

Pamela Ramos : *Carta Encontrada*
December 3rd - January 6th

There's a story my dad always tells when someone asks how his shipping business started and I happen to be around. Back in 1995 he migrated to California from Oaxaca looking for work. Maricarmen, my oldest sister, must have been a year old and I was still inside my mother when he left. He spent his first couple of months working in construction and washing cars—exhausted, I can only imagine, but probably hopeful and proud.

The story he tells goes like this:

Him and my mother are talking on the telephone after I was born. He hears my newborn cry and feels the need to return home to hold me, to meet me. Trying to figure out a way to raise money for his plane ticket, he tells all of his Oaxacan friends that if they pitch in for his flight home, he'll take back anything they want to give to their families. He raises enough money and brings with him their toys, clothes, pictures and letters. We meet.

From that moment on Ramos Envios became his shipping company through which he has been exporting goods for 26 years now, my exact age.

In the transit of objects there are things lost, forgotten, left behind. At Ramos Envios, unclaimed items can only be stored for a year or so in hopes that someone will collect them, otherwise they are discarded. In the past couple years I have been drawn to these forgotten objects. I see a parallel between them and the legal invisibility of a migrant body. Sitting in limbo, constantly expecting. Although I hesitate to pin these works to that thought or pretend that this allegory matches somebody's reality, I do think they are integral to each other.

Anyway, these works are about love, memory, gifts, honoring, second chances. The ethics of the work are still unclear to me. If the receiver didn't make it to the message—is it for us to read? Were we, in a cosmic sense, always meant to see these? I hope so. I also hope that we accept the narratives of others as intrinsic to our own and that through seeing what others leave behind we remember.