

# «CONVERSAS DIVERSAS»

## SIXTH EPISODE: «CONNECTIVITY, HERITAGE AND POWER»

BONAVENTURE:

SORAYA LUTANGU

MARSHA!:

AUDRE VERNECK

ANA GISELLE

SL: Wow!

AG: So, I'm Ana Giselle a.k.a. a transälien. So, my work as an artist is really about projecting utopias, you know? To make them real. And my experience on this planet... about everything, I start to know this place from this cosmovision of a stranger on the Earth, you know?

SL: I feel you.

AG: And I'm also a founder of the Collective Marsha! which is also a culture collective of trans people here based in São Paulo.

AV: Yes. My name is Audre Verneck. I am a member of this collective. I am a producer, cultural producer. Our meetings as a collective and as people, I mean, it had to happen. And this meeting creates all the things that we're here to talk about and all the things we want to talk about the future and things we're doing. And it's about this future we're building right now.

SL: First of all, your accents and your energies are amazing.

AV: Thank you.

SL: I'm really, really happy that you like to talk, and you like to share. We're definitely in an age where this kind of conversation, this kind of connectivity is just so important. OK. So, my name is Bonaventure. I'm a Swiss-Congolese musician and performance artist, and at the moment, I'm working and living in Kampala, Uganda. / As an African person, to come back here in Africa, it is... Girls, there is a lot. There is a lot of theories.

AG: I can't even imagine.

SL: There is a lot of dreams. There is a lot of, like, spiritual power that somehow, I didn't have access to get when I was living in Europe. You know, like, it's very different when you're on the land that holds so much power to your own

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ancestry. And, to the person organizing this conversation, I was saying the other day that one of the trigger moments in my life to really start thinking about coming back to Africa was the tour that I did in Brazil.

**AV:** Really?

**SL:** Yeah, really. Literally, the energies that are in Brazil, and this Afro-descendent force, and this warmth, but not only the positive stuff, also the darkness that I felt there in Brazil. All of those things really, kind of like, opened my eyes in the sense that I was, like, really realizing to the outside of the West, there's something that is a goal for me. It's a goal, you know. And to be around Afro-descendent people, to be around black people, it's the trip in Brazil that made me realize how much I needed that on a daily basis. I don't... I really wanted to limit my proximity with white mass and with the West in general.

**AV:** You got me thinking that you are... we're connecting the body and the mind in our works. It's about the movement that runs in our veins in our blood that moves everything around us. And when you talk about Brazil and this experience, it's about our ancestry too and something that has been erased by the colonization that it's our job to bring it back and research our history. You got me thinking a lot about this.

**SL:** Yeah, to recognize. To recognize also that we are not just the children of our parents. Like, we literally have, like... we are part of this lineage, we are part of a heritage that sometimes can be a real weight on the shoulders. It's really hard because, as you just said, we have so much work to do. You know what I mean? We have so much research to do.

**AV:** Yes.

**SL:** And very often, it comes at a price. It's not free to also open your third eye. It's not free. Then you really start realizing things about your environment and how your environment can affect the relationship that you have with your multiple selves, you know?

**AV:** Yes, definitely. Definitely.

**AG:** Yeah, it was me doing the voice, actually. I always try not to get so emotional about it. We've been doing this work since 2018, right? And it's really about praising our sisterhoods, you know, in these connections, in these exchanges that we are making in this moment. So, all of the work that we develop right now is really about praising and celebrating our existence here in Brazil in front of this government that's so awful to all of us, you know, even in the LGBTQ community, black community, Indigenous community. So, this work that we're developing right now in this moment is really about "reaffirming" our lives here. That's why I think it's so important to us.

**AV:** It's a big thing for us because we're understanding that there is nobody but us that will talk about our lives, talk about what matters to us, talk about not just our deaths, not just putting in the news, we're not talking about it anymore. We're talking about our lives, and what we are creating through this fucked-up system that wants to kill us and we're refusing to be killed by it.

**SL:** I really praise you for that. That's such an important work. To reestablish, "OK, what is our narrative? And how can we create new ways to broadcast that?" / OK, what is it to adore God blindly? And what is it that sometimes you adore a DJ the same way that you adore a God? And it's really interesting also to try to develop a buddy language together with the choir, because this theatre piece was commissioned by theatres in Europe and Switzerland. The Arsenic Theatre in Lausanne, my hometown, is the producer of this piece and there is a lot of questions that come when me, as an Afropean, I go back to Africa to develop a piece, a theatre piece with only black people that I share with my Congolese heritage. But also, there is so many questions that goes into showing a black work in Switzerland where our public is going to be 80-90% white, you know? And it's a piece that we're developing without language, like, you won't have any dialogue, you will have a lot of music, a lot of lyrics, but we decided to really focus on this universal language of being a human looking for trance. Because the way music works on a scientific level even, like, our brains are answering to brainwaves that can bring us to a trance. So, music is magic, first of all.

**AV:** There's an energetic power that comes across.

**AG:** It's all about frequency, you know? Once that we, all of us, we're made out of frequency and the frequency itself is the sound, is the music, is everywhere around us.

**SL:** You know, to put the accent on the energies is such an important thing, because we are really linked, all of us. It sounds so fucking corny but, like, I really do believe in quantal memories or in collective knowledge, you know? When I'm producing a track and that comes this vibration... You know this higher vibration of creativity? There is so much depth...

**AV:** It's a stage.

**AG:** Those insights.

**SL:** Yeah, absolutely. It's really just like going on this other level of "knowing". The thing that I'm very conscious of, when we're talking about ideas, when we're talking about ownership, you know, the ownership of the sound, like, you know, Michael Jackson has the ownership of the "hee-hee". We know it's him.

**AV:** It makes part of us.

**SL:** Yeah. All of those things, I really do believe that there is a connectivity and that if you are not doing music, if you are not having ideas, if you are not inspired, all the work is ill, my creative process is going to be hurt as well. But if you are inspired, if you are meeting with your community, if you are celebrating each other's life, it's easier for me to create the same space here in Uganda.

**AG:** I believe that today we are all connected, right?

**SL:** Absolutely, absolutely. And I think art is a beautiful conductor to bring out, it's almost like a pretext to meet, to bring out those frequencies and everything.