

Untouchables Photo Exhibition and Advertisements

Erik Ravelo, 2013



Body of Work

(Can be used for Independent Oral Presentation or HL Essay)

Contextual Information / Timeline

In 2013, the Unhate foundation approached creative ad agency Fabrica, and photographer Erik Ravelo, with a project to produce an effective campaign addressing human rights, in particular the rights of the child. They wanted to raise awareness of issues plaguing children around the world: paedophilia inside religious walls, sexual tourism, the civil war in Syria, liberal circulation of firearms, obesity, illegal organ transplantation, and nuclear pollution. The tagline of the campaign was: *The right to childhood should be UNTOUCHABLE.*

Ravelo shaped the idea of the campaign around this statement. The campaign was designed to take advantage of social media: Ravelo launched the campaign from his personal social media profiles including Facebook and Instagram and Tumblr before it was released on the website of Fabrica ad agency. In this way, the designer hoped that users would be actively engaged in distributing the message, as if they had personal responsibility for the issues in the campaign.

The campaign consists of seven pictures, recreating the image of a child victim of abuse juxtaposed against an adult embodying a 'threat'. Controversially, the adult is posed in the shape of a cross, whereby the child becomes the victim crucified on his back. In several images the face of the child is blurred so he or she cannot be identified. The images imply the child is weak and powerless, without a voice and denied their rights. The controversial choice of the cross was intended to raise awareness and to provoke debate. Ravelo *wants* his audience to feel outraged, getting a reaction from viewers to defend the children's rights. Users should empathise with the non-branded message and spontaneously spread the images around.

UNTOUCHABLES



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Physician



Priest



Syria

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Nuke



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Weapons



Thailand



Fast Food

Appendix 1

Source: <https://www.buzzworthy.com/los-intocables-controversial-shocking-photos-public-awareness-project/>

‘Los Intocables’ Might Be the Most Controversial Public Awareness Project Ever

No written copy, no stylized video editing, just a series of photos that deliver a powerful message ANYONE across the globe can understand. The photos of Cuban artist Erik Ravelo depict children as the martyrs for the sins of adults are controversial and understandably strike a nerve with parents. Ravelo is accustomed to having his artwork censored though; his “United Colors of Benetton’s UnHate” campaign that featured world leaders making out had its share of critics.

Ravelo’s latest project is titled “Los Intocables” which translates to “The Untouchables” in English and highlights some of the biggest issues threatening the well-being children across the world, issues that adults are to blame for. The photography series features a child and adult recreating a crucifixion to represent the loss of innocence through some sort of contemporary evil. Each photo tells a particular threat against children and are represented with war, childhood obesity, school shootings, illegal sex trade, black market organ trade, and nuclear fallout.

Just like previous art projects, “Los Intocables” has been met with controversy and censorship. The project garnered 18,000 likes on Facebook within days of its upload, before the social media giant put a cap on it and prevented him from uploading more images. “I am used to governmental censorship from Cuba but with this,” he paused, “my first reaction was ‘woah.’” Making the project didn’t come without its critics either. “I had

people writing me, threatening me," he told the Huffington Post. "At first the project was fun but it got a little out of hand."

The artist says that he has no plans to fight the censorship, the photos are out there and they make people uncomfortable, which is exactly what they were intended to do. These are serious issues, issues that make people cringe for a reason, and hopefully bringing awareness to them will motivate people to educate themselves about the issues and work to make a change.

Appendix 2

Source: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/erik-ravelo_n_3900061

Controversial Art Project Addressing Violence Against Children Is Censored By Facebook (NSFW PHOTOS)

Cuban artist and creative director Erik Ravelo is used to having his artwork censored. He was, after all, the man behind United Colors of Benetton's UnHate campaign, which featured doctored photos of world leaders making out.

Yet his newest project, a personal artwork unrelated to his career as a creative director, has managed to spark even more controversy "I had people writing me, threatening me," he said in a phone conversation with the Huffington Post. "At first the project was fun but it got a little out of hand."

"Los Intocables," which translates to "The Untouchables," is what Ravelo refers to as a "human installation," featuring a variety of issues plaguing children around the world. "The right to childhood should be protected," Ravelo writes on his website, a theme driving the visually disturbing works.

Each work features both a child and an adult posed to demonstrate a contemporary evil, whether it be gun violence, molestation or the threat of nuclear war. Each work features a child being crucified on the back of an adult, each scene attempting to tell a different story about the loss of innocence. The human sculptures are then photographed with the child's face blurred, resulting in images as visually jarring as they are conceptually saddening. "It's art, it's communication," Ravelo explained.

Ravelo's project has been, according to the artist, censored by Facebook. Halting his "likes" at 18,000 -- where it had landed after just a few days. He has also been prevented from uploading more images. "I am used to governmental censorship from Cuba but with this," he paused, "my first reaction was 'woah.'" The Huffington Post has reached out to Facebook for a response and has not yet heard back.

When asked if he planned to fight the online censorship, Ravelo responded: "I am not even that interested in fighting; I am more interested in promoting my work."