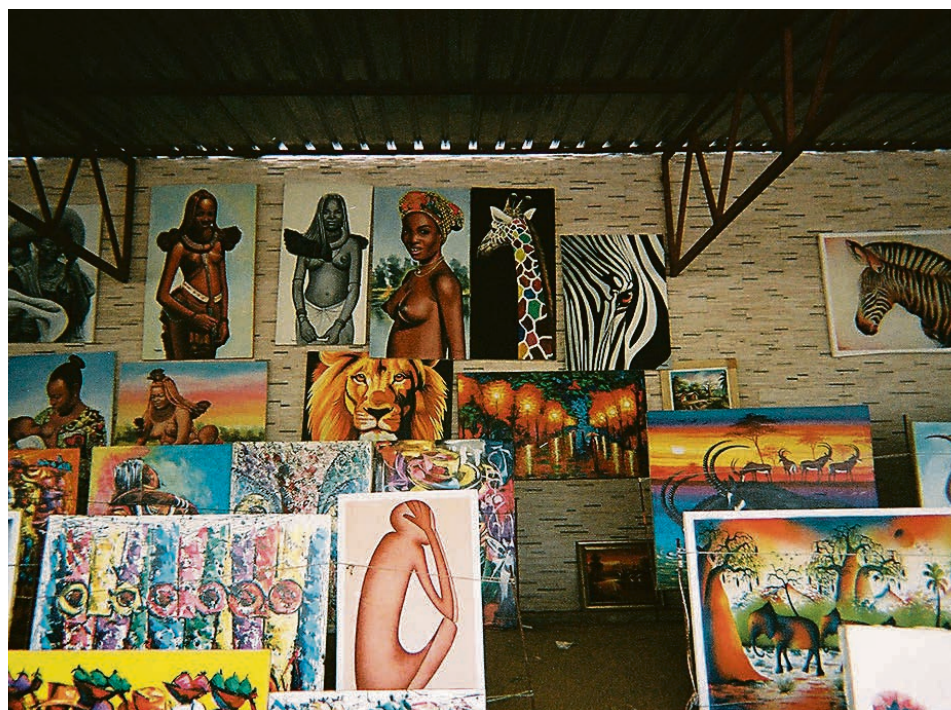


Rama em Flor, the festival that celebrates queer culture and community

The third edition of the feminist queer festival, Rama em Flor will be running until September.



Kimberley Lestieux



Through debates, concerts, art exhibitions and more, the festival seeks to empower the voices of this community. Creating, connecting, and supporting. That's what Rama em Flor is all about. When Daniela Ribeiro and Rodrigo Araújo started this festival back in 2016, the idea was to gather a community – that was already reflecting on queer issues – and give

them more visibility by creating a platform where they can show their work, express their thoughts, and lift their voices. Inspired by the Ladyfest, born in 2000 from the riot grrrl movement, the creators of Rama em Flor wanted to organize a festival here in Lisbon that celebrates feminism and queer culture, through transdisciplinary, heterogeneous and inclusive programs. When Daniela and

Rodrigo decided to move forward with the idea, they wanted to find a name that connected it with their Portuguese roots. "Rama em Flor can be associated with wild plants and flowers which bud and bloom. It is also a way of referring to a group of vegetation/flora that is deemed irrelevant or invisible", Beatriz, Daniela and Raquel, the coordinators of the festival, tell me. Flowers have long been associated

with social and feminist fights. Rama em Flor can mean many things to different people "but the name will always be tied with struggle, growth, continuity and union", the team insists.

Rama em Flor is a local festival made by the people, for the people. The festival tells the stories of the queer community's experiences in the city. "It is important because it seeks to give visibility to people and subjects that, only belong to a small part of society", explain the three women. "We assert ourselves as a representative of feminist and queer issues, seeking to integrate these into [general society]."

For the next three months, the intersectional festival, will organize concerts, art exhibitions and debates around racial issues, trans care, networks, ecofeminism and queer curatorships. "Our purpose is to create connections between people, either by sharing artistic work, connecting artists, ideas or experiences linked to being queer and from minority communities", the trio tells me.

"There is a social responsibility to make Rama happen" A festival, a community, but most importantly, Rama is a safe space for collective reflection, dialogue and sharing, in a free and inclusive way. The coordinators' main goal is to "increase female, trans, non-binary and non-white representation, incite political awareness, civic activity and encourage freedom of gender identities and expressions". The group believes that a driving force of united voices leads to progress. "We are all friends and politically engaged, we believe in change and evolution. Rama em Flor is nothing more than this



belief in the possibility of the collective making a difference. We almost feel that there is a need, there is a social responsibility to make Rama happen". But change doesn't come easily... Or for free.

This year, Rama em Flor has received financial support from the Lisbon Municipality, under the RAAML (Regulation for the Allocation of Support by the Municipality of Lisbon). It is a support for entities dedicated to the promotion of the well-being and quality of life of the population, through the implementation of programs, projects or activities that pursue the municipal interest. The team of Rama applied for this financial support and won. However, "the amount is very low", they say. "It does not cover 15 percent of the total budget of the festival, but it is an important help and thankfully we got it. The rest of the expenses we fill with other partnerships". To help fund the rest of the festival, Rama em Flor organised a fundraiser on 15 May, raising enough money to cover the production costs of a big event they are planning. "Gradually we are able to find solutions for the festival to happen", Beatriz, Daniela, and Raquel tell me. "Of course, if we had a very large budget to manage

everything, it would be easier, but as a non-profit community festival, all the partnerships we establish are important bonds that are created and that allow us to raise awareness on these issues".

In a supporting environment such as Rama em Flor, bonds are sacred. With the pandemic and mandatory curfews, it became clear to Beatriz and Daniela that they simply could not "lose ties with the community, at a time when everything was about distance, and the impossibility of touching, or meeting". Thankfully, artists, participants and anyone attending the festival can make up for lost time with three months of political, social and cultural events. Due to the current situation, the coordinators of Rama have decided to host one event per day, instead of the three or four as in previous editions. They have also decided to restrict all events to the weekend. "It made sense to dilute the festival over time, slow down and extend the festival without overloading the team or spaces. The return to social and cultural life is not easy for all people after being away so long from everything. This way we can guarantee that there is plenty of time and space for more people to join Rama em Flor".

