

Desktop Studio Visits: CRYSTALLMESS Transcript

JOHN: Hello everybody. Welcome to another episode of Desktop Studio Visits. My name is John Eng Kiet Bloomfield and I work at Wysing as a curator and acting head of programme. For this episode, I am joined by the artist Crystallmess who is calling in over zoom from Marseilles. Before I introduce Crystallmess, I'll just quickly go over some housekeeping. The event is being subtitled. You should be able to access a streamtext link that gives options to change sizing and formatting. A link can be found in the chat and on the host WysingBroadcasts page. The format of today's event, and all events in the series, is that Christelle has chosen some artefacts from her recent residency. We're going to play, show or read them and we're going to talk about them. It's as simple as that. After about 40 minutes or so, there will be time for questions from the audience. If you have a question, just pop it in the chat. If you don't, that's fine, we'll have plenty to talk about, I'm sure. If you'd like to revisit the event later on we're planning to archive it as a video, a podcast and a transcript, and that should be out in the next week or so. We'll also add audio descriptions of videos to the podcast. I'm just going to introduce Christelle. Crystallmess AKA Christelle Oyiri is a multidisciplinary artist based in Paris. She is a sound artist and DJ as well as a performer. Her work highlights forgotten mythologies, the subtle interstices between memory and alienation, DIY culture and technology. Her work has been exhibited at Lafayette Anticipations, France; Frac Lorraine, France (2019); La Gaité Lyrique, France; Espace Arlaud, Lausanne (2018); HEK, Basel (2019) Auto Italia South East, London (2019). Christelle first came to Wysing in August last year, a

few months after a research trip to Guadeloupe, which we're going to talk about in a moment. Welcome, Christelle.

CHRISTELLE: Hi.

JOHN: How are you?

CHRISTELLE: I'm good, just enjoying the sun, but also working at the same time. So not easy to keep the balance.

JOHN: Great, I think that's all of us. For access reasons we're going to describe ourselves, I'm a mixed race cis man in his early thirties, I've got black glasses and black hair.

CHRISTELLE: I'm a black woman in her late twenties, and I have long kinky hair ponytail, and an African necklace.

JOHN: And the glow, don't forget the glow.

CHRISTELLE: And the glow.

JOHN: We'll just play the first clip, which is from it's an extract from a talk that the academic Malcolm Ferdinand gave on decolonial ecology so we'll play that and then chat about it.

MALCOLM FERDINAND: It was inspired by some whities on the moon, so I want to give credit where credit is due. A rat done bit my sister Nell. (with Whitey on the moon) Her face and arms began to swell. (and Whitey's on the moon) I can't pay no doctor bills. (but Whitey's on the moon) Ten years from now I'll be payin' still. (while Whitey's on the moon) The man jus' upped my rent las' night. ('cause Whitey's on the moon) No hot water, no toilets, no lights. (but Whitey's on the moon) I wonder why he's uppi' me? ('cause Whitey's on the moon?) I was already giving him fifty a week. (with Whitey on the moon) Taxes takin' my whole damn check Junkies makin' me a nervous wreck The price of food is goin' up An' as if all that crap wasn't enough A rat done bit my sister Nell. (with Whitey on the moon) Okay, so a lot of you knew that song, I guess, but the key of this imaginary figure with Noah's Ark is we imagine the world as a ship. With a planet storm coming, the world is a ship, and what type of ship are we going to build? And the question that is raised in the Noah's Ark story is who or what will be allowed to go on board ship? Now the song by Gil Scott-Heron here is making that comparison between those that are left on the ground while some have been allowed to go all the way up to the moon and board that spaceship. And if you want to understand why, where does it come from, the fact that today we have created these white spaces where we can speak about ecological issues and not even question the absence of minorities and people of colour. We need to look at what I call the double fracture of modernity. Now I won't go into it in details, it's in French, but let's just say, like, that you can divide --that there are two movements that are critical of modernities but have really taken since the 1960s. One is the ecological movement broadly and loosely defined, but I'm tackling what I call the

environmental fracture. So we are activists, scholars, and NGOs are trying to reverse that hierarchy that puts a man above nature, loosely defined man above loosely defined nature. That's the original environmental fracture here. Again, beside this basic form of environmentalism, other forms or the trends of environmentalism have tried to tackle both the hierarchy between men and nature, and also issues of social justice, issues of gender and equality. So you have eco-feminism, you have eco-socialism, political ecology, and so on and so forth. But what I did find in my studies is that even the more leftist or radical political ecologist thinkers had one shadow. Most of the time they forget about, or overlook racism and the colonial history of modernity. So it seems that if you want to tackle the environmental fracture, and even if you want to tackle it from a radical way, you still can left out this colonial --the colonial history of the world. Now on the other hand, another movement, but it's very critical of modernity, that also gains things after the anti-colonial protest in the mid-20th Centuries, tackled the colonial fracture. They wanted to reverse that hierarchy that put one colonist man above one colonist -- one colonised man, and again, this is anticolonial movement also have the more radical trends, trying to at the same time to reverse the hierarchy, but also enforce issues of gender equality with movement like afrofeminism or issues of social justice or religious tolerances and so forth. However, all of these movements, a lot of them, have left aside issues of Ecology. Ecological challenges.

JOHN: Thank you, that was Malcolm Ferdinand, political scientist and writer. His work argues that environmental destruction is inseparable from relationships of racial and colonial domination. Christelle. Okay. You're back. So, yeah, how, could

you tell us how you came to Ferdinand's work and why it was important for your residency?

CHRISTELLE: I came across his work when, before I actually went to Guadeloupe, I was increasingly interested into environmental issues, and also the intersection between environmental issues and race issues, because I always felt like black people felt so removed from ecology just because they already have a lot on their plate dealing with racial issues and gender issues as well, the like, it doesn't really concern them, because also this is a very, like, ecology has been so gentrified and so whitened in the way that people feel disinterested in it because it has been trivialised if we're being honest. Like they don't see the bigger picture and don't feel included. So, I was looking for people and thinkers who were looking towards making the intersection between the two clearer, and making -- shedding light on different aspects of ecology that I knew of but couldn't really make sense of. Like, for instance like what happened in Flint, Michigan, I knew it was an intersection between the two, but because I haven't studied ecology, this isn't my background, I couldn't really make sense of it. I really needed thinkers and books to really like understand. Because when we think about intersectionality most of the time we think about the intersection between class, race and gender, like the actual ecosystem is often like put aside, like it's often something that is not really thought of in this aspect of things. So for me, when I was researching about this topic I came across his book which is called decolonial ecology, I was looking for a quote on the pesticide that I'm going to talk extensively about today, and when when researching about this pesticide that was out in the French Caribbean, the French West Indies, island like Guadeloupe and Martinique, which is where my

maternal side comes from, by searching, I came across one of his interviews that was really amazing because he talked about the chemistry of the master, how the master is a chemist, how the ...how we shouldn't separate slavery and ecology, because slavery had a tremendous effect on the nature, and I thought it was very brilliant. I was absolutely blown away, and then I was like, I mean I knew that, but it's one thing to know something, and it's another thing for someone to explain to you exactly what happened.

JOHN: When it seems like, I guess, yeah, I think, thinking about ecology through the lens of race feels really useful for the current moment.

CHRISTELLE: Exactly. I feel like it was, um, I'm okay with talking about micro aggression, etc, but it's also about a bigger scale and in like for me, as someone that is partially Caribbean, I couldn't really understand how such a small island like Guadeloupe and Martinique, which is for people that don't know, because it's so small, some people might not even know where it is. It's below Haiti, and it's below what we call the big West Indies which is Haiti, Jamaica, because these are big islands, and so below the big islands you have the small West Indies, which is where I come from, which is more like, it's next to Barbados, basically. It's not super far from Barbados, and it's above South America. Like it's above Trinidad. So for me, what really struck me as well with his work is how we use the concept of Anthropocene, to how we challenged this concept, because this is a concept that a lot of art centres, residency, these past 5 years, everybody was like, even in like open calls and stuff like this, it's a term that has been used and over used, and he was basically like saying that this is a term that also excludes what it means to be

an Anthropocene, because that's someone that like, it acts upon nature and it's basically transforming nature into something that it's not, and by doing that you use like the industry, you use capitalism, so on and so forth. And for me, it didn't - I didn't feel like my parents for instance were Anthropocene, because how did they benefit from that? Because if someone has a history of their family working for free for 400 years, then how can they be called that because they didn't benefit exactly from it.

JOHN: It's not all humans it's –

CHRISTELLE: Exactly I, I felt like I couldn't, I felt like I couldn't carry the guilt of being Anthropocene, I felt like it was a guilt I couldn't really carry.

JOHN: I guess we usually talk about the industrial revolution as the

CHRISTELLE: Exactly, exactly

JOHN: That's a weird blip because it's this moment when developed countries were polluting their own doorsteps before realising that actually, what they could do is extract, exploit and pollute other lands from far away, which is colonialism, and that begins earlier.

CHRISTELLE: Exactly it's also where I felt like a little confused because I was like wait, I don't really relate with this. Like maybe now, maybe my generation, maybe me, I can relate to this, but I don't feel like my parents and the people that came

before me can relate to this definition because they haven't colonised or been even slightly benefited from colonialism at all. So, this concept is still a concept where I can fit my history in.

JOHN: Yeah, the benefits are unequal, and the effects are unequal.

CHRISTELLE: Exactly. Exactly. So basically it reclaimed this concept by creating the concept of-- for instance, which is like the same concept but the concept applied to black folks, for instance, like the maroon runaway slave that goes up into the hills because most of them slaves that are run always go up in the hills, especially in Haiti, and that carry on deforestation has no choice but to do that, but that's the negrocene because it's still an exploitation of nature but it's for its survival in a framework of slavery. So, it's really, really like now we're getting into something specific, now I can actually relate. Because it's not like mistreating nature because you want to extract a profit and power from it. It's because of survival. What's happening in Haiti right now with all the catastrophe that has been going on for decades over there is largely due by the fact that the maroons slaves, like, deforests, like a huge part of the island, because when slavery was over they had to find jobs and had to also support themselves, and has a lot of people might not know that Haiti was the most, I think, it was the island that was providing the most, like, it was the most financially like beneficial island in the Caribbean and even in the realm of like slavery, it was very lucrative for France. So, they would bring slaves in, and instead of having them like living with their masters or living on the plantation like in the US, because the US is more like cotton, in Haiti it was more like relating to sugar. So, it's like a harsher agriculture,

the life expectancy of a slave in these times in the 19th Century was 2 years. So it was the biggest turnover. That's also why Haitian people have --they look more like African like me. They're less mixed because it was largely like a turnover. It's like the slave died, they bring all the slave from Africa, then they died because they had no --it wasn't like in the US where they had sort of like a life on the plantation. It's like they had no human condition whatsoever, like nothing was made for them to actually have babies, for instance, or keep them, or it was not made for that at all. There were no social aspects of the plantation society, where in some places it's the case like lighting America or even the US you had sort of like a social life around the plantation, that wasn't the case in Haiti. So it's the reason why it's an island that is very important is because it's at the centre of everything. And it's used as an example also by Malcolm Ferdinand because this is an island where a revolution happened to overthrow capitalism, slavery, institutionalised racism, and the, also the thing with the Caribbean is that also it's faced by an environmental anguish, because you are at the centre of basically, like, tornadoes, um, it's like you're at the centre of everything, basically. So for me, before, I think that I had an idea of institutionalised racism and everything in the Caribbean, but I neglected the aspect of environment. Like it was for me, it's like doing this project was also like conciliation thing all the things together, and just reviewing my way of thinking as well. Making it a more 360 thing and less compartmentalised, I guess. That's what this book has taught me as well.

JOHN: Thank you. So the next thing we're going to show, it's a film by --an extract from a film by Florence Lazar called So You Think the Earth Is a Dead Thing and it's mainly shot in Martinique so another island, yeah, like 180 kilometres

from Guadeloupe, where your research is mainly focused, and that comes up quite a lot. So, yeah, I think Chloe when you're ready we can play an extract from that film.

JOHN: Yeah, you can see that –

CHRISTELLE: Yeah, I'm coming back. One second. Oh my god

JOHN: Okay, so we can see that the film pairs really well with the, yeah, Malcolm Ferdinand's work kind of shows the ecological damage of colonialism amongst other things but could you talk a little bit about your interest in the film.

CHRISTELLE: I think my interest in the film comes from the fact that Florence Lazar comes from comes from Yugoslavia, and they changed the name of the country, and I'm really bad at geography but she comes from the Balkans, basically, and she has made this movie called 125 Acres, and basically also like she also made this movie called the Paysans like about her work is greatly focused on, like, agriculture, survival, and also critical thinking, and basically like I felt she was very, even to she comes from the Caribbean as well, I felt that the way she linked the two together because also her other movies are really interesting for that, was really clever, really smart and really clear, and for me, it's like, the interest that I also had is that the movies is not solely about how we're suffering, and how, like, how sad it is, it's also about healing ...there's in other parts like the first scene of the movie opens on like a black woman in Martinique, in her garden basically talking about every single healing plants that she has in her garden. And it's like a

huge garden. It's not --it looks nothing like what we have in our cities, but it's like, and she is with a friend, and I think it's a really, really really beautiful scene. And the reason why it's so beautiful, it's because the title of the movie is So You Think Earth Is a Dead Thing resonates with what is happening in Guadeloupe and Martinique which is basically 80 to 90% of the soil from this island is poisoned with Chlordecone which is a pesticide used from the fifties up until the mid-90s, and this pesticide had been forbidden in the seventies, like and the early seventies, in the US, and we all know the US are not a great example of, like, I would say just ecology, like this is. Probably, yeah, we're not. ...so the fact that they forbid the use of this pesticide before France, for me, when I researched was kind of odd. I'm not saying that France is more advanced or anything but I'm just saying like there is little to none like food restriction in the US. Like they still put corn syrup in everything you eat so I would expect France to be a little more savvy when it comes to the environment, you know. JOHN: It's not Metropolitan France, that's the thing. CHRISTELLE: Exactly. So this is where it comes into play, that for me, what I discovered, it's not that it wasn't metropolitan France, it's that they were aware of it, like it wasn't something that they didn't know. Like they knew, but the reason why they gave a pass to the big firm to continue the use of this poison, even though in 1983 this woman is actually talking about the revolts revolts, because in 83, the farm farmers from Guadeloupe and Martinique already knew the pesticide is not good. They already felt, like my grandmother was a farmer, on this plantations as well. So she already knew it was bad. She already knew it was not something that came across as a surprise or a big reveal. Their own health felt already under attack and already --so they demonstrated for several weeks, several months in 83. That's what the women is referring to. She is

saying, she's trying to say that it has been a concern for almost like 40 years, and basically, ...one second. Basically, yeah, it's been a concern, and, yeah.

JOHN: Just to underline that a bit, you've got, like if anyone has heard of the Rachel Carson book 'Silent Spring', it's a big book in America that is like the beginning of the environmental movement, and a lot of that was all about planning a DDT, which was a pesticide which was really --I think from what I understand, the same thing, Chlordecone.

CHRISTELLE: Exactly. JOHN: And that was in 1972 and that's the moment when America starts finding its own conscious about ecological issues, and then –

CHRISTELLE: Exactly it was a big wake-up call. This year, in 72, 73, 74, was big wake-up call years.

JOHN: Except -- well, but also at the same time, that's when they were like really started from what I understand they really started using it in Martinique and Guadeloupe, so it's outsourcing it, and probably it gets pushed around.

CHRISTELLE: It's also the discrepancy between the West and the Caribbean, which is not exactly considered the south as well. And this is what I want to talk about with my text, The Roots of Evil that I'm going to read in a few -- it's --there's this space of in betweenness, because these islands look like beautiful --there's beautiful sceneries, the people are so nice, etc, etc. There's a false misconception also that prevents like this post card, this post-card way of seeing the Caribbean,

has also affect them greatly, because you look a certain way, people then assume you're going through the same tribulations as the south, which is Africa, or Asia, whatever. Like people assume that you benefit from the same benefits, and also in our community, in the black community, even in France, me being half African, half Caribbean, I can sense that there is kind of like again are like seen as they have like this proximity to whiteness, and again, this proximity to the north and what it means, like wealth and in the collective consciousness, I think it's very ingrained and I think this is also like ...how can I say that? It's like a poisonous gift because you have this image but because you have this image, people don't dig in. They know that slavery happened there but it's like because it didn't happen on the soil of France, people do have a distance from it. Like they don't even realise that really like slavery happened. And I think it's the same thing for the UK, really. It's like they don't -- because it didn't happen on the UK soil, it happened in Jamaica, it happened in Barbados and in Martinique as well, because the English people were there for several years, I think there's this misconception that it's okay, they don't have it as bad as Africans. [laughs]and this is the worst thing ever, like because it prevents us from having critical conversations about these places which are the places where slavery happened. Slavery didn't happen in Africa, it happened there. So it happened in the south of the US, it happened in South America, and it happened largely in the Caribbean. So I think that there is really like everything is made for us to not understand fully where are the lands and the places where these problematics are actually --or these topics are actually urgent. Like there is the emergency? The emergency is not necessarily where the media is telling you it is. Like, the emergency is not necessarily like in Malawi because you see kids not having food, etc, it's another thing. There's consolidates

and there is also --it's a real realm and I think people have a hard time understanding the different --the urgent topic in different regions. They all --we have a tendency to just, I don't know, I think silence Caribbean voices as well or just exercise them, it's like, it's truly allied greatly and this is why this work is important, and this talk even is important, because it's always, it's mainly trivialised and I think it has been also the main topic of Murder by Proxy afterwards well. It's like how can we break from the post-card image and from the folklore?

JOHN: On the subject of Murder by Proxy do you want to go into The Roots of Evil text, or?

CHRISTELLE: Yeah, I would like to read it.

JOHN: Shall we go straight into that? Okay.

CHRISTELLE: Yeah. Do you have it ready?

CHRISTELLE: Yeah, in 20 seconds

JOHN: Okay.

CHRISTELLE: Even less than that, actually.

JOHN: Yeah, we can read the text and then –

CHRISTELLE: Yeah, then maybe talk about the project and maybe then listen to some music.

JOHN: Exactly, yeah. I feel like we've been talking --yeah, we've gone over quite a lot of the context.

CHRISTELLE: So I think -- oh okay. Sorry. Okay, I found it. The Roots of Evil.2020 was a year of homecoming and awakening for many. Quite naturally, self-isolation offered the opportunity to dive back into what constitutes my musical DNA: Caribbean music and, most importantly, Antillean music. After fifteen years, I was going back to Guadeloupe in an attempt to trace my own sonic genealogy all while re-exploring my maternal lineage with a new and adult gaze. While I was there, I was studying the intricacy of traditional music called gwo-ka as well as its drumming, its call-and-response structure, and of course the relation between voicing in Gwoka and the questions of identity and memory. More than being the guardians of the traditions and the chronicles of their time, I came to realize that gwo-ka was protest music and resisted France's politics of assimilation. Gwoka, a musical genre that emerged in the seventeenth century during the transatlantic slave trade. At that time, African slaves of Guadeloupe used to gather to play drums, sing and dance. The use of any kind of drum was at that time forbidden by Le Code Noir. So going out of the take just a little bit, when they were using drums and dancing, it was generally met with punishment. As a consequence, slaves used a vocal technique called bouldadjèl, which imitates drums. Gwoka practice was directly linked to agricultural work —especially sugar cane, coffee

and banana cultivations. In a way, listening to Gwoka drummers and singers was a way for me to fully witness Antillean people reconnecting with their ancestry in real-time. As someone who's a product of both African and Antillean parents, it felt like a soothing and deep sonic experience. Not only were they reconnecting with a long-lost place but practising Gwoka remains also heavily attached to the soil, the Earth, the roots. Le Code Noir was passed by France's king, in the 1685, this code defended condition of slavery in the French empire the gist of the code remaining in place until 1848. The Caribbean is an ante-chamber for in betweenness—at the centre of a triple abyss experience wrought by colonialism: the abyss opened up by the violent enslavement (the illusion of abolition within the context of continued colonial oppression); the abyss of the Middle Passage where those captured lay in the dark holds of ships -the “womb of the Caribbean, “and the abyss of environmental anguish., The Martinican novelist, essayist, poet, and playwright Edouard Glissant advocated for the multiplicity of cultural identities in an individual and borrows Deleuze and Guattari's expression of “rhizome” (rhizomatic) to expose the intricacy of the Creole identity. The rhizome is a plant that grows underground and has roots that entangle around others. However, the actual roots are indeed rotten. Although these islands have pristine and dream-like landscapes, heaven is only surface-level. “Would you live in a land whose land is poisoned for the next seven centuries?” —Celia Potiron To control banana weevil, chlordecone insecticide was widely used between 1972 and 1993 to protect banana plantations from insects in Martinique and neighbouring Guadeloupe with the complicity of the French government. Over 90 percent of the adult population of Martinique and Guadeloupe suffer from chlordecone poisoning, according to Santé Publique France, the French public health agency.

Chlordecone has been linked to prostate cancer—the rate of which in Martinique and Guadeloupe is among the highest in the world—as well as stomach and pancreatic cancer. The poisoning has also penetrated the soil and the water in some important parts of these islands, and the contamination could last from one to six centuries in the environment. This information didn't come as a surprise, but I only realized the scale of it when I saw my family's experience first-hand on-site, especially among women. The chlorinated pesticide is widely recognized for its production of reproductive deficits on men but its effects on women is rarely discussed: excess of fibroids, post-ovulatory deformities as well as a high percentage of stillborn deaths. How does the Antillean woman cultivate a healthy relationship with her womb? A womb that has already lived through the trauma of systemic rape (during slavery) and now the destructive violence of chlordecone and a fortiori modern capitalism? How to survive amongst the Dying? "Can one lead a good life in a bad life?" —Judith Butler I obviously have no definitive answer, this trip that was originally a research trip became even more transformative than I expected. In the end I was left with way more than the desire of creating a sonic body of work. Discovering the political nature of Gwoka polyrhythm, its story-telling component was one thing but thinking about the resources we have to preserve and resist was the real highlight. The necessity of a decolonial ecology felt more urgent than ever. While the French plantation owners on the Caribbean Island of Martinique had their gardens laid out in Versailles style, their enslaved workers continued their tradition of using medicinal wild herbs, which grew in hedges on the periphery of the "habitations. "The plants were known as rimèd razie, or "hedge remedies. "Nowadays these herbs represent one of several resources through which the people of Martinique

counter the health and ecological ravage caused by the use of pesticides on the banana plantations, which cover a quarter of the land. Another form of resistance is being led by farmers who are reclaiming uncultivated lands to grow indigenous vegetables, guided by expert local knowledge and without any industrial pesticides. As a sound artist, the most important thing was learning how to cultivate my own garden. Part of it was through revisiting my relationship to field recording, which took a new meaning for me after this trip: It is now about giving space to necessary healing.

JOHN: Thank you, Christelle. I love that image of needing to create your own garden, your own sonic garden.

CHRISTELLE: Yeah, thank you.

JOHN: On that, I wonder if we could see some of the Murder by Proxy project.

CHRISTELLE: Yeah, definitely. Should I share screen?

JOHN: Yeah, go for it. Let's do that.

CHRISTELLE: Wait a second. Just getting the website ready. Wait a second. I know what so, yeah, I guess this kind of came out of Christelle's residence at Wysing last August, and.

CHRISTELLE: Can you see? I know what yes

JOHN: Yes.

CHRISTELLE: Cool. This is the first part of the website, which is a view that took in a city called Bouillante which in English actually means boiling. But it's called boiling because there is literally hot bath in the city, it's in Guadeloupe. Beyond the text, you have like a video of this band called Kassav' which is one of the most known bands in Guadeloupe and Martinique because they invented a genre, which is called Zouk which is highly popular in France but also throughout the world. I can also read the text that I wrote. Live a good life surrounded by nature, indulging in daydreams in heavenly settings. Ah! The dream, or shall I say the mirage of many? Many people imagine our enchanting islands with a kaleidoscopes in their eyes. It is the envy of elsewhere, the sweet escape in the form of spice markets, I'm interrupting your program to come and say that heaven is in fact poison. There we find an okay like sir lavishing slow death, it infests, it penetrates, and it is here to stay. No good life possible, where life itself is compromised. How can one lead a good life in a bad life? I think if I want to get into the project, it may be good to play the video before getting into the project as well.

JOHN: I think there's time to play just one or two things. You have about just under ten minutes.

CHRISTELLE: Oh my god oh it's true I just feel like I've been speaking for ten minutes. Okay. So basically, I will go into my files. Just interpreting ...

JOHN: I guess the form of this, it's a website there's sound, there's video.

CHRISTELLE: Yeah, exactly, but I just want to play something as well. Wait a second. I'm sorry.

JOHN: That's okay.

CHRISTELLE: My computer is a total mess. It's working just fine but it is just like everything is out of order and place. I don't know if you can hear the sound. You can hear the sound?

JOHN: Try again

CHRISTELLE: Can you hear?

JOHN: It's very quiet. If you share your screen, there will be an option to share sound.

CHRISTELLE: Okay.

JOHN: Try that.

CHRISTELLE: Perfect. Can you hear? So basically, about this project, the aim was really to have like a whole text about, but more like a fictional story and of having

like a document that feels like really redundant and already done, I wanted to build a fictional story, like based on basically like my homecoming trip to Guadeloupe, which was very like filled with joy but also very traumatic. And I think it took me months to get over it and I think even during the residency I wasn't at my best. But when I went back to Guadeloupe, and then, it's a very personal story, but my cousin, that I was really close to when we were little, kind of like under underwent, you know, like um ... sort. She underwent a lot of miscarriage as well as--she had one baby and I think she had two offer them, and I think it was kind of like a secret among the family and my mum would --didn't share with me because she thought it was very personal, and I understand it. But it's like --it felt really all of a sudden like this whole thing like really real, and I think that before that, unless --because everyone has cancer now, like the perspective of having cancer seemed quite okay, like you are going to get cancer anyway. It felt like something really, I wouldn't say normal, but expected. You expect to die from cancer nowadays, in a way. And it's like, but it's not expected and what is less discussed about this issues that the issue is that women are encountering with their fertility, and with their womb, actually. And I think also feeling completely defenceless in front of such an issue left me really sad and, I was sad, and I didn't go through that so I can't imagine how my cousin felt because she has been with her partner for more than 10 years. So Malcolm Ferdinand and I, we did a talk as well, and it is also available online, and we talked greatly about -- I mainly talked about feminism, and the intersectionality between feminism and ecology which is like eco feminism, and how the black women at the centre of that as well, because her womb in her way of conceiving has been subjected to so many trauma that it's really hard to conceive, actually,

like black women are like for instance, like four times more likely to die while giving birth. And this is something that I didn't know before going there. Like it's like all of this stuff I'm talking about are really like stuff that I got into when I went back home, basically.

JOHN: How long were you there for?

CHRISTELLE: I was there for three weeks, like a month. And basically it's just really from my perspective that I continued like writing about it, right now like most of the stuff I wrote about, *Murder by Proxy* is wrote in French except for the 21st pages but the rest of the stories were in French, because I couldn't even write it in English right away because it felt unnatural. But basically the story is about a young woman that had the that is in the position --wow, how surprising, and she decided to go back to her roots because she hasn't been in 15 years and she feels kind of like out of place, and, you know, you haven't been there in 15 years you feel kind of weird, and she decides to indulge into the carnival, like getting to know how the carnival works and how the Dru Mr Works and stuff like this. And she records stuff as well, but she also ends up like having vision, and she is basically like way more aware of what's going on because she's there, she can't escape the reality of what's going on because she's currently living it through her family, because I used the story of my cousin to also decline it in this story, and she's basically going through this hardship, and this realisation, and in the end like she managed to cultivate her own, and create a sort of (inaudible) with other women to cultivate their gardens and create potions for women. But before getting to this point she has a lot of hardships and setbacks. This I like her worst

journey, but yeah, about experiments, like for me, I also have stuff from here, like I would love to just make -- share it.[spooky sounds].I recorded that there, same for the other recording. I don't know if you can hear. I know what yeah, we're coming up to time. Maybe we can just play out a track. [Crowd sounds] [carnival sounds]

CHRISTELLE: It's like from the carnival I'm advancing a little bit.

JOHN: Okay, thank you Christelle. Merci, Christelle

CHRISTELLE: I could go on for hours, because there's so much to say.

JOHN: I feel like we're just getting started, but that's good.

CHRISTELLE: Thank you.

JOHN: All right thanks, everyone, for watching, listening, watching on the recap. Yeah, we'll have another event in a month or so, and we'll try to find a way to continue the conversation with Christelle.

CHRISTELLE: Thank you so much, bye bye, bye everyone.