

My friend was selected by the Ethno mobility program and he told me about this. I was inspired by wanting to live musical experiences. At the same time, although I didn't have the financial means to travel to Europe, I had access to cheap tickets through my mum's husband who worked for an airline, and so I took this as a 'okay, now I have to go'.

At first it was a shock - the first thing that I realised was the social difference between the place where I come from and the place, the situation, in which the people who were receiving me were. Going to Ethno England, and being in Europe I felt this big great dimension of being in touch with so many different cultures and to me that was like opening up a big door of, wow, this is big, and different from being there and focussed on my own place and my own reality where I've been so far. I was in touch with people from different places and, at the same time, in a place of discomfort because I was outside of Brazil which is my comfort zone.

I felt I dislocated from the place that I came from, into a completely different culture to adapt myself to that space. This felt strange, at first, because I was coming from such a different place. It was very challenging and at times I didn't feel supported by the organisers. Brazil is very marked by slavery and

“A sense of freedom”

colonialism and this influence that came from Europe. People in Brazil admire so much the European culture. I felt the social differences were very clear, very visible. I felt that there was something missing, because to me, things were so different, and it was very new, everything in that sense.

It changed my life completely. I realised that the world doesn't have as many frontiers or borders as I thought it had, and I came to realise how much I put limitations to the things that I do, in all aspects of my life. This experience has given me a sense of freedom, what freedom and liberty is. Having experienced this has actually led to many unlockings of desires and wishes - not only musically, but also movements and general in my life.

An example of this in this professional realm is the fact of being a woman and being a musician; being a woman who plays accordion is not the same as being a man playing accordion, so after being to Ethno England I realised oh, I can expand, I can be this and there is the place in the world for me and I am here and I am going to take this place for myself.

Musically, I felt an openness, I felt an interest, so musically it was flowing, but and socially there was no interest, to understand how I view the world, where do I come from, and that made me





D E A T H R A T

really irritated and angry, because that's where appropriation happens, in this moment.

One big change was how I perceived my own value, and also connected to this, I guess, it's recognising my own fragility, in relation to my own value. What changed was I see the value that I have, that my culture has, and I saw that I can't give this, to give value of myself or my culture to the people receiving me, in that case, in Ethno England. That's one thing that I got out of it. I give value to this, I have my own value, and my culture has its own value and it's not up to other people to give value to that, but myself. So it's more connected to the external world because it's very fragile, this interaction, to be in this context, when people have historically dominated a situation so much. So to be conscious of that, to not put this value...

Being a woman, and a musician, when I look to male musicians, I tend to shrink and not take my space. When men are like, 'here, look, play together with me, this is your space on stage.' The Ethno England experience, was an exercise in this same sense, of a dominant culture

and a dominated culture. It was an exercise to not forget that I do have my space, the culture that I come from has its space, even though that I feel like the place is oppressive or dominant, so this is one change that I got from this experience. To don't forget about this, because I know what my value is, but it was a good exercise to realise this, to see it happening, and to continue to go on, even though this contrast was present.

It's also a big transformation also, to be here having this conversation with you, I don't speak from the place of a victim. I learned a lot.

So I guess it was this knowing that I'm a citizen of the world, that made me do this. My family, that never left the state of Sao Paulo. But knowing there are so many other different ways of seeing the world, of experiencing things, of living it, of playing music, of interacting with other people, and having this desire to feel ever more included in this big world and to keep on exchanging with people, musically also, that's what made me go for it.

Looking back, I'm very thankful for the experience.

As told to: Maya

“I’m a citizen of the world”

