

Misplaced Latina? by Alejandra Robles Sosa

Alejandra Robles Sosa performed over 15 minutes long *Misplaced Latina?* based on [Score #1: Unpacking a Bag of Your Own](#), at the Split Ferry Port, on April 7, 2021, in the frame of *Misplaced Women?* Workshop led by Tanja Ostojić



"Misplaced Latina?" by Alejandra Robles Sosa, *Misplaced Women?* Workshop Split, 2021. Photo: Tanja Ostojić

Who am I?

I am Alejandra Robles Sosa, with two last names, because I was born and raised in Mexico. My mother tongue is Spanish and I grew up at the periphery of a three million inhabitant city, Puebla City. I was backpacking across Latin America, South East Asia, and Europe for three years before I enrolled in 2018 at the Arts Academy in Split, Croatia, where I have been living ever since. My art practice is strongly influenced by critical theories and a decolonial approach. I explore the collective memory of the migration of the human race represented in art, textile patterns, food, and plants.

What were my expectations from the *Misplaced Women?* workshop?

I was interested in exploring the idea of how my “female” body as a brown Latina is read in different contexts while crossing borders. My body is not read in the same way in a South American country, in the USA or the Balkans. Every place has its expectations from me. Our bodies and our presence are also read according to the objects we carry with us while crossing borders. My body is read differently if I am alone with a hiking backpack or with a fancy suitcase. People perceive things differently when I am on a long trip with bags on my bicycle. Those objects influenced the way I feel, if I am vulnerable or not, that includes my body itself, my clothes, and the things in my bag.

The *Misplaced Latina?* performance

My emotions: I didn’t cry for a while. The pandemic situation brought to me, as too many people around the world, a desolation feeling. I have been constantly suppressing my feelings in order to stay mentally stable. While carefully choosing my objects, the day before the performance and at the beginning of it, I couldn’t stop crying. It is as if for the last four years I have packed my sorrow and tears in small containers. So, I brought those containers with me.



“Misplaced Latina?” by Alejandra Robles Sosa, *Misplaced Women?* Workshop Split, 2021. Photo: Neli Ružić

My sorrow containers:

Food. I brought along food ingredients that came to Europe after the colonisation of the Americas and nowadays are part of the Croatian daily diet, like homemade tomato sauce, potato and banana. Those represent the sorrow of my colonised and de-indigenised ancestors.



“Misplaced Latina?” by Alejandra Robles Sosa, *Misplaced Women?* Workshop Split, 2021. Photo: Neli Ružić

Religion. I included the Holy Rosary I bought for my grandmother on my first visit to Vatican. She died a year before I could give it to her. I am not a religious person, but I love my grandma and I know how important this used to be for her when she was alive. The Catholic Church also has a dark colonial past in the Americas.

Embroidery. Historically, embroidery hasn’t been taken seriously as a medium because it belongs to the sphere of women’s work. And women’s issues are usually related to *unpractical data*. I decided to embroider the existential themes that inhabited my mind for the last few weeks: Annual living cost for three different categories of people (that are considered physical persons) from third world countries required to obtain Croatian visa. Those are my personal options, since I have a remote job outside Croatia:

- *Studentica* / student: 53,368 HRK,
- Digital nomad: 217,718 HRK,
- *Kao supruga* / as a wife: 44,742 HRK.

*Those are amounts needed to be present on ones bank account (at the moment of application) required by the Croatian immigration office. They refer to the sum of an average monthly rent, insurance, and in case of a student, fee per semester.



“Misplaced Latina?” by Alejandra Robles Sosa, *Misplaced Women?* Workshop Split, 2021. Photo: Tanja Ostojić

Final reflections

Regarding my initial expectations, I ended up reflecting upon how our sorrow and tears are read when our body is seen as a female foreigner. What is a woman supposed to cry about? How do I express my feelings, and how people validate our feelings according to our gender, race, and social status?

Each of the performances realised in the frame of *Misplaced Women?* workshop was full of those feelings and reflections that as women we experience in our day-to-day life. Sexual harassment, the

church imposition of values over our bodies, the precariousness of artistic life, self-exploitation at work. Being seen as an accessory, and not being taken seriously when we argue against structural problems. Which feelings and in which way are allowed to be expressed in the public spaces? Tanja Ostojić has done silence braking performance in which Mia and I took part. She spoke in the public square of Peristil about attempts of sexual violence that she experienced in the past, about the subject that has been encapsulated into the private space, thus denying its social and structural nature. On her right side, Mia Bradić was appropriating every part of her own body with her contemporary dance improvisation, while my accompaniment included embroidering seemed more passive and therefore within the category of the feminine. Embroidering allowed me to listen, meditate and reflect.

As a foreign woman in a city where there is no Latino community, during a pandemic I have experienced a feeling of loneliness that I did not know before. Meeting with women from different backgrounds who responded to a feminist call was a hug to the heart. Thanks, everyone!



“Misplaced Latina?” by Alejandra Robles Sosa, *Misplaced Women?* Workshop Split, 2021. Photo: Tanja Ostojić

Alejandra Robles Sosa (born 1988) is currently Split based artist and designer of Mexican origin. She graduated from the Arts Academy in Split.

Text written by: Alejandra Robles Sosa

Edited and First Published by Tanja Ostojić on the *Misplaced Women?* Project Blog, May 2021.

Copy-editing: Cultural Hub Croatia (CHC) and Tanja Ostojić

Translation from English to Croatian: CHC

Photos: Tanja Ostojić and Neli Ružić

Video recording & editing: Andrea Resner

This performance has been developed and performed for the first time in the frame of *Misplaced Women?* Workshop led by Tanja Ostojić, in Split, April 6-8, 2021.

Hosted and organised by CHC in the frame of Voids2021

Production: *Misplaced Women?* Project, ongoing since 2009



“Misplaced Latina?” by Alejandra Robles Sosa, *Misplaced Women?* Workshop Split, 2021. Photo: Neli Ružić



THIRD WORLD (1952)
U HRVATSKOJ

* FUNDS/YEAR

STUDENTICA 53,368 HRK

DIGITAL NOMAD VISA 217,718 HRK

KAO SUPRUGA 44,742 HRK

SAME PLACE OF RESIDENCE WITH HUSBAND.

Embroidery by Alejandra Robles Sosa, Workshop Split, 2021. Photo: Alejandra Robles Sosa