

Can Serrat Project Check Point:
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*How are you feeling? Much better.
Como te sientes? Mas Mejor.*

As U.S. citizens, we are attached to our mobile devices that disperse updates, second-to-second, of atrocities committed at the hands of our current politicians. Apathy has taken on a new form in social media. We share our outrage on social media to absolve ourselves of the guilt that we feel toward the injustices.

As a second-generation, white-passing, Latina woman raised in the upper-middle class, I am constantly reminded of the privilege afforded to me. I am well-educated and have an Ivy-Tower job, which is much more than I can say for most first- and second-generation Latin Americans. Almost half of my extended family has not completed college, let alone a graduate degree.

Since I can remember, I have been under pressure to conform to both U.S. culture, and to Mexican culture, but I never fully fit either. I have constantly struggled with my own bifurcated identity, and only carefully disclose my background when it is necessary or statistically convenient (for school or job applications, etc.). I do not brazenly wear my Latina identity because I am not only Latina, but American. If I want to keep up my Spanish skills, I have to seek out those opportunities to "practice."

On the other hand, I used to be proud to be an American. But now, I am ashamed of my country's treatment of immigrants at the border as families are separated and children are caged and dying. While I have experienced discrimination, it pales in comparison to what my parents experienced. And my experience is nothing like that of today's asylum-seekers. My parents coached me to assimilate. Immigrants at our borders have been denied the opportunity to join the "melting pot" of America, and to even have the choice of assimilation. For them, the "American Dream" that was so kind to my parents and my generation is gone, and instead they are met by a living hell. The atrocities they face are met on social media by detached tweets about "thoughts and prayers." Which, in reality, do nothing, but alleviate the writer's sense of guilt.

During my time at Can Serrat, I created a small installation an altar for my millennial self. This altar was culminating installation in the garden grotto on the property. Everyday I would construct 10 empty milagro boxes for 10 days. Each box symbolizes the 600 empty "thoughts and prayers," which is related to the number of times the term "thoughts and prayers" was tweeted between 2015-2019. The 100 milagro boxes thus represents 600,000 empty "thoughts and prayers."

This project came out of attempting to process news information productively, as opposed to speaking passively through a digital social media outlet. The action of making these empty milagro boxes allows for the digestion of news information while coming to a sincere conclusion of my feelings on these political injustices. In the end, I would like for people to take away the following: Do something other than social media to express your outrage. Even the act of putting together a votive altar - while satirical, cynical, and also sincere - may draw viewers to get angry. Fight for the "American Dream." It can exist again.



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100 milagro boxes, votive candles in garden grotto
Can Serrat Residency 2019*



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