

BEAT FROM THE SREE

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Many stories lurk throughout Asheville, whether they are behind the Vaudevillian jazz-folk played by buskers around Pritchard Park, the colorful businesses decorated with funky, hand-made crafts or the laughter echoing from a patio as locals and tourists alike enjoy delicious beer.

Akua Adisa, community organizer/healing artist/writer, originally from Milwaukee

"I'm 28. When I was 18, I moved to Atlanta, and then five years ago, I moved here from Atlanta. Now I live here and Atlanta. I'm living bi-local."

What would you say inspires your style?

"My style is inspired by, first and foremost, what I'm feeling and working with that in a medicinal way. So, if I'm feeling that I need to be coddled and I need

to be comforted, I'll wear clothes that are very comfortable. If I'm feeling bogged down by the white dominance of Asheville, then I'll wear big Africa on my shirt, red black and green, just to make me feel more powerful in my identity. The red, black and green flag is the Pan-African flag but I would say it's totally beyond Marcus Garvey. It's embraced by Pan-Africans all over the world."

If you were to say three words that would describe your style, what would you say?

"Cozy, queer African."

If you were to cite someone of inspiration, like a writer or a political activist that gives you life and inspire you on a daily basis,

what would you say?

"I would say Audre Lorde, Jessica Care Moore, who is a really good poet, Alicia Garza, one of the founders of Black Lives Matter, who has given me life right now. I would say Erykah Badu. Oh, Andre 3000."

Do you have a personal philosophy that you live by?

"My mantra would be 'everything is unfolding perfectly.'"

What do you think of Asheville?

"Asheville is a challenging place to live for me as a queer woman of African descent. I'm trying to bring a community around that where I can bring my whole self forward but I love this place. The place itself is really healing, the mountains, the materials, minerals, the plant life. This place feels like a home. I'm making a home here,

Akua Adisa with child.



Mariah Thomas, originally from Arizona, and Jeremiah Armstrong, originally from Oregon, rock miners

T: "We mine gems and minerals, quartz, aquamarines, things like that and we sell them to rock shops."

Have you been here a long time?

M: "We've been here for, like, a week."

T: "One week today, actually"

M: "We definitely dig Asheville, though, a lot. It's a really cool city. It's been really good to us. People are really nice and everybody loves Rosco."

Have you found the rocks and gems here have been pretty good?

M: "Yeah, I just learning about it a couple of months ago. I've been lucky enough to meet him and he's been teaching me all about it. Basically, we go to different mines and different places where the pretty stones are and go digging for them and it usually works out pretty well for us. He takes them into the stores and works out deals with the owners of rock shops and stuff. We just traded for some clothes for a couple racks that we had."

Mariah Thomas and Jeremiah Armstrong

