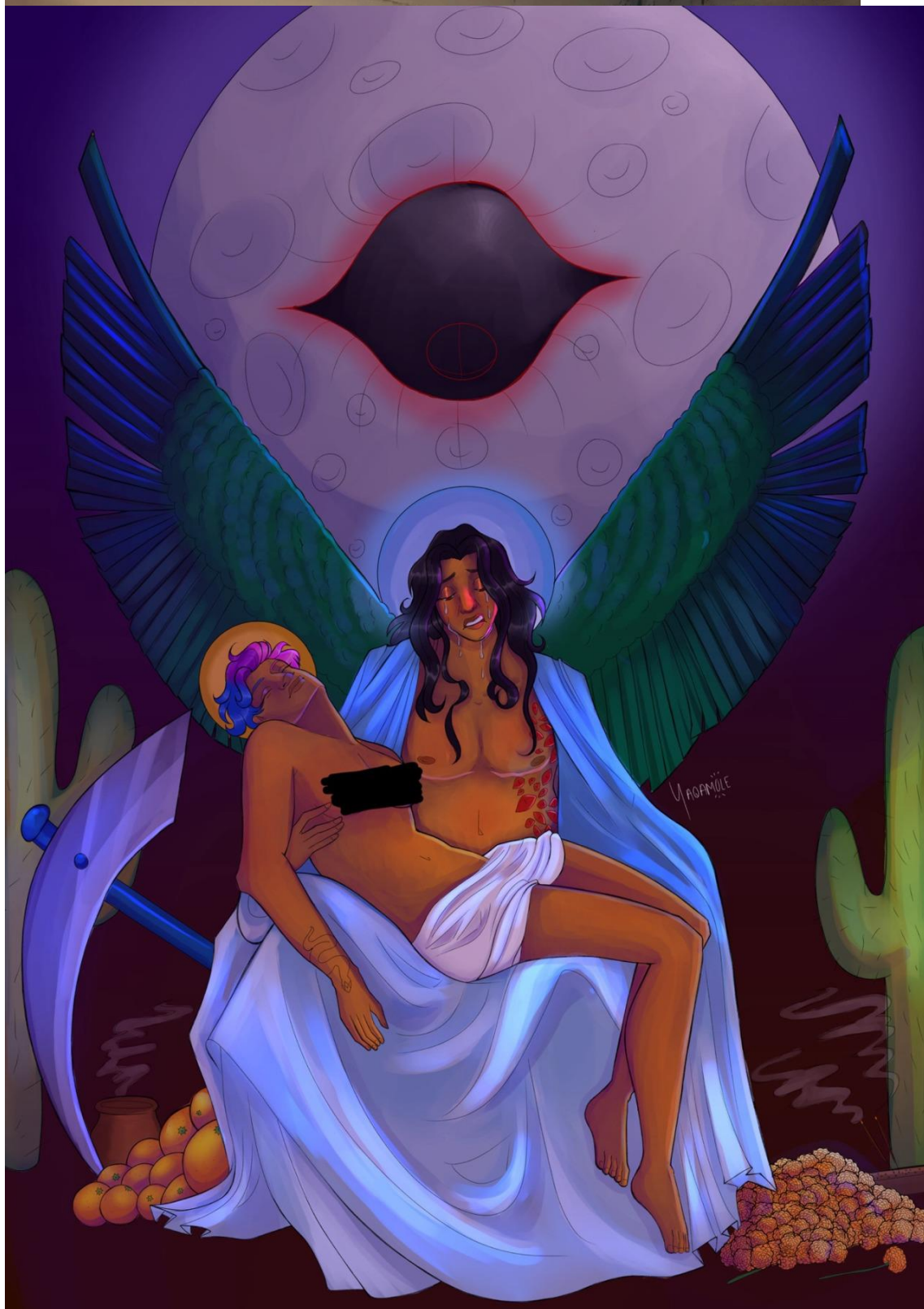


Yaquica Gonzalez
Art History 114-1037
Professor Newman
8 December 2024

The Death of Eve: Contemporary Art Through A Post-Colonial Lense

For my
final, I have



drawn a piece that touches on the themes of post-colonial art such as that which we have seen in our discussions of contemporary art. I touch on how colonialism has impacted the perception of gender and gender expression. It also is commentary on the struggle and mourning that comes from queer Latines as they embrace their roots with their queerness and radicalize themselves by distancing themselves from the colonial chains that they were put under. Overall, it's message is that queer Latines often grieve their past selves and must sacrifice them in order to reach the state of Nirvana that comes with their own unique journeys of decolonization. We reject the restrictions on gender and sexuality but we are still tied to a culture preserved with Catholicism and so we become Eve sacrificing herself for the good of mankind.

My work contains two versions of myself. They are posed together in a manner that parallels statues of Mother Mary weeping for Jesus. The figure in Mary's role is the current/future me and the figure in Jesus' role is my past self. The piece itself is commentary on the deconstruction of gender within Latin American culture and breaking down the roles that were imposed on us by colonialism. It also carries symbolism that reflects key aspects of Mexican culture that includes syncretism from indigenous cultures in order to preserve themselves within a Catholic world. Catholicism is both a tool of oppression and a tool of survival. And so there is a complex relationship between the Latine and religion that cannot be eliminated fully. Even in the act of knowing comes the acceptance that rejecting practices that have been historically used to carry on our culture will not bring the freedom expected.

In this piece, I have included symbols associated with death including a scythe, Mexican marigolds, and an offering of atole and incense. The rebirth from the figure I was into the figure I am now is to be honored rather than forsaken. Behind me we have the moon illuminating me which is a call back to Coyolxauhqui, the sister of Huitzilopochtli who would be killed by her brother and become a figure of the moon. In the same manner that brother kills sister, the modern me has killed the past me in order to truly be in touch with who I am and bring light.

An eye peers over me with St. Peter's cross in it. This stands as a symbol for how religion always will have an eye on me and yet it does not always have to be something negative. Colonialism brought these concepts, but I am rebranding them and allowing myself to be observed by God as the person that I truly am. I have two cacti on either side of me, they are symbols of courage, protection, and endurance. In order to become my best self, I have gone down a path of reconnection and deconstruction of colonial values that I have been holding onto for years. My freedom from them means that I am able to explore my gender and queerness in ways that were not allowed within the restrictive binds of colonial gender and sexuality. The oranges at my left side represent the term "naranja" which represents a lesbian Latine that rejects femininity and instead carries on masculine values and performance in order to create a healthy definition of masculinity that transcends typical expectations and definitions. It rejects the colonial machismo and instead seeks to define and liberate people who embrace it.

The wings that are outstretched behind me are Quetzal wings. This bird symbolizes many things. They are a link between the Heavens and the Earth, but they are also symbols of freedom.

The act of transitioning and killing my past self is inherently godly as I am taking and I am creating myself as God created Adam and Eve. I have a halo around both figures of myself which correlate me with holiness and sainthood in a way. This paired with the wings tells the viewer that I am not only partaking in the holy act of creation, but I am redefining the requirements to be able to do so. This is also linked to the difference in my hair from the past and now. Under an imposed view of gender, short hair was how I established my masculinity. However, as I reconnect and deconstruct, long hair is now a symbol of my masculinity and strength.

Finally, the eyes that are on my side show that I am branded to forever observed by the viewer and have my trauma exposed and commodified for the view and entertainment of others. I am on display, I am a work of art, and I will never truly be completely free from the effects of colonialism. The only thing that I can really do is honor the death of who I was and continue moving forward. Eve must die in order for me to be born. The sacrifice of a woman is what defines the lives we live and who we are. No matter how far I stray in gender and sexuality, I will forever be reminded that I come from Eve first. Like the post-colonial artwork in our course, I am creating something new from the restrictions, morals, beliefs, and structures imposed on my by colonialism. The piece connects with that theme of using what is given to create a piece that both embraces who we are while also playing on the expectations white audiences have on us.

