RENEGADE WOMEN

EVA FERNÁNDEZ

Renegade Women is an evolving body of photographic and stitched works developed through my postdoctoral research, grounded in sustained engagement with feminist practice, archival inquiry, memory, and material intervention. The series extends my long-term investigation into how women's histories are preserved, obscured, or disciplined within both institutional and familial archives. It evolves from my earlier hand-stitched postcard-sized works, *Uno Cuantos Piquetitos* (2015–2025), a decade-long project that functioned as a site of experimentation where stitch was first employed as a critical tool to interrupt photographic surfaces. This earlier series laid the conceptual and material groundwork for *Renegade Women*, enabling a shift from fragmentary gestures toward a more expansive and sustained engagement with image, language, and inherited memory.

The photographic sources in *Renegade Women* are drawn from found archival materials from Spain and date primarily from the early twentieth century, a period of profound transition in women's lives. Produced in pre–Spanish Civil War Spain, these images emerge from a moment of uneven constraint alongside growing social and political visibility, as women's claims to autonomy began to surface, culminating in suffrage in 1931 during the Second Spanish Republic. This historical moment is central to the series because it captures women on the threshold of modernity, poised between emerging civic recognition and its abrupt erasure, before hard-won freedoms were forcibly re-contained through Catholic morality, domestic ideology, and the disciplining language of the state.

Uno Cuantos Piquetitos (detail), 2023 Collection of works from the series.

Uno Cuantos Piquetitos, 2016–26, Hahnemühle Photo Rag with silk thread and glass beads, 15 cm × 10 cm each.
The intimate scale invites close viewing, foregrounding stitch as an act of care, memory and resistance.

As with *Uno Cuantos Piquetitos*, the women in *Renegade Women* are not historical figures or recognised heroines, but ordinary women, anonymous and severed from their original contexts, lacking identifying information, provenance, or familial ties. They stand in for countless lives shaped by restriction, surveillance, and erasure. These images circulate as orphaned objects, acquired through antique dealers rather than inherited as treasured family possessions. Their availability raises unsettling questions: why were these intimate records not safeguarded within domestic archives? What histories of rupture, displacement, or violence rendered them surplus to memory? While definitive answers remain unknowable, the historical context from which these photographs emerge invites careful speculation. The absence of identifying information becomes a form of evidence in itself, pointing to systemic erasure rather than individual forgetting. Appearing suspended from history, severed from kinship structures and stripped of narrative continuity, the photographs resonate with a period in which countless women were incarcerated, exiled, or killed, their lives left undocumented and deliberately erased.

While most of the photographs in *Renegade Women* are anonymous, some originate from my own family archive and are intentionally left unidentified. This decision resists privileging familial knowledge over other women whose histories have been erased and acknowledges the limits of recovery within archives shaped by violence, silence, and displacement. Anonymity here functions not as absence, but as a refusal of false completeness, allowing the work to attend to structural conditions rather than individual biography. Although I know the identities of the women depicted in my familial images, much of my family history remains fragmented or inaccessible, shaped by the ruptures of the Spanish Civil War, the Franco dictatorship, and subsequent experiences of migration and displacement.

In the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, women's lives were tightly regulated through Catholic doctrine, patriarchal family structures, and the ideological framework of the Franco regime, which positioned obedience, sacrifice, and domesticity as moral imperatives. Everyday behaviours, romantic relationships, mobility, motherhood, and expressions of desire, were subject to intense scrutiny, with deviation framed as moral failure or social transgression. My mother was one of these women. Born in Madrid during the Civil War and raised to adulthood under Francoist rule, her life, like those of countless others, was shaped by systems that sought to discipline female autonomy through shame, surveillance, and moral correction, conditions that ultimately compelled her to leave Spain as a young adult.

The text embroidered into these works is drawn directly from letters written to my mother by her parents following her immigration to Canada in 1962 with my father and my infant brother. This act of migration, undertaken in pursuit of autonomy, economic survival, and freedom from an authoritarian regime, did not sever the ideological reach of Francoism, which continued to operate transnationally through familial obligation and the moral authority of the Catholic Church. The correspondence spans several decades, encompassing my parents' migration, marital breakdown, my mother's subsequent long-term partnership, and concluding with my grandparents' deaths.

Discovered and translated only after my mother's passing in 2021, these letters reveal the affective and moral economies through which patriarchal authority was sustained within the private sphere. Marked by longing and affection alongside judgment, the letters expose the intergenerational persistence of Francoist values, rooted in Catholic morality, gendered obedience, and surveillance, that continued to discipline women through shame, obligation, and emotional coercion long after the dictatorship formally ended.

Photograph from the artist's family archive showing the artist's mother at London Airport, London c. 1957.
The image situates personal memory within broader histories of migration and social expectation.

This engagement with embroidery is also shaped by a rupture within my own matrilineal lineage. Although needlework was historically passed between generations of women in my family, this transmission was deliberately interrupted by my mother. Her refusal to teach embroidery was a conscious rejection of the gendered expectations imposed upon her under Francoist ideology, expectations that framed women's value through obedience, moral discipline, and prescribed roles. In this sense, the absence of embroidery from my childhood constitutes a form of inheritance in itself, shaped by resistance rather than continuity. My return to embroidery as an artist is therefore neither recuperative nor nostalgic. Instead, it marks a critical re-engagement with a practice that had been refused, allowing it to be reclaimed on different terms, as a method for interrogating how femininity is imposed, resisted, and reconfigured across generations.

By re-inscribing fragments of my grandparents' correspondence, I embroider, bead, and write text directly onto photographs of anonymous women. The paper, less forgiving than fabric, bears each puncture as a visible trace, demanding precision and patience. This fragility transforms the act of stitching into a meditative process of repair and reflection. In contrast to the accelerated, frictionless production of digitally generated imagery, embroidery insists upon slowness, intimacy, and care. Every stitch becomes both mark and scar, a physical record of thought, time, and attention.

Through embroidery, beading, and gilded embellishment, these women are elevated using a material language historically reserved for monarchs and the ornamentation of churches. Techniques associated with courtly dress and sacred iconography, gold thread, pearls, and meticulous handwork are redeployed to honour lives otherwise marginalised within patriarchal and nationalist histories. This act of adornment does not idealise the subjects, but insists on their inherent dignity, reframing the everyday female body as a site of resilience, devotion, and quiet resistance.

Through this tactile process, language once wielded as moral condemnation is re-inscribed as an act of feminist reclamation. The embroidered words transform accusation into agency, vulnerability into strength. By threading these charged phrases onto images of women severed from their histories, I reweave fractured genealogies and silenced narratives back into cultural visibility. In doing so, *Renegade Women* situates personal testimony within a broader feminist critique of historical erasure and gendered control, collapsing the boundary between the familial and the political, and allowing suppressed or marginalised histories to re-enter cultural memory.

Taken together, these works trace how women are first instructed, then judged, and finally condemned when they refuse to comply.

Within *Renegade Women*, the works are organised into two conceptual triptychs that reflect distinct but interrelated modes of moral regulation. The first addresses the formation of feminine subjectivity through expectation, affect, and maternal responsibility; the second confronts the language of condemnation that follows when women refuse those prescriptions. Read together, the triptychs trace a movement from instruction to accusation, revealing how shame is produced, enforced, and ultimately reclaimed.

(Left) Collection of family letters and photographs from the artist's archive. Photograph: the artist's mother with her father and cousin, Madrid, c. 1940s, reflecting social expectations of supervision and restraint in female mobility.

(Right) Hand-embroidered textile made by the artist's grandmother, photographed by Eva Fernández, 2016. Traditionally associated with domestic labour, stitch is recontextualised within the artist's practice as a critical and contemporary material language.

TRIPTYCH I: THE MAKING OF THE ÁNGEL DEL HOGAR

This first triptych examines the construction of idealised femininity as a process rather than a fixed identity. It addresses the mechanisms through which women were prepared for obedience, emotionally, morally, and socially within the domestic and religious frameworks of Francoist Spain.

Drawing on the ideological framework of the Ángel del Hogar (Angel of the House) and the Perfecta Casada (the ideal wife), this triptych attends to the early disciplining of women's desires, ambitions, and maternal responsibilities, long before overt condemnation is imposed. Here, aspiration is tempered, love is monitored, and childhood itself is positioned as preparation rather than possibility.

The works trace how obedience is cultivated not through force alone, but through intimacy - through language framed as concern, guidance, or example, revealing how feminine virtue is rehearsed, internalised, and normalised within Catholic and Francoist moral culture.

You have big dreams and feet of clay - *Tienes grandes sueños y los pies de barro*; You fall in love like a madwoman - *Te enamoras como una chiflada*; What kind of example are you giving those children? - *¿Qué ejemplo estás dando a esas criaturas?* Hahnemühle photo rag, glass beads, silk thread and 24K gold leaf, 60cm H x 53 cm W each

YOU HAVE BIG DREAMS AND FEET OF CLAY
TIENES GRANDES SUEÑOS Y LOS PIES DE BARRO

The phrase *Tienes grandes sueños y los pies de barro* draws on a biblical metaphor from the Book of Daniel, in which a monumental statue, its head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly of bronze, and legs of iron, ultimately collapses because its feet are made of fragile clay. Within this narrative, apparent grandeur is undone by an unstable foundation, transforming ambition into inevitable failure. In everyday usage, the phrase appears to acknowledge aspiration only to undermine it, locating weakness not in structural conditions but in the subject herself.

When directed at my mother, this language functioned as moral diminishment. One line of correspondence described her as "always thinking of great things," recasting intellectual curiosity and ambition as delusion rather than determination.

> "You, who either lack some sense or are crazy,
> always thinking of great things."
>
> *De ti, que o te falta algún sentido o estás chalado,*
> *siempre pensando en grandezas.*

My mother's desires to pursue education, professional life, travel, and independence beyond the suffocating ideological constraints of Francoist Spain, were framed as unrealistic and morally suspect. The implication was clear: without patriarchal supervision and familial authority, her aspirations lacked grounding. Women's movement beyond domestic containment was routinely cast as dangerous fantasy rather than ethical self-determination.

This portrait resists this logic. The woman sits firmly on the chair, her body grounded and balanced, her posture composed rather than tentative. A halo of twelve stitched stars encircles her head, drawing on Marian iconography traditionally used to sanctify obedience and humility, while here quietly reframing aspiration and self-possession as forms of dignity rather than moral excess. By applying this devotional language to an ordinary, anonymous woman, the work elevates her presence, redistributing sanctity from religious ideal to lived female experience. She is not poised to fall or collapse; instead, she occupies the space with quiet assurance. Her facial expression carries a subtle confidence, almost a knowing irony, that appears to mock the statement imposed upon her. Rather than internalising the accusation, she seems to hold it at a distance, her calm presence contradicting the warning embedded in the text.

Embroidered onto the image, the phrase is slowed and materially fixed, exposing how everyday language operates as a mechanism of control. Stitch transforms a private reprimand into a visible inscription, revealing how women's aspirations were disciplined through ridicule, moral judgement, and the erosion of self-trust. Yet the woman's stance refuses the biblical narrative of collapse. Her stability unsettles the metaphor itself.

In this work, fragility is no longer located in the woman, but in the ideological structures that sought to contain her. Ambition does not crumble; it endures. What remains is not a cautionary tale, but a quiet refusal, an insistence that women's dreams were never the unstable foundation they were made out to be.

YOU FALL IN LOVE LIKE A MADWOMAN
TE ENAMORAS COMO UNA CHIFLADA

The phrase *Te enamoras como una chiflada* operates not as casual reproach but as a moral indictment rooted in the theological, juridical, and cultural frameworks that governed female sexuality under Francoism. To love "like a madwoman" is to be positioned outside reason, restraint, and moral order, collapsing desire into pathology and framing emotional autonomy as social danger.

This phrase was written to my mother following her divorce in Canada and, several years later, her subsequent long-term relationship. While separation was legally possible outside Spain, it remained morally illegible within Francoist ideology, where marriage was enforced as permanent and women's desire tightly regulated. Love exercised beyond paternal, marital, or ecclesiastical sanction was not recognised as agency, but reframed as instability, moral weakness, and failure of discipline.

The photograph onto which this phrase is embroidered intensifies this charge. It depicts two women in close proximity, their bodies inclined toward one another, their expressions calm, intimate, and self-possessed. While the precise nature of their relationship cannot be definitively known, their closeness gestures toward forms of attachment exceeding heteronormative expectation. Under Francoism, such intimacy was not only morally condemned but criminalised. Homosexuality was constructed as social danger, subject to surveillance, incarceration, psychiatric intervention, and forced "rehabilitation." Love between women, romantic, erotic, or affective, was rendered unspeakable and punishable, positioned as a threat to reproductive heterosexuality, Catholic morality, and the patriarchal family.

This history is not abstract. Following the death of my maternal aunt in 2023, her lifelong companion, whom she met at the age of fifteen while both living in a convent to train as nuns, revealed that they had been life partners. Their relationship, sustained over decades, was lived in secrecy, shaped by the legal, moral, and psychological dangers attached to same-sex love. Survival depended on silence, discretion, and self-erasure.

Embroidered onto the photograph, the text becomes a disciplinary lens through which such intimacy is judged. What might otherwise read as tenderness, devotion, or care is reframed as madness or moral failure. Stitching arrests this language, forcing it into visibility and exposing how everyday expressions functioned as instruments of control, regulating not only women's bodies but their emotional lives.

Yet the women in the image refuse the accusation imposed upon them. Their gazes remain steady, their bodies relaxed, their closeness unguarded. Rather than hysteria or instability, the photograph communicates composure, solidarity, and quiet defiance. In the tension between image and inscription, the work rejects the logic that equates female desire with disorder.

Materially, the work brings together the most symbolically charged elements within the series. Enamoras is rendered in dense silk cross-stitch in the colours of the Second Spanish Republic, violet, red, and yellow, invoking a moment of democratic possibility violently extinguished under Francoism. By contrast, *Chiflada* is executed in 24K gold leaf, drawing on the visual language of "Old Spain," tradition, permanence, and institutional authority. Through this material tension, the work reclaims love as a site of resistance, repositioning desire as a political act.

WHAT KIND OF EXAMPLE ARE YOU GIVING THOSE CHILDREN? - ¿QUÉ EJEMPLO ESTÁS DANDO A ESAS CRIATURAS?

The phrase *¿Qué ejemplo estás dando a esas criaturas?* appears in letters written to my mother as a moral accusation framed through motherhood. Within Catholic and Francoist ideology, motherhood functioned as a primary site of moral surveillance: women were charged not only with their own conduct, but with embodying the ethical model through which children, and by extension the nation, were to be formed. To question a mother's *ejemplo* was to indict her entire moral legitimacy.

The accusation mobilises a familiar logic. Divorce, emotional autonomy, and the formation of new relationships are recast not as personal decisions, but as ethical failures inflicted upon children. Maternal care is reframed as danger; independence as corruption. In this framework, women's lives are rendered perpetually provisional, always subject to revocation should they fail to perform stability, sacrifice, and obedience. The children become rhetorical instruments through which women are disciplined, their presence invoked to enforce moral compliance.

The archival photograph presents a young girl dressed in sombre, formal attire closely aligned with Catholic devotional aesthetics. Dark clothing, a head covering, and carefully arranged accessories signal restraint, modesty, and moral containment rather than childhood ease. Her posture is upright and composed, her body held still and forward-facing, with one hand placed deliberately against a piece of furniture. She does not appear playful or spontaneous; instead, she performs a seriousness beyond her years, embodying an early internalisation of discipline, obedience, and reverence.

The child's head is similarly encircled by a halo of twelve stars, invoking Catholic visual language that casts girlhood as preparation for moral submission, and exposing how sanctity was mobilised to naturalise discipline, restraint, and ideological conformity from an early age.

In this image, childhood is staged as preparation rather than possibility. The girl becomes a visual embodiment of the "example" implicitly defended in the letter: a model of femininity shaped by silence, restraint, and moral submission, where virtue is measured through comportment, compliance, and containment. This is the childhood my mother herself experienced in Spain, one formed under Francoist Catholic discipline, and one she consciously resisted. By juxtaposing this image with the accusatory language directed at her, the work draws attention to the life she was expected to reproduce for her own children, and the future she actively refused. The work therefore asks what kind of life such an example ultimately authorises, and at what cost to autonomy, imagination, and freedom.

Embroidered onto the photograph, the phrase is slowed and fixed in place, transforming a private reprimand into a visible inscription. What appears as a question reveals itself as a directive, one that assumes a singular, correct pathway for women and children alike. The work resists this logic by holding the image and the text in tension, exposing how appeals to children's "wellbeing" have historically been used to justify the regulation of women's bodies, desires, and freedoms.

Rather than affirming the moral authority of the question, the work turns it back on itself. It asks whether the true danger lies in the example my mother set through independence and self-determination, or in the inherited model of obedience, repression, and ideological conformity represented by the child in the photograph.

TRIPTYCH II: CONDEMNATION AND RECLAMATION

Read together, the following three works operate as a contemporary triptych, structurally echoing the biblical figure of the Three Marys; Mary of Cleopas, Mary the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene, women whose presence in Christian theology embodies endurance, moral courage, witness, and transformation. Historically positioned at the margins of power yet central to narratives of suffering, care, and ethical resolve, these figures offer an alternative genealogy of female strength within a tradition that has often instrumentalised shame and obedience. In *Renegade Women*, this triadic structure is reactivated through images of anonymous, ordinary women, whose faces and bodies become sites onto which accusations of moral failure, loss of shame, excess, sexual transgression, are inscribed. By aligning these everyday women with the Marys, the works refuse the binary logic that separates virtue from deviance, sanctity from desire. Instead, they propose a counter-reading in which endurance, autonomy, refusal, and moral agency are not oppositional qualities, but intertwined conditions of women's lived experience.

You have lost your shame - *Has perdido la vergüenza*; You are a renegade of your homeland - *Eres una renega de tu patria*; Debauchery and more debauchery - *Libertinaje y más libertinaje*. Hahnemühle photo rag, glass beads, silk thread and freshwater pearls, 60cm H x 53 cm W each

YOU HAVE LOST YOUR SHAME
HAS PERDIDO LA VERGÜENZA

The phrase *Has perdido la vergüenza* appears in letters written to my mother as a moral charge rather than a description. Shame, *vergüenza*, functioned as a disciplinary virtue: an internal regulator through which women were expected to police their conduct, desire, and visibility. To be accused of having "lost" shame was to be positioned as uncontained, excessive, and morally suspect, no longer aligned with the codes of restraint demanded of women.

Embroidered onto an anonymous archival portrait, the phrase is slowed and fixed in place through a single row of gold beading. While gold traditionally signifies authority and permanence, the lettering here subtly curves and wavers, moving slightly offline as it follows the surface of the image. This minor deviation becomes significant: what is framed linguistically as a "loss" is refigured materially as movement, drift, and refusal of linear control. What was once an intimate reprimand becomes a visible inscription, exposing how moral authority is exercised through everyday language. Each bead marks an act of containment, yet the wavering script destabilises the accusation. As elsewhere in the series, embroidery functions not as embellishment but as a method of holding language accountable, making the labour and violence of moral regulation legible.

The woman's expression resists the judgement placed upon her. Her gaze is steady and composed, neither apologetic nor withdrawn. Rather than signalling moral failure, her presence suggests self-possession and resolve, unsettling the authority of the phrase itself. The portrait stages a quiet tension between inscription and embodiment: between a language designed to discipline and a subject who refuses to perform remorse.

This figure aligns with Mary of Cleopas, whose significance lies not in purity or spectacle but in her unwavering witness, suggesting that what is framed as a "loss of shame" is, instead, a refusal to internalise imposed guilt.

In reclaiming *Has perdido la vergüenza*, the work inverts its original function. The loss of shame is refigured not as moral collapse, but as liberation, an ethical refusal of imposed guilt, surveillance, and self-censorship. Within the series, this work marks a shift from condemning women's actions to policing their inner lives, revealing how authoritarian systems depend on shame as a tool of governance. By re-inscribing the phrase, the work does not erase its history, but holds it open, transforming shame into a site of resistance, dignity, and self-determination.

YOU ARE A RENEGADE OF YOUR HOMELAND
ERES UNA RENEGA DE TU PATRIA

This work takes its title from a phrase used to discipline and condemn my mother for leaving Spain and refusing the moral, familial, and ideological expectations imposed upon her. To be named a *renega* is not simply to be disobedient, but to be cast as a traitor, one who has turned against nation, family, and moral order. Under Francoism, such language was routinely mobilised to vilify women associated with dissent, exile, or leftist politics, framing female autonomy as betrayal and positioning women who stepped outside prescribed roles as threats to social and national stability.

Stitched into the surface of an anonymous archival photograph, the phrase operates simultaneously as accusation and inscription. It exposes how nationalism, Catholic morality, and patriarchal authority converged to regulate women's bodies, loyalties, and movements. By relocating this charge onto an unnamed woman from the archive, the work extends the insult beyond the personal, revealing it as a broader mechanism of ideological control through which women, particularly those who migrated, resisted, or aligned themselves with alternative futures, were shamed, silenced, and rendered suspect within the historical record.

The tears that appear in the image extend this act of reclamation. Referencing the sorrowful Madonnas and bleeding figures of Christ encountered in Spanish churches during my childhood- images that carried a visceral charge, shaped by the distance between a secular upbringing and Catholic devotional excess - the tears draw a line between private suffering and public veneration. In these devotional icons, sorrow is rendered visible and revered, transformed into a site of spiritual authority. By placing tears onto archival photographs of ordinary women, the work asks whose grief is permitted visibility, and whose is deemed worthy of reverence. Despite their presence, the woman's gaze remains steady and unflinching. She looks directly toward the viewer with a composed, stoic expression that refuses collapse or submission. Her grief is visible, but it does not overwhelm her; instead, it coexists with resolve. This tension between sorrow and endurance resists sentimental readings of female suffering, positioning the figure not as a passive victim but as a subject marked by strength, dignity, and moral presence. The portrait holds grief in place while insisting on agency, asking the viewer to meet her stare rather than avert their own.

The woman in this work aligns with the Virgin Mary as *Mater Dolorosa*, a figure sanctified through sorrow and endurance, here refigured as a migrant woman marked by exile, carrying grief alongside refusal rather than submission.

The term *renegade* is commonly defined as one who betrays, deserts, or rejects an established belief, allegiance, or authority. In reclaiming this phrase, the work refuses its original function as an instrument of condemnation. *Eres una renega de tu Patria* is reimagined not as an accusation, but as an assertion of autonomy. Detached from its punitive intent, *renega* becomes a figure of ethical dissent, signalling a conscious rejection of oppressive structures rather than a failure of loyalty. Through the act of re-stitching, the language of shame once used to control and silence women under Francoism is reclaimed and re-signified, transformed into a marker of agency, resistance, and self-determination.

DEBAUCHERY AND MORE DEBAUCHERY
LIBERTINAJE Y MÁS LIBERTINAJE

Libertinaje y más libertinaje operates not as a description of behaviour but as a totalising moral judgement, collapsing independence, mobility, education, and self-determination into sexual and ethical excess. In letters written to my mother following her departure from Spain, her attempts to learn languages, find work, and establish economic stability abroad are dismissed as *cuento*, fabrications masking moral failure. Travel, labour, and distance from the parental home are recoded not as necessity or aspiration, but as deception, reframed as evidence of corruption rather than legitimate survival.

Within Catholic and Francoist moral frameworks, *libertinaje* functioned as a key accusatory term, deployed to discipline women who exceeded prescribed boundaries of obedience, sexuality, and familial allegiance. It conflated female autonomy with promiscuity and moral collapse, transforming women's movement through the world into proof of ethical failure. The accusation required no evidence; it relied on the presumption that a woman acting beyond patriarchal supervision was already suspect. In this logic, migration itself became transgression, and refusal to remain proximate, to family, nation, and authority, was framed as betrayal.

The language of the letter reveals how moral condemnation was enforced through intimacy as much as ideology. Insults and denunciations intertwine with fear, attachment, and anticipatory grief, exposing how love and control operated together. My mother's pursuit of work, independence, and distance from an authoritarian regime is cast not only as personal disgrace, but as injury to family honour and moral order. Even in exile, she remains subject to surveillance, disciplined through shame, obligation, and emotional coercion that extends Francoist values across borders.

Embroidered onto an archival portrait, the phrase *Libertinaje y más libertinaje* is rendered in gold, a material historically associated with authority, doctrine, and moral permanence. Yet this authority is unsettled by its placement on a figure whose presence resists condemnation. The woman's expression is composed and resolute, her gaze directed outward rather than lowered in shame. The visual restraint of the portrait stands in tension with the excess implied by the word *libertinaje*, exposing the accusation as projection rather than truth.

By isolating this phrase from the cascade of verbal abuse in which it originally appeared, the work exposes how moral condemnation operates through accumulation and repetition. *Libertinaje* functions as shorthand, a means of foreclosing complexity, silencing explanation, and denying women ethical agency. Held in suspension through embroidery, the word is stripped of narrative force and revealed as a mechanism of control.

In this way, the woman recalls Mary Magdalene, a figure long burdened with accusations of excess and sexual transgression, whose moral authority was undermined through mischaracterisation, yet who persists here as a witness to autonomy rather than shame.

Within the broader arc of *Renegade Women*, *Libertinaje y más libertinaje* marks a shift from policing women's desires to condemning their entire way of life. Re-inscribed through material labour, the phrase becomes not a verdict but an exposure: a record of how women's autonomy was framed as threat, excess, and disgrace, and how such language continues to shape moral judgement in the present.

Ultimately, *Renegade Women* is concerned with challenging historical amnesia and creating space for critical reflection. By weaving together personal archives, feminist critique, and material interventions historically implicated in the regulation of femininity, the work invites audiences to confront inherited silences and unresolved forms of gendered trauma. Through close attention to language, image, and gesture, the series reveals how systems of control are sustained not only through formal institutions, but through everyday speech, family relations, and cultural traditions.

While grounded in the specific histories of Francoist Spain, *Renegade Women* speaks directly to the present. In a contemporary moment marked by the global resurgence of right-wing nationalism and renewed efforts to regulate women's bodies, identities, and freedoms, the work insists on the urgency of remembering how authoritarian values endure, adapt, and resurface. By foregrounding ordinary women, often rendered anonymous, fragmented, or expendable within historical records, the series challenges cultural denial and exposes the persistence of mechanisms that discipline and silence women across time.

Through its slow, materially resistant processes, *Renegade Women* offers a counterpoint to the speed and disposability of contemporary image culture. Embroidery functions not as nostalgia, but as an act of remembrance and resistance, one that honours ordinary lives, restores dignity, and gestures toward the possibility of transgenerational repair.

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You have big dreams and feet of clay - Tienes grandes sueños y los pies de barro
Giclée FineArt Print on Hahnemühle photo rag, glass beads, silk thread and gold metallic thread
60cm H x 53 cm W

You fall in love like a madwoman - Te enamoras como una chiflada
Giclée FineArt Print on Hahnemühle photo rag, glass beads, silk thread and 24K gold leaf
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What kind of example are you giving those children? - ¿Qué ejemplo estás dando a esas criaturas?
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