

MERCER
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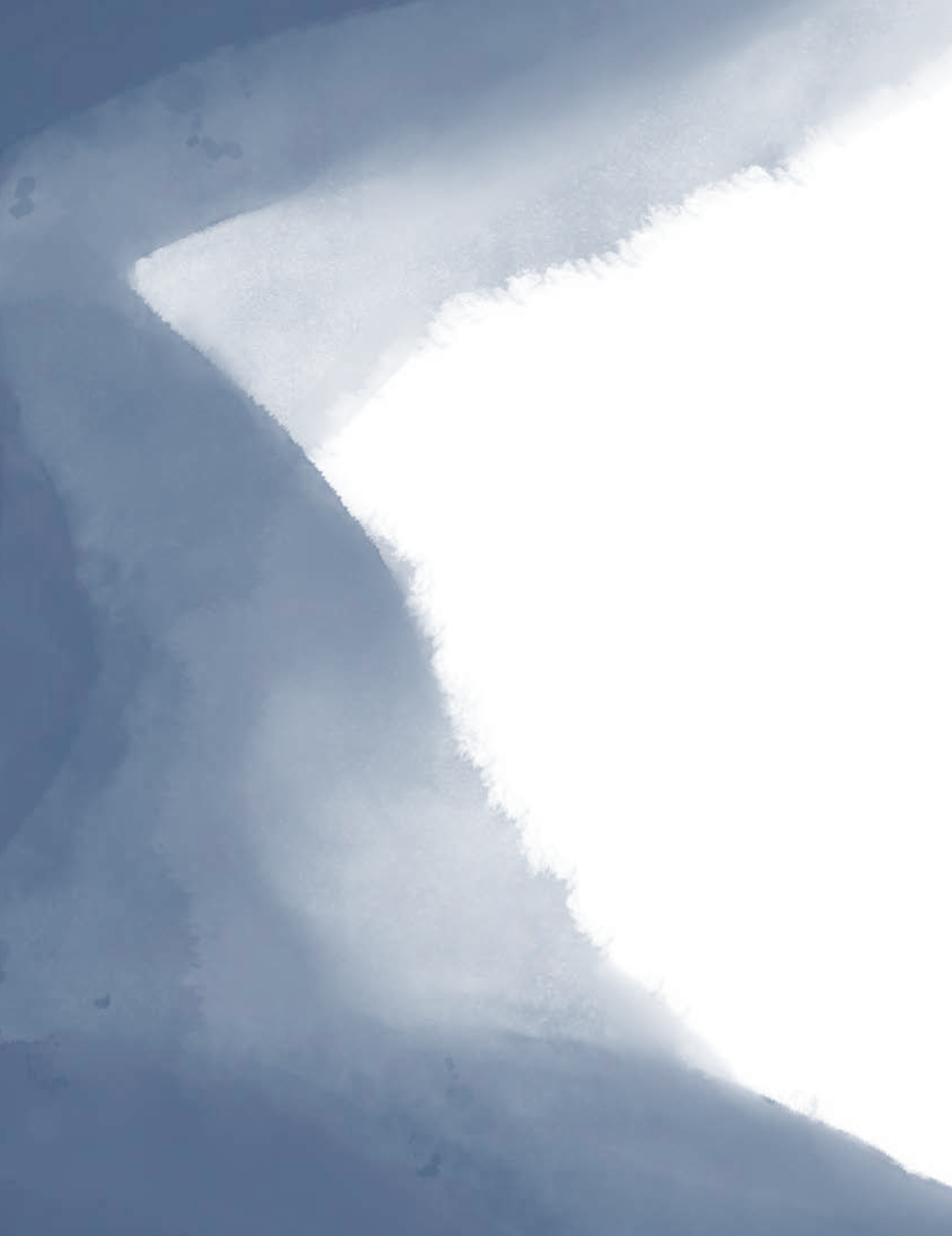
vol. 05

VOX POPULI

Department of World Languages and Cultures



poetry • art • writing • trips & clubs • outside the classroom



vol. 05



Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

Table of Contents

Dear Readers	5
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Poetry

¡Sí puedo llegar allí! <i>by Nivea George</i>	9
Un nuevo país, un nuevo mundo <i>by Mia Rosario</i>	10
Lola <i>by Hannah Ballesteros</i>	11
Gravedigging <i>by Hannah Ballesteros</i>	12

Artwork

Axolotl <i>by Lenka Anuraj</i>	15
Universe According to Cicero <i>by Emma Morris</i>	16
Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo <i>by Gabrielle Fox</i>	17
“La Llorona” <i>by Miranda Straw</i>	18
“Guernica” <i>by Alexina Harvey</i>	19
“Orozco’s Murals” <i>by Andrew McCommon</i>	20
U.S.A. <i>by Rafael Vaquero Covarrubias</i>	21
Esperanza <i>by Nancy Cifuentes-Martínez</i>	22
El muro <i>by Matthew Gutierrez</i>	23
El país prohibido <i>by Thomas Bartlett</i>	23
Demasiado tarde para despertar <i>by Daisy Johnson Perez</i>	24
El armario <i>by Jada Moorman</i>	24
Perdí la cuenta <i>by Rafael Vaquero Covarrubias</i>	25
More American than a Citizen <i>by Mónica Hernández</i>	26
I See Freedom <i>by Alma Luna</i>	26

Writing

Diary entries inspired by the story of the children of Morelia <i>by Kyle Everitt</i>	29
¡Esto es Spanglish para mí! <i>by Rebeca Castilla</i>	31
La responsabilité de la mémoire dans les œuvres françaises <i>by Cassie Carver</i>	32
Découvrir les victimes effacées: Préserver la mémoire humaine de la Shoah dans Nuit et Brouillard <i>by Papa Guerrero</i>	35

Trips and Clubs

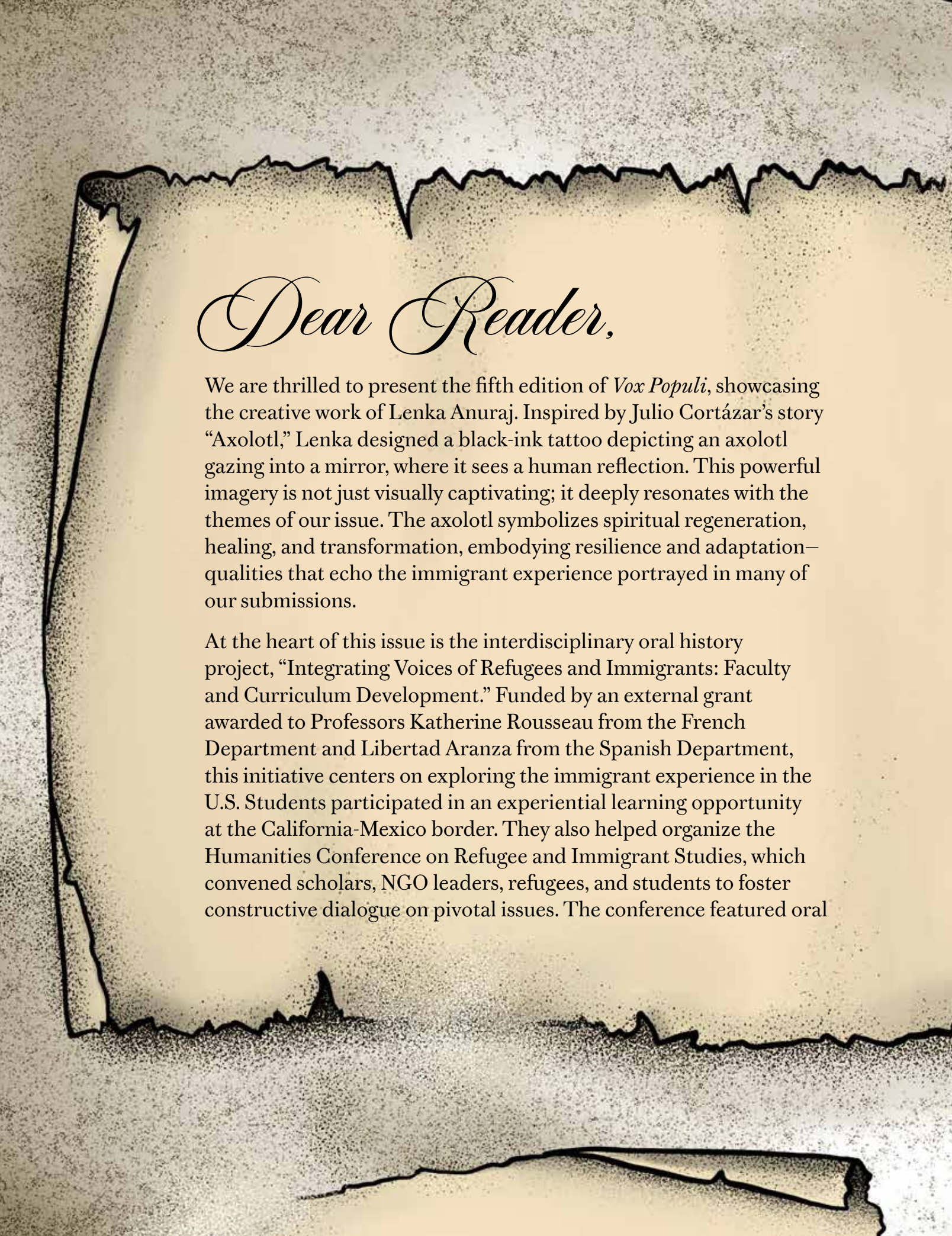
Mercer on Mission to Mexico, 2024	39
Mercer on Mission to Mexico, 2025	40
Mercer on Mission to France, 2024	41
Mercer on Mission to France, 2025	42
Mercer on Mission to Colombia, 2025	43
Spring Break in the Dominican Republic, 2025	44
Spring Break in Greece, 2024	45
Faculty-Led Summer Program in Seville, 2024	46
La Mesa	47
Le Cercle Français	48

Outside the Classroom

Integrating Voices	51
The French Village	53
Discover Mercer, 2025	54
Centro Comunitario Hispano	55
Hispanic Health Fair, 2025	55
Phi Sigma Iota Ceremony	56
Sigma Delta Awards	56

Faculty Spotlight

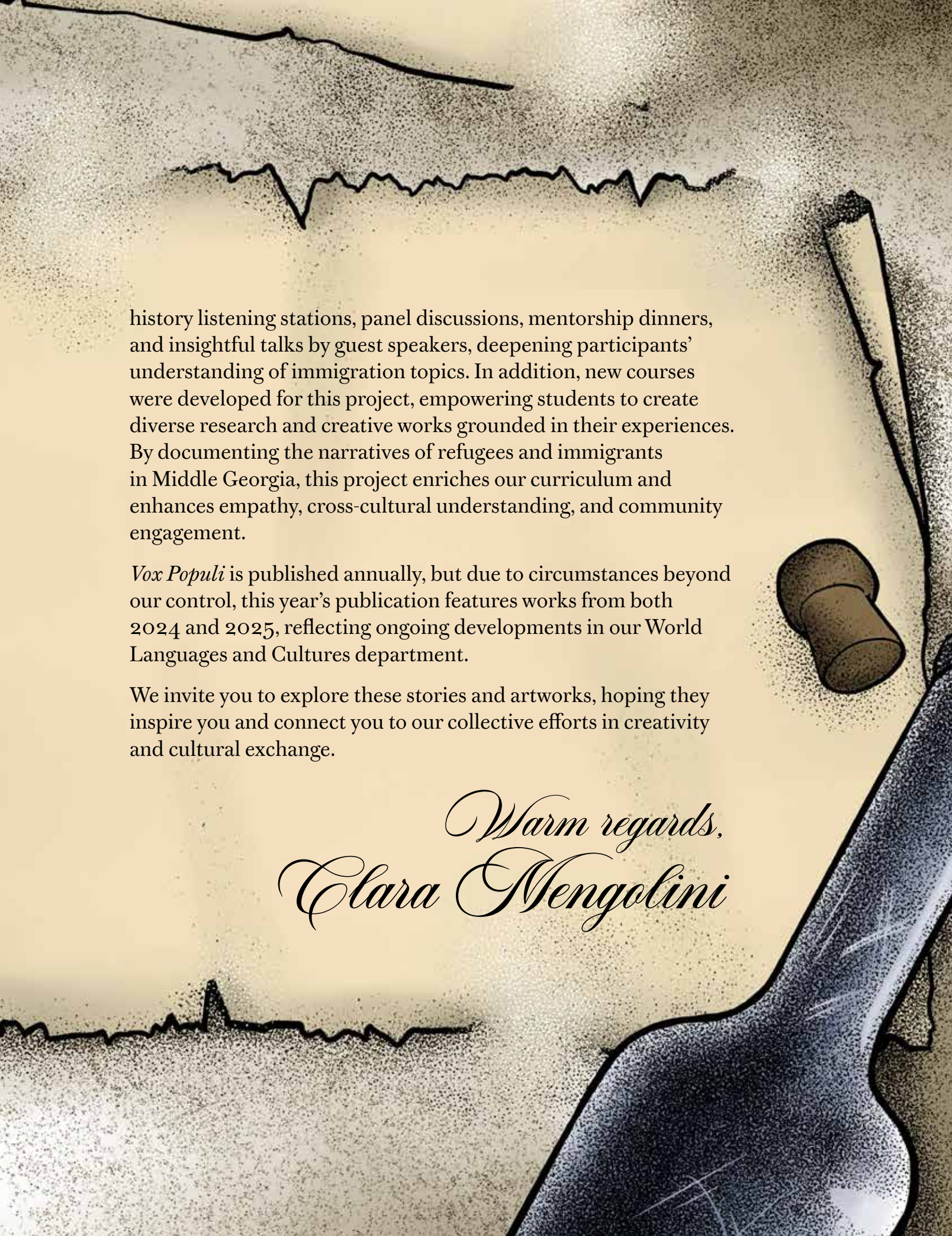
The Journals of the Moravian Mission to Georgia <i>by Dr. Achim Kopp</i>	59
Infancias <i>by Dr. Clara Mengolini</i>	62
Staff	63
Acknowledgements	64



Dear Reader,

We are thrilled to present the fifth edition of *Vox Populi*, showcasing the creative work of Lenka Anuraj. Inspired by Julio Cortázar's story "Axolotl," Lenka designed a black-ink tattoo depicting an axolotl gazing into a mirror, where it sees a human reflection. This powerful imagery is not just visually captivating; it deeply resonates with the themes of our issue. The axolotl symbolizes spiritual regeneration, healing, and transformation, embodying resilience and adaptation—qualities that echo the immigrant experience portrayed in many of our submissions.

At the heart of this issue is the interdisciplinary oral history project, "Integrating Voices of Refugees and Immigrants: Faculty and Curriculum Development." Funded by an external grant awarded to Professors Katherine Rousseau from the French Department and Libertad Aranza from the Spanish Department, this initiative centers on exploring the immigrant experience in the U.S. Students participated in an experiential learning opportunity at the California-Mexico border. They also helped organize the Humanities Conference on Refugee and Immigrant Studies, which convened scholars, NGO leaders, refugees, and students to foster constructive dialogue on pivotal issues. The conference featured oral



history listening stations, panel discussions, mentorship dinners, and insightful talks by guest speakers, deepening participants' understanding of immigration topics. In addition, new courses were developed for this project, empowering students to create diverse research and creative works grounded in their experiences. By documenting the narratives of refugees and immigrants in Middle Georgia, this project enriches our curriculum and enhances empathy, cross-cultural understanding, and community engagement.

Vox Populi is published annually, but due to circumstances beyond our control, this year's publication features works from both 2024 and 2025, reflecting ongoing developments in our World Languages and Cultures department.

We invite you to explore these stories and artworks, hoping they inspire you and connect you to our collective efforts in creativity and cultural exchange.

*Warm regards,
Clara Mengolini*



Poetry





¡Sí puedo llegar allí!

Nivea George

Una tierra de oportunidades
Una tierra de promesa
Una tierra de esperanza
Sí puedo llegar allí
¡Estoy tan cerca!
Sí puedo llegar allí
Pero llegué aquí
Todavía no estoy donde quiero estar
Cosemos nuestras historias
En los campos y calles
En cocinas y salas de clases
Construimos lo que podemos
Ladrillo y hueso, en una tierra que
no nos llama suya
O sí puedo llegar allí

¡Estoy tan cerca!
O sí puedo llegar allí.



Un nuevo país, un nuevo mundo

Mia Rosario

Un nuevo país, me dijo mi papá
Un nuevo mundo, le dije
Un nuevo idioma, no sabe nada
No sabe lo que dicen los letreros
No sabe lo que la gente dice
No sabe lo que mi tarea dice
Es un nuevo mundo

Un lugar mejor, me dijo mi papá
Un lugar extraño, le dije
Una cultura extraña con costumbres extrañas
Comida extraña con sabores extraños
Personas extrañas con tonos extraños
Es un nuevo mundo

Una vida mejor, me dijo mi papá
Una vida diferente, le dije
Una vida sin mi familia al lado
Una vida sin mis amigos
Una vida sin mis comidas favoritas
Es un nuevo mundo

No quiero un nuevo mundo, quiero un mundo mejor,
Quiero un mundo mejor en mi tierra
Un mundo donde no tengamos que huir
Un mundo donde no tengamos que dejar atrás a familia
Un mundo donde no tengamos que dejar atrás el
mundo que conocemos

Un mundo donde la vida mejor es en mi tierra
Eso es el nuevo mundo que quiero.





Lola

Hannah Ballesteros

Lola served on unforgiving ground,
mama says i'm too weak
repented and cried out to God
prayers desperate for a body that could release lola of her burden
recognition of this, once ever familiar
i beg to touch its fruit
ripe and ready for harvest, not for them, but for us
to see emerald green
forests for kilometers
amidst the gray ash painted behind the mountains
7000 miles, seems a daunting task, yet
with every inch closer, i feel the hands of those before
guide mine,
i ask the storm to wait
i'll find Lola again
knowing my history and their grasp on my country
my blood rises – and I yell
thousands of years, they stained our clothes red
and thousands more, take up the kalis, iták, bunéng, binangon, parang again and again
weaving underneath the soil; her and others before
they are the root of the trees
in every breath, in every strike, in every stride, in every run
in every beat, in every wound, in every scar, in every –
the mountains, among them
i will find her again.



Gravedigging

Hannah Ballesteros

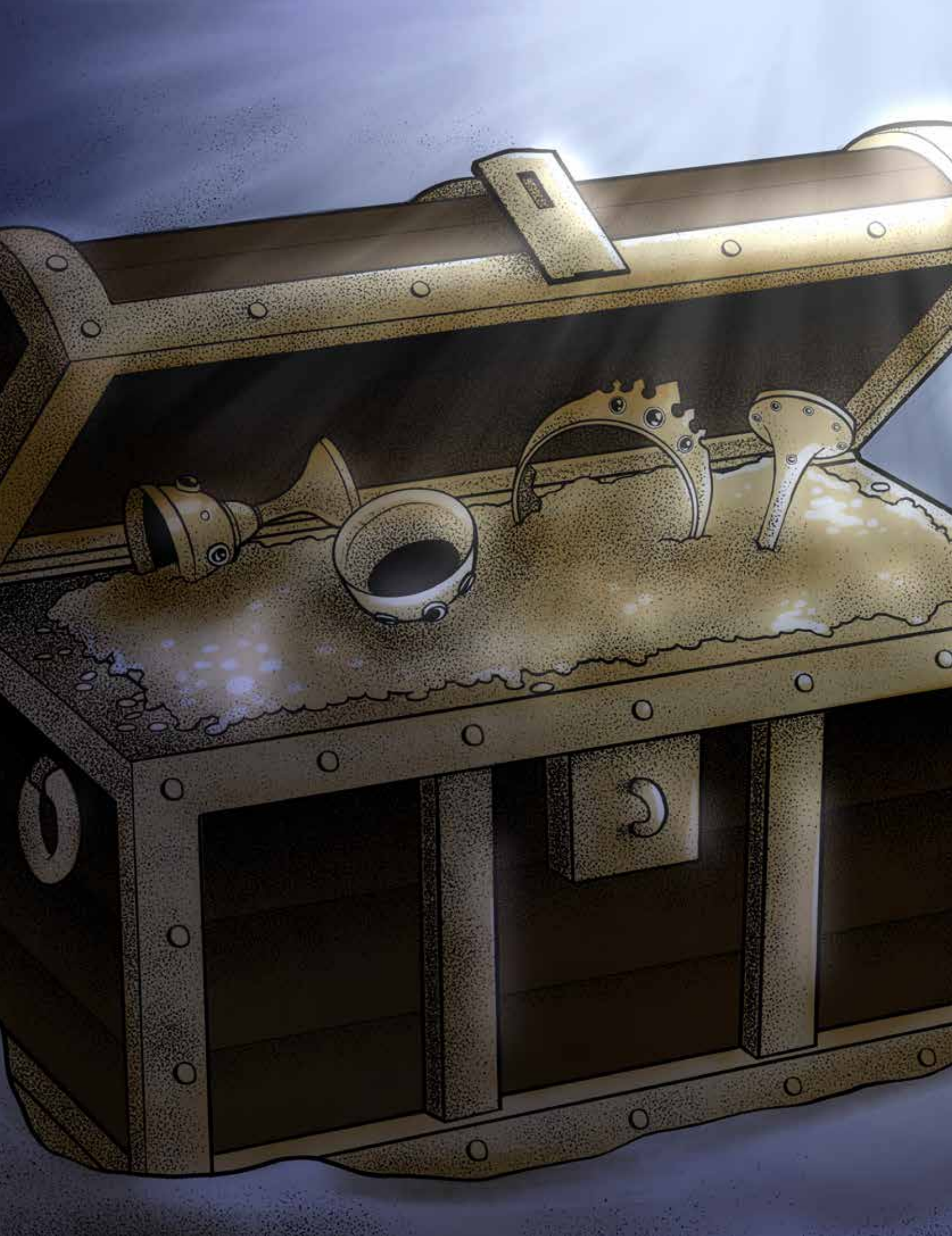
Yearning to uncover my knocked knees
from the soot – have you come to dance at
the foot of my grave

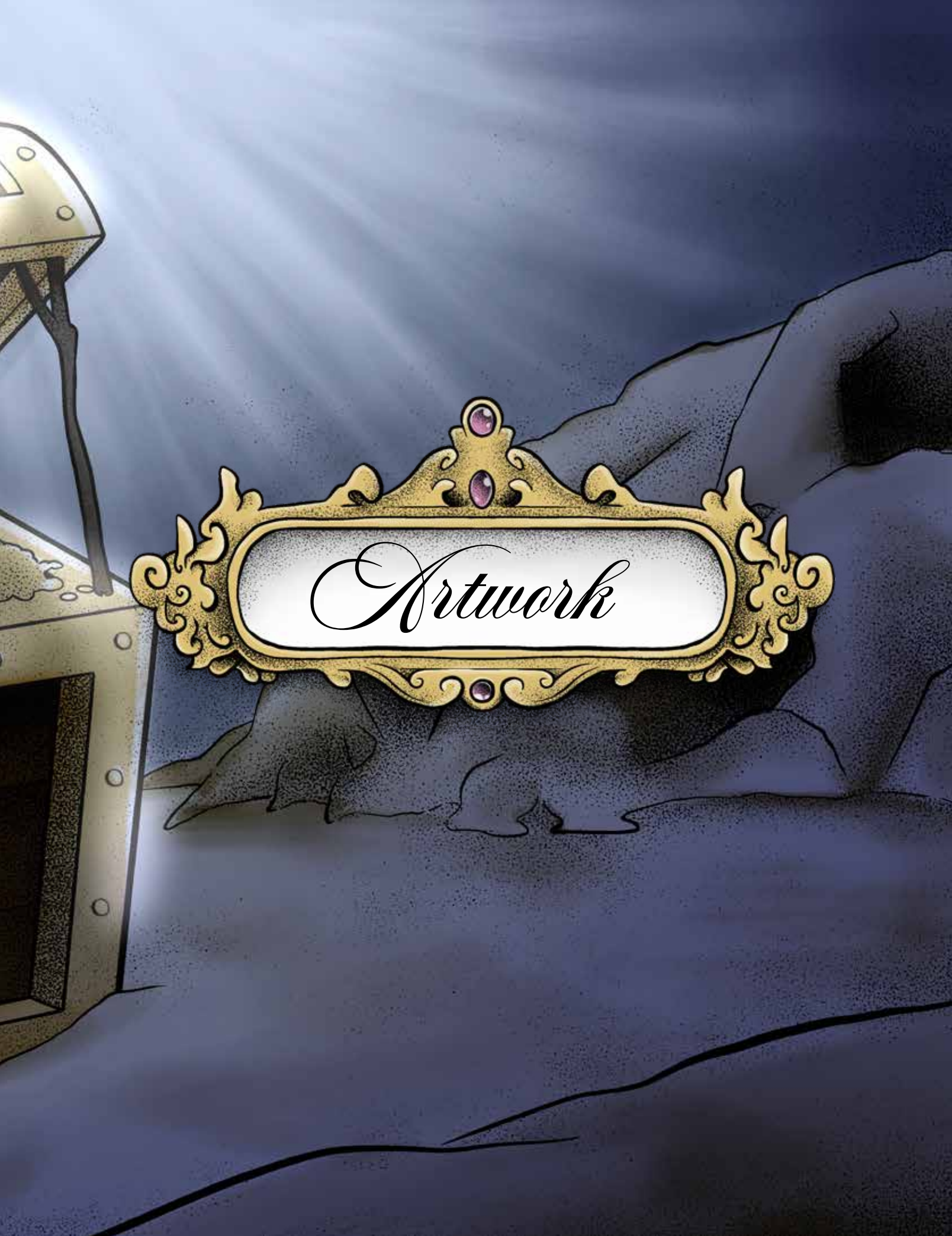
Uncover me whole, please, or better yet, let
my heart rest where the wind carries hymns
across the archipelago

Mothers, fingers sharpened, at will and
all at once, your babies waiting within
meadows, moonlight beating down their
backs, uncovering tales of hollow stomachs

Fathers, tongues cut from duty, tell your
tales of civic responsibilities, ears deafened
by machine guns, glory in stories of war,
empty bread baskets

Lovely it is to dream of Messiah, I wonder if
He has forgotten me.

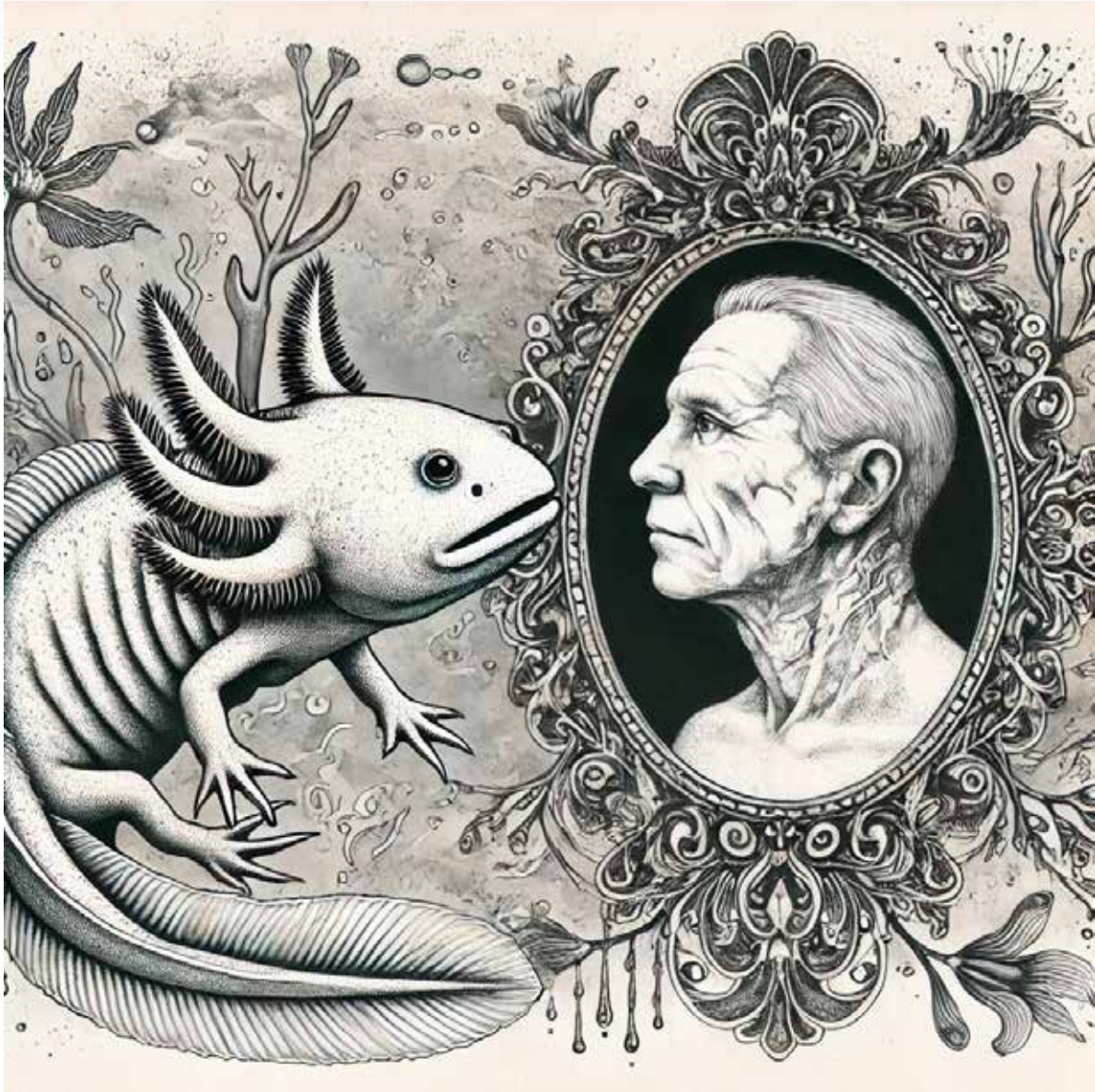




Artwork

Axolotl

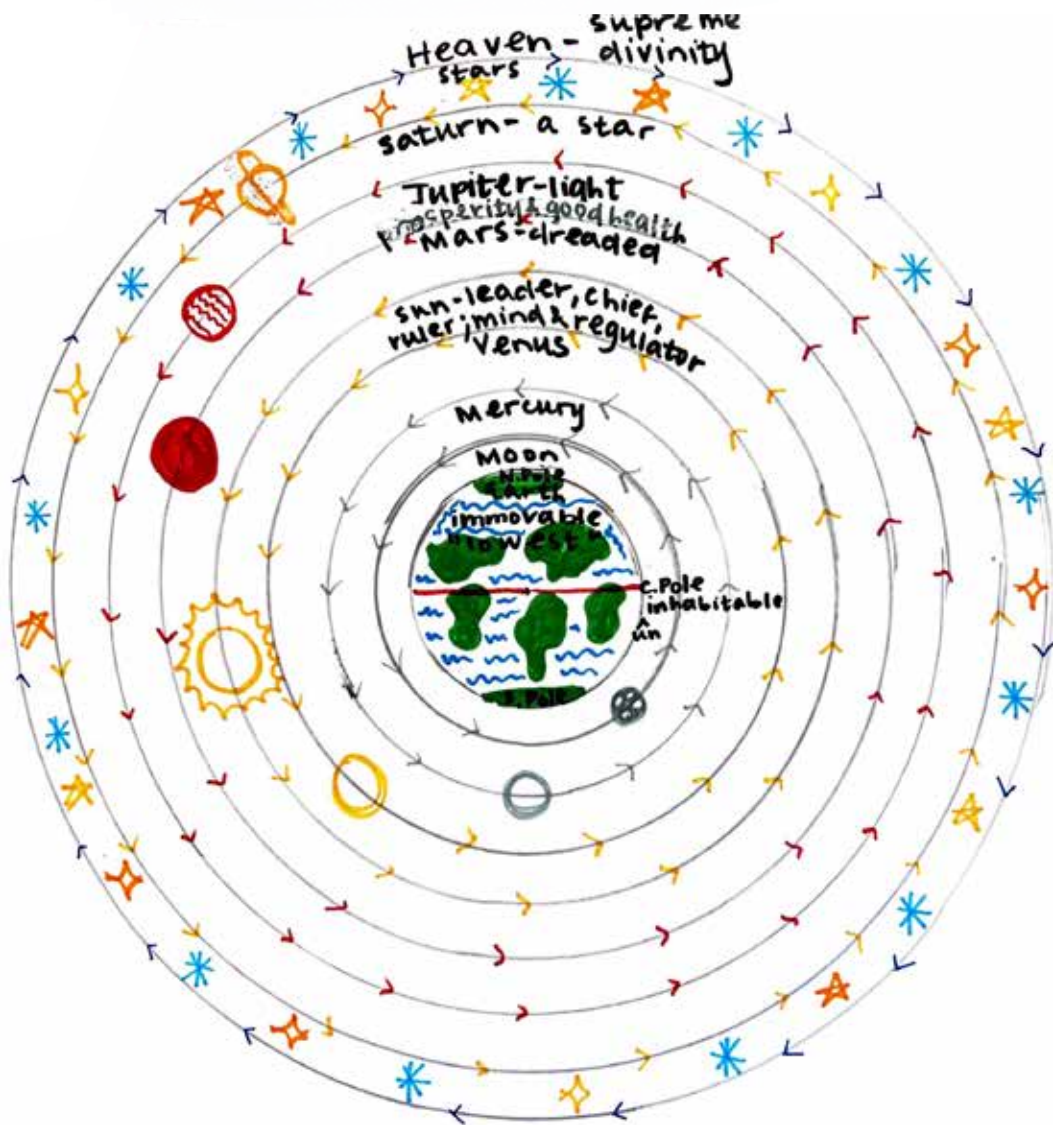
Lenka Anuraj



The students in SPN 310: Contemporary Latin American Literature were asked to design tattoos inspired by one of their favorite readings. **Lenka Anuraj** created the above tattoo, depicting the famous story “Axolotl” by the writer Julio Cortázar.

Universe According to Cicero

Emma Morris



Students in LAT 330: Philosophical Texts were asked to draw a map of the universe according to Vergil's description in the sixth book of Aeneid.

Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo

Gabrielle Fox



Students made collages representing some of the political themes discussed during SPN 301. Gabrielle Fox created this collage depicting the struggle of the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina during the dictatorship of Rafael Videla.



SPN 112: Beginning Spanish II

Fall Semester, 2024

Students chose a specific aspect of Latin American culture and used AI to create an original and creative image that represented the selected cultural theme. They were graded on their creativity, thorough research, and effort, with a strong emphasis on the value of their research. The image included a brief paragraph in Spanish explaining the creative process behind their work.

“La Llorona”

Miranda Straw



Miranda Straw was inspired by the Mexican legend of La Llorona to create a series of images depicting La Llorona and her children.

“Guernica”

Alexina Harvey



Alexina Harvey, inspired by Pablo Picasso's famous painting, *Guernica*, used artificial intelligence to create an image depicting the Russo-Ukrainian war. She drew its surrealist style, rich symbolism, and the use of both human and animal figures. By highlighting these elements, her artwork aims to resonate with viewers, helping them feel the pain, chaos, and tragedy of the current conflict.

“Orozco’s Murals”

Andrew McCommon



Andrew McCommon drew inspiration from José Clemente Orozco’s murals to create a digital mural that encapsulates the collective struggles of the modern era.

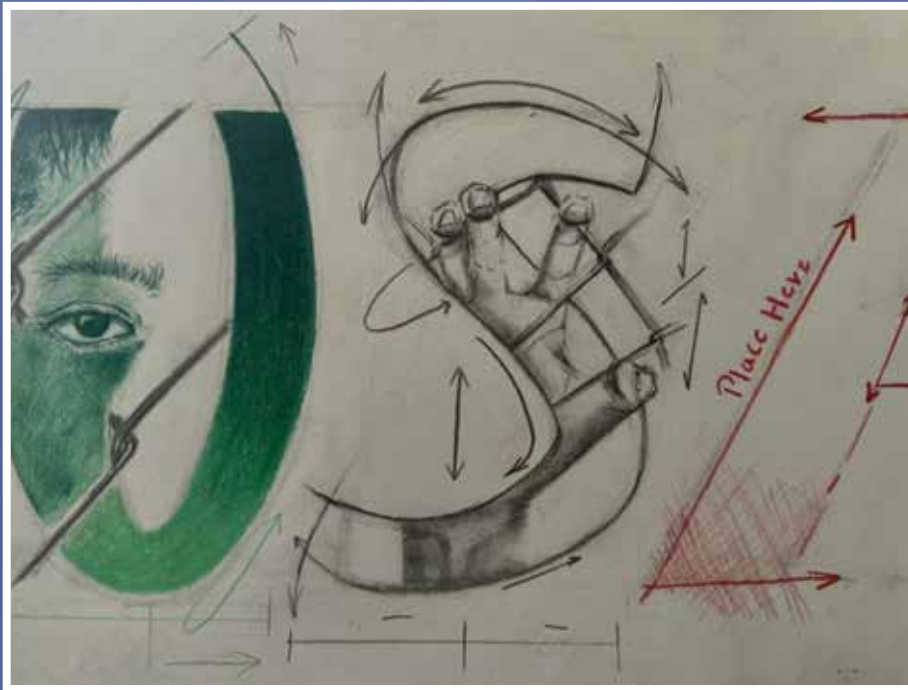
SPN 385: Oral History & (In)Migration

Spring Semester, 2025

SPN 385 is an upper-level Spanish course that explores migration and memory through literature, film, and community-based oral histories. With a service-learning component, students engage directly with immigrant narratives and ethical storytelling practices. For their final project, students created original artistic works inspired by course texts and themes, including immigration, family separation, and life between two worlds.

U.S.A.

Rafael Vaquero Covarrubias



Rafael Vaquero Covarrubias was inspired by the sacrifice of Mexican immigrants in the United States and the ways their labor and humanity are often overlooked to create his piece, *U.S.A.* Through visual metaphor, he symbolizes exclusion, alienation, and the emotional cost of migration.

Esperanza

Nancy Cifuentes-Martínez

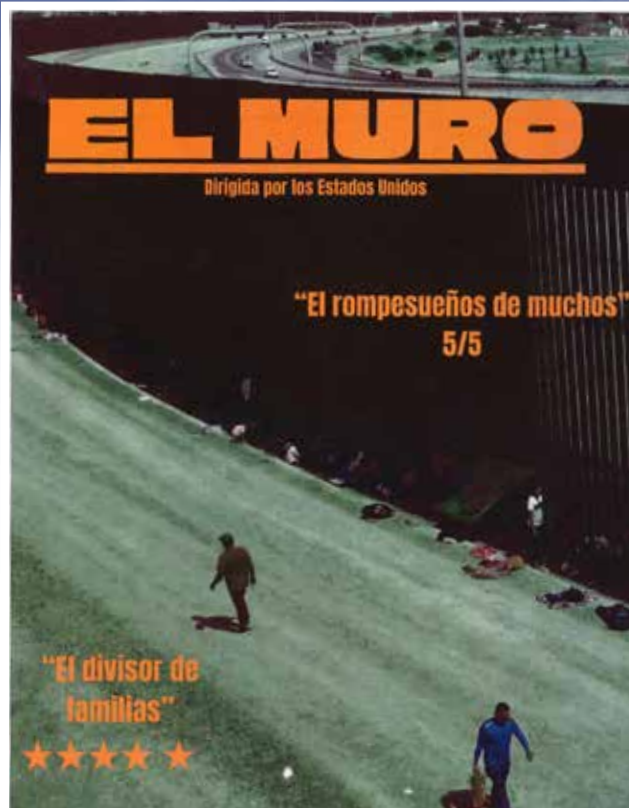


Nancy Cifuentes-Martínez, inspired by the theme of family separation and connected to class readings, created her piece *Esperanza*, which represents the emotional impact of deportations and the sacrifices that parents make when migrating to support their families.



El muro

Matthew Gutierrez



Matthew Gutierrez drew inspiration from the theme of “la frontera” and class discussions about immigration and migrant stories to design a poster for a fictional movie that portrays the U.S.–Mexico border as shaped by politics and as a “dream-breaker” for many, focusing on its effect on people.

El país prohibido

Thomas Bartlett



Thomas Bartlett was inspired by the theme of humanization and drew parallels to *Forbidden Planet* to create his poster, *El país prohibido*. His work contrasts fear-driven perceptions of Mexico with the richness of its art and culture, highlighting how immigrants are often dehumanized.



SPN 385: Introduction to Spanish Horror Short Film

Summer Semester, 2025

As their final project, SPN 385 students produced a horror short film and designed its promotional poster.

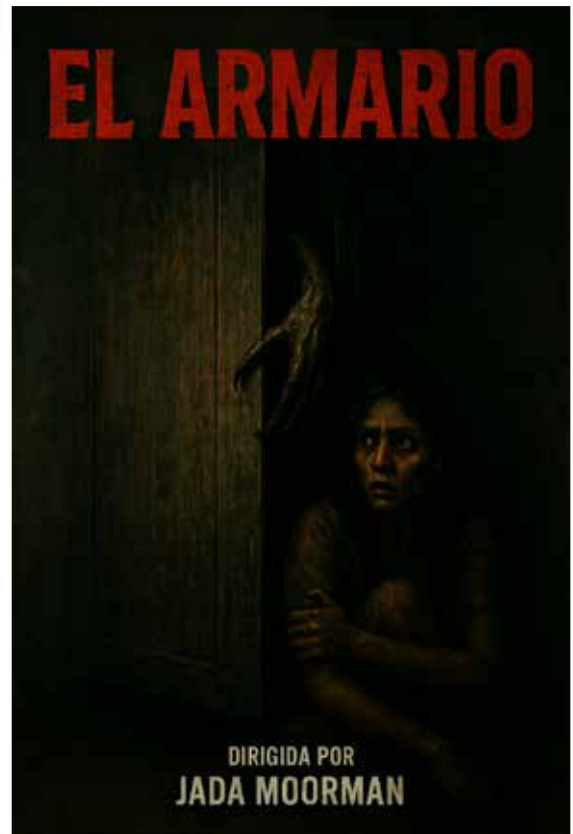
Demasiado tarde para despertar

Daisy Johnson Perez



El armario

Jada Moorman





SPN 385: Spanish for Heritage

Fall Semester, 2023

In this course, designed for native and heritage Spanish speakers seeking to strengthen academic writing and bilingual proficiency, students produced original works inspired by course themes and/or connections to their service-learning experiences. These projects reflect personal identity, linguistic heritage, and community engagement as a migrant.

Perdí la cuenta

Rafael Vaquero Covarrubias



Rafael Vaquero Covarrubias addressed the theme of immigration by demonstrating the personality changes and identity challenges that children face while living in the United States, but growing up in a Hispanic community.

More American than a Citizen

Mónica Hernández



Monica Hernandez highlights the value of immigrant labor in the United States and demonstrates the essential contributions immigrants make to the country. Drawing from class readings about undocumented workers, her artwork represents the dignity, sacrifice, and importance of immigrant hands in shaping the nation.

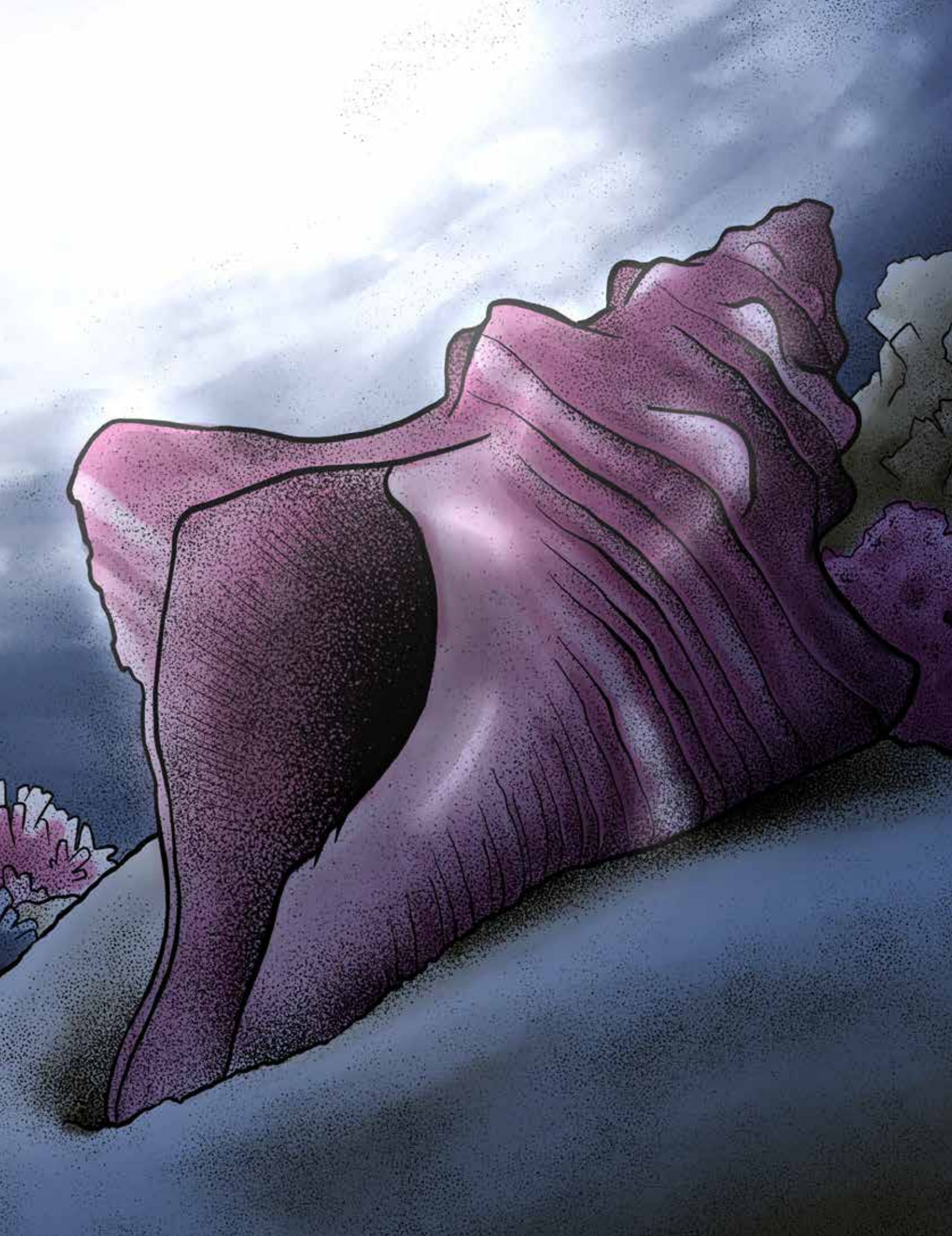
I See Freedom

Alma Luna

Alma Luna portrays the emotional journey of a refugee seeking liberty through her watercolor painting. The central tearful eye reflects personal suffering, while blurred eyes often symbolize those who came before or were left behind. The U.S. flag in the pupil contrasts with a red, smoke-filled sky, representing both hope and the painful cost of freedom.



Writing





Diary entries inspired by the story of the children of Morelia.

Kyle Everitt

The Children of Morelia, a group of approximately 456 Spanish children, arrived in Mexico in 1937, seeking refuge from the horrors of the Spanish Civil War. The Mexican government, under the compassionate leadership of Lázaro Cárdenas, generously offered them asylum. The children were mainly hosted in Morelia, a city that opened its arms to them and became their temporary home.

Querido, Diario.

Es mi primera vez en un barco. Entonces, el momento es muy agri dulce. Porque no sé qué pasa cuando salgo del barco. Mi familia, mis amigos que no están en el barco, y todo el país no están en un buen lugar. Y entiendo porque estamos en el barco. Una guerra no es un lugar para niños. Solo ojalá que la situación sea diferente. Incluso si no supiera lo que vendría después, desearía tener a mi familia para ayudarme a no preocuparme. Y me dicen que es sólo por 3 o 4 meses, pero no sé. Tengo un sentimiento malo sobre esto.

El próximo día

Querido, Diario.

Estamos en nuestro destino ahora. No sé dónde pero unos niños les preguntaron a los adultos en la ciudad y nos dijeron que estamos en México. Es mi primera vez en un país diferente, en un continente diferente, fuera de mi país o ciudad natal en general. No sé si estoy listo para un gran cambio como eso. Pero tengo nuevos amigos en los niños del barco. Hablamos de sus vidas antes de la guerra, cuando todos estábamos en nuestro país, felices y viviendo vidas normales. En el barco, jugamos con nuestras mentes, imaginando dónde vamos. Y ahora, sabemos dónde estamos.



WRITING

Nadie sabe la situación en nuestro país original. Somos demasiado jóvenes para saberlo. Pero, estamos emocionados por regresar en 304 meses como nos dijeron. Extraño a todos en mi ciudad natal. Extraño todo de mi ciudad natal.

4 meses después

Querido, Diario...

Todavía estamos en México. No sé qué está pasando. Estoy más preocupado que nunca. ¿Cuándo veré a mi familia? Nos mintieron. Estaba tan listo para regresar y ahora tengo que esperar más. No me importa si hay una guerra. Solo quiero ver a mi familia. No tengo más palabras. Solo quiero ir a casa.

Un Año después

Querido, Diario...

Entiendo todo ahora. Entiendo por qué muchos niños, incluyéndome a mí, todavía estamos en México y por qué posiblemente nunca regresemos. La guerra continuaba, y somos todavía solo niños. Extraño a mi familia, pero mi familia lo hizo por una razón. Para una nueva vida para mí. Una vida mejor. Me quedaré en México, siempre pensando en mi familia y mi vida antes del barco. Pero, tengo que hacer de este país mi nueva casa. Para dar justicia a la decisión de mis padres y a mí mismo.



Photograph from Bettman/Getty images



“Los Niños de Morelia”, 2004



¡Esto es Spanglish para mí!

Rebeca Castilla

Verse 1:

There's a language that we speak, one
that our hearts cannot hide

A bridge between languages, a mix
that is so unique

Spanish and English, a language of
the heart

It's more than just words, it's a
feeling inside

It is where our cultures meet and unify

A bridge between cultures,
so strong and so clear

Bridge:

Esta es mí canción

De un lenguaje que tu y yo compartimos

Donde hay conexión

Donde hay inclusión

Es tan especial y es único

Chorus:

Spanglish, a language that defines me

It's more than words, it's a
special melody

Spanish guitar meets English rhyme

Spanglish, the language of our time

Así que celebremos, esto que tenemos

Chorus:

Spanglish, a language that defines me,

It's more than words; it's a special
melody

Spanish guitar meets English rhyme

Spanglish, the language of our time

Verse 2:

A connection to our roots, where
identities collide

It's a language of unity, where
differences subside



FRE 365: France's Dark Years

Spring Semester, 2024

During the Second World War, France under Vichy collaborated with the Nazis to persecute and deport foreign and French Jews to concentration and death camps. Between 1942 and 1944, 76,000 Jews were deported from France.

Students in Dr. Roseau's FRE 365: France's Dark Years course considered the role of space in memory of the Holocaust. Following are visual representations and excerpts from two projects. Through a lack of clear borders, Cassie Carver's painting depicts Drancy (an internship and transit camp in France) throughout the years to show how memory of the Holocaust continues in the space today. Papa Guerrero's digital map traces the lives of three Jews living in France during the war. Points on the map include descriptions in French and in English about their families, how they suffered, and how the individuals survived or did not survive the Holocaust.

La responsabilité de la mémoire dans les œuvres françaises

Cassie Carver

Pour la France après l'Occupation, les œuvres sur le sujet des événements pendant ces cinq années sont profuses. Patrick Modiano a passé jusqu'à ce jour toute sa carrière en s'occupant de ce sujet. Lorsqu'il recevait le Prix Nobel pour ses œuvres, il a exprimé dans son adresse que « les thèmes de la disparition, de l'identité, du temps qui passe sont étroitement liés à la topographie des grandes villes. » Pour Modiano, il a eu le fort désir d'explorer et découvrir l'histoire du terrain qu'il habitait. Il a expliqué pendant la même adresse que beaucoup de romanciers sont liés avec une certaine ville de laquelle vient l'inspiration pour leurs œuvres (Verbatim). Il y a une connexion puissante entre



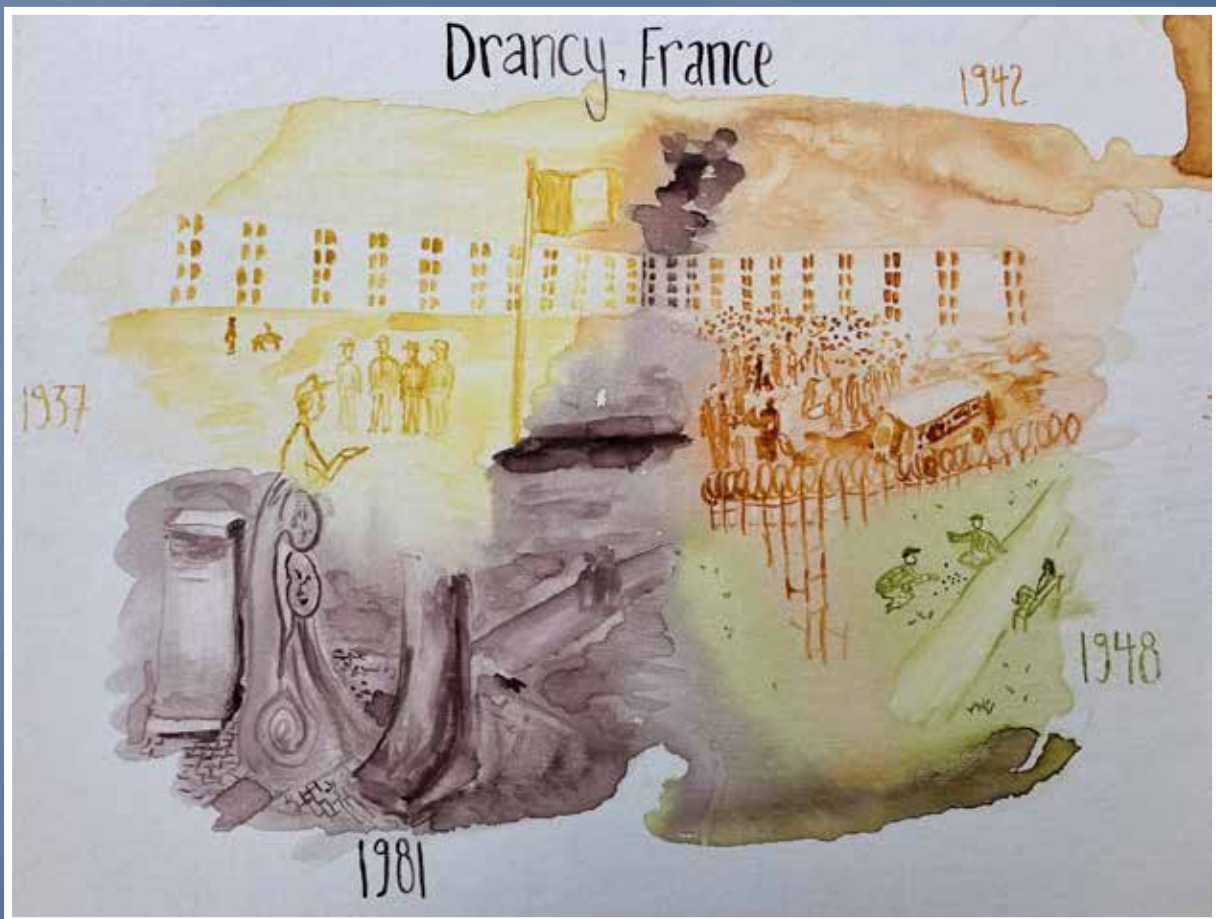
ces auteurs et l'endroit où ils habitent, les histoires qu'ils inventent, et les choses qu'ils racontent. Modiano exprime aussi une forte curiosité qu'il a eue depuis son enfance pour les histoires inconnues de certaines personnes, les noms de qui il trouve dans l'annuaire téléphonique (Verbatim). Comme résultat de sa connexion avec sa ville, il trouve qu'il s'intéresse aussi aux personnes qui y habitent et habitaient avant lui. Le lieu influence fortement les mémoires qui sont importantes aux personnes comme Modiano.

Dans mon dessin, j'ai créé des régions de couleur qui ressemble à des taches qui détendent l'un à l'autre. Dans ces quatre régions, il y a une scène de l'endroit où se trouvait le camp de Drancy, un endroit en France qui était important pour la déportation des Juifs, et chaque région représente une autre époque où les choses que l'on peut voir dans la scène changent (Histoire). Cela évoque l'idée que dans un endroit, il y a indéfiniment des mémoires qui y ont eu lieu et qui ne quitte jamais cet endroit ; comme les années passent, plus de mémoires et expériences sont incorporées avec ces souvenirs qui sont déjà là. Il est cette compilation et collaboration des mémoires du même endroit qui évoque la responsabilité que l'on ressent, comme Modiano, de se faire connaître de la mémoire des humains du passé, parce que les mémoires vraiment ne disparaissent jamais.

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WRITING

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Watercolor artwork by Cassie Carver



Découvrir les victimes effacées: Préserver la mémoire humaine de la Shoah dans Nuit et Brouillard

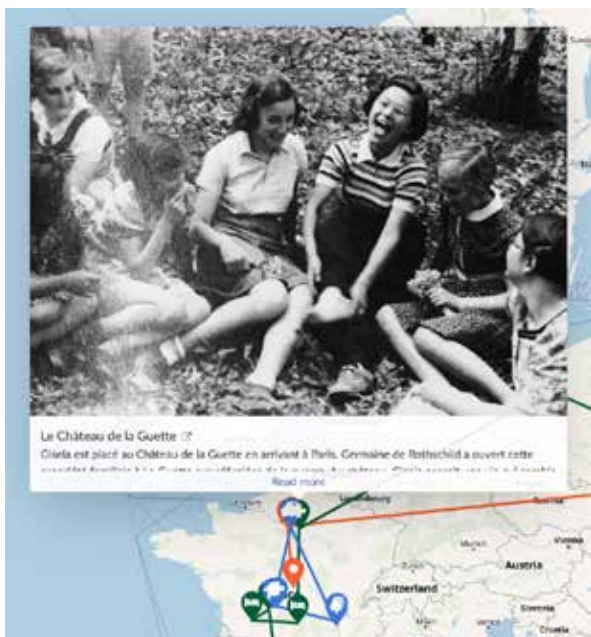
Papa Guerrero

Dans son article Christian Delage remarque que *Nuit et Brouillard* est « ...une œuvre à part entière, suffisamment aboutie et personnelle pour résister à l'usure du temps... » (94). Ce qui est clé dans cet extrait, c'est le mot « personnelle ». L'enquête de Jean Resnais, réalisateur, consiste à trouver la mémoire humaine dans les ruines impersonnelles, à trouver les personnes à partir de leurs silhouettes. La grande dissimulation historique des Nazis est la destruction des identités de leurs victimes. Les musées, les vestiges, les nombres ne peuvent jamais exprimer tout. Ils amènent un souvenir de ce qui s'est passé mais pas de qui. Donc, j'ai voulu rassembler les deux pour saisir la mémoire personnelle avec l'espace.

J'étais inspiré par la reconstruction des albums photographiques de familles, comme celles dont Elisa Bricco parle dans son article. Elle écrit « ...des albums de famille, des traces laissées derrière eux par les disparus, auxquelles les survivant.e.s et leur postérité s'accrochent pour éviter la disparition totale du souvenir du passé. La connaissance du passé est possible grâce à la mémoire transmise » (Bricco 59). La carte interactive nous permet de réconcilier les ambitions de Resnais avec ceux des auteurs de l'article de Bricco.

Contrairement au destin de beaucoup de Juifs, la famille Bluschstein a survécu, mais la Shoah avait encore un impact sur sa vie. Julien avait été séparé de ses parents et puis il a dû partir de son frère pour se cacher. Les mesures qu'il a prises pour survivre prouvent que ceux qui n'ont pas été tués souffraient énormément. Regardez les sourires de Julien et son frère et considérez la douleur de leur séparation.

WRITING



View the
digital map!





MoM to Mexico, 2024



Mercer faculty and students visiting Cacaxtla, an archeological site in Southern Mexico.



Dr. Matthew Harper teaching Mercer students INT 301 while in Mexico.



Mercer faculty and students taking a clay workshop.

TRIPS & CLUBS

MoM to Mexico, 2025



Students taking a Mexican folklore dance class.



Students participating in a first-aid workshop.



Mercer student teaching middle schoolers biology during the STEAM Camp.



Mercer faculty and students exploring Cholula, Puebla: one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities on Earth.



Mercer faculty and students visiting a bull-fighting arena in Tlaxcala.

MoM to France, 2024



Students and Utopia 56 staff outside a warehouse near Paris after a long day of cleaning tents to be redistributed to migrants living on the streets.



Mercer students visiting a refugee artist collective in Paris.



Mercer students make stuffed bears with children at an asylum-seeker welcome center in le Chambon-sur-Lignon



Mercer students working alongside refugee staff in the Refugee Food Kitchen to prepare nutritious meals for distribution.

TRIPS AND CLUBS

MoM to France, 2025



Mercer student playing a game with a child in the asylum-seeker welcome center in Chambon-sur-Lignon.



Mercer students and faculty with the center's social workers and residents from all over the world.



Mercer students play "four square" with a teen at the asylum-seeker welcome center.



Mercer student taking her turn in a multilingual version of Pictionary at the center.

MoM to Colombia, 2025



Mercer students and faculty visiting the Monserrate mountain and church.



Mercer students and faculty visiting Zipaquirá Salt Cathedral.



Mercer students taking a tutoring break at the CGCA.



Mercer students and faculty enjoying cultural Colombian food.

Spring Break in the Dominican Republic, 2025



Mercer students learning CPR at MEDI-UCE, in San Pedro de Macorís.



Mercer students' trip to Isla Saona.



Mercer students working together with MSU medical students.



The students whom Mercer students tutored in the Bateyes.

Spring Break in Greece, 2024



Mercer faculty and students on Monastiraki Square, Athens.



Mercer faculty and students in the harbor of New Corinth.



Mercer faculty and students on the Areopagus (Hill of Ares), featuring the Acropolis.



Benjamin Utt giving his site report on the Sacred Way in the Sanctuary of Apollo in Delphi.

Faculty-Led Summer Program in Seville, 2024



Mercer faculty and students at the Spanish Congress.



The Plaza de Sol, featuring Madrid's symbolic bear.



Mercer faculty and students at the Museo del Prado.



Mercer faculty and students walking through Madrid.

La Mesa

During the academic year 2024-2025, several Spanish Table Talk events were held under the leadership of Kaley Woods, Bailey Byrdsong, Zara Ishaque, and Liam Donovan, as well as the supervision of Mrs. Aranza and board members Jenni Ramirez, Jenni Vargas, and Andres Davila. La Mesa is a space for students to have fun practicing speaking Spanish outside of the classroom.



La Mesa members at the last meeting of Spring 2025.



La Mesa members practicing their Spanish with Mercer faculty and students.



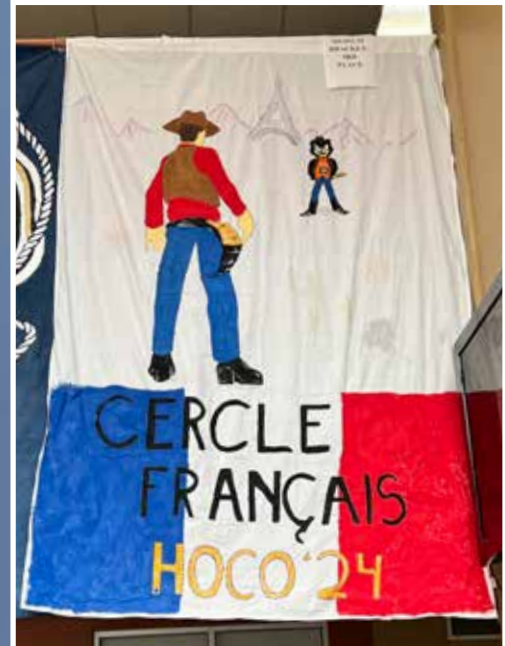
La Mesa members during a speed-dating activity, which is repeated every meeting.

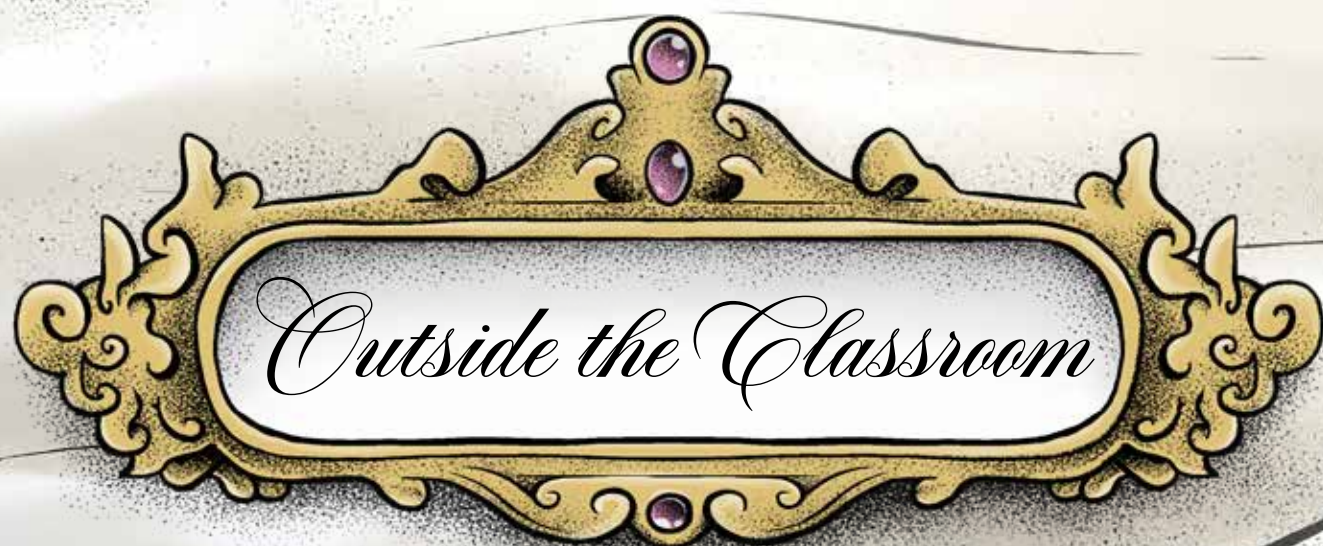


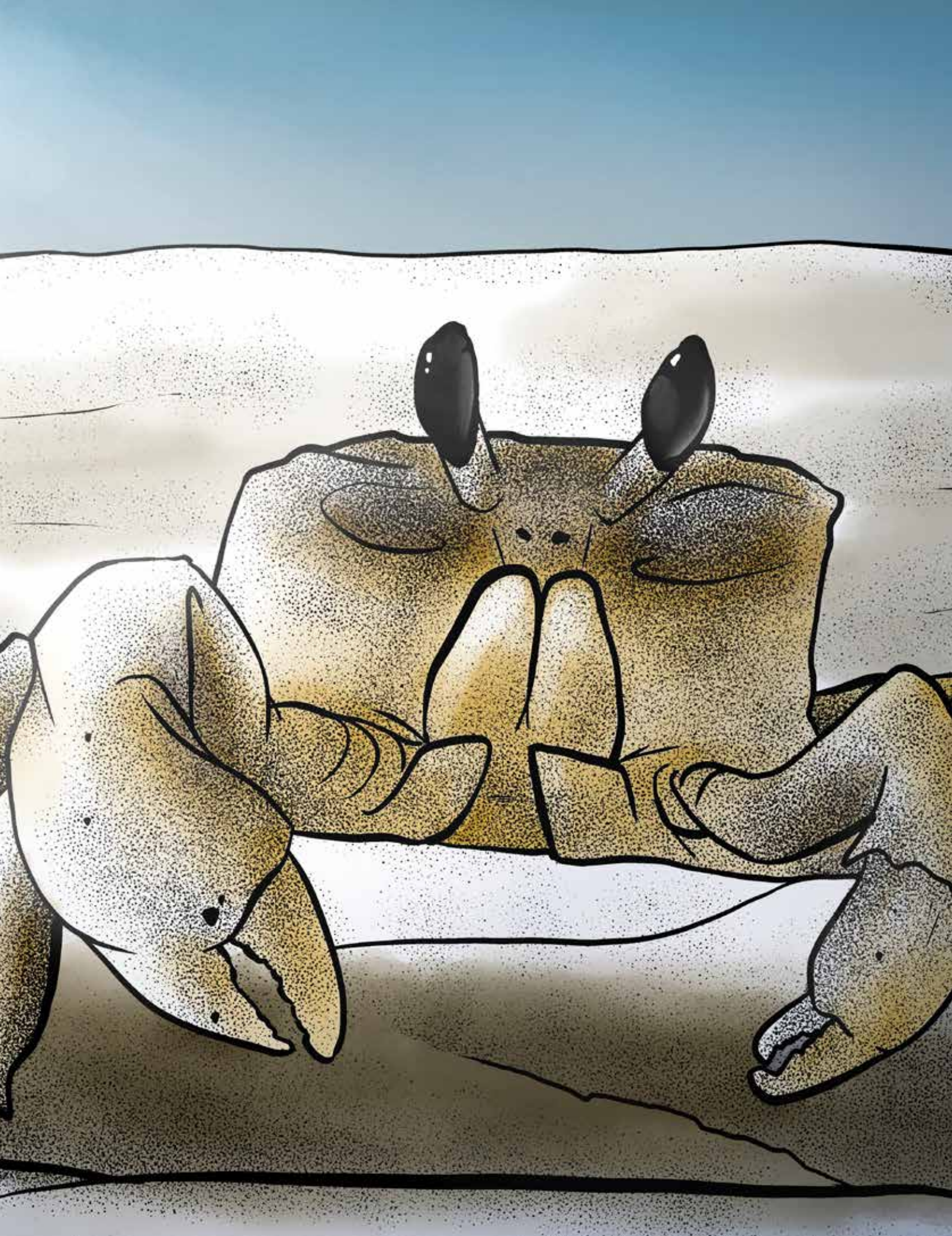
La Mesa members after a mixer with the Global Health Club to discuss mental health in hispanic communities.

Le Cercle Français

Le Cercle Français are pictured below in both preparation and execution of their Homecoming 2024 celebrations.









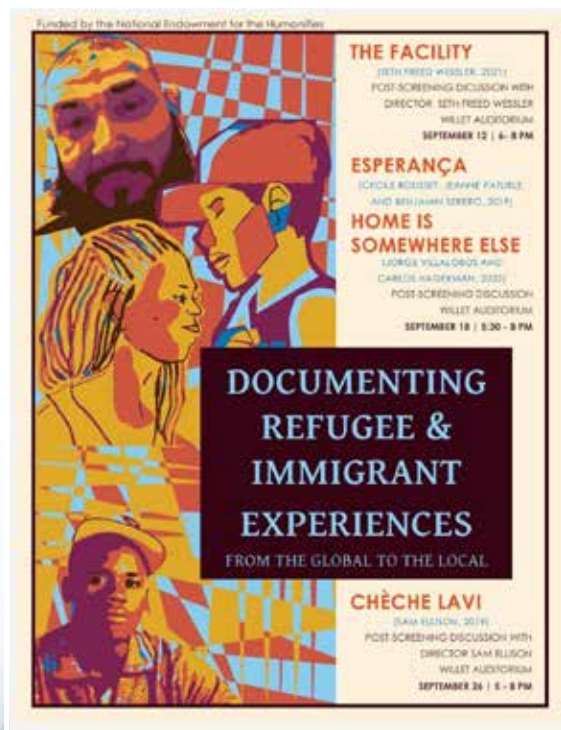
Integrating Voices

Integrating Voices of Refugees and Immigrants: Faculty and Curriculum Development is an interdisciplinary oral history project at Mercer University led by Dr. Roseau and Mrs. Aranza. The project documents the lived experiences of refugees and immigrants in Middle Georgia and was funded by the NEH for almost 2 years. The project is now developing a multilingual open-education resource and the digital archive website to preserve and share these community stories.





Dr. Katherine Roseau and Mrs. Libertad Aranza co-led two trips to the U.S.-Mexico border in Fall 2023 and 2024. Students met with representatives from the United Nations and NGOs who work with migrants at the border.



In Fall 2024, Dr. Roseau and Mrs. Aranza collaborated with Dr. Rachel Schaff, media studies professor, and students to host the NEH-funded film festival, Documenting Refugee & Immigrant Experiences: From the Global to the Local. The festival featured screenings of *The Facility*, *Esperança*, *Home is Somewhere Else*, and *Chèche Lavi*, followed by post-screening discussions with filmmakers. Held at Mercer University, the event fostered meaningful dialogue about global and local migration stories, highlighting film as a powerful tool for humanizing the experiences of refugees and immigrants.

The French Village

For their final project, Dr. Roseau's FRE 112: Beginning French II students (Fall 2023 and Spring 2024) created a French village and brought it to life in Penfield Hall. Their establishments included a hotel, bank, market, and beauty salon. They prepared scenarios which they acted out in French using vocabulary from the semester.





Discover Mercer, 2025

With the collaboration of Ms. Tracy Martinez from the Admissions Office, Mrs. Aranza's SPN 385: Special Topics in Spanish: Migration and Oral Histories students, and Mercer student organizations, the fourth Discover Mercer in Spanish was held to provide workshops and a Bear Bazar in Spanish to assist Hispanic families with the college application process, financial aid information, and the different programs Mercer University offers.



Centro comunitario hispano

In SPN 314: Culture and Civilization of Latin America, students volunteered at the Centro Comunitario Hispano (CCH) in Macon, Georgia. The center offers English, Spanish, GED, and US Citizenship classes. They also provide translation services in court and at select local clinics for Spanish-speaking individuals who are not fluent in English. Students assisted with Spanish classes, helped organize donations, and supported the development of cultural events hosted by the CCH.



Sarah Ixchell Arellano's experiential presentation.



Abraham Soto's experiential presentation.



Students teaching Spanish to the community at the Centro Comunitario Hispano.

Hispanic Health Fair, 2025





Phi Sigma Iota Ceremony



Sigma Delta Awards



Faculty celebrating departmental awards for our exceptional students.







The Journals of the Moravian Mission to Georgia

Dr. Achim Kopp

In the Fall of 2023, Dr. Achim Kopp (Professor of Foreign Languages & Literatures and Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences) and Dr. John Thomas Scott (Professor of History and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences) published a book titled *The Journals of the Moravian Mission to Georgia, 1734-1737: From Herrnhut to Savannah*. *Vox Populi* sat down with Dr. Kopp for a conversation about the new publication:

VP: We understand you and Dean Scott have a new book out. What is it about?

AK: The volume features the journals of four Moravians who came to colonial Georgia as members of two parties of settlers and each spent several months between 1735 and 1737 in Savannah while the town was being established by General Oglethorpe and the British Trustees. In their journals, the settlers reported on their negotiations with the British Crown in London, their trans-Atlantic passages, and life on the frontier in Georgia, including their dealings with the British settlers and the Native Americans.

VP: Who were the Moravian Brethren, and are they still around today?

AK: The Moravian Brethren, also called the Herrnhuters, are a German-speaking Protestant group that originated in the 1720s in the town of Herrnhut in the Electorate of Saxony (now located in the eastern part of Germany). Over time, the group sent missionaries to different parts of the world, including the newly established colony of Georgia. One of the main goals of the two parties of thirty-six settlers sent to Georgia was to Christianize the Yamacraw, a tribe of Native Americans living in the area around Savannah. Although their missionary work in Georgia lasted only a couple of years, the Moravians continued to thrive in Germany and other parts of the world, including settlements in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The town of Herrnhut, Germany, remains the center of the world-wide Moravian Church to the present day.



FACULTY

VP: What is the significance of this project?

AK: Up until the publication of our volume, the Moravian journals were available only in manuscript form at the Moravian Archives in Herrnhut, Germany. During the Cold War, this town was part of the German Democratic Republic, and the archives were largely inaccessible to Western scholars. In addition, the texts were in their original German and written in a hard-to-read old German script (Kurrentschrift). With the publication of our volume, we are making the Moravian journals from Georgia available to a broader English-speaking scholarly community and provide annotations on people, customs, and events mentioned in the texts.

VP: What is the story behind this book publication? When did you start the project? How did you divide the work?

AK: In the early 2000s, Dean Scott was working on a project on the activities of the Wesley brothers (Charles and John) in colonial Georgia. Among the archival materials he was working with, he found some letters and journals of Moravian folks who had dealings with the Wesleys in Savannah. Since the Moravian materials were in German, Dean Scott asked me to provide some translations for him over the summer. What was meant to be a one-time service from one Mercer colleague to another grew into a full-fledged cooperation over the subsequent years. We ended up visiting the Moravian Archives in Herrnhut twice for week-long searches of materials relevant to the Moravian mission to Georgia. Whenever I had some spare time between semesters, I would translate parts of the four journals most important for our project. The trick for me was to find the happy medium in the translation between the idiosyncrasies of the eighteenth-century texts and the perspective and expectations of a twenty-first-century audience. As a specialist in colonial Georgia history, Dean Scott was responsible for providing the historical context to the texts I translated. He wrote a comprehensive introduction to the journals and created a large number of annotations that help the modern reader make sense of these old and sometimes obscure texts.

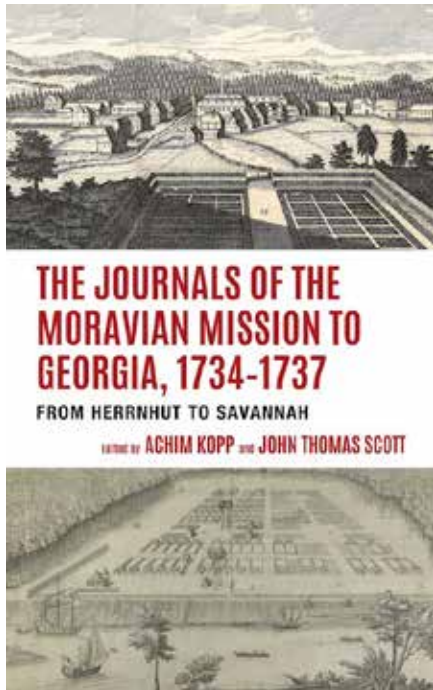
VP: What is it like to co-author a book rather than write it by yourself?

AK: Writing this book with Dean Scott was one of the most rewarding research activities I have undertaken during my twenty-eight years at Mercer. Before this volume, I had published two other scholarly books, one about the English varieties of speakers of Pennsylvania German (based on my doctoral dissertation) and one about a nineteenth-century textbook of German written by the German American scholar Francis Lieber. For both earlier publications, I did all the work over several years by myself,

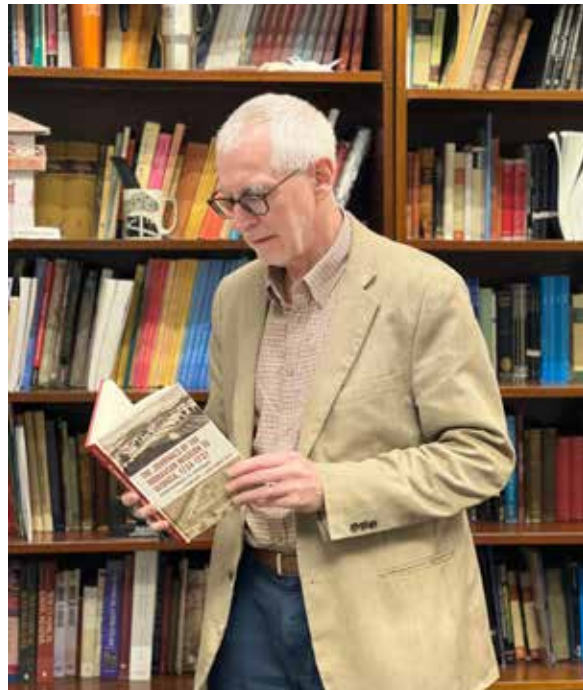
which can be a fairly isolating experience. This was a very different story with the Moravian book. Although I, as the native speaker of German, was ultimately responsible for producing the English translations of the journals, I was always able to run my questions about the meaning of certain events and details by Dean Scott. Together, we were usually able to make sense of even the most obscure passages, and if we weren't, we consulted with other scholars in the field. In all my previous research, I had never experienced this kind of cooperative spirit. Doing scholarly research can be a pretty lonely activity, but with the Moravian book it was the exact opposite for me.

VP: What else do you want the Vox Populi readers to know?

AK: Well, I want to thank you for this opportunity to introduce our book to you. If you have an interest in early Georgia history and the history of early European Protestant groups, please take a look for yourselves. The four journals will give you a lot of first-hand information on how some of the earliest settlers of Georgia coped with the challenges of their lives in the New World.



Book cover, *The Journals of the Moravian Mission to Georgia*.



Dr. Achim Kopp pictured with his book.

Infancias

Dr. Clara Mengolini

In 2018, Dr. Clara Mengolini designed a comprehensive course titled “Politics and Ideology in Latin-American Children’s Literature & Film,” which uses accessible stories, poems, comics, and short films to explore a wide range of controversial topics. This course proved itself to be a success for five consecutive summers. Therefore, during her sabbatical year, she decided to make her course into a textbook, *Infancias: Aprendiendo español a través de la literatura y el cine infantil*. The book has been implemented during the Fall of 2024 and Spring of 2025 for students of SPN 301 and SPN 302, with students discussing socio-political themes through readings and films while reviewing grammar and expanding their vocabularies.



CM pictured in her home with a textbook copy.



CM pictured in her office with a textbook copy.

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*Clara Mengolini &
Libertad Nranza*

Vox Populi visionaries and founders

March, 2026



DANKE SCHÖN
MERCI BEAUCOUP
MULTAS GRATIAS
MUCHAS GRACIAS
谢谢