

André Pilz – An Inner Journey

For the Love of Sade

Words: David Birch Posted: 18 February 2013



An estimated 22,000km on a bicycle, a switch of hemisphere and a lot of blood, sweat and tears – all for the love of Sade. Andre Pilz, originally from Germany, will attempt to cycle from Cape Agulhas, through Africa and onto London in an outrageous bid to meet his favourite singing artist. But that only tells a fraction of the story.

Pilz will undertake this voyage – one he believes will take upwards of two years – with very limited resources, no clear route or even guarantee he'll meet his hero, and, most strikingly, all whilst telling the story from the perspective of a fictional six-year-old girl called Nala. 'I'm not even fit,' he says with a smirk.

Fulfilling a dream

For Pilz this is a journey that began 27 years ago. 'I was listening to the radio and heard this beautiful voice,' he explains. 'Ever since then I've listened to Sade's music; she inspires me. I'm doing this trip for me and all the other people who don't get to see her in concert.' Throughout the trip Pilz will compile a book filled with messages of support for Sade – he's already amassed ten from around the world – in the hope 'she will be stirred to come and perform in South Africa.'

However, you get the distinct feeling there's more to Pilz's reasoning behind his adventure than meets the eye. The absence of any coherent plan – 'I'll go to Tanzania first, but I've no idea after that,' he boldly states – may seem slightly anarchic, but may well be reflective of a deeper creative side he yearns to bring out: 'The good thing about a tour like this is that you "come down". There are no luxuries; sometimes I may even struggle to find water. Not only does it help you appreciate what you have, but I also find I'm at my most artistic in such a mindset.'

The search within



Art has always played a major role in Pilz's life. He feels it 'allows him to express his inner self,' and the invention of Nala – a girl, who was 'born' when Pilz was listening to the Sade song 'Sally' – is highly illustrative of his philosophical approach. 'Nala doesn't enjoy home life,' he says. 'One day she saw the mountains and wanted to know what was behind them.' Pilz's desire is for Nala to inspire further artwork from both himself and people he meets – all in the hope 'Nala Artworks' will tell the story of his adventure. 'I want to feel the African spirit and hope that spirit comes out in the artwork. Every painting will have another story,' he explains with a distant gaze in his eyes.

Andre Pilz may not seem like your average man. And the ad hoc nature of his expedition is certainly out of the ordinary. But he is following a dream: whilst cycling to London and meeting Sade may be the end goal, the true dream lies in the experience and exploration of the journey within.

<http://www.capechameleon.co.za/online-articles/andre-pilz/>