

**PES DESCALÇOS CC
INTERVIEW.**

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PD> Please describe yourself, your practice and aspiration?

A> I am an Angolan and Portuguese artist. I was born in Angola and went to live in the suburbs of Lisbon when I was 3/4 years old, where I grew up and studied. I have always been interested in thinking about things and making new ones. My first pick at high school was electronics! I spent a year studying it and falling in love with art at the same time, drawing in classes. I changed course after that, to arts, and even if I didn't really thought of being an artist for a while, that year was the start of all of this that I am doing.

My practice takes shape in various different media – sculpture, drawing, video, photography and more. I am very interest in speaking to the general public and in using my art as part of the social, economic and political arenas of life. I have become more and more interested in using objects from specific contexts and with symbolic meanings, that seem very vulgar but that have the power to create reactions with the public as the public is very used and comfortable with them. The human figure is a very important part of my work, broadly more as a strategy to engage with the viewer. I have learned to trust my process of work and to balance it with what it is or not expected.

My aspirations are always to do more and to get better. No specific target - institutions, number of zeros in my account, galleries, and museums. Better and further.

PD> the idea of home for many people mean the place where the heart belonged, is that notion of home has any link with childhood to you? Please guide us to the place that you call home?

A> My childhood was very good and happy, I can only thank my parents and family for this. My first 3/4 years were in Luanda where I was born. I have very few and vague, but important, memories of course. After that I lived in the suburbs of Lisbon for many years. My home has been Lisbon for many years but I actually struggle with calling Lisbon my home. I have lived in Luanda, Lisbon, Athens, London and Malange, and even if Lisbon is where I spent most time, I have a connection with all of these places, so when I think of home I might think of many different places. There are two places that I also have a strong connection with: one is a small village in the north of Portugal, called Alhais de Cima, where my grandmother lived and where I actually have the only house that I own. The other near Benguela, the city where my mother was born. It is a small beautiful beach called Caotinha where we had short but good memories and where we left my mother's ashes after she passed away years ago.

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PD> who are your domestic legends? Please describe the relationship that you can recall with it.

A> I have a few, fictional and real, but none was ever at a legend level. I think my core family was and is always essential for my development and balance.

PD> Your practice encompasses photography and video. Please elaborate what role they play on your process and your approach with each one?

A> They are very important in my art practice and I use them with a documental approach most of the time. I choose very carefully when to use video or photography and actually I rarely think about making video and photography, this choice always happens halfway into a project. The first time that I used video was when I did a project in Luanda, which started with a visit to a market. I went to Catinton market to look for the makers of the wheelbarrows called Raboteiros that are used to transport various things – bags of rice, water, etc – driven by one person that moves a small cargo from point A to B. I decided to film my visit to the market, the building of one of these raboteiros and my conversation with the makers about how is their life, work, etc. I realised that this video was very important because the project was about the wheelbarrows that are part of the aesthetics and the parallel economy of the city. Documental video and photography are recordings of real life and the information that they contain is very raw so this allows me to expand the meaning and symbolism of what I am researching about. Gradually I am using these two medias more often as I am more interested in field research to start a project.

PD> Please take us through your creative process and how different places may affect or influence your work?

A> I think it's always so difficult to describe the creative process, as it is a constant and on-going thing. What I have learned is that the first step is that I need to put myself in situations or contexts that are part of what I am working about. For example, I started a project in 2016 about migration in Europe and the first steps were reading about it, looking for visual and written information about it, but soon I realised that I had to go to a place that had this problem. I ended up going to the island of Lesbos in Greece, to work with a NGO that was helping refugee and migrant boats land on the shores of this island. My time at the island was divided between working for this NGO at the beaches scouting for boats, assisting with the arrivals of people and with visits to different locations of the island to talk to people, collect objects, photograph and film. All my experience and documentation was taken to my studio and then used to produce works. Putting myself on that island for that period of time was a big investment and stressing, but that's what makes the project interesting.

I have been exhibiting in many different countries / continents and of course I am influenced by these places, especially because I am interested in sourcing materials locally. So there is a big impact on the works because some of the materials or objects are unique to some locations, or have a strong connection to the local culture. As I said I am focused in talking to the general public and going from local to global, so I have to adapt to using these materials and objects in my practice without limitations

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to finds ways for them to make sense in the place that I am exhibiting and maybe in the next place that they travel to.

PD> Using your past, present or on-going projects as examples, please tell us more about the themes you are dealing with, your interests and how it give emphasis to your work?

A> At the moment I am working on a project that it's the biggest sculpture in size that I ever made, called Free Entry, financed by the Portuguese Representation of the European Union, and inspired on the a book called Manual of Tyranny by Theo Deotinger. This book is a study of structures, strategies and constructions that control people and borders. This is a project for Festival Politica in Lisbon, Braga and Évora,

This project embodies a line of thought that I am working on that focus on concepts such as borders, identity displacement, division, inequality and responsibility. I am also using a type of strategy to develop the work that I am very interested in, which focus on the larger audiences and the experience that the sculptures provokes. Free Entry is a sculpture that resembles a big jail with 2 entries on each side, made by turning tourniquets. I want to create contrasts of ideas that direct the viewer to think about a contemporary issue - so placing a big aggressive jail in a cinema, a garden and a square, and inviting the public to choose how to enter it by using tourniquets, with signs at both entrances saying goodbye and welcome – invites the public to thing about how important public space is, about how free is this public space, about what it is to divide a space and how we can change from one position to another.

I am also preparing a show in Luanda where I am working about burglar bars that are present in most buildings around the city to protect houses, on windows, doors, balconies, etc. I am very interested in these and they are present in most buildings, dividing public space from private space and a lot of the times they are decorative as well. People are totally used to them as they are everywhere and they do a job of creating division in a city with so much inequality, so using these bars is very interesting to me as they will allow me to talk about daily problems of Luanda and of our relationship between ourselves in big cities.

PD>What are the iconography has the most significant meaning to you and has influenced directly or indirectly you practice? Please share it with us? My intuitive answer would be classic Greek and Roman sculpture. It has influenced my a lot since the beginning of my interest in art. At first I was very attached to the idea of using the human body and in copying it. I have moved on from that and even if today my work is still very figurative, the use of the human figure is a strategic choice and not an emotional one.

A>

PD>Could define your practice using four descriptive keywords:

1. Strategy
2. daily-life
3. anthropomorphic
4. symbolism

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PD>Please do share with us any thought, worries, suggestions or criticism regarding the state of art in the world by emphasizing the Angola art scene?

A> I'll skip this one if that's ok.

PD> Is there anything relevant that you would like to share with us, by take on the cultural Angolan context?

A> I would say that there is a need for more platforms, institutional or independent, that would allow new artists to develop themselves to a more professional level. But of course, starting with the public education system.

Thank you!

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