

Artist Statement – Angennette Escobar

To Reach the Stars, We Must Lift One Another Up is inspired by Adhara Maite Pérez Sánchez, a child prodigy from Mexico whose love of science and space has led her to dream of working for NASA. In the mural, Adhara sits on a cloud and reaches toward the stars, representing the imagination, determination, and limitless potential of young people. The many hands lifting her cloud remind us that no one achieves a dream alone: families, teachers, mentors, and communities all help young people rise.

The stars surrounding Adhara honor Hispanic and Latine leaders whose accomplishments have expanded what future generations can imagine. Together, they represent art, science, justice, literature, music, athletics, storytelling, and activism. The monarch butterflies and hummingbird evoke migration, resilience, and cultural connection, while the open areas of glass allow light to pass through the mural—a symbol of hope and possibility.

The mural's message, "*Para alcanzar las estrellas, necesitamos levantarnos unos a otros,*" means, "To reach the stars, we must lift one another up." It celebrates Hispanic heritage not only by remembering extraordinary individuals, but also by encouraging the next generation to dream boldly and support one another.

The Faces in the Stars

Frida Kahlo was a celebrated Mexican painter whose deeply personal art explored identity, disability, culture, and the experience of women. Her embrace of Mexican and Indigenous visual traditions made her an enduring cultural and feminist icon.

Sonia Sotomayor, the daughter of Puerto Rican parents, became the first Latina justice on the United States Supreme Court. She represents perseverance, education, justice, and public service.

Ellen Ochoa is an engineer, inventor, and astronaut who became the first Hispanic woman to travel into space. She later served as the first Hispanic director of NASA's Johnson Space Center and represents scientific curiosity and the breaking of barriers.

Selena Quintanilla was a Mexican American singer whose music brought Tejano culture to audiences around the world. She remains an important symbol of bicultural identity, pride, joy, and possibility.

Roberto Clemente was a Puerto Rican baseball legend and the first Latino inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Remembered equally for his humanitarian service, he died while traveling to deliver aid to earthquake victims in Nicaragua.

Dolores Huerta is a Mexican American labor leader and civil-rights activist who helped organize farmworkers and co-founded the organization that became the United Farm Workers. Her life demonstrates the power of community action and collective courage.

Lin-Manuel Miranda is a Puerto Rican American composer, playwright, performer, and filmmaker. Through works including *In the Heights* and *Hamilton*, he has brought Latino stories and voices to a wider audience while opening doors for greater representation.

Sylvia Rivera was a Puerto Rican and Venezuelan American transgender activist who fought for LGBTQ+ people, particularly those affected by poverty, homelessness, racism, and exclusion. She represents the importance of ensuring that every member of a community is seen and supported.

Gabriel García Márquez was a Colombian novelist, journalist, and Nobel Prize recipient whose imaginative storytelling helped introduce Latin American literature to readers throughout the world. His writing celebrated memory, history, family, and the extraordinary qualities of everyday life.

Julia de Burgos was a Puerto Rican poet, teacher, journalist, and advocate for women, social justice, and Puerto Rican identity. Her courageous writing made her an important literary and feminist voice whose influence continues today.