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Torn Apart: A Closer Look at Our Cover Image

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Torn Apart: A Closer Look at our Cover Art

Sandra Rios



April 6th, 2018: the day a new “zero tolerance” policy came into effect in the United States by the Trump Administration. June 20th President Trump signed an executive order that stopped family separations while still supporting zero tolerance of undocumented immigrants living in the United States, but it was too late. Children were separated from their families and kept in inhumane overcrowded detention centers much like concentration camps. NBC News states that nearly 3,000 children had been taken away from their parents, and though technically the zero-tolerance policy ended in June 2018, “700 more families have been separated since then, and at least five children have died” (Bala and Rizer 2019). Since then, at least 700 more families have been separated since the administration claimed that policy had ended. This is just what statistics have documented, but certainly there are more families separated that have gone unreported.

This artwork represents the trauma these families face, the American Dream fading away, and the sad truth that is our reality. This is not the America we once knew, as the 'land of the free' which promised 'liberty and justice for all.'

About the artist: Sandra Rios will graduate from CSU Monterey Bay in Spring 2020 with a bachelor's degree in Social and Behavioral Sciences and a concentration in sociology. She has been employed with the City of San Jose since 2011, and her goal is to combine her school and work experience to help strengthen communities. She can be reached at sanrios@csumb.edu.

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“holding onto dreams...”

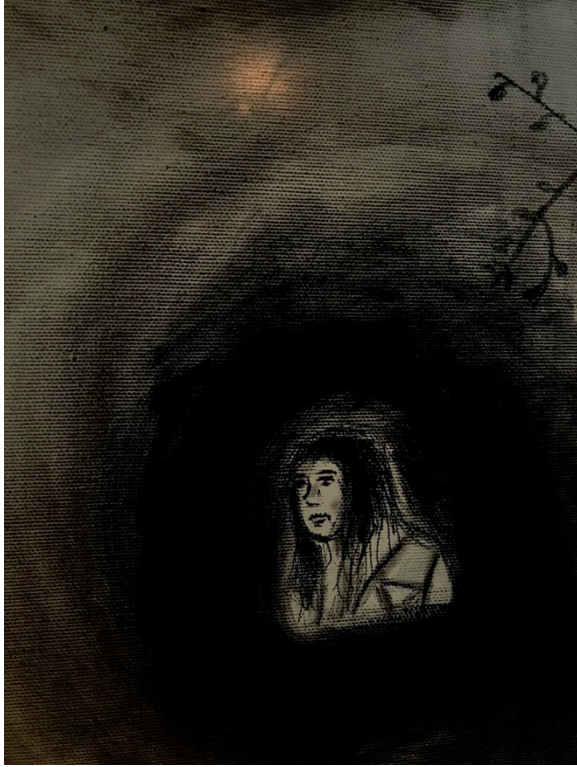
Inspiration for this picture comes from families and children facing their disappointment with the United States. The stars on the flag disappearing represents any hope of a bright future in America fading away. The father consoles his daughter; they share this moment as it may be their last time together.



“no voice”

This young boy is looking into the eyes of the viewer intently. He proudly wears this shirt that reads, “Don’t deport my mom” as a bold move to try and be heard by politicians and authorities. Children who are born in the United States are US citizens, but many have parents who are undocumented. These families have no voice, but courageously come together at rallies in an attempt to be heard by those who can make changes. These mixed statuses of citizenship create tension as they are scared to fight for freedom because it could risk the safety of their undocumented family members. The light shining through the canvas symbolizes the drive children have to save their families from being torn apart.

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“surrounded by oppression”

Darkness engulfing this child represents the world closing in on them. These young individuals are overwhelmed by a seemingly never-ending cycle of oppression. They are constantly oppressed by laws that threaten their families and futures.



“othered”

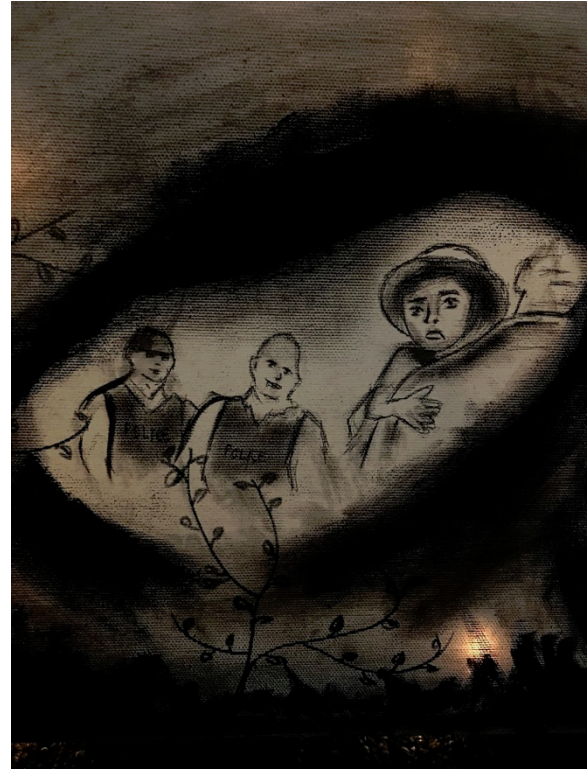
Othered by society and the upper class, young immigrants become easy targets. They are being silenced, especially in the immigration detention centers that they are kept in, under inhumane conditions. Forced to sleep on concrete floors, their rights and dignity are stolen by Trump's zero tolerance policy.

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“diminished memories”

Inspired by the faint memory very young children will have, I wanted to depict the little to no memory toddlers will have from this traumatic experience. Young kids that were torn apart from their families will have very little memories of their parents, and some may not even have any memory of their parents. Even more saddening, New York Times recorded the youngest child separated from his family at the border is Constantin Mutu, who was torn away from his family at 4 months old (Dickerson 2019). Just as this drawing is unclear, so is the faint memory many kids will have of their biological parents, who they may never see again.



“destructive dominance”

This image depicts a young boy being carried away by authorities who want to uphold laws, without prioritizing children’s well-being. The intimidating men in the background whose uniforms read “police” are entertained by the fear in his young, innocent face. The Trump administration robs children of their innocence and stomps on their future.

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“behind bars”

During family separations, children are treated worse than prisoners. Imprisoned behind bars, this child has a confused expression on his smudged face and brings light to the cruel reality these children face. The words THIS IS AMERICA echo the viral 2018 song by Childish Gambino that has over 600 million views on YouTube (Glover et al., 2018).



“uncertainty of the future”

How will our society recover from these events, or is this our culture’s new normal? These children will be scattered into the community again, with broken lives and a lack of resources. Even if they are lucky enough to land in a home that will raise them, that will not erase their past. Unfortunately, the damage has already been done to their early development. With little to no education in the camps, children and families continue in the cycle of oppression they were fleeing from to begin with. We can’t allow these lives to be forgotten.

References

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