

Remixing Modes: Critical Memory-Making in the Works of Yuyi Morales

In *Dreamers* (2018), Yuyi Morales lists various media used in creating her book, including “a brick from [her] house,” a *comal* (griddle), a skirt from Chiapas, her garden plants, childhood drawings kept by her mother, along with acrylics, inks, and brushes (n.p.). What does this eclectic mix of personal, domestic objects and painting media enact in the visual/verbal interplay characteristic of picturebooks? I explore this question by reading four picturebooks from Morales’s prolific corpus, spanning from 2003 to 2018, to posit how her material and visual assemblage of cultural objects activates critical memory practices that center Chicana/Mexicana modes of transmitting knowledge. I read Morales’s works through the lens of “remixing”, or the collection and curation of site-specific objects in Chicana/Mexicana cultural production. María E. Cotera, Karen Mary Davalos and Marci R. McMahon, in their respective scholarship on Chicana feminist art and archival practices, theorize remixing as a praxis of critical memory, which culls knowledges and stories embodied in traditional cultural objects to refashion contemporary imaginaries that articulate political strategies for survival.¹

My essay adds to this conversation Morales’s artwork, whose remixing practices in picturebooks also points to strategies of cultural survival by engaging the reader’s recognition of linked cultural text. Encouraging intertextual practices in reading visual/verbal texts, Morales’s artwork rewards interpretations that make visible the stories, histories and epistemologies of marginalized people as represented in her picturebooks. I suggest how Morales’s artistic contributions to Chicana/Mexicana critical memory-making model remixing praxes that can inform both children’s storytime programming and collection development.

¹ Cotera, María E. “Unpacking Our Mothers’ Libraries: Practices of Chicana Memory before and after the Digital Turn.” *Chicana Movidas: New Narratives of Activism and Feminism in the Movement Era*, edited by Espinoza, Dionne, María E. Cotera, and Maylei Blackwell, University of Texas Press, 2018, pp. 229-316.; Davalos, Karen M. *Chicana/o Remix: Art and Errata Since the Sixties*. New York University Press, 2017; McMahon, Marci R., *Domestic Negotiations: Gender, Nation, And Self-fashioning in US Mexicana and Chicana Literature and Art*, Rutgers University Press, 2013.