



## Questions and Answers

What inspired you to use condoms as basis for art?

A: What inspired me was the acquaintanceship with HIV positive children, when I was a volunteer for GAPA (a group of AIDS prevention).

What was your first art work?

A: A T-shirt that had a condom on it, as a decoration. I had worked as a fashion designer for some griffes and I saw the possibility of this idea grow, but I had never thought of creating a whole design. I made commercial clothes with decorations, necklaces and hair accessories. Then, I made pictures and sculptures. The fashion theme came for last, and it was just an evolutionary process of these long 10 years. In 1997 I made the first dress, using the moulage technique, but not be worn, just as a sculpture. Using fashion as an element for AIDS awareness.

I only saw pictures of feminine figurines. Have you ever made something for men?

A: I believe in the women's power of decision, when we talk about sex, so that's why I have more work towards the feminine vision. But I have a project of creating a collection with only masculine pieces, which will be called: Medieval Art "Garments as body protection". Because of that, I'm studying Medieval art, Cavalry and the sexual behavior of this time. It will be a historic collection since the 15th century, until nowadays or even until the future, it's a huge project. I've already developed a male bust series sculptured with condoms, compounded by 12 pieces.

Do you draw the designs first or create the figurine immediately?

A: It Depends. There are some collections that are planned, drawn and shaped like the Divas series I made in 2000, It was a rereading of movie divas like: Marilyn Monroe, Vivian Leigh, Audrey Hepburn, Carmen Miranda and Marlene Dietrich. But there are some collections that don't require all that. It also depends on my resources. When I don't have a sponsorship, I adapt myself to the Brazilian creativity, cutting, shaping, re-shaping and pasting, sometimes I use the moulage technique on real people, always using a not permeable fabric, for safety. I developed a lot of art techniques to obtain these results I've been presenting, the options in how to use a condom in art are very interesting, I'm always discovering new possibilities, in coloring, cutting or even in fusing (melting), this is, for me, the charming part of my work. My new discovery was making tricot and crochet with condom stripes.

What do you have in mind when you are creating?

A: I think in how the preservatives changed my life. It's been 10 years working with those. I think a lot about the social question and the fear that AIDS created on people, on my friends, mainly for being directly linked to behavior cases, taboo and prejudice. And as an artist I think about art aesthetics, and also that I don't want to see people dieing of AIDS. It's so sad to loose someone we love, victims of discrimination and prejudice that AIDS brought to society and I think my work can help reliving this discussion.

What do you prefer? The pictures or clothes you make? What is your favorite kind of art?

A: I don't have a favorite one. I want my art to be everywhere, reminding people of the necessity of prevention when you have sex. There are times that one sort of art is much more convenient. There are some pictures requests, installations, and dresses. I decided to work more with the figurines, because I noticed that their concept make people think about the meaning of "Wear against AIDS". The reflection is to question use of the preservative not as commercial fashion but as a conceptual fashion, aware or unaware, the concept is to wear it at the right time, not only as a trend, on clothes.

How many condoms do you need to make a gown?

A: I don't make gowns to be worn, I use their shape to translate what I feel. I use at least one thousand condoms on which gown/sculpture. The maximum of condoms I've used on a gown was on one wedding dress (around 80 thousand condoms).

Where do you find these condoms? (I've read once that you only used the ones that were expired).

A: I have a partnership with all preservatives companies. There is a document to obtain this raw-material, because it can not be distributed once it hadn't passed through the quality control, it's a risky kind of material. I receive them through five sources:

- 1.The preservatives that are defective, from national production.
- 2.The preservatives that are confiscated from contraband.
- 3.The preservatives that are part from laboratory tests (the ones that didn't pass and burst).
- 4.The expired preservatives.
- 5.The preservatives that didn't pass the quality control test.

The destiny of this raw-material is incineration or common trash. The incineration produces a huge quantity of sulfur and common trash is not safe for the environment, so what I do is to use and transform this material into art pieces which duration is useful and ephemeral and its decomposition is natural and doesn't harm the environment. I was an activist of Greenpeace and whenever I can I'm involved with its issues. At the beginning, I worked with preservatives, not AIDS. The AIDS issue came along with my work with HIV positive children.

How many clothes have you made approximately?

A: Around 200 sculptures, 80 pictures and 160 figurines. Some installations and exhibitions too.

Can anyone wear those figurines?

A: In some special occasions like fashion shows or editorials. The focus is not on wearing my figurines, but wearing the concept and to introduce the preservative on everybody's lives, breaking taboos and giving the public the chance to ponder about the concept that my art generates in relation of art itself, fashion, aesthetics, ethics, economy, health, the environment, sexuality and mainly the behavior questions and religion.

Have you ever worked in the fashion industry? If not, would you like to?

A: Yes I have. I worked with product development for highly respected stores in Brazil. I have some projects of commercial fashion, but always having as theme the social issues like: hunger, tuberculosis, urban violence, mental problems, depriving ourselves of being happy, and the difficulty in accepting the beauty of things! I would like to reuse the latex fiber and develop winter clothes due to the power of heat the fiber has, so they (the clothes) could be distributed for homeless people, poor people in need, etc.

What are your plans for the future?

A: I have 3 projects now:

a.The project of the male collection "Medieval art" Garments as body protection.

b."Venus' house". This is a thematic location. It's a house with furniture (sofas, beds, and kitchen) and people as sculptures. Everything will be made of condoms with the aim of introducing the preservative into people's day by day life. At Venus' house we're having lectures of sexual orientation turned to the teen public, schools for the elderly. Movies that have as theme sexuality and its history and a library with data from world wide projects of AID, HIV and STDs. The idea is to built an educational archive to support schools and universities in a contemporary view. The purpose of this project is to make easier the discussion about sexuality inside the family.

c.Fashion Show Stars: This is a very ambitious project but I believe that it will come true someday. The idea is to have a big fashion show with some personalities like: movie stars, singers, politicians, business people, Socialites from Hollywood, New York, Milan, Paris, Tokyo, Brazil and why not Greece? The idea is to make celebrities contribute with the cause wear my creations and say the sentence: "I use it, don't you?" I guess that from this moment the public can change their habits and start using preservatives.

In which ways you believe your work could be used in AIDS prevention campaigns?

A: In several ways, because my work is different from anything else. Since an add to social politics of the area. In a ludic way, with educational projects in schools. Breaking taboos and prejudice towards the subject. In exhibitions because my work causes rupture e gives space to reflexion. Unconsciously, people leave an exhibition multiplying my work, with comments and reflexions about the theme. I have projects for schools, universities and companies.

What's the importance of the Nkosi Johnson award for you?

A: I was flattered about receiving it, because Nkosi was the boy who made the world stop for a minute at the Durban conference in 2002. He was fighter, who innovated and immobilized Africa. I also put myself in the same position, because what I do is hard and to get where I stand is even harder. Although I have the attention of the media, I don't have professional stability and I'm not sponsored by anyone to continue my projects. I hope that this award helps me get some more attention in my own country, about the importance and utility of my work.

Which technique do you use?

A: I have already register 40 types of cutting techniques and 60 types of collage, all of them working with condoms. I developed the process of natural dyeing, because after their vulcanization, there is some trouble working with them, especially if the condoms have lubricant. The technique didn't exist, I had to develop it.

What is the reaction that you get towards your art?

A: The action and reaction of the public is always a surprise. There are some people that hide and whisper about it, others laugh or don't like it and say it's inappropriate and there are other people who wants to meet me, get to know me, tell me their problems, etc. There a lot of parents that look for me to thank me, because it was through my art that they've reached their children to talk about sexuality. These are the most typical reactions.

Your message:

A: "Condoms must be basic like a pair of jeans and so necessary like a great love".

Can we divulge how to get in touch with you?

A: Sure, this helps me a lot to publicize my work and inform the population about taking care of our sexual life and health. Thank you very much for giving me this space and for the article made about my work.

Do you know somebody who is/was infected with Aids and that's why you got involved to the theme?

A: When I started to work preventing AIDS, in 1994, I did it for pure conscience. I mainly understood the importance of being a volunteer in a cause that was shocking the world, in personal relations and the media. At that moment, I did not know nobody infected by the HIV virus. After some years I knew that some friends of mine were infected and this stimulated me not to stop. Today I already lost some dear people because of AIDS, and this bothers me, a lot, but it also stimulates me to promote the prevention. I think that it is the minimum that I can make being a discerning person in relation to a problem of this magnitude: "If you have conscience, act".

You come from a catholic country: what does your family think about you doing art with condoms?

A: My country is catholic, but my family is not. My father is a sociologist and my mother is a dentist, both are 70 years old, I had a liberal and politicized education. My parents had always worked in social projects, and this facilitated my vision of life, making possible an ampler conscience of the world, the equality, the fraternity and freedom. I have a deep admiration for them, and until today they continue giving me forces to continue. I would say that they are my source of inspiration when I create. My parents are in my life and my art. I find in them a lot to discuss my creation process and then they suggest, ideas, projects... We create together. I have this consultation from them, daily. About livings in a catholic country, I personally do not have a religion, I would say that my religion is loving life and respect the next one. We are all equal, we are only one before God.

Have you turned your back on Catholicism or are you protesting from within the religion?

A: I do not protest against any religion, I protest for dignity, solidarity. My protest today is for life. Protest for the prevention of AIDS and the improvement in the quality of life of people who are positive HIV. My dream is to join efforts and take to Africa the quality of treatment that we have here in Brazil.

Was the trip in Africa successful?

A: I really do not know if it was a success, since I was very surprised at the reaction of the people in the exposition. My work was representing UNESCO-Breda in '3rd African Conference for Research on the Social Aspects of the HIV/AIDS in Dakar Senegal'.

I never imagined that people who work with the theme could not recognize that my work were made of condoms. Then I thought: if these people who work with the theme do not identify, it's because they aren't familiarized with the only efficient method of prevention AIDS by sexual contact, imagine who do not work then? This really worries me, I want to go back Africa and develop prevention projects.

Does it happen to you to do other art works ?

A: Yes. My whole life I've been involved with art and social projects. My formation is in backdrop production. I worked with backdrops in the theater, television and cinema in Brazil. I studied sculpture in bronze; I made free painting courses, pigmentation, tapestry, theater, cinema and fashion. I studied in Barcelona, the artists: Gaudi, Picasso, Salvador From there and Miro. I worked with fashion creating accessories and shoes for the biggest brands in Brazil. I was always in some form of art, but always allied with social projects.

What kind of difference did you noticed between the Brazilian Catholics and the Muslim African people in terms of AIDS prevention?

A: I had little time to analyze with depth the subject because I did not leave the conference. I would like to go back to Africa with a new project and more time. I think that the religious questions are from personal issues and they do not interfere with the way I treat the combat of AIDS and as I carry my work through. Therefore when we treat issues like illness or health, we are all equal, independent of the religious option. But I can only cite I'm sorry to know that the people in Africa do not have the right of free treatment and medicine. It would be good if the African government made partnerships with the government of Brazil, which is opened to negotiate, allowing quality of life and prevention.

In Africa AIDS is mostly an heterosexual disease. In Europe, the homosexual community and drug users are more concerned by AIDS. How is it look upon in Brazil?

A: In Brazil AIDS presents itself in the following characteristics: It is reaching women, , reaching poor people each time and of less education, reaching each time more heterosexuals.

Source: Health department/National Program of DST/AIDS In Brazil, the AIDS has reached, of sufficiently intense form, the users of injectable drugs (UDI) and the men who have sex with other men (HSH) and, in the beginning of the 80's, the individuals that had received blood transfusions. More recently we are observing the increase of the number of AIDS cases, due to heterosexual transmission, mainly between the women.

Differently of the men, the women have presented increasing rates of incidence of the illness. Using education as an indicative of the social-economical condition of the individual, it is observed that AIDS reached initially the individuals with higher education, with posterior growth between people with less education. The country accumulated about

160 thousand deaths, due to AIDS, until December of 2003. However, in 1996, after the introduction of the politics of universal access to the anti-retroviral treatment (ARV) that it combines drugs with different forms of action (HAART), observed an important decrease in mortality. From the year 2000, this rate stabilized in about 6,3 deaths for 100 a thousand inhabitants, this stabilization is more evident in the Southeastern Region and between the men. Moreover, between 1993 and 2003, an increase of five year was observed in the medium age the deaths from AIDS, in both the genders, reflecting an increase of time in life of the patients.



Adriana Bertini

## Profile

Adriana Bertini

02/02/1971

Porto Alegre Brazil

Scenography technician and interior designer.

Graduated in Interpretation at CAL - Casa das artes de Laranjeiras/ RJ

Bachelor in Educational Arts UNESP São Paulo BR

Adriana began her volunteer work when she was 14 years old. Daughter of Jorge Bertin , member of the International Amnesty and her mother, the dentist Maria Neiva, one of the founders of the RONDON project. Adriana had an alternative education in socialist schools, art schools such as the Waldorf School. She initiated her social work at the Greenpeace, where she stayed for ten years, at the age of 25, she began working with HIV children at GAPA (Florianopolis/Santa Catarina/Brazil).

She has given art workshops and theatrical arts for children in risky situations or in penitentiaries.

Parallel to her social work, Adriana, has acted in fashion, where she worked in famous brands from Brazil such as: Forum, Carmin, Opera Rock, Vara and Lódice. She's got vast experience Working with backdrops for commercial films. She was part of campaigns like: Parmalat stuffed animal, Correios (Brazilian post office), Pampers, McDonald's, C&A, among others.

Since her collaboration at the XIV AIDS conference 2002, in Barcelona, Adriana only devotes herself to projects related to preventing AIDS through the arts, developing new techniques and improving her work engaging more and more psychology and education on it.

She was part of the XV AIDS Conference in Bangkok in Thailand. She gave workshops at the Life Home Project in Puket.

She created the first national campaign in December 1st, 2003 , in Portugal. She exposed her work in several countries of Europe, in Asia, Africa and the USA. And, of course, several Brazilian cities too.

Nowadays, she counts with an average of 1.500 publications per year, in all sorts of media.

In October, 2005 she was invited by the Sahara Conference to represent UNESCO-BREDA. With her presence there, she gave lectures and exhibited the Dress Up collection along with a research made by Lia Vainer supported by The Health Ministry of Brazil.

She received the "Honoring Our Hero" award in the Nkosi Johnson category in Washington D.C. in December 2004, Brought up by APAC. In the same year Bono Vox and the VIACON, KAISER FUNDACION were rewarded too.

She was also part of the 17th edition of "Postcards From the Edges", an auction organized by Visual Aids and the campaign "Por Amor use Camisinha" use condoms for love.

The campaign was launched through graffiti allowed in several languages in South and Latin Americas.

HER WORK CAN BE SEEN AT

UNESCO BREDA \* Dakar - Senegal

Museum of Word Cultures \* Gothenburg - Sweden

Minister of Health \* Washington - DC

Life Home Project \* Puket - Thailand

Centraal Museum \* Utrecht Netherlands

John'ana Berlin

## About Exhibition: Dress Up Against AIDS

The "Dress up against AIDS" exhibition is composed by 14 female figurines, made by the re-utilization of condoms that didn't go through the industry quality test. The product, which used to be incinerated action considered highly dangerous to the environment - nowadays has a different destination, and through visual art, rises one of the most troubled issues of the contemporary society: the importance of using condoms and caring about one's sexual life. With the intention of demystifying the image of condoms the only method truly capable of preventing AIDS I'm searching for a new meaning of this object leading people to reflect, all that throughout the arts.

By exposing that, boundaries are broken when a subject full of preconception is treated.

Through an aesthetic view of the art work it's possible to educate, inform and cause reflection about a great range of subjects as: health, prevention, fashion, behavior, aesthetics, politics, education and environment without any communication difficulty.

The art work come from a research and investigation process, which consists in turning condoms into an art object through dying, collage, sewing and other techniques that have been developed in ten years working with condoms and transforming them into outfits (see attached image). The artistic and poetic visions also change and give life to a material exclusively male into a feminine garment, promoting a reflection of genders to "dress up" (wear), as if one's is wearing a condom and the idea.

The condom, being the only method of preventing AIDS, should be seen as an instrument of pleasure, in a way that gathering aesthetics with prevention actions is a path to approach the theme without relating it to the disease. That's the way that the exhibition "Dress up" points to; to a new focus of the preventing method benefiting the dialogue about the importance of the use of the condom and giving it a meaning as an object of pleasure.

The objective of this exhibition is to procreate a reflection of the theme and also using artwork as argument and support material to educators, parents, health professionals discussing it in a healthy and humorous way, breaking sexuality taboos.

The artwork breaks dialogue boundaries not depending on social profile neither religious nor cultural.

The experience interchange is essential among different people and their cultures in order to this work evolve and the theme to be treated with more acceptance by society.

John'oup Berlin'

## Benefits: Dress Up Against AIDS

For a long time all the information about AIDS and the campaigns of its prevention were attached to heavy contents, prejudice ones, stigmatized by fear and mainly marked by the shadow of death. And in that way, the condom was transformed into a taboo related to negative meanings.

The condom, being the only effective method of AIDS prevention should be seen as an instrument of pleasure, in a way that gathering aesthetics with prevention is a path to approach the theme without relating it to the disease. Thus, the exhibition "Dress up" points to; to a new focus of the prevention method benefiting the dialogue about the importance of the use of the condom and giving it an aesthetic meaning of an object of pleasure.

The exhibition Dress Up Against AIDS visited 15 countries in 4 continents, collaborating with the worldwide campaign against AIDS. That's because it puts the condom in the media without any taboo, discussing the behavioral relations, producing new directions for its use. Intensify the prevention campaigns under a new vision, aesthetic, providing a healthy and humorous dialogue among traditional and contemporary families. It is an art object that makes the dialogue easier and it also works as a tool for approaching this theme for educators, students and health professionals.

The main focus is the prevention in a universal context and the renegotiation of the condom use in sexual intercourse.



**Curatorship:**  
**By Phd: Loris Galdi Rampazzo**

Through the re-using of condoms which do not go through the quality control of the industry, the artist has brought up through the use of visual arts one of the most complex issues of society nowadays, in other words, the importance of the use of condoms, the care with the sexual life. Researching the sexuality theme, under the point of view of safe sex, she works re-elaborating the preservatives made of latex, dying and handling them in different ways and manners. In the research about the material, an investigation process comes up. A desire to register life moments or of an era, aiming the result of a route in which the artistically making of it with such remarkable material makes it possible the surfacing of new concepts. The poetic and unusual look of this artist towards the material, which in a way it looks upon with prejudice although it is unquestionably necessary in the present days, is also found among male and female belongings. We realize that its utilization promotes reflection.

Through this research all the artist's sensibility emerges as to the issue of social context. Her concern in registering, in voicing, suggesting and aiding all a society through art. It would not be enough to say that the preservative we see is of use. What is before us is like a matter transformed into a sensual object which its energetic pulse is alive as fire. It is from this transitory body's vitality that Adriana Bertini's work is built. She breaks up with tradition, tabus and offers a place for the public.

They are the joint agent that derives from the homogeneous object's movement with the differential movement of the work accomplished. There is a strong investment expressed in this material, as each piece tends to be eternalized. Adriana Bertini's pieces belong to its circumstances. They show and mark a fact and at the same time promote a rupture between the question of materials usage and the social question. This production reflects and summarizes in its making and presentation the ability to give form to a plan, of its spontaneity and of its maturity artistic process in which feeling, thought and language all together lead to the creation...