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"Capitalism is a prostituting system"

Interview with Camila Sosa



Sources: <https://www.pikaramagazine.com>

Camila Sosa is a writer and actress. His first book 'Las malas' went around the world: it tells the story of a group of transvestite prostitutes who handle the knife and humor.

To the Argentine **Camila Sosa** (1982, La Falda, Córdoba) books and writing have opened doors and closed miseries, but she left prostitution clinging tooth and nail to the stage. Currently she is still an actress and recites verses by **Federico García Lorca** as if they were prayers. His first play established similes between being a transvestite and the

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miseries and headaches of the women of the fiction of the poet of Granada. The criticism was ojiplática.

In the awakenings of Sosa's life there were more thorns than roses: "When I fall in love with my schoolmates I pray that they will see me as a girl. When I begin to bloom, I pray that my tits will grow during the night, that my parents will forgive me, that a vagina will be born between my legs. But no. Between my legs I have a knife." Reading his first book, *Las malas* (Tusquets, 2020) is a gift, it is laughing and crying, it is overflowing magical realism and a sharp and precise pen when telling the story of a group of transvestites as brave as they are broken. "**Transvestites climb every night from that hell that no one writes about**, to return spring to the world." *The bad* ones have had so much word of mouth and acceptance that it has become a must.

Her new book, of stories, is entitled *Soy una tonta por quererte* (Tusquets, 2022) and with it she confirms that literature is her refuge and that we can all take refuge in it. The first story, *Gracias, Difunta Correa* is the only one that drinks from the real life of Sosa to act as a prologue and common thread with *Las malas*. Grace and Don Sosa, that is, her parents, **begin a pilgrimage to the temple of Difunta Correa to ask their daughter to leave prostitution**. Months later he premiered the play that establishes similes between the life of Camila Sosa and the women of Lorca fiction. Success rises like foam and she manages to devote herself to the tables and the exercise of writing. *I'm a fool for loving you* is a set of fictional stories (except the first) in which the protagonists inhabit violence, pain, what some consider the margins but she claims as the center.

Why does she talk about herself as a transvestite and not as a transgender woman?

When I started transvesting there was no term trans woman, in any case there was the word transsexual, which came from the queer academy of North America and Europe. They made it clear that you had to have done a genital reassignment to be transgender. On the other hand, there is the profile of the insult, which I think is wonderful. **They insulted us by calling us transvestites, all of us**. Those who had silicone tits, those who had foam rubber tits, those who had pito, those who dressed only at night, or those who dressed day and night. We were all transvestites. That word acted as an insult and as a call. Then I started reading some theorists who said: transgender is such a thing, trans woman is such another, transformist is such another, and they did a kind of research around the genitals and surgery. I didn't put on my tits until two years ago, and I went to bed as a transvestite and got up as a transvestite. **Trans woman, those two words, seem to me a sanitization**, an attempt to erase the past, like borrowing the term woman. I am not interested in that

nomenclature, let alone trying to read us as if we were a dictionary. People's identity is a mystery to everyone, not just transvestites. I find it aberrant that people wash their lives: like those who were prostitutes and are now women of society and never talk about their past again. Or the transvestites who say "I was never discriminated against". How can you wash your life to such an extent? Where is your experience, the stains and scars of your past?

When you say "I started cross-dressing", what do you mean?

When I physically dressed as a woman and went outside. It would be 13 years old. I would escape through the window and walk alone at night. He made me clothes with sheets and curtains. **Cross-dressing is all about cunning.** Being a woman or being a man was something you were given; it is taught to you by your parents, school, church, and friends. But no one teaches you to be a transvestite, it was something you learned intuitively. I remember the first tits I made. I don't know how it occurred to me to cut a piece of mattress shaped like a and paint its nipple. I was 14 years old and I hadn't seen anyone, but I wanted to go to the transvestite bowling alley. The feeling was one of power. Of a lot of power. Now I don't have any similar feelings. I went to school at dawn, walking, I had stolen a mascara in a perfumery, and a block before entering the school I put it with a lot of subtlety and that feeling was like levitating, like being twenty centimeters above the ground. It was like a crime, a betrayal... in a town where in the end they ended up chasing me with stones for being who I was.

And his father and mother?

They found out from a friend of my dad's. I had the feeling that they hated me. Western culture teaches to hate transvestites. I have been insulted by children who go to primary school. **I could never turn to my parents for help.** After many years I said to myself: "They were peasants, they had no other way out, what could they do." The world and society, everything was arranged for them to have that terror. They would go to bed at night and I would hear them speak, "What are we going to do?" My dad would say, "I'm going to send him to a military school." But how could they react? On TV we were mocked, in the media we were ridiculed. For them it was the worst thing that could happen to them.

She says that literature saved her life because it was a space that was allowed to her, that when they saw her submerged a book they left her alone.

Yes, it was extortion. They respected that I read and was cultured. It was important to them because my grandparents were illiterate and my aunts didn't even finish high school.

She was also a good student. I was always 10 and the teachers praised me. In fact, I was a flag bearer [the student who has the best average is the one who carries the flag of Argentina at school events]. They felt pride and said, "My son writes," and they left me alone.

He went to Cordoba to study biology...

Yes, but when I got to sign up I had looked at the date wrong and it was closed. I ended up signing up in Social Communication. It was what my older half-brother studied, and since I was interested in writing, I thought I could make some good out of it. I also had to leave the village, if I stayed they would end up killing me.

Have you returned to the village?

Always, my parents live there. There's a poem by **Sharon Olds** that says something like, "The damage my father did to me is retreating." Now, when I go to the village, there is no one. The people who chased me and who closed the door on me no longer exist. And I'm going to walk with my mom, to the river, to drink mate... in the evening we went out to dinner at a restaurant. For a long time, when I went, I connected with the fear I spent there. But in recent years that ceased to matter. The damage they did to me is being removed.

Studying Social Communication he met what is still his best friend today.

All life with him. He was a faggot and, as they say, the feathers flew. We saw each other and fell in love. Thirteen or fourteen years ago she went on a trip all over Latin America and I spent two months lying in a bed of the sadness I had because she had left. A huge love. We did a theater workshop at the university, and in the third year he told me that he was going to study Theater. And I said, "Well, let's go." When I entered the Faculty of Theatre, a professor came and said to me: "What is your name?" They had taken a list by Cristian Omar Sosa Villada and I, discreetly, said: "It's me." He asked me, "But what's your name?" **I told her that Camila, crossed out the name and put Camila. I felt like I was home.** Almost all of my friends are from that era. But I didn't finish Social Communication or Theater. I illegally exercise theatricality and communication [laughs]. They're going to take me prisoner. Hopefully it will be a men's prison for me to be the queen [we laughed].

It's amazing how cultured and comical you are. I say incredible for the power with which it combines both.

I gave a two-year workshop in a women's prison. Before, transvestites went to the men's prison, but with the Gender Identity Law of 2012 they were transferred to the women's prison. I would go there and read them. At first I arrived with books with a lot of social

dye. With texts by the Villero poet Camilo Blajaquis, a pive who was imprisoned for robbery and began to write in a prison workshop. Or *Faulkner's Requiem for an Inmate*. And they would say, "But if we live that every day." The same thing happens when transvestites are given to read my novels [laughs]. They immediately got hooked on reading. I want to tell this because I asked the travas if he liked to be more in the women's prison or in the men's prison. And they told me: "The one of men, because the mines like puterío and gossip very much; and there he fucked every night." Wonderful.

How did you survive in Cordoba while studying?

Prostituting myself. I was there from 2000 to 2009. Nine years. It survives with transvestite liveliness and with drugs and alcohol. **We had to be anesthetized.** Beyond the crimes, with transvestites a curious thing happens, men have a kind of fear. We had sown the idea that we were really very dangerous. Very desirable because it was all forbidden. The transvestites filled the dark matter of desire: the oily one, the one that sticks to you and is pringous. And that's what they want.

What was the cooperation and help like between transvestite prostitutes?

We carried knives, some of them robbed men. I have seen transvestites leave men convulsing in the street with heels. It was not something continuous, nor did it exist on its own, it existed insofar as there was an enemy. Sometimes the enemies were ourselves, among us. But **if the police or a hairy customer appeared, we all closed ranks.** What is now said so lightly about the sorority was what we did every day. Sometimes one would do very well for the day and say, "Come and eat at home."

She says that prostitution came because of poverty and that being poor it is very complicated to get out of there. You have been the exception that confirms the rule.

I was pushed to be poor and had no chance of doing anything else. I made efforts: I cleaned houses, sewed clothes, made patches, sold things on the street. Capitalism is a prostituting system. I don't know what the difference is between being a prostitute and having to spend fourteen hours filming the episode of a miniseries. You also put the body, they also manipulate you, there is no rest. **We're all putting the body in some way.** The question of prostitution is the body, and there is still a lot of taboo. As Margerite Duras says, there are marriages in which the wife is a private prostitute. What cannot happen under any circumstances is that the body of a woman or the body of a transvestite is managed by a trafficker.

Do you miss anything from that time?

Yes, everything. Now I'm always tired and at that time I wasn't. I also keep some good friends. But above all I miss savagery, youth and living at night.

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