
A Recurring Theme of Displacement

Dani Kriatura

Abstract

This visual essay asks what it means to un-border when what we know as the nation-state is, itself, mythology. Indeed, there is no component of a border more definitive than mythology. Mythology drives the recurring themes of displacement and dehumanization intrinsic to doctrines of discovery, “God’s chosen people,” “Terra Nullius,” “white man’s burdens,” and the extractive empires on which it is claimed *no sun shall ever set*. These logics reduce all they survey to the status of chattel, cattle, capital, and waste, ensuring that derivatives of these vertical extractive ways replicate themselves in every relationship. As such, the assassination of memory is vigorously carried out through incremental reckless endangerment, until systems only in existence since the cosmic equivalent of this morning are confused for all that ever was, ever has been, and ever shall be, even as they bring forth the terms and conditions of their own demise. How, then, does one un-border in this worlding? What is dismissed as just a dream, and what is continually and corrosively made into reality? Arriving at and through these questions, this essay explores how we might call upon the intrinsic parts of our being that have been relegated to the status of pestilence for over half a millennium through national mythology, and whether the constant enforcement, erasure, disembodiment, and coercion required for nation-building highlights its inherent illegitimacy. Ultimately, the essay turns to ways of knowing and seeing that have been disregarded at our collective peril, asking how authentic relations might be restored, or more accurately, cultivated and nurtured through social praxis; through the sacred magic found only in the work most avoided, and through what remains to be done—not through listening, but through daily acts of living and the relationality therein; through the collective gift of being and becoming.

Keywords

arts-based research; nation-states, colonial mythology, collective memory, un-bordering, visual storytelling



Figure 1. *Fresh New Start*. 2025. Dani Kriatura. Acrylic and chalk markers on 8.5 x 11 black paper, artist's collection. @bodythudz_artisanworks



Figure 2. *Set The Vibes Off Right*. 2026. Dani Kriatura. Acrylic and chalk markers on 8.5 x 11 black paper, artist's collection. @bodythudz_artisanworks



Figure 3. *Nadie Nos Puede Conquistar*. 2026. Dani Kriatura. Acrylic and chalk markers on 8.5 x 11 black paper, artist's collection. @bodythudz_artisanworks



Figure 4. Plain Sight is Clearly Not Enough. 2025. Dani Kriatura. Acrylic and chalk markers on 8.5 x 11 black paper, artist's collection. @bodythudz_artisanworks



Figure 5. *Las Que Me Criaron*. 2025. Dani Kriatura. Acrylic and chalk markers on 8.5 x 11 black paper, artist's collection. @bodythudz_artisanworks



Figure 6. *Free From the Need to Escape*. 2026. Dani Kriatura. Acrylic paint and chalk markers, 8.5 × 11 on black paper, artist's collection. @bodythudz_artisanworks



Figure 7. *Existence is Resistance*. 2025. Dani Kriatura. Acrylic and chalk markers on 8.5 x 11 black paper, artist's collection. @bodythudz_artisanworks



Figure 8. *Como Este Mundo No Permita Que Los Ancestros Descanzan...* 2025. Dani Kriatura. Acrylic and chalk markers on 8.5 x 11 black paper, artist's collection. @bodythudz_artisanworks



Figure 9. *Chapulín y Lazaro*. 2025. Dani Kriatura. Acrylic and chalk markers on 8.5 x 11 black paper, artist's collection. @bodythudz_artisanworks



Figure 10. *Crossroads*. 2025. Dani Kriatura. Acrylics and chalk markers on 8.5 x 11 black paper, artist's collection. @bodythudz_artisanworks

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my solidarity, gratitude, kinship, reverence, and love for all the peoples, ecosystems, and constellations that keep oxygen in my lungs; the ground under my feet; the clarity and perspective in my mind; the reflection gazing back at me with eyes, free from colonized and self-hating distortions; and the strong winds at my back, keeping the skies from falling upon us, as we honour today in defense of tomorrow.

Author Biography

Dani Kriatura (they/them) is a DIY analog outsider artist and visual storyteller working with chalk, spray paint, watercolours, acrylics, markers, wire, stencils, found artifacts, clay, ink, and paper to create alternate worlds through murals, figurines, masks, and upcycled clothing items. They are a diasporic non-binary/gendervoid auDHD adult refugee child/grown up street kid of multiple resistant displaced ancestries. Based in T'kranto since the age of four, Dani lives as the embodied shadows, celebrations, revolutionary dreams, and traumas of parents who fled the fascist military coup that took place in Wallmapu (Chile) in 1973. They claim Mapuche, Selk'nam, Basque, Andalusian, Lebanese, and Russian Jewish lineages, legacies, and contradictions. They draw inspiration from the people they know, love, fight for, and live for, and the ecosystems through which we all exist.