

Bold colour and tactile stitches
are at the heart of every
Señorita Lylo design



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Loly Ghirardi

THE ARTIST BEHIND SEÑORITA LYLO IS STITCHING
A VIVID PATH THROUGH LOSS AND CHILD-FREE LIVING

Words by Becca Parker

Fabric, photos, clothing.. Loly isn't afraid to experiment with new materials for her embroidery projects



At the beginning, I was always saying that I started embroidery because I was bored of working on the computer, but it's not true," admits Loly Ghirardi. You might know the Argentinian artist better as Señorita Lylo - that's her embroidery business moniker. Loly's joyous, texture-rich pieces tell one heck of a story on their own, but there's a thread within her work that runs deeper still.

"I had started an IVF journey," she shares, looking back. "It was this new thing in my life and it was very stressful, very sad. Then, walking down the street in Barcelona one day, I discovered these embroidery classes. I took one class to pass the time and have something new to do, and I found it gave me a lot of patience and focus, a bit like meditation." The therapeutic nature of creating things by hand, as well as the art itself, became intrinsic to processing what was happening to her. "When you embroider, you are in that moment, you stop thinking so much. It really helped to get me through all the treatments. My journey with stitching is interlinked with that journey too, with that part of me."

Stumbling across that embroidery workshop wasn't Loly's first encounter with the craft, but it was the first time she tried it. Before moving to Barcelona 20 years ago, Loly studied graphic design in Argentina. "I saw an embroidery piece for the first time when I was in Buenos Aires," she says. "I went with a friend to an exhibition by Argentinian artists Chiachio & Giannone. They are textile artists, and they use embroidery like illustration - they make big murals with pets, dogs, portraits." She recalls being bowled over by the scale and texture of the pieces. "It was a wow moment because those murals are three meters by three meters. And when I saw it, I thought; 'OK, this is thread, this is not

oil or acrylic!' And that caught my eye - that was my view as a graphic designer."

In Barcelona, Loly worked with several graphic design studios before setting up her own with a partner. This experience helped establish her distinctive embroidery style. "So when it comes to stitching, I have my point of view, my eye, with the colours, composition, concept," she explains. "I approach the projects like when I was a graphic designer." Each piece is more than simply something pretty to look at. "Instead, something that you think about. You have a system. You choose those colours because they came from an inspiration, or what kind of message you want to share."

Even with an incredible design background, though, she wasn't a star embroiderer overnight. It was another skill set she had to learn. "When I started, I did that course," Loly recalls, "but then I took every class I could - lots of courses with lots of different tutors! Some were on more detailed embroidery, or embroidery without knots, while others were more alternative such as embroidering with yarn or tulle."

"I am a very curious person," she says. "I'm always alert to everything that happens around me. Inspiration is always close - I may find it in my dog, in my floor tiles, or maybe on a nature walk. I take ideas from reality and I interpret →

"When you embroider, you are in that moment, you stop thinking so much... it really helped me.."

Loly's work has a freshness and originality that stems from her background in graphic design



IMAGE © DOMESTIKA



them with stitches. If I'm not sure how to make it, then I try new things to recreate it."

Her newest project? "I'm making my first book!" And she's positively beaming about it. Lylo's writing debut will be illustrated with her original embroideries and published by Penguin later this year. It'll focus on the therapeutic benefits of crafting, and her own experiences of leaning into embroidery at a difficult time. She was about 30 when she picked up the craft, following the loss of two pregnancies. It helped her through unsuccessful IVF treatments. "My career with embroidery won, she says. "My creation, I think, is my projects. Because I don't have children, I have the time to make these pieces. Now, I live absolutely for my embroidery projects."

"I want to tell this story," Loly shares. "And to inspire other people to talk about these things that happen to

women that no-one talks about. It's taboo, you know?

When I was in that place, I found books that helped me, but the books always finished with a miracle baby. For me, there was no baby. I want to put something in the library that's also a reality for a lot of women. And also, thinking a bit selfishly, it will help me really close that chapter."

"As well as the pursuit of motherhood, I'll talk about how handcrafting helps people to figure out and process illness, anxiety – lots of things. The most important thing is how crafting can help you to feel better."

Embroidery has helped bring Loly to a place of acceptance, and Señorita Lylo is going from strength to strength. "That place where I started embroidery? Now I give classes there – I'm the teacher!" She's busy nurturing her students, which is one of her greatest joys. "I love my students' feedback," she enthuses. "I'm very, very proud of sparking new passions in people through my teaching and tutorials. I also have four online courses with Domestika. I was very happy with just one, but every year or every two years they call me to make another one."

Next, she's got plans in the works to put together an exhibition of all the embroidery pieces for the book – something she's always dreamed of – and is looking forward to more one-of-a-kind projects. It's the versatility of the craft that shines for her. "When I have an embroidery commission that's going to be for something that's not been embroidered before, like once I made an embroidery for a wine label! And I made embroidery for a feminist exhibition. So with embroidery, it's not just an insular activity, it can get out there in ways you'd never expect!" Loly's life is filled with beauty and creativity and there's so much more still to come. "I put all my emotions in when I make things," she says. "It's made me very happy, and proud!"

Discover more of Loly's story and embroidery at www.srtalylo.com



