



in|visible

Negotiating the US-Mexico Border

ReflectSpace Gallery

January 27 - March 14, 2018



in|visible

Negotiating the US-Mexico Border

Curated by Ara & Anahid Oshagan

ReflectSpace Gallery

January 27 - March 14, 2018

Downtown Central Library

222 E. Harvard St.
Glendale, CA 91205
Mon-Thurs 9 am - 10 pm
Fri-Sat 9 am - 6 pm
Sun 12 pm - 6 pm
818-548-2021



Ay hija no se como haz aguantado.
Hubieras aguantado rezar el rosario todos los
dias por un año? Yo crea que no ama.

Artists
Claudia Cano
Tom Kiefer
Dulce Pinzón
Teresita de la Torre

Support for this publication provided by
Glendale Library Foundation



in | visible

Negotiating the US-Mexico Border

Curated by Ara & Anahid Oshagan

ReflectSpace at Downtown Central Library in Glendale presents “in|visible: Negotiating the US-Mexico Border,” an exhibition of visual, technological and performative narratives that reflect on the permanence and permeability of the US-Mexico border. Separating the gallery in half by a site-specific border wall and through the work of artists, public art and virtual reality, “in|visible” aims to bring attention to the border as not only a physical, familial and cultural impediment but also as the fault line of interdependence of two countries. Artists Dulce Pinzón, Claudia Cano, Teresita de la Torre, Tom Kiefer and Joan Zierhut address the visible and invisible impact of the border on lives of those on either side.

“In|visible” opens on January 27 and runs until March 14, 2018. Opening reception is on Sunday, January 28, from 4 – 6 pm with a talk by artist Teresita de la Torre at 5 pm. “in|visible” is co-curated by Ara and Anahid Oshagan.

Dulce Pinzón’s photographs from her series, “The Real Story of the Superheroes”, is an homage to invisible immigrant Mexican workers. To make them visible, Pinzón asks immigrant laborers to dress as superheroes and photographs

them in their work environment: empowering the least visible to temporarily become the most prominent and visible. The series also highlights the mutual inter-dependence of the US and Mexican economies. All of Pinzon's subjects send money earned in the US to their families in Mexico, in turn, supporting that economy. Conversely, the US economy depends on immigrant labor to function.

Claudia Cano's performance underscores and complements Pinzon's invisible immigrant worker series. Cano's alter ego, Spanish speaking Rosa Hernandez (La Chacha), performs as a cleaning woman in traditional pink and white uniform. Photographs of Rosa from previous performances are part of the exhibition in ReflectSpace. The work emphasizes the invisibility of the migrant laborer and the parallel process of making art that is invisible.

In **Tom Kiefer's** work, the undocumented immigrant is physically absent: only remnants of a journey across the border exist. Kiefer's project, "El Sueño Americano - The American Dream," consists of photographs of thousands of non-essential, potentially lethal objects confiscated by US Customs from undocumented immigrants attempting to cross the US-Mexico border. Kiefer, a fine art photographer, worked at a US Customs and Border Patrol processing facility in Arizona and collected these objects: soaps, combs, spoons, wallets, shoes, gloves, toothpaste, shoelaces, and even condoms. Kiefer's work gathers the remnants of dreams and speaks to a certain permeability of border walls: while thousands of these objects were confiscated, even more made it across. Kiefer's work is on display in ReflectSpace as well as the PassageWay.

Teresita de la Torre and her work embody the migrant crossing a silent threshold. While working along the border to assist immigrants, de la Torre came across a discarded shirt. Her project, "365 days in an immigrant's shirt," collects photographs, writings and sketches that document and contemplate her own

journey of wearing this shirt every day for a full year. De La Torre's site-specific installation in ReflectSpace includes drawing on walls and objects from the border.

Addressing the visibility and invisibility of the border wall directly is an imposing site-specific installation of an **adaptation of the San Diego-Tijuana border wall** that will split the ReflectSpace gallery in half. The installation, conceived by **Ara Oshagan**, acts as a massive impediment but it is also see-through. The transparency of the wall subverts its role as obstruction and enables the audience to see the artwork beyond it.

ReflectSpace's border wall installation forces the audience to negotiate a singular crossing point to traverse the gallery. At this crossing, the actual US-Mexico border is made visible via 3D interactive virtual reality glasses. Drawing from the **USA Today** special on-line report called "The Wall," which features virtual reality, videos, stories and images of the US-Mexico border, "**in|visible**" enables the audience to experience the border firsthand with the latest immersive technology.

"**in|visible**" further examines the border through public art. Through a collaborative project between **Joan Zierhut Studios and Glendale Unified School District students and parents**, the exhibit extends out of ReflectSpace Gallery and into other parts of the library. Highlighting the infamous Caltrans "Caution" sign that featured the silhouettes of a running immigrant family, the project creates multiple "tape art sculptures" of this iconic sign placed in strategic spots throughout the library. The sculptures highlight the humanization and de-humanization of this sign that has entered the popular imagination. Special thanks to Vahagn Thomasian for design guidance.



My best friend was getting married, and I had to make a decision. Stop my project and wear a proper female wedding outfit, or wear the shirt regardless. At this point I had a huge hole on the back of the shirt and I didn't want to be the center of attention because that should be the bride and groom. But I found a way to do both. Wear the shirt and be a proper female.

The Real Story of the Superheroes

Dulce Pinzón

After September 11, the notion of the “hero” began to rear its head in the public consciousness more frequently. The notion served a necessity in a time of national and global crisis to acknowledge those who showed extraordinary courage or determination in the face of danger, sometimes even sacrificing their lives in an attempt to save others. However, in the whirlwind of journalism surrounding these deservedly front-page disasters and emergencies, it is easy to take for granted the heroes who sacrifice immeasurable life and labor in their day to day lives for the good of others, but do so in a somewhat less spectacular setting.

The Mexican immigrant worker in New York is a perfect example of the hero who has gone unnoticed. It is common for a Mexican worker in New York to work excessive hours in extreme conditions for very low wages, save them at great personal sacrifice and send to families and communities in Mexico who rely on them to survive. The Mexican economy has quietly become dependent on the money sent from workers in the US. Conversely, the US economy has quietly become dependent on the labor of Mexican immigrants. Along with the depth of their sacrifice, it is the quietness of this dependence which makes Mexican immigrant workers a subject of interest.

The principal objective of this series is to pay homage to these brave and determined men and women that somehow manage, without the help of any supernatural power, to withstand extreme conditions of labor in order to help their families and communities across the border.

This project consists of 20 color photographs of Mexican and other Latin American immigrants dressed in the costumes of popular American and Mexican superheroes. Each photo depicts the worker/superhero in their work environment, and is accompanied by text including the worker's name, their hometown, and the amount of money they send back to their families.



Spiderman - Bernabe Mendez from the State of Guerrero, works as a professional window cleaner in New York. He sends home \$500 a month.



Catwoman - Minerva Valencia from Puebla, works as a nanny in New York. She sends home \$400 a week.



Hulk - Paulino Cardozo from the State of Guerrero, works in a produce market loading trucks. He sends home \$300 a week.



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MAPA de los ESTADOS UNIDOS DE MÉJICO,

*Segun se organizo y definió por las varias
actas del Congreso de dicha República y
construido por las mejores autoridades.*

LO PUBLICAN J. DISTANCELL 102 BROADWAY.

(NUEVA YORK.)

1847.

Scale of English Miles. REVISED EDITION.





The shirt at the border.



365 Days in an Immigrant's Shirt

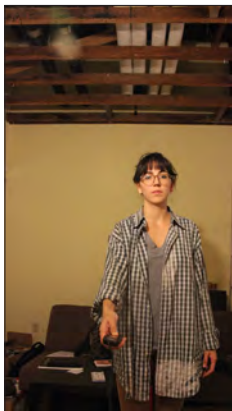
Teresita de la Torre

As a child, Teresita de la Torre immigrated to the border town of Laredo, Texas. She grew up aware of the many injustices tied to immigration, and how the Rio Grande acts as a painful divider of people. In 2016 she created “365 Days in an Immigrant's Shirt” as both a protest and conscious political act. De la Torre was a volunteer depositing gallons of water along the California/Mexico border desert with the organization Water Station. While volunteering, she stumbled upon a green plaid shirt and became intrigued with its potential history. Who had worn this shirt? Was its owner a woman or a man? Had they crossed the border safely? In that moment of overwhelming fascination, she decided to take the shirt home. As both homage and ritual, de la Torre wore the shirt every day for a year; she would take a self-portrait daily and upload the image to Instagram. This became the social media art project #todoslosdias.

Teresita has installed excerpts from this project in ReflectSpace Gallery as well as objects from the border.



Self-portraits at various stages of the "365 Days in an Immigrant's Shirt" project.



I participated in a show for a Museum
Center on Chicago I walked on the floor of
the gallery filled with my shoes and pants. In
my underwear I wrote about how immi-
grants are welcome when coming to the border.
They are raped and sexually assaulted. To
tell the gallery feeling so embarrassed, not because
everyone else was in my underwear but because
I had never been raped nor have I crossed
the border.

El Sueño Americano - The American Dream

Tom Kiefer

There is an inherently disturbing question behind many of the images presented in “El Sueño Americano” that defies logical and rational explanation: Why was all this thrown away?

Working as a janitor at a U.S. Customs and Border Patrol processing facility in Southwest Arizona from July 2003 until August 2014, I was greatly unsettled by the volume of food, clothing and personal belongings being thrown away at that facility. For many of these years I was allowed to collect and deliver the food items carried by the migrants, which would have been discarded during the first stages of Border Patrol processing, to our community food bank. The supervisor at the food bank estimated the total amount of perfectly good and edible food items brought in was well over 60 tons.

The personal effects and belongings were another matter. Why would someone throw away a Bible or rosary? Why would someone throw away a wallet with someone's identification and money? Why would a pair of shoes, for all intents and purposes “brand new”, be tossed in the trash?

America has been described as a “beacon of hope” to those seeking opportunity, democracy, equality, fairness and freedom of and from religion. Increasingly we find our nation under political leadership that is enacting and escalating policies that are doing irreparable harm to non-citizens who many see as a direct threat to our society and way of life notwithstanding the fact that these people willingly provide labor in jobs we refuse to do in the meat processing plants, service industries such as hospitality and fast food, construction and agricultural harvest.

How we treat others is a reflection of who we are. When belts, shoelaces, socks, shoes, underwear, pants, shirts, keys, jackets, rosaries, Bibles, watches, billfolds, coins, jewelry, cell-phones, pre-paid telephone cards, food, soap, deodorant, medicine, condoms, birth control pills and blankets are considered non-essential or potentially dangerous personal property and discarded, their disposal is a clear and intentional act of dehumanization.



Gloves

The desert and mountain terrain along the United States/Mexico border varies greatly with cacti and other abrasive plants. During winter months temperatures easily drop below freezing. Many migrants will find work in the construction industry and will bring their own work gloves. Drug smugglers handle bales of marijuana often covered in rough burlap material and twine. All gloves are considered non-essential personal property and confiscated during intake.



Billfolds and Wallets

After being apprehended, a migrant's belongings are placed in a property bag or remain in their backpack. Sometimes essential items such as wallets, money and personal identification are accidentally discarded or mistakenly left behind and do not follow the migrants as they are transported between various law enforcement facilities. Eventually they are deported with no identification.



Soap

Soap is considered non-essential personal property and is discarded during intake.

N E W
M E X I C O

B O U N D A R Y Parallel 31° 3' 00" North Latitude

C H I H U

This Map has been compared with the corresponding Map of the Mexican Government
of the State of Chihuahua, and the same has been found to be correct in the
at different points, are made upon the same scale, since the River changed its
it is a completely wrong one, being entirely different from the one shown.

Wm. H. H. H.
Capt. U.S.A.

Gen. S. S. S.
Capt. U.S.A.

OCEAN

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BOUNDARY
BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES & MEXICO

showing the

INITIAL POINT under the Treaty of December 30th 1853.

Astronomically determined and surveyed in 1855 under the direction of

WILLIAM H. EMORY, U.S. Commissioner.

Latitude and Longitude by W. H. EMORY, assisted by J. H. CLARK.

Triangulation and Topography by M. von HIPPEL, assisted

by J. E. KEYSER.

Designed & drawn by F. HERBST.

Scale: 1:100,000

Published by authority of the SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

Printed by Wm. West,
107 1/2 East 1st Street.

Distances Astronomically determined.

Station	Latitude	Longitude
San Antonio	28° 45' 10" N	98° 15' 10" W
San Antonio	28° 45' 10" N	98° 15' 10" W
San Antonio	28° 45' 10" N	98° 15' 10" W
San Antonio	28° 45' 10" N	98° 15' 10" W
San Antonio	28° 45' 10" N	98° 15' 10" W

The Magnetic Variation at San Antonio in April 1855
at the East of North.

NOTE: Boundary Line



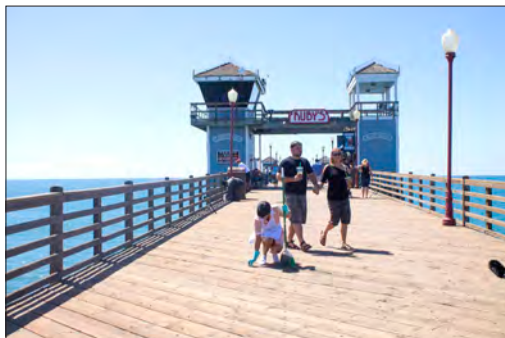
Rosa Hernandez

Rosa Hernández

Claudia Cano

Claudia Cano is an interdisciplinary artist whose recent works reflect on the inequality of women in society and the invisibility of hard-working immigrants. Cano has created the alter ego of Rosa Hernández: a typical cleaning lady, a non-English speaker who wears a pink uniform and a ponytail symbolizing her rural and indigenous roots. Cano places this underprivileged Latina in cultural institutions or public settings. Rosa would usually go unnoticed as a domestic worker, but by setting her up in an absurd situation such as sweeping the Oceanside pier, or along the border fence, the artist triggers a process that forces viewers to reconsider class and the cultural and social relationships between employers and immigrant workers. The ultimate goal is to blur art and life by engaging with an audience and attempting to transform their understanding of immigration.

Rosa Hernandez is hired by ReflectSpace gallery to clean the gallery and library during the “in|visible” exhibition opening reception.



Rosa Hernandez at the Oceanside Pier, Exploring Engagement Program, Oceanside Museum of Art, September 21, 2014



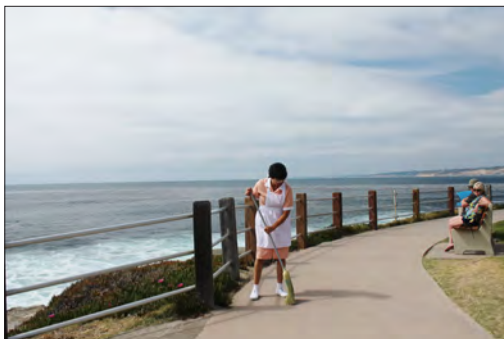
Rosa Hernandez at Ellen Browning Scripps Memorial Park, La Jolla, California, June 9, 2013



Rosa Hernandez at Cindy's Home (private performance)



Rosa Hernandez cleaning at The Gildless Age exhibition. Torrance Art Museum, September 3, 2016



Rosa Hernandez at Friendship Park, San Diego, California -Tijuana, Mexico Border, June 14, 2013

Immigrant Crossing Sculptures

The highway immigration caution sign warns motorists to avoid immigrants darting across the road. The signs were erected in response to over one hundred immigrant deaths due to traffic collisions from 1987 to 1990 in two corridors along Interstate 5 at the San Ysidro Port of Entry at the Mexico-United States border and approximately 50 miles (80 km) north at the San Clemente United States Border Patrol checkpoint in Camp Pendleton.

The running family silhouette signs were erected starting in September 1990. Eventually, Caltrans built a tall fence in the I-5 median south of the San Clemente checkpoint, which effectively precluded the checkpoint-avoidance traffic-crossing tactic at Camp Pendleton. In 1995, the Border Patrol erected a tall fence along the San Diego-Tijuana border, moving undocumented immigration attempts further east into the desert. As of 2008, one sign remains in California, and there are no plans to replace it as it is largely obsolete.

Since its deployment it has become a pop culture icon as it appeared on T-shirts and anti-immigration advertisements in various incarnations. It was exhibited in the Smithsonian Institution's permanent exhibition on transportation. British street artist Banksy used it in his Kite-2 artwork on Los Angeles area streets in early 2011.



As part of “**in|visible**”, Joan Zeirhut Studios, with volunteers and students from the Glendale Unified School District, have placed multiple **Immigrants Crossing Sculptures** at Downtown Central Library that evoke and speak to this caution sign. The sculptures highlight the humanization and de-humanization of this sign that has entered the popular imagination.

in|visible Border Wall

Addressing the visibility and invisibility of the border wall directly is an imposing site-specific installation of an **adaptation of the San Diego–Tijuana border wall** that will split the ReflectSpace gallery in half. The installation, conceived by **Ara Oshagan**, acts as a massive impediment but it is also see-through. The transparency of the wall subverts its role as obstruction and enables the audience to see the artwork beyond it.



ReflectSpace's border wall installation forces the audience to negotiate a singular crossing point to traverse the gallery. At this crossing, the actual US-Mexico border is made visible via 3D interactive virtual reality glasses. Drawing from the **USA Today** special on-line report called "The Wall," which features virtual reality, videos, stories and images of the US-Mexico border, "**in|visible**" enables the audience to experience the border firsthand with the latest immersive technology.



Dulce Pinzón was born in Mexico City in 1974. She studied Mass Media Communications at the Universidad de Las Americas in Puebla Mexico and Photography at Indiana University in Pennsylvania. In 1995 she moved to New York where she studied at The International Center of Photography. Her work is published and collected internationally.

Dulce has grants/awards from the Santa Fe project competition, the 12th edition of the Mexican Biennial of El Centro de La Imagen, New York Foundation for the Arts, Bronx Museum program Artist in the Market Place, Ford Foundation, the Gaea Foundation/Sea Change Residencies Award and the PERRIER acquisition price in Zona Maco Mexico. In 2012 she was invited to take part at 'Les Rencontres D'Arles Photographie' in France and was nominated for the prestigious Prix Pictet. Her book "The Real Story of the Superheroes" was published in 2012 in 3 languages: English, Spanish and French by Editorial RM with the support of the Cultural Co-inversion program of FONCA. Dulce is currently a recipient of Mexico's prestigious Endowment of the Arts SNCA/FONCA fellowship (2014-2017).

Dulce lives and works between Mexico and New York. www.dulcepinzon.com.

Claudia Cano is an interdisciplinary artist with an interest in performance, photography and video. Her studies include: projects that observe the interactions between Mexican and American cultures, the nuances and boundaries of the body in a state of physical labor, and works that reflect on the invisibility and inequality of women in immigrant culture.

www.claudiacano.com

Teresita de la Torre was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco Mexico. She migrated with her family to the United States at a very young age. De la Torre made a home in the border city of Laredo, Texas. Growing up on the borderlands forever impacted her psyche, and words like el norte, el otro lado, la migra formed a part of her quotidian lexicon. De la Torre witnessed the separation of friends and family--while personally dealing with an internal identity crisis-- or more commonly known as the Chicana mantra, of Ni de aquí, Ni de allá. De la Torre is passionate about immigration issues and explores and questions her personal identity in her works. She completed her Bachelors in Fine Art from Texas A&M International, and her Masters in Fine Art from Cal State Fullerton.

www.todoslosdias-365.com

Born in Wichita, Kansas, fine art photographer **Tom Kiefer** was raised primarily in the Seattle area and worked in Los Angeles as a graphic designer. Kiefer moved to Ajo, Arizona in December 2001 to fully develop and concentrate his efforts in studying and photographing the urban and rural landscape and the cultural infrastructure.

In 2015 Kiefer was included in LensCulture's top 50 emerging photographers and Photolucida's top 50 Critical Mass. His ongoing work "El Sueño Americano" (the American Dream) has been featured in news publications nationally and internationally.

www.tomkiefer.com

ReflectSpace Gallery @ Downtown Central

ReflectSpace Gallery at the Downtown Central Library is a new hybrid exhibition space designed to explore and reflect on major human atrocities, genocides and civil rights violations. Immersive in conception, ReflectSpace is both experiential and informative, employing art, technology and interactive media to engage viewers on an emotional and personal level. ReflectSpace highlights the past and present of Glendale's communal fabric and interrogates current-day global human rights issues.



The approach is intimate. Emphasis is placed on the witness narrative: who saw, wrote, spoke or has been affected by social justice and human rights issues. The narratives unfold through multiple technologies--projection, interactive media and immersive sound design--and multiple disciplines of thought and arts. ReflectSpace also presents installation art and engages with archives, books and texts from various sources including the library in which it exists.

ReflectSpace is an inclusive exhibition gallery. Its inaugural exhibit explored the Armenian Genocide, presenting personal as well as reflective narratives. The second exhibit dealt with sex slavery and the Asian "Comfort Women", the third was about aftermath of slavery in the US, while the fourth was about the Holocaust. With a focus on Glendale as well as an international perspective, ReflectSpace will also delve into contemporary issues like immigration, violence in society, Japanese internment, as well as Native Californians. And this is just the beginning.



ReflectSpace is an intimate experiential space for reflection and exploration. At times it will be immersive, at other times disorienting and yet at other times overwhelming. But it will always engage.



The Glendale Library Foundation believes in expanding knowledge, exploring opportunities, and enriching lives through an outstanding public library.

The Glendale Library Foundation was established in 2014 in response to a bequest from the estate of Robert Seiden. Committed to enhancing the Glendale Library's benefits to the community, the Foundation seeks additional donations to support equipment, programs, and special staffing needs in the ReflectSpace gallery and the Library's other inspiring spaces.

