

# Silvia Lopez Chavez Shows The Migrant Experience In The Outlaw Ocean Mural Project, Created by Journalist Ian Urbina

LA ROMANA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, May 27, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a poignant video essay about her art, muralist [Silvia Lopez Chavez](#) explains why she joined forces with investigative reporter [Ian Urbina](#) to draw attention to human rights and environmental abuses at sea within The Outlaw Ocean Mural Project.

A global effort to disseminate investigative journalism about human exploitation and labor crimes at sea, the project brings together painters from around the world to leverage public creativity with a cause. These paintings are based on the groundbreaking reporting produced by a small, non-profit news outlet based in Washington, D.C., [The Outlaw Ocean Project](#). The organization exposes the urgent problems happening on the earth's oceans including sea slavery, arms trafficking, the climate crisis and overfishing.

What makes The Outlaw Ocean Project a distinct news organization is three-fold. First, the reporting focuses on the more than 50 million people who work in a realm that covers over two thirds of the planet, but whose stories are rarely told. Second, the news-gathering is funded directly by readers and foundations so that the stories can be published for free in over a half dozen languages and more than three dozen countries, which gives it wide impact. Third, the journalism is targeted toward non-news platforms and a younger and more international audience by converting these stories into art. In turn, individuals are able to connect with the issues on a more visceral level.

The Outlaw Ocean Mural Project is part of this innovation and offers a communal display of



Muralist Silvia Lopez Chavez participates In The Outlaw Ocean Mural Project, A Collaboration with Journalist Ian Urbina

nontraditional journalism with unmatched effectiveness.

Silvia Lopez Chavez lives in Boston, Massachusetts, but was raised in the Dominican Republic.

Growing up on an island, Lopez Chavez was closely connected with the ocean. Her relationship with the ocean was one of wonder, pondering the vastness, peace, and beauty of the sea,

combined with a sense of fear and deep respect for its power. She also heard of the dangers of boat trips taken by sea migrants from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico, similar to the harrowing journeys of stowaways described in The Outlaw Ocean chapter, 'Jail Without Bars.'



Silvia Lopez Chavez's mural can be found in La Romana, Dominican Republic and is called "Fear and Wonder."

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Art has the capacity to be the point of entry to hard conversations, serving as a catalyst for transforming minds and hearts to affect change.”

*Silvia Lopez Chavez, The Outlaw Ocean Mural Project*

Upon learning the details of the migration experience from Urbina's reporting, Lopez Chavez expressed dismay. "I have a new perspective on a world at sea of which I was unaware, and it makes me question so much regarding the laws (or lack thereof) we create on land, which profoundly affect so many lives."

Lopez Chavez hopes her mural will stimulate discussion on the human rights violations encountered by sea migrants. Recognizing the potential influence of journalism-inspired public art, the artist believes her work can lead to real

change on a global level. "Beyond the local community, public art can reach a wide audience through social media and digital platforms," she said. "Visual art speaks a universal language. It connects to the deepest parts of human beings through images most can feel and understand."

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