Leonora Carrington's *Imaginary Homelands*: On the Documentary Construction of the Artist's Cultural and Artistic Identity

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Abstract

This article explores the under-researched documentary (re)mediations of the British-born/Mexican Surrealist, Leonora Carrington (1917-2011) and the construction of her cultural and artistic identity on screen. The study employs Salman Rushdie's conceptualization of imaginary homelands *to address Carrington's self-imposed exile to Mexico and her fragmented perception of home as represented in a range of arts documentaries, produced on both sides of the Atlantic:* Leonora Carrington o el sortilegio irónico *(Felipe Cazals 1965, Mexico),* Leonora Carrington and the House of Fear *(Kim Evans 1992, UK),* The Flowering of the Crone: Another Reality (Ally Acker 2008, USA), Leonora Carrington y el juego surrealista *(Javier Martín-Domínguez 2012, Spain),* Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist *(Teresa Griffiths 2017, UK). The analysis reflects on the documentaries' discursive and aesthetic strategies that render Carrington's multifaceted artistic identity as a hybrid entity beyond a single national, cultural or disciplinary origin. The documentaries often feature recurring footage from Carrington's domestic spaces and studio that evoke her senses of displacement and finding refuge in art. Carrington's flight from patriarchy and artistic liberation are conveyed via animated episodes, dramatizations, and remediated archival images, such as Lee Miller's 1930s portraits (that have marked the visual grammar of all Carrington's documentary representations), as well as remixed fragments from experimental surrealist films as Hans Richter's* Dreams That Money Can Buy *(1947), Germaine Dulac's* The Seashell and the Clergyman *(1928) and René Clair's* Entr'acte *(1924). The analysis of the documentaries' representational and aesthetic strategies is supported by theoretical perspectives on Carrington's oeuvre and examples from her literary and visual works that signal the formation of her cross-cultural imaginary.*

***Keywords**: Leonora Carrington, surrealism, arts documentary, cultural identity, archive.*

Introduction

The British-born/Mexican Surrealist, Leonora Carrington (1917-2011), has been celebrated as one of the most prolific and imaginative female artists of the 20th and 21st centuries. Her *surreal* life journey "has acquired a mythic quality," as Jonathan P. Eburne and Catriona McAra have argued. (2017, 3) Similarly, the cult filmmaker Alejandro Jodorowsky has stated that "[Leonora] had a mythic reputation among Mexican painters; she was an incarnation of the most extreme surrealism." (2008, 24) Born in Lancashire in 1917, aged 20 Leonora Carrington left England to join her lover Max Ernst and the Surrealists in Paris, as an expression of revolt to the patriarchal norms of her upper-class upbringing. After Ernst's incarceration by the Vichy and Nazi regimes, she suffered a traumatic breakdown and was hospitalized in a mental sanatorium in Santander, Spain. In 1941, Leonora Carrington managed to escape to New York via Lisbon and a year later moved to Mexico City, where she died in 2011 as a renowned Mexican Surrealist, whose artistic and literary work has stayed under-recognized by the general public in Britain. While "any expression of national cultural identity was on the whole repudiated by the Surrealists" (Ades 1998, 107), Carrington's vibrant life across Europe and the Americas has triggered scholarly and curatorial attempts to fix the artist's cultural and artistic identity to a single national origin. In contrast, in the recent documentary *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist* (Teresa Griffiths 2017, UK) Gabriel Weisz Carrington has stated that "[Leonora] never quite fitted anywhere – not England, nor Mexico. I don't think she was comfortable anywhere, that's the truth. And if there was one country, where my mother

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was very comfortable – was Art – that was her country." (Griffiths 2017, 54:05:00)

Leonora Carrington's departures from England and Nazi-occupied Europe are central for understanding her emancipation as a female avant-garde artist, as well as her perceptions of displacement and multiple belongings during her 60-year long exile to Mexico. In order to overcome the essentializing practice of rendering Carrington's multifaceted creative personality through a single national, regional or cultural origin, this article employs Salman Rushdie's notion of *imaginary homelands* to suggest that Carrington has creatively reconstructed her subjective perceptions of home in-between fragments of various cultural affiliations.[1] Echoing the fusion of remembered and reimagined sites in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* (1972), Rushdie has conceptualized writing in exile as an act of imaginary reconstruction of the country left behind. Culturally displaced writers, "exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back" which, as Rushdie argues, translates into creating "fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands." (Rushdie 1982, 10) Similarly, Carrington's literary works and paintings employ a fusion of recollected and reimagined places, as well as a mixture of diverse cultural sources, such as recurring motifs from Celtic lore, pre-Columbian Mayan mythology, Tibetan Buddhism, Jewish mysticism and esoteric symbolism. Hence, this study proposes to understand Leonora Carrington's identity and imaginary as cross-cultural in correspondence with her own artistic approach of transgressing geographical, cultural and disciplinary boundaries.

Departing from Stuart Hall's work on the politics of representation, and his argument that "identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, [...] produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices" (1996, 4), the article explores the representational strategies of a range of under-researched documentary productions. The investigation focuses on the arts documentaries – *Leonora Carrington o el sortilegio irónico* (Felipe Cazals 1965, Mexico), *Leonora Carrington and the House of Fear* (Kim Evans 1992, UK), *The Flowering of the Crone: Another Reality* (Ally Acker 2008, USA), *Leonora Carrington y el juego surrealista* (Javier Martín-Domínguez 2012, Spain), *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist* (Teresa Griffiths 2017, UK) – that have (re)produced Carrington's cultural and artistic identity on screen.

The analysis also aims to provide insights on the aesthetic strategies employed by each filmmaker in attempt to define the *poetics* of Carrington's documentary representations. In "Toward a Poetics of Documentary" in *Theorizing Documentary* (1993), Michael Renov defines four rhetorical and aesthetic functions of documentary practice – to record/reveal/ preserve; to persuade/promote; to analyse/ interrogate; and to express – that articulate the (im)balance between fictive and nonfictional aspects in documentary representation. (Renov 1993, 12-36) According to Renov, the expressive dimension "has consistently been undervalued within the nonfiction domain." (1993, 32) Nevertheless, it could be argued that Renov's observation on nonfiction's power to "evoke emotional response or induce pleasure in the spectator by formal means" (1993, 35) can be related to the expressive language of the arts documentary genre. In this context, the following discussion will reflect on the aesthetic and expressive means that have informed the documentary construction of Leonora Carrington's cultural and artistic identity, such as the re-use of photography, archival footage, animation and dramatization.

The first section explores how the selected documentary narratives have rendered Leonora Carrington's experiences of exile and her fragmented perceptions of home. In this sense, the research offers insights on the discursive construction of Carrington's cultural identity. The second part of the study focuses on Carrington's artistic liberation from patriarchy and the formation of her cross-cultural imaginary, as central for the construction of her artistic identity on screen. The analysis of each documentary is supported by examples from Carrington's visual and literary works, as well as by theoretical perspectives on her transdisciplinary oeuvre.

[1] Carrington's affinity with Rushdie's work has been mentioned by Susan Suleiman in 1993. In an interview taken in Oak Park, Illinois where Leonora Carrington lived in 1990, Suleiman remarks: "I was especially impressed by her interest in controversies, current work: she had read Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* before I did, as soon as the fuss began" (Suleiman 1993, 101).

Leonora Carrington's self-imposed exile and fragmented perceptions of home

In his celebrated essay *Reflections on Exile* (1984), Edward Said discusses exile as "a condition of terminal loss" and non-belonging – "an exile is always out of place" ([1984] 2001, 173-80) – a statement that resonates with Leonora Carrington's own state of displacement. In *Imaginary Homelands* (1982), Salman Rushdie employs the metaphor of the broken mirror to portray the fragmentary nature of recreated memories, some of which are irreversibly lost. (1982, 11) Rushdie argues that displaced authors "are capable of writing from a kind of double perspective: because they, we, are at one and the same time insiders and outsiders… [t]his stereoscopic vision is perhaps what we can offer in place of 'whole sight.'" (1982, 19) In the same vein, Edward Said observes that "most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that – to borrow a phrase from music – is *contrapuntal*." (Said [1984] 2001, 186)

The arts documentary *Leonora Carrington and the House of Fear* (Kim Evans 1992, UK) follows a similar *contrapuntal* approach in establishing a parallel between Leonora Carrington's home in Mexico and the mansion where she was raised in England. It represents the stereoscopic vison of the artist by mixing footage and symbolic images from both locations. Inspired by Carrington's exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, London (11 December 1991 – 26 January 1992), the director Kim Evans produced the reel for the BBC 1 series *Omnibus*, which began in 1967. In the 1990s, *Omnibus* continued to be "regarded as the 'flagship' of BBC's arts programming," as noticed by John A. Walker. "The aim of the series was to produce 'television to remember,' while various formats have been tried over the years. *Omnibus* has performed a reviewing role, produced artists' profiles and dramatized biographies, relayed concerts and ballet, and commissioned filmed documentaries. (Walker 1993, 52) Departing from Bill Nichols' discussion on documentary filmmaking and nationalism (Nichols 2001, 139-67), it can be argued that arts television in Britain is related to the discursive construction of British national identity. Nevertheless, the episode devoted to Leonora Carrington supports Laura Mulvey's remark that in the *Omnibus* programme "the nature of 'Englishness' is constantly under question." (Mulvey 2007, 10) As Edward Said has noted in this regard, exile and nationalism cannot be "discussed neutrally, without reference to each other […] Because both terms include everything from the most collective of collective sentiments to the most private of private emotions, there is hardly language adequate for both. But there is certainly nothing about nationalism's public and all-inclusive ambitions that touches the core of the exile's predicament." (Said [1984] 2001, 177) The *Omnibus* representational approach of constructing Carrington's identity on screen supports Stuart Hall's understanding of the complexities of dealing with 'identity' since it is "drawing meanings from both the discursive and the psychoanalytic repertoire, without being limited to either." (Hall 1996, 2)

Leonora Carrington and the House of Fear conveys the artist's fragmented perception of home via montaged episodes of interior and exterior settings that signify Carrington's senses of belonging on both sides of the Atlantic. The documentary borrows its title from Carrington's first published short story – *The House of Fear* (1938), featuring an introduction and illustrations by Max Ernst. The *Omnibus* episode makes visual references to Carrington's paintings that interpret the subject of home and feature representations of domestic spaces. *Leonora Carrington and The House of Fear* shows the artist and her husband Emerico "Chiki" Weisz in their home at Chihuahua Street in Mexico City's neighbourhood of Roma. Carrington's reflections on life, art and death as a European émigré are accompanied with immersive footage from vibrant Mexican markets, defined by Carrington as portals giving access to other kind of worlds. The documentary features a re-enacted meeting between Leonora Carrington and the art historian Whitney Chadwick, who comments on the linked spaces within the house at Chihuahua Street as being characteristic of the artist's paintings from the 1940s. Chadwick has discussed Carrington's experiments with rapid dislocations of space and scale, as depicted in the painting *The House Opposite* (1947). In this work, "the domestic world of the house is presented as a metaphor for the world and conveys suggestions of interior and exterior worlds, higher and lower regions, nature and the firmament." (Chadwick 1985, 200) Chadwick has further argued that Carrington's paintings from the 1940s "use the image of the house and the domestic

activities that take place within its walls as metaphors for woman's consciousness." (1985, 199) Dawn Ades has compared the composition of *The House Opposite* (1947) to a doll house, or a theatre set, since the interior of the building is seen as if the façade has been removed. "None of the rooms is a conventional living space; they are entered through archways and a fireplace, the floors connected with a little staircase bridge and tiny stepladders, quite out of scale [...] The spaces carry strong psychological charge, like those we inhabit in dreams: irrational, inconsistent, contradictory but wholly convincing." (Ades 2013, 112) Similarly, Kim Evan's camera follows the artist within linked rooms, terraces and staircases as an evocative journey through Carrington's psyche.

Leonora Carrington's own contemplations on the "psychic shape" of a house are complemented with extensive footage from the interior spaces and external architecture of the mansion Crookhey Hall in Lancashire, where she was raised. The documentary stages an interview with the novelist Marina Warner, who defines Crookhey Hall as the haunted house that reappears both in Carrington's writing and paintings. "I think it stood or stands in her imagination for all the conformity of her background which is something she has been in rebellion against all her life. In a sense, you can see in the house the structured hierarchy that enclosed her when she was a child. She is much closer in her imagery to the world which is on the margins of the house. She does not really occupy these central spaces. Her imagination wanders in the corridors and the kitchen, and in the attics – the places where the servants and the women live." (Evans 1992, 15:37:00) Similarly, Susan Aberth has commented that "the cavernous and theatrical Crookhey Hall [...] would exert the greatest influence on Leonora's imagination and childhood memories [...] Carrington would depict the gloomy Gothic-revival mansion in her artwork time and again in the future, perhaps to exorcise the traumatic aspects of her youth." (Aberth 2004, 11) In this sense, in the *Omnibus* episode, Crookhey Hall itself emerges as *the house of fear* in Carrington's imaginary world.

The arts documentary *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist* (Teresa Griffiths 2017, UK)[2] employs a comparable approach in representing the domestic spaces occupied by Leonora Carrington and her creative imagination. The visual language of the documentary uses video projections of the painting *Crookhey Hall* (1947) on the interior walls of a mansion that resembles the actual residence where Carrington spent her early childhood. This aesthetic strategy functions as a form of video mapping of Carrington's subjective memories. Teresa Griffiths' work builds a discourse on the recent (re)discovery of Leonora Carrington in Britain, opening with an interview with the artist,[3] who states that "it's never too late to mend the fact that I'm ignored in my own country." (Griffiths 2017, 01:55:00) Both BBC productions (by Evans and Griffiths) represent Leonora Carrington's senses of belonging by mixing footage from England and Mexico with remediated fragments from the artist's paintings of rooms and interior settings. In this context, Carrington's depictions of domestic spaces can be understood as an imaginary reconstruction of her fragmented perception of home.

Leonora Carrington and the House of Fear also montages original footage of Carrington's Mexican home with similar episodes from Felipe Cazals' short documentary *Leonora Carrington o el sortilegio irónico* (*Leonora Carrington or the Ironical Sorcery*, 1965). Felipe Cazals' experimental approach represents the 'new wave' of Mexican directors from the 1960s, who have set the aesthetic language of the political project of *New Mexican Cinema* from the 1970s. Leonora Carrington's artistic collaborations with the avant-garde filmmakers from El Grupo Nuevo Cine have been previously explored in relation to the production of Carrington's artistic identity via the medium of film. (Markova and Shannon 2019) Devoted to creating films of social criticism, Cazals' innovative filmmaking is marked by the mixture of nonfiction elements with traditional narrative styles, as analysed by Jesús Salvador Treviño. (Treviño 1979, 29-31) The title of *Leonora Carrington o el sortilegio irónico* directly quotes the Magic Realist novelist Carlos Fuentes, who defines Carrington's creative work as an "ironical sorcery" in the catalogue of her 1965 solo exhibition at the Anglo-Mexican Institute of Culture. (Fuentes 1965, 5) Felipe Cazals' documentary captures Leonora Carrington within

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[2] *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist* was produced by Erica Starling Productions for BBC and aired on BBC Four in November 2017. It won the Grierson 2018 Award for Best Arts Documentary.

[3] The used footage originates from a recorded conversation between Leonora Carrington and the journalist Joanna Moorhead that has been featured in the short video *Leonora Carrington: Britain's Lost Surrealist* (Tate 2015) as part of Tate Shots documentary series.

the liminal spaces of her home – terraces, passages and staircases – that symbolically evoke her state of living in between cultures. Cazals' camera also follows Carrington in the intimate settings of her studio. In this vein, the art collector and close friend of Carrington's, Edward James, recalls his first visit to her studio in Mexico City in 1945: "it had nothing to endow with the title of studio at all, save a few almost worn-out paint brushes and a number of gesso panels set on a dog-and-cat populated floor, leaning face averted against a white-washed and peeling wall. The place was a combined kitchen, nursery, bedroom, kennel, and junk-store. The disorder was apocalyptic: the appurtenances of the poorest." (James [1945] in Van Raay 2018, 144) Edward James' description entails the unsettling condition of exile, in which Edward Said recognizes "a particular sense of achievement in acting as if one were at home wherever one happens to be." (Said [1984] 2001, 186) Hence, the documentary mediations of Carrington's studio could be interpreted as a psychological rendition of the artist's senses of displacement and finding refuge in art.

Leonora Carrington's escape from Britain embodies "the loss of something left behind forever," as defined by Said. ([1984] 2001, 173) Carrington, among other European intellectuals, left Europe in flight from Nazism and settled in Mexico whose government granted asylum and citizenship to the refugees and victims of the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War in the 1940s. Her self-imposed exile to Mexico resulted also from broken connections with her family in England, since her parents were instrumental in sending her to the mental asylum in Spain and potentially to another institution in South Africa in 1941. The documentary *Leonora Carrington y el juego surrealista* (*Leonora Carrington. The Surrealist Game*, Javier Martín-Domínguez 2012, Spain), expands on the artist's experiences in war-torn Spain and her flight from Nazism. Featuring interviews with film critic Carlos Monsiváis (another distinguished member of El Grupo Nuevo Cine) and the artist Alan Glass, the documentary reflects on the cultural dynamics in Mexico in the 1940s. Although officially welcomed by the President Lázaro Cárdenas' policy of open borders, the European émigré intellectuals – among whom Surrealist filmmaker Luis Buñuel, artists Leonora Carrington, Remedios Varo, Wolfgang Paalen, poet Benjamin Péret and photographers Kati Horna and Emerico "Chiki" Weisz (who married Carrington in 1946) – were initially perceived as foreign "colonizers" by the politicized Mexican avant-garde. (Kunny 1996, 172) In this context, *Leonora Carrington y el juego surrealista* builds a parallel between Carrington and Chiki Weisz's separate journeys to Mexico as European refugees. The photojournalist Weisz, as a Hungarian Jew and an assistant of Robert Capa, arrived in Mexico on a Portuguese ship departing from Casablanca. (Aberth 2004, 58) Carrington has interpreted Chiki and hers shared destinies as European refugees in the painting *Chiki, ton pays* (1944). The phantasmatic composition depicts Leonora and Chiki travelling together in a wheeled vehicle among hybrid creatures and evocative topographies that reconnect the broken pieces of her *imaginary homelands*.

In relation to Carrington's Celtic heritage, Séan Kissane has established relevant parallels between Homi Bhabha's notions of hybridity, liminality and in-betweenness and the artist's life and creative work. (Kissane 2013, 67) In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha argues that, "the recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification. In restaging the past, it introduces other, incommensurable cultural temporalities into the invention of tradition. This process estranges any immediate access to an originary identity or a 'received' tradition [...] This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy." (Bhabha 1994, 3-5) In this sense, as the discussed documentaries have discursively and aesthetically conveyed, Carrington's cultural identity should be understood as a multi-layered, hybrid and in-flux entity, rather than a single fixed origin.

Leonora Carrington's flight from patriarchy and the formation of her cross-cultural imaginary

In *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (1985), Whitney Chadwick discusses Leonora Carrington's revolt against patriarchy as characteristic of other female artists associated with Surrealism. As Chadwick writes, "surrealism offered many women their first glimpse of a world in which creative activity and liberation from family-imposed social expectations might coexist, one in which rebellion was viewed as a

virtue, imagination as the passport to a more liberated life." (Chadwick 1985, 67)

According to Séan Kissane, Carrington's "self-imposed exile resonates strongly with other pioneers of modern literature, the Irish writers James Joyce and Samuel Beckett." (Kissane 2013, 59) It can be, however, observed that the literature of *cosmopolitan* exile (as defined by Edward Said in relation to Joyce and Nabokov), emanates freedom of choice to travel as a prerogative of male authors. This literature of exile has consistently reinvented *The Odyssey*, with James Joyce's self-reflexive novel *Ulysses* (1922) as the most prominent example. As argued here, Carrington's journey, contrarily, embodies female liberation and a flight from patriarchy. Leonora's literature of exile, e.g. her sarcastic theatre play *Penelope* written in Mexico in 1946 (and staged by Alejandro Jodorowsky in 1957) does not re-use the archetype of Odysseus. Instead, it *emancipates* the myth of Penelope (Odysseus' devoted wife) by telling the story of a rebellious girl who escapes from her oppressive father on the back of her favourite horse.

Carrington's spirit of revolt is also creatively interpreted in her painting *Self-Portrait/Inn of the Dawn Horse* (1937-38), whose remediated versions have become emblematic for the documentary construction of Carrington's artistic identity. The artist's documentary representations are also shaped by aesthetic strategies of reusing and remixing archival footage, photographs and ephemera. In this sense, as argued by Dagmar Brunow in *Remediating Transcultural Memory: Documentary Filmmaking as Archival Intervention* (2015), archival images and footage are central for the construction and the dynamics of cultural memory.

In our collective imagination and cultural memory, Leonora Carrington persists through Lee Miller's 1930s spontaneous portraits of Surrealist friends, which have become intrinsic part of the visual grammar of Carrington's documentary representations. In 1942, after joining the émigré circle of European Surrealists in New York, Carrington is featured in portraits by the fashion photographer Hermann Landshoff taken at her apartment in Greenwich Village. As Kristoffer Noheden has noted in relation to Landshoff's photographs "a closer look seems to reveal a self-conscious and premediated fashioning of identity on Carrington's behalf." (Noheden 2017, 134) During her Mexican years, Carrington reappears as an aesthetic subject in Kati Horna's photographic series *Ode to Necrophilia* (1962) published in the Mexican avant-garde journal *S.NOB*. Carrington's mediated aesthetic identities multiply through arts documentaries that translate her photographic presence on screen. *Leonora Carrington and The House of Fear* (Kim Evans 1992, UK) entails the artist's cross-cultural experiences and the passage of time via object-based installations of Lee Miller's photographic prints arranged next to *calacas* – the decorative skeleton figures used during the Day of the Dead festival in Mexico. Comparably, *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist* (Teresa Griffiths 2017, UK) opens with slow cadence impressions and evocative soundscape from the Day of the Dead celebrations, collaged with Lee Miller's portraits of the young Leonora Carrington.

Kim Evan's *Omnibus* episode, which to a great extent has 'set the standard' for later documentary interpretations on Carrington's life, also features audio dramatizations of Carrington's literary works, performed by Helena Bonham Carter. Leonora Carrington's mythic status as a surrealist is conveyed through the adaptation of her short story *The Debutante* (1937-38) – published by André Breton in his *Anthology of Black Humour* (1940) – and interpreted as a companion piece to *Self-Portrait/Inn of the Dawn Horse* (1937-38). The *Omnibus* version of the story remixes fragments from Hans Richter's surrealist film *Dreams That Money Can Buy* (1947) – a creative collaboration between Max Ernst, Fernand Léger, Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, Alexander Calder and Richter himself. Composed of seven episodes, each surreal dream sequence was written and directed by each one of avant-garde artists. *Leonora Carrington and The House of Fear* re-uses footage from Max Ernst's sequence *Desire* that includes uncredited appearance of Dorothea Tanning. In analogous manner, Carrington's flight from her family's bourgeois virtues into André Breton's Surrealist circle in Paris is portrayed via montaged fragments from René Clair's experimental short *Entr'acte* (1924). Hence, the *Omnibus* documentary constructs Carrington's artistic identity through allusions to her fellow Surrealists.

The surrealist ethos of *The Debutante* has also been re-interpreted by Ally Acker in her indie documentary *The Flowering of the Crone: Leonora Carrington, Another Reality* (2008). Acker's dramatization features the filmmaker herself performing each character in *The Debutante* as a

recreated version of selected Carrington's paintings. In the role of the debutante, Ally Acker appears in a pink wig resembling a female personage from Carrington's artwork *Nine, Nine, Nine* (1948). The character of the girl's mother emerges as a puppet reconstruction of the cloth-covered figure in Carrington's painting *The Ancestor* (1968). This theatrical rendition of *The Debutante* is supported with interviews with Leonora Carrington and fellow artist Stella Snead who humorously recall their experiences of 'coming out.' Carrington ridicules her visit as a debutante to the court of George V in 1935. *The Flowering of the Crone: Leonora Carrington, Another Reality* problematizes the patriarchal norms of Carrington's upbringing, as well as the gendered roles of *muse* and *femme-enfant*, that male Surrealist imposed on female artists related to the movement. The documentary builds its rhetorical impulse on Carrington's famous statement: "I didn't have time to be anyone's muse... I was too busy rebelling against my family and learning to be an artist." (Chadwick 1985, 66) Ally Acker creates her critique on the reproduction of patriarchy within the Surrealist movement by remixing episodes from Germaine Dulac's *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (1928) that has been celebrated as an early expression of feminist filmmaking. Departing from Carrington's emancipatory representation of older women in the paintings *The Magdalens* (1986) and *Kron Flower* (1987), Acker's feminist work reproduces Carrington's artistic identity against the social constructs of gender and age.

As an innovative perspective on the documentary construction of Carrington's artistic identity, *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist* employs animation to translate the artist's subjective perceptions, memories and spatial imagination. In *Animated Documentary* (2013) Annabelle Honess Roe has drawn a distinction between *representational* and *evocative* animation. Roe argues that animated documentaries convey "subjective, conscious experience via animation that is evocative rather than directly representational. Using devices such as metaphor and metamorphosis and through exploring the expressive potential of a variety of materials and techniques, these films encourage us to imagine what it is like to experience the world from someone else's perspective." (Roe 2013, 15) In this regard, the animated episodes in *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist* recur as a symbolic leitmotif evocative of the artist's subjective state. The animated fragments employ a parallax technique (layering and depth of field) in order to create an immersive effect within Carrington's painting *Down Below* (1941) that corresponds to her homonymous memoir on her traumatic experience in the mental asylum in Spain. The creation of a depth illusion within the painting positions the viewer within the pictorial space and achieves a 'tableau vivant' effect. Hence, animation functions as a medium for recreating Carrington's *macroscopic* and *microscopic* perception of space, depicted in her narrative *En bas/Down Below* (1943). In this vein, Steven Jacobs has argued that "by breaking down the storytelling paintings into their narrative elements, the filmic storytelling is done through the painter's own eye." (Jacobs 2011, 9) Michael Renov, moreover, considers that an "artful documentary" utilizes more effectively the potentialities of its chosen medium to convey poetic qualities, ideas and feelings. (Renov 1993, 35) In this sense, it could be noted that Teresa Griffiths' documentary employs animation as an aesthetic tool for fulfilling its expressive dimension.

Via animation techniques, *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist* also uncovers underrecognized aspects of Carrington's early artistic formation. Her childhood sketchbook *Animals from a Different Planit* (1927) is 'revived' via animated simulation of Carrington's actual process of drawing. Likewise, the watercolour series *Sisters of the Moon* (1932) emerges on the screen as if created by the hand of the young Leonora Carrington. The series was completed at Miss Penrose's boarding school in Florence, Italy, where Carrington discovered the works of the Italian artists Paolo Uccello, Giuseppe Archimboldo and Antonio Pisanello – recognized influences on her own visual language. As Susan Aberth notes, at that time "her work appears to make a developmental leap with a series of highly imaginative watercolours that reveal more control of her materials and greater composition coherence." (Aberth 2017, 25)

Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist also features remediated paintings form 1936 when Carrington became the first student of the French Purist Amédée Ozenfant in his London-based academy. During the same period, Carrington painted the *Portrait of Joan Powell* (1936) that has been interpreted as an emancipatory female representation and an expression of youthful

rebellion. Carrington's childhood friend, Joan Powell, is depicted with a daring look, smoking a cigarette and reading Jean Cocteau's book *Les enfant terrible* (1930). As Whitney Chadwick states, in this painting Leonora Carrington portrayed her own image of female youth in revolt. The portrait was painted "a year or two before her first encounter with Surrealism in 1937, owing more to the previous decade's vision of *demi-monde* than to Breton's Elect Woman. In many ways it incarnates precisely that image of woman – worldly, independent, tough – against which [Breton] himself rebelled during the 1920s, and which he replaced with a more ethereal and clairvoyant vision." (Chadwick 1985, 67) According to Chadwick, Cocteau's book has provided Carrington with "an emblem of revolt both literary and bohemian" (1985, 68), while Susan Aberth recognizes that it has been adopted as a "manifesto by a generation of alienated adolescents." (2004, 15) In this context, it can be argued that within Carrington's visual and literary texts, the plot of a young girl reading a book is transformed into a trope signifying female emancipation. In the short story *The Debutante* (1937-38), the heroine (Carrington's alter-ego) escapes the ball, preferring to read Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. On the actual occasion of a family visit to Ascot horse racings, Carrington chose to spend the day reading Aldous Huxley's novel *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936).

As evoked by the documentary *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist*, the artist's early creative experiments are vital for understanding her mature artistic imagination. Susan Aberth has suggested that Carrington's early artistic vison is influenced by Edmund Dulac and Arthur Rackham's illustrations for children's books – highly popular in the early part of the 20th century and representative of the so-called Golden Age of book illustration (Aberth 2017, 27). Salomon Grimberg firmly states that Leonora Carrington "loved the illustrations by Arthur Rackham and owned a signed copy of fairy tales he had illustrated." (Grimberg 2008, 47) In this vein, it should be noted that a recent publication by the Carrington extended family in England, *Prim: A Nursery Story* (Carrington Association 2019), includes a selection of early watercolour drawings by Carrington, which bear aesthetic similarities with Rackham's visual approach and techniques. For instance, Carrington's seasonal drawing of Father Christmas surrounded by a plethora of popular characters, such as Minnie and Mickey Mouse, Winnie-the-Pooh, Piglet and Peter Pan (signed in November 1931) resonates with Arthur Rackham's lithograph print *Father Christmas's Book Tea* (1901-1920), featuring Santa Claus and various protagonists from *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Jungle Book* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. This early affinity with re-mixing various references – even before discovering the typical Surrealists techniques of collage, bricolage and juxtaposition – can be understood as central for the formation of Carrington's artistic imaginary.

As the television documentaries *Leonora Carrington, imaginación a galope fino* (*Leonora Carrington, Galloping Imagination*, Fernando Navarro 2006, Mexico) and *Invocación surrealista: Leonora Carrington* (*Surrealist Invocation*, Sandra Luz Aguilar 2007, Mexico) have conveyed, Carrington's mature oeuvre displays a cross-cultural fusion of motifs from pre-Colombian Mayan traditions, Celtic folklore, Egyptian mythology and Buddhist religion. A cultural transplantation (in Salman Rushdie's terms) of Carrington's mural *The Magic World of the Maya* (1963) reveals that the artist mixes Mayan myth with elements of Celtic iconography. As Susan Aberth argues, "Carrington eschewed direct quotations in her work of pyramids or pre-Colombian statuary, so important in the work of Diego Rivera and other Mexican artists in their struggle to forge a modern national identity. Instead, Carrington was inspired by indigenous shamanistic beliefs and practices – frequently presided over by women – which coincided with her own fascination with the occult." (Aberth 1992, 84) Clare Kunny has also insisted that Carrington's "Mexican paintings developed from the multiplicity of her experiences, mingled with her embrace of intellectual knowledge spanning through Celtic myth to Maya beliefs." (Kunny 1996, 179) Likewise, Antle and Conley consider that "Leonora Carrington succeeded in establishing real interaction with non-European cultures. Unlike Breton, whose fabled trip to Mexico in 1938 resulted principally in his discovering confirmation of his own artistic principles, Carrington, who settled in Mexico City after World War Two, traveled extensively in her adopted country. For example, her trip to the Chiapas region deepened her knowledge of Mayan culture in a way that allowed her to absorb Mayan cosmogony and incorporate it into her work." (2015, 2) Similarly, the discussed documentaries – produced on both sides of the Atlantic – reveal

that Carrington's creative process and imaginary can be understood as cross-cultural in line with her artistic approach of transgressing national, cultural and disciplinary boundaries.

Conclusion

This article is the first academic study to explore a range of arts documentaries about the British-born/Mexican Surrealist, Leonora Carrington, and the construction of her cultural and artistic identity on screen. It has been argued that Carrington's remediated paintings of interiors can be interpreted as an imaginary reconstruction of her fragmented perception of home – a creative enunciation of her *imaginary homelands* (in Salman Rushdie's terms). Departing from *Leonora Carrington o el sortilegio irónico* (Felipe Cazals 1965, Mexico), the discussed documentaries reconstruct Carrington's *imaginary homelands* via recurring mediations of her studio and liminal domestic spaces – terraces, passages and staircases – that symbolically evoke the artist's senses of displacement, living in between cultures and finding refuge in art. The *Omnibus* episode, *Leonora Carrington and the House of Fear* (Kim Evans 1992, UK), destabilizes notions of 'Englishness' and conveys the artist's experience of exile through combining footage from Carrington's home in Mexico City and the mansion where she was raised in England. By following a similar representational approach, *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist* (Teresa Griffiths 2017, UK) builds a discourse on the artist's recent (re)discovery in Britain. Carrington's journey as a European refugee in flight from Nazism has been further problematized in *Leonora Carrington y el juego surrealista* (Javier Martín-Domínguez 2012, Spain). Hence, in line with the artist's experiences of crossing geopolitical and cultural boundaries, the analyzed documentaries (re)produce Carrington's cultural identity as a multi-layered, hybrid and in-flux entity.

By its own rhetorical and aesthetic means, each documentary production also renders Carrington's journey as a signifier of her flight from patriarchy and *a passport* to artistic liberation (as put by Whitney Chadwick). *Leonora Carrington and the House of Fear* defines Carrington's artistic identity through allusions to her fellow Surrealists. Kim Evan's work explores the surrealist ethos of Carrington's short story *The Debutante* (1937-38) into a dramatized version that remixes archival images and footage, such as Lee Miller's 1930s photographic portraits and fragments from Hans Richter's *Dreams That Money Can Buy* (1947) and René Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924). Likewise, *The Flowering of the Crone: Leonora Carrington, Another Reality* (Ally Acker 2008, USA) dramatizes *The Debutante* via employing episodes from Germaine Dulac's early feminist expression *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (1928). Hence, Acker constructs Carrington's artistic identity via feminist discourse on the artist's revolt against the bourgeois virtues of her upper-class upbringing, as well as against the gendered roles of *muse* and *femme-enfant* within the Surrealist movement. In an innovative manner, *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist* achieves its expressive dimension via animated episodes that recur as a symbolic leitmotif evocative of Carrington's subjective state. Teresa Griffiths' work also suggests that Carrington's early artistic formation is central for understanding the artist's later creative expression. As argued here, Carrington's early experiments with remixing multiple references translate into her mature creative process, defined by a cross-cultural fusion of Celtic and Mayan influences. Overall, in reconstructing Carrington's creative imagination via a mixture of diverse cultural sources and expressive techniques, the studied arts documentaries signal that Leonora Carrington's artistic identity and imaginary can be understood as cross-cultural.

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