



Noyes
Museum of Art
STOCKTON UNIVERSITY

Education Guide

September 17, 2020 - January 8, 2021

***If Walls
Could Speak***
Ada Trillo



Ada Trillo, *Leeway William Gonzalez*, photograph

Born in El Paso, Texas, Ada Trillo was raised in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. As a teenager traveling back and forth between the two cities while attending school, she witnessed life on the border. This had a strong influence on her world view and art practice.

As a photographer, for the past four years Trillo has been documenting the journeys of asylum seekers from Central America to the Mexico and United States border. This exhibition is a chronicle of the lives of some of these people.

Through scenes and portraits, "If Walls Could Speak," shows the harsh realities of people who are fighting to provide a better future for themselves and their families. For this series, Trillo photographed inside of Casa del Migrante, a Catholic-run migrant shelter in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. The Casa provides food, shelter, and healthcare to many who are waiting to obtain refugee status. They accommodate approximately 400 asylum-seekers, most of whom were deported when the United States' "Remain in Mexico" policy took effect in January of 2019. They represent a small percentage of the thousands of people affected by the ruling. The appearance of calm inside the shelter stands in stark contrast with life for many migrants outside the shelter's gates; where kidnapping, human trafficking, and extortion are daily occurrences. Within the Casa,

asylum-seekers are stranded in limbo, waiting for their turn to ask, again, for refuge in the United States.

“If Walls Could Speak” series is Ada Trillo’s way of showing what hope, and the loss of hope, looks like for the asylum-seekers during this point in history. The stories on these walls are both heartbreaking and complex. They defy generalizations that seek to divide us. Through the lens of her camera, she wants to help inform those who have never met a refugee. Trillo hopes that her work will spark a conversation where there has been either confusion, or silence.

In addition to this series, Trillo has also documented the infamous La Bestia, a dangerous journey by freight train that migrants take to reach the border, with the threat of gangs who kidnap, rob, and rape the defenseless migrants onboard. In 2018, she documented La Caravana, the caravan of seven-thousand migrants as they took their first steps into Mexican territory. In January of 2020, she also traveled for eight days with a large migrant caravan fleeing from violence and poor economic conditions in Honduras. Most recently, she has photographed the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests in Philadelphia.



Ada Trillo, *Loss of Hope*, photograph

Ada Trillo now resides in Philadelphia. She holds degrees from the Istituto Marangoni in Milan and Drexel University in Philadelphia. She is the recipient of a Leeway Foundation Art and Change Grant, The Center for Emerging Visual Artists Fellowship, and Fleisher Art Memorial Visual Artist-in-Residence. She has also been awarded First Place in Editorial Photos with the Tokyo International Foto Awards, The Me&Eve Grant with the Center of Photographic Arts in Santa Fe, and First Prize of Focus Photo LA. Trillo has exhibited internationally in Luxembourg, England, and Italy, and her work is included in the permanent collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

For more information about Ada Trillo, visit: <http://adatrillo.com/>

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