

## The Story

Gil is an avid social activist and uses his art to bridge cultures and diverse groups living in the U.S. His Con 'A' de Arte (A For Art) and Art Si (Art Yes) through the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County in North Carolina, connects youth and promotes art as a vehicle to affect positive change in the community. Gil's Home Sweet Home project achieved critical acclaim by actively involving the children of the Charlotte school system in the creation of a giant mural. As a result of this project, Gil met with then Senator of New York and current Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and presented her with one of his paintings.

His Nuestra Bandera, Nuestro País, Nuestro Hogar (Our Flag, Our Country, Our Home), united displaced Colombians around the world by having them place their handprints on a giant canvas. The canvas was presented in 2010 to Colombian President Alvaro Uribe during Colombian's bicentennial celebration in Bogota. These efforts have earned Gil international recognition from the Latin community with recent awards like the Premio Nueva Generacion (New Generation Awards) and the Premio Huella Colombiana en el Exterior. In addition, Gil was named Latino of the Year by Agencia EFE joining a select group of individuals that include Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor and Journalist Jorge Ramos.

His most recent social art project, Flag of Hope, will see Gil travel throughout North Carolina once again collecting handprints and signatures to develop the nation's first handprint flag made of North Carolina residents. A new project in recent years has been Painting4Diversity which works with concepts of diversity through art projects in select schools in three North Carolina cities. He has also worked with CMS program Making It Better and a project called Ten Faces of Diversity. Two of the ten designated projects have been completed so far. He is also extremely involved with diversity workshops in the community and at local universities such as Queens University of Charlotte and UNCC. Other groups he has worked with include Leadership Charlotte, and International House.

Edwin has overcome numerous obstacles to become one of America's premier Latino Artists. In his Faces of Diversity Project, Edwin shares his story of triumph and how it helped shape his idea of social awareness through art. Edwin takes you on his journey across Europe with his Nuestra Bandera, Nuestro Pais, Nuestro Hogar (Our Flag, Our Country, Our Home) project with images and music as he tells the stories of the more than 25,000 people who participated in his global art project. Most recently, Edwin toured North Carolina with his Flag of Hope collecting handprints, stories and memories to make the nation's first ever flag made with the handprints of North Carolinians. With these types of adventures behind him, Edwin is sure to motivate and spread his message of hope to all that encounter this feel good presentation.

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