

ROSA

a Dance-Theatre production
by Carlos Rivera ©

An ode to
women's
power and
their ability
to move
mountains





ROSA, a peasant Indigenous woman from Ixtacamaxtitlan, located in the highlands of Puebla State, flees her community with her six small children on her back.

As she escapes a life of abuse at the hands of her husband and her in-laws, she crosses valleys, climbs mountains, and faces enormous challenges. After three weeks, she arrives in Mexico City where she will face her greatest challenge yet: brutal discrimination.

This will force her to make choices that will have an impact on her, her children, and will reverberate for generations to come.

Through movement, theatre, photography and documentary video, **ROSA** highlights the power of the female body, her ongoing personal relationship to the land, and her capacity to resist, survive, and transform.

In this performance piece we witness the internal displacement of Indigenous peoples within their own land, a tragedy that resonates across the Americas.

ROSA is based on Carlos Rivera's paternal grandmother, Rosa Islas Lopez. A remarkable woman who at 99 years old, called Carlos and told him to visit her because she was about to die. Although she had some ailments, there was no life-threatening illness. She was simply ready to leave this earth. Gaining new layers to perspective on this extraordinary woman and her courageous journey toward freedom is what prompted Carlos to create this piece.

As Carlos makes homage to his grandmother through this piece so does Patricia Rivera in her portrayal of Rosa. Patricia is Rosa's youngest granddaughter and a professional dancer. Making this project a family's history come to life.



For Carlos, this work is also an opportunity to reconnect with his ancestry and his roots – things Rosa had to give up in order to assimilate and survive.

“Mexico is a country that continues to struggle with acknowledging and recognizing the cultural diversity of its population.”

Carlos Rivera

Like his grandmother, Carlos also left his home in Mexico and migrated to another land, Toronto, Canada. The journey of displacement, assimilation, and of adapting to a new place brings about important artistic questions: What do we adopt from the new culture that we settle into? What do we erase from our identity in order to assimilate? What do we keep and what do we let go of?



ROSA is a female solo contemporary dance piece that showcases a woman's personal journey through dance, theatre and photographic media.

The show opens with a documentary video projected onto a back scrim. Images of landscapes, plants and people of the highlands of Puebla State allow us to imagine **Rosa's** environmental reality. Establishing a context for the relationship between woman and land that is explored later through the dance.

The body is the principal vehicle that inhabits the themes of the piece. The set consists of piles of raffia deposited onto the stage. A representation of her environmental landscape, which she explores, destroys, transforms and learns to work with throughout the journey. A material that is at once, abstract and tangible like **ROSA's** uncertain future.



Through the five minute introductory video we are guided into a description of the migration process, told by the voice of Rosa's son and Carlos's father, Don Justino.

In a storytelling style, Don Justino recounts the steps of their family's migration process. (audio Spanish with English subtitles). As the performance moves further into the dance realm, black and white photographic images of landscapes, details of earth and plants are projected onto the scrim. This creates an opportunity for interaction between the interpreter and the imagery; further examining other parallel migrations that have occurred in Rosa's lineage.

"Without her incredible strength I wouldn't be here today."

Carlos Rivera



CREATIVE TEAM

CARLOS RIVERA

Concept, Direction, Choreography and Co-production

Carlos is a director, choreographer, actor and a dancer, originally from Mexico City. Carlos trained in Mexico in various dance forms, he started his career as dancer and choreographer and went on to produce his own works.

In 2018 he graduated from the Indigenous Residency Program at The National Theatre School of Canada in Montreal, and attended the Master of Fine Arts in Directing for Theatre program at the University of Ottawa.

Carlos has worked and collaborated with several performing arts companies across Canada including:

- Red Sky Performance (Toronto)**
- Globe Theatre (Regina)**
- Raven Spirit Dance (Vancouver)**
- MT Space (Kitchener)**
- Puente Theatre (Victoria)**
- Ondinnok (Montreal)**
- Lemon Tree Creations (Toronto)**
- Electric Company (Vancouver)**
- Micro-Scope Productions (Montreal); among others.**

He is continuously working on numerous artistic projects in dance, film, theatre and performance.



PATRICIA RIVERA

Dancer and Co-creator

Patricia is a dancer, teacher and choreographer born in Mexico City. She graduated from Escuela Nacional de Danza Nellie y Gloria Campobello, Mexico City.

She is the founder and artistic director of Ts'ook, a dance and performing arts platform based in Mexico City, where she creates dance works and offers professional dance training.

Patricia is well known in the dance scene of Mexico and has won numerous awards. She has collaborated with companies like Triciclo Rojo, Danza Capital, and CEPRODAC-Centro de Produccion de Danza Contemporanea de México; among others.

She has toured Colombia, Cuba, Argentina, USA, Japan, Costa Rica and Canada.



FRANCISCO CARRERA

Sound Designer, Composer and Technical Director

Francisco is originally from Mexico City, and he is a teacher, actor, dancer, and a choreographer. Mr. Carrera holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Acting from the National School of Theatre Arts (CENART), Mexico.

His background in dance includes a diploma in Choreographic Composition from the Center for Choreographic Research at the Mexican Fine Arts Institute, Mexico.

As an educator, he holds a diploma in Arts Education and Interdisciplinary Creation from the National Arts Centre, Mexico.

Francisco has received scholarships from the Banff Centre for the Arts and the Mexican National Fund for the Arts. This support has allowed him to collaborate with Canadian choreographers Peter Chin of Tribal Crackling Wind and Malgorzata Nowacka of Chimera Dance Theatre.

Currently, he is a faculty member of the National School of Theatre Arts in Mexico and the Arts and Education Center - “Luis Spota Saavedra”, Mexico, where he teaches theatre arts.





JUSTINO RIVERA

Elder and Cultural Consultant

After thirty-two years working in education as a vocational school teacher, Justino retired to pursue his childhood passion: farming and ranching. He has settled in a small community located in the foothills of the state of Mexico. His ranch is neighbouring an active volcano, the very well known Popocatepetl.

He is an elder with a social consciousness for helping small food producers of the region. He volunteers to manage power lines and hydro, advising the local government on managing water sources and pushing for the equitable distribution of government grants for local producers.

At 86, Don Justino, as people call him, is still working. He divides his time between taking care of his farm and promoting equal rights in the distribution of natural resources in the area where he lives.

LAURA DOMINGUEZ

Lighting Designer

Laura specializes in lighting design and is a graduate of the Bachelor of Fine Arts in scenography from the École Supérieure de Théâtre, UQAM.

She is currently pursuing her Master's degree, and is particularly interested in shadow and darkness within light.

She is a lighting designer for various dance and theatre projects and has worked with performance artist Isabel Rancier (Montréal), Théâtre des Trompes (Montréal) and Théâtre à Ciel Ouvert (Montréal).



CREATION RESIDENCIES

- **May-June 2023 / Banff Center for the Arts
Banff, Alberta, Canada**

Indigenous Dramaturgies Exchange Program
Three-week Land Based, Research and Exploration
Residency and in-studio presentation

- **July 2023 / Ixtacamaxtitlan, Puebla, Mexico**
One-week Land Based Research Residency

- **March-April 2024 / Centro para la Cultura y las Artes de La Ribera
Ajijic, Jalisco, Mexico**

Two-week Research and Exploration Residency and
work-in-progress presentation

- **July 2024 / Banff Center for the Arts
Banff, Alberta, Canada**

Indigenous World Dance Residency
Three-week Creation Residency and
showcase presentation

- **September 2024 / Ondinnok Indigenous
Theatre Co.**

Yewanda Studio, Montreal, Quebec,
Canada

Artist in Residency Program

Two-week Creation Residency and
in-studio presentation



PERFORMANCE

- October 2024 / RUTAS Festival at Factory Theatre
Presented in collaboration with Aluna Theatre and Factory Theatre
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Three performances of ROSA 's first version, presented on the main stage.

The final performance included a "Meet the artists" panel discussion.

WHAT IS NEXT?

- Final tuning residency in Montreal in June, 2025. Venue to be confirmed.
- Premiere of the show in Mexico City in June - July, 2025. Venue to be confirmed.



ROSA by Carlos Rivera ©

The length of the piece is 60 minutes.
Full production to be ready for touring by July 2025.
Contains scenes with partial nudity.

Technical and tour information as well as inquires;
please contact Carlos Rivera by email:
tepaczin@hotmail.com

[Click here](#) to see raw footage on Vimeo of the first
version of the show presented at RUTAS Festival 2024
at Factory Theater MainStage.



CREDITS

Concept, Direction, Choreography:	Carlos Rivera
Dancer and Co-creator:	Patricia Rivera
Sound Designer, Composer and Technical Director:	Francisco Carrera
Costume Builders:	Carey Lees, Elena Vandakurova and Jolene Houle
Scenography Concept and Make-up Desing:	Carlos Rivera
Lighting Designer:	Laura Dominguez
Scenography Builder:	Blue (Corinna) Johnston
Text:	Justino Rivera and Francisco Carrera
Pre-recording Voices:	Maria Eva Zermeno, Carmen Vera, Randi de Sofia and Justino Rivera
Elder and Cultural Consultant:	Justino Rivera
Photography:	Rita Taylor, Carlos Rivera, Francisco Carrera and Gerardo Montiel Klint
Video:	Gerardo Montiel Klint and Carlos Rivera
Video Editing:	Gerardo Montiel Klint and Naomi Silver-Vezina
Executive Production:	Carlos Rivera and Arianna Suárez

The first version of **ROSA** was performed at RUTAS Festival 2024 in October 4th, 5th and 6th, 2024 at Factory Theatre, Mainstage, Toronto.

ROSA is a Carlos Rivera production in collaboration with Ondinnok (Montreal) and Abra Projects (Mexico). The creation of **ROSA** has been supported by the Indigenous Dramaturgies Exchanges Residency and the Indigenous World Dance Residency at The Banff Centre for the Arts, Banff, Alberta, Canada. Centro para las Artes y la Cultura de la Ribera in Ajijic, Mexico; and Ondinnok Artist in Residency Program, Montreal.

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FACTORY

abra performing arts projects