

***Bridging Cultures Mural Project***  
State University New York Potsdam  
*Francisco Letelier*



***A collaborative mural project bridging memory and culture***

The ***Bridging Cultures Mural Project*** at New York State University Potsdam connects three decades of solidarity and cultural actions in support of human rights and democracy in Chile and Latin America to current issues and perspectives in the Americas. Faculty and students worked in collaboration with artist Francisco Letelier, broadly exploring themes in human rights. The mural uses a central image of an Afro Latina woman framed in the contours of the American continents as well as other depictions of women to symbolize the shared struggles of many nations and communities.

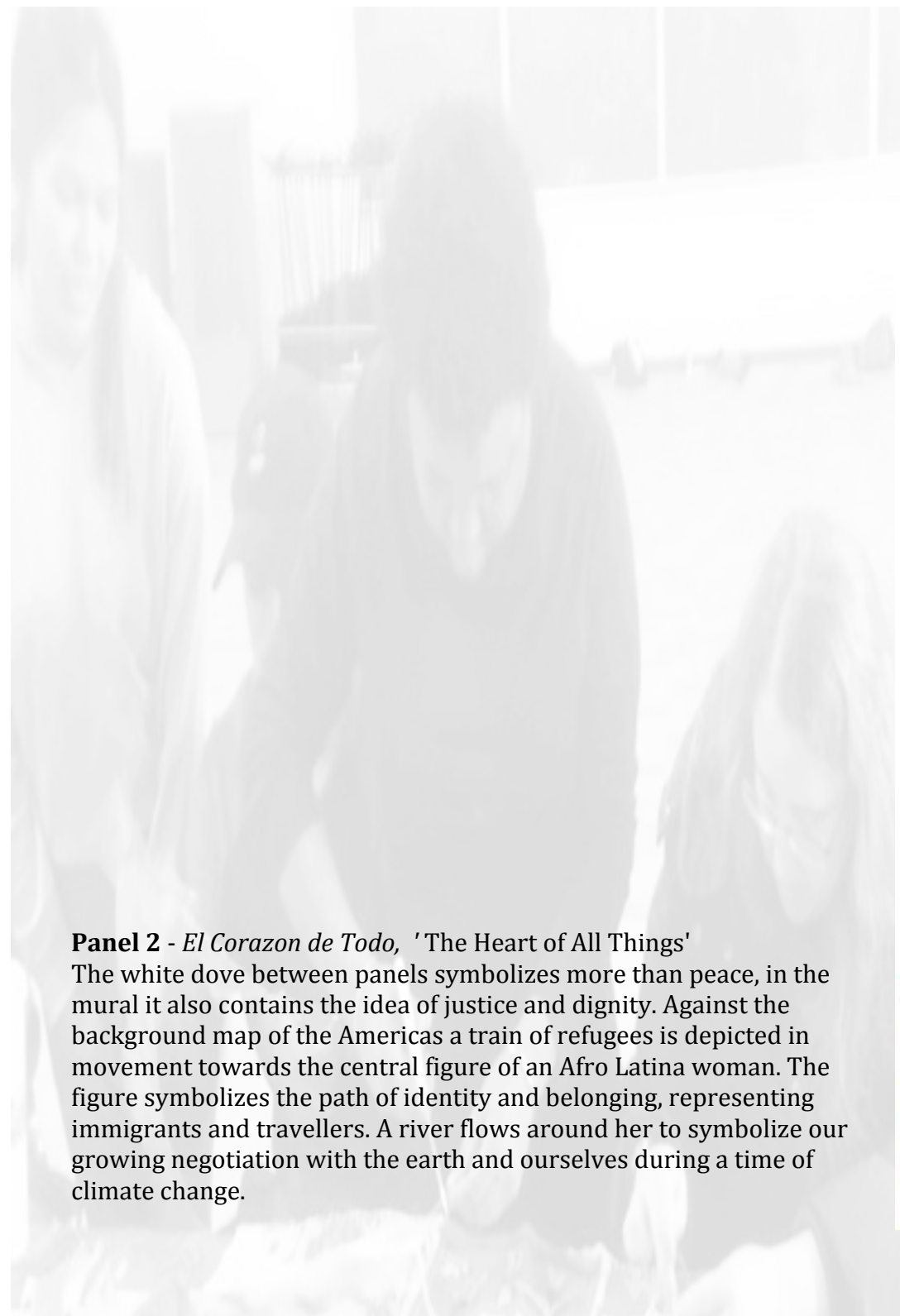
**Panel One-** *Nueva Cancion, Pacha Mama, 'New Song, Pacha Mama.'* The New Song movement includes folk traditions, ballads and protest songs. A hybrid music genre, it celebrates commitment and social equality, continues to played an integral role in social struggles. The figure represents the Pacha Mama creative energy that sustains life on earth. Her spirit runs through the Andes Mountains depicted in the mural



Building Bridges Mural

Panel 1 Nueva Cancion/ New Sing





**Panel 2 - *El Corazon de Todo*, 'The Heart of All Things'**

The white dove between panels symbolizes more than peace, in the mural it also contains the idea of justice and dignity. Against the background map of the Americas a train of refugees is depicted in movement towards the central figure of an Afro Latina woman. The figure symbolizes the path of identity and belonging, representing immigrants and travellers. A river flows around her to symbolize our growing negotiation with the earth and ourselves during a time of climate change.



**Building Bridges Mural**

**Panel 2 Corazon de Todo/ Heart of it All**





Building Bridges Mural

Panel 3 Los Desaparecidos/ The Disappeared



### Panel 3

#### *Los Desaparecidos*, 'The Disappeared'

During the military dictatorships in Latin America, thousands of people disappeared after being taken into custody by the armed forces. Decades later, family members and loved ones continue to seek justice and information. Army torture, detentions and disappearances are once again prevalent in Colombia, Chile and Brazil. New lists of disappeared include native women along the US - Canada Border and extend well into the Southern Cone as indigenous and environmental leaders face continued reprisals and citizens demonstrate against economic models. New numbers also include those taken into border camps within the United States and are unaccounted for.

#### Panel 4

*Toda la Luz, 'All the Light'*

A woman receives light into her hands, as it reflects into other directions. This final panel symbolizes the power of women to create life, shelter and safety. In depicting her we conjure up notions of home and hearth, affirming basic human rights, traditional beliefs, inquiry and investigation.



Building Bridges Mural  
Panel 4 La Luz/ The Light



***Building Bridges*** is created within the context of an ongoing pursuit for truth and justice, celebrating survivors, victims, witnesses and observers as carriers of imagination, culture, resilience and persistence. The project and its associated elements are created through collaborative and participatory processes, employing dialogues and exchange to expand upon viewpoints concerning human rights and justice in the Americas.

*Building Bridges* is a program of ***Forging Memory***, a collaboration of faculty students and community in the United States and Chile. The project exhibited a collection of Chilean patchwork appliques called *arpilleras* at Suny Potsdam Gibson Gallery and St Lawrence University's Brush Gallery. During the creation of *Building Bridges*, the artist team created textile works in the style of Chilean *arpilleras*, that were integrated them into ***Paso del Condor***, a multi media mural installation presented by ***Francisco Letelier*** at the Santa Fe Art Institute in October 2019.

***Bridging Cultures*** was made possible through the collaborative efforts of many students and faculty at SUNY Potsdam including:  
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