

## WOMEN'S LIVES, THE MONARCH PROJECT

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### **CHARLOTTE of HABSBERG (1840-1927)**

A Belgian princess and Empress of Mexico. She married a prince of the Habsburg line, Archduke Maximilian of Austria; in 1864 they began their rule as emperors of Mexico. When Maximilian was shot in 1867, Charlotte went mad and lived the rest of her life secluded in a castle in Belgium.

### **REMEDIOS VARO (1908-1963)**

Born in Spain, during the Spanish civil war she aligned herself with the Republic and went into exile in Mexico. Her vast, complex work is touched by an atmosphere of the mystical but is integrated in the modern secular world. Stylized human figures are mixed with archetypal dream elements.

### **LA SANDUNGA**

Is she a woman who became song? A song made woman? *La Sandunga* is a traditional Oaxacan piece. "Sandunga," derived from Zapotecan *Saa* (music) y *Ndu* (profound), means elegance, poise, charm. Rhythmically the *Sandunga* is a fandango.

### **MALINTZIN or LA MALINCHE (1498?-1529)**

The emblematic figure of Mexican mixed race (*mestizaje*). Born into a powerful tribal family, little Malintzín was given to group of businessmen when her father died and later sold in Tabasco. There she was offered to Hernán (or Hernando) Cortés. Cortés discovered that she spoke Maya and Nahuatl and he made her his inseparable companion, his guide in the *mexica* culture. She bore his son, who they named Martín.

### **LA LLORONA**

The legend of *la Llorona* forms part of Mexico's collective imagination, the product of a fusion of the pre-Hispanic legend of the woman cursed to wander the night and the myth from the viceregal epoch, of a woman who drowns her children and later endlessly wanders by the river looking for them. The Llorona echoes the Mexican figure of Death, the Skull that wanders through the world provoking terror.

### **TONANTZIN - GUADALUPE (QUETZALPAPÁLOTL)**

The Virgin of Guadalupe, symbol of Mexican religiosity, originating in a union of Tonantzin - who represents Cihuacóatl (snake woman) - and the Virgen Mary. Everyday worship by *mestizos*, new world Spaniards, and Indians helped bridge differences of caste during the Spanish colonization as well as later after Independence. The Virgin of Guadalupe came to symbolize the Mexican people and their spirit of resistance.

### **FRIDA KAHLO (1907-1954) and THE BLUE HOUSE (*La casa azul*)**

Victim of a grave accident that left her lame, the artist's first immobilization allowed her to explore painting in depth. She married the muralist Diego Rivera, living a tumultuous story of love and passion. Her blue house was an organic part of her life: the structure, spaces and colors of the house speak as much of Kahlo as her clothes, jewelry, and paintings.

### **MARÍA SABINA (1894-1985)**

An indigenous medicine woman of the Sierra Mazateca in Oaxaca. Born in a family of traditional healers, she received from childhood a rigorous education in the use of plants. Once her knowledge of the ceremonial and curative use of regional hallucinogenic mushrooms spread, she became an international celebrity. Nevertheless, the foreigners who became fascinated with her knowledge exploited her mercilessly; and she ended her days in the most abject poverty.

### **SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ (1651-1695)**

A precocious child with an enormous devotion to letters, at twenty-one Juana took religious vows in the Convent of St. Jerome in Mexico City. That life presented the only possibility of dedicating herself to writing and study. Afterward, she was vulnerable to the insistence of the prelates that she abandon profane letters, taking away her library and explicitly forbidding her to write.

### **ADELITA**

The *adelitas* or *soldaderas* were women who participated in the Mexican Revolution. Many historians point to the nurse Adela Velarde Perez as the inspiration for the popular ballad "Adelita" written by Antonio del Rio Armenta. Every November 20th, girls dress up as *adelitas* as part of the celebration of the day of the Revolución Mexicana.

### **JESUSA PALANCARES**

"...protagonist of *Hasta no verte Jesús mío* by Elena Poniatowska, represents the silenced voices of Mexico the anonymous and its courage in the face of calamities. ... Her trajectory is characterized by an untiring struggle against any power that threatens her individual liberty and integrity." (source: *Doctoral Thesis, M. T. Medeiros Lichem, Carlton University, Canada*)

### **JOY LAVILLE (1923- )**

"A painter born in England, residing in Mexico since 1956, [LaVille] is creator of a very personal and clearly identifiable style. Her work has been carried in several books by her husband, writer Jorge Ibargüengoitia. Her planes evoke sea and sky; her closed spaces delve into a limitless intimacy ... creating in that way ... an interior immensity." (source: *Artes e Historia, México*)