

ALGORITHM

Press Release

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To begin, let's start at the historical facts and theory behind the painted muse. On December 9th in 1531, Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to a converted christian, Juan Diego, who was an Aztec Native American. During the New World era in history, the Spaniards and Aztecs had high conflict over their differing views of god; Monotheism versus Polytheism and their differing ways of worship. Our Lady asked Juan to go to the Bishop and have a church built in her honor, and with it will come her protection, love, and other virtues. He went to the Bishop and met a skeptic response, with the Bishop stating that he will require a miracle for the favor, to prove to him Juan is telling the truth. Juan's uncle was very sick at the time, and he grows worried of his fate regarding this matter. On December 12th 1531, he roamed in search of a priest, and found her yet again. She told him that she will bring his uncle back to health, and that he needs to go pick the flowers on the top of the hill. The land at the time bared frost and was infertile for such roses. He discovered them, being a miracle in itself, and brought them back to Our Lady. She helped arrange them on his Tilma, to then be presented to the Bishop. Later, as Juan presented them to the Bishop, the image of Our Lady formed on the cloth infant of their very eyes. The Bishop and other observers were so moved by the miracle, they built a Basilica in her honor. To this day, Juan's Tilma still holds up and is on view at the church built in its honor. It has been around 400 years since its manifestation. This was viewed as a sign of connection between the Aztecs and the Spaniards.

The symbolism behind the depiction of Our Lady shows many ties to each culture. She carried the Spaniard cross around her neck, which was fitted on their ships and in their churches. She was holding a black sash in her hand, symbolizing that she is bearing a child (Jesus). The 4 petal flower on her dress over her abdomen, symbolized to the Aztecs 'One True God'. The color of her cloak, green, was befitted for royalty. The stars on her cloak have been stated to portray the constellations in the sky at the night of her arrival. She stands on the crescent moon, in front of the sun, two prominent god figures in the Aztec culture. In 2002, Juan Diego was canonized (declared a saint).

Moving into a more personal conversation about these works, I would like to state that I am not extremely religious nor am a religious historian, but I do follow religions, especially the one I was born into. With that being Christianity, I admire and learn as a student and human. The Virgin Mary or Our Lady of Guadalupe seemed like a very fitting muse for what I wanted to paint at the time of these works production. As a child I was fascinated with the story behind the birth of Jesus. It is something I've thought about a lot throughout my life, especially in hard times. The spectacle that Christianity holds and all Religion holds within society is one of the most common similarities that

humans share on this planet. The idea of Hope, an afterlife, heaven, all things interpreted as wonderful by many, including myself. If you rewind time back to the Da Vinci days of the Renaissance, religion was one of the most prevalent themes in all artwork, especially painting. Looking into his work, *The Virgin of The Rocks*, depicting the Virgin Mary, Jesus, John The Baptist, and an Archangel.

Virgin Mary's reference in artistic culture is prevalent throughout the generations. Even Andy Warhol dabbled with religious ideology in his work, especially in *Raphael Madonna*-\$6.99, 1985. As pictured below,

Born a Catholic, Warhol used Catholicism throughout the years in his work, sprinkling religious hints and tones across his canvases. As time has progressed, religion has still played an important role in art, whether it holds prominent or hinted tones. In 1997, Chris Ofili premiered his *Holy Virgin Mary* painting at the Saatchi Gallery exhibition entitled 'Sensation'. As pictured below,

Chris Ofili's painting, *The Holy Virgin Mary*, stirred up quite the controversy. I am not one to chime in on this matter, but observe this from a historian's perspective (observing art and its factual history). Someone even tried to throw white paint on the artwork, stating that the work was 'blasphemy' in their eyes. After all of this, Chris won the 1998 Turner Prize for British Visual Artist. Starting with the leading artists behind the earliest works of *The Virgin Mary* being none other than Caravaggio, Michelangelo, Raphael, Da Vinci, and many more talented Renaissance masters. All the way to our modern day renditions, a few that I have stated above. *The Virgin Mary* has stayed an important, prominent, and recognizable figure in art.

Going into this show, I dove even deeper into my personal understanding of Our Lady of Guadalupe aka *The Virgin Mary*. I dove into some religious text about her miracles, and ventured outside into text from individuals' views and perceptions of *The Virgin Mary / Our Lady*. It was interesting for me to discover just how relevant and 'right there' a lot of religious symbolism is in our day to day lives. As time has progressed from the Renaissance, the church and state have definitely separated further, fathering in different perspectives and deriving new meanings from old symbols. I even bear her tattooed on my left arm, which I got a significant amount of time before I decided to paint her.

The main themes I implemented through her consist of emotion tied to color. I purposely painted with a minuscule pallet to focus my energy on the depictions of sadness, joy, hope, power, and more. I explored different themes through each painting. The red one invoking her love, whereas the blue portrait stating a bit of fear, exploring the unknown. The yellow's energy brings a sense of hope to my eye, but the purple brings me to the feet of her nobility. I will further explore these ideas in an interview that will be released later. To everything up, the works did not take very long to paint, but the days in progress were no short of 10 hours. I listened to mainly classical music during my sessions, and would take breaks to watch history clips of Da Vinci. This exhibition is about charity, and a portion of proceeds will be donated directly

to a charity I chose that will be announced later. The show will be an online exclusive through Artsy, with gallery partner ALLGORITHM.

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