

EP9-Slavica Habjanovic_Eveyln

00:00:00.000 --> 00:00:02.580

(upbeat music)

Eveyln

00:00:02.580 --> 00:00:16.200

- Hi, and welcome to Untold Hong Kong Stories,

00:00:16.200 --> 00:00:19.080

Multimedia Narratives from the Margins.

00:00:19.080 --> 00:00:21.280

This is a podcast series where we hear the stories

00:00:21.280 --> 00:00:23.480

of people in our community,

00:00:23.480 --> 00:00:25.560

from Hong Kong's non-Chinese locals

00:00:25.560 --> 00:00:28.540

to marginalized members of our community.

00:00:28.540 --> 00:00:30.320

We hope that by sharing their stories,

00:00:30.320 --> 00:00:32.360

we can think about the way we live ours

00:00:32.360 --> 00:00:35.960

and create a more inclusive and diverse society.

00:00:35.960 --> 00:00:38.120

I'm Evelyn Kwok from the Academy of Visual Arts

00:00:38.120 --> 00:00:40.080

from Hong Kong Baptist University.

00:00:40.080 --> 00:00:43.360

And our guest for today's podcast is Slavica Habjanovic,

00:00:43.360 --> 00:00:46.440

a writer, editor with a background in sociology

00:00:46.440 --> 00:00:48.560

and publishing from Croatia,

00:00:48.560 --> 00:00:51.160

who's lived in Hong Kong for seven years.

00:00:51.160 --> 00:00:52.780

Here she shares her story.

Slavica

00:00:56.200 --> 00:00:58.520

- I've been in communications, I've been in the design

00:00:58.520 --> 00:01:00.760

industry for over a decade.

00:01:00.760 --> 00:01:03.120

I'm a writer, I'm an editor,

00:01:03.120 --> 00:01:06.640

and I've got a background in sociology and publishing.

00:01:06.640 --> 00:01:09.760

I've always had quite a big interest in diaspora,

00:01:09.760 --> 00:01:12.860

identity, culture arts, and so I'm kind of like

00:01:12.860 --> 00:01:16.480

on the margins of all of these topics in different ways.

00:01:16.480 --> 00:01:18.320

And, you know, kind of actively participating

00:01:18.320 --> 00:01:19.160

in different ways.

00:01:19.160 --> 00:01:22.560

And I guess a lot of those interests

00:01:22.560 --> 00:01:25.000

have sort of been fueled by my family background

00:01:26.040 --> 00:01:28.160

and, you know, family stories and migration

00:01:28.160 --> 00:01:29.320

that I've experienced as well.

00:01:29.320 --> 00:01:33.480

So I was born in Melbourne and then I moved to Croatia

00:01:33.480 --> 00:01:36.560

where I have part of my family heritage is from

00:01:36.560 --> 00:01:40.760

when I was a teenager and then went to university there

00:01:40.760 --> 00:01:44.080

and then went back to Australia to do my master's

00:01:44.080 --> 00:01:46.440

and worked there full time for a while

00:01:46.440 --> 00:01:49.160

and then had a great opportunity to transition

00:01:49.160 --> 00:01:51.480

into Shanghai and then Hong Kong.

00:01:51.480 --> 00:01:53.320

And so here I am now.

Evenlyn

00:01:53.320 --> 00:01:54.560

- Wow, what a journey.

Slavica

00:01:54.560 --> 00:01:55.400

- Yes.

Evelyn

00:01:55.400 --> 00:01:58.200

- So even just like, you know, coming to the studio today,

00:01:58.200 --> 00:02:02.520

calling you Slavica and then hearing you introduce yourself,

00:02:02.520 --> 00:02:04.160

which I'm not going to butcher.

00:02:04.160 --> 00:02:05.680

(laughing)

00:02:05.680 --> 00:02:07.520

You know, I always find names,

00:02:07.520 --> 00:02:12.040

it's an interesting way for somebody to be identified

00:02:12.040 --> 00:02:14.640

and understood in their place in the world.

00:02:14.640 --> 00:02:17.120

So I wonder, how do you relate to your name

00:02:17.120 --> 00:02:18.680

and can you please say it for us?

Slavica

00:02:18.680 --> 00:02:21.280

- Sure, so because I grew up in Australia

00:02:22.560 --> 00:02:26.120

and, you know, Australians have a really hard time

00:02:26.120 --> 00:02:29.440

with pronouncing foreign names, as I'm sure you know.

Evelyn

00:02:29.440 --> 00:02:30.280

- Yes.

Slavica

00:02:30.280 --> 00:02:31.480

- With your backgrounds as well.

00:02:31.480 --> 00:02:33.960

So I was always Slavica and, you know,

00:02:33.960 --> 00:02:36.160

I have no problem with that, but in Croatian

00:02:36.160 --> 00:02:38.160

and in, you know, any kind of Eastern European

00:02:38.160 --> 00:02:40.520

Slavic language, they would know to say Slavica

00:02:40.520 --> 00:02:43.080

because of the C, it's like produced in that way.

00:02:43.080 --> 00:02:45.960

But actually, interesting fact, so on my birth certificate,

00:02:45.960 --> 00:02:48.960

my surname is written with a J, so it's Habianović

00:02:48.960 --> 00:02:50.880

and the J is like a Y sound.

00:02:50.880 --> 00:02:53.320

But when I enrolled in school, my parents changed my name

00:02:53.320 --> 00:02:57.400

to Habianović with a Y and then I rebelled at about 11

00:02:57.400 --> 00:02:59.280

when I was like, no, I want my real name everywhere.

00:02:59.280 --> 00:03:02.280

So I like self-initiatively like changed my name

00:03:02.280 --> 00:03:04.280

on all my, like, not documents,

00:03:04.280 --> 00:03:07.040

but just like in the school registry and stuff.

00:03:07.040 --> 00:03:08.640

So yeah, it's always been this evolving thing.

00:03:08.640 --> 00:03:11.280

So I have no problem with people calling me Slavica,

00:03:11.280 --> 00:03:14.520

but I now sort of tend to introduce myself more as Slavica

00:03:14.520 --> 00:03:16.240

and I actually think in Hong Kong, people can say it.

00:03:16.240 --> 00:03:20.000

So they do, but yeah, there's variations of it.

Eveyln

00:03:20.000 --> 00:03:21.520

- Slavica

Slavica

00:03:21.520 --> 00:03:24.440

- Yeah, but it's okay, you can call me Slavica, it's fine.

Eveyln

00:03:24.440 --> 00:03:26.800

- Is there a special meaning behind the name?

00:03:26.800 --> 00:03:27.640

What does it mean?

Slavica

00:03:27.640 --> 00:03:31.520

- So Slavica means, in English it would mean Gloria.

00:03:31.520 --> 00:03:35.720

But then it comes from like the verb Slaviti,

00:03:35.720 --> 00:03:38.520

which means to celebrate or to glorify.

Eveyn

00:03:38.520 --> 00:03:40.480

- Wow, to celebrate or to glorify.

00:03:40.480 --> 00:03:45.480

That, from what I know of you, that is 100% accurate.

Slavica

00:03:45.480 --> 00:03:49.120

- And Slavia means like party or celebration

00:03:49.120 --> 00:03:50.880

and that's very accurate.

Eveyn

00:03:50.880 --> 00:03:53.320

- You are a party, 100%.

Slavica

00:03:53.320 --> 00:03:54.160

- Yeah.

Eveyn

00:03:54.160 --> 00:03:57.240

- If I had to choose any word in the dictionary,

00:03:57.240 --> 00:03:58.320

in any language.

Slavica

00:03:58.320 --> 00:04:00.760

- So it's accurate, yeah.

Eveyn

00:04:00.760 --> 00:04:06.280

- Awesome, so how'd you end up being in Hong Kong?

00:04:06.280 --> 00:04:10.160

Is it just because of work or is there any kind of pool

00:04:10.160 --> 00:04:13.520

to be like, actually I want a different experience in life?

Slavica

00:04:13.520 --> 00:04:18.240

- For sure, I think there are people

00:04:18.240 --> 00:04:22.960

that are kind of have that sort of adventurism in them

00:04:22.960 --> 00:04:27.960

or some sort of curiosity, especially about places.

00:04:27.960 --> 00:04:30.520

I don't mean people can travel and experience that,

00:04:30.520 --> 00:04:33.720

but I think for me, I've always been very curious

00:04:33.720 --> 00:04:35.760

about the realities in different places.

00:04:35.760 --> 00:04:40.080

And as much as I've been afforded the opportunity

00:04:40.080 --> 00:04:41.560

or being able to create the opportunity,

00:04:41.560 --> 00:04:44.320

I've kind of strived for that.

00:04:44.320 --> 00:04:47.080

And I think Hong Kong especially has just been

00:04:47.080 --> 00:04:49.960

a really, really amazing and kind place to me.

00:04:49.960 --> 00:04:54.320

And it's been a place where I've been able to find,

00:04:54.320 --> 00:04:58.320

I'd say a great community and to some degrees,

00:04:58.320 --> 00:05:00.920

a sense of belonging, which I'm sure we're gonna talk about.

00:05:00.920 --> 00:05:03.760

But yeah, I think Australia was interesting.

00:05:03.760 --> 00:05:07.040

Like I really felt like I really wanted to go back

00:05:07.040 --> 00:05:10.320

after my university finished in Croatia

00:05:10.320 --> 00:05:11.800

and I was working there for a while.

00:05:11.800 --> 00:05:13.760

And I wanted to sort of see what it was like living there

00:05:13.760 --> 00:05:15.640

as an adult independently.

00:05:15.640 --> 00:05:17.080

And so that was a great experience.

00:05:17.080 --> 00:05:18.480

But then at some point I almost felt like

00:05:18.480 --> 00:05:20.800

I outgrew it a little bit,

00:05:20.800 --> 00:05:23.800

which maybe sounds a little bit, I don't know,

00:05:23.800 --> 00:05:25.200

wrong to say, but it kind of felt like,

00:05:25.200 --> 00:05:27.960

Australia is an amazing place, but it's very inward looking.

00:05:27.960 --> 00:05:29.880

And I've always kind of been very hungry

00:05:29.880 --> 00:05:32.880

for sort of understanding the world

00:05:32.880 --> 00:05:34.840

from different perspectives and just kind of

00:05:34.840 --> 00:05:37.240

in its entirety as much as I possibly can,

00:05:37.240 --> 00:05:38.600

which obviously is very difficult.

00:05:38.600 --> 00:05:41.840

But yeah, I think just, and I fell in love with Shanghai.

00:05:41.840 --> 00:05:43.280

The first time I went there, I was like,

00:05:43.280 --> 00:05:45.080

this is so exciting.

00:05:45.080 --> 00:05:47.560

It's just such an incredible place and,

00:05:47.560 --> 00:05:51.280

witnessing a huge country like China, it's just,

00:05:51.280 --> 00:05:52.120

it's amazing.

00:05:52.120 --> 00:05:52.960

So yeah.

Evelyn

00:05:52.960 --> 00:05:59.600

- Thinking about the experience of,

00:05:59.600 --> 00:06:02.720

wow, when you step into a country,

00:06:02.720 --> 00:06:04.760

you don't necessarily speak the language

00:06:04.760 --> 00:06:07.520

and the culture is not quite clear to you,

00:06:07.520 --> 00:06:10.440

the kind of cultural norms, that kind of thing.

00:06:10.440 --> 00:06:14.440

Coming to Hong Kong, I mean, obviously you

00:06:14.440 --> 00:06:17.640

identify in a way as a westernized expat

00:06:17.640 --> 00:06:20.560

because English is a mother tongue

00:06:20.560 --> 00:06:22.400

or a mother tongue enough to you.

00:06:22.400 --> 00:06:24.360

Was there a moment where you feel like

00:06:24.360 --> 00:06:26.880

when you're in Hong Kong that you're a minority

00:06:26.880 --> 00:06:31.320

in any sense, or at least, not just a minority,

00:06:31.320 --> 00:06:36.040

but maybe even as a person who's on the margins

00:06:36.040 --> 00:06:38.360

in some way, how do you feel about that?

00:06:38.360 --> 00:06:39.640

And how was that like for you?

Slavica

00:06:39.640 --> 00:06:40.480

- Okay.

00:06:40.480 --> 00:06:42.600

So I think we definitely separate the minority

00:06:42.600 --> 00:06:44.520

and the marginalized questions because

00:06:44.520 --> 00:06:45.520

I think they're two different things.

00:06:45.520 --> 00:06:49.080

So, I mean, yes, like ethnically, I'm a minority

00:06:49.080 --> 00:06:51.680

or I'm not part of the majority ethnic

00:06:51.680 --> 00:06:54.440

and other group here, language groups.

00:06:54.440 --> 00:06:59.200

So I think that I fall into that kind of category

00:06:59.200 --> 00:07:01.040

by any sort of standards.

00:07:01.040 --> 00:07:04.480

I kind of forget that sometimes,

00:07:04.480 --> 00:07:08.360

I tend to think that I blend in, but I don't.

Evelyn

00:07:08.360 --> 00:07:09.880

- I love the confidence.

Slavica

00:07:09.880 --> 00:07:11.480

- I just kind of think that,

00:07:11.480 --> 00:07:13.480

but yeah, I honestly don't blend in

00:07:13.480 --> 00:07:15.560

because I don't look like the majority of people here,

00:07:15.560 --> 00:07:16.400

but that's fine.

00:07:16.400 --> 00:07:17.720

I mean, I don't feel like that's such an issue,

00:07:17.720 --> 00:07:18.960

but it's just like, you kind of think

00:07:18.960 --> 00:07:20.960

that you're inconspicuous walking down the street,

00:07:20.960 --> 00:07:22.160

but actually you're not.

00:07:22.160 --> 00:07:24.360

(laughing)

00:07:24.360 --> 00:07:26.440

So yeah, definitely I would say I'm a minority,

00:07:26.440 --> 00:07:29.960

but it is interesting because yes,

00:07:29.960 --> 00:07:33.760

I have an Australian accent and I'd say definitely

00:07:33.760 --> 00:07:35.440

part of my identity is tied to Australia,

00:07:35.440 --> 00:07:38.000

but then it's also Eastern European.

00:07:38.000 --> 00:07:40.240

And actually that kind of garners more interest

00:07:40.240 --> 00:07:41.160

from people.

00:07:41.160 --> 00:07:42.400

They're always kind of interested more

00:07:42.400 --> 00:07:45.760

about the Croatian story and the aspect of me

00:07:45.760 --> 00:07:47.680

rather than the Australian, which is kind of interesting.

00:07:47.680 --> 00:07:49.280

I think that's a little bit of curiosity.

00:07:49.280 --> 00:07:52.400

It's also a little bit tied to the rise of Croatia

00:07:52.400 --> 00:07:55.920

as this like tourist destination in these last years.

00:07:55.920 --> 00:08:00.000

And then obviously I think the marginalization

00:08:00.000 --> 00:08:04.120

or marginalized question is, yeah, that's an interesting one.

00:08:04.120 --> 00:08:09.120

I do not think that by any sort of regular kind of standards

00:08:10.080 --> 00:08:12.080

that would consider myself marginalized.

00:08:12.080 --> 00:08:14.280

And I don't think that I should,

00:08:14.280 --> 00:08:17.440

because that would kind of be quite demeaning to that term.

00:08:17.440 --> 00:08:20.640

I think about myself as having a visa here.

00:08:20.640 --> 00:08:23.240

I've got a certain status that's attached to the visa.

00:08:23.240 --> 00:08:24.960

So I've got employment, I'm a professional,

00:08:24.960 --> 00:08:27.000

I've got money, I've got a home.

00:08:27.000 --> 00:08:31.480

I have some sort of agency over my own life here.

00:08:31.480 --> 00:08:33.760

So I don't think that I'm marginalized,

00:08:33.760 --> 00:08:35.920

but I also think that it's kind of a scale.

00:08:35.920 --> 00:08:39.160

There are people that are very disenfranchised

00:08:39.160 --> 00:08:40.880

or have got absolutely no legal status,

00:08:40.880 --> 00:08:42.280

like refugees, for instance.

00:08:42.280 --> 00:08:45.800

So yeah, there's a whole scale of that.

00:08:45.800 --> 00:08:48.960

The thing that I was thinking about this a little bit,

00:08:48.960 --> 00:08:52.720

it's kind of like not exactly marginalized,

00:08:52.720 --> 00:08:54.920

but I would say personally me,

00:08:54.920 --> 00:08:57.160

and we might get into this for various reasons

00:08:57.160 --> 00:08:58.000

of why I feel this way,

00:08:58.000 --> 00:09:00.520

but I would say I feel vulnerable.

00:09:00.520 --> 00:09:01.920

And I think there's a bit of a vulnerability

00:09:01.920 --> 00:09:05.360

attached to people that are maybe on visas

00:09:05.360 --> 00:09:07.960

and then particularly for my situation and circumstance.

00:09:07.960 --> 00:09:10.000

But yeah.

Evelyn
00:09:10.000 --> 00:09:13.080

- You use the word kind to say that,

00:09:13.080 --> 00:09:15.000

Hong Kong feels kind to you.

00:09:15.000 --> 00:09:17.960

Can you elaborate on that?

00:09:17.960 --> 00:09:18.960

What was that like for you?

00:09:18.960 --> 00:09:20.280

Or what is that like for you?

Slavica
00:09:20.280 --> 00:09:22.840

- I think it's a very gentle,

00:09:22.840 --> 00:09:25.720

and again, this is very much based on my experiences,

00:09:25.720 --> 00:09:26.840

and everyone's experience is different,

00:09:26.840 --> 00:09:27.880

but I can really speak for mine.

00:09:27.880 --> 00:09:30.960

So I'll talk from that perspective, of course.

00:09:30.960 --> 00:09:32.200

I think it's a very gentle city.

00:09:32.200 --> 00:09:34.280

I think it's very welcoming.

00:09:34.280 --> 00:09:37.160

I think that even though it's quite conservative

00:09:37.160 --> 00:09:39.800

in some ways, I still think that it's quite tolerant

00:09:39.800 --> 00:09:42.160

and it allows people to kind of be who they are

00:09:42.160 --> 00:09:44.360

in many ways.

00:09:44.360 --> 00:09:45.400

And I think it's just,

00:09:45.400 --> 00:09:47.080

even though when I first got here,

00:09:47.080 --> 00:09:50.120

I remember just the density in that,

00:09:50.120 --> 00:09:52.160

like I love the density, but it's overwhelming,

00:09:52.160 --> 00:09:54.360

especially when you come from Melbourne,

00:09:54.360 --> 00:09:57.600

where I came from previously to my move here.

00:09:57.600 --> 00:10:01.760

And so until I figured out kind of like how the city breathes

00:10:01.760 --> 00:10:03.800

where you can kind of go and find a little bit of space

00:10:03.800 --> 00:10:06.240

and some quiet, that was quite overwhelming.

00:10:06.240 --> 00:10:08.800

But then the flip side of that is actually

00:10:08.800 --> 00:10:11.240

there's quite some calm and there's a gentleness

00:10:11.240 --> 00:10:14.520

and a very, I don't know,

00:10:14.520 --> 00:10:16.200

a slower pace of life in some ways.

00:10:16.200 --> 00:10:18.480

And I think it's just, it's kind of quite open

00:10:18.480 --> 00:10:21.040

and it's quite a curious city in many ways.

00:10:21.040 --> 00:10:23.280

And I do think actually a lot of that does have to do

00:10:23.280 --> 00:10:24.200

with the history of Hong Kong,

00:10:24.200 --> 00:10:27.080

where it's had so many waves of migration in.

00:10:27.080 --> 00:10:29.560

You know, everyone's kind of like trying

00:10:29.560 --> 00:10:30.480

to do something here.

00:10:30.480 --> 00:10:33.760

So yeah, and I mean, of course that can be quite cutthroat

00:10:33.760 --> 00:10:37.400

and competitive, but I also think that it can be quite kind

00:10:37.400 --> 00:10:39.480

in that people are very open and curious

00:10:39.480 --> 00:10:41.600

to different things.

00:10:41.600 --> 00:10:44.40

And because it is also a little bit transient,

00:10:44.400 --> 00:10:47.720

maybe there's a kindness for looking out for people

00:10:47.720 --> 00:10:49.200

in certain communities.

00:10:49.200 --> 00:10:50.040

Yeah.

Evelyn

00:10:50.040 --> 00:10:51.760

- Yeah, there's a, from what you're saying,

00:10:51.760 --> 00:10:55.600

I'm getting a picture of like a sense of acceptance

00:10:55.600 --> 00:10:58.240

as well, that there are people from different backgrounds,

00:10:58.240 --> 00:11:02.280

from different walks of life that might be in Hong Kong

00:11:02.280 --> 00:11:07.280

who yeah, should be welcomed and who should feel welcomed,

00:11:07.280 --> 00:11:09.440

when they're in a space like this,

00:11:09.440 --> 00:11:11.720

even though like you said, it's very dense

00:11:11.720 --> 00:11:13.840

and sometimes it seems very fast paced,

00:11:13.840 --> 00:11:16.560

but there's also, there's a sense of comfort.

00:11:16.560 --> 00:11:19.360

There's a sense of safety as well.

Slavica

00:11:19.360 --> 00:11:20.200

- For sure.

00:11:20.200 --> 00:11:24.760

But I also think, of course my experience is very specific

00:11:24.760 --> 00:11:29.360

to having come on a professional visa, having, again,

00:11:29.360 --> 00:11:32.800

money and some sort of agency to create my own life here,

00:11:32.800 --> 00:11:36.240

whereas, there are definitely very marginalized communities,

00:11:36.240 --> 00:11:37.360

which we know of, yeah.

Evelyn

00:11:37.360 --> 00:11:38.920

- Yeah, that experience is very different.

Slavica

00:11:38.920 --> 00:11:39.760

- Very different.

Evelyn

00:11:39.760 --> 00:11:40.600

- Yeah.

00:11:40.600 --> 00:11:43.480

I wanna go back to your point about vulnerability.

00:11:43.480 --> 00:11:45.640

Can you talk a little bit about that?

Slavica

00:11:45.640 --> 00:11:47.240

- Why I feel vulnerable and how I feel vulnerable?

00:11:47.240 --> 00:11:48.160

Okay.

00:11:48.160 --> 00:11:50.720

I think anybody that is on some sort of,

00:11:50.720 --> 00:11:55.680

in some sort of visa situation where your life is tied

00:11:55.680 --> 00:12:00.440

to somebody else's, granting you either a status

00:12:00.440 --> 00:12:03.520

or employment or something like that,

00:12:03.520 --> 00:12:05.760

automatically makes you a little bit vulnerable.

00:12:05.760 --> 00:12:09.120

And so obviously all countries have this in some form,

00:12:09.120 --> 00:12:11.240

but I think whenever you migrate,

00:12:11.240 --> 00:12:14.120

you kind of put your hands a little bit in the favor

00:12:14.120 --> 00:12:18.120

or you give that power over a little bit to a government

00:12:18.120 --> 00:12:21.000

or an employer or whoever it is.

00:12:21.000 --> 00:12:22.840

And so with that, it just kind of,

00:12:22.880 --> 00:12:25.840

it makes it feel like your life could turn

00:12:25.840 --> 00:12:27.720

in a couple of days.

00:12:27.720 --> 00:12:30.520

And I think particularly, I'm almost at seven years

00:12:30.520 --> 00:12:32.840

in Hong Kong, so almost getting permanent residency.

00:12:32.840 --> 00:12:34.840

But seven years is a long time.

00:12:34.840 --> 00:12:36.320

It's almost a decade.

00:12:36.320 --> 00:12:38.960

And so in that sense, it kind of feels like

00:12:38.960 --> 00:12:40.800

there's this constant impermanence

00:12:40.800 --> 00:12:43.760

where things could change quite quickly.

00:12:43.760 --> 00:12:46.360

And it's an interesting space to be in.

00:12:46.360 --> 00:12:48.840

And I think for the first couple of years for me in Hong Kong

00:12:48.840 --> 00:12:51.160

it was like, okay, I was traveling a lot.

00:12:51.160 --> 00:12:52.280

It wasn't such an issue.

00:12:52.280 --> 00:12:54.120

And I was sort of, it's all fresh

00:12:54.120 --> 00:12:55.160

and you kind of don't really know

00:12:55.160 --> 00:12:56.680

what your future's gonna hold.

00:12:56.680 --> 00:12:59.680

And then I didn't maybe have as many connections to the city

00:12:59.680 --> 00:13:03.200

but then having really been here rooted during both COVID

00:13:03.200 --> 00:13:06.200

and it was really lovely to kind of really sort of start

00:13:06.200 --> 00:13:07.880

rebuilding a home for myself.

00:13:07.880 --> 00:13:10.840

The thought that that could change quite quickly overnight.

00:13:10.840 --> 00:13:12.880

And that has happened with so many people,

00:13:12.880 --> 00:13:15.320

not just here, obviously there's been a lot of turbulence

00:13:15.320 --> 00:13:17.160

during these years all around the world

00:13:17.160 --> 00:13:19.400

where people have had decisions made for them

00:13:19.400 --> 00:13:21.200

that they maybe wouldn't have made for themselves.

00:13:21.200 --> 00:13:23.760

It's quite, it does leave you in quite a vulnerable way.

00:13:23.760 --> 00:13:26.040

And then a lot of people like, well, whatever,

00:13:26.040 --> 00:13:28.360

you can go back to Australia or go back to Croatia

00:13:28.360 --> 00:13:32.200

but going somewhere after 10 years,

00:13:32.200 --> 00:13:34.200

it's another migration.

00:13:34.200 --> 00:13:36.800

So that just kind of makes you a bit vulnerable.

00:13:36.800 --> 00:13:37.800

And for me personally,

00:13:37.800 --> 00:13:40.480

because I don't have immediate family,

00:13:40.480 --> 00:13:43.600

I don't have family in countries where I have citizenship

00:13:43.600 --> 00:13:45.080

or the right of a boat.

00:13:45.080 --> 00:13:46.920

That's also a really interesting dynamic.

00:13:46.920 --> 00:13:50.240

That makes me feel very vulnerable in many ways as well.

Evelyn

00:13:50.240 --> 00:13:51.240

- Yeah.

00:13:51.240 --> 00:13:53.640

How does that vulnerability translate?

00:13:53.640 --> 00:13:58.240

Because this sense of vulnerability sounds very macro,

00:13:58.240 --> 00:14:00.320

you know, that your life could be flipped.

Slavica

00:14:00.320 --> 00:14:01.160

- Yeah.

Evelyn

00:14:01.160 --> 00:14:04.200

- You could have to just shift, go, bang, right?

00:14:04.200 --> 00:14:07.520

How does this vulnerability translate into everyday life

00:14:07.520 --> 00:14:09.880

in the minutia of everyday life?

Slavica

00:14:09.880 --> 00:14:10.720

- Interesting.

00:14:10.720 --> 00:14:16.080

I haven't thought about that.

00:14:16.080 --> 00:14:19.440

I think, I mean, I do think actually

00:14:19.440 --> 00:14:22.440

that it's kind of an interesting position to be in.

00:14:22.440 --> 00:14:24.200

I don't actually know a lot of people in my position.

00:14:24.200 --> 00:14:26.680

There's some people that have maybe got some similarities

00:14:26.680 --> 00:14:28.280

and I kind of observe them and sort of like

00:14:28.280 --> 00:14:30.400

look for what they do and how they do it as well.

00:14:30.400 --> 00:14:32.040

And you know, how it kind of manifests

00:14:32.040 --> 00:14:33.400

in their lives.

00:14:33.400 --> 00:14:37.880

I mean, I think it kind of means that you're sort of

00:14:37.880 --> 00:14:39.720

both trying to create a life

00:14:39.720 --> 00:14:42.680

that's maybe not based on standard templates,

00:14:42.680 --> 00:14:45.240

that society is sort of built around,

00:14:45.240 --> 00:14:48.720

you know, this idea of like having the right to live

00:14:48.720 --> 00:14:51.520

and work in a place where you've got like, you know,

00:14:51.520 --> 00:14:54.400

some sort of citizenship or you can buy property there

00:14:54.400 --> 00:14:55.520

or, you know, whatever.

00:14:55.520 --> 00:14:59.440

It kind of just means that you're having to sort of

00:14:59.440 --> 00:15:02.560

build a life that's maybe a little bit more,

00:15:02.560 --> 00:15:04.720

it's a bit more creative in some ways.

00:15:04.720 --> 00:15:09.120

I think it's a bit of a negotiation in terms of like,

00:15:09.120 --> 00:15:14.120

you know, how you feel tied to a place as well.

00:15:14.120 --> 00:15:16.680

Yeah, I'm kind of curious, you know,

00:15:16.680 --> 00:15:18.800

when I get permanent residency soon,

00:15:18.800 --> 00:15:19.640

like how that's gonna make me feel,

00:15:19.640 --> 00:15:21.920

but it already gives me a sense of relief

00:15:21.920 --> 00:15:22.920

knowing that that's coming.

00:15:22.920 --> 00:15:24.600

I'm hoping that the government doesn't change anything

00:15:24.600 --> 00:15:26.320

too quickly in the next couple of years.

00:15:26.320 --> 00:15:27.840

(laughs)

00:15:27.840 --> 00:15:29.280

You know, but it's kind of like,

00:15:29.280 --> 00:15:32.240

but I also think there's an interesting

00:15:32.240 --> 00:15:35.440

kind of juxtaposition, say for instance,

00:15:35.440 --> 00:15:37.680

because we're both, you and I have both got, you know,

00:15:37.680 --> 00:15:40.240

some of our experience lived in Australia.

00:15:40.240 --> 00:15:42.280

Australia is a country that's had a very, very,

00:15:42.280 --> 00:15:44.720

very long, stable period.

00:15:44.720 --> 00:15:47.760

And people just aren't used to turmoil and upheaval

00:15:47.760 --> 00:15:48.680

and changes and things.

00:15:48.680 --> 00:15:52.480

Whereas where I come from, it's like constant change.

00:15:52.480 --> 00:15:55.320

And so people just, yeah, like Eastern Europe, Croatia,

00:15:55.320 --> 00:15:57.720

all of that area is just like constant change.

00:15:57.720 --> 00:15:59.520

So people are just used to dealing with like,

00:15:59.520 --> 00:16:01.920

not being able to plan ahead, you know?

00:16:01.920 --> 00:16:03.480

And so in some ways I'm kind of like,

00:16:03.480 --> 00:16:05.160

wow, I've kind of come full circle.

00:16:05.160 --> 00:16:06.960

(laughs)

00:16:06.960 --> 00:16:07.960

You know?

Evelyn

00:16:07.960 --> 00:16:11.760

- That sense of almost being unbound, right?

Slavica

00:16:11.760 --> 00:16:12.600

- Yeah.

00:16:13.160 --> 00:16:15.680

When we use words to describe stability,

00:16:15.680 --> 00:16:18.640

we also think grounded,

00:16:18.640 --> 00:16:21.000

or there's some sort of binding to something.

00:16:21.000 --> 00:16:23.160

And it's not a negative or a positive, you know?

00:16:23.160 --> 00:16:24.520

It's just how it is.

00:16:24.520 --> 00:16:26.080

And like you're saying, you know,

00:16:26.080 --> 00:16:29.280

maybe then in Australia or where you're used to that,

00:16:29.280 --> 00:16:30.800

there's less change, you know?

00:16:30.800 --> 00:16:33.160

It's much easier to be, you know,

00:16:33.160 --> 00:16:35.880

yes, achievements look like buying property,

00:16:35.880 --> 00:16:38.640

staying supported, having a house, having children,

00:16:38.640 --> 00:16:43.160

having all these sort of quite standard goals, right?

Slavica

00:16:43.160 --> 00:16:44.000

- And milestones.

Evelyn

00:16:44.000 --> 00:16:45.800

- And milestones, exactly.

00:16:45.800 --> 00:16:47.320

But now you're saying, you know,

00:16:47.320 --> 00:16:49.040

you brought up the word creativity, you know,

00:16:49.040 --> 00:16:53.360

maybe because you're more or less unbound in Hong Kong.

00:16:53.360 --> 00:16:55.960

It's the thing that is stable, yes, it's your job,

00:16:55.960 --> 00:16:57.440

you know, but things could flip, you know,

00:16:57.440 --> 00:17:00.440

then you could be sent somewhere else, you know,

00:17:00.440 --> 00:17:02.280

because of visa reasons.

00:17:02.280 --> 00:17:07.280

But that kind of unboundedness allows creativity,

00:17:07.320 --> 00:17:09.200

allows freedom.

00:17:09.200 --> 00:17:12.520

And, you know, I can sense that from you.

00:17:12.520 --> 00:17:14.120

And I'm wondering if you could speak a little bit

00:17:14.120 --> 00:17:17.400

about that sense of unboundedness is also exciting,

00:17:17.400 --> 00:17:19.200

that there's room for creativity.

Slavica

00:17:19.200 --> 00:17:20.440

- Yeah, I think so.

00:17:20.440 --> 00:17:22.480

I think it kind of means that you don't, yeah,

00:17:22.480 --> 00:17:25.120

you don't look at the templates that are established,

00:17:25.120 --> 00:17:29.680

you kind of look outside of those and you, yeah,

00:17:29.680 --> 00:17:33.160

I mean, you sort of, I do have a sense of like,

00:17:33.160 --> 00:17:35.680

maybe urgency in some ways, like, you know,

00:17:35.680 --> 00:17:37.440

what's today doesn't necessarily mean

00:17:37.440 --> 00:17:38.840

it's going to be tomorrow or next week.

00:17:38.840 --> 00:17:41.920

So you kind of have to act a little bit now,

00:17:41.920 --> 00:17:42.920

which maybe isn't great.

00:17:42.920 --> 00:17:44.520

Cause it's a little bit of like, not FOMO,

00:17:44.520 --> 00:17:47.520

but it's just a bit of, I know it's a little bit of anxiety.

00:17:47.520 --> 00:17:49.800

But then I also think, you know,

00:17:49.800 --> 00:17:53.400

people like me are maybe like quite well geared to change

00:17:53.400 --> 00:17:55.200

and just upheaval, you know,

00:17:55.200 --> 00:18:00.760

and kind of just understanding that what is today

00:18:00.760 --> 00:18:02.040

won't necessarily be tomorrow.

00:18:02.040 --> 00:18:04.720

And I think in a world which is rapidly changing

00:18:04.720 --> 00:18:07.360

all the time, more and more, I think, you know,

00:18:07.360 --> 00:18:09.400

there's a certain advantage in that.

Evelyn

00:18:09.400 --> 00:18:11.040

- Well, I mean, it also helps that, you know,

00:18:11.040 --> 00:18:16.040

your creativity has also allowed you to produce something

00:18:16.040 --> 00:18:20.080

that is quite monumental and substantial.

00:18:20.080 --> 00:18:22.600

And, you know, for listeners who cannot see

00:18:22.600 --> 00:18:26.760

what's in front of us, I have a beautiful book here

00:18:26.760 --> 00:18:28.520

and I'm holding it for the camera.

00:18:28.520 --> 00:18:31.480

Yeah, Croatian stories.

00:18:31.480 --> 00:18:34.880

And I was saying to you earlier today,

00:18:34.880 --> 00:18:37.440

outside of the recording, that I was so moved

00:18:37.440 --> 00:18:39.320

by reading your introduction.

00:18:39.320 --> 00:18:42.800

And that just gave me, that really pulled me

00:18:42.800 --> 00:18:47.800

into your world about what is home, what is culture,

00:18:47.800 --> 00:18:51.040

you know, your connection to a culture,

00:18:51.040 --> 00:18:55.680

what is, what's roots, what's family, what's dedication,

00:18:55.680 --> 00:18:58.360

what's love and creativity.

00:18:58.360 --> 00:19:01.880

And, you know, I understand that right now,

00:19:01.880 --> 00:19:03.680

speaking about being in a world

00:19:03.680 --> 00:19:05.360

where there's so much uncertainty, you know,

00:19:05.360 --> 00:19:06.360

you could plan for something

00:19:06.360 --> 00:19:09.040

and things would just be flipped anyway.

00:19:09.040 --> 00:19:12.560

But now, you know, this beautiful collection

00:19:12.560 --> 00:19:14.320

is forever out there in the world.

00:19:14.320 --> 00:19:16.640

Can you speak a little bit about this?

Slavica

00:19:16.640 --> 00:19:17.480

- Sure.

00:19:17.480 --> 00:19:20.120

Yeah, so Croatian stories is a book

00:19:20.120 --> 00:19:22.600

that I recently published and it's a collection

00:19:22.600 --> 00:19:26.320

of columns that I wrote over a 10 year period

00:19:26.320 --> 00:19:28.320

for the Croatian Herald in Australia.

00:19:28.320 --> 00:19:30.200

Shout out to the Croatian Herald,

00:19:30.200 --> 00:19:31.560

original community newspaper.

00:19:31.560 --> 00:19:35.360

It's actually the longest standing publication

00:19:35.360 --> 00:19:37.600

in the Croatian diaspora.

Evelyn
00:19:37.600 --> 00:19:38.440

- Wow.

Slavica
00:19:38.440 --> 00:19:40.040

- Yeah, so it's claimed to fame.

00:19:40.040 --> 00:19:42.200

Yeah, so I had a column for 10 years

00:19:42.200 --> 00:19:46.120

and it was like this very formative decade of my life

00:19:46.120 --> 00:19:49.200

where I had both moved from, as I said,

00:19:49.200 --> 00:19:53.120

like back to Australia and then in that period,

00:19:53.120 --> 00:19:54.520

also Shanghai and then Hong Kong

00:19:54.520 --> 00:19:57.640

and ended the columns when I moved to Hong Kong.

00:19:57.640 --> 00:20:01.480

And it was a period in which my parents both passed away.

00:20:01.480 --> 00:20:03.800

And then, you know, there was a lot of like changing Croatia

00:20:03.800 --> 00:20:05.760

where we joined the EU,

00:20:05.760 --> 00:20:07.520

there was the whole migrant crisis

00:20:07.520 --> 00:20:10.040

which is still ongoing through Europe.

00:20:10.040 --> 00:20:12.880

So yeah, a lot of changes in that decade.

00:20:12.880 --> 00:20:14.040

But then also for me, like, you know,

00:20:14.040 --> 00:20:16.680

I kind of stepped from like student to kind of adult.

00:20:16.680 --> 00:20:17.960

(laughs)

00:20:17.960 --> 00:20:20.680

And yeah, it was a really big body of work.

00:20:20.680 --> 00:20:21.920

And I kind of just at the end of it,

00:20:21.920 --> 00:20:24.320

I wanted to really just read through them.

00:20:24.320 --> 00:20:26.160

And I was like, "Oh, maybe I could do a book.

00:20:26.160 --> 00:20:28.120

Maybe I'll just put it into like a PDF

00:20:28.120 --> 00:20:29.160

and share it with my friends."

00:20:29.160 --> 00:20:30.920

And then, you know, one thing led to another.

00:20:30.920 --> 00:20:32.200

I was like, "Maybe I should actually get this

00:20:32.200 --> 00:20:33.920

a little bit more designed up."

00:20:33.920 --> 00:20:37.040

And then I ended up working with a really great emerging

00:20:37.040 --> 00:20:38.920

designer from Croatia called Imelda Damo

00:20:38.920 --> 00:20:41.000

which she produced this beautiful book.

00:20:41.000 --> 00:20:44.120

Yeah, it's kind of taken on its own little life.

00:20:44.120 --> 00:20:47.240

It's interesting, like, you know, when you talk about,

00:20:47.240 --> 00:20:49.760

yeah, putting that, I guess,

00:20:49.760 --> 00:20:52.360

there's questions about instability

00:20:52.360 --> 00:20:54.440

or maybe just like the connection to home

00:20:54.440 --> 00:20:55.920

or what is home, you know.

00:20:55.920 --> 00:20:58.280

This is sort of like an exploration.

00:20:58.280 --> 00:21:00.560

So it's like kind of, I guess, outside of the templates

00:21:00.560 --> 00:21:01.560

of what you would normally do.

00:21:01.560 --> 00:21:05.440

It's like, this is a bit more of a way of me even questioning.

00:21:05.440 --> 00:21:06.880

I mean, there's a lot of like questions in there.

00:21:06.880 --> 00:21:07.720

There's some answers,

00:21:07.720 --> 00:21:08.960

but I think there's probably more questions

00:21:08.960 --> 00:21:09.920

than anything else.

Evelyn

00:21:09.920 --> 00:21:13.040

- I mean, as an academic, you know,

00:21:13.040 --> 00:21:16.640

I love reading a book that gives questions and answers.

00:21:16.640 --> 00:21:17.600

(laughs)

00:21:17.600 --> 00:21:19.600

Love to, you know, really, you know,

00:21:19.600 --> 00:21:23.920

give us a space to really think for ourselves, you know.

00:21:23.920 --> 00:21:26.480

And I think, again, you know,

00:21:26.480 --> 00:21:29.440

it's this idea of home and migration.

00:21:29.440 --> 00:21:31.200

You've been through so many spaces

00:21:31.200 --> 00:21:32.960

at different times of your life,

00:21:32.960 --> 00:21:36.560

and now you're here and you've, in a sense, you know,

00:21:36.560 --> 00:21:40.160

not fossilized in this way, this is very old,

00:21:40.160 --> 00:21:42.760

but you've put this into concrete now.

00:21:42.760 --> 00:21:46.400

That writing is a clear expression of your creativity

00:21:46.400 --> 00:21:50.920

and love and your dedication to home.

00:21:50.920 --> 00:21:54.920

You know, to me, you know, when I've seen this,

00:21:54.920 --> 00:21:56.960

I just feel this strong sense of home

00:21:56.960 --> 00:21:59.480

and home isn't necessarily, yeah,

00:21:59.480 --> 00:22:03.120

like home's not necessarily about a place.

00:22:03.120 --> 00:22:05.000

Home is where love is.

00:22:05.000 --> 00:22:09.760

Home is where you feel at ease and seen.

00:22:09.760 --> 00:22:13.080

And this, you know, I feel like there's a lot of you

00:22:13.080 --> 00:22:18.080

that I can see as it's a celebration.

Slavica

00:22:18.080 --> 00:22:19.400

- Interesting, and so do you see, like,

00:22:19.400 --> 00:22:20.760

the sense of home coming through

00:22:20.760 --> 00:22:24.960

as a more abstract concept in this, or?

Evelyn

00:22:24.960 --> 00:22:28.280

- Well, I guess, but home is not so much

00:22:28.280 --> 00:22:30.640

a physical place, right?

00:22:30.640 --> 00:22:33.880

Because, you know, you feel at home in Hong Kong,

00:22:33.880 --> 00:22:35.240

I would assume, right?

00:22:35.240 --> 00:22:37.080

Because you've been here for nearly seven years,

00:22:37.080 --> 00:22:39.640

you know, you're very comfortable, you have friends, and.

Slavica

00:22:39.640 --> 00:22:41.000

- I put an asterisk on that, though, right?

00:22:41.000 --> 00:22:44.400

Because this has been the struggle where, like,

00:22:44.400 --> 00:22:47.600

I have created what I would say is a home,

00:22:47.600 --> 00:22:50.320

but then you're like, at input that could flip.

00:22:50.320 --> 00:22:52.960

And so you're kind of like, ooh, do I invest more?

00:22:52.960 --> 00:22:56.080

You know, it's just this kind of slight sense of unease,

00:22:56.080 --> 00:22:57.880

but then it's kind of going back to what I talked about,

00:22:57.880 --> 00:23:00.240

like, it is today, who knows what it is tomorrow,

00:23:00.240 --> 00:23:02.440

you know, I'll probably adapt.

00:23:02.440 --> 00:23:04.320

But that is a difficult space to live in,

00:23:04.320 --> 00:23:06.960

but it's also an exciting space, so yeah.

Evelyn

00:23:06.960 --> 00:23:10.720

- Yeah, but I mean, it's not going to flip this.

00:23:10.720 --> 00:23:12.720

For example, this is there forever now.

00:23:12.720 --> 00:23:16.320

It's in print, it's in the world, it's shared,

00:23:16.320 --> 00:23:21.000

you know, it's a shared expression of your humanity,

00:23:21.000 --> 00:23:25.800

of your commitment to migration, home, family,

00:23:25.800 --> 00:23:28.600

love, connection, and there's a sense here

00:23:28.600 --> 00:23:32.880

that I can feel your expressions in the last 10 years,

00:23:32.880 --> 00:23:34.680

'cause these are the columns that you've written, right,

00:23:34.680 --> 00:23:36.520

over a 10-year period.

00:23:36.520 --> 00:23:39.720

How does it feel to use, to be able to have that

00:23:39.720 --> 00:23:42.600

so clearly, you know, for you that writing is something

00:23:42.600 --> 00:23:44.120

that you can channel your creativity,

00:23:44.120 --> 00:23:46.200

no matter where you are, whether you're in Hong Kong,

00:23:46.200 --> 00:23:49.240

Shanghai, Croatia, Australia?

Slavica

00:23:49.240 --> 00:23:51.000

- Yeah, thank you for that.

00:23:51.000 --> 00:23:52.640

I mean, that's a really lovely reflection,

00:23:52.640 --> 00:23:55.120

'cause actually that's another thing, sort of,

00:23:55.120 --> 00:23:56.160

that we might talk about later,

00:23:56.160 --> 00:23:57.960

but yeah, it's been really lovely to,

00:23:57.960 --> 00:24:00.640

I had zero anticipation around the book.

00:24:00.640 --> 00:24:04.040

I was like, you know, go to some Croatians and Diaspora,

00:24:04.040 --> 00:24:05.160

I'll go to a few of my friends,

00:24:05.160 --> 00:24:07.760

it'll be just like a nice little thing to have,

00:24:07.760 --> 00:24:10.320

but actually the reception has been a lot bigger

00:24:10.320 --> 00:24:13.800

from people that are not Croatians than I expected at all.

00:24:13.800 --> 00:24:16.360

And so that's been amazing, because I do think actually

00:24:16.360 --> 00:24:19.480

anyone that's kind of got some sort of migration experience

00:24:19.480 --> 00:24:21.400

kind of connects with the stories a lot more

00:24:21.400 --> 00:24:22.240

than I thought they would.

00:24:22.240 --> 00:24:24.920

So that's lovely, so thank you for that.

00:24:24.920 --> 00:24:28.000

Yeah, I know, having, I think, writing not just as an outlet,

00:24:28.000 --> 00:24:30.120

but kind of as a medium to connect with people,

00:24:30.120 --> 00:24:32.440

that's been amazing.

00:24:32.440 --> 00:24:35.120

And, you know, as I said, I think it's kind of connected

00:24:35.120 --> 00:24:37.040

with people already in ways that I haven't expected,

00:24:37.040 --> 00:24:40.280

and people have found, you know, laughter and, you know,

00:24:40.280 --> 00:24:44.120

sadness and connection in different sentences as well.

00:24:44.120 --> 00:24:46.000

It's interesting always what kind of strikes people,

00:24:46.000 --> 00:24:47.720

it's always interesting to hear what's

00:24:47.720 --> 00:24:50.200

particularly resonating with them.

00:24:50.200 --> 00:24:53.200

Yeah, I really, what I did kind of have is like a very,

00:24:53.200 --> 00:24:56.160

like high level dream for the book was that it would

00:24:56.160 --> 00:24:59.080

spark some sort of conversations between, you know,

00:24:59.080 --> 00:25:01.080

not just the Croatians and Diaspora,

00:25:01.080 --> 00:25:02.560

but maybe Croatians in Croatia,

00:25:02.560 --> 00:25:04.320

and kind of a little bit more of a dialogue,

00:25:04.320 --> 00:25:07.080

because I think, especially with the Croatian Diaspora,

00:25:07.080 --> 00:25:09.680

you know, we're so, we're a tiny country,

00:25:09.680 --> 00:25:11.920

our Diaspora is just as big as the amount of people

00:25:11.920 --> 00:25:13.400

in the country, but we're still, you know,

00:25:13.400 --> 00:25:14.800

it's a very tiny number.

00:25:14.800 --> 00:25:17.720

And then again, the voices that are sort of heard

00:25:17.720 --> 00:25:19.320

from the Diaspora, they're very small,

00:25:19.320 --> 00:25:22.200

they're very particular, it's like quite a fossilized,

00:25:22.200 --> 00:25:23.080

you know, Diaspora.

00:25:23.080 --> 00:25:26.720

So this is kind of like, hopefully the start of maybe

00:25:26.720 --> 00:25:30.520

a little bit more dialogue and different voices being heard.

00:25:30.520 --> 00:25:32.280

Yeah, so it's really lovely,

00:25:32.280 --> 00:25:34.720

but I also think it's kind of, you know,

00:25:34.720 --> 00:25:36.480

I went through a lot of,

00:25:36.480 --> 00:25:38.880

I think actually introduction was like the really hard bit

00:25:38.880 --> 00:25:39.920

for me to write in some ways,

00:25:39.920 --> 00:25:43.480

but it was also a little bit cathartic, but it also did,

00:25:43.480 --> 00:25:47.080

I mean, it still makes me cry a little bit when I read it.

00:25:47.080 --> 00:25:49.600

Yeah, because, you know, it's kind of like,

00:25:49.600 --> 00:25:54.200

there's this power in maybe feeling a little bit vulnerable

00:25:54.200 --> 00:25:55.680

and a little bit feeling lost

00:25:55.680 --> 00:25:58.080

and kind of not knowing these answers, you know.

Slavica

00:25:59.280 --> 00:26:03.120

- It's exciting, but it's also hard on a daily basis, yeah.

Evelyn

00:26:03.120 --> 00:26:08.120

- I mean, it's more powerful to be doing something

00:26:08.120 --> 00:26:10.440

that scares you, right?

00:26:10.440 --> 00:26:14.120

Because there is an uncertainty and the fear,

00:26:14.120 --> 00:26:15.720

even though you know the fear is there,

00:26:15.720 --> 00:26:18.480

but it's not stopping you, it propels you forward,

00:26:18.480 --> 00:26:22.800

if anything, to be even louder, you know, in some sense,

00:26:22.800 --> 00:26:25.480

to be like, okay, I have these ideas, I have these stories,

00:26:25.480 --> 00:26:27.760

I'm gonna put them together and I'm gonna print it,

00:26:27.760 --> 00:26:29.120

doesn't matter who's gonna read it,

00:26:29.120 --> 00:26:30.840

maybe it will generate dialogue,

00:26:30.840 --> 00:26:34.360

maybe it will just be with my friends, let's see, right?

00:26:34.360 --> 00:26:37.560

And now the ongoing, it's gonna ripple through,

00:26:37.560 --> 00:26:40.200

it's something that will continue to be

00:26:40.200 --> 00:26:42.320

not just an internal dialogue,

00:26:42.320 --> 00:26:45.880

it will always be an expanding dialogue, which...

Slavica

00:26:45.880 --> 00:26:47.400

- And there's a lot of things I think about books

00:26:47.400 --> 00:26:49.720

where they actually have quite a long life, you know,

00:26:49.720 --> 00:26:52.400

even in like five years, people can still read it

00:26:52.400 --> 00:26:53.880

and it'll still be relevant in some ways,

00:26:53.880 --> 00:26:56.120

like there's a time stamp, but it's still like,

00:26:56.120 --> 00:26:58.200

you know, the topics are kind of internal, so yeah.

Evelyn

00:26:58.200 --> 00:27:00.000

- It's time stamped, but you know, hey,

00:27:00.000 --> 00:27:02.480

as again, as academics, we still reference books

00:27:02.480 --> 00:27:05.160

from 50, 60, 100 years, 200 years ago.

Slavica

00:27:05.160 --> 00:27:07.120

- And you read it in the context of that time,

00:27:07.120 --> 00:27:08.600

like you still like it when it was published

00:27:08.600 --> 00:27:11.040

and you sort of know, so even now, it was interesting,

00:27:11.040 --> 00:27:13.600

like going back over columns that I'd written 10 years ago,

00:27:13.600 --> 00:27:16.600

you know, it was like, wow, some stuff like really

00:27:16.600 --> 00:27:19.520

surprised me in a good way, some stuff was like, wow,

00:27:19.520 --> 00:27:21.680

I can't believe I wrote that, I put it out,

00:27:21.680 --> 00:27:23.520

so it's just a best of, like just to clarify,

00:27:23.520 --> 00:27:26.240

it's not all my columns, it's only about 17 years book,

00:27:26.240 --> 00:27:27.720

it's just a book that I loved.

00:27:27.720 --> 00:27:29.520

(laughing)

00:27:29.520 --> 00:27:32.120

You know, some that should never see the light of day again.

Evelyn

00:27:32.120 --> 00:27:35.280

- Oh gosh, I'm sure somebody would like this even.

00:27:35.280 --> 00:27:36.840

(laughing)

Slavica

00:27:36.840 --> 00:27:37.680

- Yeah.

Evelyn

00:27:37.680 --> 00:27:39.400

- I have to ask, have you connected

00:27:39.400 --> 00:27:41.240

with any Croatians in Hong Kong?

Slavica

00:27:41.240 --> 00:27:45.760

- I have actually, so we have, there's like a couple,

00:27:45.760 --> 00:27:48.400

there's probably about maybe 10 or 15,

00:27:48.400 --> 00:27:51.600

and I mean, this, you know, changes, it's fluctuating,

00:27:51.600 --> 00:27:53.920

but we actually recently had a dinner

00:27:53.920 --> 00:27:55.960

with a Croatian ambassador to China,

00:27:55.960 --> 00:27:57.960

he came down to Hong Kong for the first time,

00:27:57.960 --> 00:28:00.160

obviously, since like COVID,

00:28:00.160 --> 00:28:02.400

and he gathered all 20 of us that he knew,

00:28:02.400 --> 00:28:05.880

and we had dinner, and it was really fun,

00:28:05.880 --> 00:28:07.280

I thought it was gonna be a little bit like stifled,

00:28:07.280 --> 00:28:09.160

I thought I was probably the endless person in the room,

00:28:09.160 --> 00:28:12.040

to be honest, but it was really fun,

00:28:12.040 --> 00:28:13.880

and obviously everyone's from different walks of life,

00:28:13.880 --> 00:28:15.200

so there's some people that are like me

00:28:15.200 --> 00:28:16.680

that were born in the diaspora,

00:28:16.680 --> 00:28:18.800

and there were people that are from Croatia,

00:28:18.800 --> 00:28:20.960

like proper and moved here from there,

00:28:20.960 --> 00:28:23.080

so So there's a few of those, but yeah,

00:28:23.080 --> 00:28:26.040

it's kind of interesting, because we're so tiny,

00:28:26.040 --> 00:28:27.320

you know, it's just like, it's so rare

00:28:27.320 --> 00:28:29.600

to meet somebody that speaks your language,

00:28:29.600 --> 00:28:32.040

so, and this is always an interesting juxtaposition,

00:28:32.040 --> 00:28:33.440

'cause I have a lot of friends from India,

00:28:33.440 --> 00:28:35.120

and I have a lot of friends also from China,

00:28:35.120 --> 00:28:36.560

and I'm just like, wow, what does it feel like

00:28:36.560 --> 00:28:39.000

to be from like the two biggest countries in the world,

00:28:39.000 --> 00:28:41.880

and wherever you go, there's like shops that sell your food,

00:28:41.880 --> 00:28:43.480

there's like people that speak your language,

00:28:43.480 --> 00:28:45.240

this is so, it's so wild to me,

00:28:45.240 --> 00:28:47.200

like I can't even imagine it, you know?

Evelyn

00:28:49.040 --> 00:28:51.960

- How does it feel to be acknowledged and recognized

00:28:51.960 --> 00:28:54.680

by someone or some, like an entity that's so official,

00:28:54.680 --> 00:28:56.680

like a governmental kind of?

Slavica

00:28:56.680 --> 00:28:57.800

- I've always had a lot to do

00:28:57.800 --> 00:28:59.560

with government entities, actually.

00:28:59.560 --> 00:29:02.200

I think in Croatia, like you're always

00:29:02.200 --> 00:29:04.760

about one degree of separation from anything like that,

00:29:04.760 --> 00:29:07.840

so it doesn't feel like anything particularly,

00:29:07.840 --> 00:29:11.920

I guess special, it's just a kind of, you know,

00:29:11.920 --> 00:29:15.240

we kind of have to work together, otherwise, yeah,

00:29:15.240 --> 00:29:16.600

but especially like, you know, in Australia,

00:29:16.600 --> 00:29:18.440

I was obviously involved with the paper,

00:29:18.440 --> 00:29:21.080

and then I did film festivals,

00:29:21.080 --> 00:29:22.600

I did some other cultural work as well,

00:29:22.600 --> 00:29:24.840

so I was always kind of connected in some ways

00:29:24.840 --> 00:29:28.640

to government bodies, and yeah, yeah.

Evelyn

00:29:28.640 --> 00:29:31.720

- And how does it feel to be, to have that experience

00:29:31.720 --> 00:29:33.720

and being in Hong Kong, do you feel a sense

00:29:33.720 --> 00:29:36.440

that you want to connect with the cultural sector

00:29:36.440 --> 00:29:39.520

in Hong Kong as well, even more so because of that,

00:29:39.520 --> 00:29:41.680

you know, that history and background that you've learned?

Slavica

00:29:41.680 --> 00:29:43.200

- You mean the Hong Kong cultural sector?

Evelyn

00:29:43.200 --> 00:29:44.320

- Yeah.

Slavica

00:29:44.320 --> 00:29:46.640

- For sure, I mean, I think I'm on the margins of it,

00:29:46.640 --> 00:29:49.120

I think I've got like, you know, little like feet in

00:29:49.120 --> 00:29:51.680

and little like, you know, tentacles kind of poking

00:29:51.680 --> 00:29:53.600

in a little bit, but I think, well, it's actually,

00:29:53.600 --> 00:29:54.720

I was thinking about this the other day,

00:29:54.720 --> 00:29:57.520

I think the tricky thing is that,

00:29:57.520 --> 00:29:59.520

or sad thing also is a little bit that I realized

00:29:59.520 --> 00:30:02.160

that it is very difficult for someone like me

00:30:02.160 --> 00:30:05.080

that doesn't have, you know, a Hong Kong background

00:30:05.080 --> 00:30:08.440

or Chinese ethnic background to kind of actually work

00:30:08.440 --> 00:30:11.280

in some sort of official, you know,

00:30:11.280 --> 00:30:15.440

institution or something, it's probably quite difficult.

00:30:15.440 --> 00:30:18.840

They do bring in people, but they're very specialized,

00:30:18.840 --> 00:30:20.800

you know, it would be really lovely,

00:30:20.800 --> 00:30:22.680

I think this is kind of the thing I've been thinking about,

00:30:22.680 --> 00:30:24.240

you know, what could give me a bigger sense

00:30:24.240 --> 00:30:27.160

of belonging here is to be a little bit more involved

00:30:27.160 --> 00:30:29.920

with some of those more official, you know,

00:30:29.920 --> 00:30:32.560

entities and things, because private sector is one,

00:30:32.560 --> 00:30:35.400

but then institutions and things like universities

00:30:35.400 --> 00:30:38.480

are amazing, you know, yeah, and Hong Kong has a lot of that,

00:30:38.480 --> 00:30:40.880

but I think it is a little bit hard and a barrier

00:30:40.880 --> 00:30:44.680

for entry is a little bit harder for non-locals, yeah.

Evelyn

00:30:44.680 --> 00:30:47.920

- Yeah, that is definitely, yeah, I can see that.

00:30:47.920 --> 00:30:52.360

Do you feel fully expressed in Hong Kong?

Slavica

00:30:52.360 --> 00:30:55.280

- That's an interesting question, I feel, as I said,

00:30:55.280 --> 00:30:57.600

I think because it's such a welcoming place,

00:30:57.600 --> 00:31:01.240

and I know other people probably have different experiences

00:31:01.240 --> 00:31:03.840

and opinions about it, but from my perspective,

00:31:03.840 --> 00:31:06.600

I think that it's like very open to new ideas

00:31:06.600 --> 00:31:08.760

and to just people trying things,

00:31:08.760 --> 00:31:11.440

and I think actually that's quite a generalization

00:31:11.440 --> 00:31:12.960

we can make about Asia in general,

00:31:12.960 --> 00:31:15.160

and I think particularly, you know,

00:31:15.160 --> 00:31:17.880

this part of the world is just like, so like, try it,

00:31:17.880 --> 00:31:20.760

because you can make things happen very quickly,

00:31:20.760 --> 00:31:22.040

and so I think there's this culture

00:31:22.040 --> 00:31:24.800

of like being able to try things,

00:31:24.800 --> 00:31:26.680

and I think, you know, on the one hand,

00:31:26.680 --> 00:31:29.640

the barrier for entry is quite low,

00:31:29.640 --> 00:31:31.280

which then, you know, that does mean maybe

00:31:31.280 --> 00:31:32.960

that the quality sometimes isn't as high,

00:31:32.960 --> 00:31:34.600

but that it does mean that you can try things

00:31:34.600 --> 00:31:36.240

and you can learn and you can just make things

00:31:36.240 --> 00:31:38.040

happen really quickly, whereas I feel like,

00:31:38.040 --> 00:31:40.840

okay, in Croatia, for instance, there's a lot of judgment,

00:31:40.840 --> 00:31:43.560

so it's very hard to try new things,

00:31:43.560 --> 00:31:45.440

'cause there's always someone that wants to shoot you down

00:31:45.440 --> 00:31:47.360

even before you even start, you know?

00:31:47.360 --> 00:31:49.120

I feel like in Australia, the barrier for entry

00:31:49.120 --> 00:31:51.680

is quite high, and I think that then flip side

00:31:51.680 --> 00:31:53.360

is that it's very like high quality,

00:31:53.360 --> 00:31:55.040

but it does mean that it's really harder,

00:31:55.040 --> 00:31:56.960

it's much harder to try things,

00:31:56.960 --> 00:31:58.920

so I feel like in Hong Kong, I had the ability

00:31:58.920 --> 00:32:01.400

to just like sort of try things a little bit

00:32:01.400 --> 00:32:03.000

or be, you know, a little bit more,

00:32:03.000 --> 00:32:04.600

maybe more, take some more risks

00:32:04.600 --> 00:32:06.240

than I would have in other places.

Evelyn

00:32:06.240 --> 00:32:09.360

- Yeah, I can definitely imagine, you know,

00:32:09.360 --> 00:32:11.920

that as someone coming into Hong Kong

00:32:11.920 --> 00:32:15.200

who can see its potential that it's,

00:32:15.200 --> 00:32:16.920

yeah, just give it a go, you know?

00:32:16.920 --> 00:32:18.680

The sense of welcomeness that you feel,

00:32:18.680 --> 00:32:21.840

you know, it's like, okay, well, let's give it a go,

00:32:21.840 --> 00:32:25.240

because you're not gonna get shot down,

00:32:25.240 --> 00:32:27.360

not as easily in other places, or like you said,

00:32:27.360 --> 00:32:29.840

from if it was in Croatia, for example.

Slavica

00:32:29.840 --> 00:32:31.720

- And I do think that is also a little bit of like

00:32:31.720 --> 00:32:33.400

that the speed of the city is,

00:32:33.400 --> 00:32:35.640

it's like things happen so fast and change so fast,

00:32:35.640 --> 00:32:39.040

so it's kind of like, because of that, you know,

00:32:39.040 --> 00:32:41.920

you do something, probably people forget within two weeks.

00:32:41.920 --> 00:32:43.080

(laughing)

Evelyn

00:32:43.080 --> 00:32:44.040

- There's so much going on.

Slavica

00:32:44.040 --> 00:32:45.160

- Yes.

00:32:45.160 --> 00:32:46.600

So, you know, that is kind of,

00:32:46.600 --> 00:32:51.600

but I do think it's a great place to explore,

00:32:51.600 --> 00:32:54.040

you know, your passions, yourself,

00:32:54.040 --> 00:32:56.600

your like, you know, ideas and things,

00:32:56.600 --> 00:32:58.440

as I think a lot of room for that here.

00:32:58.440 --> 00:32:59.280

Yeah.

00:32:59.280 --> 00:33:01.960

So yeah, back to that question of expression,

00:33:01.960 --> 00:33:04.240

I think that I would love to have a little bit,

00:33:04.240 --> 00:33:07.320

maybe more, a little bit, maybe more like space

00:33:07.320 --> 00:33:09.240

for some creative, like I actually think physical space

00:33:09.240 --> 00:33:11.360

is fairly difficult here, which obviously we all know it is,

00:33:11.360 --> 00:33:15.320

because of, yeah, just the complexities of density,

00:33:15.320 --> 00:33:17.400

plus rent and all that, but yeah,

00:33:17.400 --> 00:33:20.840

I think that there's a lot of room

00:33:20.840 --> 00:33:21.840

that I would still like to explore

00:33:21.840 --> 00:33:24.840

in terms of creativity and yeah.

Evelyn

00:33:24.840 --> 00:33:26.600

- Do you see yourself living in Hong Kong

00:33:26.600 --> 00:33:27.920

in the near future?

Slavica

00:33:27.920 --> 00:33:32.400

- Yes, I definitely have no plans to leave at this stage.

00:33:32.400 --> 00:33:34.840

I don't feel like this chapter of my life is over,

00:33:34.840 --> 00:33:38.440

I feel like actually it's almost a new chapter

00:33:38.440 --> 00:33:40.600

that are in the same place, you know,

00:33:40.600 --> 00:33:43.240

like getting permanent residency soon,

00:33:43.240 --> 00:33:47.160

plus this new era after COVID is kind of like quite exciting,

00:33:47.160 --> 00:33:49.240

I think it's gonna be really exciting to see

00:33:49.240 --> 00:33:51.760

what happens in Hong Kong now, you know,

00:33:51.760 --> 00:33:53.360

especially given the past years

00:33:53.360 --> 00:33:56.240

and everything that happened 2019 onwards.

Evelyn

00:33:56.240 --> 00:33:58.960

- What do you think your life here

00:33:58.960 --> 00:34:00.400

in the near future is gonna look like?

Slavica

00:34:00.400 --> 00:34:01.240

- I don't know.

00:34:01.240 --> 00:34:03.240

(laughing)

00:34:03.240 --> 00:34:05.560

I mean, I think it's actually a really lovely time

00:34:05.560 --> 00:34:08.680

where I feel like maybe that trauma of COVID

00:34:08.680 --> 00:34:10.200

is sort of, we're starting to get over it,

00:34:10.200 --> 00:34:12.280

collecting a little bit, you know,

00:34:12.280 --> 00:34:14.480

and I think the last weeks of like all the activities

00:34:14.480 --> 00:34:16.880

in the city have sort of shown that,

00:34:16.880 --> 00:34:19.480

but I still, I feel like actually I really

00:34:19.480 --> 00:34:23.520

had a really amazing period of being able to understand,

00:34:23.520 --> 00:34:26.440

you know, and get to know the local culture a bit more,

00:34:26.440 --> 00:34:29.240

build community, kind of put roots down a bit more,

00:34:29.240 --> 00:34:31.120

and so it's kind of like the best of both worlds

00:34:31.120 --> 00:34:34.320

where we're gonna be more outlooking because we can now,

00:34:34.320 --> 00:34:37.320

but then I've also got more of a sense of place.

00:34:37.320 --> 00:34:41.640

So yeah, I think it's gonna hopefully be exciting.

Evelyn

00:34:41.640 --> 00:34:45.120

- I really get the sense of your embodiment

00:34:45.120 --> 00:34:49.080

of excitement in a place, like in this place

00:34:49.080 --> 00:34:53.600

in particular right now, which is infectious, I think,

00:34:53.600 --> 00:34:56.040

you know, 'cause a lot of people have said,

00:34:56.040 --> 00:34:59.720

"Oh my gosh, because of X, Y, Z reasons,

00:34:59.720 --> 00:35:01.160

"oh, I've gotta go somewhere else now

00:35:01.160 --> 00:35:03.520

"because it's not as exciting as it used to be."

00:35:03.520 --> 00:35:05.800

But I think every place in the world

00:35:05.800 --> 00:35:10.160

had its moment of down, right, in the last three years.

Slavica

00:35:10.160 --> 00:35:11.760

- And they're very personal things, you know,

00:35:11.760 --> 00:35:13.440

as I said, like my personal situation

00:35:13.440 --> 00:35:16.280

is very specific in some ways, and so, you know,

00:35:16.280 --> 00:35:19.160

I can only kind of work with what I've got,

00:35:19.160 --> 00:35:21.320

but I think what I've got is pretty great,

00:35:21.320 --> 00:35:22.760

so I'm very grateful for it.

00:35:22.760 --> 00:35:24.160

I would actually like to talk a little bit about,

00:35:24.160 --> 00:35:26.400

like last summer when I went back to Croatia

00:35:26.400 --> 00:35:28.640

for the first time, and I was there for three months,

00:35:28.640 --> 00:35:30.400

and I was like, "Oh my God, three months in Croatia,

00:35:30.400 --> 00:35:32.680

"sounds amazing," and it was actually probably

00:35:32.680 --> 00:35:34.280

one of the hardest periods of my life,

00:35:34.280 --> 00:35:39.280

and that was partly because I was in Croatia

00:35:39.280 --> 00:35:41.840

for the first time for a long period of time

00:35:41.840 --> 00:35:44.400

without my parents, you know, they'd both passed away,

00:35:44.400 --> 00:35:49.400

and so I was in, you know, what is, my city,

00:35:49.400 --> 00:35:51.960

at a place where I, you know, both have a name

00:35:51.960 --> 00:35:55.280

that, you know, people can pronounce and don't, like, wonder.

00:35:55.280 --> 00:35:58.800

I have citizenship there, I have, like, a home,

00:35:58.800 --> 00:36:02.120

and yet I sort of felt incredibly disoriented,

00:36:02.120 --> 00:36:04.600

and I realize it's because, you know,

00:36:04.600 --> 00:36:07.120

I'm still grieving, but I'm also kind of grieving

00:36:07.120 --> 00:36:08.920

a little bit for my past life, in a way,

00:36:08.920 --> 00:36:11.600

and I always knew that when my parents passed away,

00:36:11.600 --> 00:36:15.720

I'd have to sort of renegotiate my relationship

00:36:15.720 --> 00:36:17.440

with the place, you know, I'd have to sort of

00:36:17.440 --> 00:36:19.720

maybe root it more in place than people,

00:36:19.720 --> 00:36:20.720

and of course I've got friends,

00:36:20.720 --> 00:36:22.320

and I've got extended family,

00:36:22.320 --> 00:36:24.440

but I think also what happened is because of COVID,

00:36:24.440 --> 00:36:26.360

they all turned a lot more inward, too,

00:36:26.360 --> 00:36:27.760

so people were a lot more sort of

00:36:27.760 --> 00:36:30.240

in their own little bubble with family, and, you know,

00:36:30.240 --> 00:36:35.240

and so I kind of had to, like, think about

00:36:35.240 --> 00:36:36.920

what does this place mean, you know,

00:36:36.920 --> 00:36:39.120

am I gonna be able to rebuild a relationship with it,

00:36:39.120 --> 00:36:42.800

and it was both intense and beautiful,

00:36:42.800 --> 00:36:44.080

but also incredibly difficult,

00:36:44.080 --> 00:36:45.920

so, like, I journaled every day,

00:36:45.920 --> 00:36:47.040

and I'm really glad I did that,

00:36:47.040 --> 00:36:48.880

because it's very raw, like, emotion,

00:36:48.880 --> 00:36:52.160

and just, you know, my observations and things

00:36:52.160 --> 00:36:53.800

that I don't really have an answer,

00:36:53.800 --> 00:36:55.360

and it was quite surprising to me,

00:36:55.360 --> 00:36:56.720

I didn't think it would actually be like that,

00:36:56.720 --> 00:36:59.240

and it was interesting, 'cause I'd just finished the book,

00:36:59.240 --> 00:37:01.080

and so I was like, I have this thing

00:37:01.080 --> 00:37:03.680

that I'm now gonna promote (laughs)

00:37:03.680 --> 00:37:05.440

about a Croatian identity, and I'm, like,

00:37:05.440 --> 00:37:08.040

questioning everything about my identity, you know?

Evelyn

00:37:08.040 --> 00:37:11.400

- Wow, that sounds like kind of the perfect way

00:37:11.400 --> 00:37:14.360

to finish writing a book, you know,

00:37:14.360 --> 00:37:18.480

it's like you've created this solidified, you know,

00:37:18.480 --> 00:37:21.920

sort of ideas and expression,

00:37:21.920 --> 00:37:24.280

and then you literally go back

00:37:24.280 --> 00:37:25.680

to where it all kind of originated.

Slavica

00:37:25.680 --> 00:37:27.960

- Yeah, and then I was like, I wanna change my name.

00:37:27.960 --> 00:37:29.800

(both laughing)

Evelyn

00:37:29.800 --> 00:37:33.480

- And then feeling disorientated, and, you know, it's,

00:37:33.480 --> 00:37:37.680

I mean, that sounds like a really moving experience

00:37:37.680 --> 00:37:41.400

for you as well, as kind of a, almost like a,

00:37:41.400 --> 00:37:44.240

like a love letter, like a bittersweet love letter

00:37:44.240 --> 00:37:47.320

to that part of your, that part of your life.

Slavica

00:37:47.320 --> 00:37:49.840

- It was, and I didn't really think it was gonna,

00:37:49.840 --> 00:37:51.360

I kind of anticipated it would seem

00:37:51.360 --> 00:37:53.880

just be a continuation of, like, pre-COVID, you know,

00:37:53.880 --> 00:37:55.800

2019, summer, you know, I thought it was

00:37:55.800 --> 00:37:58.040

this really good continuation, and actually it was,

00:37:58.040 --> 00:37:59.560

it felt like a really new chapter,

00:37:59.560 --> 00:38:01.520

and I wasn't prepared for that, you know?

00:38:01.520 --> 00:38:04.120

And so I think I was just, like, in a lot of shock,

00:38:04.120 --> 00:38:07.400

but as you say, it was a little bit of a bittersweet moment.

00:38:07.400 --> 00:38:09.280

And so I don't really have the answers,

00:38:09.280 --> 00:38:12.240

I've been grappling with that, obviously. (laughs)

Evelyn

00:38:12.240 --> 00:38:16.040

- I mean, I think often, I feel like these are more stories

00:38:16.040 --> 00:38:19.240

that we have, right, rather than needing

00:38:19.240 --> 00:38:20.920

to find an answer to anything,

00:38:20.920 --> 00:38:24.880

because there is no answer, the answer is that it is, right?

00:38:24.880 --> 00:38:27.840

You know, Croatia's your home, Hong Kong's also your home,

00:38:27.840 --> 00:38:29.960

Australia's also your home, you know?

Slavica

00:38:29.960 --> 00:38:31.560

- In different ways, in different things.

00:38:31.560 --> 00:38:34.120

And so I think, I think it's a lot more interesting,

00:38:34.120 --> 00:38:36.920

but I think it's also, like, it's very complex,

00:38:36.920 --> 00:38:38.440

and I think maybe some people don't really have

00:38:38.440 --> 00:38:41.080

the sensitivity around that, and so I don't share that

00:38:41.080 --> 00:38:43.280

with a lot of people as well, because I think, you know,

00:38:43.280 --> 00:38:45.240

it doesn't really fit their templates of, like,

00:38:45.240 --> 00:38:46.920

the answers that you're supposed to give them.

00:38:46.920 --> 00:38:49.200

So yeah, but I'm very glad that, you know,

00:38:49.200 --> 00:38:51.600

I can have a conversation with someone that's very empathetic

00:38:51.600 --> 00:38:54.040

and gets it, too, on so many different levels.

Evelyn

00:38:54.040 --> 00:38:55.800

- Yeah.

00:38:55.800 --> 00:38:57.480

There's one line here from your book

00:38:57.480 --> 00:39:00.320

that I'm just gonna read, because it really,

00:39:00.320 --> 00:39:04.840

it syncs up everything that you've sort of been saying,

00:39:04.840 --> 00:39:08.760

is that, "I hope this book serves as another line

00:39:08.760 --> 00:39:11.200

"in the overall narrative, and as a vehicle

00:39:11.200 --> 00:39:13.120

"to bring people together.

00:39:13.120 --> 00:39:16.240

"I see it as a small contribution towards seeing

00:39:16.240 --> 00:39:18.800

"and hearing each other in the diaspora,

00:39:18.800 --> 00:39:23.040

"and also as a dialogue between the diaspora and Croatia

00:39:23.040 --> 00:39:24.520

"and the wider world."

00:39:24.520 --> 00:39:30.000

I mean, that is your love letter to not just Croatia,

00:39:30.000 --> 00:39:32.960

but to the world, to your family.

00:39:32.960 --> 00:39:35.080

It is exactly, as you were saying,

00:39:35.080 --> 00:39:40.040

there's no need for an answer, because it just is.

00:39:40.040 --> 00:39:45.040

And on that lovely note, I want to ask you three words

00:39:46.600 --> 00:39:50.920

to describe your state of being in Hong Kong right now.

Slavica

00:39:50.920 --> 00:39:53.440

- Right now.

00:39:53.440 --> 00:39:56.320

Excited for future.

00:39:56.320 --> 00:39:59.320

- Excited for future is grammatically incorrect, but.

00:39:59.320 --> 00:40:01.240

(laughing)

00:40:01.240 --> 00:40:02.720

Future excited me.

Evelyn

00:40:02.720 --> 00:40:04.560

- Wow.

00:40:04.560 --> 00:40:07.160

Amazing, future excited me.

00:40:07.160 --> 00:40:10.600

And on that note, we will wrap it up.

00:40:10.600 --> 00:40:12.080

Thank you so much.

Slavica

00:40:12.080 --> 00:40:13.400

- Thank you so much, Evelyn.

00:40:13.400 --> 00:40:26.380

(upbeat music)