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Family, Diaspora, and the Politics of Care in Griselda San Martín's The Wall , 2015-16

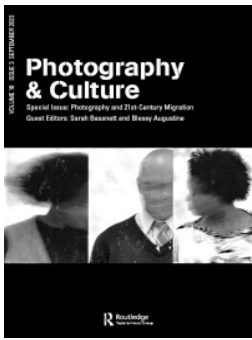
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Family, Diaspora, and the Politics of Care in Griselda San Martín's *The Wall*, 2015-16

Sarah Bassnett 

Abstract

This article examines a series of photographs by Griselda San Martín, a Spanish journalist and documentary photographer based in New York City and Mexico City. The series focuses on the experiences of people at Friendship Park, a bi-national park located in the border region of San Diego, United States, and Tijuana, Mexico. Working in Tijuana, San Martín engaged with families as they attempted to connect with loved ones across the border in San Diego. Many of the people she met at Friendship Park had become separated from family members after living as undocumented migrants in the US and then being deported. This article looks at how San Martín's approach to the representation of migration differs from mainstream news coverage, which often represent Mexicans in clichéd terms, either as threatening or as victims. I draw on political theorist Deva Woodly's work to consider San Martín's approach as grounded in a politics of care. I show that in San Martín's work, care is a means of reconfiguring image making as an ethical practice in which the ambivalence and challenges of diasporic experience and family separation are recognized, and I explore her series as an important recasting of the photography of Mexican migration.

Keywords: photography, migration, diaspora, family, Griselda San Martín, Mexico

In an image by photographer Griselda San Martín, a Mexican man named José Marquez is seen posing for two photographs, one with his family members in San Diego, United States (US), and the other seen here, taken in Tijuana, Mexico (Figure 1). In the photo, which we don't see, of his family on the other side of the border wall, he would only be visible between the gaps of the metal bars, but to viewers of San Martín's photograph, he is standing with his back turned in front of the bars. He wears formal clothes, suit jacket in hand. The thick rods of the fence are painted to blend in



Figure 1. Griselda San Martín, *The Wall*, 2015–16. José Marquez poses for a photograph that a visitor is taking of his family on the other side of the border wall. Marquez has not been able to hug his daughter Susana in 14 years, since he was deported from the United States after living and working in San Diego for 18 years. Photograph © Griselda San Martín.

with the scenery: green shrubbery at the base and blue sky at the top, alongside stars and stripes that reference the American flag. The photograph's vivid colors and unified composition are visually appealing, but the wall itself symbolizes division, making the decorative painting of the flag an indictment that implicates the US in separating Marquez from his family. The caption suggests a narrative of hardship and longing: it tells us Marquez was deported from the United States after living and working in San Diego for eighteen years, and it has been fourteen years since he has hugged his daughter Susana.

This photograph is from San Martín's series, *The Wall*, 2015–16, which focuses on the experiences of people at Friendship Park, a bi-national park located in the border region of San Diego and Tijuana. Working in Tijuana, San Martín engaged with Mexicans visiting the wall on weekend afternoons to connect with loved ones across the border in San Diego. San Martín is a Spanish journalist and documentary photographer now based in New York City and Mexico City. Over the past decade, her work on migration and human rights has been published by media outlets such as *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* and has been exhibited and screened worldwide.¹ Her approach is informed by her own experience as an immigrant,

first to Mexico and then to the United States, and her work challenges mainstream portrayals of migration by exploring the transnational family relationships and diasporic experiences of Mexicans.

By focusing on family and diasporic experience, San Martín's series introduces a perspective that is seldom encountered in mainstream news coverage of migration. While the term diaspora suggests dispersal and refers to the migration of people from a place of origin, diasporic experience relates to the impact of that migration on people who make their home in a new place as well as on those who stay behind. The subjects in San Martín's photographs define themselves through their familial relationships – they are separated from parents, siblings, children, and grandchildren – even as the series itself considers how forced separation shapes the identities and transnational attachments of these subjects. The work is informed by but disrupts conventions of family photography, a categorization that is often applied to snapshots and portrait photography. But instead of adopting the generic idea of family photography as a type of image, I take cultural geographer Gillian Rose's suggestion and consider family photography as a practice (Rose 2010, 18). The practice of making photographs together as a family creates moments of connection, and as Marianne Hirsch explains, it also operates as "an instrument of [a family's] togetherness" (Hirsch 1997, 7). As they pose for photographs on different sides of the border fence, the diasporic families in San Martín's *The Wall* negotiate separation and counteract stereotypes about migration.

This article looks at how San Martín's approach to the representation of migration differs from mainstream news coverage in fundamental ways, drawing on a political theory of care to offer a new way of thinking about documentary and photojournalism. Whereas news images are commodities and products of a complex infrastructure, San Martín's work plays a restorative role in building relationships and identities. As foundational scholarship in cultural

studies by Stuart Hall, bell hooks, and others has shown, the field of representation is a crucial site for diasporic identity formation (Hall 1994, 236; hooks 1995, 57). San Martín's approach offers an important alternative because news images often represent Mexicans in clichéd terms, either as threatening or as victims. The academic literature on photography and migration critiques the kind of clichéd and spectacular representations of migrants that San Martín works against (Chouliaraki 2006; De Genova 2015), and it also grapples with the ethics of witnessing, an important theme in late twentieth century photojournalism (Reinhardt et al. 2007; Bassnett 2021). In addition, critics and cultural theorists have analyzed the way contemporary artists have subverted conventional media portrayals of migration (Demos 2013; Mazzara 2019). But scholars have not considered the politics of care, a framework that is well suited to San Martín's work because she acknowledges the human relationships at the heart of stories of migration.

In order to show how San Martín's series highlights the agency and relationships of people affected by migration, I draw on Deva Woodly's work on the politics of care. Woodly explains that the politics of care is fundamental to the Movement for Black Lives, but its principles can be applied in other contexts as well (Woodly 2021, 82–89).² Care is concerned with creating the conditions for individual and collective well-being. It is grounded in an acknowledgement that oppression is both unjust and the cause of social trauma (84–88). Under oppressive conditions, care is about providing what is necessary for flourishing, rather than about sentiment or indulgence. It is a means of recognizing the harm caused by oppression and a way of creating the conditions for well-being through personal and political action (91–92). I turn to the politics of care for analyzing San Martín's work rather than the concept of resilience, which has been popular in recent discussions of various forms of oppression, because, as Sara Ahmed explains, in neoliberal parlance resilience operates as a technique of governance: when already marginalized people are expected to

demonstrate resilience, what is really required is that they “take more pressure” (Ahmed 2017, 189). In contrast to resilience, which expects more of those who experience oppression, the politics of care considers how relationships provide support. In San Martín's work, care is a means of reconfiguring image making as an ethical practice in which the ambivalence and challenges of diasporic experience and family separation are recognized. Care means showing how families separated by both structural and physical barriers sustain one another through their relationships.

News images of migration

San Martín's work on Mexican migration to the United States stands in contrast to news media representations on the topic. North American news outlets have reported on migrant caravans, the apprehension of migrants by border patrol, child separation, poor conditions in detention centers, and unjust court proceedings. News stories cover important issues such as border security, human rights, and policy, but they frequently use dramatic literary metaphors like waves and floods to describe migration, emphasizing scale and diverting attention away from the reasons people leave their homes. Reports often typecast migrants as desperate people living on the margins of society by referencing popular photographic motifs, such as a group of people on the move, which turns complex issues into predictable narratives (Bassnett 2018). I am not the first to argue that many images borrow from religious iconography or draw on stereotypes to portray displaced people as either passive or threatening, and as not fully human (Wright 2002; Chouliaraki and Stolic 2017). As art historian W.J.T. Mitchell explains, migration is “structurally and necessarily bound up with images,” because other people are perceived by way of images, and stereotypes precede practices of exclusion (Mitchell 2011, 59). Even as stereotypical images fail to address the complex circumstances of leaving one place for another, they also reach a wide readership and thereby influence public discussion of the issues.

Although mainstream news coverage of migration does the valuable work of informing its audience about current events, many stories simply emphasize the act of border crossing and the victimization of migrants. Take, for example, when thousands of Central Americans migrating through Mexico towards the United States in 2018 became a touchpoint for then President Donald Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric. The people on this journey were fleeing violence, abject poverty, the effects of climate change, extortion, and the threat of forced recruitment into international gangs. Travelling together in the company of others provided some protection from the usual dangers people face as undocumented migrants in Mexico. On their own they would be targeted both by criminal organizations, who are involved in kidnapping and human trafficking, and by Mexican officials who beat, rob, and apprehend migrants, as well as collude with the cartels (Isacson, Meyer, and Morales 2014, 13–17). Yet it was also the scale of the so-called “caravan” and the promise of dramatic images of large crowds that captured the attention of the mainstream media, leading to more stories from the typically limited range of perspectives.³

However, it is important to note that photographers themselves are not responsible for these shortcomings in news coverage. Editors often select formulaic photographs from subscription news agencies to illustrate stories, or they send a photographer on assignment with a shot list or guide indicating the subject matter and preferred vantage points. In my interview with San Martín, she described a situation in which a photographer based in Mexico City was on assignment at the stadium where many people travelling with the so-called caravan were temporarily housed. After spending several days making photographs that showed both the chaos and humanity of that experience, the photographer submitted her work. But despite the range and nuance of her images, a photo editor selected a conventional shot to accompany the story (San Martín 2018). This is just one example of the kind of barriers individual photographers

encounter when they attempt to tell stories in unexpected ways.

A further significant factor is how the organizational structure of news media determines what photographs are made and where they circulate. News images are a contrived product and the result of a system that generates specific kinds of photographs for public consumption. As media anthropologist Zeynep Gürsel explains, the images we encounter in mainstream digital and print media are the product of a global industry that includes a network of image brokers who select, label, and distribute photographs (Gürsel 2016, 7). Gürsel's research shows that news images are products of an infrastructure with a defined set of practices or ways of making photographs suited to address multiple audiences as they circulate globally across different platforms. These kinds of images are made possible by transporting photographers to locations around the world, but also by the organizational structure of the wire service and the digital transmission systems that are currently used for circulating images. When news services manage to get their photographers to events deemed newsworthy, image brokers scrutinize the resulting images and those that are considered most effective are selected for distribution (129–143). As Gürsel explains, “how well an image corresponds to a visual expectation on the part of imagined readers carries greater weight than how representative the specific image actually is” (135–136). News images are a commodity that moves from one context to another, circulating on the internet, on social media, and in print publications, and like migration itself they follow paths of capital and conflict.

Photographers such as San Martin who pursue independent, self-funded projects operate outside the global network of the news service, which is incompatible with a photographic method based on the politics of care. Instead of feeding a system with an appetite for eye catching versions of the status quo, San Martin is concerned with challenging stereotypes and telling a story that conveys the agency of diasporic subjects (San Martin 2018). Instead of

simply turning up to cover events and generate news images like other photographers, her method relies on intensive research and a familiarity with Mexican culture gained from years spent living in Mexico City. She spends hours and even weeks with some subjects, staying with them in their homes and sharing meals and conversation (San Martin 2018). Reciprocity is an essential feature of San Martin's relationships with her subjects and a key reason I describe her practice as restorative. She respects the agency of her subjects by accepting gestures of hospitality, and in return she validates their experiences. In addition, her work does not circulate in the same way as news images, but instead is published in books and is shown at photo festivals and in cultural and community spaces (Figure 2).⁴ San Martin's work is a form of activism that builds relationships to tell stories against the grain.

Friendship Park

San Martin's series *The Wall* was made at Friendship Park in Tijuana, on the Mexican side of the bi-national park. The gathering space on the US side is located within Border Field State Park, which opened in 1971 as part of Richard Nixon's Legacy of Parks program. As the name suggests, Friendship Park was originally intended as a symbol of unity and friendship between the US and Mexico. However, over the past fifty years that spirit of partnership has been repeatedly challenged by the growing pre-occupation with border security in the US (Andreas 2009, 38). In the 1980s, nativist sentiment and the Reagan administration's drug enforcement agenda led to a gradual militarization of the southern border (Dunn 1996, 103–140, 161–163). Then in the 1990s, as NAFTA destabilized the Mexican economy and migration increased from Mexico to the US, anti-immigrant attitudes intensified and a fourteen-mile fence was erected along the border near San Diego, cutting through the park. The Department of Homeland Security took over jurisdiction and tightened security after 11 September 2001, and in 2009 they installed a secondary steel



Figure 2. *The Wall* by Griselda San Martín, shown in the group exhibition *When does a place become home?* at St. Ann's Warehouse, Brooklyn, New York, 2018. Photograph courtesy of Griselda San Martín.

mesh fence that is so tightly woven that people on either side can only touch by pressing the tips of their fingers to the metal. This mesh fence is in addition to a twenty-foot-high barrier of steel bars that extends 300 feet into the ocean, along with cameras and sensors. An outer perimeter controls access to the park, and when San Martín completed this work, the US side was only open to a limited number of people on weekends between 10 am and 2 pm.⁵ Despite the heavy presence of border patrol, Friendship Park in San Diego has been well used and is an important site of protest and resistance against the militarization of the border.⁶

Although San Martín could have made this series in Friendship Park in San Diego, she instead chose

to work on the Mexican side of the border in Tijuana. In contrast to the US side, the park in Tijuana is an open and accessible public space where families gather for community events. In my interview with San Martín, she explained her decision to focus on the perspective from Tijuana as a way to validate the experiences of people in Mexico. She said, "the language that is used to talk about Mexico is negative" (San Martín 2018). To address this prejudice, she wanted to show the beautiful, lively, and welcoming atmosphere of the park. The wall in Tijuana, she explained, is decorated with murals painted by local artists and the community, and people gather here to enjoy time together. There are no border patrol agents, and aside from

the metal fence, it is not a secured area. People come and go as they please. They bring chairs and umbrellas so they can sit and talk with family members through the mesh barrier. As San Martín explained, she worked in Tijuana because she wanted to tell the story from a Mexican point of view, rather than an American one. This caring act of accountability is conveyed in her comment about the wall in Friendship Park as “a symbolic place” for many Mexicans because “this is what separates them from their family” (San Martín 2018). This choice recognizes and seeks to mitigate the negative effects of oppressive conditions created by US border security and compounded by the discrimination Mexican immigrants experience in the US.

Many of the people San Martín met at Friendship Park had become separated from family members after living as undocumented migrants in the US, and a key aspect of San Martín's politics of care emerges from the way her photographs respond to that distressing feature of Mexican diasporic experience. The series acknowledges the condition of forced separation and conveys longing but does not dwell on hardship to generate pity, a strategy used in much of the mainstream news coverage.⁷ The ethical problems with a pity-based approach will be familiar to many photo historians from Martha Rosler's well-known critique of liberal documentary photography, which highlights the way this approach gives those with power a chance to feel sorry for the disempowered (Rosler 1989). San Martín's method instead borrows from family photography to recognize the complex nature of relationships shaped by migration and diasporic experience. San Martín said that in this series she hoped to “call attention to the human interactions at Friendship Park, where families visit with and speak with one another through a metal fence.” She wanted to “neutralize what this wall was built to create: separation” (San Martín 2018). Her work is about recognizing and affirming familial ties, and this restorative approach centers on how people sustain relationships under difficult circumstances that keep them apart.

Diasporic experience, family photography, and the politics of care

For many diasporic Mexican families, relationships are strained by forced separation, and meeting at the border fence is a way to reconnect. Collaborating with San Martín to make photographs together contributes to this process. This activity corresponds with what art historian Anthony Lee describes as the participatory and investigative role photography plays in diasporic experience (Lee, et al. 2018, 181). He suggests that migrants engage with photography to create identities and a sense of belonging in a new locale. They may also use it to stay connected with their origins, perhaps by sending and receiving photographs from loved ones. As scholars Leigh Raiford and Tina Campt show, photography also performs the cultural work of envisioning and creating connection within diasporic communities (Raiford 2006, 212–213; Campt 2012, 14). Recognizing that diasporic experience and identity is about hybridity and difference, as Stuart Hall indicates (Hall 1994, 235), San Martín performs the work of negotiating difference. Her process of making portraits across the divide of the metal wall builds attachments and enacts care.

In San Martín's series, the activity of engaging her subjects to make photographs at the border fence contributes to connection and community, which are hallmarks of care work. One image in the series depicts Cesar Salgado and his niece Giselle, who live in the US, meeting Salgado's daughter and other family members for the first time in 14 years (Figure 3). In this portrait, San Martín conveys the effect of forced separation by showing the family members in Mexico clustered together in two groups in front of the wall while Salgado and his niece are visible through the bars on the other side. The obtrusive wall, with the decorative painting that seeks to make it blend into the landscape, here forms a backdrop behind the group and a screen in front of Salgado and Giselle. The wall is at once a symbol of forced family separation and the device that structures cross-border relationships and the photographic



Figure 3. Griselda San Martín, *The Wall*, 2015–16. The Salgado family poses for a portrait. Cesar Salgado and his niece Giselle visit with several family members in Tijuana, and Cesar saw his daughter for the first time in 14 years, only it was through the beams of the border wall. Photograph © Griselda San Martín.

encounter. In this sense, the wall and the photograph together configure the ambivalence of diasporic experience, at once marking out difference and bringing families together.

As photo historian Marianne Hirsch explains, family photography responds to concepts of family life absorbed from the dominant culture (Hirsch 1999, xvi). Families tend to adopt and respond to conventions of family life when they pose for photographs. San Martín's portraits of families rely on these customs, but the images are unsettling because the wall separates family members from one another. Take, as another example, the photograph of Rosario Vargas standing in front of the rusting steel fence in Tijuana. Her daughter Jannet Castañón and grandson Hector are on the other side in San Diego, visible only as shadows (Figure 4).

Vargas and her daughter live just a few miles apart and at the time the photograph was made would visit every other weekend to ameliorate their ten-year separation. This image follows the conventions of family photography in the way the subjects pose for the camera to mark the occasion. But San Martín's photograph also exposes the ideal of family portraiture, what Hirsch refers to as the "familial gaze," in the way it fails to embody that ideal (Hirsch 1999, xvi). In this portrait, the family is not pictured in the expected state of smiling togetherness because the wall separates and obscures two of its members. The shadow cast over Jannet Castañón and Hector suggests the inadequacy of connecting through a steel barrier and alludes to the way forced separation strains intergenerational relationships. But even as the portrait recognizes these limitations,



Figure 4. Griselda San Martín, *The Wall*, 2015–16. Family portrait. Rosario Vargas (in the foreground) with her daughter Jannet Castañón and grandson Hector, 15, (behind the border wall, on the U.S. side.) Rosario and her daughter live just a few miles apart but have been separated by the U.S-Mexico border wall for almost 10 years. On April 30, 2016, they were one of the few families who were allowed to briefly reunite for 3 min when a small door in the fence was opened. But once the door of hope was closed, the reality of the border hit them again. They see each other every weekend through the metallic fence. Photograph © Griselda San Martín.

it also stands as a tribute to the ongoing commitment between family members.

Another way of thinking about these complexities is that San Martín's portraits of Vargas and the Salgados reference conventions of family photography while they also acknowledge the care work that sustains diasporic relationships. These photographs depict families engaged in the emotional labor of maintaining connections during prolonged separation. In Nicole Fleetwood's study of prison photography, she notes that people who are incarcerated and separated from their loved ones often stay connected through family photographs (Fleetwood 2015, 488). Family members exchange

photographs, but it is especially the photographs taken together on visits that convey the emotional investment in the relationship and provide comfort during separation (Fleetwood 2015, 502). This same practice is possible for these families, as San Martín offered to send copies of portraits to the people she photographed. Although the conditions of separation are significantly different, in San Martín's work the act of posing for photographs at Friendship Park shows a shared commitment to visit and connect with family members divided by deportation.

Similar to the way family members in these photographs care for one another, San Martín as the

photographer supports the well-being of her subjects (Figure 5). Rather than making photographs without consent, as is common in photojournalism, San Martín approaches people. Most are happy to talk to her, often disclosing their immigration status and telling her who they were meeting. For instance, when talking to Olga Camacho, San Martín learned that Camacho and her granddaughter were visiting Olga's son who can stay in the US under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program but who would not be allowed to re-enter the country if he left.⁸ In addition, people were almost always willing to be photographed and were often eager to smile and pose for her. They sometimes asked her questions about whether

undocumented relatives can safely visit the US side of Friendship Park. These interactions are at the heart of the care work she performs in this project and are why she considers it a form of activism aimed at showing migrants and deportees that their experiences matter (San Martín 2018).

While San Martín's series is not about celebrating the stamina of an oppressed group, it is a means of challenging negative assumptions about Mexican migrants, including the pervasive characterization of undocumented migrants as "illegal" and as therefore criminal or threatening. For that reason, it is important that these photographs follow many of the conventions of family photography, such as depicting family members in proximity to one another in the



Figure 5. Griselda San Martín, Olga Camacho and her granddaughter Yara, who is 2 years old, visit Olga's son Jonathan, who she hasn't been able to hug in 13 years. Jonathan benefited from DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and has been able to stay and work in the United States legally. However, the Deferred Action benefit does not allow individuals to leave the country and return freely. Photograph © Griselda San Martín.

same image to confirm their connection. They also conform to expectations of family portraiture, in which individuals typically present themselves with dignity and as they wish to be seen. But even as these photographs affirm a notion of family and its role in creating cohesion, they also acknowledge another aspect that Patricia Holland identifies, which is that for many people family history is rife with disruption and dispossession (Holland 1991, 11). The ambivalence of San Martin's series recognizes diasporic experience as a state of being "in transition." This in-between state is a feature that Stuart Hall identified in photographs of newly arrived Caribbean migrants in Britain in the 1950s (Hall 1991, 154–156). Whereas the portraits Hall analyzed left out the pressures encountered by

members of marginalized groups in daily life, San Martin instead makes them visible. The metal fence is an ever-present reminder in this series of the burden of forced separation, and as such is a feature that may make viewers uncomfortable.

Whereas news images emphasize the comfort of viewers by positioning subjects in distress as distant and other, this series prioritizes the collective well-being of the subjects, even as it creates discomfort for viewers. This approach is aligned with what Woodyly describes as "healing justice," which refers to the work of recognizing the impact of trauma and changing the conditions of oppression (Woodyly 2021, 91, 122–123). San Martin uses visual storytelling as a form of healing justice by focusing on the humanity of her subjects and by highlighting how



Figure 6. Griselda San Martin, *The Wall*, 2015–16. José Marquez hires Mexican norteño musicians to sing a song to his daughter Susana, 33, and grandson Johnny, 14, who live in California and meet with him every month at the border wall. They have not been together in 14 years since Marquez was deported. Photograph © Griselda San Martin.

they maintain relationships in everyday life. She explains that “deportees are completely ignored” in the conversation about migration, and she wants to recognize their experiences (San Martin 2018). To do the work of healing justice takes time. For instance, San Martin spent weeks with José Marquez, pictured in the photograph hiring Mexican norteño musicians to sing a song to his daughter Susana (San Martin 2018) (Figure 6). Here, San Martin tells a story of love and longing that validates the complex experiences of loss that photo historian Sigrid Lien has described as a feature of life between countries and cultures (Lien 2018, 248).

San Martin describes her project as challenging stereotypes about migrants, but as ultimately being about allowing migrants to see themselves and feel

valued. When I asked her why she does this work, she said “I want [migrants] to know that they are important” (San Martin 2018). The photographs used to illustrate news stories about undocumented migrants for a mainstream audience emphasize their difficulties, their insecure status, and other experiences that foreground the dehumanization that is an outcome of systemic oppression. San Martin's work is recuperative and instead focuses on expressions of love and moments of connection, such as in this photograph of family members hugging during the “Opening the Door of Hope” event in 2016. (Figure 7) This extends not only to experiences during the creation of the photographs but also to how the work circulates and is viewed. When San Martin exhibited this series at Photoville in Brooklyn in



Figure 7. Griselda San Martin, *The Wall*, 2015–16. Gabriela Esparza (in red) reunites briefly (3 min) with her sister Susana and her mother María del Carmen Flores during the “Opening the Door of Hope” event at the border wall in Playas de Tijuana, Mexico, on April 30, 2016. On January 2018, Border Patrol announced the door will not re-open. Photograph © Griselda San Martin.

2018, she talked to several school groups. A girl in one class went up to her after the presentation and said she was from Mexico. She thanked San Martin for her work, saying she was undocumented, and it meant a lot to her to see her country represented in this way. San Martin said, "That was the best thing" (San Martin 2018).

In the introduction to San Martin's book *Tijuana*, Jorge Ortega describes that city as "unclassifiable and incomprehensible." As a gateway to the US, Tijuana is "in a state of constant evolution" (San Martin 2019). For many years the city's Friendship Park has been an important meeting place, where families who are separated from one another have been able to reconnect. By making work in Tijuana instead of in the US, San Martin reorients the discussion of migration to focus on Mexico. She draws attention to the impact of the border wall on transnational family relationships, especially for deportees, and validates her subjects' experiences by revealing and enacting care, rather than by celebrating their resilience. Her series adapts and challenges aspects of family photography to acknowledge the suffering that forced separation causes and to recognize the complex nature of relationships shaped by migration and diasporic experience. Because she works independently, she can determine how she tells the story of migration, where the work is shown, and to whom it is addressed. The transnational lives of migrants are not discussed in the mainstream media, and yet for many people, diasporic experience is shaped by forced separation from loved ones. San Martin's series is an intimate and restorative portrayal of people who experience this form of loss and an important recasting of the photography of Mexican migration.

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Supplemental Material

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Notes

1. San Martin received the 2018 FENCE Jury's Choice Prize for her series, *The Wall*, 2015-16, and this body of work was featured in an exhibition at Photoville 2018 in Brooklyn, NY. Her work has been shown in the United States, Mexico, Canada, Argentina, Colombia, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, and India. See Griselda San Martin, *The Wall*, <http://www.griseldasanmartin.com/the-wall> [accessed 16 August 2022].
2. As Woodyly notes, the work of Black scholars and activists, done in the service of the struggle for Black liberation, has in the past and continues to benefit the fight for equality by other marginalized groups, including undocumented migrants.
3. For example, see Kirk Simple and Elizabeth Malkin, "First Waves of Migrants in Caravan Reaches US Border in Tijuana," *The New York Times*, November 14, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/14/>

[world/americas/migrants-caravan-tijuana-border.html](#) [accessed 16 August 2022].

4. See Griselda San Martín, *Tijuana* (Barcelona: Kris Graves Projects, 2019).
5. See "Friendship Park, San Diego, California," <https://www.tclf.org/sites/default/files/microsites/landslide2021/locations/friendship.html> [accessed 7 September 2022].
6. At the time of writing, the situation at Friendship Park in San Diego is uncertain. Public access to the park on the US side of the border ended in 2020 during the pandemic and has yet to resume. The Department of Homeland Security is constructing two thirty-foot tall barriers that will replace the existing fence. See <https://www.borderreport.com/hot-topics/border-culture/taller-border-wall-panels-going-up-at-iconic-beach-location-angering-opponents/> [accessed 7 September 2022].
7. The American Psychological Association lists the following as some of the traumatic experiences faced by the undocumented in the US: arbitrary stopping of family members to check their documentation; racial profiling; being forcibly separated from family members; immigration raids in their communities; and deportation. See "Undocumented Americans," <https://www.apa.org/topics/immigration-refugees/undocumented-video> [accessed 14 September 2022].
8. DACA is a program created in 2012 by the Obama administration to prevent the deportation of people brought to the US as children who do not have citizenship or legal residency. See Giulia McDonnell Nieto del Rio and Miriam Jordan, "What is DACA? And Where Does it Stand Now?" *The New York Times*, June 14, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/what-is-daca.html> [accessed 14 September 2022].

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