



Untitled

Benjamin Bartlett

I embarked on this artistic endeavor with an old, heavily damaged wooden door as my canvas. My choice was deliberate - a large door with a substantial surface area, yet not too heavy. To begin, I put newspapers to the front, creating a base for my artwork, and applied a layer of primer to establish the background. The inspiration for my creation stemmed from an online search for an image depicting immigrant children. Projecting this image onto the door of my classroom, I meticulously traced the figures, capturing the essence of their collective struggles.

In tandem with my visual portrayal, I delved into articles detailing the challenges faced by immigrant children pursuing the elusive American Dream. Incorporating an illustration of the words 'American Dream,' I interwove these elements on the door. The subsequent painting phase presented a unique set of challenges, particularly when rendering the nuanced facial expressions of the children. Achieving diverse skin tones required a meticulous mixing of paints, emphasizing my commitment to representing the multitude of immigrant groups in the United States.

Originally intending to depict a fabric fence, I pivoted and painted the bars of a cage instead. This decision was symbolic of the harsh reality faced by immigrant children during the ongoing crisis in the United States. My choice to present the quotes in a childlike manner aimed to echo the innocence and sincerity with which children express themselves.

The immigration crisis in the United States has given rise to the alarming separation and imprisonment of children. Many young souls, entering the country with their parents, find themselves forcibly separated and confined to cages, creating profound trauma. The language barrier intensifies their fear and confusion about their uncertain future. My artwork seeks to shed light on this deeply unsettling reality, emphasizing the emotional toll on these children, some as young as five or six.

The zero-tolerance policy significantly contributes to these separations, with ICE facilities holding hundreds of children in cages, exacerbating the psychological impact. The confined spaces lead to increased rates of depression and suicide among the children, underscoring the urgent need for change.

As children embark on journeys in search of a better life, they carry dreams of the American Dream. However, for many immigrant children, these dreams are shattered upon arrival. Whether physically confined or entrapped in a system of corruption and exploitation, the American Dream remains elusive. My door symbolizes the desperation and struggle of these children, their eyes filled with fear and faces etched with sadness, representing the diverse spectrum of immigrant groups.

The bars on the door serve a dual purpose, portraying both the physical cages where immigrants are held and the metaphorical confines of a system rife with exploitation and injustice. The American Dream, depicted in vibrant letters, serves as a tantalizing but unattainable beacon for these children. I chose specific quotes to encapsulate their poignant predicament, highlighting the stark disparity between their dreams and the harsh reality they face in pursuit of the American Dream - a dream that, for them, remains just out of reach, ensnared by the bars of injustice.