SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHECKLIST

Dana Salvo, American, born 1952

*Macarena of Miracles*—Chiapas About 1995

Chromogenic print

Gift of Laszlo Bogosian; PH.998.47

Audrey Flack, American, born 1931

*Macarena of Miracles* 1973

Color lithograph

Gift of Dr. Samuel Mandel; PR.983.57.1

Andre Pierre, Haitian, 1914–2005

*Ritual Jar for Ezili Freda* Collected 1966

Oil paint on terracotta

Gift of Micaela and Jack Mendelsohn, Class of 1956; 2003.7.2

Unknown, Mexican

*Our Lady of Guadalupe* Early 20th century: Spanish colonial

Paint and steel

The Alice Cox Collection, Class of 1939/W; 177.9.235704

A Space for Dialogue, founded with support from the Class of 1948, is made possible with generous endowments from the Class of 1967, Bonnie and Richard Reiss Jr. ’66, and Pamela J. Joyner ’79.
Our Lady of Guadalupe has been revered in Mexico since the sixteenth century, granting her a prominent status in Mexican religiosity but also national and racial identity. Due to the hegemony of the Spanish conquistadors, Catholicism—brought to the Americas during the late fifteenth century—spread quickly throughout the indigenous populations of Latin America. According to legend, the Virgin of Guadalupe, a Marian apparition, appeared to Mexican native Juan Diego in 1531 and called for his conversion to Catholicism. Since the seventeenth century, Guadalupe has been revered in Mexico, affirming not only Mexican religiousity but also national and racial identity.

Traditionally, the Virgin of Guadalupe is depicted as a skin-toned figure and sur- rounded by an aureole, an almond-shaped cloud of light. The Hood Museum of Art’s early-twentieth-century work titled Our Lady of Guadalupe is portrayed in this conventional manner emphasizing her popularity in and relevance to Mexican Catholicism. Painted on a small piece of steel, this rendering was likely created as a portable private devotional object.

Dana Salvo’s photograph Menendez Household Shrine (1995) provides an example of how the faithful use portable images of the Virgin as part of a personal domestic altar. Domestic altars remain an integral part of worship for followers of a number of religions. At home, worshippers can tailor their space and practice to fit their specific spiritual needs. Domestic religious objects tend to reflect this personalization and enable more efficient and individualized devotion. In Mexico, the number of home altars increased during the nineteenth century, due to a renunciation of the Church during the Enlightenment. The continued usage of Mexican home altars today underscores a focus on individualized religious experience and allows worshippers to customize their commemoration of specific events, saints, or ancestors. Salvo, in Menendez Household Shrine, illustrates how Consuelo and Ricardo Rincón Mendoza have arranged their own santos, an altar dedicated to the celebration of Christ’s birth, with offerings of food and drink, statuettes, lithographs of saints, photographs of deceased family members, and lavish ornamentation. Various portable representations of Mary, including the Virgin of Guadalupe, are placed on the altar, indicating her significance to the Mendozas.

The Virgin is also used outside of the Christian context. Haiti’s Vodou pantheon is comprised of a number of loa (deities) with distinct personalities. In colonial Haiti (1492–1804), the European invaders pressured Vodou practitioners to convert to Catholicism. To ensure the survival of their particular religious traditions, the subjugated practitioners adapted Catholicism to their needs. As they were introduced to Catholic saints with similar personalities, attributes, and experiences, the loa acquired white faces. Ezili Freda, the loa of love and beauty, was matched with the Mater Dolores, a representation of the Virgin Mary sometimes shown surrounded by gold with seven swords through her heart.

Haitian artist Andre Pierre created this goti (collected 1966), a small jar in which the soul of a deceased ancestor resides during Vodou rituals. It is highly ornate, in line with the iconographic expectations for both Dolores and Freda. Additionally Pierre includes a sword derived from the stories of the Dolores, and pink and light blue, colors that traditionally refer to Freda. His incorporation of symbols alluding to this apparition of Mary illustrates her utility even in a new religious and cultural context.

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