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# Brain, Brow, and Booty: Latina Iconicity in U.S. Popular Culture

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## Abstract

We were shooting on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum one night. It was lit romantically, and Jennifer was wearing an evening gown, looking incredibly stunning. Suddenly there must have been a thousand people screaming her name. It was like witnessing this icon. (Ralph Fiennes in the New York Times, 2002, p. 16, emphasis added)

This stamp, honoring a Mexican artist who has transcended “la frontera” and has become an icon to Hispanics, feminists, and art lovers, will be a further reminder of the continuous cultural contributions of Latinos to the United States. (Cecilia Alvear, President of National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ) on the occasion of the introduction of the Frida Kahlo U.S. postage stamp, 2001; emphasis added)

“Nothing Like the Icon on the Fridge” (column about Salma Hayek’s Frida by Stephanie Zacharek in the New York Times, 2002).

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# Notes

- 1 We recognize that the category “Latina” is fluid and porous. As such, Penélope Cruz, who is Spanish, is often categorized by both the popular press and websites as “Latina.” As well, although Cameron Diaz is currently (February 2004) Hollywood’s highest paid actress, only Latina magazine claims her as Latina. Neither she nor most coverage of her ever mentions her Latinidad.
- 2 [Sinclair \(1999\)](#) notes that many of these industry officials come from the Latin American media and middle class and reinscribe the outsider status of U.S. Latina/os and U.S. Latina/o popular culture.
- 3 Madonna also tried to produce a biopic of Kahlo. A Mexican-produced biopic predates all three U.S. attempts.

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