THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF RECLAMATION: SPACE, ART AND RESISTANCE IN THE SOUTHWEST

A Thesis

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Abstract: This Senior Thesis is centered around three spaces in the Southwest of the United States— the U.S. Mexico Border (in The Rio Grand Valley, Texas and San Diego, California), The Mission District (San Francisco, CA) and Chicano Park (Barrio Logan, CA). This Thesis in organized in three chapters— one for each place. These spaces are united by their significance to those who identify as Chicano— a Mexican-American identity with political roots. I recount my experiences in these spaces— what I saw, smelled, felt, heard— how bodies moved, connected, and engaged— what my presence meant/means. I then investigate the dynamics of each space— focusing particularly on the power, subversion, and resistance of art. In discussion, I draw from scholars' work on performance, body and spacial politics as well as my own experience as a dancer and choreographer. I am interested in investigating space and bodies. I want to understand the meanings these entities have, take on, or are forcibly given. I argue that in the three spaces I focus on this Thesis, we witness what I call "a choreography of reclamation". This is a process of reordering, challenging and shifting space and the entities within both physically and emotionally.

Key words: Chicano Park, Mission District, U.S.- Mexico Border, art, Murals, choreopolitics, resistance, gentrification, borderlands, border, reclamation

Prologue

The U.S.-Mexico border exists in a condition that is hard to understand until one sees it with their own eyes. It is porous and malleable, but also rigid and exact. It's a space negotiated by a multitude of complex identities, but also where a strict hierarchy of bodies is created. It has been constructed by hegemonic narrators, but is re-written by the people who travel through it. It is a space of movement. It is a space of contradiction. It is a space of conversation.

In all of its nuances, the U.S.-Mexico border remains an entity that perpetuates distinctions rather than complicated intersections. It provides a platform for categorization—this side or that side, Mexican or American, this land or that land. This instills an artificial sense of order and thus presumed control and safety— however false and misconceived that perception is. In the borderlands, the opposite is experienced—exchange, negotiation and plurality. Gloria Anzaldúa describes a borderland as "...vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition" (Anzaldúa 23). Go to the borderlands and you will smell a medley of tacos swirling through the wind. Go to the borderlands and you will hear *Son Jarocho* from Veracruz, Mexico collide with the Chicano movement. Go to the borderlands and you will feel the weight of displacement and the exhaustion of being uprooted. Go to the borderlands and you will see architecture become canvases of decolonization. Go to the borderlands and you will know resistance. When I see this with my own eyes I begin to understand.

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I explore the Pulga (a flea market of sorts) in Mission, Texas with my friend Mica. We pass by stands of every variety— colorful fruits and vegetables, clothing, papas spiras, barrels of

colorful drinks, tacos, electronics— nuzzled close to each other. Mica recounts her visits to the Pulgas of Mexico and explains to me that while people buy certain things when they visit the Pulga, it is not necessarily the space's main purpose. Rather, the Pulga is more of a social space and a place to be in community. I very much feel that here. I feel an energy of comfort and connection as I move through the maze of stands — families explore and eat together and music fills the crevices between them. I don't view myself as an outsider for one of the first times in my travels through Texas. I think this is because of the the environment of the Pulga— busy, in motion, colorful, dynamic, many sounds. I fall into the movement of it all—I loop and pass through the space with the flow and rhythm of bodies. Left, right, left, right - negotiate a pathway as oncoming bodies come toward you - feel the air as the body slips by effortlessly - smell that? - blur with the bodies - breathe with the bodies. Left, right, left, right.

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The concept of a borderland comes from the negotiation of a delineation whether physical or metaphoric. In the borderlands, distinctions are challenged and identity becomes ambiguous and less static. In contrast, borders encourage binaries to develop— here or there, us or them, familiar or unfamiliar. " A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge" (Anzaldúa 25). Today borders are attached to an idea of order— even if completely idealistic. Joseph Nevins (2010) writes, "There are a variety of reasons why one might support enhanced boundary enforcement measures as epitomized by Operation Gatekeeper... it is often a desire to create order that underlies their support" (Nevins 139). The process of creating order involves the establishment and adherence to categories which rely on identity markers such as

race, gender and class in a very stagnant manner. Border policy attempts to strip fluidity and nuance from identity. It attempts to create not only a physical order, but also an identity order. The emphasis on reading the body by how it appears, and not what it consists of, negates the complexity of people and promotes a process of flattening identity. A body exists in the physical realm— but its physicality is so much more complicated than it appears to be. It is a vessel for ancestors, experiences, and history. To view this vessel simply as a material entity without considering all that the body encapsulates is to reduce and simplify identity. Identity *is* a process. It does not exist in the past or present— it is consistently moving and fluctuating. The bodies that I encountered in my time in Texas and in California (as I will discuss) exist in the borderlands because they refuse to be made static — whether through a lived practice or an overt statement of resistance.

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The past few days in Texas have been filled by a somewhat comical game of counting the State Troopers and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) vehicles we pass as we drive through the Rio Grande Valley in our van. The excessive "law enforcement" we see here is absurd. Their vehicles take up so much space in this area — physical and emotional— and the frequency with which they exist makes their presence laughably apparent. As we play the counting game, I am reminded of discussions by Joseph Nevins (2010) who describes the objectives of border enforcement as working towards the creation of a *sense* of order or security despite the actual success of their actions. It's a strategy that privileges appearance over effectiveness. It is a performance of "security". As I stare out the window and see DHS or state

trooper vehicles every five minutes, I'm acutely aware of this performance, but as I watch, I feel a degree of removal like a member of an audience. I watch the scene unfold from a distance. It's challenging for me to connect to what this must feel like for someone who lives in the Rio Grande Valley— inevitably an actor in this constant performance of surveillance. I have an acute awareness of the militarized presence that surrounds me but I interact with the presence in a specific way because of my outsiderness/race/nationality/gender/class. While I feel incredibly uncomfortable around this militarized presence, I know that I will not be given any trouble when going about my day or moving through space because my body is read as innocent/legal/good because of its color, gender and clothing. It's very uncomfortable for me to think about what rights my body is granted in these militarized spaces in comparison to bodies that look different from mine.

Law enforcement on the border operates through flattening identities through a process of rigid categorization. Simultaneously, they engage in the stretching of guaranteed rights of "citizenship". The Constitution free zone is a concept that exemplifies this contradiction. It was introduced to our class by Anthropologist Margret Dorsey. The Constitution free zone has come into existence since "Court rulings have declared that the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution does not apply at checkpoints and spaces up to 100 miles north of the U.S.-Mexican border" (Dorsey and Díaz-Barriga 204). In discussion of the constitution free zone Dorsey, brings in Angela Davis' concept of a "racial state" to highlight the ways in which border policing is overtly racist (Dorsey and Díaz-Barriga 205)**.** The State Troopers and DHS create an unnatural order of identity through the stiff assumption that certain markers— race, ethnicity, gender etc.— are indicative of a specific character. Simultaneously, they destabilize and infuse ambiguity to an

identity marker that should be clear and unquestioned— citizen. This is an example of how those in power negotiate through contradiction. We see similar inconsistencies in the fluctuation between rigid or malleable approaches in border policy with the U.S.-Mexico border. The unrestricted movement of goods through NAFTA versus the stringent surveillance and denial of movement to human bodies is one such example.

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This Senior Thesis is centered around three spaces in the Southwest of the United States — the U.S. Mexico Border (in The Rio Grand Valley, Texas and San Diego, California), The Mission District (San Francisco, CA) and Chicano Park (Barrio Logan, CA). This Thesis in organized in three chapters— one for each place. These spaces are united by their significance to those who identify as Chicano— a Mexican-American identity with political roots. I recount my experiences in these spaces— what I saw, smelled, felt, heard— how bodies moved, connected, and engaged— what my presence meant/means. I then investigate the dynamics of each space— focusing particularly on the power, subversion, and resistance of art. In discussion, I draw from scholars' work on performance, body and spacial politics as well as my own experience as a dancer and choreographer. I am interested in investigating space and bodies. I want to understand the meanings these entities have, take on, or are forcibly given. I argue that in the three spaces I focus on this Thesis, we witness what I call "a choreography of reclamation". This is a process of reordering, challenging and shifting space and the entities within both physically and emotionally.

This Thesis is rooted in fieldwork. In February of 2016, I spent a week in the Rio Grand Valley, TX with Santiago Guerra's "Border and Borderlands" block course. In May of 2016, I

received a SWS Benezet Research Grant where I spent two weeks in San Francisco, CA and San Diego, CA. During my fieldwork, I met with community members, artists and scholars. I visited several galleries, walked throughout neighborhoods and saw performances. All that I encountered in my fieldwork was incredibly influential to this Thesis whether explicitly mentioned or not. My method of recording experiences was through field notes, participant observation and interviews— both formal and informal. Close attention and awareness of my identity and body in the field was and is very important to me. I understand myself as an outsider to the spaces I witnessed and write about. I have written about my own experiences. I do not wish to assert that my words are the feelings or experiences of Chicanos or those who live in these places. I share my thoughts as an outsider witness to incredibly complicated, beautiful and changing spaces.

It is my hope that this Thesis can translate, transfer and have meaning beyond the page. I am interested in how the discussion of space, body politics and the choreography of reclamation can be used for protest, resistance, and decolonization on the ground. I offer my experiences rooted in the Southwest of the U.S. in three particular spaces, but I believe that these questions of space, politics, bodies and power are relevant nationally and internationally in many places. I will continue to hold my experiences from around the Southwest to question and examine the spaces around me— I invite you to do the same.

Chapter 1

San Diego, CA May 28, 2016

Fandango Fronterizo

My friend Jeronimo and I turn off at the last exit before Mexico. We could drive straight into Mexico if we wanted to... no problem, no questions, no suspicion. We move freely. But we don't. We turn off to "the last exit before Mexico" although, we're unsure if we're going the right way. We know the wall is near. We start to see signs that advertise the Fandango Fronterizo with arrows directing us where to go. We drive through a series of obscure and empty dirt roads with vast vegetation to find a parking lot full of cars and a few buses. As soon as I open the passenger door, I hear the strums of jaranas and melodies of Spanish and English bouncing through the air. The sounds are messy and playful— a few notes here and there, a sentence that begins in Spanish is interjected with an English word. The space is filled with sounds of anticipation, I am reminded of an orchestra warming up.

We get out of the car. I am immediately taken by the joyous energy present. People laugh and embrace. It feels like a reunion of sorts. We start to follow people who walk down a sandy path that seems to stretch on eternally. It's a hazy day and it's hard to see what we're walking towards. The people who sprinkle the path contrast the overcast hue with their colorful clothing. Many of the women wear long skirts and the many of the men have hats. Most people have their instruments casually slung around their back as we walk on. We walk for a few minutes and soon the ocean appears in the distance.

We make our way to the beach where the massive sea stretches in front of us. We have caught up to the people who walked in front of us “Hola, que tal?!” they greet us. We introduce ourselves and exchange smiles. Jeronimo begins to converse in Spanish with one of the men, I

sheepishly continue conversation in English. Words weave through the salty air. I speak with a man who has been to the Fandango multiple times before. He is Mexican-American, a father and a marine scientist. He shares stories of doing research on the islands off the coast of California and tells me about his daughter who plays in a Son Jarocho band of all women. He says he is so glad that I'm here. He makes me feel welcome in a space that I feel a bit nervous about being in. I am unsure if this is a space for my presence.

As we walk on, a looming and abrasive brown structure comes into view. An unnatural being in a rustic and ragged environment. We walk closer and the layers to this structure are revealed. Tall steel beams extend skyward. They are held together by horizontal beams and thick panels of steel that eliminate the possibility of anything passing through the top of the fence. There is a second layer in front of the steels bars made of what looks like thick wire. The wire runs horizontally and vertically creating small box shapes. Later, when I get closer, I am able to see that there are actually several wire layers which makes it impossible for anything— only perhaps the most tightly rolled piece of paper, letter or note— to pass.

I can't help but laugh to myself as I notice that the wall extends several yards into the ocean. The concept of building a wall on land is ridiculous enough to me but the notion of building a wall through the ocean is darkly comical. The wall's short extension into the ocean evokes a sense of arbitrariness. I know that crossing bodies of water can be a very real consideration for immigrants and I'm sure it has been in this space. However, in this context it feels like the extension of the wall into the aquatic realm is a visual assertion of power, a statement of dominance and authority— ownership of the sea—rather then a mechanism to inhibit bodies from crossing.

We have to walk up from the beach to get to Friendship Park where the Fandango is held. As we walk up the hill, I begin to hear a chorus of instruments strumming together. There is a powerful sense of rhythm to the sound. I can't see anyone yet but what I hear evokes an image of many bodies moving as one— hands striking chords, hips swaying and feet stomping in connection.

We climb the hill and reach "Friendship Circle & Bi-National Garden." The space has it's own fence that we must pass through to get to the wall. We walk through the Friendship Circle's fence and four DHS officers warmly greet us. "Welcome" they smile, "and enjoy." The sound I heard early becomes physicalized as we approach the playing and swaying bodies. They face the wall in a concentrated clump. I can't see it but I know that there is a similar clump across the wall in Mexico. Song and dance together— a body seemingly divided, resists the division through Son Jarocho— music from Veracruz, Mexico. The sounds of resistance, joy, sorrow and love cannot be stopped by this wall. Jeronimo and I stop short in amazement at the power of this initial image that we encounter.

We walk closer to the wall, first to the outer edges of the group. I'm taken out of my initial enamor by a sound that contrasts that of Son Jarocho— heavy crying. I look around me and see two women wiping their tear streaked eyes. Their eyes glance towards the wall and soon I see their gaze extends through it. They are speaking with people on the other side. Friendship Circle is a place where families who live on either side of the wall can meet to talk and see what they can of each other through the layered wall. It's hardly a "friendly" environment amidst all the wire and security. This wall has stripped away seeing and touching those that are loved, land that is loved. I see a moment of connection obstructed by materials of dehumanization— an

assault on the senses, on the body's capacity to feel close to that which is loved. I feel that I am witnessing an intimate moment and move away.

Jeronimo and I walk into the crowd. The sways and song envelop us, our bodies become absorbed into the collective one. I do not have an instrument and don't know any lyrics, so I move throughout the Fandango. I feel curious about what sounds arise depending on where I am. Sometimes, I hear the perfect blending of the whole and other times a particularly strong voice rises above the rest. There are also moments when one voice takes over for a verse. The degree of listening and presence strikes me— in such a large group of people there is seamless navigation of voices and instrumentation.

I am drawn to the movement of beings, particularly when the movement is not codified or intentional. Musicians are one of the most intriguing manifestations of this. At the Fandango, peoples' entire bodies play their instrument. Hips sway, feet stomp, heads bounce, heels tap. I crouch down to watch the movement and to listen to the sound close to the ground. Swish, swish, sway, stomp. From down here, I can feel the rhythms of bodies embellish their instruments' sound. Swish, swish, sway, stomp.

In crouching close to the ground I see the *tarima* for the first time— a wooden platform that is danced upon to create a percussive element in Son Jarocho. There is a *tarima* pushed up against either side of the wall so the dancers face each other. Again, the wall is quite obstructing but that does not stop the dancers from smiling, laughing and sometimes even speaking through it. The *tarima* is shared continuously. One person dances and when someone else wants to dance,

they gently tap their shoulder and take their place. Men and women dance, and sometimes two people at a time are on the *tarima.* The dancers' feet keep a consistent rhythm while their upper bodies are relaxed. The movement of their feet reverberate through their relaxed torsos.

They sporadically embellish the movement with turns around themselves or by gestures with their hands, but the feet are never disturbed. They continue to keep the rhythm.

The Fandango has a multitude of people present. There are many people whom I speak with that are of Mexican descent and many that are not. Old and young are present and participants. We are united in our detest for this structure and what it promotes, attacks and symbolizes. But today does not necessarily feel like it's about the wall but rather an assertion of humanity. Through song and dance, the dehumanization of this wall and the ideas it perpetuates are resisted and dismantled. The sound and movement that travels through, around and over the wall seems to say we are here, we are alive, we are vibrant and we will continue to exist in all our beautiful

complexities and to resist a structure that tries to strip it away. There is a moment when a father holds his infant child and sings with them in his arms. So many smile at the site of this but I also feel saddened. What kind of world is this baby growing up in? I wonder how this space will change as they grow up. Today, at the Fandango, it feels like the baby might come back here when they have children of their own to land and a ocean with no stakes running through it.

I take a moment to walk outside of the group. Jeronimo walks up to me and exclaims, “Did you see the dolphins?!” There are packs of dolphins just beyond where the wall ends. They swim back and fourth between the “two sides.” How fitting, I think. “They’re joining the Fandango!” someone next to me jokes.

Jeronimo and I return to the wall outside of the group. We try to peer through to Mexico. A woman in Mexico is glancing through the wired layers the same as we are. “Hola!” An

exchange transpires. “No puedo ver, pero puedo sentir,” (I can’t see, but I can feel)” she tells us before walking away.

As the Fandango begins to draw to a close (Friendship Circle is only open Saturday & Sunday 10:00 am- 2:00 pm) there is a surge of energy as voices sing a bit louder and the instruments are played with a bit more urgency. So far there has been only one break in the music for a brief rest but now there is a deliberate moment of pause. It challenging to hear what is being said— someone speaks in Mexico to all of us at the Fandango in Spanish. From what I can hear, his words are filled with thanks. The Fandango ends with everyone present— on both sides— counting down from 43 to remember the 43 college students who disappeared in Guerrero, Mexico.

People begin to pack up and leave the fenced in area near the wall. The sky has cleared and the sunshine brings a little more clarity to the space. As Friendship Circle closes and is locked, I look through the fence and see a very different space then what I walked into a few hours earlier. The Fandango still resonates through the space. The Fandango has disrupted and re-imagined the border space. I feel this sort of intervention lives and continues to exist even when it ends— the space is changed. It leaves a trail of questions behind. What will this space look like in a year? How will the voices that connected today continue to speak, sing, be seen and be heard? Will there be a Fandango soon where people can fully see each other, hold each other, smell each other— where more then sound can move freely? When will something change?

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The U.S.-Mexico border wall exists to stop and regulate moving bodies. Here, movement is highly policed. Here, movement is criminalized. Here, movement is manipulated to assert control and power. The wall and its accompanying agents (Department of Homeland Security, security cameras etc.) choreograph the movement of bodies on the border. This choreography changes drastically with the location that one encounters the border. There are stretches of the border that are not surveilled and others without the presence of a wall. The portions of the border that do have a wall vary significantly. The wall can be physicalized as a several foot high iron structure or short fence that can easily be crossed.

My discussion addresses the spaces that are highly surveilled and have prominent walls— such as points of entry or border cities. In these portions of the border, bodies are expected to perform movement as choreographed by entities in power, if they are to be safe or deemed legal.

This includes movement into the United States only through designated points of entry, no movement close to the structure of the wall and the performance of a "good body" through docile and obedient physicality. The choreography of movement is essential to maintaining dynamics of power in this space and creating an image of national security. An understanding of this provides immense opportunity to use the physical body and movement as tools for resistance. This is what I witnessed at the 2016 Fandango Fronterizo— a challenge to imposed border choreography and the creation of a new, subversive choreography of reclamation.

There is ample scholarship on space, body and performance politics that specifically focuses on the dynamics of "public" space. In her article "Choreographies of Protest" Susan Foster examines the relationship between bodies and protest. Foster's centers her argument around the body as "an articulate signifying agent" and the belief that physical or corporeal interference in protest makes "a crucial difference" (396 and 395). She posits the body as having "a central role as enabling human beings to work together to create social betterment" (397). In his essay "Choreopolice and Choreopolitics or the task of the dancer," André Lepecki expands on Foster's discussion as he grapples with the notion of moving politically. He cites Hannah Arendt's statement— "... we have arrived in a situation where we do not know— at least not yet — how to move politically" and asserts that in our current "control society"— one with constant surveillance— this can also be written as "we do not know— at least not *yet*— how to move freely," (14). Lepecki hones in on the role of police in spaces of protest as "movement controller(s)" who "determine(s) the space of circulation for protesters, and ensures that "everyone is in their permissible place" (16). Lepecki describes this choreography of control of space and people by police as "choreopolicing" (16). In conjugation with "choreopolicing" he

presents another key term "choreopolitics"— which is described "as the formation of collective plans emerging at the edges between open creativity, daring initiative, and persistent— even stubborn— iteration of the desire to live away from policed conformity" (23). Foster and Lepecki provide tools to discuss and analyze controlled and surveilled spaces and the potential for movement to challenge them.

The movement of bodies on the border is choreographed by the physical presence of the wall, border security and the sense of surveillance imbued in the border space. Amoore and Hall describe the effect of these multiple choreographers— "At the border, where bodies come under the watchful scrutiny of an assemblage of guards, cameras and security experts that aim to modulate, police and filter mobilities, there appears little possibility for the emergence of the surprising or unanticipated" (Amoore and Hall 302). The choreography of movement on the border is a crucial tool for maintaining predictability or order. It is understood by those structures and people in power that maintaining the role of hegemonic choreographer is essential. "The border, then, is a political stage for the performance of control..." (Amoore and Hall 303).

How can knowledge of the relationship between movement and power be used for resistance? At the Fandango Fronterizo, this is demonstrated in a myriad of ways. Pulsations, sways and tapping feet embody the Son Jarocho music that weaves through the border wall— back and fourth between the U.S. and Mexico. The bodies in motion physicalize the freedom and jubilation of the sones. This is not a choreography of policed or controlled movement, but rather movement of humanity and celebration. This is radical, to move this way in a space that commands quiet and controlled bodies. This embodied resistance is heightened when those on both sides move close to the wall. At times, they are even pressed against it or touching it. This

close proximity challenges the spacial expectations of the border choreography that is typically enforced. Movement near the wall is criminalized in most spaces along the border. These bodies engage so intimately with a forbidden structure that they disempower its presence. This a major departure from the enforced border choreography.

The movement at the Fandango Fronterizo completely subverts the expectations of the border space— what I am calling a choreography of reclamation. I use the term "choreography of reclamation" to articulate a process of claiming identity, space and rights through a reordering of space and movement. This choreography rejects expectations of how bodies (specifically Chican@, Mexican and Latin@ bodies) should behave and exist in highly policed spaces but also in all other spaces. At the Fandango, bodies claim their right to a choreography that is their own. One that is not imposed by hegemonic choreographers. This embodied (re)clamation reflects the voice and agency of the Son Jarocho music.

At the Fandango Fronterizo there is also an intangible power of the choreography. As the people of the fandango slip into their corporality, into their moving bodies, the kinesthetic is activated. Bodies sense their own movement, the movement of other bodies and the movement of the space. Connection is heightened through the activation of the sensory. Movement becomes a tool for transcending physical barriers— like the border wall. As the woman in Mexico says through the barrier, "No puedo ver, pero puedo sentir," (I can't see, but I can feel)". The choreography of the fandango exemplifies movement's capacity to connect one to their deepest humanity and empathy, even in the presence of a physical barrier.

While the Fandango Fronterizo challenges the choreography of the border space, it does so under controlled circumstances. The event takes place within the hours that Friendship Park is

open and guards from the Department of Homeland Security are present for its duration. In her article "Hands Up! Don't Shoot!": Gesture, Choreography, and Protest in Ferguson" Anusha Kedhar paraphrases Andre Lepecki's notion of *choreopolitics* and *choreopolicing*— "He defines choreopolitics as the choreography of protest or even simply the freedom to move freely, which he claims is the ultimate expression of the political. He defines choreopolicing as the way in which "the police determines the space of circulation for protesters and ensures that everyone is in their permissible place" (Kedhar 3). I argue that the Fandango engages in choreopolitics, but also note the presence of choreopolicing. The DHS officers remain ready to address any threat. They allow choreography that challenges the space to exist so long as "everyone is in their permissible place".

Does the Fandango Fronterizo lose its power in the presence of choreopolicing? This has to do with the consideration of whether or not the Fandango Fronterizo is a protest. In his essay "Creative Renewal of the Son Jarocho Fandango in Los Angeles," Alexander Hernandez describes the fandango as an event that is "...a re-appropriation and re-activation of gathering in order to build a sense of community and belonging" (2). He goes on to say that the fandango becomes political when it engages with the public sphere, "where there is a demand to be recognized in the public space" (Hernandez 3 and 8). Hernandez highlights the political nature of space— Who gets to take up space? Who is seen? Whose presence is valued? Who gets to determine this? "The Chicano identity is one that exists "teetering" between two or multiple worlds and goes through the physical or psychological experience of belonging, rejection, dialogue, or ambivalence in U.S.-México relations. This experience is mediated through cultural practice and the Chicano-Jarocho fandango is a format for a renewal of identity" (Hernandez 3).

Using Hernandez's analysis we can understand the Fandango Fronterizo as an gathering to claim identity and community. The Fandango Fronterizo is political— which Hernandez emphasizes is not inherent to the fandango but rather specific to context (in this case location in the U.S. and on the border)— but I would argue it is not first and foremost a protest.

Hernandez's discussion of fandangos as well as my own experience at the Fandango Fronterizo suggest that although choreopolicing is present at the event, it is deemed irrelevant and powerless. The event is not concerned with the relationship between the DHS and people at the Fandango, but rather the relationship of people to people on both sides of the border. The Fandango is held to assert that community can and will be gathered regardless of a wall. At the Fandango Fronterizo identity is claimed—in its fullness, with regard for the united and the fractured. While the DHS officers were perhaps choreopolicing, the connection and identity-claiming that occurred at the Fandango transcended its power. The Fandango Fronterizo changes the border space and the people who are part of it. It honors movement as a connector and the capacity of the kinesthetic. It might not directly impact the passage of a bill or halt the construction of more of wall structures. However, a radical and reclamatory act takes place with the re-choreography of movement, the claiming of identity and the gathering of community on the border.

Chapter 2

San Francisco, CA May 21, 2016

The Mission District

Today, I visited a the Mission District in San Francisco for a tour of the famous murals. The tour was given through Precita Eyes (a non-profit) by a community member who has lived in the Mission for several decades and is also a muralist. Precita Eyes works with the community to continually improve the neighborhood from the inside out and to make art accessible and present in the daily lives of the community.

The Mission murals have a deeply rooted history in this place. They began as a community movement with the explosion of Chicano voices in the U.S. during the 60s and 70s— "This movement was not backed by church or government but by people in the community seeking alternative information as a tool to develop awareness and rally people to action— the grassroots against the status quo" (Jacoby 22). The centrality of community remains essential to the murals today. Our tour guide explained that the murals are often painted in a participatory manner. She likened the act of painting a mural to a festival or celebration.

As we walk around the Mission, I feel swept up by the space. Sounds of honking cars, bodies navigating the sidewalk and the annual Porchfest (a community music event) infiltrate my ears. There is vibrancy and movement in the murals that engulf us as we explore the alleys.

> "Passions that raise people's consciousness give the murals energy and rhythm. This Mission tradition of painting murals is done with respect and reverence for a native past. The art splashes along the streets like the ever-changing cadence of sunlight and rain on sidewalks. As a community of music makers and street painters, we invite your eyes to start dancing. The rest of you will follow" (Jacoby 23).

It's intriguing to consider why movement feels so present in the seemingly stationary murals. As Carlos Santana reflects in *San Francisco Street Art: Mission Muralismo,* there certainly is an element of embodiment— of the thoughts, voices and lives of the community— that the murals contain. Each brush stroke tells a story or intention from the heart and the hand. The multitude of lives that meet here to share their stories through paint create a space of healing, conversation and intersection— always moving and dynamic. Santana further echoes the embodiment of the murals when he writes, "The murals are the heart, eyes, hands, voices, and spirit of immigrants, workers, children, teachers, and activists, as well as artists" (23). The ancestors of the Mission, those who call this community home for decades and the evolving voices of the current moment all preside in the alleys, splashed across the wall.

It is clear that the murals are far more than paint and walls. So when the space is threatened by commodification, capitalism, coffee shops and tech yuppies, it's an attack on the flesh and bones of a community. The mural tour was an unexpectedly intense experience. I was not cognizant of just how much tension exists in the Mission. At one point in the tour, a woman walked by us (a group of white tourists) and screamed, "The gentrification never ends, it never ends!!" I was shocked into an acute awareness of my body in this place. It translates to a great deal of guilt and discomfort. How is my body read here? Am I everything that my body is read as? Who gets to read whom? Who gets to decide what bodies are "good" and "bad"? Gentrification is a very real, exponentially growing, concern for the Mission community. I ask my tour guide if she sees any hope or if families will continue to be displaced. She tells me that she believes in the power and resilience of the Mission community to resist. She also notes that it's not that the community is against people moving to their neighborhood. They are against

people moving to the Mission and making no effort to join or contribute to the community. They are against people buying homes that lay vacant for Airbnb most days. People need to show up for the space they are making their home.

This subject of gentrification is the focus of a particularly poignant mural. It is mounted on a double garage door. The divided structure of the garage serves to create a vision of two worlds or realities. On the left, we see an image of a Mission street scene with Spanish words splashed across store fronts, a banner with the colors of the Mexican flag and predominantly brown bodies. In the foreground, there are two police officers interacting with two men— one is being arrested and one looks as though he is being questioned. The one who is arrested has his pockets turned inside out and his face is invisible under his fitted hat. The body language of the two men reads as ashamed and obedient in contrast to the dominating stature of the police. Above this street scene we see two women reminiscent of the iconic skull imagery of Dia de los Muertos. Across from them sits a skeleton man whose head morphs into a charging chord. He sits typing on his laptop computer as dollar bills swirl around his fingertips. On the right garage door, we see an image of white bodies splattered throughout the neighborhood. There is a long line in front of a coffee shop, a moving truck being emptied and many cyclists. Again, a police officer is in the forefront of the image. This time he stands holding a coffee drink with a woman who holds a "Wealth Foods" bag and an identical drink. They seem to have an amiable relationship. Next to them is a man who sleeps on a piece of cardboard curled into himself— no one seems to pay him any mind. It is interesting that the police are focal images to this mural. I am in the Mission the day that the SFPD police chief is asked to stepped down by the Mayor. Jessica Williams, a young African-American woman, has recently been fatally shot. This mural

explores the relationship of different bodies to the police and provokes a connection between the gentrification of the Mission and law enforcement/authority.

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The Mission District in San Francisco has not always been an incredibly elite and wealthy neighborhood. The gentrification of the Mission District coincided with the dotcom boom in the 90s which displaced, and continues to displace, thousands of working-class residents who are predominately Latina/os. “By the late 1990s and early 2000 more than 1,000 Latina/o families had been displaced” (Mirabel 13). The white, wealthy populations who are moving to the Mission District are drastically changing the neighborhood. This process can also be described as “Silicon Valley’s colonization of San Francisco” (Mirabel 27). This colonization of the Mission District brings up important questions around what Casique refers to as “spacial justice” and “geographies of justice”— concepts that address the socio-political dimensions of space— who has access and the right to it (2). When discussing the Mission District is crucial to

remember that space is not solely encompassed by the physical, but also the intangible. What is lost for those who are uprooted from their personal histories and communal memory?

The murals in the Mission District are one aspect of the neighborhood that holds deep meaning for the Latino/a communities that reside here. Today, their striking and vibrant presence gives the neighborhood a hip and artistic appeal for new residents. However, these murals have deep history and meaning. The initiation of the Mission Murals was fueled by the Chicano Movement in the 1970s. This influence is reflected in many of the mural's content which have themes of identity politics, human rights and justice. The murals possess a sense of storytelling. As Casique cites from the book *Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism,* "Painted along the garages and fences of the narrow alleyway, the artwork suggests that in moving through the spaces of the neighborhood, residents of the Mission District move through narratives of history and struggle particular to the Latina/o population" (86).

With each stroke of the brush, the muralists claimed the streets of the Mission as theirs, as their community's. "The artists who paint new life onto drab surfaces do more than choose a surface to mark. Muralismo is a political/community aesthetic that changes the way everything looks and everyone sees" (Jacoby 29). I would like to add that the murals also change the way Latino/a bodies move through the Mission— the muralists engage in a choreography of reclamation. Here, reclamation means the right to define ones own identity and narrative, and to make visible. Here, reclamation means empowerment of Latino/a bodies within this particular space. When muralists paint the walls of the Mission they create mirrors for the community to see themselves in. The murals demand visibility for the Latino/as in a country that invisibilizes

communities of color and their narratives all to often. As the muralists choreograph the space with their paint, they claim Latino/a's right to exist in their fullness.

The Mission is a space of contestation today. The presence of the tech industry and the influx of white, upper class, elite populations who are moving in to the Mission impose a new choreography on to the space. This choreography is one of displacement. What happens when this choreography of reclamation enacted by the murals encounters capitalism and commodification? Mirabel discusses the whitewashing of murals, and cites one example that was particularly painful for the Mission community;

> The whitewashing of one mural in particular symbolized for many Latina/os what was seen as the whitewashing of Latina/o culture in the Mission District. On July 25, 1998, one of the more famous and beloved murals, the "Lilli Ann," by Jesus "Chuy" Campusano, was whitewashed after the building it adorned was sold to the Robert J. Cort Family Trust, a major investor in San Francisco real estate. In 1986 Campusano was commissioned by the city of San Francisco to design and paint the mural. It was soon recognized as a national landmark. Its whitewashing, the Cort Family Trust reasoned, was to provide adverting space for the new tenants' dot-com company logo. (24)

Whitewashing takes on multiple meanings here. There is the actual process of painting over the image, and the process of white hegemony infiltrating the space. Both meanings exist simultaneously as they are inextricably intersecting and intertwined. In this act, a re-choreography takes place where the visibility and agency of Latino/a's narratives and bodies are forcibly removed. This erasure happens in more subtle ways as well. The influx of new businesses and stores completely re-choreographs the neighborhood. As the this re-choreography is enacted it shifts who is seen to "belong" here. As the space the muralists and other entities

choreographed and (re)claimed begins to be erased, the movement of Latin@ bodies through the Mission become invisible, questioned and criminalized.

While the Mission is rapidly changing and continues to see more and more people evicted from their community, resistance remains. People continue to paint, and some of the newest murals directly reflect the current moment. There is momentum to destabilize the re-choreography imposed by the colonizers of the Mission. However, the blatant disparity in economic resources and social capital makes it challenging for the Latino/a community to engage in a choreography of re-reclamation. “A struggle between the incomers and local residents ensued and, as Edward Said reminds us, the struggle over geography is, inherently, a struggle over relationships of power” (Casique 111). It is uncertain what the Mission will look like in a few months, a few years, after a decade. As Mirabel concludes, “There are no redevelopment placards, at least not yet, in the Mission District. There are no memorials to a bygone time or concrete statues that speak of a past history and people, who *once* lived here. But there is a seething presence, a *haunting* if you will, that travels and moves through space, resting in the cracks of the sidewalks and waiting for what comes next” (25). The Mission District has traces of a reclamatory choreography that still exists but a choreography of coffee shops, single-white folks and wealth is rapidly re-choreographing the space with gusto. In the Mission, we saw and continue to see a choreography of reclamation take place as muralists engage in a process of reordering, challenging and shifting space and the entities within it (both physically and emotionally).

Chapter 3

Barrio Logan, CA May 29, 2016

Chicano Park

I arrive in barrio Logan—a neighborhood in south central San Diego— and stroll down Logan Ave. Within moments of arriving, I encounter a huge mural painted of Frida Kahlo on a car garage. It looks as though it was painted quite recently. I continue down Logan Ave and stop in to ¡Salud! for a late lunch. The clientele match the descriptions of the restaurant I saw earlier online— "hip" and "casual". It's a busy afternoon at the restaurant. I wait in line and notice the hum of exchanges in Spanish and English. Some customers order in Spanish and others in English. Almost every time the order is repeated to the kitchen in Spanish.

After my lunch I continue down Logan Ave. There are buildings that appear to have been here for decades snuggled next to freshly constructed ones. One of the new buildings houses a cafe and galería—"Por Vida". They advertise as "fair trade and organic coffee with a Mexican twist." I get an iced horchata coffee and peruse the beautiful crafts for sale which I learn are made in the barrio and Mexico. "Por Vida" encapsulates the sense of hybridity barrio Logan seems to have— historical and cultural roots encounter a new hip sensibility. As I continue down Logan Ave to Chicano Park, I feel that there is a strong sense of community here. People congregate outside shops and art galleries, chatting and laughing with each other. There is an active and present energy about these people and the way the inhabit the street evokes a sense of pride for the barrio.

Logan Ave soon approaches the highway overpass (San Diego-Coronado Bridge) where Chicano Park resides beneath. I see the first mural of Chicano Park which lines the wall of the ramp that leads to the bridge. I gaze at its grandeur from across the street. There are a multitude

of stories from different pieces of the Chicano history and experience— Las Boinas Cafes (The Brown Berets), La Virgen de Guadalupe, the United Farm Workers Flag and Aztec imagery. At the top of the mural there is a line of portraits honoring various luminaries of the Chicano movement. I cross the street, back and forth, to look at the mural up close and then to take it in for its fullness. I find both perspectives equally moving. When I am across the street, the immensity of the mural and the way that all the images connect and relate to each other strike me. The figures and images in the mural look as though they have a relationship to each other — as if to say our past and present connect, our history is alive and dynamic and a vital part of today. When I move very close to the mural, the small strokes and impeccable detail evokes, a sense of humanness, a reminder that within this mural lives the stories and experiences of the hands who created it.

I continue walking and am soon taken directly under the bridge. Underneath the bridge, the sounds of cars rushing and slicing through the air turns into a deep, low, hum of tires meeting the pavement. I can hear just where the potholes or bumps in the road overhead are by the rhythmical thump, thump, thump, and pops that get louder or more distant depending where under the bridge I stand. I am directed forward by a paved pathway lined by painted pillars (that hold up the bridge) on either side. My glance bounces from right to left, left to right, and back again in order to absorb all of my surroundings. Vibrant murals stretch on as far as I can see. The pillars have been claimed as canvases. I notice that the main paved path I am walking on extends out to each pillar I encounter, as if to invite the visitor for a moment of divergence to consider and connect to each mural. A family walks behind me and engages in several exchanges in Spanish. They soon pass me and continue to stroll down the path without paying particular attention to the murals. I get the feeling that they've spent some time here before. After walking forward a bit more, I see a playground to my left. There are several children squealing with glee as they sprint from monkey bars to slides and back again. Grass fills in the space between the paved path and playground with picnic tables scattered throughout painted like Mexican flags. Today is fairly overcast, but I can imagine this stretch of the Park filled with people on a beautiful weekend afternoon.

Soon the paved path splits off into several directions— it mirrors the movement of the overpass. When the bridge overhead turns left so does the path. So when the bridge splits off in several directions so do the murals. One might consider the immense influence the bridge's architecture has on the design of Chicano Park to be disempowering for the barrio Logan

community. However, the muralists utilize the obstructive and dominating architecture of the pillars as an opportunity to demand visibility.

It is exciting to walk around the pillars and see what stories unfold. I see that muralists have thought about the structure of the architecture by the way that they orient figures and images in the murals. There is one image where a man looks as though he is lifting the bridge above his head. Some muralists use the shape of the pillar to create multiple worlds within the mural. For other muralists, it seems that the multi-dimensionality and shape of the pillar is what captivates them. As I walk around the pillar, the story unfolds and develops. The ways muralists have interacted with the architecture are intelligent and subversive. The artists claim the space under the overpass with their paint. They position and create images that are so specific to the architecture of the bridge that the existence of the overpass feels necessary for these works to exist. This is not to say that the muralists support the bridge's existence but rather to highlight the muralists mastery of the space. As I walk through and around the pillars, I can hear the calculations and deliberations of those who have created here— "The barrio is ours. How do we render the presence of this structure powerless? How do we subvert the meaning that the bridge imposes on us? How do we claim this space for our community"?

The content of the murals varies as does the style. Some look as though they have been painted several years ago and have not been maintained while others look freshly painted. However, I notice that there are prominent motifs in the murals— indigenous people and symbols, images of fertile land with crops (namely corn) growing, Mexican nationalism, the United Farm Workers symbol, womb and birth imagery and the three faced head. All elements relate to the Chicano experience. One mural strikes me in particular because I see "Fuck Trump" has been written on the cuff of one of the figure's pants. This mural shows a family— father, mother and son standing in a line one in front of the other. The father stands in a stance the emanates strength and protection. His arms which imitate the eagle of the UFW symbol that looms behind him, are extended as if he is taking in the land. His gaze is outward. Standing directly beneath him is a woman who stares out into the distance the opposite direction with her arms wrapped around a child. The young boy looks directly at the viewer with an expression of innocence and a bit of fear. He holds two books in his hands and the one whose title we can see reads "Leyes" (Laws). In the background stretches a desert and a mountain range. In front of the boy stands a tree that looks burnt and lifeless. However, when I look closer, I notice that the tree has small green buds sprouting from its trunk. Although it may very well be a coincidence, the boy's shirt and the buds are the same color. Within this image I see a message of resilience and hope in the power of lineage, the possibility of youth and the emergence of new leaders.

As I continue to walk into the park, I see many more stories unfold through these murals with strong imagery. I see a people's history. I see the memorialization of momentous figures. I see the representation of brown bodies on their own terms. I see a proud declaration of indigenous roots and mestizo identity. I see a park that is alive, dynamic and evolving like the people who created and continue to care for it. When my eyes drift away from the murals, I see scenes of community. Children scream on the playground, a large meeting takes place under a covered platform, the wheels of skateboards screech on the concrete. Surrounded by incredible art and an important historical project, people enjoy their afternoon. I find this quite beautiful—that people live alongside these murals. They eat, discuss, play, rest surrounded by them. In the murals' accessibility there is great power. Art of the people, for the people, where the people are.

I retrace my steps down Logan Ave at the end of the day. I run into a group of local residents who are in the process of opening "The Chrch" a community arts hub. I speak to them about living in Logan, how it's changing and the relationship between art and gentrification. As I leave the barrio, I feel nervous about how it will change in the next year. My recent experience in the Mission resonates. I wonder if like the Mission, barrio Logan will become inaccessible for the people whose histories, stories and lives exist here. I think about how powerful public art is and the ways that it transforms space. However, a certain vulnerability also exists due to this characteristic. Space can be colonized, taken away and manipulated. However, a man I speak with echoes the sentiment of my tour guide in the Mission— our community is strong, we believe in its resilience and we will protect it.

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Chicano Park in barrio Logan is a place that embodies the relationship between the Chicano movement and art— one that is incredibly intertwined and vibrant. In his book *Chicana and Chicano Art: ProtestArte* Carlos Francisco Jackson describes the intimacy of this relationship, he writes, "Chicano Park remains an example of the marriage between Chicano activism and art making" (80). In 1969, the Coronado Bridge was built over barrio Logan, in order to connect San Diego and Coronado. This bridge's construction was an act of colonization — a hegemonic group asserted their power over space, community and culture. This is one of the many examples of how infrastructure has been used as a tool for colonization throughout history. The building of this bridge was not simply an apolitical architectural choice, but rather an action to invisibilize and silence the barrio Logan community. As Tareq Amer writes, "What narratives

are to be told when establishing the image of a place, is immediately attached to what Lefebvre referred to as the right to the city. The narrative of a place, that is the image that a place chooses to broadcast to the wider world, implies, as well, an exclusion of narratives and people" (1). Amer's discussion of the connection between narrative and place is important because so often those who are not included in the process of public place-making are unheard, misrepresented or erased in several arenas.

The community of barrio Logan's response to the colonial act of building the bridge was one of resistance and subversion through art. Jackson writes, "On April 22, 1970, community activists, students, and families from barrio Logan occupied the Coronado Bridge underpass for twelve days, demanding that the City of San Diego immediately begin construction of a community park in the location" (78). The city proved unresponsive to the community's request and eventually through negotiations with the City of San Diego, barrio Logan took matters into their own hands. Thus, Chicano Park came to fruition. The direct action from the barrio Logan community is significant because through these actions they claimed their right to be space-makers and place-shapers;

> Place, as conceptualized, concretized, and reconstituted, is inherently political. Place-making, moreover, is an act of defining, and defining is, in turn, an act of power. Who creates the meaning of a place, in other words, who turns the space through which our lives move into a thing attached to history and purpose, how far that meaning is broadcast, and how that meaning reconstitutes or reinforces power relations are questions of ability (Amer 2).

This attention to self-definition resonates strongly as an important element of Chicano Park. From the murals which display a multitude of images to create an visual history of Chicanos to the incorporation of structures for community gathering, the people of barrio Logan created as a

space that honors their history and supports the community's right to be meaning makers and self-defining in the present and future.

Community members began to create murals and as Jackson puts it created a "liberated territory". I posit that we can also claim Chicano Park as a site of decolonization. Here, the community reclaims the space and rejects the hegemonic narrative imposed upon the barrio. The Park screams, "This is our land and our community— we will not disappear, we will not be moved." One of the most interesting facets of the Park are the murals painted on the literal structure of the bridge. By painting the pillars, the community renders the imposed bridge powerless and simultaneously empowers and (re)presents the space for the community.
In reference to Chicano Park Amer writes, "I would assert that the intent to reclaim residual space by communities of color is an act of resistance, and the design process that subsequently transforms and personalizes the landscape carries a significant political message" (4). The use of the word "personalizes" is an important word to consider in this discussion. While Chicano Park is undoubtably a site of great political significance, it is also people's home and a capsule of personal history. As stated by the Chicano Park Steering Committee, "[Our] goal is to transform the cold grey concrete and rock-hard dirt that once dominated the site into a glorious thing of beauty that would mirror and showcase the beauty, culture, and spirit of the Chicano people" (8). This mirroring of peoples who are often not/mis/under-represented is just as important as a personal right as a political statement. The Park should not be understood as a purely political project as it has very specific personal meaning for members of the barrio Logan community.

Chicano Park emblematizes a choreography of reclamation. Here, the barrio Logan community re-choreographed a space and its meaning that was imposed on them. In this

choreography of reclamation they created a site of empowerment for Chicanos in the barrio and throughout the country. Through the reclamation of space and the employment of particular images, barrio Logan reclaims its history, its roots, and also claims its future. The art/artists of Chicano Park flip the commentary that the bridge imposes (a narrative of inferiority, invisibility etc.) and puts forth the community's own commentary on identity and representation. The murals are accessible to all and live with the people who spend their days in the Park. They shift the way Chicano bodies move through the space. The Park's stories are for the people and of the people — of their past and continued existence. Chicano Park demonstrates that cultural production through art does not need to happen in sanctioned or designated places. It demonstrates that cultural production is not the activity of a certain group but rather for all. In Chicano Park a choreography of reclamation takes place as muralists and community members engage in a process of reordering, challenging and shifting space and the entities within it both physically and emotionally.

Epilogue

The West Bank November 23, 2015

Bethlehem

My friend Alta and I shuffle around the bus station in Jerusalem across from Damascus Gate in the Old City. We finally find the bus that travels to Bethlehem and board. I smile at the bus driver as I hand him my shekels in exchange for the bus ticket. I'm wary not to use the few Hebrew words I know. I've been told by my friend who has spent a substantial amount of time in the Occupied Territories that it is wise to disassociate with being a student studying in Israel. We board the bus and I feel very aware and a bit uncomfortable of my visible presence— as a foreigner, a white "westernized" woman and a transient body in this region of the world. We sit down and drive towards Bethlehem. The bus takes us to a checkpoint. We follow everyone's lead and get off the bus. The checkpoint is maze like. We continue to follow the people who walk in front of us and are suddenly released outside. We have arrived in Bethlehem. Immediately a slew of taxi drivers approach us to ask if we'd like a ride. We are determined not to overpay but we also have no idea what to expect. Finally, we settle on a taxi driver who seems to offer a good price to take us to the Church of Nativity. Once we're in the cab, he asks us if we'd like to go for a tour of the wall with him. He pulls out laminated pictures of Banksy's artwork on the wall and exclaims "Don't you want to see this!?" We thank him and decline. He continues to pry and to make a case for his tour of the wall. The wall has become a economic opportunity. The tourists' gaze provides ample opportunity for profit.

Eventually, we make it to the Church of Nativity and later we eat at Hosh Jasmin, an organic farm and restaurant in the countryside. The owners at Hosh Jasmin call a taxi to take us to the wall— we will visit it on our own. We possess a strong desire to see and bare witness to

the wall. The taxi driver brings us to a little business center close to the wall and points us in the direction of where to go. As we walk, we stop in a small shop. The shop has postcards, bags and other small items with images printed from the wall— this is another example of the commodification of this space. It's complicated to consider that in this context it is the Palestinians who are selling these images. I wonder if I should think about this as an act of empowerment and resistance or a perpetuation of Israel's dominance.

We leave the shop and walk along the wall itself. It is a desolate environment with very little human activity and distant sounds. The wall has been rendered a concrete canvas. There are are detailed, precise, and very technical murals as well as portions that are layered with words and images that feel like many people screaming at once. A choreography of reclamation unfolds as the artists paint their own meaning on the wall. A call for decolonization— stroke by stroke.

As we continue to walk we come into close quarters of the Aida Refugee Camp. As we walk, we hear a few noises that sound like gun shots. The noise isn't discernible enough to be certain, just in case, we start walking back to the town center. As we walk, the noise gets louder and more frequent. We look up to see Israeli soldiers with guns in hand. A family watches from their front porch and looks at us, "They are shooting rubber bullets at kids. It isn't safe to be here," a man warns. A car comes screeching around the corner and the driver wipes his eyes as he wails in pain. Alta and I quickly leave— shaken and disturbed.

We find the bus to return to Jerusalem. As we travel back we stop at a checkpoint that requires much more extensive security then entering Bethlehem. I watch as people start to get off the bus, I follow them to do the same. A woman stops me, "No you stay on the bus." I am confused, but do as I am told. Every Palestinian must get off the bus and walk across the

checkpoint. I, with my U.S. Passport, am driven through the checkpoint. I am hyper-aware that my body means something very particular in the choreography of this space. The Palestinians must display their documents for scrutiny before re-entering the bus. I only receive the slightest glance from the IDF soldier.

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Around the world we see hegemonic forces police, regulate and define spaces. We see them create meaning for cultures and people who exist in them through this choreography. Whether it be The Department of Homeland Security, elite gentrifiers, the City of San Diego, or the Israeli Army, these choreographies construct relationships of power, subscribe codes for moving and belonging in space and compartmentalize bodies and identity. It is crucial to recognize the interconnectedness of these choreographies throughout the world. In this paper, I focus on resistance to these choreographies and the re-choreography— what I term the choreography of reclamation— of space and all that it holds in the Southwestern United States. In the choreography of reclamation, we see people reject hegemonic forces and witness a claiming of space, identity, narrative and rights.

In the three primary sites where I focus my attention— the U.S.-Mexico Border, the Mission District and Chicano Park— we see art as the vehicle through which the choreography of reclamation occurs. On the U.S.-Mexico border, I witnessed people choreograph through the defiance of expectations for bodies in a highly militarized space through dance and song. In the Mission District, I witnessed people articulate and make visible the Chicano identity in past and present through painting— a choreography that continues to resonate strongly but meets a new elitist choreography with the influx of millionaires in San Francisco. In Chicano Park, I

witnessed the Barrio Logan community consume the construction of The Coronado Bridge, rendering the choreography of colonization powerless and the stories of the Barrio vibrant and alive. The choreography of reclamation is global. Through movement, murals and music we see people use the transformative power of art to choreograph, claim, activate, shift and (re)present space, bodies and identities for themselves and their communities. We see art as resistance. We hear art bring stories of the borderlands to life. We feel art honor history and tell of the now. We experience a powerful choreography of reclamation.

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