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The Un-Doing of Hard Borders: Art at the U.S. Wall Against Mexicoⁱ

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Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.

Robert Frost, "Mending Wall"

The conjunction of the pernicious effects of transnational capitalism, environmental degradation, genocides and civil wars have caused millions to flee their homes in search of basic human rights to food, shelter, healthcare, education, and security. While the number of international migrants has doubled since 1994, we have become witnesses to the multiplying of highly militarized walls built between groups, nations, and regions. Their functions are multiple, i.e., to divide peoples, to prevent entrance to victims of forced migration, to preserve unjust income divides, to create cheap labor at and beyond the border, and to inscribe national rights above human rights. Art on these walls attempts healing functions. Countering nationalistic, class, and ethnic divides, artistic partnerships are forged. Rejecting false and militarized separations of hybrid or potentially hybrid cultures, art on separation walls ignites critical consciousness about the dynamics of such barriers. Most strikingly, some border art fulfills what Freire

calls an annunciatory function, awakening our imaginations to peaceful and just possibilities of relationship. While separation walls pose limit situations, border wall art helps us to see them not as “the impassable boundaries where possibilities end,” says Alvaro Pinto, “but the real boundaries where all possibilities begin” (1960, p. 284). The limit situations of hard borders call forth the creation of art as limit acts that cross over the given into rehearsal for and creation of a more just and peaceful world. This essay reflects on the functions of border art at and near the U.S. border wall at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Paradoxically, when we are pressed against walls, if a sense of futility or defensive violence does not overtake us, creative imagination can be powerfully constellated. To practice imagination in the face of oppressive fixity is an example of what Brazilian pedagogist Paulo Freire (1989) calls a “limit act,” an act that both resists the imposition of destructive limits and creates anew in the face of them. The building of the wall at the U.S.-Mexico border has paradoxically, yet predictably, called forth the rupturing “swell[s]” that poet Robert Frost knew eventually undo imposed divisions, that “spill the upper boulders in the sun.” Quickened by the aggressive “securing” of the border after the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and 9/11, creative counter-acts have gained focus and resolve. Many U.S. citizens are fiercely divided regarding the wall, some arguing for its demise while others even provide personal funding for its completion. Others still are disinterested.

When I first encountered the wall in 2001, I was on the U.S. side at Friendship Park, South of San Diego. The monotonous military green of the landing strips from the first Gulf War used to construct the wall blocked a full view to the Mexican beach on the other side. The next day, while on the other

side in Tijuana, I discovered creative and vibrant wall art, transposing the drab military backdrop. Studying this art, talking with some of the artists, and linking the wall art in Mexico with border wall art in Derry, Belfast, Palestine, and Berlin have been important ingredients in the galvanizing of my capacity to see—to vision—alternatives. To learn about the transborder and international collaboration of wall artists has acted as a counter-force to the divisiveness of the wall itself.

Border wall art has the power to undermine a separation wall's functions, transmuting the impeding material surfaces into a gallery that nourishes critical consciousness, memorializes losses, and sparks prophetic imagination. It portrays marginalized points of view, critiques dominant messages, presents its own ideological commitments, and not only posits alternate possibilities but inspires them. Such are the functions of limit acts. While the wall stands, it is put to different uses, indeed, to tasks most often antithetical to its intended purposes and meanings. Performative border art also defies the limit of the wall, rehearsing transgressions that allow imagination not to be stopped at the wall's brute technologized and material limit.

The art on the Mexican side of the wall is like a healing salve placed on an open wound. To encounter images on such a forbidding surface is to remember Nietzsche's (1968, p. 435) insight that "we possess *art* lest we *perish from the truth*." The building of the wall has been a violent introduction of a foreign object into and onto the earth, intruded into aquifers and incised across fragile and unique terrains. It divides people from their backyards and animals from their habitats and migratory ranges. It slashes through the heart of nature preserves, a university, and through the streets of people's towns and cities. It stands as a

powerful contradiction to the welcome we strive for in our homes and communities. It is ugly, and, indeed, it repels and repulses.

Conversely, the art on the wall invites one in and brings one up close, creating an intimacy with the wall. In the midst of wall art one does not feel “up against the wall” – in opposition to it -- but invited to altogether other scapes and ways of thinking. Transgressively, the art uses the wall to begin to undo the wall itself. Vladimir Mayakovsky insisted that “Art is not a mirror to reflect the world, but a hammer with which to shape it” (quoted in Samuels, 1993, p. 9). While this is not true of all art, it holds true for much border wall art.

Some say the Berlin Wall fell from the weight of the paint used for graffiti and murals on the West Berlin side. The East Berlin side of that wall remained sterile except for a few marks. The U.S. side of the wall at the U.S.-Mexico border also has no wall art. A single exhibit in Brownsville curated by artist Mark Clark of Galeria 409 was attached to the fencelike wall in Brownsville for a few hours and then removed as planned. What graffiti has been placed on the U.S. side of the U.S. owned and created wall has been erased or blacked out by border authorities. Artists’ proposals have been rejected by the Department of Homeland Security. On the Mexican side the arts of contestation, protest, memorial, outrage, and prophetic imagination thrive without any form of state censorship.

Graffiti: Generative Words and Images

The popular education method of Brazilian pedagogist Paulo Freire is employed not only for acquiring literacy skills but to learn to decode and read, to analyze the situations we live in. In the spirit of Freire, a beginning place for

critical analysis is to bring into dialogue generative words and phrases that help us claim and focus on what is important in our realities. These words name both what is problematic and what is valued (e.g., femicide, militarization, clean water). Those who create separation barriers and walls tend to obscure the functions of the walls with their naming. For instance, the East German government called The Berlin Wall the “anti-Fascist protection rampart.” The wall that separates Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods in West Belfast is called the “Peace Wall.” Graffiti art often takes on the function of naming what a wall is from the perspective of those who are prevented from moving freely across it. The first graffiti on the Berlin Wall was “KZ=DDR”, equating East Germany with a “Concentration Camp,” a chilling and insightful summation, attempting to crystallize the function of the wall to keep people in, not out. German graffiti also posed the question of how much longer the wall would be allowed to divide: “Wie lange noch?” – a question that introduced fragility and uncertainty to what was presented as powerfully solid and durable. While the government talked about protecting its citizens from the decadence of capitalism and fascism, the wall actually functioned to create a prison for many East Germans. Similarly, the word “GHETTO” is written in graffiti across the Israeli separation wall, ironically linking the ghettos that Jews historically suffered to the environments being created for Palestinians in the occupied territories of Palestine.

Some of the graffiti on the U.S. wall also incisively sums up the situation from the Mexican side: “Go home Yankee!” With such a brief exclamation, the history of who is situated on whose land is underscored. Mexicans like to say, “The border crossed us. We did not cross the border.” The question of who is

actually in the others' home space destabilizes the position of the wall and contests the placement of the border itself. The graffiti "Deportan a la Migra," "Deport the Border Patrol," reverses the cry by 51% in the United States to deport Mexicans without documents. "Get out of Iraq, get out of Mexico!" draws attention to the U.S. government's propensity to intervene in other people's lands. Through this graffiti the tacit claim of the wall—that Mexican interlopers need to be forcibly restrained—is called into question. The graffiti turns the table on the question of who the real interlopers are.

Many graffiti writers are trying to establish the larger context of which the wall is a part, for instance by linking the wall to U.S. military interventions in other parts of the world. This is similar to how the art on the International Wall in West Belfast tries to link the struggle in Northern Ireland to that in the Basque country, to Cuba, to slavery in the United States. These linkages create international solidarities. For instance, the graffiti phrase "*Fronteras: Cicatrizes en la Tierra*" ("Borders: Scars to the Earth") by its general claim, links the U.S.-Mexico border wall to other international border walls. Even brief graffiti statements can bear a power to transform the very thinking out of which the wall first arose. In Nogales one reads "*Las paredes-vueltas de lado son puentes,*" telling us that if we bend walls, we can create bridges.

In addition, there are single generative images that attempt to show some of the meanings of the wall. Some simply paint money signs, pointing not only to the money migrants hope to make in the U.S., but to the profits made by trapping people at the border who then work for low wages in the *maquiladores*, industrial factories on the Mexican side. Indeed, the wall is all about money.

One of the most powerful generative images of the border and its wall is that of *“una herida abierta,”* an open wound. It is clear that this wall is not like a garden wall that protects a restorative place. It is another variety of wall, one that is imposed upon an open and dynamic landscape and which forcibly separates peoples and families, curtailing their freedom of movement, as well as overturning environmental safeguards that have taken decades to put into place. On the Mexican side of the wall in Tijuana a gaping wound is painted, with attempted sutures. It is not a delicate painting, but a rough and jagged one, evoking the tear in the landscape and the pressing need for repair and healing.

Separation walls have given rise to a lexicon of imagery that is recognizable across particular situations. On the Palestinian side of the Israeli separation wall, there is a particularly poignant face that is crying, giving image to the grief and tragedy occasioned by this wall. Upon seeing Jews intensely praying at the temple wall in Jerusalem, Europeans dubbed it *“the wailing wall.”* This Palestinian face evokes a different sense of a wailing wall, one where the wall itself cries, as though witness to the separations and injustices that the wall starkly imposes. When one places one’s imaginal ear on the northern face of the U.S. wall at the U.S.-Mexico border, one can hear it weeping. It is also easy to imagine blood seeping through it. The U.S. border wall occasions deep sadness and even tragedy for many Mexicans and Central Americans. The self-regulatory aspect of migratory streams has been disrupted by the wall. When the border was more open, a person could come to the U.S. to earn money for one’s family, and still return home for a funeral of a loved one, for a reunion with one’s spouse and children, to give life another try in one’s village or city of origin that one calls *“home.”* Now it is so expensive and dangerous to cross without documents

that many migrants remain in the U.S. without hope of return. Family members and friends in Mexico rightfully fear the rape and/or death of those migrating.

Memorial

Much of the art on the wall memorializes the deaths of those trying to cross into the United States. The very wall that has caused these deaths is used to name them and remember them, transgressing the literal lack of vision the wall imposes with insight into its human costs. Crosses with names and caskets with numbers of migrants who have died each year since the passage of NAFTA dot the wall. Each is a solemn assessment of the wall's tragic and deadly outcome. Here the death of unnamed migrants is marked and remembered, those who travel without identification and whose families will have no way of knowing if they have disappeared into hiding in America or perished on their way there. It is a slow and steady death count of those who have perished on their way north, often about even in numbers with the young American men and women who have died in the Afghan and Iraq Wars. We are reminded that at our border we are involved in a war of a different kind. Artist Carmela Castrejon forewarned this when she hung blood soaked clothes on a 13-mile stretch of fence built at the border in 1991, coinciding with the first year of the Gulf War.

One of the most moving memorials to both living and dead who are touched by migration is Alejandro Santiago's *2501 Migrantes*. Upon returning to San Pedro Teococuilco, his hometown near Oaxaca, Santiago was shocked and saddened by the migration of 2500 residents due to poverty, lack of schools, and chronic unemployment. Like hundreds of other Mexican towns it has been depopulated by 50% or more due to the economic need of its residents to find

work in El Norte. Adding himself, this made 2501. Many of his own friends and relatives had also left for the states, adding to his own intimate sense of abandonment.

Santiago had a dream in which his community became re-populated. When he awoke, he undertook the project of creating in ceramic form the absent ones of his village (Casanova, 2008). His vision was to create a tribute that would offer dignity to those who had to migrate. He hoped that the project could draw population back to Teococuilco, as well as keep its current young people at home by creating jobs and creative activity. Santiago enlisted a local team composed of the sons and daughters of local farmers struggling to support their families, training them to become ceramicists in order to accomplish this project. He understands emigration as signaling a loss of connection to one's community and the land. To better foster these connections he has introduced into Teococuilco farm animals, projects for water conservation and agriculture, hoping to create an ecosystem that is self-sustaining (Johnson, 2006).

Although having the proper documents to cross the border legally, Santiago arranged to cross with a coyote so that he could experience what those in his village had gone through to find passage to the North. From that harrowing experience, he understood that his $\frac{3}{4}$ life-size clay figures needed to be made naked to express their utter vulnerability in leaving their homes, risking their lives in crossing through perilous deserts and mountains, and into a country where they are deemed aliens. The nude ceramic clay figures display the migrants' uprootedness, the marks and scars of their journey imprinted on their flesh, their weary gazes, and broken bodies—all testifying to their desperate pilgrimage.

2501 Migrantes is Santiago's "tribute" to those crossing borders who have to begin their lives anew, as well as to those whose lives are taken by borders. These figures have been placed in the desert near the border, in the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Oaxaca, and are intended to be placed back in Santiago's hometown. In school yards and churches, at the town *zocalo*, and near shops and fields, these figures will mark the absence of those who have gone north to feed their families, to secure funds to come back and build a home, or to pay for the medical care of an ailing mother or father. As you walk amongst these figures in Oaxaca, and stand beside them, you are gifted with tender encounters. Made of earth, their fragile, vulnerable, naked, ghostlike presence makes an appeal to us. As our bodies stand amongst them, we cannot hesitate to imagine what it would be like to wait for a stranger to lead us into completely unfamiliar terrain, to be at their mercy as we cross into a land that forbids us, and threatens us with death by forcing us onto such forbidding terrain. These "mutely expressive" (Johnson, 2006) figures have a profound impact on those who experience them. The viewer is brought from bystander to witness, pulled into the situation by the imploring and lost faces. In one part of the installation, there are multiple rows of open coffins, each with a ceramic migrant in his or her final resting state, having succumbed to the inhospitality of the desert through which they had been forced to travel. One of the most moving parts of the installation is a refuse pile where parts of broken figures lie waiting to be thrown away. The migrants are used up, broken, and discarded.

Border Dynamics

In addition to the naming of single generative words and images, more complex border wall art often visually depicts what the dynamics of the border are from the perspective of those who live in its shadow. Until 2010 on *Calle*

Internacional in Nogales, Mexico, walking along the wall, you would find “*El Paseo de Humanidad*,” “The Parade of Humanity” (2004) by three artists from both sides of the border: Guadalupe Serrano, Alberto Morackis, and Alfred Quiróz. Their transborder partnership reflects efforts to link artists from North and South who defy through their artistic collaboration the separation that the wall attempts to impose.ⁱⁱ Inspired by the border art of Tijuana, Quiróz says that making the art was “like a rebellion, because people are not supposed to touch the border” (personal communication, 2011).

This transgressive installation in 2004ⁱⁱⁱ of sixteen giant *milagros* by Quiróz and 19 metallic human figures by Taller Yonke Arte Público artists Alberto Morackis and Guadalupe Serrano warn migrants of the dangers that await them as they cross the border. It borrows from Mayan, Aztec, and Catholic iconographies, asserting the generative power of Mexican peoples’ cultures and traditions.

Milagros are religious folk charms in the shape of what someone is praying or thanking for. They may be held in the hand while praying, attached to statues of saints, nailed or pinned to crosses, or hung with ribbons from altars and shrines. A particular *milagro* helps to quicken the supplicant’s prayer for such things as a recovery from an illness or a heartbreak. It also helps the person to focus his or her attention on a specific ailment as they pray. They are carried for good luck and protection.

Quiróz uses the popular iconography of healing in Mexico to offer both blessings and warnings. These charms central to popular healing are fixed on the separation wall as though on the wall of a church. While they are intended to help heal the sufferings of those who are on the way to cross the border, it seems

as though they might also act to heal the wall itself. By placing the *milagros* on the wall, it is transposed from a wall that re-inscribes economic and national divides into a site of supplication and prayer. On the very wall that asserts power, control, and inhospitality, Quiróz suggests a different way to be with the border: as a holy place to pray for well-being and health. In the face of a wall that negates what migrants bring to their “host” culture, Quiróz celebrates the healing images of their folk tradition.

Quiróz uses the *milagros* “to tell the story of the border.” Tucson Weekly art critic, Margaret Regan (2004), says,

They're meant to be read in sequence. One set begins with a flaming heart, a conflagration that sends the wanderer away from home. Next is a snarling coyote head, a stand-in for the human coyotes who smuggle migrants across the border for a fee. Then there's a big leg, another traditional milagro icon, but this one is equipped with border-crossing jeans and a sneaker that is on the run. Ahead are a truck laden with skulls, two gallon-size water bottles lying uselessly next to a skull in a now equally useless hat, and finally, the trio of skulls lying at the foot of a saguaro. Yet others address the economic aspect of the situation: one depicts a retail bar code on a saguaro. Everything is up for sale.

In the central portion of this work the dynamics of exchange at the border are depicted, combining, says Morackis, Aztec iconography with contemporary sensibility (Regan, 2004). The artists present the border as a red revolving door, where migrants both depart and return. Using the male and female symbols familiar to us from the doors of public bathrooms, the artists symbolize the mass nature of the migration underway. Above is the map of Mexico before the U.S.

Mexican War, reminding us of the fact that what lies on the other side of the wall was not so long ago a part of Mexico.

What are the migrants bringing to the U.S.? One figure carries mariachi instruments on his back, another the Virgin of Guadalupe in his backpack. They bring not only their labor, but also their culture, their music and spirituality. We are introduced to new cultural figures, such as Juan Soldado, who was wrongfully killed for a crime he did not commit in Tijuana. He is symbolic of failed justice, an experience all too many migrants will encounter as they cross the border. Another figure is Jesus Malverde, known as the saint of narco-traffickers, a folk hero in Sinaloa and analogous to Robin Hood in being a champion of the poor (Alvarez, 2008). One figure represents the border patrol agent, *la migra*. He is chasing the migrants with a big stick. His chest and heart area are constructed out of the same corrugated metal as the wall. He is speaking what at first looks like Latin, an unintelligible language to those he addresses. Above his head is a credit card insignia, for from one point of view he is an agent of the free market capitalism that has forced these travelers to take flight from their homelands.

What are the migrants bringing home? A bomb and weapons are painted on the body of a woman, as the US is the largest exporter of arms to Mexico -- which has strict gun control laws. A shrouded body, a victim of the crossing itself, is carried back to his homeland. Manufactured goods, from screws to a washing machine to women's boots are depicted, as migrants bring back items their families would not otherwise be able to enjoy.

The desert itself, often called a "road of fire," is depicted as a flaming path that burns the travelers' shoes and feet, as the imprints of their travels leaves a

trail of footsteps. Indeed, the journey leaves a variety of imprints, such as the figure whose body is covered by eyes, pointing to the effects of being surveilled so closely by the border patrol. His being is reduced to someone who is seen and tracked, while meanwhile his organs are exposed and show the plight of dehydration. A woman traveler bears sign language symbols on her body that spell what she desires, "Vida," life. One woman figure holds her child by the hand, as her belly carries an unborn child into the dangerous terrain.

Sculptors Serrano and Morackis planned an installation called "Border Dynamics" for both sides of the wall, U.S. and Mexico. After initial approval by the U.S. border authorities, it was denied -- purportedly because they feared Mexican migrants would slide down the backs of the figures and that children might hurt themselves climbing on them. All four figures were placed temporarily on the Mexican side and then installed at the University of Arizona campus in Tucson.

In "Border Dynamics," we are drawn to meditate on both the action and the inattention that keeps a wall in place. In this installation, the artists draw our attention past those holding the wall in place through their intentional force, and invite us to focus on how the walls we live within and impose on others are sustained by our weight through the turning of our backs. The work urges us to acknowledge the degree to which our weight has often silently sustained the walls in our communities, as well as at the border, as our eyes have been focused elsewhere.

Prophetic Imagination

The power of separation walls to restrict and control constellates transgressive limit acts of prophetic imagining and embodied acts of resistance inspired by them. Developing a critical understanding of border dynamics by demystifying the past and present opens a creative space in which people can begin to dream a future that is more deeply aligned with what is desired. Envisioning images of the future can help us dream past the restrictions and curtailments of the present, beginning to give life to images of liberation, justice, and of peaceful coexistence. These images act as seeds for actions in the present and future. Utopic images of a world without destructive separations appear on many separation walls around the globe and are an essential part of the lexicon of wall art.

In Tijuana on the U.S. wall, we see a mural of an open door, signaling hospitality and freedom in lieu of exclusion. In 2010 in Nogales Alfred Quiróz collaborated with Grupo Yonke to make the wall invisible. Quiróz's photo of an area of Nogales, Arizona just opposite the wall to the north was transposed onto vinyl and installed on the Border wall at the exact location where the photo was taken. As you look at the life size photo of trees and vegetation, you experience what you would see if the wall were no longer present. It gave viewers a glimpse into both the past and the future, the border without the separation wall.

The Life and Dreams of the Perla Ravine, *Vida y Sueños de la Cañada Perla*, is a mural painted on the Mexican side of the wall in Nogales. This mural was originally painted in 1998 in Chiapas, Mexico to celebrate the inauguration of the Mayan autonomous municipality of Ricardo Flores Magón^{iv}, a Zapatista community committed to self-governance and its own organization of education, healthcare, women's rights and communal agriculture. The leader of the team

was artist Checo Valdez. It was destroyed fourteen hours after its creation by paramilitary forces on April 11, 1998, and its artist among others were imprisoned. Subcomandante Marcos, the spokesperson for the Zapatistas, called for it to be repainted throughout the world, and it has been. The mural depicts Mayan indigenous communities in Chiapas as able to live in peace, after 500 years of assault by colonialism and neoliberalism. In 2005 Guadalupe Serrano invited Valdez to oversee its replication on the border wall in Nogales.^v

This mural acts as a healing salve placed upon the wound of the wall and the border. It functions like the Sabbath does in Judaism, bringing messianic time into ordinary time, transforming the place of the present with its divisive struggles into a temporary sacred space of enacting and manifesting what is most desired (Heschel, 1951). A time is imagined when peace and justice prevail, where people live in the fullness of creation, where women can safely gather, and children are free to swim in refreshing waters. The inspirational leaders of this Mayan community, Ricardo Flores Magón and Zapata, watch over the peaceful scene. Through the multiple incarnations of this mural in many communities, we are encouraged to experience a solidarity of diverse peoples that contradicts the stark division of the wall.

Reconciliation Arts: The Search for Common Understanding and Ground

The literal walls humans build between their own group and others are material embodiments of the divisions being lived in towns and neighborhoods. Reconciliation arts begins from a position of compassionate listening to those on both sides of the division. It seeks through the presentation of images to build understanding, hoping that fruitful dialogue can be

stimulated. An example of such a project was undertaken in 2007 by artists Zuntz, Reitz, and Moshe who used the Israeli separation wall in Abu Dis as a temporary site of interconnection. The wall became a screen for a multimedia project, "Challenging Walls: Life Beyond the Walls." Life-size photographs of people from both sides of the wall were projected to Palestinian and Israeli audiences, attempting to bring the two sides closer together through the visual displays. The photographers had grown up next to separation walls in their home communities in Germany, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Israel, and Palestine. The photos from these four walled-off conflict zones show the daily lives of people on both sides of such walls. Zuntz said "the goal of the project is to draw attention to the lives of the people on either side of the wall. If we succeed in removing the mental walls between the two sides, we will be able to overcome the fear and despair that separate the two peoples, as well as the physical wall itself" (quoted in Belarmino, 2007).

If arts and imagination are to be used for reconciliation, to heal the open wound of the border, they must attend to the lived realities on both sides of the wall, communicate these to both sides, and search for the common ground that could once again be exposed. In work over the last decade with U.S. groups of varied ages and ethnicity, participants have imagined the images that would give expression to fears and worries on the U.S. side that breed division, as well as images that depict the U.S. history of racism against Mexicans and others that finds its latest expression in the building of the separation wall at the border. Participants imagined these images not only upon the U.S. wall, but on the walls of their home communities, giving expression to how these issues are lived at close range in their own communities.

Americans and others do not have to go to the border wall to practice the arts of reconciliation. As Santa Barbara playwright Cabranes-Grant (2004) says: “We are each transportable borders, enacting a separation or challenging it.” We are faced each day with living inside or resisting the borders that we have created or that have been imposed on us. Each of us can name these walls, question the dynamics that birth them, bring forth images to express what they are really about. We can inquire into their history, and mourn what is lost in the face of them. We too can rehearse for a daily life where doors are made in these walls, where we use our bodies and our hearts to hold them open and walk more freely back and forth, as we work to forge a needed hospitality.

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ⁱThis article is based on a chapter in a forthcoming book E. Casey and M. Watkins, *Up Against the Wall: Re-Imagining the U.S.-Mexico Border*, University of Texas Press.

ⁱⁱ The transborder feature of their collaboration is common to other groups such as the Border Art Workshop / Taller de Arte Fronterizo (BAW / TAF), who have strived to embody in their collaboration the hybridity they value at the border. The Border Art Workshop was founded in 1984 under the sponsorship of Centro Cultural de la Raza (San Diego) to address “the social tensions the Mexican-American border creates, while asking us to imagine a world in which this international boundary has been erased” (quoted in Chavéz, Grynsztejn & Kanjo, 1993). It was among the first groups to use conceptual art to highlight the politics of the border that exclude migrants while inviting the free flow of capital (Prieto, 1999).

ⁱⁱⁱ Unfortunately, given increased security concerns at the border, the installation was removed in 2010 to protect it from theft.

^{iv} Magon was a critical anarcho-syndicalist thinker who helped the Mexican revolution.

^v In 2011 it was taken down, hopefully temporarily, as the U.S. puts in a new border fence that allows the border patrol to see into Nogales. Whether or not art that obscures U.S.' vision to the other side will be allowed is uncertain.