

The New York Times

Seesaws Straddle the Mexico Border, and Smiles Shine Through

The playground equipment was inserted through the steel slats in a section of border wall in Sunland Park, N.M.

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July 30, 2019

ALBUQUERQUE — For a brief moment — just a half-hour over the weekend — a simple piece of playground equipment served as a bridge between the United States and Mexico.

In images and videos that were circulating on social media this week, children smiled and giggled with glee as they bobbed up and down on three pink seesaws that had been inserted through the steel slats of a section of border wall in Sunland Park, N.M.

“Actions that take place on one side have a direct consequence on the other side,” Ronald Rael, one the architects who designed the border seesaws, wrote in an Instagram post describing the unusual installation.



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The project points to how artists and architects are responding to President Trump's efforts to build a wall along the border, in addition to border barriers constructed during the administrations of Barack Obama and George W. Bush.

In images and videos, children on both sides of the border could be seen playing on three seesaws along a portion of an older section of border wall in Sunland Park, immediately west of New Mexico's border with Texas and sprawling El Paso. In social media posts featuring the seesaws, the wall seemed to be an afterthought rather than a barrier limiting contact between those who live in its shadow.

Placed between the steel slats on the border fence in Sunland Park, the seesaws were observed by Border Patrol agents and Mexican soldiers, according to Artnet News.

Mr. Rael, an architecture professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and Virginia San Fratello, an associate professor of architecture at San Jose State University, originally designed their "Teeter-Totter Wall" in 2009.

Since then, prototypes and etchings of the seesaws have been featured in museums including the Museum of Modern Art in New York.