

## THINGS I AM NOT

By

Emmanuela Lia

(Switches on microphone)

Hello. Welcome to 'Things I Am Not'. Yes, I know you know what it is called, but it actually is what it says on the tin. You see, everyone starts with at least one of those things when they meet me so... I'm curious to see what it feels like to put them all out, in one go. I just don't think I can do it alone. So, thank you for being here.

To begin with, I'm not from here. I bet you've already thought of that and you've been trying to figure it out since I said: 'Hello' or was it: 'tin'? People can listen to me talk all day but unless they get a specific answer, they're hoping for me to say something that will give it away, a reference to a thing, a memory, a historical event...something...anything ...I bet by now you have eliminated at least three continents and are focused on a region.... Right! Now that the accent thing is out of the way, the next thing I'm not is, married. Nor have I ever been or want to be for that matter. Although people have asked. In a very... informal, casual way...

Very flattering right? To know that someone has thought of spending the rest of their life with you, or at least they think they do, and you say yes, because you think so too and you marry and then you realise 'Damn! It's a dog I wanted!' (waits) People get curious though, 'Commitment issues? Difficult childhood?' That's when I raise the stakes, I'm not interested in having kids either. 'Do you hate kids?' No... I just/ 'Or maybe there's something wrong with you' ...No I don't/'that makes you afraid to connect and not able to express your maternal instinct' ...No, no, I just don't have/ 'How are you ever going to feel whole?' (finishes the phrase for the sake of it) ...a maternal instinct. (pause) It was when I had the ectopic pregnancy, do you know what that is? Basically, it's your body going 'OMG A FOETUS!' and throws it away like a grenade to the first place it thinks it will fit and of course it's never in the right place so, the grenade (makes exploding sound) and you nearly die. That's when I knew I didn't want children. That's when I realised, I shouldn't have children. All I cared about was when I'll be able to dance again. I even asked the doctor and he burst out laughing, 'would you like to try and walk first?'. Oh, ... no, no, no I'm not a dancer. But I like a good tune (pause) I'm also friendly, polite, a bit self-conscious, 5ft5 average/No sorry, I'm actually 5ft4' but the guy who made my first passport thought he was doing me a favour by adding an inch; he even gave me a wink while doing it and smiled expecting to see some sign of gratitude. FOR AN INCH! What I'm trying to say is... I could be your friendly next-door neighbour, that sounded creepy. Scratch that (Inhales) What I'm trying to say is: I am not dead inside. There. Ok I might 've started off a bit broken and managed to glue myself back together-probably badly- but I'm good at arts and crafts so it looks deliberate.

Until...someone, feels the breeze coming through the cracks and I'm always desperately hoping they'll describe it as 'sunlight''. Hasn't happened yet so...no, not in a relationship either. U-huh! It's been a while now. 'Aww how long has it been without sex? I didn't say I'm not having sex! I said, I'm not in a relationship.' Have you had many relationships?' Yes. 'Have you had lots of sex?' Ooooo yes! 'Are you a slut?' Sorry, what?!(pause to let it sink) I pretend I didn't hear that. Just this once. I'm not... confrontational. I'm really not. I will never attack, not even when threatened. And unless you hurt the one person in the whole world I'd die for, I will always try and figure it out. Talk it through. I 'dip my tongue in my brain before I speak'. Like my gran taught me. Always! Weeeell... not always. I can't keep my cool when I like things. When I reeeally like things. I want to shout from the rooftops and share it with everyone, like a 5 year' old running around, isn't that poem amaaaaazing! Listen,

listen! Roses are red, violets are blue'/what? The first time a 5 year 'old hears that, is saying it for breakfast lunch and dinner. (Enjoys the word a little too much) Violets, vi-o lets- viiiioooleeets. Violets, violets, violets. That's me, that's me when I like something. You'd probably hate me for life.

But I do like words. ... pretentious right? Because you can't get THAT excited about words! You can analyse them, you can romanticise them, you can pay millions for them but for the love of everything rational you can't get excited! Well, there are a few minor things people get excited about and I don't, like (thinks) Twitter followers or (thinks) running or God/Ooooo 'how is that a minor thing'? Ok maybe I should have started with 'I'm not religious' and now it's... 'Oh ok are you at least spiritual? Erm...no. Sorry, I don't even know what that means. If I ask you to define spirituality in a sentence that could be understood by everyone, could you do it? Not the people you hang out with, ...every, single, one. Could you? (waits) And that's why God is winning. Anyway, I digress. Another thing I'm not- and there is so much doubt about it- is competitive. Hi! That's me. Totally not interested in the concept. 'But...but... you're here...talking, in public...alone...' Ah yes... I need to be here. I really, really, really do! I just don't need to be here *instead* of everyone else. This world is HUGE! 'Aw you're so kind!' No, I'm not. That's another thing: 'Be kind' what is this? Why do we need a reminder? Since when has cruelty become the default? No, I'm not kind. Not to the people who don't deserve it! I can almost hear the eyebrows rising 'and who are you to judge who deserves kindness?'. Oh, I don't know...do you let anyone into your house? It's that simple. it's as simple as...not everyone cares what I am. Are you still trying to figure out where I'm from?