

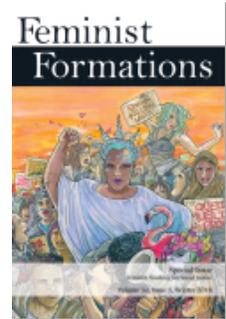


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The Regime of Destruction: Separating Families and Caging Children

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The Regime of Destruction: Separating Families and Caging Children

Adela C. Licona and Eithne Luibhéid

This photo essay and assembled materials begin in recognition that forced separation is not a new practice but one with a long and brutal history connected to colonization, slavery, internment, and imprisonment. This project contextualizes and connects these histories to the specific cruelty being enacted on children at present. It is an online and installation-ready interventionist art project that participates visually, textually, and sonically in the collective outcry against the forced separation of migrant and refugee children from their families at the US/Mexico border. It is a call to action.

Keywords: deportation / family separation / migration industrial complex / no cages / regime of destruction / regime of distortion

*Let's not shame our eyes for seeing.
Instead, thank them for their bravery.*

—Joy Harjo

Between October 1, 2017, and May 31, 2018, at least 2,700 children have been separated from their parents when crossing the US/Mexico border (Lind 2018). No one knows the exact numbers.

The Trump family separation policy builds on a long and brutal history of separating children from their families and communities. The US government has consistently valued and supported white, middle-class, married families as a means to build the nation. Families that are indigenous, of color, poor, queer, and nonnormative gender have been treated as threats to fear and expel or labor to exploit. The forced separation of migrant families at the border fits into the United States' long history of treating enslaved families as property

whose members can be sold away from one another; forcing Native American children into boarding schools designed to violently strip away their language, culture, identity, family and community ties; immigration policies designed to prevent immigrants of color from settling and forming families; punitive, deeply inadequate social welfare policies; and domestic policies that punish, impoverish, incarcerate, and destroy poor, queer, indigenous, and racialized US citizen families in part by cultivating a cradle-to-prison pipeline that makes the United States the most incarcerated nation in the world.

This collective cry of outrage began as a crowdsourcing call to friends to send Adela photos of themselves as children. While her ideas were not fully formed at the outset, Adela felt an urgent need to do something to draw attention to the atrocities happening once again along the US/Mexico border. She recalled Toni Morrison's (2015) admonitions to artists in troubled times. It is then, precisely, Morrison tells us, that artists must get to work. And so Adela did. She had already been working on the idea of the United States as a "Regime of Distortion," where fear and insecurity are consistently cultivated by the state to produce the given to be seen as an always already criminalized migrant (Licona, forthcoming). She wanted to do something more to intervene in the state's escalating criminalization of migrants and the rendering of their children ever more vulnerable. She wanted to create a multimodal and participatory project with photography at its center. She quickly realized that whatever direction her project took, it could possibly naturalize structures of oppression or reproduce the very traumas she wanted the project to confront. She felt momentarily immobilized. She moved forward with a cautious fervor inspired also by Gloria Anzaldúa's call to use the tools of our creative and critical production as tools of activism and intervention. *Entonces "por medio de la pluma" y agrego de la cámara*, so by means of the pen and the camera, she continued to imagine the project. She knew the project would need careful contextualization. She was thrilled that Eithne, a migration studies scholar and friend, offered to write an overview of what she terms the "Regime of Destruction" to contextualize and situate the art project in the larger and looming conversations regarding migrants, refugees, migration, displacements, detainments, and deportations. She was moved and inspired by friends who trusted her enough to send photographs even though her ideas were still forming. She felt a responsibility to do right by them and most especially by those who are being separated at the border and moved into caged conditions of deep uncertainty.

In this collaborative essay, written first in a shared voice, we situate the Trump administration's separation of migrant families in a longer historical context of state-sanctioned violence, brutality, and dispossession directed toward families that are of color, indigenous, poor, queer, and gender nonnormative. The next section, written in Adela's voice, describes how she called for and created the photographs for this project, some of which are reproduced here.



Figure 1. Kira, Nana, Rex

The final section, written in a shared voice, lists demands for change and refers readers to the project's website for further resources (Licona 2018b).

The Context

The forcible separation of families, which must be resisted and stopped, fits into a long anti-immigrant history. In the 1990s, family ties were once again deliberately targeted as part of renewed efforts to criminalize immigration and crack down on undocumented immigrants. The efforts focused on deterrence, militarization of the border, the expansion of the grounds on which people could be deported, and an astronomical growth in the numbers of border patrol agents, ICE officials, and detention facilities. Family ties were deliberately targeted as follows:

- new laws made it virtually impossible for undocumented migrants who married citizens or legal residents, or gave birth to citizen children, to get legal status despite having state-recognized family ties;
- immigrant women's childbearing was demonized as a threat and laws prevented them from seeking healthcare or food assistance;
- Congress and state legislatures introduced bills to deny citizenship to children born in the US to immigrant parents;
- immigrant parents seeking food, healthcare, and education for citizen children were threatened with deportation, even while their children were not assisted;
- millions of citizen spouses and children lived with the constant threat and often reality of a family member's deportation;
- children separated from detained and deported parents often ended up in the state's foster care and adoption systems, even when parents tried desperately to hold onto them; and
- under Trump, the state expanded the concept of the "at-risk migrant child" to further escalate the criminalization of immigration and the destruction of families (Moratorium on Deportations 2018).

Diverse families—including married couples with children, same-sex and trans couples with and without children, single parent households, transnational families, chosen families, and much more—were deeply affected. These anti-immigrant policies were mirrored by the expansion of the prison industrial complex that criminalized and incarcerated US citizens of color and poor and queer citizens on a catastrophic scale, while slashing social safety nets, with terrible consequences.

The Trump administration's policy of forcibly separating parents and children at the border cruelly escalated strategies for criminalizing immigration—without ever acknowledging or addressing the US's role in slavery, colonization, settler colonialism, and global trade policies that still drive much contemporary immigration. Justification for the policy relied on racist and heteronormative narratives about migrant parents as "irresponsible" and "deficient," including when they were trying to save their children's lives and their own. The policy (ab)used children and families in a cruel and failing effort to:

- "deter" immigration;
- punish those who have immigrated;
- use children as "bait" or "hostages" so that authorities can criminalize, prosecute, detain, and deport immigrant parents and guardians when they try to reunify with their children;
- further criminalize immigration and demonize immigrants; and
- expand forms of surveillance, militarization, detention, and deportation with associated circuits of capital.

Authoritarian regimes instrumentalize intimacies and (ab)use parent/child ties in just these ways.

We come from the border where cultures and colors intermingle. We share meals, we raise each other's children, we work together, learn from each other, we lean on one another and we love the families that make this "side" complete. Without them - WE are not US. Our lives, children, families and world are enriched by the FRONTERA and its people. Resist. No wall. No hate. NO CAGES

Amanda

Figure 2. Declamation 1, Amanda

The recent heartbreaking and outrageous family separations fit into general US immigration control practices that, in recent decades, have separated literally millions of families through expanding criminalization, deportation, and disappearances/deaths when border-crossing. These policies and practices also threaten separation for an estimated 800,000 US citizen spouses and 4.5 million citizen children under the age of 18 whose family includes undocumented immigrants; for 230,000 citizen children whose parents (from Nicaragua, Sudan, Haiti, El Salvador, and Honduras) lost Temporary Protected Status under the Trump administration; and for some 800,000 young immigrants who received Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status, which the Trump administration has sought to end.

The Regime of Distortion: Seeing through the Eyes of Insecurity and Fear

Donald Trump swept into office on a nativist, racist, homophobic, anti-immigrant agenda that centered on building a wall to prevent undocumented migration through Mexico and banning migration from majority-Muslim countries. His agenda reflects a complete lack of understanding about the global dynamics that drive immigration, the role of the United States in those dynamics, and how US immigration policies interface with global dynamics to route millions into undocumented status. Instead, it focuses on further criminalizing immigrants, stepping up enforcement, and aggressive detention and deportation—none of which have proven effective in changing dynamics that generate migration. Under Trump, these strategies have reached new levels of cruelty



Figure 3. Melissa, Teeni, Regina

and scale, with little pretense of oversight or accountability. Undocumented immigrants are especially targeted—but so are documented immigrants and US citizens who are indigenous, people of color, poor, queer, trans, not Christian, or differently disabled.

Undocumented immigration fell during the first year of the Trump presidency, but grew again (although it remains at historically low levels). Increasing numbers of migrants are families from Central America, and often they are seeking asylum from severe, life-threatening violence. National and international laws allow people to seek asylum, and gives particular protection to families and asylum seekers. This has enraged the Trump administration. Mixing lies with half-truths, the Trump administration has been suggesting that migrants are not really families (and if they're families, they're not "worthy" families) and not really asylum seekers. Fake families and fake asylum seekers, according to the Fake News perpetuated by the Trump administration as grounds for their

When we turn away--in mind, in heart, in understanding--from history, we are startled, but not surprised, when it emerges in a related form. While most of the children in the WWII Japanese Internment Camps resided with their parents, they were segregated for portions of the day, during which time they were "educated" about being "American."

This 1944 photo, which was taken of my family at Heart Mountain, an Internment Camp in Wyoming, shows my mother, Jacqueline Joy (lower left corner) being propped up by my grandfather, Jack Fumito. My grandmother, Tazueye Helen stands directly behind Jack.

Jill

Figure 4. Declamation 2, Jill

atrocious actions. Indeed, some migrants are not asylum seekers but displaced people on the move due to personal reasons, collective ties, and structural dynamics that generate a process of migration that is as old as human history and only recently considered a crime.

Separating Families: Cruel Policies and Blatant Lies

President Trump repeatedly claimed that he "hated" to separate families, but was required to do so because of "bad laws" passed by Democrats. In fact, there is no law requiring families crossing the border to be separated. The decision to separate families was made by Attorney General Jeff Sessions when he announced a zero-tolerance policy in April 2018. AG Sessions cited the Bible (Romans 13) to justify his actions; pro-slavery advocates have cited that same verse to justify slavery and the forced return of runaway slaves (Burton 2018). Parent/child ties are being cruelly used to advance the Trump administration's white supremacist, settler-colonialist, xenophobic, and heteronormative agenda.

The Trump administration especially wants to "deter" further immigration including by asylum seekers. Deterrence measures introduced under Trump include reduced or complete denial of opportunities to apply for asylum; expanded detention; swift removal with little or no opportunity to explain why asylum is needed; and repeated, unsupported claims that all immigrants are likely criminals and security threats.

The Trump administration is also deliberately using state-recognized family ties to further their goals. In March 2017, White House Advisor John Kelly proposed separating children from parents at the border as a calculated means to deter more migration, including by those fleeing life-threatening violence.

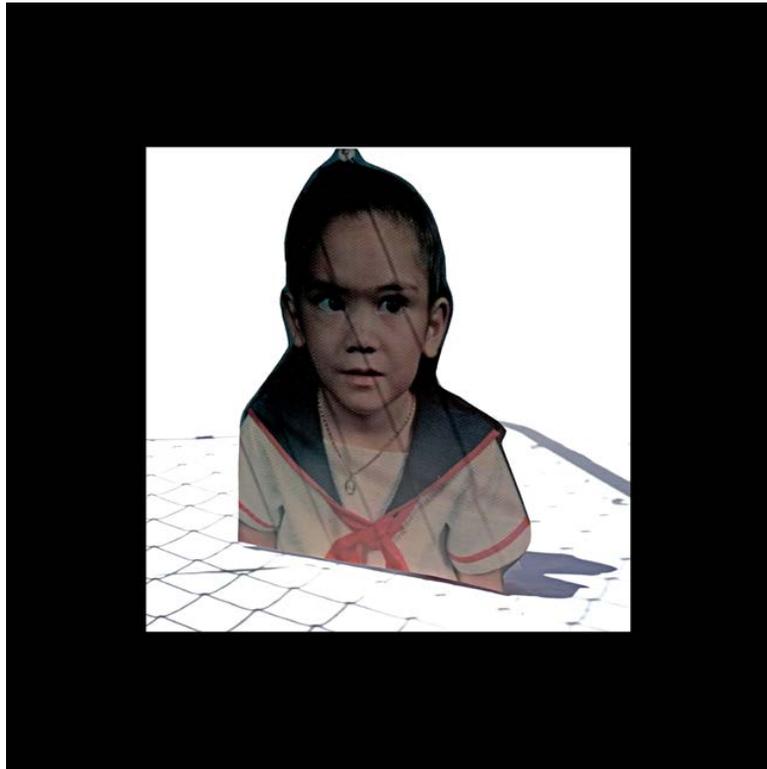


Figure 5. Patti

In response to a public outcry, Kelly temporarily dropped the proposal. However, he issued new guidelines that called for prosecuting parents or guardians who stepped forward to reunite with children who had been detained at the border. He claimed that the parents were either trafficking the children, or else putting the children at risk of falling into the hands of traffickers, as a pretext for prosecuting them. The administration did not acknowledge that parents were often trying to save their children's lives by bringing them, and although parents would surely have preferred to bring their children openly and safely, US immigration laws made that impossible.

By December 2017, a complaint filed against the government by the ACLU showed that the Trump administration had moved ahead with separating children as young as 2-years-old from their parents at the border. No one knows the exact numbers involved. In May 2018, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced a zero-tolerance policy toward anyone caught crossing the border

without authorization, including those seeking asylum. Anyone who was caught would be referred to the Department of Justice for criminal prosecution. Secretary of Homeland Security Kristjen Nielson insisted that parents who apply for asylum at recognized ports of entry (rather than crossing the border at other points) would not be separated from their children, but this was another half-truth. Migrants have a right to seek asylum; migrants do not always know where official ports of entry are located or have the means to reach them; officials at some ports of entry have refused to allow people to apply for asylum; people hoping to apply for asylum have been forced to sleep for days on concrete outside ports of entry, waiting to apply; and some parents have been separated from their children even when they apply at ports of entry.

Crying children, toddlers, and babies, including a breastfeeding infant, have been taken from parents who didn't know where the children were going. According to the government, the children became designated as "unaccompanied minors" and turned over to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) under the Department of Health and Human Services. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) claims that they kept parents and children connected, but this is not true. There's little coordination between ICE, which handles parents' cases, and ORR, which handles children's cases. Until the public outcry over family separation, there were no protocols in place for parents and children to keep track of one another, and no mechanisms for them to be able to stay in contact or become reunited. Parents and children were generally held in different states, far from one another. Now, ORR offers a toll-free hotline, but it is very difficult to get through and also to get accurate information.

Some terrified parents have been pressured to drop asylum claims or accept being charged with illegal entry in exchange for the promise of being reunited with their children—even though reunification often doesn't happen. In May, a Honduran man hanged himself in a Texas detention cell because he was so distraught about being separated from his children and wife. In June, a Guatemalan woman was deported while her child remained in US custody. Numerous groups, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychiatric Association, and the United Nations' top human rights official, have forcefully condemned the separation policy and documented the enduring harm it causes to children. Documentation about the terrible conditions under which children—and migrant parents—are held has also been mounting. The Trump administration's indifference to these conditions and impacts is suggested by Chief of Staff John Kelly's remark that children are "put into foster care or whatever" (Mike 2018).

The Regime of Deportation

On June 17, 2018, Trump suggested that he was deliberately inflicting cruelty on families in a bid to force Congress to support and fund more terrifying

Ruben is a formerly undocumented queer migrant who came to the U.S. at the age of 10. When his parents told him to choose something to remember El Salvador, his homeland, he picked an old stuffed animal named Toto. While he is still searching for home, he envisions home as a space not defined by nation-state borders or citizenship. Rather, home for him is a space of intimacy, desire, and pleasure, where contradictory feelings of joy and melancholia converge. He is inspired by artist and activist interventions that teach us about the beauty of migration, family oriented and otherwise.

Ruben

Figure 6. Declamation 3, Ruben

immigration enforcement plans. On June 20, 2018, in response to overwhelming pressure from the public, politicians, businesses, and religious groups, among others, he signed an executive order that ended the policy of separating families at the border. The Executive Order shows that he had been lying about the origin of the policy and his ability to address it. However, the main change made is that children can now be locked up together *with* their parents rather than separately. Since current law does not allow immigrant children to be locked up for longer than twenty days, his administration is seeking ways to change and extend that time limit. The administration will continue their “zero-tolerance” policy, reduced opportunities for asylum, and expanded detention and deportation strategies.

On June 27, a Federal judge ordered that the Trump administration had until July 10 to reunify children under 5-years of age with their families, and until July 26 to reunify the remaining children. The Trump administration asked for a blanket extension, but the judge refused, allowing only case-by-case extensions. To comply with the judge’s order, volunteers began combing through government records, which were not coordinated among the agencies involved. Moreover, in hundreds of cases, records linking children with parents had disappeared or been destroyed as part of the Trump administration’s literal creation of separated families. In order for reunification to take place, the Trump administration is demanding DNA testing; this strategy, supposedly undertaken to protect children from potential traffickers, imposes a heteronormative and racist definition of family and contributes to the demonization of migrant adults, without manifestly assisting or protecting children. Although the Office of

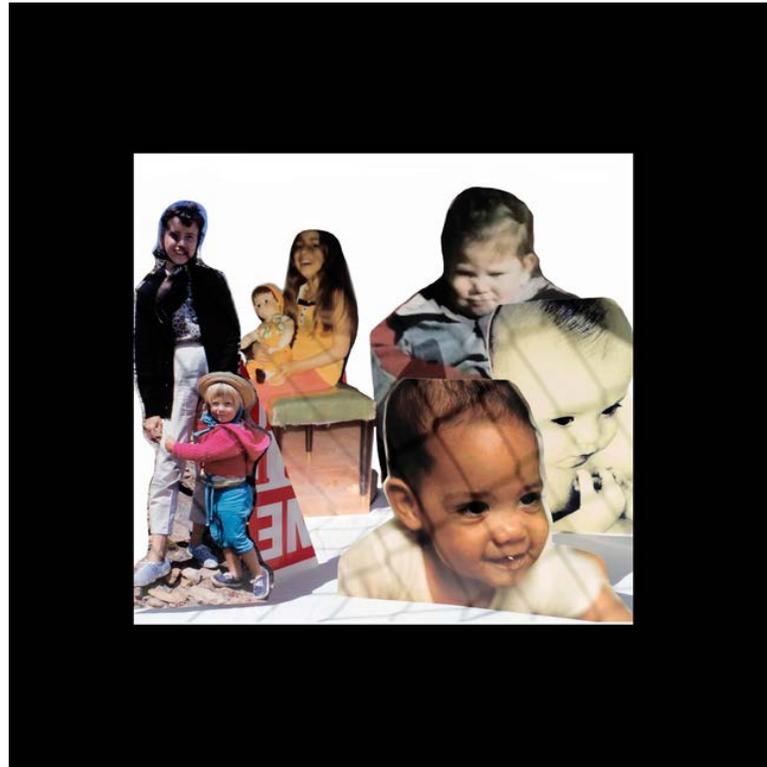


Figure 7. Marcia, Laura, Betting

Refugee Resettlement says that it will pay for all DNA testing, some migrant parents reported they had been asked to pay the costs, which were far beyond their financial means. Other migrant parents have been asked to pay the costs of transporting their children from other states, where the government had taken them, to be reunified; this is also beyond most migrants' financial means. Parents seeking reunification with children must also undergo a criminal background check. TENDER R/AGE :: RABIA TIERNA ~ an outcry of collective outrage, an interventionist and participatory art project, is designed to highlight these imposed oppressions that extend anti-migrant practices and emergent policies in the United States and that have newly created conditions for reunions that may never happen.

TENDER R/AGE :: RABIA TIERNA ~ an Outcry of Collective Outrage

Listening to and reading news reports about the forced caging and isolation of infants and children deeply disturbed me. I felt an urge to gather together with others who were feeling similarly. I was moved by a collective groundswell of refusal to allow this practice to continue without a public outcry. To make this a participatory project, I circulated a call for childhood photographs to friends and friends of friends. I began in the understanding that we have all been children. Using the submissions I received, I centered the image of the child. I decided not to use images of actual children being forcibly separated from their caregivers as I felt it would capture children at a time of wild vulnerability and victimization and without their consent. With the help of the Gloo Factory, a community-minded union print shop in Tucson, Arizona, I printed submitted childhood photos on photo-quality cardstock as paper doll-like cutouts (up to nineteen inches in height and thirteen inches in width, depending on the image's quality and composition). The cutouts were intended to trouble the concepts of both childhood and of playthings, each of which involve expressions and experiences of privilege and/or oppression. They generate mimetic engagement that tacitly reminds us of the fact that we have all been children.

The digital photographic scene I produce deliberately evokes the specter—the shadow—of the cage within which children are being separated and contained. I photographed outside. The harsh desert sun casts a shadow across the cutouts I assemble for each photograph. Individual and group cutouts are marked by the cage's shadow falling over the images and against a stark white background, which is meant to convey a space this is not defined, at once unfamiliar, unknowable, and disorienting—a space and no-space. The harsh white background instantiates, too, the legacy of white supremacy in its power to define and divide families. Shadows over the cutouts invoke life being lived in the shadow of these cages. Bodies are differently marked by the cage and differently constricted, terrorized, and traumatized. The cutouts placed in the midst of a stark white background and foreground also imply an overexposure that speaks to conditions for the production of hypersurveillance practices and technologies. The consummate starkness of the white background is also intended as an abstraction that highlights the callous conditions of radical isolation for children forced, alone together, into a cage.

These images evoke children cut out of contexts, separated and decontextualized, which is what is happening to them as a result of (forced) migration and of enduring the violence of numerous states (the states they fled, traveled through, and the US state). The production of such a background for the cutouts calls viewers to consider the cold and sterile conditions of any cage. In this cultivated context of nothingness, a flattened dimension and void are produced through the stark white background that is bound by the high intensity and highly stylized contrast of the heavy black frame bordering each

My name is Sandy. I am a citizen of the Navajo Nation and am Eastern Shoshone from my mother's side. Many of my relatives were sent away from their parents and families during the boarding school era. My parents' caregivers felt that learning English and becoming Christians, while giving up their Indigenous ways of being, was the only way to survive. My great-grandmother, who raised my mom, grew up speaking four languages, but refused to teach any of the Indigenous languages to my mom because she knew it would only hurt my mom in this English-dominant society. The US policy of assimilation for Native Americans was cruel, causing a ripple effect of historical trauma for generations. It was based on separating families. Sending children away from their communities is such an effective way to attempt to eradicate a culture, a people. When I see the migrant children, separated from their parents, it makes me think of my ancestors who were forced to leave their families and attend boarding schools. It makes me think of the trauma that is being inflicted now, and that will re-emerge in the future generations. All children deserve to be with their parents and with their communities. The United States has a deplorable history of treating others with a lack of dignity, but this doesn't have to continue.

Figure 8. Declamation 4, Sandy

photograph. That chosen frame implies the many ways the border is being insidiously reinforced and reproduced as a powerful instrument of division, control, containment, and death.

In this historic moment, when we are witnessing the further expansion of the for-profit, billion-dollar industry of border surveillance, control, and containment through the separation of families and the caging of children, I use cutouts to focus on this powerful control and to provoke an engagement with myriad separation policies that have (and continue to) cut children out of their family and community contexts. Cutouts are printed and held upright with DIY stands made out of protest yard signs the Gloo Factory donated. To make the stands that render cutouts 3D, signs are cut into triangles: shapes that have their own history in the brutal containment and elimination of unwanted bodies. Using double-sided adhesive, stands support the cutouts as 3D paper dolls. The stands are visible in the photographs to also signal the need for and the expression of support. These triangular stands represent coalitional possibilities and relational connections.

Each photograph is accompanied by a demand for “NO CAGES.” This particular demand is a rhetorical choice that leaves the project open to coalitional engagement with others attempting to intervene in myriad divisions of the carceral state. It is a call, then, that recognizes the related histories of settler colonialism, slavery, internment, and imprisonment as structures and practices of imposed separations and isolations. My photographic approach means also to

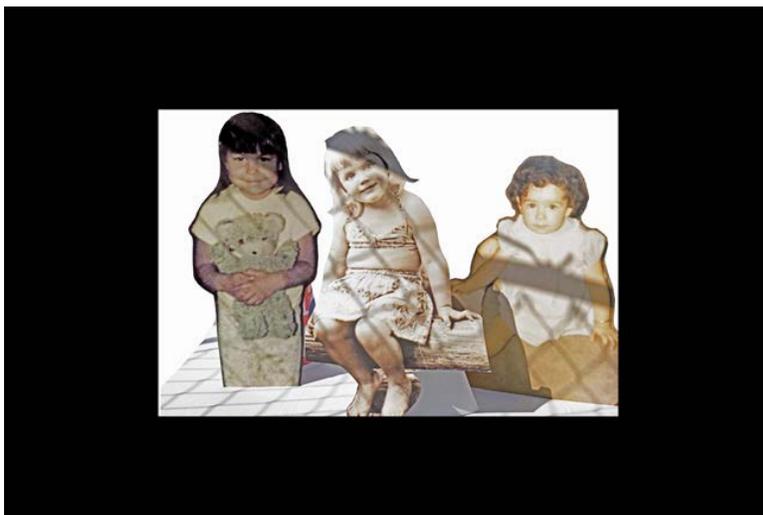


Figure 9. Sandy, Alison, Ana

highlight the instrumentalization of intimacies the state is engaged in and the ways the state has used definitions and recognitions of “family” to divide people and to dispense and withhold rights according to those normativizing definitions and recognitions (see Luibhéid with Andrade and Stevens 2018). Such definitions are at play in current immigration policies that enmesh those who are admitted in relations of surveillance, render people ineligible for entry, and otherwise produce detentions and deportations in and from the United States.

In addition to the visual imagery, the project has an added textual component. I have gathered and produced poster-like declamations from participants that offer first-person responses to and perspectives on the specific cruelty being enacted against adult and children migrants and refugees. They are written by Native, Diné, undocumented, white, educated, privileged, brown, black, queer, and QTPOC project participants. Some recall childhood memories of frightening if momentary separations, others address separations born of personal experiences of migration, others express simple outrage, and still others question what separation means, does, and has done for generations of families, peoples, and communities. Collectively these declamations offer an affective connection and relational contextualization of images produced as cutouts for this project.

A soundscape collaboration with artist and sound studies scholar John Melillo is that final touch that sensorially contributes to the affective outcry of *rabia tierna* that structures this project.¹ This soundscape begins in the recognition that the cries of babies are ways of communicating a need for attention, comfort,



Figure 10. Susan, Ana Adelita, Alana

care, and action. This sound-mix brings together reverberations of wailing humans and (non)humans including mourning doves and coyotes, cicadas and the wind, caged and crying children, and birds, in textures that re-sound as pure grief, anger, anguish, and alienation. This composition is designed to further contextualize the images within a collective sonic experience of displacement, containment, sorrow, and outrage. These are the sounds of the captors, the caged, the separated, the encroached upon, the displaced, as well as those of us witnessing. This sound collage works together with photographs and words to express a sensual experience of collective outrage at the injury of imposed division across (non)human contexts. By sounding the ecologies of division and displacement that cages and borders impose, the sounds mixed here signal the lasting trauma and terror that has been installed and inflicted on children and those who love them that cannot be erased by any Executive Order. Together, sounds, image, and text call for all cages to be opened.

This art intervention is designed to stress the brutality of displacements, forced cagings, separations, and divisions. It is a call to struggle out loud and together for politics and policies that respect and value families and intimacies in all their forms—those recognized by the state and those not recognized but

still deeply meaningful to people. It is an invitation to imagine, through its sounds, words, its digitally produced photographs and their stark backgrounds, a vast expanse, a world perhaps, without borders. ¡NO CAGES. NO BORDERS! And it is an ensemble of demands.

From Contextualized Art to Action

We demand that separated children and parents be reunited immediately; that legal assistance be provided to immigrant families and individuals; the removal of unnecessary barriers to asylum; an end to the criminalization of immigration; a halt to the building of detention facilities and a shutdown of existing facilities; the end of harsh detention and deportation practices; that Border Patrol and ICE be held accountable for abuses and deaths; an end to ICE/police collaborations; that relief without punitive conditions be provided to all undocumented immigrants in the United States; that ICE be abolished; an end to the policing of indigenous, racialized, poor, queer communities that leads to criminalization, incarceration, and family separation for citizens and immigrants; the implementation of employment, social welfare, healthcare, housing, and education policies that recognize the dignity and support the well-being of individuals and families in all their diverse forms; and respect for the sovereignty of First Nations' cultures, institutions, lands, and resources.

For Resources, Readings, and Actions you can take in support of No Cages and No Separations, please visit the project website and specifically the page on Actions and Resources (Licona 2018a). To make suggestions for additional resources, readings, and actions, or to schedule a pop-up installation, please contact the authors directly.

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Eithne Luibhéid is a professor of gender and women's studies at the University of Arizona. Her research focuses on the connections among queer lives, state immigration controls, and justice struggles. Luibhéid is the author of *Pregnant on Arrival: Making the 'Illegal' Immigrant* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013) and *Entry*

Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border (University of Minnesota Press, 2002). She is the editor of "Queer Migrations," a special issue of GLQ (2008); and the coeditor of A Global History of Sexuality (Wiley Blackwell, 2014), Queer Migrations: Sexuality, Citizenship, and Border Crossings (University of Minnesota Press, 2005), and "Representing Migrant Women in Ireland and the E.U.," a special issue of Women's Studies International Forum (2004). Luibhéid's current book manuscript, Why Don't They Just Get in Line? Immigration, Deportability, and Queer Intimacies, critically explores how deportability is being extended and resisted through intimate ties between LGBT undocumented migrants and U.S. citizens. With Karma Chávez, she is coediting Queer Migrations 2: Illegalization, Detention and Deportation.

Note

1. John and I approached sound as a vital component of this project but one that challenged us and gave us pause. We felt it inappropriate and overwhelming to simply rerecord the cries of caged children, even if into a mix with other sounds. John listened to and combined field recordings by Adela, some of his own recordings, and the cries of caged children circulating in mainstream media. He focused on the noise of wind, which forms the baseline against which other sections of frequency-time-space are stitched together, and worked to create a kind of "quilt" of frequency-time-space. John's sonic quilt mixes all of the recordings together in combinations that are not simply cuts in time but also cuts in the frequency range of the sounds. He took care to craft and curate the sounds as recognizable but also as reconstructed and clashing. His "quilting" approach is especially appropriate given what we have learned about caged children lying in cages under discomforting emergency thermal blankets. John's sound quilt can be experienced sonically as an imperfectly patterned construction. This sonic quilting method provides a mixture of abstraction and reference that places the cries of the coyotes, birds, and children into a relationship with each other while refusing the naturalization or the kind of off-handed "orchestration" that *la migra* unempathetically make light of in the recording. This mix is composed as a practice of refusal to hear crying as simply a "part" of the landscape. It attends to displacements and containments that borders and cages produce. It's pain happening, it's uncomfortable, and it's also not simply demanding empathy but asking that we reimagine our listening. It is a call to action.

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