

## MY JOURNAL

**Salma is currently an artist in residence with Dance North as part of the Arts in Moray (AIM) Collective programme. AIM is a Culture Collective project, funded by Scottish Government through Creative Scotland.**

AN INVITATION to observe excerpts of A Personal journal written during my residency. Often on the scenic train from Glasgow-Forres via Inverness/Aberdeen. This has become an invaluable understanding and evaluation to being a resident Dance Artist in Rural Scotland, finding both nourishment and challenges along the way.

- I felt for the first time I was able to call-out, sing, reflect on the last 2 years and the Race card. I am not responsible in educating White people.
- Generations from the past, Defining Culture, being brought up to SHUT UP! Being shamed and blamed. Sharing racial prejudice. Loving our Mothers, be it a difficult journey of understanding each other-being Queer & Black & a Mother.
- Invited to a BBQ and this is the first conversation:

“Is your name from the film “Selma?” “No, but that was a ground-breaking story in history”. “I worked in South Africa and our company got fined for employing Coloured Folk”. “You mean Black & Asian people, right?” “Is that what they are called now?” “Yes”.

I suddenly put these comments aside because he tells me he helped build the Railways in East Africa. I smile and say we something in COMMON; my late Grandfather worked on the Railways in Tanzania.

- Findhorn Café: I get coffee, a family, the Mother quickly moved her croissant and child away from the table when I asked if they were using the table. I will stop smiling sweetly when people look at me like I’m a Beast!
- MY EMOTIONS: Education, Child/Youth, Difficulties, Expression/ Voice, Challenging, Isolating. SPACE FOR: Safe & Secure. COMMUNITY: Meet, Listen, Find, Share. WORKING BASE TO EXPLORE: Reflection, Reconnect to movement, Recognise Diversity.
- Beautiful orange & blue sunset rippling tones on the water, as I sit eating pizza with a resident.

“Do you call yourself POC?” “I only feel the need to IDENTIFY myself, A Black Woman, when I am surrounded by people who make me feel DISPLACED.

- Mother’s Day, I am again overwhelmed by the laughter, joy, dance, grounding, and celebration as my Sunday morning class is generously received by the community. I tell one of the regular attendees, of whom always worries about being late and finding time to be share her joy of Dance, especially since Covid,

“The energy you bring to this class is beautiful. You are a spring flower blossoming, sharing generous soul”. Such gratitude for others who have travelled an hour to attend my class.

- Trying to understand people's behaviour, knowing lack of diversity, whilst chatting to a kind world-travelled resident.

"Would People not come to class because you are Black?"

WHAT does that mean to me? Painful to even hear it.

- Called my Mentor, so excited to share the PRIDE of getting through creative process alone for the first time. Something 'electric' in my bones being in the woods, ALONE at 7am, fear but the silence is healing to a 'foreigner' in Rural land.
- Offered Outdoor First Aid Course, great meeting different community members from various fields of work.

"When People of Colour, Global Majority suffer a shock or Heart Attack, their palms don't go white, their face does not look Ashen or extremities Blue!" I ask the Trainer whether he would consider having examples to suit all people, and the 'dummies' could also reflect skin-tone and other genders rather than just white and male. I am responded with ignorance of Race, EDUCATION speaks volumes.

- Spoke to my Mentor about taking in a lot in Findhorn, I felt "too much" today, where is ME? I need to find my boundaries, but I am so passionate about connecting with the community and finding common ground, or not in diversity and inclusion.

"I am too old to do this class" "This is so much better than meditation, the only practice we are offered here". "What joy to Dance again TOGETHER after Covid".

- I am thrilled to find a woman who runs a Choir to work with, but: "My coloured friend also likes to sing". "Not coloured, you mean Black?" "She calls herself coloured"! "WOW, I think you shouldn't call her that". "What you've experienced is ignorance NOT Racism". "It's sometimes Racist". "PEOPLE ARE NOT USED TO SEEING YOU HERE, they don't know".

In reflection I think: OH YES, THEY DO KNOW, this is 2022. Besides you're NOT BLACK, so you don't know how I FEEL!

### **CULTURE COLLECTIVE: (An outstanding offering to the community of Artists)**

**Reflection on those incredibly nourishing, therapeutic zoom meetings; a place I never thought I would find solace in listening & learning with an open heart. It is exactly that which brought an abundance of understanding the complexity of working, creating, achieving, revising, crying, laughing, being with PEOPLE!! The journey is a beautiful and powerful reminder of loneliness and isolation during Covid. I continue to offer gratitude to this team, I challenge the fear of self-employment, what comes next? Am I too old, too different, too vulnerable, too clever, too honest, too kind, too ME? My dream job, continuing my Education, accepting Therapy, BEING HEARD. I am now**

**equipped with the knowledge, the journey is safe in good hands, great understanding, human kindness. Gratitude.**