

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

A Mural of Brotherhood at the US/Mexico Border

Karen · Wednesday, July 31st, 2019

Mexican-American artist [Enrique Chiu](#) has created a [mural project for peace](#) along the U.S./Mexico border. Chiu came to the States with his mother when he was 8, and is coordinating a bi-national effort to create an artistic response to Trump's anti-immigrant politics. He has named it "The Mural of Brotherhood," and it is filled with messages of hope to encourage all who cross the border.



The project highlights the interconnectedness of the two countries, and according to Chiu, is dedicated "to all those people who are looking for a better life, those who take enormous risks, and those who have been separated from their families."

Living in Mexico, I ponder frequently how interwoven our two countries are and how so much of the anti-immigrant rhetoric we're currently hearing ignores this fact. The town in which I live, San Miguel de Allende, has close to 10,000 American expats, all of whom live symbiotically between the States and Mexico, traveling back and forth regularly.

The other month I traveled to LA briefly for a work seminar and my Lyft driver's GPS was giving him instructions in Spanish. We struck up a mishmash conversation of English and Spanish as we rode through the city streets and I told him how much I was enjoying living in San Miguel. This kind of cross-cultural exchange happened numerous times during the course of my stay in LA. And on the plane ride back to Leon, a Mexican woman named Helena sat next to me with her husband. They have four grown children living in California, and another three who live near them in Mexico. All of her children have grandchildren, and so they take turns visiting one another. Sometimes she and her husband fly to LA, and sometimes her American children and grandchildren come to Leon. "Both countries," she repeated to me in Spanish, and smiled.



In the context of this multicultural and multi-country milieu, the "America first" outlook rings very hollow. It is completely disconnected from the reality of an interconnected, global world. As much as the right wing might cringe at this evolutionary fact, there is no "us" first anymore. Not in today's economy and not when so many people call more than one place, culture, or community home. To pretend we live in a world that is "America first" (and by implication, "white first") is to willfully stick our heads in the sand and choose an outdated and colonial past over a multicultural and inclusive future.

Given the sheer amount of divisive and abusive rhetoric and actions we've witnessed over the past three years, Chiu's [artistic movement for peace and unity](#) is a timely expression that offers a much-needed salve. Chiu says that the mural is "an opportunity to redefine the wall, to create a borderless place through art, and make visible what others can't see."

Mexico and the United States are inextricably woven together, despite all protests to the contrary. It is my hope that The Mural of Brotherhood will be an enduring reminder of this unchanging reality and an influential symbol of healing which creates a more inclusive future.



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