

UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE WALL

a TAYLOR GENOVESE film



FILM INFORMATION

FILM TITLE

Under the Shadow of the Wall

CONTACT INFO

Taylor Genovese - Director, Cinematographer, Editor, Writer
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TECHNICAL INFO

Running Time: 9 minutes
Exhibition Format: Digital; Blu-Ray
Aspect Ratio: 16:9
Shooting Format: Digital HD
Color, English

<https://www.kuznitsa.media/#shadow>



<https://letterboxd.com/film/under-the-shadow-of-the-wall/>

SYNOPSIS

This video essay focuses on the landscapes of the Sonoran Desert—and the project of a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico—as a way of investigating the manner in which something as seemingly generic as a wall can take on particular political and affective forms. This short provocation explores the ways that violent and distasteful objects create, and subsequently come to characterize, malevolent spectacles.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My sub-compact car rattled and knocked as it bounced along a dirt road that snaked its way through the desert near Douglas, Arizona. Through my passenger-side window, I could start to see the recently installed, massive copper-colored border wall peeking out from the space between the hills of this rolling landscape dotted with ancient rock, small cacti, twiggy trees, and dry brush. As I got closer to the San Bernardino Wildlife Refuge, I pulled my car off the road and squeezed it into a small clearing between two spindly mesquite trees and stepped out into the mild but dry winter air.

About 100 yards ahead of me was a tightly packed series of vertical steel beams that reached twenty feet up toward the clear sky and stretched off horizontally in either direction. I could hear quails gently cooing in the creosote bushes next to me and in the distance, the gentle drone and slight glimmer of semi-trucks could be seen and heard as they slowly crawled across the Carretera Federal 2 that wound its way along the border of Mexico and the United States. Other than that, it was quiet; dead quiet.

I began to cautiously walk towards the wall, continually checking over my shoulder for any sign of workers or Border Patrol agents. I felt like I was trespassing—which I probably was—but there were no posted signs or obstructions other than the massive wall itself. I glimpsed through the narrow bars at the Mexican side and the landscape looked the same—the same dirt, the same rocks, the same mountains, and, as the details retreated into smudgy infinity, the same gradient of dull browns and greens so indicative of the Sonoran Desert.

This was my first experience interacting with the border wall—a grotesque structure that continues to stand at our southern border. I had initially only wanted to put together a photo essay that would document this artifact at the tail-end of the Trump era, but after setting foot in the scrub brush of the Arizona borderlands, I immediately intuited that a film must accompany my photographs. There's something visceral, raw, and immediate about a film that I knew would be lacking in my accompanying photography.

In a way, this film exists as my bittersweet goodbye to the Sonoran Desert—a unique and naturally gorgeous environment that I have witnessed being slowly ground up and disemboweled by real estate developers, mining corporations, and energy executives over the course of my thirty-six years here. In the summer of 2022, my family and I will pack up our things and return to New York, leaving behind the place where I was born and grew up. In many inescapable ways, I will always be a desert rat, but this is not the same place I trekked through as a child. It isn't the same magnificent desolation that I explored as a teenager. It isn't the setting of raw vivacity I would, as an adult, frequently pitch a tent inside of and just stand in awe.

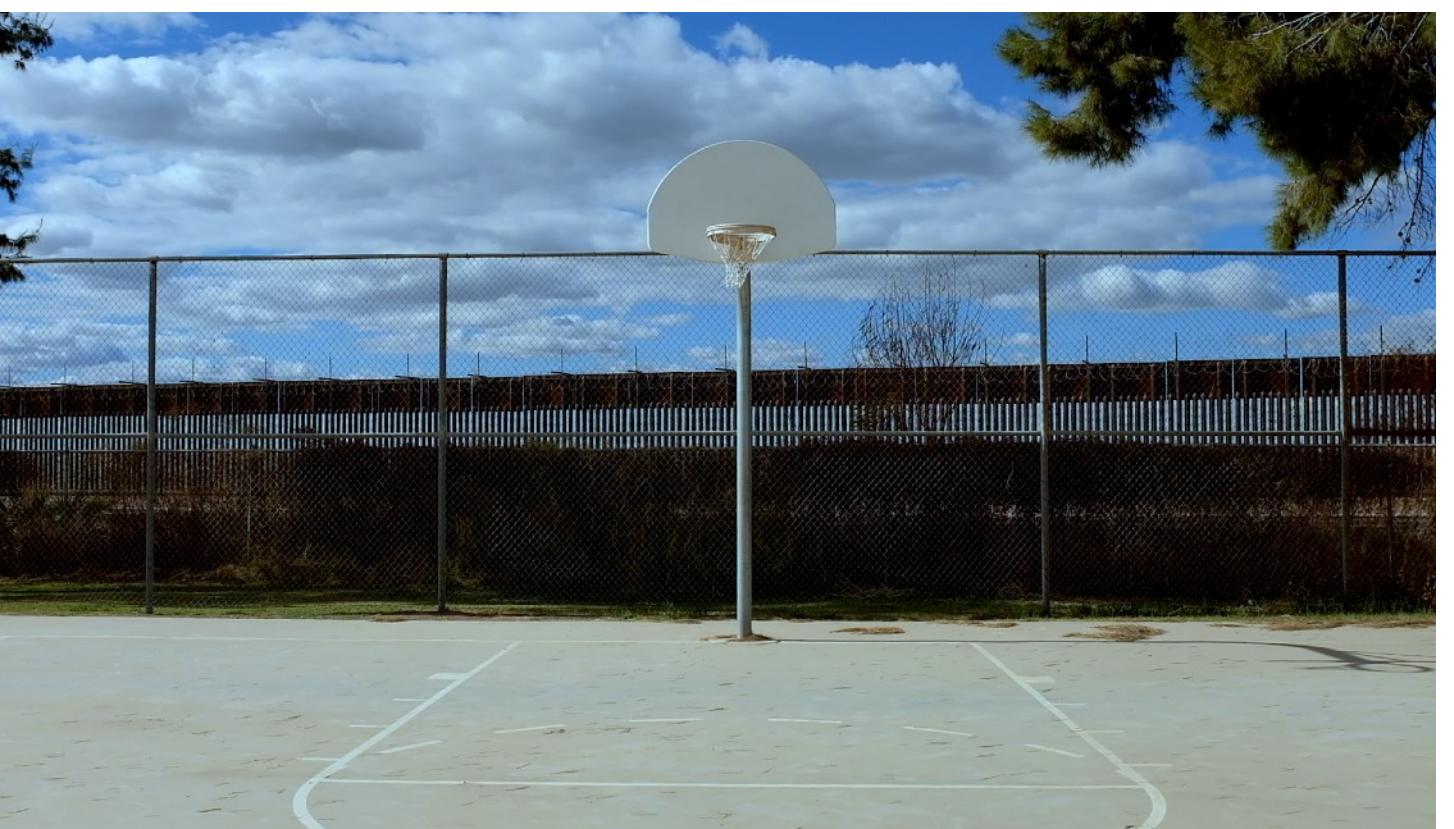
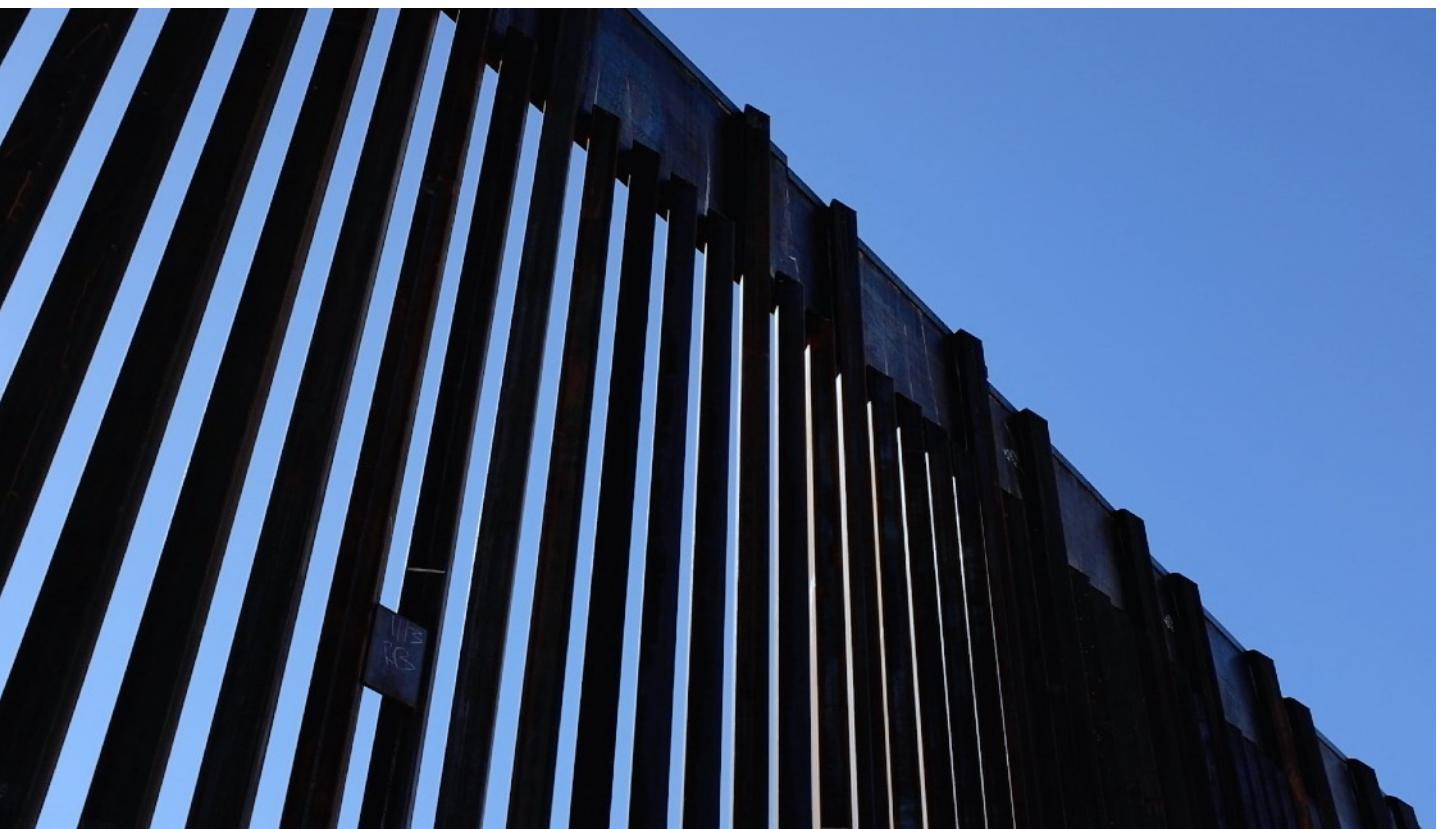
But it could be.

As my mentor David Graeber used to say: “The ultimate, hidden truth of the world is that it is something that we make, and could just as easily make differently.”

High resolution images available at:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Uh_AaWNwKT-q3F5eXYlrQW_o_fj8sMsQ?usp=sharing

STILLS



BIOS



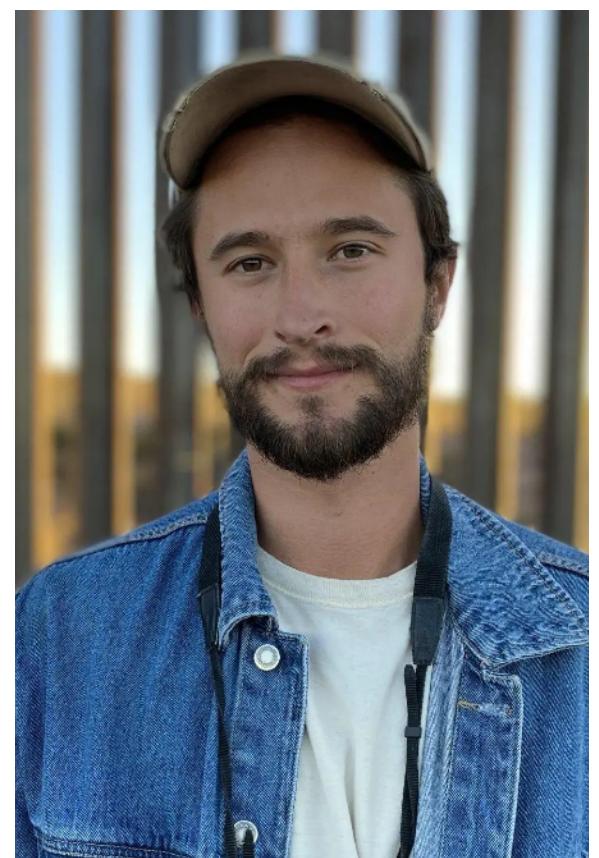
TAYLOR GENOVESE – DIRECTOR, CINEMATOGRAPHER, EDITOR, WRITER

Taylor Genovese is an eclectic multimodal anthropologist who tends to work simultaneously on a variety of different projects in a diversity of artistic and academic modes—using digital video, photography, and sound as methods and sites of inquiry for anthropological research. He has been a filmmaker and photographer for over 15 years. Genovese is currently a Ph.D. Candidate in the Human and Social Dimensions of Science and Technology program at Arizona State University. He lives and works on unceded, occupied Akimel O'odham and Xalychidom Piipaash Land (so-called Tempe, Arizona).



DICK POWIS – ORIGINAL SCORE

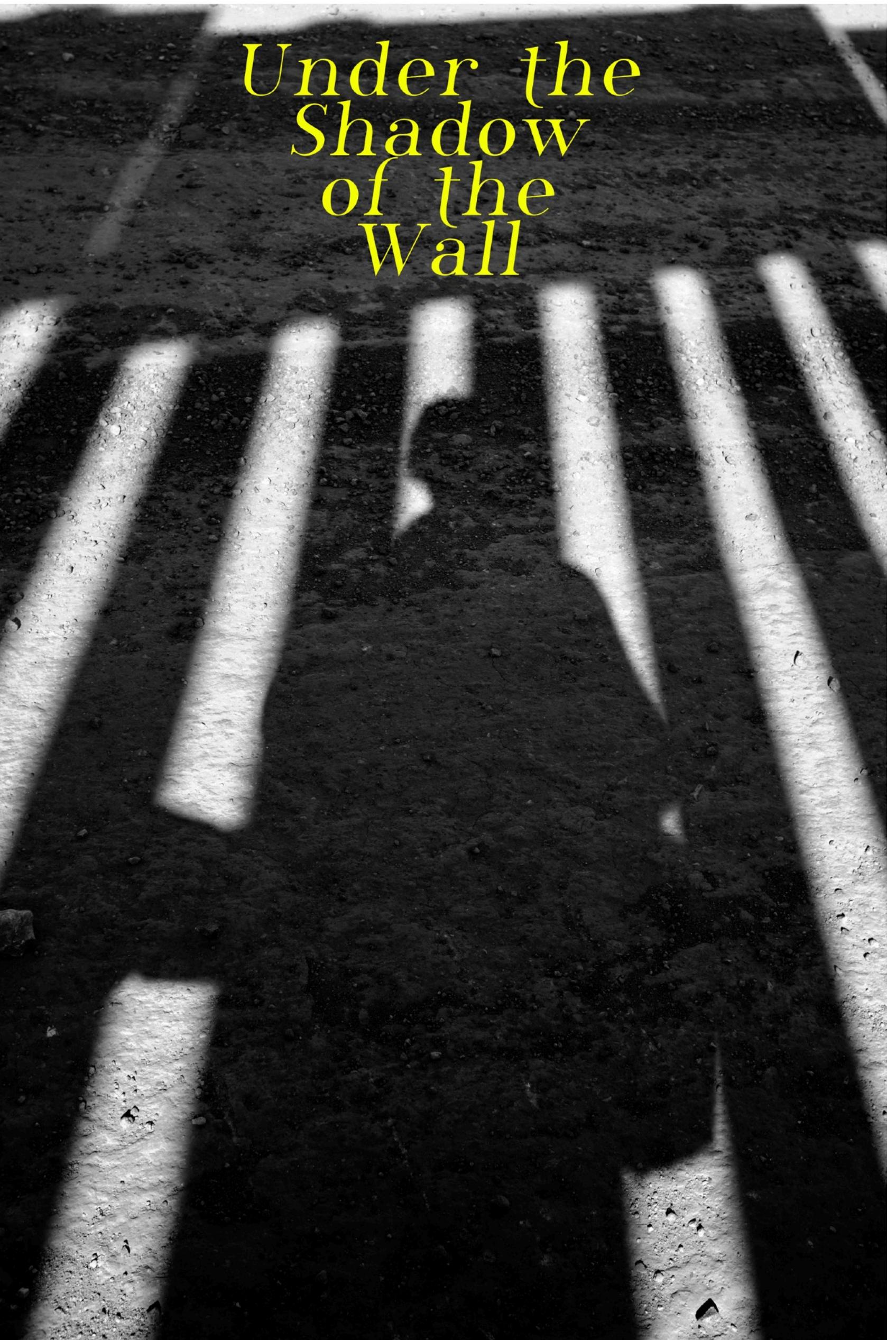
Dick Powis is a medical anthropologist and ethnographic photographer who researches masculinity, kinship, and pregnancy in southern Florida (US) and Senegal (West Africa). His film score work is influenced by David Bowie, Nick Cave, Alessandro Cortini, Augustus Muller, Trent Reznor, and Tristan Shone. Powis is currently a public health research fellow at University of South Florida. He lives in Tampa, Florida.



LAIKEN JORDAHL – HIMSELF

Laiken Jordahl is a Borderlands Campaigner who works to protect wildlife, ecosystems, and communities throughout the U.S.–Mexico borderlands and draws attention to the costs of border wall construction and border militarization. Before joining the Center for Biological Diversity, Jordahl worked with the National Park Service throughout the Rocky Mountain West, including Big Bend National Park and Organ Pipe National Monument. He has also worked as a bike mechanic, a clam farmer, and a legislative fellow in the U.S. House of Representatives.

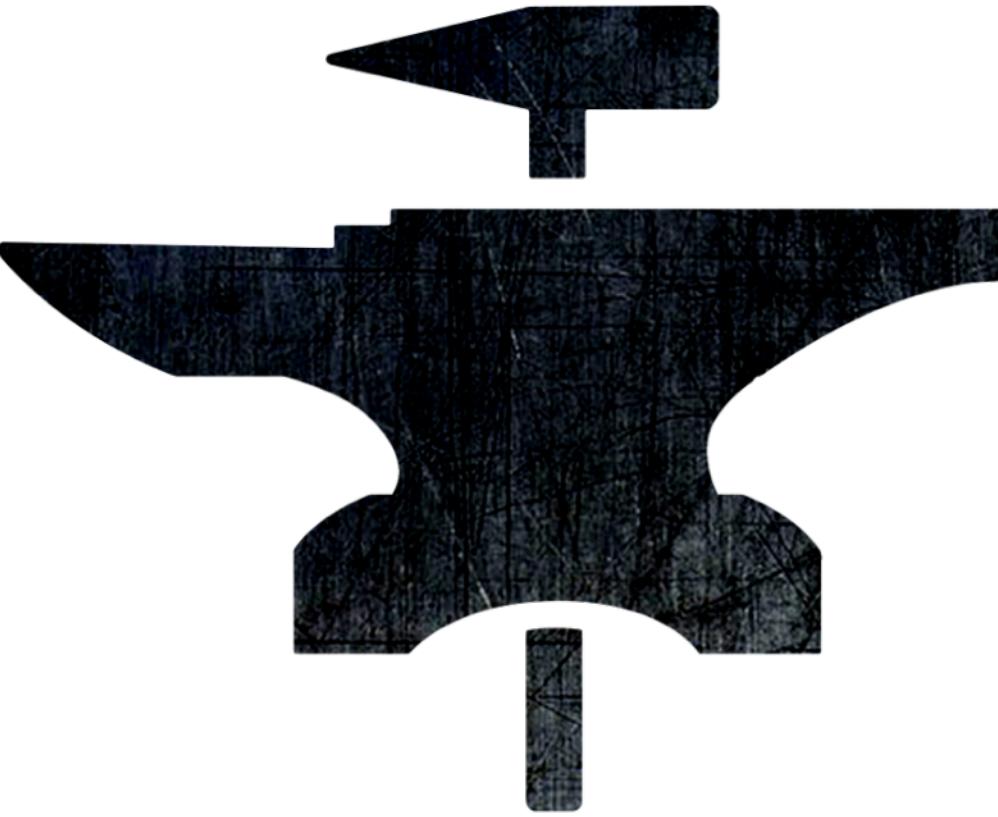
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High resolution image available at:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Uh_AaWNwKT-q3F5eXYlrQWOf8sMsQ?usp=sharing

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