigger symbolism of power is another aspect to be looked into.

Bruno Latour and others discussing Actor-Network Theory (that grows from a Foucauldian way of thinking) explain how we are conditioned by the objects that we create as a symbol of our own cultural and social values. The wall sure works as a barrier, but it goes beyond that. It is a social condition (Back to Caldeira’s City of Walls). The monument that was once the obelisk, marking a spatial political border, today gained a new meaning as a historical object, circumscribed within the new social order – the wall. The delimitations between countries were already clear, but the visual effect of a linear blockade speaks louder. Nevertheless, we can also recognize new meanings for the wall as a monument of oppression and dominance that the obelisk might not fully grasp. Can we think about it a symbol of revolt? As the immortalization of the Anthropocene? (can we also think about the wall as the obelisk’s decorated shed? – Venturi + Scott Brown)

Posting a photo of the wall on social networks also felt weird. Visiting spaces of dispute and making them as an icon to be shared as such, in one had contributed to the reinforcement of the strong power that object has, and on the other, by being shared as an absurdity, tries to reinforce the movement fighting against it. It reminds me a bit of the relations we have with holocaust or war memorials, for example. Except here the monument is actively serving a need. I might see it as a monument from one perspective, but I cannot deny its purpose as a tool. The “monumentalizing” of it might be one of the aspects this tool brings with it, and the simple act of being a barricade, another. As for the prototypes, thinking about them as a monument seem more accurate.

### **Findings/Conclusion**

The discussion must go on!  
Feeling the need to better understand these border situations, through my project, I would like to propose to provide the space for further conversation. Not only that, I would like to acknowledge how many other scholars and students within our university approach similar topics that correlate with what we here understand as the “Borderwall urbanism” case-study. How can we better understand the space that we are studying and also broaden these discussions beyond?  
Within the Borderwall urbanism topic, I am trying to recognize sub-categories that can become topics of discussion in a broader manner. Within these topics (individually or collectively selected), I intend to create open events that engage the participants (and a broader audience) in conversation. The format would vary, according to the materials available or selected. Short screenings, round tables, pocket exhibitions, workshops, talks, performances... Some of the workshops could be led by guests and professors, and some could be led by our own group of students depending on their interests.







# ROB UNGAR

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## *BORDERED EARTH*

*San Diego - Tijuana Dispatch*

### **Introduction**

Tijuana is experiencing exponential growth in the past few decades, mainly since NAFTA (North American Fair Trade Agreement) boosted the borderland job market. Population grew to ~3,000,000 people, the distribution of Maquiladoras (manufacturing and assembly factories) around the region continues and the construction of the borderwall, all add to an immense burden on the natural ecosystem and the desert watershed, transcending the US-Mexico political boundary.

The exposed, hilly landscape is being altered by hands, machines and political interests. Social fabric is affected by industrialization and international trade, shifting culture to a regional, transnational hybrid. In the midst of these multiple forces, production and consumption patterns, earth and water, access to health and social services, the basic human activity of growing food and eating it, has a significant role.

### **The Earth is Sculpted**

Tijuana's surface is being transformed in every moment, like a huge earthen sculpture being carved into a never-finished landform. The desert mountains are being flattened, moved, compressed, piled, filled, blown or drained by natural and human forces. This transformation is performed in different scales, all seeking security.

#### **(1)**

The most visible is the sprawl of informal settlements in the valleys and up the hills, starting from dry river banks and up the slopes. This was clear in our drive through Camino Verde, and the drive up Los Laureles. People here are building their homes based on speculation of future urban development, erode the mountain dirt into used tyre walls, and flatten the earth above to build their house. Like ancient agricultural terraces, slopes become a man-made landscape, built with manual labor and found materials. People carve the mountain seeking the security of a home.



(2)

A larger scale earth movement is made by contractors working for private developers, preparing the land for housing projects overlooking the ocean. These horizontal developers use tractors and shovels and trucks to flatten slopes for easier-to-build real estate. Machines carve the mountain seeking a secure investment.

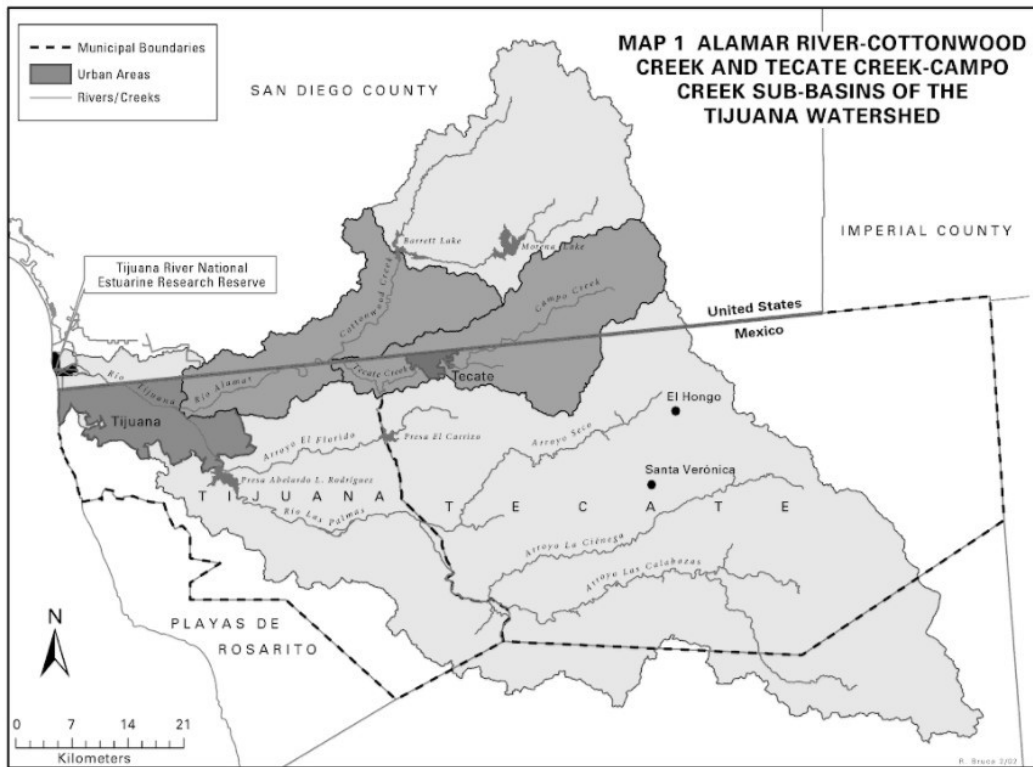
(3)

A yet larger scale soil removal is municipal development, trying to keep up with the accelerated growth of the city. The soft mountains are cut by heavy-duty machinery to allow the D1 highway connect the pacific coast with Tijuana city center and the US border crossings. The state highway is hoping to secure a smooth transportation passage.

(4)

Perhaps the most abrupt and transformative change has been made by the US Government. In 2008, flattening of the Laureles mountain top was undertaken by the US, pushing large amounts of soil to fill the canyon. The steep canyon, where Los Laureles valley ends and the international boundary crosses, is known as “smuggler’s gulch”. A 3-layered wall was built to block crossing, smuggling and violence. The unilateral landfill of the canyon was described by Teddy Cruz as “further physicalizing the collision between natural and administrative boundaries between the ecological and the political”<sup>i</sup>. Dozens of environmental, historical and economic laws were waived to allow the construction of the wall post 9/11, in the name of homeland security.





A massive drainage culvert was built underneath the 180-foot high earth wall to allow rainwater to flow from Los Laureles canyon into the Tijuana river estuary and tidal wetland on the U.S. side of the border. This culvert hosted “Political Equator 3”, a performative cross-border walk for activists and scholars, artists and other stakeholders in June 2011.

(5) Parallel to all these earth movements, the mountains are being sculpted at a much finer scale with every blowing wind and dropping rain. Tijuana’s soft mountains are melting, like wax, with every rain. Sediment is drained with stormwater, flowing through the watershed into the US.

### The Earth is Contaminated

Sediment is not the only substance flowing north beyond the borderwall. When it

rains, and no artists or activists walk in the drains, tons of dump, garbage, raw sewage and contamination flow from Mexico into the U.S. causing environmental hazards, illness and ecological damage along the estuary and coast.

While the ecosystem and beach-visitors on the US side of the border suffer greatly from dozens of spills throughout the past years, residents of the informal settlements at higher elevations in Tijuana suffer on a day-to-day basis. Heaps of garbage pile up in the streets, and dry riverbeds are covered with trash. This is systematic problem of inadequate waste management infrastructure and environmental enforcement. At the root of the problem is illegal dumping from construction or manufacturing industries. Contractors pick up waste and dump it at nights in the

rivers, filling the canyons with industrial grade trash and go unpunished.<sup>iii</sup> From there, the path to losing control and belonging to the living environment is short. Waking up regularly to piles of trash and chemical waste in your neighbourhood, is a fast route to unchain people's connection to nature. Adding to that a large population of non-native dwellers, refugees and temporary workers, a sense of place is hard to attain.

The uncontrolled construction and manufacturing industries have other consequences relating to water and the environment in the form of concrete channelization of rivers.

In their 2002 book "Urban Rivers in Tecate and Tijuana: Strategies for Sustainable Cities", Suzanne Michel and Carlos Graizbord from San Diego state University present in-depth analysis of constraints and forecasts for Tecate and Tijuana rivers in light of rapid urbanization and growing industrial manufacturing, and propose a river-park strategy as a sustainable and socially-beneficial alternative to channelization.

The book also presents a list of contaminants found in Tecate and Tijuana storm water flows, showing clear evidence of commercial and industrial grade waste, sourced in Maquiladoras, as well as illegal dumping and unregulated household usage.<sup>iv</sup> NAFTA has created an unregulated framework for custom-free trade, which may allow economic benefits for some, but took a toll from the environment.

### **Environmental Crisis is an opportunity for Collaboration**

International Boundary and Water Commission — which oversees water treaties between Mexico and the United States and tracks trans-boundary spills ran an investigation in February 2017 and found that amid cuts in federal funding,

huge investment is needed. "IBWC investigation found more than half a billion dollars of need repairs in Tijuana, including dozens of sewage pipes and collectors on the brink of collapse"<sup>v</sup> ... "Before the two countries spent billions of dollars to construct treatment plants on both sides of the border more than a decade ago, around 10 million gallons of raw sewage a day flowed down the Tijuana River and into San Diego County."

### **The Earth Provides**

Corn / Maíz, the main grain of the Americas, is the emblematic element of both Mexican and US cuisine. US industrialized the production of very few varieties of corn to be used as syrup to sweeten pretty much anything. And controls global corn prices through subsidies which sustain millions of families in the corn belt of the mid-west. Mexico has a larger variety of corn and heirloom varieties can still be found in markets and ranches across the country.

However, NAFTA and US subsidies created a situation where Mexican buyers rely on US to supply affordable grains. This situation is changing, as US-Mexico relations are tense and NAFTA talks push Mexico to seek new suppliers from South America. A walk through Mercado Hildago (Hidalgo Market) in Tijuana exposes the richness that corn brings into Mexican culture, and in turn into American culture.







# MICHEAL CLYDE JOHNSON

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## *TOWARDS A PROJECT*

*San Diego - Tijuana Dispatch*

### **Introduction: The Borderwall**

The collaged nature of the border wall is perhaps symptomatic of the schizophrenic nature of relations between the United States and Mexico (and Latin America more broadly). Despite the two countries' inextricably interdependent existence – economically and culturally – an anxiety over maintaining strict separation persists (perhaps a product of this very interdependence). Mexico is the third largest trading partner of the United States – totaling 538 billion USD of imported and exported goods in 2015. 1 Much of the Western half of United States territory was ceded to the US from Mexico after the U.S.-Mexico war of 1848, 2 and Latin and Spanish culture is a major part of the culture of this area and in the United States at large. More native Spanish-language speakers live in the United States than in Spain. 3 But despite this deep integration between the economies and cultures of the United States and Mexico – particularly within the “third-nation” of the borderlands, as described by Michael Dear – a desire remains for a distinct separation between

these two broader societies, manifest in the form of a border wall. Worldwide, this desire for separation and building of border walls appears most often among states “with significantly different economic standing [since 1990].”

The fortification along the U.S.-Mexico border, however, doesn't exist in a single, monolithic form. Rather, the “wall” appears largely as a series of discordant wall- and fence-like structures, set at various distances from the political border on the U.S. side, often as a single structure, and sometimes as multiple layers. 5 On the beach in Tijuana alone, I counted many different materials comprising the barrier along the border: railroad rails (with and without sheet metal adhered at top, with and without chain-link fence attached), thick structural steel square bar or tube, thin steel square bar or tube with steel mesh adhered, thick steel round bar or tube, and ubiquitous corrugated sheet metal, all painted various colors (on the Mexican side), all in various states of decay, rusting in the salty sea air. Most of this fronts additional layers of fencing

that appear to have been more recently erected. Further inland from the beach, this pattern of assemblage continues, with many different fencing typologies littering the border to El Paso, where the Rio Grande River begins to do most of the work. Seeing the wall in person, and describing it here, the outlines of an inner existential conflict begin to take shape. Rather than as a true fortification, “the wall” appears to me now as an expression of a people’s conflict over their own desires. Like a wound variously bandaged, re-opened, re-cut, and bandaged again.

### **The Prototypes**

As the entire length of the border wall is a mashup and assemblage of various materials and fence typologies, the border prototypes themselves appear as a postmodern tapestry of architectonic features, colors, and materials. From painted red and blue, to steel, concrete, smooth, striated, squared and rounded, the prototypes stand in the desert sand like monuments to disjointed thoughts, manic attempts to ward off the other. But in their haphazard stance, they do no such thing. Instead, the prototypes appear as monoliths peering above the existing border fence, looming more as symbolic agents of desire rather than devices of enclosure, expressions of fear rather than strength. In their existing state, they seem to serve their intended purpose – as guard dogs, or rather, scarecrows, or, maybe, gargoyles, a secular attempt to ward off evil. However, it isn’t clear whether either the enclosed or those on the other side are convinced of this illusion. The immediate audience is instead hundreds or thousands of miles away, with these objects truly only functioning through images and media, intended for those who will never encounter them. The prototypes, then, seem to serve simply as props in an ongoing border play.

### **Marcel Sanchez-Prieto**

During our visit with Marcel, we were introduced to broader patterns of development within Tijuana. In moving from the Modulo Prep Library in Camino Verde to Laureles, we could see the dramatic impact made once a neighborhood or area is brought under the auspices of the municipal government, under which it may receive services such as water, electricity, and roads, and housing density increases. This pattern seemed to mirror the development of rural areas in the United States, but within the purview of a municipality. The process that Marcel described, wherein landholders are able to increase the value of their property and gain access to municipal services at citizen expense, wasn’t unfamiliar to discussions of gentrification within the United States. As I remember, rather than paying for services to be installed, landowners would lease their land for informal settlements in order to attract a critical mass of people to live on the land. After which, they were able to approach government agencies and compel them to provide services to the people living on the land, thereby increasing the value of their property for lease or sale for more profitable development. As Marcel noted, Camino Verde, only fifteen years before construction of the library, had existed in the same state of development as Laureles. He also noted the existence of an OXXO on the corner, as an informal early indicator of the area’s integration into the broader municipal system.

### **Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman**

Our first visit, to the Cruz / Forman Studio at the University of California, San Diego, brought many of the larger issues surrounding our trip immediately to bear. Namely, to what end do we work, and whom do we serve. Cruz provided a blunt defense of his projects (particularly in conversation around the maquiladoras): one must produce and engage how one can, within the broader context as it exists,







rather than wait for a “revolution” or ideal conditions. More nuance probably exists here, but it was meant to counter, I think, those who might ponder these issues and engage through thought rather than intervention in the built environment. I think it’s still a question worth considering, but alongside a broader practice, which seems to be Cruz and Forman’s true approach. The ethics around Cruz’s maquiladoras project is worth considering, as one can still engage while remaining more skeptical within a broader context: essentially, does worker housing built from raw manufacturing materials left over from the maquiladora help the

worker or the factory owner (or both, but to what degree)? Cruz’s description of community engagement sessions as sites of contestation – the meeting of one group’s (design) expertise with another group’s (community knowledge) – was simultaneously provocative, invigorating, and a bit impolitic. But truly creative collaborations can be antagonistic, as long as mutual respect remains. Cruz’s preference for projects that endure, rather than temporary interventions, seemed to be a common – if not always feasible – desire. However, I think that in their relative ease and quickness of implementation, temporary interventions





can be productive in inserting functions and ideas into a space.

### **Towards a Project**

A larger question around the ethics of insertion and engagement persists, and I wonder if this is a question of power, or an imbalance of power, whether real or perceived. I think, there is a desire to provide a service, broadly speaking, without inadvertently enacting a play of humanitarianism. This reminds me of a debate within architecture around Shiguru Ban's work; Specifically, to what degree are architects responsible for the conditions in which they work, and in that work, are they

responsible to ameliorate, free to ignore, or simply work within, those conditions? In Ban's case, he designed refugee housing from inexpensive material, but perhaps ignored the context in which the desire existed for use of cheaper material – in other words, the change in material benefited NGO's but not refugees. "... Ban's shelters did not only introduce refugees to Gihembe [the refugee camp]; through the exchange of valuable aluminum poles for valueless cardboard tubes, those shelters also introduced refugees to the abjection that humanitarian assistance at Gihembe entailed." Since previously, the refugees were able to sell their aluminum poles for more economic independence from





the camp. As well, In working to address a crisis, care should be taken not to reify the conditions of the crisis. “The refugee camp at Gihembe therefore exists as a permanently temporary space where the threshold conditions of bare life extend indefinitely into the future.”

And what of snark? We may needle those with whom we disagree, but in service to whom? Ourselves – in a dramatic accumulation of cultural and professional capital – and to please those with whom we already agree? Or as a critical gesture, one that (hopefully) alters people’s perception of an issue to realize previously unseen connections?

I would like the project to take architectural form, that is, as an object or proposal which defines space. I was struck by the abundance

of steel, wireframe-like structures I saw as we walked and drove around Tijuana. These structures were in service to many different functions: market stalls, vending carts, shelves, awnings, billboards, shelters, and were often covered in tarps or other materials stretched or simply set across often parallel poles defining surfaces. These could perhaps be seen as highly articulated geometries in an otherwise chaotic visual field of curves, solids, colors and materials. I wonder, then, if such a structure, or, even, a collage of such structures, could start to define spaces of calm, a resting place, providing shade, seating and maybe wayfinding. Perhaps a Traveling Architecture, akin to Robert Morris’s Traveling Sculpture, moving through the space of the border in some rule-bound way. And looking to Luis Aldrete’s “Pilgrim Route” for those on pilgrimage.









# CHEYENNE CONCEPCION

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## BORDERS VERSUS BARRIERS

*San Diego - Tijuana Dispatch*

### **Reflections**

This reflection discusses my encounters with visible walls and invisible ones in Tijuana/San Diego.

Tijuana felt like a fortified city.

Obviously, the US-Mexico border wall haunted our peripheral vision each day, but the fortified layouts of each of the spaces we occupied provoked this idea. The symbology of the wall has remanufactured itself throughout Tijuana's urban fabric. From Erre's workshop studio, to Telefonica, to the gated community we came home to, there was always a clear separation between the street and the interior space. On Marcos Ramirez Erre's street alone there were three doors that blended into the properties' wall, functioning like a barrier, not an entrance. Similarly, Telefonica was unrecognizable from the street, only recognizable after passing through two 10 ft tall black metal gates. The U-Shaped court protected diners from the world outside. Even the upper-class Tijuana neighborhoods have employed gates (and security guards) to create divides. The market was also

a private-space, gated with a booth layout functioning as a barrier to the surrounding city. Again, on the walk up to the library, I wondered why a group of boys prefer to play behind the chain gate of their building's courtyard, when there was an empty park across the street.

To try to differentiate The Border wall from barrier walls, I identified two scenarios walls for security versus walls for safety. Security is defined as protecting one's assets from the other, while safety is described as being protected from the other. And if the U.S.-Mexico Border grew out of a need to "protect" U.S. Asetts, what does fortification in the sister-city imply about Mexico's perceptions around safety in the borderland. How have these perceptions about safety and fortification been amplified by the border-wall infrastructure built by the U.S. ? These thoughts are still being developed, I cannot help but notice the abrasive architectural forms. It feels like fear is being re-manufactured.



### **Rasquachismo:**

According to Chicana/o art scholar Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, rasquachismo should be considered first as an attitude and a sensibility, and secondarily as a set of formal art qualities.

My ideas around rasquachismo are romantic. Repurposed objects as objects of resilience from less privileged hands. Making do with what you have, upheld by a sense of pride and swagger. There were many examples of rasquache in Tijuana, but came few and far between in San Diego. In Tijuana, more popular forms of rasquache came as barriers, fences and erosion control. Rasquache for

vendors appear to be more playful and colorful. Rasquache-style interior decor seems to have been fully appropriated by Beer-Pubs around California. By chance, I am returning to San Diego this weekend, where I hope to see other forms of rasquache.

Moving forward, I want to go deeper into the rasquachismo attitude and phenomena. Past the low hanging fruit of beer pubs and fences. What object, or series of objects can I make which can create a new collective memory of what rasquachismo means.



### **Sound Waves:**

Collecting Sounds. Traversing the border I was thinking about something I can create that can traverse or “break” the border. Sound or smoke came to mind as having the most porosity and least amount of associated control. The sounds of Tijuana were vibrant and entertaining for me. In Rosarito, the layers of sounds generated by the night clubs were contrasted by huge speakers on wheels that groups of young boys tolled around the beach. The endless loud advertisements and conversations in the street layered on top the sounds of buses and honking impatient drivers. . There was a sense of celebration. I kept reflecting on how quiet

San Diego is in comparison. How different the worlds are in this way.

I wonder what sounds can tell us about our collective cultures. I am a visual person, but the visual differences are so clear. In the same way music can traverse different cultures, can a collection of sounds from each city, tell a different story? And if each city’s “song” does tell a story, what does it mean when compared side by side? How do I engage the border with sound? While I’m intrigued by the opportunity to make hearing the primary sense versus vision, I don’t want this project to be an archival of sounds, and I want to be able to have a visual connection to.





# SOPHIA ARBARA

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## CITY OF WALLS

*San Diego - Tijuana Dispatch*

### **Introduction**

By the time a wall claims its existence it becomes also a subject of questioning. For me, it was difficult to look at it in one way. Is it just another wall or is it the Wall? The Wall, the where “normal” behavior ends and gives space to social and political differences, oppression, conflict, division and supremacy. Or the wall, a bunch of old rails, wires and steel, a material, man-made construction that will decompose over time? Sometimes, it seemed to me as if the “other side” wouldn’t exist and yet, others, that everything is part of the same interrelated system. Meeting with Norma Iglesias, made this thoughts even more intense: Tijuana and San Diego, two cities whose majority of citizens may have never crossed or met, thus so dependent one to another.

### **Overall approach**

From the beginning of our trip, my thoughts have been focusing on how a project of research could not only be seen as a place for personal education

or appropriation of a major issue with severe impact into people’s life, but how interventions, even the smallest or biggest scale, can lay the foundations towards future change. Is there a way to move from solutions of “healing” and “repairing” to acts that could build upon different realities?

Teddy Cruz’s talk raised important issues to this question; first, in a practical level, according to his point of view, institutions should be linked more with local actors and communities and second, design and policy should build upon alternatives of public thinking, within bottom-up policies and community-based dynamics.

### **Tijuana: a city of walls**

It takes only a while in Tijuana to realize that it’s not only The Wall, but the Walls that spatially define this city. Fenced houses, gated communities, fences made from the most expensive till the self made, stitched materials, exist in almost every part of the city. New neighbourhoods emerge, with identical repeated





housing units and fenced properties and neighbourhoods. Social segregation is happening in multiple levels; in a binational level, in the scale of the neighborhood, in the scale of the individual property. However, Tijuana is not the exception of the rule. As a professor in Brazil kept reminding me: in Latin American cities it is not only that we build walls to exclude the poor, but it is the walls we build to distinguish ourselves from the ones that don't have.

### **Reflection Topic #3**

“Which side are you on?” During our trip, I wanted to capture what is happening not

in the level of the eye, but in the level of the ground. The way crowds move on public space, the way they dress, their age group can tell a story about the place. Together with the material aspect of what lies on the ground, a narrative of the places we visited can be created. Trash, informal markets, left or lost objects, objects for sale. While we were driving around the city, I started looking up; signage was the most common thing to see; KFC, Chevron, OXXO, Starbucks, Soriana, Calimax and a couple of insurance companies were repeating most of the time. I started asking myself: by looking at only one of the two points of view, how would someone identify the place, without knowing





where it is? And how different would the scene look in San Diego? As expected, the first signages to encounter were not very different from the ones back in Tijuana. Starbucks, Taco Bell, KFC and Shell, reminded me that borders don't apply in multinational companies and commodities of a globalized world. What if signages, instead of promoting companies - major economic drivers, were advertising markets of informal economies?

### **Findings/Conclusions**

Going back to the U.S. and visiting Friendship Park from the other side,

has been the most intense moment, the highlighting of the border, being the place of family reunification. Only 10 at a time.

Moving towards the ocean and the edge of the border, placing myself out of the context of political conflicts and the underlying meanings of the wall, I wanted to be on the other side; I started questioning who is within the walls and who is outside. Does it have to be someone at all? What if we would be inside the walls? Thinking towards possible project ideas, challenging this concept might be an idea for further development.



Ambiguities, elements that connect more to the invisible than to the visible space become the link among the border. Therefore, apart from factual data, it is important to investigate the experiential aspect of borders, such as light, temperature, material properties, sound or smell- combined with the physical presence of a perceiving subject. The role of the local actors, users and inhabitants becomes crucial. If we want to interfere in the border, it is through their eyes that we can approach and address the issues of it. Like in literature, “...The reader has to become the as a co-producer of the narrative - indeed, it is the reader who appropriates the story and makes it his or her own...”

Marc Schoonderbeek and Klaske Havik in their paper, search for experimental ways in which Urban Design and Architecture can approach the border; prescription is one of them, and could be an important tool to consider. They mention: “As a tool,

prescription takes into account one of the most challenging aspects of design: the evocation of what is not yet there. It offers ways to deal with the reality of a given site precisely by immediately countering it with imagination. Prescriptive instruments derived from, amongst others, surrealist writers, generate associative connections and metaphors, allowing a look at sites from a very specific viewpoint, informed by a (fictional) hypothesis or metaphor.” Ronald Rael, at the end of his book “Borderwall as Architecture” raises the question that “...we must also work toward finding relative methods to raze the walls of racism, misogyny, homophobia, poverty, religious persecution, and fear that now more than ever define us as as citizen of these divided states.” And the wall, if not clearly states, it keeps reminding us that these tensions are here; paradoxically existent, both physically and conceptually.





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# LIZZIE STURR

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## TO SCALE A WALL

*San Diego - Tijuana Dispatch*

### **Introduction**

In his book “Why Walls Won’t Work,” Michael Dear describes Tijuana as having “more buzz than any other border city.” Dear describes that over the last decade, Tijuana has enjoyed a reputation as “a ‘creative city’ where a combination of demographic dynamism, economic growth, and an innovative do-it-yourself cultural scene combined to produce an unprecedented explosion of contemporary art, music photography, film, video, architecture, food, and fashion” (page 155).

While our trip was not entirely representative of the Tijuana experience (staying in a gated community, driving around in a van), the people we met (Erre, Marcel, Norma) and the unique experiences (Nortec show, nightlife, Telefónica) helped to provide a better picture into the systems that Dear describes as ‘Border Fusion.’

For this dispatch I am focusing on natural systems in the urban realm

(meeting points + topography) and the similarities I found between my experiences with the Israel/Palestine Wall.

### **Dos Ciudades, Una Región: Natural Systems**

“The environment does not know boundaries. On the contrary, the geography and resources that we share are the element that validates our friendship and binds our destinies.”

- Raul Arriaga,

*(Mexican Environmental Protection Agency)*

We briefly discussed that a closely-linked environmental problem requiring international cooperation from both sides is pollution from industrial and residential sources. We witnessed first hand the raw sewage while walking in Friendship Park. While I think that this is an extremely important topic and a whole project could be completed around water and pollution prevention, I want to focus on public spaces that are created for ‘natural disaster’ preparedness. As mentioned in



the quote above, natural disasters do not know boundaries -- the sister cities will face similar issues simultaneously along the border and I think that these spaces, marked in the urban fabric of these cities, could make for an interesting project. I was curious about the many green circles that I saw in a variety of different forms and sizes around the city. One passerby explained it was a meeting point for earthquakes while two other people questioned did not know what they represented. My research found that these circles are called 'punto de reunión,' or meeting point. Each circle marks a predesignated evacuation point for a nearby building. There are a lot of reasons a building may be evacuated but such procedures are important in a city and country where residents need to plan for the aftermath of earthquakes. My research found that these circles are common across the country and people have written about them in Mexico City. These painted street-side markers were part of safety regulations launched in 2002. The positioning and inclusion of these mandated meeting points is determined by building owners, not the government. Markers are supposed to be far enough from the building to avoid falling debris but often this is not the case in dense urban areas (or if cables will fall). These spaces are all used in a similar way but all have different forms -- sometime squares, sometimes rectangles, all of varying sizes with arrows pointing at a central dot. The green-and-white color scheme of Mexico's meeting points is the typical color for emergency exit signs outside of the United States. Green generally represents no burning, safe, etc. In the United States schools and companies have meeting locations for emergency drills (fire, earthquake, etc.) but they are not physically marked. The color and style of meeting point signs in the US isn't standardized -- more research will have to be done in El Paso to see if the space is marked.

I am most excited about this topic because I think it would be the most applicable to

implement in a wide range of Sister-Cities along the border. Despite their effectiveness, the importance of these markers is firmly fixed in the collective memory of the people. In Mexico City, earthquake drills are carried out each year on September 19th (in remembrance of the 1985 earthquake), and residents gather around the puntos de reunión.

### **The Wall: Scale + Topography**

Before starting this class I was shown Josh Begley's short film 'Best of Luck With the Wall,' which follows the US-Mexico border by stitching together 200,000 satellite images. See link below \*caution motion sickness warning.\*

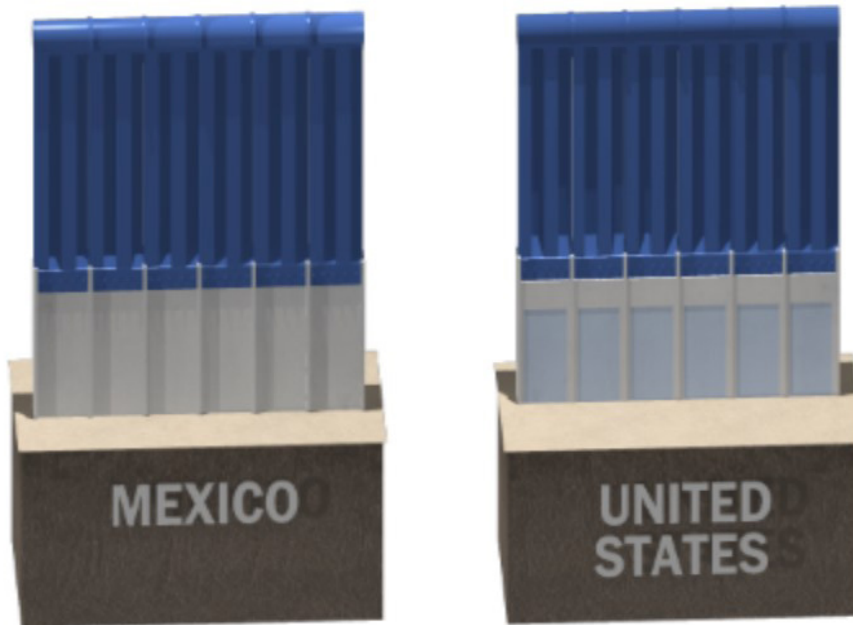
<https://vimeo.com/189015526>

I was extremely fascinated with the 6+ minutes of rapidly changing landscapes, topographies, hydraulic, and city systems that exist along the US-Mexico border. Although its fast and the author does not address the existing wall infrastructure, politics, or people, etc. I think this video does a good job at trying to show the vastness and variety of the territory that exists between the two countries. While visiting Tijuana and San Diego I was constantly reminded of this flickering as we drove along the wall in Tijuana and the sheer changes in topography, in sharp contrast with the expensive and surreal ways the fence followed the border which we could see while driving or even from the roof deck of our Airbnb.

In Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the U.S. Mexico Boundary, Ron Rael discusses "Smuggler's Gulch," a canyon bookended by two mesas (which we drove past in Tijuana). The gulch, which was a 520-acre highly functioning coastal scrub/tidal wetland ecosystem, drained stream overflow and runoff from Mexico into the the Tijuana River Estuary watershed (it was one of the nation's largest wetland restoration projects) where it was cleaned and released back into the watershed. The







*Concrete base with solid metal wall*

*Cost: \$406,319*

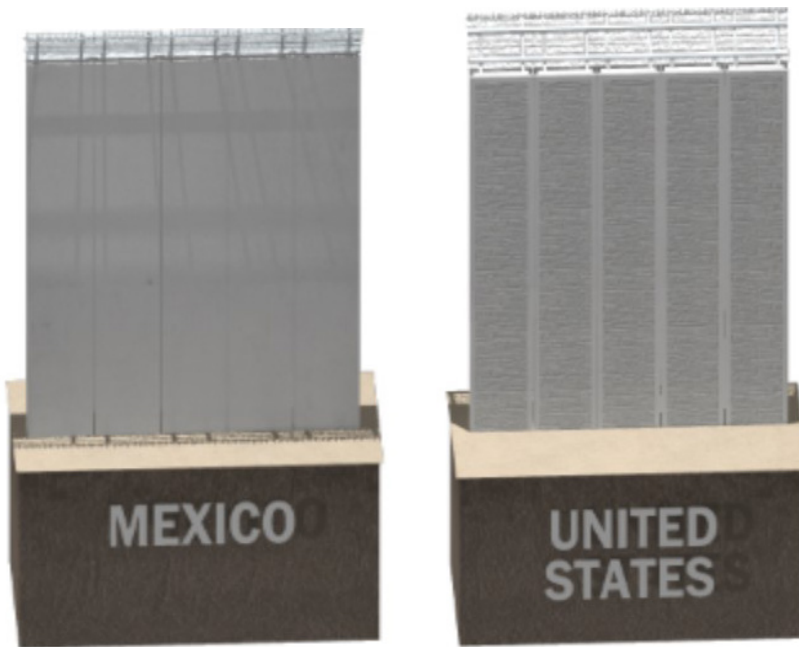
Gulch was filled in 2008 with 2 million cubic yards of soil (taken from the surrounding mesas) and larger wall and surveillance infrastructure were installed on top (lights, three walls). This effort was part of a larger project which built 3.5 miles of wall at a cost of \$60 million. The solution for the drainage was to construct a 680' culvert which rapidly accelerates runoff and floods the estuary and surrounding farmland with polluted water. This poses as a health risk as well as it damages the habitat of the native plants and animals (page 147).

In Tijuana we also saw the massive building projects that capped the mountainside to cut roads (and the plants/trees that were breaking through), as well as the massive housing projects that flattened mountain tops to provide more housing. As mentioned in my first reflection topic, messing with the natural

and hydrological systems of these places will have a much greater and lasting implications on the region as a whole. Current regional policies are weak -- will there be more effective regional policies in the future? What would the cost be to repair these ecosystems and how does it compare to Trump's border wall prototypes?

### **The Wall: Israel + Palestine**

Frequently throughout the trip I was reminded of the time I spent traveling between Israel and Palestine and the "architecture of the Border. Not surprisingly, one of the prototypes that we visited was designed and built by a large Israeli defense contractor owned by state-run Israel Aerospace Industries (ELTA). ELTA was the only international contractor to win a bid to create a prototype. The company, which makes radar and other gear, opened its new U.S. headquarters in Maryland in May.



*Fisher Sand + Gravel Co.*

Cost: \$365,000

## Conclusions

While I am not sure the form or point of view/critique of my final project, I think I would be interested in exploring how these spaces could be utilized not only during a time of crisis but reactivated to connect or share information between the two cities. The following is a list of my “questions” or topics that I am exploring:

1. Is the wall one of the locations of “crisis”?
2. Ron mentioned that El Paso / Juarez border is located in a valley, and noise travels freely inbetween the two cities. Could these locations be strategically located to communicate with the other side (like the house next to the Airbnb --see below)?
  - a. OR, do they frame a certain view or item (create sitelines)
3. What is the form? What is the color? Is it bilingual?
4. Can people directly communicate with

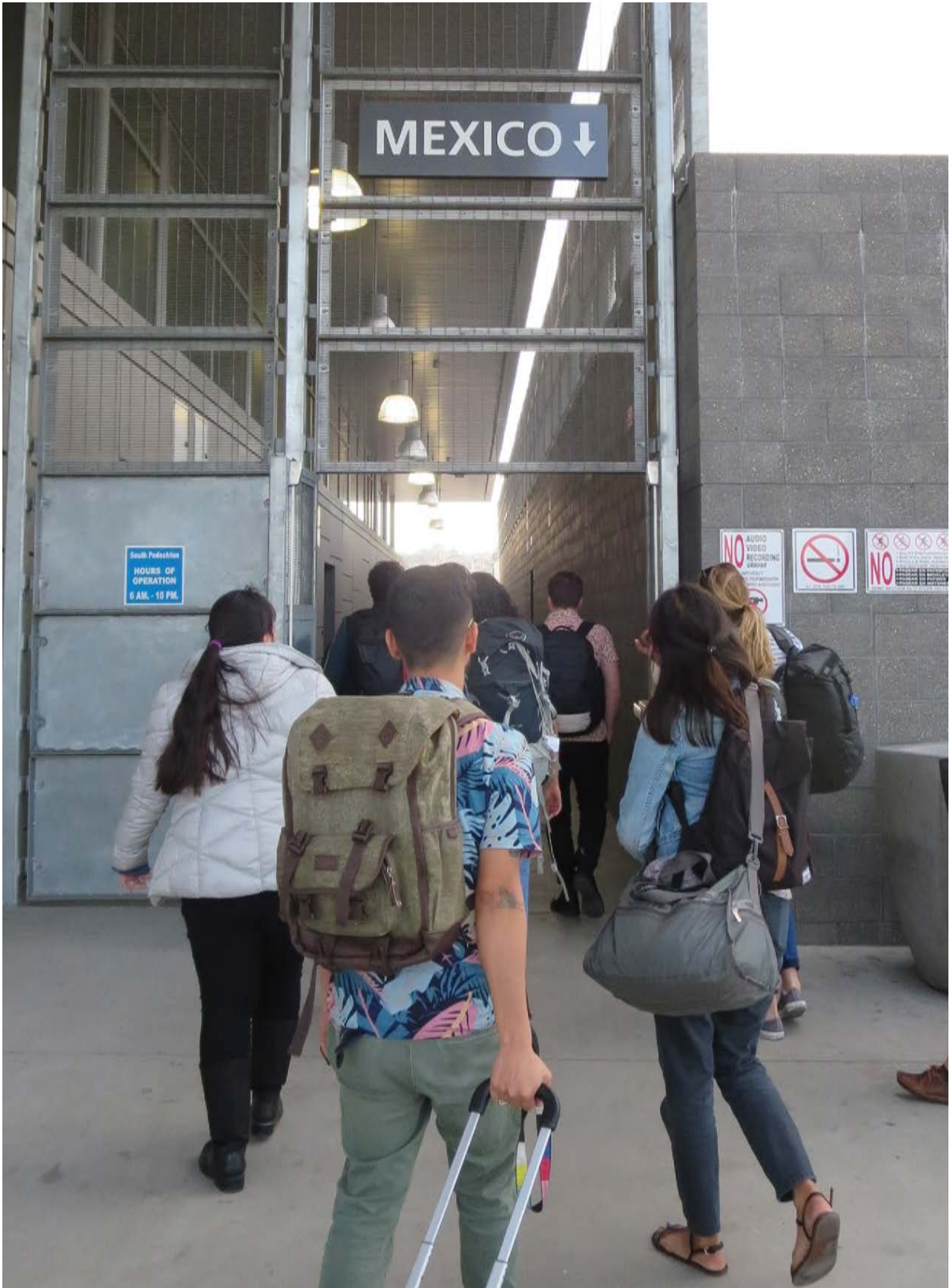
one another in these spaces?

5. Are they permanent or temporal?

6. What additional information or instructions are provided in this space?

An interesting concept from Michael Dear’s book is looking at a cross-section from the most frequently trending topics in six twin cities -- “the topics represent the usual melange of ephemera and quirky obsessions but also reveal a diversity of cross-border exchange and topical concerns focusing on events from the otherside” (page 100). I want my project to not exist in the physical realm but would be interested in using social media or other platforms to bring greater information exchange and dialogue between the two cities. I am struck by Dear’s statement, “popular memory may also be at work in creating public perceptions of a distinct territory.”





# WON CHA

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## WHEN DEVELOPMENT STOPS

*San Diego - Tijuana Dispatch*

### **Introduction**

Is architecture/development a democratic process? Do we assume, when creating/providing for the voiceless and vulnerable in a society, that “anything is better than nothing” because of a vertical, or as Teddy Cruz explained, a “top down” methodology of governance? Does this not reinforce the very systemic and ideological dynamics which positions large groups of people as criminals and or victims? Hasn't this “savior” discourse been proven again and again not only in development politics but colonial history, imperial history, westward expansion, industrialization, Native American history, etc... to be incredibly destructive?

### **Quality of life vs. Standard of Living**

Living by toxic sewage, lacking clean water, not having access to basic amenities, building a home without a proper foundation are serious issues that must be dealt with. But how does this work happen with the people? instead of for the people?

In a country where the gap between extreme wealth and extreme poverty is wide, development and the work to establish a standard of living are interlinked. Government agencies, NGOs, nonprofits, multinationals, corporate entities, and firms in their many iterations have their individual mission statements, areas of expertise, intents, funding streams, and projected timelines. At the same instance “informal settlements” are being examined, global multinationals a few miles away are investing in luxury condominiums. National and international chains (Dairy Queen, OXXO) have already taken root. A few hills over, what was described to me as “settlement like residential white cubes”, are built in large clusters. A clinical white that mirrors the pragmatic white of the Library of Ideas, which anticipates the criminal behavior of the very populace its meant to serve.

### **When Does Development Stop?**

Can we learn from other cities and countries that have made the jump from extreme poverty to a so called globally recognized abundance? Nations like Singapore and South Korea are continually obsessed with this notion of Progress at the detriment of its most vulnerable populations and the erasure of cultures. How do we accept that the experiences, desires, and cultural knowledge specific to communities should be respected as an ecology that is complex. That by dropping a modernist white cube, complete with “protection gates”, at the center of an impoverished community, a multifaceted array of desires are produced. How doesn't a teenager who has “risen from her circumstance” see her community and her family within the very lens she has been viewed through? Cant this critical lens, aimed again at the immobile in society, be pointed, instead, at centers of power which gain from inequity?

“People are not vessels to be poured into.”

As trained and educated architects, designers, educators, and artists that have the ability to speak, that assume positions to speak for others, should we not rethink how we listen and question why we are listening? Can we agree that it is not enough to “just do”... that we are forever dealing with the consequences of well/ill intentioned people with ability, that have just “done” for others?

### **A Project:**

I've come to the conclusion that with the limited time I have, my personal limited understanding of the subject matter, and the nature of this course... I want to develop a project that can be useful to the Berkeley course cohort and possibly others interested in understanding the proposed borderwall.

Understanding the unmeasured and unmeasurable psychological toll the current wall and the idea of the proposed borderwall site has on people on both

sides. It is fair to ask: who are the people, specifically the executives, behind the companies selected to create the prototypes. Following the works of Mark Lombardi, Walid Raad, and Hans Haacke...

I will attempt to trace the personal, financial, organizational, and political interweaving behind the individual executives behind the following companies:

*W.G. Yates & Sons Construction Co. ELTA North America*

*ELTA Israel*

*Caddell Construction Co.*

*Texas Sterling Construction Co.*

*KWR Construction Inc. Fisher Sand & Gravel Co.*

I would also like to build replicas of the walls as surfaces for the investigative work. Due to time and a lack of technical ability I might not be able to do this. If anyone is interested in a collaboration, please let me know.





LÍMITE  
DE LA  
REPUBLICA  
MEXICANA

La destrucción  
e dislocación  
de este monumento  
es un delito  
punible por  
México y los  
Estados Unidos

# GABRIELLA WILLENZ

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## *NOT FROM HERE, NOR FROM THERE*

*San Diego - Tijuana Dispatch*

### **Introduction**

I find “reality” to be a complicated site of investigation. I’m interested in researching the construct and mechanics that create what we experience as “real”. I also want to continue and expose for myself my own blind sights, assumptions and ideas I take for granted.

### **Wall Prototypes**

At first, I was a bit disappointed with the visit to the prototypes’ location. I thought we would get to approach, touch, test. Climbing on tiers, jumping, or riding paralyzed with terror atop of the van, just to get a glimpse and a picture made those outrageous structures into a rare and longed-for object of desire. But then I thought how interesting it is that what is obscuring the view of the prototypes was the already realized, thus real, fences, now an unarguable fact. The fences that divide People into separate entities quickly changes themselves from cause to effect while constructing the idea of some kind of inherent difference, is obscuring the view of its mechanics.

I love sketches, models, drafts and prototypes as they declare both their tentative nature, their plan to be modified and also function as a symbolic gesture that points to the constructed (= not natural or inevitable) nature of the later, final, product or policy. Mapping, as James Corner states in his essay *The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention*, although seemingly neutral, because of its reliance on subtraction can enable repressed and new representation to come forth and to uncover power relations and hierarchies. Ron Real’s book *Borderwall as Architecture*, full of speculative walls and wall-usages highlights the possibility of imagining another reality or at least challenges some of the basic customary practices regarding the border.

### **Fences Behind Fences After Fences**

In my work I am very interested in binaries, delineations, demarcations, structures of separation and control (thinking back to the ancient Greek “divide and conquer”, *dīvide et imperā*). Having the ability to delineate between







things is needed both for physical survival, as well as communication and survival within a socialized community. But the social-political implications of nationalities, genders, race and class divisions are deeply troubling. One of my typologies was fences that appear through other fences. I'm interested if understanding that we all are part of a complex network of ever-shifting context reliant boundaries can make us question the system altogether. I've been thinking a lot about Gayatri Spivak's idea of Strategic Essentialism. By this, she refers to a minority group's need to unite and portray a simplified essential identity in order to fight for rights and power. I am interested in this idea because it holds both a formal, definable structure or grouping but at the same time exposes itself as a tactic, a strategy, an action needed in response to political inequality, but still holding on to its ephemerality. Can shining a light on all the levels of physical delineation and separation, be it walls between rooms, fences around property, signs or barriers that indicate transitions between counties etc., undermine the grandiosity of the borderwall? Not sure.

### **Doing Good**

This is a complicated topic but it came up several times during the trip, before and after so I'll try to unpack some of my thoughts. This is a "wicked problem" (Laura introduced me to this term) which means any solution just points to new problems. One can never anticipate the full effects of an action. Farther more, the number of perspectives and categories of evaluation make all actions "fail" on some level.

Are the projects by Teddy Cruz and Fonna doing good? Are they not also accepting and reinforcing a state of inequality? Instead of getting a Maquiladoras to give their scraps of metal isn't it better they would pay a fair wage to their employees? But aren't real metal left-overs better

than a hypothetical change of payment policy? What does it mean working with a community to understand their needs? Doesn't that also embody power relations? Isn't there pretentious built within? But isn't that better than indifference?

It seemed to me that Jill herself was having conflicted feelings toward the importance of empowering vs. the necessity of improvement of infrastructure. Can one even work without the other? So do we wait until there is an opportunity for a complete reality-TV-like makeover or do we try and make a change that feels like pressing on the gas pedal of a Jeep deeply buried in mud?

Was I the only one that felt the library of knowledge was very empty? For and with the community, thoughtful design, even two macs, but what is the impact? Is this something we can quantify? Do I believe these quantifications? Yes, I heard there is one girl that went to the library program and is now studying art somewhere. Is that enough? What if the alternative is nothing?



# GABRIELLA NAVARRO

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## PROTOTIPOS DE MUROS ABSURDOS

*San Diego - Tijuana Dispatch*

*“Nosotros somos los culpables de esta destrucción, los que no hablamos su lengua ni sabemos estar en silencio. Los que no llegamos en barco, los que ensuciamos de polvo sus portales, los que rompemos sus alambradas. Los que venimos a quitarles el trabajo, los que aspiramos a limpiar su mierda, los que anhelamos trabajar a deshoras. los que llenamos de olor a comida sus calles tan limpias, los que les trajimos violencia que no conocían, los que transportamos sus remedios, los que merecemos ser amarrados del cuello y los pies; nosotros, a los que no nos importa morir por ustedes, ¿cómo podía ser de otro modo? Los que quién sabe qué aguardamos. Nosotros los oscuros, los chaparros, los grasientos, los mustios, los obesos, los anémicos. Nosotros, los bárbaros.”*

Yuri Herrera, Señales que Precederán al Fin del Mundonémicos. Nosotros, los bárbaros.”

### **A Proud Tijuanaense (Once More)**

I've come to realize that I have perhaps internalized a love-hate relationship with my hometown, one that manifests itself in the duality of border citizenship: neither here nor there. To the rest of Mexico, we are the odd younger sibling that doesn't quite fit into the family; to the U.S., we are the one that will never be good enough. Being Tijuanaense in itself is struggle with identity, a

perpetual attempt at reconciliation. Hence, my feelings toward Tijuana have range-- sadness and anger at the rampant disparities and corruption that exist, love and pride for my hometown that has risen from the ashes multiple times. Lately, perhaps as a self-defense mechanism, my feelings have been more of reluctance, as I am coming to realize that I will probably never call it home again. But, what I





had been missing (and in some way was hoping to recover through this studio) is experiencing what makes Tijuana la fea so beautifully unique. That inspiration first came in the presentation by Norma Iglesias. I am ashamed to say that I often forget how Tijuana forces one to confront realities that are often hidden elsewhere--there is beauty to be found in that.. Her discussion of the Tijuanaense as people who are chaotic, dynamic and therefore resilient really challenged me to confront this idea I've seemed to developed that everything needs to be well defined and figured out. The city itself and its people are defiant of this notion! Her approach to this phenomena of borderisms and attempt to provide meaning was thought-provoking and inspiring.

### **Crossing the Border: A New(ish) Experience**

One thing that really stuck with me and has taken some time to unpack was the feeling I had when we crossed the border into Tijuana. This is not a new event for me--I spent 7 years of my life doing it nearly every day--but it was the first time I'd crossed through recently opened PedWest. It wasn't the militarized feeling of the space nor walking into the unknown, it was what was at the end of that tunnel that frazzled me. Never in my 33 years of crossing this border on foot had I been stopped to fill out paperwork. This act in itself was not much, but the message behind it left me uneasy: we will no longer let you walk freely into our country. That sense of relief that usually accompanies the crossing into Mexico was no longer there! Instead I was met with skeptical attitudes and an unwelcoming feeling. The customs officer did not appreciate my inquisitiveness, and become somewhat malicious (of course, this is my interpretation) when he felt the need to reiterate multiple times that I am not a Mexican citizen, so to save myself the questions. This 5 minute interaction provoked two feelings: first, I loathe the fact that it seems like a reactive move to the conflictive narrative around the border.

Secondly, it felt as if I'd been unmasked--am I no longer a Mexican citizen? Have I chosen the extranjeros side of the aisle, never to return again?

### **Caminos Verdes (y blancos, por alguna razón)**

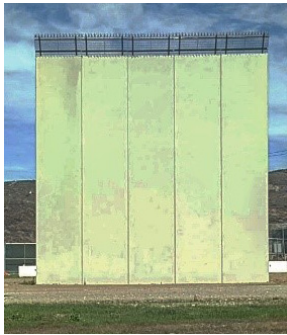
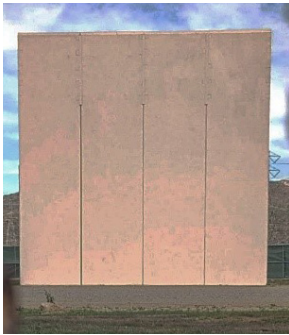
To me, our visit to the Biblioteca Casa de las Ideas was perhaps the most thought-provoking in relation to my professional motivations. I am, in essence, studying to deploy interventions at the community level in order to ameliorate the disparities that exist in society. Since coming to grad school, I've really struggled with how to effectively pursue participatory planning practices and not perpetuate the top-down interventions that we are accustomed to. I had conflicting feelings about both this project and Teddy Cruz's, mostly because these interventions are coming from external actors hoping to create neighborhood change through interventions they have deemed appropriate. I also struggle with the field of community development in a more general sense, as it targets its efforts in marginalized communities without necessarily acknowledging the actions or policies that have created these conditions--in other words, it doesn't necessarily address the status quo that keeps perpetuating these disparities, and lets those who perpetuate them off the hook footloose and fancy-free. The ironies of creating community spaces while retracting to your walled-off neighborhood at the end of the day, feeling good about your charity work are not lost here, as I'm sure many of us felt. As a Tijuanaense, this felt more personal, and it leaves me further questioning my positionality in my chosen professional field.

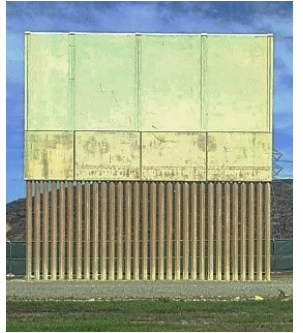
### **Prototipos de Muros Absurdos**

I don't think there is much to say here. To me, this is the embodiment of absurdity. As I showed these to my dad, he felt compelled to show me all the memes he and his friends have been enjoying. Catapults, ladders, and such.









# SOPHIA SOBKO

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## *FENCES BEHIND FENCES AFTER FENCES*

*San Diego - Tijuana Dispatch*

“Fuck the US. Go back to your country.”

### **Introduction**

I have spent a fair amount of time in Tijuana for both leisure and activist/artistic projects, so, for me, this trip was largely about returning with a new lens. I appreciated seeing the city through the lenses of landscape architecture and urban design and found myself attracted to ingenuities and abnormalities (what Cheyenne and Arturo called *rascuache*). Beyond design and aesthetics, I grappled with the ethics, problematics and possibilities of academic and artistic work in a region that is so fraught (e.g. the wall as not just an idea but a site of people’s very real pain, death, etc.). I am always looking toward the generative possibilities of criticality, and am hoping that by the end of this reflection I can generate some promising directions/approaches to work addressing the border region/border wall/border politics. In whatever project I decide to take on,

I have several goals: (1) work on both representational/metaphorical/symbolic/poetic/discursive and material levels, (2) address analyses of power, focusing on systems/structures/people at the root of the problem, and not just the effects. For now, I am taking inspiration and directions from the man who drove by us, yelling “go back to your country!” I want to create something that will point the lens back at us, at the roots of the problems plaguing the border regions, that will work ambiguously and poetically to offer enough space for us to think about ourselves and our relations with others, that will show us or help us imagine a before/after/otherwise...

### **Inspiration from Artists & Professors**

I was very artistically inspired by the Marcos Ramírez (Erre)’s art talk. I found it incredible that he was first a lawyer, then worked in construction, and finally



SECRETARÍA DE GOBERNACIÓN  
INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE MIGRACION

Oficio No.: DFCHIS/JUR/8645/2017  
Exp. No.: EA/15.9/DFCHIS/JUR/CEX/3858/2017  
Tapachula, Chiapas, a 09 de Agosto de 2017  
Asunto: Oficio de Salida de la Estación Migratoria Siglo  
XXI, con fines de Regularización



VALIDA DE LA ESTACION MIGRATORIA

El día 09 de Agosto de dos mil diecisiete, en cumplimiento al resolutivo  
del Procedimiento Administrativo Migratorio al rubro citado aperturado a  
YEMEN, con fundación XXXII de la Ley  
de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, artículo 25 y 27 del Reglamento Interior de la  
Federación III, 77 fracción II, inciso C, 92 del Reglamento Interior de la  
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LA PERSONA  
ALI AHMED SALEH OBAD  
TESTIGO DE ASISTENCIA  
LIC. BLANCA ABIGAIL CALENDO BERMUDEZ

directed his various knowledges and skills toward art that was conceptual and material. (Listening to him inspired me to begin a zine project on artists who had a different profession before making art). Most thrilling was his conceptual approach - I loved the wit, humor, and elegance of projects such as the Toy-An Horse (transparent, two headed), migration path back to Aztlan and the artist back home, Stripes and Fence Forever: Homage to Jasper Johns, Prop 187 (187 photos of hands doing different work), transparent heart, State of Emergency (toilet at the Palacio), the Merry Go Round of distribution of wealth in Mexico. The work felt inspiring and accessible because it seemed he approached it from a conceptual place, a place of questioning, and he was able to merge concept and materials so elegantly to communicate. I bought his book and want to look through it slowly, using his projects as jumping off points to generate new ideas.

I was also very impacted by Dr. Norma Iglesias-Prieto's talk at SDSU. Sometimes it feels conversations about the border region becoming musings or experiments and function only in the discursive arena, but her approach seemed grounded in the lives of the people most affected by the geopolitics of this region. I appreciated her breakdown of the (1) physical border (2) symbolic borderlands, and (3) borderisms, or meanings people make. I am really interested in thinking in (3) - that is, the ideological realm, and understanding how (3) works on (2) and (1) - that is, how the meaningful and symbolic affect the material, and vice versa. For example, Gabby W., Sophia A. and I met today and discussed at length the way that ideologies (e.g. fear) give rise to border walls, and border walls (or fences) begin to function on their own to further create fear. The wall is in some ways a pre-condition (I didn't ask for me it to be built, and it was already built in my lifetime), but all around me people support it, are complicit in its existence, etc. I liked Dr. Iglesias-Prieto's discussion of the border city as

a microcosm and exaggeration of the worlds' biggest problems - a laboratory not in the sense of a place for outsiders to experiment, but as a site where already so much is happening (a magnifier, not an exception). I really liked how she highlighted the flexibility, creativity, ingenuity, and responsiveness to survive of transfronterizo people and people living in border cities. She described creativity as an act of human dignity and resilience - action in time of crisis. It was exciting to think that transfronterizo citizens are the most adapted, adaptable, likely to survive in the case of chaos or disaster; they already transcend borders. I also appreciated her critical answer to my questions about cultural exchange programs. I asked what they offer Tijuaneños, and she said: "the boss doesn't need to know the worker, but the worker needs to know the boss" - that is, in TJ, kids need to know how to develop strategies to survive in a geopolitical and economic situation that is largely controlled by U.S. interests. I actually thought she was much more clear and grounded than Teddy Cruz. He was interesting and charismatic, but in the end I couldn't grasp exactly what he was talking about, or the extent to which he thought about the conditions of the people living the ideas that he discussed.

### **Visiting the Prototypes / Informal Settlement / Interactions with Locals**

It was intense, emotional and contentious to visit the border wall prototypes and, later, the informal settlement. I had many informal conversations with classmates during these visits as we grappled with the same questions: what are we doing here? Why is this visit important? What are we learning? Who are we not talking to? Who is this knowledge for? What will we do with it? I don't have simple answers to propose; rather, I think grappling with the questions is an ongoing part of this work. I was struck when the man drove by us and yelled "fuck the US, go back to your country."









I respect his act of resistance, and I think he has an important point: we should look at ourselves, our country, and shared our knowledge with the people in our country who are creating this problem. In fact, we were looking at our country- we just had to leave to get the right perspective (you can't even access the prototypes from the U.S. side). In some ways I felt our presence was a violation (it seemed at times we were just taking pics for our Instagrams), but now as I write this I think: we had to leave to take a look back at ourselves. The prototypes were impressive in their horror and absurdity. But, beyond the shock, what is there? What does it mean to pick up the ripped up migrant cards of human beings who are risking their lives? What does it mean to talk and think about it? Make art about it? I think we will strive to answer these questions the rest of the semester. I found the drive through the informal settlement less ethical and less useful. I felt

really disturbed and uncomfortable as our white Mercedes micro bus plodded up the ravine. I think our windows were tinted but I felt like I made eye contact with every person I passed. They seemed to be frozen there, looking at us and wondering what these intruders were doing there. People had their camera phones pressed against the windows. Poverty porn. I wondered what "refusal" would look like here, what it would be mean to look away. I was reminded by a quote from Tuck & Yang (Refusing Research), who insist that settlers (or in this case people of relative privilege) study racializing systems, not racialized people. It was explained to us that it was important for us to witness the conditions, but I'm not sure if that's true.

I'm also skeptical of narratives of "development" or "progress" that were suggested to us - that in 15 years this area may look different, just like the previous area we visited. What is development or progress?



Who or what is left? Who makes these decisions? I think it would have felt really different if people from this settlement had invited us, if we had gotten out of our bus, if we had been led by people who lives there or who were most impacted.

I am so thankful for this trip, and at the same time, I have to engage critically to develop rigorous, ethical and compelling work. Perhaps because of my background working with those people most impacted by the ideas that we rather comfortably study and discuss, I noticed that we interacted with many “cultural workers” (artists, professors) of a certain class, access, experience, and perspective, but we did not have programmed interactions with various people living the conditions brought about by US-Mexico relations and US imperialism. I did talk to several people on my own: out of the three people I randomly talked two, two were deported from the US (!), and they

all shared their life stories with me within minutes. It was so rich to learn about their experiences! It felt important to talk to them, and to listen. How might it affect our experience to meet with activists, deported parents, maquiladora owners and workers, shopkeepers, young people, etc? To that end, who is in our class and who is missing? And how do the existing and absent perspectives inform or limit us? These questions persist as I look toward the upcoming trip to Juarez... of imagining another reality or at least challenges some of the basic customary practices regarding the border.

### **Fences Behind Fences After Fences**

In my work I am very interested in binaries, delineations, demarcations, and structures of separation and control (thinking back to the ancient Greek).



# SAM GEBB

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## *TRACING BODIES*

*San Diego - Tijuana Dispatch*

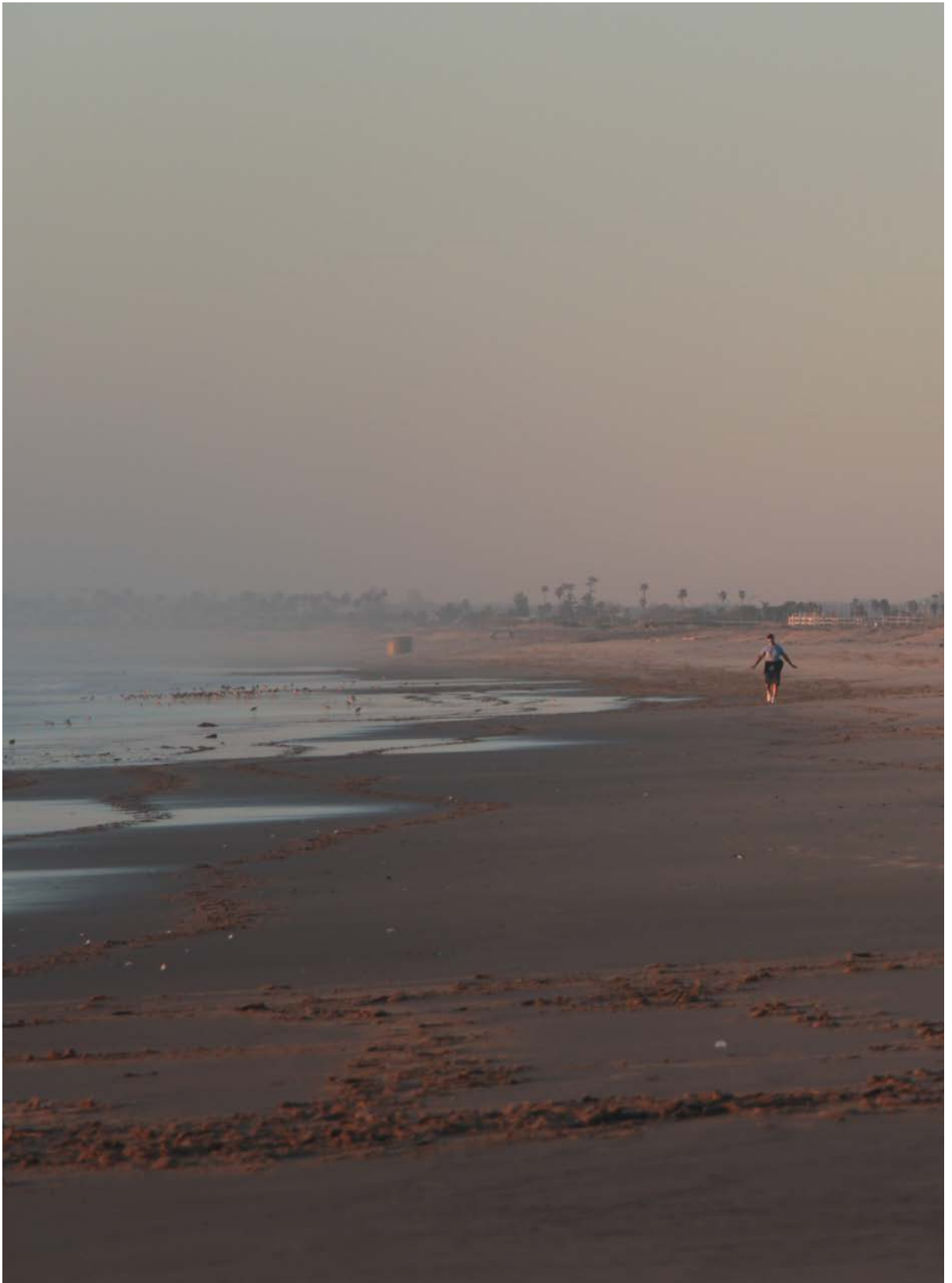
Throughout the trip, I found myself thinking about how a specific space supports--or hinders--life. Does it have a clear perimeter? Does this perimeter welcome or repel? Does it hide its contents from the outside, or does it allow its innards to seep outwards? How, if at all, does it trace its past? Project its future? Do like typologies perform similarly across the border?

The taco restaurant where we had lunch on the first day in Tijuana perches lightly but firmly on the land -- it does not feel like private space but rather a permeable transparent shell placed over public space, with musicians, vendors, and customers wandering in and out freely, spilling easily out onto the sidewalk. The inhabitants and their behaviors are very visible, from both inside and out. Yet, it is not clear how long this place has been here. The clientele and the employees make it feel like a long-standing institution, but the architecture suggests otherwise.

Nearby, the market we were all so fond of was characterized by a different set of conditions. From the outside, it seemed imposing, enclosing, and static. The complex's walls abutted the sidewalk, leaving a thin sliver of habitable space much less occupied than the pedestrian area surrounding the taco restaurant. Yet, upon entry, one is blasted with sensory information from the volume and density of goods for sale, and the commingled hum of shopping and chatting of the market's patrons. This market does seem to have been here for a long time. Each shop fills a niche, and customers seem to know exactly where to go. The parking lot seems to have been stuffed inside it, almost swallowing a church and a performance pavilion. This walled oasis firmly contains itself, protecting its inhabitants from outside forces.

In both of these examples, I would hazard to guess that most of us felt included in the space and ensconced in the present moment, rather than excluded or spatiotemporally displaced. Yet, there were many instances of the trip where we did not feel this way.





## Traces

For my Assignment 2 typology, I ended up focusing on what I termed “traces of life”: a lollipop dropped in a parking lot, a half-drunk cup left on a half-wall, a Christmas tree cast into a cement-walled canal running through a residential neighborhood. These objects, misplaced but not out of place within an urban scene, were intriguing to me for the stories that they conjured of the humans who had previously interacted with these objects, in this space. They suggest a past for a human that, were it not for that object, I would not have considered or even imagined. Other objects or instances that functioned in this manner were graffiti on the border and Tijuana River walls, an old house sunk six feet below the surface level of a prominent commercial street, Erre’s flag for the Whitney casually leaning against a pile of sheet material in his workshop.

## Transparencies

On this trip, we encountered many barriers that were physical, but not necessarily visual. This might encourage one (Exhibits A, B, C: Arturo, me, Ron) to transgress this barrier, either actually or imaginatively. When we encountered this fenced-in garden just after the border crossing, I wanted very much to go inside, perhaps even more so because entry was prohibited to me by a fence and a locked gate. (As an aside, it seems absurd to fence off this tiny green space in an area with a lot of foot traffic/people in need of a bit of respite.) This begs the question of how to encourage this sort of imagined or actual translocation through a demarcation of space that is not so violent and impenetrable as a fence.

## Projections

Sometimes physical structures would encourage me to think about the future in addition to the past and the present.

When confronted with a building under construction, one cannot help but speculate on what it will become and how it will change the fabric around it. Pictured is an example from the coastline near Rosarito. Perhaps it is a nascent hotel for beach tourists, perhaps construction has slowed due to fears that American and Mexican-American tourism to the area will decline in the wake of Trump. Another example of projection is the Oxxo, as per Marcel’s explanation of the general path of development of Tijuana and his pointing out of the Oxxo at the beginning of the informal settlement that we visited. It was interesting to be told this only after seeing the village which seemed so firmly rooted in the past, and then be spurred to imagine its future as perhaps similar to the neighborhood in which Marcel’s library is located.

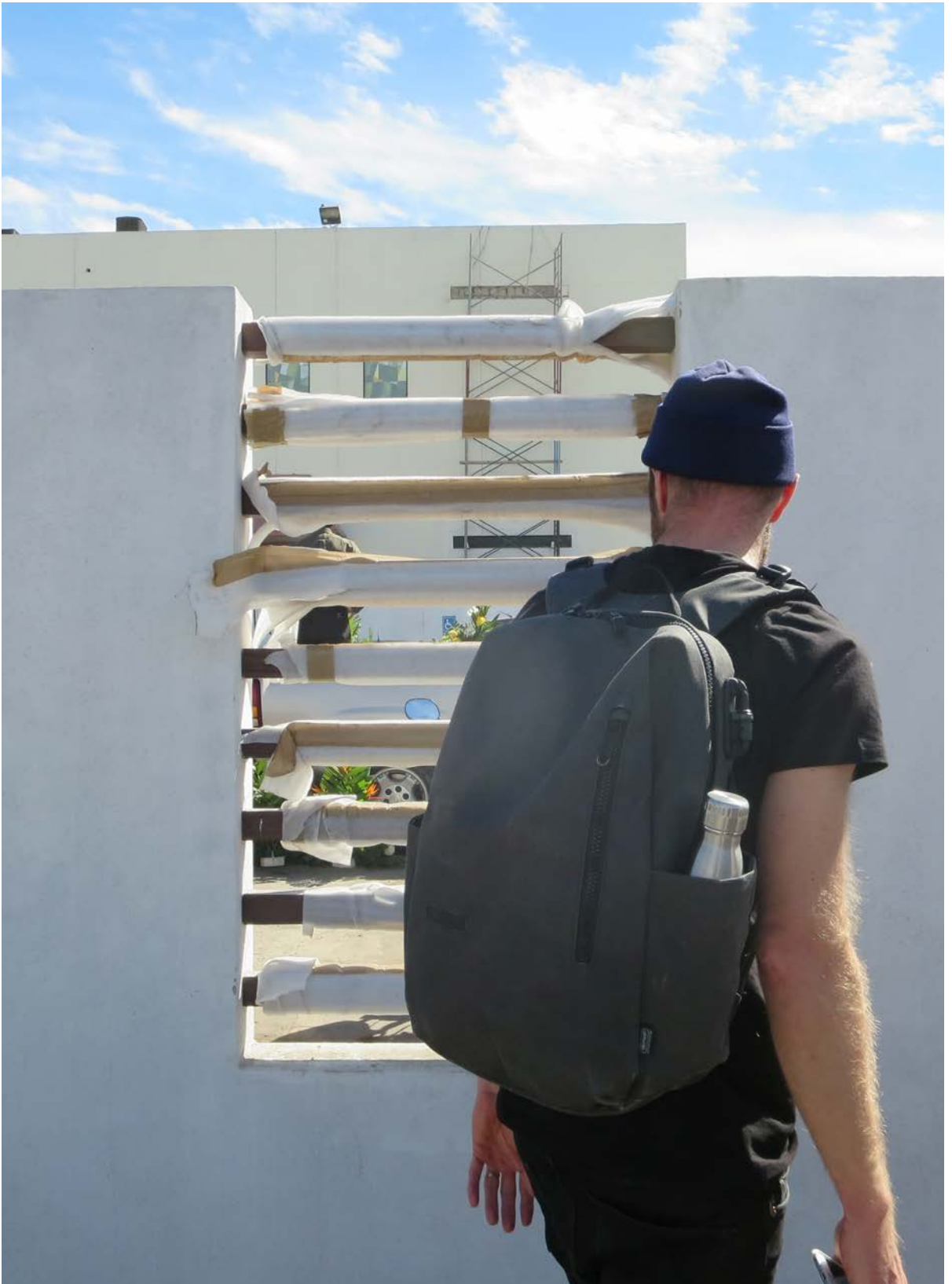
Each of these categories--traces, transparencies, projections--deals with spatial and/or temporal translocation. Instances or objects in the environment encourage the witness to imagine themselves or another in a different space and/or time. One places one’s existence elsewhere, for a moment -- I would like to believe that this imagining is a form of empathy.

## Beach

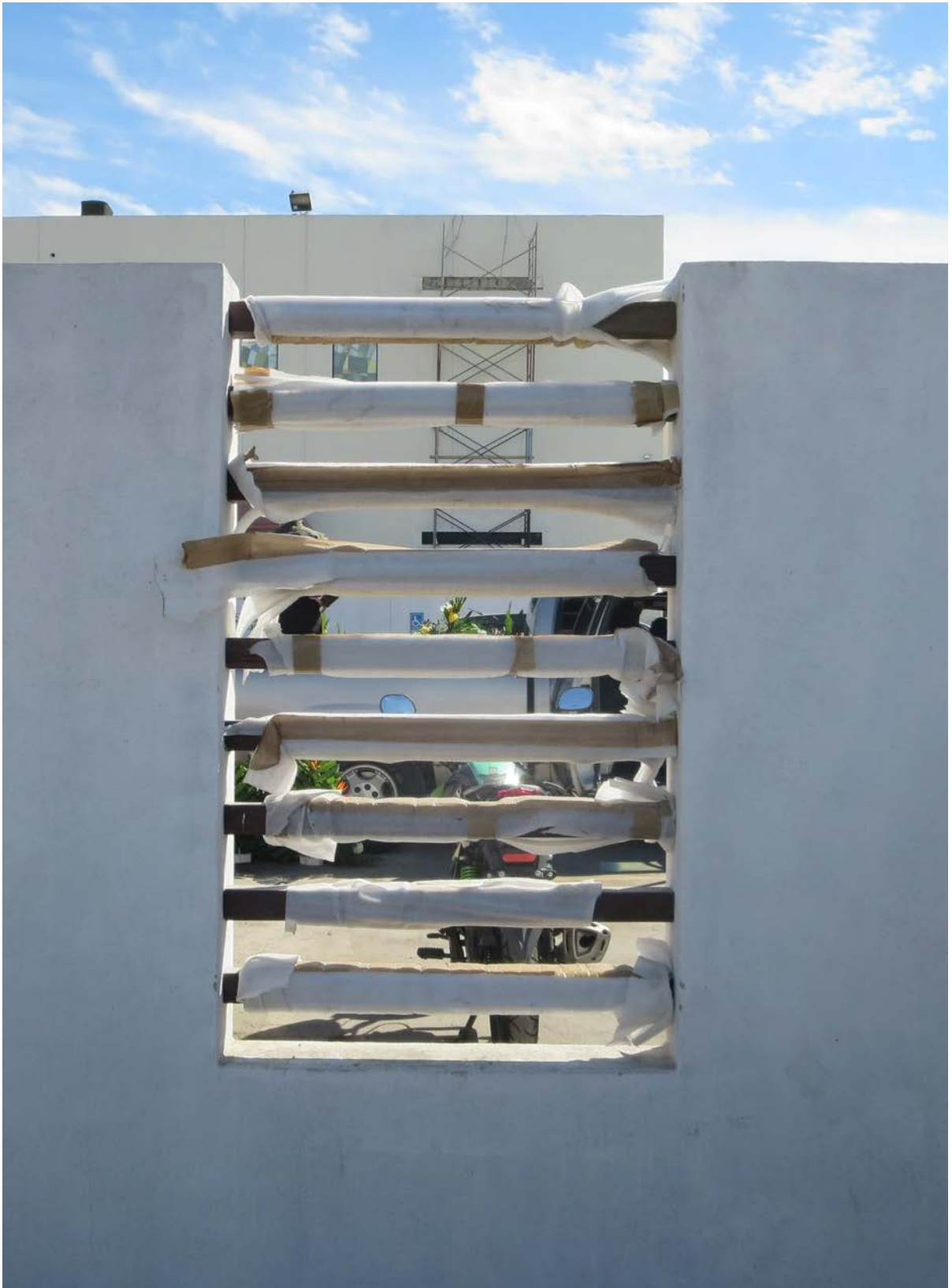
I am sure we all noticed that the beaches of Tijuana and Rosarito were teeming with much more life and activity than the beach on the American side. While I imagine that the separation of the beach from urban density of San Diego by the Tijuana River Estuary is a factor, it would seem that the Mexican beaches we visited are occupied for longer periods of the day and by people engaging in a wider variety of activities. It is heartening to see people activate natural and public space in this way.

## Pollution

First witnessing all of the garbage in the canals in Tijuana and then having to wade through toxic runoff en route to the San Diego side of Friendship Park was visceral,







to say the least. Especially after having such a pleasant time on the Tijuana side of the park, the pollution was a stark provocation to consider how poorly our water resources are managed on both sides of the border. This is a place where we directly need connection and collaboration, and the wall hinders this both physically and sociopolitically.

### **Scarcity**

A silly but nonetheless telling example of the issue of water scarcity arose when we returned to our airbnb after the first night out in Tijuana to a kitchen devoid of sources for filtered water. The undersink carbon filter was disconnected, the fridge filter didn't function, and the two 5L jugs of spring water were empty. This, for me called into question issues of access. Is clean water widely available in Tijuana, or can it be difficult to come by if you are part of an underserved population? What is the current state of the water treatment and delivery infrastructure? I am interested to keep looking at water both at an individual and ecological level when we travel to El Paso, where the Rio Grande is a shadow of it once was.

### **Walking as performance/bodies in space**

Architecture's imperative is to grasp something absent, to trace or demarcate a condition that is there only latently. (Hays) I am interested in how bodies occupy space: kinesthetically, behaviorally, phenomenologically, politically. Apologies for the lengthy block quote but de Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* does a beautiful job of explaining how pedestrian movement can be so rich and multivalent -- and he goes on to warn of the inherent failures of attempting to represent this movement in a two-dimensional form: Their story begins on ground level, with footsteps. They are myriad, but do not compose a series. They cannot be counted because each unit has a qualitative character: a style of tactile apprehension and kinesthetic appropriation. Their

swarming mass is an innumerable collection of singularities. Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together. In that respect, pedestrian movements form one of these 'real systems whose existence in fact makes up the city.' They are not localized; it is rather they that spatialize. It is true that the operations of walking on can be traced on city maps in such a way as to transcribe their paths (here well-trodden, there very faint) and their trajectories (going this way and not that). But these thick or thin curves only refer, like words, to the absence of what has passed by. Surveys of routes miss what was: the act itself of passing by. The operation of walking, wandering, or 'window shopping', that is, the activity of passers-by, is transformed into points that draw a totalizing and reversible line on the map. This allows us to grasp only a relic set on the nowhen of a surface of projection. Itself visible, it has the effect of making invisible the operation that made it possible. These fixations constitute procedures for forgetting. The trace left behind is substituted for the practice. It exhibits the (voracious) property that the geographical system has of being able to transform action into legibility, but in doing so it causes a way of being in the world to be forgotten. (de Certeau)

During our trip I had hoped to find a way of recording movement that was neither obtrusive nor reductive but did not quite succeed -- perhaps we did not have enough time to linger in heavily populated areas, or perhaps I should have been more dogged in watching and following people... in any case, an ongoing project of mine is to figure out how to record/analyze/interpret movement through a mix of media, and I would like to continue this effort here. De Certeau's warnings of the reductivity of the map, or rather, the tracing, is echoed by James Corner in his text on mapping. He refers to a conventional map as a trace, while his version of a map is more operative. He cites Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion map, the sparse tabula rasa



scribbles of Waltercio Calda, and OMA's layered diagrams for their Parc de la Villette proposal as maps that effect a radical and/or more holistic understanding of the spatial conditions that they portray. How might movement be portrayed with the same sort of agency that these examples exhibit?

Indeed, de Certeau continues to say that bird's eye view or plan is omniscient, but a fiction... "Ordinary practitioners of the city are the walkers whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban text they write without being able to read it," (de Certeau). What would it be to render

patterns of life visible and palpable to their own practitioners -- through a wall, a fence, a physical/visual/sociopolitical barrier? The project of rendering one's body and its actions visible to oneself and, even more so, to others is both an existential and political act, as described by Judith Butler. She states:

"To be deprived of the space of appearance is to be deprived of reality. In other words, we must appear to others in ways that we ourselves cannot know, that we must become available to a perspective that established by a body that is not our own. And if we ask, where do we appear? Or where are we when we appear? It will be





over there, between us, in a space that exists only because we are more than one, more than two, plural and embodied. The body, defined politically, is precisely organized by a perspective that is not one's own and is, in that sense, already elsewhere, for another, and so in departure from oneself.... If we consider what it is to appear, it follows that we appear to someone, and that our appearance has to be registered by the senses, not only our own, but someone else's, or some larger group." (Butler)

This quote frames the situation of two human bodies, but it is easy to apply the same language to the relationship of the US

and Mexico as two bodies both adjacent and intertwined. If individual bodies walking and living and inhabiting space on either side of the border are made more apparent to each other, perhaps the inspired fictions will have potency enough to consider the other and begin to break down both tangible and intangible barriers.







## 05 DISPATCHES

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*EL PASO + CIUDAD JUAREZ*





UC BERKELEY

Nevada

California

SAN DIEGO

TIJUANA

Arizona





Nebraska

Utah

Colorado

Kansas

a

New Mexico

Oklahoma

EL PASO

JUAREZ

Texas



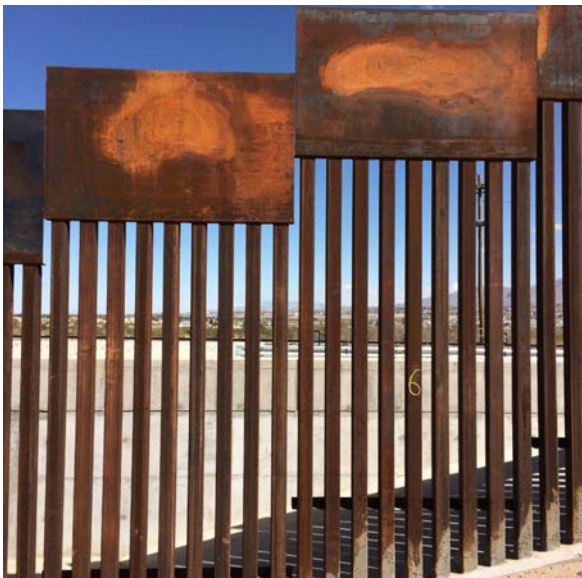
























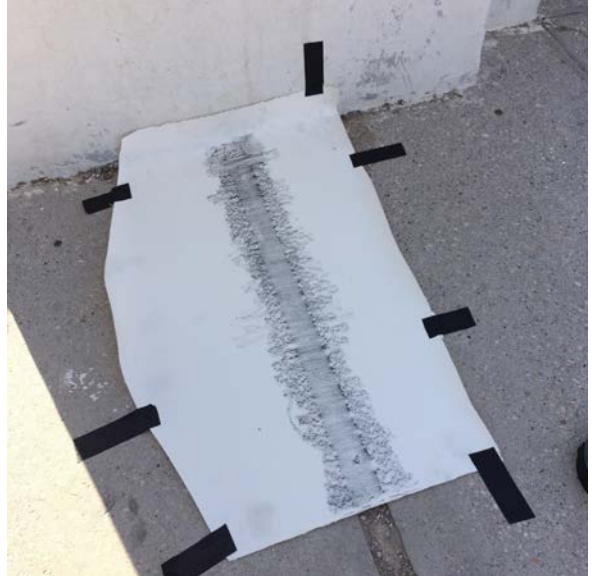






























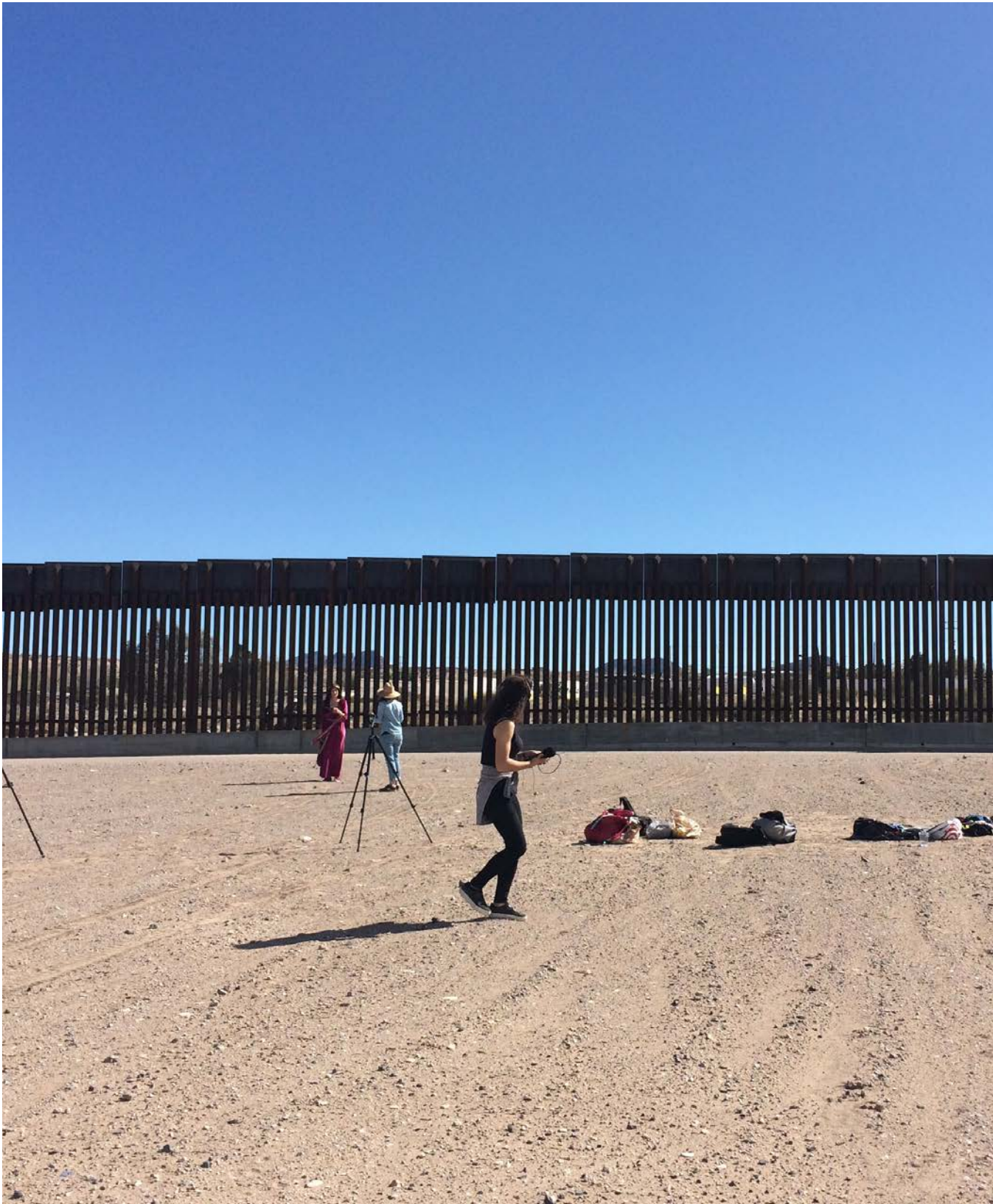














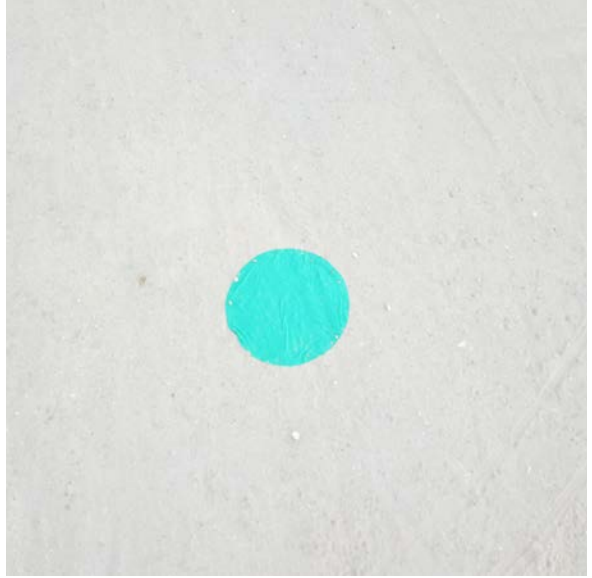
















# GABRIELLA WILLENZ

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## *A MUSEUM AND A SHOW*

*El Paso - Juarez Dispatch*

During one of our meetings preceding the trip to El-Paso and Juarez, while still brainstorming about potential projects Sophia Sobko quoted George Lipsitz and said something in line with the following: “instead of looking at racialized people we should point our attention to how space is racialized and to the systems that create a racialized reality.” In both my personal life and my work I try to remind myself to look beyond the effect at the structures that enable, configure and maintain the spaces and places in which we live.

### **Border Patrol Museum**

On a Saturday I went with Stephanie and Matthew to the National Border Patrol museum of El Paso. It's one of its kind and receives no federal support, i.e., is funded solely by donation and merchandise sales. A small enclosed space, resembling a shrine, and a wall covered by names of all the agents that died while on duty, functions as a memorial site. As I was standing there a man in a border patrol uniform entered, took off his hat and held it against his

chest as he skimmed through the names. Shortly after another uniformed man entered and commented about the latest addition to this room. This is not the first time these men have visited this museum. They are not tourist passing by. This museum is created by and for the border patrol agents. The museum isn't large but it is packed with artefacts, stories, information, artistic works and gestures that, in my eyes, more than they portray a clear historical narrative are there to establish an identity and community.

Another small room had a couple of rows of chairs and a small TV. Four kids, three looked Mexican-American and wore border patrol uniforms walked into the room. They are part of the border patrol youth group. They learn about the unit and train and mostly are deeply marinated in this group identity and will. When they will turn 21 they will be able to join the force. I wondered why does one need to train for this job from the age of 14, and asked “is it very competitive?” I think they said that not so much. I started mind wandering and wondered







if my friends that joined “combat fitness” groups in middle and high school did it only in order to be fit and strong enough to join very competitive elite military units. That, for sure, was part of it, but it also said something much deeper about what that person/kid was, what interest him/her, how important the army service was in their narrative at that early stage. Between thinking of the border patrol youth group and the “combat fitness” groups my mind shortly stopped on the Hitler-Juden (Hitler Youth). What are the state-level (or international) systems that make a space in which kids will be inclined to join these groups?

Another thing I found interesting was how I could read some of the things that were displayed so differently than the intention of the curator. For example, on display were several shoe-assists, rascuache that people put together to hide their footprints. These items, to me, reflected the desperateness, the fragility of the immigrants and evoked empathy and desire to assist. But in the museum context symbolized the immigrant’s slyness of the

agents cleverness in catching them. Or a description that placed a salvaged boat in context was titled “Voyage to Freedom” and described the incident in which immigrants were caught and returned to their homeland.

Again I thought about Israel and the horrifying indifference and racism people are expressing towards immigrants and refugees from Eritrea and Sudan. What are these people’s wound? In which ways has the systems banged and bended them so that they can’t view the other as themselves? I have no hatred towards them, I feel deeply sorry for them. Sorry and scared. I think of the philosophers Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas. According to Levinas, our subjectivity is formed through the process of subjecting another. Or, in other words, our responsibility and tie to the other is not a derivative feature of our subjectivity but what forms it. Buber delineates between two kinds of encounters or ways to exist, one he defines as “I-it” and the second “I-thou.” While most of the time we objectify the other, when engaging



in a dialogue relationship, an I-thou experience, we enter into a meaningful existence. I think of our special group and our ability to collaborate and inspire each other.

### **Monument #1**

The museum also had a well made architecture model of a border crossing, very similar to the one we went through a couple of days prior. Architecture models, providing a clean, simplified, and bird-eye view portray a very different image than what plays out in reality. The contrast between this model and the our nerve-racking border crossing experience was striking.

We arrived at the border crossing after completing our monument rubbing adventure. This project, to me, relates to two pivotal points. Rubbings asks to transfer not only the image but, by the power of contact that is required to create it, bring forth some inner/inherent quality. Monument no. 1 and its siblings can be understood as a simple humane gestures. They acknowledge a divide between distinct cultures, languages, and histories without incorporating any power relations. We wanted to take that potency and create a stencil, a model or pattern that anyone can copy and by that re-create a symbol of delineation between equals. By returning the monument to a stencil stage we are also commenting on the potential that has been neglected in our present state. But there is something naive or even rude by thinking that at any point there was a non-hierarchy, non-power-infused relationship between the two sides of this monument. Borders are there to define what is and what is out, can that ever really be inline with equality?

### **Antigone**

Antigone is enraged. The dust of a civil war has just settled over Thebes. Both sons of former king Oedipus, both of Antigone's brothers have died. Creon,

the newly appointed king, has declared one brother, Polyneices, a traitor and forbids his burial. Antigone, whom I believe would kill her brothers for starting this insane war, deeply loves them and can not see one as traitor. She sees two brothers, two men. She defies her new king in the name of justice. Characters (in stories) are not (simply) stand-ins for different people but for different perspectives and the narratives exists to debate between them. An actor should never judge their character. Antigone is the clear protagonist and Creon the antagonist, but this play is so good because it is very easy to understand Creon's point of view. The dust has just settled and after a state of complete chaos, right and wrong need to be identified and sedimented. Specifically after a civil war a unifying identity needs to be established. According to Claude Levi-Strauss (though of course structuralism is clearly out of fashion) myths reflect cultures' way to grasp, explain and organize the world. Obscure and diverse as they may be, these myths relay on universal sets of binary opposition. Creon is simply trying to set his nation's and culture's boundaries. But this play is exploring a deeper set of binaries - law of man (state) and law of god (nature or justice) in which all people are equally born, equally die, and equally deserving of respect. In her book "Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death" Judith Butler uses this myth and its many interpretations (I remember specifically her beef with Hegel, Lacan, Freud and Strauss himself) to shine light on our processes of socialisation. She explores the idea of incest, or more accurately, the naturalised laws that exclude incest from the normative society. The content of this debate between a tyrant that is trying to rename a kin as the enemy felt very appropriate to the border discourse. We were interested in conducting auditions to highlight the idea of variation, of interpretation, of inhabiting a part. Bringing attention to the places of inconsistency felt to us like pointing to the gaps, the holes in the wall. Lastly, by deciding to stage Antigone in a medieval setting we declared the medieval architecture of the WALL as part of our stage set, ridiculising and attenuate it.





# MICHAEL CLYDE JOHNSON

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## STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

### *El Paso - Juarez Dispatch*

#### **Crossing the Border**

The constituent fragments comprising the border wall between El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Chihuahua, seem less a phenomenological presence than their counterparts further west along the border in Tijuana. With the caveat that I'm speaking from my experience as a U.S. citizen, the border between El Paso and Juarez seems not quite as apparent nor as assertive – one knows it is there, but not exactly sure where. This is partly a function of geography – once the border reaches Texas, it exists primarily in the form of the Rio Grande River (alongside various levels of fencing) – but also in its relative permeability. There is a lot of traffic between these two cities.

The slight obscurity of the border here is also due to urban form: in both cities, the wall is lumped in with so much infrastructure, freeways, fences, railroads, the rivers. It is difficult to reach, engulfed as it is in the industrial wastelands that define so many cities in which once central centers of industry

built-up along waterways later become tracts of desolate space now passed over and through. I think of the Los Angeles River in its massive channelization, which one would rarely venture to reach, but which becomes a locus of a monstrous freeway system and bisects East Los Angeles from the rest of the city. In El Paso and Juarez the river, freeways, and fences seem to do the same – here bisecting not a singular city, but “twins” maybe, each dependent on the other. This was somewhat my experience of crossing the border here, which took on some trappings of a metropolitan commute. While walking was fairly unimpeded and not unlike taking a pedestrian path over a massive freeway to reach the other side, driving felt similar to rush hour traffic, sitting for over an hour to pass through from Mexico to the United States. Of course, the security and border checks don't allow for the fantasy of an undivided metropolitan area to last long. But the ties between the two cities don't make the idea seem too fanciful either. Particularly while walking, it









seems as though one continues down a single long street from one country to the next; which one does, only the streets have different names. Not too much changes along them either. There are the same small storefronts, bars, and markets in both, where mostly Spanish is written and spoken. Rather than a hard line then, the experience of the border here is as a gradient, moving from one country to the next. Here the border doesn't define difference, but merely marks a political division.

#### **Anapra/Sunset Park**

The same may not be said for the edges of the two cities, however. Outside the main crossings near the city centers, despite however obscured the border

fortifications may be, there is obviously no other way to get from one side of the border to the other. And at the edges of the cities, and even further beyond, the fences and walls lining the border become ever more apparent, as singular moments of infrastructure in an otherwise bare desert landscape.

Tracing the contours of the terrain, the border wall continues uninterrupted over plateaus, hills, mountains, and flat land alike. Out here, settlement on the U.S. side seems to be repelled by the border, while in Mexico it seems to have the opposite effect, with buildings very close along the edge. Older neighborhoods of El Paso, however, do not follow this pattern; here, development abuts the infrastructure



lining the river. It is in these moments, such as in the Segundo Barrio, that the nature of the original settlement as a single city is most apparent.

### **Marfa, Texas**

There isn't as much of Donald Judd in Marfa as one might assume, having never been there. Or one could be forgiven for mistaking his work for an arrangement of items on a table, or pencils on a desk, or books on a shelf – remnants of a life of quiet intensity to be sure, but to what end. Touring the collection of buildings comprising the Judd Foundation, and this daily detritus frozen in time, one might mistakenly conclude that the end was this very thing, this collecting and arranging, these odd set pieces.

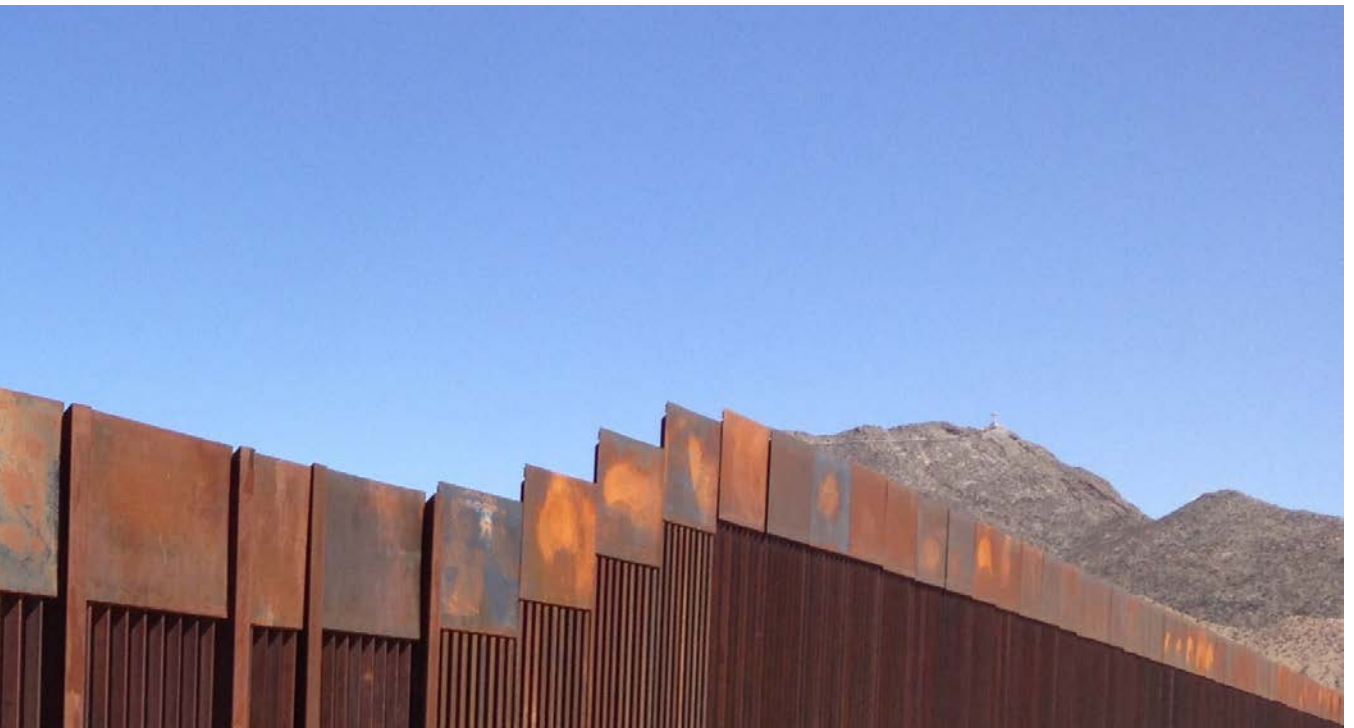
What exists of Judd's work in Marfa is found at the Chinati Foundation – a few hugely important permanent installations. But the idea of Marfa – so reliant upon the aura of Judd – when confronted with

its reality, lacks much of what made him such a pivotal figure in the history of art. “Marfa” instead becomes a sort of natural history museum with its *mise en scènes* to the idea of an artist, rather than a confrontation with the work itself.

I don't know how much if at all Judd contemplated the culture of the border region, the “third nation.” It did not seem to affect his work (the development which followed from works completed in New York); in fact, he seems to have fairly well segregated himself from the town at large. But the landscape undoubtedly had an impact. In west Texas, Judd found an ideal location in which to site his works exploring object-ness, seriality, and the spaces between.







# SAM GEBB

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## REFLECTIONS ON MIRRORS AND SHADOWS

*El Paso - Juarez Dispatch*

During this trip, I was thinking a lot about reflection and mirroring, in spatio-physical and metaphorical senses as well as in a visual material sense. I noticed acts of mirroring:

- in Marfa,
  - in site-specific artworks
  - in the rural vernacular
- in El Paso and Juarez,
  - at the Juarez art museum
  - along the wall/border/river
  - in our projects

My interest in mirrors as a spatial device is three-fold: 1) what they do and do not duplicate through reflection (are you, the viewer, visible in the frame, or are you looking at it from an angle?) as well as the faithfulness of that duplication, 2) their uncanny ability to both compress and expand depth while encouraging the viewer to take note of their distance from the reflective surface, and 3) the contemplation that the mirror spurs of what is contained in that space between the mirror and the viewer, as well as

what is beyond and being blocked by the mirror. A mirror is an object in an environment that asks you to consider not itself but everything else, captured and thrown back to you through direct visual or indirect association. Mirrors can never present the entire picture; they highlight a fragment that wants to be fit into an imaginary whole.

### **Marfa-Prada**

One approaches Prada Marfa tangentially and at high speed: it's eerie self-contained symmetry and broader incongruity with the expansive, formidable landscape of west Texas become apparent suddenly and almost too late if one isn't already looking for it. The building is a mirror in which the viewer becomes acutely aware of herself, perhaps in her participation in consumer capitalist society, which apparently can worm its way even into primordial landscapes, and certainly in the two mirrors embedded in the interior of the building, one in each back corner, reflecting those who peer through the plate glass storefront. Perhaps here we





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expect to continue to look through the building to the Mexico-US border and the mountains beyond, but instead we are confronted with our own image against a backdrop of ranchlands on the other side of the highway and railroad tracks. The bilateral symmetry of the storefront is distinctly Prada but is detoured here by the omission of a central title over the door, collapsing hierarchy and making the prospect of entering unsettling. What does the building—through its nervous symmetry, its singularity yet non-monumentality, its furtive reflections—ask its visitors to confront in the middle of what appears to be a vast desert?

### **Judd**

Continuing our tour of art objects dropped in the middle of the desert, Donald Judd's 100 untitled works in mill aluminum. These are, indeed, very reflective, and housed buildings mediate their relationship to the landscape through large swaths of plate glass. These boxes, like a mirror, draws the viewer into a simulacrum of her environment while disallowing penetration of the object itself. The boxes seem not of this world; they have a nuanced language, but it is not decipherable by us. Amidst the boxes, we are aware of our doubled selves and surroundings, both real and reflected, but the goings-on between the reflected and the real remain enigmatic, opaque.

### **Irwin**

Not so far from the boxes, one encounters another inanimate work, Robert Irwin's untitled (dawn to dusk). Here, the scrim panels, on the edge of solidity, soften rather than reflect their surroundings. Yet, there are two levels of mirroring in the form of the organization. First, we encounter a doubled long screen directing axial movement followed by a series of penetrable frames channeling transverse movement. Second, we move through the same progression but in reverse, this time rendered in white rather than black. This

project encourages its visitors to viscerally and cognitively consider what it is to move along, then through, then through, then along a partition—a wall—that flips from black to white, drawing attention to yet simultaneously obfuscating the environment.

### **Flavin**

In an installation that is unapologetically rooted in immateriality, the viewer is guided through a series of long corridors occupying a linear array of six U-shaped buildings, each with a pair of lit openings at its terminus. The geometry is replicated exactly, only the color shifts through a progression of neon hues. Of the works discussed so far, this one is the most at odds with its environment. The work still hinges on mirroring, on a symmetry in which there is only one variable, but it chooses not to reflect (neither its environment nor its viewer). As viewers, we are forced to reconcile the abrupt, repeated transition between neon-lit corridor and naturally-lit outside world. There is something Sisyphian about retracing your steps, being forced to go out and around and back in again, just to see another pair of lights. These objects of interest are quite close to each other as the crow flies, yet walls and doors force us to take the long way around.

### **Rural Vernacular**

Wandering around the residential and rural zones of Marfa, one notices multiple instances of mirroring, specifically through the mechanism of bilateral symmetry seen at Prada. Yet unlike Prada, there are distinct variations between the two halves, indicative of human life and suggestive of differences in ownership and activity. A warehouse is divided and converted into two parallel dwellings, a double garage changes paint color at its midline, two houses—one with an awning, one without—face each other across an easement, the gates for two adjacent

grazing fields meet at a right angle, an alley is flanked by fences of similar height but of varying color and material. This domestic vignettes suggest lives that move in tandem but are not the same. What similarities and differences might we find in the two garages, the two dwellings, the two fields, separated by only a thin sheet of material or a strip of land?

## JUAREZ

### Birds

In the art museum in Juarez, we were all very enamoured by the shadows of the birds perching on and taking flight from the translucent domed roof above us. The scene of birds flocking and gathering is so quotidian, yet when viewed through a screen, it became arresting. Through the screen, we see not the bird itself but its shadow, flattened in color and geometry through projection. We imagine the in its vacuous fullness occupying the sky that we cannot see while also perceiving the shadow as an entity in itself. The space between the shadow and our imagined bird opens up, allowing us to fill that space with our own meanings, musings, and sensorial responses.

## BORDER

### Signs

At the site of Casa de Adobe, where Monument #1 lies near the confluence of Mexico, Texas, and New Mexico's terrestrial holdings, the delineation of the border is marked by two mirrored signs and a slight, assumedly natural depression in the earth through which runoff might reach the Rio Grande. Here, one can easily be in the two countries at once. Here, the US fortifications lie quite far from the actual boundary, sited along the opposite bank of the river. Hopping back and forth across the border is a strange self-reflexive exercise. On either side, one imagines oneself a moment before, located in one country but looking across to the other.

Here, there is no hindrance—physical, technological, bureaucratic—to making this transition quickly and easily. It lies in a stark distinction to all of the other border crossings we have undertaken thus far.

### River

Just to the east of Casa de Adobe is where the international border enters the Rio Grande. Yet the river is not the border; it just contains it, floating somewhere in the middle of the waterway. While the border in some places might seem thick, here at the river it feels infinitely thin, a ribbon suspended in an aqueous body with mass and volume that reflects light and accepts life along its banks. Yet, the mirror of the river here is one sided. On the Mexico side the river is flanked by a road allowing access to the river for fishing, swimming, and relaxing. On the US side, the wall blocks visual and physical contact with the river.

### Projects: El Paso + Juarez, Decoy Cactus + Pinata.

Lizzie and Arturo's projects speak to the ways that water stored in the desert. Their decoy cactus is easily mistaken for an actual barrel cactus and is hypothetically intended to store and dispense water for illegal border crossers. Their pinata water jugs, specifically, the tire pinata, highlight the nefarious actions of Border Patrol of tire dragging and water jug slashing. The cactus is a duplicitous mirror to hide its actual contents, while the pinata is a superficial mirror meant to provoke awareness of an incongruity.

### Monument Rubbing

Gabi, Sophia, and Sophia created duplicates of the border markers through rubbings. The time it takes to do the rubbing is a prolonged look in a mirror; one registers, stroke by stroke, every minute contour of the object. One can then transport the rubbing and view it in another context, increasing the distance







between the original object and its duplicate while lessening the cognitive and imaginative rift between primary and secondary environments.

### **Found Space**

In a similar mechanism of duplicating and recontextualization, Michael, Gabi, Laura, and Sam found spaces in El Paso and Juarez and delineated them with string to highlight their existence. Measured drawings facilitate reconstruction of those spaces in other locations. Yet the string is only a wireframe; while it can duplicate the volume of the space, it cannot reproduce the sensorial and narrative context of the original space. One can physically inhabit

the reproduced space, but it will take on an entirely new meaning determined by its new context.

### **Projection**

(Video) projection is a type of mirroring that is more flexible in its surface engagement and better equipped to reproduce temporal as well as spatial characteristics. It allows for more layers to be added, both material and immaterial, and mediate space at multiple scales. There is the scale of the screen in the context of its environment, the difference between the projected object or environment's original and projected scale, and the space between the viewers and the content-laden screen. While we watch a projection, we do not view



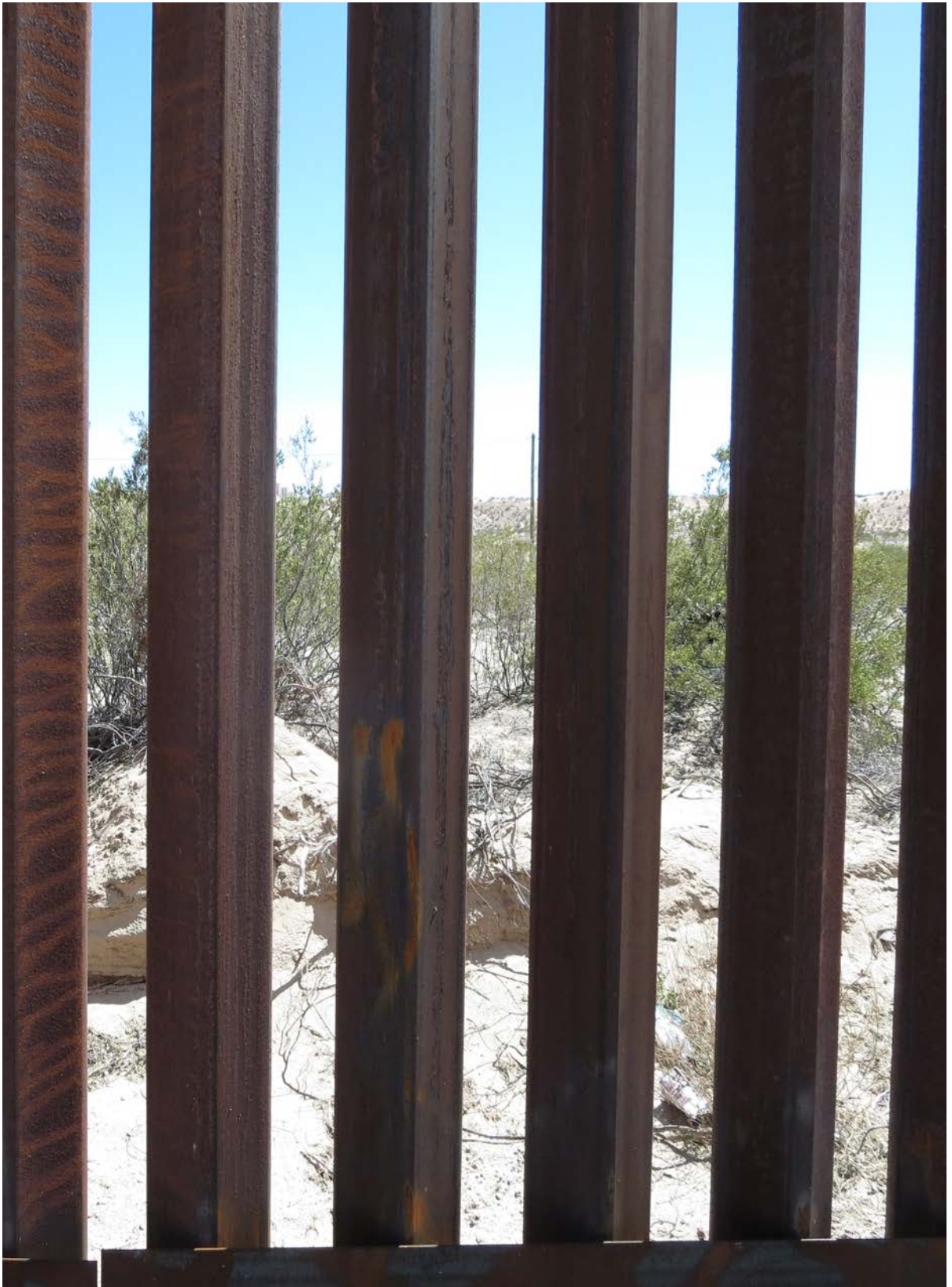


ourselves directly but rather imagine ourselves located in or with the content being projected. The screen becomes both a division and a portal. We can imagine ourselves within the screen, or on the other side of it. This is effectively the same location in space, but in the former we are in another world, while in the latter we are in our same environment, just on the other side of the wall.

If we are not simply passive viewers of the projection, we can engage with and manipulate it by blocking portions of light. We effect an immediate embodied response to something that is immaterial and elsewhere. We change the duplication in a way that is real – that escapes the imaginary, if only for a moment. This

embodied engagement with projection, with an immaterial throwing of light that duplicates an object or event or place that is elsewhere—perhaps, on the other side of a wall—does more than geometric duplication and alteration. We create an empathetic, visceral environment that is a hybrid of actual and projected place. This space is within the mirror, suspended between the imaginary and the real, from which both new imaginaries and new realities could flow.





# CHEYENNE CONCEPCION

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## BORDERLANDS

*EL Paso - Juarez Dispatch*

*Welcome to Borderlands National Park!  
Where Mexico ends and America begins!!  
Borderlands National Park -- The greatest  
National Park ever!!! Spanning coast to  
coast along the United States' southern  
border, find the worlds longest, strongest,  
most beautiful borderwall!!!! Experience  
the wild and scenic desert landscape  
with an added sense of security!!!! Safely  
indulge in authentic mexican cuisine and  
enjoy panoramic views of Mexico from the  
comfort of your own country!!!!!!*

The following post explains the protest-art installation titled ' Borderlands National Park'. This project was created by two UC Berkeley graduate students, Cheyenne Concepcion (MLA) and Gabriela Navarro (MCP).

The satiric project is layered and intends to touch on a variety of topics in the political, physical, and rhetorical landscape. As we've learned in the *Borderwall Urbanism studio*, the borderlands is a unique environment

that is on the edge of two countries and two cultures. These factors create an unusual urban environment with unique urban forms (such as fortification) and unique experiences and attitudes. To address these complexities, the art project employs a fake "branding" and "marketing" scheme for a fake "National Park Project".

### **Conceptual Themes**

- Political Landscapes
- An evolving political agenda around Immigration and trade in the United States
- Co-opting Trump's language about the U.S.-M.X. borderwall: "*The Big Beautiful Wall*"
- A changing national dialogue about immigration, trades and jobs

### **Physical Landscapes**

-What do National Parks symbolize for America? Do we still cherish the same ideals? If National Parks were established to preserve noble american relics and



landscapes, then what would today's society preserve? What do we believe in most? What monuments represent us and our dialogue the most?

-The wild and Scenic border landscape. The US-Mexico border occupies a wild terrain that is beautiful in some parts. Sometimes the wall contrasts this beauty in an eerie and idyllic manner.

-How the borderwall functions as monument / physical symbol vs. actual security measure.

-Rhetorical Landscapes

-Evolving rhetoric about immigration laws, safety, security and border measures.

-How this changing political rhetoric leaks into the media, which creates a wave of mis-education of the public on immigration policy and practices.

#### **Project Development Strategy**

-Delineating the National Park/Cartesian colonialism

-Delineating the space: The 14 sister cities plus surrounding landscapes

-Create "official" map





- Map travel destinations, monuments, and histories related to the wall immigration/ border security/branding/marketing

- Create marketing strategy modeled after 1950's National Park Service travel advertisements

- Co-opt Trump language of economic development and security

- Co-opt nationalist dialogue for border security

- “Brand” Trump-era monuments i.e. Wall, Wall Prototypes

- Create promotional video with drone footage

- Made logo with wall as a centerpiece intended to legitimize the “National Park” and advertise certain experiences within the space

### **Signage**

- Demarcate/direct users to certain experiences... what “relics” encapsulate the rhetoric most? What is the scenic views in the Borderlands? (i.e. tire contraption used by Border Patrol, or Trump’s newest



section of the wall which heightens security?)

-Bring signage into the city.... Confuse users. We did this in El Paso Texas, and many people came up to us to ask if this was real

-Make signage as real / official looking as possible to underscore our intentions

### **Popup, Berkeley and Beyond**

-The physical objects deployed in El Paso can be built upon through a more detailed web campaign, and sharpening the quality of the items

-Below is a list of ways we will expand the project:

-Expand Post-Card campaign.

-Provide stamps and addresses to stakeholders that have a hand in National Security and relationships to the US-MX border. This could mean senators, representatives, ambassadors, ICE?

-Create a better map that actually demarcates "destinations"

- Have a more detailed historical component to these, where people can learn about the wall / US History in terms of the borderwall.





-Create a website to put all this information

-Make more posters and “National Park Swag” i.e. magnets, postcards, stickers, patches and totes...

-make the pop-up experience more like a *BORDERLANDS NATIONAL PARK* Gift Shoppe.





# GABRIELLA NAVARRO

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## *PHENOMENAL BORDER*

*EL Paso - Juarez Dispatch*

*I am in between. Trying to write to be understood by those who matter to me, yet also trying to push my mind with ideas beyond the everyday. It is another borderland I inhabit. Not quite here nor there. On good days I feel I am a bridge. On bad days I just feel alone."*

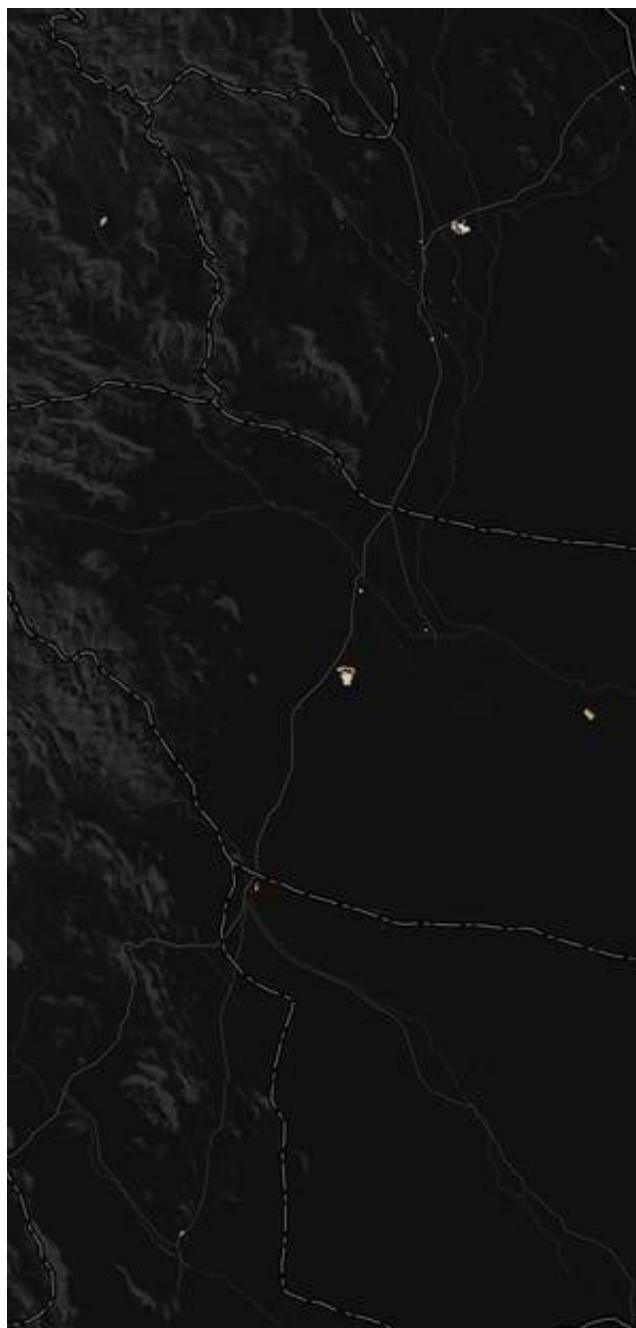
*- Sergio Troncoso, Crossing Borders: Personal Essays*

I approached our second border trip with my usual query-- are the borderlands spaces of inbetween, attempting the delineate one from the next; or are they an attempt at reconciliation of artificially imposed differences? My relationship to border phenomena has always been framed by these two paradigms, but throughout this semester my restlessness with border identity has produced a third, perhaps more fruitful line of inquiry: what is it the result of, as Troncoso puts it, inhabiting this physical, mental and emotional borderland? I will explore this shift from attempting to define to exploring what lies within the ambiguity.









# LIZZIE STURR

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## TRACKING

*El Paso - Juarez Dispatch*

### **Introduction:**

This dispatch will explore some of the topics that arose during our second trip visiting El Paso/ Juárez. While much longer, I found this trip to be very different than our first experience. Our time in Juarez was extremely limited and was mostly preoccupied with deploying our projects rather than exploring the city or meeting with people. Before heading to El Paso our tour guide in Marfa at the Chinati Foundation and when later reading Michael Dears book 'Why Walls Won't Work: Repairing the US-Mexico Divide, both brought up that the migration of relatively affluent juarenses to El Paso had created a boom within the city, "there were more people on the streets and in restaurants, adding a European-style bustle to the city." Similarly to Sophia, El Paso felt empty yet familiar (being from the southwest) which I think was largely due to staying downtown in a business district. This was even more so apparent when venturing outside of the downtown area (for food or to the hardware store).

### **Data, Security, + Surveillance**

El Paso / Juarez was one of our initial mapping projects where we explored access to abortion services for women. While moving throughout the city and waiting in line at the border crossing, I was constantly reminded of access and movement within a city without a car.

### **Hike to El Cristo Rey**

Meeting with Ersela + Stephen and hearing about their new research on the growing geography of global security complexes and the form they take in the urban environment was fascinating. When I graduated from undergrad I moved to Washington DC and was a 'Workplace Consultant' -- surveying and reimagining a wide range of government bureaucratic spaces and thought I had experienced every typology. I am extremely interested in their research, specifically the repurposing of these militarized spaces, and look forward to the release of their book. I am also a data and visualization/



representation junkie and recently came across an article that found a Fitness Tracking app Strava that allows people to record their exercise and share it with others has given away location of secret US army bases. The map shows every single activity ever uploaded, more than 3 trillion individual GPS data points (from phones, fitness trackers, etc.). Their data visualization tool has created beautiful maps that show popular running routes in major cities but also is detailed enough that it can give away extremely sensitive information about military personnel on active service (I wonder if it captured our hike to El Cristo Rey that day).

### **Border Patrol Policies - Hold the Line**

Growing up in Phoenix, I witnessed and heard about the many raids led by Joe Arpaio as well as the many reports of abuse of travelers due to the Border Patrol Checkpoints both interior and roving. While some of the class had different experiences and interactions with the Border Patrol and the different checkpoints (on the way to Marfa) and crossings (returning to El Paso from Juarez) I was surprised that the Border Patrol agents did not confront or question our projects in Anapra (maybe it was because Arturo was in a dress).

I was not able to visit the Border Patrol museum in El Paso, however last week's RadioLab episode: The Border Trilogy Part 2: Hold the Line discusses the change in patrol policy and how it originated in El Paso by Silvestre Reyes. Reyes was the first Mexican-American to ever hold the position and developed 'Operation Blockade' in 1993 which deployed 400 Border Patrol agents along a 20-mile segment of the border on an around the clock basis. This had a drastic effect on the economic and political factors surrounding the sister cities. The concept won widespread support for the Border Patrol in El Paso, but sparked major protests across the Rio Grande. Soon after, the strategy was rolled out on a

national stage and implemented across the border dramatically changing the policies and strategy for the Border. Without expressly stating it, Operation Blockade forces people interested in crossing into harsh and extreme landscapes, letting the environment do their dirty work. As explored in our first assignment in mapping the deaths in Nogales and as further researched with Arturo for our final project, the risk is much higher. Traditionally many people crossed in or near cities but with 24-hour surveillance, people moved further and further and tested more dangerous crossings.

### **Project Work**

As mentioned above, the majority of the trip was centered around "deploying" our projects on the border. I view the remained of this dispatch as a working document to better help me work through some of the concepts of my project.

#### Hydration Stations

Through this class and our work, Arturo and I kept grappling with "As designers, how can our work intersect in these types of conflicts? How can landscape architecture provide assistance to the border crossers?"

As a specific design solution, our project prototype is viewed as one iteration of a possible method to push back against border patrol.

As landscape architects can we pick or select species that would be easily identifiable to the people in need without alerting the Border Patrol? Barrel Cactus are much more prevalent in the Sonoran desert (hotter temps and less winter frost) than the Chihuahuan desert. I believe our next steps would be to identify species and select the cheapest material to further press our prototypes.







# ARTURO ORTIZ

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## ON THE "WHITE SPATIAL IMAGINARY"

*El Paso - Juarez Dispatch*

### **Perception of the Border**

During this trip, my perception of the Border has changed dramatically since the beginning of the class and the last trip to San Diego/Tijuana. It has organically molded into a complexity of layers. I still hold those perceptions of fear and anger but now have been able to see the wall through another lense: seeing the border wall in a comic way. It's just a wall. It's stupid. It's political divide is absurd. But never, in my entire life, would I have thought that I would be wearing a dress and wig alongside this wall. The wall and the environment surrounding it has its own identity along the two sister cities we visited.

Even though I'm able to see this wall in a comic way, I cannot deny the fact that this is not the case for a lot of people. I do agree with Michael Dear that the wall does not work. People will find ways to cross despite how large a wall is built. Even the teenagers/young folks who were talking to Ron in Juarez said that they could easily jump over it. However, I see the wall doing its job in a different way. It's purpose

to intimidate is doing its job: people are increasingly dying because they have to cross in harsher terrains. In that sense, it's working. The implementation of fear, high-security, nationalism, and division are constantly reinforced by media, social norms, and laws.

### **Questions I have:**

1. How has my positionality and my class status changed by attending a high institution school like Berkeley?
2. How is the borderlands?
3. Why is El Paso downtown so empty?

### **The White-Spatial Imaginary**

Seeing the Border Patrol who happened to be brown folks was a bizarre scenario. My preconceived notions of border patrol is that they are all white. I was reminded of people's change in positionality once their families change in class/citizenship/geographical status. I ask myself at what point does this occur? How do racialized geographies perpetuate the American white-spatial imaginary? This makes me think about friends who have papers vs those that don't.









Growing up in a predominately white school in the U.S. I saw the tensions and destruction created by living in the white-spatial imaginary between our own brown communities. The school was divided into territorial sections. You had the Latinx folks who emerged into the U.S. pop-culture on one side of the school and you had other brown students who immigrated recently on another.

We called this side “little Mexico”. I notice those students with papers had a sense of entitlement and would sometimes call other students ‘wetbacks’ (even tho they would get called wetbacks by the white students). This territorial divide is seen in a larger scale today. Seeing the border patrol you can feel a sense of ownership and entitlement. My question is: is the notion of a transnational citizen farfetched? Or could there be a dismantling of borders and perceptions as the future continues to diversify?

#### **Questions:**

1. How can designers engage with communities to exchange knowledge about the white-spatial imaginary?
2. Where is there more research on these types of topics?
3. How do Borderwall sister cities differ in identities?

#### **Designers in the Borderlands**

How do designers play a role in the borderland landscapes and how can design be used as a form of activism? This is the question I asked myself during the last reflection. Being able to deploy our projects was an amazing experience and gave me a sense of how designers can indeed make a positive impact in our landscapes.

Implementing our projects was rewarding in the sense that we were able to not only see the fluidity of the projects but get a better understanding of the context of the site; how it changed the architecture of the projects to better understand our purpose

of our projects. Working with Lizzie was an unexpected team, but since the beginning I have seen the dynamics of two cultures working collectively to dismantle the complexities of the Borderlands. I appreciate having her on my team. We were able to create very poetic projects from the initial Sister cities projects to the prototypes. I appreciated hearing that these projects spoke to people in El Paso. From the cacti prototype to the pinatas, people were curious and willing to talk about them or engage with them.

Overall, this class has been an amazing experience. I would have never gone/ traveled to any of these places if it wasn't for this class. For that I'm thankful. It inspired me to travel and gave me more curiosity of what is out there in the world. I would like to see what other places are like around the world and experience life outside the bay.

Also, having a diverse pool of professionals in the class from different backgrounds was a very rewarding experience. The first day of class where everyone presented their work was a little bit intimidating. Everyone has done rad work. This trip made me realize that they are all human.. who did and are doing rad work. And I hope this is not the end and hopefully we are able to collaborate in more future projects.



# SOPHIA SOBKO

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## *RUBBING BOTH SIDES*

*El Paso - Juarez Dispatch*

### **Introduction:**

For me this trip was primarily centered around two objectives: (1) “deploying” our projects, and (2) experiencing a second border city (after having spent considerable time in Tijuana over the past few years). I found Marfa to be fascinating on its own (the town, the foundations and Judd’s work, the hours to wander in my little square of the map), but I will set those impressions aside here to first focus on the border cities and my experience implementing the two borderwall projects.

### **El Paso**

I did not know what to expect of El Paso or Juárez. I had passed through El Paso several years ago, making a stop at the emergency room to get checked out after a car accident. I didn’t remember much. As for Juárez, I had heard many times that it was a “murder capital” and the most dangerous border city. I associated it with the disappearances of the many women who worked at maquiladoras. I tried to acknowledge these preconceived

notions and open my eyes. El Paso seemed quiet and desolate in a way that I found calming but sad. I did not really interact with locals, save the hotel staff. One night we went to a dive bar/restaurant near the hotel. The waiter was a young man from Juárez who turned out to be an opera singer who had traveled the world. He was taking his parents with him. When we were outside one day a mother asked Won for some food; he gave her fruit, which she handed to her little son. Many places seemed closed, either temporarily or permanently. I could see attempts to bring life to the city: the plaza/park by the hotel, a poorly attended event with food trucks, a matinee movie.

### **Crossing to Juárez**

The most “bustling” part of El Paso that I experienced was the two blocks heading toward Juárez. This was the most fascinating part of El Paso for me...the single road that connects the two sister cities. We walked on the El Paso side past clothing stores advertising butt padding and tight jeans for women. We paid fifty





cents to cross a bridge over the Rio Grande and Rio Bravo, where I saw Fuck Trump graffiti. Suddenly we were in Mexico. We headed south on that very same street, past an old bar where margaritas were supposedly invented, past a family playing a street concert, past an old man who sold scorpions that he made out of beads, all the way down to a crowded Saturday market and plaza filled with vendors and food stalls which sat at the heels of a big cathedral. The cathedral was full of (seeming) locals praying, sitting, coming up to a Virgin Mary (?) statue that was maybe there for Easter. The plaza outside was full of life. What a difference from El Paso, which felt so dead. We ate a delicious local restaurant that was crammed with families. It was decorated with torero paraphernalia and a woman made tortillas by hand.

The way back was just as surreal. This time we paid 25 cents (you can pay in pesos or put in a quarter) and crossed the bridge right back into forgotten El Paso. I wish I could have traveled to El Paso in past decades - what did it look like 10 years ago, 20, 30? How will it look in the future?

A thought that has been in my mind over the past year is that rather than studying racialized people, someone of my positionality (documented, white, educated) should turn toward racializing systems and spaces, those of us complicit in maintaining hegemony, etc. In the case of this class and our projects, for me this means turning toward the U.S., not Mexico, and considering my audience to be a U.S. audience. People in Mexico already know the problem; it is up to the rest of us to understand how we are complicit in it, how the stories are told, where there might be room for change.

George Lipsitz's (2007) "The Racialization of Space and the Spatialization of Race" asks that instead of looking for racialized people, to look at how space is racialized (in his work, how the same space exists under white and black spatial imaginaries) see *Tuck & Yang: Unbecoming Claims*.

## Hike to El Cristo Rey

I thought Ersela's talk at the top of El Cristo Rey was fascinating. Though her work seems highly technical and I did not quite understand all of it, I was struck by her determination and boldness in visiting the various military training sites. I especially like when she said that she was a constituent and had a right to visit, and she was granted permission (surprising!). I immediately thought of San Diego and all of the areas I have driven by that look like trainings set up to model sites in the Middle East. I felt naïve listening to Ersela.

I truly have no idea of the extent of the government surveillance we are under, and the depths and detailed lengths that the military goes to mimic situations of warfare. I couldn't believe that there are fake morgues, fake smells.. I had heard of video games used to train soldiers, but not real life compounds. I want to read about this and look into it more. I feel we have a right to know! I recently heard Trevor Paglan speak on surveillance and military training as well. He took photographs from great distances; the result were blurry and melted suggestions of covert operations. There seems to be a lot of crossover, and I want to look more into this.

## Anapra – Both Sides

An interesting experience was visiting "both sides" of Anapra. On the Mexico side we created rubbings of Monument 2C. Almost immediately a little girl- Alejandra- came out of her house and approached us, curious and wanting to help. We gave her some graphite and had her help us draw. She seemed really happy to be able to contribute and it was quite a compelling site – Russian-American, Jewish, and Greek UC Berkeley students rubbing a US-Mexico monument with a young Mexican girl. Even her little brother, no older than 2 or 3, joined in. I spoke with her mother to make sure it was okay, and she smiled and said, yes. We gave Alejandra one of the drawings to take with





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her. She also used some of the graphite to make her own drawing. When I asked her what it was of, she said “Frozen” and another American movie. It made me think of how porous the cultural border truly is – how strange to have this thought literally at the edge of the massive fortified wall.

The next day we were on the American side of Anapra. It felt wrong to be able to be there and see Alejandra’s house through the breaks in the fence. We had the freedom to move back and forth, but she couldn’t be part of our theatrical production. Several kids came up to the fence from the Mexico side, curious about our medieval costumes. I briefly spoke to them and they knew Alejandra and her brother. They pressed their faces against the breaks in the bars but they couldn’t come over like we did. It’s a simple thought, but it’s important to keep realizing the absurdity and injustice of this. I felt it every time I visited the deported parents with whom I was working in Tijuana over the course of six months.

Staging *Antigone* in Medieval Times at the border was as strange and surreal as the title sounds. We were apprehensive about the border patrol, but very soon understood that they did not care at all that we were there. Is it because we were women? White women? Is it because we were doing something absurd? Because performance and art are harmless? They only asked how long we would be there, nothing else. Even more absurdly, the border patrol truck kept driving back and forth, dragging the tires to smooth the sand. Sometimes the agent would release the tires, as if the truck had gotten tired of dragging that load along. None of it made sense. We were making plenty of tracks and footprints, but these were considered benign, and they would just be erased once we left. Our actions felt silly and futile, which we kind of expected. Just the visual motif of the border patrol agent pulling the

tires made it all the more obvious. Again, I was touched by the interest of the kids, and I wished that we had some way for them to participate in the production, or at least to explain what it was. An elderly couple watched us for a long time as well. I wish I had shared more with them.

### **Adobe House Monument Rubbings**

Creating the rubbing of International Boundary Marker 1 was overwhelming! In retrospect, we would have needed much more time and preparation (and perhaps different wind conditions) to have done a truly excellent job. At the same time, it was a wonderful experience because of the collaboration and support of those on both sides: all of our classmates, who held the ladder, moved the ladder, climbed the ladder, rubbed with the charcoal; the docent of the Adobe House, who stayed long after hours with eagerness and let us borrow his ladder; and of course the two lesbian police chiefs of Juarez who watched us from their car the entire time while drinking cold beers. I will never forget this experience.

Having researched the monuments and written about them, I now understand that our action was a remembrance of the monuments, which have faded and been forgotten with time. They seem and feel irrelevant in comparison to the heavy border fortification, prototypes, and surveillance. And yet there they are, standing, this one available to be visited by people on “both sides.” In some ways gifting a rubbing to the docent felt cheesy and I resist romanticizing a past that was undoubtedly violent. On the other hand, the action marked a beautiful evening of collaboration and camaraderie despite the oppression of the US government.

### **Quotes on Obelisks**





*“The obelisks had other names once, back when they were first built and deployed and used, but no one remembers those names or the great devices’ purpose Memories are fragile as slate in the Stillness. In fact, these days no one really pays much attention to the things at all, though they are huge and beautiful and a little terrifying..*

*It’s obvious that the obelisks are nothing natural. It is equally obvious that they are irrelevant. Awesome, but purposeless: just another grave-marker of just another civilization successfully destroyed by Father Earth’s tireless efforts. There are many other such cairns around the world: a thousand ruined cities, a million monuments to heroes or gods no one remembers, several dozen bridges to nowhere. Such things are not to be admired, goes the current wisdom in the Stillness. The people who built those things were weak, and died as the weak inevitably must. More damning is that they failed. The ones who built the obelisks just failed harder than most.*

*But the obelisks exist, and they play a role in the world’s end, and thus are worthy of note.”*

*-The Fifth Season by N.K.Jemisin*

# LAURA BELIK

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## (ON) SPACE

*El Paso - Juarez Dispatch*

### **Introduction**

Through this dispatch, I present some of my thoughts and connections on space and scale, beyond their physical aspects, but at the same time, conditioned by it. These “landscapes of the absurd” bring to light how our perceptions of “landscapes” need to be broader and understood through their interconnections.

Being my first trip to the “American Southwest” I finally could really feel and understand what history books meant when referencing the conquering of the territory and the strategies of doing so. While El Paso’s grid contrasts with Ciudad Juarez’s sprawl, making clear the battle for land ownership, the physical connections between the two city’s plans is also undeniable.

I’ve been thinking about questions of space from its multiple perspectives, culturally and spatially and the scales [in its broader terms] that each one of these can have.

### **What is the city but its people?**

Visiting the University of Texas- El Paso, we have learned that about 80% of their student body is Mexican or Mexican-American. Walking downtown El Paso, most commercial establishments are in Spanish, and that is the main language you hear on the streets. “This is a bilingual city”, someone explained to me. “In some parts of town, Spanish is simply a requirement”. This was, honestly, a relief.

### **View from Mount Cristo Rey**

Culture transcends boundaries?  
Border culture is conditional.  
Historically, it is interesting to think how the conditions of the border itself has changed, and so has the ways this population portrays themselves within the space. The Border spaces might be an interesting way to think about Subject-Object interconnected relations (Bruno Latour ), but also how they transcend through its political/economic/social connections (Donna Haraway ), or, further, how these border conditions









can be understood as an example of what Elizabeth Povinelli calls the Geontopower .

### **On Space**

By walking a straight line, one connects downtown El Paso and Ciudad Juarez's main plazas. Connections between great administrative or religious buildings/monuments or plazas are seen as a planning strategy that took place through many different planning schools/strategies. Colonial Spain in Latin America is known to build on top of ancient cities and/or impose their European Baroque plan that was very much connected to making clear the power of the King and the Church.

In the U.S., as Mario Gandelsonas explains, this baroque experience is seen through the monumental axis that are created within the greater grid (which is particularly visible in the Washington D.C. case, for example. The City Beautiful Movement in Chicago, by Daniel Burnham, also draws from these same principles). The American Grid, that was first proposed as a strategy for occupying larger, vast territories in the U.S., also known as the "One Mile Grid", gets incorporated in urban centers as well by mid- Nineteen Century. But what we see in El Paso-Juarez is particularly interesting because it somehow incorporates these different planning strategies and principles, that are perceptible while experiencing both cities (See Image 3).

### **Porosity Within Barriers**

It is strange/amusing/disturbing (I find it hard to describe how I felt) how such contrasting principles coexist in the border towns. Porosity of places, people, culture, language, food, manners, etc. happen in a highly militarized space (everyday more).

A hike to Cristo Rey mountain may be what best summarizes this feeling. The idea of "crossing" or the Spanish-language reference of "el otro lado" has such a

bizarre connotation and the absurdity of it culminates in seeing Trump's wall following the terrain (see Image 1) up a hill through the desert's landscape. The wall/gate right by Rio Grande also makes no physical sense other than a political statement.

Back to the grid and ideas on mapping, I could not help but to think about De Certeau's writings on "Practices of Everyday Life", where he famously describes Manhattan while seeing it from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center, bringing to light discussions on alienation from this birds-eye-view experience . Mount Cristo Rey gives me that perspective in a way. While I was being warned by the border patrol guards about the "bad elements" that I could find on my way up the mountain, the poetics of the military jargon led me to think of how they manage to detach the individuality of those people into an "element". Being "up there", on top of the mountain also gives a certain detachment from the ground.

Mount Cristo Rey represents the connection between three different territories: New Mexico, Texas and Mexico. The mountain, supposedly merging into one single landscape, ends up representing precisely the division itself, marked by lines that are both physical and conceptual. These are some of the paradoxes of understanding the territory from afar. The lines, the elements, the rules, the borders. The view from the top of Mount Cristo Rey, in a way, might be, on one hand, understood precisely as the opposite of De Certeau's Manhattan: there is no space for alienation, the ground's reality is much closer here. Coming down won't make much of a difference. On the other hand, mapping these boundaries and borders is pointedly the incarnation of the alienation of power in the first place.











## 07 INTERVENTION

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*INSTALLATION*





UC BERKELEY

Nevada

California

Arizona

SAN DIEGO

TIJUANA





Nebraska

Utah

Colorado

Kansas

New Mexico

Oklahoma

EL PASO

JUAREZ

Texas







# BETWEEN DUALITIES

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*CACTUS PROTOTYPE*

*Arturo Ortiz + Lizzie Sturr*

After Operation 'Hold the Line' was deployed in 1993, fewer migrants were able to cross in safe urban areas and were forced into harsh and dangerous landscapes. Nonprofits and community groups leave water gallons throughout the desert to help prevent migrant deaths. Our project developed after watching and reading about U.S. Border Patrol agents sabotaging water supplies left for migrants coming from Mexico into the United States. On social media you can see them slashing, shooting, kicking, or emptying water from the gallons.



large:



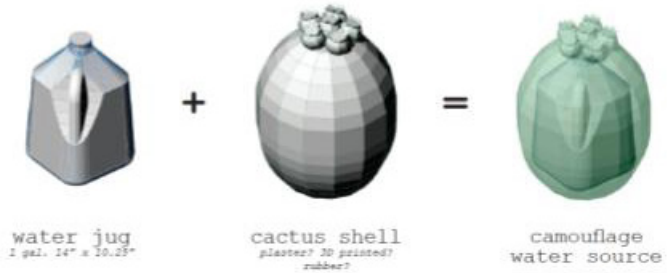
Saguaro  
*Carnegiea gigantea*



small:



Barrel Cactus  
*Schinocactus grusonii*



### Intent

As landscape architects and designers, our project 'Between Dualities' explores this tragedy in two forms and pushes back on the Border Patrol Agents -- one as a design solution and the second as an art object that can be critiqued.

### The Prototype

The purpose of this prototype is to camouflage water left for crossing migrants from U.S. Border Patrol. As a political art statement, this prototype highlights the absurdity that a simple human necessity to survive (like drinking water) needs to be camouflaged.

This prototype was installed in along the Mexico-U.S. Border in El Paso, TX and further developed as an installation for Wurster Courtyard.

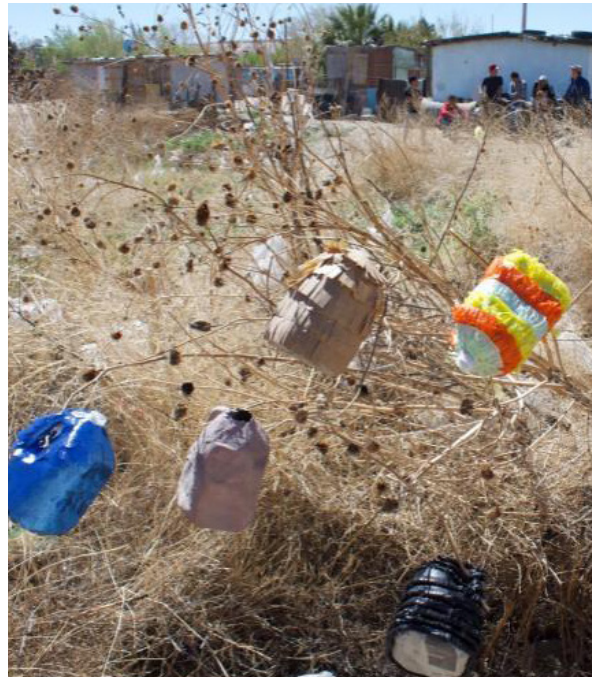












### **Numbers 20:11**

*“And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he struck the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their animals also.”*

*- King James Bible*

### **Tire drag**

Based on the tires used by border patrol agents to scrape the land near the wall to find people crossing

### **Mirage**

An optical illusion caused by atmospheric conditions, especially the appearance of a sheet of water in a desert or on a hot road caused by the refraction of light from the sky by heated air.







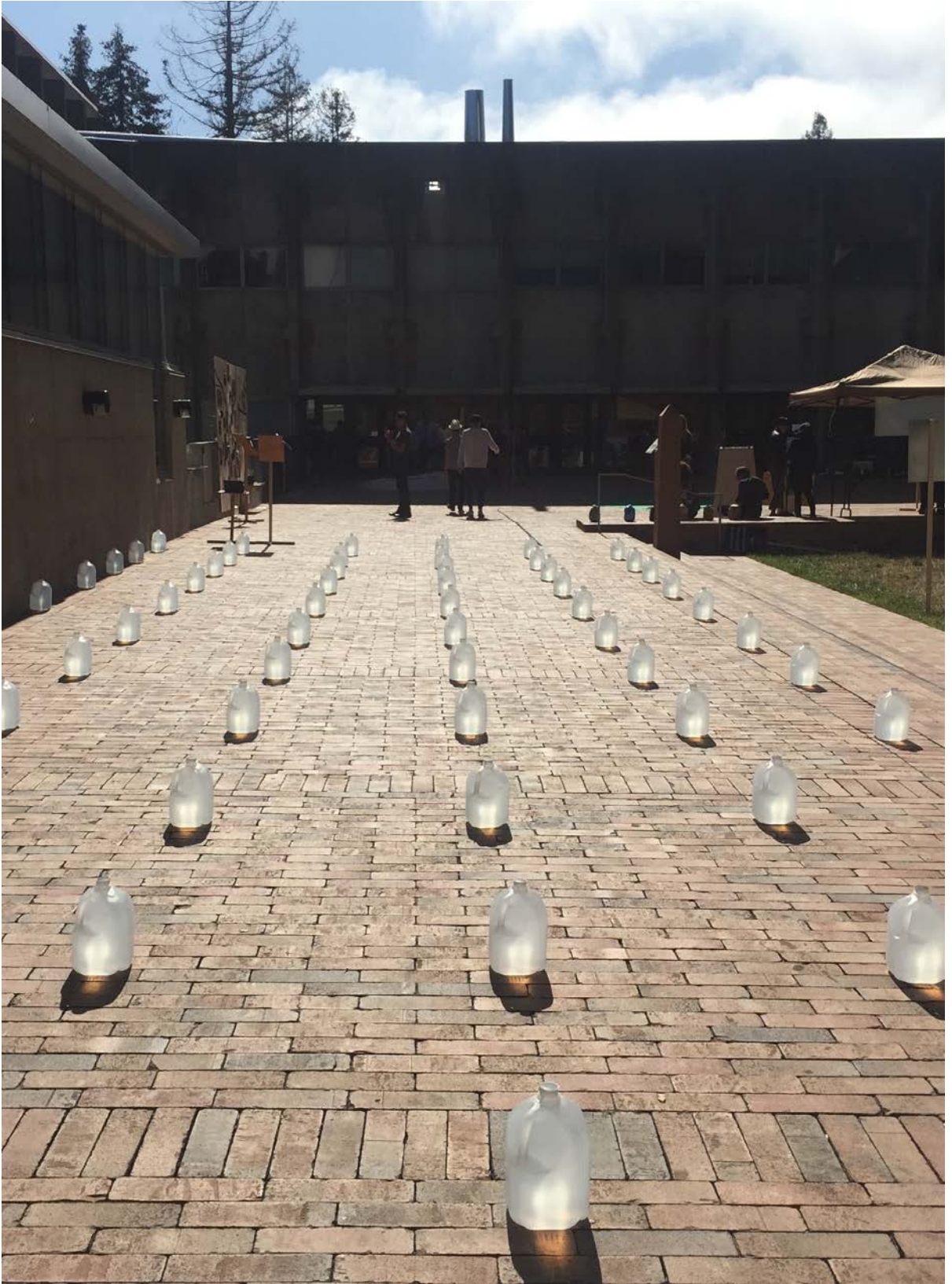


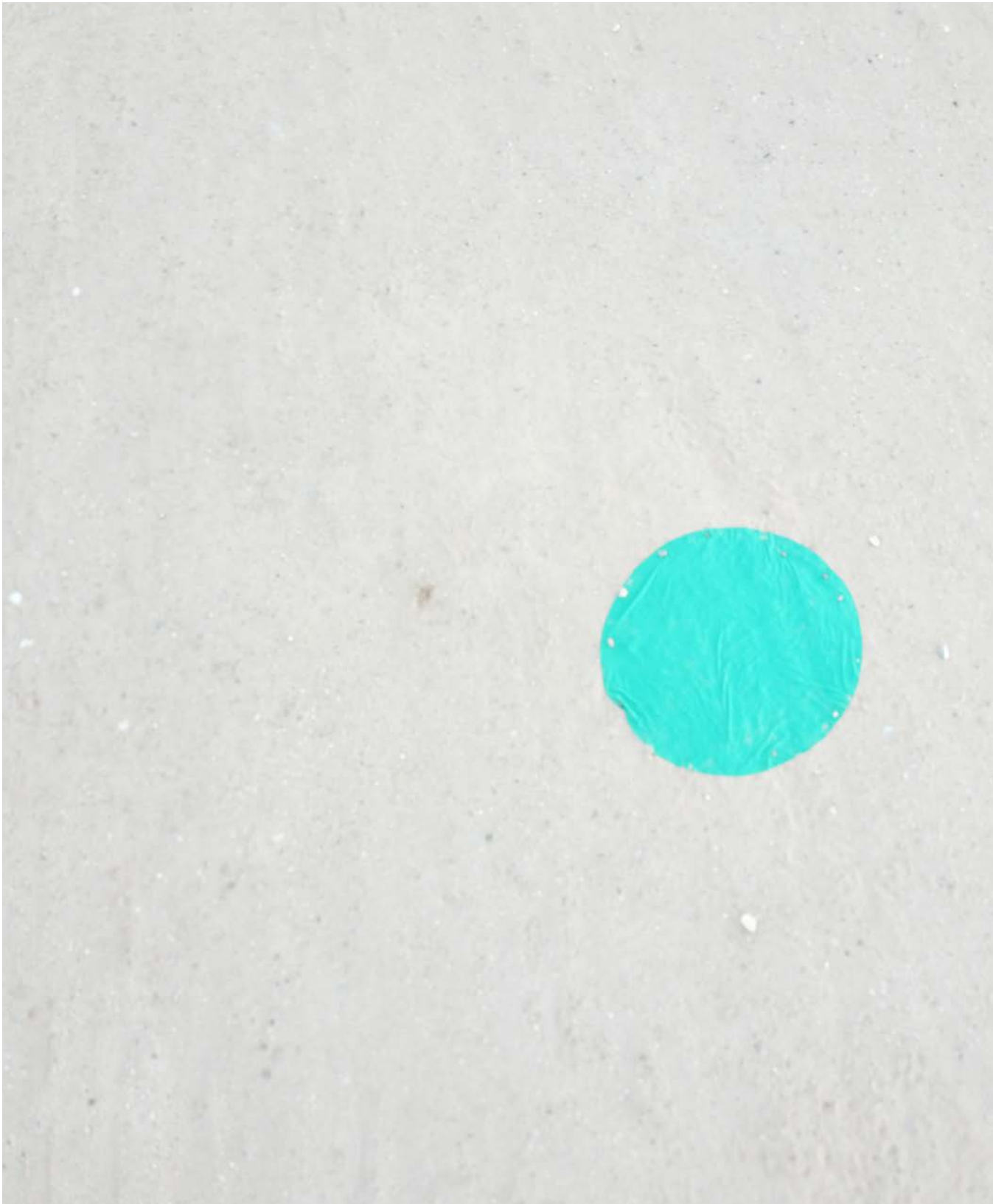
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# PUNTO DE REUNION

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## *MEETING POINT*

*Lizzie Sturr*

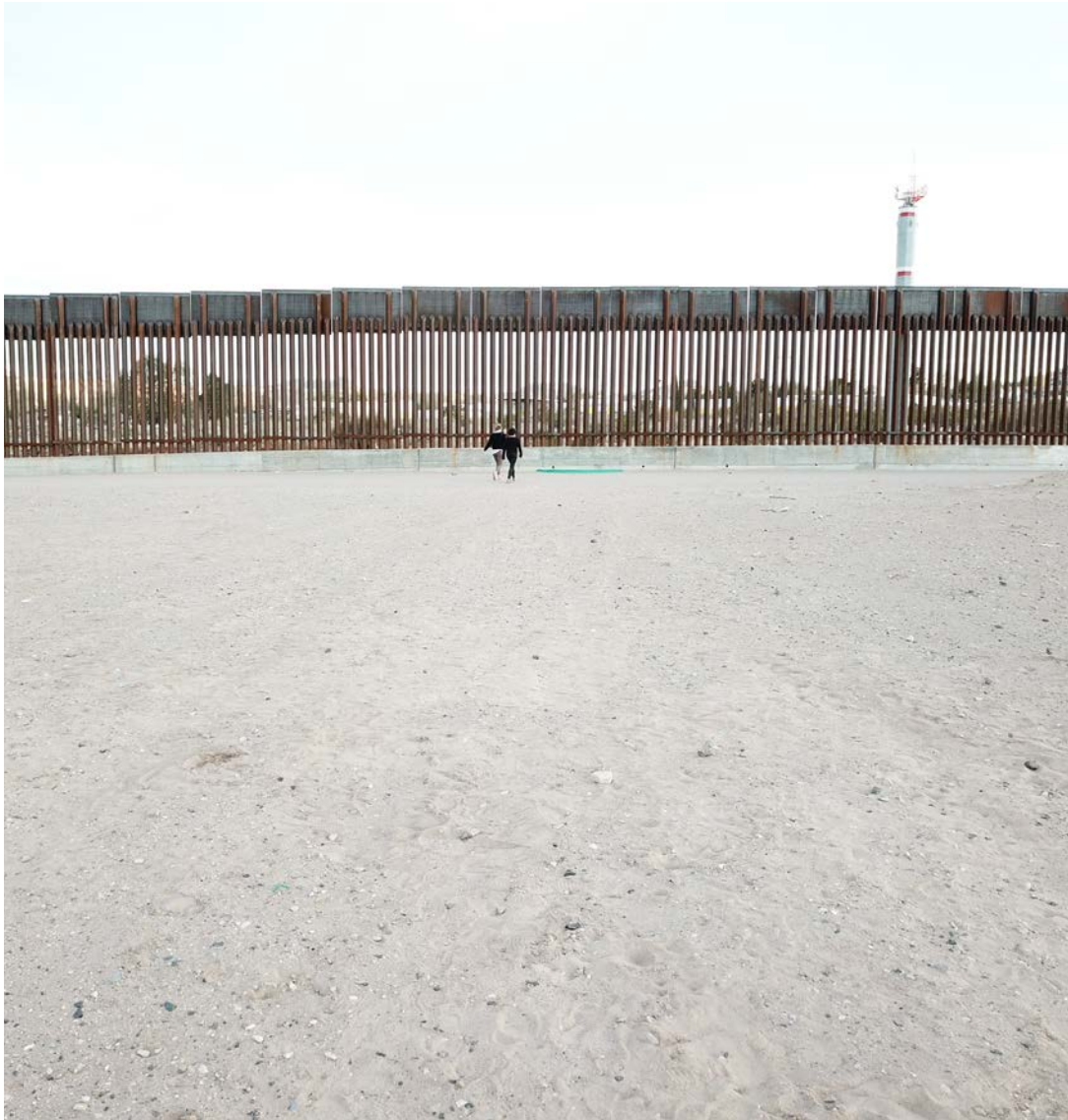
### **Punto de reunion:**

*The geographically defined place where people meet.*

These green dots deliberately marked in urban landscapes, in different colors and forms, each offer a nuance and personal interpretation of what a common + fixed image of what a signifier of meeting should be. My research found that this marking has evolved to become a decorative tag throughout the city that does not have any specific clear purpose.

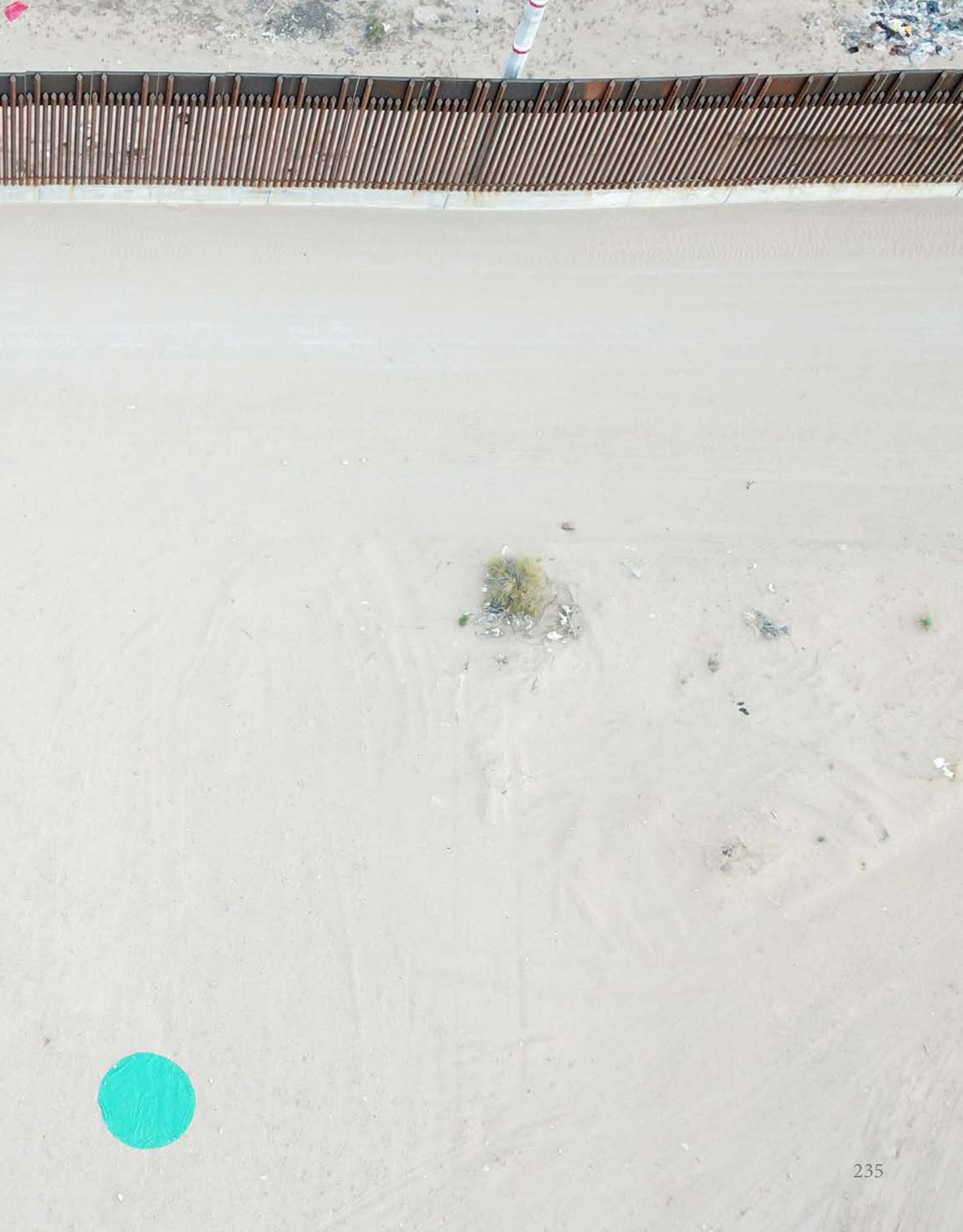
These dots mark a good intention with an inefficient result that reflect a larger collective memory insecurity in the country. They are human moments, points of focus and reflection in a vibrant city saturated with noise. This project takes the concept of punto de reunion, and inverts its relationship to the landscape, memory, and context, by placing it next to the borderwall to ask questions of what it means to deliberately highlight or mark an arbitrary point in the landscape.







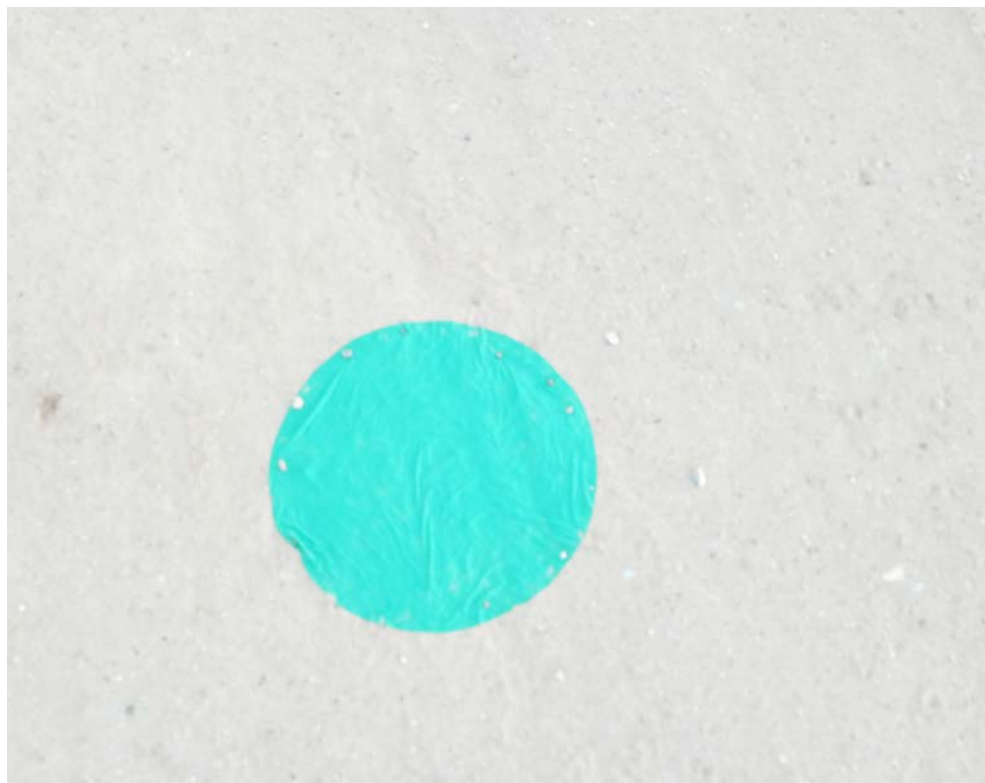


















## DOUBLE ANACHRONISM

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### *STAGING ANTIGONE IN MEDIEVAL TIMES AT THE BORDER*

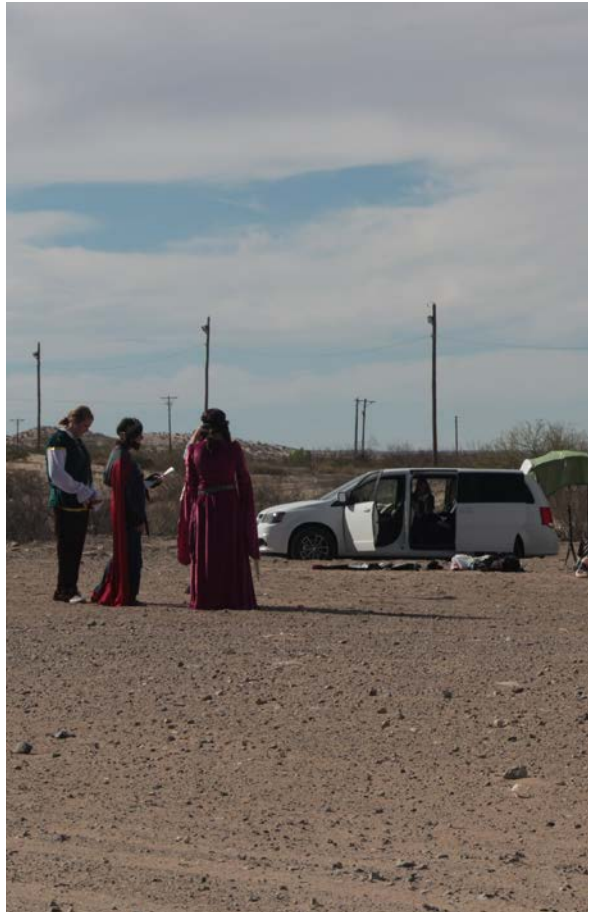
*Sophia Arbara, Sophia Sobko, Gabriella Willenz*

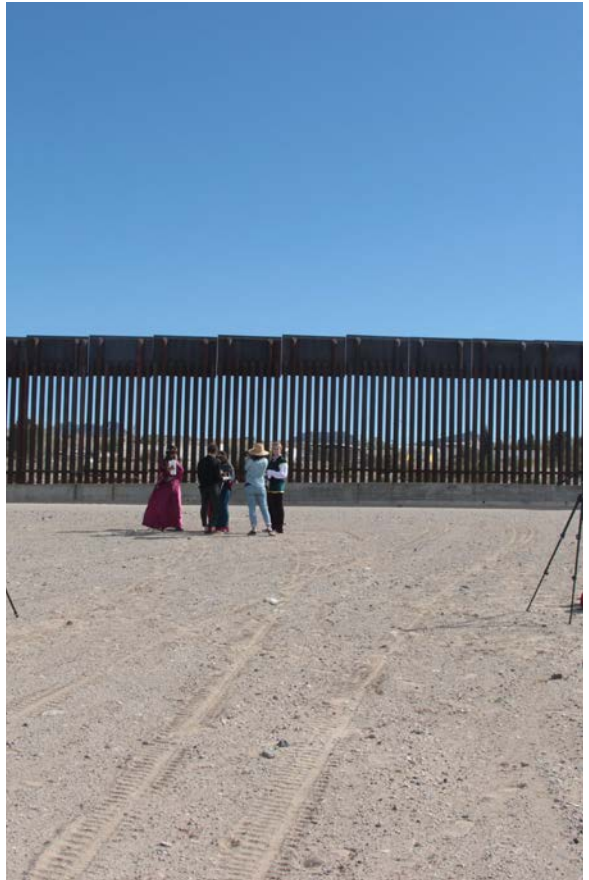
#### **Participants:**

Laura Belik, Cheyenne Concepcion, Sam Gebb,  
Gabriela Navarro, Arturo Ortiz, Lizzie Sturr

A scene from the greek tragedy Antigone by Sophocles is staged in front of the US - Mexican border. Antigone, endlessly evoked as an example of ultimate resistance, stands against inequities perpetrated in the name of the state. The border wall functions as the play's backdrop, equating technology and ideologies of a wall (a medieval solution to a modern problem), while pointing to its performative qualities. From ancient Greek times, to the Middle Ages and today's border conditions, man-made laws and state power continue to challenge humanistic values: this negotiation of power forms the broader context in which our project is staged. The amateur aesthetic of the production reveals our own feelings of inadequacy and impotence as we try to confront these powers.















# AGROCORN

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## TRIPTYCH

*Won Cha and Robert Ungar*

9/11 was the catalyst for a renewed effort by the Bush administration to strengthen national security. The Department of Homeland Security, after 9/11, in cooperation with other federal agencies developed a “threat matrix”, an extensive, covert, infrastructure meant to anticipate and respond to any potential threats to the U.S.

Words like “Agro-Terrorism” were formed, with the help of U.S. agribusiness companies, to define threats to America’s food supply. There are no documented cases of agro-terrorism originating from the U.S. Mexico border. We were interested in the speculative nature of agro-terrorism and what U.S. agribusiness companies see as a threat.

Historically, corn has been and continues to be a foundational staple crop in Mexican culture. Mexico has over 59 known indigenous varieties of corn. Yet, Mexico is America’s top corn importer in the world. Iowa alone produces 3 times as much corn per year than Mexico. Over 90% of corn produced in the U.S. is grown from Monsanto’s GMO seeds. Inadvertently, Monsanto dominates Mexico’s corn supply.







Within the last 2 years, Monsanto, with its unlimited lobbying power and resources, has been seeking to buy the most fertile land in Mexico to expand its corporate project within the country. Directly attacking Mexico's agricultural autonomy and endangering corn biodiversity. Here we ask who is the agro-terrorist?

Seeking the ancient ancestor of the corn we know today, Teosinte is an ancient grain native to Mexico. Zea Mays Mexicana, or Teosinte is a resilient variety native to the Northern Mexico/Southern U.S climate. Mexican farmers mix Teosinte in their corn fields to strengthen the crops against pests. U.S border control officers confiscate any seed entering the U.S under agricultural quarantine.

We found this Teosinte-GMO hybrid, as a form, to embody the cultural, historical, social flux that has always existed within the 3rd nation. A flux, that is threatened by America's renewed surge of nationalism and colonial corporate tactics.

Utilizing methods of smuggling and crossing from our respective borders, the DMZ in Korea and the Palestine-Israel barrier, we developed various methods of dispersing Teosinte seeds across the Mexico-U.S border. We hope these seeds take root and continue to disseminate.





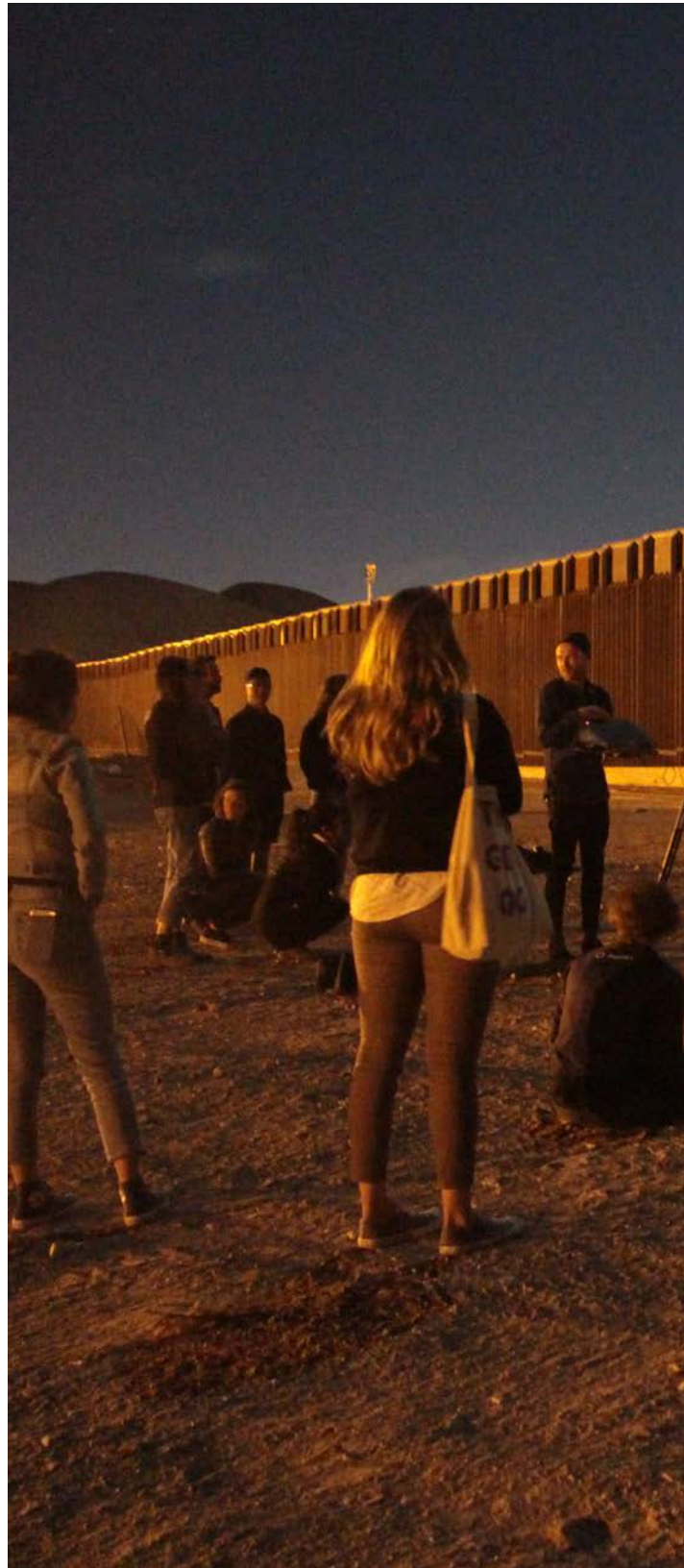
# PROJECTED

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## *BODIES AND BORDERS*

*Sam Gebb*

Video projection is a type of mirroring that is more flexible in its surface engagement and better equipped to reproduce temporal as well as spatial characteristics. It allows for more layers to be added, both material and immaterial, and mediate space at multiple scales. There is the scale of the screen in the context of its environment, the difference between the projected object or environment's original and projected scale, and the space between the viewers and the content-laden screen. While we watch a projection, we do not view ourselves directly but rather imagine ourselves located in or with that which is being projected. The screen becomes both a division and a portal. We can imagine ourselves within the screen, or on the other side of it. This is effectively the same location in space, but in the former we are in another world, while in the latter we are in our same environment, just on the other side of the wall.















If we are not simply passive viewers of the projection, we can engage with and manipulate it by blocking portions of light. We effect an immediate embodied response to something that is immaterial and elsewhere. We change the duplication in a way that is real – that escapes the imaginary, if only for a moment. This embodied engagement with projection, with an immaterial throwing of light that duplicates an object or event or place that is elsewhere—perhaps, on the other side of a wall—does more than geometric duplication and alteration. We create a visceral environment that is a hybrid of actual and projected place. This space is within the mirror, suspended between the imaginary and the real, from which both new imaginaries and new realities could flow.







# MONUMENTAL MONUMENT

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## GRAPHITE RUBBINGS

*Sophia Arbara, Sophia Sobko, Gabriella Willenz*

*“Monuments as relics say something about the necessity for ruins in our modern world.”*

*- Daniel D. Arreola*

In 1889, the governments of the U.S. and Mexico established the International Boundary Commission (IBC), a body responsible for negotiating the terms of several treaties signed after the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848. The IBC’s survey of the border region resulted in the installation of 276 monuments, “dots” marking the land boundary between the U.S. and Mexico, from El Paso to the Pacific Ocean. Whether the boundary markers were meant to demarcate territory or to heal the wounds of war, in today’s context of heavy border fortification and surveillance, they appear as ghosts, mere relics of the past.

By rebuilding *International Boundary Markers 1 and 2C* (located in El Paso, TX), we displace them from their temporal and geographic contexts, returning to a stage where territorial division was denoted only by monuments: dots that were later connected to become lines, fences, walls. Were the original monuments the colonial markings of new nation-states, the collective suturing of a recent wound, or a preamble to future notions of sovereignty and exclusion?

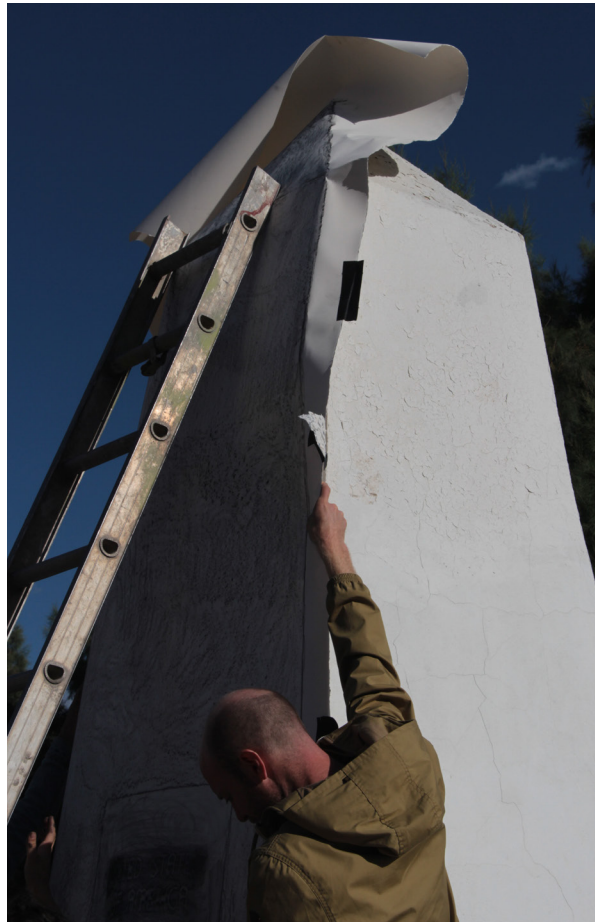




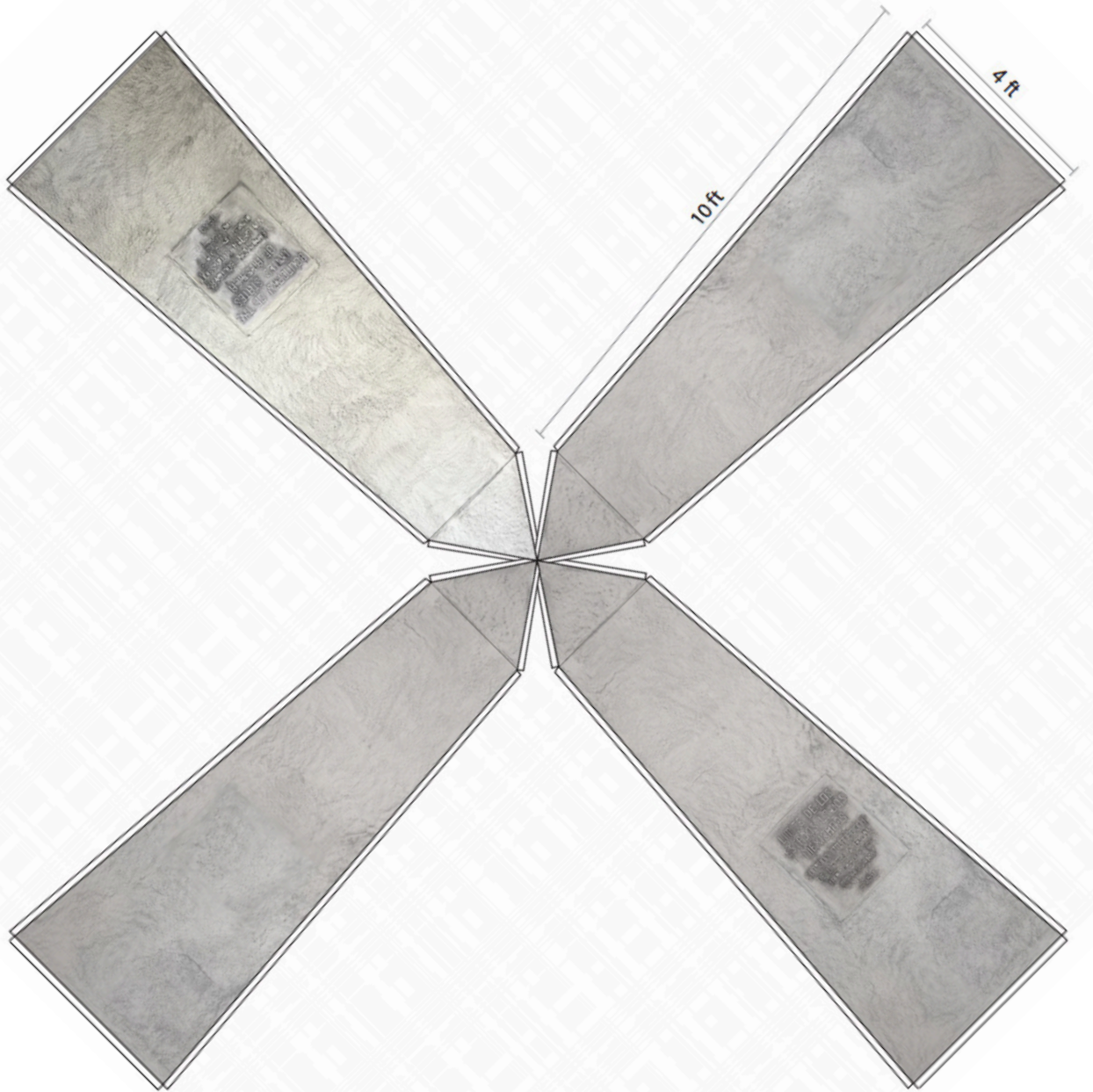














# MANUAL FOR FOUND SPACE

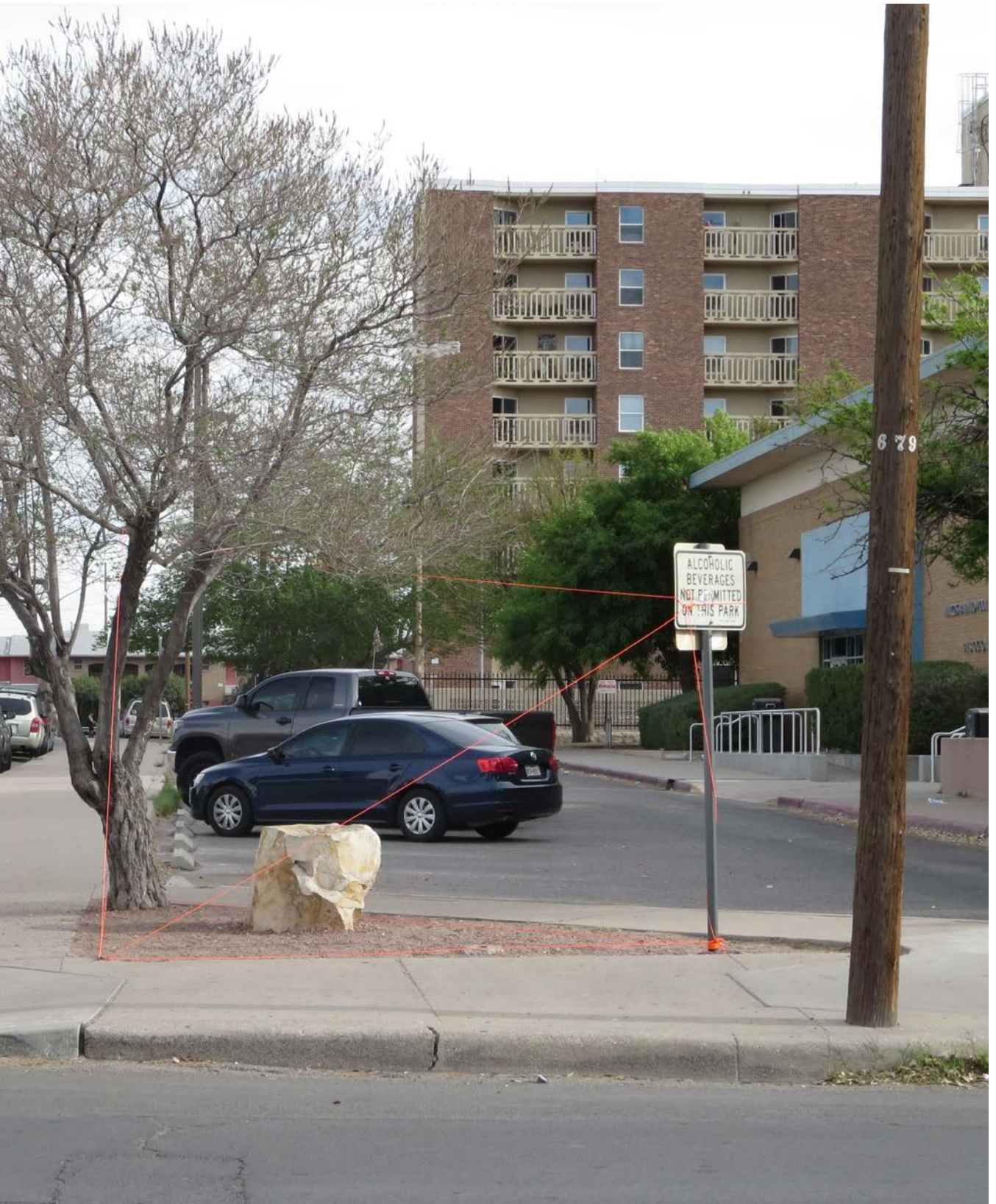
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## RESEARCH

Laura Belik, Sam Gebb,  
Michael Clyde Johnson, Gabriella Willenz

In the project *Manual For Found Space* we worked to find, extract and later reproduce specific places, in US El-Paso and Mexican Juarez, by defining spaces. Building upon the thought of Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre and considering space as a means of executing power, the ability to define and gain hold over space/place - as we offer through our manual - becomes desired. But the attempt at reproduction by taking an outline of a polygon out of its original context reveals itself futile and exposes the desire to obtain, control and manipulate the “other” through displacement and reproduction of a cultural landscape. Aside from the manual, our project includes three iterations that, in a subversive affirmative manner, reveal the process of objectification and capitalist value extraction: a 1:1 scaled wireframe wooden structure, “One of a kind” cast sculptures and a series of small 3D printed objects that can be purchased at the Borderlands National Park gift shop.

















# MANUAL FOR FOUND SPACE

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*MIXED MEDIA*

Laura Belik, Sam Gebb,  
Michael Clyde Johnson, Gabriella Willenz

*Manual for Found Space contains all essential information for the user to recognize, create and reproduce space. This manual includes step-by-step setup instructions, warnings, and examples of reproducible areas.*

## **Warranty**

Limited Warranty, Disclaimer, Limitation of Liability For a period of one (1) hour from the time of assemblage by the retail customer, Found Space® warrants any attempts in producing space against defects in materials, workmanship or lack of feeling of belonging.

This warranty does not cover any damage or failure caused by misuse, abuse, accidents or misinterpretation of any kind.

*Manual for Found Space* does not come with any features other than the reproduction of space. Further acknowledgements of its significance are personal and not-transferable. If product is found to be defective, you may try reproducing it elsewhere. Spatial content is a creation of the mind. Retail customer should consult with an accredited psychoanalyst if problem persist.



M A N U A L  
F O U N D  
F O U N D  
S P A C E



## **INSTRUCTIONS OF USE**

Manual for Found Space is both an easy way for reproducing space and for finding and creating your own delimitations of it!

Notice: to best use this manual, establishment of spatial goals need to be addressed prior.

### **Reproducing space**

Manual for Found Space comes with four (4) easy-to-assemble crossborderers reproducible spaces. Follow step-by-step setup instructions on page 10 to recreate the chosen form. Place associations are recommended but not provided.

### **Creating space**

See examples of reproducible spaces provided on pages 16-31. Measurements and space-making materials (see recommended material list on page 13) need to be implemented by user. Instructions to find spaces are personal and non-transferable, based on individual's perceptions.

## **WARNINGS**

### **Be aware**

Hazardous! Risk of choking. Risk of misplacement.

This product does not come with real estate value.

Third spaces created physically coexist with place of implementation.

Found Space® does not take legal responsibility for any commercial transactions.

Found Space® does not take responsibility for any emotional attachments or disappointments it may cause.

### **Attention**

spaces may be created independently of human actions.

## **PRODUCT DESCRIPTION**

Manual for Found Space is a guide to help users reproduce different spatial localities elsewhere. Each edition of the manual comes with detailed instructions and measurements of selected areas to be reproduced where most convenient for the retail customer. The manual indicates materials and strategies of assemblage, actively creating the possibility for new and multiple reiterations of place.

### **How to Find Space**

Detect a defined available site. Sites should consist of a continuous line with the potential to become a shape.

Attach the outlining of additional sides to create a closed polygon.

### **Notice**

Spaces availability is unlimited. Conforming and perceiving spaces tend to form a place.

How to capitalize space defining a space should be seen as a mean to a larger goal - extracing capital out of the new space. Once a space is defined its shape could be reproduced in several ways: 1:1 scaled structures in completely alternative land, scaled down art sculpters (respectively to the art at market value) and a variety of smaller, affordable products such as keychains, snow-shakers, paper holders etc.

## SETUP INSTRUCTIONS

This manual comes with four (4) selected reproducible spaces. Original geo-location is specified within each project. *Manual for Found Space* does not provide materials for Space Assemblage. Recommended materials (see page 13) should be purchased separately.

1. Select a location from *Manual for Found Space*.
2. Select a physical space where this location will be reproduced
3. Measure space
4. Select proper materials for reproductions (see recommended materials list on page 13)
5. Follow steps indicated on your chosen location. Illustrated figures available. If creating space, indicate steps.
6. Connect end points of string once space completed. Closed polygons guarantee area.
7. Enjoy in moderation

### Setup warnings/ Improper setup results

Following precise instructions for Space Assemblage is required in order to faithfully reproduce the indicated space. Disruptions to the norm will result in a different place.

## RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

String/ Rope

Tape

Tacks/ T-pins

Binder Clips

Hooks / screw eyes

Measuring tape

Wire

Scissors

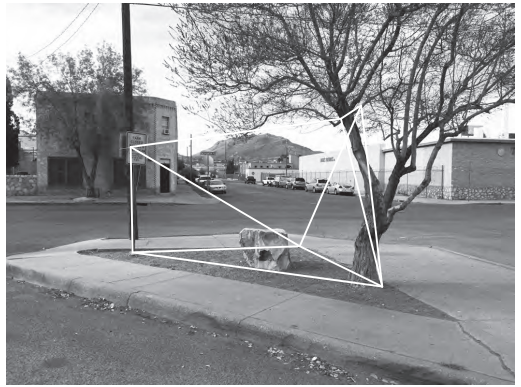
\* Materials are not provided by the *Manual for Found Space*. The preceding list is an illustrative recommendation

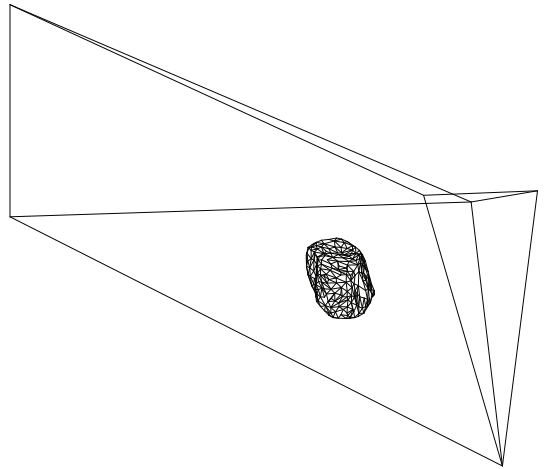
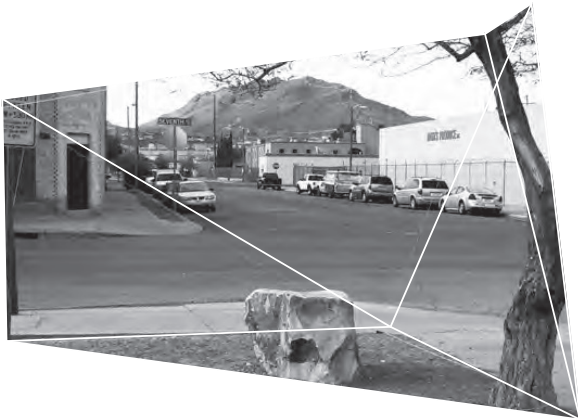
\*\* Materials may vary according to each project. *Found Space*® does not take responsibility for any damage [mis] place-making might cause to selected space

\*\*\* Materials might shape form



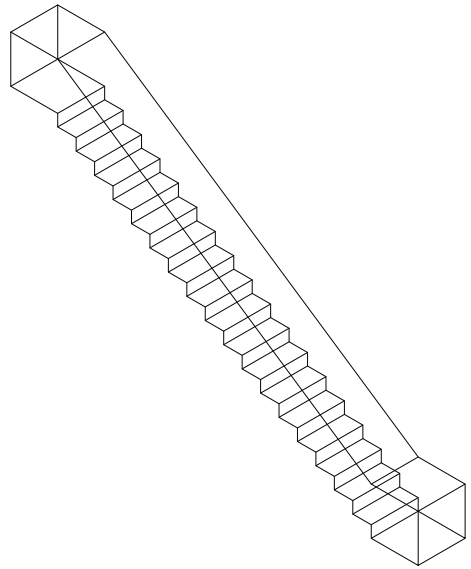


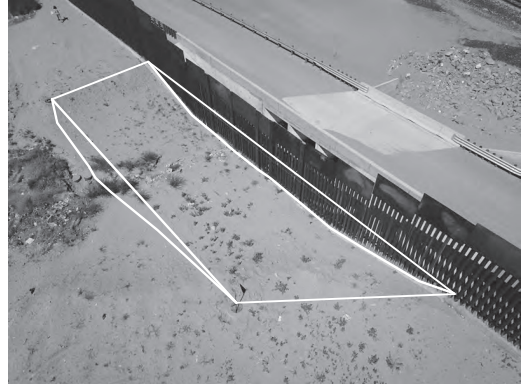




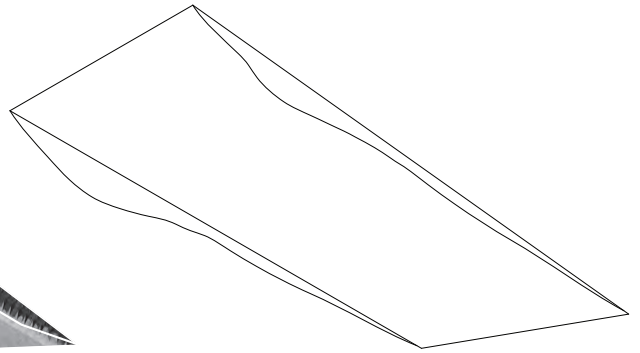
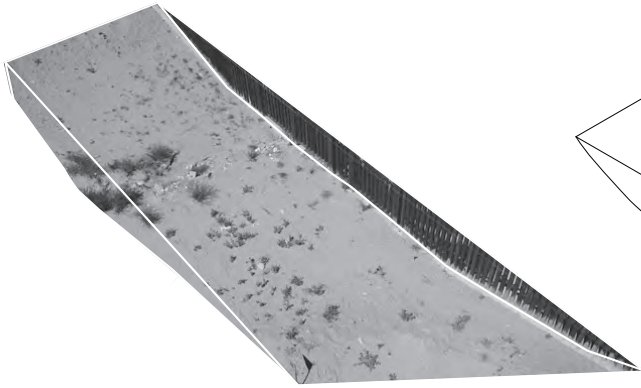


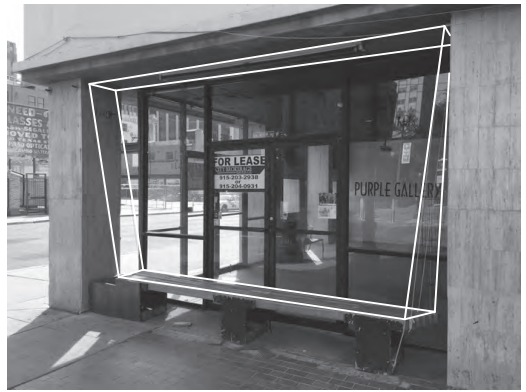


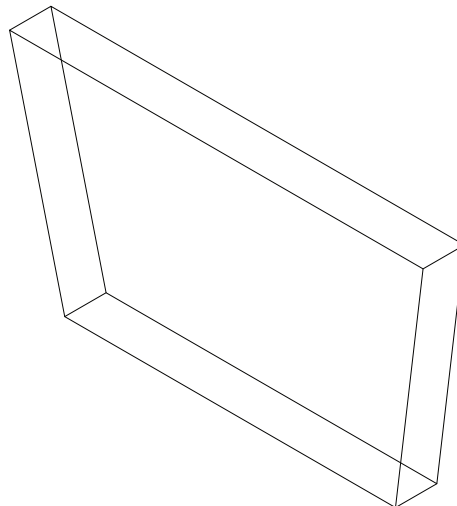


















# BORDERLANDS NATIONAL PARK

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*MIXED MEDIA*

*Cheyenne Concepcion + Gabriella Navarro*

*Borderlands National Park* questions the concept of protected lands within the context of border spaces. As geographic boundaries that demarcate political territories, borders are a social construction of space. Physical barriers, often justified in the language of national security, attempt to exercise complete sovereignty over interdependent landscapes with indifference to processes of culture and history.

In recognition of the temporality of political borders and the absurdity of physical walls, this project proposes a repurposing of the highly-surveilled, hyper-militarized U.S. - Mexico border region: the designation of a new National Park: *Boderlands*.



WELCO

BO

NA



OME TO

RDERLANDS

TIONAL PARK













**PRADA**

MARFA

**PRADA**





## 08 THANKS

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*BORDERWALL URBANISM*

**PRADA**  
MARFA

Special thanks to Susan Moffat, Sarah Hwang, and the Global Urban Humanites Initiative for making this reasearch trip possible.

**PRADA**







MATHILDE  
BOWEN  
♡  
THEODORE  
CORANSON  
3/6/8

NO  
TRUMP

15/10  
AT  
DAY

A vertical utility box covered in various stickers and graffiti. The stickers include logos for 'CLASH BANGERS', 'SUBWATER', and 'THE BURNING'. There are also several small, illegible stickers and drawings on the box.

A small, white, square-shaped object mounted on the wall, possibly a light fixture or a sensor. It has a circular pattern on its face.







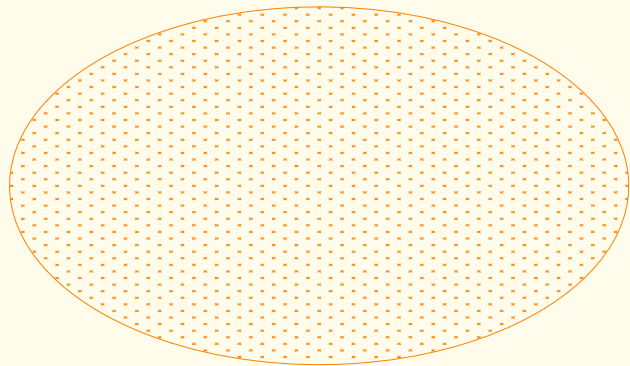
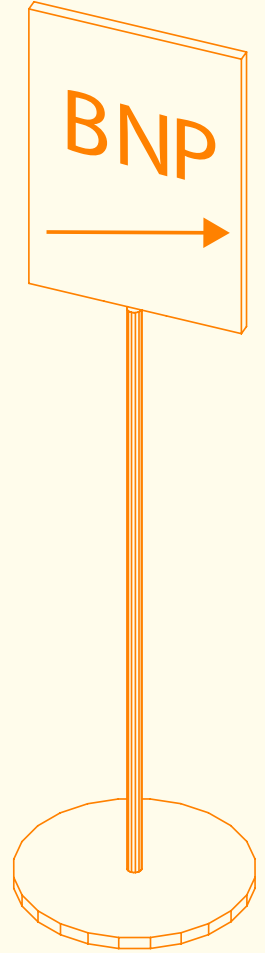
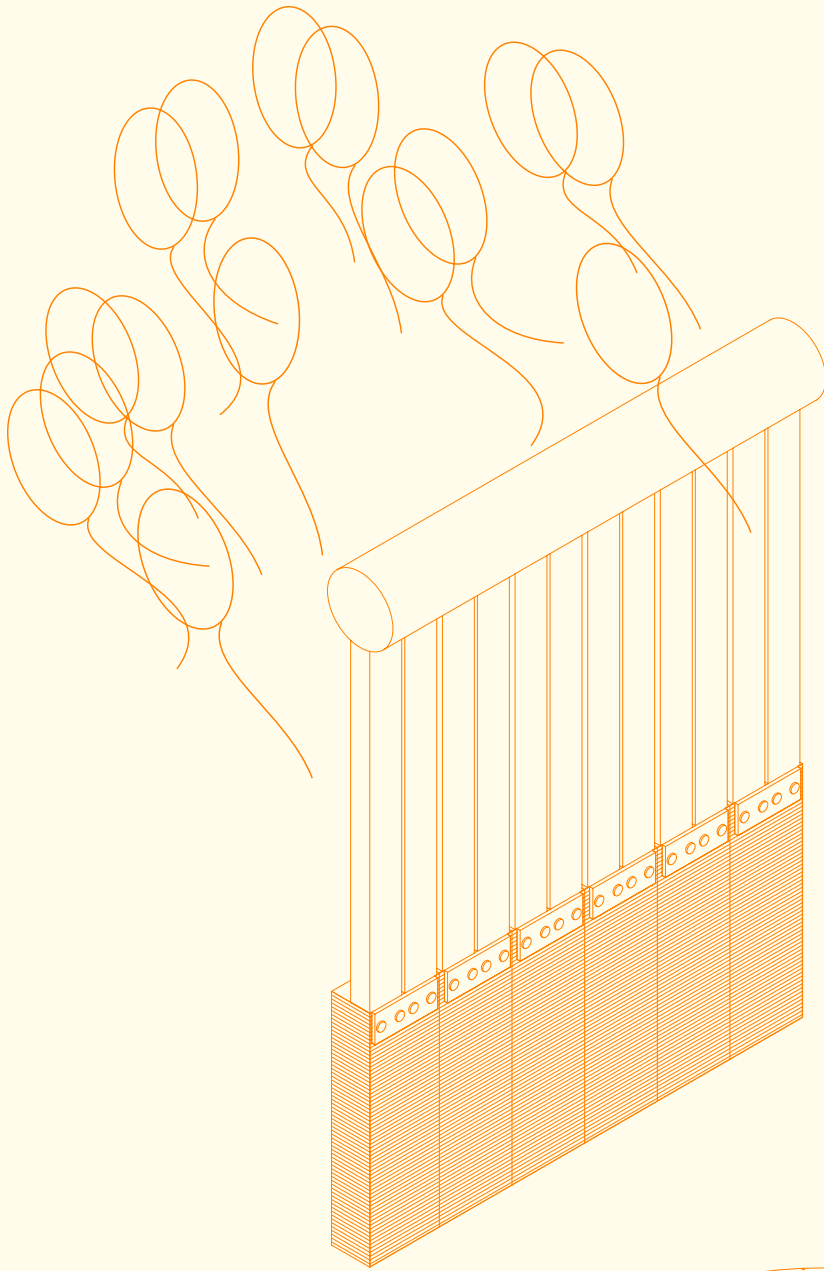
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