

1. First, your work as director usually arouses some discomfort. In London and Paris, for example, your magnificent performance *Exhibit B*, would be censored. What do you think about censorship in theater and art in general in modern times? And then, why do you think that your work should cause such reactions?

<http://www.france24.com/en/20141208-interview-brett-bailey-theatre-maker-exhibit-b-paris-centre-104-protests-racism/>

2. How do you understand the theater today? I'm asking you this because your plays have that little performer who turns away from the scenic convention. Do you consider yourself more of a performance artist or an director of the new kind of theater?

When I decide on the themes or subjects that I want to work with I do a great deal of research, and the form that the work takes arises from my research. I don't decide 'I'm going to make a play about this, or an installation about that' – the form is determined by the content. I don't think in terms of categories of theatre or performance artist.

3. Here in Chile you know, thanks to *Exhibit B*, the reality of many immigrants in the country. What conclusions obtained from your work and study? It differs, in some cases, to other countries where it has led to the same play?

In Chile there are relatively few black migrants, they have settled in the country very recently, and it seems to me they do not feel established enough to have become really organized and to assert their rights. In countries where black communities are very well established, they are generally more assertive about their social and human rights.

4. Regarding the same: *Exhibit B* was mounted on Cousino Palace. Why do you usually choose such places rather than theaters? What other spaces like this have you chosen for your plays?

I prefer to work in places that provide a rich context for a performance work, that open up associations, that have histories of their own. Theatres are often very sterile, and demand passivity from the audiences sitting comfortably in the darkness. I've worked in abandoned train stations and churches, a cemetery, a Nazi concentration camp, old power stations, disused ethnographic museum, ...

5. Regarding *Macbeth*, the opera. It was released in April 2014 in Cape Town. First, why did you interested in making the play of Verdi and how was the creative process?

I've made this opera twice before, each in a very different way, but always within an African context. My fascination really lies in my love for the music that Verdi wrote: such huge, sweeping arias and gorgeous, moving choral pieces.

And in the darkness of Shakespeare's very human tragedy of moral corruption, pure evil, and remorse.

I'm an artist who loves revisiting the same piece again and again, always coming at it from a different angle, and working my way deeper into the material.

6. You put in Congo, why did you take this election?

As I have mentioned, I have made this opera twice before, both times within an African context. My previous interpretations were quite loosely 'African', not set in one particular country or situation, and connecting more with animist beliefs and witchcraft in Africa than with any political scenario.

During the past few years I have become increasingly aware of the horrific situation that has played out in the east of the DRC in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide of 1994, when around a million Hutus fled Rwanda and crossed the border into Congo. Their destabilizing presence there, and the subsequent incursions of armies and militia from several African countries – notably Rwanda and Uganda – have resulted in the deaths of around 5.5 million people, and the displacement, maimings, rapes and enslavement of millions more.

The region is one of the most mineral-rich places on earth, and dozens of militias have arisen and fought to gain control of the mines that bring them cash, arms and power. The victims are civilians. The ongoing conflict is perpetuated by weak state governance, and is fuelled by multinational corporations, governments and generals that are greedy for the natural resources that make their profits, and that have scant regard for the bloodshed and despair at the bottom of the supply chain.

This situation barely receives attention in the global media. We all know about 120 000-odd deaths in Syria, but how many of us know that over the past 17 years there have been more deaths in the eastern DRC than in any conflict since World War II. The cost of a large proportion of the cellphones, gaming consoles, laptops and jewellery that we crave and consume is the carnage and misery that occur in the shadows cast by the bright lights of the First World.

Macbeth tells of corruption, bloodshed, cruelty and greed in a war-ravaged society. As someone living in Africa and aware of the situation in the DRC and how little space it is given on the global stage, I feel a responsibility to use the opportunities that I have been given to claim space for it.

7. In my interviews I usually ask this question: What is the first picture of Macbeth? What we can see at the start of the stage and what happens in the first scene?

The first picture is of the group of refugee performers that has fled the conflict in the villages of the North Kivu Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They are the ones who are performing the opera, it is told from their point of view. They settled in the regional capital, Goma. There are tens of thousands of refugees in camps here, most of them from the surrounding countryside and villages. So the group of performers took up residence in the town hall in Goma and found a trunk of props and costumes, librettos, old recordings of Macbeth... Sifting through this material, they realized it has coincidences with their own history. They used the material to tell their own story, the situation in their own country. The first scene establishes them as the storytellers.

8. Do you considered yourself an admirer of Verdi and Shakespeare? Which play excited you, besides this?

No, Im not really a Shakespeare fan.

9. Are you working on a new project? If you could tell me something about this, it would be great.

My next piece – The Raft <http://thirdworldbunfight.co.za/the-raft/> - looks at the refugee crisis in the EU.

10. Finally: Who are your biggest influences or references in theater? And about Fiba, the festival that brings to Macbeth to Buenos Aires and Santiago, what do you think about latinoamerican theatre of today?

Influences: Peter Brooke, Robert Wilson, Laurie Anderson, several African and South African amateur groups...

This interview might also be interesting to you:

<http://thirdworldbunfight.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Interview-from-Paris.pdf>