

Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation is the adoption of elements of a minority culture by members of a dominant culture, while using these elements outside of their original cultural context. These cultural properties may be forms of dress, music or art, religion, language, intellectual property or social behavior, all of which may have deep cultural meaning to the original culture, but may be used as fashion by those from outside that culture.

Often, the original meaning of these cultural elements is lost or distorted, and such displays are often viewed as disrespectful, or even as a form of desecration, by members of the originating culture. Cultural elements which may have deep meaning to the original culture may be reduced to “exotic” fashion or toys by those from the dominant culture. When this is done, the imitator, who does not experience that oppression is able to “play”, temporarily, an “exotic” other, without experiencing any of the daily discriminations faced by other cultures. Appropriation and the “fetishizing” of cultures, in fact, alienates those whose culture is being appropriated

(From Wikipedia)

Rhythms of Resistance takes its form of action and some aspects of its music from a Brazilian Black liberation movement, while not being part of that movement. Our selection of instruments is the same and our way of maestrating similar to real batucadas. Custard, Samba Reggae and Sheffield Samba Reggae are simplified versions of original Samba Reggae rhythms, Afoxé, Voodoo and Xangô are directly rooted in Afro-Brazilian religion. Angela Davis, Cochabamba, Crazy Monkey, Hafla, Menaiek, No Border Bossa, Ragga and possible others are based on styles of popular music from the Global South.

There is an ongoing debate in the RoR network about to what extent this is cultural appropriation, and what consequences to draw from that. Many bands have decided to stop calling themselves “Samba” or “Batucada”, but rather use alternative phrases like percussion or drumming. Some bands have decided to stop playing specific tunes.

Still it is important to acknowledge that our methods and music are inspired by Samba and Carnival and are using many elements from it.