

Border Cantos / Sonic Borders
Richard Misrach | Guillermo Galindo



Sonic Borders Installation View, Photo: Stephen Ironside

Organizer	Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art
Space Requirements	Approximately 3,000 square feet (flexible)
Objects	10 large-scale, framed photographs and <i>Sonic Borders</i> installation consisting of 8 instruments, each with their own iPod, subwoofer, and speakers (requires power run to each pedestal). All casework, A/V equipment and instructions are included.
Text Components	Labels and panel text in electronic format
Optional Interpretive Content	Border map, digital content related to instruments in <i>Sonic Borders</i> , discussion questions, migration story activity
Associated costs	\$25,000 fee plus shared costs including crating, packing, shipping, Fine Arts insurance. On-site expenses include electrician, carpeting, and under carpet electrical for <i>Sonic Borders</i> works; production of didactic materials; art handling and registration.
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Exhibition Overview:

This exhibition brings together the sights and the sounds of the Mexican-American border through a transformative and multi-sensory experience. Photographer Richard Misrach and composer/artist Guillermo Galindo began collaborating in 2011, after both artists had created bodies of work inspired by the Mexican-American border region and its human impact. In the political climate today, art surrounding this border is more relevant than ever, compelling us to put ourselves in the shoes of these migrants—to envision their journey.

Misrach's large-scale photographs beautifully capture the various types of landscapes, textures, and experiences found across the almost 2,000-mile dividing line. But, by showing moments of disruption on the land, they also introduce a complicated look at policing the boundary. Although Misrach does not photograph people directly, human impact is still deeply present in these images—through the water stations placed by humanitarian groups to prevent deaths in the remotest areas of the desert, the presence of a section of border wall that seems more of a monument than a deterrent, or the eerie presence of three effigy figures and the unknown meaning behind them. Breaking from his typical style, the image *Veronica, Friendship Park*, captures Misrach's experience in the only place along the border where families from either side can meet, although it feels more like visiting a jail. The “portrait” of Veronica is reduced to a vague human outline through a dense man-made partition.

Galindo's installation *Sonic Borders* is an original score for eight instruments, created out of discarded objects found and collected at the border. The composition embraces the pre-Columbian belief that there was an intimate connection between an instrument and the material from which it was made, with no separation between spiritual and physical worlds. Composer Galindo explains, “Mesoamerican instruments were talismans between worlds, and the sound of each instrument was never separate from its essence, origin, and meaning.” Based on the Mesoamerican “Venus calendar,” *Sonic Borders* plays for a total of 260 minutes and is separated into 13 cycles of 20 minutes. Within these cycles, the instruments play in small groups of two or more, or all together as an orchestra.

When experienced as a whole, the images, instruments, and emanating sounds create an immersive space in which to look, listen, and learn about the complicated issues surrounding the Mexican-American border. While the artists do not seek to provide the solution, they do provide insight into a place into which most people have never ventured and create a poignant connection that draws on our humanity.