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#ALLMIGRANTS

ABOUT





FIELDS is about activists and change-makers. We talk about global issues through Third Culture Kids, a global nomad lens. We are a French and English print and online publication with a social mission to inspire change. Each quarter our print publication explores a theme, features long-form reportages, interview, and photo stories. With outstanding image quality, ethical publication values and often-innovative art direction, FIELDS is as smart as beautiful.

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FIELDS is edited and published by Fields Creatives.

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THE EDITOR'S NOTE

All migrants!

We are not here for the semantics, the legal jargons, the meaningless labels or the top-down vision of the world. There are plenty of very good publications out there for that.

It's not about numbers, it is about people just like you and me. Fearless storytellers, soulful adventurers; this issue is dedicated to all the people who have refused to be the victims of an unfair system and decided to take their destiny into their own hands. It is for the people who continue to thrive for a another life, wherever this might be - at least they try.

Is it because of my African passport that the world seemed a faraway concept in which I was obviously not included. How many international travellers claim to have toured the world and never set foot in the African continent?

Or is it my European passport which opened infinite possibilities of movements from north to south, east to west. I was born a migrant somewhere in west Africa and this extraordinary (bumpy) ride continues, one country at a time.

We move away from our challenges for more opportunities. We go back to our roots to find the meaning of our existence. For love, for work, for money...

From the ballerina from a favela in Rio who goes to the Big Apple to follow her dreams to the Syrian engineer who is fleeing the war in his country for a better life in Germany, we are all migrants.

The production of this issue was a rollercoaster. It would not have been possible without the financial support of Mrs Manuela Col. I know she'll be embarrassed to find her name written in this editor's note, but hey, Manu, you made this possible! Meme, NovNov, Manu was my godmother when I started as a journalist in Paris, nine years ago. She gave me the best tips and advice about the industry. Thank you so much Manu for believing in FIELDS. We won't disappoint you.

We are global daydreamers, from Tehran to Ilha de Moçambique, we firmly believe that the world cannot be viewed solely through a western perspective. We are passionate about what we are doing and want to make our voices heard as far as we can.

At least we try.

Make some noise!

#allmigrants

Saran Koly

FIELDS



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DESIRÉE JAIMOVICH
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Argentine journalist and translator. Desirée is a freelancer and enjoys freedom; in all senses of the word. In love with life, she believes the world is a huge amusement park worth discovering with child's eyes. She loves running and performing aerial silks. Her motto is: "If you don't succeed at first, try, try, try again."



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Japanese-American freelance photographer with a passion for social justice. She hopes to shed light on identity issues and dignify marginalised people through portrait photography. On a much lighter note, Haruka also enjoys hiking, camping, and taking long road trips to the middle of nowhere.



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Jamaican American freelance photographer...who only happens to take photos of his lover. Although private, he does enjoy travelling, building things by hand, and digging deeper into his roots.



MARC BUONOMO

Photographer, traveller, astronomer. Between the earth and the sky, he travels through space to meet others. He carries with him his words and images as evidence of the wider world. Marc loves art in all its forms, lemon pie, paper and books.



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MIGRATIONS



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Quantitative sociologist and data scientist; makes art, culture and the non-profit world better measured, but people behind numbers are her main source of inspiration.



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Mama Djombo's daughter born and raised in the Parisian suburbs, trying to untold unheard stories with her lens and pen since 2003.

IDENTIDADE

POETICA

SCHENGEN

TEXT and PHOTOS by DÉLIO JASSE



“...it was just a small stamp that would decide my fate”.

These two series are profoundly connected as they show my approach to documentary photography. Even if I consider photography as a document, especially in the case of portraits which remind us of bureaucracy, I am challenging this very status of portraits, adding more elements to the original pictures. Also in both series there is an echo of my personal experience; I could not secure my resident permit in Portugal, so I was an illegal immigrant for about nine years. I could basically do anything in Portugal, such as work and go out with friends, but still I had no legal right to be there. Also I couldn't leave Portugal, I was locked in. My situation could be described as *Kafkaesque* because my great-grandfather was Portuguese so everybody in my family already had their Portuguese documents but me. They couldn't find my birth certificate, it was really crazy. Then all of a sudden everything got resolved and I became a Portuguese citizen.

My situation had a profound impact on me; it was just a small stamp that would decide my fate. Nothing else would have mattered:

my efforts; my studies; my heritage; my qualities and capacity. More than anything, the stamp was crucial to my future. So I started experimenting with documental images, stamps and letters, creating new documents with a new meaning, often very different from its original one.

In the series *Identidade Poética* I created a story using old portraits I found at Feira da Ladra (Lisbon's most famous flea market). On these portraits I decided to juxtapose the stamps that were originally printed on the back of each image. They were simply the stamps of the shop where the pictures were taken and developed, but once they were at the front of the images, near to the people's faces, these stamps acquired a new meaning. They become more official, giving these people a new history and a new narrative.

In *Schengen* my own experience is more present. I took pictures of my friends and family in Lisbon and added to their portraits various stamps from different documents - some of these documents were mine, others were taken from old passports and documents I found in Lisbon's flea market. For each of them I created a new narrative, with the use of the stamps and of the documents. Bureaucracy is everywhere, it is what defines their histories.



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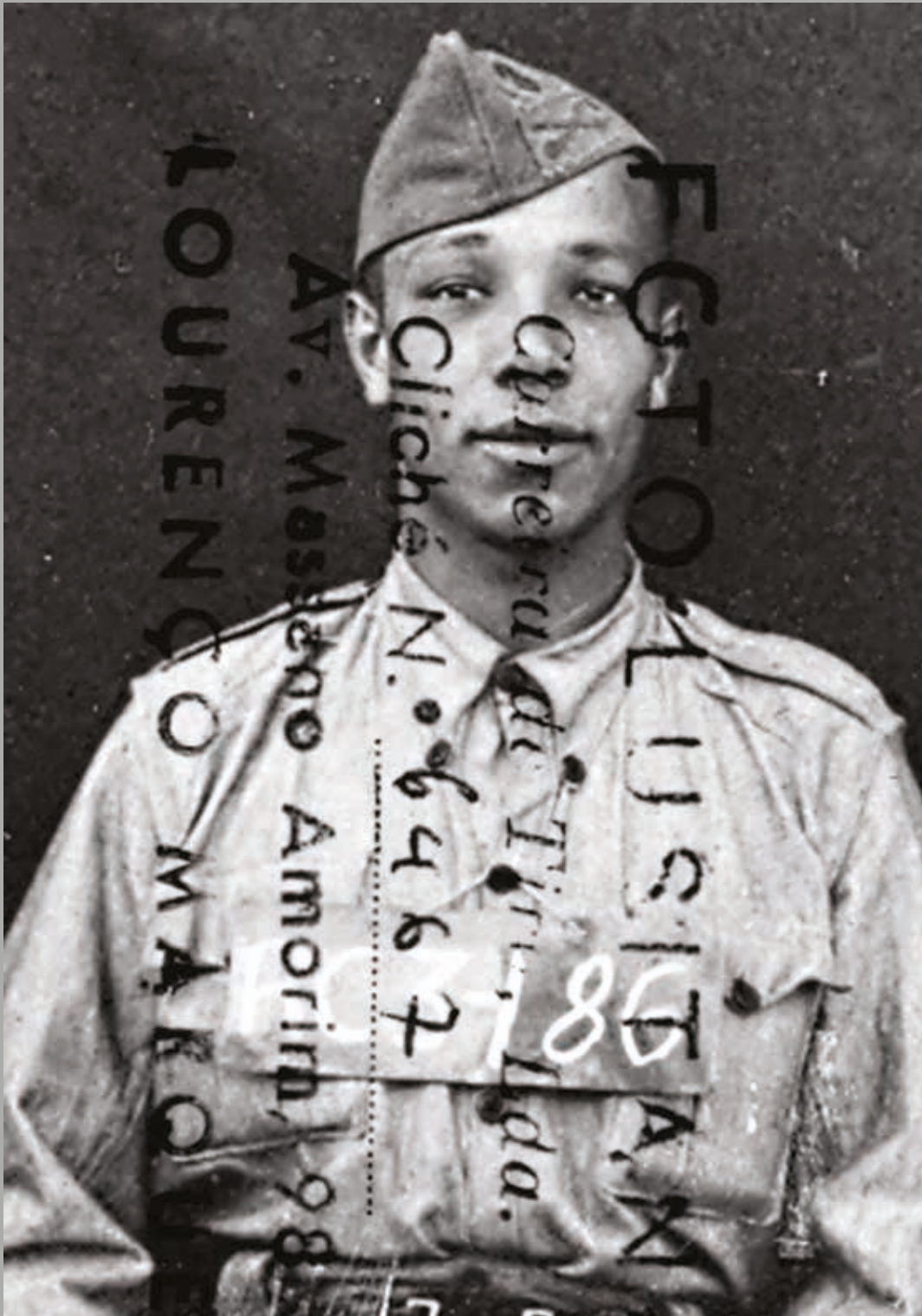
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THE WODAABE, THE NOMADIC MAGNETISM

TEXT and PHOTOS by TERRI GOLD

Pressed between the endless stretch of sand dunes and the fertile grasslands of the African savannah there is an immense steppe of arid land which is the domain of the Wodaabe tribes. Living at the mercy of the formidable climate, the Wodaabe tribesmen survive by adherence to their ancient nomadic traditions. Though constantly on the move throughout the year, when rain visits the dusty terrain, the Wodaabe gather for an extraordinary seven day festival called Werewolf. The most handsome men compete against one another for the favour of the women, a test of beauty, endurance and magnetism.



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ATONG ATEM¹'S MULTILAYERED ART

TEXT by SARAN KOLY + PHOTOS by ATONG ATEM and BENJAMIN FRASER





She is Australian and South Sudanese, her migration story took her from Addis Ababa to Melbourne. Her work as a visual artist explores the multiple identities of her generation in Australia.

Where are you from?

I hear that question from everyone! Usually when I hear it from people of colour, I'm less hostile and will tell them I'm South Sudanese, especially if they're black because it's usually a way to connect. When I hear it from white people though, it's usually to bother me and they'll get the suburb where I currently live, if that.

“I was afraid to identify as primarily South Sudanese.”

I identify as a South Sudanese person living in Australia but that hasn't always been the case. I guess as I've grown and learned about my culture and formulated my own ideas, I've developed a pride in my people and my parents that has allowed me to let

1 Atong Atem wears a piece designed by Fizzy Fingers

go of the shame of otherness I adopted as a kid.

Initially I was afraid to identify as primarily South Sudanese, in terms of culture, because I often felt that I wasn't South Sudanese “enough”. Now I think that's silly but at the time there was a really strong sense of cultural inferiority because I grew up in a very white country and believed, to some extent, that the further from white you are, the more inferior you are. So I felt inferior to my white counterparts but also inferior to my South Sudanese counterparts because I was whisked away from my people at such a young age that I wasn't able to develop enough as a South Sudanese person. When I started to unlearn the idea that culture is stagnant and that whiteness is superior I kind of flipped completely and started thinking almost the opposite. It really didn't take long for me to develop a pride in my culture, my people and my family as soon as I started unlearning what white supremacy had taught me.

I grew up in a smallish town a couple of hours out of Sydney in a beachy area called The Central Coast. I was fortunate enough to start school in kindergarten so I got to grow up with the kids in the area. That being said, I was definitely ‘othered’ constantly. The Central Coast was

overwhelmingly white - the only other black kids in my primary school and some in high school were my siblings and cousins. I got very used to being stared at and learned very young to not notice it most of the time, and I, to this day, avoid making small talk with strangers, cashiers, people in shops, bus drivers and so on because those innocent conversations often turn from “Do you have the time?” to “Gosh you’re dark! You look burnt!”

I’ve heard so many racist remarks delivered as cute quips in my life and I guess the people who utter them are so unaware of how hurtful they are because they have the privilege of never having their racial identity questioned and mocked daily.”

MAKING ART

“I always wanted to make art in some capacity as a kid but I wanted to do and be everything. There was a time when I wanted to play tennis because Venus and Serena Williams were doing it, I wanted to sing because I loved choir and for a long time I wanted to be a journalist like my dad. I still don’t know what I want to do when I grow up but for now I’m glad that I get to do things that I really enjoy and can get away with having fun as an adult.

I love colour and detail so my work generally involves a lot of this as well as

patterns that pay homage to Dutch wax print. When I begin to start an artwork or a series of works, composition is usually one of the first things I think about. Even if I’m not certain of how I want the elements in the work to be placed, I’m always trying to creating something that is visually harmonious while incorporating either a lot of elements or clashing elements.

I started studying fine art at Sydney University in 2011 majoring in painting and although I hadn’t started photographing then, the things I learnt as a painter and the way my style developed through that medium have influenced my photography. Again, it has to do with colour and composition mostly but also my interest in portraiture, blackness, colonialism and identity which all stem from studying painting.

I’ve always been interested in photography, usually fashion editorials and vintage studio photography - images that are bold and visually engaging - so I attempted to create images that had elements I like in photography and elements I like in the paintings that I create and I enjoyed it more than I thought I would.

My interest in the work of photographers such as Malick Sidibe, Seydou Keita, Philip Kwame Apagya and the like started



through a theoretical look at colonialism in Africa and its effect on art from the continent. Initially I was looking at Dutch wax print fabrics and their inherently colonial narrative. These wax prints were introduced to parts of Africa by the Dutch from their travels to Indonesia and have now become synonymous with Africa and African art and fashion!

I then started exploring artists that use Dutch wax print materials in their work such as Yinka Shonibare and Kehinde Wiley and that led me to the studio photographers. The thing I like about all of these artists is the way these continental 'identifiers' wax prints; the studio set ups are used in such different ways which convey the diversity of the African diaspora. I also find it interesting to see how colonialism is intrinsically referenced through a lot of these common motifs but in a way that is uniquely Malian or uniquely West African. To me this is important and worth celebrating because it shows the malleability of culture and the fact that it is a thing that evolves and changes, and that's evident too in the contemporary diasporic art of today, which is all part of culture.

My subjects were initially just my friends and whoever was free and willing to be photographed for a few hours! I guess that's still the case, with the only thing

being that I'm showing 'my people', other African TCKs whose experiences are often presented one dimensionally and monolithically if at all. I'm not trying to show that we're diverse, or 'modern' or connected to our families' cultures, I'm making honest art that's interesting to me and by virtue of existence, shows those truths anyway."

COLONIALISM, BLACKNESS, AFRICAN IDENTITY

"I don't think it's possible to honestly and truly think about, or make, art as a colonised person without thinking about, and therefore questioning, colonialism. Living in Australia means that the way I think about colonialism and making art here as a black African person is nuanced because although I'm a colonised black woman living under white supremacy, I still have many privileges that aren't afforded the First Nations people of Australia because I'm a settler.

This issue comes up, for example, with the language we (non-Indigenous Australian black people) use in Australia, i.e. calling ourselves Black Australians which can be dismissive of Indigenous Australians or talking about the issues we face as black people in this country, without taking into consideration the fact that Indigenous

people often face similar issues and then some on a social and governmental level.

Colonialism is a multi-dimensional thing that is present in every facet of society and being aware of its effects, at the very least, means that I can unlearn things that I've been made to believe about myself and other people and that I can begin to redefine my perceptions and my identity outside of a narrative that seeks to dehumanise and destroy who I am and where I'm from."

MIGRATION STORY

"I can't deny the importance of seeing representations of yourself in art and hearing the voices of the disenfranchised in their own words."

"My family is Jieng (or Dinka) from South Sudan and I was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A few months after I was born, we were forced to flee due to civil war and made our way, with thousands of other families, to Kenya on foot. We lived in Kenya in a refugee camp for some time

before we eventually were accepted to move to Australia under refugee visas in 1997. I've lived in Australia ever since.

Being a migrant informed most of my beliefs and perspective today. I think it has to do with constantly questioning yourself and wanting to understand yourself and your position in society. A lot of people don't get the chance to do that let alone at a young age so I guess I've had a strong sense of self and self-confidence from quite a young age.

I can't deny the importance of seeing representations of yourself in art and hearing the voices of the disenfranchised in their own words. The fact that I can speak about my experiences so openly is really special to me and if I had access to the ideas and art of people similar to me when I was younger, I would have felt okay with who I am and the things I embodied much earlier in life.

There's always someone who relates and feels less alone when they see themselves reflected in art or literature, that's an incredible thing that I might hopefully contribute to."

FROM "HOST" COUNTRY TO "HOME"

"I've never felt at home here in Australia. There's a constant lingering feeling that

I'm not meant to be here. That's partly because I came here very young as a refugee so there was no choice on my part, partly because of my desire to go to South Sudan for more than a visit and reconnect with people who I have such an intrinsic connection with and partly because Australia is a difficult place for non-white people to live in.

Most of my childhood was a struggle between the different perspectives in my life. I guess we gauge our sense of place when we're young by comparing ourselves and experiences to the people around us and their experiences. It wasn't until I was 16 or so that I met and engaged with other TCKs and migrant people of my own age but by then I had started to come to positive conclusions about myself and my identity. Connecting with other TCKs really helped me to cement the positives and question where the negatives were coming from and why I had chosen to believe them.

Seeing other people with similar backgrounds to me doing so many varied things with their lives and at various levels in terms of embracing their parents' cultures was one of the things that made me renounce the idea that being a migrant meant I had to be one particular way. I finally started to see that people of colour are incredibly diverse! Although that

sounds really obvious, when you grow up removed from your culture and cultures similar to your own, the only example you have is your family and that can be really limiting in terms of diversity and how you see yourself, especially when representations of blackness outside of that, such as in the media, are either nonexistent or highly offensive.

I considered myself a misfit in high school, and maybe to some extent still do. Back then it was purely because of my physical and cultural differences to the white majority and now it's that, but also because of my refusal to adopt or dismiss the things I don't like in the culture I live in. I mean basic things that contribute to the oppression and cultural denial of disenfranchised people. I guess that mostly comes from my personal experiences and knowing first-hand what a lot of that oppression looks and feels like.

Within the social circles that I'm part of, I'm not at all a misfit, but in the greater cultural landscape I probably am and that's okay by me. I'm focusing on travelling now, around the world and home to South Sudan. I think I've gained almost all I can from Australia as a "home base" for now; although I'll definitely return, so I'm planning to go somewhere else after my degree ends."









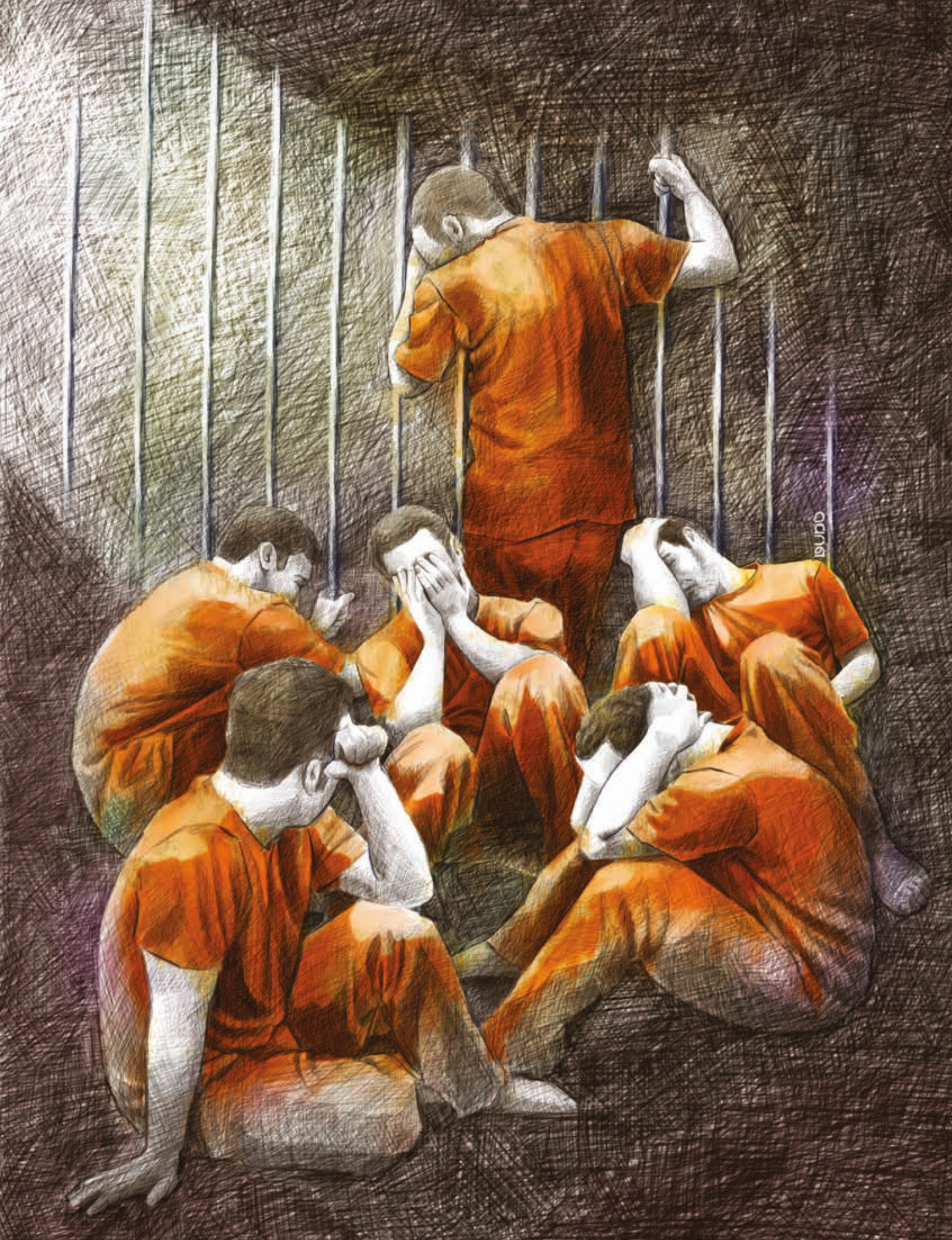






FROM GUANTANAMO TO MONTEVIDEO

TEXT by DESIRÉE JAIMOVICH and MATÍAS LAMOURET + ILLUSTRATIONS by HAMED ZAHED



acris

Six men: four Syrians, a Tunisian and a Palestinian who were held for more than 10 years arrived in Uruguay in December 2014 and tried to make a new life for themselves.

Many have seen them or heard about them but not many have been able to talk to them. Only a few can pronounce their names correctly, still the great majority of Uruguayans know who they are. Everyone has an opinion when it comes to the former Guantanamo prisoners who arrived in Montevideo last December. The four Syrian men: Alí Husain Shaabaa (32); Ahmed Adnan Ajuri (37); Omar Abdelahdi Faraj (39); Jihad Ahmed Mustafá Diyab (45); Palestinian man Mohammed Abdullah Tahamuttan (35) and Adel Bin Muhammad El Ouerghi (49) from Tunisia, are notorious but at the same time they are surrounded by a halo of mystery. Some love them, others resent them, but no one seems to be indifferent to their presence in this small Latin American country.

In a city where “major things hardly ever happen,” as a journalist from one local newspaper El País confessed, the story of four Syrians, a Palestinian and a Tunisian, who were detained for 12 years and are

now struggling to start a new life in this country where the language, religion and customs differ so much from their own, immediately caught everyone’s attention. At first, the refugees opened up to the press and although they refused to describe in detail all the difficulties they had endured while held in Guantanamo, they did express their gratitude to the country and revealed some of their future expectations. However, recently, they have decided to keep a low profile.

“...the six men arrived in Montevideo handcuffed and wearing their orange prison uniforms.”

They were all arrested in 2002, accused of having close ties with al-Qaeda members, according to WikiLeaks’ documents. But none of them were ever formally charged and eventually were cleared for release because the US government believed they no longer posed a terrorist threat. By the end of 2013, the US ambassador to Uruguay at the time, Julissa Reynoso, asked Mr Mujica if he would be willing to take in the detainees. He accepted. A year later, the six men arrived in Montevideo handcuffed and wearing their orange prison uniforms.

Mujica's decision was questioned by certain sectors of society, mainly those with more centre-right views. "We are trapped in a problem and we won't be able to find a way out. The government failed to fully inform us of the true reason behind this decision and it wants us to believe this is just a humanitarian cause," complained Jaime Trobo, member of the National Party in Uruguay. "Why didn't he (Mujica) submit this project to parliament for approval? Uruguay is not a monarchy but a republic. It's a shame that the government has received these people without having obtained parliament's authorisation," he added.

Despite the fact that Mujica's move is viewed with suspicion and mistrust by certain sectors, others have supported his initiative. "This is a humanitarian cause. Many Uruguayans, forced to flee the country during the military dictatorship, were welcomed and hosted by different nations. It is now time for us to return the favour. We should give back hospitality to those who need it," explained Fernando Gambera, member of the PIT-CNT, the main union in Uruguay which was in charge of helping the ex-detainees during their first months in the country. In April 2015, this responsibility was taken over by the Ecumenical Service for Human Dignity's (Spanish acronym SEDHU) local

representative of the United Nations Agency for Refugees.

'OPEN TO IMMIGRATION'

All the former Guantanamo prisoners have been granted refugee status, except for Jihad. He is the only one who refused to sign the agreement with SEDHU which guarantees a monthly allowance of \$600 for each of them, as well as accommodation and medical checkups. In exchange for these benefits they are required to learn the language, obtain training to learn different skills and eventually get a job.

The agreement, signed on 19 May will last for one year with the option to be renewed for another 12 months. Ali, Ahmed, Omar, Mohammed and Adel have all rented houses, are learning Spanish in the area of Pocitos and say they want to start their own businesses or get a job in Uruguay. However, life has been very different for Jihad. Although he says he is grateful to Uruguay for accepting him, he feels the US should take responsibility for having imprisoned him, as well as other inmates, without charge.

He also wants to be reunited with his wife and children who are in Syria.

Those who have been in contact with him, since he arrived in the country, say he is angry, deeply hurt and torn to pieces.





adina

He blames the United States for having deprived him of his freedom “with no apparent reason”, he says. He also resents the fact he will never see his eldest son again, who died, apparently caught amidst an attack carried out in Damascus; a tragedy he didn't find out about until he arrived in Montevideo and which has left him devastated.

Jihad is one of the four refugees (together with Ali, Ahmed and Adel) who camped for almost a month last April outside the American embassy in Montevideo to demand that the US provide them with better conditions to ensure their economic and psychological well-being.

“It was hard at first to have them sign the letter of commitment. But it is not that they were not well predisposed, as it was said. The problem was they didn't fully understand what the conditions were or what was required of them. When the second document was drafted, the clauses were put forward with more details and they agreed to subscribe it,” explained academic Christian Mirza, the official intermediary between the government and the refugees.

“Many criticised the fact that, in a moment of crisis, the state has decided to spend money on them. First, it should be said that the funds come from the Ministry of

Foreign Relations, besides it is also worth remembering that our country has always been open to immigration,” said Mr Mirza.

Maybe some of the adverse comments from opposition parties and certain sectors of society encouraged president elect Tabaré Vázquez to put a stop to the agreement with the US. While his predecessor had announced that these six refugees would only be the first to be received by Uruguay, and that more would be taken in by the end of 2015, Mr Vázquez has assured the country that they won't be open to getting more Guantanamo inmates. Uruguay is the first South American country and the third in the American continent to have welcomed former prisoners from the detention camp. So far, 645 ex-inmates have been transferred, while there are still 122 in the facility.

OVERCOME THE SUFFERING

“I will never forget my mates who are there. I came here to fight for them...”

Jihad left Uruguay in February to visit Buenos Aires, not only to complain about his situation but also to ask the Argentinian

government to accept those who still remain in Guantanamo Bay and will be released in the following months. “I will never forget my mates who are there. I came here to fight for them,” he told the local press.

Jihad, who walks with the aid of crutches because of back problems, is the one who finds it most difficult to overcome the suffering undergone during captivity. He is the only one who still lives in the four-bedroom house on Maldonado Street which was originally provided for them by the PIT-CNT. The house is a former refuge for female victims of domestic violence; the union wants to get it back to continue helping battered women. That is why the refugees have all left and rented a place of their own with the financial aid they receive from the government. The only one left there is Jihad and his future is quite uncertain. He still does not have refugee status and therefore remains in a legal limbo. He only relies on the occasional help he receives from neighbours.

“There is this old woman who prepares food for him and goes by, every now and then, to check on him,” mentioned Leonardo Duarte, official of the PIT-CNT who visits the house almost every day. He is the one who has shared the most with all of them since their arrival.

Jihad spends most of the time in the

house. Those in contact with him say he paints, prays and chats with his family over the Internet. It is quite usual to see him glancing through one of the windows overlooking the street.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

The local language and habits are probably the two main challenges they need to overcome. For Uruguayans the mate (a hot beverage made with hot water and herbs which is meant to be sipped with a straw from a small, rounded receptacle) represents a main part of their daily routine, and also acts as a way of socialising.

Their way of having mate, which requires sharing a straw, usually gets the attention of foreigners. But in this case, four out of the six ex-detainees are Syrians and in their country it is also common practice to enjoy this beverage with friends. This is because over the last century, there was a huge wave of Syrian immigration to both Argentina and Uruguay. When those immigrants returned to the Middle East they spread this habit of taking mate they had acquired in the Rio de la Plata area.





“They want to work and feel useful but it’s difficult because they are not ready yet. They still have to learn the language; besides, the whole process has to be supervised by the SEDHU, it’s not that they can just jump at any opportunity they come across.

“They are all skillful in different areas: there’s a cook, a salesman and a butcher. They are considering the idea of opening a restaurant to offer typical Middle Eastern food,” explained Duarte. We approached Adel who, in Italian, explained he was not ready to talk yet. “They have endured many difficulties, things have been tough and they dislike some of the things the press has published about them,” pointed out Duarte. “We travelled to Chuy (a small town near the border with Brazil) where there is a vast Muslim population. They got to share the whole day with them. They felt happy and relaxed because they could speak their mother tongue and were surrounded by other people who share their beliefs. One of the neighbours there suggested he could help them set up a mosque in Montevideo,” remarked Duarte. He rounded up the conversation by recalling one of the phrases Mujica shared with the refugees when he visited them: “It’s time for you to stop acting as though you are prisoners; you have to leave all the horror behind and move on in order to truly become free men.”

**RENDEZ-NOUS
NOS NOMS
JUIFS ET
FRANÇAIS,
LE CHOIX DU
PATRONYME**

TEXTE par AURÉLIE TOURNOIS + PHOTOGRAPHIES par PASCAL VO + ILLUSTRATIONS par SELMAN HOSGÖR



Depuis 2009, le collectif La Force du Nom soutient et accompagne ces citoyens qui souhaitent retrouver leur nom de leurs ancêtres. La démarche est possible depuis 2011, mais pour certains le combat fut long et d'autres sont toujours en cours de procédure.

« Les hommes ressemblent plus à leur temps qu'à leur père. » Cette citation de Marc Bloch, La Force du Nom l'a faite sienne. Depuis 2009, ce collectif soutient les Juifs de France dans leur démarche de changement de nom en les accompagnant dans la déposition de leur requête. En 1985, Olivier Rubinstein est le premier à effectuer cette démarche, sans succès. L'association, fondée par la psychanalyste Céline Masson et l'avocate Nathalie Felzenszwalbe autour d'un panel d'intellectuels, regroupe aujourd'hui trente citoyens français souhaitant « oser leur nom juif sans honte ». Céline Masson et Nathalie Felzenszwalbe ont été entendues par la direction des Affaires civiles et du sceau au ministère de la Justice en janvier 2010. Très vite, elles reçoivent une dizaine de demandes de requêtes, déposées par la suite par le collectif, représenté par Up Felzenszwalbe. Cependant, toutes

ces demandes se heurtent rapidement à la décision du Conseil d'État, qui s'oppose à ces changements de nom. En effet, jusqu'en 2011, l'administration française refuse aux Juifs de retrouver leur patronyme d'origine. Cette décision s'appuie sur deux motifs : l'immutabilité du nom et l'impossibilité de reprendre un patronyme « à consonance étrangère ». Pour le Collectif et les demandeurs, ces deux arguments ne tiennent pas. D'une part, le principe d'immutabilité du nom, régi par l'article 61 du Code civil, qui stipule la nécessaire continuité du patronyme auprès de l'état civil, est désormais remis en cause par les lois de 2002. Au nom de l'égalité des sexes, on peut choisir de transmettre à ses enfants le nom de la mère comme celui du père. D'autre part, l'avocate du collectif invoque la réparation symbolique. Après la reconnaissance officielle par le président Jacques Chirac des responsabilités de la France dans la déportation, lors de son discours à l'occasion de la commémoration de la rafle du Vel' d'Hiv' le 16 juillet 1995, mais aussi grâce au travail de la Mission Mattéoli, instaurée par le Premier ministre Lionel Jospin, qui permet aux Juifs de demander réparation des biens dont ils ont été spoliés, la réparation symbolique par le droit au retour au nom juif leur paraît justifiée.

SAUVER LE NOM DE SES ANCÊTRES

Entre 1945 et 1957, on relève 2 150 décrets visant à la francisation d'un nom juif. Ainsi, 8 000 à 10 000 personnes, soit 5 % de la population juive française, troquent leur nom d'origine pour un patronyme francisé dans l'angoisse d'être identifiés comme tels, marqués par les traumatismes des déportations et de la collaboration. La procédure leur est facilitée dès 1947 par le Conseil d'État, qui reconnaît alors la « consonance israélite » en tant que motif légitime de changement et souhaite « éviter que ne se reproduisent le cas échéant les persécutions et les déportations dont les israélites citoyens français ont été l'objet pendant la période 1940-45 ». Il est précisé qu'il « ne s'agit donc pas de rechercher si la personne est elle-même israélite où même si le nom est réellement d'origine israélite. Ce qui importe, c'est de savoir si le nom est généralement considéré comme tel. »

Dans l'ouvrage «Rendez-nous nos noms ! sous-titré Quand des Juifs revendiquent leur identité perdue», Céline Masson appelle à « une réaction citoyenne, un engagement éthique et politique pour une France multiculturelle qui ose ses noms à consonance étrangère ». Elle précise : « Nous pensons que l'on peut être et rester français avec des noms à consonances diverses, plurielles. » Celle dont les

ancêtres s'appelaient Hassan parle d'un nom « lissé et coupé de son histoire, de sa langue », ayant « perdu sa saveur, son accent ». Pour cette universitaire, après la volonté des familles autrefois de se libérer des souffrances et des traumatismes du passé, retrouver ce nom juif équivaut à le sauver de la disparition. Aujourd'hui, enfants et petits-enfants souhaitent réaffirmer une identité juive par le nom.

Depuis 2011, une dizaine de requérants ont obtenu gain de cause. En revanche, ceux ayant essuyé un refus auprès du Conseil d'État ont recours à l'artifice du pseudonyme ou du nom d'usage afin de faire vivre leur véritable nom, l'ancien patronyme de leur père, celui de leur grand-père. Mais ceux-là souffrent encore de ne pas pouvoir le transmettre à leur descendance.

**« ON M'A TOUJOURS APPELÉ
RUBINSTEIN »**

Éditeur et directeur de l'Institut français de Tel Aviv, en Israël, on a changé son nom alors qu'il n'était qu'un enfant. Depuis trente ans, il mène un combat pour que son nom juif redevienne le seul officiel.

« J'étais déjà à l'école, j'avais 6 ans », se souvient-il. C'est à la naissance de sa sœur que les parents d'Olivier Rubinstein décident, en 1964, « pour des raisons de sécurité », d'abandonner leur nom et d'en prendre un nouveau « à consonance française ». Alors que la plupart des Juifs ont réalisé la procédure en 1946, c'est une « décision tardive et assez lourde » qui intervient suite à la déportation de la famille de sa mère, et aux difficultés rencontrées par son père, représentant de commerce, pour se faire une place dans son milieu professionnel. Sa mère opte pour « Raimbaud », en hommage à l'écrivain Rimbaud qu'elle adore. C'est vers 13 ans que le futur éditeur commence à s'interroger sur ses origines. « Raimbaud, c'était pour l'extérieur. Dans le cercle privé, on m'a toujours appelé Rubinstein », raconte-t-il. L'élément qui pousse Olivier Rubinstein à déposer sa première requête auprès du Conseil d'État, c'est la naissance imminente de sa fille : « Je n'ai pas voulu transmettre un nom qui n'était

pas le mien. » Ce patronyme « francisé », celui qui se fait appeler Rubinstein dans sa vie professionnelle depuis la fin des années 1970 le considère alors comme « un nom d'emprunt. »

Sa première requête, déposée en 1985, est retoquée par le Conseil d'État, au motif de la « consonance étrangère ». Cet argument laisse pantois le Parisien et citoyen français de naissance, pour qui parler de consonance étrangère à l'égard des noms juifs « revenait à sous-entendre que les Juifs étaient étrangers. S'il n'y avait pas eu la collaboration, un certain nombre de Juifs n'auraient pas changé de nom après-guerre. C'était donc quand même un peu fort que l'État français refuse à ses citoyens le retour à leur nom d'origine. »

Deux ans plus tard, avec le soutien du Congrès juif mondial, il dépose une nouvelle requête, c'est ce qu'il appelle « une demi-victoire ou un demi-échec ». En effet, le ministère de la Justice finit par accepter le port de « Rubinstein » en nom d'usage. Cependant, sur ses papiers devra figurer la mention : « Raimbaud dit Rubinstein », faisant apparaître son nom de naissance comme un pseudonyme. Après la victoire remportée par d'autres en 2011, il poursuit sa démarche et espère toujours obtenir gain de cause. « C'est une question de principe. Et puis, il y a la question de mes

enfants qui s'appellent Raimbaud et ne portent donc pas le même nom que moi. » Depuis le dépôt de sa troisième requête, à laquelle son fils s'est d'ailleurs joint, celui dont le nom de Rubinstein figure sur les papiers bancaires, administratifs ou de sécurité sociale, est toujours en attente du verdict. S'il s'était heurté à son incompréhension dans les années 1990, depuis, Olivier Rubinstein dit penser que son fils a compris sa démarche, comme il avait compris celle de son propre père dans les années 1960 en ajoutant : « Il m'a dit, il n'y a pas très longtemps, qu'il voudrait que les deux noms soient gravés sur sa tombe. Ça m'a beaucoup touché. »

« J'AI L'IMPRESSION D'AVOIR RENDU JUSTICE À MON PÈRE »

David Fuks, avocat parisien, est une exception parmi les requérants. Il ne lui aura fallu attendre que six mois pour obtenir gain de cause dans sa requête pour retrouver le nom de Fuks, que ses ancêtres avaient changé en Forest. Si la décision le ravit, il n'oublie pas pour autant le bouleversement administratif et identitaire engendré par cette démarche.

« Ma mère disait : “ce n'est pas notre vrai nom” », se souvient David Fuks, qui n'apprend que très tardivement, en écoutant discrètement les discussions de ses parents, que ceux-ci ont porté un nom juif. Enfant, il ressent un malaise lorsque, à l'école, l'instituteur l'interrogeait sur ses origines dans un but pédagogique. « Déjà alors, je comprenais qu'il y avait danger, je ne voulais rien dire, rien avoir à justifier. » Quand la guerre éclate, son grand-père, Alexandre Fuks, emmène sa famille se réfugier en zone Sud, à Sarlat. Après avoir échappé en 1942 à une rafle, ils se rendent à Grenoble puis à Lyon, où ils vivent cachés dans une mansarde, sans voir le jour pendant un an. Une fois la guerre terminée, son grand-père change, le 31 octobre 1951, le nom de Fuks contre celui de Forest, dans le but de protéger son fils unique, âgé alors de 15 ans.

el Poder
de la
Imaginación



C'est à 39 ans qu'il demande officiellement à retrouver son nom, poussé par cette frustration de ne pas pouvoir partager sa judaïté. « Je me sentais totalement invisible dans une identité impossible avec l'envie de renouer avec cette culture et de l'approfondir. » C'est en apprenant la victoire du collectif La Force du Nom qu'il se lance, plein d'espoir, soutenu par sa famille et l'avocate du collectif, Nathalie Felzenszwalbe. Il ne lui faudra pas plus de huit jours pour boucler sa requête, avec généalogie, récit de son histoire et explication de son choix à l'appui. « J'ai voulu conjurer cette angoisse qui avait été la leur puis la mienne. Il s'agissait de ne plus rester caché derrière ce nom, symbole de cette mansarde que mon père avait occupée », confie l'avocat parisien, pour qui cette démarche est également une manière d'affirmer enfin ses origines judéo-polonaises.

Six mois plus tard, le 26 octobre 2012, David Fuks accueille avec une joie immense l'acceptation de sa requête : « Mon père était fier. Cela témoignait de mon attachement à mes origines, à mes racines et à l'histoire familiale. J'avais l'impression de lui avoir rendu justice finalement. Ça l'a beaucoup touché. » Hormis un couple d'amis qui juge la décision « rétrograde », son entourage accueille la nouvelle avec enthousiasme.

Désormais, sur ses papiers, le nom de Forest est raturé. À côté figure la mention « changé en Fuks ». Alors même qu'il attendait ce moment avec impatience, l'avocat a pourtant vécu ce changement avec violence. « Je ne savais plus très bien comment je m'appelais. » Connue au sein de sa profession sous le nom de Forest, il se voit contraint de garder cette appellation dans le cadre de son emploi. « C'est très ironique, car Fuks est mon vrai nom, et Forest le faux. Alors qu'à l'origine, c'était le vrai ! » plaisante-t-il aujourd'hui.

**“KILL THE
INDIAN, SAVE
THE MAN”¹**

LES PENSIONNATS

AUTOCHTONES

TEXTE par CLARA BAILLOT + PORTRAITS et PHOTOGRAPHIE par PAT KANE



La dernière école résidentielle pour Amérindiens a fermé en 1996. Des établissements où les enfants autochtones étaient envoyés, coupés de leurs racines mais aussi parfois abusés physiquement et sexuellement.

Ils ont 6 ans, 7 ans tout au plus. Un matin, un bus, un bateau ou un train, arrive dans leur communauté pour les emmener au loin. Les enfants amérindiens vont vivre à l'écart de leur famille, jusqu'à l'adolescence. Arrachés parfois de force à leurs parents puis escortés par la gendarmerie royale, ils sont brutalement coupés de leurs racines et de leurs liens affectifs.

En juin 2015, la Commission vérité et réconciliation (CVR) a publié son rapport

1 En 1879, un officier de l'armée nommé Richard H. Pratt a ouvert un pensionnat pour jeunes Indiens à Carlisle, en Pennsylvanie aux États-Unis. Son but: utiliser l'éducation pour faire assimiler la culture dominante. Cette année, 50 Cheyenne, Kiowa et Pawnee sont arrivés à son école. Pratt leur a coupé les cheveux, obligé à parler anglais, et interdit toutes traditions tribales. La devise de Pratt était «kill the indian and save the man.» (tuer l'indien et sauver l'homme)

en six volumes sur les pensionnats autochtones. Les commissaires ont parcouru le pays pendant six ans pour enquêter sur ces établissements, financés par le gouvernement, qui ont fonctionné pendant plus de cent vingt ans au Canada. :« L'agression contre l'identité autochtone commence (...) à partir du moment où l'enfant franchit le seuil de la porte : on leur coupe les tresses, on leur donne un uniforme scolaire en échange de leurs vêtements traditionnels fabriqués à la main, on remplace leur nom autochtone par un nom euro-canadien et un numéro », affirme le document.

Rien d'Indien ne doit subsister en eux ; « kill the Indian, save the man » (tuer l'Indien, sauver l'homme) est le mot d'ordre de l'époque. « C'est une politique qui promeut l'assimilation de manière cruelle, puisque l'on juge que l'on ne peut pas intégrer les Indiens sans les retirer de leur famille et sans couper la transmission culturelle identitaire entre les parents et les enfants », explique Denys Delâge, historien et sociologue professeur associé à l'université de Laval.

LA CONQUÊTE DU TERRITOIRE

Jusqu'au XIXe siècle au Canada, les Indiens sont les alliés des colons. Ils les aident à dompter une terre inconnue et revêche pendant deux siècles et deviennent leurs

partenaires commerciaux. Marie-Pierre Bousquet, anthropologue professeur agrégée à l'université de Montréal, résume ainsi : « À l'époque, la traite des fourrures reposait entièrement sur les Amérindiens. On ne peut pas dire que l'on avait essayé de les intégrer avant pour la simple et bonne raison que l'on ne pouvait pas se le permettre. » Mais cette activité est ensuite abandonnée au profit du défrichage des terres. Il faut désormais exproprier les Indiens pour permettre aux nouveaux arrivants en provenance d'Europe d'accéder à leurs ressources naturelles et de développer l'agriculture. Alors, en 1844, une commission royale sur les peuples autochtones se réunit, la commission Bagot. L'objectif est double : intégrer les Indiens à la nation canadienne et mettre la main sur leurs terres, afin de former un pays uni et prospère.

Le processus d'assimilation des Indiens suit l'idée selon laquelle « plus on les prend tôt et plus il y a de chances de les récupérer. Il faut donc imaginer les éduquer dès le plus jeune âge. Le moyen le plus sûr est de les enlever à leurs parents : s'ils sont éduqués par des Blancs, ils vont devenir comme des Blancs », explique Marie-Pierre Bousquet. Les pensionnats concentrent ces objectifs telle une devise, en trois actes : scolariser, évangéliser, assimiler.

DES GÉNÉRATIONS TRAUMATISÉES

L'enseignement est identique à celui des autres écoles canadiennes. Mais pour parler le français ou l'anglais, les élèves sont contraints d'abandonner les langues apprises par leurs ascendants.

Marie-Pierre Bousquet s'est intéressée aux pensionnats autochtones par hasard. Lorsqu'elle arrive dans la communauté au sujet de laquelle elle réalisera sa thèse de doctorat, un ancien prêtre vient d'être reconnu coupable de pédophilie ; il enseignait en école résidentielle. « Pour eux, il y a eu un avant et un après cette condamnation », explique-t-elle en racontant comment elle s'est « pris ces récits en pleine gueule ».

Des cas de maltraitance sont connus dès les années 1930. Les enfants, loin de leurs familles, vivent isolés, et les agressions sexuelles, travaux forcés, punitions barbares et humiliantes demeurent tues. Les visites des parents sont découragées et, lorsqu'elles ont lieu, se déroulent en parloir, sous surveillance. Surpopulation, insalubrité ou de maladies contagieuses, sur les 150 000 élèves des pensionnats du Canada, 4 000 enfants meurent. Souvent, les parents ne sont pas avertis de la mort de leur enfant ; si toutefois on les en informe, c'est par une lettre rédigée en

anglais ou en français, des langues qu'ils ne comprennent pas.

« Lorsqu'ils retournent dans leur collectivité d'origine, leur famille et leur culture leur sont devenues étrangères. Ils ont perdu leur langue et on ne leur a pas transmis le savoir-faire leur permettant d'entreprendre des activités économiques traditionnelles, ni ce qu'il fallait pour réussir dans une économie euro-canadienne », avance le rapport de la CVR. Marie-Pierre Bousquet ajoute : « Les pensionnaires n'ayant pas eu de modèle parental, comment auraient-ils pu devenir eux-mêmes parents ? Cela a brisé les parents, les enfants mais aussi les futurs petits-enfants, qui ont vécu le traumatisme par ricochet. Ils avaient des parents qui ne savaient pas se comporter en parents. »

UNE « POLITIQUE D'APARTHEID » TOUJOURS D'ACTUALITÉ

Cependant, les pensionnats ne furent pas une tragédie pour tous les Indiens. Pour certains, l'apprentissage de force d'une culture euro-centrée a constitué le meilleur moyen de le dénoncer. Les écoles résidentielles ont créé une élite pan-indienne, capable de comprendre la langue des colons et de prendre la parole publiquement face à eux. Phil Fontaine en est l'un des meilleurs exemples. Après

sept années passées dans le pensionnat de Fort Alexander, au Manitoba, il est l'un des premiers, en 1990, à dénoncer les violences qu'il a subies. Il ouvre la voie, et devient chef de l'Assemblée des Premières nations ; un mandat qu'il exerce encore aujourd'hui, dix-huit ans après son élection.

Un succès parmi des milliers de destins meurtris, pour lesquels le gouvernement canadien s'est engagé, en 2008, à offrir une réparation financière. Au total, 2 milliards de dollars ont été promis aux anciens élèves, au prorata de leur nombre d'années passées en pensionnat. Par ailleurs, d'importantes sommes ont été versées pour payer des thérapies collectives. La drogue, l'alcoolisme et la violence sont en effet monnaie courante dans les réserves autochtones du Canada. D'après Denys Delâge, les causes de ces comportements ne sont pas seulement anciennes : « Les difficultés des Indiens relèvent moins des pensionnats que de la politique d'apartheid qui a encore cours et consiste à déposséder des Indiens, à les enfermer dans des réserves, puis les entretenir de manière misérable. Les compagnies internationales viennent exploiter le minerais à côté de chez eux, ne les embauchent pas et ne leur donnent pas de redevance. » Aujourd'hui, aucun manuel scolaire n'évoque la période des pensionnats autochtones. « On parle des Indiens au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles mais ensuite, ils disparaissent derrière le grand

récit de l'expansion coloniale », se désole l'historien.

PORTRAITS

MIKE NITSIZA^[C], WHATI, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, CANADA

Residential Schools: St. Joseph's Convent,
Fort Resolution
Breynat Hall, Fort Smith
Lapointe Hall, Fort Simpson

In September 1959 a floatplane landed in Whati and a gentleman got off, took our hands and put us on the plane. We didn't know we were leaving, he didn't tell us what it was for or nothing. We thought we were just going for a joyride. There was no chairs so me and my brother sat on the floor. They picked up more kids and took off. We landed near Marian Lake village (near present-day Bechoko, Northwest Territories) and picked up more children. We stopped at a few more places and we landed in Fort Res (Fort Resolution, Northwest Territories) around 10pm. It was dark and they took us to the school. I remember some of the children crying, wanting to go home. Some were crying their hearts out. They gave us a blanket and showed us to a room where we all slept, and I fell asleep. Then the next day

we started school. I wasn't allowed to talk my language. The nuns spoke in English and we would get into trouble if we spoke our language; they would pull my ears or discipline me. I had to get by and just learn their language. I had it better than some students because I was very young when I started school, still pretty much a baby, so they liked me. The nuns taught me English and today I'm happy that I was at least able to learn another language and survive.

I was at St. Joseph's until about Christmas 1959 and then I was moved to Breynat Hall in Fort Smith. I had to adjust to new people and a new building. We all had to get our hair cut and we all looked alike so they gave us a number to tell us apart. My number was 33. All our clothes we wore, our coveralls, everything had that number.

We went to church a lot. On Sunday, we had to dress up in our best clothes and line up and go to church. The food was only good on Sunday, other than that it wasn't that great: potatoes that had been there for quite a long time, all kinds of soup and mixed food that was old. Sometimes we would snare rabbits and they would cook that for us. It was a real treat for us to eat our own food again. When I went home in the summers I struggled because there was no sense of belonging anymore. What happened is after they



took us to residential school, we lost our connection with everything; our creator didn't exist anymore, our language didn't exist anymore. So when we went back to our communities, it was another challenge to be accepted. Our own people wouldn't speak to us and we were rejected.

It was hard to get over that. So many of us had the same experience in residential school. We have all been affected by emotional, physical and spiritual abuse. We were treated like savages. We were treated like we're not human beings. I had some problems with alcohol addiction later in life. I drank heavily – a lot of people [who attended residential school] did to cope with all of these memories.

I remember the day I started to realise I could change. I was at a powwow and I saw a hoop dancer. He was so strong and proud. I thought to myself: "if he can be strong and proud, then so could I". Drinking wasn't who I was so I gave that up. I have struggles and bad memories from time to time, but I talk with my family, go on the land, help elders and live my culture. By reconnecting with my culture, I've been able to change for the better.

***CAMILIA ZOE-CHOCOLATE, BEHCHOKO,
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.***

Residential School

Akaitcho Hall - Yellowknife, NWT

My residential school experience was much different than most of the older generation, mainly because things had changed so much by the time I started school and they weren't run by the church anymore. It was a normal school, like any high school. I did see what residential school did to the people in my family and community though.

My father was the second youngest in his family and all of his brothers and sisters went to residential school. One day in September, my dad was picking berries and he saw an airplane overhead. His older brother came and said: "come, let's go pick berries somewhere else". They walked for a long time and it was starting to get dark. My father wanted to go back home but his brother kept telling him not to worry, that they'd go home soon. They saw some people looking for them, calling out their names but my uncle put his hand over my father's mouth to keep quiet. The people didn't find them and they saw the plane leave. When they went back home they got into a lot of trouble from my grandparents



but I think they were a little bit happy they didn't go. My father never went to residential school – he grew up on the land and became a really good hunter, a good provider.

My mother didn't go to residential school either. She was raised by another family – kind of like a foster family, I guess. It was very common back in the day in our communities for children to be raised by different families, even though their biological parents still lived in town and visited their children. Anyway, my mother was always taken to a more remote place during the fall hunts – they never went where most people hunted. I think they did that on purpose so the children weren't taken away. She grew up living a very traditional lifestyle as well.

But later in life she saw all of the people who did go to school and they had cars and were starting to build new houses. I think she felt like she missed a good opportunity going to school, even though she never knew of the abuse that went on there. She only saw what people had, and that they had better clothes and spoke different languages. She started hanging out with them more and more and started to drink heavily. I remember my parents would argue when my mom came home late at night. It was very scary.

I think because my mother was much younger than my father, that she felt like she missed out on a good life. Residential schools made the more traditional families – the ones who still hunted and got most of their food and clothing from the land – feel like they were not as good as the others. They felt poor for the first time, which made some of them very depressed and resentful.

Residential schools divided many families and communities. We can't be angry anymore. We can't keep drinking our problems away and blaming people. It's not helping us heal. I think we need to heal together and move on from those experiences.

***JOHN DOCTOR, YELLOWKNIFE,
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, CANADA***

Residential Schools: Breynat Hall, Fort Smith, Canada

Fort Smith was a Roman Catholic Indian Residential School, run by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

I remember the first day I went to residential school [in Fort Smith]. I was six-years-old and living at Trout Rock with my parents and brothers and sisters, about 20 miles away from Yellowknife.

A floatplane came one day in early September while I was picking berries and all of these nuns dressed in black robes, wearing crosses around their necks, came off the plane. They told my parents that the children needed to come with them and they told us to get on the plane. They pointed and didn't say what was happening or where I was going. I was all confused. We landed in Fort Smith and had a shower. That was the first shower I had because we used to go swimming all the time [to bathe]. Then they cut my hair short, like in the army. When we started school, we had to wake up every morning at 6am and go to church. Over the years I learned to speak English and French but I lost my language. It took me 30 years to learn my language (Tlicho) again. It took a while. When I went back home [after the school year], I talked to my parents in French.

All the boys had to stay on one side and the girls on the other side. We weren't allowed to speak to them. Me and the boys used to play hockey all the time. Sometimes the nuns would let us set rabbit snares. We would skin them and cook them and made sure everyone got a piece. There was five of us who would wake up early and go to the skating rink and run around in our socks at 40 [degrees] below zero. If you did it, you were the toughest one. When the nuns came, we would pretend we were putting

our skates on to play hockey. Many of the kids there committed suicide from all kinds of physical and sexual abuse. There was one boy named George who sat beside me. He cried and cried and cried. He cried all the time. One day he didn't again.

When I was done with school and finally back on the Barren Lands with my granny, grandpa and my dad, we spent all winter every year out there on the trap line. We built a little cabin and lived on the land. We did everything by hand through hard work.

***ROSA WAH-SHEE, YELLOWKNIFE,
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, CANADA***

Residential Schools:

Breynat Hall – Fort Smith, NWT

Grandin College – Fort Smith, NWT

I ended up at residential school by accident, really. I was living in the village of Fort Rae when I was a little girl. I was the only girl with 10 boys in the family. One morning some of my brothers were packing their suitcases and I was curious about where they were going. They told me they were going to school and I said I was going too. I was alone almost an entire year before the summer and I wanted to be with them.

My parents were not home at the time, they were visiting family not far away,





so I packed a suitcase and followed my brothers to this big bus. I wasn't on the list so my brothers hid me between them and snuck me onto the bus. It was pretty sad when my parents showed up and she was crying outside of the bus and tapping on the window. She told the boys to take good care of me.

From there we went to Yellowknife and boarded a very large airplane – it must have been a Hercules or a DC-3. There were so many other children on it, all of us sitting on the floor. It was very quiet. A few hours later we landed in Fort Smith but I didn't know where I was. I was put in a line and separated from my brothers. I said: "mom told you not to leave me alone, she said you'd look after me." They told me they'd be back soon. From that day forward we weren't allowed to talk to each other. I asked an older girl when we were going home and she said not until next summer. I got really scared because that was a long time to be away from home. That was my first day away from my family.

I remember we had to learn things very quickly and study, study, study. There was no support like tutoring or anything like that. We were forced to learn a new language, a totally new lifestyle and if we didn't we were going to be punished.

So I spent six years at Breynat Hall and six years at Grandin College [an extension of the residential school system for gifted

children from across the Northwest Territories and Northern Alberta]. I didn't want to go to Grandin because all of my friends were at Breynat but the bishop thought I should give it a try. I told him I'd go for one month and if I didn't like it, I wanted to go back to Breynat. He agreed and I actually enjoyed it – it was very different from Breynat, more nurturing and more supportive.

I never forgot how tough it was at Breynat and how we had to learn everything on our own without any help. It was extremely difficult for some more than others. And truthfully, I think it was hardest on our parents. There weren't children in these small communities anymore. Imagine living in a small village with no laughter from children? Many people were used to having big families too, lots of people around and then take all the children away. It was very sad for our elders.

Today I think there is such a generational divide between today's youth, their parents and their grandparents. It's important that we teach our children about residential schools and what it did to our families and communities and not just teach indigenous children, but all children. We also need our government to invest in social programmes and counselling for residential school survivors. We had some very good programmes like that but they were cut. Those programmes were extremely helpful



and important. We need support like that in order to heal.

***NORMAN YAKELEYA, TULITA,
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, CANADA.
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL: GROLLIER HALL,
INUVIK***

Residential school was a bit like being in the military. I remember when I first arrived [at Grollier Hall in Inuvik], we had our heads shaved and we were assigned a number. We had to write that number on all of our clothes, our books, even our toothbrush. We were already put into a pen, so to speak, and branded with that number. For a while we forgot about our names and our parents didn't know why we had numbers all over our clothes when we returned in the summer. They were like: "who is this person"? My number was 296. So that was my introduction into the residential school system.

Because we were young, about six years old, we had older students that were kind of like your guide or commander sort of thing. They would whip you into shape. If you wet your bed, you had to take your blankets and walk down a line and all the boys would laugh at you and heckle you. There was a shaming process that started when we were very young.

I remember that the nuns and supervisors asked students where they were from and treated you good or bad depending on your [racial] background. If you were full blood Indian or Eskimo you were treated pretty good but if you were half-breed or Metis, you were put at the back of the line and got hand-me-downs. Nobody was treated very good, but if you were half-breed, you were treated worse.

We were separated from our brothers and sisters. Because of the Catholic training, the religious training, it was taboo to talk to your sisters. If you did, you got a good willow [hit with a stick]. If you got one of those, you didn't want another one again. We learned pretty fast what not to do.

But there were some things that I really liked too: we played games I'd never heard of like basketball and volleyball; we played hockey and learned how to skate. It was all so new and different from what we were used to. But it wasn't good for many students. If you had sadness or pain you weren't allowed to show those feelings. You weren't allowed to feel. If a supervisor was sexually abusing you, you didn't talk about it. They taught you not to trust yourself.

Many students would shut down. Around 1989, a group of 465 boys stood up for themselves and there was a sexual abuse trial for Grollier Hall – at the time it was the biggest sexual abuse investigation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Canada - against several supervisors that worked there over a twenty-year period. One after the other. And that was the first time we started to break those rules of shame and we started to talk. We started to trust our feelings again. It was powerful and overwhelming.

I think the best way to heal is to move forward as a group of survivors. It is important to teach about residential schools but we cannot let our children dwell on it or be angry about it. Residential school was my experience, not my son's. That is my pain to deal with, not his. We need to move ahead now. We also need our government to lead a territorial or national forum with the churches, educational institutions and the press to create a mission to change our thinking by educating our young people about the residential schools era and the need for world healing from this past experience.





FROM SOUTH TO SOUTH, AFRICANS IN ARGENTINA

TEXT by DESIRÉE JAIMOVICH AND MATÍAS LAMOURET + PHOTOS by HERNÁN MUSZKAT





Over the last ten years there has been an increase in the number of people coming from Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana and the Ivory Coast to Argentina.

Nengumbi Celestin Sukama explains his name means “someone wise and also difficult to dominate”; a name he seems to live up to. He has turned his struggles into challenges that have encouraged him to keep walking, with firm steps, in the hope that his circumstances will get better. Determination seems to pervade his story.

He is 52-years-old and came to Argentina in 1995, escaping political persecution in Congo. At that point Mobutu was in power and Nengumbi was an activist in one of the main opposition parties.

“I left because I had no other choice,” he explains in perfect Spanish. But when he first set foot in Argentina he didn’t speak a word of it. He didn’t know much about the country, other than the fact it was in Latin America.

“It was a last minute decision. The first option was Europe, but the possibility of getting a visa to enter the continent had become too difficult, so, advised by other political members, I decided to try Argentina and permission was issued by the Nigerian Embassy because there was no

Argentinian embassy in Congo,” he points out.

As soon as he got to Buenos Aires, Nengumbi started the paperwork to get refugee status, which he obtained 14 months later. He was one of 303 who, that year, submitted the request in Argentina.

“Argentina is an open country. It has policies that favour immigration and social reinsertion. Besides, over the years, globally, a huge amount of people have been forced to move due to wars and internal conflicts. The number has reached unprecedented high levels. In 2013, 51.2 million people were displaced due to war, and last year, that figure increased to 59.5 million, which represents a dramatic increase,” states José Samaniego, regional representative of the UN refugee agency in Latin South America (UNHCR). It is worth mentioning, though, that in spite of the surge, African refugees still represent a minority in the country.

LEGAL STATUS

The fact that Europe has become less and less welcoming to African migrants and that many nations in Asia are experiencing political unrest, has made Latin America an alternative worth considering. Besides, Argentina is more open than other

countries to immigration and offers facilities to accommodate the process. Faye Modou, 29, from Senegal, agrees it wasn't difficult to obtain legal status as a resident, but he claims he has been discriminated against in various ways. He explains: "I have been told by angry locals to go back to my country many times, and haven't been able to get a good job that is why I work on the streets. Back in Senegal I was about to graduate as a French teacher." Qualified immigrants like him or Nengumbi feel victim of a form of hidden racism that prevent them from truly mingling and growing professionally. Nengumbi recalls: "I studied Spanish for two years and did some courses on accounting to update my knowledge, because I hold a BA in Business Administration, and my intention was to get a job in that field, but it was very difficult to obtain one. The colour of my skin acted as an impediment. That is because black people are still associated with slavery. There were job opportunities, but just to work in construction or to do informal jobs, but I wanted a qualified job".

"I was paid much less than other employees who carried out the same duties. It is been 15 years since I first arrived in the country and I still haven't been able to get a formal job"

At first he started teaching English and Spanish eventually he did get an administrative position in a company, which then closed, but he suffered discrimination when it came to money.

"I was paid much less than other employees who carried out the same duties. It is been 15 years since I first arrived in the country and I still haven't been able to get a formal job," he said.

In order to fight against that covert racism, as well as other forms of discrimination, he founded the Argentine Institute for Equality, Diversity and Integration (IARPI, its acronym in Spanish).

"There should be public policies aimed at fostering integration. Most African immigrants are vulnerable both in the sense that they carry out informal jobs and also in terms of their immigration status, many lack the proper documentation to stay," points out Marcos Peñaloza, lawyer and

legal adviser for the Argentine Catholic Commission for Migration (FCCAM, its acronym in Spanish).

“Argentini­ans think people from Africa can only practice Macumba, dance or do hard work in construction sites”

Baltazar Ackast, president of the NGO Argentina and its African Diaspora describes a similar scenario. He came to Argentina from the Ivory Coast 21 years ago and has endured this kind of discrimination. “Professional and social integration has always been difficult. I felt discriminated against due to the colour of my skin. It was hard to get a room to rent or to be hired by a company. Argentini­ans think people from Africa can only practice Macumba¹, dance or do hard work in construction sites,” he said.

He has now founded his own non-government (NGO) and works independently. He is married to an Argentine, just like Nengumbi. None of them have plans to leave, but for many

others Argentina is just a place to stay for a couple of years to raise money and then move to other countries in the region or eventually return to their home countries.

Such is the case for Sel Gom. He was born in Senegal, is 27-years-old and has been in the country for the last two and a half years. “I came to make some money and help my family who is in my country. I miss everything a lot and would love to return to Senegal as soon as possible,” he claims. Although he says he leads a quiet life, and has had a good experience in Argentina so far, he admits he has to work a lot to barely make ends meet. He has a stand in the street where he sells watches, jewellery and gloves. His shopping spot is in Balvanera, also known as Once, one of the cheapest neighbourhoods to shop in Buenos Aires. It is an area that calls for diversity of all kinds: interests, needs and, of course, nationalities. If there is one place in the capital city of Argentina where you can hear different languages and come across different cultures, it is Once. But, as opposed to what may happen in posh places such as Palermo or Barrio Norte, the area is crowded with travellers and immigrants; not tourists.

1 Voodoo ceremonies.



It is quite usual to see immigrants, mainly from Africa and Latin America, selling all sorts of things in the streets. Only a few metres away from Sel Ngom, Poky Kinmae has his stand. When asked if he would like to be interviewed, he stares in silence and with gestures tries to explain he doesn't speak Spanish or English or French either. He speaks Twi, a dialect used by the Akan group and is spoken in many African countries, such as in his native Ivory Coast. His friend Ywao Thno or Eric, as everyone calls him in Argentina, is also from the Ivory Coast but has a perfect handling of Spanish and offers to act as his translator. Poky, therefore, agrees to talk and moves quietly between the trestles that surround him to have a quiet conversation in a nearby gallery.

He slowly glides along the street crowded with shoppers and vendors. It is not easy to walk up and down Pueyrredón street on a weekday at five in the evening when people are rushing to return to their homes, or to buy that one last item they need to get before the shops close. But Poky does not run. He is not in a hurry. "Not anymore," he says in Twi and with help from Eric says he arrived in Argentina three months ago. Tired of the political turmoil he says his country is constantly in, he decided to hide on a ship in order to go "somewhere". He wasn't it sure where

the vessel was heading, but he jumped onto it to get another opportunity. Even though he believes he made a good choice, he resents having left behind his wife and three children, but he hopes to see them again some time soon. He has started the paperwork to get refugee status and if he is successful he will be able to submit a petition to have his family moved to Argentina as well. "It is not easy but there is some hope," he explains.

Poky prefers not to describe the difficulties he endured in his country. He only nods in silence when asked if he has suffered a lot. His eyes convey all the sadness he refuses to put into words.

"People are free in this country, they come and go as they please and I want that. I miss my kids and wife and hope I can be reunited with them," he says. Although he is happy about that freedom he says he enjoys in Argentina, his days are long and tiresome. He wakes up every day at 6 am and heads to Once where he sells gloves, bracelets and watches. He works around 10 to 12 hours every day, seven days a week. He needs to save money, he explains, and that leaves him with no time to rest. And still, he feels he is free. Or, at least, he believes he has a higher degree of freedom than the one he experienced in his home country.

FORCED TO LEAVE


Ywao or Eric also has a tough story to share. He arrived in Argentina in 2010, when he was 15 years old. “I got into a ship because I had to escape from the civil war my country was immersed in,” he says. Between 2010 and 2011 the Ivory Coast underwent a major internal conflict after the presidential elections were held. He didn’t know where he was going, but knew for sure that he had to leave. Eric says he is happy he can live without major worries, live on his own and earn his own money. “I have been dating an Argentinian girl for the last three years, and last week our first daughter was born,” he tells us.

He misses his country and resents having been forced to leave due to war.

“I remember the beach, the hot weather and the time spent with my brothers and sisters. I miss all that.”







ROHINGYAS: NI TERRE, NI IDENTITÉ

TEXTE par AUDE MASSIOT + PHOTOGRAPHIES par PASCAL VO + ILLUSTRATION par ALEXIS-FRANÇOIS MORAND



En Birmanie, la tragédie du peuple rohingya, « l'une des ethnies les plus persécutées du monde » selon les Nations unies, a ressurgi à la une des journaux en mai dernier, lorsque plusieurs bateaux remplis de milliers de Rohingyas ont été repérés à la dérive près des côtes malaisiennes, abandonnés par leurs passeurs. Les membres de cette minorité musulmane ont été privés de leur nationalité en 1982. Ainsi devenus apatrides, ils sont, depuis 2011, opprimés par les extrémistes bouddhistes à la tête de l'État de Rakhine, au sud-ouest de la Birmanie. Treize personnes rohingyas seulement vivent en France, toutes dans la région parisienne. Rencontre.

HLA AUNG : « JE NE VEUX PAS RESTER RÉFUGIÉ TOUTE MA VIE »

Hla Aung est calme, mais son discours emporté. Assis dans un sombre restaurant bangladais près de la gare du Nord, à Paris, à deux pas du taxiphone dont il est propriétaire, cet homme à l'allure professorale raconte le jour où, il y a vingt-cinq ans de cela, il est devenu ennemi politique du pouvoir birman.

Le 30 mai 1990, après de violentes émeutes, les premières élections législatives depuis 1960 sont organisées en Birmanie. Né rohingya, Hla Aung a la chance de pouvoir aller à l'université, d'où il sort avec un diplôme en Sciences politiques et la volonté de défendre les droits de sa communauté. Lors de ces élections, il se présente en tant que suppléant pour le Parti national démocrate pour les droits de l'Homme (NDPH), un parti œuvrant pour la représentation de la minorité rohingya au Parlement birman. Le parti obtient quatre sièges quand la Ligue nationale pour la démocratie (NLD) d'Aung San Suu Kyi, la « Dame de Rangoun », en remporte 81 %. Mais la junte militaire refuse de quitter le pouvoir et empêche l'Assemblée élue de siéger.

Quelques semaines plus tard, Hla apprend que la victoire de son parti est invalidée par les autorités. Ils auraient dépassé la limite des dépenses de campagne autorisées. « Il n'existait aucune limite de la sorte en Birmanie, explique Hla. Nous étions un petit parti. Cela n'avait aucun sens. » Le voilà donc appelé à comparaître devant la Cour suprême, au début de l'année 1992. Après un procès fantoche, Hla attendra le verdict de la Cour suprême pendant sept ans durant lesquels il lui est interdit de quitter la capitale et de voir sa femme et sa fille, alors âgée de 2 ans.



Au cours de ces années, les exactions contre les Rohingyas s'intensifient. Et depuis 2000, les membres du NDPH sont pourchassés, torturés, certains, tués. « Les membres du parti élus au Parlement ont été condamnés à quarante-sept ans de prison, et leur famille à dix-sept ans », indique Hla, en baissant les yeux vers la table. « C'est alors que j'ai décidé de fuir. »

En France depuis quatorze ans, il est le témoin impuissant des exactions que subissent les Rohingyas : viols, stérilisations forcées, tortures sexuelles, destruction de villages, esclavagisme, pogroms et arrestations arbitraires. Alors Hla milite, dialogue avec les responsables politiques chargés des relations avec l'Asie. Mais cela ne lui suffit pas. « Je ne veux pas rester réfugié toute ma vie. Je veux faire quelque chose pour aider mon peuple, pour développer l'éducation là-bas, dit-il. Avant je fermais les yeux sur un possible retour. Maintenant, je veux rentrer et vivre avec ma famille. »

AMIR HAMZA : « NOUS VIVONS DANS UNE PRISON À CIEL OUVERT »

Veste en cuir sur les épaules, les cheveux noirs coupés courts, Amir a le regard timide. À 23 ans, le jeune Rohingya est un enfant des camps de réfugiés. Le 14 février 1992, sa mère, enceinte de huit

mois, avec son mari et ses deux enfants l'État birman d'Arakan pour le Bangladesh voisin, musulman. Né ce jour-là, Amir est donc immédiatement enregistré comme réfugié par l'ONU. Ce sont, encore aujourd'hui, ses seuls semblants de papiers d'identité. Lui et sa famille resteront trois ans dans le camp de réfugiés où il vu le jour, avant d'être transférés par les autorités bangladaises dans le camp de Kutupalong, un camp géant réservé aux Rohingyas.

Depuis une dizaine d'années, la politique du Bangladesh envers les Rohingyas s'est durcie, encourageant le racisme antirohingyas dans le pays. Amir a subi des discriminations pendant toute son enfance, balloté de part et d'autre de cette frontière poreuse.

Rejetés des camps officiels, ses parents trouvent, en 2002, un petit village d'illégaux, comme eux, au milieu de la forêt bangladaise. Un soir, alors qu'elle marche le long d'une route, la sœur d'Amir, alors âgée de 22 ans, se fait interpeller par des membres d'un gang qui lui demandent de venir avec eux. Ses parents écrivent une lettre aux anciens du village pour se plaindre. En représailles, le jour même, huit hommes kidnappent la jeune fille, la violent, et la laissent inconsciente dans la forêt. « Comme nous n'avions pas de papiers, elle n'a pas pu recevoir de soins

FLASH INFO

**LES ROHINGYAS SONT
LE PEUPLE LE PLUS
PERSECUTE SELON L'ONU.**

BIRMANIE

#Silence on Tue

médicaux, raconte Amir. Les anciens nous ont ensuite demandé de quitter le village. »

Quelques mois plus tard, la famille d'Amir est arrêtée et envoyée dans le camp de Lada, du côté bangladais. « Une prison à ciel ouvert », selon le jeune homme. Seuls quelques téléphones portables circulent et permettent aujourd'hui à Amir d'avoir des nouvelles de sa famille, restée là-bas. « Il n'y a pas l'eau courante, le réseau électrique y est précaire, décrit Amir. Ma famille y vit dans une cabane faite de bois et de plastique. Et aucune ONG n'est autorisée à apporter de l'aide aux habitants. » Des gangs y font la loi, les jeunes hommes en âge de les concurrencer sont tués. Le 5 février 2012 (Amir indique la date sans la moindre hésitation), sa famille, aidée par un oncle en Birmanie, décide de lui faire quitter le pays. À l'aide d'un passeur et de l'équivalent de 3 000 euros, il passe en Inde, puis en Italie avant d'arriver à Paris, où il vit depuis trois ans, attendant toujours d'obtenir le statut de réfugié.

HAROON YOUSUF : « NOUS SOMMES PERSÉCUTÉS PARTOUT »

Haroon est en colère. En colère contre la communauté internationale qui ne fait pas assez pour combattre le régime de Rangoun. En colère contre la junte militaire au pouvoir en Birmanie. En colère surtout

contre les bouddhistes de l'État de Rakhine qui continuent à persécuter impunément les Rohingyas. « Être rohingya, c'est n'avoir ni maison, ni terre, ni identité », lance cet homme âgé de 36 ans. « Nous sommes persécutés partout. » Avant d'arriver en France, il a vécu en Arabie Saoudite et au Pakistan.

En 1988, lassé d'être la victime récurrente des passages à tabac, son père décide de quitter la Birmanie avec sa famille. L'homme s'était rendu coupable de transmettre, quelques années durant, un enseignement basique aux membres de sa communauté. Une initiative qui n'était pas du goût des autorités. À plusieurs reprises, il a été arrêté et battu par les milices locales.

Comme son père, diplômé de l'université de Rangoun, Haroon est instruit. Et, comme son père, passionné par la cause des Rohingyas. Il déplore d'une voix forte le fait que « la Birmanie [soit] une usine à réfugiés. Dans les camps gigantesques de l'État d'Arakan, les gens vivent même mieux que dans les villages. Là-bas on les tue comme s'ils ne valaient pas mieux que des animaux. »

Arrivé en France le 20 décembre 2013, il obtient par l'Ofpra un statut de réfugié en moins d'un an. C'est en effet le seul État qui délivre aussi rapidement des papiers aux



Rohingyas, reconnaissant les persécutions dont ils sont victimes. En Arabie Saoudite, Haroon avait essayé d'obtenir des papiers pour la Norvège, où résident des membres de sa famille. Les autorités lui avaient alors recommandé de se tourner vers la France, arguant qu'il y recevrait une meilleure protection. C'est ainsi qu'il s'installe, avec sa femme et ses deux enfants, dans ce pays où il ne connaît personne et dont il ne parle pas la langue. Pendant les premiers mois, il cherche d'autres « frères rohingyas » et rencontre Hla Aung, membre pivot de la communauté. « J'ai alors décidé d'aider mon peuple, avec les moyens que j'avais », indique-t-il. Depuis Paris, il s'informe et milite contre les persécutions que subissent ses compatriotes en Birmanie, mais surtout, il aide ceux qui, comme Amir, ne parlent pas assez bien anglais pour expliquer leur situation à l'Ofpra¹.

SAYED NOOR : « J'AI GRANDI DANS LES CAMPS DE RÉFUGIÉS »

« J'ai été battu par le gouvernement bangladais, persécuté des deux côtés de la frontière », lâche Sayed, 31 ans. « De 1992 à 2013, j'ai grandi dans les camps de réfugiés. » Trimballé avec sa famille d'un camp à l'autre par les autorités locales, il a été pris en charge par le Haut Commissariat

aux réfugiés des Nations unies (HCR), et installé dans le camp onusien de Kutupalong, réservé aux Rohingyas. « Nous vivions dans des conditions très difficiles, nous n'avions même pas le droit à une quelconque éducation », interpelle Sayed.

Il faudra attendre 2002 pour que le HCR mette en place à Kutupalong des séances éducatives de base pour les mineurs. Sayed a 18 ans, il y apprend l'anglais. Un apprentissage qui lui coûtera cher car il lui permettra de dénoncer les conditions de vie et les persécutions que subissent les Rohingyas dans le camp aux agents du HCR. Sayed sera, pour cela, arrêté et torturé à deux reprises, avant d'être de nouveau menacé par des membres du Comité de rapatriement des réfugiés rohingyas (RRRC), une organisation officielle bangladaise dont l'objectif est d'organiser le renvoi de nombreux réfugiés en Birmanie.

Malgré l'enregistrement de sa plainte auprès du HCR, les menaces continuent. Craignant pour sa vie, Sayed décide de quitter le pays, grâce aux passeurs qui l'ont fait entrer en Inde. Pour 5 000 euros, en passant par la Turquie et la Slovénie, Sayed arrive en France en février 2013. Il raconte qu'on lui demande souvent pourquoi il n'est pas venu avec sa famille, avant de s'emporter : « Mais tout simplement parce

¹ Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides.



que nous n'avions pas assez d'argent ! Sinon, bien sûr que j'aurais amené mes frères et mes parents avec moi ! » Il obtient le statut de réfugié en décembre de la même année, et travaille maintenant dans un restaurant français en région parisienne. Ouvrant fièrement son portefeuille, il en sort la photo de la carte d'identité de son père” ; “vestige d'une époque où les Rohingyas n'étaient pas encore les parias de la Birmanie, un papier qu'il ne verra lui-même vraisemblablement jamais portant l'inscription de son propre nom parce que, tel qu'il le dit : « En France, je suis très bien. »

BEXIGA: UN LIEU DE RÉSISTANCE

TEXTE par ADELINE HAVERLAND + PHOTOGRAPHIES par LUCAS LIMA











Un pull bleu turquoise sur une chemise azur, un collier de coquillages bénis autour du cou ; devant le siège de Vai-Vai, la principale école de samba de São Paulo, Ricardo Rocha Santos termine de se vêtir avec précaution. « Je suis né dans la rue Santo-Antonio, dans le bas du quartier de Bexiga, juste au-dessus de l'ancien marché d'esclaves d'Anhangabaú », raconte cet Afro-Brésilien alors qu'il se prépare à rejoindre la foule venue assister à la samba de rue du vendredi soir.

À le voir déambuler au milieu des passants, avec son regard tendre et un sourire séducteur qui illumine sa peau noir cuivré, on a peine à croire que cet ancien danseur de jazz, passé par New York, Tokyo et Paris, vive aujourd'hui dans un terrain vague derrière les locaux de Vai-Vai. De sa vie actuelle, Ricardo parle peu. De sa descente aux enfers, il ne donne aucun élément, préférant s'attarder à nous raconter ce qu'il décrit comme *the village* brésilien.

« Ce quartier, c'est un résumé de l'histoire du Brésil », annonce-t-il en souriant. Dans un éclat de rire, il poursuit : « C'est comme la recette d'un gâteau. On y a jeté des descendants d'esclaves, ajouté un peu d'Européens, des Italiens et quelques Portugais, et saupoudré d'immigrants du Nordeste... Avec le temps, on a mélangé et

la pâte est devenue homogène. » L'avantage de cette recette, c'est qu'elle est impossible à oublier, puisque l'on en retrouve les ingrédients jusque dans le nom des rues. Ainsi la paroisse catholique de l'Archiropita est-elle localisée sur la rue du 13-Mai, date de l'abolition de l'esclavage au Brésil ; en remontant, on débouche sur la rue des Anglais, qui croise celle des Français en direction de la place des Hollandais, avant de redescendre vers la rue de l'Abolition.

Ici, jusque dans les années 1920, la majorité de la population est composée des descendants de la traite négrière, qui furent libérés en 1888. Située au-dessus du marché d'esclaves, où plus de la moitié des 630 000 Africains envoyés au Brésil étaient vendus, au pied des nouvelles zones riches de la ville où les emplois de domestiques sont accessibles, Bexiga devient rapidement un quilombo¹. Puis, dans les années 1930, la tendance s'inverse avec l'arrivée des Italiens, et le quilombo se transforme en petite Italie.

Dans un nouvel éclat de rire, Ricardo raconte comment, pendant la crise de 1929, les Italiens arrivèrent dans Bexiga : « La rumeur circulait entre eux que l'eau de la rivière du quartier permettait de guérir

1 Au Brésil, le quilombo désigne les villages et communautés formés par les esclaves en fuite dans les régions reculées à l'intérieur des terres.

les maladies de peau. Les premiers arrivés envoyaient l'information aux suivants, et sans s'en douter, les familles se regroupaient dans cet ancien refuge d'esclaves. »

«La vie du Noir brésilien n'est qu'un tissu d'humiliations.»

Une histoire qui fait aussi sourire Namur, un descendant de Napolitains, fondateur du groupe Madeira de Lei, qui diffuse tous les vendredis des airs de samba dans la rue : « Les vertus du Rio Saracura font partie de la légende. La vérité, c'est que les Italiens, en arrivant d'Europe, avaient de l'argent à investir. À Bexiga, ils trouvaient des anciens esclaves prêts à travailler pour presque rien. » Moins idéaliste que Ricardo, il continue : « Derrière l'histoire idyllique de l'entente des communautés, il y a un système de domination. Les Italiens se sont installés là où la main d'œuvre était la plus docile et la plus rentable. Ils ont occupé le haut du quartier, dans la partie la plus noble, pour laisser les Noirs en bas, au pied du fleuve, dans la région humide où les maladies se propagent beaucoup plus facilement. »

Derrière la vision édulcorée de Ricardo, on retrouverait ainsi dans l'histoire de Bexiga les logiques du « racisme cordial » qui sévit encore au Brésil. L'expression, popularisée par la journaliste brésilienne Cleusa Turra, décrit un racisme poli, sans violence directe, mais ancré dans les mentalités. Une hypocrisie que dénonçait aussi le dramaturge Nelson Rodrigues dans les années 1980 : « Nous ne pourchassons pas les Noirs à coups de bâton au beau milieu de la rue comme aux États-Unis, mais ce que nous faisons est peut-être pire. La vie du Noir brésilien n'est qu'un tissu d'humiliations. Nous le traitons avec une cordialité qui n'est que le lâche déguisement d'un mépris qui fermente en nous, jour et nuit. »

«Bexiga, à l'image de la métropole pauliste, a été totalement désafricanisée et nous en avons fait un quartier idéalement italien.»

Ricardo, pourtant si enthousiaste en parlant de son quartier, reconnaît que la recette Bexiga a parfois un goût amer : « Mon portugais a toujours été considéré trop bon

pour être parlé par un Afro-descendant. J'ai beau venir d'une famille de classe moyenne, mon vocabulaire a toujours surpris. »

À Bexiga comme ailleurs, le racisme cordial est structurel. Pour Marcio Sampaio de Castro, auteur de l'ouvrage *Bexiga, l'Afro-Italienne*², il s'agit aussi d'un racisme institutionnalisé. Alors que, au début du xxe siècle, tous les journaux décrivent le quartier comme un « morceau d'Afrique au Brésil », les autorités ont cherché, selon l'auteur, à « effacer les traces de l'histoire noire ». L'arrivée des Italiens s'est accompagnée d'un discours moderniste : les Européens travailleurs et civilisés contre les Noirs sauvages et fainéants. Pour Marcio Sampaio de Castro, ce qui s'est passé dans Bexiga s'est reproduit dans l'ensemble de la ville. Alors que São Paulo accueille la plus grande communauté d'Afro-Brésiens du pays (en nombre absolu), elle se vit avant tout comme une ville de descendants d'Européens. « Bexiga, à l'image de la métropole pauliste, a été totalement désafricanisée et nous en avons fait un quartier idéalement italien », insiste Marcio Sampaio de Castro.

2 *Bexiga: um bairro afro-italiano* de Márcio Sampaio de Castro. Editions Anna Blume

En passant devant le terreiro³ du Candomblé⁴ du père Francisco, Ricardo se rappelle comment, jusque dans les années 1980, aucune référence aux quilombos n'était tolérée. Le père Francisco est arrivé à Bexiga en 1982. Dans le lieu de culte, situé derrière l'école de samba, le représentant de la principale religion afro-brésilienne a été accueilli avec méfiance : « On venait casser mes vitres, crever les pneus de ma voiture. Je rencontrais les gens dans la rue qui me disaient : « On ne veut pas que ça devienne de nouveau un refuge d'esclaves. » » Le religieux s'enorgueillit alors : « C'est sans compter que Bexiga est un lieu de résistance. » Avec l'aide du père Toni de l'Archiropita, le père Francisco a fondé la pastorale afro de Bexiga. « Nous nous sommes battus pour faire accepter l'africanité du quartier, pour que la mémoire du quilombo continue d'être vivante.

Après l'abolition de l'esclavage, le Brésil s'est réinventé une histoire en remplaçant le concept de « suprématie raciale »

3 Un terreiro de candomblé est le terme généralement utilisé pour désigner les lieux de culte du candomblé. En même temps qu'un lieu de culte, c'est un groupement social au travers duquel se transmettent les traditions africaines

4 *Candomblé* est le terme utilisé dans l'État de Bahia, au nord-est du Brésil, pour désigner les groupes religieux présentant un ensemble de pratiques rituelles originaires d'Afrique de l'Ouest.

par celui de « démocratie raciale ». En suggérant un métissage calme et fraternel entre les Blancs, les Noirs et les Indiens, l'oppression raciale existante s'est cimentée et l'inégalité sociale maintenue. Au nom de cette idéologie, on laisse croire que, depuis la Loi Auréa qui abolit la traite des Noirs, tous les problèmes sont résolus. « C'est oublier que plus des trois quarts de l'histoire du Brésil se sont déroulés sous le régime de l'esclavage. Vouloir effacer cette partie de l'histoire, c'est prendre le risque de minimiser les conséquences du racisme dans le pays », précise Douglas Belchior, un membre du mouvement noir de São Paulo. Dans Bexiga, la lutte se focalise désormais autour de l'école de samba. Menacée d'expulsion par l'arrivée de la nouvelle ligne 8 du métro, le siège de l'école pourrait être déplacé vers le centre de la métropole. Ricardo risque non seulement de perdre son domicile, mais c'est aussi un « autre élément de la présence afro-brésilienne dans le quartier qui menace d'être effacé ». Pour Ricardo, l'enjeu est grand.

UN MIGRANT, UNE VIE

TEXTE et PHOTOGRAPHIES par MARC BUONOMO + ILLUSTRATIONS par HAMED ZAHED



Hier, ils étaient grecs et s'appelaient Michel, Kyriakos, Nicolas, Athanase, Évangélie, Basile. Aujourd'hui ils sont syriens, irakiens, palestiniens, pakistanais, et s'appellent Marwan, Ali, Mahdi, Kader, Toufik.

Tous ont quitté la côte turque, depuis la région d'Ayvalik, de Pergamo (Bergama), de l'ancienne Phocée (Foca), d'Izmir (Smyrne)... Tous, ou presque, ont pu rejoindre l'île de Lesbos, quelque part sur les façades Nord et Orientale, aux regards des côtes turques.

La « catastrophe de Smyrne », comme disent les Grecs pour parler du terrible incendie déclenché en septembre 1922, est un événement important de la seconde guerre gréco-turque. La ville portuaire de Smyrne fut partiellement détruite et l'on estime que plusieurs milliers de personnes ont péri.

Comment qualifiera-t-on les guerres d'aujourd'hui ? Ces guerres qui dévastent le Proche-Orient, l'Irak et la Syrie, la Palestine depuis longtemps, la Libye, et au-delà, le Pakistan, l'Afghanistan. Ces conflits aux causes multiples et aux intérêts parfois troubles des nations « extérieures », européennes et nord-américaines ?

GUERRES DE MIGRATIONS

Mi-juin 2015, Skala Sikaminéas, sur la côte Nord de Lesbos. Je m'arrête devant un groupe de personnes qui se reposent un peu, à l'ombre, sur le bord de la route, à 2 kilomètres à peine de leur Zodiac abandonné après leur récent débarquement. Assis pour la plupart, adossés à quelques véhicules garés là, ils semblent rêvasser, attendre, laisser le temps s'écouler, paisiblement. Les regards se lèvent doucement lorsque je m'approche, dans un mélange d'étonnement, d'interrogation, d'inquiétude, mais aussi de sourires. Je m'adresse au groupe en anglais, en français et en arabe, une langue apprise au Maroc et dont il me reste quelques rudiments. Ces mots en arabe, qui sont des mots de bienvenue et de salutation, provoquent une évidente détente : les sourires s'élargissent et les bouches s'ouvrent pour commenter ou me répondre. On me demande d'où je viens, qui je suis, on s'intéresse à moi, avec curiosité, et comme je suis moi aussi curieux, un dialogue se noue. Dans ce groupe, les hommes, femmes et enfants viennent essentiellement de Syrie. Ils sont originaires de trois villages voisins, ils sont amis ou parents.





Un homme est blessé ; son pied est cassé, très enflé en tout cas. Une femme est assise, visiblement triste et fatiguée, enceinte de huit mois. Les femmes de ce groupe, et celles aperçues tout au long de la route, sont plus réservées qu'elle, elles ont des visages plus fermés, tristes et fatalistes. Les hommes sont plus joyeux, apparemment heureux d'être là en Grèce, à vivre leurs premiers instants européens pleins de promesses.

«J'observe cette femme enceinte. Je songe à ma grand-mère Évangélie.»

En mai 1914, la tension est vive sur la côte turque d'Asie Mineure. La communauté grecque se prépare à un exode. Mes arrières grands-parents, Constantin Nicodimos et Christiane Xiotélis, décident de quitter leur village. Un chariot, tiré par des bœufs, les conduit de Pergamo vers le port le plus proche. Les soubresauts sont brusques et fréquents, et ma grand-mère naît en exode, le 27 mai. Un bateau les emmènera vers la France, en Camargue, où Constantin travaillera dans une usine de munitions. Les deux frères de ma grand-mère naîtront plus tard ; Athanase à Arles, en 1917, avant que mes arrière-grands-parents ne décident finalement de

retourner s'installer sur leurs terres turques natales.

Qui sera cet enfant qui va naître bientôt, ici, quelque part peut-être sur la route entre Skala Sikaminéas et le port de Mytilène? À moins que ce ne soit dans le camp de réfugiés de Moria ? Cette femme enceinte épuisée baisse les yeux, loin d'imaginer les pensées qui me traversent l'esprit.

Un enfant né sur la route de l'exode, au sens propre car la loi grecque interdit à quiconque de venir en aide à ces réfugiés. Sous peine d'une amende conséquente de 2 000 euros, il est interdit de les aider en les véhiculant. Ils ne peuvent pas non plus prendre de bus ni de taxi. Leur seule issue est la marche à pied, une trentaine de kilomètres encore, après les centaines déjà parcourus en Syrie et en Turquie, et avant la traversée en bateau pour Athènes puis, pour certains d'entre eux, d'autres longues marches vers d'autres pays européens.

Cette interdiction relève principalement du souci déclaré par les autorités grecques d'éviter que la population ne leur extorque encore quelques billets, à l'instar des passeurs turcs. Pour ce trajet en Zodiac, chacun a dû déboursier environ 1 000 dollars, y compris les enfants, mais aussi cet enfant à naître.

Discuter avec eux, impuissant à les aider concrètement, est une situation étrange. Eux-mêmes ont été informés par les passeurs turcs qu'ils devraient se débrouiller seuls, que les Grecs ne pouvaient rien faire et qu'ils risqueraient l'expulsion s'ils se comportaient autrement. Et l'on voit en effet quelques personnes se baigner, vivre leur vie habituelle de villageois ou de vacanciers, à côté du ballet incessant des Zodiac qui débarquent leurs passagers équipés de gilets de sauvetage. La plage en est jonchée : de toutes les couleurs, en tas, rangés soigneusement et abandonnés par les migrants, de même des carcasses de bateaux, dégonflées, ballottées sur les galets. Les moteurs ont disparu, les planches de fond aussi : sur la côte, des vans attendent ces frêles embarcations et récupèrent immédiatement les moteurs de mauvaise qualité et les planches ; la police regarde ailleurs. Ces Zodiac sont fabriqués hâtivement dans des usines turques. Ils sont conçus pour une unique navigation de quelques heures, avec un moteur poussif. Pendant que je discute avec ces Syriens à peine débarqués, un autre Zodiac s'approche déjà de la côte. Certains se lèvent et me racontent. Une vedette de police se rapproche du canot, lui tourne autour, puis continue sa route.

Et je repense à ma grand-mère, et à ses parents, Constantin et Christiane, morts de faim quelques années après leur arrivée sur cette île de Lesbos, n'ayant pas réussi à survivre longtemps après un second départ de leurs terres turques, en 1922, lors de la catastrophe de Smyrne. La guerre terminée, ils étaient retournés s'installer sur la côte d'Asie Mineure, dans le village côtier d'Ayvalik, à portée de vue de Lesbos. En 1922, le cauchemar avait recommencé, il avait fallu fuir, sans aucun bien, ni bijou, ni argent. À l'époque, les Turcs coupaient des doigts pour des bagues oubliées. Certains Grecs disent aujourd'hui qu'il y aurait encore des objets précieux cachés quelque part, derrière des pierres de maisons ou au fond des jardins. Évangélie a donc débarqué sur cette île en 1922, à l'âge de 8 ans. Sa mère Christiane avait dit aux militaires turcs qu'elle avait « oublié un enfant dans sa maison ». Ces derniers l'avaient alors laissée repartir brièvement ; elle était revenue en tenant dans ses bras... sa machine à coudre emmaillotée. Christiane avait exposé à son mari que l'avenir était incertain et qu'elle pourrait peut-être gagner quelques sous en cousant. Son fils Athanase, âgé de 5 ans lors de ce départ définitif, est ensuite devenu tailleur à Mytilène. Sa boutique, près du port, s'est transformée en un salon de coiffure après sa mort en 2008.

Athanase fut un ardent militant communiste, emprisonné de longues années de sa vie, envoyé au bagne sur une île déserte.

Parmi ces gens dont je regarde les visages aujourd'hui, lesquels arriveront comme ils le voudraient en Allemagne, en Belgique ou en France ? Lesquels auront des vies toujours plus rudes, jonchées de difficultés insurmontables ? Que deviendront cette mère et son enfant né sur la route ?

Ma grand-mère Évangélie a quitté Mytilène, définitivement, le 2 août 1929, en pleine crise financière mondiale. Dans un musée à Skala Loutra, un village de Lesbos, j'ai retrouvé le document rédigé par les autorités grecques de l'époque, qui annonce le départ de cette jeune fille de 15 ans, pour un mariage arrangé entre familles. Sur le bateau qui l'emmenait à Marseille, il avait fallu l'enfermer dans sa cabine tout le trajet : elle avait été affolée par le discours d'une femme plus âgée qui lui avait expliqué ce qui l'attendait, le mariage et la nuit de noces. Le 17 novembre de la même année, le mariage arrangé eut lieu à Grenoble. À 18 ans, Évangélie avait déjà ses trois enfants.

C'est en 1996 que je suis allé à Mytilène pour la première fois, découvrant sur le port la sculpture en hommage aux femmes

grecques réfugiées, ainsi que la maison d'immigrés où ma grand-mère avait vécu une partie de son enfance. Un quartier avait été construit pour les Grecs chassés d'Asie Mineure. C'est d'une cabine téléphonique en face de sa maison que je l'avais appelée pour lui raconter tout ça. Elle criait et pleurait de joie. Elle est morte dans son lit à 82 ans, deux jours seulement après mon appel depuis son île.

UN MIGRANT, UNE VIE

Quelle sera donc celle de cet enfant à naître ? Celle qu'il construira. Pendant que je cause avec ce groupe, quelques hommes valides sont partis au village voisin chercher à manger. C'est là que je les retrouve. Je leur propose de les ramener en auto, mais ils refusent, poliment, timidement. Je réussis à porter leur réserve d'eau. Revenus parmi leurs proches, ils distribuent la nourriture, chacun sortant sa petite liasse de billets pour partager les frais, et c'est vers moi qu'ils tendent d'abord un paquet de biscuits, et des beaux sourires de partage. Je décline avec une profonde émotion ce geste, qui restera inoubliable. Et je n'oublierai pas non plus la joie intense de ces moments de partage.

« Dans quinze jours comme ça, j'y serai, tu verras, on se verra là-bas. »

Mahdi, plein d'énergie, le regard pétillant, polyglotte, semble orchestrer un peu les choses. Il me raconte les péripéties de leur route, depuis la Syrie. Tous les détails des opérations, la rencontre avec les passeurs turcs, les explications fournies, les consignes de navigation, l'esquive de la police pour s'engager sur les eaux, et l'échange furtif de matériel contre de la nourriture à leur arrivée à Lesbos. Puis il me fait part de son ambition : Bruxelles. Il me promet avec force et en français : « Dans quinze jours comme ça, j'y serai, tu verras, on se verra là-bas. » Il ajoute, pointant un doigt vers le ciel en l'accompagnant d'un regard empli de reproche : « Inch'Allah, mais je ne peux pas parler de lui. »

De l'autre côté de ma famille, mon arrière-grand-père Nicolas Nicodimos avait choisi de rester sur ses terres, au milieu de ses amis, disait-il. Il est mort d'un coup de fusil, pendant qu'il circulait en ville sur son cheval et que tout le reste de la famille fuyait sa femme et ses quatre fils. Son fils aîné, Basile, le frère de mon grand-père,

est arrivé un peu plus tard aux États-Unis. Il avait acheté des billets pour toute la famille, et revenait en Grèce chercher les siens pour s'installer sur la côte Est, y vivre le rêve américain entre New York et Boston. Il est mort juste avant de revenir, à 24 ans, d'une vilaine grippe.

Mon passeport ne sait rien de tout cela. Il m'annonce que je suis français. L'homme en face de moi est né au Maghreb, il a vécu en Syrie, et rêve d'un passeport belge.

Kyriakos, le cadet de Basile, s'était engagé dans l'armée grecque pour résister et reprendre le territoire d'Asie Mineure. Lors de la déroute de 1922, il se trouvait sous le feu nourri des soldats turcs et avait plongé dans la mer Égée, nageant dix-huit heures pour espérer rejoindre Lesbos. Malgré la consigne donnée à l'époque de ne sauver que les enfants, ce jeune adulte fut tout de même repêché par un destroyer français et ramené sain et sauf à Mytilène, d'où il partit pour la France. J'ai côtoyé toute mon enfance ce vieux monsieur digne, au visage buriné, sans savoir son parcours de vie. On m'a même longtemps caché sa mort, un saut du balcon du quatrième étage, à 85 ans.







En 2015, là, sur le port de Mytilène, au bord de la rue qui longe les yachts et les vedettes de l'armée, je le revois en face de moi, assis sur un carton, son frère cadet me tendant un autre morceau de carton pour m'inviter à m'asseoir aussi, à l'ombre d'un palmier coincé derrière les grilles des autorités portuaires.

Toufik et son frère Kader sont palestiniens. Seuls rescapés orphelins d'une famille décimée par les bombardements israéliens,

ils ont quitté Gaza, puis traversé la Syrie. Ils prononcent une seule fois le mot « Daech », à voix basse, en baissant les yeux. Je n'ai aucune envie d'en parler. À voir leurs têtes et leurs yeux humides, je sais que je ne comprendrais pas. Ces deux-là n'ont plus rien, pas même le petit sac à dos qui transporte la vie de nombreux migrants. Leur embarcation a coulé, victime de sa fabrication à l'emporte-pièce, puis un bateau de la marine grecque les a sauvés après quelques heures de nage forcée.

Je leur donne de l'argent pour manger. Ils écrivent leur histoire en arabe sur mon carnet. Je laisse mes coordonnées pour les revoir, les recevoir. Depuis ce jour, je n'ai aucune nouvelle d'eux.

Marwan et Ali sont syriens, un juriste et un économiste. Ils ont leur petit sac à dos, et l'envie d'une vie meilleure, d'une situation à construire, d'une famille, de vivre en paix. Ils me montrent les photos de leur traversée en Zodiac, on les y voit bras levés de joie, arborant de larges sourires. Pendant que l'on fait connaissance, un Grec s'approche du portail de la barrière. Tous les migrants flânant sur le port se précipitent alors, en rangs de deux, respectant déjà les codes d'une autre culture. L'homme sort sa disquette, son poste à souder et répare la barrière. Devant ce symbole de la fermeture de notre vieille Europe face à ces richesses intellectuelles et motivées venues d'ailleurs, nous sourions ensemble, Marwan me montre alors ses papiers. Lui et Ali sont là depuis quelques jours et ont déjà obtenu les documents pour quitter Lesbos cette nuit même. Le soir, à travers le trouble de mon verre d'Ouzo, je regarde le bateau partir.

Ali est, depuis, resté à Athènes. Marwan a rejoint Francfort, après avoir traversé l'Europe dangereuse de la Macédoine et de la Hongrie, à pied. En Macédoine, les migrants sont rackettés pour traverser le pays. En Hongrie, certains sont frappés et expulsés par des habitants excédés de voir passer devant chez eux des personnes aux peaux brunes.

Mon grand-père Michel est arrivé comme ça, un beau jour, à Grenoble, sans trop d'encombres, disait-il avec fatalisme.

Je les croise dans mon esprit. Leurs chevelures se ressemblent, abondantes, pleines de fougue et de vie. Celle de Marwan est encore d'un noir intense, tout aussi noir que l'était le blanc éclatant de celle de Michel. Il est mort lorsque j'avais 11 ans. Il avait ouvert un salon de coiffure dans la rue des Gitans, auxquels il proposait des coupes en échange de mélodies.

Manitas de Plata était un client guitariste régulier. Michel aura vécu avec les gens et les musiques du voyage.

Aux terrasses grecques, on parle de tout cela, impuissants, un café frappé à la main. Chaque migrant suit sa route. Elle est longue, sinueuse.

JULIANA LUNA: CONNECTING ANCIENT AND MODERN

TEXT by SARAN KOLY + PHOTOS by ZACH ALLIA



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She is Brazilian, grew up in Bolivia and Argentina, studied in Italy and called New York home for five years. Eternal wanderer; she has recently discovered her roots in Nigeria. Yemisi is her Yoruba name and she travels the world to share her passion, empowering women through meditation, dance and the art of the African head wrap.

HERITAGE

“I am from Rio de Janeiro. I do hear that question pretty often! Even in my own city. I normally tell people where I am originally from and that I also feel at home in many places! I call myself a nomad spirit.

I am Brazilian. My parents are Brazilian but the great part about being born in Brazil is that you can identify with at least three or four different ethnic groups. We are so mixed. I travelled a lot and my parents too, so I believe they play a big role in my adventure; free spirit life. I have lived in many places, initially because my father, a chemical engineer, travelled a lot, so it was because of his job. But when I grew up it was just the restlessness in me made bigger by my nomadic childhood. Growing up, I was always a foreigner. But I participated

in so much of the culture I was immersed in so it almost felt like I belonged too. This constant duality was hard for me as a kid to process. But I was living it, so it became natural to just adjust. I did struggle a little because society makes us grow up seeing in segments and to me everything was just one thing. People and culture were so seamlessly weaved into my life, I could not tell the difference! Who were they, who was I, who were we?

The south Amerindian community was very present in me. In school, in Bolivia, I remember winning all the folkloric dance contests. Wearing traditional clothes and me, as a Brazilian, winning the competition!

I studied performing arts, so dance was my life! Through it I felt free. I always wanted to encourage freedom. I just wanted people to feel how great it is to experience freedom.

I have never been ashamed of where I come from, but not proud either. The place I come from is very simple in its ways, which is a big part of who I am. But, it hasn't developed at all. Basic sanitation and even pavement structure has not yet arrived. For 29 years I have seen the same picture there: lots of corruption and cartel controlled politics. I don't relate to any of it. It actually makes me sad, as my family still lives there.

But I was born there, so of course it's a part of me.

INTUITION

When one travels a lot, the language spoken is energy. Attitude and style don't mean a thing in many places. Language is key, but what if you don't speak Arabic or French or Spanish? A dance happens in between these energetic interactions, but no one can see it. One has to feel it. I am much open to that kind of interaction. Letting myself be guided by my intuition in places is also something I developed through my nomad adventures. I always find the best restaurants, the best people in town and have the best stories to tell.

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in town, and have the best stories to tell!

BRASIL DNA AFRICA

Brasil DNA Africa is a series of documentaries that trace African heritage amongst Brazilian people. They tested about 150 people from five different states in Brazil, to determine where exactly their roots belong to in Africa.

I was one of the people tested. They randomly found me in the street but I don't believe in coincidences. My DNA results showed Yoruba, Nigeria. They also offered me the chance to go to Nigeria to reconnect with the land of my ancestors. It was an incredible experience. It changed me on so many levels. I come from the tribe that makes the most beautiful head wraps in the world, it's coded in my DNA!

THE MOTHERLAND

I always had a curiosity about Africa. When I visited South Africa in 2013 I met Nelson Mandela and President Obama there. I knew something incredible was awaiting me. Just to be in the presence of global icons, who represent so much for people all over the world. My perspective changed. Meeting the most powerful people of my time, in the continent of Africa, was a big deal for me.



Then my wish to travel and discover more about this huge continent just grew. Since my journey to Nigeria, I feel completely taken care of. Supported. Like my life is being protected and directed by someone who knows better than me. Even when I make mistakes and feel down, something soothing happens and I just rest and understand. I feel old and young at the same time. I feel like there is someone by my side the whole time and I guess they are my ancestors. So, yeah I am both young and old.

PROJECT TRIBE

The idea came from something Vanessa Coore and I were both cultivating on an individual level. I had my head wrap brand and she had her vintage clothing brand. We had this feeling to inspire and empower women through our work. And so we did. And one day, Vanessa sent me an email about a project called Unicorn where a hat with a horn would circulate the world and gather people's messages.

I was enthusiastic but suggested that we change the unicorn thing for something more realistic and offered to merge my crowns with the concept. So we designed everything together and put it out there. We struggled with the name and then suddenly I made a mood board, filled with

images of tribes from all over the world and Project Tribe was born. This would not have been possible if we didn't live in such a globally connected world. What it would take for two people to come together in different continents and create a whole movement that impacts on so many people around the globe, it sounds a little surreal but yes we did it!

NURTURE THE STORY

“I want to create a universal language of empowerment for all the women who wear a head piece.”

I want to keep working with the head wrap as I see it as a symbol of the culture of my ancestors; a bridge between worlds. Something so powerful, that it is capable of transforming lives forever. Start conversations, build relationships, and lead us to recognise ourselves in others. I want to create a universal language of empowerment for all the women who wear a head piece. I want this ancient symbol to represent the power of my ancestors all over the globe. Even if my boat travels across the world...I know I can always return to that shore and take time there to regroup.”

**MOIRA
FORJAZ
“I DON’T
BELONG
ANYWHERE”**

TEXT and PHOTOS by YARA COSTA PEREIRA



Born in 1942 in former Rhodesia she now lives on the Island of Ilha, in Mozambique.

As a fourth generation immigrant can you recall the first move in your family?

From looking at pictures and what I was told, my great-grandfather was born in Mongolia. He was a poor shoemaker who moved to Russia. My grandmother, his daughter, was born in Riga, Lithuania and married a Russian man. Around 1907 they left for a promising new life in Africa and their ship docked in Cape Town, their first stop. After three years, my grandfather died of Blackwater Fever and my grandmother left the area with her three children. They ended up in former Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe.

On my mother's side, her maternal grandparents were Russian immigrants in Ireland and her father also came from who, from the age of 15 travelled and worked all over Europe, finally settling in Ireland where he fell in love with a Irish born woman of Russian descendant. After they got married, they both continued to migrate; first to Leipzig, Germany where they had their first child and around the beginning of the 18th Century they made a

big move and arrived in Zambia. My mother was then born in Southern Rhodesia. So my parents are first generation Africans from European settlers.

I was born during the Second World War in 1942, in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. I lived there until I was 19-years-old and then moved to Johannesburg, South Africa to study art. This was during the apartheid and I was involved in political activism, which determined my path in the following years. In the early 60s I engaged in the political struggle of the region, which took me to Mozambique. This was the Portuguese colonial period in Mozambique and the movements of independence were starting to gain force. As the situation became tense, I decided to abandon the region and moved to London. Soon after my arrival, I gave up my Southern Rhodesian citizenship and applied for asylum in London. By then I had already met my husband-to-be in Mozambique. His parents were Portuguese teachers working in colonial Mozambique and had moved there with their children.

I lived in London from August 1965 to June 1966 and after he came back from the army, I emigrated to Portugal to live with him. After one year of living in Lisbon, we both went to New York so he could do his masters as a Fulbright student for a year. My husband was then offered an

opportunity to take over a prosperous architecture practice in Swaziland and off we went again.

Why Swaziland and why did you move again?

There were two reasons: the interesting job and the fact that Swaziland was about to gain independence and we wanted to be in that new independent country, the first in Southern Africa. Mbabane (the capital of Swaziland) became our home for six years and that is where we had our son.

This was your sixth move. Were you ever tired of moving and thought about settling?

No. Just before Mozambican independence in 1975 we had decided we wanted to move to Brazil. We lived well in Swaziland but the atmosphere became claustrophobic and Brazil seemed like a mixed thriving country, it felt like another place to go. But then the April 25th (1974 Carnation Revolution) happened and the Salazar regime collapsed in Portugal so we decided to go to Mozambique instead.

Did you move to Mozambique for the same political reasons that took you there the first time?

Yes, I was full of hope and believed in utopia so in Mozambique I worked as a photojournalist and was involved in the cinema during the time of the socialist revolution in the country from 1976 to 1986.

But you kept moving, you didn't stay in Mozambique, why?

In August 1986, my husband went on a sabbatical to Italy for a year, so we moved again and in October 1986 Mozambique's president Samora Machel died in a plane crash. I then moved to Portugal so my son could study there.

After so many travels, where is home for you?

I don't belong anywhere in particular. I only belong where I feel organically comfortable. But out of all those countries, Mozambique was the country that I felt I would like to live in. I felt comfortable there, mostly with the people.



You moved quite a lot compared to the average person at that time. What made that possible?

It could be my family history but also I am gypsy in my heart. Look at where I am right now? I am like in a caravan and I move with my things. I have now been living on this tiny island for the past three years but I would leave again if I had to.

Why Ilha (Mozambique) this time?

I had been in Ilha in 1977 and 1983 and this is where I took many photographs that are now part of a photographic book about to be launched on that very important period of my life in Mozambique, which is also an important historical period for the country. At the moment Ilha is my home, in my tiny house with my things but I could be in Santa Fé in New Mexico and feel at home too.

I don't like to feel trapped in any place. I want to be free enough to follow friends or family anywhere. If my son moved to America, I would move there. Because of my family history, I never felt that there was just one way of living, there is always a choice.



TAYO
ROCKSON
“USE YOUR
DIFFERENCE
TO MAKE A
DIFFERENCE”

TEXT by ROXANE CASSEHGARI + PHOTOS by HARUKA SAKAGUCHI

Tayo Rockson is a recent MBA graduate from Fordham University in New York. He is a writer, social entrepreneur and social media genius who could advise you on how to market your next brand. Born in Nigeria, he had already lived in Africa, Europe and Asia before the age of 17. Now, based in New York, Tayo is on a mission to show third culture kids that their differences can make a positive change to this world. He recently launched a digital media platform Use Your Difference (UYD) to enable millennials and third culture kids to interact.

You are a prime example of a third culture kid (TCK). You grew up in five different countries. What is your story?

I was born in Nigeria and since my dad is a diplomat, I started living abroad at an early age. We moved to Sweden when I was one and we lived there for two years. We then moved back to Nigeria where I went to elementary school and spent the most part of my childhood there. When I was a teenager, we left again for Burkina Faso. Although Burkina Faso is a French-speaking country, the middle school I attended was American. This is the first time I was exposed to different cultures

simultaneously and to different accents. My family and I went back to Nigeria before relocating again, this time, to Vietnam. At 17-years-old, I left Hanoi to go to college in Virginia, United States.

Are you often asked where you are from?

Everyone asks me that question all the time. Even in Nigeria, I often hear: “ You don’t look Nigerian, you don’t sound Nigerian, you have an accent, an American accent”. Most people in Nigeria think I am African-American.

What is your typical answer to this question?

My immediate answer is “How much time do you have?” If they do have time, then I tell the whole story. However, if I was to give one simple and short answer: I am from Nigeria. I first and foremost identify as a Nigerian.

Growing up did you ever consider yourself a misfit?

Growing up as a teenager in Burkina Faso, I did not feel that I fitted in so I had to find a way and I found it through sports, mostly playing soccer and basketball. I would study the history of all these sports and search for ways to get involved.







I asked the best basketball player in school to teach me how to play. This is how I got committed and invested in school life. I went back to Nigeria to go to boarding school and this is when people started asking where I came from and if I was Nigerian. Apparently I looked different. I went through an identity crisis.

How did you overcome your identity crisis upon returning to Nigeria as a teenager?

At first I would get mad because I felt my identity was being denied. People would treat me differently and sometimes were even deferential because they thought I was American. I realised that getting mad would not change anything so I had to find ways to come to terms with who I was and that I had several influences.

When I first moved to the US, I again was questioned about my origins. My college mates would think I was African American and once they found out that I was from Nigeria, they would assault me with questions about Africa. I found myself having to teach people that Africa is not like in the Lion King, that we drive cars and also have urbanised cities with buildings and highways.

What prompted you to continue exploring other cultures, travelling and immersing yourself in unknown cultures?

Having to explain constantly where I was from and educating people about Nigeria and Africa made me realise the potential of education. Learning about other countries and cultures is the way to build bridges. In my junior year of college, I also took a trip through Europe and travelled to Rome, Turkey and Greece. I realised that I needed to be in this constant multicultural immersion. I became sure that I wanted a career that would expose me to more multiculturalism and cross-border interactions. It started in college when I had the opportunity to help friends who were creating non-profit organisations. Their goal was to raise awareness on specific issues - HIV, access to education - in African countries. I would help them build their social media campaign to attract publicity.

Why did you decide to come to New York?

My first job out of college was at a software company. It was not what I had aspired to do. My life changed when I nearly died in a car accident. I realised life was too short to sit and wait until I could do what I really wanted to. I quit my job and decided to move to New York and pursue an MBA. I chose New York because it is the land

where dreams are achieved. I was looking for the spark. I was of course inspired by the movies and a romantic notion of the city. I wanted to reach for my dreams. Another life event had to happen before I would fully embark on my mission. During my MBA, I interned at a start-up company and got fired in the middle of my internship. I then decided to change direction and fully commit to defending the values of being multicultural.

How did you decide to embrace your TCK identity and to make it your day-to-day commitment as well as a personal brand?

While I was still working for the software company, my mentor and former boss who had moved to New York invited me to attend an event where Arianna Huffington was speaking. She told the story of how she felt self-conscious about her accent when speaking in English. She tried to change it until people started advising her against it because she would then lose her identity. This was inspirational to me. I related to her story and realised I was not the only one struggling with asserting my identity. This gave me the idea of interacting with TCKs. I contacted Arianna Huffington and told her about my projects and interests. She then made me a contributor to the Huffington Post. Little by little, I made my way into the sphere of social media. My first step was

to create a blog (tayorockson.com) where I would discuss topics that TCK can relate to.

Today, you still have your blog but you also host a podcast and have built a media company, all of which celebrate TCK. You are making TCK identity a social and entrepreneurial mission. How did this come about?

I started by holding Skype conversations with TCKs that I would meet through social media. I would interview them about their stories and pick their brains about what being a TCK is, what the challenges and strengths are. I would record the conversations and turn them into podcasts. This is how “As told by Nomads” came about. Entrepreneurs.com found out about it and ranked my podcast programme the N°2 podcast in 2014. I would never have imagined the podcasts would have so much success and get so many people’s attention. Soon enough, aspiring interviewees would reach out and ask to participate in the programme.

My goal is essentially to target the millennials, which is the most diverse group of all age groups. I want to prove that being from a diverse cultural background, you can use your identity to solve problems in the world. TCKs can solve problems because they can be bridges, educators



and entrepreneurs. “Use your difference to make a difference” became my motto. After I was fired, I decided to fully develop this concept and bought the domain name “Use your Difference” (UYD). UYD gathers a TCK community online that can share and celebrate the values of being a TCK. This is also how I have become an editor-in-chief by accident. TCKs from everywhere will contribute to creating content for the platform and we are determined to post something new every day.

What are the strengths of being a TCK?

The UYD project aims to form and bring forward the next global leaders. TCKs are the most enlightened youth and they can, in turn, build cross-cultural skills. As a TCK, you don’t have to choose, you are a combination of everything. You always have to navigate between different cultures, people, values, understanding and you are skilled at adjusting and reconciling. This also helps you become a natural multi-tasker and avid learner. I know how to do multiple things at the same time and I have used that as an asset in my entrepreneurial initiatives.

What is your message to them?

I have summed up the ideas I want to defend and the TCKs to embody in three letters: DBC.

J’ai résumé tout cela en trois lettres alphabétiques : DBC.

D - defeats the “supposed-to” syndrome. Nothing comes as definite. There is nothing you are pre-determined or supposed to be or do.

B - break down the Berlin Wall. These are the stereotypes you want to take down because they are the worst at understanding different cultures.

C - Connect. Social media is a force in this regard. I have used it as a vector and a powerful tool for TCK culture. Social media is a way to have a voice. TCKs don’t find their place easily so they have to create their own ways, their own platform to be listened to. Most communities are close-knit but TCKs do not have that. Most of the time, their parents do not understand it either. TCKs have to explode the barriers to find their own voice. Being creative is therefore a natural trait.

You just graduated from business school and while studying, you managed to launch UYD and continue your podcast programme. How do you manage your daily schedule?

I do have to wake up very early, 5 or 6 am! I try to release a podcast per day so I have to work on editing an episode. I also schedule the next interview so it keeps on moving. Every day I attend meetings, answer emails and discuss potential partnerships. I like to watch TedxTeen conferences once a day. And, yes, during my MBA, I had to go to night classes to be able to keep up with my schedule.

Classic job interview question: where do you see yourself in five years?

I want to do more multimedia content! I am hoping to become a staff contributor for the Huffington Post and at some point, a Tedx speaker. I see myself based in the US and making back and forth trips between the US and Nigeria.

NELLY

BONNEFOY:

“HARLEM

MADE ME A

FIGHTER”

TEXT by ROXANE CASSEHGARI + PHOTOS by HARUKA SAKAGUCHI



Three years ago Nellie Bonnefoy decided to brace herself and take the migration leap. She left Burgundy, France, where she had grown up, to be a teacher in a school in Harlem, New York. Nellie teaches at the New York French American Charter School, the first public bilingual school in New York. Located in Little Senegal, the school community is a vibrant blend of various cultures. Through her students, Nellie learns about Africa, Europe and the United States, sometimes even further afield. She is teaching little citizens of the world and has become one herself.

What was life like for you before arriving in New York?

I come from a small town in Burgundy, France called Paray-le-Monial. I grew up and lived there until I left for university in Lyon. Soon after getting my diploma, I got my first teaching assignment in a small town of France called Nevers. There, I learned to be a teacher, a school director and often a psychosocial worker. I worked very hard and was very dedicated to running the school. This is also the year I decided to leave for New York.

I sent my resume to all the francophone schools in New York. I got a few interviews

and then in June of that same year, the director of the New York French American Charter School (NYFACS) called to offer me a teaching position at the school.

Why did you choose New York?

I had come previously as a tourist with my best friend and somehow I felt at home there. I come from a very small town and I love my region of France but I never saw myself settling there. All my best friends are there but apart from these familiar circles, I never fitted and never found my place. When I got to New York for the first time I felt that I already knew this place. It was really strange but I promised myself I would come back to live there.

Of course, coming to New York seemed impossible. I am a schoolteacher. What would a schoolteacher do in New York? I did not even speak English. I was lucky. I met someone who helped me discover New York and find my way around. This person also reminded me that I was a hard worker and that I could do it as long as I was determined. So I accepted the challenge. I was not very conscious of the risks or the consequences.



You grew up in a very homogenous environment and suddenly you get to New York, a very international, cosmopolitan city. How did you feel acclimatising to this city?

It is exactly like the theory of change: you have the honeymoon phase, the descent to hell and then you start adapting. The honeymoon phase was very short in my case. I got overwhelmed pretty much immediately and the language barrier did not help. I could not make any jokes, be myself. I did not understand anything. It felt like beyond humanly possible at the beginning but I did it.

I will always remember my first teacher-parent meeting. The majority only spoke English. They must have thought that I was dumb. I could not even form a sentence. At the same time, I wanted to appear professional, since I was going to be in charge of their children. That sums up my first year. I felt embarrassed many times but I was never afraid. I would just take the risk and try to make sense in English. My friends helped a lot. They would change the movie language to English without telling me. I started to understand it. No one ever made fun of me. I stayed strong. I learned that the language barrier is only in your head and you must liberate yourself from it. Also, when you smile, everything works, even in

broken English!

You teach in a very multicultural environment. At NYFACS, most kids come from at least one different country. This in itself must have been another process of adaptation?

There are 80 different countries represented at NYFACS. When my French colleagues and I started, we were not welcome. We were five new teachers and a new director: all French and white. Parents thought we were going to turn the school into a French lycée (school) and that we would completely ignore the African culture. I had not anticipated this. I did not even know how multicultural Harlem was. I never expected the school to be the recipient of so many cultures. We had to fight to be accepted. We had to convince parents that our real interest was the kids and that we were there to teach them French but never to represent our own country of France.

I have been at NYFACS for three years. When the director wants to hire a French teacher who did not have any previous contact with African cultures or with an international context, I am reluctant. I now understand parents' reactions when we first arrived. NYFACS is a beautiful project. We are all united around the French language

and we are in the heart of Little Senegal in Harlem. We must value this and preserve it. French culture is also African. We share the same values and yet, we are very different. This is so precious.

You are able to witness firsthand the benefits and richness of multiculturalism. How do you think we should preserve it?

We must preserve it but it is really a fight. It is very complicated for multiculturalism to survive. Think of NYFACS, a French-English-speaking school where Africa meets America. I absolutely understand some African parents' fear of losing control over their children's education and cultural environment. It is normal to be mistrustful. We are fighting for the school to continue every day.

You said you had no idea about the school's cultural diversity when you first started. How did you come to realise it?

Everything started so fast and so intensely that I did not really have the time to take a moment to think about my environment. The cultural immersion happened very naturally. We started realising that during Muslim holidays, many students and colleagues were absent. Then we understood that Muslim is a very important religion in most West African countries.

You start having cultural awakenings like this.

Who is Nellie Bonnefoy today? How has this school made you a different person, adding layers to your own cultural background?

I think I now have a little bit of Senegalese blood. I dance and eat like in Senegal every day. My assistant, who is from Senegal, is my second mother. I am also a bit "Marseillaise" because I have become like a sister to my French colleague. We are from the same country but the culture is very different compared to where I come from. Now I speak some Wolof and some Marseille dialect. That has enriched my identity. I have friends from different places and cultures. We do not always share the same political opinions or values, but I respect all of them and I have opened up my perceptions.

In a way, this mixed identity was already there. This is who I am. I love football but I can also talk about fashion for hours.

Did you then find your home in New York?

Not yet. It (Living in New York) also made me realise that home is my hometown, Paray-le-Monial. This is where I come from.



I think I can say I have several houses: Paray-le-Monial, where my childhood house is; Lyon, where I spent my early twenties; Nevers, where I became an adult and a professional; New York, which made me a citizen of the world and Harlem which made me a fighter and a woman.

What was your biggest struggle adapting?

I realised that the status of women is very different from one country to another. Growing up in France and in an environment where I was free to do whatever I wanted, I took it for granted. Here, at work, I can see it in men's eyes. They treat me differently than my other colleagues who are men or Muslim. I have a lower status. Realising this and finding ways to overcome it was also part of my adaptation to a very culturally diverse environment.

What elements from these different cultures would you want to keep in your own life?

The family values and the role of the community. You do not really find this in France whereas in Harlem, everything revolves around the community. There is a strong community solidarity. In African culture, you are here for each other because you come from the same place.

Sharing is an important thing. Every Friday, at school, we order food, eat and get together around the table. All conflicts and problems are washed away with food. It is interesting because I also experience this solidarity with my own community of French expats. Abroad, we are more united and we help each other out. We build a second family.

I am also much more open to other cultures and religions. I have learned a lot about Islam, Jehovah witnesses, Judaism, Christianity. Every time there is a religious holiday, we talk a lot with the kids. They like to teach their classmates how to pray, how to celebrate their traditions; that brings a lot of mutual respect into the classroom.

These children, who are evolving in a very multicultural environment, are the next generation. You have a direct role since you are part of their education. Has this changed your role as a teacher?

Yes. However, kids are the ones who teach me rather than me teaching me. Young kids have a very pure and unspoiled perception of the world. They do not see the conflicts and problems that can arise from a multicultural environment. They just observe. Some will pray to Jesus, others will pray to Allah. Some will speak French at home, others will speak Wolof and when they talk about it in class they just giggle

and are amused by the differences. But, that is it, there is no further interpretation. It is actually almost like a game. They will ask each other questions and they will say things like: “I am coffee, you are chocolate, I am white.”

I tell them that there are indeed differences but that our hearts beat the same way. When you cut yourself, you bleed the same way. You can be from the same country but not necessarily be the same colour. It does not change anything concerning who we are.

What happens next? Why is there so much conflict around racial and cultural differences?

Unfortunately I witness at school that as they get older, kids start showing signs of intolerance and racial prejudices. Society is what happens. They hear what mom and dad say at home. They watch the news and they see that this man killed black people in a church. It is impossible to escape this, especially in the United States. There is a lot of fear coming from the parents. Imagine coming from a Muslim country and suddenly having to deal with a very sexualised society, where your kids are constantly being exposed to other cultures with different values. How are you going to protect your children and preserve their heritage? It is an issue because at the

same time, they came for a reason: for a better future. This fear leads to them being mistrustful and that creates intolerance, distance and prejudices. We are in a society that is very much controlled by white people and Christianity is dominant. A simple illustration: Muslim holidays are not all observed by the school system while all Christian and Jewish holidays are.

We know the US struggles with great racial divisions but we can admit that so does France. Would you not face the same issues at school there?

Yes, I have seen the same racial tensions happening at school there.

Is it the role of school to correct racial prejudices?

Yes, because it is where society begins. As a teacher, you cannot let anything off the hook. One racial insult and you should immediately call the parents and the school director. There are ways to fight racism at school. You make them write essays about tolerance; you can use arts and activities that can create unity. I use football a lot. I would put kids from different cultural backgrounds in the same team. History is also very important. You have to show kids that history is something we share and that they are also part of it. I would talk about

immigration and tell them that it is also their history. Building a common identity through history is key.

What about Harlem? Since NYFACS is particularly culturally mixed, did you have to find specific methods to prevent racism there?

It is also the parents I have to educate. Last year, we introduced the Inside Out project at the school. It is a project by the French artist, JR. We took pictures of each student in the Kindergarten classes and then sent the pictures to JR's studio to print and they returned them to us in a larger format. We pasted the pictures on the outside walls of the school. All parents and kids were able to see how beautiful and special their kids are. When we asked the children who they thought was the most beautiful, they answered: "everyone, it is us together." Our hope is for the parents to feel the same way. We also organise lunches and we invite parents to bring a meal from their country that we all share. This way, we show we respect everyone and are interested in all cultures. I will also ask parents to assist me in museum visits and other activities. My goal is to demonstrate to parents that you can be an immigrant and that you also have access to culture and good food in this country.

Would you uproot yourself and come to New York, if you had the chance to start again?

I never planned this immersion into such cultural diversity. It just happened to me. But, yes, I would do it again. I am a new Nellie Bonnefoy because of Harlem, because of NYFACS. I am the same person and I am also different. Now, I will always be looking for cultural diversity in my life. This is now for me normality. I would be bored otherwise. This is why I want to travel even more. I want to go to South America. Before this experience, I was not tempted by Africa but today, I would jump on a plane in a second. In fact, I have been in Africa for three years. I am in Harlem but in reality, I am in West Africa and now, I want to actually be there.

**DIANE-AUDREY
NGAKO,
« ON N'EST PAS
DES CARTES
POSTALES »**

TEXTE et PHOTOGRAPHIES par LIZ GOMIS

Pour capter Diane-Audrey Ngako, il faut se lever tôt. Si possible en fin de semaine quand elle vient à bout de ses multiples activités. Diane-Audrey était encore étudiante en stratégie digitale il y a quelques semaines.

Mais du haut de ses 23 ans, la jeune « camer' » affiche un parcours professionnel hors du commun.

À la fois photographe, chef d'entreprise pour son site participatif « Visiter l'Afrique » et sa nouvelle agence de communication « Omenkart » ; elle a rejoint en début d'année, la rédaction de la toute nouvelle section Afrique du journal Le Monde et squatte deux mardis par mois le plateau du *JT Afrique* sur ; elle.

Diane occupe le terrain sur la toile, les salles de conférences et dans notre poste télé. Elle est en mission pour une Afrique inspirante, positive et fière. « J'aspire à inspirer ma génération à croire en son potentiel », aime-t-elle répéter. C'est son crédo, sa ligne de conduite. Et, visiblement, elle y parvient, à en juger par les nombreux commentaires que laissent ses milliers de

followers sur les réseaux sociaux dès lors qu'elle édite une photo ou un message. Elle inspire une génération de rêveurs qui deviendront un jour entrepreneurs et contribueront à développer cette Afrique en laquelle elle croit. Une Afrique en pointe, concurrentielle, maîtresse de son avenir.

C'est dans son appartement qu'elle nous reçoit, près du quartier d'affaires de La Défense. Étonnante coïncidence, pour une *workaholic* de son genre. Un spacieux T1 qui compte plus de tableaux qu'il n'y a de murs pour les accrocher. « J'ai fait de la place », nous avoue-t-elle le sourire aux lèvres. Une sélection de livres d'auteurs et artistes africains, des magazines économiques toujours tournés vers le continent, des bijoux et accessoires que l'on imagine négociés pendant des heures sur les marchés ou glanés lors de ses nombreux aller-retour. Diane-Audrey, elle tient à son prénom composé, respire l'Afrique par tous ses pores.

Elle est née au Cameroun et en est fière. On le devine aux premiers mots qu'elle prononce avec une intonation particulière. Cet accent et ces mimiques qu'elle a importés de Douala dont elle joue et use selon ses interlocuteurs. Elle qui avait pourtant tenté d'étouffer cet accent pour s'intégrer dans son petit village du Loiret.

1 Diminutif pour Camerounais, Camerounaise, citoyen du Cameroun.



« J'ai complètement oublié mon côté noir. C'est horrible. À un moment, j'ai vraiment zappé ma culture africaine et camerounaise, avec une mère qui pourtant parlait le patois à la maison. »

Sa prétendue différence, on la lui notifie tous les jours. Sa couleur de peau, ses coiffures, ses tics de langage. Pas facile pour une adolescente de 12 ans de s'intégrer au collège d'un village qui compte 1 500 habitants. « Tu vois le truc quand tu te lèves en classe et tes camarades font des bruits bizarres. Ce n'est même pas une personne, c'est tout un collège qui te regarde toujours bizarrement. C'est intéressant aujourd'hui de voir d'où je pars pour comprendre où je suis en train d'arriver. » Son chemin, Diane-Audrey continue de le dessiner et en affine les traits chaque jour. « Je crois vraiment au rêve africain. Je veux toujours aller plus loin. Tous mes rêves, j'essaie de les concrétiser, de toucher la chose au plus près.» Et des rêves, elle en a réalisé : en 2009 elle s'envole pour Washington au siège de la Banque Mondiale. Elle réitère l'opération deux ans plus tard pour assister un réalisateur camerounais, Yves Tchouta, basé à Atlanta.

Boostée par les exemples de réussite africains qu'elle côtoie pendant son aventure américaine, Audrey revient en

France persuadée de l'absolue nécessité pour les enfants d'Afrique, diaspora incluse, d'écrire la suite de l'histoire du continent. « Les Africains manquent égo. On ne fait pas un truc parce qu'on veut le faire. On fait parce que l'autre l'a fait... Je trouve qu'en Afrique, nous n'avons pas la notion de "Big Picture". On ne voit pas loin, on voit là. Demain.

Je crois vraiment qu'à un moment, nous Africains devons reprendre les choses en main pour écrire notre "african narrative". Il faut que les africains comprennent que ce sont eux qui doivent écrire leur histoire. Parce que, si tu n'es pas là où tu dois être, quelqu'un d'autre prendra ta place et tu ne pourras pas lui en vouloir... Tant qu'on laissera les médias extérieurs raconter ce qui est censé être notre culture et mettre en avant par la même occasion, leur culture, les gens de chez nous se tourneront toujours vers eux parce que ce sont eux qui ont raison finalement.»

Et, c'est aussi une des missions de « Visiter l'Afrique », ce site qu'elle a créé il y a tout juste un an et qui entend donner une autre image de l'Afrique, loin des poncifs : guerre, famine et peaux de banane. « Visiter l'Afrique contribue aussi à faire prendre conscience qu'on n'est pas des cartes postales... Je veux que les gens aillent en Afrique pour embrasser des cultures. Rencontrer des gens, de personne à personne et pas juste aller

filmer des pygmées comme ce qu'on voit au Cameroun où on pense que c'est normal. » Un projet purement touristique qui a trouvé son écho jusque dans les bureaux de ex-ministre du Tourisme sénégalais Abdoulaye Diouf Sarr ou encore chez la Première dame gabonaise Sylvia Bongo. Diane Audrey, ambassadrice malgré elle, pour l'Afrique, elle y croit et ses *followers* aussi. Sa dernière campagne de financement participatif a réuni plus de 16 000 euros, une somme qui aidera au développement du site et à la création d'un réseau d'ambassadeurs locaux.

Et, c'est dans ce sens qu'elle a décidé de rentrer au pays pour mener ses actions depuis son Cameroun natal. « Le fait d'évoluer dans les médias africains autant que dans les médias français m'a permis de faire le point. Rentrer en Afrique, ce n'est pas facile. J'ai eu cette idée en 2012 et nous sommes en au-delà... Ça va au delà de moi. Je n'y vais pas parce que moi, je veux être en tête... J'adore être à Paris, en France, marcher dans les rues, boire mon petit verre avec mes amis. Mais ce n'est pas ça ma vie. Ce n'est pas la vie à laquelle je suis destinée. Je suis persuadée que j'ai un grand avenir sur le continent mais ça passera par la culture et l'éducation, «Visiter l'Afrique » tient ce rôle.

« Ce site, elle rêve de le voir grandirafricaine incontournable, si ce n'est la plateforme numéro un. Voir grand. Viser la « big picture ». Voir grand, viser la "big picture", Diane-Audrey s'y attèle depuis Douala, avec sa toute jeune agence de communication « Omenkart », spécialisée dans le tourisme - en Afrique bien sûr! De grands rêves sont déjà sur les rails : un Airbnb à l'africaine, des campagnes de publicité qui repenseront le rapport à la ville et des projets en collaboration avec la jeunesse africaine. « L'Afrique a besoin de ses enfants enfants, peu importe où ils sont. En tout cas moi je choisis d'être sur place, avec eux. Et c'est en travaillant avec eux, en leur donnant envie de croire à leur pays et leur continent que demain, ils sauront défendre nos intérêts. »

Ne nous étonnons pas, demain, de retrouver Diane Audrey Ngako en une de *Forbes Afrique*, sous le titre mérité « les 10 femmes les plus influentes du continent ». Encore un autre un rêve à concrétiser.

Web . www.visiterlafrique.com



**MONIQUE
DAUPHIN,
LA PRÊTRESSE
DE MONTRÉAL**

TEXTE par CLAUDE GILLES + PHOTOGRAPHIES par CHRISTIAN TREMBLAY



Vivant ici depuis plus de quarante ans, elle est considérée comme un porte-drapeau du vaudou haïtien. Ce culte, enfermé pendant plusieurs siècles dans le registre de la sorcellerie par la littérature de soi-disant anthropologues, se pratique aujourd'hui dans une interaction constante avec le public.

Immigrée au Québec, Monique Dauphin, 68 ans, déconstruit les préjugés sur le vaudou. Dans sa famille, il était interdit de le pratiquer. Pourtant elle a su qu'elle était vaudouïsante à la suite de son divorce d'avec le père de ses enfants.

Intervenante en psycho-sociologie de la communication à l'université du Québec à Montréal (Uqam), Monique Dauphin a pris sa retraite cet été. Elle consacre désormais tout son temps à la pratique du vaudou à Montréal, où elle officie comme mambo (la prêtresse, en créole) depuis une quinzaine d'années. Elle a vu partir sa progéniture de la maison familiale, mais pas les loas (les divinités, notamment les legba). Invisibles aux yeux des hommes, ces divinités habitent l'âme et le corps de celle qui, très jeune et comme un grand nombre de ses compatriotes, a fui la dictature des Duvalier.

Des vêtements de culte de guédé (l'esprit de la mort et de la sexualité, symbolisé par le crâne d'un humain) sont constamment étalés à quelques centimètres de son lit. La pièce mitoyenne de sa chambre à coucher sert de badji (de temple) et contient tout un assortiment d'objets et d'effigies indispensables à la mambo.

Avec ses incantations, ses potions magiques et ses rythmes compliqués, le vaudou haïtien nécessite quelques ajustements, concède-t-elle. C'est le cas notamment du sacrifice d'animal et de l'utilisation de tam-tams, en raison de la rigueur de la législation québécoise. « À la fois religion, culture et médecine, le vaudou est notre forme de spiritualité. Nous l'avons transporté de l'Afrique à Haïti, et maintenant à Montréal », indique la prêtresse installée dans une minuscule chaise au milieu du badji. « Ici, l'environnement et les législations sont différents de ceux d'Haïti. Les esprits nous guident dans les préparatifs des rituels », ajoute Monique Dauphin, qui porte des tresses attachées dans un foulard d'un blanc immaculé, comme la chasuble qu'elle enfile avant de présider chaque cérémonie.

« Il faut user de toutes nos forces créatives pour trouver les moyens de vivre notre spiritualité, insiste-t-elle. On a besoin d'arbres, de rivières, de la mer, d'animaux vivants. Nous ne pouvons pas le pratiquer tel qu'on le vit en Haïti.



Cependant, les abattoirs ont convenu de la nécessité d'aménager un espace pour le sacrifice d'animal. C'est tout un rituel. Il faut amener l'animal à accepter le sacrifice. Il est picoté, poudré et lavé. »

Pour éviter la nuisance sonore et l'intervention de la police, le tam-tam est presque banni. Il est alors remplacé par la voix ou des supports audio. Pourtant, « le tam-tam, ce n'est pas seulement de la musique, c'est une énergie », reconnaît non sans regret la prêtresse, obligée de s'accommoder comme tous les membres de la Confédération des Haïtiens vaudouisants du Canada.

« Les rythmes de tambour assurent le succès d'une cérémonie vaudou, ce qui confirme sans doute que cet élément du rituel soit si complexe », défend Nicole Beaudry. L'auteur du *Langage des tambours dans la cérémonie vaudou haïtienne* a repéré, lors de sa recherche, une cinquantaine de rythmes de base. « Pendant les cérémonies, certains fidèles deviennent possédés par les loas et les tambours participent à la crise de possession. Aidé par ses assistants, un prêtre décide de la liturgie du jour et, par conséquent, des loas que l'on doit invoquer ; c'est lui qui indique aux tambourineurs quels rythmes jouer pour attirer ces loas », poursuit l'auteur.

Dans cette mythologie, l'esprit invoqué passe par le poteau-mitan¹, au centre du péristyle². Pour appeler son dieu, le prêtre ou la prêtresse écrit sur le sol un vèvè. Ce dessin tracé à la poudre dans les temples pour attirer les loas est la seule forme de communication écrite des adeptes. Le vaudou haïtien comme d'autres cultures humaines s'est développé, à Montréal aussi, sans autre moyen de transmission de l'information que la parole et sans autre moyen de conservation que la mémoire individuelle.

La « possession » constitue l'une des caractéristiques du culte. Dans des sous-sols aménagés en badji, les prêtres et prêtresses « désensorcellent », « purifient » l'âme des adeptes en dépit des installations sommaires. Les adeptes y viennent aussi pour résoudre les problèmes qu'ils rencontrent au sein de leur foyer ou de leur travail.

1 Le poteau mitan dans le vaudou, c'est le péristyle du « hounfor » autour duquel dansent les initiés ou « hounsis » (adeptes).

2 Le péristyle est une sorte de tonnelle dans laquelle se déroulent les cérémonies. Au centre se trouve un poteau, ou mitan, qui assure la communication entre le ciel, où demeure le Maître inaccessible, et le monde terrestre.

Mais à la pratique de ces croyances ramenées du pays se heurte un christianisme aux visages multiples.

« Le vaudou n'est pas une religion à orgies, il n'est ni animiste, ni une forme de cannibalisme, ni un culte au serpent, ni une religion démoniaque. »

Une vieille bataille rangée hors-territoire, que mambo Dauphin digère mal : « Les évangélistes prompts au dénigrement tentent de réduire le vaudou à des forces occultes. »

Professeur-chercheur à l'université de Guanajuato (Mexique), Jean Eddy Saint-Paul précise pourtant : « Le vaudou n'est pas une religion à orgies, il n'est ni animiste, ni une forme de cannibalisme, ni un culte au serpent, ni une religion démoniaque. » Au même titre que le *candomblé* du Brésil, la *santería* de Cuba et le *dopkwe* du Dahomey, le vaudou est pratiqué par de larges couches de la population haïtienne, constate l'expert en sociologie des religions. Le sociologue Lamartine Petit-Monsieur, pour sa part, affirme que le

vaudou, comme toute religion, revêt « un côté ésotérique ouvert au public et un côté ésotérique réservé seulement aux initiés ». Considéré comme une religion primitive, il est présent dans l'esprit des adeptes aussi bien en Haïti qu'à Montréal. Mais, au rythme des dispositions concédées, ne devrait-on pas parler de « vaudou québécois » portant des traces haïtiennes ? C'est d'ailleurs déjà le cas pour le vaudou haïtien, qui continue de garder ses racines africaines quatre siècles après l'arrivée des esclaves en Amérique.

Notes:

Beaudry Nicole, « Le Langage des tambours dans la cérémonie vaudou haïtienne », *Revue de musique des universités canadiennes*, N° 4, 1983.

Saint-Paul Jean Eddy, « La Laïcité en Haïti : Approches sociologiques de quelques erreurs épistémologiques et théoriques dans les débats récents », *Histoire, Monde et Cultures religieuses*, N° 29, Karthala, Paris, 2014.

AMANDINE

GAY:

« JE TROUVE

SCANDALEUX QU'ON

REMETTE EN QUESTION

MA FRANCITÉ »

TEXTE par CLAUDE GILLES + PHOTOGRAPHIES par FRANÇOIS OLLIVIER





Comédienne, réalisatrice, journaliste et bientôt de retour sur les bancs de l'université, Amandine Gay, 30 ans, est aussi afro-féministe. Installée depuis peu à Montréal, cette artiste politique résume sa France natale en ces termes : « Un pays de déni... » Interview avec une volubile et souriante activiste qui ne fait pas dans la dentelle. Ouvrir la voix est justement le titre de son film qui sera montré durant le Mois de l'histoire des Noirs à Montréal.

Vous êtes comédienne, réalisatrice, et afro-féministe. Pourquoi pas féministe tout court ?

En France, nos spécificités ne sont pas abordées dans les mouvements féministes traditionnels qu'on pourrait appeler mouvements féministes blancs. Ce sont des groupes composés majoritairement de femmes blanches issues des classes moyennes ou de la bourgeoisie et qui ne partagent pas nécessairement nos expériences et nos préoccupations. Par exemple, pour les femmes noires, la lutte féministe n'est pas dissociable de la lutte antiraciste. Et dans le féminisme traditionnel, certains problèmes ne sont pas abordés. Inversement, en tant que femmes et Noires, aborder des conflits intra-communautaires au sein de ces organisations risque de contribuer à renforcer l'image stéréotypée des hommes

noirs. En effet, quand je critique la vision patriarcale très dure de certains militants panafricains, je n'ai pas envie que les féministes blanches s'en servent pour dire que les hommes noirs sont plus misogynes que les hommes blancs. Si nous éprouvons le besoin de nous retrouver entre nous, c'est aussi pour pouvoir mener des réflexions intra-communautaires, sans risquer de voir les thématiques que l'on aborde – le harcèlement de rue par exemple – se retourner contre les hommes de notre communauté comme s'ils étaient plus sexistes que le reste de la société. Je suis afro-féministe parce qu'il est autant nécessaire de déconstruire la société patriarcale que la suprématie blanche.

Historiquement, les mouvements féministes blancs abordent rarement la question de l'immigration et de la nationalité ; c'est ce que démontre notamment Chandra Mohanty dans *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*¹ (femmes du tiers-monde et politiques de féminisme). C'est aussi votre regard en tant qu'afro-féministe?

Dans les années 1970, dans le contexte français en tout cas et surtout dans les

¹ *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo Indiana University Press, 1991.

universités parisiennes, qui ont vu naître entre autres le Mouvement de libération des femmes (MLF), la population était encore majoritairement blanche, bien que les immigrés issus des anciennes colonies ou des Antilles commençaient à arriver massivement. Les femmes qui se retrouvaient dans cette première vague de mouvements féministes étaient presque toutes blanches. De fait, les thématiques abordées étaient spécifiques à leurs communautés : la lutte contre l'Église, le droit à l'avortement, etc. D'autres groupes minoritaires se sont certes développés en parallèle à la même époque, parmi lesquels on peut citer, la Coordination des femmes d'Amérique latine ou la Coordination des femmes noires, mais ces militantes ont été effacées de l'histoire du féminisme français. Pour mon film *Ouvrir la voix*, j'ai rencontré certaines d'entre elles qui sont aujourd'hui âgées de *cinquante* ou *soixante* ans. Elles m'ont confirmé comment à leur époque déjà, la création de groupes spécifiques pour les femmes noires était apparue comme une nécessité face aux limites pratiques et théoriques des groupes communistes et/ou panafricains et/ou féministes. Ça fait donc quarante ans que c'est la même histoire !

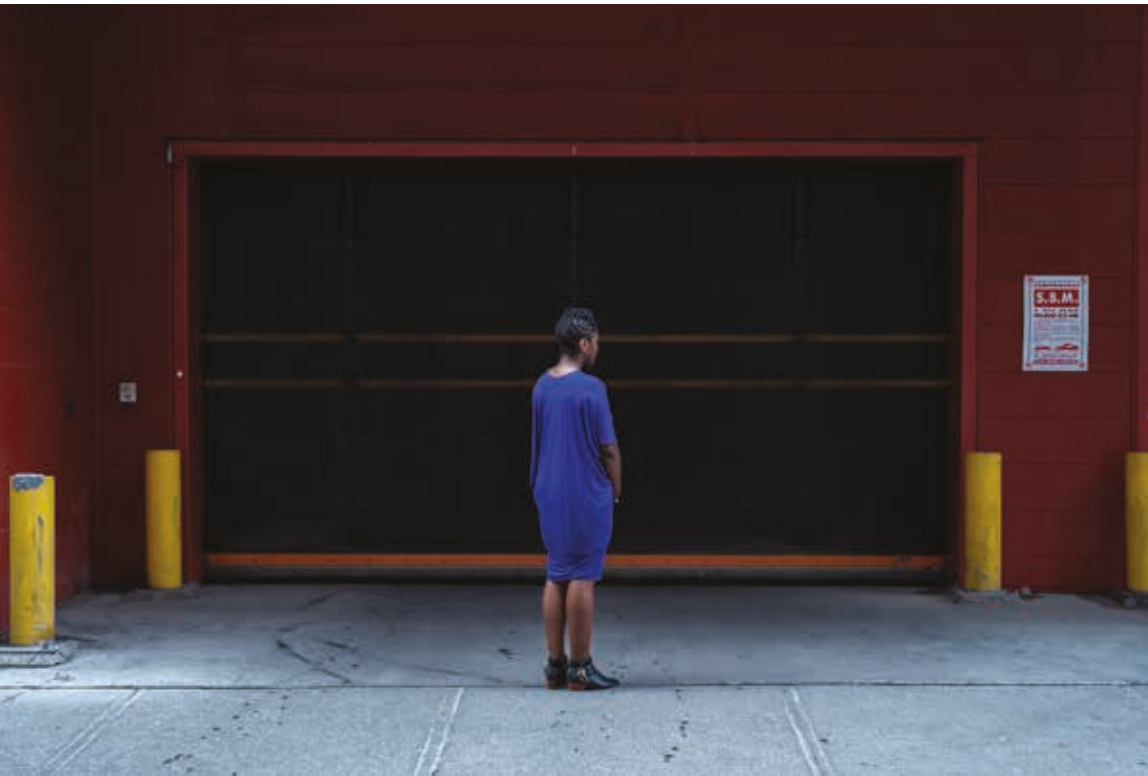
Vous déménagez de Paris à Montréal pour continuer des études en sociologie et avez certainement dans votre sacoche *Ouvrir la*

***voix*, votre documentaire de 90 minutes...**

Nous travaillons à ce que la grande première se fasse durant le Mois de l'histoire des Noirs, en février 2016, ici à Montréal. Pour l'instant, je m'installe tranquillement et au mois d'août nous reprenons le montage avec mes deux cadres et monteurs, Coralie et Enrico.

Après cinq ans à faire de l'interprétation, dans des rôles d'ailleurs souvent réservés aux Noires, vous passez derrière la caméra. Comment cela s'est-il fait ?

Je suis arrivée à Paris il y a environ huit ans pour faire du théâtre, après l'obtention de mon diplôme de Sciences-Po à Lyon. Je suis rentrée au Conservatoire d'art dramatique dans le 16^e arrondissement et j'ai commencé très vite à travailler. Au bout de quelques mois je n'avais obtenu que des rôles de droguée, de prostituée, de sans-papiers, de cocaïnoman, de dealeuse de cannabis, etc. J'ai appelé mon agent pour lui dire que j'en avais marre de ces castings et que je voulais passer à de vrais rôles. Elle m'a alors expliqué qu'elle avait envoyé mon profil pour tous les rôles qui correspondaient à ma tranche d'âge, mais qu'on ne lui répondait que lorsqu'il était spécifié dans le scénario que le personnage était une Noire.



À ce moment, j'ai eu une espèce de choc et de prise de conscience : je pouvais faire tout ce que je voulais sans jamais pour autant avoir accès aux rôles qui me plaisaient, puisque je ne pouvais pas devenir Blanche.

C'est ainsi que j'ai commencé à écrire des programmes courts pour la télévision, afin de promouvoir une autre vision des femmes noires. Très vite, même constat. Dans les boîtes de production, ce sont des hommes blancs de plus de 50 ans qui sont aux postes de décision. Ce sont eux qui choisissent ou non de financer un projet. Si ce dernier ne correspond pas à leur vision ou tout simplement à leur expérience de la société, le projet est abandonné ou modifié de telle façon qu'il ne ressemble plus en rien à l'idée originale. Par exemple, une amie et moi avons écrit un programme court satirique qui s'appelait « Media Tartes ». L'idée était de prendre des magazines féminins et de les comparer à la vraie vie des héroïnes de cette série. L'une des membres du groupe d'amies était lesbienne, sommelière et noire. C'est ce rôle que les producteurs refusaient et ne comprenaient pas. On me répétait que j'avais regardé trop de séries américaines et que ces filles n'existaient pas en France, simplement parce que ces producteurs n'en avaient jamais rencontré. Pour moi c'est ça qui était surréaliste, car je suis pansexuelle et j'ai managé un bar à vins ; ce personnage

c'était moi ! Quand on s'est rendues au CNC (Centre national de la cinématographie) pour demander des subventions pour cette série, dont les cinq personnages principaux étaient des femmes, l'un des refus nous a été exprimé avec pour motif que c'était une série potentiellement sexiste. Je me suis alors rendu compte qu'il y a cette espèce d'image monolithique de qui sont les femmes, en particulier les femmes noires, en France, et qu'avant d'influer sur la fiction, il allait falloir passer par le documentaire. Montrer qu'on existe, dans notre diversité, physique, de modes de vies, de religions, d'orientations sexuelles, etc. Mais je souhaite aussi célébrer nos existences sans tomber dans l'écueil de l'obsession de l'excellence noire. Comme nous sommes constamment dévalorisés dans les médias *mainstream*, le discours qu'on construit dans les médias communautaires vise souvent à glorifier les réussites individuelles, en particulier lorsqu'elles s'inscrivent dans la logique capitaliste. Qu'est-ce qu'on fait de la classe moyenne ? De celles et ceux d'entre nous qui n'ont pas de diplômes ? Qui considèrent que la réussite ne se limite pas à gagner beaucoup d'argent ? Ces personnes ont le droit d'exister aussi. Passer derrière la caméra me permet de partager la parole avec d'autres femmes noires aux parcours variés et différents du mien.

À vous écouter, on se dit que la France a, par rapport à certains pays d'Amérique ou d'Europe, aujourd'hui encore un problème de ségrégation que l'on chercherait difficilement à cacher...

La France a énormément de retard. C'est un pays du déni. Quand on pratique le déni à grande échelle, il devient difficile de résoudre des problèmes qu'on prétend ne pas avoir. Aux États-Unis au moins, c'était flagrant, il y avait la ségrégation. Le plus dur en France, c'est cette lutte contre un ennemi quasi invisible. On a supprimé le mot « race » de la Constitution en 2013. Est-ce que cela supprime aussi le racisme ? Non, ça ne change rien. Le problème, c'est la politique du déni. Pour déconstruire le racisme, il faut commencer par s'attaquer aux privilèges blancs et aux tabous. Moi, je n'ai pas d'amour du drapeau. Mais je trouve scandaleux qu'on remette en question ma francité. Quand quelqu'un me demande d'où je viens, je joue à l'imbécile en répondant : « Je viens de Lyon. » La question en fait, c'est pourquoi je suis noire, est-ce que je suis française. Personne ne demande aux Blancs et Blanches d'où ils viennent. Moi je leur retourne la question ; après tout, la France a toujours été une terre d'immigration. Pourquoi devrais-je justifier ma présence quand les descendants d'Italiens, de Portugais, de Polonais n'ont pas à le faire ?

Quel regard avez-vous sur le phénomène migratoire ?

Il y a actuellement en France une réflexion sur la migration. On prétend que le pays ne peut pas accueillir toutes les misères du monde, ce qui est une contre-vérité. La France ne fonctionnerait pas sans les migrants, surtout les sans-papiers, qui sont taillables et corvéables à merci. Il y a trois secteurs dans lesquels les institutions exercent très peu de contrôle : le bâtiment, la restauration et les services de gardes d'enfants et de personnes âgées. J'ai bossé dans une vingtaine de restaurants à Paris et je n'ai jamais vu un seul contrôle de l'Inspection du travail. Pourtant, tout le monde sait que les cuisines parisiennes sont remplies de sans-papiers. Je n'ai jamais vu non plus un Blanc faire la plonge. C'est une tâche réservée aux Sénégalais, aux Pakistanais et aux Maliens sans papiers. Tout le monde le sait. Quand le ministre de l'Immigration du Québec dit que la migration n'est pas un choix mais une nécessité, c'est une façon pragmatique de voir cette société. C'est une province dont la population est vieillissante, qui choisit d'entreprendre une politique migratoire raisonnée. En France, on a besoin de la migration mais on fait semblant de n'en avoir pas besoin. On en revient toujours au déni.

MOMO
SANNO¹ —
DAZZLING
THE WORLD
ONE DANCE
AT A TIME

TEXT by OLGA KONONYKHINA + PHOTOS by Carioca Studio, Franz Galo, Pollak Po

ST FARGHEY CASINE DUS





Momo is one of those people who lights up a room and mesmerises audiences and when everybody just wants to know who he is, he nails it with a story of his Romanian origin. His body language is an intense mix of wildness, graciousness, passion and beauty. His dance is familiar and yet an eye-opener at the same time – as if you know the story he is trying to tell, but suddenly it is a journey filled with so many colours. Momo’s natural form of communication would be dancing, filled with glimpses of emotion, however he happily agreed to stop for a brief moment to change direction and answer a few questions.

How was it growing up in the provincial Romanian city of Galati. Did you feel that you were different?

I never saw my skin colour as a problem, I

¹ Momo Sanno (momosanno.com) is a Romanian freelance dancer and choreographer. He is classically trained, but has spent the last 15 years exploring different approaches to contemporary dance and developing his own style. Since 2006, he has been travelling and collaborating with different dance projects as a freelance dancer and choreographer in Brazil, Haiti, Jamaica, USA and Europe.

knew my father was black and that’s why I was black too and I don’t remember wanting to be white or more similar to others.

Your parents separated when you were a baby. How did your mother raise you? Was she your female and male role model?

I don’t believe in gender role models being necessary to raise a happy child; rather there is a concept of an adult mind to me. I was a kid and kids understand certain stuff, some jokes or comments, but they aren’t really fixed on anything until there is a significant adult who cements right or wrong ideas in their mind. My mom was and still is a very different person. From an early age she surrounded my sisters and me with open-minded people, she taught me freedom and never imposed her will on either of us.

Probably that sounds surprising because Romania was and is more conservative than some Western countries, but really the first time I recognised racism was in the USA in 2003. Before, I studied in Germany and had problems with auditions, as no one expected a Romanian to be black and I had to pass an appearance expectation test first, before they would actually assess my dancing skills.

You have Romanian and Liberian origin in your blood, you have travelled the world, absorbed and lived within lots of different cultures. Where is home for you?

Home is where one is not a stranger.

But even in Romania you are either recognised as a TV star or seen as a foreigner. How does it feel to be perceived as an outsider by default even in your home country?

Romanians are usually very curious and being perceived as a foreigner is not necessary a disadvantage. They come, they ask, they congratulate my knowledge of languages and indeed they want to know more when they find out that I am Romanian. Surely there are people who don't believe I can understand them, but I doubt it's because of my appearance.

What are you trying to achieve with your dance?

In general I want my dance to make people think and go deeper into themselves. I don't believe in providing direct answers, or offer one way to have a better life. I like exposing my audience to things their conscious mind may not know but something inside them will still understand.

When in a theatre, I bring the quality of big

productions from around the world, that I was a part of, to my every performance. I spend time searching for the right music or a particular type of a light effect, rehearse and shape my character, so that my audience can have a very personal and solid story to live through with me.

If I carry out projects in public spaces I enjoy breaking linearity or a role of a certain fixed place. For example I see people rushing because they follow a daily routine and suddenly they see my dance and stop, and for the next five minutes schedules and business isn't a priority. For those who want to study dance I aim to not only show a technique of a movement, but also bring a mood, flavour, vibe and story I experienced in different countries or places where a particular style originated. Even in my everyday life I can make a change by breaking stereotypes just saying that I'm Romanian.

Do you feel privileged?

I'm privileged to keep discovering my own body, to work with something that is so close to me and to be able to express myself through me and not through some external idea for example.

**RODNEY
SAINT-ELOI
N'EST PAS NÉ
DU BON CÔTÉ
DE LA BARRIÈRE**

TEXTE par CLAUDE GILLES + PHOTOGRAPHIES par CHRISTIAN TREMBLAY



Poète, écrivain, essayiste et éditeur né en Haïti en 1963, il a fondé les éditions Mémoire d'Encrier, devenues, en une décennie, une référence pour une littérature de la diversité. Son œuvre correspond à une longue traversée des villes et des visages. Admis récemment à l'Académie des lettres du Québec, il parle sans langue de bois de la migration : les propos d'un « activiste littéraire », appartenant à cette espèce qui croit que l'être humain vit d'eau, de pain, d'air et aussi de livres.

Rodney Saint-Éloi, vous êtes écrivain et éditeur établi à Montréal depuis quinze ans. Votre métier vous emmène dans différents pays ; et puis vous voyagez aussi à l'intérieur de vous-même. Comment vivez-vous le phénomène migratoire ?

Le voyage est une nécessité. Celle de regarder le monde, de fouler la terre. En tant que citoyen haïtien, le monde m'a été interdit. J'ai besoin d'un visa pour traverser n'importe quel village. D'autres ont pourtant le bon passeport. Moi, je ne suis pas né du bon côté de la barrière. Le monde est divisé entre ceux qui peuvent circuler librement et ceux à qui l'on empêche de circuler. Je fais partie de la deuxième

catégorie. J'ai le privilège de pouvoir circuler aujourd'hui. Quand on regarde la crise en mer Méditerranée, on constate le repli et la tentation de construire les forteresses. Les mots d'ordre : « lâchez les chiens », « restez chez vous ». Écrivain, je constate avec frayeur l'impuissance à laquelle nous sommes tous réduits. Les utopies sont piétinées. Le chant nouveau demeure le cynisme de la finance. Or le sursaut ne peut venir que des humanités, de notre capacité à nous dépasser, à se projeter dans l'avenir et dans le vivre-ensemble. D'où la nécessité et l'urgence de la poésie, de l'art et de la culture. Car seule la culture est capable de renverser la tendance, en humanisant nos sociétés.

Cette séparation de la planète est aussi d'ordre sémantique, puisque l'on parle d'immigrants pour ceux qui viennent du Sud et d'expatriés pour les Occidentaux...

Tout est dans le langage. Il est fondamental d'interroger les clichés du discours social. Nous, nous sommes des immigrants. Du Nord au Sud, eux sont des expatriés, des coopérants, des humanitaires, des développeurs... Alors que les pays du Sud ont besoin de tout sauf de développeurs. L'inégalité est flagrante dans la circulation. En Haïti, j'ai recueilli des témoignages d'Haïtiens, souvent des professionnels, pour qui une demande de visa peut durer

jusqu'à six mois. Ce traitement est indigne, c'est une manière de déshumaniser l'autre. Ce sont aussi ces expatriés, ces coopérants et ces développeurs, qui à travers de nombreuses compagnies, viennent déposséder ces pays du Sud de leurs ressources. Le retour des choses : si vous appauvrissez l'Afrique, les Africains n'ont rien d'autre à faire que d'aller là où miroite la richesse du monde. Ces derniers temps, on a observé une vague migratoire vers l'Europe. Si les ressources de l'Afrique sont pillées pour construire la fortune des pays du Nord, les gens se déplacent vers des lieux prospères où sont affichés leur pétrole, leur or, leurs diamants. Les gens suivent la route des produits. Les matières premières circulent librement, et l'on pense pouvoir arrêter les humains. Comme les gens n'ont plus d'espoir, ils se jettent à la mer. Il n'y a aucune manière de barrer la route à l'espoir. C'est ce qui est arrivé aux États-Unis avec les *boat-people*. Dans la mer Méditerranée, ils plongent pour regagner les côtes de l'Espagne, de l'Italie... On parle de crise, et il y a panique en Europe. À l'inverse, de nombreux Européens vont vivre au Maroc, en Tunisie, au Sénégal. Là, on ne dit rien.

On considère souvent les Haïtiens comme un peuple nomade. Sont-ce, selon vous, les mêmes raisons que vous venez d'évoquer qui expliquent cette mobilité-là ?

La raison est d'abord historique, même s'il y en a aussi une d'ordre économique. L'histoire nous a nomadisés. Les Haïtiens sont un peuple venu d'ailleurs, constitué à partir d'un ensemble de cultures et d'imaginaires. Nous habitons l'Amérique, mais les premiers habitants de cette terre étaient des Indiens. Après que les Indiens ont été décimés par les Espagnols, on a emmené de force des Nègres en Haïti. Ces derniers étaient considérés pendant longtemps comme des bêtes de somme pour faire marcher la machine du capital. C'étaient un voyage et un espace imposés. Seule la littérature nous aide à traverser les frontières. La poésie nous permet de regarder le monde avec sérénité. La terre est ronde. Elle n'est pas un triangle qui s'appelle Haïti. Il faut sortir et aller vers l'autre. Découvrir pays et paysages. Nous sommes des habitants de la Terre. Nous habitons l'eau, nous habitons le feu, nous habitons les vents, nous habitons tous les continents.

Avec l'évolution du phénomène migratoire, une certaine littérature tente d'établir une différence entre migrants libres, migrants forcés, etc. Mais, au fond, ne sont-ils pas liés par leurs origines sociales ?

En arrivant dans les pays adoptés, les gens cherchent à reproduire les préjugés qu'ils avaient chez eux. Des migrants haïtiens, par

exemple, reproduisent la même dynamique de classes sociales, en créant une sorte de petite Haïti avec les mêmes préjugés, les mêmes formes d'exclusion et de racisme que dans leur pays d'origine. Quelque 95 % des migrants haïtiens au Québec habitent Montréal. C'est là qu'ils peuvent se défendre. Ils vivent déjà la solitude de l'image, la neige en lieu et place du soleil. Déséquilibrés, ils sont piégés dans ce qu'Edouard Glissant appelle « le pays réel et le pays rêvé ». Ils parlent créole, écoutent les radios haïtiennes, mangent créole. Plus tard, les enfants vont casser la dynamique. La pire chose qui puisse arriver aux sociétés occidentales, c'est de se fermer sur elles-mêmes.

À propos d'écrivains haïtiens : une affiche de Yanick Lahens, prix Femina 2014, est placardée dans votre bureau. La littérature haïtienne est très forte, si l'on se réfère à la qualité et au nombre de prix prestigieux obtenus par des Haïtiens dont certains évoluent à l'étranger. Serait-ce plus facile pour un créateur de se déraciner ou disons, de vivre sa culture quel que soit l'environnement ?

Un créateur est un déraciné, puisque l'on est toujours dans ce voyage qu'est l'imaginaire. On se déplace. On dialogue avec l'autre. On ouvre le territoire, habitant un univers plus large que les 27 500 km² du

pays Haïti, on est dans le feu, les eaux, les continents, les vents. Il n'existe alors plus de frontières. C'est ça le rêve d'un écrivain. Le cas de *Mémoire d'Encrier* est exemplaire en ce sens, en mettant en avant les littératures de la diversité et de la complexité, avec des auteurs qui sont d'ici et/ou d'ailleurs, et qui n'ont plus d'identité en fin de parcours. Frankétienne a déconstruit l'imaginaire et les frontières avec ses mots, Yanick Lahens a obtenu le prix Femina, Dany Laferrière est élu à l'Académie française. Je suis admis à l'Académie des lettres du Québec. C'est symboliquement une manière d'exister à travers la littérature. Les êtres humains ont besoin de reconnaissance. Et l'Occident laisse entrer l'imaginaire. Nous pouvons dire en riant que c'est beaucoup plus difficile d'obtenir un visa de résidence qu'un Prix littéraire. En 2015, Dany Laferrière et Yanick Lahens montrent le respect des institutions littéraires françaises envers la littérature haïtienne. En même temps, cette même France, qui accueille les œuvres des Haïtiens, qui consacre les auteurs haïtiens, chasse les Haïtiens comme des animaux sauvages dans les territoires d'outre-mer. C'est ce paradoxe migratoire qui fait peur et qui appelle notre humanité.



**JULIEN
LEBRUN,
UNE PLONGÉE
DANS LES
ARCHIVES
AFRICAINES**

TEXTE et PHOTOGRAPHIES par LIZ GOMIS



Fabrique artisanale de projets musicaux estampillés « Afro-Soul » et « Tropical Funk », Hot Casa Records, le label de Julien Lebrun et Djamel Hammadi, suscite le respect au-delà des frontières de Paris Bastille, son QG. De Gilles Peterson à Q-Tip, les aficionados de « rare grooves » louent le travail des têtes chercheuses de la Casa.

Si aujourd'hui ils sont reconnus par leurs pairs, c'est grâce à une direction artistique pointue, mais aussi à un travail effectué treize années durant, à la recherche de disques à rééditer de stars oubliées de la musique africaine. Orlando Julius, Itadi Bonney, Stanislas Tohon, Joni Haastrup ou encore Akeeb Kareem : des anonymes pour le grand public, qui ont pourtant marqué l'histoire de la musique africaine post-coloniale. Rencontre avec le manager du label qui nous les fait réécouter.

Fraîchement revenu de Lomé, Togo, bronzage et chemise en wax de rigueur, Julien Lebrun a la parfaite allure du débarqué de Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle. Il nous accueille dans son officine, au sous-sol de son appartement, une cave parisienne dans laquelle il garde une partie de sa collection de disques, gère les stocks de son label et autres embrouilles administratives avec l'Afrique.

« Je viens d'envoyer un Western Union à Yaoundé à un des artistes du catalogue Hot Casa, Francis Mbarga dit « Francis The Great ». Apparemment, je n'ai pas écrit son nom correctement, la transaction a été refusée, il vient de m'envoyer un texto. Il faut que je retourne à la poste. Ça par exemple, c'est mon quotidien », confie-t-il en riant.

C'est qu'il est rôdé. En treize ans de rééditions de vinyles, il a complètement intégré le sens du mot «patience».

Trouver le bon interlocuteur ; s'assurer de la disponibilité des droits ; établir un contrat ; vérifier à nouveau que les droits n'ont pas été cédés à un autre label. En trois mots, son quotidien administratif se résume à faire, défaire et refaire. « Il y a la recherche de disques d'abord et après, il y a la recherche des producteurs, qui est particulièrement importante pour le label car on demande l'autorisation et les droits pour rééditer à l'identique. Parfois, on met quatre, cinq ans à retrouver les ayants droit... »

C'est ça, la formule Hot Casa : pas de place pour le bootleg [une copie illégale d'une œuvre piratée, ndlr] ; le duo tient à être légalement et éthiquement irréprochable. Ce qui se traduit généralement, fracture numérique oblige, par de nombreux échanges téléphoniques, et puis beaucoup de transferts d'argent et des voyages pour finaliser les licences.



Pour ce qui est du voyage justement, Julien affiche pas mal d'heures de vol au compteur. Le quadra a eu la bougeotte très tôt, influencé par des parents soixante-huitards en perpétuelle quête d'ailleurs. Habitué de la formule sac à dos, il écume les destinations telles le Sri Lanka, le Brésil, la Chine. Ses pérégrinations africaines lui sont arrivées bien plus tard, à la fin des années 1990 et ont alors peu à peu pris l'avantage sur sa *wishlist* vacances. « On était deux ou trois potes complètement hypnotisés par le hip-hop. En fait, c'est toute la richesse de cette culture, qui regroupe du jazz, de la soul, et du funk, qui nous poussait à vouloir toujours chercher plus. C'est comme ça qu'au milieu des années 1990, j'ai découvert l'afro. Je retrouve dans cette musique la quintessence de toutes les musiques qui m'ont bercé. Ça correspondait à cette période de recherche de samples illimitée. C'était une suite. »

La suite dans ce cas, décrite comme un virus, c'est de nombreux séjours sur le continent, venus éteindre provisoirement cette soif du disque. Du Sénégal au Togo et plus récemment l'Éthiopie, ses quelques disques à échanger et sa bonne étoile, Julien a parcouru toute l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Et il en faut de la souplesse pour passer outre la barrière du « petit Européen qui va chercher ses disques en Afrique ».

Aujourd'hui, il ne se considère plus comme un vrai touriste. Il y a bien longtemps qu'il a délaissé son Routard, ses disques valant bien mieux qu'une carte pour découvrir le pays.

« C'est l'occasion de voyager différemment. Par le *digging*, tu peux rencontrer les gens, aller chez eux, partager le thé. Ce sont des histoires que tu ne peux pas avoir en tant que touriste de base et le disque permet de rentrer chez les gens. C'est hyper intime. Quand on est à Abidjan avec Djamel par exemple, tel papi collectionneur nous envoie chez un autre papi. Ça nous permet d'aller dans des quartiers qui sont techniquement hors guide... » Et c'est ça qui est intéressant, « retracer l'histoire de ces gens, leur passé musical, les bals où ils allaient, les maquis où ils jouaient. L'Afrique de l'Ouest était assez connectée. Ils allaient jouer au Mali, au Burkina, au Ghana... Et c'est tout ce mouvement, cette histoire de l'Afrique = post-coloniale 1960-80, qui est intéressante à gratter. Et nous, on s'est focalisés là-dessus. »

« L'Européen tout-puissant débarquant de Paris pour sauvegarder un pan de la culture de pauvres Africains »

Une direction artistique à la marge qui ne fera pas d'eux les prochains millionnaires de l'industrie du disque. Julien en a pleinement conscience et l'assume, avec fierté. Pour lui le challenge est ailleurs. « Pouvoir rester indépendant relève d'un rapport humain, musical, historique et politique. Faire des choses pas forcément commercialement puissantes mais les faire. Cette recherche de disques, c'est aussi l'idée de conserver un patrimoine en train de disparaître du fait du climat, du fait aussi d'un archivage quasi inexistant. Là, par exemple, on va rééditer un disque de l'artiste ivoirien Pierre Antoine, *Kalabuley Woman*, tiré à très peu d'exemplaires à l'époque. Je pense qu'il doit y avoir quatre ou cinq copies viables et écoutables dans le monde. Et pour moi c'est une des plus belles pièces d'Afrobeat. »

Une position qui ne le met pas toujours très à l'aise, lui « l'Européen tout-puissant débarquant de Paris pour sauvegarder un pan de la culture de pauvres Africains ». Un débat qu'il a du mal parfois à appréhender même s'il a fini par se reprendre. « Tu ne peux pas sauver le monde à toi tout seul. Après, l'idée, c'est d'être *clean* sur place. Avec le label, on essaie de faire des avances calquées sur le niveau de vie occidental. Ce qui représente des sommes considérables pour les locaux. Or c'est normal, c'est juste légal. Pour ce qui est du voyage, tout est dans la façon de regarder, l'autre en fait... je

ne sais pas comment l'expliquer. Se mettre au même niveau... »

Et visiblement, la mise à niveau se fait naturellement. Quand le téléphone sonne chez Julien, c'est souvent en provenance de l'Afrique. Ce matin c'est Lomé. Roger Damawuzan au bout du fil. Le mimétisme s'installe. Julien emprunte naturellement les intonations de l'artiste togolais et autres expressions locales, laissant penser qu'il ne trouvera décidément jamais le remède à son virus. Encore faut-il vouloir en guérir.

**INGRID SILVA:
“BEING
A BLACK
BALLERINA, I
AM BREAKING
THROUGH
BARRIERS”**

TEXT by ROXANE CASSEHGARI + PHOTOS by HARUKA SAKAGUCHI



She started ballet dancing when she was eight-years-old in Mangueira, a favela of Rio de Janeiro.

She did so following her mother's advice to channel her energy through sport.

Today Ingrid is a 26-year-old professional ballerina with goals as high as New York City's skyline. She moved to the big apple when she was 18 to join the Dance Theatre of Harlem and has been dancing with the troupe ever since.

FROM RIO TO NEW YORK

I started dancing when I was eight-years-old with Dançando Para Não Dançar, a project dedicated to take ballet to the favelas of Rio. One of the teachers used to dance at the Dance Theatre of Harlem and she took me to my first audition in New York in 2007. I got into the summer intensive programme and stayed there. I spent the summer of 2007 in New York and then went back in 2008 but, this time I trained with the professional programme for four months before joining the Dance Theatre of Harlem Ensemble. In 2013, a small number of the young dancers joined the main company: Dance Theatre of Harlem. I was one of them! I never thought about becoming a dancer,

let alone a professional one. I used to practise a lot of different sports and I decided to pick ballet when I heard of the classes in my neighbourhood. It is only when I was 18 and left for the US to dance with the company that I became determined. I knew I wanted to do this professionally and I would have to sacrifice being without my family.

FIRST DAYS IN NEW YORK

I travelled from Brazil straight to Harlem! I remember the day I arrived at JFK airport. I met this lady who spoke Spanish and that was the only language I could communicate in. She was my guardian angel and took the subway with me all the way to Harlem. That very first day, I immediately went to the dance studio and started training. I was getting into my routine already.

CULTURAL IMMERSION

I did try to learn English at a school but I stopped because I did not feel I was learning a lot. I started learning on my own and then with people. In my dance programme, there was an American girl from Louisiana. She invited me to spend Christmas with her family. It was my first Christmas in the US, in an American home and in the South! It was honestly the funniest Christmas of my life. Everyone

would talk to me in English thinking that since I was black, I should speak English. In the end, this is how I learnt English and discovered American culture. I would go to the movies, read many books and make conversation with Americans. It was very hard because the language definitely created a barrier at the beginning but I learnt how to speak and understand English in one year.

THE AMERICAN DREAM

I have lived in New York for seven years now. This has changed my perceptions of my country. I realised that the opportunities are not the same in Brazil. When you are not born with money, it makes it much harder to reach for your dreams. In fact, it is easier to go to another country and move up the social ladder from there. For me, it would have been hard to succeed in ballet in Brazil. It is true to say that the US is a land of opportunities.

RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

Everything is about race here. You are identified by your race from the moment you are born. In Brazil, we are all very mixed and race is not a way to differentiate people. We do not talk overtly about racism and I never felt that being black was going to be an obstacle.

However, it is true, you do not see that many black ballerinas in Brazilian ballet companies. You do not see black ballet dancers on national television either. Perhaps, racism is more silent in Brazil. Racial inequality is still very much prevailing in the US and in many other countries. Only recently was an African American ballerina, Misty Copeland, named as the first principal dancer at the American Ballet Theatre in New York. This story made the headlines.

I am aware that being a black ballerina, I am breaking through barriers but I do not want to be affected by racism. Since I come from a country with a different perspective on race, I am less sensitive to racism. Either I do not even see it or I ignore it. I take racism as being ignorant. That said, I know I was also lucky. I was sheltered from all these issues. The Dance Theatre of Harlem Company was founded by Arthur Mitchell, an African American dancer, who wanted to give a chance to black dancers in the ballet world. The company is now very international. There is a mix of people coming from everywhere. There are also many Brazilians. This worldwide environment made it so much easier for me. I also think that it is not only about race but that everything comes down to the lack of opportunities. In Brazil, I was never a victim of racism and I was very driven and loved





Tumblr . ingridsilvarj.tumblr.com
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Instagram: [Ingrid Silva](https://www.instagram.com/IngridSilva)

dancing. Yet it is the US that rewarded me for this. It is only here that I was able to grow professionally.

DOUBTS

I have to say emigrating was very hard. I did not go back home for the first three years. I thought a lot that I was young and that I was not going to be able to do it but then I thought about home and how it would be harder. I was determined to stay because I wanted to change my family's life and change their history. That would never have been possible staying at home. I have come a long way. Now, I have incredible opportunities. Here in the US, I can change company if I want to, I can go to school... I am thinking of studying Psychiatry. I want to help dancers because it is a very stressful profession. I even have other opportunities that I can pursue in the US. I do think it is important to go to another country to get another experience but it is tough. Perhaps, your home country should give you the support to seize this kind of opportunity.

RECOGNITION

I never thought I would go back home and be on national television. I realised that sadly, you have to leave Brazil, go to another country, make it out there and then people will recognise you for who

you are. It should not be this way. You would hope that your own country would be the first to give you recognition. For instance, why would it not be possible to have black ballerinas in the most important dance companies of Brazil? Brazil is such an amazing country. Things should be different. So, I am grateful for all the opportunities I have had in the US but I am already thinking of how to change things in Brazil. My experience must make a difference not just for me but also for my home country. The kids who are in my situation should feel that they can also achieve the same things as I did.

RETURN TO BRAZIL

Where I am right now is where I am meant to be. It took me all these years to get recognition in Brazil but it is not enough. I am planning on making a change in Brazil. I also keep in mind that it is important to be a good representative of your own country wherever you are so I want to educate people about Brazil. I am not going to be dancing forever. I want to do more. This is a formative experience in my life so that I can do more after. I feel that I can bring a lot to people. I love when people go to my performances and say "my daughter looks up to you." That is what motivates me, especially in the dance world, which is not an easy environment. You get very



tired and there is a lot of competition so you have to find inspiration. I now have a sense of responsibility. I feel humble and it is important for me to give back. Education is the way you give back. I actually just had my first Ingrid Silva workshop. I taught ballet to children and adults in 20 schools in cities in Brazil, including Rio. It was the most amazing experience to go back to my own city and teach. For most of them, it was their first time being taught by a professional ballerina coming from their country and living abroad. For me, it was also my first teaching experience. I did not know how to do it and I thought I would just learn on the spot and it worked fine. It was incredible. I am now getting more requests to come back and teach.

IMPACT

You have to be visible. People need to know who you are. I had to put myself out there and come out of my little dance bubble. I have done interviews for several Brazilian magazines and last year, I participated in a gala for the Brazil foundation in New York. I am also using social media a lot. I created my Facebook page, Twitter and Instagram accounts and I just launched my own YouTube channel! This is a great way for me to be in touch with my audience and share what my life is. I can show them where I am travelling but also simple things such as

how I do my hair. It is not much, but it can always help someone. It may not be a lot for you but it may be a lot for other people. With social media, I can reach out to a lot of people, not only Brazilians. A lot of people read my stories online, have seen me dancing or have kids who look up to me. One fan set up an Instagram account with all my pictures and quotes. I would never have expected that. She was inspired by my story. This is amazing because you realise people relate to your story and how much you can make a change this way. It can be a bit scary to see your photo being shared everywhere and people not knowing it is you but I appreciate it. I want to use this power to make a change and break boundaries. I want everyone to see you can be any colour and you can still do it.

A WISH

I just wish my mom would come one day to New York to see me dance. She did come to the US but she has not seen me on stage yet. I want her to be in the audience. I have done all of this for her. I would not have made it here without her. I have all this perseverance thanks to her. She pushed me to go to the US because she knew it was my one time opportunity. She always believed in me even when I thought I was not going to make it. For the first three years in New York, I only saw her online. Yet, she never

cried, she gave me confidence, which is super important to be able to leave home and work in the world of ballet. She would always say that your turn will come when it is the right time for you to succeed. However and how far you go, you have to go clean and do it without stomping on people. When I went back to Rio to teach, she was very grateful for what I was trying to do for people in Brazil.



POLYGLOT, A CREATIVE WAY TO EXIST

TEXT by SARAN KOLY + PHOTOS by JERMAIN RAFFINGTON





Facebook . polyglott
Instagram . @polyglot.webseries

Amelia and Amanda are sisters. They are 24 and 21 years old. Amelia Umuhire is the filmmaker and the director of the web-series Polyglot. Amanda Mukasonga a.k.a. Babiche Papaya is the protagonist. They are Rwandan and German and much more. They speak German, Kinyarwanda, English and French.

Their bond is striking. They don't interrupt each other. When one speaks, the other one listens carefully. This mutual trust is translated in the first two episodes of *Polyglot*. Amanda plays Babiche Papaya, a spoken word artist who tries to settle in Berlin. She walks the cold and grey streets of the city. It is with this same instinctive acting that she interacts with the other characters, in English, in the first episode "The Bewerbungsgespräch" (the interview), then in French in the second, "Le mal du pays".

Amelia, writes and directs with finesse. She sets a poetic atmosphere and transports the audience to the other Berlin. The non-white one.

They are Africans and Europeans. Amelia and Amanda are part of the young generation of black Germans

ready to question German identity and multiculturalism; one episode at a time.

POLYGLOT

Amelia "We were sitting at the big table with our flat mates and thought about making a series about people just like us! People with multi-layered cultural backgrounds. Non-white creative people living in a city like Berlin. I started writing the script and looked for a director of photography and we started with the first episode. We shot it in our apartment."

"I always wanted to do something in film. But I didn't know what it would be. With Polyglot, I enjoyed writing the script, and to create the look and feel. I thought: this is it! I want to be a director." *Amelia Umuhire*

"Money would be nice at some point. It has to stay independent but I'd like to be able to pay everyone who's involved."

"So far, we have received very positive feedback. It really inspires us to continue. The next episode will be more musical.





Wait. I don't want to say something and come with a completely different idea in the end!"

Amanda "We exchange on so many levels that it is easy for me to understand her directions. If Amelia says: "red" I know what kind of red she means. For the first episode, she helped us to build our characters. Amelia told us what atmosphere she was looking for. I knew the other actors as friends. It was quite natural to play together. The second episode was completely scripted. Our older sister played the hairdresser's role."

"Some people tell me, they don't know how they can relate to this series. I usually tell them: 'this is actually not related to you whatsoever'. The people touched by Polyglot understand the message immediately."

"I have a problem with what is called mainstream in general and in Berlin in particular. It is actually done by hip white males. Why this is not labelled as such? Why I'm labelled as a minority; African, German, woman or else, while they are mainstreaming nothing else but themselves. Who is represented by mainstream?"

BLACK AND GERMAN

"I'm Rwandan. I think this represents the biggest part of my identity." *Amanda Mukasonga*

"There is this one image of Germany: white people speaking German. Being black and German is a minority in terms of numbers. We are not represented in the media, the film industry, nowhere."

"We grew up in a small town in West Germany. At school we were the only black kids. We tried hard to fit in. Some friends would tell us: 'I've never seen you any differently than us' but they don't know how much we had to change our true self to fit in."

Amelia "When asked where I'm from, I usually say Rwanda but I grew up in Germany. This "but" should become "and". I'm from Rwanda and I grew up in Germany. I am in the process of owning this identity."

"We are very lucid to the fact that we live a privileged life. We can spend our time watching films for university in a European capital."





We have no stress with our documents or residence permits. We know that we have a responsibility bigger than ourselves, because of where we come from. Our parents always told us that we represent our country and our behaviour has to be exemplary in a way. We try to translate this in a creative way not into a social political responsibility.”

“Before moving to Berlin, I lived in Vienna where I studied international development. I wanted to work for an NGO, go back to Rwanda and do something. I am now studying African studies. The cultural part is very important in this field. In those two years I’ve learned so much about African films. Things I had no clue about a couple of years ago. I knew Nollywood¹, full stop.”

ART IS POLITICAL

Amanda “ I came to Berlin to study urban planning and realised this was a training for urban planners only. I wanted to learn something I could apply to my everyday life and decided to explore American studies and African studies as a minor. With this, I learnt more about myself and it

complements the art I do.”

“I like to rap in the German language I’m more able to bend the words. In English I access different emotions.”

Amelia “Using other ways to make our voices heard is important. Youtube allows us to share a vision that would have otherwise not reached so many people. This: ‘If I don’t get the funding, I’d just do it myself’ attitude is very political. We are being made invisible by an entire system. We find creative ways to exist anyway. This is very political.”

1 The cinema of Nigeria, often referred to as Nollywood, grew quickly in the 1990s and 2000s and became the second largest film industry in the world in number of annual film productions, placing it ahead of the United States and behind only India.

**JR,
THE WORLD
IS HIS
PLAYGROUND**

TEXT by JULIANA LUNA + PHOTOS by KAT IRLIN and COURTESY of JR





Web . www.jr-art.net
Web . www.saveellisland.org

The street artist, self-proclaimed citizen of the world pays a poignant tribute to the ghosts of Ellis Island in New-York.

“I discovered, I had family going through Ellis Island.”

“I have been working on the topic of immigration for a year now in Ellis Island and in Lampedusa. The reasons why people were travelling one hundred years ago are exactly the same now. They want a better life. Ellis Island was called the island of hope, the island of tears. While working on this project I discovered I had family going through Ellis Island. I felt the same energy in Italy in the tiny island of Lampedusa where some make it and others never make it.”

The first person to arrive on Ellis Island as an immigrant was Annie Moore from County Cork, Ireland. She arrived on January 1st, 1892 on her 15th birthday to join her parents already settled in New York. Travelling to New York with her younger brothers in steerage, Moore received a \$10.00 gold piece from officials upon her arrival.

The UNFRAMED Ellis Island project aims to bring alive the memory of Ellis Island. From 1892 to 1954, over 12 million immigrants entered the USA through the portal of Ellis Island in New York Harbor. Many from eastern and southern Europe were escaping poverty and conflict. Typically starting on horseback or train from cities and towns across Europe, many travellers had a long journey just to get to the seaport. They then boarded ships that were crowded, filled with a diverse group of up to 3,000 passengers all from different cultures and religions and sailed across the Atlantic for two weeks. It is estimated that 40% of all current U.S citizens can trace at least one ancestor to Ellis Island.

During the peak period of Ellis Island’s operations between 1900 and 1914, 5,000 to 10,00 passed through the immigration station each day. The ‘Passage of Immigrant Quota Act’ of 1921 ended the era of mass immigration to New York.

In 1954 a portion of Ellis Island, 30 buildings, were closed and left with an uncertain future. Since 2000, Save Ellis Island has been working in partnership with the National Park Service to continue the important work of preserving Ellis Island, its many memories, and its rich history.

“I always came to New York, felt good here and inspired. I came for a couple of months, a year and ended up staying 5 years. I travel most of the time.

When you come here you feel at home, because everybody is a foreigner in New York. In the US when people ask you where you from you are really happy to say you come from somewhere. In France when they ask the same question, they are asking you why you are not from here.

“My family come from Tunisia, and I was born in France, I feel good there. I feel good anywhere. I am a citizen of the world. Parents give roots. My roots are very important to me. I grew up in the suburbs of Paris, the big city. I feel I’m still growing and I hope I’ll never stop growing up.”













**YARA
EL-GHADBAN,
SEMELLES AU
VENT**

TEXTE par CLAUDE GILLES + PHOTOGRAPHIES par CHRISTIAN TREMBLAY



Romancière, musicienne, anthropologue... Elle cumule les titres autant qu'elle arpente les territoires avant de trouver son ancrage au Québec. Professeure d'université, cette originaire de Palestine met ses expériences de migrante et sa formation d'anthropologue au service de ses recherches en Afrique du Sud, au Québec et dans le monde arabe. Une anthropologue aux semelles de vent pour parler des multiples visages de la migration. Des idéologies aussi...

De Dubaï à Montréal, votre ancrage, en passant par Beyrouth, Sanaa et Londres... Vous avez un long parcours de migrations. Comment vivez-vous la migration ?

La migration est un voyage qu'on ne choisit pas. Jusqu'à mon arrivée au Québec en 1989, j'ai voyagé par nécessité : soit pour trouver un meilleur endroit pour vivre, ou bien parce que mes parents étaient des réfugiés et dans le meilleur des cas parce que je rendais visite à des membres de ma famille éparpillés un peu partout dans le monde. Je viens d'une famille d'exilés avec des parents au Liban, en Syrie, en Jordanie, dans le Golfe arabo-persique, en Roumanie, en Suède, et jusqu'à récemment à Londres et aux États-Unis. La migration offre des expériences extraordinaires ; mais aussi une

douleur, des blessures. C'est une douleur que j'assume. Quand on l'assume on peut transformer cette douleur en opportunités même si la blessure ne se cicatrise pas complètement.

En plus d'être une migrante aux semelles de vent, vous êtes aussi anthropologue, écrivaine et professeure d'université. Quelle est votre perception du phénomène migratoire ?

Les migrants sont de grands rêveurs. Il faut vraiment avoir une immense capacité à rêver et un imaginaire sans limite pour décider de laisser tout ce que l'on connaît et faire ce plongeon dans un pays absolument étranger, tout en ayant la certitude ou du moins l'espoir que ce qui nous attend est meilleur. C'est inspirant. C'est en partie ce qui m'a poussée d'abord vers l'anthropologie, et maintenant vers l'écriture. Je suis devenue romancière car seule la fiction peut, à mon avis, incarner cette part imaginaire, fantasmagorique de l'expérience migrante dans toute sa beauté et ses tourments. Dans mon premier roman, *L'Ombre de l'olivier*, Yuryur, une fille de 10 ans, parle avec un grand oiseau qui lui apprend l'amour, lui montre les ravages de la guerre, la transporte par-delà *les frontières...* Dans le deuxième, *Le Parfum de Nour*, qui paraîtra à l'automne, Leila, une journaliste aguerrie, est transformée par un parfum mystérieux qui l'amène à la terre

des dieux et la confronte à ses peurs. C'est cela un immigrant : un oiseau qui a vu des choses à la fois horribles et magiques et qui suit le parfum de ses rêves. Au Québec, et dans d'autres pays d'immigration, on tend à réduire cette expérience de la migration à des calculs économiques ou matérialistes qui sont parfois en décalage avec le sens symbolique que porte la migration pour l'immigrant. S'il y a des malentendus sur le rôle des immigrants dans la société d'accueil, c'est souvent à ce niveau.

Vous parlez de la douleur, des blessures comme si vous les viviez encore. Qu'est-ce qui, d'après vous, blesse le plus un immigrant ? Le déracinement, le voyage forcé à la limite risqué pour ceux qui se jettent par exemple dans les mers, Atlantique ou Méditerranée ?

Je ne peux pas assimiler mes expériences de Palestinienne à celle d'un Haïtien qui a fui la dictature des Duvalier, ou celle d'un Libyen fuyant l'instabilité politique, économique et sociale. Cela étant dit, je dirais que le déracinement est à la fois une souffrance et une jouissance. Il y a un désir de liberté totale, une liberté intérieure que la personne cherche, mais aussi l'angoisse, la confusion, l'aliénation quand on arrive dans un pays où l'on ne sait même pas comment prendre l'autobus. C'est aussi un moment d'euphorie, car tout est possible.

Le migrant arrive doté d'une énergie quasiment sans limite. Cette énergie est créatrice de prime abord. On veut construire, refaire le monde. C'est un don que l'on veut offrir au pays qui nous a accueillis. Si ce don n'est pas reconnu, si l'on persiste à croire que l'immigrant a tout à gagner et rien à nous apprendre, cette énergie est gaspillée et risque de tourner à la colère. Dans l'ouvrage collectif *Le Québec, la Charte, l'Autre*, auquel des intellectuelles de tous les horizons ont collaboré, plusieurs ont insisté sur les possibilités et le risque que présente le moment du déracinement et de la rencontre avec l'autre. On parle trop souvent, à mon avis, d'intégration, de compassion, et même de pitié, quand il s'agit des migrants qui meurent dans la mer, mais trop peu de solidarité – car la solidarité implique un travail à deux, main dans la main, et une reconnaissance mutuelle.

Existe-t-il, selon-vous, un endroit idéal pour un immigrant du monde arabe où vivre ses rêves, ses croyances, sa culture ?

L'endroit « idéal » n'existe pas. Chaque pays a des atouts, des blessures, et une histoire. C'est parfois une question de destin. C'est comme un couple amoureux : l'amour, il faut l'entretenir. J'ai habité dans plusieurs pays, je vois tout ce qu'ils m'ont donné et ce qu'ils m'ont pris.

Londres a changé ma vision de l'Europe. À Sanaa, j'ai vécu la dernière année de mon enfance. C'est une ville qui représente quelque chose de très intime pour moi. Bien que je sois née à Dubaï, l'un des pays les plus riches du monde, je n'y ressens pas le même attachement. Le Québec m'a donné une troisième langue, le français, qui est devenue ma langue d'expression, à travers laquelle je raconte mon histoire, partage ma vision du monde et invite les autres dans mon imaginaire. C'est ainsi que je fais ma contribution à ces pays et à l'humanité. C'est un précieux cadeau, la langue, car il est réciproque.

Les notions et les concepts évoluent, à l'image du phénomène migratoire. La migration des Haïtiens, Africains, Arabes, par exemple, change souvent de visage. Qu'est-ce qui peut expliquer ces changements d'aspect, selon vous qui êtes anthropologue ?

Effectivement ça change de visage. Je fais partie de cette vague de migrations venant du Liban, même si je ne suis pas arrivée directement du Liban, mais comme réfugiée palestinienne du Liban. C'était à une époque où le Canada accueillait beaucoup d'investisseurs, de professionnels, de travailleurs qualifiés. Déjà chez eux, ces immigrants faisaient partie de la classe moyenne et même supérieure.

Il y a aujourd'hui le phénomène du migrant de la mer et des sans-papiers. Mon collègue Filippo Furri, anthropologue, a observé un changement important : avant, les sans-papiers fuyaient les autorités par peur d'être enregistrés et détenus ; aujourd'hui les autorités ne veulent même pas reconnaître la présence des sans-papiers sur leur sol, parce que si vous leur donnez un numéro de dossier, vous devenez responsable d'eux. C'est une forme de déresponsabilisation totale et déshumanisante. Du côté des pays d'accueil, un virage inquiétant s'est produit vers une perception sécuritaire du rapport à l'autre. L'autre est menaçant, de prime abord, il éveille le soupçon. Les relations sont ainsi perverties par la peur et la suspicion avant même qu'elles ne puissent se développer. Le ressentiment envers cet autre est d'autant plus fort qu'on associe sa présence aux lois antidémocratiques que les pays adoptent au nom de la sécurité, comme la loi C-51.

Vous menez, en tant qu'anthropologue, des recherches au Québec, en Afrique du Sud et dans le monde arabe sur les enjeux de l'identité, les pratiques interculturelles dans les sociétés pluralistes et sur le vivre-ensemble. Ce vivre-ensemble est-il une tautologie mortelle dans le cas de la Palestine, votre pays d'origine, et Israël, le pays voisin ?

Je ne crois pas à la haine ni aux tautologies. L'anthropologie m'a appris que nous sommes des créatures extrêmement complexes, ambivalentes. Donc pour toute forme de tautologie, il faut une grande violence. Dans le cas de la Palestine et d'Israël, un certain discours prétend que les gens se haïssent depuis des centaines d'années, que le problème entre les deux peuples est si profond qu'il ne sera jamais résolu. Tout ça, c'est de l'idéologie. Les enjeux sont simples, en réalité. Les questions légales sont claires. Il y a une occupation du territoire qui est illégale, un déracinement illégal au regard des lois et des conventions internationales. Aucune ambiguïté là-dessus. Et puis il y a autre chose : ce sont deux peuples qui se ressemblent et qui ont une histoire partagée. Déjà, nous partageons les langues, l'arabe et l'hébreu, qui découlent de la même racine. Au niveau même de la religion, nous partageons des pratiques sociales. C'est donc une question de rapports équitables et justes. Parler de tautologie entre religion, terre et identité est un prétexte pour justifier des intérêts politiques.

J'estime que les choses n'ont pas le choix de se régler ou non. Le territoire est tellement petit. On ne peut pas s'ignorer les uns les autres. La loi internationale est claire. Pour les réfugiés, il faut reconnaître ce qui s'est passé en 1948. Il y a eu un nettoyage ethnique de toute une population. Même les historiens israéliens le reconnaissent. Plusieurs solutions sont déjà sur la table. Il ne manque que la volonté de la communauté internationale de respecter ses propres lois.



HABIBA

DA SILVA,

THE MUSE

TEXT by SARAN KOLY + PHOTOS by TOM KENNEDY



Web . www.habibadasilva.com
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She shares uplifting messages with candour and poise. Writer, poet, and trendsetter this 21-year-old Birmingham-born Brazilian-Lebanese beauty and fashion blogger has taken the internet by storm.

I'm originally half Lebanese-Syrian and half Brazilian; a mixture of many ethnicities, many people always ask and I always answer with "Lebanese/Brazilian" even though my roots are a little more complicated.

I grew up in a predominantly Arabic-cultured home. I appreciate it now that I'm older because I speak the language fluently and relate to the culture a lot. However, I wish I had been a little closer to my Brazilian side.

I believe my parents' ethnicities don't define me as Habiba, it defines my roots, it's the reason why I look the way I do. Sometimes, I do struggle to decide which culture I want to represent or which one I should hold closely. Being mixed can come with some self-questioning, but I hold strong to the belief that it is a beautiful thing. It's futuristic; it's a blend of two different cultures to create bi-cultural souls.

My parents came to the UK for better life and I really appreciate that they travelled and worked so hard for so long to give us this privileged life. There is definitely some things I won't understand because I'm British born and bred, but I know they struggled for this. I'm more appreciative towards what I have and where we are. My first mission is to create and share positivity and inspiration. I also like to shed light on struggles other than beauty and lifestyle.







**VANESSA
COORE
“THROUGH
ROSE
COLORED
GLASSES”**

TEXT by SARAN KOLY + PHOTOS by NORMAN “HAZ” COORE



She sees beauty everywhere and through vintage clothing she displays parts of her spiritual migrations, which she believes started in the 70s... Whether it was this realm or another, she was born during a time of freedom, self exploration and empowerment...

Where are you from?

I'm from California. I hear this question quite often since I currently live in Atlanta. I'm pretty sure there's something about the way I dress, the way I talk, the energy I give off that lets people know the South may not be my original home.

I was born in the Mojave Desert, southern California then moved up to northern California when I was seven. I was a free bird, and extremely active. I had roller blades, a BMX bike, a skateboard, everything you could think of. I lived outdoors and spent every single moment being embraced by the wild. I'm a true Cancer in my nature and would find small animals that were dead and give them a proper burial, and like ten names! I had a very deep connection with the sun and would sit in her glow baking for hours. She always made me feel like there was

something bigger than myself; that I was connected to a higher power.

Before I was aware of the term "Girl Power" I naturally embodied all of that. I was a competitor and challenged boys to anything and everything. I didn't like to be told I couldn't do something because I was a girl and always had to prove myself and my strength. One incident in particular, my best friend Nuru was throwing rocks against a brick wall with his brother and then hitting them with sticks. I wanted to play, but his brother told me no and that he doesn't play with girls. I was determined to play regardless and went to pick up a stick and got hit in the head with one of the large rocks. All I remember was people screaming and tons of blood everywhere. I woke up in the ER with 10 stitches, and a worried, yet not surprised mother.

The very next day I was right back out there, ready to go. I never really let it heal properly, because why would I. I can't even begin to tell you how many scars I have from accidents such as roller blading on a glass table and falling through and the list goes on and on.

TRACING MY ANCESTORS

I received my results from DNA.Ancestry.com one month ago. Being a Black American it can be extremely difficult to trace your ancestors. Slavery broke so much of our lineage and created no real paper trail besides ownership papers. I think the blacks living here felt like they had no other choice but to adapt to the traditions and ideals that were forced upon us. We had no other real reference.

I personally think the government should provide this service as a part of reparations to help heal the black community. It would allow for us to connect to something real, something not manipulated by the system; but that's another story. What I found was that I am 83% African, with the majority coming from Cameroon and the Congo. This was a beautiful discovery as I have a strong relationship with nature, wildlife, the sun and the warrior in me. I have links that go through the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Senegal, Benin and Togo too. I am 15% European, which I knew would be up in there somewhere. I do know that it doesn't have to all be in part to slavery, but I am processing it a little differently...I am, however, still open to learning more. I am 2% from India, Iran, and Armenia, which even though is small, I can definitely see how the journey through those countries

still managed to make a deep connection with my spirit.

FASHION, STYLE AND ART

I dressed myself...always! When I was young my mum just let me, be me...I think it was too much of a battle. I would wear my leotard to the grocery store, and run around the house all day in boots and underwear! To date nothing about that has changed! As far as art is concerned it has definitely played a very present role throughout. I've always enjoyed creating things by hand. As I've grown I've been fortunate enough to continue in that vein. I collect local art from my travels and display them all over my house as a way of always feeling a part of that moment...that story.

At first I wanted to become a lawyer because I liked to debate and wanted to be heard. I always felt like I had something to say and was always speaking up for people. I also wanted to be a vet, but as much as I loved, played with, and buried every animal... I was seriously allergic to them too! I do have a dog called Pinky and a pig called Pineapples that I manage to give that love to!

Then came the fashion element. After high school I went to the Fashion Institute for Design and Merchandising (FIDM) in LA and in some way have been involved ever









since. Now I have found ways to merge my love of both to make an even greater impact. I call it Positive Energy, through Positive Imagery. I use my love of fashion to tell you multiple stories. The fashion is just one element in my pictures, but I add in a message, or narrative that takes you even deeper into the photo.

IDENTIFYING AS CREATIVE

“Creativity is not a competition it’s a way of being...”

I think it’s great! I welcome individuals identifying themselves as creatives. It’s not for certain people, it’s for everyone, at every level. Creativity is not a competition it’s a way of being, a way in which you express yourself. There are no rules, no restrictions, no judgment.

There is a very interesting post I’d like to share with you where the author says: “I don’t like advice like “Do what you love and the money will follow.” Not because it isn’t true, but because it’s a monkey’s paw: it’s true under the right circumstances with the right people, and for everyone else, it’s just bad advice.” What is your opinion on this?

I think I can definitely see it both ways. I think if you told people they will only make their dreams come true under the right circumstances, with the right passion some people wouldn’t even try. They would automatically assume they would or wouldn’t have what it takes. On the other side no, not everyone who has a passion will be able to provide a means from it; but ultimately passion and money are two different things. We all hope we are able to find a way to provide solely based on what we love to do, but that also turns it into a business and can suck the actual passion right out of it. It can become more of an obligation. To me passion comes from the spirit, passion is the universe working through you, and for you. It’s meant to be shared...it’s meant to be expressed. I think we should continue to push each other to chase our dreams, because ultimately wherever we land I truly believe the journey will be worthwhile.

STYLE JOURNEY

My style Journey is not necessarily one I was conscious of, if that makes any sense at all. As of late I can look back at my wardrobe and notice the journey it took me on. I gravitate toward pieces that have their own story to tell. Vintage printed polyester from the 70s happen to find its way into my closet consistently. I have a very Global



Bohemian Vibe, but I can only say that now that I've actually taken a step back to look at it. I collect things from everywhere: from my travels; to thrift stores; to Target. Ironically at one of my last jobs I was required to know what Trending was. I follow NONE of that in my personal life. I don't think about when you wear what colours and in what season. I wear what my spirit gravitates toward and allow that energy to dress me. It's literally for me and no one else. Sometimes the clothes draw attention by their colour or print, but I personally don't need it. I'm extrovertly introverted. But if it creates a conversation with a like spirit, I'm definitely open to it!

***PROJECT TRIBE, BAZAAR BOHEMIAN,
PRINTED PATTERN PEOPLE...***

As of now we are focusing on sharing inspirational messages, love and happiness through various media with Project Tribe. It can be difficult managing a movement with a partner that is based out of the country, so in the meantime we are focusing on continuing to provide daily inspiration, empowerment and encouragement through @ProjectTribe.

As of this year I'm relaunching BazaarBohemian.com. It will be an interactive website that gives you even more of the layers my community asks for

on Instagram. I will have more in depth blog posts featuring narratives not just from myself, but a global perspective as well. I will post more photos in the realm of travel, daily life, fashion, spirituality and home. I'm very excited to know that this will be a beautiful community that I can personally cultivate and grow.

Printed Pattern People (PPP) is a brand which is owned, operated and designed by Shade Akanbi and I am the Brand Ambassador. I incorporate the wonderfully made pieces into my everyday life, and capture it for our social media community. PPP offers a unique assortment specialising in prints, patterns and textiles.

I will be co-designing a collection we are doing for Restival.Global. This is a seven-day retreat that will take place in the Sahara Desert in Morocco this November. We are the design partners and will produce an exclusive capsule collection filled with movement, textiles, sun drenched hues and fluidity. This collection will take you on a nomadic journey, so stay tuned!

FINDING A BALANCE

I don't manage! I don't find the energy! Ultimately I am still in the process of creating an easier flow, but in the meantime what keeps me going is the purpose. I read all the messages and emails from people

and know that the work I'm doing is so much bigger than me. I'm merely a vessel and the community is my fuel.

Finding balance can be difficult with everything always moving, but when I'm able to sit in silence and connect with nature, I'm able to find my centre. My home has a lot of windows and a deck that faces lots of trees, so it allows me to feel like I've escaped a little.

When I'm out and need to ground myself I stop, breathe, look around and find something that reminds me of this present moment and how beautiful it is. Yoga and meditation are vital ways of maintaining more centred Chakras; it reminds you to connect back into your energy source.

POSITIVE LOVE ENERGY

“...it is my obligation to tell the narrative of what it means to be a black creative woman...”

I know my mission is to spread #PositiveLoveEnergy through every outlet I have access to and send lots of positive energy through positive imagery into the world. I use my photos as a way of

communicating, as well as the messages I attach to them. It fills my spirit to see so many people, from all different backgrounds, all different cultures, all over the world resonate with everything so deeply. I'm not a writer, nor am I a photographer, but I hear the calling from the universe and it's my honour to answer.

As an activist it is my obligation to tell the narrative of what it means to be a black creative woman with a message. I have to write my own story because if not society will write one for me. I'm complex, I'm dynamic, I'm multi-faceted and I am actively fighting against the stereotypes that weigh on my community.

I hope to continue to bridge the gap between our races, our cultures, all while giving insight. Before I am anything else I am a being, a force but I am also a brown baby and am using whatever resources I have to show them the love, admiration and respect that they tend to get left out of. I am a warrior of light for my people and to me that means actively finding ways to shift negatives into positives and opening up lines of communication across the world. This is my life's work, this is my purpose.





MERON ESTEFANOS, THE LIFELINE

TEXT by SARAN KOLY + PHOTOS by MARTA STRENG



Her phone number is the last resort for Eritrean refugees, kidnapped, tortured and held for ransom in Sudan and Sinai.

Meron Estefanos was 13 when she moved to Sweden. “I’m a lucky one, my father had been living here for many years and I joined him. I quickly learned the language.” Meron’s mother stayed in Eritrea. “This was the hardest part, being so far from my mother.”

In 2002, she moved back to Eritrea, in the Horn of Africa. “Eritrea has one of the most repressive regimes in the world, where everyone has forced national service from the age of 17 to 50. The regime basically owns your life until you are 50 years old; that’s for women and for men. I realised my childhood friends spent years in military service. One of our neighbours had disappeared. I didn’t have to go through this.” She is quickly reminded of the privilege to be a Swedish citizen. “If I can’t help the Eritrean people while in Eritrea, then maybe I should help the Eritrean people from outside of the country,” she said.

“I started with radio (programme) in South Africa. They trained me, taught me

everything about broadcasting. Then a friend wanted a female voice for another radio and told me I could do a show about human rights.” She thought it was too broad and “narrowed it down to refugee issues Eritreans face inside and outside the country. “This is how Voices of Eritrean Refugees was born. “We started getting feedback from people in Eritrea.” But she insists: “I don’t see journalism as my profession, I’m an activist.”

THE SOUND OF TORTURE

“The Sinai Bedouins put them in shackles and give them phones. They force them to call their families while they are being tortured.”

“In 2010 I received a call from a guy in the UK who told me his brother had been kidnapped. He was being asked to pay a ransom. He gave me the number and I decided to call to investigate if this was true.” She asks if she can broadcast the interview on her show. “Although I had heard about the kidnappings, this had been my first contact with a family that had someone who was kidnapped and my



first encounter with the kidnappers. They allowed me to talk to hostages.” Since then, the calls never stopped. “The hostages saved my number, it circulated in different torture camps, and they would call me to tell their stories.”

Held at locations in North Sinai and in Egypt, the hostages tell of beatings, burnings, women raped repeatedly every hour, and babies deprived of food and water. The phones work as tools for the kidnappers to force the hostages to call their families and ask a ransom as soon as they arrive in Sinai. “The Sinai Bedouins put them in shackles and give them phones. They force them to call their families while they are being tortured. This is a way to apply pressure on their families to pay the ransom. Unless it’s paid, the mutilation and death will not stop. For the last five years this is all that I’ve been doing. I speak to them on a daily basis. We’re talking about hundreds of hostages, and many of them have died,” she insists.

According: “Since 2004, over 200,000 Eritreans have fled repression and destitution at home to remote border camps in eastern Sudan and Ethiopia, dodging Eritrean border guards with shoot to kill orders against people leaving without permission. They have no work prospects in or near the camps and until 2010, tens

of thousands of them have had to pay smugglers who took them through Sinai to Israel.” By 2011, Israel had completed large sections of a 240-kilometre fence along its border with Sinai to keep them out. “Since then, traffickers have continued to kidnap Eritreans in eastern Sudan and sell them to Egyptian traffickers in Sinai,” says the organisation.

“ Since 2010, \$600 million dollars has been paid in ransoms. The torture is done by the Bedouins and the kidnappings are done by the Sudanese during the Eritreans’ escape into the Sudan,” explains Estafanos, who co-authored *The Human Trafficking Cycle: Sinai and Beyond*¹.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that about 4,000 Eritreans flee the country each month and as of mid-2014, more than 313,000 Eritrean; over 5 percent of the population; have fled.

“ The whole international community remains silent. The U.S. could stop this kidnapping and torture in a day if they wanted to. They could give aid to Egypt and use it to pressure the government”

Estefanos wants the world to know and take action. For a year and a half,

¹ van Reisen, M; Estefanos, M; & Rijken, C (2013) *The Human Trafficking Cycle: Sinai and Beyond* [Draft], Wolf Legal Publishers, Oisterwijk



documentary filmmaker Keren Shayo followed the activist. They captured the feeble cries of a newborn baby in a torture house, the trauma of a released hostage, the horror, the pain and the daily struggle of asylum seekers in the pursuit of a better life in the documentary: *Sound of Torture*. Her work takes Estefanos all over the world.

Back in Stockholm, Meron Estefanos keeps receiving calls. What could stop Eritreans from fleeing? “The root cause is the regime that is driving people out of the country. In Eritrea, a mafia-like regime exploits its people and makes money in the name of its people.

The journalist operates from her kitchen. Her phone never stops ringing. “People call me all the time. My friends are annoyed by these calls because we always get depressing news and when we think we have heard the worst, there is another call and we realise that the worst is possible.”

“...I hear women and children screaming, crying. I try to calm them down, but this is when I feel the most powerless.”

In the summer, she gets calls from people in a boat crossing the Mediterranean Sea. “They tell me they are drowning and ask for my help, they tell me their lives are in my hands, I hear women and children screaming, crying. I try to calm them down, but this is when I feel the most powerless.” GPS coordinates are hard to find, sometimes their batteries go down. She usually quickly calls the Italian authorities to help. “Now it’s a bit better it takes 7 to 8 hours but before it used to take 48 hours. I tell them they come by boat not by helicopter but during this 7 or 8 hours, they keep calling every couple of minutes, and I can’t do more it’s terrible.”

The single mother of two is exhausted. “I’m busy all day with the refugees then my two sons, sometimes I go to bed but I can’t sleep because I’m thinking about one of the calls. I sit and think and watch movies to change my mind, that’s the only treat I give myself to relax.”

Financially, the situation is hard. “I struggle to make ends meet. I can’t sustain myself.” Her fourteen-year-old son is supportive but he says, “Mom, we appreciate what you do but you don’t make any money with this job”. After ten years of voluntary work, she says: “I am completely bankrupt.” She has hopes to soon start a new paid job as a researcher for refugees’ human rights.

Meron Estefanos is burnt out. “You start being an activist because you think you can make a change, but it’s so hard, so slow, it is frustrating. I would like to be able to do a lot more.” When asked what keeps her going, she says: “I’m humbled and inspired by the people. They are so courageous. I admire their faith in life. In a country like Eritrea, with a shoot-to-kill policy, I would never risk my life. But they do, they take their chance. They are the real heroes.”



