

Curriculum Vitae

Isela Xospa Cruz

Mexico City, 1975



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Current position

Founder and General Director of Ediciones Xospatronik

www.xospatronik.com

Introduction

Isela Xospa is an independent illustrator, designer, and publisher from Mexico City. Since 2014, she has been the head of Ediciones Xospatronik, an autonomous, independent publishing house for children's literature that foregrounds themes and characters from Milpa Alta, a Nahua region in the south of Mexico City.

She has a degree in Graphic Communication Design from UAM-Xochimilco and a master's degree in Editorial Design and Production from the same university. She has worked for the Fondo de Cultura Económica, ILCE México and the David Bowie Archive. She specializes in character design, visual narrative, self-publishing, and illustration.

Winner of the Antonio García Cubas Award for Best Book and Publishing Work in the field of Anthropology and History in the Children's Book category in 2021 and Artist Book category in 2024.

She actively participates in the exchange of experiences in self-publishing indigenous language books and visual narratives. Her artistic and research work focuses on experimenting with diverse registration systems of native cultures, which she regards as valid processes of learning and transmission of knowledge.

In 2021-2022, she was nominated Chevening British Library Fellow. Her research project focused on the study of early printed books from Latin America, and featured different strategies to make the information about the collection accessible to speakers of native languages, as well as laying the groundwork for future exchange with the British Library.

Her Master's Thesis investigated the phenomenon of self-managed publishing in her hometown, through the detailed analysis of two editorial projects. She emphasized the urgency of strengthening self-managed publishing as a way to preserve and revitalize the ancestral culture of native peoples.

Academic training

- Graduate in Graphic Communication Design (1999-2003)
- Master's degree in Publishing Design and Production (2017-2024)

Awards and distinctions

- Antonio Gacía Cubas Award for Best Book and Editorial Work in the field of Anthropology and History in 2021. Children's Book Category.
- Chevening British Library Award 2021-2022.
- Antonio Gacía Cubas Award for Best Book and Editorial Work in the field of Anthropology and History in 2024. Artist Book Category.

Areas of research

- Self-managed publishing from and for indigenous communities.
- Publishing and translation of indigenous thought and philosophy.
- Ethical processes in communal publishing.
- Visual narratives as tools of experimentation and registration systems from indigenous cultures as vehicles for learning and transmission of knowledge.

Articles and publications

Xospa, I. (2024). *La edición autogestiva en Milpa Alta. Dos casos de estudio: Calpulli Tecalco y Contraviento Atoltecayotl 2004 – 2022*. [Master's thesis, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Unidad Xochimilco].

Xospa, I. (2023). Writing Our Own Stories. Book manufacturing as a political tool. *The New Bookbinder. Journal of Designer Bookbinders*, 43, 43-52.

Xospa, I. (2022, October 27). The Day of the Dead Celebration. A safe space to share the stories and memories of our lost ones. *Americas and Oceania Collections blog*. <https://blogs.bl.uk/americas/2021/10/the-day-of-the-dead-celebration-a-safe-space-to-share-the-stories-and-memories-of-our-lost-one.html>

Xospa, I. (2020, November 16). Libros en lengua indígena: la nueva tendencia editorial. *ADN Cultura*.

<https://www.adncultura.org/gusanos-de-la-memoria-libros-en-lengua-indigena-la-nueva-tendencia-editorial?fbclid=IwAR2k9FCj1yrkGIKumVv6OoLqKYeM-QndKjNXNGOqHVhhJRrnZpNQ9F3TuMg>

Xospa, I. (2020, September 30). 8 artistas indígenas de México que desafían las etiquetas. *Global Voices*.

<https://es.globalvoices.org/2020/09/30/8-artistas-indigenas-de-mexico-que-desafian-las-etiquetas/>

Recent projects (2019-2024)

Ediciones Xospatronik.

Independent and self-managed publishing project inspired by the cultural heritage of Milpa Alta (*Malacateticpac*: in the circle of hills), a native town in the southeast of Mexico City. www.xospatronik.com

Exchange of knowledge and digital activism.

A project that aims to make books and publishing accessible to indigenous children of Mexico and Latin America. <https://xospatronik.com/intercambio-de-saberes/> and <https://xospatronik.com/traduccioness/>

Invited talks

Global Voices Summit 2024, The resistance will be translated: Translation as a tool for activism, Kathmandú, Nepal, November 2024.

Global Voices Summit 2024, The internet isn't multilingual enough: A spotlight on indigenous language digital activism, Kathmandú, Nepal, November 2024.

HAY Festival Querétaro, J. Silverio from Taller Leñateros and Isela Xospa in conversation with Yásnaya Elena Aguilar, Querétaro, Mexico, September 2023.

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, National Book Day Colloquium, Speaking New Regions: Ancient knowledge, present *oralities* and transmediality in indigenous languages, Casa Universitaria del Libro CASUL, Mexico City, Mexico, November 2023.

HAY Festival Querétaro, “Narrating the towns”, Querétaro, Mexico, September 2022.

Universidad Veracruzana, International University Book Fair, Women in Publishing Forum: Publishing children’s and youth literature books, Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico, September 2022.

British Library, Chevening Award Holders Presentation, London, United Kingdom, August 2022.

British Library, Día de Muertos on stage: Closing Gala round table, London, United Kingdom, October 2022.

Biblioteca de Investigaciones Juan de Córdova / Endless Oaxaca Multilingüe, “Publishing in indigenous languages: challenges and experiences”, online talk, August 2020 .

Rising Voices / Mexican Embassy in Canada, “How digital activism in indigenous language can play a role in the upcoming International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032)”, online talk, September 2020.