DOI: https://doi.org/10.14232/actahisp.2023.28.131-147

REINSCRIBING MALINCHE IN CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ART: METAPHORS OF MALINCHE AT THE DENVER ART MUSEUM EXHIBITION "TRAITOR, SURVIVOR, ICON: THE LEGACY OF LA MALINCHE" (2022)

ÁGNES ZSÓFIA KOVÁCS

University of Szeged, Hungary

Reception date: 16/03/2023
Acceptance date: 19/05/2023

Abstract: Malinche was an indigenous slave woman who helped Cortés communicate with and understand native chiefs during the conquest of Mexico. This paper analyzes the way the Denver Art Museum represented cultural metaphors of Malinche in visual culture in its 2022 show titled "Traitor, Survivor, Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche." The exhibition distinguishes five key metaphors in the reception of Malinche from the sixteenth century through today. The paper highlights the theme of Malinche as the mother of the nation and its diverse appearances in visual culture among the images displayed. The paper surveys the ways in which images of motherhood interact in museum space.
Keywords: The Conquest of Mesoamerica, Malinche, Contemporary Reception, Visual Art, Cultural Metaphors.

Introduction

Hernán Cortés and Malinche function as Adam and Eve in the creation of Mexico. Cortés was the leader of the Spanish conquistadors who arrived on the shore of the Yucatan in 1519 to start the conquest of Mesoamerica. Malinche was an indigenous slave woman who served Cortés as an interpreter, advisor, and lover from 1519 on. She bore him a son in 1520 and then married one of his captains in 1524. Together Cortés and Malinche administered the fall of the Aztec Empire and initiated the rise of New Spain under Spanish colonial rule.

Although many know the story of Malinche, perhaps they may not be familiar with the diverse ways that she has been remembered through the centuries. The deeds of Cortés and Malinche have been well documented by contemporary native and Spanish sources alike (that call her Malintzin or Doña Marina, respectively). Sixteenth-century illustrated historical narratives represent her as the companion to Cortés, an interpreter speaking the language of emperors, a negotiator caring for the interest of the weak, and a respectable married noblewoman, a representative of a new faith. In contrast to a lack of interest in Malinche in the eighteenth century (Black 2022, 64), in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, she is

romanticized and sexualized. In the early twentieth century, amidst the political struggles that produced the independent nation of Mexico, Malinche was seen as a problematic figure whose ambiguous (Paz 1990, 74-79) miscegenation with Cortés produced a mixed blood nation. At this time "the Indian (La Malinche) was equated with betrayal and inferiority" (Cypess 2022, 85; see also Gaspar de Alba 2022, 23 and Sousa 2022, 110).

As a reaction to the narrative of nation-building, a revision of the figure of Malinche was performed by Mexican American women artists in the 1970s and 1980s. They identified with Malinche's bi-lingual or trilingual, in-between position. For Feminist Mexican American artists, Malinche appears as the model female artist on the border between two cultures (Anzaldúa 2012, 21-22) who is constructing her voice among diverse sets of existing cultural expectations (Candelaria 1980, 2; Pratt 1993). They highlight that Malinche's own voice is absent: her story is only available to us through representations (Downs 2008, 397). From this perspective, the figure of Malinche poses problems of basic racial (indigenous/foreign) and class (slave/aristocrat) identifications (Lyall et. al. 2022b, 6).

Mexican American literary representations approach Malinche as the epitome of the borderland experience of Mexican American artists. Malinche is the coloured slave woman whose voice is missing, but who is given voice through contemporary fictitious texts by Mexican American authors like Gloria Anzaldúa, Sandra Cisneros and Carmen Tafolla (see also Csikós 2015 and Tate 2017). As a corollary, this paper studies some contemporary visual representations of Malinche. This interest has been triggered by the exhibition of the Denver Art Museum titled "Traitor, Survivor, Icon: the Legacy of La Malinche," about the reception of Malinche in visual art on both sides of the present US-Mexico border (Lyall and Romo 2022a). The general question this paper explores is how the contemporary visual representations collected for the exhibition reflect existing cultural metaphors of Malinche's figure. In particular, the paper examines how the museum exhibition itself creates a visual experience of remembering Malinche from the perspective of Mexican American literary representations. The paper reconnects specific artifacts from the exhibition to illustrate trends in contemporary visualizations of Malinche as the mother of the nation, and then goes on to consider the role that cultural metaphors play in the museum-generated experience of remembering her.

1. The in-between position of Malinche and its Mexican American literary reception

In Mexican popular mythology, Malinche is most often remembered as a traitor, the indigenous woman who sold out to the Spaniards (Cypess 2022, 82). In contrast, Mexican American literary representations revisit the figure of Malinche as the epitome of the borderland experience of Mexican American artists: bilingual or

trilingual, bicultural, transnational, and voiceless. This section provides a brief summary of basic data about Malinche gleaned from literary representations of Malinche from nationalist and Mexican American perspectives.

Malinche's life is documented only after the time she met Cortés, and none of that documentation comes from her. Malinche was the daughter of a nobleman in the Coatzacoalcos region who died early and because her brother was to inherit her father's wealth, young Malinche was sold off as a slave to Indian traders, then to the Chontal Maya (Lyall et. al. 2022b, 2). She was given as a gift to Cortés together with nineteen other women by the Maya after the Spaniards defeated them. As an indigenous woman of noble birth, she spoke the language of the Aztec ruling class, Nahuatl, but also that of her slave master, Yucatec Maya. She must have had a good ear for languages and was also young, around 17 or 18, so she quickly learned Castilian Spanish, too. She was baptized by the Spaniards and given the name Marina. She became Cortés's interpreter of three languages (his "tongue" as he refers to her in his second letter to the Spanish king), mediator, advisor, strategist, and lover. She helped Cortés navigate indigenous tribes under Aztec rule ready to ally with him. She also mediated his negotiations with the Aztecs, Moctezuma in particular. She oversaw baptisms and the administration of Spanish taxes. She was the mother of Cortés's son, Martín, and was given property that she took into her marriage to Cortés's captain Don Juan Jaramillo in 1524. She bore him a daughter. Around 1528 Malinche died of smallpox, a disease which had been brought by the Spaniards.

In 1950, in a key study of Mexican national character, Nobel Prize winner Octavio Paz elaborated on Malinche's significance for Mexican nationalism. Paz explained that as the mother of the mixed-blood Mexican people Malinche has an "ambiguous" position and legacy: traitor and abused (1990, 74-79). In contrast, Mexican American critic Marie Louise Pratt sums up Paz's position as a negative branding of Malinche:

> Paz argued that Malinche the traitor functioned in the national imagination as the symbolic mother of the Mexican people. Her illicit relationship with Cortés defined Mexicans as a mestizo people and the illegitimate offspring of colonial rape and/or sexual betrayal. Paz interpreted the popular patriotic expression "Viva México, hijos de la chingada" [Long live Mexico, sons of the screwed woman] as alluding to La Malinche. This myth, Paz argued, constituted part of a debilitating self-hatred and misogyny that undermined the national psyche (1993, 860).

Sandra Messinger Cypess provides an overview of the reception of Malinche in order to break down the traditional dichotomy of victimizer/victim connected to her figure and to study the sociocultural impact of the stereotypes connected to her figure (2022, 82).

Both Pratt and Cypess criticize Paz from the perspective of second-wave Feminism in the US that had a profound effect on Mexican American women artists and academics in the border area. They offer a critique of Paz's notion of Malinche. Mexican American artists and critics problematize key aspects of Malinche: lying through speaking languages, betrayal of the nation, and sexual promiscuity. Through initiating this debate, Paz influenced most twentieth-century notions about Malinche (Tate 2017, 84).

In addition, Mexican American authors have sought to give Malinche a voice in their writings. Essays, poems and short stories address the ambiguities of her position and construct versions of her constraints and emotions. In particular, Gloria Anzaldúa's *La Frontera* highlights the similarities between Mexican American artists and Malinche and argues for a positive view of her: "[t]he worst kind of betrayal lies in making us believe that the Indian woman in us is the betrayer" (Anzaldúa 2012, 22). Similarly, Sandra Cisneros displays the complexities of the Maliche's legacy in two short stories in her *Woman Hollering Creek*, "Never Marry a Mexican" and "Little Miracles, Kept Promises" (Nassi 2021). Her protagonists defy the traitor's role offered for them in their relations to Mexican men and seek to find their own voices (see Cisneros 1991).

Mary Louise Pratt's early essay traces a Malinche trope in poetry by female Mexican American authors like Sosa Riddell, Helen Silvas, and Carmen Tafolla. Their poems represent varieties of positions on Malinche's cultural significance. According to Pratt (1993) "Riddell speak(s) from within the position it assigns to her and claim(s) that position as an autonomous space of being, rather than a dependent space ascribed from the outside by others" (863). In contrast, Helen Silvas (1988) "adopts more fully the patriarchal definition of Malinche as traitor" Pratt states (Pratt 1993, 864). Carmen Tafolla's "Yo Soy La Malinche" imagines la Malinche as a visionary who sees "another land" (Pratt 1993, 869) beyond both Aztec and Spanish influence, in the future. In these poems, Malinche is reenvisioned and the resulting new perspective draws attention to problems of national and gender identity through bilingual language productions.

More recently, several historical novels react to the negative readings of Malinche's role by fictionalizing her life "without making her culpable for the Spanish victory," (Cypess 2022, 85). These include Marisol Martin de Compo's *Love and Conquest* (1999), Laura Esquivel's *Malinche* (2006), and Fanny del Rio's *The True History of Malinche* (2009). In addition, a popular TV series Malinche was produced by Patricia Arriga-Jordán in 2018 with a focus on women and indigenous people's roles in the conquest.

These Mexican American rewritings of the nationalist view of Malinche reconsider her linguistic, cultural and sexual roles. She is re-envisioned as a gifted cultural mediator trying to save her people through negotiations, and as one who had no choice but to enter into a sexual relationship with Cortés as a slave.

2. Contemporary visualizations of Malinche

The Denver Art Museum exhibition of 2022 titled "Traitor Survivor Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche" displays visual representations of the impact Malinche had on both sides of the US-Mexico border from the 1500s through today. The title highlights the ambiguities of Malinche's position not as binary opposition of right/wrong (traitor-survivor) but rather as a complex position subject to interpretation (an *icon* as Terezita Romo would put it, see Romo 2022, 155). So the show is concerned not so much with who the historical Malinche was but rather with how she has been remembered visually: the ways in which her image has been appropriated by various artists through the centuries.

The Introduction specifies the origin of the project in "the initial rehabilitation of Malinche by Mexican American poets and scholars during the 1970s and 1980s" (Lyall et. al. 2022a, 4). It had been preceded by the 1995 exhibition of the Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin, Texas and Sandra Cypess's 1991 book on Malinche. The actual idea of the exhibition was conceived in 1999, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champagne Interdisciplinary Conference on the Historical, Literary, and Visual Arts Legacy of Malinche. The conference proceedings contain an essay by Terezita Romo (2005) entitled "Malinche as Metaphor," which provides a blueprint for the Denver exhibition. In the essay, Romo (2005) identifies five major metaphors that structure the way Malinche the Malinche is remembered.

The Denver Art Exhibition arranges 70 images according to Romo's metaphors. Eight images show Malinche as an interpreter. Twenty-eight images depict Malinche as an indigenous, coloured woman. Eight images highlight her role as mother of a mixed-race nation; ten portray her as traitor. The last eleven images are contemporary recasts of earlier images. Judging from these numbers, there is a more prominent emphasis on the indigenous woman, but the remaining three-fifths of the images are almost evenly distributed among the other four categories.

The thematic displays do not intend to define periods in Malinche's reception but rather to collect and confront diverse representations connected to the given metaphorical theme. Therefore, the five metaphoric sections cut across temporal planes just as they cut across each other, especially when pictures in the contemporary section reinvent earlier depictions from the previous four sections. The mother section also contains pictures from outside the early twentieth century. Similarly, although the final Mexican American division carries images from one dominant context, the fact that these refer back to representations in the previous sections directly makes this segment interrelated as well.

3. Malinche as mother of a mixed-race nation

The different metaphors of Malinche interact in the exhibition in order to showcase the processes of reception tied to the figures of Malinche. This section of the paper surveys the visual representations of the five metaphors represented in the museum exhibition, and then focuses on the metaphor of Malinche as the ambiguous mother of the nation, an image that has been criticized extensively in its Mexican American revisions. The visual representations of Malinche highlight how the metaphor of the indigenous woman is juxtaposed to that of Eve the fallen mother, and in turn, how the same metaphor reappears in its Mexican American retakes for the sake of reconsideration. Finally, the case of Malinche in Leslie Tillett's tapestry presents one more case-study of metaphoric representation of the ambiguous mother. Here, the recent purchase and the actual display of the work reveal possibly conflicting curatorial agendas.

The show illustrates Romo's five metaphors of Malinche as: 1) the interpreter, 2) an indigenous coloured woman, 3) the mother of the mixed-race nation, 4) the traitor and 5) the contemporary recast of earlier images of Malinche into that of the multi-lingual female activist. The five metaphors provide the basis for the spatial arrangement of the exhibition. Visitors are to meet these metaphoric ideas of Malinche in the order of the list if they follow the route which the numbers of the exhibited items and the commentaries project. The metaphors also provide a rough chronology of Malinche's cultural reception, as the interpreter and indigenous woman metaphors are mainly connected to her sixteenth and seventeenth-century representations, while versions of the mother and traitor metaphors begin to appear in the eighteenth century and proliferate in the early twentieth.

A key issue among the various representations of Malinche is how the metaphor of Malinche as the mother of the mixed-race nation of Mexico is perceived. As we have seen, the metaphor Malinche as the mother of the mixed-race nation became popular at the time of Mexican nation-building in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries through the mid-century, interconnected with her being perceived as the traitor of the nation because she helped the Spaniards colonize the region. In visual culture, several murals at national institutions depict Malinche as the fallen companion to Cortés, the two of them making the founding couple of mixed-race Mexico. In these, Malinche is not only the Eve who causes her Adam's fall but also a native subdued by a European.

As a case in point, let us consider José Clemente Orozco's mural from 1926, *Cortés and Malinche*.

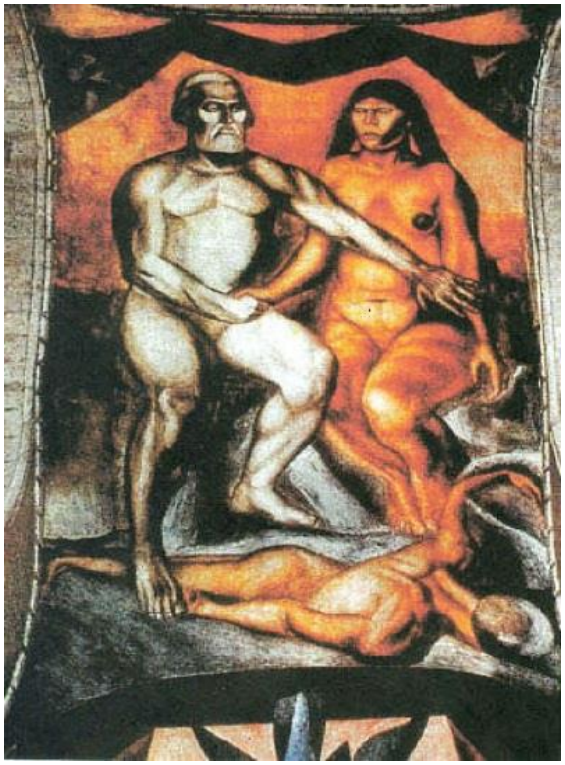

Figure 1. José Clemente Orozco, *Cortés and Malinche*. 1926. From murals at the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, Mexico City.
Source: Wikiart.org

Both figures appear in the nude, white against brown, and Cortés is drawn without genitals. He reaches over to Malinche by hand, guarding and limiting her at the same time, while she sits with eyes cast down, legs pressed together, timid. Meanwhile, Cortés's foot appears to trod on the dead body of an indigenous man. The pair form an Adam and Eve couple of a new nation on the ruins of the old one. Cortés the white male dominates the relationship. Similarly, Diego Rivera's Cortés, Malintzin ("La Malinche"), and Martín from H*istory of Mexico: From the Conquest to 1930* (1929-35) (National Palace, Mexico City) shows Malinche in a secondary position, holding her child, timid to witness the reconstruction of the old Aztec capital (Vargas-Santiago 2022, 89; Saunders 2013).

Following the Mother section, its logical outcome, the Malinche as traitor section of the exhibition surveys the sexualization of Malinche in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It also contrasts these images of Cortés and Malinche with sixteenth century indigenous representations in pictorial narratives where she plays a

role in the *spiritual conquest* (Sousa 2022, 113). The Lienzo Tlaxcala, the Florentine Codex, the Florentine and Azcatitlan Codices all depict Cortés and Malinche as a pair, with Malinche in leading positions. For instance, Malinche is promoting Christianity in the Dogging Manuscript (Sousa 2022, 115) and also in the Lienzo Tlaxcala, where her image closely resembles that of the Virgin Mary hanging over the scene.

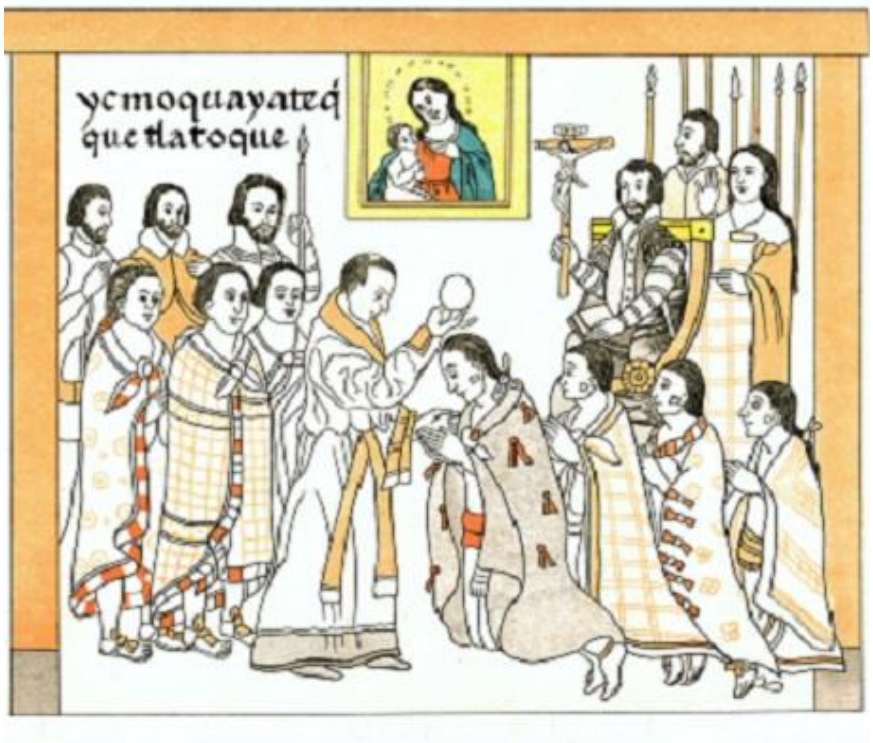

Figure 2. Genaro López, Lienzo de Tlaxcala, 1892. Plate 8.
Source: Mexicolore.co.uk

This background questions the negative "mother of the mixed-race nation" version of Eve as Malinche in nationalistic early twentieth-century depictions of the Cortés-Malinche founding couple relation.

Chicano artists have revisited Orozco's iconic image of the founding couple repeatedly. In Section 5, Maria Eugenia Chellet's "Cortés and Malinche" from 1985 adds a face and a gaze to Malinche. It uses Oroczo's image as its basis, but it transposes the black and white photo of a smiling young Mexican American on Malinche's "original" sad, downcast visage. The sad and overruled, expressionless feminine face of the original representation is turned into its reverse. The orange-brown monotony and Cortés's restrictive, stern warning gesture in the picture are

infused with the monochrome smile and naughty look on the young woman's face. The result of the interposed face is that suddenly a female person appears in the picture, and that manages to break the original status quo of the pair. The black and white of the photo also disrupts the color dichotomy of the earlier image; instead of Cortés's whiteness, it is now the chrome tints of Malinche's face that dominate the image. Furthermore, the frame of the image has been changed as well: the downtrodden native body has disappeared from the foreground, and so have the lower parts of Cortés' and Malinche's bodies, therefore the two faces fill in the image and it is Malinche whose face stands out.

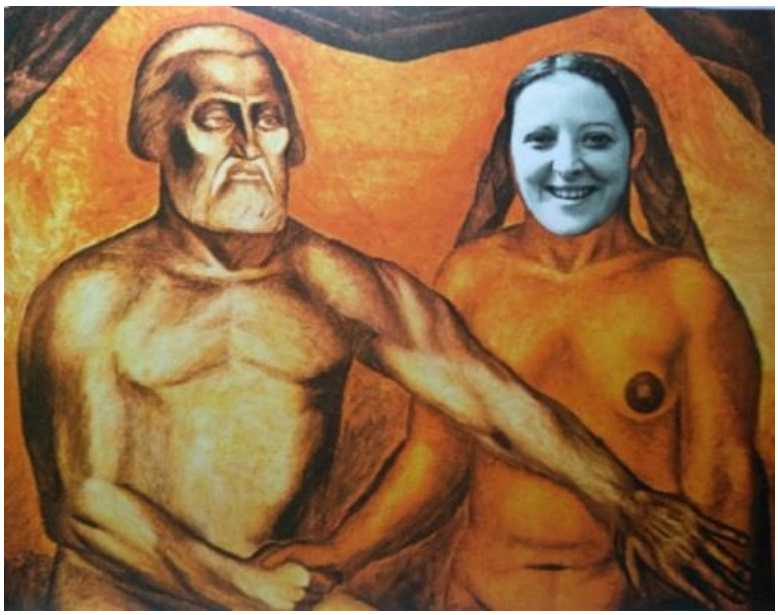

Figure 3. Maria Eugenia Chellet, *Cortés y Malinche*. 1985.
Source: Lyall 2022a, 147.

In section 3, (mother of mixed race nation), John M. Valadez's "Adam and Eve double exposed" from 1991 also refers back to both Orozco's mural and López's image. It shows Cortés and Malinche as Adam and Eve, as both Orozco's picture and that of Adam and Eve hang on the wall in the background of the sixties Mexican Adam and Eve scene.

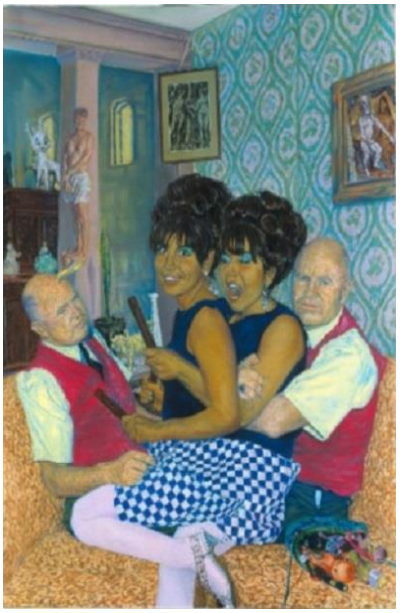

Figure 4. John M. Valadez. *Adam and Eva Double Exposed*. 1991.
Source: Blanton.emuseum.com

The proliferation of Eves in the image is repeated in the foreground, too: the characters of Cortés and Malinche are doble-exposed, as the title highlights. Malinche is both alluring and passive, Cortés is both seductive and protective. The ambivalent faces of both "Adam" and "Eve" refer back to the ambiguity of the mother metaphor. Yet, the fact that the double exposure happens with "Adam" the same way as it happens with "Eve" suggests a reflexive attitude towards the way the characters can be remembered: a focus not so much on the content and possible negativity of the ambiguous mother but rather on the duality of the representation and the proliferation of dual representations. This ongoing reproduction of images and metaphor draws attention to the also ongoing cultural production and reproduction of stereotypical images and meanings, in this case in relation to the image of Malinche as Eve.

In the general survey of the spatial organization of the exhibition it has been mentioned that the five metaphors of Malinche's figure provide a roughly chronological overview of Malinche's reception, but it is just as important to point out that the two orderings do not overlap. Contrary to expectations, contemporary representations appear not only in the Mexican American section of the exhibition but earlier as well, as for instance, Valadez's self-reflexive contemporary picture discussed above is situated in section 3 with other works displaying Malinche as mother. These "visiting" contemporary pieces are connected to or seem to relate to

the metaphor being explored in the given section of the exhibition. Let us consider further examples for this kind of inclusion and take a look at their functions in the exhibition.

Section 4, the Traitor, also contains a "visiting" contemporary picture by Teddy Sandoval from 1993 which poses the question of the kind of treachery Malinche may be associated with. The title of the picture is "Malinche's Betrayal" and it depicts a love triangle of Malinche (left), Cortés (middle), and an Aztec warrior (right), reusing characters from Oroczo's image.

Figure 5. Teddy Sandoval, "Malinche's Betrayal," 1993.
Source: Montana Public Radio News

Disembodied heads of Malinche and Cortés dominate the foreground, whose long undulating tongues invite kisses but also allude to Malinche's role as an interpreter. Malinche is situated on top as an initiator of the seduction, while the body of an Aztec soldier stabbed in the heart lies in the background, the result of her betrayal. A set of eyes watch the pair from the foliage of garden plants. (Sousa 2022, 110-111) The image relies on many aspects of the Malinche as traitor narrative but is also self-referential as it includes viewers' eyes and thematizes its own viewing. The picture is situated among sixteenth-century images that clearly do not portray Malinche through the iconography of an adulteress or an immoral woman, and nineteenth and early twentieth-century representations of her as a lascivious person.

Placed among these diverse representations, the stray eyes in "Malinche's Betrayal" take on a self-referential function of questioning the simple love triangle narrative.

Another example of a "visiting" piece works differently in sections 3 and allows us to return to the discussion of the metaphor of the mother. In section 3, one can see a current acquisition of the Denver Museum of art, Leslie Tillett's "Tapestry of the Conquest of Mexico" (1977). The tapestry depicts the Spanish conquest of Mexico through a series of scenes that run in its middle section. The narrow top and bottom sections contain textual elements that frame and comment on the pictures. The double, pictorial and textual narrative relates to the double narrative style of sixteenth-century histories, both indigenous and European. The tapestry was completed between 1965 and 1977, so one would assume it belongs to contemporary revision, but it is not situated in section five: it is labeled as interpreter and is actually placed among depictions of Malinche as mother. The Tapestry was acquired by the Denver Museum of Art for the Exhibition and is being shown for the first time. The catalog mentions the purchase and illustrates the piece several times, as if promoting it to the audience.

Figure 6. Leslie Tillett's "Tapestry of the Conquest of Mexico" (1977). Hand embroidered silk on cotton, 71 cm wide x 30.5 m long. Malinche is situated in the center of the section, beside Cortés.
Source: Denver Museum of Art

The Tapestry relies on both indigenous and European sources and highlights the role of Malinche in the Conquest. Malinche appears eighteen times in the tapestry, often in remakes of scenes from the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala*. These pictorial narratives show Malinche the translator, the warrior, and the Christian in scenes that are the exact replicas of ones in the *Lienzo*. The second source for Tillet's tapestry was Diego Rivera' work. Tillett admired Rivera's murals about the history of Mexico, especially his "Conquest of Mexico, History of Cuernavaca and Morelos". Rivera's revolutionary nationalist vision of Mexican history focused on scenes of Mexican history, the violence of the Spanish, indigenous suffering, and visions of a need for freedom from Spanish colonial rule. Therefore he represented Malinche as the source of national shame. A third source for Tillett's tapestry was the Bayeaux tapestry, the pictorial narrative of the Norman conquest of Britain in 1066. The Bayeaux Tapestry depicts the narrative of William of Orange's journey to victory. It is a founding document narrated from the perspective of conqueror that Tillett admired and used when he designed the tri-part layout of his own tapestry.

When visitors encounter the Tapestry, they have already seen several things about sixteenth-century representations of Malinche. They have seen Malinche as an indigenous woman as is shown elaborately via the surviving sixteenth-century indigenous and European histories alike. Indigenous Nahua artists and scribes produced pictorial histories on scrolls or screenfolds of amate paper (bark) or animal hide (Lyall and Ortega 2022c, 38). These pictorial histories were transformed in the sixteenth century to fit European style historical narratives. The scrolls were transformed into the European codex form with pages bound between two covers. Also, an alphabetical script was added to the picture narrative. Visitors learn that there are six pictorial narratives from the sixteenth century available today that represent the coming together of two literary and narrative traditions, Nahua and European (Lyall and Ortega 2022c, 38), and that these represent at least two points of view: Tlaxalan and Aztec. Visitors also see that these accounts all represent Malinche as a respectable noble married woman, interpreter, mediator, even soldier. The artists recognized her indigeneity but also her importance to the Spanish by positioning her either among the Spanish or in between the Spanish and the indigenous characters. The indigenous artists could not place her within their existing social categories (Lyall and Ortega 2022c, 49-50).

By the time the visitors face part of Tillett's tapestry, they can place it in Malinche's reception. Tillett's tapestry retells the story of the conquest of Mexico familiar from Rivera's murals by relying on the iconography of indigenous narrative histories, but he frames his vignettes in the European tapestry format of glorious conquest and nation building. Looking at his work from the Eastern European context, one is even reminded of the genre of panorama pictures about victorious battles of founding a nation which were popular in the late nineteenth century. Could it be that Tillett's Aztec style vignettes actually serve the simple function of retelling

a national epic in a picture narrative and not that of reinscription? This would explain the Tapestry's position in Section three on nationalistic representations of Malinche as the Mexican Eve: it belongs there as an illustration not as a reflection. However, there is no explicit commentary of this aspect of the work either in the catalog or in the promotional video, which both celebrate Tillett's achievement and the Museum's acquisition and display of the object.

Despite the lack of explicit commentary, the visitor can read the Tapestry as a continuation of the nation building narrative from the 1930s. Within the interplay of other artifacts exhibited, the Tapestry starkly contrasts with the work of Mexican American artists at the time who, simultaneously with Tillett, were deconstructing nationalist readings of the conquest by their revision of Malinche's image. So Tillett's work may be a valued possession of the Museum, but it is in conflict with the exhibition's project to carry on the critical legacy of the Chicano movement – and visitors can see this not from captions (which are not there) but from their experience of the reception of Malinche that emerges from visiting the exhibition.

Conclusion

Although "The Legacy of Malinche" exhibition draws visitors in with the allure of historical documents on illustrated scrolls and on pages of codices in its first section, the show is much more about the experience of Malinche's memory than about displaying historical facts. The indigenous female interpreter of the first sections is juxtaposed to images of Malinche as a native woman, mother of a nation, traitor and artist figure; these portrayals indicate the effect of the earlier representations and draw attention to the continuous process of reception. The interpreter and native woman metaphors are then complicated by the mother and traitor metaphors that bring new issues into the reading of Malinche's figure. The final section offers a revision of all these themes of reception: interconnections that are supposed to be made by the visitors.

In particular, the theme of Malinche as the traitorous, victimized mother of the mixed-race nation is problematized in several representations of the show. Mechanically reproduced (Valadez), interposed (Chellet), refashioned (Sandoval) earlier images (Oroczo) of Malinche as the traitorous mother of the mixed-race nation are reflected, reinscribed, and problematized by contemporary visual recyclings. In these visual reinscriptions, the recycled metaphor of the mother signifies less an obvious outcast and more an autonomous agent. Interestingly, it also happens that a contemporary piece on display does not reinscribe but rather repeats the traditional mother of the mixed-race nation metaphor (Tillett). However, the critical reading of the representational mode of the conquest by the Tillett Tapestry

forms part of the interplay of connections that have been made visible by the exhibition itself.

The exhibition displays familiar popular images, historical images, and contemporary art which meet each other and through this draw attention to the complex representational positions Malinche has occupied throughout the centuries. The show recreates a historical story in such a way that the visitors are compelled to activate connections among the artifacts on display, and to eventually generate a version of the metastory about how narratives or metaphors about history come into being.

Bibliographical references

Alba, Alicia Gaspar de. 2022. "Crimes of the Tongue: A Malinche Tree Inside Me." In *Traitor, Survivor, Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche*, edited by Lyall I., Victoria and Terezita Romo, 21-27. New Haven and London: Denver Art Museum in association with Yale University Press.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. 2012. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza.* San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Candelaria, Cordelia. 1980. "La Malinche, Feminist Prototype." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies,* 5 (2): 1-6.

Csikós, Zsuzsanna. 2015. "Malinche ábrázolások a kortárs hispán irodalomban." In *Románc és vértanúság: Nők a hispán világ történetében*, edited by Csikós Zsuzsanna and Szilágyi Ágnes Judit. Szeged: Americana eBooks. https://ebooks.americanaejournal.hu/hu/konyvek/romanc-es-vertanusag/.

Cisneros, Sandra. 1993. *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Chellet, Maria Eugenia. 1985. *Cortés y Malinche*. Source: Lyall I., Victoria and Terezita Romo, eds. 2022a. *Traitor, Survivor, Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche*. New Haven and London: Denver Art Museum in association with Yale University Press. https://books.google.hu/books?id=3g9fEAAAQBAJ&pg=PA147&lpg=PA147&dq=maria+eugenia+chellet,+cort%C3%A9s+y+malinche.+traitor+survivor+book&source=bl&ots=2P8-iCdmE5&sig=ACfU3U0jsO9ENw60Oc-vIVaGa81dugeruQ&hl=hu&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjroerRh9n9AhXf9LsIHSPSADUQ6AF6BAgoEAM#v=onepage&q=maria%20eugenia%20chellet%2C%20cort%C3%A9s%20y%20malinche.%20traitor%20survivor%20book&f=false.

Cypess, Sandra Messinger. 2022. "The Many Views of "Mother Malinche" and Allegories of Gender, Ethnicity, and National Identity." In *Traitor, Survivor, Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche*, edited by Lyall I., Victoria and Terezita Romo, 82-86. New Haven and London: Denver Art Museum in association with Yale University Press.

Downs, Kristina. 2008. "Mirrored Archetypes: The Contrasting Cultural Roles of La Malinche and Pocahontas." *Western Folklore,* 67 (4): 397-414.

Glantz, Margo. 1992. "Las hijas de la Malinche." In *América Latina: palabra, literatura y cultura vol.1*., edited by Ana Pizarro, 161-179. Sao Paulo: Memorial de América Latina. https://doi.org/10.22201/cieg.2594066xe.1992.6.1612.

López, Genaro. 1892. *Lienzo de Tlaxcala.* Plate 8. Mexicolore.co.uk https://www.mexicolore.co.uk/aztecs/spanish-invasion/expert-opinions-two.

Lyall I., Victoria and Terezita Romo, eds. 2022a. *Traitor, Survivor, Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche*. New Haven and London: Denver Art Museum in association with Yale University Press.

Lyall I., Victoria, Terezita Romo and Matthew H. Robb. 2022b. "Introduction." In *Traitor, Survivor, Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche*, edited by Lyall I., Victoria and Terezita Romo, 1-8. New Haven and London: Denver Art Museum in association with Yale University Press.

Lyall I., Victoria and Jesse Laird Ortega. 2022c. "Uprooted: reconsidering Indigenous Representations of Malinche." In *Traitor, Survivor, Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche*, edited by Lyall I., Victoria and Terezita Romo, 38-50. New Haven and London: Denver Art Museum in association with Yale University Press.

Nassi, Viola. 2021. "The Figure of La Malinche in Chicana Literature: Between Betrayal and Redemption." *Global History.* https://globalhistory.org.uk/2021/02/the-figure-of-la-malinche-in-Chicana-literature-between-betrayal-and-redemption/.

Orozco, José Clemente. 1926. *Cortés and Malinche*. Murals at the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, Mexico City. Wikiart.org https://www.wikiart.org/en/jose-clemente-orozco/cort%C3%A9s-and-la-malinche-1926.

Paz, Octavio. 1990. "The Sons of La Malinche." In *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, translated by Lysander Kemp et. al., 65-88. London: Penguin.

Pratt, Mary Louise. 1993. "'Yo Soy La Malinche': Chicana Writers and the Poetics of Ethnonationalism." *Callaloo,* 16 (4): 859-873.

Romo, Terezita. 2022. "Hijas de la Malinche: Chicanas Reinscribe an Icon." In *Traitor, Survivor, Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche*, edited by Lyall I., Victoria and Terezita Romo, 155-165. New Haven and London: Denver Art Museum in association with Yale University Press.

Romo, Terezita. 2005. "La Malinche as Metaphor." In *Feminism, nation and myth: La Malinche*, edited by Romero Rolando Harris and Amanda Nolacea, 139-151. Houston: Arte Público Press.

Sandoval, Teddy. 1993. "Malinche's Betrayal." Painting. Source: Montana Public Radio "La Malinche was a young linguist forced to serve the Spanish conquerors." https://www.mtpr.org/2022-07-15/la-malinche-was-a-young-linguist-forced-to-serve-the-spanish-conquerors.

Saunders, Frances Stonor. 2013. "Mexican modernism and the politics of painting." *The Guardian*, June 29, 2013. https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/jun/29/mexican-modernism-politics-paint-rivera.

Sousa, Lisa. 2022. "Reexamining Malinche's Betrayal." In *Traitor, Survivor, Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche*, edited by Lyall I., Victoria and Terezita Romo, 110-121. New Haven and London: Denver Art Museum in association with Yale University Press.

Tate, Julee. 2017. "La Malinche: The Shifting Legacy of a Transcultural Icon." *The Latin Americanist*, 61 (1): 81-92.

Tillett, Leslie. 1977. "Tapestry of the Conquest of Mexico." Tapestry. Denver Museum of Art. https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/blog/leslie-tilletts-tapestry-conquest-mexico.

Valadez, John M. 1991. Painting. "Adam and Eva Double Exposed." *Blanton Emuseum*. https://blanton.emuseum.com/objects/7958/adam-and-eva-double-exposed?ctx=a6790177788163edd3ceaf63095b298703ea856f&idx=0.

Vargas-Santiago, Luis. 2022. "Crafting the National: Visible and Invisible Malinches." In *Traitor, Survivor, Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche*, edited by Lyall I., Victoria and Terezita Romo, 87-95. New Haven and London: Denver Art Museum in association with Yale University Press.

Villasenor Black, Charlene. 2022. "Image between Time: Malinche in the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries" In *Traitor, Survivor, Icon: The Legacy of La Malinche*, edited by Lyall I., Victoria and Terezita Romo, 54-65. New Haven and London: Denver Art Museum in association with Yale University Press.