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Latinos are everywhere. They are a massive part of what the world is nowadays, thanks to all the contributions that they have made. As a Latino that used to live on the border between the United States and Mexico, it is completely easy for me to understand how different these countries are. But why do Latinos decide to move to the United States? These people want a



Jean-René (JR) French artist

change for the better. This decision that many Latinos make has the consequence of changing their lives forever, not always in a good way. Poverty, violence, and political liberty are the main reasons Latinos immigrate; their goal is to succeed and achieve the American dream. The French artist and photographer JR, in his visual art “Kikito” created in Tecate, Baja California, Mexico, in 2017, successfully reflects the hopefulness that immigrants have when crossing the border in search of a better future in the United States.

“Kikito” brought people from two sides of a violent/politically charged issue together in a peaceful, hopeful way. The differences between these two countries have created a division without a relationship through time. However, JR unintentionally connected the people from the U.S. and Mexico through an art piece that showed the issue with the border that divides these

two countries. Alexandra Schwartz, a staff writer, explains in her article, "It didn't bring a political conversation, but a human conversation. 'What is this kid thinking?' It was really just a love message. No hate debate" (Schwartz). When the community realizes a problem, and they're all together without differences, their ideas connect, and there's an environment with no harmful intentions that can affect each other. The way this piece made people connect is just a natural thing that can happen when there's no presence of negativity, and it's just about learning and sharing different points of view with respect. This art piece peaceably connected two different points of view of different countries.



JR's new work, along the border fence in the Mexican city of Tecate, will remain in place until October 2nd. Photograph by John Francis Peters / NYT via Redux

"Kikito" helped people connect with their humanity and see the immigrant issue from a different perspective. The U.S. and Mexico are countries that have always thought the opposite of each other, they are not open-minded to new perspectives that can make them think differently. Lizy Higareda, mother of 'Kikito' says in an interview on JR's website, "People have a wrong image of us like we are the 'worst.' I think a child does not find malice when he is looking to play. He is simply observing" (Higareda). The representation of this visual object made them aware of how these two countries live in division, made by the government, using a big tall fence. A child represents innocence. A child does not have enough thinking or experience

to know what is happening around him, and there is no consciousness about an issue in a child's mind. It is important to mention that this child represents human kindness, which means that his purpose is to show equality. This big visible object succeeds because it shows human kindness and how a child sees an issue, creating different ideas.

The giant size of this visual object, this piece of art, and this representation brought attention from all places and helped spread the message in the best possible way. It is incredible to know that "Kikito" was three times bigger than the fence that divides the U.S. and Mexico, a wall to reduce illegal immigration. For example, an Irish journalist, Rory Carroll, explains, "The expression is playful but his scale – 65ft – dwarfs the fence, making it look puny and eminently climbable" (Carroll). The fence seems insignificant for this art piece; it grabs all the attention and tries to give the message of that child with innocence trying to know what's on the other side. The size of this art piece made the border seem insignificant because it was three times bigger; although the fence is enormous, the art piece was more prominent and created a perspective where the wall appears small. In addition, there's another example where Lizy Higareda, mother of 'Kikito,' argues, "In a place that nobody takes in account, and he made it stand out, that no one looked at until he made them big" (Higareda). It shows how someone creates something on a large scale to deliver a message that could impact people from different places because there was a lack of attention to all these issues. "Kikito" means representation; his enormous size shows his power and clear purpose.

On the other hand, many local Mexican artists disagree with JR's work. This happens because, for these artists, art or photography changes the world for them if it connects to the political commitment and contribution of the artist and photographer (Bacon). This means that all art should cooperate on both sides and different points to change the world. Bacon David,

writer, and photojournalist explains the concern of Enrique Botello by saying, “ ...The problem of Kikito is that he is too distant, both from the deaths at the border and from the reasons people



Giants, Kikito and the Border patrol, Tecate,
Border Mexico-USA, 2017

risk it... ‘JR says that he has no political position!’... ‘His interest isn’t in making a commitment, just in his art.’” (Bacon).

Many artists decide to create art without any political or social purpose; they just want to show their art and leave their audience with their interpretation. Art is a form of expression where everyone can express what they wish; every artist has a

different perspective on figurative art, but other ideas and views must be treated respectfully. However, although JR’s purpose is not to show a political position, he unintentionally shows a political issue when he does these types of art pieces, because he is complementing and establishing a political issue that has occurred for a long period.

Finally, the purpose of this art piece impacted many citizens of Mexico and the U.S. thanks to the interaction they were able to have with “Kikito”. As a Latino, I would say that JR made something that unintentionally showed the issues that immigrants experience every day as they try to achieve something better for their lives. That child from Tecate represents all that is needed - hope, curiosity, and an open mind. It’s incredible how this made citizens from both sides interact and respect each other when many political and social issues were present. The hope continues growing in these people; they want to succeed and be someone in this life. Latinos are hard-working people in search of a better future. Many countries do not realize the

importance a Latino makes in their country, especially the United States; they are the primary country that needs these people. No words were needed, only the photograph of an innocent child.

Works Cited:

Bacon, David. "The Art of the Border: Searching for Kikito." *The American Prospect*, October 30, 2017, <https://prospect.org/civil-rights/art-border-searching-kikito/>

Carroll, Rory. "Proud to be Mexican: Meet the baby whose huge image gazes over the border." *The Guardian*, September 18, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/sep/18/proud-to-be-mexican-meet-the-baby-whose-huge-image-gazes-over-the-border>

Jean-René (JR). "Giants, Kikito." *Social Animals*, 2017, <https://www.jr-art.net/projects/giants-border-mexico>

Schwartz, Alexandra. "The Artist JR Lifts a Mexican Child Over the Border Wall." *The New Yorker*, September 11, 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/as-told-to/the-artist-jr-lifts-a-mexican-child-over-the-border-wall>

Annotations:

Jérôme Jean-René (JR). "Giants, Kikito." Social Animals, 2017.

Author's Credentials: JR was born on 22 February 1983 in Paris, France. He is a French photographer and street artist. JR stands for the initials of JR's first name, Jean-René. JR has the largest art gallery in the world. Thanks to his photographic collage technique, he exhibits his work free of charge on the walls of the whole world.

Audience and Type: His audience is all those persons that are interested in JR's artworks. His audience tends to have a better knowledge by learning more about his art pieces. He includes in his art pieces many actual problems occurring, so his audience can be those that feel identified. His type of information is a professional publication with specific details.

Bias/Point of View: The source has different points because it is a video where many people explain different views about the art piece. It discusses the purpose until the final detail and contains accurate information.

Currency: The publication matters because the same year the art piece was made, the source published the "Giants, Kikito." It was published the same year, telling the audience how important the art piece was.

Coverage and Scope: All the subject of the art piece is completely covered because the author of this source is the same one who made the piece. It has a narrow scope and focus because it only discusses one specific topic.

Relevance: This source contributes to my topic because the artists who created the visual object were the same person who made that source. It showed the details and his intentions, even though he didn't expect too much opinion from his audience.

Schwartz, Alexandra. "The Artist JR Lifts a Mexican Child Over the Border Wall." *The New Yorker*, September 11, 2017.

Author's Credentials: Alexandra Schwartz is an American who joined 'The New Yorker' as an editorial staff member in 2013 and has been a staff writer since 2016. She has written extensively about literature as both a critic and a reporter.

Audience and Type: The audience is all Latinos, immigrants, and people interested in how the border between Mexico and the U.S. works. The type of information is a professional publication to explain the purpose and context of an art piece.

Bias/Point of View: The purpose of the source is to show how they create the art piece "Kikito." It shows how JR, the creator of "Kikito" impacted socially and emotionally to people from many different places and even countries.

Currency: The date of publication matters because it was published right after the art piece was made. The fact that it was published fast gave the audience a better knowledge of "Kikito."

Coverage and Scope: Many quotes from JR cover this source's coverage, showing the purpose of "Kikito." The scope is narrow because it covers one specific topic, just about an art piece.

Relevance: This source contributes to my topic because It explains the point of view of JR and all the context behind his art piece.

Images Cited

[-JR à la Galerie Perrotin - 2015.png](#)

[-Schwartz-As-Told-To-JR-installation.jpg](#)

[-6975654c-bace-4faa-a835-8cb641c4526d_GIANTS,-Kikito-and-the-Border-Patrol,-Tecate,-Mexico---U.S.A.-2017.jpg](#)