Saints and Zinesters: Fandom and Legacy in the Zine *St. Sucia*[1]

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"*I was so excited about the Estampas Chicanas exhibit, I cosplayed it!*"[2]

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine.

[2] St. Sucia (@stsucia), "Photograph of Natasha I. Hernandez standing in front of Judith F. Baca's *Absolutely Chicana* at the McNay Art Museum," Instagram photo, January 18, 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/BsyCMKbBw7-/.

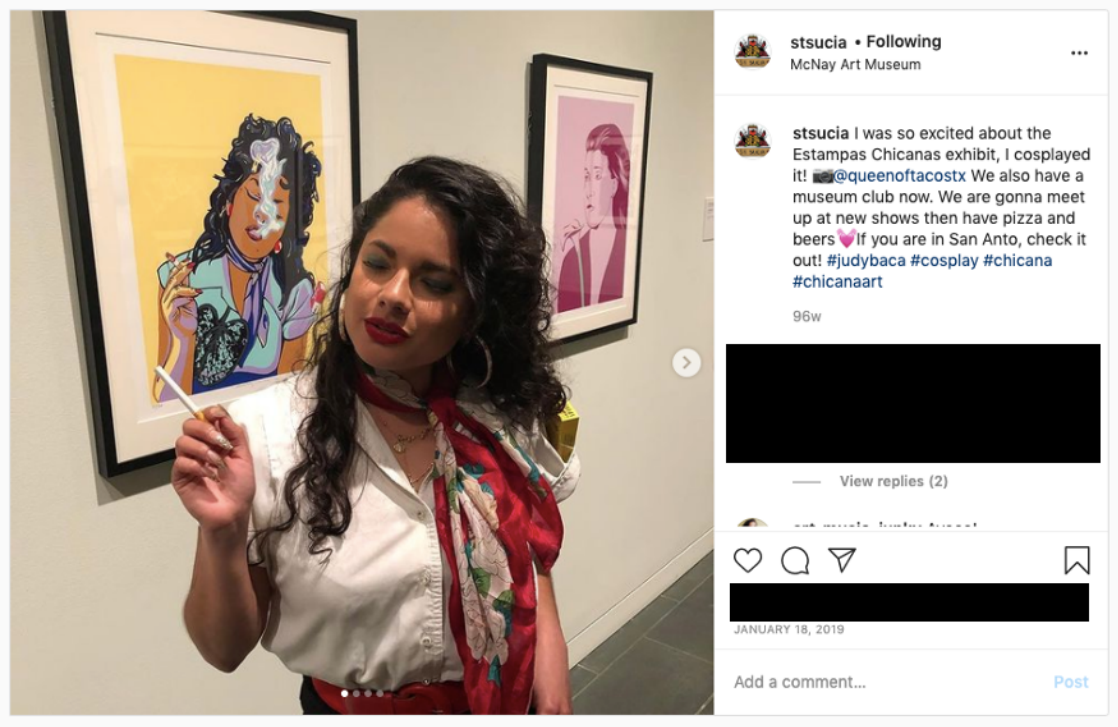

Figure 1 Isabel Ann Castro, Untitled Instagram Post "Natasha I. Hernandez Estampas Chicanas," 2019. Courtesy of Isabel Ann Castro and Natasha I. Hernandez.

This declaration captions a 2019 Instagram carousel post in which the first photo presents poet and artist Natasha I. Hernandez standing in front of Judith F. Baca's (Judy Baca's) print *Absolutely Chicana* (2008) (fig. 1), a photo composed and taken by Hernandez's friend and collaborator Isabel Ann Castro.[3] Hernandez and Castro posted the photo set on Instagram for *St. Sucia*, the San Antonio-based zine cofounded by both Hernandez and Castro. Following the first photo are two more photos shot by Castro documenting the exhibition visit: a selfie of Castro beaming in front of prints by Barbara Carrasco and Ester Hernzández (fig. 2), and a photo of Castro and Hernandez's friends at the exhibition, silhouetted by the gallery lights as they gaze upon the framed works.

[3] A photo carousel post on Instagram is when the user includes more than one photo in a post, not unlike a slide show that viewers can swipe through to see a series of photos. Note that in the post, there is an arrow at the middle edge of the right frame, as well as four white and grey translucent dots towards the bottom frame's center. These four dots indicate the number of photos in the carousel.

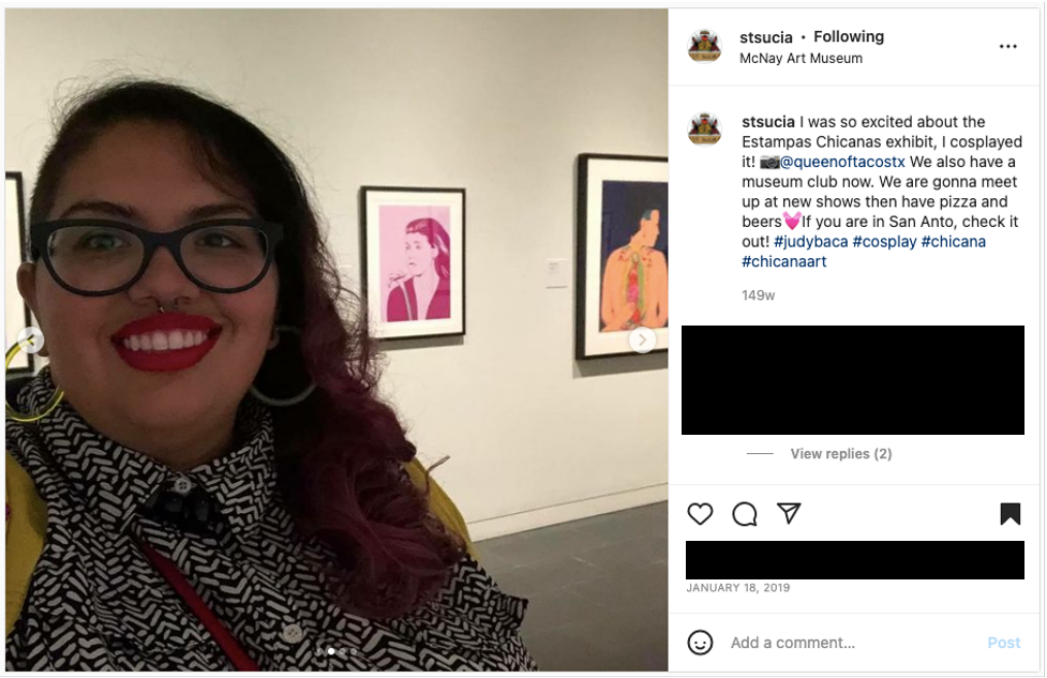

Figure 2 Isabel Ann Castro, Untitled Instagram Post "Isabel Ann Castro Estampas Chicanas," 2019. Courtesy of Isabel Ann Castro and Natasha I. Hernandez.

Though all three photos document the group's enthusiasm, Hernandez dressing up as the print's subject, Judy Baca as La Pachuca, visually cites an artistic predecessor.[4] Hernandez styles herself after La Pachuca's hyperfeminine but rebellious appearance, replicating the figure's maquillage (red lips, blue eyeshadow, and curled hair), and fashion sensibilities (a fulsome neck scarf and casually buttoned white blouse where a carton of cigarettes has been stashed in the cuff of an upturned sleeve).[5] A cigarette positioned in Hernandez's right hand draws attention to her immaculate manicure. Though the cigarette is unlit, Hernandez's upturned lips and downward gaze gives the impression of having just taken a satisfactory drag, looking like the embodiment of a cool, femme, "tough girl."

Hernandez's detail-oriented replication of *Absolutely Chicana* and position in front of the print remind the viewer that this pose is a performance, a "cosplay." Though cosplay is not a term or activity often related to museum exhibitions, this performative of act of "dress up" offers a starting point for understanding Hernandez's playful response on Instagram. In discussing the distinct affective resonance of cosplay

[4] The Pachuca is a term that originated in Mexican-American communities in the 1940s. She is a bad/tough girl that wears her hyper-femininity with aggression to confront misogynistic society.
[5] Anna Indych-López and Chon A. Noriega, *Judith F. Baca* (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2018), 96.

as opposed to other forms of dress-up/performance, Nicole Lamerichs points to cosplay as an iteration of fandom's ability to interpret, embody, perform, and rewrite existing texts to extend them into the performer/reader's own narratives.[6] Baca's print depicts a dressing up, as Baca presents herself dressed as the character La Pachuca. Hernandez's "cosplay" response to Baca's artwork offers one strategy to foster a collective Chicana political activism. As *St. Sucia* creators Castro and Hernandez engage with this Chicana visual inheritance, they inhabit and build off Baca's critique of limited gender roles.

From 2014 to 2018, through the submission-based printed zine *St. Sucia*, Castro and Hernandez built a space where Latinas were invited to tell their stories "about love, heartbreak, dating, growing up, being a chingona, y latin@ identity."[7] The deliberate use of the zine format simultaneously pays homage to past traditions, demonstrating a knowledge and appreciation for the artist, activist, and punk predecessors who pioneered the format.[8] The artists have described pulling out Hernandez's personal collections of punk zines and looking through to find forms that she and Castro wanted to emulate.[9] During its four-year publication run, *St. Sucia* published submissions from its readers whose stories cumulatively presented a new perspective on Latina/x identity in the twenty-first century. Through this iterative process, the community collectively created the identity of a Saint Sucia figure.[10]

The visual discourse in the zine *St. Sucia* materializes the process of performed identity-making essential to young feminist queer Latinas in the twenty-first century. Through the figure of the fan, this article analyzes the zine's subversion of La Virgen de

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[6] Nicole Lamerichs, "Embodied Characters: The Affective Process of Cosplay," in *Productive Fandom: Intermediality and Affective Reception in Fan Cultures* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 203.

[7] St. Sucia (@stsucia), "Call to Submit to St. Sucia," Instagram photo, October, 4, 2014, https://www.instagram.com/p/twX5m8MFN8/. Chingona: bad-ass woman. Latin@ is a gender-neutral form of Latino/a, similar to but different to the term Latinx.

[8] Stephen Duncombe, *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (London; New York: Verso, 1997), 10-11. As one of the first to write a scholarly account of zines in contemporary culture, Stephen Duncombe defines zines as "noncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish, and distribute by themselves." In the publication and the creators' digital platforms, Castro and Hernandez reference Mexican-American altars, feminist Chicana artists, and previous pop culture icons. The zine intentionally plots itself in the tradition of punk subcultures, as well as Mexican and Chicano mass-produced print culture.

[9] Isabel Ann Castro and Natasha I. Hernandez, interview with author, June 18, 2020.

[10] Throughout the course of this article, I will refer to the figure Saint Sucia as such to further distinguish her from references to the material zine *St. Sucia*, though of course they are the same project. The creators and participants of *St. Sucia* refer to the Saint as the following (but not limited to): St. Sucia, Saint Sucia, La Santa Sucia, our Santa.

Guadalupe. By using fandom as a methodological framework to understand *St. Sucia*'s engagement with La Virgen's iconography, this article analyzes how the cofounders found ways to perform their identities through the cultural figure of La Virgen de Guadalupe, a strategy previously implemented by their queer Chicana artistic predecessor Judy Baca in her work *Las Tres Marías* (1976), which the 2008 print *Absolutely Chicana* revisits. In conversation with Baca's transformational strategy, the *St. Sucia* cofounders rewrote La Virgen as Saint Sucia, who was created as an oppositional rereading to the *marianismo* of La Virgen. The inchoate identity of Saint Sucia and the collective format of zine-making created a participatory space for queer feminist Latina/xs to tell the stories of their lives, and in doing so, control the narrative of what it means to be Latina/x.[11] Hernandez and Castro's shifting self-presentations in the editors' note across fourteen issues of *St. Sucia* reflect these processes, responding to the materialization of their patron saint and attesting to the communal inscription of her identity.

"NOT NECESSARILY A GOOD GIRL, BUT GOOD ENOUGH": THE FORMATION OF A SUCIA SAINT

On October 4, 2014, Castro and Hernandez sent out a call for submissions for anything on "being chingona." The first issue of *St. Sucia* printed a range of works: paintings, photographs, essays, and even screenshots from a dating app. To celebrate their inaugural issue, Hernandez and Castro staged a release party in Southtown San Antonio featuring queer and punk Latina/x musical acts. Hot off an unattended work copier and bound with thread from Hernandez's sewing machine, the physical zine created a shared touch in the cofounders' community that resonated with readers, contributors, and their friends. The zine ran for four years, during which time Castro and Hernandez collaborated with a growing community of contributors from all over the world, visited zine festivals, and presented the zine at academic institutions and gallery spaces. Over the course of its run, the zine became queerer, embracing an expansive notion of femininity and feminism that informed their growing community. Through their shared cultural history, the cofounders appropriated the traditional icon of La Virgen, one familiar to Latinas, in favor of a new saint.

Created as the antithesis of La Virgen, Saint Sucia appropriates her image and iconography to new ends. "Sucia" as a feminine noun directly translates to English as "dirty [girl/woman]"; in general, it acts as a pejorative term for a badly behaved girl. The tongue-in-cheek reclamation of this term in *St. Sucia* reflects a shared frustration by Castro, Hernandez, and their friends, who desired a saint who would not judge them

[11] Ramón García, "Against Rasquache: Chicano Identity and the Politics of Popular Culture in Los Angeles," *Critica: A Journal of Critical Essays* (Spring 1998): 1-26.

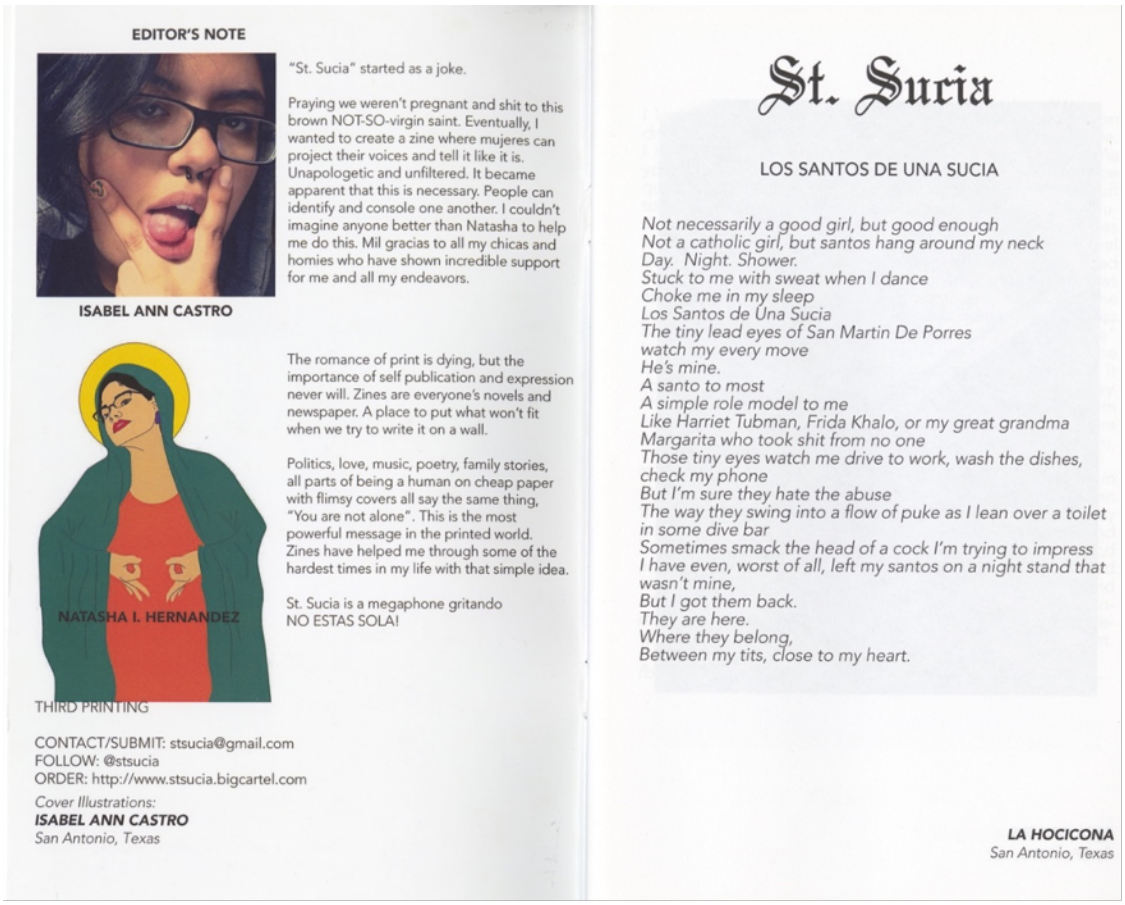
like the Catholic saints of their childhoods, and understood their Chicana selves. In the founders' cowritten "About" page on the zine's website, Castro and Hernandez narrate the saint's hagiography: "Isa and her college friends […] felt guilty asking the Virgin de Guadalupe for help with their hangovers and late periods. So, they came up with Saint Sucia. So many mujeres identified with the joke that Isa wanted to expand on the idea. A zine was the only answer."[12] In the first editor's note, Castro reiterates this satirical origin: ""St. Sucia" started as a joke./ Praying we weren't pregnant and shit to this brown NOT-SO-virgin saint."[13]

Notably, Saint Sucia is first referred to as an icon herself, not the title of the zine. A poem, "Los Santos de Una Sucia," from *St. Sucia*'s first issue (fig. 3), presents an example of the care and acceptance that young Latinas desire from this eponymous saint. The narrative describes a young Latina who wears and prays to Catholic saints, even as she pukes in a dive bar, gives a blowjob, and forgets the religious pendants on the nightstand of a hook up. Though she knows the saints disapprove of her behavior, she holds them near, "between my tits, close to my heart."[14] The narrator is a self-identified sucia who needs a new saint to look after her without judgement, a saint with whom the sucia can empathize. She needs Saint Sucia, a figure at the intersection of Catholic sainthood and deviance.

[12] Isabel Ann Castro and Natasha I. Hernandez, "About," *St. Sucia* (blog), https://stsucia.bigcartel.com/about.

[13] Isabel Ann Castro, "Editor's Note," *St. Sucia Issue I: La Primera* (Self-published, San Antonio, TX: 2014), 1.

[14] La Hocicona [Natasha Hernandez], "Los Santos de Una Sucia," *St. Sucia Issue I: La Primera,* (Self-published, San Antonio, TX: 2014), 2.



EDITOR'S NOTE

"St. Sucia" started as a joke.

Praying we weren't pregnant and shit to this brown NOT-SO-virgin saint. Eventually, I wanted to create a zine where mujeres can project their voices and tell it like it is. Unapologetic and unfiltered. It became apparent that this is necessary. People can identify and console one another. I couldn't imagine anyone better than Natasha to help me do this. Mil gracias to all my chicas and homies who have shown incredible support for me and all my endeavors.

ISABEL ANN CASTRO

The romance of print is dying, but the importance of self publication and expression never will. Zines are everyone's novels and newspaper. A place to put what won't fit when we try to write it on a wall.

Politics, love, music, poetry, family stories, all parts of being a human on cheap paper with flimsy covers all say the same thing, "You are not alone". This is the most powerful message in the printed world. Zines have helped me through some of the hardest times in my life with that simple idea.

St. Sucia is a megaphone gritando NO ESTAS SOLA!

NATASHA I. HERNANDEZ

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St. Sucia

LOS SANTOS DE UNA SUCIA

Not necessarily a good girl, but good enough
Not a catholic girl, but santos hang around my neck
Day. Night. Shower.
Stuck to me with sweat when I dance
Choke me in my sleep
Los Santos de Una Sucia
The tiny lead eyes of San Martin De Porres
watch my every move
He's mine.
A santo to most
A simple role model to me
Like Harriet Tubman, Frida Khalo, or my great grandma
Margarita who took shit from no one
Those tiny eyes watch me drive to work, wash the dishes, check my phone
But I'm sure they hate the abuse
The way they swing into a flow of puke as I lean over a toilet in some dive bar
Sometimes smack the head of a cock I'm trying to impress
I have even, worst of all, left my santos on a night stand that wasn't mine,
But I got them back.
They are here.
Where they belong,
Between my tits, close to my heart.

LA HOCICONA
San Antonio, Texas

Figure 3 Words and photo by Isabel Ann Castro & Natasha I. Hernandez, Graphic by Caterina Gutierrez, First Two Pages of St. Sucia Issue I: La Primera, 2014. Courtesy of Isabel Ann Castro and Natasha I. Hernandez.

PERFORMING MARÍA: CHALLENGING MARIANISMO WITH LA VIRGEN

As a formation born from the cofounders' disconnect with La Virgen de Guadalupe, the figure of Saint Sucia can be understood as a challenge to the traditional patriarchal and heteronormative expectations of Chicana femininity. La Virgen, the Mexican Virgin María, is the venerated figure whom Gloria Anzaldúa describes as "the single most potent religious, political, and cultural image of the Chicano/Mexicano."[15] Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano additionally notes that "La Virgen can also be used as a role model for a feminine ideal which includes the virtues of passivity, obedience, unswerving love, and an endless capacity to endure suffering and pain."[16] As a cultural and religious

[15] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books, 2007), 28.

[16] Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, "La Virgen de Guadalupe," lecture given in Seattle, Washington, 1993.

icon, La Virgen's image and iconography invoke a feminine ideal and imperative that follows narrow Catholic parameters for acceptable behavior by women. The veneration of La Virgen, known as *marianismo*, expects a feminine compliance to masculine dominance reinforced through instruction, criticism, and reclamation. To "be like María," *marianismo* compels women to be chaste and virginal in all aspects of her life. A "proper" Mexican-American woman dresses modestly feminine and has a downcast demure gaze. She obeys the men in her life, whether they be her father, her husband, her brother(s), or her sons. Deviation from these prescriptive behaviors results in disgrace for herself and her family, and invites violence and rejection.

In response to *marianismo*, Chicana artists throughout the twentieth century have incorporated marian iconography into their art to critique the structures that seek to control femininity.[17] A feminist iconographic use of La Virgen departs from the icon's prescriptive Marian presentation for an aberrant femininity.[18] Aberrant femininities visually signify "queer cipher[s]" to view and connect politicized aesthetic gestures, which artists deliberately construct to affront normative cis-heterosexual male gazes.[19]

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[17] Other late twentieth-century queer and/or feminist Chicanx artists who appropriate the iconography of La Virgen de Guadalupe to invoke a critical discourse include but are not limited to: Alma López, Yolanda López, Ester Hernández, Patssi Valdez, Alex Donis, Tony de Carlo, Santa Barraza, and Sandra Cisneros. Additionally, scholars argue that Spaniards conflated Virgin Mary iconography with the indigenous deity Tonantzin in sixteenth-century New Spain. Evidence suggests that Indigenous insistence on pre-Columbian iconography for the "Mother of Mexico," La Virgen was an act of resistance to Spanish conquest. In the twentieth century, Chicanas incorporated pre-Columbian iconography to invoke Tonantzin, or Coatlicue, resisting both Euro-centric Western hegemony and its patriarchal strands in machismo Mexican culture. See: Jeannette Favrot Peterson, "The Virgin of Guadalupe: Symbol of Conquest or Liberation?", *Art Journal* 51, no. 4 (Winter 1992), 39-40; Holly Barnet-Sanchez, "Where Are the Chicana Printmakers?: Presence and Absence in the Work of Chicana Artists of the Movimiento=Dónde Están Las Grabadistas Chicanas: Presencia y Ausencia de La Obra de Las Artistas En El Movimiento Chicano," in *Just Another Poster? Chicano Graphic Arts in California* (Santa Barbara, CA: University Art Museum, 2001), 132.

[18] Rosa Linda Fregoso, "Homegirls, Cholas, and Pachucas in Cinema: Taking Over the Public Sphere," *California History* 74, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 316-27.

[19] Catherine S. Ramírez, *The Woman in the Zoot Suit: Gender, Nationalism, and the Cultural Politics of Memory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 78; Leticia Alvarado, "Malflora Aberrant Femininities," in *Axis Mundo: Queer Networks in Chicano L.A*, edited by C. Ondine Chavoya, David Evans Frantz, Macarena Gómez-Barris, Leticia Alvarado, Julia Bryan-Wilson, Simon Doonan, Colin Gunckel, et al. (Los Angeles: ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives at the USC Libraries; Munich, Germany: DelMonico Books-Prestel, 2017), 103, 106. Initially coined by Catherine Ramírez, Leticia Alvarada uses the concept of "aberrant femininity" as a methodology to analyze the visual strategies deployed by Chicana/x artists in her work "Malflora Aberrant Femininities."

Artists like Hernandez, Castro, and Judy Baca interpret La Virgen through a feminist and/or queer Chicana/x lens. While these artists emphasize La Virgen's association with Mexican-American womanhood, their framing exaggerates the saint's femininity to the heights of high-femme splendor. The hyper-femininity of this splendor subverts the modest feminine representation, resisting objectification through its use of camp, and its confrontation of cis-male heteronormative forces.

The title of the zine itself refers to and rejects La Virgen, and thus, can be understood as a reference to and rejection of different aspects of *marianismo*. Beginning with the first issue of *St. Sucia*, Castro and Hernandez have consistently referred to La Virgen as another form of Saint Sucia whom they resist and revere. In the premiere issue "La Primera" (fig. 3), Castro's self-portrait shows a close-up of her face wearing rectangular glasses, a septum piercing, and tongue out between her fingers shaped in a V. The square dimensions and close crop of the image resemble popular selfies taken on cellphones. This choice of composition fosters an intimacy between Castro and her readers. While Castro's hand gesture refers to oral sex, it also satirizes La Virgen.[20] The gesture directs the viewer's attention to Castro's middle fingernail, which has been decorated with a tiny nail art portrait of La Virgen, shown upside down in the photo. In Mexican-American households, this temporary reversed orientation of saints' icons often indicates that a saint has not answered its followers' prayers. Part of a cultural code, this message was legible to the first readers of the issue, who belonged to the editors' own Chicana/x networks. The photo is paired with Castro's cry for a "NOT-SO-virgin saint." Taken together, the self-portrait invokes Castro's critical reverence for the icon of La Virgen.

Beneath Castro's selfie, Hernandez presents herself dressed as La Virgen through a digital illustration created by Caterina Gutierrez. Castro is depicted standing in three-quarters profile looking down at the viewer. The vector self-portrait is composed of stark lines and flat blocks of orange, green, brown, red, and yellow. A yellow disk behind Hernandez's head acts as a halo and draws attention to her bright red lipstick and glasses. Unlike La Virgen's downcast and passive gaze, Hernandez raises her chin and gazes upon the viewer through a sidelong glance. Hernandez is as an aberrant María, one who takes no bullshit and listens to plenty of punk. Through their simultaneous embrace and critique of La Virgen imagery in the first issue, the creators formulate Saint Sucia as a figure herself. In their reinterpretation of La Virgen and her significance to Mexican Americans, they remake La Virgen as Saint Sucia. La Virgen in negative, Saint Sucia provides a method of reinterpreting the confining feminine roles within *marianismo*.

[20] Natasha I. Hernandez, email to author, November 29, 2021. Castro's hand gesture is understood as "eat pussy."

FANATIC FEMINISM: THE FEMINIST CHICANA IMAGINATION AS FANDOM

Growing up in Catholic households, many Chicanas/x have a fraught relationship with La Virgen, and seek to reclaim her as a saint that aligns more with their identities and values through their own representations. Queer feminist Chicanas use strategies that both appropriate Marian iconography, privileging irony and distance, as well as the fan strategy that focuses on attachment and desire.[21] Through their melancholic attachment to this cultural icon, Chicana artists remake La Virgen through the fan's desire for representation. An example of this religious fandom re-imagining is found in Judy Baca's materialized queer Chicana feminism in *Las Tres Marías* (1976), a triptych that uses Christian symbolism, femme ritual, and subversive identities to explore a femme spectrum in Chicanidad.[22]

Las Tres Marías is a three-paneled work composed of two full-length colored pencil portraits on paper mounted on hinged wooden panels and a central floor-length mirror panel that reflects the viewer's full figure. The triptych's scale and reflective surface resemble a folding dressing mirror that evoke interior femme rituals of dressing either for the day or for play.[23] Baca rewrites the machiste "Marías" as the Pachuca and the Chola through the styles of people she knew personally: La Pachuca in *Las Tres Marías* arises from the past in the form of Baca's cousin. A member of the South-Central L.A. gang the Florencias in the 1950s, Esther intimidated and inspired a young Judy Baca, symbolizing danger and power in hyperfemininity.[24] The Pachuca in Baca's

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[21] Catherine Grant, "Fans of Feminism: Re-writing Histories of Second-wave Feminism in Contemporary Art," *Oxford Art Journal* 34, no. 2 (2011): 269. Catherine Grant argues that a fan strategy's emotional connection with the subject material creates an affective resonance in their reinterpretations of the subject material. The fan's intense engagement with the subject material provides an active model for examining contemporary political art's engagement with previous movements.

[22] Indych-López, *Judith F. Baca*, 99. To view Judy Baca's *Las Tres Marías*, refer to http://www.judybaca.com/artist/art/lastresmarias/. Although all three parts of the work are rich in meaning, the themes of the interactive triptych of "Las Tres Marías" converse directly with those of the performances and visuals from *St. Sucia* in the 2010s, and will thus be the focus of this section.

[23] Ibid., 97. The work's title refers to the three Christian Marys in the crucifixion story: Virgen Mary, Mary Magdalen, and Mary of Cleofas. The triptych format also recalls medieval and early modern Catholic triptychs that were commissioned for church altars. These hybrid painting and architectural works presented viewers with a central panel featuring the crucifixion or birth of Jesus Christ, while the flanking panels depicted other religious figures, which could include the Marías. In contrast, Baca's triptych centers the Marías and re-envisions them through the figures of the Chola, the Pachuca, and the viewer standing before the central mirror. The Chola and the Pachuca are two urban identities of the iconic "tough girl" Chicana.

[24] Ibid., 99.

triptych has a carefully made-up appearance that signals the feminine—the color-coordinated styling, the teased hair, the makeup, the comb—but the Pachuca wields the feminine as a weapon, not a balm to the archetypic aggressive machismo. With high-femme splendor, Baca's Pachuca confronts her viewer with a "tough girl" persona, departing from the heteronormative femme framework.[25]

The Pachuca and Chola are two sides of the same aberrant-femininity coin. As the historical progenitor of the Chola, "Pachuca/o" entered popular parlance among young Mexican Americans in the 1930s and 40s.[26] The Mexican Americans who identified as Pachuca/os cultivated a non-normative look of excess and hypermasculinity or hyperfemininity woven with a tough, sexual, and confrontational attitude.[27] The Pachuca/o hyper-gendered dress satirizes gender norms: the Pachuco plays on hypermasculinity, while the hyperfemininity of Pachucas becomes an aberration as it confronts a hostile misogynistic environment.[28] While the biblical Marías act as a moralizing dichotomy (holy Mary vs. the whore Mary Magdalen), the Pachuca/Chola act in tandem against that moralizing framework.[29] The Pachuca predates the Chola, who predates the homegirl, yet the boundary blurs between the social identities, revealing a generational replay and reinterpretation of past identities with those in the present.[30]

On the left panel, Baca's portrayal of the Chola is based on Flaca, or "Flaquita," a member of the East L.A. gang Tiny Locas, i.e. Cyclonas.[31] Dressed in a long-sleeved,

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[25] Ibid., 97; Ramírez, *The Woman in the Zoot Suit*, 123-4.

[26] Cara Bresnahan, "Pachuco," *Subcultures and Sociology*, Grinnell College, last modified 2019, https://haenfler.sites.grinnell.edu/subcultures-and-scenes/pachuco/. Derived from the city El Paso, Texas, which Mexican immigrants referred to as "Chuco" towns, Pachuco/a subculture provided a framework and aesthetic to resist prejudices and inequalities in the United States. The signature Pachuco Look was the zoot suit, a men's suit with exaggerated proportions including a high-waisted, wide-legged, and tight cuffed trousers paired with a wide-padded shoulder, wide lapelled, long jacket. The zoot suit, created by Ernest "Skillet" Mayhand, was first associated with African-American communities, and later made popular among marginalized communities by American jazz musicians in the 1940s.

[27] Alvarado, "Malflora Aberrant Femininities," 103-4.

[28] Ramírez, *The Woman in the Zoot Suit*, 123-4.

[29] Fregoso, "Homegirls, Cholas, and Pachucas in Cinema," 327.

[30] Stephanie Montes, "Chola Makeup Isn't a Trend—It Signifies a Hard-Earned Identity," *Byrdie*, October 7, 2020, https://www.byrdie.com/chola-makeup-5079680. The Chola arose in the 1960s through the Chola style, which became synonymous with an adoration for lowrider cars and an association with gangs. In the twenty-first century, the Chola look is most often associated with chunky gold jewelry, ornate acrylic nails, slicked down baby hairs, thick eyeliner, and brown lipstick with a dark liner.

[31] Indych-López, *Judith F. Baca*, 99. Flaca: skinny girl/woman. Flaquita: little skinny girl/woman (with endearing sentiment).

baggy-neck black sweater and ill-fitted black pants, the figure gazes at the viewer with a down-turned mouth through heavily lined eyes. Flaquita's long, dark, unstyled hair hangs loose and straight over her shoulders. Flaquita's contemptuous upward chin and downward gaze recall Hernandez's defiant self-styling as La Virgen in the editors' note from the first issue of *St. Sucia*. The absence of conventional feminine signifiers in Flaquita's portrait is not necessarily characteristic of Cholas, since a Chola look may also include hyperfeminine elements.[32] Instead, the Chola works as a transformative iteration of her progenitor, the Pachuca, to complicate notions of Mexican-American femininity.

As the artist portrays herself as the past Pachuca and the constructed present Chola identity of Flaquita, she asks the spectator to play with their existing identity alongside the two figures. Reflecting the full-length of the viewer's body, the central mirror panel invites the viewer to reflect their own self-fashioning. Evocative of dressing ritual—trying on new clothes, or playing with an elder's or friend's wardrobe—the triptych's central mirror positions the viewer as a fellow "tough girl" conspiring with the viewer to complicate the feminine. Baca's reinterpretation of Chicana cultural figures collapses the three social subjects into one moment in time to emphasize a distinctly Chicana generational rewriting of femininity. When viewed in the twenty-first century, Baca's Pachuca and Chola represent two previous generations of Mexican Americans. Baca's mirror invites the twenty-first century viewer to place their body in conversation with Baca's portraits and complicate Latina/x identity in the viewer's present.

Returning to the fandom term "cosplay" in the St. Sucia Instagram caption, Hernandez's post situates her performance and *St. Sucia* within the feminist Latina social community that embraces and critiques elements of "Chicanidad" or "Latinidad," especially La Virgen and expectations around gender and sexuality. Cosplay refers to the process of dressing up as a character from a movie, book, or other media, often with over-the-top costumes and exaggerated gender norms. A "fanaticism," a strong participatory act compelled by a passionate attachment to and dedication for the subject, forefronts the fans' subjectivity and authorship to come into view.[33] Though Judy Baca does not describe her Pachuca self-portrait as cosplay, the portrait acts as a performance of her experience as a queer Chicana artist. In a similar manner, Hernandez's cosplay of Baca's Pachuca performance confronts the *marianismo* hierarchies wielded against her by a patriarchal society. Hernandez's cosplay

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[32] Fregoso, "Homegirls, Cholas, and Pachucas in Cinema," 322. In a line describing a scene from the film *Colors* (1988), Fregoso writes, "Danny watches as Luisa, in heavy make-up, teased hair, wearing the provocative dress typical of *cholas*, is donning her hose." This description and Baca's portrait of Flaca as Chola points to the Chola as an antecedent of the Pachuca that further complicates the feminine.

[33] Grant, "Fans of Feminism," 272.

communicates her strong attachment and admiration of Baca as a queer Chicana artist, extending Baca's narrative into Hernandez's own as well as into the narrative of Saint Sucia.

CANONIZATION AND COSPLAY: THE STAKES OF SAINT SUCIA'S FANDOM

Like Baca's appropriation of La Virgen, Castro and Hernandez celebrate the icon while also critiquing the *marianismo* of previous generations. This relationship between the present and the past evokes "temporal drag." A concept introduced by Elizabeth Freeman, Catherine Grant adapts the idea in her analysis of feminism as fandom, using the notion of "temporal drag" to understand a characteristic rewriting of fandom narratives through engaged reinterpretative readings over time.[34] Rather than conceptualizing time as a linear succession, temporal dragging replays historical moments by "dragging/suspending time on the present *and* the past" in order to convene and converse with the past in the present moment.[35] This dragging occurs in Baca's *Las Tres Marías* triptych, which collapses the Pachuca, the Chola, and the present viewer. Natasha Hernandez's cosplay of Baca's Pachuca image and *St. Sucia's* own iconography play with La Virgen, and rewrite Mexican-American feminine narratives of the past for the present. The cofounders' engagement with temporal drag complicates their subversion of La Virgen: by replaying past moments in the present, Hernandez and Castro bring queer Chicana artists' previous invocations of La Virgen into their own work.[36] This temporal drag reveals what is at stake in Hernandez's performance of Baca's performance of La Pachuca - a reinterpretation of past identities. Judy Baca's triptych, Hernandez's performance of Baca's Pachuca, and *St. Sucia* the zine act as a drag, or a suspension of time. Baca and Hernandez repeat history as a method to convene and converse through alternative femininities.

Hernandez and Castro use the playful and passionate elements of fandom to build *St. Sucia* into a multivocal space for their Latina communities. Significantly, Hernandez described her own self-fashioning as "cosplay" of Baca's La Pachuca, consciously situating her performance in fandom and fan studies.[37] From the

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[34] Ibid., 274.

[35] Elizabeth Freeman, "Packing History, Count(er)ing Generations," *New Literary History* 31, no. 4 (Autumn 2000), 728-9. Freeman's formulation of "temporal drag" combines gender theorist Judith Butler's theories of "performativity" and "drag." Freeman builds from Butler's notion that "time" in queer performativity is progressive, "insofar as it depends upon repetitions with a difference—iterations that are transformative and future-oriented."

[36] Ibid., 729.

[37] For *St. Sucia Issue XII: Pop Cultura*, the cofounders featured a contributor Shelby Criswell's illustration of the cofounders dressed as ghostbusters for the editors' note, fittingly in Ghostbuster cosplay for their zine's pop culture theme.

beginning, Castro knew "a zine was the only answer" to her frustration with *marianismo*, pointing to zines' collective authorship and origins in subculture. Zines themselves arose out of fandom; also called fanzines, fans distributed and exchanged the low-cost publications to passionately rewrite and identify with an existing work.[38] The cofounders chose the zine format for its punk associations, independence, and use as a communal object. Zines' low-cost production enables a collaborative process for the cofounders. A cheap production means the publication can include more submissions, and also reach more hands. As a physical multi-authored work, *St. Sucia* brings its participants and fans together in one object of shared authorship. As a distributed object with its handmade qualities of handsewn or stapled binding, *St. Sucia* travels from the cofounders' makeshift studios to the hands of readers, accumulating members in a worldwide community connected by touch and recognition.

Precisely because this subjectivity leads to an intense engagement, a fandom methodology reveals how Hernandez and Castro's feminist Latina work provides an emotional connection to past political and cultural moments. Their appropriation of La Virgen's iconography follows previous artists' appropriation, and continues a dialogue using altered tropes of La Virgen de Guadalupe iconography. Each iteration re-enacts, and thus, rewrites previous narratives for new versions whose authorship is dispersed between the present and past.[39] This dialogue persists not only in the visual signifiers, but the emotional resonance between the fans and their subject. Hernandez, Castro, and their contributors' emotional resonances with La Virgen facilitates dialogue with previous Chicana artists facilitated by engaging with the cultural forms.

"SOY": SIGNIFYING SAINT SUCIA WITHOUT LA VIRGEN

The zine embodies the spirit and identity of Saint Sucia collectively imagined. Each contributor's submission also contributes to an understanding of who Saint Sucia is. In this context, the artists' self-representations may be understood as an evocation, through cosplay, of the character. Any and every sucia is an incarnation of Saint Sucia. After four years, the fourteenth and final issue of *St. Sucia Issue XIV: Soy* displays how the contributors' collected aberrant femininities created Saint Sucia. Rather than creating Saint Sucia through La Virgen iconography or appropriated Chicana cultural forms, the final zine's varied content under the theme "*Soy*"—content including the jotería, the gorditas, the abject, the sacred—represents Saint Sucia.[40] The signifiers are not based in satirizing La Virgen's starry green mantle and red tunic, or a cosplay of an

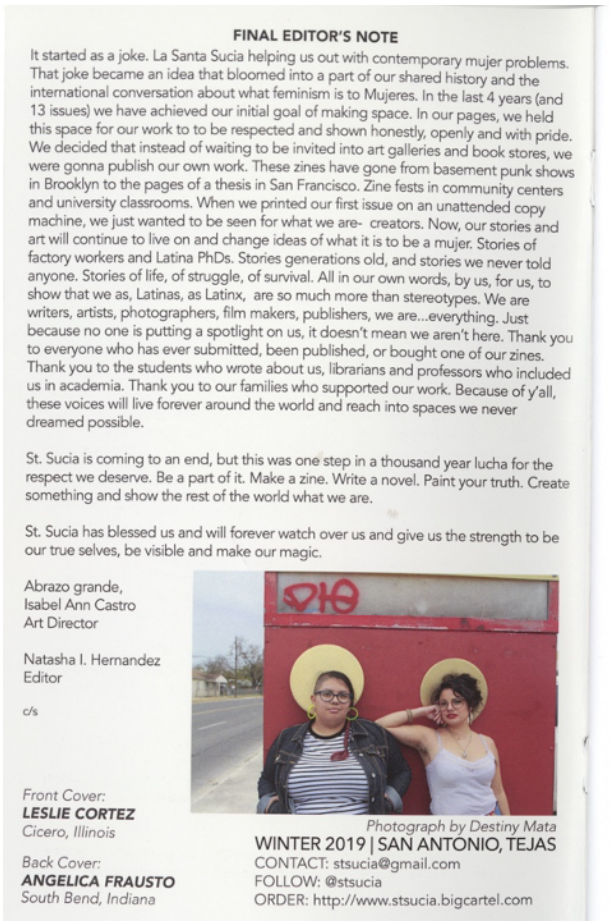
[38] Grant, "Fans of Feminism," 283.

[39] Lamerichs, "Embodied Characters," 204.

[40] Jotería: something that is perceived as queer, especially as gender-nonconforming. Gorditas: little fat women.

iconic artwork by a Chicana predecessor, but a stubborn and unapologetic resolve to be sucia.

The cofounders' portrait in the final issue of *St. Sucia* emblematizes their new patron Saint Sucia, a final fanatic icon. The last editor's note presents the two together as saints in a portrait photographed by Destiny Mata (fig. 4). The two stand in front of a red building, their even gazes meeting the viewer. Their self-assured expressions make them look undeniably *cool*. Though both meet the camera's gaze directly, Castro's tiny smile gives nothing away, and Hernandez's expression conveys fleeting interest. Castro sports neon green acrylic hoops with her butch undercut and pink tinged braid, while Hernandez wears dark red lipstick, her wavy hair piled atop her head, and thick gold hoops. Castro stands with her hands in the pockets of her jean jacket, shoulders squared towards the viewer and taking up space. Hernandez leans her elbow on Castro's shoulder, propping her head with her hand. Her unshaved armpit hair contrasts with the femininity of her lacy lavender camisole top. The graffiti tag above them could read "DIE" or "DIO," and this ambiguity emphasizes the punk fandom inherent to their sacred and irreverent project. Unlike their first portraits, which heavily referenced La Virgen, only a yellow circle halo gestures to the divine origins of Saint Sucia. Most importantly, their final portrait presents them as two amigas supporting each other, side-by-side: Saints for all their sucias.



FINAL EDITOR'S NOTE

It started as a joke. La Santa Sucia helping us out with contemporary mujer problems. That joke became an idea that bloomed into a part of our shared history and the international conversation about what feminism is to Mujeres. In the last 4 years (and 13 issues) we have achieved our initial goal of making space. In our pages, we held this space for our work to to be respected and shown honestly, openly and with pride. We decided that instead of waiting to be invited into art galleries and book stores, we were gonna publish our own work. These zines have gone from basement punk shows in Brooklyn to the pages of a thesis in San Francisco. Zine fests in community centers and university classrooms. When we printed our first issue on an unattended copy machine, we just wanted to be seen for what we are- creators. Now, our stories and art will continue to live on and change ideas of what it is to be a mujer. Stories of factory workers and Latina PhDs. Stories generations old, and stories we never told anyone. Stories of life, of struggle, of survival. All in our own words, by us, for us, to show that we as, Latinas, as Latinx, are so much more than stereotypes. We are writers, artists, photographers, film makers, publishers, we are...everything. Just because no one is putting a spotlight on us, it doesn't mean we aren't here. Thank you to everyone who has ever submitted, been published, or bought one of our zines. Thank you to the students who wrote about us, librarians and professors who included us in academia. Thank you to our families who supported our work. Because of y'all, these voices will live forever around the world and reach into spaces we never dreamed possible.

St. Sucia is coming to an end, but this was one step in a thousand year lucha for the respect we deserve. Be a part of it. Make a zine. Write a novel. Paint your truth. Create something and show the rest of the world what we are.

St. Sucia has blessed us and will forever watch over us and give us the strength to be our true selves, be visible and make our magic.

Abrazo grande,
Isabel Ann Castro
Art Director

Natasha I. Hernandez
Editor

c/s

Front Cover:
LESLIE CORTEZ
Cicero, Illinois

Back Cover:
ANGELICA FRAUSTO
South Bend, Indiana

Photograph by Destiny Mata

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Figure 4 Destiny Mata, Portrait of Isabel Ann Castro & Natasha I. Hernandez in St. Sucia Issue XIV: Soy, November 25, 2018. Courtesy of Isabel Ann Castro and Natasha I. Hernandez.

Instead of invoking La Virgen as in the first portraits, Castro and Hernandez rewrite themselves as the divine absent of the iconography of this cultural icon, relying on the negative space left by their previous invocation of La Virgen's figure to communicate their divinity. The printed and published discursive space *St. Sucia* and the newly formed Saint Sucia grant participants a space to question and confront ideologies of gender, race, and sex in the Chicana/o and Latina/o community for the affirmation of new identities.[41] The last sentence of the final editors' note refers to Saint Sucia with the same language as one would refer to La Virgen. With reverence, the

[41] García, "Against Rasquache," 10.

cofounders write, "St. Sucia has blessed us and will forever watch over us and give us the strength to be our true selves, be visible and make our magic."[42]

[42] Isabel Ann Castro and Natasha I. Hernandez, *St. Sucia*, "Soy," Issue XIV (Self-published, San Antonio, TX: 2019), i.

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