

Tabita Rezaire

ARTIST

I'm infinity, I'm part of the infinite cycle of life and I'm a teacher. A teacher is an ... an embodiment of teachings. Teachings flow through me, and I'm just here to deliver those teachings.

And you're keeping them safe and like sharing them and then they will sprout, so like you're planting seed. Okay, I'm a gardener with a soul. I'm planting. That's what being an artist is for me. Planting seeds, seeds of consciousness. Seeds of love, you know. Into the mind of people, into the heart, into the soul, into the bodies of people.

So, how did it happen. So I was studying economics. I did a BA in economics. I mean I wanted to be a doctor. And then I was like, ah-. Okay non, so I've always wanted to be a fashion designer. That was like, what I wanted to be, I mean dreamlife. And then, because I was very good at school, I got a bit like brainwashed by the high school I was in. And they were very like enforcing the value that like: "Oh when you're good at school like, you have to do like even- only like law school, like medicine school, economics", whatever. Like- and when I was like "I want to do like fashion", they were like: "That's a waste of brain". And that kind of like, I don't know, I was young, influenceable, I don't know, like it got to me. So, I was like: "Okay whatever, I do economics". And then I was just depressed, and it was just horrible. So eventually I moved to Denmark, and I decided, to- to do the fashion thing, you know. So I applied to *Saint Martins* and got in. And when I was there, like, I was doing this pluri-disciplinary year and you had to choose and I don't know why, like, I just signed out, like literally. I don't know what happened. So my whole life I've waited to be there to do fashion and then like, I don't know. So here I am, doing this thing and then, yeah, I guess, I mean, then I did a MA in a- a research MA in experimental cinema.

I was doing a master in experimental cinema, artist moving image, and I was doing research. No practice, I've never actually studied art like practice based, but I was doing like my own thing on the side, like I was like shooting on me like super eight. I had my little theater stage in my room in London, like I wanted to be a theater player also at the time.

And so I was doing research on- okay, the title of my thesis was "From cruelty to ecstasy. The scream of resistance in film-performance". It's very funny, because now that I think about it, like in that, and it was like, I don't know, now, six, seven years ago and at that time I've never thought of making art, really of being an artist. And I feel it's as if I wrote the whole like conceptual theoretical, like framework or what I was gonna do, you know, like years before. And I even find a chapter in my- on my computer that was called "Ecstasy. The metaphysical body".

ARTWORK

I guess, my work in general has to do with connection. How do we connect? To what do we connect? With what do we connect? Like what tools do we use to connect? What- who connect with who, how- like why- like all of this. And how does it feel, the way we connect to each other?

So I made this work, called "*Deep Down Tidal*" and in it I look at transoceanic networks of information and communication. One of them being the internet, because the internet goes through fiber optic cables under the ocean. And so, I found out that those cables are actually layered onto formal colonial shipping routes. And I was like: "Wow!" – because before like, I've been just like searching or like researching the relationship between the internet and colonialism, and the internet as a colonized space and how much the internet was a space of- of oppression, that reinforced exclusion, oppression, exploitation. So, to realize that the architecture of the internet itself is layered onto, or is related to colonial geography, was striking, actually, to say the least, you know. And I wondered what energetically, what it would mean, you know, or what it actually- what it does mean. But maybe in both like ways, it can be- it can reinforce, you know, that suffering of that history or maybe it is a call, you know, to heal those lines and those routes by the way that we use the internet today and what information we

share and which information travels those fiber optic cables along the ocean. So I was talking about the different ways that I understand technology. And for instance, like- so you have a global communication system that uses the ocean as an interface for communication. But in African spirituality and also in like many indigenous spirituality, water is seen as a conscious being, water is alive, and water is a messenger, an interface between the world of the spirit and the material world. So, through like different practices involving water with its libation or like water healing or like sacred baths or like drinking specific water or praying to the water or invoking like water spirits. So, water [?] snakes or serpents or like- you connect to the world of spirits, you know, to the world of ancestors or depending in different traditions. So, water is a technology of communication and of information because water speaks. If you listen, you know, she shares messages. So, in itself, she is a- an ICT, an information and communication technology. But it's beautiful in a way to see that our modern technology use water also as a communication interface, but that people throughout time have and still now use water to- to communicate, you know. Yeah, for instance, that's an example of like those layers, you know, to understand technology in different ways, in all its potential. And how they- they merge, you know at specific points, and that's beautiful. Like now, as I just told you, the research I'm doing on the sky, how like a- a rocket or spaceship going exploring like another planet can be related to, you know, technology, from which we can do like in-sky traveling, you know. People have traveled through time and space like, without like going on a rocket you know. Just by meditation or like trancework or like connecting through ancestors, like there's different ways, different technology available.

PRODUCTION

I believe, that our bodies, beings are an interface in themselves that can receive information from source. If you listen, if you grow the capacity to listen to the sound that do not- that you cannot hear. And so that's intuition, receiving messages from source from the universe, that's intuition, connecting to your intuition. And so with that understanding comes also the- and for me the feeling, that- I'm in service of a greater force, that everything that I do, is to serve infinity in a way. And my work is a part of this. So, I'm just a channel to [explanatory noise] receive something and like through me it goes and goes into the world. So, I'm being used basically by the universe, to- for the universe to do its work. I'm just a, yeah, a vehicle. So in that sense, what's fundamental my responsibility for me is, to clear those channels, so that I can receive the information, so that I know, what's asked of me to do. So, it's cleaning my subconscious, cleaning my mess, like refining my antennas and like [explanatory noise] to be alert and aware in order to hear the messages when they come, because they always come, but most of us we're like closed off, you know. And we don't- we shut them down. So it's like open up [explanatory noise] all those like centers to receive and that's how my work come, that's how inspiration come. So sometime I'm just gonna like- there's no way I'm just- I can be doing anything like cooking, like reading, like walking around, whatever and I'm gonna [exclamation] "I need to do this". And then, I start the journey, you know. And along the way like it's like: "Ah, I receive". So, I'm just like channeling. So that's, yeah, my process of like channeling messages and just like intuiting, what's the next move, what's the next process, what's the next phase. Ouais, that's it, ouais. But then- yeah, it's like- I feel like I'm guided, to do the things, that I do. Like there's something that send me to these people, so that these people tell me the story and I'm like: "oh wow", and I feel touched and I'm like: "I need to share this to the world". And then I start research and then, you know, I meet these people and these and these and these and I gather all those things and I go to all those places and just like why, you know. And I think like how. It's like- it's beyond me, it's way beyond me.

So I make a work of art, I birth a work that will have its own life. It's like giving birth to child and the child is not yours, it has its own life, its own destiny to fulfill. An artwork is the same, I'm not in control of like the effect my work is going to have in the world, in peoples' life. My only responsibility is to birth it. Then it has its own life. So when someone reach out to me: "I wanna show this work" – who am I to tell them "no", you know? Because maybe this person asked, because someone is gonna see that work, and its gonna transform them in some way

and they gonna then do this and that would be the fulfillment of this work. I don't know, you know, so I cannot hinder the flow, you know, of that works' destiny. That's how I feel about it, you know.

MATERIAL

My material is stories. That's how- or from what I make work. That's from what I- that's what inspires me. It's when I know I'm gonna make a work when I encounter story that like shifts on seeing me and I'm like: "Wow, this was so profound like, I need to like share this". And then I'm like- constellate different stories. This, okay it makes me think of this and that and then [explanatory noise]. And you create the whole world around that story and then you give it form. And then you are like [explanatory noise] birth something, you know. But it's stories, that's it. That's my medium or- non, I said material, yeah. It's the same almost.

Those stories or those constellations, they materialize in my work through like screens or like films and like energy streams, you know. Because I also hold collective healing, which are like a space for me, to share those stories. But actually, thinking about it now, it's all about like movement. Whether it's like image moving or like body moving or like energy center, like shifting and moving. So maybe it's- yeah, it's movement that materializes those stories. I mean, stories are moving themselves. They are movement. They are emotions.

MEDIUM

So for me, my understanding would be that my material is stories. Because that's the raw material. Or maybe it's a feeling, I don't know, it could be. Or like a- [explanatory noise] a sense of urgency. Or a sense of radical transformation, you know, that- like an inner storm, but beautiful storm, you know. Okay, I don't know, so that- . Okay now I'm moving too much. And- . Otherwise, I can also speak in terms of: "Yes, my medium is like a video installation or performance" [mocking voice], you know, that's also a thing. But that's not really interesting to me, you know, because that you can see. And when you see my work, you can say it yourself, you don't need me, to say this right.

So, an information needs to be encoded in a format in order to be shared, you know, in order to travel. So, if the information- my material is stories, then the encoding can have different realms of existence. One is first maybe the research process, the encounters from which I gather the stories, that's the main part of- it's my favorite part actually of work [laughs] – then you have maybe the manifestation of it in different like forms or one would be film, I work often with film, and video like [explanatory noise] creating from older stories like something else, you know. So then it becomes a- an interface, that's the word, the different interfaces for those stories. So, one would be film than one would be more energetic, because I hold healing circles in my practice and so that's a different interface for me to share those stories and to connect with people on a- on a different way. You know, I feel like a lot of my video work are very like- maybe more like head based, because there's a lot of information, they're very dense, so you connect from here. And maybe my healing circle it's more like- it allows a space in order to connect like heart to heart, so it's a different knowledge center, that's activated through the body. So, it- yeah, it's more speaking to soul, you know, rather than trying to share a message maybe. You know, in my video work, there's things I wanna say, whereas in my healings I [?] what is there, what needs to be processed right here, right now? There're all different, different in depending on where we are, who is there, like what's happening energetically in the space. So, it's a very different process but still an interface for the stories to be shared. And then sometimes these stories also demands another realm of existence, which is a space like almost an institution, well like- this word is a bit complicated- but like outer place, space, home, environment to hold this teaching and these stories in a more like- maybe across space time, you know? So, for the work that I'm working on now, I'm hoping to build an observatory. You know, I started an astro-club in Cayenne, you know, to- we're like getting the telescope out, you know, watching the moon, telling stories about like the universe, so this all. Or the project, you know, like maybe when we're talking about the internet earlier with friends of mine in

South Africa, we created our own server to build like a space on the deep web to have an autonomy and security. So that's more like- it's a different approach, you know. So sometimes the stories demand that.

I also work in cycles, so I guess for the last five years I really worked around information and communication technology, whether through like electronic technologies, organic technologies, spiritual technologies, so how can we connect through and from those. And now I've started another cycle, looking at the relationship with the sky as I said. But I'm already forcing the next cycle which is earth space, because now I live in the forest in the Amazon and I'm actually looking for some land to build a space, a home, a school, I don't know, a place of study for the enfolding of the soul. We'll have an observatory, medicinal garden like lots of- farming and like sound work, bodywork, so it's art of science of the body of the earth, of the sky and of sound.

PROCESS

So, my work is research based. I gather information. I hunt literally, like [explanatory noises] deep, far and deep. By going across like dimensions to like across like [explanatory noises] depths of my being and existence to like reveal things that need to be shared, you know. And from this, in my video work- they're a bit essay like, you know, so it's some more an intellectual process for me, to like understand almost through theory like what I've gathered, you know. To make sense of it. So, it's really like head based, it's really where I process, when I try to make sense of this on a more mental way, you know.

Yeah it's not just head based, it's like whole body, whole bodies based, you know, it's-. Voilà.

It's about knowledge centers. In our beings we have different knowledge centers, so you don't access the same information or share the same information from different knowledge center. Whether you receive information from your mind, your chin, your breast, your womb, it's like, or your aura, it's different data that you gonna receive. So maybe my video work is from a certain knowledge center. Then my collective healing they address another- they trigger, they evoke, you know another knowledge center. And then my spaces, you know, they also allow different knowledge center to be activated. Yeah, that I'm comfortable with hundred percent.

PRESENTATION

I think I don't make my work for specific space, because the work they go to like many, many different institution in many different contexts and they change form sometimes, because people either they don't have the capacity, the space, dadadada, so I'm quite flexible. And all my work is online, so you can watch it just on your computer. In an installation, just a screening projection like [explanatory noise]. It doesn't really matter to me, actually.

Non, okay, to be very down to matter, earth, most of my works they exist either as an installation or within the installation there's a video often, so you can either show the video, like watch it online, it's on *vimeo* or do a screening or put it on a monitor or actually, if you have the resource and the capacity, like to either ship or like to produce, you know, you can show it in the installation setting. So, it's kind of this. And also like the offerings, the healing circle it needs me, so then I travel around to like hold the space for this.

Yeah, it's important for me, that all my works are online and accessible to the most, you know, because art is a very niche industry, you know. Like who goes to gallery, like pay entrees to like a museum, like it's not a space of the- the people, you know. That's not how it's sold, that's not how it's designed. It's quite like exclusionary, so yes, to exist in this world, fine, because that's how the industry is, but for me it's important, that it reaches different worlds. And so, by being online it's like, it's there for whoever. Well still have access, because the internet is also not- is also a place of exclusion, but a bit less so than a gallery would be here.

INTENTION

Don't you know, we're all suffering? Yeah that's life, you know, like it's the journey of life, to overcome like pain, overcome suffering, trauma, the one you carry, the one that your ancestors carry, then that you carry through your genes, your DNA, your heart it's all the things that block you and your access to your soul. That's what we're all suffering from. We've completely disconnected to our soul and the soul is, who we are. We're all just souls, beautiful, magnificent, whole, divine souls. But we forgot. And that's why like the world is in the state that it is, that's why there is so much hate, fear, insecurity, depression, all like everything. It's because we forgot, who we are. And that's the path of healing, to remember, to reconnect to who we are, to the universal like force that we are, the divine within our self, the- the beauty, the love, to access love and not like looking for love in a partner or like in sex or in whatever. Non, it's like actually like being love, embodying love. That's healing. It's becoming whole and whole within our self in order to be whole and home in the world and to actually stop spreading your hurt, because when you're broken inside, you give birth to broken dreams and you go on like spreading your hurt, you know. The path of healing is taking responsibility. RESPONSE. ABILITY. What's your ability to respond to the situation, to your own mess first? So that you can be like actually decent human being in the world, you know. That's all it is, that's our work, that's our work against coloniality, that's our work against white supremacy, hate, like all like mess, that we're all like complicit of, you know. That's the only thing we need to do, like heal our self, so we can heal the earth and all life, that's around us, that's in us. Yeah, that's it.

METHOD

Decoloniality. Easy, easy booby [laughs]. That's the only method. It's not an easy one.

So what is decoloniality? Decoloniality is the theory and practice to overcome western hegemony, but it's a practice, it's important to understand. It's to remove all the legacy of colonialism. And those legacies are still so pervasive in today's society, in today's so-called like postcolonial societies.

Basically the legacies of colonialism are still very much alive and in all spheres of life. The way we love, the way we learn, the way we speak, the way we think, the way we move our bodies, the way we make love to people, the way we study, the way we work, the way we relate to each other, ourselves and the world, the earth and the universe, like everything has been contaminated by coloniality. And what is coloniality? It's all the hierarchies that have been placed to organize society. So, we have hierarchies of- between people, according to race, according to gender, according to physical, mental abilities, according to class, according to belief system, according to profession and what not, you know. With of course like the white, male, able body, like financially stable, like heterosexual like person at the top of that pyramid making like all other form of existence less valuable. So, like intrinsically the society is built to make you feel, that you are less worthy of- of love and of being loved and of just living, just by the situation that you find yourself in. Then you have hierarchies between cultures, with again non-western cultures, being less like legit or valid or worthy of respect, you know. You can let people drown in front of you, it doesn't matter, because they don't belong to you, you know. And you have hierarchies of systems of knowledges. With, as we said earlier, like scientific, modern knowledge, being the pinnacle of what legitimate knowledge is or important knowledge is. And it's all non-western knowledge being completely like devalued or worse like demonized, like actively demonized, you know. So then, what does it mean in your body, when you don't belong to those top of hierarchies, you know? How does that make you feel? So that's the work, you know, trying to understand like those feeling, that feeling of inadequacy, but that is actually politically designed for you to feel this way, you know. And so, removing all those layers of like shame. Removing all this nonsense basically, like valuing yourself, respecting yourself, loving yourself, loving a plant like an animal, valuing their life, you know, valuing the spirits, your ancestors and our descendants. That is our work against coloniality, against all those mechanisms who have stripped us away from our ability to connect with the world, you know. And not just people that look like us, to like- the vastness of life. So that's decoloniality, it's doing this work actively in everything that you do. Like having that intention. I mean, that's my methodology,

that's what I try to do in my work. I'm seeing like, how am I like embracing like the vastness of the power that are here and how I putting this power in service of the universe, not in service of like what coloniality is cherishing, which is greed like success, money, like fame, all of this. Non, like being in service of love, being in service of a community, of a prosperity, but prosperity in a soulful way, like being in service of the soul. That's decoloniality for me, that's- that's my practice, my method, my everything. That's- yes. That's the work, that's it, yes. It's my mission, I'm here on a mission, like, yeah. I'm not here to play.

ART

Art is a co-creation with infinity. Yeah, that's it. It's actually being in collaboration with the universe, that's art. Creating, oui, creating life, yeah.

BIO

Tabita Rezaire (b.1989, Paris, France) is a French-born Guyanese/Danish new media artist, intersectional preacher, health practitioner, tech-politics researcher and Kemet/Kundalini Yoga teacher based in Cayenne, French Guyana. She holds a Bachelor in Economics (Paris) and a Master in Artist Moving Image from Central Saint Martins College (London). Tabita is a founding member of the artist group NTU, half of the duo Malaxa, and the mother of the energy house SENEB.

"Navigating digital, corporeal and ancestral memory as sites of struggles, she digs into scientific imaginaries to tackle the pervasive matrix of coloniality and the protocols of energetic misalignments that affect the songs of our body-mind-spirits. Inspired by quantum and cosmic mechanics, Tabita's work is rooted in time-spaces where technology and spirituality intersect as fertile ground to nourish visions of connection and emancipation.

Through screen interfaces and collective offerings, her digital healing and energy streams remind us to access our own inner data center, to bypass western authority and download directly from source." <https://tabitarezaire.com/info>

Credits

The interview was conducted on 02 March 2019 in Paris

Interviewed by: Kristin Klein

Filmed and recorded by: Lea Dinger, Marlène Tencha

Edited by: Nicolas Seiffert

Transcript by: Eva Klein

Produced by: Universität zu Köln, Department Kunst und Musik / Institut für Kunst und Kunsttheorie