

Inspired by the incredible story of Julia Pastrana, Larissa Garcia and Katie Sabolek came together to celebrate her life and share their interpretive works with the community. As a symbol of disrespect and exploitation, Julia's story speaks directly to the souls of anyone who has been rejected or vilified for being "different" and to all of us who fight for equality. We hope to help generate a conversation that is spearheaded by inclusion and acceptance.

—Larissa Farias and Katie Sabolek

Julia Pastrana Brief Chronology

1834 - Born in a small village in the western Sierra Madre region of the State of Sinaloa, Mexico. Julia Pastrana is born with congenital generalized hypertrichosis lanuginosa and severe gingival hyperplasia which causes her body and face to be covered with thick hair and have an overdeveloped jaw.

1834-185? - The details of her life as a child are not certain. Historian Ricardo Mimiaga research into the oral history reveals that Julia's mother dies when she is very young and that her uncle becomes her caretaker and sells her to a traveling circus.

18?? -1854 Lives in Culiacan in the home of Pedro Sanchez (Governor of Sinaloa from 1836 to 1837). The exact terms under which she lives in the Governor's house are not known. We can assume that during this time she begins her training as a mezzo soprano and dancer and learns English and French, languages in which she becomes fluent in addition to Spanish and her native indigenous language cahita. Ms. Pastrana leaves the Governor's house when she is sold to Mr. Francisco Sepulveda, the administrator of Maritime Customs of Mazatlan. According to accounts by Irineo Paz, Mr. Francisco Sepulveda partners with the Governor of Sinaloa and an American businessman, Theodore Lent, to showcase Julia Pastrana in the United States.

1854-1855 Performs in Guadalajara, Mexico and the USA.

1855- From evidence found in archival documents, it is possible that Pastrana travels from Veracruz to New Orleans with Mr. Sepulveda to meet with Mr. Lent. Upon arrival Mr. Lent secretly convinces Ms. Pastrana to marry him and becomes her manager. They travel to New York, Cleveland, Baltimore and Boston in the USA and Canada where she is exhibited by Lent.

1854-1858 - Her manager and husband Theodore Lent bills Julia as: The Ugliest Woman in the World, The Nondescript, The Hirsute, The Ape Woman, The Female Hybrid, The Wonderful Hybrid, Bear-woman, Baboon Lady, among others. They travel to London and tour throughout Europe and present a show in which Julia Pastrana dances and sings opera as a mezzo soprano. The performances are a great success. They travel to Vienna, Germany and Poland where she performs. Her stage show has great commercial success. Ms. Pastrana is visited and examined by doctors, and is written about by Francis T. Buckland and Charles Darwin.

1858 - An interview with Julia Pastrana is published in Gartenlaube newspaper, Leipzig, Germany.

1859 - Pastrana becomes pregnant by her husband and manager Theodore Lent.

1860 - Pastrana and Lent travel to Moscow. On the 20th of March Julia gives birth to a boy who is diagnosed with the same condition as Pastrana. The infant dies 35 hours later. Complications during childbirth keep Ms. Pastrana hospitalized and Mr. Lent sells tickets to see Julia Pastrana in her hospital bed. The 25th of March, Julia passes away from a puerperal metroperitonitis. Lent sells the bodies of his wife and child to Dr. Sokolov of the University of Moscow, who had developed embalming techniques.

1862 - Theodore Lent visits the Hospital of the University of Moscow and when he sees the results of the work of Prof. Sokolov on Julia Pastrana and her son, he demands that they be returned to him. The request is denied. Lent reaches out to the Embassy of the USA to reclaim them, and with their intervention is successful in retrieving them. He puts Julia Pastrana and the child inside a glass case and begins to exhibit them all over Europe. The commercial success is greater than when Julia was exhibited alive.

1864- Theodore Lent meets Marie Barthel, a young bearded woman from Karlsbad, Germany. Lent changes her name to Zenora Pastrana. Barthel becomes part of the exhibition presenting Julia Pastrana and her baby as "sister and nephew" to the audience. Their economic success continues to grow.

1884 - Theodore Lent dies in a psychiatric hospital in Saint Petersburg. Barthel inherits the bodies of Pastrana and the infant and continues to exhibit them.

1921 – Marie Barthel sells Julia and her son to the Norwegian Haakon Jaeger Lund to exhibit them in Oslo. Later, his son Hans Jaeger Lund continues to exhibit the bodies of Julia Pastrana and her baby and takes them on tour.

1943 - Shortly before the Second World War, the German diplomat in charge of the medical department in Oslo, orders that the bodies of Ms. Pastrana and her son be confiscated and sent to Berlin. Lund declines and takes the bodies on tour through the Nordic countries.

1953 -The bodies of Ms. Pastrana and her child are stored in Linköping, Sweden.

1954 - Mr. Hans Jaeger Lund dies and his son inherits the bodies of Julia Pastrana and child. They are stored in a warehouse in Oslo.

1971 - Julia and her son are exhibited multiple times in the touring Tivoli Fair in Norway.

1972 - Julia and her son are taken on tour to the USA to be exhibited in fairs.

1973 - Sweden and Norway pass laws that prohibit the exhibition of human bodies. The bishop of Oslo requests that the bodies be confiscated and buried in a catholic ceremony.

1976 - Bjorn Lund, heir to Hans Jaeger Lund keeps Julia and her son and puts them in storage in Oslo. Thieves break into the warehouse and throw the body of the infant in a field where he is eaten by rodents. Julia's arm is ripped from her body, which is later found in a dumpster and taken to the police.

1979 - Lund's warehouse is vandalized again. Julia's body disappears.

1988 - Jan Bondeson finds Julia Pastrana's body in the cleaner's closet in the basement of the Forensic Institute of Oslo. Pastrana's body is restored and she is kept at the Institute.

1994 - The University of Oslo and other organizations discuss the future of Pastrana. Voting is in favor of burying Julia--only Dr. Per Holck is opposed. Shortly after the voting, the Royal Ministry of Health and Church affairs sends an order that Julia Pastrana must remain in custody

of the Schreiner Collection of the Department of Anatomy Forensic Studies of Oslo for research purposes. The Director of the Schreiner Collection is Dr. Per Holck.

1996 - Dr. Jan Bondeson researches and publishes essays on Julia Pastrana. Dr. Rosemarie Garland Thompson publishes a number of studies on Julia Pastrana. Numerous articles by different authors are published in Europe and the United States. In Mexico she is virtually unknown.

2003 - Laura Anderson Barbata becomes familiar with the life and story of Julia Pastrana after being invited by her sister Kathleen Culebro to collaborate on the costume design for a play based on Julia Pastrana produced by Amphibian Stage Productions. Ms. Culebro writes and circulates a letter to the Mexican Embassy in Norway requesting the repatriation and burial of Ms. Pastrana. She gathers hundreds of signatures in support. The letter is sent to Norway and no reply is received.

2004 - Laura Anderson Barbata is invited to Oslo by the Office of Contemporary Art OCA, Norway to visit and meet with Sami communities in northern Norway. She is in contact with institutions, universities, academics, scholars, artists, politicians and activists of the Sami Communities. She learns that the Schreiner Collection, where Julia Pastrana is kept, has hundreds of Sami skulls that were acquired by illicit means.

2005 - LAB is awarded by the Office of Contemporary Art, OCA in Norway an artist residency. LAB proposes to work on a project regarding Pastrana during her residency in Oslo and begins correspondence with the University of Oslo, Dr. Per Holck, anthropologists, sociologists, Sami scholars, intellectuals, historians, artists and the Ethics Committee of the University of Oslo. The National Committee for Research in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH) expresses to LAB that they will be forming a new Board to evaluate cases involving human remains and agree that LAB will present the case of Julia Pastrana to the Board and will be the first case they review.

2005 - LAB publishes an obituary in the local newspaper in Oslo announcing the death of Julia Pastrana: En memoriam. Julia Pastrana (1834-1860). México-Moscú. The obituary also informs that there will be a catholic ceremony (faith that Ms. Pastrana practiced during her life). With the aid of Christiane Erharter, Barbata organizes a catholic mass in memory of Julia Pastrana in the Cathedral of Oslo. It is the first humanitarian gesture towards Ms. Pastrana and is attended by hundreds of people, many are circus performers who bring her flowers.

2005 - The new Board for the Evaluation of Human Remains under the National Committee for Research in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH) is officially formed and LAB sends the Board a request for inquiry concerning the state of Julia Pastrana. She requests the Board's evaluation for her repatriation and burial in Mexico.

2007 - The Committee responds and informs LAB that the case of Julia Pastrana will be reopened for study and evaluation. The Board sends an official document sent by mail. The document is lost and damaged by the US Postal Service, but is recovered and delivered 1 year later to LAB.

2007-2011 - LAB consults scientists specializing in genetics to find Julia Pastrana's relatives. After numerous consultations and research, it is clear to LAB that a moral and ethical argument

is more feasible to claim Ms. Pastrana's repatriation than to find her relatives (DNA samples of Pastrana are not available). LAB meets Professor Ricardo Mimiaga, historian from Sinaloa who has written and researched the life of Julia Pastrana. Together they begin to search for documents related to Julia Pastrana: birth certificate, certificate of baptism, etc.

2011 - Silvia Gamez, reporter from Reforma newspaper in Mexico, discovers the story of Julia Pastrana and of Laura Anderson Barbata's involvement in her repatriation. Gamez begins correspondence with LAB, the University of Oslo, the Ministry of Health of Norway as well as scientists and historians in Mexico. She publishes her findings and the news is published all around the world by hundreds of news sites.

2012 - The Ministry of Health of Norway recognizes that no investigation has been done on the body of Julia Pastrana nor have they received any requests and states that Julia can be buried.

LAB speaks with Remigio Mestas in Oaxaca to discuss the creation of a ceremonial prehispanic huipil for Pastrana for her burial. The huipil and enredo back strap woven textiles are made by master weaver from Oaxaca, Francisca Palafox utilizing natural cotton, coyuchi, caracol and human hair.

14th of March, 2012 - Culiacán, Sinaloa. Laura Anderson Barbata has an audience with the Secretary of the Governor of Sinaloa to present the repatriation of Julia Pastrana to her native state for burial project.

16th of April, 2012- Governor of Sinaloa Mario López Valdez joins LAB's repatriation efforts and sends a letter to the National Committee for Ethical Evaluation on Human Remains, NESH, to request and petition for the repatriation of Julia Pastrana to her native state for burial. The Governor's letter is accompanied by a letter by LAB that includes the moral, ethical and social justifications for Ms. Pastrana's return to Mexico for burial.

8th of May, 2012 - In Oslo, Norway the NESH meets to evaluate letters received from Mexico requesting the repatriation of Julia Pastrana.

4th of June, 2012- The NESH responds to the repatriation petition with a document in which they recommend that Julia Pastrana be repatriated to México for burial following her religious faith. The recommendation made by NESH is received by the University of Oslo and the Institute of Basic Medicine of the University of Oslo, both of which accept Julia Pastrana's repatriation to Mexico.

June-December, 2012 - LAB seeks the institutions that will be involved in the repatriation project: The Office of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, the Embassy of Mexico in Belgium that is responsible for Norway, the University of Oslo, the Ministry of Health of Norway, Albin International Repatriation Services Ltd., Funerary Services Oslo, México City and Culiacán, Sinaloa, the Institute of Culture of Sinaloa, the office of the Governor of Sinaloa.

January, 2012 - Laura Anderson Barbata begins an international not for profit campaign: A Flower For Julia, a call to send a flower to symbolically welcome and give closure to Julia Pastrana's long journey home on the day of her burial in Sinaloa, Mexico.

7th of February, 2013 - Laura Anderson Barbata, along with forensic anthropologist Dr. Nicolás Marquez Grant from the University of Oxford, witnesses that the body of Julia Pastrana is in the coffin and then sealed. In the Chapel of the University Hospital a private ceremony takes place for the transfer of custody of Julia Pastrana to the Government of Mexico. LAB represents the State of Sinaloa. Artists, academics and activists attend the ceremony.

8th to the 10th of February, 2013 - Julia Pastrana's coffin is transported from Oslo to Mexico in a sealed coffin. The body arrives in Culiacán, Sinaloa. LAB verifies that Ms. Pastrana is in the coffin, and the coffin is not opened again.

12th of February, 2013 - The coffin of Julia Pastrana is transported from Culiacán to Sinaloa de Leyva. She is welcomed with official ceremonies and a funeral mass, then taken to the Municipal Cemetery following local traditions. As music plays, Julia Pastrana's coffin is covered in the flowers and buried. Inside her coffin she has prehispanic ceremonial huipil garments and a photograph of her child on her chest. The tomb of Julia Pastrana is completely covered in concrete and enclosed in walls that measure more than 1 meter in thickness to protect that her tomb never be vandalized and to guarantee that she will never be exposed again. The tomb is then covered with thousands of flowers that have arrived from all over the world.

Updated December, 2016

Sources:

Godfrey, Kathleen. (2016). Julia Pastrana Online. Retrieved from <http://juliapastranaonline.com>.

Bondeson, Jan. *The Strange Story of Julia Pastrana. A Cabinet of Medical Curiosities*. I.B. Taurus Publishers. 1997. pp 241-243

Bondeson J, Miles A.E.W. Julia Pastrana, the nondescript: an example of congenital, generalized hypertrichosis terminalis with gingival hyperplasia. *American Journal of Medical Genetics*, 47, 1993, pp. 198-212

Mimiaga, Ricardo. Julia Pastrana. Una sinaloense extraordinaria. Conference. *Historians and Chroniclers*. Mazatlán, Sinaloa. 2010

Gamez, Silvia. *Periódico Reforma*, México, D.F. 27 of February, 2012