

## Tom: finding time to exist in the Algarve

### について

Tom: finding time to exist in the Algarve

World Tourism Day 2021 | #TimeToEmbrace #TimeToBe

We are celebrating the World Tourism Day. Over the last years, the tourism industry has seen an enormous expansion and growth, so it's important to underline how openness and inclusion play a crucial role in improving social, cultural and economic relations. Now we would like to let others talk about their life in Portugal.

Meet Tom Leamon painter who moved from cosmopolitan London to quiet Castro Marim, Algarve.



In 2014, he co-founded The Beekeepers, an Arts Association, and Estúdio Yucca, an art studio combining different types of artistic expression in Cabanas de Tavira, where he works on his art projects and welcomes artists from all over the world for artistic residencies and retreats. We met him there, at his art shelter.

“ I ’ ve found a common trait in a lot of people who wanted to have a safe and quiet space where they could create and, mostly, reimagine their art career in nature. So these projects were very much about that.

It felt like it was an important thing that people, unless they were a bit older and mature in their career, that people could have a place where they could come to and develop their practice with the silence around. I guess that ’ s the hardest thing, for an artist - enabling yourself that time to breathe. ”



So why Portugal?

“ London life was getting a tad too much. Constantly lots of things going on. Growing up in the countryside, I felt that I needed to touch base with nature again. I decided the Algarve was the right place. I wanted to retreat away from humans in general. And then, I came here with my partner at the time and we fell in love with it. What was meant to be going back and forth every weekend, ended up with us staying 6 months - and then, full-term. ”

In the beginning Tom left all his friends and family back in London and moved to the Algarve with the 2 people with whom he was running his art space. He found a community of locals that started to engage with him.

“ One of the things that impressed me the most here was having time for things. Portugal provided me with time to be present within myself. Back in London, with all the running around, you don ’ t allow yourself that.

I have many good days here. For me, a perfect day is without any emails, he chuckles. A perfect day is waking up, having a nice breakfast, taking the dogs for a walk, going to the studio and be there painting and doing art work essentially that challenges me. And to be able to go out for lunch. That ’ s a lovely thing, isn ’ t it? I also like knowing that the afternoon might change. I like to be able to flow with the day. I never restrict myself. ”

For artists, context is everything. There are places that drain you, and there are places that replenish your creativity tank.

“ The artist community is not very large here in East Algarve. I wanted to change this a bit, I needed to highlight this part of the world.

My work has definitely changed since I moved here. It took me some time to understand that. In the beginning I worked a lot with the earth, with local materials. And in that time I was still trying to find my voice here. If you compare the work that I used to do in London, before moving here, it was pretty much on a gray scale. Then, everything got pretty colourful here. And it ’ s hard not to be, you know! Whether you work in a closed space, with closed windows, everything is that much brighter. It ’ s consistently like that. ”



Are you curious to know what inspired him about the Algarve?

“ The whole reason we founded The Beekeepers was nature. That diversity of being here and seeing the seasons is incredible, as nothing I ’ ve ever seen before. The occasional rain in the winter that wakes you up at night. The sunshine, the summers are incredible and it ’ s interesting to be in that environment where people are relaxing and enjoying themselves. ”

It ’ s fascinating when you look at the Algarve. You have so many diverse locations. Olhão, for instance, is an incredible place. As it ’ s become richer and richer over time and now you can see there ’ s a youth buzz happening there. And the islands there (Culatra, Armona and Farol), there are just so beautiful. ”

Tom doesn ’ t feel like a foreigner here. He feels he found a new home where he ’ s settled down.

“ I ’ m very keen on being a human being as opposed to being British or from a specific place in the world, so I feel I ’ ve met my family and my community here. Lots of people coming from all over the world, the majority of those people don ’ t feel they ’ re from a certain country or nationality. They do want to find a place that ’ s enables them to feel like they can exist and being comfortable with existing, especially in times like these. We ’ re so lucky to exist right now. ”

Rest assured, Tom. You ’ re one of us now.

You can find more about Tom ’ s art on his website <https://tomleamon.com/>



Photos by @nashdoeswork