

Episode 6: Marilet Martinez

Marilet Martinez: Hey, beautiful people. My name is Marilet Martinez. I am an actor, improviser, teaching artist, fight choreographer, intimacy coach, writer, director, producer, bruja homegirl born and raised in La Mission de San Pancho, currently living in Chicago pursuing a career in comedy and content creation.

Growing up in the Mission in the late '80s and '90s meant that there was art, music, dance, theater, food, political awareness, and engagement everywhere you looked. I took up [indecipherable 0:32] dance classes at the Mission Cultural Center. I would go to Casa Lucas after school and get fruits.

I would go to political actions and protest opposing legislations, like Prop 187. I think I was 12 when I went to my first protest. No matter where I went in the Mission, always watching over me was Frida Kahlo.

A mural down 24th, on Balmy, or down Mission Street, Frida's knowing look and stare were present and watching, her presence and her spirit of revolution, her poetic nature, her general Bohemian influence was everywhere. You could see it in that smirk in her face.

I don't really remember being introduced to her work or her in any particular or specific instance. She was just always present. She was like that tía at a baptism or christening, yet I was there. You didn't really know who she was, but you knew that she was important. You knew that she was a very significant part of the family.

That's how I've always thought of Frida, as somebody that was a significant part of my life, even though I didn't necessarily always know what that meant.

As it came to know more about Frida and particularly learning more about her queerness and her political views, I became more and more inspired by her. This woman who was a prolific artist, a cultural icon, a political progressive, a lover, and a very vulnerable human being who understood great pain and suffering reminded me so much of every woman in my family.

The many aspects of Frida played out in my matriarchs. To that end, it's safe to say that playing nuanced, whole, complex women onstage has always been a part of my career in theatre. I've had the great privilege of originating many roles in new political comedies and many other kinds of plays.

I also have the great honor and creative blessing to create work with my all Latina improv and sketch team, Ratas de Dos Patas. I also have the honor and creative blessing to create original content with my all Latina improv and sketch team, Ratas de Dos Patas. [laughs] Yes, we are named after the song by another cultural icon near and dear to our Pocha hearts, Paquita La Del Barrio.

We are unapologetically ourselves bringing comedy, cultura, and corazon to everything we do. We are advocates for equitable representation, equal access to resources. We are

for the dismantling of White supremacists' values and systems and for the liberation and freedom of all oppressed peoples. Mostly though, we just want to make you ha-ha.

I've been told on a few occasions that after meeting me for the first time, several -- now -- friends went on to describe me as a San Francisco Native Frida. What can I say? Statement jewelry, flowers, and overthrowing governments are my love language.

Rio Yañez. Even though Rio and I both grew up in the mission in San Francisco at pretty much the same time, we didn't meet each other until we were adults. We met through Sarah, his partner who was production manager at Brava for a long time. Her and I were part of the Bay Area Latino Theatre Artists Network or BALTAN.

It's through Sarah that I met Rio. The first time we met was during one of the World Series celebration. I was acting hood as all get-out, and Rio thought that I was the craziest person. He's not far off. Rio's now one of my closest friends, one of my dearest homies.

He and Sarah have been such instrumental parts of my artistic journey providing me both housing at certain points, comfort, care, love, artistic inspiration, sounding board, space, all kinds of things that have helped me become the artists that I am right now, and turning into the artists that I hope to be.

Rio's support, his laughter, his joy, and his just downright ability to uphold community and creates love, care, and inclusiveness for just a ton of people is one of my favorite things about him. Really, it's just such a joy to be a part of it and privilege to be a part of.

I am so excited about what we're doing here, honoring both him, his father, his mother, honoring the work that has been done by Galería de la Raza, throughout the Bay Area, and realistically with the Chicano Artistic Movement in San Francisco.

Currently, while this pandemic is going on and we are rethinking what art and live performance looks like, me and Ratas de Dos Patas are going to be bringing online content to our Instagram page as well as...Is that what it is? A page or accounts.

We'll be bringing content to Instagram. We're also going to be putting that up on a YouTube channel as well. You could check us out on Instagram @ratas_de_dos_patas. You can check me out on IG as well @mariletmartinezsf. Check us out for some content coming up. We also produced a...Roll up.

Another thing I want to promote and give a shout out to is ComedySportz Chicago. I'm a company member there. We do online virtual shows. You can check that out at comedysportzchicago.com. Keep an eye out because there's going to be more coming up on behalf of myself, Ratas de Dos Patas. I'm looking forward to making new content and giving space. Hold on.

Keep an eye out on our Instagram for content coming up as well as soon-to-be-launched YouTube Subscription page. Other than that, thank you so much

Bay Area. Thank you, de Young. Thank you, Rio. Thank you, Renee Yañez. Thank you, Galería de la Raza.

Here's to more art in La Mission. Here is to Frida Kahlo. One of my favorite, [Spanish] of all time. Thank you, One Love Bay Area.

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