Landscapes in the Making

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Stephen Daniels and Dell Upton
Editors

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FRONTISPIECE: Both overburden and excavated boulders are organized into a spatial logic that builds a quarry world. Huichapan, Hidalgo, 2019. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

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FOREWORD

We begin this volume with an acknowledgment that the lands on and in which we gather are within the ancestral territories of Indigenous peoples who have known the Potomac Valley and its lands and waters as their homeland for thousands of years to the present day, including Algonquin, Iroquois, and Siouan peoples. We know the lands of Dumbarton Oaks as within the Piscataway homeland. As historians of land and place, we recognize that long prior to European occupation and through today, Indigenous peoples have stewarded the lands and waters of the American continent. They have shaped and cared for the lands that we live and work on and, in our scholarship, the very land we explore, experience, and investigate. Thus, we begin by recognizing the Native Nations' unbroken and unbreakable connections to these lands in the past, present, and future.

Dumbarton Oaks's Garden and Landscape Studies program dates to 1951, with the Garden Endowment Fund and the proposal for early-career fellows to study gardens and design in history and as a contemporary practice. In 1972, it was established as a scholarly program in garden and landscape history. In 2014, John Beardsley, my predecessor, inaugurated the Mellon Initiative in Urban Landscape Studies. In 2022, the Garden and Landscape Studies program launched the next phase of this initiative, "Democracy and Landscape: Race, Identity, and Difference," supported by the Mellon Foundation's Humanities in Place initiative. The intention is to catalyze, steward, and disseminate scholarship that reframes the narratives of landscape history by engaging in a deeper inquiry into the legacies of race, identity, and difference as they shape the practice of making place in the land.

In our collective work, we have sought to reimagine the contributions to history of land- and place-based scholarship. This framing grounds how we support communities of scholars and learners as well as public scholarship. It has shaped our thinking about our archives and our library collections, how we share these resources and how we think about access and contributions. In this work, we seek not merely to acknowledge the colonial foundations of landscape history, a discipline grounded in art and architectural history with their complex and contested historiographies, but to challenge and alter those foundations to generate counternarratives.

A landscape framework offers the opportunity to more fully examine the relationship of people and communities to place and land. This is nowhere more clearly manifested than in the 2022 Garden and Landscape Studies symposium "Landscapes in the Making." This was the third symposium in a five-year series exploring what it would

mean to center histories of making landscapes. Building on previous symposia, including "Segregation and Resistance in America's Urban Landscapes" in 2020 and "Land Back: Indigenous Landscapes of Resurgence and Freedom" in 2021, this symposium explored the actual creation of place in the land. The participating scholars considered stories of labor, craft, and stewardship as the work of making landscape, broadly conceived as a social and physical process including labor, craft, maintenance, and stewardship, as well as materials and production. We were interested in how historians might engage an alternative history of landscape creation, of its manifold makings and meanings in various periods and places, with a focus on the people who imagine and shape the land. We wanted scholars to look beyond canonical histories of design and architecture to include the people, particularly socially marginalized communities, who are involved day-to-day in its making and meaning, including commemorating its past as well as planning its future. By expanding our discourse on relationships between people and places, culture and landscape, making and stewarding, we seek to more fully understand the histories of places and, in this particular volume, how making, labor, and care are manifested in place. We are delighted with the essays as they have emerged and are now shared, but understand that this is only a start, a beginning that suggests the richness that is the potential of future scholarship.

Dumbarton Oaks has long been a critical center for the humanities as imagined by Mildred and Robert Bliss, our original patrons. The Garden and Landscape Studies program has sought to shape landscape history scholarship. The Mellon initiative has brought new scholars and audiences to our collective efforts while broadening attention to the landscape humanities as a means of understanding the cultural constructs and built environments of cultures around the globe. This work has contributed to expanding "the field of humanistic inquiry by adding new dimensions . . . of time, space, mapping, [and] method" to the traditional focus on textual materials.[1] This volume builds on efforts to understand how spatial analysis and the study of landscapes are essential to reading and teaching place and land narratives. Further, this work is essential to the teaching of landscape history and how the places we know, teach, and enjoy are made and maintained.

All of this cannot be accomplished without a community of leaders, participants, and advocates. On behalf of our coeditors Stephen Daniels (University of Nottingham) and Dell Upton (University of California, Los Angeles), I note our deep appreciation for the leaders of Dumbarton Oaks and the Mellon Foundation for their support for this important work. Dumbarton Oaks director Tom Cummins and Mellon program director Justin Garrett Moore were essential to the development of this volume. The Garden and Landscape Studies senior fellows, including Elizabeth Meyer (University of Virginia), Beth Hyde (Kean University), Dianne Harris (University of Washington), Vera Candiani (Princeton University), and Philip Deloria (Harvard University), were integral in shaping the symposium. We also acknowledge the critical work of the Mellon Advisory Board, led by Alice Nash (University of Massachusetts Amherst), N. D. B. Connolly (Johns Hopkins University), Willow Lung-Amam (University of Maryland, College Park), Eric Avila (University of California, Los Angeles), Andrea Roberts (University of Virginia), Sarah Lopez (University of Pennsylvania), and Gabrielle Tayac

(George Mason University). Further, the publications staff was essential, including the director of publications Kathy Sparkes and the managing editor Sara Taylor, as well as our program staff, Jane Padelford and Rebecca Goodman. We also want to thank the anonymous reviewers. Finally, we thank our contributors who worked so hard and with such commitment to sharing important scholarship that we hope will, in turn, lead to new questions and discourses.

Thaïsa Way
Director of Garden and Landscape Studies
Dumbarton Oaks

NOTE

1 Anthony Cascardi and Michael Dear, "What Are the Urban Humanities?," *BOOM: The Journal of California* 6, no. 3 (Fall 2016): 7.

6

Cantera Stone and Mexican Masons

The Making of Migratory Landscapes in a Transnational Arena

SARAH LOPEZ

As you drive down the flat and evenly paved roads of Downey, California, dubbed "the Beverly Hills of Latinos," where, in the postwar period, a majority white population has given way to incoming Latinxs who account for 75 percent of the inhabitants today, you may see a pair of rotund baroque-inspired twisted stone columns with double capitals flank a covered doorway, framing a seemingly "Spanish-style" house. Depending on who is looking, the columns may elicit radically different interpretations: they are yet another standard neoclassical element meant to aggrandize a mundane entryway; they also act as a signal that calls out Mexico—its land, its architecture, its urbanisms. As Tony Rodriguez, the salesman of several columns in Downey, argues, "Italians have marble, but it is too bright, it tires you. Cantera is our material."[1] Made from cantera stone, the columns are one example of scores of cantera landscape elements scattered throughout Downey, greater Los Angeles, and the Southwestern United States (Figure 6.1).[2]

This essay seeks to understand how places that are designed for Mexicans (and Mexican Americans) and by Mexicans are made by focusing on cantera stone—on the quarrymen who excavate it, the stonemasons who process it, and the clients who commission it. Building off my previous research, here multisided research design that crosses national boundaries expands my methodological scope to better fit the lived scope of people from Mexico in the United States who have played and continue to play vital roles in building cities and making places. Dell Upton has called upon architectural historians to interrogate the relationships between sites, to "hold them all in mind at once"[3] when investigating the history of one place; sociologists George E. Marcus and Michael Burawoy have argued for expanded case study methodologies where researchers follow the person, thing, or idea to glean the global connections between sites.[4] In addition to multiple sites, it is the

FIGURE 6.1
"Spanish hacienda-style" house. Downey, California, 2022. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

circulation of a material—in our case, cantera—between those sites that also has a history to tell.[5] Arjun Appadurai's argument in the 1980s for "the social life of things" continues to mutate and develop in the work, for example, of Anna Tsing, who urges scholars to attend to "the social worlds of . . . objects in motion."[6] Multi-sited material methods allow us to needle at nationalist frameworks for understanding immigration and urbanist paradigms for understanding cities and here ask: what do so-called transnational spheres[7] mean for labor and materials in the building trades in Mexico and, subsequently, for the production of new architectures and landscapes in the United States?

Social worlds in Mexico and in the United States are co-constituted by both men from Mexico who migrate and by migrating stone. Approximately eleven million people from Mexico live in the United States today (they are the largest group of foreign-born persons), and if we include people of Mexican origin in the United States variously called Mexican American, Chicano/a/x, and Latinx, the number grows to some forty million people, or about 60 percent of the "Hispanic" population as a whole. While one can argue that migration and intimate relations between Mexico and the United States extend back to at least 1848 (if not earlier), it is since the 1980s that a steady increase in emigration from Mexico has resulted in ballooning figures, and this has produced a spade of critical scholarship. Indeed, by 2009, David Fitzgerald was able to argue that Mexico is "a nation of emigrants";[8] today, labor across Mexico's thirty-two states is often compared—by workers themselves—to labor in the United States. And within the building trades in the United States, over half of construction laborers are from Mexico, the next largest group hailing from Central America. How is it that we know so little about the ways that their histories are entangled with histories of the built environment over these last forty or so years? As architectural historians, we are poised to unsettle narratives of unskilled brawn and mere execution, narratives that cast makers as less worthy of our attention.

Capturing voices through an ethnographic approach (business histories, oral histories, and on-site observations) allows me to track a far-reaching network of quarrymen, stonemasons, cantera distributors, and clientele engaged in the business of producing a migrant-driven building sector that caters to Mexican and Mexican American clients in the United States. This essay pulls what economists call "global supply chains" down to the places in which they are enacted and addresses their situated histories, pushing against homogenizing globalization discourses. Here, it is not abstract markets catering to U.S. demands and dollars that explain the history and logic of Mexican places; it is Secundino García, Juan Trenado, and Hugo Sanchez who do so. It is the rock shards—fragments of millennia—that create uneven floors of chipped overburden in dusty workshops. It is the story of labor in Huichapan, Hidalgo, and Degollado, Jalisco—two Mexican towns dedicated to excavation and artisanry, respectively—that reveals how staying in Mexico for some is a choice that is linked to men's struggles to maintain autonomy and freedom in the workplace in the face of endemic and destabilizing emigration.

Here, Mexican men occupy center stage as historic figures in their own right with an archive in material form of their struggle for self-determination: men who—in dialogue with cantera—carry with them an embodied knowledge of place, space, and the environment that, I argue, creates the conditions of possibility for diverse representations for marginalized peoples in the United States. As we will see, what is and is not possible in custom homes in places like Downey relies on the specific social, spatial, and material histories of Mexico's cantera towns, where the idea of making itself enters a binational frame. Huichapan and Degollado explicate how grounded microscale historical analysis can spin out to interrogate the geographically distributed spatial networks that produce places.

Cantera: What Is It?

In Mexico, cantera has been a building material for thousands of years, but it was during Spanish colonization, with the erection of colonial cities, that the majority of the stone known today as "cantera" made its debut. A word that means "quarry" in Spanish, there is much confusion today about what cantera is, in part because the term is not used by geologists and academics, but rather by businessmen to describe a commercial product (Figure 6.2).

Geologically, most cantera quarries share deep historic processes, narrowing the scope of what typically constitutes cantera from "natural stone" to Mexican tuff. In central Mexico, the terrain folds and stretches due to the formation of mountains ranges and plateaus. On the western edge of the mesa (known as the Mexican Plateau) runs seven hundred miles of the Sierra Madre Occidental; the east is flanked by the Sierra Madre Oriental. The south of each range is stitched together by an east-west axis known as the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt, a geologically active range that cuts through Jalisco, Michoacán, Guerrero, México, Morelos, and Puebla. Dramatic mountainous backdrops and vertiginous cliffs define the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt, also known as the "Mexican arc," a turbulent territory constituted by nearly eight thousand volcanic structures that extend from the Mexican Pacific Coast to the Gulf of Mexico. Its name stems from its

FIGURE 6.2
Screenshot of Cantera, Inc., located in Carson City, Nevada, illustrating various cantera stone color samples. Captured by Sarah Lopez.

geometric fact: the arc "is transversally emplaced" over most of the northwest and southeast geologic provinces that define Mexico.[9]

Cantera is a product of violent volcanic explosions, many of which occur in the Mexican arc. The crust that supports life bursts into millions of fragments, magma turns to lava upon contact with the air, and immense clouds of dust form plumes that can rise thousands of meters into the sky, producing cubic miles of ash blown about, arcing toward the ground, where its own heat and weight compress it into tuff, a material defined by diverse mineral compositions and found in a wide array of colors. The stone is textured with a rough finish marked by seemingly random and sporadic embedded flecks of related matter like quartz. Fairly soft and porous, the rock can be easily cut and worked.[10] Its unique composition makes it recognizable to a discerning eye (Figures 6.3 and 6.4).

It is in the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt, where lava flows of different geologic periods are interbedded with one another, that one finds much of the building material used to erect Mexico's colonial cities, such as San Luis Potosí, Guanajuato, Guadalajara, San Miguel de Allende, Zacatecas, and Querétaro. According to Mexican geologists working on cantera or tuff, as early as the second half of the sixteenth century, rock was transported within a geographic radius of about one hundred kilometers.[11] Whereas precolonial quarries used for building Maya and later Aztec monuments harvested different types of rocks available in nearby settlements (tuff, limestone, sandstone), the architecture characterizing Spanish colonization primarily utilized volcanic tuff for ashlar and

FIGURE 6.3 Diagrammatic map of Mexico, showing the location of cantera quarries, many clustered in the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt. Map by Roberto Escamilla.

FIGURE 6.4
A house facade clad in multicolored cantera tiles. Degollado, Jalisco, 2022. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

masonry facades. So, what is cantera? It is a composite of the lively crust that furnishes human settlement, and a record of explosion, that for thousands of years in places like Mitla, Oaxaca (a Pre-Columbian site built with cantera)—but more commonly for hundreds of years in places like Los Altos de Jalisco—has been imbricated into the very fabric of building Mexico.

The Production of Migrant Landscapes, Part 1: Harvesting

While quarries are often discussed as sites of excavation that rely on labor exploitation and produce toxic landscapes, here I will consider quarries as processes of cleaving where bedrock/ground becomes portable stone, as the moment when rocks' entanglements with weather, water, flora, and substructure shift to an entanglement with human technologies. I will also consider how this shift creates new social worlds.

In the northern region of the arc, the town of Huichapan in the state of Hidalgo is famous for its eighteen colors of cantera stone. In the 1960s, Huichapan did not quarry stone; rather, the economy was based in agriculture. By the 1980s, there were approximately five quarries; by 2000 about fifteen; and today, it is estimated that there are between forty-five and fifty quarries and workshops.[12] Indeed, today Huichapan, Hidalgo, is known nationally as a major exporter of cantera stone to both national and international markets.

One of, if not *the*, earliest quarries commenced excavation in the 1960s and is still in operation today. Anotolio Callejas Sáenz, born in 1918 and died in 1989, was described by his son as a man from "el campo, el campo, el campo" (the fields, the fields, the fields).[13] In 1955, along with two brothers, Anotolio managed to buy land. Not long after, a prospector recalled as a "man who rode the trains" saw a ravine below the railroad tracks that exhibited high-quality rose-colored stone. He proposed a partnership—and provided the capital—to extract the stone. The business started small; workers collected rock along the streambed to be cut into *adoquín*, or flooring tiles. But cantera was (and is) a perfect material for a regional Mexican modernism; in the mid-1960s, standardized yet hand-cut pieces—twenty by forty by two centimeters—of *adoquín rosa* were commissioned for Félix Candela's Palacio de los Deportes in Mexico City. With this notable commission, Huichapan's cantera assumed a national stage; Sáenz described "hundreds of workers" pouring into town.[14]

Upon the death of Anotolio Callejas Sáenz in 1989, his seventy *hectáreas* of land was divided among three sons; his four daughters were cut out of this patriarchal land-tenure turnover entirely. One of Anotolio's sons, Don Jesús Sáenz, still operates his 23.3 *hectáreas* of land today in a business called De Canteras Huichapan with his three sons who manage sales, the quarry, and the *taller*, or workshop (Figure 6.5).[15] For Don Jesús, large commissions continued to mark the 1980s and 1990s as periods of growth. Rose-colored *adoquín* was ordered for Monterrey's nationally renowned Macroplaza. For two months, Don Jesús and his workers made two trips daily to drop off product in San Luis Potosí where it was then transported to Nuevo León. De Canteras Huichapan excavated and processed gray cantera from nearby Querétaro for the Museo de Antropología de Xalapa. For one year, Don Jesús and his team drove a loaded flatbed truck twice weekly to provide the

FIGURE 6.5
A framed photograph of Anotolio Callejas Sáenz held by Don Jesús Sáenz (right) and his son (left). Huichapan, Hidalgo, 2019. Don Jesús's grandchildren are not pictured here but also work at the quarry. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

facade's elegant cladding. In addition to the quarry, in 2000 the family opened a workshop near town to process the stone using industrial machinery. At peak times, seventy men excavated the mountainside while fifty men used large gantry-mounted, water-cooled radial saws to cut dimensional pieces.

Quarries are a part of any stone building's origin story. Monumental architecture has its roots in monumental excavation efforts defined by large-scale and highly coordinated human efforts. Quarries are also places with social histories and social relationships married to their geologic logic. Geographer and quarryman David A. Paton notes: "It is in the quarry—where the fiery upheavals and material absorptions of a molten intrusion are evident, the weathering and abrasions occurring over unimaginable millennia persist, and the puny (in comparison) yet comprehensive mechanised dismantling of structural integrity is in action—that surface relations become a critical mode of engagement with productions of place."[16] As a built-environment historian invested in the production of towns, cities, and landscapes, my "site" of analysis is generally found on the ground, stretching across the horizon. Paton's orientation assumes a vertical approach that cuts into the belly of the ground. The "mechanised dismantling of structural integrity" refers to people taking apart "the surface," also known as the quarry face. Dismantling or cleaving rock from cliff wall is a moment where human social time interfaces with geologic time to create social dynamics unique to the quarry world.

Thirty kilometers outside the city of Huichapan and another fifteen kilometers up a winding dirt road that snakes through a hillside, one finds De Canteras Huichapan's quarry world: a massive open-pit quarry that stretches out beyond the crest of a cliff wall. The stone is orange, and for cantera, the grain is relatively smooth and regular. The bright

FIGURE 6.6
Both overburden and excavated boulders are organized into a spatial logic that builds a quarry world. Huichapan, Hidalgo, 2019. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

contrasts of orange stone against a line of green *nopales* and mesquite trees stretching across the horizon with blue skies above underscore a feeling of arrival. One can identify various rock outcroppings dotting the expanse, places that have been prospected and surveyed over time, tested for stone quality.

From the quarry crest, looking out and down over fifty years of continuous excavation, rituals have created an ecology of quarry-related knowledge evident in well-worn paths, clusters of rock organized by size and shape, and decades of overburden artfully arranged. The hard rock quarry required some degree of what quarry lexicon terms "primary fragmentation," the use of dynamite and expanding cement to initiate excavation.[17] But there is no remaining evidence of an initial blast. Rather, the quarry's twenty-five hectares, or over sixty-one acres, are organized into areas—large regular-shaped boulders collect in one corner, and irregular piles of overburden are scrapped in another. Overburden is stacked to create retaining walls, to pave the haul road, and to build multiple structures found in this hive of extraction (Figure 6.6).

Slabs create enclosures that shelter tools, trash, quarrymen's personal belongings, and machinery. Scrap is repurposed as benches and tables. Rough stacked stone is mixed with scrap metal, tire treads, and a thatched-style roof protecting a large firepit for warmth.

FIGURE 6.7
Overburden covers every inch of ground and miraculously lifts skyward to create a small, sacred building topped with a stone cross. Huichapan, Hidalgo, 2019. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

Another shelter boasts hand-hewn timber columns and a lightweight wooden canopy sheltering a firepit used for an impromptu meal. Overburden is even imbued with sacred meaning, stacked to make a small *capilla*, or sacred space, topped with a stone cross used every third of May to celebrate the Día de la Santa Cruz, or what has also become known as the Día del Albañil (Day of the Vernacular Builder) (Figure 6.7).

All these structures and areas frame the main activity and drama of the quarry occurring on a twenty-meter cliff wall. Active excavation follows a stair-stepped pattern; the oldest and steepest excavations cluster on one end of the wall, and the newer, more shallow excavations are found on the other. Extracted boulders are hauled by double-derrick trucks either to another part of the quarry for processing or to De Canteras Huichapan's workshop forty-five kilometers away. The floor is littered with tires used as pry bar fulcrums, hoisting buffers, and cushions for falling rock. Looking over this epic earthwork, Don Jesús noted: "Es mi herencia" (It's my inheritance).[18]

The social ecology of the quarry is defined by a hierarchy of labor and laborers that roughly maps onto time spent learning the secrets of *these particular* outcroppings: some have worked here for only a year, others for over twenty. In "bad times, like now," about sixteen men work the quarry.[19] Many live in the nearby pueblos of their birth, where employment options include the quarry, *el campo*, or emigration to the United States. As noted above, in the quarry "the surface relations [of the quarry face] become a critical mode of engagement with productions of place"; the twenty-meter cliff wall is a wall of surface relations that have been learned over decades of excavation. Men stand on homemade ladders in teams of two to survey the lower wall for splitting; they scout for horizontal

FIGURE 6.8 AND 6.9 Teams of two scout the quarry face for weaknesses; years of excavation reveal a stair-stepped excavation pattern. Huichapan, Hidalgo, 2019. Photographs by Sarah Lopez.

drill locations; they mark the stone to identify the rift; they follow the visible joints and cracks down the quarry face; they hammer wedges along the desired future face of the wall at the bedding plane to create fissures; they drill holes approximately six inches apart aligned with vertical joints; and they split the stone from the face of the wall. Shifting from the technicality of rock splitting, they double as haulers, moving steel buckets full of dust and debris away from the site of extraction to increase visibility and clear workspace. Like rock whisperers, with embodied knowledge that reengineers the landscape, the men follow a logic and precision to the spacing of the drill bits, tracing the visible joints and cracks down the quarry face (Figures 6.8 and 6.9).

At the top of this hierarchy is one of Don Jesús's sons, Alejandro, the quarry foreman or manager, who also operates the truck. Especially large wall fragments may require the aid of the derrick pulley truck that's used as a tool: Alejandro revs the engine, pulling rope tied to the derrick pulley and looped around a cliff shard, prying the earth's bedrock apart.

Far from finished, fresh splits migrate over to dressing stations activated by another set of skills. Bull set hammers and chisels are used to remove large portions from large boulders. Wedges are added to these tools to shape irregular rock into regular cubes.

Chisels with varying tips and a collection of hammers are swung in repeated movements, creating an orchestral rhythm, an audio backdrop to the scene of extraction. A relatively old Ingersoll Rand generator sits on the quarry crest, electrifying hoists, hammer drills, saws, lighting, and water pumps. In this way, large channels are quickly drilled down the face of the wall. The hum of the generator up high and the rumble of the diesel truck down low intermittently overpower the more melodic clinking and banging along the quarry floor.

At the quarry, Alison Leitch's dictum—the "history of mining is after all also the history of mining bodies"—is evident and visceral.[20] The scouting, pushing, pulling, hauling, wedging, hammering, lifting, and rolling are coupled with an understanding of the cliff wall itself, with stone quality and with stone workability that happens at the greatest levels of specificity. Generally, the best stone is found at the top two meters of the cliff wall; the "good" stone in the eighteen meters below is eventually sorted into numerous categories based on future workability and sale value. Quarrymen's embodied knowledge is learned on-site. The most experienced are about forty-five years old, with some twenty years of experience. They work "directly in the quarry bank, exploiting the mine."[21]

Decades of experience are evidence of the decision made thousands of times to return to the quarry for workdays that begin at 8 a.m. and end at 5 p.m., with a half-hour break around 11 a.m. and an hour for lunch. In a place where "[e]verything ages quickly . . . including people,"[22] muscular and nerve damage, missing fingers, extreme sun exposure, and hearing loss are some of the known health effects of this work. And yet, as quarry operator and once-worker Hugo noted: "I feel satisfaction. I like to see the whole process from the quarry to here [the workshop], getting it cut. Our work with cantera is very noble. We are not selling milk!"[23]

De Canteras Huichapan is a family business with limited capital where familial wealth is locked into the land itself and where, according to Don Jesús, neither his family nor their workers are "getting rich" off the business. In 2019, experienced quarrymen made about three thousand pesos per week, with those in entry-level positions earning one thousand pesos per week (roughly $157 and $52, at the 2019 exchange rate). While only some of their product is destined for the United States (most of it reaches national markets), quarry workers are aware of the wages their countrymen earn in the United States for both quarry and service-sector work.

In a Texas quarry, owner Martin Aguado, from San Luis Potosí, hires approximately seventy to one hundred migrant workers from Mexico through H-2B visas yearly. Their visas expiring every December, the men are forced to return to Mexico for at least three months; at this time, a new group rotates in. In the late 1990s, Aguado, a teenager, worked as a "cutter" in Texas quarries, a grueling task with repeated lifting, sorting, and slicing that puts undue strain on backs, shoulders, and arms and for which he was paid twenty-five dollars a day for eight-hour days. Today his young employees from Guanajuato, Jalisco, Mexico City, and Hidalgo get paid fifteen to twenty dollars an hour: "Nobody gets paid minimum wage."[24] Not long after Hugo described feeling satisfaction from quarry work, and its noted superiority to selling milk, he described the operation's underside: "This business enslaves one, it is like a kind of enslavement. I don't know if I will stay. It is so stressful. The guys don't want to work. They want to come for two days and then take a

break. Or work a half day. Remittances have created a big problem for Mexico. They go to the US and then come back and don't want to work."[25] De Canteras Huichapan, in continuous operation since the 1960s, is increasingly competing for workers and with wages found in the United States.

The Production of Migrant Landscapes, Part 2: Shaping

Unlike Huichapan, Hidalgo, known nationally for extraction and standardized products, on the northwestern edge of the Mexican arc, Degollado, Jalisco, is where boulders become objects, where the bottled potential of amorphous rock is fixed into final forms. Referred to as the "Mexican Capital of Carvers of Cantera," Degollado's twenty-one thousand inhabitants live among architectural elements, sculptural objects, and edifices made from cantera stone that broadcast local skills. One is greeted at the town's western entrance with an *arco de ingreso* (gateway) made entirely out of *cantera piñon*. With generic neoclassicist finishes, pilastered columns support a double-arched cantera billboard emblazoned with the town's shield and topped with the intercessor, the Virgen de Guadalupe. At the town's eastern entrance, a larger than life-sized sculpture of a *cantero* carving a small, naked woman with a lump hammer and chisel stands on a pyramidal platform that reads, "Bienvenidos a Degollado: Tierra de Artesanos" (Figures 6.10 and 6.11). In town, two different open-air museums boast almost two dozen large sculptures made out of cantera in a range of colors. An aging cantera gazebo anchors the central plaza, whose floor is an expanse of cantera tiles; historic churches and civic buildings abut the plaza, showcasing cantera's deep history as a local building material. In sum, Degollado is a cantera wonderland with a complex and surprising array of objects on display.

And yet, surprisingly, the "tradition" of locals carving and sculpting is relatively new. According to the town's historians, in the 1960s a booster invited master *canteros* from the neighboring La Piedad in Michoacán to build arches around the plaza and to teach locals how to work with the stone.[26] In part, the booster was motivated by the much older cantera masonry exhibited in Degollado's cathedrals and churches, a skill that had been apparently lost for more than one hundred years. After learning (or reigniting) the trade from masons in Michoacán, in the 1970s a small number of workshops opened in the center of town. A decade later, Degollado's governor financed a ring road for highway traffic and roadside workshops. By 1980, eight workshops relocated to the town's periphery. In the 1990s, Degollado saw an increase in the production of cantera due to *el mercado norteamericano*. This period inaugurated a golden age for *canteros* who recall that "before, the gringos came with their cars to get whatever we had in our shops. They would come with two or three trailers and check out what we had and fill them up."[27] Buyers would scoop up fountains, columns, and chimneys, asking only "What do you have?"[28] rather than the price.

With abundant clients and commissions, *canteros* broadened their material palettes from the local color (*café* Degollado) to cantera stone from distant quarries: *rosa* Tarimoro, *blanca* Bañadero, *café* Higuera, and *blanca* Huichapan. Carvers eventually brought a popular limestone known as Ribera Beige from the state of Puebla and even began bringing stone from "our neighboring country in the North, *la Lighstone Texas* [Texas limestone]."[29]

FIGURES 6.10
The neoclassical details in the Degollado inaugural arch represents the town. Degollado, Jalisco, 2021. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

FIGURES 6.11
A monumental *cantero* lionizes the town's artisans. Degollado, Jalisco, 2021. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

By the end of the 1990s, municipal officials and civic boosters, alongside *canteros*, began brainstorming ways to elevate craft in Degollado to the realm of artistic production. Ten years in the making, in 1998 the town opened the Museo de la Cantera a Cielo Abierto, which crystallized "many people's dream[s]."[30] Twelve artists, eight from Mexico and four from Spain, Uruguay, Chile, and Cuba, designed pieces that local *canteros* then realized at an urban scale. This exhibition spurred a creative and experimental period not seen before or since. Local artisans began designing their own works of art, eleven of which are displayed along the main road toward the plaza. *Canteros* were interviewed for local books, photographs were taken for regional newspapers, and according to townspeople, Degollado assumed a position in the world as the town where "the stones speak."[31] In 2008, the Comisión de Cultura del Congreso del Estado declared the municipality the "Capital Estatal del Labrado en Cantera."[32] That same year, churning out hundreds of Virgens de Guadalupe, Juan Pablo IIs, and miniature animals, Degollado had an estimated 105 workshops employing two thousand people, with eighty-five percent of their product bound for Canada and the United States.[33]

This growth carried Degollado through the peso devaluation and economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s in Mexico, but it did not inure the town and workshops to the vagaries of the economic crisis in the United States. In both print ("la crisis inmobiliaria del mercado norteamericano disminuyó en sus compras"[34]) and conversation ("Now the gringos, since 2008, have fear of narcos, and the economy is bad"[35]), the economic downturn in the United States is identified by inhabitants as the cause of a major turning point: by 2015, Degollado's 105 workshops shrank to 49.[36] By 2020, additional shops closed; it is estimated that "now [Degollado has] about thirty percent of what it once [did]."[37]

While at the outset it appears that Degollado's economic product is yoked to the rise and fall of market forces in the United States, the relations are more complex as individual *canteros*' histories, as well as townspeople more generally, are tangled up with emigration and return.

Secundino García, referred to as "Cundo," is a renowned maestro in Degollado who has realized several public sculptures in town, including an approximately twelve-foot Emiliano Zapata for a monument to Mexican independence and the Mexican Revolution. Like other masters comparable to his seventy years of age, he makes a living carving religious figures and animals, about half of which are destined for the United States. Using skills learned from his father and reproducing the father-son apprenticeship model in his *taller chico*, Cundo works alongside two sons and another highly skilled *cantero* in an outdoor studio shaded by a shed roof and blanketed with fallen shards (Figure 6.12). While approximately 50 percent of their work is destined for the United States, a large portion of the remaining 50 percent is for *norteños*' houses (migrant homes) in Degollado and its surrounding ranches.

Cundo masterfully works the stone like paint on a canvas. Working from low-resolution, two-dimensional WhatsApp images sent in exuberant text strings, Cundo marks the stone with red colored pencils, fearlessly envisioning and then chinking human-scale three-dimensional forms. Relying mostly on the same tools used by colonial sculptors from Spain—handheld, variously tipped chisels and lump hammers—Cundo added electric tools and compressors to his toolkit as late as 2017. Working a seven-foot stone

FIGURE 6.12
Secundino "Cundo" García's outdoor workshop. Degollado, Jalisco, 2021. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

statue of Jesus, Cundo admonished: "Don't call us sculptors. . . . I say no, they are figures. Sculptors are famous, that is not what we do here. We make figures" (Figure 6.13).[38]

This "figure maker" who is revered in Degollado for his outsized talent has worked in the United States in what is erroneously categorized as unskilled wage labor, leaving his hometown "three or four times" to work in restaurants. "Thirty to forty years ago when I went, we crossed the desert and wrote letters home." He tried to find work in cantera in the 1980s and 1990s, but "there wasn't any then."[39] Cundo's right-hand man in the workshop worked in Chili's restaurants for eleven years from 1994 to 2005, washing dishes and chopping vegetables. He also sought cantera work in 1994 in Tennessee, but "there was no cantera work."[40] Cundo's children have not only learned from his skills as a sculptor: they have also learned from his emigration history. In 2016, three of his nine children—one daughter and two sons—hired a coyote and crossed the U.S.–Mexico boundary in search of restaurant work (Figure 6.14).

FIGURE 6.13
Secundino "Cundo" García carves Jesus out of Texas limestone that upon completion will be shipped back to Texas. Degollado, Jalisco, 2021. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

For Cundo, ideas of relative freedom are thrown into relief when comparing his life in the United States to his current situation in Mexico. He recalls working in a restaurant on an army base in Texas, trapped in a hot kitchen for eight hours and then shocked by the cold walk-in refrigerator, a contrast that eventually rendered one side of his face numb. Quite simply, he summed up: "There you are too closed in. Here you are freer."[41] Quarry workers in the nearby town of Escolásticas agree. They recall time in "Missouri, North Carolina, Colorado, Texas . . . working as gardeners and laying pipes. . . . [Working] in the US, I was illegal. . . . I didn't like the pressure, no opportunity to talk, to relax."[42]

FIGURE 6.14
Secundino "Cundo" García's two sons at his studio; when apprenticing, they start with the rays of sun emanating from the Virgin Mary. Degollado, Jalisco, 2021. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

For some, feeling "too closed in" in the United States is a form of indebted servitude. Many youths who emigrate from Degollado, like Cundo's children, find themselves locked into long-term commitments and ongoing debt. Some *norteños* from Degollado who have opened successful restaurants come back to Degollado "to get youth to work for them in their restaurants."[43] The restaurateur pays the coyote; in 2021, it cost between twelve and fifteen thousand dollars to be guided across the U.S.–Mexico desert on foot. The *jóvenes* (young people) then pay off this loan by working in their restaurant, a debt that can vary depending on several external factors like the health of oneself and one's family or the cost of living in the new city. While paying the employer back, an emergency or death in Mexico that requires their return can exponentially deepen their debt.

Enjoying comparative freedoms in Mexico is coupled with meager salaries. Master sculptor Juan Trenado did not migrate to the United States to wash dishes and make burgers; he was recruited with his brother to work in stonemasonry in Texas (Figure 6.15). Juan described working from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. with no breaks. In both 1999 and 2009, he went to Texas for six months. Today, he sets longer hours for himself (from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.), but his day is broken up by breaks, a leisurely lunch, pick-up soccer, and casual conversation. He accepts or rejects commissions and negotiates prices. In 2019, he was paid thirty thousand pesos, or roughly $1,500 (at the 2019 exchange rate), to sculpt a life-sized seated religious figure that took him two months to complete (Figure 6.16). For an eight-hour workday, not counting his breaks, he will earn four dollars an hour for a five-day workweek carving this figure. While this is well above Mexico's minimum wage of 141.7 pesos or $7.10 daily,

FIGURE 6.15
Juan Trenado and his brother in Juan's studio. Escolásticas, Querétaro, 2019. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

FIGURE 6.16
Juan Trenado at work roughing out the arm of a seated religious figure. Escolásticas, Querétaro, 2019. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

it is well below what he made as a sculptor working in Texas, yet neither brother has any interest in returning to the United States.[44]

An elderly *cantero*, Ismael Mendoza, who runs a roadside shop and who worked on Degollado's central fountain back "before there were workshops, before the town had electricity," exclaimed: "I am very proud of what I have built—the yard, the gallery, the house. It is very nice to see a figure emerge from the stone—each person has their chance to realize their capacity!"[45] Self-determination and the personal satisfaction and growth associated with artistic production are attainable for some and have become a critical historical narrative of the town at large: "In each work, the artisans project the heart of the pueblo with their hands, it's the magic of knowing how to form the materials, embodying a feeling, a trade, a tradition, to create a unique piece that represents our history and from that the importance of conserving this legacy for future generations."[46]

Even so, the topic of emigration causes deep ambivalence locally as individual relationships with and dependencies on money are weighed against the cost of sustained geographic distance among family members and fraying *cantero* apprenticeships. Shopworkers like Jorge García bemoaned: "All of our sons have left! There is nobody left to work here [in Degollado]!"[47] More pointedly: "All my kids are working in restaurants in Ohio, California, Franklin, Tennessee!"[48] Amid rapid-fire discussion about communicating with his children through WhatsApp, Cundo sadly joked: "I know them through their faces and their faces have changed."[49] But at the same time, and sometimes in the same breath, fathers with distant children express gratitude that *norteños* bolster their business. In 2021, Jorge's workshop, just down the road from Cundo's, was working on

FIGURE 6.17
Jorge García in front of his workshop, with black cantera bucking-horse sculptures behind large boulders that await processing. Degollado, Jalisco, 2021. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

twelve six-foot horses in cantera *negra* commissioned by a restaurateur in the United States for his ranch in Degollado (Figure 6.17). Astonished, he exclaimed: "We can have work for three or four years doing a ranch of one *norteño*!"[50]

Representation as a Material Process: Keeping Cantera Alive

Pulling back from the hands that sculpt and mold volcanic tuff into galloping stallions, this essay's third and final section centers on commissioning—on which, on how, and on what it means that individuals from Mexico seek out and finance the production of cantera elements for homes and businesses across the Southwestern United States. The repeated action of individuals commissioning and financing cantera accumulates and coalesces into a larger pattern that illuminates one of the mechanisms through which specific meanings get assigned to specific materials. Following cantera to the people who want to live among it reveals how personal relationships with the stone act on more than individual, social, and cultural registers to include the logistical, infrastructural, and geopolitical realms of possibility enabled by transnational networks of making.

Cantera distributor Tony Rodriguez, motivated to bring "a piece of Mexico to the US,"[51] supplies custom cantera pieces to the Ortiz brothers in Downey, California, where this essay began. Over the course of some twenty years, starting in the 1970s and lasting until the 1990s, eleven Ortiz brothers migrated to the United States from Mexico City. The eldest eight were born on a small ranch outside of Degollado, Jalisco, where the family made a living dry farming. Their father also worked as a bracero for almost the entire length of the U.S.–Mexico guest-worker program, which lasted from 1942 to 1964, periodically traveling "north" to work in California's agricultural fields.[52] Following the eldest brother, eventually all eleven settled in Santa Paula, California, the same agricultural town where their father was hired as a bracero, before relocating to Los Angeles.

Over the course of forty years, from 1983 to 2023, each brother was able to open and maintain at least one El Pescador restaurant across the greater Los Angeles region. Owned independently but sharing one menu, the restaurants are located in predominantly Latinx neighborhoods, such as the original El Pescador #1 located in Bell Gardens, where over ninety-five percent of the population identifies at Latinx. As Gustavo Ortiz Jr. was told by his late uncle: "When we owned El Pescador #1, we didn't have enough money for an apartment or house *and* the restaurant, so we pulled out the banquettes and slept in the booths. In the morning we would wake up, put the tables back, and go to work."[53] The second youngest brother, Victor, recalled of this early period: "Most of my brothers started in Bell Gardens. We were putting in a hundred hours a week."[54] At age nineteen, Horacio arrived: "I washed plates until my arms burned from the soap."[55]

El Pescador #1 now occupies a purpose-built structure erected in the early 2000s. Sitting at the intersection of Eastern Avenue and Lubec Street, what would be a severe double-height corner is recessed. A Spanish tile roof is broken into three pieces by two faux buttresses; above the roofline, the name of the restaurant and pictorial logo are plastered into an arched parapet. Once white, the building is now olive green, mustard yellow,

and burnt red; irregularly shaped cantera tiles embedded in red-painted mortar line the base, creating a stately backdrop for freshly planted magueys.[56] While not easily visible from a moving car, patrons from Mexico in this "immigrant neighborhood" will likely notice the cantera and magueys upon arrival. Once inside, bright white walls, Saltillo tile floors, wooden booths, and photographs of Degollado's and Jalisco's agave fields are punctuated by floating red balloons (Figures 6.18 and 6.19).

While patterns are evident across the brothers' fourteen restaurants—such as rows of agave lining the buildings' entrances, cantera tiles plastered at the base of the facades, and auto-oriented high-rise signs that beam the restaurant's emblem—Victor Ortiz' El Pescador in Ontario, California, stands out: "I wanted the Mexican people to have a Disneyland. To bring this ambiance, to bring in clients that identified with Mexican art and architecture. You can't get this at Home Depot. Everything was made by hand. When I touch the stone, I touch the many people who made it."[57] Creating a thematized environment that is simultaneously rooted in Mexican labor, materials, and craft, Victor remodeled and expanded El Pescador with a keen awareness of his context as a person of Mexican descent who became an adult in California (Figure 6.20).

While technically "más de California de Mexico" with fourteen years in Mexico and some forty in the United States, Victor is shaped by his arrival to a new place without the English language and without "dollars"—coming to the United States meant learning about the commonplace abject treatment of Spanish-speaking workers. Now, after forty years and success, as he put it: "You should show to the *gueritos* [whities], *quién es quién*. This area is Caltrans. I put in all of this agave."[58] El Pescador in Ontario is separated from a freeway on-ramp by a wide berm owned by Caltrans, the California public transit and highway system. Incrementally from 2008 to 2015, Victor planted maguey in the berm; today, mature maguey cacti neatly planted in serial rows conjure Jalisco's tequila farms (Figure 6.21). Beyond the cactus garden, El Pescador's exterior skin is covered in cantera—tiles, columns, triple-tiered fountains, window trim, and cornices abound. In the restaurant's parking lot, a contemporary rendering of the legendary churchyard cross of San Agustín de Acolman, which dates from the sixteenth century, anchors a planting strip.

The Ortiz brothers also use cantera in their personal homes. Eliazer Ortiz (known as Don Chel, owner of El Pescador #1) distinguishes his sprawling one-story corner-lot house with cantera detailing. While admiring his baroque-inspired twisted stone columns with double capitals, he discussed the purpose and meaning of the column, explaining its origin story as Greek and Roman and Mexican (see above, Figure 6.1). When walking through his house, he asked me: "Who's not in love with Spanish hacienda style?" The fountain in the backyard is "ten thousand pounds" and moved with "the force of man," a fountain that "will remain for one hundred years. People will say, 'My papa put it, my *abuelo* put it'" (Figure 6.22).[59]

Sitting nearby in his own garden, Horacio—Don Chel's brother—explained the feeling that an object in cantera ignites: "The fountain doesn't talk but it gives me pleasure. The rock makes me happy. The garden conjures a fast versus a slow life." He also asked me, "Do you know what a lot of work is? No, you don't. I worked all the time. We are migrants, we did it without papers, without language, we wanted to increase our standard of living. . . . Our

FIGURES 6.18 AND 6.19
El Pescador #1 in Bell Gardens is owned by Eliazer Ortiz and was remodeled in the early 2000s. Bell Gardens, California, 2022. Photographs by Sarah Lopez.

FIGURE 6.20
Lavish cantera detailing clads the exterior skin of El Pescador. Ontario, California, 2022. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

FIGURE 6.21
Victor Ortiz planted scores of maguey between the freeway on-ramp and his restaurant. Ontario, California, 2022. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

FIGURE 6.22
Don Chel's Downey house with a stately cantera fountain in the courtyard. Downey, California, 2011. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

fathers were *campesinos*, we were another level better, now another level. . . . We had a dream, and as soon as we achieved it, we had another dream, and another . . . but we still need to work, we don't only bring cantera, we also bring family."[60] These representational possibilities linked to extensive networks articulate a new regional specificity: according to Tony, an "estilo rustico-mexicano-español-americano-californiano."[61]

The Ortiz brothers' artifacts allow us to ask the question: who gets to represent and in what spaces? Back in 1995, Dolores Hayden argued that material representations in urban space give shape, voice, and presence to life histories of historically marginalized groups and can even result in the acquisition of political power.[62] Making oneself visible in the context of migration asserts the right to exist in place—or as Genevieve Carpio, Clara Irazábal, and Laura Pulido argue, a right to the suburb[63]—to be a part of the decision-making processes that shape one's future trajectory regardless of citizenship. Cantera columns in Downey may have social and political ambitions, and new visibilities can refashion peoples' own subjective understandings of themselves, not only their rights but also their responsibilities.

It is here, in the politically and spatially relevant choice to present cantera to suburban Los Angeles, that we can also interrogate the choice to commission generic neocolonial ornament such as columns that carry Spanish colonial, pre–Mexican Revolution, and hacendado connotations. During the turn of the twentieth century in the Southwest, the so-called Spanish Colonial Revival style was largely invented by Anglo boosters, architects, and developers looking to distinguish the Western United States from the neocolonial East, to construct a regional style, and to deal with the complex juridical history of empire and land in places like California. Abigail A. Van Slyck argues: "Spanish Colonial Revivals appropriated the forms of alien groups, using them as foils against which to measure the assumed superiority of Anglo-Saxon culture."[64] Phoebe S. K. Young discusses on the one hand the "illusion" that Spanish-Mexican influences "arose organically from the region's nature and history" while, on the other hand, they also "establish[ed] a perception of California's Spanish past that defined its Mexican heritage and people as foreign, outsiders to the California dream."[65] Today, Spanish-style architecture—if we dare to dwell in the dream—is a legacy style, one result of settler colonialism. The triumphal implementation of red-tiled roofs, white stucco walls, Saltillo tile floors, and iron details by Anglos can be read as an attempt to encapsulate a people and a place.

In the 2020s, over a hundred years after the Spanish Colonial Revival style blossomed in places like Los Angeles, the Ortiz brothers modify "Spanish" with the term "hacienda" in their description of a "hacienda style." Far from a style, hacienda is a system of land tenure that lasted for over three hundred years in New Spain and into Mexican independence, one that depended on the exploitation of temporary Indigenous labor, debt peonage, and enslaved African labor. While there is no one "hacienda style" or "hacienda type," there is in Mexico a legacy of servitude and subjugation, one that Mexico's revolution at the dawn of the twentieth century is credited with disrupting, resulting in a swelling of the so-called peasant class of small-scale farmers who were granted small plots of land once owned by hacendados, a class to which the Ortiz family belonged. Emigration from Mexico meant a future; it meant the potential to exit the "peasant class."

After forty years of work and success, the brothers can and do harvest the same material used to build many of Mexico's haciendas to build their own "hacienda styles." The invention of Spanish Colonial Revival by Anglos in the early twentieth century and the maturation of the so-called hacienda style in New Spain and postindependence Mexico can now be compared to the invention of a migrant style at the turn of the twenty-first century. Let us think through these inversions of peonage and servitude. Let us think about how transregional economic and material systems allow so-called migrants to reassert and reposition themselves vis-à-vis class to new urban audiences and ask: Is there a critique in cantera landscapes? And if so, what is it? Are these normative landscapes that announce wealth or the bases for coalescing an urban ethnic solidarity?

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Thinking from the volcano to the quarry to the workshop to the suburb sheds light on how racialized identities manifest in place. Mexicans have a long and complex history of racialization: from the *casta* system in New Spain that placed enslaved Africans and then Indios or Indigenous on the bottom of hierarchies topped with the whiteness of Spaniards, to the legal categories created by the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo when Mexicans in the newly minted U.S. territory became "white by treaty," a status that—as Ramón A. Gutiérrez reminds us—light-skinned Mexicans in the Southwest would defend throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[66] Migration has always intersected with these evolving racialized hierarchies in complex ways. The continuous in-migration to the United States of Spanish-speaking Mexicans and then, increasingly, Central Americans in service-sector jobs throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries contributed to tension zones and debates about deserving versus undeserving Mexicans/Latinos/Latinx migrants versus Mexican Americans versus Americans, citizen versus noncitizen, divides that sometimes do and sometimes do not map onto a brown/white binary. The Latinx identity, Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo argues, is a history "of variegated and contested processes of becoming and unbecoming—consumers, citizens, taxpayers, voters, labor force, criminals, terrorists."[67] The building projects of so-called migrants contribute to their own arguments about who they understand themselves to be (arguments when and where the question "Who are you?" was never asked), as well as who they are becoming.

For the Ortiz brothers, the use of cantera points toward the binational scope of those arguments: building an expensive "forever house" with rusty pink cantera trim announces arrival in the United States and to a new socioeconomic class but simultaneously exhibits enduring ties to a Mexican homeplace. In Downey, their land, their geology, their references are *present*. But the column is not only about re-*presenting*. To understand its importance, it is necessary to *hold multiple places in one's mind at once*: it is the social and labor histories of Huichapan and Degollado that carry potential for human creativity and ingenuity, potential that is necessary to create alternative and diverse representations for marginalized peoples elsewhere.

Imagining the processes and people from the quarry to the yard that make a column possible, if made by hand, I estimate it takes twenty-four people to make one third of the column's shaft (so twenty-four people who repeat the same works three times) and

FIGURE 6.23
"Degollado: Salí de tí pero tú nunca de mí" (Degollado: I left you, but you never left me). Degollado, Jalisco, 2021. Photograph by Sarah Lopez.

another seventeen to transport it to and install it in the United States.[68] Carvers are paid approximately three to four thousand pesos ($150 to $200) for a Doric column in Mexico (double that for a spiral one); in the United States, clients pay $450 to $500, a markup mostly consumed by the costs of hauling. As the most frequently commissioned object, the column's conservative aesthetic supports ample social and spatial networks that carry a radical and heretofore unexploited potential to stand ground, to stake claim, and to make space. Investigating the quarry, the workshop, and the house as a continuum reveals the ways in which so-called creative genius and potential in architecture are found in the realm of material production and in the embodied knowledge of laborers; the human networks and relationships that shape building elements inform making itself. Restated, the conditions of possibility for objects and architectural artifacts are delimited by the realms of production. And here, those who have been (and in some cases continue to be) spatially and materially marginalized are in control of these realms.

I end with an extraordinary sculpture that sits in Degollado, just next to the *portales* at the edge of the plaza (Figure 6.23). A sculpture that depicts a man donning a tailored suit, exiting his beloved hometown with his life in a briefcase. His wife and child are shrouded, protected, left behind in the grand embrace of Mexico's national eagle. "Degollado: Salí de tí pero tú nunca de mí" (Degollado: I left you, but you never left me). As described earlier in this essay, the Virgen de Guadalupe is positioned at the town's entrance, and a towering male *cantero* creating a small woman on a pedestal is at its exit; this patriarchal representation of a migrant family sits at the town's center. What three-dimensional representations await future articulation across the U.S.–Mexico boundary, in the suburban yards and commercial storefronts of California, commissioned by *canteros*' sons *and daughters* working in Mexican restaurants?

NOTES

1 Antonio Rodriguez, interview with author, Downey, California, and Bell Gardens, California, November 19, 2011.

2 Within the United States, my research has thus far documented cantera in the Midwest as well, but the vast majority I have found is throughout the Southwest.

3 Dell Upton, "Understanding New Orleans's Architectural Ecology," in *Rebuilding Urban Places After Disaster: Lessons from Hurricane Katrina*, ed. Eugenie L. Birch and Susan M. Wachter (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 283.

4 George E. Marcus, *Ethnography through Thick and Thin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Michael Burawoy et al., *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); and Michael Burawoy, *The Extended Case Method: Four Countries, Four Decades, Four Great Transformations, and One Theoretical Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009). See also Janina Gosseye, Naomi Stead, and Dehorah van der Plaat, eds., *Speaking of Buildings: Oral History in Architectural Research* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2019).

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