An Experience L.A. Event
Thursday, October 20, 2022
Los Angeles Theatre Center
Downtown Los Angeles

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- (Un)Documents is the first solo show by Jesús I. Valles, an award-winning queer Mexican immigrant actor and poet currently based in Providence, Rhode Island.
- The show was written and is performed by Valles, and was directed by Rudy Ramirez.
- This is the West Coast premiere of (Un)Documents, presented by the Latino Theater Company.

“I learned early on what some people are able to do or unable to do, all based on a few pieces of paper and, you know, some holograms on some plastic. Paperwork becomes personhood at a certain point, and that was never lost on me.”
—Jesús I. Valles, in The Austin Chronicle, 2019

WRITING PROMPTED BY EXPERIENCE AND POLITICS

Jesús I. Valles was a child when they came to Texas from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, with their family. The family was undocumented at the time and eventually gained citizenship. Yet in 2009, Valles’s brother was deported after a workplace ICE raid. Valles processed it all through writing, often having “conversations with the documents that we constantly had to pull up” through journaling and poetry. (Un)Documents built on Valles’s poems, and was prompted by the election of Trump to the U.S. presidency in 2016: “I was like, ‘Okay. Limited time, fascism is crazy, we don’t know how long it’s gonna take, or where it’s gonna go. What if you just say ‘f*** it’ and do whatever you wanted to do? And one thing I wanted to do, always, was writing and theatre. So I was like, ‘Cool, do a solo show,”’ Valles told The Austin Chronicle.

“sin papeles,” we say, “without papers,” but the term is wrong
we are wounded libraries of nothing but paper
—from the poem “(un)documents” by Jesús I. Valles, published in The New Republic, August 24, 2018

LATINO THEATER CO.

The Latino Theater Company is dedicated to contributing new stories and methods of expression for the American theater repertoire and increasing artistic opportunities for underserved communities. Programming highlights local playwrights and new voices from Latinx, First Nation, Black, Asian American, Jewish American, and LGBTQ+ communities. LTC operates the Los Angeles Theatre Center, a historic landmark in downtown Los Angeles that houses five theaters as well as office and gallery space.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

What does (Un)Documents say about citizenship and personhood?
What does Valles mean by “(un)documentation”?
Valles told The Austin Chronicle, “I have a really deep love for the people I’m talking about . . . for my family and for undocumented communities.” Does this come through in the show? If so, how?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

Jesús I. Valles on social @thejesucia
Latino Theater Co. latinotheaterco.org
The Undocupoets Fellowship siblingrivalrypress.com/undocupoets-fellowship
Cornerstone Theater Company cornerstoneetheater.org
Upcoming Visions and Voices events, including
10/25/22 Lido Pimienta in Concert
11/3/22 Dahlak Brathwaite: Try/Step/Trip
11/13/22 August Wilson’s Radio Golf at A Noise Within
12/2/22 The Brothers Paranormal at East West Players

In 2020, about 281 million people were living outside the country they were born in, according to the UN.
DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

JAVIER GARIBAY of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this event. Electronic resources are accessible through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu but may require the user to log in using their USC credentials.

BOOKS


DATABASES

- Contemporary World Drama
- Digital Theatre Plus

JOURNALS

- Theatre
- Theatre Journal