

NATIONAL BUTTERFLY CENTER

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***CHECKPOINT CARLOS* COMING
TO THE NATIONAL BUTTERFLY CENTER**

(Mission, TX) – ‘Checkpoint Carlos’ by Doerte Weber, is coming to the National Butterfly Center, December 30, 2018. This large-as-life artwork representative of the border wall will arrive before the bulldozers are scheduled to show in February, to give Valley residents and visitors a taste of what the landscape will look like once the center is bisected by 36 ft of concrete and steel.

Weber, a dual citizen of Germany and the United States, created this exhibit named after Checkpoint Charlie at the Berlin Wall, to challenge viewer’s impressions of security, sovereignty and beauty.

“Growing up in West Germany, it was always difficult to cross to East Germany,” Doerte explains. “It was not a pleasant time. One never knew what might happen to you; how long they might hold you at the border.”

Given the increasing militarization of the border, where concertina wire is strung and troops have been deployed, the idea that people will sacrifice freedom for some sense of protection, even if it is an illusion, is particularly relevant. For this reason Doerte’s tapestries, depicting butterflies and steel bollards, woven from plastic newspaper delivery bags, are timely and terrible.

“Contemplating this wall, my first thought is that a free press is fundamental to a free society, however, we live in an era of warring ‘news’ machines and media distrust,” states Marianna Trevino Wright, executive director of the National Butterfly Center. “Then I marvel at how the artist has recycled materials—plastics that have a devastating impact on wildlife and the environment—and made them into something beneficial by transforming refuse into art.

“While it is hard to escape the damage that will be done to private property in the short-term, this depiction of the wall tells another story,” continues Wright. “It is one of decay. As the plastic dries and cracks, exposed to the elements, so will the concrete crumble and disintegrate, one day, destroyed by Nature or by Man.”

Doerte’s walls will go up inside and outside the National Butterfly Center for several reasons. First, the artist insists her art is for all to see, regardless of status, education, age or income; second, this wall of plastic recalls the temporary “safety fencing” used to create barriers to entry for construction zones, which the center will soon be; and third, because the artist intends for everyone who passes to understand that plastics—like policies—have the potential to help and to harm.

To learn more about the ‘Checkpoint Carlos’ exhibit and future plans for the artist’s reception, call 956.583.5400. To learn more about the National Butterfly Center, and how you can join us, visit www.nationalbutterflycenter.org. Your annual membership or charitable gift impacts the beauty of our community and helps preserve the biologically diverse, natural treasures of deep South Texas.

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The National Butterfly Center is committed to ‘Growing Connections’ between people, plants, and the winged wonders that pollinate and propagate all that grows around us. We do this through educational and environmental initiatives that cultivate meaningful understanding of the processes that create sustainable ecosystems. The Center is open to the public, for visitors and members, seven days/week.