

RONALD RAEI AND VIRGINIA SAN FRATELLO

Recuerdos

Borderland dreams

Since 2000, we have been traveling along the United States–Mexico border, collecting memories and stories of the places and people we have met, and documenting a series of scenarios, real and imagined, along the border wall.

Together they tell a very different story of what has been the largest construction project in twenty-first-century America—a story that is different from what you see in the news. Almost exactly the distance of the Grand Tour, the tourism route for upper-class Europeans that went from London to Rome, this journey stretches for 1,931 miles along the border with the United States. This Grand Borderlands Tour traces the consequences of a security infrastructure that stands both conceptually and physically perpendicular to human mobility. The artifacts that Grand Tourists would return home with—art, books, pictures, sculpture—became symbols of wealth and freedom. Our border wall has become a barrier to movement that would create art, books, pictures, sculpture, wealth, freedom.

On this journey, our collected experiences are represented in the form of snow globes: souvenirs, or *recuerdos*—a Spanish term that defines both the trinkets one might purchase at tourist shops and memories. The *recuerdos* gathered along our border are tragic, sublime, and absurd, occasionally hyperbolized, but in all cases based on our own experiences and actual events in the liminal space that defines the boundary between the United States and Mexico. **B**

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Cemetery Wall. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RAE SAN FRATELLO.



Confessional Wall. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RAE SAN FRATELLO.



Climbing Wall. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RAE SAN FRATELLO.



Volley Ball Wall. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RAE SAN FRATELLO.



Burrito Wall. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RAE SAN FRATELLO.



Wildlife Wall. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RAE SAN FRATELLO.



Xylophone Wall. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RAE SAN FRATELLO.



Teeter Totter Wall. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RAE SAN FRATELLO.