

The voyaging reality: María Izquierdo and Antonin Artaud, Mexico and Paris

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Abstract

As Dawn Ades has stated, 'The intersections between surrealism and art in Mexico are numerous, intimate and contentious.'¹ These latter two qualities certainly characterise the creative collaboration between Antonin Artaud and the Mexican painter María Izquierdo during Artaud's visit to Mexico in 1936. While Artaud's interest in and writing on Izquierdo's painting has barely registered within the prolific studies of his work, the interaction between the two is continually noted in contemporary accounts of Izquierdo's career. The connection between Artaud and Izquierdo has not, however, received any in-depth analysis. In order to investigate this significant intersection between surrealism and art in Mexico, this paper follows the voyage of a painting by Izquierdo called *Consolation*, from its inception and reception in 1933 as a work of indigenist, nationalist significance within post-revolutionary Mexico, through its inclusion in an exhibition of Izquierdo's work organised by Artaud in Paris in 1937, to its categorisation as 'art brut' in a surrealist collection of manuscripts and artworks.

The recent exhibition *Kahlo's Contemporaries, Mexico: women: surrealism* at the University of Essex Gallery included a mysterious and striking watercolour painted in 1933 by María Izquierdo.² *Consolation* was lent by a private collector in Paris, and although it is a small work (27 x 20.3 cm), the painting's impact is so dramatic that the decision was made to hang it on a wall by itself in the gallery [fig. 1].

Izquierdo's work was an essential inclusion in the exhibition, which sought to emphasise the abundance of women artists working in post-revolutionary Mexico and also to underscore the widely varied connections many of these women developed with the surrealists. Izquierdo was a key figure in the Mexican art world of the 1930s and 1940s who constantly exhibited her work in solo and group exhibitions, and her painting was celebrated in essays by nearly all of the most significant art critics, poets and intellectuals in Mexico at the time. In keeping with the period's nationalist rhetoric, Izquierdo's painting was regularly read as deeply reflecting the authentic Mexican spirit and it was with her series of small watercolours and gouaches painted throughout the 1930s, such as *Consolation*, that her artistic reputation was made.

Furthermore, it was through these small paintings that Izquierdo entered the surrealist 'orbit,' for when Antonin Artaud arrived in Mexico City in 1936, he befriended Izquierdo, and declared her the only painter truly reflecting the indigenous roots of Mexico in her work.³ Artaud took around thirty of Izquierdo's watercolours with him back to Paris and held an exhibition of her work at the Galerie Van den Berg in Montparnasse at the beginning of 1937.⁴ Most of the exhibited works have since disappeared, some perhaps confiscated and destroyed when Artaud was institutionalised later in 1937, some perhaps destroyed during the Second World War, some possibly lying dormant in private collections or even in dusty attics. Recent years have seen art



historians attempting, with little luck, to track down these paintings.⁵ During the process of conducting research for the *Kahlo's Contemporaries* exhibition, it became evident that *Consolation* is probably one of the paintings that Artaud took with him to Paris.



Figure 1: María Izquierdo, *Consolation*, 1933, gouache on ricepaper, (27 x 20.3 cm).
Reproduced courtesy of owner (private collection).

Reflecting on *Consolation* and its travels and reception, the work can be said to shed light



on three intertwining topics: the aesthetics of nationalism within the visual culture of post-revolutionary Mexico, the ideological role of Mexico within surrealism, and women's place within these dialogues. This paper will examine both the metamorphosis of Izquierdo's imagery when she came into contact with Artaud, and the metamorphosis of the reception of her paintings as they travelled from a nationalist context in Mexico City to a surrealist context in Paris.

The title of the paper, 'The Voyaging Reality', is borrowed from an essay that Artaud wrote to accompany Izquierdo's Paris exhibition, entitled 'Le mexique et l'esprit primitif: María Izquierdo'. In this essay, Artaud described Izquierdo as an indigenous Mexican, and asserted that her paintings exemplified a superior expression of reality that was found in both dreams and the primitive mind; the basis of this reality was metamorphosis. Artaud wrote that within these states of being:

...the shapes of objects sprout out and join their singular properties with the properties of all the other objects. Then objects don't form the real, but are in the real, travelling ... exchanging their strengths from one to the other.⁶

This, for Artaud, was the 'voyaging reality'. His notion of objects travelling and constantly metamorphosing inspires this paper's examination of the painting *Consolation* and the way it has travelled and been an object of varying significance to the different people and ideologies in contact with it. Often these ideologies have reflected problematic notions of the 'primitive,' the 'Indian,' and as will be examined further along, the 'insane.'

Izquierdo painted *Consolation* in Mexico City during the period in which she was collaborating very closely with the painter Rufino Tamayo. The two artists developed a technique using impasto-applied watercolour in tiny, vibrant brushstrokes to create a purposely naïve or even slightly crude effect. Thematically these works present poetic scenes of nude women who blow horns and heavily recline or meditate among architectural ruins such as fallen columns and broken archways. Izquierdo also painted many scenes of peasant women ritually mourning on their knees in front of coffins and cemeteries.

Like most artists in post-revolutionary Mexico, Izquierdo and Tamayo were attempting to articulate a specifically Mexican identity through their work. Both the intricately textured surface of their paintings and their colour palette were meant to reflect the aesthetics of the Mexican pueblo and indigenous culture, which they saw as the basis of Mexican culture. Their concepts undoubtedly romanticised these groups and positioned them as simultaneously central and on the outside, as can be seen from an essay Tamayo wrote in 1933:

Our people - Indian and mestizo - are not a festive people, but profoundly tragic, with a preference for colours that are moderate and balanced, those of a people who bear the weight of pain. White, black, blue, muted earth-tones are the colours that characterise



our painting because they are the colours preferred by the people here. If we observe the tones of their clothing, the facades of their houses, the colours of their daily utensils, we can plainly confirm this. You will see warm colours, yes, but muted and heavy.⁷

Judging from the way Tamayo's characterisation of the pueblo begins with an inclusive 'our' but rapidly turns into 'their,' it appears that for urban artists such as Tamayo and Izquierdo, the pueblo was simultaneously 'us' and 'them,' a group they were a part of, but only to a certain extent. The pueblo was also something they could theorise about from the outside. Furthermore this Mexican pueblo was conceived of not as joyous or colourful, but as one that 'bore the weight of pain' - something necessary to reflect in modern Mexican painting.

In terms of imagery, Izquierdo's paintings are more poetic and mysterious than the overtly historical and didactic work of the Mexican muralists, but her scenes of rubble, ruin and mourning also arguably engage in the nationalist dialogue by commemorating the destruction of the recent Revolution, which killed nearly one million people and left the country in shambles. Within Izquierdo's images male bodies are not directly represented, yet are everywhere alluded to through the broken columns that lie scattered in the countryside. The paintings are like small paper cenotaphs - monuments to the dead who are lost or lie elsewhere.

However, in some paintings such as *Consolation*, Izquierdo creates ambiguous scenes that purposefully evade a singular narrative, but may allude to the experiences of women. Does *Consolation* depict some profound heartbreak or grief? A standing nude woman comforts another nude who lies on the ground by covering her with a white sheet, veil or shroud in a room that is empty except for an incongruous red column. A small angel serenades the women from a window with a red horn, providing comfort or perhaps beckoning them to leave behind the pain of the body. The title of the painting, *Consolation*, would appear to confirm the meaning of the painting as one of comfort in the face of profound sadness. However, this title was only given to the painting sixty years after it was painted, when it was sold in Sotheby's 1993 Latin American Art sale in New York. The original title of the painting - if Izquierdo gave it a title - is unclear.⁸

Comfort and consolation is one reading of the painting, but its symbolism is multi-faceted. The shroud-like quality of the white cloth and the angel blowing a horn at the window could instead signify that this is a scene of death, although the reclining woman is clearly still moving, not in rigor mortis. The spread-legged position of the woman on the ground could alternatively make this an image of new life: childbirth with a midwife. There is furthermore a certain sexualised element to the scene - the covering of the nude's face serves to accentuate the curves of her body. Could the standing woman actually be removing the white sheet in an erotic disrobing, with the angel serving as a symbol of desire? In each of these readings, the postures of the figures, the action of covering or removing the white sheet or veil, and the fantastical creature at the window create a scene that addresses the connection between the body and the spirit - is this an allegory of a physical or emotional state? The covering, veiling, shrouding - or



perhaps uncovering or disrobing - of the nude figure also underscores the painting's ambiguous expression of transformation. It is as Erica Segre's writing on the veil in Mexican photography indicates:

The veil as sudarium, shroud and envelope/wrap signifies revelation and concealment, transparency and opacity, the embodied and the immaterial, the liminal and the universal, essence and appearance, the temporal and the timeless, depth and ephemerality, tactility and the intangible, the enclosed and the limitless - in a surfeit of always inferred but also always deferred content.⁹

The Mexican art critics and poets who wrote about Izquierdo's painting often analysed it in terms of both national expression and gender. For example, the poet José Gorostiza felt that Izquierdo's painting reached an authentic Mexican core, and that this had less to do with her themes or the textures and colours of her paintings than with the heavy female emotions channelled through the works. In words that resonate with the themes of covering, veiling or exposing so clear in *Consolation*, Gorostiza wrote: 'Ruins and women operate as a screen behind which María Izquierdo powerfully describes her anguish, her fear, her solitude.'¹⁰ Like the pueblo, Izquierdo and her painting could thus be celebrated as a symbol of the tragic, profound Mexican spirit. Furthermore, her images were transparent 'screens' through which could be seen Izquierdo's own emotions, or perhaps screens onto which critics could project their own interests and theories.¹¹

This is the environment within which paintings such as *Consolation* were initially conceived and received, but they would travel and enter new ideologies. When Artaud arrived in Mexico at the beginning of 1936, Izquierdo had been working on her watercolours and gouaches for around four years. These works would come to hold a central position within Artaud's visualisations of Mexico, and in exchange Izquierdo's works would come to be influenced by Artaud's concepts.

Artaud had become convinced that it was necessary to travel to Mexico in a 'voyage to the land of speaking blood' in order to find an alternative to the 'rot' of European culture, as he put it.¹² Before he left for Mexico, Artaud developed a highly esoteric vision of the country based upon Mesoamerican solar and astrology-based religions and rites of sacrifice, and he hoped to find traces of these in contemporary indigenous groups and in the Mexican earth itself. He stated:

Bound to the soil, buried in streams of volcanic lava, stirring in the Indian blood, there exists in Mexico the magical reality of a culture whose fires it would, doubtless, take little to actually rekindle.¹³



Artaud's concept of 'fire' was central to his views. As he saw it, 'Every civilisation started from fire and the idea of fire nourishes and sustains all aspects of Mexican life.'¹⁴ Artaud felt that this fire was not only a life force, but was also 'the drive that transformed the coppery men of ancient Mexico into determined supporters of death.'¹⁵ For Artaud, the balance created through the continual flow between life and death was the antithesis of European culture's foundation in the written word: 'To write is to prevent the mind from moving in the midst of the world of forms like a vast respiration. Because writing fixes the mind and crystallises it into a form, and from form is born idolatry.'¹⁶ The harmony brought about through fire was the means through which man's thoughts could be ever-transformed and not corrupted in the static of written word: 'This idea of life is magical, it assumes the presence of fire in all the expressions of human thought.'¹⁷ After encountering Izquierdo's painting, Artaud would come to describe this continual metamorphosis as 'the voyaging reality.'

Artaud appears to have met Izquierdo shortly after his arrival in Mexico City, and Izquierdo's daughter Aurora has recounted that for part of his visit to Mexico, Artaud lived in Izquierdo's house, which was also her art studio. Aurora recalls that the two spent much time together drinking coffee and visiting art exhibitions.¹⁸ Artaud began to write about Izquierdo's painting, incorporating it into his esoteric vision of Mexico, a realm of lava, buried indigenous consciousness, and a certain menacing violence: 'The painting of María Izquierdo demonstrates that the red spirit has not died, that its sap intensely boils, fomented by the long effort of waiting, of incubation, of maceration.'¹⁹ Having likely viewed Izquierdo at work on her paintings, Artaud saw her physical actions and brushstrokes as channelling indigenous culture, stating that her work was 'born of a paintbrush with a species of inner vigour' that denoted a 'powerful reference to remote ancestors.'²⁰

While Izquierdo's watercolours such as *Consolation* had always contained a metaphysical element, with the arrival of Artaud they now began to express an increased violence and imagery of mysterious astrological and solar rituals. Intriguingly, Izquierdo was inspired by Artaud's concepts of Mexican indigenous culture, but uniquely used these ideas allegorically to underscore the situation for women in 1930s Mexico. The Andrés Blaisten collection in Mexico City contains two striking paintings that are highly representative of Artaud's influence on Izquierdo's painting: *Allegory of Work* (1936) and *Allegory of Liberty* (1937).²¹

In *Allegory of Work*, a desperate nude crouches in a hilly landscape and like the figure in *Consolation*, covers her face with her hands [fig. 2]. Towering over the woman, a menacing, muscular pair of male legs emerges from the cloudy skies. In the place of genitals, or perhaps as a sort of astrological codpiece, this god-like figure has a golden sphere covered with symbols of the moon and stars, and rays of light or fire shoot out from the sphere. As Adriana Zavala has suggested, 'Whereas in many of Izquierdo's images the phallic symbolism is implicit, signified by columns and tree trunks, here the symbolism is overt and overwhelms the female figure.'²² The title of the painting seems purposefully obscure: what kind of 'work' is being undertaken here?



The cowering woman and the sexual, threatening masculine presence may indicate that this is an allegorical commentary on the exploitation of women. At the same time, the fire-rays shooting out of the male legs along with the esotericism and violence of the image reveal Izquierdo's awareness of Artaud's concepts of Mexican culture and fire.



Figure 2: María Izquierdo, *Allegory of Work*, 1936, watercolour and tempera on paper, 21 x 27.5 cm. Reproduced courtesy of Museo Blaisten, Mexico.

Allegory of Liberty works with similar mysterious motifs of fire, mythical figures and violence against women [fig. 3]. Along with thick black smoke, a chimney exudes an apocalyptic creature: a white winged being carries a golden torch in one hand, and in the other clutches the severed heads of five women, held by their long black hair. If the figures in *Consolation* and *Allegory of Work* cover their faces to protect against some tragedy or horror, these decapitated figures have met exactly such a horrific fate, their heads bundled together into a sort of grotesque human bouquet. The repetition of their severed heads recalls the many images from pre-Hispanic codices in which warriors and priests clutch the severed heads of their sacrificial victims. The small, rather comic angel of *Consolation* has become in *Allegory of Liberty* an angel of sacrifice and death. This white figure flies heavenward - towards the same bright rays of light that appear in *Allegory of Work*. The painting addresses the costs of war and the price of freedom within the nation-state, with the standard allegorical figure of winged liberty serving as the bearer of the violent sacrifice required for liberty's fulfilment: human lives. The decapitated, sacrificed women are victims of powers completely beyond their control, ironically undermining the



painting's title of 'liberty.'



Figure 3: María Izquierdo, *Allegory of Liberty*, 1937, watercolour on paper, 21 x 26.5 cm. Reproduced courtesy of Museo Blaisten, Mexico.

Through her interaction with Artaud, Izquierdo's work metamorphosed into an allegorical vision that melded a dark, mystical and perhaps oneiric vision of pre-Hispanic culture with a modern, post-revolutionary sensibility. While the collaboration of Izquierdo and Artaud has sometimes subsequently led to the designation of Izquierdo as a 'Latin American surrealist,' Izquierdo would always adamantly refuse to classify her work in this way, stating in 1939: 'There are two kinds of painting: mental and emotional. Surrealism is worked out in the mind, and I paint emotionally.'²³

Not only did Izquierdo's imagery change during Artaud's visit to Mexico, but the reception and context of her painting changed when Artaud took her work back to Paris for exhibition. While in Mexico her work and person served as a symbol of Mexican national identity, in Paris her work became a symbol of Artaud's conceived alternative to stifling European rational consciousness. Both of these receptions arguably exoticised Izquierdo, but not necessarily in ways to which she would have objected.

Izquierdo's daughter has stated that the Paris exhibition was meant to serve two purposes. Izquierdo hoped to expand her professional reputation to Europe, but she also wanted to help Artaud by raising money through the sale of her paintings, allowing him to enter a drug rehabilitation program.²⁴ While it is unclear how much money was raised through the exhibition,



the paintings also held another significance for Artaud as the visual evidence of his journey and his concepts of Mexican indigenous culture. In this sense the works became Artaud's theoretical postcards.

There is no known exhibition catalogue for Izquierdo's Paris show, and there are currently only seven paintings that are known for certain to have been in the exhibition or that were very likely in the exhibition. As Artaud felt that the indigenous soul was so strong within Izquierdo that she was unconsciously repeating its voice, a voice that knew the mysteries of death and ritual, it isn't surprising to find many of the paintings in his exhibition were those highlighting scenes of syncretic Mexican worship, often within a funereal context.

Among the paintings Artaud exhibited are *Cemetery* (1936), which depicts the walls of a cemetery with coffins seen through the entrance, and *Prostration* (1936), an image of two peasant women ritually prostrating themselves in front of a cemetery entrance. Both of these paintings are currently lost and only known through the black and white reproductions that appeared with Artaud's article published in Paris. Another painting, *La Manda* (1933), was also probably in Artaud's exhibition.²⁵ The painting is strange and striking: three women plead and pray and mourn towards something that is outside of the painting, while in the foreground an eerie stone head glares out at the viewer. A sense of foreboding, punitive ritual is created. This painting was long held in a private collection in Paris and was recently purchased by a museum in the United States.²⁶

Artaud's exhibition transformed Izquierdo's paintings into a personal conduit through which he sought to express an alternate reality to European culture. While his use of the female and the non-European as an uncontaminated source of creativity and identity was not entirely removed from the practices of Mexican cultural nationalism, his concepts of women and so-called 'primitive' groups should be seen as in closer continuum with surrealist practices. The audience for Artaud's exhibition is unclear, however, so it is uncertain how the surrealist group responded to Izquierdo's works. As André Breton and Artaud had reconciled in early 1937, it seems likely that Breton would have been at the exhibition. By all accounts, however, during Breton's visit to Mexico in 1938 he never met Izquierdo, and her painting was not included in the 1940 *Exposicion Internacional del Surrealismo* in Mexico City.

Returning to *Consolation* may help shed some light on the surrealist reception of Izquierdo's work. The painting is thought to have been one of the works in Artaud's exhibition because it later surfaced as part of a surrealist's 'art brut' collection of manuscripts and paintings that were originally owned by Artaud, Pierre Mabille, George Sadoul, Roger Blin and Roger Caillois. *Consolation* was placed amongst and juxtaposed with a watercolour by a German psychiatric patient, a manuscript by Artaud, and an Indian ink drawing by the nineteenth-century French psychiatric patient, Emile Hodinos.²⁷ The juxtaposition of Izquierdo's painting with the work of Hodinos is especially interesting. Hodinos was an apprentice to an engraver of medals before being institutionalised for 'manic excitement' at the age of twenty-three. He would spend



the rest of his life hospitalised, and drew thousands of designs for medals based upon a personal symbolic system. Nude female figures covered or partially covered with a transparent veil and dismembered parts of female bodies are central features within Hodinos' imagery.

It is not clear if the surrealist collector knew what he was looking at when he acquired *Consolation* and classified it as art brut. Perhaps this designation was simply due to the association of the piece with Artaud, who would spend most of the rest of his life institutionalised. The designation is obviously problematic, as Izquierdo was a well-known professional painter whose work regularly appeared in major exhibitions in Mexico City and the United States. Was this collector purposely colliding the art of a female, non-European with the art of asylum patients, or was this classification simply due to the raw, naïve and revelatory qualities of *Consolation*, also the common qualities of art brut?

Either way, the naïve quality of the painting, originally intellectually and ideologically conceived by Izquierdo as a means of expressing an authentic Mexican identity, was reconfigured by this collector as a raw expression of some unmediated, irrepressible state. The placement of *Consolation* within a surrealist art brut collection may also underscore the eclecticism and chance encounter so central to the surrealist sensibility.

The interpretation and classification of *Consolation* continues to evolve. In the *Kahlo's Contemporaries* exhibition, the painting was juxtaposed with the work of five other women working in Mexico in the period, including artists more closely affiliated with the surrealists such as Leonora Carrington and Alice Rahon. It could however be argued that *Consolation* would most coherently be exhibited alongside the work of Izquierdo's male colleagues who were working with similar imagery at the time, including Tamayo, Raul Anguiano and Carlos Orozco Romero. The poet Horacio Amigorena has perhaps taken the interpretational approach most akin to Izquierdo's artistic intentions. In his short piece for the *Kahlo's Contemporaries* exhibition, Amigorena does not attempt to classify or define *Consolation*, but instead commemorates the painting's mystery and allows it to continue its voyage:

Maria Izquierdo's painting is a sphinx. It has been called *Consolation* since it was sold at auction in New York. But it gives us no consolation. The figures within it, torn from the jungle, modelled in earthy colours, discreetly attract the passerby and abruptly confront him with the sly question, 'tell me what is going on' ... The spectator, proud of being accosted so intimately by strangers, looks closely at the image and without too much thought abandons himself utterly to subtle interpretations, for the enigma never loosens its grip.²⁸



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¹ Dawn Ades, 'Mexico, Women, Surrealism', *Kahlo's Contemporaries: Mexico: women: surrealism*, Colchester 2005, 19.

² This exhibition, curated by Dawn Ades, Valerie Fraser and Terri Geis and organised by the University of Essex Collection of Latin American Art and the AHRC Research Centre for the Study of Surrealism and its Legacies, was held at the University of Essex Gallery from 3 October – 5 November 2005. The other artists included in the exhibition were Leonora Carrington, Olga Costa, Lola Cueto, Alice Rahon and Rosa Rolanda. See exhibition catalogue details in footnote above.

³ To use the phrasing of Dawn Ades. See her essay 'Orbits of the Savage Moon: Surrealism and the Representation of the Female Subject in Mexico and Postwar Paris', Whitney Chadwick (ed.), *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism and Self Representation*, Cambridge, Mass. 1998, 106-127.

⁴ The exact number of paintings Artaud took with him is unknown, but Izquierdo's daughter, Aurora Posadas Izquierdo, has speculated that it was around thirty. Author's interview, along with Carlos Molina, with Aurora Posadas Izquierdo, State of Mexico, 6 September 2005.

⁵ For example, the art historian Olivier Debroise, one of the first to present Izquierdo to a contemporary audience in his book *Figuras en el tropico* (1984), has attempted to track down some of these lost paintings, with no luck. Debroise in email to author, 22 July 2003.

⁶ Antonin Artaud, 'Le mexique et l'esprit primitif: María Izquierdo,' *L'Amour de l'art*, 7 (October 1937). Translated into English by Daniel Garza Usabiaga and Terri Geis.

⁷ Rufino Tamayo, 'El nacionalismo y el movimiento pictórico,' *Crisol*, Mexico City, May 1933.

⁸ As communicated in an email to the author from the current owner of *Consolation*, 14 August 2005.

⁹ Erica Segre, 'The Hermeneutics of the Veil in Mexican Photography: of *rebozos*, *sábanas*, *huipiles* and *lienzos de Verónica*,' *Hispanic Research Journal*, 6:1 (February 2005), 39-65. I am especially grateful to Erica Segre for her suggestion of the potential reading of the veil in *Consolation* during my presentation of an earlier draft of this paper at the 'Kahlo's Contemporaries' Symposium at the University of Essex on 4 November 2005.

¹⁰ José Gorostiza, 'La pintura de María Izquierdo,' *Mexico al día*, Mexico City, 15 December 1933.

¹¹ José Gorostiza was among the many poets and writers of the Contemporáneos group who promoted and wrote on Izquierdo. For a detailed analysis of their interpretations of her painting and ways in which they may have collapsed her body with her art, see Adriana Zavala, *Constituting the Indian/Female Body in Mexican Painting, Cinema and Visual Culture, 1900-1950*, unpublished PhD, Brown University, 2001.

¹² Antonin Artaud in a note/poem from 1935, 'Excerpts from notebooks and private papers (1935),' in Susan Sontag (ed.), *Selected Writings*, Berkeley 1988, 353.

¹³ Artaud, 'Mexico and Civilisation,' in Alastair Hamilton and Victor Corti (eds and trans.), *Death of Satan and Other Mystical Writings*, London 1974, 9.



¹⁴ Artaud, *Death of Satan*, 9.

¹⁵ Artaud, 'La cultura eterna de Mexico,' *El Nacional*, 13 July 1936.

¹⁶ Artaud, 'El teatro y los dioses,' lecture given at the Anfiteatro Bolivar, Mexico City, 29 February 1936. Artaud sent a copy of his speech to Jean Paulhan, and part of it was also printed in the Mexico City newspaper *El Nacional* on 24 May 1936.

¹⁷ Artaud, 'El teatro y los dioses.'

¹⁸ The author and Carlos Molina in conversation with Aurora Posadas Izquierdo, State of Mexico, 6 September 2005.

¹⁹ Artaud, *Mensajes Revolucionarios: Textos sobre México* (1936), Mexico City 1999, 134.

²⁰ Artaud, *Mensajes Revolucionarios*, 133.

²¹ The Andrés Blaisten collection contains a significant number of important Izquierdo paintings. See the entries of Dawn Ades and Terri Geis in James Oles (ed.), *Arte moderno en México: Colección de Andrés Blaisten*, Mexico 2005.

²² Adriana Zavala, 'María Izquierdo,' in Mary Kay Vaughan and Steven Lewis (eds), *The Virgin and the Eagle: National Identity, Memory and Utopia in Mexico, 1920-1940*, Durham, North Carolina 2005, 119.

²³ Izquierdo quoted in Marguerite Donne, 'Mexico's Best-Known Woman Painter,' *Mexico Today*, Mexico City, 11 March 1939.

²⁴ The author and Carlos Molina in conversation with Aurora Posadas Izquierdo, State of Mexico, 6 September 2005.

²⁵ Adriana Zavala has suggested that the title *La Manda* was first used when the painting appeared in the 1988 Centro Cultural/Arte Contemporáneo monograph on Izquierdo. Zavala believes the painting may have been exhibited under the title *Mourners* in Izquierdo's February 1933 exhibition in Mexico City. I thank Zavala for sharing her ideas with me in an email on 23 October 2005.

²⁶ *La Manda* is currently in the collection of the Davis Museum and Cultural Centre at Wellesley College in Massachusetts. The painting was acquired by the Davis Museum in 2000 from the art dealer Mary-Anne Martin. Martin acquired the painting from a Paris dealer; it had long been held in a Paris collection. My thanks to Mary-Anne Martin and Jay Oles for this information.

²⁷ As communicated in an email to the author from the current owner of *Consolation*, 14 August 2005. This owner was not at liberty to give me the name of the original surrealist owner of these paintings and manuscripts.

²⁸ Horacio Amigorena, 'María Izquierdo, *Consolation*,' trans. Dawn Ades, in *Kahlo's Contemporaries*, 23.

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