

We Will Not Be Tamed

TEXAS IS DEFINED BY ICONIC LANDSCAPES, FROM BIG BEND TO THE PINEY WOODS. IT IS THE LAND THAT DEFINES US AS TEXANS, TEN DISTINCT ECOREGIONS AS DIVERSE AS ITS PEOPLE. ONE OF THOSE IS THE TRANS-PECOS REGION, HOME TO THE FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS, ARTIST XOCHITL RODRIGUEZ, AND HER DAUGHTER, CALISTA.

“The beauty of raising a kid in a wild place is that she will be wild.”

Xochitl Rodriguez is an artist and El Paso native deeply rooted in the mountains of West Texas. The Texas landscape inspires everything from her art to the relationships with the women in her family. Rodriguez is committed to passing the tradition of a wild, untamed spirit to her four-year-old daughter, Calista, through daily hikes and exploration.

“I was born with the wandering in my blood. Raised predominantly by my mom and grandmother, our life was outside. My grandmother lived two blocks away from this beautiful arroyo, and that was our backyard growing up. We’d go on journeys that didn’t have an end goal, but they had a purpose—to explore the world around us. Now, I share these journeys with

my daughter, Calista.

“Every time we go down the trails to get into the arroyo, I feel like we’re going down into the beautiful guts of the earth. It’s a place you can feel on your skin. It’s this very tangible, tactile thing that contrasts against the silence and stillness of the cacti. It’s also a place of possibility because when you’re down there, you can look up to a mountain and ask yourself, “How can I go up from beneath the surface all the way to the top to touch the sky?” You are constantly reminded that you’re here but you could be there, and if you were there you could be down here.

“For all I know, my mother may have intentionally wanted me to understand that resilience. And on a metaphorical level, she taught me how to teach my own daughter—how

to predict change, and how to roll with it when it comes. The smallest decision of letting Calista lead a hike has huge benefits in terms of the way she leads, the way she understands to be confident, and how to believe in herself.

“I want Calista to know she’s free all the time, and she has no limitations. She can absolutely climb a mountain. She can absolutely get dirty and tear her pants. And, falling down a hill in the wild might prepare her in life when she has a bad fall and she’s got to get up on her own.

“Every generation starts where the previous one left off. Calista gets the benefit of my grandmother, my mother, and me. She’s the ultimate evolution of three generations, and I’m really excited for her to have the wild in her bones and in her blood.”

Artist Xochitl Rodriguez hikes with her four-year-old daughter in the Franklin Mountains in El Paso, Texas.



“The artwork I create is an echo of the journeys I take with my daughter.”



WATCH VIDEO

Visit [TexasMonthly.com](https://www.texasmonthly.com) to see more of Xochitl and Calista’s story and watch videos about other Texans who are living the untamed life.



Texans are some of the wildest, most rugged, independent, and freedom-loving people on Earth. So is our land and the life on it. Find out how you can join Xochitl and others who are standing together for the land that has given us so much.

[WEWILLNOTBETAMED.ORG](https://www.ewillnotbetamed.org)

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