

EN QUERIDA MEMORIA

HONORS THESIS

Presented to the Honors College of  
Texas State University  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements

for Graduation in the Honors College

by

Nancy Pedraja

EN QUERIDA MEMORIA

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Thesis Supervisor:

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Heather C. Galloway, Ph.D.  
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## **Abstract**

*En Querida Memoria* discusses the parallels found within both myth and history. This series particularly focuses on the use and abuse of Mexico's national history, in addition, to my personal history surrounding Mexico. This photographic series questions how histories differ based on the person who "guards" it. Studied through this series is the phenomenon in which history—specifically "monumental" and "antiquarian" as defined by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche—provides an escape to a fantastical past created through the mythologizing and preservation of war heroes, folklore, and nations alike.

Images in this series are created using a combination of Mexico's revolutionary history and my personal childhood history growing up in a city bordering Mexico. Furthermore, the color red is used as a motif throughout all the photographs alluding to its psychological connotations, referential qualities to subjects of war and nationalism, but especially, its connection to the color's cultural significance found in Mesoamerican societies within Mexico.

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## En Querida Memoria

The art series, *En Querida Memoria*, discusses the mythologizing of histories, particularly focusing on the use and abuse of personal and national history surrounding Mexico. This photographic series questions how histories differ based on the person who “guards” it. Studied through this series is the phenomenon in which history—specifically “monumental” and “antiquarian” as defined by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche—provides an escape to a fantastical past created through the mythologizing and preservation of war heroes, folklore, and nations alike.

Nietzsche’s text, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, is the primary literary source informing the concept of this work. He firmly believes that the foundations for the future of a person, culture, or nation depends on our ability to harmoniously create a balance with the past and present. Nietzsche believes history serves a grander purpose than serving as pure knowledge but actually has the potential in dictating life. He manifests this idea when he writes his own various definitions of history—monumental, antiquarian, and critical forms of history—as adapted by the human species along with their service to life and their advantages and disadvantages. As Nietzsche explains, history for some serves the purpose of emphasizing the greater deeds of the past that will then mold and influence its future—which is what he calls monumental history—this is history used by the man who wants to create greatness by using the past to then empower himself. An antiquarian history, as defined by Nietzsche, is for those who when presented with history want to nothing more than to admire and preserve it against anyone or thing; in other words, history for the traditionally valued—the man who wishes to emphasize the customary through the cultivation of the past. Lastly is critical history, which works alongside both monumental and antiquarian history; however, its aim is not to preserve or to glorify the past but rather to critically analysis it to best serve the future.

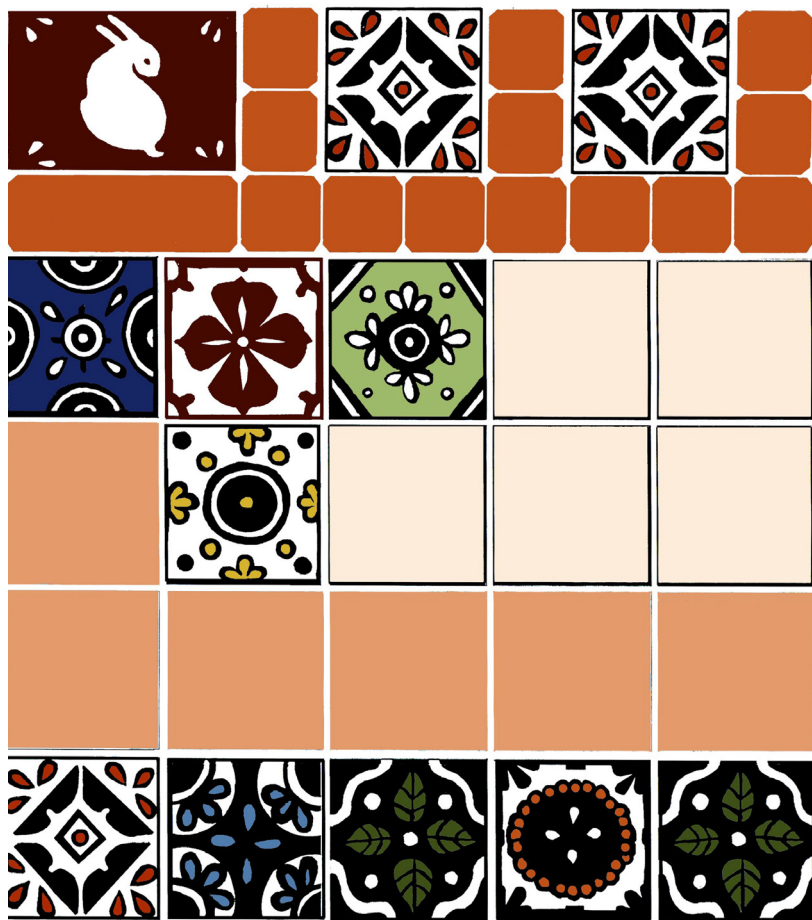
Tales of Mexico's national heroes such as: Juan José de los Reyes Martínez Amaro "El Pipila", Narciso Mendoza "El Niño Artillero", Emiliano Zapata, Francisco "Pancho" Villa, and Niños Heroes are the national rhetoric informing the narrative of the photographic work alongside personal history of my childhood growing up bordering Mexico. Personal histories include, but are not limited to: (1) my craze for Mexican candy such as Kinder Sorpresa, Chiclets, or Paleta Payaso at a young age; (2) the color, Mexican Pink, that paints the outside facade of my grandmother's home in Mexico and other daily aspects of Mexican culture; (3) memories from my childhood ranging from visits to a Monarch butterfly sanctuary in Mexico to my peculiar habit at a young age of carrying a blanket everywhere I went, especially to family parties, so I could fall asleep. Both histories, national and personal, are informing the photographic narratives alongside the materiality of the props used within the photographs.

Furthermore, the color red and its variants are used as a motif throughout all the photographs alluding to its psychological connotations, referential qualities to subjects of war and nationalism, but especially, its connection to the color's cultural significance found in Mesoamerican societies within Mexico.

This photographic series examines the issues caused by the romanticism used to create mythologies solely through the emphasis in monumental and antiquarian history within Mexico. Images in this series are created through a combination of Mexico's revolutionary history, which is scrutinized through the lens of monumental history, alongside personal history of my childhood in a city bordering Mexico that is viewed in an antiquarian form. This series being contained within a book format further infers both history and folklore books, consequently, calling to question the paralleling relationships found between said books. *En Querida Memoria* is therefore adopting Nietzsche's belief of critical history as the photographs entice the viewer with their fantastical aesthetic, yet each frame

*En Querida Memoria Book*





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#### Author's Note

The art series, *En Querida Memoria*, discusses the mythologizing of histories, particularly focusing on the use and abuse of personal and national history surrounding Mexico. This photographic series questions how histories differ based on the person who “guards” it. Studied through this series is the phenomenon in which history—specifically “monumental” and “antiquarian” as defined by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche—provides an escape to a fantastical past created through the mythologizing and preservation of war heroes, folklore, and nations alike.

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#### Nota Del Autor

La serie de arte, *En Querida Memoria*, discute la mitologización de las historias, centrándose particularmente en el uso y abuso de la historia personal y nacional que rodea a México. Esta serie fotográfica cuestiona cómo las historias difieren sobre la base de la persona que “la protege”. Estudiado a través de esta serie es el fenómeno en el cual la historia—específicamente “monumental” y “anticuario” según lo definido por el filósofo Friedrich Nietzsche—proporciona un escape a un pasado fantástico creado a través de la mitificación y la preservación de héroes de guerra, folclore y naciones igualmente.

El texto de Nietzsche, *Sobre el Uso y Abuso de la Historia para la Vida*, es la principal fuente literaria que informa el concepto de esta obra. Él cree firmemente que los fundamentos para el futuro de una persona, cultura, o nación depende de nuestra capacidad para crear armoniosamente equilibrio con el pasado y el presente. Nietzsche cree que la historia sirve a un propósito más grandioso que servir como conocimiento puro, potencial en dictar la vida. Manifiesta esta idea cuando escribe su propia varias definiciones de historia—monumentales, anticuarias y críticas de la historia—adaptadas por la especie humana junto con su servicio a

history for some serves the purpose of emphasizing the greater deeds of the past that will then mold and influence its future—which is what he calls monumental history—this is history used by the man who wants to create greatness by using the past to then empower himself. An antiquarian history, as defined by Nietzsche, is for those who when presented with history want to nothing more than to admire and preserve it against anyone or thing; in other words, history for the traditionally valued—the man who wishes to emphasize the customary through the cultivation of the past. Lastly is critical history, which works alongside both monumental and antiquarian history; however, its aim is not to preserve nor to glorify the past but rather to critically analysis it to best serve the future.

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la vida y sus ventajas y desventajas. Como explica Nietzsche, la historia de algunos sirve al propósito de enfatizar los hechos mayores del pasado que moldearán e influirán en su futuro—que es lo que él llama historia monumental: esta es la historia usada por el hombre que quiere crear la grandeza usando el pasado para entonces empoderarse. Un anticuario historia, tal como la define Nietzsche, es para aquellos que cuando se les presenta la historia no quieren más que admirarla y preservarla contra cualquier persona o cosa; en otras palabras, la historia tradicionalmente valorado—el hombre que desea enfatizar lo acostumbrado a través del cultivo del pasado. Por último es la historia crítica, que trabaja junto a la historia monumental y anticuario; sin embargo, su objetivo no es preservar ni glorificar el pasado sino analizarlo críticamente para servir mejor al futuro.

Cuentos de los héroes nacionales de México como: Juan José de los Reyes Martínez Amaro "El Pipila", Narciso Mendoza "El Niño Artillero", Emiliano Zapata, Francisco "Pancho" Villa, and Niños Héroes son la retórica nacional informando la narrativa del trabajo fotográfico junto a historia personal de mi infancia creciendo en la frontera con México. Las historias personales incluyen, pero no se limitan a: (1) mi locura por dulces mexicanos como

Pink, that paints the outside facade of my grandmother's home in Mexico and other daily aspects of Mexican culture; (3) memories from my childhood ranging from visits to a Monarch butterfly sanctuary in Mexico to my peculiar habit at a young age of carrying a blanket everywhere I went, especially to family parties, so I could fall asleep. Both histories, national and personal, are informing the photographic narratives alongside the materiality of the props used within the photographs.

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Kinder Sorpresa, Chiclets o Paleta Payaso desde chica; (2) el color Rosa Mexicano que pinta la fachada exterior de la casa de mi abuela en México y otros aspectos cotidianos de la cultura mexicana; (3) recuerdos de mi infancia que van desde visitas a un santuario de mariposas monarca en México a mi hábito peculiar de pequeña llevando una colcha dondequiera que fui, especialmente a fiestas familiares, para poder dormirme. Ambas historias, nacionales y personal, están informando los narrativas fotográficos junto a la materialidad de los objetos utilizados en las fotografías.

Además, el color rojo es un color como un motivo a lo largo de todas las fotografías alusivas a su connotaciones psicológicas, cualidades referenciales a sujetos de guerra y nacionalismo, pero especialmente su importe conexión con la cultura del color encontrada en sociedades Mesoamericanas en México.

Esta serie fotográfica examina los problemas causados por el romanticismo utilizado para crear mitologías únicamente a través del énfasis en monumentales y historia anticuaria dentro de México. Las imágenes de esta serie se crean a través de una combinación de historia revolucionaria, que es escudriñado a través de la lente de historia monumental, junto a la historia

scrutinized through the lens of monumental history, alongside personal history of my childhood in a city bordering Mexico that is viewed in an antiquarian form. This series being contained within a book format further infers both history and folklore books, consequently, calling to question the paralleling relationships found between said books. *En Querida Memoria* is therefore adopting Nietzsche's belief of critical history as the photographs entice the viewer with their fantastical aesthetic, yet each frame an individual curious narratives forcing the viewer to question the validity of the history they are presented within these images.

Lastly, huge thank you to everyone who helped make both this book and series a reality, however, a special thanks goes Mark Menjivar who was the best at nurturing my art practice and this idea since its beginning stages in Mexico City along with providing unconditionally guidance throughout the entirety of this process. I would also like to thank Burton Pritzker for endlessly believing in me and providing me with encouragement, especially when I left you in the dark and asked only your trust regarding this project.

personal de mi infancia en una ciudad fronteriza con México que se ve en una forma anticuaria. Esta serie que está contenida dentro de un formato de libro infiere además libros de historia y folclore, consecuentemente, llamando a cuestionar las relaciones paralelas encontradas entre dichos libros. *En Querida Memoria* está adoptando la creencia de Nietzsche de la historia crítica como las fotografías atraen al espectador con su estética fantástica, sin embargo cada marco de un individuo curios narraciones obligando al espectador a cuestionar la validez de la historia que son presentados dentro de estas imágenes.

Por último, un enormemente agradecimiento a todos los que ayudaron a que este libro y la serie de una realidad, sin embargo, un agradecimiento especial para Mark Menjivar que fue el mejor en el cuidado de mi arte y esta idea desde sus comienzos en la Ciudad de México, incondicionalmente a través de la totalidad de este proceso. También quiero dar las gracias a Burton Pritzker por crear sin cesar en mí y proporcionándome ánimo, sobre todo cuando te dejé en la oscuridad y sólo pediste tu confianza en este proyecto. Ron, gracias por creer en este libro y serie, además, a ser un recurso increíble y mentor. También quisiera extender un enorme agradecimiento al Colegio de Honores

Ron, thank you for believing in this book and series, in addition, to being an incredible resource and mentor. I would also like to extend a huge thank you to Texas State University's Honors College for its incredible support throughout this project. Christina, Glenn, and Peter—I cannot ever thank you enough for being such incredible neighbors, but more importantly, amazing friends who happily and unhesitantly went along this crazy ride [and many others] as models, illustrators, designers, and confidants when I struggled with this project. Rand, I cannot thank you enough for your patience, dedication, and amazing work that always brings my visions to life with your books. Averi thank you for your support with my photographs. Finally Jerry, thank you for being my biggest fan, critic, and endless emotional support throughout all my art and life endeavours.

de la Universidad Texas State por su increíble apoyo durante este proyecto. Christina, Glenn y Peter—no puedo agradecerles lo suficiente por ser tal increíbles vecinos, pero más importante, asombrosos amigos que feliz y sin vacilaciones, siguieron este loco paseo [y muchos otros] como modelos, ilustradores, diseñadores y confidentes cuando luché con este proyecto. Rand, no puedo agradecerte lo suficiente por tu paciencia, dedicación y increíble trabajo que siempre trae mis visiones a la vida con tus libros. Averi gracias por su apoyo en mis fotografías. Por último, Jerry, gracias por ser mi mayor fan, crítico e infinito apoyo emocional a través de todo mi arte y esfuerzos de la vida.



A decorative horizontal oval frame with ornate, symmetrical scrollwork and floral patterns at the corners and midpoints. The word "PREFACE" is centered within the frame in a serif font.

## PREFACE

¿Conejo Blas, adonde vas con esa escopeta colgando detrás? Conejo Blas, ven por aquí pues un favorcito te voya pedir. Anoche cuando yo estaba yo solo y vino el lobo, y vino el lobo, me dijo dándome un grito, "¡A que me como tu borreguito!"



## The Conquest of Cortés:

### False Prophecy:

When Hernán Cortés arrived to Mexico, he was seen as the returning God, Quetzalcoatl. Cortés was showered with gifts—for that is what leaders among tribes of the time did with one another as a form of respect—however, he did not understand this. He did not understand the governings of Moctezuma, what he represented, indigenous customs and traditions. Cortés did not even understand that a different definition for the word “war” and rules existed between him and the indigenous groups of Mexico. He only knew that he was a conquistador.

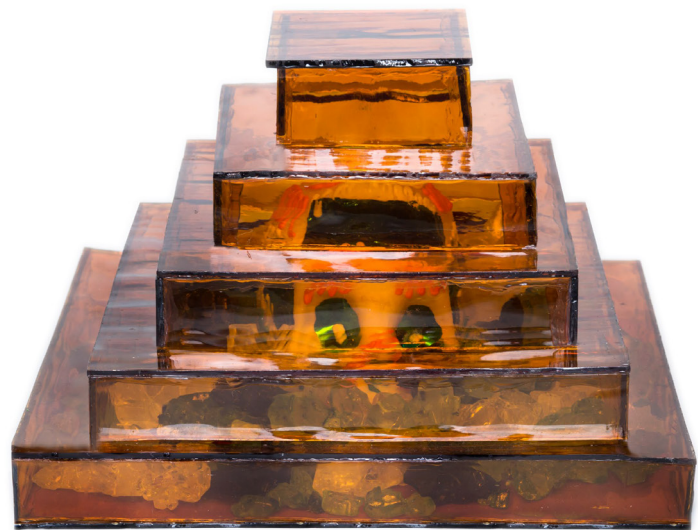
“And when they were near the Spaniards, then, in their presence, they kissed the prows of the boats, as they did in ceremonies when they kissed the earth. [For] they had the opinion of the time that our Prince Quetzalcoatl had come.”

### Profecía Falsa:

Cuando Cortés llegó a México, fue visto como el Dios, Quetzalcoatl, que regresaba. Cortés fue recibido lleno de regalos—porque eso es lo que los líderes de los tribus en esa época hacían entre unos a otros como una forma de respeto—sin embargo, él no entendió esto. No entendía las gobernanzas de Moctezuma, lo que él representaba, además de las costumbres indígenas y tradiciones. Cortés ni siquiera comprendía que existía una diferente definición de la palabra “guerra” y reglas entre él y los indígenas de México. Sólo sabía que era un conquistador.

“Y cuando estaban cerca de la los Españoles, entonces, en su presencia, besaron las proas de los barcos, como lo hacían en ceremonias cuando besaban la tierra. [Por] ellos tenían la opinión de la época en que nuestro Príncipe Quetzalcoatl había venido.”







## Mexican Pink:

National Obsession:  
the passion for the color red and its variants.

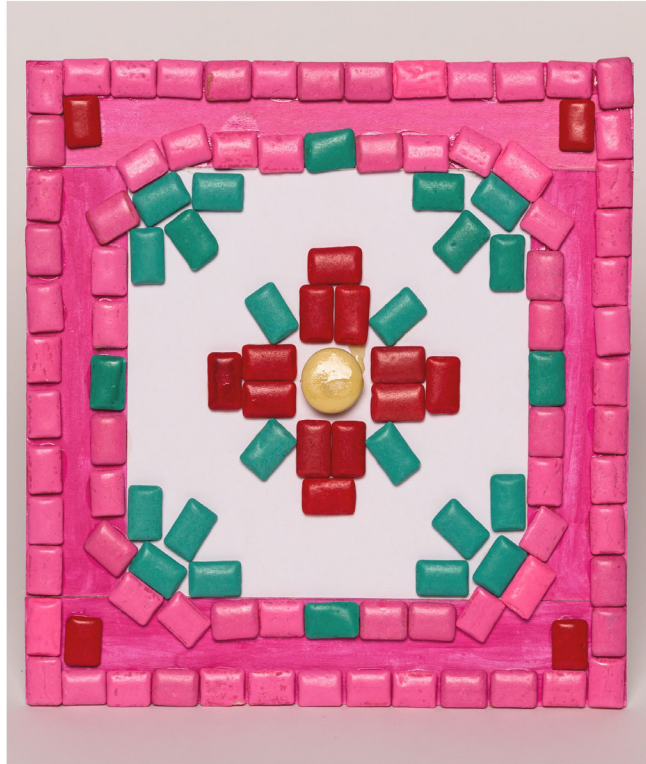
Mexican pink was first coined in 1949 by Mexican fashion designer, Ramón Valdiosera, after doing intense research throughout the entire country searching for inspiration to his fashion line. He discovered that red, in addition to its various gradients, is dearly loved color of Mexicans found in garments of indigenous groups, colored facades of homes, and even in both the external and interior of Mesoamerican pyramids. Valdiosera explains in an interview with The New York Times, "Mexican pink represents something more than just a color in my mind: it's an emblem of our nation's creative and emotional roots."

Obsession Nacional:  
la pasión por el color rojo y sus variantes.

El rosa mexicano fue primer acuñado en 1949 por el diseñador de moda, Ramón Valdiosera, después de a ver hecho una intensa investigación por todo el país buscando inspiración para su línea de ropa. Él descubrió que el color rojo, además de sus varios gradientes, es un color querido por Mexicanos que se encuentra el la ropa de grupos indígenas, como color de las fachadas de hogares, y hasta en ambos exteriores y interior de las pirámides Mesoamericanas. Valdiosera explica en una entrevista con el periódico, The New York Times, "El rosa mexicano representa algo más que solamente un color en mi mente: es una emblema de nuestra nation's creatividad y raíces emocionales."









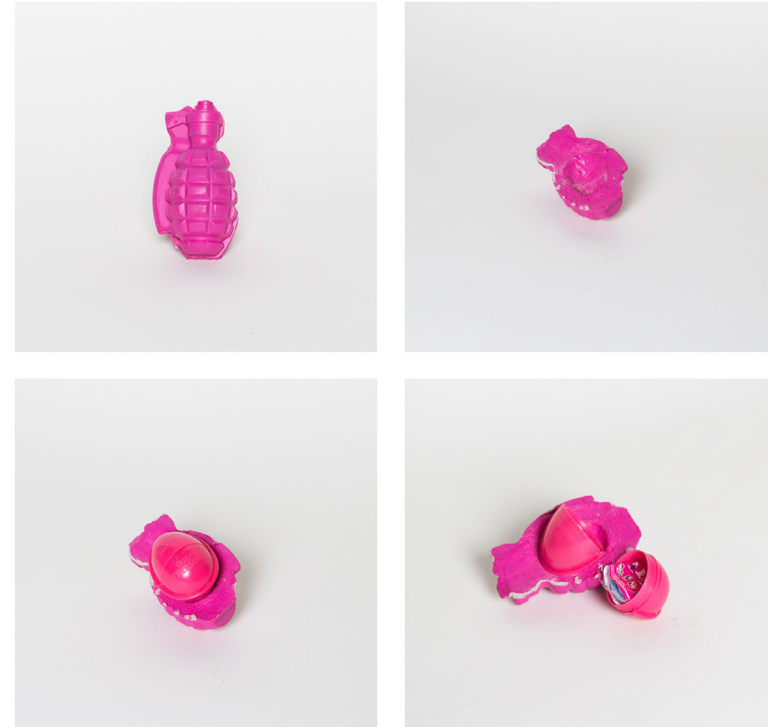
### Sorpresa Grenade:

#### Small but harmful:

There is a candy in Mexico that is called Kinder Sorpesa. It is a chocolate candy shaped like an egg, and when you open the inside of said egg lies the pleasant surprise of a toy. As a child, I would get so excited to discover, what felt like an endless possibility of, a toy. Now I know that there is actual limitation to the possibilities of what that toy can be as a gender specific toy. The connection between the surprise element of this seemingly harmless candy reminded me of the surprise found within a grenade. Both in formal element, such as its shape, but also in the element of surprise found within something so small that can in fact prove to be quite harmful.

#### Pequeño pero doloroso:

Hay un dulce en México que se llama Kinder Sorpesa. Es un caramelo de chocolate en forma de huevo, y cuando se abre el interior de dicho huevo se encuentra el agradable sorpresa de un juguete. Cuando era niño, me emocionaba tanto descubrir, lo que se sentía como una posibilidad sin fin de, un juguete. Ahora sé que hay una limitación real a las posibilidades de lo que ese juguete puede ser como un juguete específico de género. La conexión entre el elemento sorpresa de este caramelo aparentemente inofensivo me recordó la sorpresagranada. Tanto en el elemento formal, como en su forma, sino también en el elemento de sorpresa encontrada dentro de algo tan pequeño que puede infact demostrar ser absolutamente dañoso.







### Old Habits Die Hard:

When I was young I used to carry the same blanket everywhere I went. With this blanket I always fell asleep at 10 P.M. regardless of where I was—a party, in the car, my grandmother's house. My dad likes to say that I would fall asleep "como relojito" (like a small clock) always falling to my makeshift bed wrapped in my blanket to the floor without anyone being able to take it off.

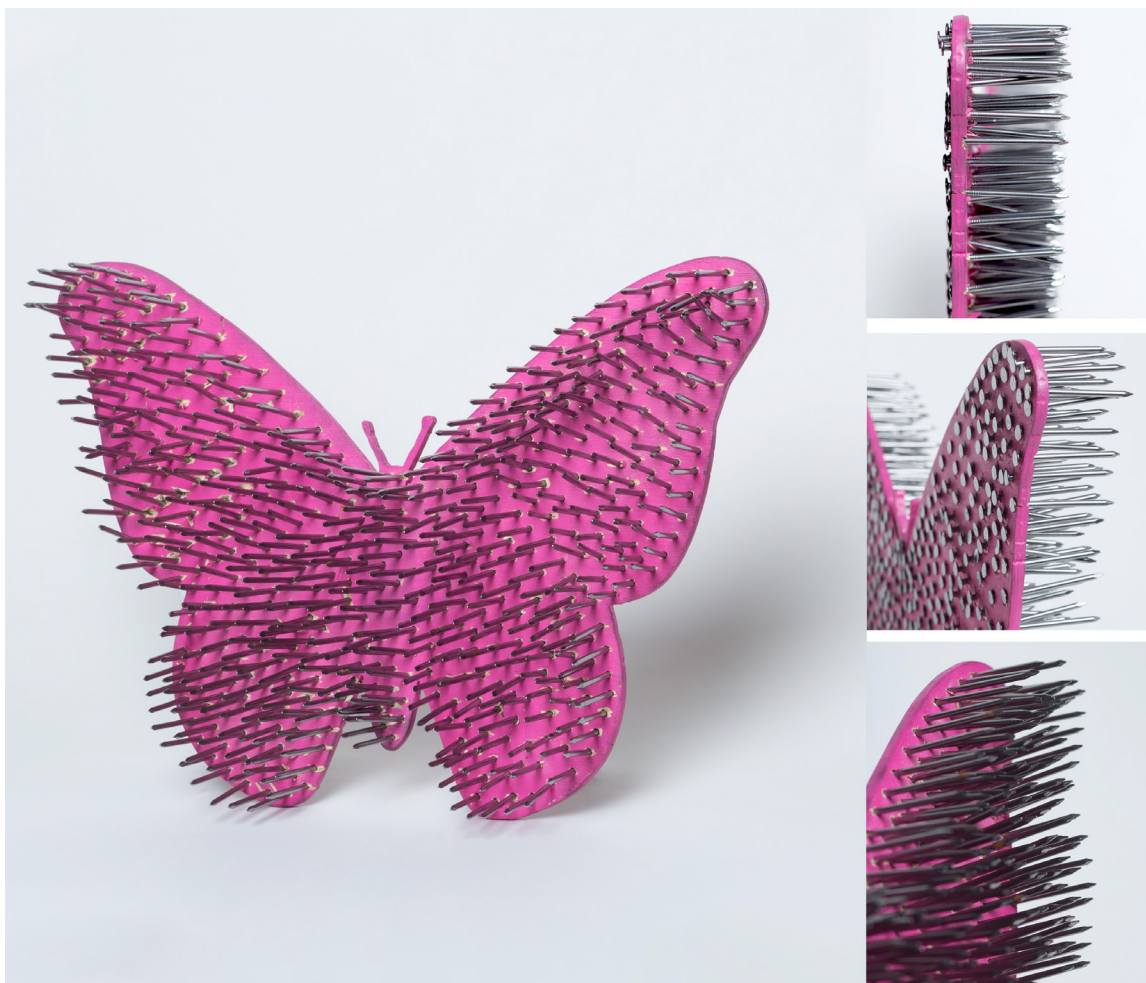
Mexico allegorizes the loss of Texas through narratives of the U.S. invasion of Mexico, and the myth of the Niños Héroes celebrated on September 13. During the U.S. invasion of Mexico City in 1848, while the U.S. forces led by Winfield Scott advance upon the military academy in the Castillo de Chapultepec, six young military cadets chose to leap off a cliff wrapped in the Mexican flag rather than have their flag—and the nation's sovereignty—captured.

Cuando era joven solía llevar la misma cobija por todas partes. Con esta cobija siempre me quedaba dormida a las 10 P.M. a pesar de dónde estuviera: una fiesta, en el coche, la casa de mi abuela. A mi padre le gusta decir que me quedaba dormido "como relojito" siempre cayendo a mi cama improvisada envuelta en mi cobija al suelo sin que nadie me la pudiera quitar.

México alegoriza la pérdida de Texas a través de narrativas de la invasión de los Estados Unidos a México y el mito de los Niños Héroes celebrado el 13 de Septiembre. Durante la invasión de Estados Unidos a la Ciudad de México en 1848, mientras que las fuerzas estadounidenses dirigidas por Winfield Scott avanza sobre la academia militar en el Castillo de Chapultepec, seis jóvenes cadetes eligieron saltar de un acantilado envuelto en la bandera mexicana en lugar de tener su bandera—y la soberanía de la nación—capturado







## Sweets & Tar :

The story of the "Pipila" is that of a revolutionary miner who tied a long flat stone to his back to protect himself from the muskets of the Spanish troops, "Pipila" carried tar and a torch to the door of the granary where Spanish soldiers were taking refuge and set it on fire. The insurgents—who far outnumbered the Spanish in the warehouse—stormed inside and killed all the soldiers along with the civil Spanish refugees. Some accounts say that Pipila was not alone but went accompanied by other indigenous miners.

The Paleta Payaso is a chocolate covered marshmallow found in Mexico that has only three colored gummies that make up the face of the "clown". However it seems that much like history, every time one opens a new package those three gummies happen to make a brand new version of the clown's face.

La historia del "Pipila" es una de un minero revolucionario que ató una larga plana piedra sobre su espalda para protegerse de los mosquetes de las tropas españolas. "Pipila" llevó alquitrán y una antorcha a la puerta del granero donde el ejército Español tomaba refugio y encendió el edificio. En llamas los insurgentes, que superaron el número de españoles, entraron en el almacén y mataron a todos los soldados junto con los refugiados civiles españoles. Algunos relatos dicen que Pipila no estaba solo sino que acompañados por otros mineros indígenas.

La Paleta Payaso es un malvavisco cubierto en chocolate encontrado en México que tiene solamente tres gomitas coloreadas que componen la cara del "payaso". Sin embargo parece que mucho como historia, cada vez que se abre un nuevo paquete las tres gummies pasan a hacer una nueva versión de la cara del payaso.



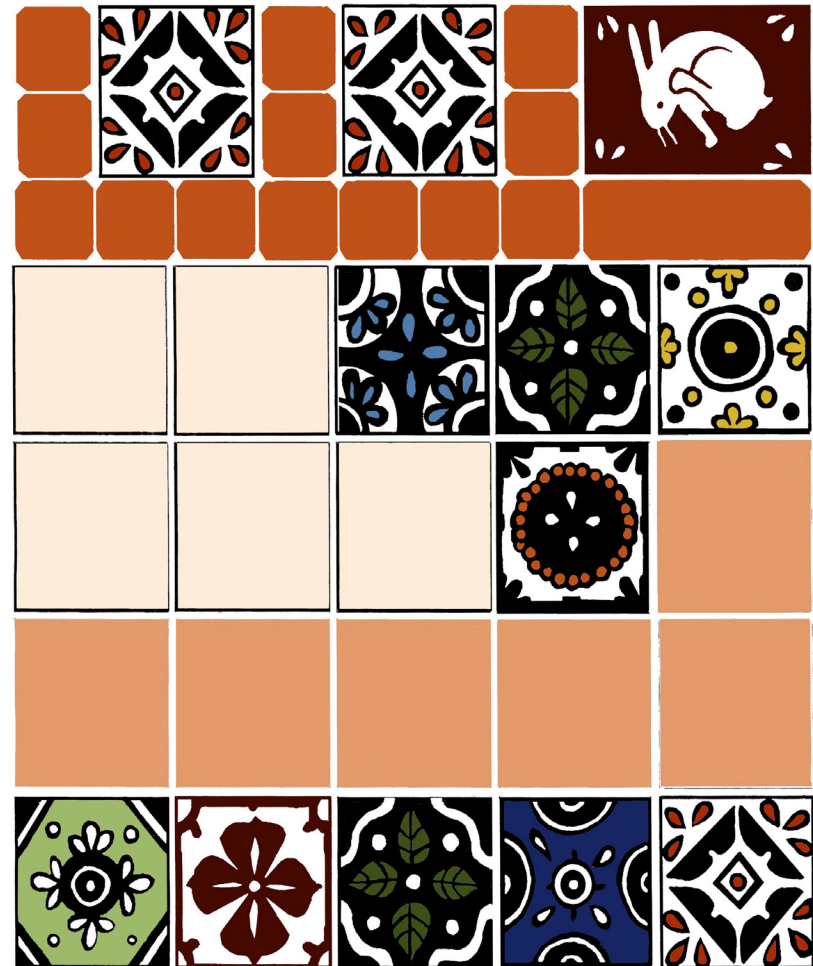


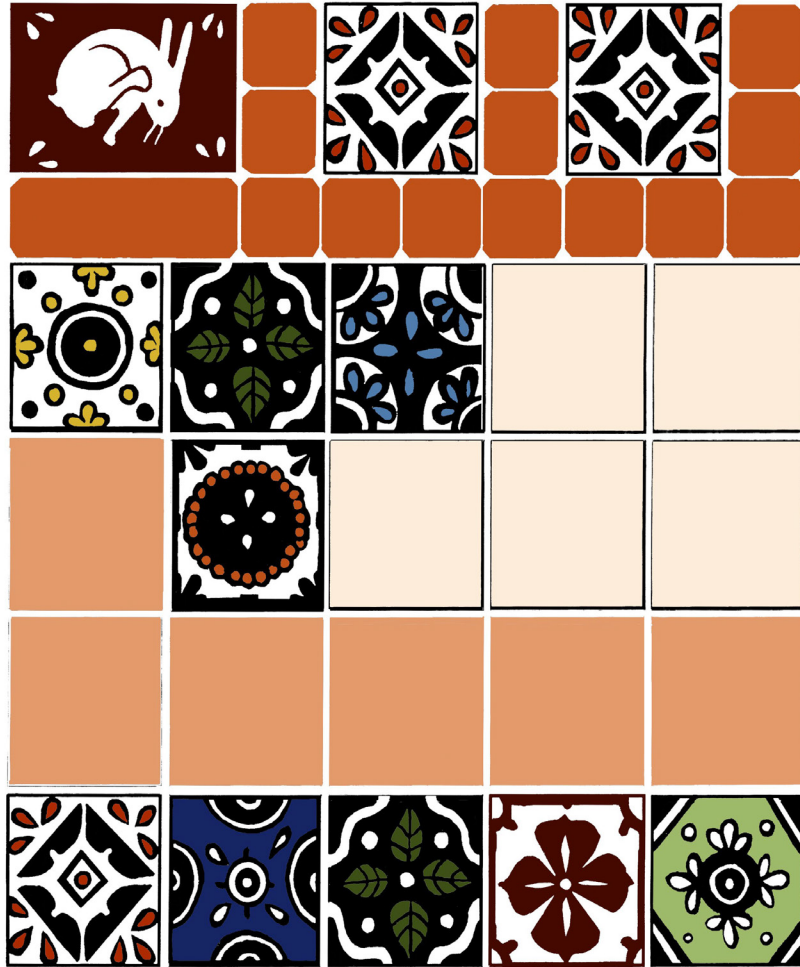




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