



We got out of the car near where 16 de Septiembre meets Constitucion.

Her face was there. Painted on the wall nearby, her eyes a flat blue, and dozens of faceless eyes were floating around her head. The words "te observan" were written at the top. "We're watching."

Karina told us that it was a painting by Isabel Cabanillas. The artist who worked as part of several collectives that worked to protect the women of Juarez, to counter the incredible femicide that had taken root in the city. It was impossible to travel even a few blocks without finding a pink rectangle with a black cross painted on a wall, a symbol that a woman's body had been found at that location. She also worked to meet another growing need in the city - guiding migrants to the places where they could access resources and safe lodging. She painted clothing to sell to raise money for them. She kept a neighborhood watch. She was doing the work.

Isabel was shot in the head and chest and left to die on the street in January of 2020.

She became another pink rectangle with a black cross.

The community that she worked so hard to protect was and remains rightfully outraged at her loss. Marches were held. Crowds of women shut down the Santa Fe bridge, under the shadow of the cross with the toe tags of murdered women. They wrapped black bandannas around their faces and chanted "ni una mas." Not one more.

Across the street from "Te Observan" is a painting of Isabel. Purple hair, big smile. At various spots around the area, purple stencils of an eye surrounded by the words "Isa Vive" can be found. Isa lives. She is still doing the work. "They didn't kill all of us." Karina explained.

Forming a triangle with "Te Observan" and the painting of Isabel is Panaderia Rezizte. The Resist Bakery. In it 'Yorch' and his wife are baking bread. Gorgeous loaves and sweet buns made from recipes that were passed down from his grandfather. They sell the bread to raise money, and they donate baked items to migrant shelters. They were close friends with Isabel and the bike she was riding when she died is placed in a position of honor above the front door. "You have to eat, right?" Yorch told us. "This is a basic need. We're making bread." The bakery has the electricity of big things packed into small spaces.

The day before we went to the intersection, Omar picked us up and we talked with Karina in his van while he purchased lumber to take to a build site. When we got there, we helped walk the wood to the side of a small hut, where they are building lodging for migrant families who are waiting for their immigration court date. Small children are being patiently shown how to add just the right amount of water to dusty clay to make adobe for the walls of the hut. Just before it is time for us to leave, they finally get the moment they've been working for- the moment when they take off their shoes and squish the water into the clay with their toes. The families who will live in that small home will probably never hear the laughter of the kids who helped build the walls that are protecting them, but I hope they feel it. It's not a mansion, it will not have AC, memory foam mattresses, cable television. But it will provide some measure of protection in a world full of agencies, weather, and human beings that almost always do not.

It's the communities of Juarez- Karina, Yorch, Omar, their families and hundreds of others using art, and bread, and mud, and sweat, and laughter and community to heal the brokenness of the world.

Isa vive. Isa lives.