WRITERS MOSAIC

What We Leave We Carry

Malú Ansaldo

Malú Ansaldo: So my name is Malú Ansaldo. I'm Argentinian. And I work in the creative sector in the UK and internationally, actually. I normally work as a producer or a programmer in theatre or in performing arts.

I was born in Argentina, in Buenos Aires, which is the capital of Argentina. And I grew up between the city and a place in the mountains, in a small village, in a province called Córdoba, which is in the centre of Argentina. That's where we spent our summers and a lot of time. And that was very rural, very idyllic upbringing. And then in my early 20s, I moved to Patagonia. So I lived there for about three years, in a place called Bariloche, which is by the mountains. It's very famous for skiing and for lakes and beautiful sightseeing. And there, I started working. That was just after I finished university. I studied theatre, and I did also a pedagogic degree. So I was working there, for the National Theater Institute, doing an audience development program for very young people across Patagonia. So I worked a lot with different very, very rural, isolated communities in Patagonia, which was incredible. So I ended

up traveling quite a lot there, and I can say I got to know my country very well, and that was—I'm very proud of that part. And then I moved back to the city, and very soon after that, I was working in the International Theater Festival in Buenos Aires. And I met the artistic director of a festival in the UK, and they invited me to come over and work in their festival for one year for one of their editions. So I came in 2010 for a few months, worked with them, then I went travelling for a little bit. And then the following year, they were moving on somewhere else, so they offered me a job in the festival, so I took it, and that's when I moved, officially moved to the UK, in 2011.

I lived in Norwich and in London, and then for a year or so, I lived on the road with a big show. I worked for Cirque du Soleil at that time, so I was basically living with the circus, so I didn't really have a home. I moved all around the world with them. And then I lived in Wales for some time as well. I was working for the National Theatre of Wales there. And again, it was very similar to my very early job in Patagonia. This was working all across Wales, with lots of different communities. And it was also idyllic because you might be putting on a show on a beach town. And I got to meet a lot of amazing people and did a lot of hikes. And then I came back to London, and I've been in London ever since. That was, I think I came back to London in 2018. Yeah, I would say London is my home now.

Part of me always thought that I was going to live somewhere else, that I was going to live abroad. My parents both worked internationally, and my mum was a representative in Argentina for a thing called ELS, and it was an exchange programme for people to go and study English either in Europe or in the U.S., which I did that when I was very young, after school. So I went to study in the U.S. for a few months. And so they spent, in their 20s and 30s, a lot of time in other countries, my parents. And we always had a lot of people coming around, so they spoke a lot of English at home as well. So I always had this fantasy that I would eventually live somewhere else, but I was pretty sure I was going to live in the U.S. And then when I went to live in Patagonia, I was like, *this is awesome. I'm probably going to stay here forever because I'm really into outdoors and sports.* So there was a moment when I really had this very conscious choice of, *okay, I stay in Patagonia, and I change my life and just work outdoors and do something completely different, or I pursue this career in the arts*, which is what I studied and what I really loved, *and I go back to the city*, because, let's be honest, I mean, it was a pretty small place where I was living, so there were not really loads of things to do with the arts there. So I went back to the city, and very soon after, I met these people when I was working in the festival. And we got along super well, and they offered me this opportunity, but something that maybe people say, 'Oh, you should come and work with us, it'd be amazing.' And I really took it on board. I was like, 'Okay, I'll come.' And they were like, 'Really?' And I was like, 'Yes', because I wanted to have this experience. And I think there was

something that was like an opportunity thrown in the air, but I made it very real. So I remember—until today, we're really good friends with them, and they're like, 'You really wanted to come.' And I was like, 'I really wanted to come.' But I didn't even know where Norwich was. I had no clue. It wasn't my dream to live in the UK; it was just this opportunity to do something completely different. And the first time I came, it was amazing. I had a great experience. It was a very incredible festival. The artists that they booked were great. They had this really good energy. Everyone in the team was very nice. I made lots of friends. And it was a small place, so it was very welcoming. It was very easy to integrate in that scenario.

Because I'm from Italian heritage, I went back to the village where my Italian ancestor came from, and I got their birth certificate. And so with that, we could claim Italian citizenship. And that allowed me to be a legal alien, let's say. And so then I accessed my Italian passport. And at the time, that was before Brexit, so I could live in the UK. And that's when, the next year, when they offered me the actual job. The first time I came, I came for the experience. I was 23, I think. It was very inspiring to see how things worked. I ended up with this group of friends who, until today, they're some of my best friends. They're like my family in the UK. I wasn't migrating the first time, definitely not, but I experienced the place, and I thought, *this is amazing. This is wonderful. This kind of festival, I don't think, exists in Argentina. And being able to live off this is wonderful,* because the reality of people who work in

the arts in Argentina is very different. Our arts funding is almost inexistent. There's not a lot of jobs. Most of them—the festival where I was working was run by the government. It always gets to a point where it starts being a little bit political.

There was a moment where we were working in this—it was a tango festival, and we were giving out free tickets from the—I think it was the cultural ministry house. And there was a massive protest coming on that main road. It's the street that goes from the congress to the government house, we call it La Casa Rosada, to the Pink House. So lots of the main protests normally run in that avenue. And this building, where we were giving out the free tickets, was just on that avenue. And this protest took over the entire house, and they kidnapped us inside of the building. They closed the doors, and we were all there, and they were all covering their faces and everything. And it was very scary. And I remember the security people took us up the stairs, and I had to drop this box with lots of money and tickets under the minister's office; there was a place where I could leave it. And then there was a—it's like a movie, this story. There was a door between that building and the bank that was next to that building, so they took us out through that secret door, and then we went from the bank downstairs, out through a back door. And then we went around, and we saw all this entire protest on the front of the building, and it was quite scary. And I remember at that time, I was leading a team of front of house people for the whole festival, and I had one of my school friends, her little sister was

working in my team, and she was 18. So the next day, we were scared, and so I was like, ‘Okay, don't worry, I'll walk you to your bus stop after work’, because I was on my way to another job I had in what would be the west end of Buenos Aires. I was working in the ticket office in the night during the winter breaks, just to make additional money because I had to pay my sister back, so I had different jobs during the day and during the night. And I only had one hour to walk between one job to the other. I dropped this girl at her bus stop, and then I kept walking, and it was a road that goes to the Obelisck. And these two little kids, they must have been 12 or something, they tried to rob me at gunpoint there. And they were like, ‘Come on, give us all you've got.’ And I was really scared. And I just kept walking really fast. And I ended up walking between the cars, and then I made it to a theatre where I had some friends that were working there. And they were like, ‘You look so pale. What happened?’ And I said, ‘Oh, these young kids tried to rob me with the gun, and I can't believe it.’ I was so upset because I said, ‘Can you believe, I only have one hour between two jobs, I'm working my ass off, and they try to steal from me. Come on, I don't have anything to give them.’ Anyway, I was very upset. And then that night, I went to my parents' house after that, and I said to them, ‘I don't think I want to live here anymore because it's a bit tricky.’ And they were like, ‘Okay, we understand’, because my sister already lived abroad. So they were fine with me saying, ‘I think I want to leave the country.’ And so at that point, that was a very, very turning point that I remember because I’d come back from Europe, where I had this amazing

experience, thinking, *oh, you know you can make a living out of this,* and then I was in Argentina, having four jobs, and they were trying to kill me with a gun, and they were 12 year olds. And I was like, *this is ridiculous*. *Why?* And I was like, *this is not really how I want to live*. So then, effectively, I moved back, and I came back to work as a producer in that same festival.

It was bizarre because also I come from a big city, so Buenos Aires is super big, and then I had—the places where I lived were super big city, huge, or quite rural. And then I thought, *well, Norwich is a city, so it's going to be like a city*. And then I went there, and it felt very much like a town, like a smaller village, but every time I would say something like that, they would be like, 'No, this is the city.' Anyway, it felt very easy for me because everything was—you could just walk everywhere. I don't think I took a bus ever when I was there, or you would cycle, and people knew each other. It was very like a small town. But it was a bit hard for me at the beginning because, obviously during the festival, there were lots of things to do, but when the festival finished, it was quiet. It was very quiet. Also, things were closing very early, and I'm always used to like, well, now not anymore, but I was used to eating quite late, right. So many nights I ended up without dinner because I thought, *I'll just eat like at 10 p.m.,* normal for us, and there was nothing. And I was like, *why? Why is everything closed?* I was a bit shocked, yeah. Then also the other thing for me, I grew up speaking English, I studied in the U.S, so when I came, I was like, *of course I'm*

bilingual. And then I arrived there, and I was—the reality of the accent and how people speak is quite different. And there's not such a crazy accent in Norwich, but still for me, it was a bit complicated. So I was a bit frustrated because I was finding it harder to do phone calls or work. Yeah, I got used to it later on. But you know how British people are very much into accents and knowing where people are from or what their class is according to how they speak, and I was totally tone deaf to all of those things. I was like, *I have no clue where anyone is from or their background because of how they speak*. No idea.

The first time, I lived on someone's spare room, this was a person who was a supporter of the festival, and she was super nice. But the second time I came, when I moved officially, I remember I messaged on Facebook all the friends I made at the festival, being like, 'Hey I'm coming back, does anyone have a room?' And one of my friends who was also working in the festival, who today is one of my best friends, she said, 'Oh, there is a spare room in my house, you can come and live with us.' And it was a house with seven people and 25 cats. And I lived in the box room, it was a tiny bedroom with a single bed. And that was a reality check as well because in Argentina, I had my own house, I lived on my own, I had a car. They're very different. And here, I lived with seven people, till today, 14 years later, I've never had a car again. I have a bike, and that's it. Yeah, I was very used to a certain lifestyle that it never really got to the same here, but also, I don't think you need the same

lifestyle that I had there to have a very good life. I do think my standard of living went—I don't know if it went down, but it certainly changed. It was quite different. There's a lot of things that I say about my life in Argentina that if I say it in the UK, people assume I grew up as a millionaire or I'm super posh. But there's lots of things that are more normal for us, like I had a horse when I was growing up, we had a horse in our summer house. Now, if someone says to you, 'We had a horse in our summer house', you think, *okay, well, they're quite wealthy*. But a lot of people have a summer house. This is a summer house that was bought by my grandfather a million years ago, in a village, in the mountains. In fact, that's where my parents live now. A lot of people in those places have horses. You just have the horse in your garden. A lot of people are members of a club. It's not—you don't have to be super wealthy to have that. But it is, yes, it is a certain standard of life and a certain class statement being a member of a club, but a lot of people can access that. It's not so exclusive as it would be here. But I remember perfectly well, the weekend before I moved, we were at the club with my dad, and he said to me, 'You're going to be an immigrant now. You have to remember that this life that you have here is not gonna—you're used to a certain life that is not going to be the same.' And I was like, 'What do you mean? It's great.' And it is because you can make a good living by working in the arts, which I think is a bit harder in Argentina. But here, I'm an isolated unit making a living in the arts. In Argentina, I have all my family, my background, so all of these things that I had, the club, the summer house, all of

those things that are things that you just come with because you're born into this family. Here, I don't have anything, so anything I have is what I made. So I think in that sense, yes, it really has changed. But for example, here, instead of going to the pool of my club, I can go to the pool that I pay my membership on Better and it's, I think, it's £40 a month, and you can swim in all the pools in London, so it's—they're great pools. I don't need a members' only club with a pool because you can do that, and we don't have that in Argentina. You know what I mean? So there is a difference, yes, but I can still do the things I like doing.

After Norwich, I came to London, and I worked at the Globe Theatre for five years. That is the main thing that really changed my life that time there because I think that is when really this whole journey into internationalisation and working all around the world really exploded for me. So the time I was working there, the first project I did there was called the Globe to Globe Festival, and it was during the London Olympics, so it was part of the Cultural Olympiad, so it was a very, very big—I don't know if you remember this, but it was a very incredible time in London where everything was about multiculturalism and internationalism, and there were so many amazing projects, and there was lots of funding for amazing projects. So the Globe Theatre was presenting basically the complete works of William Shakespeare, each one was done by a different company from a different country in their own language. So this was revolutionary because the Globe has a massive

following of people who are like, 'Shakespeare in proper English', and then we were doing it in all of these other languages, and we would get complaints like, 'What? This is sacrilege. This is not Shakespeare, it's in Chinese.' And we were like, 'Well, Shakespeare belongs to everyone, and everyone feels like they can do it.' And it was incredible because all of these international communities that live in London and across the UK were finally coming to the Globe, to a place where they might have never gone before because they never felt that it really talked to them, and this time, the shows were in their own language, maybe it was their national company coming. Anyway, long story short, it was amazing, and we had 80% new audiences, which is a very, very high number for any organisation doing any kind of audience development. It's huge.

So I started having all of this experience of like, *okay, I work for a British institution, which is quite well known, and I'm representing them, but I'm a non-British person.* And sometimes, people, when I would arrive, would find that weird. I remember when I arrived in Macedonia, and we were working with the National Theatre from there. It was a very, very state-run theatre with the big office, with the old, bald guy wearing a suit, expecting another guy like him. And then I got off the plane, and he was like, 'You are the representative of the Globe?' And I was in a plane, after a few hours, and being on tour, I was like, 'Yeah, I am. I'm sorry, but I am the person that you've been negotiating with for months. And now, I'm the person that you have to work

with, even if you don't like it. I look like this.' And yeah, between 2014 and 2016, we did a project which was a global tour of Hamlet. And so we took a production of Hamlet to every country in the world, literally every country, so 197, according to United Nations. And I didn't go to 197 countries, but I went to a lot of countries with them. And so we visited lots of different refugee camps in Middle East and in Africa, and we took the show to them. And it was fascinating. And that is the project that really, really changed my life because it really made me think about the arts, what it does, how it brings us together, how it's language, stories, the power of storytelling, how something can take you out of your reality for a few hours and make you feel different. And that's when I went to live in Wales, and I was working for the National Theatre of Wales. That National Theatre doesn't exist anymore, and now there's a new one being created. But that National Theatre had this motto of, 'We're a national theatre without walls, so the entire nation is our theatre.' So all of the shows were site-specific shows that we would go and make with different communities all across Wales. And it was amazing. And a lot of people were super welcoming; a lot of people were super open. It was interesting which stories we were telling in those places. But there were also lots of conflicts. I mean, Wales has this thing with language. There's always a tension with England. It's different priorities in terms of funding our Arts Council and what they want out of that national theatre. At the moment, it was just after Brexit as well.

So when I first came to London, I had a very big group of Argentinian friends that became my family here. But after Brexit, a lot of people left, a lot of them went to live in Europe. And I started feeling sometimes when people would ask me, 'Where are you from?', because obviously I have an accent, so people ask me, and because I sound Spanish, people always assume I'm from Spain. And I'm like, 'Well, the world is bigger than Europe. Think wider.' Argentina is the end of the world, but we exist.' So I always ask people, 'Where do you think I'm from?', and it's quite funny to hear how long it takes them to get there.

Depends who you talk to, and normally the more far away from bigger cities and the more you are in smaller places and particularly with older people, people might talk about Malvinas, about the war. Some people have family members that were in the war, so they're not hostile, but they might make—someone made a very bad joke once in Norwich, when I was there and on my first time there, and I was like, *wow, I never expected this.* When you first leave the place where you grew up, and I never experienced racism in Argentina, and then I came here, and people would make maybe a comment or a joke or something, and I was like, *oh, okay, this is how it feels. I didn't know*. And then you're more ready for it. But I think, yeah, I had my time in Norwich, and I loved my time in Wales, but I think I feel more comfortable living in London because it's more international and more multicultural. And sometimes

when you're in places where it's very homogeneous, the community that lives there, and you're the only one who's different, it's a bit harder.

Most of my work was always very international and very global, and for me, it was always thinking, *London is this international city.* But then when I was in Wales, the company still had very big international ambitions, and they wanted to tour. And yes, it was different because it was working embedded in the communities for those local communities most of the time. I could have gone to the best university and had the best credentials, but they're not from here, so they don't recognise them. So all I have in the UK is my work experience, it's not my education. It doesn't matter where I studied to anyone because they don't know what it is. It doesn't say anything to them, and also, our education system is different.

The time I worked in Wales was really good, and it gave me that, *okay, I make shows here for here as well*. I'm happy it was in Wales because I think Welsh people are the rebels of the UK, and I really like it, and it's such a beautiful nation with incredible, yes, the outdoors is just very inspiring, and the people are very, very nice and very friendly. And actually, in Wales, they love you if you're Argentinian because that's the only place in the world where there is a Welsh colony, so you're like a rock star there, and everyone gets very excited to meet you. They think that everyone speaks

Welsh in Argentina, and no, they don't. But it's a small place in Patagonia. I went there, and it's really beautiful.

I do feel settled, but also, I don't. I know it's my home. I love Argentina, and I love going there. I don't know if I could live there. I think that—I'm not saying politics in England or in the UK are any easier, but I think it's always been so volatile in Argentina, and it feels a bit safer here. It feels more that if you put one foot in front of the other, you will get to a place where you cannot always plan—we can't plan anymore after the pandemic—but you know what I mean? You can have a career and know that if you do certain things, you'll get to certain places. In Argentina, it's very much you never know what's going to happen. You might lose everything all the time. People go bankrupt a million times, and then they reinvent themselves. We're very resilient as a nation, but it's a bit exhausting emotionally as well.

I loved that time in Wales, and it was very nice to—finally, I could live on my own again in Wales. It was the first time in all those years. And so I started feeling a bit more like, *okay, I could have my home somewhere.* But definitely I was like, *but I wouldn't live here*, even though I like it so much more because it's so beautiful, and I love the outdoors, and I love nature, but I was very sure that I had to live more in London. And I still think that in the UK, I would probably just live in London, maybe Edinburgh, because it's also quite international during the festival season, and

there's that different feeling. But having experienced a lot of other places, I don't think I would live in other places, or I wouldn't necessarily want to. Yeah, and then I think after that, I bought a flat in London, so that really gave me a footing, that really made me feel like I had a place somewhere in the world that was mine, a little bit of—my little corner in the world. Owning something for the first time after working very hard for long years, it really—that made—gave me a different feeling, I guess. And now I have my family, so yeah, it's—but we always talk about this because my partner is also a migrant, so we're always like, well, we could live in so many places. We live here and this is our home. We're Londoners, if you want. Our baby was born here. But yeah, I don't know.

I don't think I can have a sense of permanence. I don't think about life that way. Since I came over, every time I would go home, people always ask you, 'Are you going to stay forever?' or 'When are you coming back?' And I'm like, 'Why are those the only two options?' Because I could live anywhere. I could move to Australia for 10 years and then go and live in Italy for another 15 years and then go and live in the U.S. and then die in Costa Rica one day. Who knows? I don't think I can know because I think I came here out of chance, maybe. Yes, I think there's no such thing as pure luck. I think I was ready and looking for a place to go, and I wanted to have this experience, and you maybe manifested it. I don't know, but it happened. And I know that we want a certain lifestyle. My partner also works in the arts. So we're

going to probably either have to be in places where we can do our jobs or change our jobs or be able to work somewhere where we can work remote or access a good airport because we need to get places with what we do. I'm still working in a similar way, taking shows around the world and doing international stuff, so I'm still doing the same kind of thing.

I don't think I can think in permanence in that way because that's just not how I think my life is and how I am. I think I like thinking about different options and different alternatives, and I think you can always change. We are lucky that we have different passports, and so we are allowed to live in different places if we want to, so we could try different things. And that's very lucky, not everyone has that, not everyone has the option. So yeah, it's something that we always think about, but for now, London is our home, and it's the place where we work and allows us to do our job. And we definitely are very aware that it's one of the best places to live if you work in the arts and you do what we do.

Brexit had an effect on me because even though I am Argentinian, I'm also European. And I think the idea of Europe and the philosophy of Europe is something that I believe in and I like. And so I think this is a very shared feeling; a lot of people felt a bit let down by Britain wanting out of that, and the reasons why I feel it happened, which are very, in a big sense, racism was a big part of it

happening, I think. So it did affect me. And from a paperwork point of view, there was this, 'Oh, well, if you were European and you've lived in the UK for more than X amount of years, you get your permanent leave to remain, there's nothing—there's no problem. Nothing is going to happen to you. You can stay.' But I never trusted that because I think that they say that, but then they said Brexit wasn't going to happen, and then it happened. So I then had to start my paperwork to become British, which I didn't want to necessarily do. I was happy just not being British, being European, living here. I didn't want to get to a point where, in a few years they'd be like, 'No, now we've changed the rules, and you have to pay this extra tax', or 'people have to leave', or whatever. So I became British.

Yes, maybe I'm not the main point of racism in the UK because I'm a white woman with a European passport, but I think it all depends where you stand. In Spain, for example, I was a victim of racism much more because they don't like Latin Americans because a lot of our migration goes there. I was told to my face, 'Go back to where you came from', by a guy on the street when he heard me speaking in Spanish with my Argentinian accent. And so that happens in Europe, not here, because like I was saying, the same with education, same with me and my accent, is not really a point of reference, Argentina, for the UK that much, like Latin Americans are not—I mean, to the point where, for a long, long time, in most of the ethnicity forms, there was no box for 'Latin America', so we always had to tick 'Other'.

I remember asking back to everyone, regardless of their accent. Lots of people were super British, and they were like, 'Where are you from?' And I would say, 'Where are you from? Why are you asking me? Why does it matter?' It was a bit of a weird time, I think, and a lot of my friends left. It was disappointing, and I think it's gone downhill a little bit after Brexit in lots of ways, so I don't think it's become better. I think we just got used to it. But I think it made me more of a Londoner than a person that would be like, 'Oh, I'm British.' I live in London, and this is where I feel safe and comfortable because it's so international. I have friends from all around the world, all shapes and forms, and I see how others of my friends feel.

I think, in terms of identity, this is something that we discuss a lot in this household. My partner is also—he's half Argentinian, half Turkish. He was born in Israel, grew up in Istanbul, and moved here for university. And now we have our baby, who's all of these mixes together. I was born in Argentina, but my dad's family comes from an Italian background, and my mum's family is from a Spanish background. In Argentina, there is a lot of European migration in the last century, so a lot of us have European heritage. And my dad grew up speaking Italian with his grandma because she didn't speak Spanish, and my mum's grandparents spoke Catalan. So there's a big mix as well. And so I always felt in the way they raised us, there was very much this notion that we're Italian; I have an Italian name; my grandma cooked all of this

amazing food; we had this very, very strong sense of that identity on top of our Argentinian one. But again, I think this is a self-reflective thing that until you leave the country, you don't realise. I never thought, *oh, well, yeah, drinking mate is still a statement of my Argentinian identity*. I just drank it every day because everyone does it, and it's just how I grew up. And then when I started living with my partner, who his mum is Argentinian, but he never lived there, and he grew up thinking, *oh, I'm very Argentinian because I have this heritage*, but then we started living together, and he was like, 'Oh, my God, you're so Argentinian because you have all of these habits that you still do.' And there are little things like, yes, a lot in the food and tastes and things. I love Latin music. I love Argentinian music, so I listen to a lot of it. With our baby, we try to speak to him. I speak to him in Spanish only, and my partner speaks to him in Turkish only, so that he'll have our languages as well. He's going to have Jewish upbringing because my partner is Jewish, and for him, it's very important that he has this learning and this part of his identity. So we are very mixed in that sense, and we're trying to amalgamate all of it. And it's an interesting journey now having a young person with us and seeing how we help him navigate this mix.

I don't feel I have British things when I'm here, but then when I go home, there are certain habits and certain things that I have acquired. I mean, I lived with a lot of British people for a long time when I was sharing homes, so I picked up lots of different things. I still don't drink a lot of tea, but sometimes, I don't know, the

notion of going to the pub and sharing that. At the beginning, I didn't quite get it, like why would we spend so many hours just sitting down and drinking and talking because we were used to dancing. But now, I like it. It's like meeting with your friends and spending that time there. Definitely something about time management and eating earlier. And there's lots of different habits and things that I think I've picked up, ways of communicating or—yeah. No, that's for sure. I think there's—we have acquired a lot that I—maybe it's hard for me to be able to list them. But if someone—if I go back home, they would see that I am different, that I do some things in a different way. And that I think is for after 15 years of living here.

Having a baby here made us think quite a lot. And in a way, a lot of people ask me, 'Are you gonna go back home to have the baby?' And actually, I wouldn't have gone back home to have the baby, even though my parents and my brother and a lot of my nieces and nephews are there because I was like, *do you know what I live here*. I was working full-time when I was pregnant, so I was going to a doctor and everything here. And, yeah, it made a difference in the sense our baby is full on British. We both have British citizenship, so it's fine, but we're still always going to be migrants, and he's born here, so that's the difference between him and us. I think it made us purposely speaking in Spanish to him or really thinking about how am I going to—I want him to feel Argentinian. And it's not a pride thing, it's more—it's who I am, and what I can give him. And I think Spanish is a very important language

globally, so I really want him to have that as an offering I can give him. But yeah, I don't know. I'm very intrigued about how he's going to grow up and how he's going to feel with all of this mix. But I'm also very intrigued about how the world is going to change and how someone like him can live in the world. What is he going to care about? Because we see the world through our background and through the eyes of our own stories and where we come from. Is he going to care about some of the same things I care about because of my experiences, or maybe they're so far away from him that it doesn't really quite matter so much, but maybe other things will matter to him? I don't know.

I want to believe I'm a global citizen because I think when I think about things, I try to think about it with that perspective, even though my partner would say, well, but I'm not mixed heritage myself in that sense because I was born in the same place where my parents were born, so I'm not a third culture kid, for example. He is, my baby is a third culture kid as well. But I think the experiences I had working and traveling and living in different places and even living in different places in my own country have made me be able to always try to think about things from a different angle. And I think, yeah, the global politics—everywhere is becoming more fascist, really. We have a very fascist president in Argentina at the moment, which is shameful. But there's a lot of people that are hopefully more like me, and there is more and more movement, so there's more and more mixture. So even if people

want to stop that and close borders, the reality of modern living is that people travel and move and mix, so I don't think it's something that can be stopped. I think maybe it's going to be more radical because there's going to be more mixed, so there's going to be more radicalized fascism on the other side trying to stop it, but it's unstoppable. You know what, a few years ago, there were these things—well, now with AI everything's a bit crazy, and I'm a bit scared of AI, but there was a moment where there were all these photos of how people are gonna look in like 2050 or in a hundred years, and everyone was like super mixed, like with their different skin colours, eye colours, hair shapes and forms. And I thought everyone looked very beautiful in those projections because I don't think you can stop people from moving. Legally or illegally, people move, people migrate. And with climate, with the climate disasters we're having, people are going to have to move more because they need to access safer grounds. And it's just a reality is beyond war. I mean, literally because of nature, people are going to have to move, so we are going to keep mixing. So yes, politics are going one way, but nature is taking us to live in a different direction, and you cannot stop that.

Well, I think, obviously during the pandemic, there was a bit of a complicated time for me and for everyone working in the arts and in lots of industries because everything shut down. So at the moment, I was the head of Performing Arts at the Roundhouse, which is this amazing venue in London. So we were programming lots

of different shows from around the world and trying to engage a lot of the international local communities as well through different projects. It was really a dream job. And then after that, I worked at Battersea Arts Centre as well, also programming during the pandemic, so everything was digital. And then I worked with a bunch of different artists, helping them with their international work, which, like I said, is one of the things that I always do. And then I went into working in the immersive sector, which is quite a big sector now. And in the UK, it's the home of immersive theatre and arts. And that's what I'm doing now. I'm working at Punchdrunk, who are, I don't know if they're the creators of the genre, but one of the main ones. And I'm working on taking their latest show around the world.

When I came here, I was working with the people I was studying when I was in Argentina. I could go and see the shows that I would only read in books or meet the people or work with them. A lot of times, I actually work with them, which is mind-blowing. So in a sense, everything comes through London in particular. And then there's a lot of very inspiring people that you meet here that are at the top of their game, and there are people that are changing policy globally or that are changing so many people's lives with their work and with what they do, in different industries, not just in the arts. And that's fascinating. And I think it's a very inspiring place. You can always go and meet people, see shows, experience different things that will keep you engaged and with your eyes open. Yeah, I think here I was—I did

become a global citizen here, with a global perspective and global care. Sometimes I feel I go back home, and it's so self-reflective, like only thinking about Argentinian politics and all of the issues that are happening there, which is fair enough, they're big, but the world is big, and there's things happening everywhere. It's a land of opportunities for me, but I think I was a lucky person. I came with a job, so by the time I had to look for a second job, I already had an experience here, which, if you didn't study here and you never had a job here, it's very hard to start because they're not going to acknowledge any of your experience. If you come from a place like Argentina, which is not very relevant for the UK, for the history of the UK, I feel like if you come from other places that maybe were part of the British Empire or that they would have more of a reference to, it's different. But it's such an alien, random country for here.

The country that I grew up in and I went to school in and the history that we're taught in school is not British history, so I know much more about the Spanish empire and a lot of other parts. And this is also something that is to be mindful of. And I think, sometimes in Britain, people are very—they think that this is the only reality. And of course, you study history, and you study the history of the world through the eyes of the British Empire, and I studied them through the eyes of something else. And my partner grew up in Istanbul, and the history books that he read are so different, like he knows all about sultans and a lot of other things that I

have no clue. And so I feel like London is the global place where there is all the layers of migration and people from all around the world and people that come here from different backgrounds and because of different reasons. Now, there's lots of different international and migrant communities across the UK, and a lot of them are more historical migrant communities that are part of a thing, a movement, that came maybe after the empire. There's like—you have South Asian communities, black communities, different pockets in bigger, inner cities, if you want. I don't feel like there is that for Latinos in other parts of the UK. They're mainly in London. And that's another thing that for me was a big discovery after I left Argentina, where I left being, *I'm Argentinian*, and I got here, and I was like, *I'm Latin American, I'm not just Argentinian, I am part of this bigger community of migrants.* Latin America is a massive, massive part of the American continent, so it's like saying to someone who migrated from, I don't know, Kenya or, I don't know, South Africa, I mean, 'Are you South African or are you African?' So you start having this notion of you're part of a bigger community. One of my friends, she's from a Pakistani family from Bradford, and they have a very big community there, but that's a historical migration. So I think there is diversity and there is variety in other parts of the UK, but the level of globalization that you have in London, I don't think you have it in other parts of the UK. At least I haven't experienced it in the places where I lived or where I've been traveling to or working in.

Some of these migrant communities are second, third generation, fourth generation, And then they become that is the community of that place. Obviously, they are diverse, if you want to think about them in comparison to a white English family, but they are established. And then now you have someone who's a new arrival like me, then I will be not part of that community also. So in a way, I feel like in a place where there is a multiplicity of diversities, it becomes easier than in a place that certain communities are established, and I'm still not part of them. They're all migrants, and they're all migrant communities, but there's a difference. There's a difference if you're third generation than if you just arrived. There's a difference if you're a third generation, you have your family, you have a big community around you, or if you're on your own. I think that's the difference. It's not easier or harder; it's just different.

I always remember that day where my dad said to me, 'You're going to be a migrant now. Are you aware that you're going to be a migrant?' And I haven't thought about it, and then I was like, *oh, yes, I am.* And it's been 15 years. And I still remember that chat. And maybe it's because his grandparents were migrants, and he lived it through them, so he was telling me that. And I don't know. I don't think it diminishes. I'm British now. So legally, I'm a British citizen with the same rights as everyone else. But I still have an accent. I still drink mate at home. People still tell me, 'Oh, your English is very good', when I'm doing something. Or one time, I was

telling someone, I remember this was still when I was working at the Globe, and I said to him, 'Oh, I work at the Globe.' And they're like, 'Oh, you'—they just assumed I was an usher. And I'm like, 'Why would you think? Why? Why is that the only job I could have?' So there's still those things still happen. And I still don't have a lot of the cultural references. I still haven't studied here. I still—there's still things, and there's always going to be things. But it's not good or bad, it's just a fact. I don't dwell on it, but it's a reality. I will be a migrant forever because I wasn't born here.

A recording of this interview can be found at writersmosaic.org.uk