



Transculture Express.

The Artistania podcast with your hosts Frida and Abilaschan.

Episode 1 : Jamila and Naima Musical Companionship and artistic collaboration (made with soundtrap)

In the very first episode of Transculture Express, we are talking about the meaning and importance of musical companionship and artistic collaboration with Jamila Al-Yousef and her producer Naima Hussein . We are also talking about how to navigate being a musician and a producer in a male dominated music sphere, facing stereotypes and biases and about how meaningful change can happen within the music industry.

Frida- Hello and welcome to the very first episode of Transculture Express. My name is Frida.

Abi- My name is Abilaschan. Transculture Express is the artist on your podcast about queer feminist, global, South and postcolonial music practices in our neighborhood.

Frida- Thank you for tuning in. We are really excited to get started. The Artistania Atelier has been closed for many months and we just like many others, are longing for a place to come together.

Abi -In this podcast, we want to provide a platform for musicians, cultural activists and organizers to discuss and share survival strategies for the current moment.

Frida- We also want to share musical inspirations and to dream about and imagine post pandemic future.

Abi-And we want to just listen to music together. In this first episode we are going to talk about the meaning and importance of musical companionship and artistic collaboration in these strange and challenging times.

Frida- And about how to navigate being a musician and producer in a male dominated music sphere. When you're not a dude.

Abi- We will listen to and talk about some beautiful new music

Frida- And to do all of this, we have invited two wonderful people who will be our guests today.

Abi- Welcome to Jamila and Naima.

Jamila, Naima- Hello.

Frida- So, to briefly introduce you to our listeners, Jamila you are a person with so many talents and projects that it's hard to know where to start. You are an anti-racism trainer and educator and the cultural organizer who has founded and curated a variety of festivals, among them the Arab underground program at the Fusion Festival. But most importantly you are a musician and you've been playing and touring with your band. Jamila and the other heroes across Europe and the Middle East playing psychedelic desert funk. Your debut album was released on Spring Stuff label in January last year, right before everything just turned upside down. And it is an album that I really love. It's called C Tycoon, which means the grandmother of the universe. In the past year you have started a doodle project called Gin Power and you have released your first solo single, which was produced by our other guest.

Abi-Who I'm going about to introduce now, Naima as a solo artist name, and you composed and published several albums and toured across the country at the same time. You are a passionate producer, vocal coach and author for other artists or commercial campaigns or doing film scores. I also don't know where to start about with all the professions that you're involved in, but over the time you collected many experience in recording and arrangement and your recent album that I found was like the funk and LP published at Chateau La Grande Musique Hamburg.

Naima-Really great name, right?

Abi- And the description about your own music sound I quote in German: " Ein dream, , UV, mit viel analog soul, a lo dream, pop jam with a lot of analog sound, soul and real disco tears and your last singel was "On the run", published in summer 2019, right?

Naima-That's right.

Abi- OK, nice to have you here, a warm welcome.

Naima-Thank you.

Frida- So to begin with, we would like to ask you one question. It's a question we want to ask all of our guests on trans culture express because we think it's good to begin the podcast with a note of inspiration.

Abi- And it is what was your last musical discovery? It could be anything like the last song you heard that made you think, wow, this is so great or touched or make you somehow emotional in some other way.

Jamila- So Naima and me we were in Portugal in November December to record our music and afterwards I went to Lisbon and I met a very interesting filmmaker who showed me a song. From a Cap verdien artist that was released on Analog Africa, which is a really cool label. I think that is even based on Berlin and I would have to look the artist up. Playing this song because it gives me so much positive energy in this very, very dark time and it's by the " Onesio Mayo". Oh, I hope I said it right, and it's called Deamanche. And yeah, it's from the space Echo analog Africa album.

Abi- Nice, we're going to definitely add this to our trans Culture Music podcast playlist.

Naima-Yeah I have like rediscovered the band's :Sunlouks and I just thought like, wow, that takes so much space for us. Really unusual arrangements and sounds. And yeah, super freestyle in the songs structures and like this is something I'm really longing for when I listen to music.

Abi-Thanks for sharing.

Naima-And yeah, I can recommend it to listen to it.

Frida-Cool, yeah, we're going to put this on our playlist.

Naima-Let's see how it fits to all the other songs.

Abi- Then it's going to be a very quiet interesting compilation by then. All of the artists and music makers with their contributions to this list. I think it could be a quite good mix and we need new inspirational mixes, right?

Frida-Should we continue?

So Jamila and Naima you guys are friends and you've known each other for some years already, right?

how long you been on each other?

Jamila-That's a good question. I think actively, maybe 5-6 years.

Naima-Yeah, at the Tim's birthday party, no no.

Jamila-It was Phillip puzzle after party. Yeah no, yeah this is the first time I really saw you. But the crazy thing is I knew your music long before and there's this one song: The Wester

Song you had onto fanwar that like 10 years ago or something I listened to and really loved like you were already musically on my mind before I met you as a person.

Naima-And then we had two personal like crossings, right?

Jamila-You want to talk about that?

Naima-Yeah, it's no. It's always that if you should meet somebody that's there are some more like connections.

Jamila-But definitely Allin Cohen is a very close friend of both of us, right?

Frida-Yeah, OK. So then you were friends for some years and now you were also collaborators, and I want to know how did that start? Like, how did you start working together?

I think that was precisely made last year.

Naima-Wasn't the sunset on the bridge with a white wine?

Jamila-Yeah, it was a really good white wine, and Naima was like hey, why don't we just jam? We never really did that before.

Naima-To make it clear now I'm not the person who says let's jam. Never ever. It's not my style though, but because Jamila told me, I want do anything musically with you, why don't we ever do anything together and I said yeah maybe let's just play something, a jam. Let's just not make a plan or not make it precisely and let's see what comes. And it was so nice that it just worked out so well and it was in the same night, in every session that you said. I'm much too tired I can't. No, there's nothing coming tonight, no, no and I said, come on, come on, come on! It's OK I just start it's OK I just take the kalimba. I just start any line and started to sing a really nice melody and then she said: Stop. I have to record it! Wait a second!

Jamila-That's what I love about working with Naima. It's because you just grab a small thing that I do even washing up and humming a melody and you wait. We have to record this melody. Wait, I get the Ukulele. I find it hard to it like this feeling of it doesn't have to be difficult. It doesn't have to be exhausting. I don't have to be perfect. Like this brings in such a special energy that really, really motivates me and was a totally new experience for me to work like this, because also usually I meet with my band members and a band room. I'm the only woman which has different aspects, but we usually we meet and we jam on chords and then the melody is developed and then later I think about lyrics and but it always happens kind of live. But what we did is also you directly recorded keys or the kalimba or melody. In a very different way of creating music that I really enjoy.

Naima- And I also had the feeling that not many persons would take this spontaneous energy so good as you did, so I just tried to keep that as like a as the quality of the special quality of our music development. You know?

Jamila-Yeah yeah, that is very spontaneous and like process.

Naima-I know and also that's why we had the idea always to go in special nice places.

Frida- Can you tell us more about the setting? Things like that? That you go in special places to work.

Jamila- Or I can maybe talk about where we went too and Naima can talk a bit more about what she took as her studio. That I found super amazing how in a little bag everything fits in, so the first time we went to Valentin Theater. Really lovely friends offered us to stay in their refugium as they call it beautiful old villa directly at the water and it was still when taggle Airport was open last summer in September and you recorded also the sound of the planes because they fly very low. They were really low above us. And yeah, we were there for a couple of days. Yeah, and then the second time we went to Portugal. I rented a little house there in Salima by the seaside and I Garve no person to see anywhere like it was very deserted and beautiful landscape like the Atlantic coastlines and artists breathtaking and there all the songs came and that last little special place was the dance studio of Sasha Weilts where we recorded the last bits of you can fly and finished it. And yeah maybe. Let you know once will say something about how we did that, how you did it technically. The was amazing.

Naima-No, I just put everything into the bag and two pieces of underwear.

(laugher)

There wasn't much space left. And it was just really little. Master keyboard very small one. And yeah, the sound card and the laptop with the logistic and ukulele and kalimba and little shakers and like some small nice things and everything like gave us a nice new idea or made a song every little thing we took.

Frida-Yeah, 'cause I wanted to ask about who is responsible for what. And it sounds like you Naima are responsible for bringing the bag full of the stuff, and then you sing.

Jamila-Yeah, actually, what is so beautiful that you give me a lot of orientation because I have so many ideas you know, and usually I don't often sit down and just write a song right? I usually do it when I really have to tell a story or really have to deal with a feeling or an emotion. But in that case with you, it's really like there's someone who gives me orientation of yeah this I take, this is good. Can you write a lyric on this melody? Yeah, let's further this melody and stuff.

Naima-Maybe in this case it's more about special moods or interesting or nice or deep moods, but it's not these big topics, you know. They come if they want, but it doesn't have to.

Jamila-And I think sometimes like as much as I hate the pandemic, I think it might not have happened without having had the space and this. Yeah, this time of senselessness in a way that really opened a space to do this and like I must say the project with you Jamilah is one of the core things that really helped me through this ***** time and also yeah motivated me to do something beautiful like this is so special.

Frida-Yeah yeah it sounds really special, yeah? Uhm, I actually have also one question for you Jamila, because you've had many band projects earlier and you were still in the band and then now you have a duo and your project with Naimah is also kind of promoted as your solo project and I wanted to ask what was it that made you want to also release music as a solo artist?

Jamila-Well first of all Naima was very clear that she wanted to be my producer. I'm not your band made. But I'm happy either way. For me it was not mainly I have to release a solo project, but I must say like now having the experience in my duo with Karina and also in our project with you Naima it is something different to work with women or with people who are socialized and like define themselves as women. I love the people my bandmates. They're really lovely people, but something makes me feel we were thinking to call the album Serene. And this feeling of being serene and just letting go and just be there as you are and not having to be perfect and like creating with what is there not with the pressure of yeah being super good or I don't know. I don't know how to describe it but it's kind of newer experience.

Frida-So you would say working with Naima feels different to you than other experiences you had as a musician?

Jamila-And of course, also in a group you have much more possibilities to feel insecure than with one person, which I can always directly talk to. I mean also we sometimes trigger each other or have projections or whatever, but we're really re good at communicating openly and learning from it, you know.

Abi-From this part and I would like to address the question towards you Naima because like music production itself which is a quiet male dominated sphere. How did you get into music production in the 1st place and have you experienced any barriers or obstacles that you wouldn't have had to deal with if you were a guy?

Naima-Yes. First of all, yes. I just started with producing with my own music, so I had a head and have a solo project and I just wanted to yeah develop my own visions of how the music, how the songs have to sound but it has like a long story so my father showed me when I was like 12 how to produce on logic, how to make a logic arrangement. So that was

a good start and then I studied Arts free arts so I'm like person who likes to build her own creations her own vision. So, I have like this Constitution not just to think like I want to build up things. You know I want to go into the deep into the details and construct it. Until it's an old bone building. So, this is my way of thinking. Or that's what I can do. That's why I can think in an abstract way. It's a good quality for producing and I needed a really long time to really start making it and also Jamila gave me the option to do a whole album. That's the first time I'm doing it and before that I just did single songs for other people and my own stuff. So, it needed a long time because of one thing, because I always kept myself back. I knew of those qualities I have but I was afraid that I don't have enough technical qualities and that's super typical. So, I had a lot of experience, but I thought I have to do it like the men I know do it and I even know producers, female producers and they are not able to play one instrument and they you know they're not able to do a lot of things but they just stand there and say "I'm a producer" And that's the step I needed to do to just trust myself.

Abi-Thinking of yourself from the past what advice you would give from the perspective and experience you have now because now they are coming up more ideas, networks, fostering programs which are actually addressing non binary trans female producers. Do you think there's more need than ever to actually foster these future generation of producers?

Naima-Of course, I already thought about maybe making classes for upcoming female producers. Just say here there's a space for it because in the end, if you look at the music industry always the people who decide is men and everybody is running to the men you know and asking what are you saying now? Is it good? Is it right? And I just think it should stop, you know, and there has to be like a lot of open doors to say it's possible you can do it, and I guess I already inspired some singers and musicians to start producing their stuff themselves. Yeah, they saw she's doing it too. Maybe I should try, you know, I have ideas too and I maybe I can build a beat maker beat by myself, which is really good.

Abi-For example, I was thinking of female pressure, which is like an international network of other supporting networks for like Female in creative industries worldwide. But also like here in Germany for speaking in the music industry's maybe like you've heard about a key change at the Reeperbahn festival, for example, launched in 2017, which is a funded program. Also quote, "It's a global network and movement working towards a total restructuring of the music industry in reaching full gender equality." Do you think there's a real attempt of it? Or because it's like fashionable or what in your opinion?

Naima-That's great. There has to be a lot of movements in this direction, and it's OK if it's like written one time too much somewhere you know, because human beings don't like to change, you know, and it needs a long time. And it's also in here at my own private in my own private life. It's really everyday process.

Jamila- Uhm, I want to point out like the label where I'm at, that also released a solo album at the solo first single that we listen to now and was run by Reina Shira. And he's such a sensitive and well-informed person. I'm so grateful. And I also want to point out it's not about everyone in the industry has to be female now. Definitely we need much more equality and much more women and Flinders indecision positions, yeah, but also I want to point out and I'm grateful to work with a person like I know who really is supportive and it's so important to have people like that in the professional industry, not only in your friends circus, which is super important too, but to have someone there who does not really earn a lot of money through you but really believes in the messages you want to get out. You know and support that and yeah, I just want to give credit to that also, and he also really supports us now with this project and the first single was released. Also, through him, yeah?

(Song)

Frida-So we listened to your song Jamila and produced by Naima and yeah I was wondering about if you can elaborate more about this moment of creation of this song and how it came up.

Jamila-Yes it was created on Valentine's Day on that island where Naima recorded the planes and it's a song that has different layers so one layer actually is feeling stuck here and not being able to travel as we used to. Yeah, this wanderlust. This longing for just being on the road, new places, new people. But then there's a second layer which has to do with my love partner, but also many friends I've had similar feeling with, which is when, yeah, it's really hard for me to come to bear when a variable loving person is not feeling well, but not really knowing and doing something to change their state of mind. So, I kind of always. Grew up with. I want to help people, but of course it can also be unhealthy and every person has to go their own way and figure out how they want to live and how they want to reach that. If they don't feel well in the current situation. I was longing and this is how the song also starts with wondering how would it feel to let go of my need to cure your pain and somehow like the way the lyrics evolve is for me like really an empowerment song? Yeah, feeling empowered to smile, to cry to fly. I mean everything belongs together and I think our real strength is to show our vulnerability. Show up with that and get in touch with that. And then in the last end of the song it's really about do you think let go of old patterns, but I know where my place is, my place is not to rescue someone, but I can share because I survived myself very dark places in my life and stages in my life and I know how transformation feels like and that it's possible. I really wanted to get this message out.

Frida-Yeah the clearness of your message maybe gave me also the impulse just to find directly the right atmosphere, the right sound, the right attitude so that just flew out of me.

Naima-She was going to sleep and I was just Doing beats and beats and basslines and was like I can't stop, the maniac.It was just that I have to get this done now because I know what has to happen.

Abi-U feel the drive you just want to follow it and don't wanna leave go on till it's ready.

Naima-And everything else was just details afterwards.

Abi-Nice way to sum it up.

Frida-Yeah yeah, really, you recorded the song in 2020 last year, which was probably for you, just like for us, and for most of the people I know, a tough year, right? It was a challenging year. I wanted to ask how kind of this you already touched upon it when you were talking, but how kind of your collaboration what it did for you personally in terms of coping with the pandemic and this difficult situation, was it a healing process or was it maybe also challenging?

Jamila-I felt it was not challenging at all. It was giving me a lot of hope and motivation and to not stop believing that I'm a musician. I mean, you named my functions before in the beginning and it took me really long to actually say I'm a musician. I always hit behind the other things I did and I was really good at doing them and. I always thought that I'm not good enough. I didn't study music and I'm not perfect in this instrument. I'm not perfect with that, and because Abilashan also talked about impostor syndrome. You know, like this idea of I really have to prove to the world I really am a musician, you know. And when this pandemic came, and as I said before, our first big Germany tour got cancelled and other invitations abroad and all of that falling away just so devastating and by continuing not only continuing. Also, creating a new project with Naima was. It's still not over. We're not talking, post Pandemic we're still in it and it still is really something so near to my heart and I'm grateful for being able to. Yeah, practicing and experiencing and experimenting with music because I really come from the life musician point of view. I don't spend a lot of time like that usually, so I'm very grateful.

Frida-So Naima, what did this musical collaboration mean for you personally in the past year?

Naima-I just enjoyed that time. You know, they're in this special times. Like a lot of people overthought what they are doing because look, yeah, in this capitalistic life you're running and running after jobs after things. And I really enjoyed like the slow down, you know. I can work much better if everything around me is like calmer and slower. I'm not the you know, superhero style and super career maker. I'm just love to have time for things and I guess that's also what gave us the opportunity to come to this idea.

Frida-We've been talking now mostly about the project that you two are doing together and where you are singing Jamila and you are producing Naima, but you also you have other musical projects and maybe you want to introduce one of those to us now.

Naima- Just what's really good with a topic we just talked about is the song On the run. It's a single of my last album and I released it with a video of it with a really nice music clip. And yeah, it's about maybe things slowing down before the lockdown came. And yeah it was just a really nice band album I did with my last band and I wrote the songs and we just went to the studio and just played it live. So, it's really different than what we do now. And it was really without producing. It was just playing just what comes out of these three musicians and we went to the studio and recorded that.

(Song)

Frida-We were just listening to On the run. Naima's song from 2019. It's a really cool video I have to say so you guys should check it out. We are going to link the video or

Abby-You can see what we were like having joyful moments watching together this very vibrant clip. But maybe you can tell us about how this video also came out and the idea about this song.

Naima-The first idea came to me through like a relationship to a friend of mine who's really wild. And I have the conversation we had in my mind like about what it is to run away from yourself. And why do you need all this chaos? And yeah, that's like the personal part of it. And also, we talked about this capitalistic lifestyle and running after things and never slowing down. And like there's 2 levels of feelings coming together for me. And I just wanted to say: No, I'm not running away anymore. Yeah I stopped, I'm not on the run.

Frida-Sounds like a very healthy stand or a very healthy thing to tell oneself.

Abi-Yes, we need more of this kind of like creative output. (Laughter). Jamila, in that way you both have in common your passion for music and the talent to make this kind of beautiful music but also your Arabic sounding names. Do you think that there were any given circumstances within professional context for example when you were working as a cultural facilitator, in applications for grants for also touring with your band, for panel discussions that you got invited to? Where they're like this moment where your names might have been a crucial decisive factor or role in which you got like, get the job or the funding or the invitation, or different treatment in any way?

Jamila- But first of all, I'm trying to create myself also spaces and not just a musician like I used to cook a lot and create fast is even Naima when we still had the live music series in this Neukölln place. I love to also collaborate, bringing people in. So, a lot of situations in which I was also sitting on panels or whatever was also collaborations because this is for

me always how the social spheres in my music life work. That we collaborate that we are supporting each other. The invite each other. There's kind of a strong community. When I was invited like. I had two really negative experiences where I felt I'm I'm a token, so to speak.

One time I was in Lower Saxony, I was the program director of the Welcome Board. We were supporting refugee musicians to get their careers back on track after fleeing to Germany and I was asked to come into the Music Commission. So the Commission that has a lot of money to support where to put it in in which festivals in which projects whatsoever and I was the only woman the only person below 60 years old and the only person with a non-wide German name and the round was introduced by: This is professor so and so. And this is Mrs Ellis : We're very happy you're here. We want more people like you. And everyone was really introduced by their qualities by their profession. And I was sitting there. I was so shocked I couldn't say something at that time. It's a couple of years ago, and I mean, I've been organizing festivals since I'm 14. I've been a musician since I'm 16 and I've been running really big projects, festivals whatsoever, you know. And not being interested at all at my real competences. I was invited for my name and running this new project that the ministry really wanted to get recognition for to finally have something that they can say we do for refugees. They're just so frustrating! And another time I was booked with my band and I was it somewhere at the line. There's many places and the festival creator come to the backstage tent. We just arrived and she's looking around. And then she's introducing herself to make. I'm Jamila oh, you're Jamila, I expected a little girl with black curly hair. And like the poster was even hanging there like can you see that this is I'm the woman from this band like excuse me and this is something so interesting because I position myself as white passing and I feel of course I have a lot of privileges by not being recognized as a person of minority. Like if you don't know my name or my history. But recently I just learned in a mentoring that being white passing also means the invisibility of certain struggles and pain you have and always being questioned for how you look. Also when I'm in Arab countries like saying I look so German. Once I was also called in my position in this job and in Lower Saxony and someone says like oh, your face is so wide and shiny and friendly it doesn't look like an hjgu Which is my last name. Yeah, and I was so shocked. And then he continues like Ah, but your German is already really good. I I guess you must be very well integrated yet. And then he continued with yeah why I'm calling is the Ministry of Arts and Science told me you are here to integrate the refugees. But like no this is not like I was trying to explain nicely it's a two-way process. We all want to learn from each other and he said I don't care whatever I wanted to suggest for our next opera project to invite the refugees here in the town. Maybe they can do a belly dance performance. Please help us find some people. And the crazy thing is, like as shocking this is, this is the problematic thing, especially people working in arts see themselves as open minded as international they want to do good things. And it doesn't mean that that you don't reproduce racism, for example, and it's so important to talk about it and to not think you're racist If you're a neo Nazi at the edge of society, no, like we all carry certain ideas and we have to talk about it and we have to say wait, this is a boundary. I'm happy to speak with you, but don't comment on how I look and how these fits to my name or don't think that you don't have to ask people how they want to be included in a

process and just decide they shall be belly dancers, you know, and it's still a long way to go. Human beings don't want to learn. They need a long time.

Abi- Yeah, of course this process of unlearning it takes probably generations, and it's a fight that we all have to fight together.

Jamila- Just one last thing. I also recently discovered with a friend who like me also has been very active in festival contacts. And now as we didn't have festivals for almost two years, we start thinking about things that you don't think about when you're on the run because you're hustling all the time. Yeah, so we realized we are always being called complicated. We are always being called to demanding. I realized like so many people that are so motivated and engaged in and also bringing in different perspectives and more or less white festivals here in Europe. That want to bring in political context, historical context, really controversial performance, you know, then you are too demanding because the artist maybe has other needs because maybe the artist comes from a conflict and war area and cannot just jump around and get lost in a huge crazy festival you know. And I heard that so often and then she told me the same and we started thinking, OK, we have to do something about it. Yeah, like maybe our own kind of I don't know Channel, you are not too complicated.

Abi-It sounds like new beginnings and maybe this is a good way like moment to think about this.

Jamila-I think this is what's good about this effect of a pandemic to really overseeing and unlearn and. Yeah, we really have time to reflect.

Frida-I would like to reflect on language for a moment. And specifically, I'm interested in your relationship to Arabic songwriting Jamila. Because you do sometimes write songs in Arabic.

Jamila-Yeah, actually, currently. 'cause we're going with a band to the studio in two weeks. Actually, the term father tongue is quite fitting because it's my father who speaks Arabic and I grew up in a very German speaking environment and also, I was mainly socialized with him in German so when I was four, we moved away from Berlin to Mecklenburg Vorpommern and after that there was actually no one except for him. I could have spoken Arabic too and I really lost all of that for quite a long time. And after I was finishing school, I went a lot to Palestine and always when I was there trying to speak as much as possible or take little courses or private lessons or something. And now actually since just two weeks ago I'm a student at Birzeit University in Palestine. Uhm, yeah, because I could never say my Arabic is perfect, but through my second master which was music, diversity and cultural education I was able to choose an instrument of my liking and I decided to take Arabic singing, and through that really good friend Ahmed who's also known through Kahara and his solo project and his dual project with Avyan Ahmed. He started teaching

me Arabic singing and Arabic folklore music, but in a very modern way like we would play jazz chords on the piano to it, you know. So I really thank him a lot for introducing me into this because I felt too shy before to do it and to also say I claim that this is also a language that is dear to my identity. Also just from a singing point of view, singing Arabic does something totally different technically, because I use other vowels and come and sing more from the throat, but yeah, so different sounds.

And when I sing, write in Arabic, I usually start with something simple that I'm sure of that is right and elaborate an idea around it and then I ask friends to support me with this and one of my best friends. Russia Hill. We, she's my main Co Arabic songwriter, amazing person who I also currently work with. So yeah, that's very important to me.

Frida-Do you feel that there are kind of limits? Or possibilities within the different languages that you use for writing?

Jamila-The possibilities lay in the industry and now it gets interesting because with my English songs I'm not very successful. The Arabic songs are those who made it into editorial playlists. We came into an Apple playlist that has 60,000 followers. We landed into several Spotify playlists, Arab Indi, Arab jazz Palestine sounds Syria sounds, and also there's a streaming company that is really big in the Middle East and north. Africa called Unrami, which means my melody. It's not available here, but also, they're shown into big playlist that are followed by 10 thousand, 100 thousand of people, and I don't know if I would ever do that with English, which is crazy. And then again, I'm like, am I not a good enough musician? And do I have to exercise myself to have success or to get a listening community like?

Frida-Yeah, that's interesting that you say that the limits and the possibilities are more in terms of this distribution and what happens after you made the song, it's not so much about the process before or like your personal process, but it's more an outward.

Jamila-One thing that happened if you ask me about limits and possibilities when Naima and me were in Portugal on our last night. Naima, like had a really beautiful following chords on the guitar and then when showering and was like just seeing something and for the first time I was not watched by anyone and I was not Listen by anyone I just improvised in Arabic, just very freely without knowing what I'm doing. I mean knowing what I'm saying, but knowing, maybe grammatically, it doesn't make the best sense. And then I send this little thing that I made to a friend who's from Lebanon and he sent me super touched voice memo back that he had goosebumps how honest my words were and how much you could feel it and even stronger than with anyone who could very perfectly, have done this in the language and I think that's maybe a possibility I want to explore more. Yeah, it feels very dear to my soul and also to a part of my identity. My Palestinian identity was a very or is a very political one. And it was my own search for also different cultural aspects of this identity in the past 15 years. Going to different places in the Middle East starting, Arab Undergrounded Fusion Festival, but now also really digging into music and creating my own.

Frida- So that's maybe kind of the chapter that you are at now. Yeah, on that in that exploration, yeah?

Jamila- Yeah.

Frida- And now I think maybe we should listen to something very new and fresh, which is your new single Jamila? Can you tell us what it's called and what it's about?

Jamila- It's called follow the sound of the sea and it's very. It's very poetic because it's a poem, a poem I wrote in 2010.

Naima-Really,

Yeah, for a musician I was in love with and it's so crazy because I just visited Abilashion's sister in Cologne and I remembered how I bought the book of Reguel Letters to a young poet over there fell in love with his musician and wrote this poem sitting in a café, reading Regue, and drinking coffee and smoking a cigarette in writing this poem. Yeah, and when Naima and me we were in Portugal, surrounded constantly everyday by this stunning beautiful end force of the sea, you know it came back to my mind and we were starting to improvise on it. And the first part is this poem and it's again this very beautiful cosmic very sounds Naima created and then it turns into a more BT driven force, you know, and mesmerizing for me. It's mesmerizing, you know. Follow the sound of the sea and one line is you can follow and rise high and I think the positivity that I also know was really there and the natural forces and then we put it in the song.

Frida- OK so we will listen to follow the sound of the sea.

(Song)

Abi- We listen to the last track for this episode. Follow the sound of the sea.

Jamila-Yeah, and I just when we listened to it again. Now I just realized all my songs are about freedom. Somehow, it's this really big core topic in all my music.

Abi-Maybe also sort of this kind of like urge to express it in any like in so many ways.

Jamila- And I think I can't strip off the fact I grew up with a father from a place that is unfree. Like and that is a really strong part of my identity and I'm also not free to live there, and I think this really brings me to all this wish of freedom and on a personal and on a political level.

Frida-We are coming to the end and maybe uhm to round it all up.

Abi-We could try to talk about some visions for the future like what needs to be done to support the creative collaborations and communities. I mean we talked about like your project but also the things that you would like to see more growing initiatives fostering different like gender identities and groups within the creative scene, right? But how would you like to see the? Intersectional feminist practices in your circle of artist friends for example?

Jamila- Starting to talk. I think this is one of the biggest tools we have to exchange and then to learn that many experience are not just your individual feeling of maybe not being enough or insecurities, but realizing that you have to put them in the framework of our social power structures and to understand that to learn terms. That are there for it like impostor syndrome. To understand the historic development better. And it's not images said before. I really loved that to also create new spaces of learning from each other. Yeah, like you had this idea of maybe inviting women to support them and producing their own stuff to also share our knowledge that always comes for me from a personal starting point to really connect with people and then brainstorm ideas from that. And to make also our venues survive. I mean, this podcast also came from the idea to support Artistania to stay alive and I really want to give a shout out to Artistania where we don't only have our rehearsal room with the band, but where I experience so many beautiful live concerts of not very well-known acts that became more well known. Like really the whole community there. I miss it so incredibly.

Naima-Yeah, I can just connect to what Jamila said before, like that that I see my responsibility to just give like my power to younger people to trust yourselves to go the way they feel, to follow their visions and also maybe add to find concrete classes or frames to just give possibilities also in combination with maybe more support from the politics I don't know. Also how the money structures could be like, more supportive and more understanding for the way cultural life is lived and what it needs, you know, because it's also you see now all the support from the government is like has a lot of holes you know and a lot of people just fall through and you see how not really connected it is often. To the chaotic or different way the people live, you know.

Jamila- And I just wanted to say I wish for more funding institutions like Music board Berlin because it's in Germany the only one on a federal level that really says we have a quota for gender and we really look into diversity aspects and we want to support that. There's more BPOC people and that people are aware of access and it's really something I wish for every federal state in Germany to exist, you know. So thank you music board for funding this.

(Laughter)

Frida-Yes, yes. Thank you, music board, for funding this and thank you Jamila and Naima for being here with us today.

Abi-Our very first guest for this episode.

Also, thanks to Claire Chaulet from Artistania, our project manager.

Frida-And thanks to all of you who are listening for tuning in.

Next time we will talk about post pandemic party culture with some of the finest party people around, The funky funk band La By'le and Lewamm from the Berlin Club Commission and the Qti Bpac feminist centered collective Brand.

Frida- Until then you can follow us on social media on Instagram. You'll find us at [trans culture_Express_podcast](#) and tell a friend.

I'm Frida

I'm Abilaschan, and we hear you soon.