

UC Riverside

UC Riverside Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Mitos, Musas Muxe, y Mujeres Zapotecas: Illuminating Magnolia

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/45v0b6b2>

Author

Lessing, Angela Cruzan

Publication Date

2019

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Mitos, Musas Muxe, y Mujeres Zapotecas: Illuminating Magnolia

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Art History

by

Angela Lessing

June 2019

Thesis Committee:

Dr. Jason Weems, Chairperson

Dr. Patricia Morton

Dr. Robb Hernandez

Copyright by
Angela Lessing
2019

The Thesis of Angela Lessing is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

Acknowledgements

As a whole, this project would have never come to be without the support of numerous people. First, a thank you to my thesis committee. In particular, many thanks to my advisor Jason Weems for his advice, patience, encouragement, and challenges. Also, for reeling me back in when things became overwhelming, and remaining positive when I was too overly critical of myself and this project. Thank you for seeing the earnestness. Thank you to Patricia Morton for being a constant encourager since my project's inception last spring. Your insights and critiques helped me condense and get back to the heart of what I really wanted this project to be about. Robb Hernandez, thank you for your much-needed feedback when it came to my defense, and for opening my eyes to topics I had not yet considered. They were all a tremendous help this last quarter. I also owe a huge thank you to Barbara B. Brink and her travel award, for which if I had not been afforded the opportunity to visit Juchitán de Zaragoza last year, this project would have taken a drastically different turn. I am grateful for all of the experiences I had while in Juchitán, and all of those I met. Vicente, Lilia, Stephanie, Francisco, Matthew, Elvis, and Jade: your experiences and honest feedback are at the heart of this project. A special thank you to Krystal Boehlert, Sonja Sekely-Rowland, and Leigh Gleason for guiding me through my many questions about the nerdy side of image use, and for all of the scanning!

Thanks to my cohort for the spirited conversations, camaraderie, group encouragement, and the many memorable days over the last two years. Shannon, Heather, Hanna, and Molly, you all made this experience worth it. Thanks as well to Teresita, Sepi, Aaron, Jennifer, Joanna, Laura and all my other dear friends and loved ones who offered words of advice, jokes, and food. A thank you also needs to be given to my brother, Steven, for always being my best friend, I love you.

Finally, an obvious but enormous thank you is owed to my parents John and Tina. Your endless love and support through all of my endeavors, is more than I ever felt like I deserve. I wouldn't be who I am without either of you.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Mitos, Musas Muxe, y Mujeres Zapotecas: Illuminating Magnolia

by

Angela Lessing

Master of Arts, Graduate Program in Art History
University of California, Riverside, June 2019
Dr. Jason Weems, Chairperson

Since the mid-nineteenth century the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Oaxaca, Mexico, has been a well-traveled site for various artists as a place to document the beauty and projected ethereal nature of the Zapotec womxn that inhabit the area. An ancient *matrifocal* society—rather than a matriarchy—Juchitán de Zaragoza’s residents are fiercely independent and stereotypical gender roles are frequently non-formalized. Juchitán is also a site of ethnic resistance, working against a centralizing Mexican national culture, and home to the *muxe*, who adhere to a fluid sex/gender hybridity.

This study focuses on Mexican photographer Graciela Iturbide’s decade long series *Juchitan de las Mujeres* (1979-89), and specifically the images of Magnolia, a muxe, whom Iturbide befriended throughout her time in Juchitán. Critiquing Iturbide’s inclusion of Magnolia within her series serves to prompt those who view photographs of gender non-conforming bodies to consider the implications of taking such photographs and what they become when presented as *documentary*. Ultimately, this study considers the *Juchitán de las Mujeres* series as stylistically anachronistic and unrepresentative of an accurate version of the muxe, or the Juchitecas, Iturbide

photographed. The intention of this thesis is to provide an alternative history of gender identity and normativity within Juchitán, in addition to remaining critical of Iturbide as a photographer in order to understand how complex cultural rhetoric and photographic processes create slippages within meaning and effect image consumption.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iv
Abstract.....	vi
List of Illustrations.....	ix
Introduction.....	1
Defining <i>Muxe</i>	6
<i>Frame-works</i>	10
Overview of Thesis.....	13
Chapter 1. Through the Lens: Iturbide to Magnolia.....	17
The <i>Author</i> , The Spectacle, y las Influencias Modernistas.....	18
<i>Juchitán de las Mujeres</i>	26
The Sombrero, Female Revolutionaries, and Zapata.....	32
A Brief Queer/ <i>Queered</i> History.....	37
Chapter 2. Performative Practices.....	46
Discursive Spaces, <i>La Malinche</i> , and Contextualizing Juchitán as Matriarchal.....	50
Re-Orienting Magnolia: Vanity and Interiority.....	60
Contextualizing Magnolia Contemporarily.....	68
Epilogue.....	74
Bibliography	76
Appendix	83

List of Illustrations

- Figure 1. Graciela Iturbide, *Magnolia III*, Juchitan, Mexico, 1986. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010. See pages 1, 22, and 30.
- Figure 2. Graciela Iturbide, *Magnolia I*, Juchitan, Mexico, 1986. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010. See pages 1, 29, and 32.
- Figure 3. Graciela Iturbide, *Magnolia II*, Juchitan, Mexico, 1986. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010. See pages 1, 21, and 28.
- Figure 4. Graciela Iturbide, *Rosa*, Juchitán, Mexico, 1979. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010. See page 31.
- Figure 5. Graciela Iturbide, *Juchiteca con cerveza* [Juchiteca with beer], Juchitan, Mexico, 1984. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010. See page 31.
- Figure 6. Graciela Iturbide, *Untitled* [Two Juchitecas Dancing], Juchitan, Mexico, 1986. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010. See page 31.
- Figure 7. Graciela Iturbide, *Despues del rapto* [After the abduction], Juchitan, Mexico, 1986. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010. See page 31.
- Figure 8. Tina Modotti, *Woman of Tehuantepec*, ca. 1929. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Zigrosser, 1968. See page 24.
- Figure 9. Manuel Alvarez Bravo, *Mujer del istmo peinando a Isabel Villasenor*, 1931. See page 24.
- Figure 10. *Una Zapatista*. Postcard. Mexican Photographs Collection (MS 026), box 2, folder 10. Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside. See page 34.
- Figure 11. Hugo Brehme, *Emiliano Zapata, Cuernavaca, Morelos*, May 1911. See page 36.
- Figure 12. José Guadalupe Posada. “Los 41 maricones...Muy chulos y coquetones” [The 41 faggots...Very cute and coquettish]. Courtesy of Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin. See page 40.
- Figure 13. José Guadalupe Posada. “Abanicos elegantes...” [Elegant fans...]. Courtesy of Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin. See page 40.

Figure 14. José Guadalupe Posada. “41 maricones para Yucatán” [41 faggots to the Yucatan]. Courtesy of Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin. See page 41.

Figure 15. Lourdes Grobet, *La Doble Lucha I*, 1981-1982, gelatin silver print, collection of California Museum of Photography, UCR ARTS, University of California Riverside, gift of Lorenzo R., Nicolas, and Cristina Hernandez. See page 65.

Figure 16. Nelson Morales, *Self-portrait*, 2015, Union Hidalgo, Oaxaca. See page 69.

Figure 17. Vittorio D’Onofri, *Muhxe Amaranta*, 2001, Juchitán, Mexico. Photo courtesy of the artist. See page 70.

Figure 18. Nelson Morales, *The Big Lady*, 2016, Union Hidalgo, Oaxaca. See page 71.

Introduction

An individual poses charmingly for the camera in each photograph, their presence is strong yet reticent. In one a smile is witnessed, in another, they hold an unwavering gaze. A third captures an off-guard expression. Soon what becomes noticeable is the broadness of their shoulders, the hairiness of their forearms and legs, large feet that occupy a pair of thong flip flops, a stuffed bodice, and their overall stature. Upon the first examination, this group of three photographs taken in the late 1980s, which will serve as the primary topic of this thesis, produces a diverse range of simultaneously off-putting and intriguing reactions. In one photograph (Figure 1) the individual holds a mirror that reveals their profiled reflection draping them in luminous white light, opening up their protagonist gaze. In another (Figure 2) they are posed frontally with one hand on their hip, the other extending their dress. This over-feminized posture cannot help but appear innocent, almost childlike, conveying a powerful yet demure sense of self. Their head tilts with a pleasant smile as a sombrero sits atop their head. In a third (Figure 3), they are seated, and their gaze wanders while a raised hand holds a half-eaten paleta. These are the looks of Magnolia, the *muxe* participant of Graciela Iturbide's *Juchitán de las Mujeres* series. The photographs that are part of this project were all taken during Iturbide's decade long assignment, starting in 1979, portraying the womxn within Juchitán de Zaragoza, a community within the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Oaxaca, Mexico.

Above all, the intention of this thesis is to provide an alternative history of gender identity and normativity within Juchitán by equally critiquing the depiction of gender ambiguity within Iturbide's "documentary" photographs and completing a close reading of photographs of a *muxe* who defies categorization within gender norms. I am critical of Iturbide as a photographer in order to understand how complex cultural rhetoric and photographic processes create slippages within meaning and effect image consumption. I do this in order for Magnolia's agency as a

human being and photographic subject to become a starting point in illuminating the ambiguity within Mexico's gender economy in addition to adhering transgressive value to the photographic documentation of non-binary gender identities. Therefore, this is an attempt at a decolonized art-history. My goal is to alter the art historical canon and methods so that readers might better interpret the intersections between art, gender identity, and culture.

Juchitán de Zaragoza

As a *documentary* photographer, Iturbide essentially became a tourist in her own country, and after artist Francisco Toledo invited a group of artists, including Iturbide, to Juchitán her photographic corpus, and some of her most referenced and loved photographs would soon emerge. Above all else, Iturbide's photographs are personal, intuitive, and rich with symbolism. Many are regarded for their ethnographic like behavior, though she is not an anthropologist. Nonetheless, they produce questions about the society and culture of her subjects.

Graciela Iturbide was born in Mexico City in 1942, and in 1969 at the age of 27, she enrolled at the Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematograficos at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), where she studied filmmaking and still photography until 1972. She served as an assistant from 1970-71 to renowned modernist Mexican photographer Manuel Alvarez Bravo, who then was Dean of Photography and abandoned filmmaking. Bravo stimulated Iturbide's interest in photography, became her mentor and would have her accompany him on many of his photographic journeys. She met Henri Cartier-Bresson while traveling in Europe and was one of the founding members of the Mexican Council of Photography in 1978. Besides Cartier-Bresson and Alvarez Bravo, Italian Photographer Tina Modotti and husband Edward Weston would also influence Iturbide and her oeuvre. Known for her dedication to her country's rich visual heritage and particularly Mexico's lively indigenous population and traditions,

Iturbide would follow in her mentor's footsteps and travel widely throughout Mexico, Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama, and East LA.

Juchitán de Zaragoza is the city of many names. Known as the Ciudad de Las Mujeres, Ciudad de Las Flores, its indigenous name Ixtaxochitlan, or *Lugar de las Flores Blancas*. Juchitán is the fourth largest city in the state, is located about 26 kilometers away from the city of Tehuantepec and is considered to be one of the most culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse regions of Mexico.¹ About sixteen languages are spoken in the Oaxacan state the two most common being Zapoteco and Mixtec before Spanish. In popular culture, Juchitán is the fabled home to a proto-feminist, gay paradise where the mythical Amazon womxn (Juchitecas) exhibit considerable strength and independence. It is described as a place where gender defies the patriarchal ideal found in the hegemonic ranchero masculinity and femininity, and where the presence of a third gender, *muxe*, live. Within this project, Juchitán as a location also serves a different purpose: Juchitán de Zaragoza is a locale, or rather a discursive space for its Zapotec history and gender ambiguity. Juchitán is a site of knowledge production and provides a frame mediated by a regulatory power where contexts are received.² Juchitán as a discursive space, an idea Juana Maria Rodríguez discusses at length in *Queer Latinidad*, has its "...own linguistic codes and reading practices...[that] engage[s] in hiding and revealing [its] own internal contradictions."³ It is a space that can inform, constitute, or even subvert identity. The challenge then "...becomes how to conceptualize subjectivity through both semiotic structures (discursive

¹ Alfredo Mirandé, *Behind the Mask: Gender Hybridity in a Zapotec Community* (University of Arizona Press, 2017), 13.

² Summary from Juana Maria Rodríguez, *Queer Latinidad: Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces* (New York: New York University Press), 2003.

³ Rodríguez, 6.

spaces) and agency (identity practices)”⁴ Magnolia’s identity is what is called to question within this discursive space.

In the early twentieth century the matriarchal myth of the liberated Amazon womxn had swept the minds of artists and writers across Mexico, and even Jose Vasconcelos, the then Secretary of Education sent artist Diego Rivera after his return from Europe to see if the rumors of the ethereal and powerful womxn were true. By the 1920s the Isthmus was a popular point for artists from across Mexico and around the world. In 1979 Iturbide was invited by artist Francisco Toledo with the opportunity to visit his home, Juchitán de Zaragoza, where he had recently founded the Casa de la Cultura, the Juchitán Cultural Center, in 1972. Iturbide was asked to photograph the community, and after the series concluded in 1988, the photographs resulted in *Juchitán de las Mujeres*, a book that printed the following year. Iturbide spent prolonged periods over the decade entering and exploring the lives of the Juchitecas. Iturbide befriended these womxn and forged relationships. In an interview with Fabienne Bradu (2003), Iturbide was asked to recollect her experiences with the womxn and stated:

They’re strong women, physically large, and the whole time they were telling jokes and erotic tales in Zapotec—at times they translated for me, at times not.... I lived in their houses. They cared for me, they took me to the market, they in a way adopted me.... It wasn’t that they only gave me permission to take pictures, but also that they took initiative and showed me things. I came to describe Juchitán through their eyes, but at the same time through mine.... It was thus that I entered into the Zapotec world.⁵

Though Iturbide’s oeuvre seems to offer the audience a “...time for observing, which is essential for singling out layers of meaning even where there doesn't seem to be anything to understand, where everything appears as simply and plainly as possible,”⁶ as proposed by Marta Dahó in

⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁵ Fabienne Bradu and Graciela Iturbide, “Graciela Iturbide habla con Fabienne Bradu” (Madrid: La Fabrica y Fundacion Telefonica, 2003), 30-31.

⁶ Mary Davis MacNaughton et al., *Revolution and Ritual: The Photographs of Sara Castrejón, Graciela Iturbide, and Tatiana Parcero* (Ruth Chandler Williams Gallery, Scripps College, 2017), 83.

Revolution and Ritual (2017), the simplicity of the photographs in combination with the conjured romantic memory and fantastical notions of Juchitán creates an interruption between what is presented and derived photographically, especially when including the intersection of gender. The photographs of Magnolia are troublesome and problematic because they offer an idealized vision of the indigenous, and an exclusivity of what being muxe looks like. This results in a viewership of Zapotec womxn and the muxe that is ethnocentric and simplistic, reiterating the stereotypical and nationalistic view of Isthmus womxn as “assertive, dominant individuals who favor strong language and ribald behavior, presumably in contrast to other Mexican women.”⁷ Since documentary photography is historically aligned with anthropological discourse, documentary photographs are seen as irrefutable truths, again exalting exotic myths. Therefore, I am weary and critical of Iturbide’s use of the camera (a manifestation of Western convention), how she *shoots* indigenous communities, and her inclusion of Magnolia, the only muxe defining person within this decade long project.

Photographs and their “documentary” value, as Iturbide’s are said to be, become especially problematic as objects of historical evidence, and further how viewers single out and reflect upon the various layers of meaning. The disillusioned reality of a photograph—as something easily manipulated—reflects how discourses can be continually re-contextualized through myths, cultural memory, and politicized lens’. History and memory are intertwined discourses that manipulate ideas about the present and future. In the following work I will reframe this memory and these lens’ through historical and contemporary contextualization’s.

⁷ Beverly Chiñas, *The Isthmus Zapotecs: A Matrifocal Culture of Mexico*. 2nd ed. Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1992), 113.

Defining Muxe

Within a community that is proudly Zapotec and considered a historical site of resistance against a centralizing Mexican national culture, also live the *muxe* who challenge the anthropological and instead adhere to a fluid gender/sexuality hybridity. Therefore, it is necessary to define—in the broadest, but most inclusive way—what being muxe encompasses. The origin of the word muxe is uncertain, but according to Rueda Saynez, it derives from the Zapotec word *namuxe*, ' meaning *miedosa*, or cowardly.’⁸ In the most direct of terms, *muxe* refers to a biologically male sexed body at birth who defies the hetero-normative standards of gender in Mexico. They assume an in-between gender status, molded into specific place-based social roles, in this case, within the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

As concluded by Alfredo Mirandé in *Behind the Mask: Gender Hybridity in a Zapotec Community* (2017), *muxe*, a third sex/gender category is something “...which cannot be fully explained or understood through conventional Western conceptions of gender and sexuality or within the fields of transgender studies,”⁹ the *muxe* community in Juchitán “...rather than being considered an exceptional figure outside of the norm, assume[s] an important economic role in the family and in the community at large.”¹⁰ Muxes are never considered to have chosen to live as muxe, but rather adhere to the notion that “God made them that way.”¹¹ Sharp gender-based divisions of labor characterize Zapotec society, although, some roles are unassigned to one gender, while others are the domain for muxes (said to rely heavily upon domesticity). Muxes also, as elaborated by Mirandé

⁸ Mirandé, 49.

⁹ Mirandé, 61.

¹⁰ Ibid., 9.

¹¹ Chiñas, 108-109.

expand the hybridity because they are simultaneously exposed not only to the traditional Mexican systems of sexuality and gender as well as to the emerging modern gay object choice model, but also to an indigenous two-spirit system of gender classification, which accommodates a third gender consistent with their indigenous roots.¹²

Not prescribed to traditional hetero-normative male or female roles, to be muxe, is considered a lifestyle for life—something usually designated at a young age. The muxe occupy many domains and represent a range of experiences, lifestyles, and sexualities. In *Behind the Mask*, Mirandé discusses the intersections of work and gender within Juchitán, discussing that “...counter to the gender binary, lighter work in music poetry, and art, for example, is typically defined as men’s work, whereas women’s domain, including working in the market and planning fiestas and velas, is linked to subsistence and heavy work.”¹³ The use of the term muxe to describe those that fall in-between necessarily distances them from being viewed as gay, transgender, or hermaphrodites. While the term muxe is also one of encompassment—having agency—not to be meant in a constricted manner, the term can be problematic, in my opinion, when used restrictively. It is essential to realize that all of those who self-identify as muxe do not always subscribe to the social or economic barriers that have been described of/placed on them. Exceeding the traditional muxe "lifestyle" again recreates, or rather re-defines what it means to be muxe, and further what being muxe within the discourse of art can mean. For reasons that will become apparent in the following chapters, this clarification regarding definition was made chiefly due to the nature of the photographs invoking an “iconographical” view of the muxe opposed to Magnolia’s, and muxes, independent agency.

Defining a gender category like *muxe* is complicated. Like any definition regarding gender identity, it is the ambiguities that call for constant re-definition but also expand the theoretical frame. This project is not a denial of previous research, but merely an

¹² Mirandé, 26.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 69.

acknowledgment of the existence of un-popularized understandings of gender, and identity. There can be no firm definition for muxe—as it is a result of constant learning, observation, and experience—and if these words seem overly passionate, and if such a project challenges previous statements of other scholars, so be it. Like Juana Maria Rodríguez, this research is invested in a vision of the future where such rigid categorizations of gender diminish, and the wealth of ambiguity that undeniably exists has the opportunity to enrich not only future scholarship but enliven understandings of the past.¹⁴ This thesis, therefore, is an acknowledgment of ambiguity.

Within Juchitán de Zaragoza there is a heightened acknowledgment concerning ambiguity and the breaking of a binary, but the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and Juchitán is not a “gay paradise.” Bodies that do not prescribe to a binary form of gender do face discrimination at wavering levels, even in Juchitán. Prejudice comes from both in and outside the community and can even be seen among the muxe as well. Celebrations of acceptance among indigenous North American groups is misguided, which begs the question of genuineness within scholarship. Are those who write about the muxe, or even more broadly gender ambiguity among North American indigenous groups, truly challenging against queer discrimination, or are they preserving a romanticized ideal? I believe, like Jennifer Chisholm, that a pro-queer agenda at the cost of stereotypical acceptance that orbits sexual liberation among indigenous societies is what drives many scholarly writings that discuss gender and sexuality. The appropriate way to dismantle engrained anti-queer Western practices and assumptions about gender becomes misconstrued through many writers’ intentions.¹⁵

¹⁴ Summary from Juana Maria Rodríguez.

¹⁵ Summary from Jennifer Chisholm, “Muxe, Two-Spirits, and the Myth of Indigenous Transgender Acceptance,” (*International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies*, August 10, 2018), 21–35.

A Note on Terminology

It is vital to define extra terms used in this project. Since this thesis is based in various times and locations, the term *queer* is utilized throughout, but is not a blanket term. It nevertheless provides an essential means within the discussion of non-heteronormative sexualities and gender binaries.¹⁶ Like Juana Maria Rodríguez in *Queer Latinidad*, I use the term queer as:

...not simply an umbrella term that encompasses lesbians, bisexuals, gay men, two-spirited people, and transsexuals; it is a challenge to constructions of heteronormativity. It need not subsume the particularities of these other definitions of identity; instead it creates an opportunity to call into question the systems of categorization that have served to define sexuality.¹⁷

Queer is also employed as a verb, in the sense that normative Mexican ideology becomes “queered” through the intersection of actions and identities within mainstream history. I also implement the term *non-binary* as an adjective for all genders other than female/male, and *gender-queer* in regard to bodies who do not identify or express their gender within the gender binary.

I also use the term *homosexual* sparingly, but like Ryan Jones, I use it to “...to refer to those men for whom same-sex interactions was a primary aspect of their lives; this term also includes both effeminate and masculine-identifying men. Homosexual as a term also circulated in Mexico early in the twentieth century.”¹⁸ The term, used within a Mexican historical context, refers specifically to men regarded as “effeminate,” or “effeminizing.”

The term *womxn* is applied, and used intentionally, for any identity or presentation that leans towards femme/femininity, which also intersects varying degrees of gender and sexuality in

¹⁶ It is also useful to note that there is no direct translation for “queer” in Spanish.

¹⁷ Rodríguez, 24.

¹⁸ Ryan Jones, *"Estamos en todas partes:" Male Homosexuality, Nation, and Modernity in Twentieth Century Mexico*. (Dissertation: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012. <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/34522>), 5.

Juchitán. Additionally, the pronouns they/their/them are applied to Magnolia and any other muxe defining persons in this project to maintain their bodily autonomy.

Frame-works

Within Iturbide's photos of Magnolia, it becomes essential for a viewer to decolonize¹⁹ their discursive practice of "looking" in order for a history, seen as lesser—or rather as a spectacle—in the archive of history to come forth. Magnolia, therefore, can be seen as a *framework*, their history as a relative collective history is one that is simultaneously muxe, indigenous and colonized. The instilled *cultural memory* of Juchitán de Zaragoza as matriarchy and gay, proto-feminist paradise has remained a critical political tool that has re-contextualized the identities of the Juchitecas.²⁰ These admired photographs by Iturbide represent a seemingly exotic space which inadvertently took part in creating institutional and civic narratives about gender ambiguity within indigenous groups and image making. Ultimately, this contributes to the *archive*, and how it affects *reality*.

This reality is subsumed in myth (gay paradise and matriarchy), residing within the archive, in which A. Sepúlveda drawing from Foucault and Rama describes as, a "category of analysis determin[ing] the parameters of the historical narrative, and as a concept...disrupt[ing] and regulat[ing] the terms of historical discourse."²¹ Within the Juchitán series, Iturbide is based in the colonial Western perspective, where an alternative history (against the singular 'history' as

¹⁹ In opposition to European imperialism and domination, decolonization is the attempt to fix the white, colonial narrative (here) within artistic practice. It serves as a recognition of Europe's own history and its provincializing effects.

²⁰ Cultural memory refers to objectified and institutionalized memories that can be stored, transferred, and re-contextualized. For more see: Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 2003.

²¹ Gabriela Aceves Sepúlveda, *Women Made Visible: Feminist Art and Media in Post-1968 Mexico City*, (University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 23.

always from the Western perspective) is unseen. For Barthes: “The photograph does not necessarily say ‘*what is no longer*’ but only for certain ‘*what has been.*’ This distinction is decisive.”²² But what if the photo projects, what I will call, the ‘never was’ to a certain extent? It is best to remember that photographs are without culture, but it is a viewer and photographer who are embedded within it. The ‘catch,’ is the art historical conception of *frames* and the limiting boundaries they can produce.

The photographs of Magnolia are also a discursive space, but this time on Iturbide’s behalf. Though not diminished, Magnolia’s subjectivity as the sitter is decentralized and subscribed to Iturbide’s own repertoire. Compared to the other Juchitecas in the series, of who justify the romanticized culture and urban myths about Juchitán, Magnolia is isolated, not portrayed through the veil of “telling jokes and erotic tales.” Instead, they resemble a bug tacked to board waiting for onlookers to ogle.

The archive and its memory exist in everyone and “succeeds” as a supercilious source of knowledge, with decided enduring materials and documents. Above all the archive resists change, sustains power and is against alterity. However, much like history (which fundamentally informs the archive), the archive is full of myths, the first being that it is unmediated.²³ This myth suggests that there is a sole “archive,” a reiteration of history (Europe), keeping the “Modern” separated from the “other.” Iturbide works within the archive, and a viewer initially reads a photograph through the artist which automatically, and thoughtlessly reconciles the photograph with the archive. For Magnolia, their image becomes one dimensional if a viewer merely takes into account Iturbide and her practice, ultimately stripping Magnolias agency.

²² Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, (Pbk. ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 2010),85.

²³ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Duke University Press, 2003), Summary of pg. 19.

Photography first and foremost is an act of exploitation. To believe that photographing is in any way an act of non-intervention, would be to believe in the documentary aspect of the medium. This is a vacuous notion. Everyone is complicit (except the photograph), and the ethics of *shooting* a subject with the predatory weapon/machine is fragile and automatically transforms a subject into an object.²⁴ This object, is silently and softly murdered—prompting nostalgia and sympathy— their vulnerability preyed upon by the machine, capturing their “death.” Photographs have the unusual ability to bring the “there then” into the “here now,” appearing to conserve a diminishing past.²⁵ However, the diminishing past, in the context of *Magnolia*, is a not so distant past. It is one that has been transfigured by memory, a cooperation between the artist and history. Photographs, according to Sontag, “...turn the past into an object of tender regard, scrambling moral distinctions and disarming historical judgements by the generalized pathos of looking at time past,”²⁶ indicating their acute anachronistic partnership with “history.” They are deductions, broken pieces of information, fantastical, and are symbolic objects of the “there/then,” that emphatically determine the “here/now.” The camera as a tool and the photograph as a result, are tools of possession, of the places and people, they have *shot*. Is *Iturbide* free from photography’s intentions when visiting Juchitán? Above all, photographs apprehend and conduce fiction, and “[p]hotography reinforces a nominalistic view of social reality [... where] the world becomes a series of unrelated, freestanding particles; and history, past and present, a set of anecdotes and *faits divers*,”²⁷ as stated by Sontag. These deductions limit social and political knowledge on the

²⁴ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador USA, 2001), Summary of pg. 14.

²⁵ Christopher Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), Summary.

²⁶ Sontag, 71.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

subjects and viewers behalf, leaving both with lingering, ubiquitous, remnants of the photographer. Perspective is not universal, it is not binary, and nor should it be delimited as such.

Overview of Thesis

This project is a study of relationships, including those congruent with an identity like femininity to masculinity, feminism to nationalism, national heritage to cultural heritage, artist to subject, photographer and photographed, and myth to *reality*. Imperative is how these seemingly binary themes become blurred and permit for re-interpretation and re-contextualization. They in turn, work together in weaving a larger, more accurate narrative. An overarching dualism that I will explore and extrapolate upon within this project is the history and ritualized use of male homosexuality in Mexico as it pertains to the formation of a national identity before, during, and after the Mexican Revolution (1900- 1940), and the Mexican feminist movement which mainly took place from the 1960s to (and beyond) the 1980s. Collectively they will also consider a queered Mexican history as a cultural-historical expression of national identity, and how nationalistic ideology relied on homosexuality as a critical concern in forming a “new” nation. This project, densely situated within the discourse of gender and the defiance of gender normativity, necessitates a discussion and convergence of both histories alongside the context of Juchitán as a locale.

It is within these two chapters that provide two different yet intertwining directives—between photographer and photographed—that draw meaningful conclusions regarding the photographs and their social context. They additionally attempt to articulate claims about transparency within the photographic medium and see documentary photography as a paradox in order to discuss their misleading nature. Iturbide and Magnolia both draw connections between intentionality and agency, relationships and representation, and offer a point of reflection and reflexivity as a way to bridge a gap to viewers.

Concentrating further on Iturbide, Chapter 1 will compare the photographs of Magnolia to other womxn in the Juchitán series, as well as explore how photographs play a role in *collective memory*, a space of projection. This is a framework, explained by M. Hirsch, for how “received, transferred knowledge of events is being transmuted into history, or into myth [.]”²⁸ offering themselves as sites of imagery and myth within themselves. Looking at Iturbide’s use of historical aesthetics and conceptions, as well as considering a queer historical context through specific events, artistic expression and politics, Chapter 1 will demonstrate the construction of Magnolia’s identity through iconography, stylization, visual devices, and political transitions.

²⁸ Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Post memory,” *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (April 1, 2008): 103.

Sociocultural contexts will be the driving factors of Chapter 2, focusing on feminist practice, Juchitán as a discursive space, and supplemental contemporaneous photographers to Iturbide. It will consider both performativity and interiority in order to further grasp Iturbide's complicity as an operator of a physical manifestation of the Western convention, as well as provide Magnolia a platform to "speak." By comparing photographs taken by artists such as Lourdes Grobet, Nelson Morales, and Vittorio D'Onofri the anachronistic nature of the photographs of Magnolia will become more apparent. Further it will also consider intertextuality as a contribution to the constructed nature of Magnolia's identity by exploring the essay that accompanied *Juchitán de las Mujeres*.

These two angles – collective memory and socio-cultural contexts – are the most exigent as relating to invoking (or limiting) an alternate history and how viewers consume images of gender ambiguous bodies. Taking what she has learned from some of the world's leading modernist photographers (of whom are a product of Western epistemology) and being a part of (even from a distance) the feminist movement allowed Iturbide to morph modernism, heritage, culture, and politics. It also provided Iturbide the outlet to photograph her world, but ultimately fail Magnolia by inadvertently positioning them as a token of anachronistic indigeneity.

This project does not claim to be a definitive account of sexuality or gender position seen through the photographic gaze, but rather as a starting point that will hopefully inspire further study with other comparable questions and explorations between bodies, visual culture, and art history. It is a starting point for bodies, like Tortorici stated, "that might otherwise be relegated to the margins of historical inquiry."²⁹ The goal is not to fill in cracks of the historiography of gender but rather to take seriously, and sometimes dispute the "canons" within photography and

²⁹ Zeb Tortorici, *Sexuality and the Unnatural in Colonial Latin America* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2016) 16. The sentence following this one is also a summary from the same page.

gendered bodies in Mexico. As someone who wishes to be part of the efforts to dismantle systems of oppression and privilege in order to empower, I acknowledge that I cannot and should not attempt to “speak for” those who live within such paradigms that I present here. Any attempt on my part to do so would reinforce my privilege as a white cisgender womxn. However, what I can attempt to speak for is the undeniable impact that colonization and Western ideas regarding race, sexuality and gender have had upon indigenous people. An impact that continues to misinterpret, allow institutionalized misogyny and reinforce violence upon bodies that do not subscribe to absurd hetero-normative standards.

Chapter 1

Through the Lens: Iturbide to Magnolia

Many of Iturbide's photographs are celebrated for their emotional depth, reflecting the personal relationships that she fosters with her subjects. One of her primary interests has been the role of womxn, and she uses photography as an attempt to understand Mexico and portray its totality as a combination of indigenous practices, imported and assimilated Catholic religious practices, and foreign economic trade. The mixture of presenting complex cultural histories and practices with dramatic yet simplistic stylizations make Iturbide's photographs undeniably political. Her images are emotionally charged and capture the uncanny in the everyday. When it comes to her *documentation* of the Zapotecs of Juchitán, which consist mostly of posed portraits, they provide great ethnographic information.³⁰ However, their proclaimed "documentary" positions are cause for disruption and criticisms. According to Analisa Taylor, these defy and interrupt the images of symbolized womxn, most notably the Virgin de Guadalupe (the pure and selfless mother) and La Malinche (Hernan Cortes' consort).³¹ She also states how "...photographic images such as these, in which women of a single Indian group are portrayed as forward and aggressive, function to reinforce the stereotypic representation of the submissive

³⁰ Iturbide's first significant project initiated in 1974 by the National Indigenous Institute of Mexico (INI) in collaboration with anthropologist Luis Barjau justifiably had an important influence over her oeuvre. Alongside photographers Mariana Yampolsky, and Nacho Lopez, Iturbide received a commission in 1978 to name an indigenous group of her choosing to document photographically, choose a writer, and collaborate with an anthropologist in creating a book about that group. Iturbide chose the Seri, and the commission resulted in a book entitled *Los que viven en la arena* (Those who live in the Sand), 1981. After this commission, Iturbide's photographic practice solidified further, devoting her photography to the rural, the remote, and mainly indigenous peoples of her own country.

³¹ Analisa Taylor, "Malinche and Matriarchal Utopia: Gendered Visions of Indigeneity in Mexico," *Signs* 31, no. 3 (2006): 815-40. Summary of pg. 828.

woman who prevails throughout Mexico generally.”³² These images of the Juchitecas are reinforcements, to a degree, of cultural expectations that do not counter patriarchal constructions of the feminine. This is significant in the context of the *muxe* because their images have been used to construct a single identity and purpose around their existence in order to fit the narrative of place-based ethnic identity.

This chapter will principally focus on the three portraits of Magnolia (Figures 1, 2, and 3), which ultimately portrayed them as a specific and normative figure. Rather than inserting additional images of gender-queer bodies into the scholarship of this introductory chapter, I will instead investigate these three images through *collective memory* by considering historical events, photographic modernism and the intersection of anthropological discourse. They will serve to inform and create socially constructed histories nonetheless adding to a collective cultural discourse. These photographic *documents* might not appear to be a unique reading of gender identity (one that pictures Magnolia as a distinctive person) but, in examining the portraits, the layers within the images will become more apparent. The layers become deconstructions that ultimately investigate anachronisms and the effect they have on how one reads photographs.

The *Author*, the Spectacle, y las Influencias Modernistas

The photographs of Magnolia are not *about* Magnolia, the womxn, or the Zapotecs in El Istmo,³³ but about Iturbide. They serve as a metaphorical ode to famed modernist photographers, much like Alfonso Cuarón’s film, *Roma* (2018), serves as an ode to Italian neorealism, and the master director himself Federico Fellini. Iturbide’s photographs are celebrated, but she is also a

³² Stanley Brandes, "Graciela Iturbide As Anthropological Photographer," *Visual Anthropology Review*. 24, no. 2 (2002): 95-102. 99.

³³ Referring to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

cisgender, affluent Chilango ³⁴woman, who instead of using her “light-skinned” privilege as a distinguished artist to comment, Magnolia and the womxn of Juchitán, instead, become objectified. As a fierce critique, Magnolia becomes nothing more than for Iturbide's use, and as a projection of her fame and name as an artist, becoming a token of indigeneity. Magnolia appears one dimensional, dry, and static compared to photographs of some of the cisgender womxn in the Isthmus, who in other ways parallel the urban myths and romanticized ideals of Juchitán. Magnolia becomes a quasi-magical creature, an object of ethnography, beyond the already mystical figures of the “ethereal” Zapotec womxn, reminiscent of the “savages” on display or images of the “exotic,” at World’s Fairs. Already a common trope of people of color to be a token or magical creature within the arts, Magnolia’s life becomes homogenized, a reconfirmation of colonial construction and Western ideology, regardless of reality.

The “us” vs. “them” approach that anthropologists in the 1970s tried to break away from still permeated and continued to be unidirectional, slipping back into a wrestle with colonial heritage. For Diana Taylor in *The Archive and the Repertoire* (2003), the “unidirectionality of meaning making and communication also stemmed from and reflected the centuries old privileging of written over embodied knowledge.”³⁵ Despite the decolonizing sentiments, the power in the binary as an acting authority of modern Western philosophy still shined through the discipline. Objects are markers of the time and place of their making, but do not possess the ability to construct a residue that can be understood upon simply looking. How does one reconstruct the *archive*, what Allan Sekula referred to as an “encyclopedic repository,” both as an “abstract paradigmatic entity and a concrete institution...the archive is a vast substitution set, providing for

³⁴ Denoting someone from Mexico City.

³⁵ Diana Taylor, 8.

a relation of general equivalence between images.”³⁶ The question is then: Can an alternate history be evoked?

The relationship between photography and Western colonialism is intricate. Photography functioned as a cultural tool and political medium in support of colonialist power, as a projection of authority. Conjured up exotic fantasies, controversial myths, and expressionistic narratives of the noble savage, are reminiscent and were implicit to many mid 19th - 20th century anthropologists. The search for the exotic was a universal trope utilized, documented photographically, and disseminated widely in a variety of photographic formats. There are overwhelming amounts of photographic evidence within the context of colonial history, racial rhetoric, and ethnographic difference. As E. Hight and D. Sampson have discussed, the “us” and “them” binary that anthropologists and photographers imposed

...between colonized peoples and themselves ambivalently; as agents of colonial culture...most often envisioned their subjects as objects of both racial inferiority and fascination. The photographers’ perceptions of their subjects were influenced and reinforced by a diverse array of familiar administrative practices, commercial enterprises, artistic and literary traditions, as well as the ongoing scientific investigation and classification of racial types.”³⁷

Photography served as a justification for colonial rule. Questions of the “other” are prompted while viewing Magnolia sitting on the chair, holding a mirror, and wearing a sombrero in addition to eliciting colonized history/photographic use when looking at the space they occupy. As has already been stated, the space that Magnolia occupies within their portraits is one that provides no details as far as place and time, in turn allowing “ethnographic” details to emerge. Where this can become slippery, in terms of time, is how the photographs have come to use. Photographs of colonized peoples acting as racial or specimen “types,” were usually accompanied by a plain

³⁶ Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October*. 39 (1986): 3-64. 17.

³⁷ Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson. *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place* (London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2004) 1-2.

backdrop in frontal, profile, or posterior views and “...helped define each other as an untamed spectacle for the fascinated, if anxious, Euro/American viewer.”³⁸ Therefore, photographs do not merely record, but rather displace, compartmentalize, investigate, and when pointing cameras at subjects, they too become objects: ones of abstraction and fragmentation.

Adhering to institutionalized history, the alternate or counter narratives would never have a place, therefore remaining controlled, disconnected, and abstract. It becomes a must to first accept the premise that alternate histories do exist, that there is a premise of marks, gestures, and evidence left, ones that need to be released. It becomes difficult when discussing *Magnolia* because Iturbide’s use of the machine, becomes transparent with Western convention, the canon of art, and “anthropology.” Therefore, it is a colonized history that frames *Magnolia*. Though I do not believe that Iturbide *intended* to project this anachronistic similarity, to photographs taken 50-100 years her former, it is one embedded within the Western construct. Photography, discussed by Hight, is a medium linked to issues about transparency “...as a possible mask for contradictory layers of cultural and political meaning,”³⁹ Nonetheless, it becomes a responsibility of the one operating the tool to decide how images will be used/consumed. *Magnolia* becomes an imagined and constructed vision to recapture a state of myth and sentimentality.

In *Magnolia II* (Figure 3), though they merely sit in a chair and look off center, one cannot help but draw connections between the photographic quality and contentious anthropological history, turning them into a clinical classification. The specificity of sitting in a chair, in $\frac{3}{4}$ view, typically involved photographs used as “types,” reminiscent of a time when the formations of anthropological theorists were determined on more ‘scientific’ productions of photographic portraits of races. The past now becomes present through this photograph, moving

³⁸ Hight, 4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

Magnolia into a *double-temporality*: they were observed and are actively observed. Magnolia's head has not yet met their gaze and appears a little uncertain while the hand which holds the paleta lowers from their mouth. Here, a glimpse of contingency is captured at the moment of exposure.

The camera acts as a tool of surveillance, one that produces by-products of history and sovereignty. Magnolia becomes an extension of a master narrative within the "history of Europe."⁴⁰ Here, Mexican and muxe history "...itself is in a position of subalternity,"⁴¹ where Europe remains a silent referent, dominating the discourse of history, no matter how one tries to disrupt it—even Iturbide. The performance absorbs the Western positioning of anthropology and continues to wrestle with its colonial heritage. It then becomes a question about how to not further implicate ourselves. "Art" as an institutional "history" and "culture" is itself a structure of curation, but the entity is not equated with speech, nor does it exercise institutional agendas, both beguiling and problematic. However, the possibility for a colonized subject to "speak" outside of the narrative of being colonized, is certain. It expands the archival context of history and meaning-making.

Any display—here a photo—is not a discovery because the discovery inherently exists within the imagination of the one who travels in search of it. The moment of discovery is also a negotiation if it measures up to what one thought and believed to be *true*. It becomes a different kind of encounter. The concept of *performance* itself is problematic because it comes with expectations in place. For example, when comparing *Magnolia III* (Figure 1) within the context of human zoos or wild west shows, the most powerful, and subjected position is to choose not to

⁴⁰ Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Historicism and The Narration of Modernity," In *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 27–46, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 27.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

participate. However, Magnolia does participate, just in a different way. The lens here, like for everyone else, reveals *our* (the viewers) desires and interests. Like Chakrabarty, it may be “...correct in noting the interdependence of social and cultural performances within a specific society, yet it might be important to question whether and how this interdependence would work cross culturally.”⁴² This position is unequal and distorting, resulting again in a double bind, turning performance into a *discourse* rather than an *adjective*—separating it from Western logocentrism.⁴³ The West conveniently forgets about the parts of the world that have eluded its grasps, and when it does remember, feels the need to reiterate the centrality of its position by freezing the non-West always as “other.” For Mexico, the Isthmus eluded its contrived nationalism discourse, and from then on was seen as a foreign and mythical point of interest.

The “archive” can become frustrated, by both “...the messy contingency of the photograph and by the sheer quantity of images. The photographic archive’s components are not conventional lexical units, but rather are subject of the circumstantial character of all that is photographic,”⁴⁴ according to Allan Sekula. Magnolia is not a universal trope, nor are they someone to be subjected and seen as “other.” A conventional colonizing narrative is applied, solidifying Iturbide as a normative user of photography, one working alongside the machine’s conventions. This is not revolutionary and instead projects Iturbide’s self-reflexivity onto her photographs. *Juchitán de las Mujeres* is a series about Iturbide, where the photographs of Magnolia fit within a colonizers gaze. Iturbide’s photographs do not work as a “reverse ethnography,” do not give a voice to those she portrayed, but instead tap into nostalgia with an artificial façade of representation, adding hokum romanticism, creating the perfect formula for a photograph.

⁴² Ibid., 9.

⁴³ Ibid., Summary from pg. 6.

⁴⁴ Sekula, 17.

Instead of seeing a nuanced image, one is presented with, on behalf of Iturbide, a stoic form of magic, produced for the consumption of the exhibition (the *white* wall, the *gaze*), not for the documentary value of dispelling myths. Further, Iturbide's work is not for the Isthmus womxn.

In comparison to Manuel Alvarez Bravo and Tina Modotti, both of whom traveled south to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Iturbide's *Juchitán de las Mujeres* series, strikes immediate resemblances. Bravo and Modotti, both praised and famed modernist photographers visited El Istmo in the 1920's and '30s, and the resemblances in stylization between Bravo's *Mujer del istmo peinando a Isabel Villasenor*, 1933 (Figure 9), Modotti's *Woman of Tehuantepec*, 1929 (Figure 8), and Iturbide's photographs of *Magnolia*, taken nearly 50 years later in 1986 are striking. All three utilize high contrast, low shadowing, shallow depths of field, and little to no contextual backgrounds as to place, or time, aside from using indigenous womxn as subjects. These works are not introduced to analyze formally, but to prove a glaring point: the resemblances between Iturbide and those who influenced her do not work in her favor. Though Bravo indisputably effected Iturbide's love for the medium and ultimately her oeuvre, those similarities produce unfavorable results when produced much later with the utilization of Bravo's "still photography" technique. This stylization makes *Magnolia* appear as if they "were" a reality, instead of "being" a reality in 1986. Tina Modotti also belonged to a group of Mexican female photographers in the early part of the 20th century that depicted a romantic version of "femaleness," within indigenous communities. Her photograph, taken at a low angle and frontally, captures the dignity and pride of the indigenous womxn of Tehuantepec. Modernist photography, inspired by modernism, emphasized formal qualities (those that were exploitative), rather than those that obscured. The camera, then, was a mechanical tool to capture *reality*, coupled with movements in painting, architecture, and sculpture. In the 1930s

documentary photography was groundbreaking: photographers presented photography as a tool for historical evidence, propaganda, as well as a form of art.

The conscientious decision to stylize photographs in a “documentary” way within modernist discourse, of a projected mythical place sets in stone the peoples and the place’s *otherness* contemporarily. Again, reiterating Iturbide’s position as one set within Western convention and history, as a superior rather than an equal. For the viewer, the anachronistic nature of the photographs of Magnolia promotes backwardness both on behalf of Magnolia, the muxe, and Juchitán as an ethnic site of resistance.

Iturbide fails to move out of her own professional and cultural elitism, and her photographs of Magnolia do not expose the “...myth that accompanies the label, the folklore of photographic truth.”⁴⁵ The difficulty with the documentary genre resides in its rhetorical strength. The camera’s “evidence” which lives within the “objective,” does not live in the politics of the viewer, and therefore, objectivity only resides within the machine, where meaning is arbitrary. The genre also, as elaborated by Sekula, “simultaneously contribute[s] to much spectacle, to retinal excitation, to voyeurism, to terror, envy, and nostalgia [and I will add here, sympathy] and only a little to the critical understanding of the social world.”⁴⁶ *Documentary*, then, becomes art when it serves as an act of self-expression on behalf of the photographer. I reject that Iturbide’s photographs fall within the paradigm of *documentary* or act as metonymic vehicles of “social or psychological truth,”⁴⁷ but instead, inversely sublimate themselves with the archive. Stripping original “documentary” intent for the active role makes Iturbide complicit with the “Western-

⁴⁵Allan Sekula, *Photography against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works 1973-1983*, (Halifax: Pr. of the Nova Scotia College of Art Design, 1984), 56.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

ness” of the machine. It is her cultural separation from “history” that creates spaces where interpretations are vast, often contradictory, and differential.

Alternate history has only been allowed to speak within the paradigm of “history.” What becomes troubling is when photographers claim photographs to be “documentary,” instituting them as the abject and concrete, the *reality*. This confusion in addition to the projection of the abject image inherently makes them anachronistic—regardless of their stylization—and places photographs, and in this project, Magnolia here in the present/reality for consumption but also perpetually there/dead in the past. However, the muxe do exist, Magnolia exists, that is not a question of exactitude, but of reality, something established without a method, a history, or archive. The documentary existence elicits sympathy and ethical convolutions. It is the ethical complexity of such “realness” that is called into question because the documentary is intrinsically aesthetic.

Juchitán de las Mujeres

The multifaceted “definitions” and roles for muxes, defined in a linear matter within scholarship, interrupts their fluidity in a contemporary sense but makes identifying the figures in photographs uncomplicated. The details within Iturbide's images become exceptionally important. Iconographic objects that are emblematic of masculinity such as the sombrero, or emblematic of vanity like the mirror alter and create complexities. Clothing is also indicative, while the presence of “feminine” attire and makeup are some of the visible indicators, additional depicted objects and actions deserve consideration. It is also essential to recognize that the rendered identities and roles of these womxn represented reflect the tension between social directives, identity politics, instituted hegemonic masculinity, and the reality of the lived experiences throughout the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

Furthermore, implying definitions for the muxe when viewing photographic “evidence” demonstrates how photographs of the muxe characterize them as indigenous and poor. These rendered identities strip individual agency—to a degree but are also material truths. Iturbide's photographic “truth” is not to say that it was never untrue or reflective, but it is one that does not necessarily exist contemporarily. The muxe identity is specifically cultural, rooted in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, based in ethnic identity and social roles. Additionally, muxe experience within the socio-political history of Juchitán (something that has always been present) —because of photography, art, and writers— is now recognizable on an international scale.

There is no denying that non-binary identities exist, because indigenous communities who have resisted some form of colonization and imperial domination, have survived. They are living and evolving parallel to oppressing socio-cultural and nationalistic attitudes revolving around aspects of identity. The muxe identity because of outside intrigue of their existence, now appears more “true.” This documentation implements them into the archive.

This stigma in Juchitán reinvents the muxe as the “...crazy one dressed up, the drunk, the one that doesn't have a trade, the one that didn't go to school, the indigenous....[where] the media sold them an idea that being Muxe is bad, that being Muxe is a synonym of poverty, that being Muxe is a synonym of marginalization, of indigenism.”⁴⁸ Juchitán is an example, where a controlled and contrived system regarding femininity and masculinity shows its colors. To be indigenous is a political act. To therefore be muxe, is foremost a political act, one that has been informed by colonization, studied and altered by outside “documentation,” creating a fantastical dialogue as to what it means or does not mean to be muxe.

⁴⁸ Elvis Guerra, interview with Angela Lessing, August 2018, Juchitán de Zaragoza, Oaxaca, Mexico.

Herein lies a paradox. The representation of gender-queer bodies and identities throughout art and culture as visibility is one that has coincided with political movements, those marked by heightened violence and the suppression of rights. Grappling with these contradictions, visibility and recognition are “doors” that are actually “traps” that coincide only by accommodating “bodies and communities insofar as they cooperate with dominant norms,”⁴⁹ as explained by Gossett in *Trap Door* (2017). This paradox of “...seeming embrace paired with violent rejection,” is necessary to examine regarding muxe representation and the intersection of the matriarchal myth.⁵⁰

Magnolia II, 1986, (Figure 3) portrays Magnolia, centrally placed in the foreground, sitting atop a wooden chair, consuming the majority of the photographic frame. A chair sits inside on a concrete floor against a rough and nearly crippling concrete wall that serves as a backdrop. They appear to be of average height and build, their arms shaven, and they are sturdy yet soft. They sit in a three-quarter view with their hairy legs crossed. They wear a sleeveless mid-length cotton dress with a deep “v” top and multicolored floral trim around the skirt. Magnolia’s top is stuffed in order to accentuate their nonexistent breasts, form-fitting around their torso and waist. They wear white soled thong flip flops, and their toenails remain unpainted. A pearl and large scallop shell necklace occupies their chest while their hair is kept in a short bob with bangs falling right above their painted and exaggerated eyebrows—reminiscent of a 1920’s flapper. Magnolia’s thick eyeliner wings at the tips, paralleling their winged eyebrows giving their expression a slightly surprised look. Their body is turned towards the right, while their gaze has been captured somewhere off frame to the left and above. Their expression is difficult to pin—

⁴⁹ Reina Gossett et al., *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* (Cambridge Mass: The MIT Press; London England, 2017), xii.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* For further discussion about this concept see Reina Gossett et al., *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*, 2017.

somewhere caught between calm and intrigue. Their right hand sits atop their crossed leg gripping their thigh while their right is raised holding a partly eaten paleta nearly dissipating into the background. There is no stark contrast between the background and the tone of Magnolia's skin.

While the entire image is in focus, light floods from the left, spills into the background and illuminates the right side of their body casting a shadow on the bottom right hand of the frame, indicating that they are indoors. The verticality of Magnolia sitting in the chair corresponds to two horizontal lines that lead the eye from the left hand of the frame directly to them. The two wooden horizontal bars of the chair parallel these lines, creating a frame. The intersecting arcs in the hemline of their skirt reflect the deep "v" of their top, their crossed legs and a narrow crack in the floor create and reflect this composition, allowing the eye to gaze up and down their seated body. Soft lines on the unswept ground curve from the left hand of the screen and extend through and beyond the bottom of the frame reminding the viewer that space extends beyond the frame.

In *Magnolia I*, 1986 (Figure 2), Magnolia reveals a narrative that reinforces a mythicized document, that of a symbol for permissible "feminine modesty." Perhaps unknowingly done on behalf of Iturbide, the portrait is reminiscent of a *venus pudica*.⁵¹ Ever present within the Western imagination, Magnolia stands alone, smiling and framed by a pale neglected concrete floor and wall. Their head tilts slightly to the right, their weight is counterbalanced on their right leg, while their left slightly forward, bends. With their right arm bent holding their waist instead of covering their genitalia like Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*, 1484–1486, they instead extend the hem of their dress with their left arm. Magnolia's arms become a reimagined *venus pudica*, where instead

⁵¹ The *pudica pose* refers to a classic pose in Western art, where an unclothed female, either standing or reclining, covers themselves; iconography of modesty.

of their nude body being covered, Magnolia's arms of play with their clothing—the dress as the symbol of womanhood— instead of possessing sexual organs traditionally equated to womanhood.

This feminized pose is directly connected to iconicity and myth, linked with the reimagined use of the pudica pose, and its own iconicity held throughout the canon of art history. This reinterpretation allows for an intersubjective reading and a different viewing experience— adding to its history and collective memory. Cultural memory as stated by Diana Taylor is “...among other things, a practice, an act of imaginations and interconnection.... Memory is embodied and sensual, that is conjured through the senses; it links the deeply private with social, even official, practices.”⁵² This manipulation of Magnolia's representation serves as a way to mediate their body—a contested site of existence within certain cultural parameters. It functions in conjunction with other memories and consciousnesses troubled by the gaze of the photographer and the viewer.

Though Magnolia does not sharply contrast with the background, they occupy the majority of the frame wearing the same dress. While standing, their dress can no longer hide their muscular features, but instead vividly displays how the dress awkwardly pulls as it tries to hug and caress their body. Striking though is the embroidered wide-brim sombrero that sits atop their head.

Again, in *Magnolia III*, 1986 (Figure 1), Magnolia stands against the same contextual lacking background. This time standing at a three-quarter turn, slightly away from the camera, with their face also turned toward the left, with one foot turned to point at the viewer. Their expression is strong and confident, serene. Their left arm is bent in front of their chest grasping the bottom of a small rectangular mirror. Their right is also raised but gently caresses the

⁵² Diana Taylor, 82.

backside of the mirror in order to frame the profile of their face. Their stance is relaxed and casual. Their posture is also reminiscent of a renaissance mythological woman standing in contrapposto.

When compared to supplementary photographs of Juchitecas in the series, two points become evident. First, that Magnolia's separation from the other womxn perpetuates their otherness, and second, the other womxn appear to subscribe to the romanticized myths that surround Juchitán. In several photographs, the womxn can be seen dancing arm in arm with one another in the streets, drinking and touching. The photographs of the Juchitecas are loud, in action, even erotic. For example, in Iturbide's *Untitled (Two Juchitecas Dancing)*, 1986 (Figure 6), two womxn are caught in a moment of dance and having fun, they are outdoors under a tree and in the dirt. Two male figures occupy the frame but pay no attention to the womxn. The womxn each wear a huipil and enagua, their hair is braided, dressed in ribbons, and one wears a wreath of flowers around her head. In *Despues del rapto (After the abduction)*, 1986 (Figure 7), four womxn are seen dancing in the street after a significant traditional event (the rapture), designated for womxn. In *Juchiteca con cerveza (Juchiteca with beer)*, 1984 (Figure 5), a full-bodied Juchiteca sits outdoors on a chair drinking from a glass beer bottle. She is gleeful, laughing with a giant smile occupying her face while one hand promptly rests on her hip, the other holding the beer, raised to her lips. She too wears an embroidered huipil with a polka dotted enagua. The dirt ground is littered with spots of shade, and a tip of a tree branch peaks in at the top right corner of the frame. In the background, a small body of water can be seen cutting through diagonally, and children are playing. Another portrait shows a Juchiteca, *Rosa*, 1979 (Figure 4), standing nude in a doorway, turned to look over her shoulder gazing into the camera. Situated among the shadows she stands proud with a smile, while a dramatic light sprinkles her

body. The light simultaneously defects and highlights her nude figure making a viewer focus on her calm and confident gesture instead of objectifying her.

Compared to the Juchitecas, each photograph of Magnolia is silent and still, eerily lonesome, and enveloped among the many other photographs of Juchitecas in the streets drinking, dancing and embracing other womxn.

The Sombrero, Female Revolutionaries, and Zapata

As an object related to masculinity—one of patriarchal domination and iconographic vigor—the sombrero has a specified meaning in context with Magnolia. What may have merely appeared as a prop in *Magnolia I* (Figure 2), the sombrero serves both as an icon and as a symbol for a social, cultural, and economic system. The sombrero became a symbol of the Mexican Revolution, the Zapatistas, and a symbol attributed to “manly” men and lower-class uprisings. When Magnolia wears the sombrero, they perform both their femininity and their position as a rebel, provoking a duality. Their body becomes a convergence binding the individual with the collective. They express their femininity in a traditionally feminized way by wearing a dress and makeup, but then render themselves as an actively defiant participant as a queered body performing within a social structure by wearing the sombrero. This intentional manipulation of their appearance creates multiple conclusions through the icon and layers of symbolism.

The Mexican Revolution was a vastly photographed war. Regarding the documentary aspect of the medium, Mexican photojournalism began in 1900 and was utilized under the Porfirian regime as an essential tool for his dictatorship. However, with the start of the revolution in the upcoming decade, photographic use would drastically change.⁵³ Many of the photographs

⁵³ Summary from John Mraz, “Photography and Cinema in 20th-Century Mexico,” Vol. 1. Oxford University Press, 2015.

that depict the war were used to promote the “men” of the revolution including Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata, Francisco Madero, and Porfirio Diaz, and were used to assimilate and spread their political messages. After and even contemporarily, images from the revolution also construct/reconstruct its history within a totality. Creating a conceived photographic national memory of the revolution served not only as a political tool but as a continuous social formation of identity well into the twentieth century. Photography also played a critical role in constructing the identity of the photojournalists and documentary photographers that manufactured the images. This manufactured Mexican “identity” was integral to the social memory of the revolution for decades after.⁵⁴

Making up only a small fraction of images, the depiction of womxn who fought in the revolution, *female revolutionaries*, serve as a type of document. They maintain gendered notions and ideals of femininity in later postwar works of art, and more broadly, in the cultural representation of womxn in Mexico.⁵⁵ The feminine space, tied to the domestic and notions of respectability (confirmed well before the war), was redefined throughout and after the revolution, and female revolutionaries were continually re-contextualized and dismissed. Images of female revolutionaries are a prime example of how a gendered history is weaved throughout social memory, becoming a cultural *reality*. These revolutionaries are also an example of ideological reconstruction revolving around the dismantling of female stereotypes and gender normativity, through the photographic lens.⁵⁶ It is crucial to investigate the relation of constructed national

⁵⁴ Most notably, these real-life subjects from photographic memories came to be imagined subjects most notably by artists like *Los Tres Grandes* during the 1930s and ‘40s. During the 1950s, history, and photographs from the revolution used by artists- now indirectly affected- were used to reconstruct a narrative of the revolution for a mainly domestic public audience- furthering the process of creating and formulating a national identity.

⁵⁵ Jessica Lynn Orzulak, “Picturing Soldaderas: Agency, Allegory, and Memory in Images of the 1910 Mexican Revolution” (Thesis, August 2014 <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0rh6g078>), 12-20.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

identity alongside a national “gendered” identity in order to better understand the effective processes of photographic discourse on memory and attitudes about gender ambiguity.

The term *soldadera* encompasses many contradictions with several implications. Defining womxn who fought in the Mexican Revolution through documentary evidence can only be determined by certain elemental factors. Whereas using the term “female revolutionary,” restores these womxn’s agency, when used symbolically, *soldadera* is better used when describing post-war images and artworks. *Soldaderas* are icons and hold a vast amount of imagery—rather than having the nature of the real womxn who fought in the war.⁵⁷ The images of proclaimed *soldaderas* are comparable to the ethereal Amazonian imagery associated with womxn within the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and Magnolia.

Compared to a recognizable photograph of a proclaimed *soldadera* (Figure 10), whose context already projects multiple frames and moves beyond the parameters of portraiture, Magnolia adheres to a similar lens. In the photograph, a woman stands alone with a simple and unassuming pose, staring—almost defiantly—into the camera. Similar to Magnolia the photograph is fully framed and cropped close to her body, with the active lines from the railroad tracks focusing the eye on the womxn. She is outdoors holding a sword and flag with bandoliers strapped and crossed on her chest.

The sombrero that the female revolutionary is wearing has been pushed back on her head in order to reveal her features and display her hair—a symbol of femininity—despite her otherwise masculine appearance. Hairstyle is an essential trait in defining womxxn that belong to a generalized racial group and serves as a symbol of Mexican traditionalism. In the Isthmus, braids worn by the Zapotec womxn are one symbol of this traditionalism. Instead Magnolia takes on a “modern” look with a short, fixed bob. Functioning to reposition Magnolia as incorporated

⁵⁷ Ibid., 12-20.

with society—one that since the 1920s saw indigeneity as something fixed within national welfare—their hair acts as a denial of a cultural past, or rather, a denial of a homogenized cultural past.

The soldaderas clothing is tactical and, as mentioned, she wears a sombrero, photographically symbolizing her as a follower of Emiliano Zapata, also connoting her to broader issues of class and race. Unlike Magnolia, the soldadera is dirty, unkempt, with her hair messily pushed into her sombrero. Like Magnolia, the details that surround the soldadera create a “more intimate connection with the individual being pictured than the reflection of her physicality...” and strip altering contexts.⁵⁸ Leonard Folgarait in *Seeing Mexico Photographed* (2008) stated: “A singular man, dressed as a member of a recognizable class, is always seen as representative of that class and is thus both separate from, by being singled out and part of that larger mass.”⁵⁹ While looking at the images of Magnolia and the soldadera, each exemplify this principal. Each is an epitomized representative of what is socially claimed, and though they are singled out, they codify two completely different ideas.

The soldadera, strictly in this photo, is a propagandic performer on behalf of Zapata and the ideals of his revolution. Similarly, Magnolia, through an untrained eye, is seen as representative of all muxe that live in Juchitán, rather than as an individual. Unlike the photo of the soldadera that was undoubtedly widely amassed and consumed throughout and post-revolution (allowing for re-interpretation after reinterpretation that adds to collective and national memory), Magnolia’s image has not been allowed that reality, until more recently.

What can be further discussed in the context of the sombrero used by both Magnolia and the female revolutionary is through the context of another prolific revolutionary photograph.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 45

⁵⁹ Leonard Folgarait *Seeing Mexico Photographed: The Work of Home, Casasola, Modotti, and Álvarez Bravo* (New Haven (Conn.): Yale University Press, 2008), 11.

Hugo Brehme's 1911 photograph of Emiliano Zapata in the city of Cuernavaca (Figure 11), has a significant resemblance and creates a compelling comparison to the Magnolia photograph.

Emiliano Zapata stands in a three-quarter turn towards the camera, dressed in regalia holding both a gun and a sword.⁶⁰ Zapata's costuming is a form of propaganda, utilizing both an object of conquest and one that connotes political and moral authority. Here, Zapata's images could be read, as Orzulak observes, "...allegorically as a new claiming of the land by the Mexican people, a taking back of the nation from the conquest of Spain."⁶¹ Besides his three-quarter turn, his body positioning parallels Magnolia's. His left foot is frontally stepped and bent, his left arm grasps his sword, while Magnolia's bends, resting on their hip. His right arm is raised, showcasing his weapon, while Magnolia's bends to grasp and tug their dress. They both stand proud and embracing, Zapata's gaze is direct, Magnolia's sweet. Unlike Zapata, Magnolia does not have adoring onlookers, instead standing in front of a damaged wall and unswept floor—a place that provides beautiful details but little objective context. Both portraits are political statements, an expression of the power each holds. Whereas Zapata's is meant to reinforce his political strength, Magnolia's reinforces personal strength. Both are authorities of their presence at this moment: Zapata wears a suit, boots, embellished sombrero and bandoliers rather than battle garments, and Magnolia is in their mid-length dress and flip flops, rather than a traditional huipil and enagua or even "masculine" attire.

Looking at Zapata's and Magnolia's photos in totality, both constructed appearances are an attempt at proving the control each has in the performance. The camera is looking at them, looking back at the camera. Magnolia's engagement in returning the gaze of the camera, and further the viewer "...[o]perates as a denial of access to [their] inner-self while simultaneously

⁶⁰ Swords were not the weapon of the revolution but instead represented an earlier era, and exclusively appeared in images of Revolutionary leaders.

⁶¹ Orzulak, 50.

asserting [their] person. The viewer still *sees*... ” Magnolia.⁶² In comparison to the photograph of Emiliano Zapata, and the assertion of personage, Magnolia’s implies a magic realism. It taps into a viewer’s archive, but instead of seeing the powerful appearance signifying the revolution, Iturbide taps into the spectacle once again. The ‘magic realism’ for Magnolia when compared to Zapata, is the interruption of the two similar gazes, now confounded and stabilized as nothing more than spectacle on display. They are both intentionally self-constructed and take advantage of visual devices that hold definite symbolic meanings. Zapata’s self-fashioning within the image positions himself as a notorious yet politically influential figure, a symbol for male heterosexuality, and the “manly man” Mexico “needed” during and after the revolution, while Magnolia’s takes advantage of their constructed self, establishing an unclear purpose.

Nonetheless, even if the sombrero is merely a prop, Magnolia’s individuality is affected through an allegorical context of war, and indigenism. The context of the sombrero and the space Magnolia occupies could be read as a characterization of being indigenous, mestizo, and within a broader context: a peasant, reiterating Magnolia as an allegorical trope rather than an individual. After viewing the photographs of the *soldadera*, Zapata and Magnolia, what becomes apparent is how Magnolia’s attire stands out considerably, prompting the question: what does it mean to have a Mexican “man” in a dress?

A Brief Queer/*Queered* History

The exploration—of Magnolia and the muxe—through this frame is needed and necessary because it offers a crucial point of reflection for processes of Mexican cultural and national development, requiring an investigation told through a marginalized group of individuals

⁶² Orzulak, 52.

that are indeed part of the Mexican experience.⁶³ Mexico has a complicated history with nationalism, shaped through war, politics, and social movements among others, where one could even implore, like Coco Fusco has written regarding Latin America in general, “...is that the state has created ideologies that propose solutions to the problem of identity, but those solutions always occlude the existence of marginalized groups who are not part of the “national project.”⁶⁴ During and after the Mexican Revolution, the effort to solidify the nation included mass amounts of institutionalized propaganda related to the “ideal” citizen, one that differed from the Porfirian bourgeois, something that nonetheless had to do with homosexuality, and collaborated with the government in homogenizing national consciousness. For J. Rodríguez, this identity along with the cultural nationalism of the *mestizaje* has “...very often [been] grounded in hetero-masculinist narratives and highly stratified categories of racialized gender.”⁶⁵ This radical shift in social and cultural convention began after a frenzy one night in 1901.

On November 17, 1901, 42 men of whom half dressed as women, were arrested by Mexico City Police after they raided a private party. Clandestine transvestite balls were not considered a new phenomenon in 1901, but what was, was the garnered national attention. The fact that the private party—revealing the queer underworld—was exposed was enough to provoke, according to Irwin, “...a new discourse formulating the possibility of a certain eroticism existing between men.”⁶⁶ The event of the Famous 41, seen as another event of Porfirian excess and modernization, “...also introduces broader themes related to sexuality and social control” in Mexico.⁶⁷ The contextualization and construction of homophobia can and has been traced from

⁶³ Ryan Jones, summary 2-3.

⁶⁴ Rodríguez, 13.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Robert McKee Irwin, et al., *The Famous 41: Sexuality and Social Control in Mexico, c. 1901* (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 3.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 12.

1900 -1910 in Mexico City's satiric working-class penny press by Robert Buffington. With a nation on the brink of social upheaval and a national revolution, the event of The 41 solidified the contested nature of the Porfirian regime. Further, the news used homophobia and the queer community as representations of severe excess and modernization:⁶⁸ Male effeminacy and homosexuality were seen as defiantly anti-Mexican.

The "dandy" figure served both as a figure of modernization for the "...Mexican upper classes of the era, but he also became a symbol of bourgeois corruption and decadence for Mexico's incipient revolutionary forces."⁶⁹ Penny press editors, tabloids, and newspapers, therefore, sought to subvert the masculinity of upper-class men, by portraying them as "...parasitic *catrines* who dozed in a narcissistic haze of self-congratulation and conspicuous consumption while working-class patriots struggled to protect and nurture *la patria*."⁷⁰ The 41 and all homosexual men were mocked and satirically dragged as a threat to national culture. Becoming a significant source of anxiety, preoccupations with sexuality, morality, national culture formation during the Porfirian could be said to be attributed to the impending Mexican Revolution and its aftermath.⁷¹

The scandal of the 41, or as Carlos Monsivias has argued: the invention of homosexuality in Mexico, prompted many artists, including Jose Guadalupe Posada, to depict the night for the local papers. Posada's engravings have become some of the most recognized illustrations portraying the 41's events. In the engraving, a group of men half of whom dressed like women are seen joyously dancing with other men. The central figure depicts a man in a long ball gown

⁶⁸ The number adjustment from 42 to 41 gives life to the rumor that husband of Porfirio Diaz's daughter, Don Ignacio (Nacho) de la Torre, was the other man on the list.

⁶⁹ Irwin, 12.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Irwin, summary from 12-15.

with a full mustache intact, arm in arm with another man in a tuxedo, surrounded by two additional pairs of men in the foreground, and a bustling crowd behind them. This illustration (Figure 12) among the many others that Posada created serves as one of the primary sources that kept the memory of the 41 alive during the 20th century. The headline reads “Los 41 maricones. Encontrados en un baile de la Calle de la Paz el 20 de Noviembre de 1901” [The 41 maricones. Discovered at a ball on La Paz Street on November 20, 1901]. Following the headline is a *corrido* entitled “Aqui estan los maricones, muy chulos, y coquetones” [here are the maricones, very cute and flirtatious]. On the subsequent page (Figure 13) Posada engraved part of the punishments of the men, depicting them cleaning the streets in their full elegant costumes for the public to scrutinize. Though the headline has mistaken the date of the event, it is the distortion of Mexican sexuality and gender normativity that has prevailed as a misconception and a repressive discourse. The legacy of the 41 is vital to discuss because although men-in-drag homosexuals were not the only visible “type” of queer or “effeminate” man in Mexico, the mix of both fear and fascination with “...the gender-bending male,” claimed by R. Jones, “was particularly prevalent after the scandal, and the man-in-drag would be a recurring trope in definitions of what the Mexican masculine citizen was increasingly defined as not.”⁷² It also meant that transvestism and homosexual became equated terms.

Thus, the scandal of the 41 represents “...more than a shift where homosexuality became legible as a problem in Mexican society,” it represents how ideas about gender and sexuality converged with ideas about nation and country.⁷³ Moreover, the governments punishment for the 41 men, was to be publicly shamed while in drag, and sent to the Yucatan to serve a sentence, described in a third Posada illustration (Figure 14). Between 1920 and 1960 the Mexican

⁷² Ryan Jones, 82.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 30.

government continued their dissemination of information to solidify a nation through “...propagation of this ideal citizen in propaganda, public art, education, cinema, and even Mexican-style wrestling.”⁷⁴ The aftermath of the revolution was situated with the search for “virility” and the “new man” based around the patriotic, hard-working, and “useful” individual. The dissemination of information took hold not only through newspapers, and classroom teachings, but art. At the behest of Jose Vasconcelos, muralists like *Los Tres Grandes*,⁷⁵ through their social realist art “...depict[ed] nationalist subject matter, Mexico’s previous indigenous civilizations, daily life, ideological figures like Marx who agitated for proletarian struggle, and historical scenes ultimately showing the triumph of Mexican heroes over their adversaries,”⁷⁶ as stated by Jones. At the same time, the relationship between muralism, writing history, and nation-building to create a fixed national “memory” has always been an elite nationalism. A radical shift after the Mexican Revolution took place, where an enterprise of knowledge and a cultural schema of *representation* served as a strategy of achieving cultural modernity. This new enterprise of knowledge can be seen straightforwardly in not only Jose Vasconcelos’s *La Raza Cosmica* (The Cosmic Race), but in Octavio Paz’s *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, 1950, here proclaiming his views on homosexuality, asserting:

It is likewise significant that masculine homosexuality is regarded with certain indulgence insofar as the active agent is concerned. The passive agent is an abject, degraded being. This ambiguous conception is made very clear in the word games and battles—full of obscene allusions and double meanings—that are so popular in Mexico City.... Masculine homosexuality is tolerated, then, on the condition that it consists in violating a passive agent. As with heterosexual relationships, the important thing is not to open oneself up and at the same time to break open one’s opponent.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁵ *Los Tres Grandes* include artists: Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros.

⁷⁶ Jones, 157.

⁷⁷ Octavio Paz, “Chapter 2 Mexican Masks.” *In The Labyrinth of Solitude and Other Writings*, translated by Lysander Kemp et al., 29–46. 1950. Reprint, (New York: Grove Press, 1985), 39–40.

Further, it is these (queer) communities, though documentable, that will “never enjoy the privilege of providing meta-narratives or teleology’s...” of their histories. These narratives in part, “bespeak an anti-historical consciousness, that is, they entail subject positions and configurations of memory that challenge and undermine the subject that speaks in the name of history,” stated by Chakrabarty.⁷⁸ There lies a double bind through which the history of those who are indigenous can articulate themselves because its construction is still a tale of colonization that has been imperially and nationalistically constructed. During the 1950s, history and photographs from the revolution used by artists—now indirectly affected—were used to reconstruct a narrative of the revolution for a mainly domestic public audience- furthering the process of creating and formulating a national identity.

If images of the female revolutionaries subverted ideals regarding femininity, then the portrayal of Mexican men in drag and dancing with other men also challenged ideologies of what masculinity and being a “man” was comprised of, breaking traditional gender expectations and constructs, “queering” history and expected roles. Also, like the photograph of the female revolutionary, the Posada engraving was widely amassed and used as propaganda. She symbolized a follower of Emiliano Zapata, the 1901 illustration symbolized/satirized homosexuality—a frivolous, scandalous symbol of Porfirian modern excess. Therefore, like the *soldaderas*, the prints by Jose Guadalupe Posada from 1901 are an example of how a gendered and generated “history,” weaved throughout social and cultural memory transform into “fact.” Above all, The 41 and the soldadera figure both correspond with Magnolia, asserting personal identity, community membership, and resistance politics.

⁷⁸ Chakrabarty, 37.

After the Mexican Revolution, these roles were troubled. The roles performed by womxn did not subvert patriarchal gender expectations. Instead, womxn returned to traditional gender roles (mothers, wives, and educators), emphasizing, as historian Stephanie Smith has said, a “political rhetoric [that] increasingly limited women's attributes to publicly defined areas of the feminine.”⁷⁹ Additionally, revolutionary womxn were essentially written out of history, an example of selective historical memory, but one that has been restructured and addressed in recent years in order to create a counter-narrative, or what I have been referring to as an alternate history.

Mexican nationalists found their elitism through a narrative that, at various times, saw the indigenous always as a figure of lack. For Magnolia to wear a sombrero, something already said to be representative of not only Zapata but of those indigenous “manly” men that the country sought to create and therefore “get back to,” reiterates them as indigenous and indigent. At the same time, it clashes two narratives that were made to be kept separate: the narratives of femininity, or in this case “effeminacy,” and masculinity. Emiliano Zapata immortalized the gendered nature of the Revolution’s heroes, has been canonized as a hero of the state contributing to the national stereotype of the *macho* figure “...and resulted in the marginalization and erasure of the female and the non-masculine (homosexual or straight but not conforming to masculine gender norms),”⁸⁰ as explained by S. Slaughter. Not limited by one form of queer performance, Magnolia, the soldadera, and the men from the 41 preferably, “are a composite of many...”⁸¹ Magnolia queers the spaces of a binary, calling them into question and expanding a narrow discourse. Further, they dispel said notions of masculinity and social class, those which through

⁷⁹ Stephany Slaughter, "Queering the Memory of the Mexican Revolution: Cabaret as a Space for Contesting National Memory," *Letras Femeninas*. 37, no. 1 (2011): 47-70. 49.

⁸⁰ Slaughter, 48.

⁸¹ Jones, 107.

years of institutionalized propaganda have been trying to formalize. Magnolia's body "serves as a site of controversy and ambiguity," and acts as a "site for meaning, a location, and sign of itself."⁸² If the representation of the soldadera figure is one that rethinks and questions male/female gender norms, so does Magnolia by calling "...attention to the materiality of the sexed body."⁸³ If the soldadera emphasizes masculine gender markers through her wardrobe, Magnolia does too inversely, where the performance relies on "...an act of gender as performance as well as gender *in* performance, that physically embodies her call to genetic revolution."⁸⁴ Magnolia represents the ambiguous in-between that questions traditional binaries.

Conclusion

The portraits *Magnolia I, II, and III*, represent various symbolic constructions that compete for dominance in the experience of viewing their image. The manipulation of their representation serves as a way to mediate their contested body within Mexican culture and the paradigm of photography. Though these "documentary"-like portraits of Magnolia move both within and beyond the boundaries of the common stereotypes seen of non-binary people, they nonetheless still adhere to the notion of Magnolia as a concept or object, rather than an individual. Both their ambiguity per their singling out in the photos move Magnolia into the realm of the performative—not the concrete or objective—operating to create an image that acts as a surrogate for *all* muxes living in Juchitán, while also dissociating their body from the actuality of their subscribed cultural structure. As images of womxn in Juchitán replaced earlier striking imagery from other impactful artists, the images of these womxn, in turn, were contoured into figures of

⁸² Slaughter, 50.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 51.

fantasy and myth, aided by their constructed representation as solitary matriarchal ideals. This manipulation moves Magnolia into the realm of allegory time after time as a “type” for accepted forms of femininity, and forgone is the task of stripping back each layer to conclude. It is too simple to see these images of Magnolia as “beautiful,” “inclusive,” or “fantastic,” that is the easy way out. The appropriation of their image as a gender-queer figure within the context of myth and allegory simplifies the viewers job, prohibiting their photo to be complicated. These discursive signs from history ultimately fracture Magnolia. If Magnolia is a representation of a counter-narrative, where is their platform to present such a narrative now located? Chapter 1 was concerned with Iturbide and collective memory, residing within history and its frames. A focus shift from the discursive to the social is now needed.

Chapter 2:

Performative Practices

During the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s Latina artists sought for a dramatic revision of feminism, as stated by K. Reiman, with movements "...in contrast to the homogenous, monumental, conception of the political body that had characterized muralism, [exploring] the differentiated experiences of bodies and the polysemic and fragmentary nature of the corporeal experience in contemporary culture."⁸⁵ In Mexico, those eras also experienced mass social change, dramatic political scandals, and environmental disasters while reliving history through uprisings and various massacres.⁸⁶ During these periods often comprised of anguish, anger, and lies, feminism and questions of identity were continuing to be challenged. In Mexico, the post-1968 period saw the most dramatic restructuring of womxn's rights. Swayed by the populist policies of President Luis Echeverria Alvarez (1970-76), his administrations nationwide campaign for democratization (*apertura democratica*) in order to redeem his popularity, stated by G. Sepúlveda, included "...a series of wide-ranging reforms that targeted economic, political, and cultural sectors...."⁸⁷ This redemption strategy included Mexico hosting the United Nations International Women's Year Celebration in Mexico City (1975), in addition to "extending full rights of citizenship and social equality to the female population in 1974."⁸⁸ However, Alvarez continued to use surveillance to spy on activists and left-wing organizations and used violence to dispel public demonstrations, in addition to keeping detailed records of feminist activists. By

⁸⁵ Karen Cordero Reiman, "Corporeal Apparitions/Beyond Appearances: Women and Bodily Discourse in Mexican Art, 1960-1985." *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985*, by Cecilia Fajardo-Hill et al., (Hammer Museum, University of California, 2017, pp. 270–280), 271.

⁸⁶ Including both the Tlateloloco (1968) and Corpus Christi (1971) massacres against student protestors.

⁸⁷ Gabriela Aceves Sepúlveda, *Women Made Visible: Feminist Art and Media in Post-1968 Mexico City* (University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 19.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

undermining existing systems of oppression, artists were able to intervene and sought to restructure regulating formats. The time between the 1960s and the 1980s were central to the aesthetic, social, and political agendas prompted by feminism.

Chapter 1 presented a part of a queer history that affected national ideology as well as newfound homophobia, in addition, to also “queering” the history of the revolution. Socio-cultural and intertextual contexts about Juchitán being a discursive space in line with history (rather than based on its autonomy), will be the focus of chapter 2. This chapter will again utilize the three photographs of Magnolia, but instead of historical comparisons, symbolism, or stylization, it will place emphasis on the essay that accompanied the book and contemporaneous images by alternative photographers that also portray the muxe. These comparisons are signifiers coaxing the complications of looking at the photographs of Magnolia. Overall, chapter two questions the discursive frames of Juchitán being considered a matriarchy. It also considers interiority to further grasp Iturbide’s complicity with Western convention, as well as provide Magnolia a platform to “speak.” Chapter 2 will elaborate on the ambiguity that accompanies *looking*, and serve to reach discernible conclusions about Magnolia, and further, how one portrays bodies.

Questioning the Patriarchal Superstructure

Within Latin America, the 1960s were a time where artists began to produce an iconographical turn from established traditions by using their bodies as a medium in order to alter masculine hegemony.⁸⁹ The body is intervened and scathed by the patriarchal superstructure,

⁸⁹ Modernism arose in Europe as a radical approach to the rebellious attitude of the twentieth century at first as a rejection of European culture and its complacency within arts, sciences, and politics. Within art, modernists sought to distance themselves from any one mode of creativity and instead, in search of freedom, trifled with many styles, including Fauvism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Cubism, and Secessionism, to name a few. Modernism allowed artists to deal with

plagued by stereotypes, and hetero-normative modernism. The 1960s promoted new discourses about the politicization and questioning of gender systems, again addressing modernisms contradictions. Setting forth new theorizations of gender, sexual identifiers and society were, according to feminist theorist Griselda Pollock, able to:

...seek ways in which the difference of the feminine might function not merely as an alternative but as the dialectical spring to release us from the binary trap represented by sex/gender. This involves its own creative paradox: to seek articulations of the specifically feminine whose effects upon the totality of culture will be to displace homogeneity in favor of radical heterogeneity. “Gender” — the division of the world into fixed oppositions anthropomorphically figured as man and woman—erases many other forms of difference: issues of sexuality and cultural diversity.⁹⁰

Latina artists subverted the female form seen as a biologically and culturally claimed and conditioned site. The alternate history, in which this project is attempting to deploy is one that was initially positioned by radical womxn artists throughout the 1960s to (and beyond) the 1980s. They sought to challenge biological essentialism, and questioned art systems that discriminated against particular bodies. In the mid twentieth century Latina artists “...classified by society as women (regardless of their gender identifications of self-representation),” radically experimented with their bodies ultimately enacting the 20th century’s “largest iconographic transformation.”⁹¹ They sought to analyze the body, regulated by society, and the implications of such monitoring. Not framed and bound to the feminist art movement of the United States, Latin American womxn artists sought to not only look at issues addressed by global feminism but to also look at revolutionary struggles and resistances against dictator governments.

new assumptions about culture and reality. This embrace of freedom also allowed the critical discourse of feminism to rise, and one that is indispensable when discussing modernism.

⁹⁰ Griselda Pollock, “Inscriptions in the Feminine,” *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art in, of, and from the Feminine*, edited by M. Catherine De Zegher, (Les Editions La Chambre, 1996), 67.

⁹¹ Andrea Giunta, “The Iconographic Turn: The Denormalization of Bodies and Sensibilities in the Work of Latin American Women Artists,” *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985*, Hammer Museum, University of California, 2017, pp. 29–36. 30.

All cultural meanings attached to the categories of male and female are socially prescribed. Social and cultural mechanisms impact cognitive processes, and keep qualms of sorting by sex present, a force that has been wrongly embedded and internalized in society. This enabled artists to question patriarchal structures. Latina artists pursued ways to reinforce decision making and regain their—not only cultural, but—sexual autonomy.

In Mexico, many female artists in the 1970s, presented by A. Giunta, were interested in “dismantling the dominant structures of visual representation and the international emergence of feminist art.”⁹² Ultimately, they questioned why the reception of produced and distributed visual images “created and reproduced patriarchal power relations.”⁹³ In the 1970s, when Iturbide was beginning to synthesize her oeuvre a feminist cultural critique was being advocated by many activists. Artistic production therefore interrogated “...how the representation of sexual and gender difference was performed through visual, performative, and archival practices.”⁹⁴ Though I do not believe that Iturbide was a feminist artist, I implore a study of art based on feminist agenda, employing Iturbide and the other artists in this chapter as *artistically feminist*,⁹⁵ something that strongly affects the reception of Mexican feminist art. Instead, Iturbide was one photographer during this time that revitalized ethnographic photography, seeking a more

⁹² Sepúlveda, 25.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 26.

⁹⁵ Andrea Giunta states: “I establish a difference between feminist artists and artistic feminism. I consider feminist artists those creators who deliberately and systematically attempted to build a feminist artists repertoire and language (most of them were also feminist activists). I use the term *artistic feminism* to refer to the position of historians who study art from the perspective of the feminist agenda. That might mean salvaging artists largely invisible—and, in doing so, contributing to the emergence of a history of feminist art—or analyzing systems of representation linked to feminist agendas even when the artists do not consider their work feminist. This perspective is linked to gender studies that consider sexuality to be a social construction. Historical methodology requires not calling all works produced by women feminist art.” Note two on pg. 34 of *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960- 1985* (2017).

“authentic” feminine essence, resulting in a reiteration of *indigenismo* and exalting the matriarchal myth in Juchitán de Zaragoza.

Discursive Spaces, *La Malinche*, and Contextualizing Juchitán as a Matriarchal

History is a vital and powerful tool for the Isthmus Zapotecs, and today, this collective memory embodies those that inhabit the area. Within the local historical tradition, the documentation of heroic roles throughout time emphasize the Zapotec womxn who played active roles in resistances. Though many womxn in Mexico have played vital roles in history, what is prevalent to Isthmus historians is the proud inclusion of those womxn's roles. One uprising in Tehuantepec history, known as “Haremos Tehuantepec,” in 1600, became the largest insurrection in Oaxacan cultural history. According to a Spanish report of the incident “...the boldest and most obstinate stone-throwers were the Zapotec women (Manso de Contreras [1661] 1987: 16).⁹⁶ Additionally, it was the womxn in a rage who threatened death to Spanish authorities and churchmen.⁹⁷

Gender identities outside of a contrived binary system survived colonization through ethnic resistance. According to Isthmus mythology, and described by H. Campbell, the ancient Zapotecs referred to as the *binni gua'sa'* “...either descended to earth from clouds in the form of beautiful birds, emerged from the roots of trees, or were from large rocks or wild beasts.”⁹⁸ It is within these mythological stories that the *binni gua' sa'* permeate the consciousness of the

⁹⁶ Howard Campbell. *Zapotec Renaissance: Ethnic Politics and Cultural Revivalism in Southern Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1994. 20.

⁹⁷ The cause for rebellion was the “forced purchase of Spanish goods at high prices and the coerced sale at low prices of indigenous agricultural and handcrafted goods....” (20). For more information, see Howard Campbell's, *Zapotec Renaissance: Ethnic Politics and Cultural Revivalism in Southern Mexico*, 1994.

⁹⁸ Campbell, 5.

Zapotec people. The Zapotecs split from the Mixtecs around 3700 BC. and conquered the region of Oaxaca around 1350. Of the Zapotecs that would settle in Tehuantepec—a regional power center established long before the arrival of the Spanish—was the “...principal Isthmus Zapotec town and an important regional market center.”⁹⁹ Where a distinct social hierarchy containing “sharp ethnic and spatial fragmentations” began. The surrounding “...tributary villages [began] to form a separate micro-ethnic unit closely related to other Zapotec groups, especially the Valley Zapotecs, but with a distinct identity, territory, and local dialect.”¹⁰⁰ The Spaniards arrived in the Isthmus in 1523 when the region was ruled by Cosijopii, the son of Zapotec ruler Zaachila. As described by anthropologist B. Chiñas, there was “...no immediate resistance to the Spaniards [and] Cosijoppi allowed himself to be converted to Christianity, during Cortes’ visit in 1526,” where he was baptized as Don Juan Cortes.¹⁰¹ However, during these initial conquest years, evidence to Zapotec social structure provides tantalizing details regarding the past, suggesting that the “Isthmus Zapotec women were active economically and in defending their pueblo...,” and that “Zapotec identity solidified as a “cultural defense” against colonialism.”¹⁰² Clues that strongly suggest that the culture was matrifocal before Spanish intervention include womxn of nobility who owned property and even disposed of it as they wished, and many 17th century references that relate to womxn taking active roles within political protests. Never having been conquered by the Aztecs, could attribute to Zapoteco gender acceptance. They were able to keep worshipping gods that occupied both gender roles, and therefore were able to attain some level of acceptance, even throughout colonization.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Ibid., 7.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 8-9.

¹⁰¹ Chiñas, 11.

¹⁰² Campbell, 15.

¹⁰³ For the Mexica, femininity, and masculinity were always in flux, and some gods were thought to be simultaneously male and female. However, the female part of this duality was still seen as

The matriarchal myth also persists due to socially enforced sexual divisions of labor (enforced since the early 19th century by high society) that are subverted in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and where womxn are politically active. Although subverted, gender-based division roles are still rigid, while “...some occupations are not assigned to one gender or the other and instead recognized as the domain of muxes.”¹⁰⁴ The matriarchal myth in the land of the liberated Amazon woman is documented as early as 1839. French traveler and historian Charles Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg described the marketplace as dominated by womxn: “[They] chattered, laughed, conversed, screamed, and argued with an incredible animation. They openly made fun of their men, who they provoked in Spanish and Zapotec with a shameless hardly equaled”¹⁰⁵ The myth was described well into the 1990s, and those that still analyze and showcase photographs of Juchitán passively refer to the Isthmus as a matriarchy, reiterating the romanticizing of femaleness.

The matriarchal myth questions how understandings of gender and ethnic identity are imagined within nationalistic configurations (mestizaje) in Mexico. It is when one chooses to believe in the myths that it legitimizes a gendered nationalistic discourse and the archive. Matriarchy is the inversion of patriarchal domination (in the Western perspective), but, as explained by A. Taylor, Juchitán “...instead reaches beyond these binary oppositions that conflate male and female with dominant and subjugated, active and passive, modern and traditional, public and domestic, productive and reproductive labor to focus on Zapotec gender roles as they are locally understood.”¹⁰⁶ The semiotic is also called into question when considering the text that accompanied this project, turning the Juchitán photographs into ethnographic studies perpetuating

secondary to the masculine counterpart.

¹⁰⁴ Mirandé 69.

¹⁰⁵ Tom DeMott, *Into the Hearts of the Amazons: In Search of a Modern Matriarchy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 18.

¹⁰⁶ Analisa Taylor, 821.

false information. The photographs, essay, and the ethnographic quality are all allied as what C. Pinney referred to as “unwitting agents.”¹⁰⁷

After the Mexican Revolution, *mestizo* became an ideological symbol for the new government. Post-revolutionary writers fused ideas of ethnicity and gender roles within Mexico and “mestizo” as a deliberate symbol of national unity became a referent in the construction of political and cultural subjecthood that has since, within the modern national discourse, persisted. Jose Vasconcelos, the former Secretariat of Education in his novel, *La Raza Cosmica* (The Cosmic Race) 1925, trumpets: “we are Indian, blood and soil: the language and civilization are Spanish.”¹⁰⁸ Octavio Paz, another essential figure in Mexican literary history compliments Vasconcelos’ writings with *Indianness* as one that stems from true and complete “otherness.” Analisa Taylor describes Paz’s idea of *Indianness* as “...a central though disembodied part of the Mexican social psyche, an absent presence or ambivalent agency that conjures up the figure of Malinche.” *Indianness* acts as an aesthetic, transforming itself, “as the subject of national identity.”¹⁰⁹ *Magnolia*, therefore, serves as a symbol for indigeneity, subscribed through these ideological constraints.

Cultural identity within Mexico also has a complicated history. Differing from the binary character of the Western (U.S. and European) perspective and the nationalistic discourse post-Mexican Revolution, Juchitán, to an extent, does not fall under these same hegemonic gendered systems. In addition to the ideology of the “ideal” man against homosexuality and effeminacy, the patriarchal superstructure that was the Mexican government (among other high officials) also

¹⁰⁷ Pinney, 98.

¹⁰⁸ Jose Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race*. Trans. Didier T Jaen, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press. (1925) 1997), 37.

¹⁰⁹ Analisa Taylor, 826.

institutionally broke down female autonomy. It is worth discussing the myth of *La Malinche*,¹¹⁰ who, mainly because of Octavio Paz, became the abject mother of Mexican cultural identity. Malintzin is a cultivated symbol of conjured national unity. She is a referent in the construction of political and cultural subjecthood, always the liminal, the reflection of the female gender, the scapegoat, and reference to every Mexican woman. Further constructed in Octavio Paz's "The Sons of La Malinche," within *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950), the relationship between all Mexican womxn and Malinche is described as the *Chingada*, the violated and raped one.¹¹¹

Though the relation of La Malinche to "every" Mexican woman is not a new correlation, but one that has been presented in depth by many feminist scholars, it exemplifies the construction of gender/sexuality categories within Mexico. It also signifies a metaphor for the Mexican state, being something that was claimed, and colonized. Malintzin exemplifies the ultimate abject, subordinate, and claimed body—the space that is meant to be kept under control and sanctified. Used by male writers to regulate womxn to the church and household, and to retaliate against womxn fighting for their civil rights, Malintzin, was not seen as the daughter of Aztec nobility, or one who undoubtedly saved many natives lives by having Cortes negotiate his actions, but as a traitor and a symbol of betrayal. This overemphasis on sociosexual reputation interweaves itself into the fabric of Mexican culture, and the conceptual division of social space by gender, similar to how homosexuality was treated during and after the revolution.

¹¹⁰ Malinche (also known as Malinalli, Malintzin Tenepal, and Doña Marina) served as Cortes' translator, indigenous interpreter, advisor, and her name is associated as one of betrayal (depending on how you view her). Nonetheless, she played a vital role during the Spanish conquest of Mexico. It also meant that Malintzin served as a martyr for writers after the revolution. *Indianness* as a collective unconscious and as an abstract entity in all Mexican individuals.

¹¹¹ For further reading see Octavio Paz, "The Sons of La Malinche." Chapter 4. In *The Labyrinth of Solitude and Other Writings*, trans. Lysander Kemp et al., (New York: Grove. (1950) 1985, pp. 65-88).

The myth of La Malinche and that of the matriarchy both enable the hegemonic perpetuation of mestizo nationalism. Both stories have roots in post-revolutionary nationalist culture production and further reiterate the ideals of modernism's "liberal lie."¹¹² La Malinche serves as a masculinist impulse, one like the 41, meant to grapple with the insecurities and unpredictability of Mexican identity. The attempts to classify and identify Mexico's national identity, codify, legislate and erroneously misinterpret uncertainty and ambiguity as betrayal and a source for national social anxiety. Reducing Malintzin and the Isthmus womxn to symbolic enigmas full of ambiguity is exhibited by Paz and other writers because, as argued by N. Shuman after Gerda Lerner, "...women are considered ambiguous...they are not allowed the privilege of theoretical and ultimately false simplification and hierarchization through language."¹¹³ Lerner writes in *The Creation of the Patriarchy*:

Women, like the poor, the subordinate, the marginals, have close knowledge of ambiguity, of feelings mixed with thought, of value judgments coloring abstractions. Women have always experienced the reality of self and community, known it, and shared it with each other...Patriarchal thought has relegated such gender-defined experiences to the realm of the 'natural,' the non-transcendent. Women's knowledge becomes mere 'intuition,' women's talk becomes 'gossip.'¹¹⁴

Iturbide complicates the notion of hegemonic ranchero masculinity in the Magnolia portraits, if only to freeze Magnolia in time, stripping their agency and instead place them into the logic of the exhibition space (like viewing the soldadera images after the revolution). This furthers the distance between body and self, and connection to the viewer. Overshadowed by myth contends that Iturbide's use of the camera is little more than a reiteration of how photographic discourse

¹¹² Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs Crafting a Modern Nation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 90.

¹¹³ Natalie Irene Schuman, *Woman as Dialect: La Malinche in the Construction and Re-Construction of Post-Colonial Mexican Identity* (Senior Projects Spring 2017, 342), 8.

¹¹⁴ Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford UP, 1986), 224.

utilized the medium in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In turn, disallowing patriarchal, hegemonic masculinity to move further than being “complicated.”

What is pertinent in the relation to post-revolutionary writers, the matriarchal myth, La Malinche, and the photographs by Iturbide, is how Iturbide’s work is a point of reflection where, because of the content, feminist contexts are presented and can be conceived (albeit non-inclusive ones). They do not advance a critique or dispel the fallacy of the matriarchal myth. Transforming her “documents,” Juchitán is then perceived as a set of locales: those of “symbolically overdetermined terrain,”¹¹⁵ underscored modernity, and “visual poetics.”¹¹⁶

Juchitán, rather, can be seen as “matrifocality.” In contrast to a matriarchy, a matrifocality, as stated by Chiñas, “...can function along a patriarchal superstructure because it operates at the informal level and in separate arenas from the patriarchal overlay of male roles.”¹¹⁷ It was not until the 1970s where this type of culture was recognized elsewhere, to now be applied to the Isthmus.¹¹⁸ Within the Isthmus, womxn, as explained by Chiñas, “...often hold non-formalized complementary roles in the public sector for which men hold in the formalized roles.”¹¹⁹ What is crucial is an understanding of what deems roles as “formal” for men since every society is different. Isthmus Zapotec gender roles are in stark contrast to the gendered roles in Mexico at large and is a place where Juchitecos have maintained a community that is proudly Zapotec, resisting the centralizing Mexican state and national culture. Matrifocality functions

¹¹⁵Coco Fusco, “Essential Differences: Photographs of Mexican Women,” *Afterimage* 18 (1991): 11–13. 12.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Chiñas, 87.

¹¹⁸ It was not until 1974 when Nancy Tanner published the article, “Matrifocality in Indonesia and Africa and among Black Americans,” that the Zapotec culture presented as a matriarchy, represented a matrifocal case much clearer. Tanners article and definition of a matrifocality was a response in “...an attempt to explain the elusive quality of relationships between the sexes that has had casual observers to characterize the Isthmus Zapotec social system as a matriarchy,” 87.

¹¹⁹ Chiñas, 5.

within a patriarchal superstructure, because it operates at an informal level, and the non-formalized roles that womxn partake in may have begun as an adaptive mechanism against manipulative purposes “...such as overt confrontations between men.”¹²⁰ Further, fully internalized by each gender, matrifocality also serves as an adaptation to “cultural and political domination by outsiders and as a cultural mechanism through which the people were able to mitigate the impact of that domination.”¹²¹ Juchitecos rather than being merely “Indian,” they, as said by Mirandé, “resist the influence of the state while remaining prosperous, providing economically important roles for women and being tolerant of los muxes.”¹²² The slippages between “difference” and “other” create spaces for misinterpretation and misunderstanding of photographic representation. While the post-revolutionary thinkers were committed to resistance against European modernism, the perpetuation of socially confined and regulated patriarchal codes still prevailed. This aided the formation of identity in Mexico, one that ritually dismissed and enforced gender norms on behalf of cultural fatigue and the ambiguity of Mexican identity.

Historian Elena Poniatowska’s essay “El Hombre del Pito Dulce” (The Man with the Sweet Penis) is perhaps the most troubling consequence of *Juchitán de las Mujeres*. Leading to serious misunderstandings of the social frameworks of Juchitán, her essay if believed to be accurate, insists, “...on seeing documentary photography as irrefutable proof.”¹²³ Poniatowska discusses her vision of Juchitán, exclaiming:

Juchitán is not like any other town. It has the destiny of its Indian wisdom. Everything is different; women like to walk embracing each other, and here they come to the marches, overpowering, with their iron calves. Man is a kitten between their legs, a puppy they have to admonish. “Stay there.” They walk touching each other, playfully, they trade roles: they grab men who watch them from behind the fence, pulling at them, fondling

¹²⁰ Chinas, 98.

¹²¹ Ibid., 107.

¹²² Mirandé, 25.

¹²³ Mary Davis MacNaughton et al., 86.

them as they curse the government and, sometimes, men themselves. They are the ones who participate in the demonstrations and beat policemen.¹²⁴

Elena Poniatowska's beautifully scripted and literary talent engulfed with fascination is fictive, reiterates myths and continues to disseminate misunderstandings about Juchitán de Zaragoza. For Poniatowska and all other writers, artists, or intellectuals who have "documented" the matriarchal myth, they force personal agendas. Regarding the womxn in a social and economic context Poniatowska linguistically reproduces culture declaring:

You should see them arrive like walking towers, their windows open, their heart like a window, their nocturnal girth vanished by the moon. You should see them arrive; they are already the government, they, the people, guardians of men, distributors of food... It is the Juchitec woman who owns the market. She is the powerful one; the merchant; the bargainer; the generous avaricious, greedy one. Only women sell.¹²⁵

Poniatowska reduces the Juchitecas to semiotic objects working beyond the historical or aesthetic trends (here, Iturbide's photographs). Words symbolize and "...shape the reality where those signifiers are projected."¹²⁶ Presented by Bal and Bryson, "...reusing forms taken from earlier works, an artist also takes along the text out of which the borrowed element is broken away, while also constructing a new text with the debris."¹²⁷ Intertextuality then, "refers to the ready-made quality of the linguistic—and one can add, visual—signs, that a writer or image-maker finds available in earlier texts that a culture has produced."¹²⁸ The symbiotic nature of the womxn is reiterated further when looking through *Juchitán de las Mujeres*. Iturbide's titles—although cryptic—are very telling. The images of Magnolia are variations of her name, whereas those that would identify as transgender (Iturbide uses transvestite) are labeled as such. Perhaps this is a

¹²⁴ Graciela Iturbide, Elena Poniatowska, and Pablo Ortiz Monasterio, *Juchitán de Las Mujeres* (1a ed. México, D.F: Ediciones Toledo, 1989), 13-14.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹²⁶ Schuman, 18.

¹²⁷ Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, "Semiotics and Art History" *The Art Bulletin* 73, no. 2 (June 1991), 242-256.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 206.

silent indicator of how she viewed Magnolia—as something more than a label, unintentionally shedding light on the muxe social status at the time and their ability to be seen in public.

Further, when intersecting gender-queer individuals, it is worth noting that the muxe work and sell in the marketplace, a place historically deemed to be the arena for womxn. Matriarchy as a cultural signifier is so intensely “gazed” upon because it appears to be the inversion of *machismo*. Above all, though, matriarchy or matrifocality is a result of Western interpretation that changed how one inside and outside the social structure and cultural fabric now interact. Regardless, the archive is informed.

Iturbide explores the female form as not only a gendered subject but also as something that outside of a male or phallic gaze is considered as a taboo in itself. When using Magnolia as not only a *subject* but also an *object*, Iturbide reiterates the explicitness of depicting the female form and extends categorical boundaries of the art historical canon into ancillary disciplines. On one level, for Magnolia, their body as an “in between” is metaphorical to their displacement of being removed from the binary model of womanhood and their socio-cultural placement in the world. By having their audience commit a voyeuristic act, Magnolia commentates on societies reaction to viewing non-binary bodies, or rather the aftermath of it. By removing a chance for them to speak, Magnolia instead refuses the discourse for activism. Hoping to trigger a moral outrage, discussed by A. Szymanek, “forecloses the uncomfortable truth of pleasure in the act of viewing images of [non-binary bodies].”¹²⁹ The body becomes a site of cultural inscription and Magnolia’s tableau creates a challenge for the viewer. In terms of Iturbide’s images being accompanied by a body of text, the photographs fall victim to being seen as serving a functional

¹²⁹ Angelique Szymanek, "Bloody Pleasures: Ana Mendieta's Violent Tableaux," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 41, no. 4 Summer 2016, 897-925: 903.

role. The images become consumed with what Barthes referred to as a “parasitic” message, the text then, structurally takes over and burdens the image, ultimately siding with the archive.¹³⁰

What is extraordinary is when one ponders the accompanying text, without even looking at the images. Poniatowska’s essay, as already stated, is one of fiction, also shaped and transformed through political testimony of the state. Her romanticized writings cannot help but conjure up post-revolution writers’ ghosts. The text *is* Poniatowska, and hence a digested view of societal ideology, one that unfortunately questions and holds a repressive value against indigeneity and gender ambiguity, again longing for the *mestizaje*. Different social and cultural realities undermine fixed relations between personal identity, cultural identity, otherness and serve to go beyond communication moving into alteration. Again, reiterating indigeneity as a magical token figure, ultimately seen as “other,” keeping “history,” the essay, and the photographs within hetero-normativity.

Re-Orienting Magnolia: Vanity and Interiority

Iconicity is descriptive, it invokes an aura or façade that serves to complicate ‘reality’ or truth. Iconicity is not a simple concept to define, as pointed out by historian Andrea Noble, especially within the context of photography. Iconic photos are said to require a rhetorical power, but all images invoke a response on the viewer’s behalf. Iconicity has a metonymic function, where a component of the whole of something stands in for another, or it can function in an allegorical manner.¹³¹ More critical to this project is that the iconographic *abstracts*. The embodied piece of another’s whole demarcates meaning and forgoes the individual. However,

¹³⁰ Roland Barthes and Stephen Heath, *Image Music and Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 25.

¹³¹ Andrea Noble, *Photography and Memory in Mexico: Icons of Revolution* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2011), 7-8. The preceding sentence is also a summary of the same source.

iconicity as contending with one's visibility, is newfound visibility that comes with unpredictable stakes, many of which shock and do not align with what society has been told or believes. It is a great privilege to be male, even in a place like Juchitán, and not having that privilege and therefore negotiating the intersections of being simultaneously female and male is one that comes with many sacrifices. Magnolia's and all muxes' bodies become a conceptual battleground consisting of threat and invisibility.

Though Magnolia works within the iconography of “femininity”—dress, makeup, stance—they are evocative as, what A. Noble called, an “object of inquiry and frustration.”¹³² Magnolia deconstructs “woman's experiences” by performing their unique femininity to cisfemininity, enacting an “embodied participation” for Iturbide and by extension, the viewer of their image. Magnolia, then, contributes to the conceptual landscape of feminist inquiry through art. It is also in print, and physical where Magnolia performs for the viewer, not in the public space of the street: a site of violence and harassment for non-binary, gender-queer, and ambiguous bodies. Alternate history now has a platform, and the archive has the opportunity to be reconstructed, of course, with negotiation. It includes the “liminality [it] intersect[s] with borders, translations, and migrations (language, concepts, and identities).”¹³³ For Magnolia to interact with the archival includes engagement with earlier histories and through self-preservation. Magnolia brings recognition into the inclusivity of feminist art history, without Iturbide's projections.

Archives are contested forms of agency and undermine fixed notions of objectivity, framing what Stamatina and Vaccaro stated as, the “...encounter with the archive as one that demands that you bring your own body [suggesting] that archives, in particular, those collections

¹³² Gregory Stamatina, and Jeanne Vaccaro, “Canonical Undoings: Notes in Trans Art and Archives,” *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*, ed. Reina Gossett, (Cambridge Mass: The MIT Press; London England, 2017), 351.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

housing materials related to marginalized communities require continual intervention and reinterpretation.”¹³⁴ While Magnolia may interrogate categories such as “woman” and “man,” Iturbide does not, resulting in a depleted demonstration of identity politics’ inadequacy of representation. Iturbide and Magnolia are at odds with one another. One tries to deconstruct while the other archivally constructs, one deinstitutionalizes while the other is a product of the institution, one is *without* canon, and one works within it. The *space* for a critical restructuring of an absence relies upon the one who views the photographs.

The allegorical projection of vanity within the photograph *Magnolia III* (Figure 1), is one that has been explored religiously within art that employs iconicity. However, the fact that Magnolia does not look at themselves in the mirror is telling. By not looking at themselves, they now represent another act of resistance or rebellion. For Magnolia to look directly at their reflection would be to fully accept this version of themselves, as if undeniably true. This version (the photograph) is shrouded in cultural prerogatives, social standards, and mystifying structures, Magnolia, refuses their culpability within their own space. Magnolia’s existence is an enactment of iconicity because living iconicity differentiates from the need for repetition in a social context (something seen as essential). Magnolia is emblematic of a particular identity, enough of which to be considered to move beyond “reality” and into the photographic realm.

Gender explicitly holds connotations in congruence with the mirror as an iconographical object. The mirror is evocative within the history of art with no limit for the use of reflection within artistic convention. From Caravaggio's *Medusa*, 1597 and *Narcissus*, 1597-1599; Diego Velazquez's *Las Meninas*, 1656; Jan Van Eyck’s *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434; or Édouard Manet’s *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, 1881-82, reflection in art has proved to be a potent tool to

¹³⁴ Ibid., 354.

portray allegory, *mise-en-abyme*,¹³⁵ myth, or painterly advancement. Unlike painting, the camera pushes the barrier between the spaces of “reflection.” The mirror not only acts as a tool for Magnolia’s reflection in order to see the other half of their face, it serves as a conceptual self-awareness, where the camera—also a mirror—is a point of reflection containing multiple spaces and gazes.¹³⁶

Where gender intersects, is inside the construction of personifications of vanity. The use of the mirror again plays within the space of the photograph and the space in which the image exists. The mirror within art is both a practical tool and a polysemous trope, where iconography in the Western sense is focused on gender, genre, gaze, and visibility.¹³⁷ It is not only refractive but mimetic, creating the paradox between symbol and object. The allegorical context of the mirror is one usually associated with womxn within the confines of myth, reiterating misogynistic clichés involving the female gaze, and the voyeuristic. As said, Magnolia does not give into their reflection. They deny the Narcissus trope, disrupting the theatrical and the confrontation. As stated by Philostratus: “The pool paints Narcissus, and the painting represents both the pool and the whole story of Narcissus.” Magnolia denies the mirror their capture, and the photograph represents both the mirror and Magnolia’s story.¹³⁸ In other words, to interpret Magnolia as an allegorical tribute is to see the camera’s station within the archive. Magnolia’s refusal to interact

¹³⁵ Literally translates to “into the abyss.”

¹³⁶ Including: the camera looking at Magnolia and their reflection, then Iturbide looking through the camera to look at Magnolia; and outside the camera space: Magnolia and their reflection within the literal space where she stands; and then the viewer looking at the image as a point of their own self-reflection and contemplation.

¹³⁷ Summary from Helena Goscilo, “The Mirror in Art: Vanitas, Veritas, and Vision,” (Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature 34, no. 2, June 1, 2010).

¹³⁸ Lehmann-Hartleben, Karl, “The Imagines of the Elder Philostratus” *The Art Bulletin* 23, no. 1 (March 1941): 16.

with themselves is like a denial of life's vanity: the certainty of death, the transience of life, or even worldly “pleasures,” again reiterating their refusal of the frame that they are within.

Interestingly, what is reflected in the mirror appears masculine. From the angle of the mirror, the luminous light that softens their face instead accentuates masculine features. The mirror, creating a literal doubling, symbolizes the internal. Magnolia's reflection is seen in this same format: while Magnolia is muxe, they are also Zapotec, while they are Zapotec they are also Mexican, simultaneously masculine and feminine, indigenous and modern, strong yet hidden away. The photographic evidence acts as a referent comprised of the cultural knowledge that allows a viewer to understand what the photograph presents. The camera does not know what is “true” or “typical,” something troublesome to the interdisciplinary notions of the medium, which in turn, troubles the photographic space even further. The “there-then” model is brought into the “here-now” space, creating a double temporality—a cogent paradox—a “micro-event,” or rather allusion, that lies in front of the camera at the moment of exposure and disrupts the “reality.” The camera merely records what is placed in front of it, unable to make distinctions about “the relationship of its visual trace to psychic, social or historical normativity.”¹³⁹ Magnolia's *body* parallels the space in which they occupy within each photograph. Both flooring and wall are rough in texture worn, neglected, and cracked. The absence of decorative elements creates a vastness. This parallel is a silent yet telling collaboration between Magnolia and this space, as if they and the walls together create a vessel for the body—ambiguous and unassuming.

These photographs of Magnolia pose questions about gender identity and the preconceived notions others have based on their physical appearance, ones that capture multiple identities within an existence, expressed and explored within a single body. Magnolia challenges against basic signifiers of gender identity, and therefore serves as an approach to penetrate and

¹³⁹ Pinney, 81.

deconstruct its liminality. Simultaneous deconstruction and investigation on behalf of the viewer is necessary. Photographic *space* is imperative when considering the Magnolia photographs as a site of projection. The photographs again subvert particular histories, lived experiences, and reinforce the idea of otherness, constructing images that contain iconographic signifiers. The comparison to supplementary photographer's is necessary to further prove the anachronistic nature of Iturbide's photographs. In addition, these comparisons do move between gender positions, but consider interiority as an extension of the self.

In Lourdes Grobet's black and white photograph, *La Doble Lucha I*, 1981-82 (Figure 15), a woman similarly occupies a space alone. In stark contrast to Magnolia, the lucha is presumably in her bedroom, sitting on top of her bed facing the viewer. Facing forward, she sits alert with her hands touching one another in her lap. She wears a long dark skirt with a light buttoned up cardigan. From behind, she is illuminated by a light coming from a curtain-covered window. There is no shortage of decorative elements, the room is a personal archive and contemplative sanctuary. The bedroom is not a reserved place, instead a mirror into the interior. A collaboration between body and soul that is interrupted through the guise of a literal mask. Wearing the lucha mask, a symbol of strength and intimidation, she takes on the lucha identity and parallels the room on display. Like Magnolia, the mask that the lucha wears, whose real identity remains anonymous, questions the culturally implicated signifiers of gender identity.

The lucha expands the paradigm of hetero-normative standards of femininity and masculinity like Magnolia. By wearing the mask and participating in lucha libre, the luchadora deconstructs the familiar gender metanarratives that surround the sport, Mexico's gender economy, and the conceptions of the "macho" male. Luchadoras demonstrate that gender is merely a classification, but not a signifier of strength, and perseverance. The collaboration that the lucha has with her space is one of expansion, in contrast to Magnolia's space that limits. The

lucha accepts anonymity, keeping her private life secret by not revealing her face, but at the same time sharing a space that can be considered a sanctum, full of the private and hidden. The mystery of identity is faced head-on by the lucha, who chooses to confront normativity. As stated by Rafael Tonatiuh, “[a] secret identity is the superhuman right of any wrestler, determined to modify himself in order to upset his ecosystem and prove that space-time is not only relative, but also unruly.”¹⁴⁰ Magnolia, on the other hand, does not have the opportunity to decide how their selfhood is consumed. What a viewer sees is the extension of Iturbide and her repertoire.

As a body indoors, without direct proximity to spectators, Magnolia protects themselves. The portraits stage a binding of the viewer and the viewed to metaphorical representations of discrimination which demands that spectators address not just Magnolia, but their relationship to them as consumers of their image. Acknowledging discrimination as something experienced through patterns of misogyny and racism, Magnolia obliterates the continuities between their body as a muxe and that of a cisgender womxn.

It is an optimistic assumption that Magnolia’s display triggers a moral awakening, foreclosing truths regarding gender identity in the act of viewing images of nonconforming bodies. This historicizing opens up marginalizing narratives that challenge the tropes of allure and intrigue for photographs. Here, the photographs engage a viewer differently: capturing them through an implication within the culture of discrimination, in which everyone participates. This encounter, through the engagement with a photographic document, reveals something about the nature of the viewer’s relationship to discrimination that, unlike empathy, can be disquieting.

The perpetuation of the matriarchal myth by outsiders has transformed the socio-cultural dynamics of the Juchitecas and has instilled silent biases within the community that allows

¹⁴⁰ Lourdes Grobet, *Lucha Libre, the Family Portraits* (México D.F, México: Editorial RM, 2009), 7.

toleration for violence, especially toward los muxes. The gendering of violence, as in the masculinized aggression exercised against feminized bodies, has been accepted with little or no acknowledgment of violence against gender-queer peoples.¹⁴¹ Magnolia, as a non-white, indigenous, gender-queer person raises questions about how narratives of violence become constructed. Magnolia's gender and cultural identifications are not minimized or anonymous. Instead, their identity as a muxe is placed centrally within the photographic frame, conjuring narratives of imperial conquest and political injustice.

By not looking at themselves they silently and defiantly reject this truth or "reality" — and create room for change and improvement. Photographs are objects of the gaze creating class markers upon bodies that are pictured. Likeness, as described by Orzulak:

...relates to images and in this case portraits, [as] a function of recreating what one sees in such a way as to allow recognition to occur for the viewer. Manufacturing likeness in certain genres of handmade images is important in order for the viewer to recognize a person or an object and is traditionally related to the technical ability of the artist.¹⁴²

Not dependent on the artist's technical ability, but instead of mechanical reproducibility, likeness therefore, is only *recreated* not created. Likeness also does not correspond to transparency or equivalence, meaning it is not a reflection of "reality" —already stated as something slippery within itself. *Reality* is formed by context, usually on behalf of the viewer rather than what is in the photograph, also extending to the perceivability of meaning. Magnolia denies a viewer a certain level of correspondence and interrupts a viewer's point of reflection, who is supposed to draw conclusions and make assumptions. Denying this makes those who look at Magnolia culpable and complicit. They must let go of their preconceived thoughts about who or what they

¹⁴¹ Summary from Angelique Szymanek, "Bloody Pleasures: Ana Mendieta's Violent Tableaux," (Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 41, no. 4 (June 2016), 895–925).

¹⁴² Orzulak, 45.

are looking at, and more importantly, what they should be searching for. The photographs transform Magnolia's viewer into a voyeur, intruding upon his intimate struggle of the self.

Magnolia denies both reflections. They allow the double consciousness (how they *are* seen vs. how they *want* to be seen) to be troubled, uneasy, and slippery. This confrontation within the photographic paradigm works on Magnolia's behalf, not Iturbide's or the viewers. Magnolia now functions as an object of collective cultural memory. What disrupts this function is personal identification. Setting the stage, the use of the mirror as a prop creates a dramatic overtone in the photograph, loud enough for a viewer to deflect and move on from becoming implicated. Even Magnolia's positioning—indoors—does not feel like a usual place to stop and stand, especially when compared to the other portraits in this series, suggesting that location is now intentional. To step outside, to be in the public eye would be to also look into the mirror, to allegorically confront the violence and discrimination.

Contextualizing Magnolia Contemporarily

As the photographer, Iturbide exalted and continued (over a ten-year period and with the publication of *Juchitán de las Mujeres*) to exoticize Juchitecas, reductively leading viewers who remain in the archival realm to believe in the matriarchal-like character of Juchitán. The photographs of Magnolia are evocative of an earlier time and play upon the analytic of images taken for “scientific” purpose, again reiterating Magnolia's otherness. Iturbide's mode of narration at this moment is riddled with romantic mythology and signifies the hegemonic influence over her authorship.

In contradiction to the photographs of Magnolia, the framing of a photograph from 2015 by Nelson Morales (Figure 16) expands perspectives about the muxe. Centrally, the subject sits on a slightly turned sofa pushed against a wall, while a sheer white and embroidered curtain

covers it. To the left of the sofa sits a large rectangular gold framed mirror that is leaning against a chest disguised with another green tinged fabric collecting cluttered items. A second shorter chest sits beside it, only partially covered with a woven blue and white blanket while the right bottom drawer and leg peek out into the open floor space. The dullness from the muted wall and fabrics has juxtaposed the richness of the red stained concrete floor. From the placement and angle of the camera, it feels as if a viewer were peeking around a corner and happening upon this scene. The subject is indoors but somewhere of comfort and peace.

As a self-portrait of the photographer, Morales, also a muxe, is not traditionally positioned for a portrait like *Magnolia*. They sit, leaning back into a sofa, relaxed as they sink deeper into the cushioning. Morales' arms rest at their sides while their left hand quietly fidgets with the vibrant royal red skirt that they wear, contrasting the cream blanket with green florals that covers the sofa. Their knees bend and the skirt plunges over nearly touching the ground, illuminating the precise gold detail that embroiders the skirt. Their bare feet peek out from under the skirt touching the ground. They are also bare-chested and while their head is tilted back, they stare straight into the lens and out to the viewer. The mirror, placed to the right of the sofa, catches their reflection in the lower left corner, capturing a compelling profile and part of their hair covered chest. What is compelling about this photograph is Morales' gaze. Their act of staring back at the machine and extended, their viewer, interrupts the voyeuristic act and instead operates as a denial of access to their inner self. They assert their agency as a person, and as a muxe. Now, and more clearly, a viewer *sees* Morales first and foremost. Morales as the photographic referent disrupts the power position a viewer holds by gazing back at them.

Like *Magnolia*, they do not gaze into the mirror, becoming irrelevant because Morales, unlike *Magnolia*, challenges the spectators' gaze the act of looking at their image, something *Magnolia* does not allow. The photograph becomes a collaboration between the viewer and the

viewed, stripped from the unnecessary and cluttering stylization, which inadvertently complicated meanings and distances the viewing process. The viewer of Morales' image does not need to battle with the placed and enforced confines of the canon, or the archive.

While Morales' gaze negates the voyeuristic act, it is okay because the photograph becomes a vehicle for conversation and honest intention. Morales' portrait seeks understanding, collaboration, and subjective readings, and invites admiration because their gaze is consenting. Their photograph bands the many reasons for simplistic looking and denies the transition into the allegorical. Morales "hinders the ability of the viewer to read the images as a sum of its symbolic parts,"¹⁴³ instead encouraging their image to be read as an extension of their individuality. Morales has control over the construction of their image. The photograph acts as a point of reflection for the viewer, and even more so, a soft challenge about looking. Unlike the self-portrait by Morales, Magnolia's gaze in *Magnolia II*, does not so overtly assert their person. The viewer is well aware of their voyeuristic act, and Magnolia's stare, however joyful, is still solicited as not their personage inviting the viewing, but rather, the photograph that invites it.

Within this semblance, an additional photograph of a muxe makes a great comparison. Whereas the self-portrait by Nelson Morales is in color, taken digitally, and provides more significant contextual information, this photograph by Vittorio D'Onofri, *Muxe, Amaranta*, 2001 (Figure 17) acts as another example of inviting a viewer to look. This black and white photograph again frames the subject close, in a more traditional portrait format. Instead of being hidden away and indoors, they are outdoors in a river, in the open, wet and nude. They, like Magnolia, gaze out to the viewer, and like the Nelson Morales photograph, invite the viewer to again participate with them. This time and even with the added element of nudity, the need for symbols and props is unnecessary, as the gaze is of utmost importance. In glaring contrast to the photograph of

¹⁴³ Orzulak, 55.

Magnolia, this photo is one of liberation. Their expression is confident, relaxed, even their gesture splashing in the water is peaceful, commenting identification rather than a response to erotic objectification.

Against the invocation of the anthropological, and the question of reality, one last example, again by Nelson Morales, dispels the uncertainties that the photographs of Magnolia project. Admonishing the notion of the scientific type by comparing these two images, alleviates Magnolia of the pressures placed upon them. In Morales' *The Big Lady*, 2016 (Figure 18), an older muxe sits on a wooden chair centrally within the frame, outdoors. Behind them stands a crumbling building surrounded by lush green trees and grasses. To the left of the frame, one can also see large storage containers, a couple of red crates, and in the foreground a small dog is asleep. *The Big Lady* wears a beautiful huipil and enagua in vibrant reds and black. They are full-bodied, with strong arms and broad shoulders, their hair is slicked back behind their ears, leaving their face untouched. They wear red eyeshadow and a light rouge on their lips. They have also accessorized with silver jewelry that adorns their neck and each wrist. Unlike the photographs of Magnolia, Morales steps back, placing the *Big Lady* in the landscape. Far from the *documentary* or ethnographic like Iturbide, *The Big Lady*, and *Self-Portrait* by Morales are elusive, move beyond fact, and strip a bit of the fantasy. Iturbide's series "contest[s] 'images of women' as the national essence."¹⁴⁴ *Juchitán de las Mujeres* could instead be seen, according to Sepúlveda, as "...representing one vision of feminism that romanticizes femaleness as the national élan, or as symbols of matriarchal politics...."¹⁴⁵ Iturbide, therefore, is incapable of escaping "othering" tropes that exoticize the womxn of Juchitán. The photographs by Morales and D'Onofri are "aesthetically lacking in comparison to the repertoire" of Iturbide, but they nevertheless offer an

¹⁴⁴ Sepúlveda, 230.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

alternative strategy for addressing power relations.¹⁴⁶ Unlike Iturbide whose photographs serve as symbols for a type of feminism that serviced the state in their effort to broadcast support of “ethnic pluralism,” Morales and D’Onofri demand a change in photographic structuring of gender-queer bodies. Iturbide, unfortunately, reiterates, like the post-revolution writers, a dialogue that questioned *Indianness*, resulting in an idealized version of ethnicity. Moreover, the prominence that Iturbide gained from these images resulted in them taking visual prominence as *the* symbol for Mexican feminism, both in and outside of Mexico, in turn and at the time, undermining feminist activism in Mexico.

Conclusion

Recalling that photographs are without culture, but that the photographer and the viewer are always within it, the goal of this chapter, was to use *frames* as unrestrictive barriers when viewing and dissecting Iturbide’s photographs of Magnolia. The intention was to use frames as interpretations on behalf of the viewer to show the intertextuality of the photos within these *mise-en-abyme* like referents and to prove that the images of Magnolia, though emblematic, are not the only one way of being muxe or contextualizing them photographically. The photographs of Magnolia support a fixed narrative as to what it means to be muxe, and more broadly a feminized body in a regulated space.

Similar to the writings that reiterate the myth about Malintzin, Magnolia becomes textually mythicized, discouraging the understanding of various signs at work in their images, because Iturbide, becomes displaced by her own embodied archive. The essay by Poniatowska is inherently hetero-discursive and reiterates matriarchal falsehoods. Poniatowska’s essay is

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 210.

contaminated by a precedent, fracturing a potential for objectiveness in her writing. Overall, symbolism and intertextuality reimplement “history” and the archive as a precedent and absolute source of evidence. Furthermore, Iturbide’s photographic practice, and the essay both shaped the *Juchitán de las Mujeres* series, and Magnolia into objects meant to be viewed and consumed without re-orientation or analysis beyond the aesthetic.

These supplementary examples of muxe representation are in no way a totality, as I believe it could never be when considering gender identity within photography and the discourse of art. Ultimately, it became a question about what or whose reality is presented to the viewer in the photographs of Magnolia, in addition to indicating the instability of photographic meaning.

Epilogue

Realizing the depth of complicity that Iturbide has with an exploitative medium is unnerving. Optimistically, research such as this will prompt photographers and viewers to become more mindful when shooting and consuming images of gender-queer bodies. This study incorporated a critical approach to Iturbide's photographs in order for Magnolia's agency to become a starting point in illuminating the ambiguity within Mexico's gender economy, in addition to adhering transgressive value to the photographic documentation of non-binary gender identities. This was discussed through historical and contemporary contextualization's including various factors of cultural memory and socio-cultural circumstances, related to summoning an alternate history. What is necessary is discourse that becomes troubled through inquiry. Photography first and foremost is an act of exploitation, when viewers can dissect the constructs of society and culture, they can see how they, too, become implicated within photographs by looking. They can step beyond the artists and archives projections and begin to realize an embedded and alternate history's power. The viewer is then prone to see the systems and weight of cultural implication that are formed and molded throughout history.

Therefore, the socio-cultural frames explored throughout these chapters provide not only a point of reflection for the viewer but one of relief and justice for Magnolia to weave a larger, more accurate narrative. Above all, they attempted to place an alternate history in the forefront. Collective memory and socio-cultural contexts were the most exigent angles relating to conjuring an alternate history and how viewers consume images of gender-queer bodies. This historicity was investigated in order to make it possible to conceive new, alternative ways of addressing representation within communities subjected and regulated through ideological heteronormativity. Overall, this thesis interrogated the hereto-normative patriarchal system in Mexico,

the elusiveness of photography as a medium, and of Iturbide's inclusion of the muxe in her romanticized depiction of Juchitán de Zaragoza.

Bibliography

- “A-Z Of Modernist Photography.” Tate. Tate, n.d. www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/photography/a-z.
- Azoulay, Ariella. *The Civil Contract of Photography*. 1st pbk. ed. New York: Cambridge, Mass: Zone Books; Distributed by The MIT Press, 2008.
- Azoulay, Ariella, and Louise Bethlehem. *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography*. English-Language ed. London: New York: Verso, 2012.
- Bal, Mieke, and Norman Bryson. “Semiotics and Art History.” *The Art Bulletin* 73, no. 2 (June 1991): 174. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3045790>.
- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Pbk. ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 2010.
- Barthes, Roland, and Stephen Heath. *Image, Music, Text*. Nachdr. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2009.
- Barthes, Roland, and Annette Lavers. *Mythologies*. 47. [print.]. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2006.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge Classics. London; New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Binford, Leigh. “Graciela Iturbide: Normalizing Juchitán.” *History of Photography* 20, no. 3 (September 1996): 244–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.1996.10443660>.
- Brandes, Stanley. “Graciela Iturbide as Anthropological Photographer.” *Visual Anthropology Review* 24, no. 2 (November 2008): 95–102. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-7458.2008.00007.x>.
- Bradú, Fabienne, and Graciela Iturbide. “Graciela Iturbide habla con Fabienne Bradú.” Madrid: La Fabrica y Fundacion Telefonica, 2003.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge Classics. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Campbell, Howard. “The COCEI: Culture, Class, and Politicized Ethnicity in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.” *Ethnic Groups* 8, no. 1 (1990): 29–56.
- . *Zapotec Ethnic Politics and the Politics of Culture in Juchitán, Oaxaca (1350-1990)*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Univ. Microfilms International, 1991.

- . *Zapotec Renaissance: Ethnic Politics and Cultural Revivalism in Southern Mexico*. 1st ed. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1994.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. “Historicism and The Narration of Modernity.” In *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 27–46. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Chilcote, Ronald H. *Mexico at the Hour of Combat: Sabino Osuna’s Photographs of the Mexican Revolution*. Laguna Beach, CA: Laguna Wilderness Press, 2012.
- Chiñas, Beverly. *The Isthmus Zapotecs: A Matrifocal Culture of Mexico*. 2nd ed. Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1992.
- Chisholm, Jennifer. “Muxe, Two-Spirits, and the Myth of Indigenous Transgender Acceptance.” *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies*, August 10, 2018, 21–35. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcis.v11i1.558>.
- DeMott, Tom. *Into the Hearts of the Amazons: In Search of a Modern Matriarchy*. Madison, Wis: The University of Wisconsin Press/Terrace Books, 2006.
- Earle, Rebecca. *The Return of the Native: Indians and Myth-Making in Spanish America, 1810-1930*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Fajardo-Hill, Cecilia, Andrea Giunta, Rodrigo Alonso, Hammer Museum, Brooklyn Museum, and Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA (Project), eds. *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985*. Los Angeles: Munich; New York: Hammer Museum, University of California; DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2017.
- Foerstner, Abigail. “Graciela Iturbide Documents a Ritual-Laden Matriarchy.” *Chicago Tribune*, August 27, 1993.
- Folgarait, Leonard. *Seeing Mexico Photographed: The Work of Horne, Casasola, Modotti, and Alvarez Bravo*. New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Fusco, Coco. “Essential Differences: Photographs of Mexican Women.” *Afterimage* 18 (1991): 11–13.
- . “The Other History of Intercultural Performance.” *TDR* (1988-) 38, no. 1 (1994): 143–67. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1146361>.
- Gardner, Nathaniel. “Visual Witness: A Critical Rereading of Graciela Iturbide’s Photography.” *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 35 (June 2017): 174–94. <https://doi.org/10.7560/SLAPC3510>.
- Gell, Alfred. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. <https://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1661316>.

- Gossett, Reina, Eric A Stanley, and Johanna Burton, eds. *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*. Cambridge Mass: The MIT Press; London England, 2017.
- Graham, Richard. *The Idea of Race in Latin America: 1870-1940*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004.
- Grobet, Lourdes. *Lucha Libre, the Family Portraits*. México D.F: México: Editorial RM, 2009.
- Giunta, Andrea. "The Iconographic Turn: The Denormalization of Bodies and Sensibilities in the Work of Latin American Women Artists." Cecilia, Fajardo-Hill et al. Hammer Museum, Brooklyn Museum, and Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA (Project), eds. *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985*. Los Angeles: Munich; New York: Hammer Museum, University of California; DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2017. 29-36.
- Goscilo, Helena. "The Mirror in Art: Vanitas, Veritas, and Vision." *Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature* 34, no. 2 (June 1, 2010). <https://doi.org/10.4148/2334-4415.1733>.
- Hackenberg, Robert A., and Charles M. Leslie. "Now We Are Civilized: A Study of the World View of the Zapotec Indians of Mitla, Oaxaca." *Ethnohistory* 8, no. 4 (1961): 431. <https://doi.org/10.2307/480365>.
- Heron, Liz, and Val Williams, eds. *Illuminations: Women Writing on Photography from the 1850s to the Present*. London New York: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 1996.
- Hight, Eleanor M, and Gary D Sampson, eds. "Introduction: Photography, 'Race', and Post-Colonial Theory." *In Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, 1–19. London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2004.
- Hirsch, Marianne. "The Generation of Post Memory." *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (April 1, 2008): 103–28.
- Irwin, Robert McKee, Ed McCaughan, and Michelle Rocío Nasser, eds. *The Famous 41: Sexuality and Social Control in Mexico, c. 1901*. New Directions in Latino American Cultures. New York, N.Y.; Basingstoke, Eng: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Iturbide, Graciela. "Interpreting Reality." *World Literature Today* 87, no. 2 (2013): 118–21.
- Iturbide, Graciela, and Judith Keller. *Graciela Iturbide: Juchitán*. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007.
- Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Pablo Ortiz Monasterio. *Juchitán de Las Mujeres*. México, D.F: Ediciones Toledo, 2010.
- Iversen, Margaret. *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1993.

- Jones, Amelia. "Ch. 12: Interpreting Feminist Bodies: The Unframeability of Desire." In *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork*, edited by Paul Duro. Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism. Cambridge [England]; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- . *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory Identification and the Visual Arts*. 1st ed. Abingdon, Oxon [England]; New York: Routledge, 2012.
- , ed. *Sexuality*. Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2014.
- Jones, Ryan. "*Estamos en todas partes:*" *Male Homosexuality, Nation, and Modernity in Twentieth Century Mexico*. Dissertation: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012. <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/34522>.
- Kozloff, Max M. "Graciela Iturbide's Prima Scenarios - Iturbide's Haunting Photographs Scrutinize Mexico's Contradictory Social Landscape." *Art in America* 87, no. 11 (1999): 122–27.
- Krauss, Rosalind. "Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View." *Art Journal* 42, no. 4 (December 1982): 311–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.1982.10792816>.
- Krauss, Rosalind E. *Perpetual Inventory*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2010.
- Kwon, Miwon. "Bloody Valentines: After Images by Ana Mendieta." *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art in, of, and from the Feminine*, edited by Catherine de Zegher, 164–71. Les Editions La Chambre, 1996.
- Lehmann-Hartleben, Karl. "The Imagines of the Elder Philostratus." *The Art Bulletin* 23, no. 1 (March 1941): 16. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3046729>.
- Lerner, Gerda. *The Creation of Patriarchy*. Women and History, v. 1. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- MacNaughton, Mary Davis, Marta Dahão, Esther Gabara, John Mraz, Sara Castrejão Reza, Graciela Iturbide, Tatiana Parceró, et al., eds. *Revolution and Ritual: The Photographs of Sara Castrejón, Graciela Iturbide, and Tatiana Parceró*. Claremont, CA: Los Angeles, California: Scripps College, Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery; published with the assistance of the Getty Foundation, 2017.
- Marchand, Marianne H., and Anne Sisson Runyan, eds. *Gender and Global Restructuring: Sightings, Sites and Resistances. RIPE Series in Global Political Economy*. London; New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Marcus, Joyce, and Kent V. Flannery. *Zapotec Civilization: How Urban Society Evolved in Mexico's Oaxaca Valley*. New Aspects of Antiquity. New York, N.Y: Thames and Hudson, 1996.

- McCaughan, Ed. *Art and Social Movements: Cultural Politics in Mexico and Aztlán*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012.
- McMichael, Philip, ed. *Contesting Development: Critical Struggles for Social Change*. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Mirandé, Alfredo. *Behind the Mask: Gender Hybridity in a Zapotec Community*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2017.
- Mraz, John. "Photography and Cinema in 20th-Century Mexico." Vol. 1. Oxford University Press, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.013.269>.
- Noble, Andrea. *Photography and Memory in Mexico: Icons of Revolution*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2010.
- Olsen, Elizabeth Patrice. "Issues of National Identity: Obregon, Calles, and Nationalist Architecture 1920-1930." *Sincronía, An E-journal of Cultural Studies from the University of Guadalajara*, no. Spring (1997).
- Orzulak, Jessica Lynn. "Picturing Soldaderas: Agency, Allegory, and Memory in Images of the 1910 Mexican Revolution" (Thesis, August 2014 <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0rh6g078>)
- Paz, Octavio. "Chapter 2 Mexican Masks." *In The Labyrinth of Solitude and Other Writings*, translated by Lysander Kemp, Yara Milos, and Rachel Phillips Belash, 29–46. 1950. Reprint, New York: Grove Press, 1985.
- Paz, Octavio. "Chapter 4 The Sons of La Malinche." *In The Labyrinth of Solitude and Other Writings*, translated by Lysander Kemp, Yara Milos, and Rachel Phillips Belash, 65–88. 1950. Reprint, New York: Grove Press, 1985.
- Pinney, Christopher. *Photography and Anthropology*. Repr. Exposures. London: Reaktion Books, 2012.
- Pinney, Christopher, and Nicolas Peterson, eds. *Photography's Other Histories. Objects/Histories*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Pollock, Griselda. "Inscriptions in the Feminine." *In Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art in, of, and from the Feminine*, edited by Catherine de Zegher, 67–87. Les Editions La Chambre, 1996.
- . *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and Histories of Art*. London; New York: Routledge, 1988.

- Rabinowitz, Paula. "Voyeurism and Class Consciousness: James Agee and Walker Evans, 'Let Us Now Praise Famous Men.'" *Cultural Critique*, no. 21 (1992): 143.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1354120>.
- Reiman, Karen Cordero. "Corporeal Apparitions/Beyond Appearances: Women and Bodily Discourse in Mexican Art, 1960-1985." *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985*, by Cecilia Fajardo-Hill et al. Hammer Museum, University of California, 2017, pp. 270–280.
- zz, Juana Maria. *Queer Latinidad: Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces. Sexual Cultures*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.
- Schuman, Natalie Irene, "Woman as Dialect: La Malinche in the Construction and Re-Construction of Post-Colonial Mexican Identity" (2017). Senior Projects Spring 2017. 342.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Updated with a new preface. Berkeley Los Angeles London: University of California Press, 2008.
- Sekula, Allan. *Photography against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works, 1973-1983*. The Nova Scotia Series Source Materials of the Contemporary Arts, v. 16. Halifax, N.S., Canada: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1984.
- . "The Body and the Archive." October 39 (1986): 3.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/778312>.
- Sepúlveda, Gabriela Aceves. *Women Made Visible: Feminist Art and Media in Post-1968 Mexico City*. University of Nebraska Press, 2019.
- Slaughter, Stephany. "Queering the Memory of the Mexican Revolution: Cabaret as a Space for Contesting National Memory." *Letras Femeninas* 37, no. 1 (2011): 47–70.
- Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. New York: Picador USA, 2001.
- Starr, Frederick. *Notes Upon the Ethnography of Southern Mexico*. II vols. Davenport, Iowa: Putnam Memorial Publication Fund, 1900.
- Stamatina Gregory and Jeanne Vaccaro, "Canonical Undoings: Notes in Trans Art and Archives," Gossett, Reina, Eric A Stanley, and Johanna Burton, eds. *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*. Cambridge Mass: The MIT Press; London England, 2017. 349- 362.
- Stephen, Lynn. *Zapotec Women: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity in Globalized Oaxaca*. 2nd ed. Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Stevens, Evelyn P. "Marianismo: The Other Face of Machismo in Latin America." University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973, 90–101.

- Szymanek, Angelique. "Bloody Pleasures: Ana Mendieta's Violent Tableaux." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 41, no. 4 (June 2016): 895–925.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/685503>.
- Taylor, Analisa. "Malinche and Matriarchal Utopia: Gendered Visions of Indigeneity in Mexico." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 31, no. 3 (March 2006): 815–40.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/499209>.
- Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Tenorio-Trillo, Mauricio. *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation*. The New Historicism 35. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Time-Life Books, ed. *Documentary Photography*. New York: Time Inc., 1972.
- Tortorici, Zeb, ed. *Sexuality and the Unnatural in Colonial Latin America*. University of California Press, 2016.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520288140.001.0001>.
- . *Sins against Nature: Sex and Archives in Colonial New Spain*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.
- Vasconcelos, José, and Didier Tisdell Jaén. *The Cosmic Race: A Bilingual Edition*. Johns Hopkins paperbacks ed. Race in the Americas. Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Whitecotton, Joseph W. *The Zapotecs: Princes, Priests, and Peasants*. 1st ed. The Civilization of the American Indian Series. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977.
- Williams, Walter L. *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.
- Zegher, M. Catherine de, and Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston, Mass.), eds. *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art in, of, and from the Feminine*. Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1996.

Appendix



Figure 1. Graciela Iturbide, *Magnolia III*, Juchitan, Mexico, 1986. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010.



Figure 2. Graciela Iturbide, *Magnolia I*, Juchitan, Mexico, 1986. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010.



Figure 3. Graciela Iturbide, *Magnolia II*, Juchitan, Mexico, 1986. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010.



Figure 4. Graciela Iturbide, *Rosa*, Juchitán, Mexico, 1979. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010.



Figure 5. Graciela Iturbide, *Juchiteca con cerveza* [Juchiteca with beer], Juchitan, Mexico, 1984. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010.



Figure 6. Graciela Iturbide, *Untitled (Two Juchitecas Dancing)*, Juchitan, Mexico, 1986. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010.



Figure 7. Graciela Iturbide, *Despues del rapto [After the abduction]*, Juchitan, Mexico, 1986. Reproduced in Iturbide, Graciela, Elena Poniatowska, and Mario Bellatin. *Juchitán de las mujeres, 1979-1989*. México, D.F.: Amigos de Editorial Calamus. 2010.

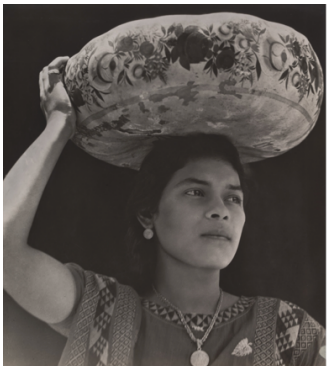


Figure 8. Tina Modotti, (Italian, 1896-1942), *Woman of Tehuantepec*, ca. 1929. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Zigrosser, 1968.



Figure 9. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Manuel Alvarez Bravo, *Mujer del Istmo peinando a Isabel Villaseñor (Woman of the isthmus combing Isabel Villaseñor's hair)*, negative 1933; print 1990s. Gelatin silver print. Image: 8 5/8 × 7 9/16 in. © Colette Urbajtel/Archivo Manuel Álvarez Bravo, SC.



Figure 10. *Una Zapatista*. Postcard. Mexican Photographs Collection (MS 026), box 2, folder 10. Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

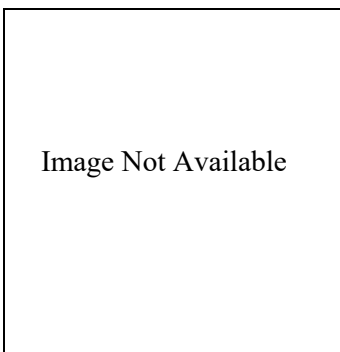


Figure 11. Hugo Brehme, *Emiliano Zapata, Cuernavaca, Morelos, May 1911*.



Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Figure 12. José Guadalupe Posada. “Los 41 maricones...Muy chulos y conquetones” [The 41 faggots... Very cute and coquettish]. Courtesy of Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin.



Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Figure 13. José Guadalupe Posada. “Abanicos elegantes...” [Elegant fans...]. Courtesy of Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin.



Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Figure 14. José Guadalupe Posada. “41 maricones para Yucatán” [41 faggots to the Yucatan]. Courtesy of Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin.



Figure 15. Lourdes Grobet, *La Doble Lucha I*, 1981-1982, gelatin silver print, collection of California Museum of Photography, UCR ARTS, University of California Riverside, gift of Lorenzo R., Nicolas, and Cristina Hernandez.



Figure 16. Nelson Morales, *Self-portrait*, 2015, Union Hidalgo, Oaxaca. Photo courtesy of the artist.

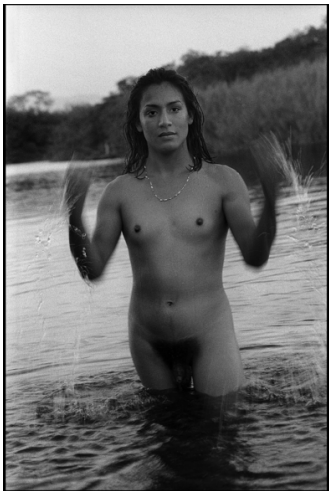


Figure 17. Vittorio D'Onofri, *Muxe Amaranta*, 2001, Juchitán, Mexico. Photo courtesy of the artist.



Figure 18. Nelson Morales, Nelson Morales, *The Big Lady*, 2016, Union Hidalgo, Oaxaca.