

The Hum Podcast

Episode 16: “The Battles Are Fought In The Mind And Won In The Heart”

{Theme music begins}

{Emmanuel’s voice begins to come in over top of music}

Emmanuel: Who owns your mind? Is it fear, worry, anxiety, or poverty? Because the battles are fought in the mind and are won in the heart, and whoever owns your mind owns you and everything you create.

{Music increases in volume}

Male voice: You’re listening to The Hum.

{Music decreases in volume}

Gilad: Do you wear jewellery that tells your story? Delane Cooper is an incredibly talented studio jeweller and has a fascinating process of creating custom luxury pieces. Her design process includes an interview on why you want a piece created. Research, meditation and dreaming allows her to create a distinct piece of jewellery, and not only do you get a one-of-a-kind piece of art, but a unique story where the design feels authentic to the wear. I met Delane two years ago when she designed my partner’s engagement ring and I can’t

recommend her enough. Connect with Delane at delane.ca for your story to be told through your next piece of custom jewellery.

{Music fades out}

Simona: Alright, with us we have Emmanuel Jal, former child soldier from South Sudan, a hip hop artist, political activist for children of war and I have to tell you like, straight up, just naming all those things I am incredibly intimidated by talking to you right now, like what else don't you do. Do you cook, do you like do children's parties on the weekends, like we are just so incredibly excited to have you here and sharing your story with us.

Emmanuel: Thank you for the humbling welcoming and just pushing me out. Thank you.

Simona: Awesome. So I think we have to get it out of the way right now. You have an incredibly impactful story, so we are going to touch on a few sensitive topics, but we need to get the most, I think most uncomfortable conversation out of the way right - right at the beginning of this conversation is: what are your current thoughts about hip hop right now and Kanye West?

Emmanuel: Well I - what I can say is every human being has their own journey. Hip hop artists have their own battles. And so in the battles that they fight, we hear them through music and then we hear them through their experience. Whatever is going inside you will come out, so if heaven is inside you, then people will experience heaven. He's going through some battles and he's gonna find himself, so -

Gilad: Thanks. That's probably the most patient answer I've ever heard on Kanye West, so I appreciate that. Thank you. I want you to guide us a little bit through your early childhood.

Where in Sudan were you born and what was life like for you before everyone got mixed into the SPLA? What was life just as a child if you can remember in South Sudan?

Emmanuel: Life was simple. We had cows, we had goats, we're with the nature. You walk in the wild, we live with the animals. At night, you would hear hyenas laughing like women, you know, in the day - this was a simple life. You know, I used to hear about the war but I had no idea what it tastes it really. My mother used to tell us like, the world will end someday, and to me as a kid to imagine that how will the world end, you know, coming from a religious family that Jesus is gonna come back and then here in our cave there's something called hell, people gonna burn and all, the world is gonna end. And to me, when the war reached us for the first time, I thought the world has ended because I've never heard bombs like that in my life. Something dropped down and the ground would shake, and it is so loud and fire everywhere and people running in different directions and so much confusion. One of the things that I remember - I still have the scars on my left foot, you know. One time when the war happen is - a bike fell on me, and the fire was just burning me and everybody was running, nobody could come to rescue me. One of my aunties saw by accident when she was running, because when I was crying, they thought I was crying because of bombs that were dropping, but I'm crying because the bike is on me and I'm burning.

Gilad: You're in pain.

Emmanuel: And so yeah, like that war reached the core of my family. It drove the soul of my village, it took everything. All my aunties died during the war. All my uncles except two. You know, my mum was claimed by that war and it continued to fester, we run, we become refugees in our own homeland. We run from one place to another. Imagine walking in a place, we see dead rotten bodies. I had no - I look at it, this is hell, to me I look at it as this is hell has come to us, being in a situation - my aunt was raped in front of me one time by a soldier but I couldn't understand why she's crying, because I thought that's what adults do, but I saw she's not comfortable and it was forceful. And to me now I can define what that is, but as a kid you don't really understand what's really going on.

Gilad: You touched a little bit on your mum being claimed in that war and I know that your journey has taken you to many different places. From what I understand, your journey took you to Ethiopia shortly after that in seek of an education, I believe. Can you tell us a little bit more about what happened there in Ethiopia?

Emmanuel: Well my father told me I'm gonna go to school in Ethiopia, so he was a commander at that time, so he was responsible for the villages there. And he end up collecting thousands of kids and he gave me out just to show their assurance to all other - hey my son is going, so your children are going to safe place, and that journey was a difficult journey. A lot of children died of starvation, some died of dehydration, some were eaten by wild animals. It was a difficult, difficult journey to be through.

Gilad: How did you come to be a part of the SPLA, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, while you were there?

Emmanuel: Well now in Ethiopia, imagine you see six, seven years old burying their own dead. Somebody die, we made our own prayers, we dig our own graves. There are questions that we would like to ask people but nobody was there to answer. And you see the devastation of all happenings, a child would climb a tree and put a rock tied to his neck and then jump. Now who told this kid that there's something called suicide that you can do? I remember at one point where I heard adults talking that you could take so many drugs, pills, or you go to hospital, there's the tablets that you could take and you could die. I did that one time, someone look for those things and I took all of it. I mean, that was the most fricking death ever, because I wasn't dying. I'm in pain and I wasn't dying. And I was lucky some woman noticed and they made me throw up, and that helped a bit and then - it was a difficult situation. You ask where is my mum, where is my dad, what happened to my village. We're little kids, but what they did was - when we were taken out to be recruited as soldiers, it was a whole completely transformation. Our minds were shifted. We became like killing machines, you know. And the training - there's a whole transformation process that they did and sometimes I'd wonder, a child soldier can kill their family members and feel nothing about it. What have they done to the mind of the person? Now when we were arriving at the training camp, we were welcomed with a beating. So soldiers were hiding in the forest and they would beat us and beat us and you run with your bags, drop down. You're getting kicked and we're not allowed to like have that connection, like to be lovey-doveiness, it wasn't allowed. You cry, they beat you more, so you had to show stone face. And then child soldiers come again and they hit you again and kick you in the boots. And you look, oh he's young, I wanna be strong like that. But the training itself was not easy because you don't wanna be an example. I'm very cheeky, I like to crack jokes and try to get attention of the trainers, but I didn't know they were trained to actually beat you, so I was used as an example.

Sometimes I get beaten, but the kids that can be - that are beaten to death so that other kids can learn, so in the military they have different concept. They look for someone that they can set as an example, they shoot you in front of everybody, or humiliate you or beat you so that everybody else can follow the discipline. So we were trained like real adults, how to crawl into the battlefield, how to attack and how to follow those in - imagine you wake up five in the morning, four in the morning, you have few minutes to eat and as we ran to eat our food, like you're grabbing the food, you get burned, you wipe it on somebody's back and as they tried to run, you eat it on their back, so the - but bigger boys used to do that. And so we're trained how to eat really fast, one thing is - what made me complete the training were two things. One, I wanted to kill my trainer. I wanted to kill my trainer after the training is done. Second, I wanted to kill as many Muslims and Arabs as possible, because I could see the flashback in my village of what happened and I remember one time we're humiliated by one government soldier, and they beat my mum and they beat my uncle and I jumped to try to bite one of them in the foot, and they did something to me that I black out. When I came back to life, I could still remember. A seed was planted into me and as I think the seed of bitterness or hatred began that humiliated - beating my mum in front of me, and then them continue to talking that "this - this our slaves, it's God will, that their land and them belong to us, but if they become Muslim, they could be spared." And so to me, I had a whole different concept about what Arabs and Muslims are, and my desire was I'm going to finish this training and I'll revenge for my family. And so those are the things that made me complete the training. I had no concept of what the war was all about, but you know in the training centre they're so smart that they give you a gun without bullets, because they know that some of the kids {laughs} ...

Gilad: Everyone's got that same first goal.

Simona: Yeah.

Emmanuel: Yeah, you just go and then, you know, you really wanna finish because young child soldiers are sometimes - are not like adults, you know, they go with their thoughts and they act immediately.

Simona: How long did this whole process last, like how long was training and how long were you actually a soldier for the SPLA?

Emmanuel: The training was long, so it was like six to nine months. The training, we train properly, discipline. Some of the principles I learned there I hated them, but now that I am here, I'm actually so grateful with those principles that I learned there and I'm beginning to recall them back. Now, one of the things that I like about it was discipline. There's no place on planet that has more better discipline than the military. And I couldn't understand when they would do a parade where they would check us, you don't have clothes but you have to be clean, your bed has to be made. Whatever you have, there has to be full organization. So the soldiers that had boots and everything, they'll check your belt, how do you tie your belt. They check your boot, how do you make your shirt and everything, so we're trained about detail orientation. And how they recruit a person is they recruit you on how you handling the training, how you are detail oriented, and then they make you a leader. And they know the clumsy ones are the one that are easily able to fall on - they die easily, you know, because they don't observe. So when they train us this details orientation is because when you go the forest, you can pay attention to the details, to the foot, to the movement of the forest, to the leaves, why is this bush here, this bush

was not there before. And I really appreciate that, like how they do it, that they could be able to tell the one that will - they can predict basically who's gonna be able to last and who's not gonna be able to last, and then they give them responsibilities.

Gilad: It's wild that you talk about discipline because, you know, it's like listening to you speak, I forget that you're talking about children this entire time and it's children that are involved in this discipline. Like you think of a child here in Toronto of being put through - anywhere really in the world being put through that situation it's just - it's alarming, it's alarming. How did you get out, how did this end for you?

Emmanuel: Well it ends, you know, there was a place called Juba, which is the capital city of South Sudan now. So we were planning to capture it and I found myself in front line.

Gilad: Sorry, you came back from Ethiopia back into Sou - into Sudan?

Emmanuel: Yeah, Ethiopia was overthrown and then we were pushed back into South Sudan, but how I got out is I got out from a place called Juba, and we were around the area, very excited to capture the city. I had two goals, a bike, and to kill Arabs, so I didn't still understand what was the mission. So I managed to get my bike, I managed to get my revenge, but the thing is after you see like, when I see like human beings, there's - there's sweetness in revenge, but after that there's ghost that haunt you for the rest of your life, so how do you deal with those situations? Here, an escape that was planned is because we - the vision kind of like became blood, there was tribalism and soldiers were telling on each other and we say look, we rather go to our village where we could protect our families. And so an escape was planned, but I was not

told about the escape because I was considered as a guy with a big mouth, that I will tell everybody "hey we're escaping get ready". And like if you do that there's a firing horn, there's a discipline to that to - and so when the escape was done, I thought it was a normal - it was a normal way of us of taking food to the front line or to helping the sick or the wounded, but I didn't know it was an escape until we left, which became difficult, like to me there - apart from being in a battlefield or seeing horrible things and growing, the escape itself is where I am completely transformed. I think like my foundation of a lot of things happened in this escape, because it's the biggest test I've ever gone. No, there was no water, we drank our own urine. You know, we walk, we wipe our hand on the grass to collect the dew and drink it, and as we walk on that journey, imagine after there was no water, we found a place where there was a lot of water and now you walking this swampy land. Imagine you are in water for days with nowhere to find food. Now mosquitos will come and swarm into your body, you can't just blow, you just allow them to stay. Now you look at somebody's face, you see like it's covered by mosquitos, the whole body. So for you to see, just have to swipe, wipe and you see like people's faces are full of blood. Now, in this journey, what I remember because there's no food.

Simona: And how old were you while this is going on?

Emmanuel: I think I was twelve or turning thirteen. It was a difficult place because in this water that we're walking is somebody fall down, there was nobody to give you a hand, to pull you up. You just see bubbles. You just see - this is somebody that you know, that is just dying in front of you, they fell in front of you. Because the more you try to cut them, you go down with them, and I think that to me I found it hard. I managed to travel light and light, and what we did in this journey, what I started doing is I would see snails popping on the water and I'll collect them. I

would eat them, you know, and the situation became more intense. Somebody die, vultures come to eat the dead body. We shoot the vultures and eat them, but that was not enough. The birds, the little creatures that we could eat, anything that we could find, that we could eat started keeping off, and then cannibalism started. So some soldiers started eating dead bodies. For me, my senses changed. I could remember, I said to my - look at my fellow human beings, sit next to them or stand, they smell like food, like food to eat. And my - one of my comrades was dying and I look at him and I tell him I'm going to eat you tomorrow. He did not say anything and he was just looking at me and I was looking at him. That night, we put bombs around another soldier, you know, hoping a hyena comes to eat that dead body. But the hyena attacks the body, the bomb explode, and it became more frustrating. And that was a battle in my mind. Part of my mind tell me you gonna eat your friend, part of mind tell me if you eat your friend, it will haunt you for the rest of your life. And so I started remembering what my mother used to do and I said mum, God, if you're there, give me something to eat, and if I survive this journey, I will always give you the credit. And so - and I remember that night I battle with my mind, I didn't wanna sleep because I remember one thing, when you're starving the first day it's difficult, there's headaches. Second day, there's still headaches. The third, fourth day it becomes sweet, because your body's digesting itself and I did not wanna sleep, because I know when I sleep, I won't wake up because then sleep becomes sweet. So there's like, there's a comfortable - there's a sweet pain that is drawing you, it's like in a relaxed way, but then you're conscious, you know you wanna eat. And so I battle with my mind that time until like 11 a.m., when I was about to lose hope and eat my friend, a crow came on top of a tree. I tried to cock my gun, I didn't have the muscle. So child soldier that had died, I thought he died, was in another tree. He pick his gun, see it and shot the bird and it fell between my legs, and then he collapse. He never waited to eat that bird and sometimes I would wonder why this part of my story inspire me. Did

that person die and was their soul hanging up in the sky, wanting to struggle in, to give me that food? Why didn't he leave to stay? But now I'm telling his story, he's my hero in that journey, and so I ate that bird from the claws to the intestines to the feathers. Nothing was thrown away and it gave me energy to be able to walk to a place of safety. Somewhere between two to four hundred and only sixteen people survived that journey.

Gilad: It seems like so many miracles had to happen for you to be here with us. There's another hero that pops up later on in your life, Emma McCune. We - it's like we can't google your name without hearing about your love of Emma McCune. Could you tell us a little bit more about who she was and what she meant to you?

Emmanuel: Well Emma McCune was a British aid worker that I met in a place called Waat. Now, she became a turning point but in my life, I would say like I am not here because of myself. There's so many heroes. I remember people who would literally tell you to run and then they wait and blow themselves up to kill others so that you can stay alive. I remember people who give you - people gave me their lives, you know, and - but Emma McCune was different, wasn't looking like me, you know, and her passion was so strong. 150 child soldiers she rescued, but I was the only one that she picked and smuggled through a plane to leave with her in Kenya, and that to me, when I think about it why me, and sometimes I would look at it why in the battlefield, why would the commanders refuse me to go in front line, why would they want me to stay in the headquarter? You know, why would a woman I meet from nowhere decide to give me their food, you know, like there was a journey where a woman picked me and fed me every day and told me that she's been looking for somebody like me to feed, to take the story and I happen to have that energy, to walk that journey. And people came into my life, some I

looked for, some I didn't have to, and sometimes I look at it as, I would probably say if you can define your purpose as early as possible, your purpose will create luck for you. And when you walk in your purpose, you're in sync with the forces of procreation, just as much as the plants, the trees, the birds don't plan what to eat tomorrow, but they obey the season. That same force that take care of nature, that universal intelligence is able to recognize you through your purpose and I think my purpose created luck for me. So Emma put me in school and now my life is transformed by that.

Simona: She unfortunately passed away in a car accident in Kenya and what happened after that?

Emmanuel: Well she got killed in a car accident. Some of us believe that she was actually planned. It was a targeted plan because there was a big fear she work for CIA or she was sent by the British people. People just afraid of her because she was doing good stuff. And yeah, my life crashed again, you know, everything became down. Like I think it's the first time probably I literally cried and say why, why is that everything start good - because I started studying my life, always after there is something terrible happen, then there is something good happens. And then after that something good happens, something terrible happens. So it became like a wave, it's like musical, and so now I began to understand okay, life is like that. So whenever something good is happening, I prepare to go down like grrrrrrr {chuckles}, and then I know it's going to come back again, so I look at it's temporary. I'm just going down, I'll come back again, you know.

Simona: And part of the - kind of part of our research, we found it was in Nairobi, in a slum in Nairobi where you discovered hip hop. So I have a couple of questions. I wanna know what was the track, like what was - who was the artist, but what about it, what about that music, that beat, that rhythm did you think like oh something's there, like oh this is kind of cool, like this is something I wanna learn more about?

Emmanuel: Well for hip hop, I think it wasn't my favorite music, it wasn't. I like to dance. I like African music, jump around. I even tried to go to church to sing, got kicked out of choir because I didn't have that voice that would inspire people, {imitating church choir} "Yeah", but I wanted it. But for hip hop what interests me, I thought the rappers, you could call them, you know, from D.M.C. to Tupac and Mase and all of those guys and Biggie. I used to think they're Kenyan. It took me a while to realize that these guys are in a place called United States, and they come from - you hear it, but it doesn't click. They're black people, so they're Kenyan, and they look like Kenyans and so I thought these are Kenyans. And I just love the stories that are told in hip hop, these are angry people but they are making sense and then the beat makes your head go like this, so you don't have to move your head. The beat moves it for you {chuckles}, and they're like - it's like you're agreeing to what they're saying and then I begin to see people dancing. And, you know, I didn't speak english properly, but I just like to play them. Like for example, Lost Boyz -

Simona: Ah.

Emmanuel: You know, became like "whatever prm, {indistinct}", I would just say that, I don't know. I go to a place where there are kids and I would try to pretend I'm rapping in English and

they'll say, "Human!" {Simona laughs}. But I'm just saying words that don't exist, but I'll put one word in it and the kids thought I was a really good rapper, but I wasn't. But what I like was hip hop was similar to the village, there is something called {indistinct}, where young people will gather and diss their mothers and their sisters and their aunties, so - their grandmothers, so now I used to go for -

Simona: Like you're momma so big ...

Emmanuel: Yeah, so someone would say hey, like um, that your mother is so ugly that when the lions come to your home, then the lion will collapse {Simona laughs}.

Gilad: I'm so glad Emmanuel Jal is the first to do a "your momma" joke {laughter}, that's amazing.

Emmanuel: So you go for those competitions, so I used to lose all the time. So I would go there, I would try there - because like kids they know who's the toughest. Imagine like, you see like six years old and seven years old, eight years old, ten years old, they gather in the evening somewhere just dissing their parents. And so I used to go lose, but we do that when we're taking care of the little ca - because the boys, young kids take care of calves and so when they're going to take care of the calves, like they're thirteen years old, twelve years old, you know, it's usually from six to eleven years old. By the time you reach twelve, thirteen, you go initiation. And so now, remembering that, and then I got momentum, okay I wanna do hip hop. But now first time I went to studio, I was kicked out, you know. The producer told me like, you guys can't rap, get out of here {laughs}. And like they put the beat, dum dum, we say "yo yo".

Gilad: I'll teach you man, I'll teach you after the interview {laughter}.

Emmanuel: They kick us out, but then I keep going somewhere until I found somebody who told me hey, what you doing is called spoken word, but I think what triggered me to actually start rapping is Puff Daddy. That time, they used to call him Puff Daddy. So he did a song called "Jesus My Best Friend", and I was in a - on a matatu, a Kenyan transporting system.

Gilad: I've been on them before, they're terrifying.

Emmanuel: Yeah, you know the matatu.

Gilad: Yeah, it's terrifying. I've been on a matatu I think that was meant for eight, there was like twenty-five, there was a goat on there - like a baby goat {Emmanuel laughs}.

Simona: I was - someone put a chicken on my lap, but I didn't know if it was my responsibility to move it or to hold it.

Emmanuel: You just kept it {laughs}.

Simona: I just - okay, this is ...

Gilad: I'm so glad - I'm so glad that you bring up Puffy and Mase and Biggie because those were the first, that was like "Mo Money Mo Problems" was the first MP3 I downloaded and I

know we're all like 80s kids here. And so I wanna get back into music really quickly, because one thing I do for a living outside of this podcast is the charity work is combining the human rights and the arts, to have larger conversations and there's a quote that we found that came from you. And you were asked about mixing art or music and politics, and your answer was, "When there is a need, they should mix. In times of war, starvation, hunger and injustice, such tragedy can only be put aside if you allow yourself to be uplifted through music, film and dance. It can be used to communicate messages to the masses and create awareness, to influence the people positively." So we know that you do a lot of work in your life, even with the charity that you started and especially through music, but can you talk to us about how you use art or music as a tool to draw awareness to these things, to your story, to the history of Sudan and what's happening there today?

Emmanuel: Well first, when I was doing it, my knowledge has not grown into how far, you know, I was just purpose-driven. I didn't even have a clear vision then, so a lot of things I learned on the way. But I understand that music is the only thing that speak to your mind, your heart, your soul system, you know, your cells, and kind of influence you without even your permission, and so - and I said okay, I wanna be part of this, how can I - how can I use this avenue, because I remember in the war when we lose a battle, we sing. When we are afraid, we sing. If we win, we sing. When there is food, we sing. Music was everywhere and so then I said okay, I'm gonna learn this thing, because music is the place I was able to become a child again, this is a place I was able to become heaven. Art in general has a way to in each - speak to us. Storytelling, you know, it's a music in itself. You're watching a film or a piece of art drawn something, it's able to cater to our emotions. And I realize music itself is innocent, but the lyrics that we put in it, it would now - can breathe terror or can breathe consciousness and kindness and love and

patience, and so that's when I decided to choose look, I'm gonna choose words that I wanna put in this music and that can go out and make an impact, and I used it to tell stories. So I look at myself, I'm a storyteller, so I tell stories through music.

Gilad: Thank you. Thank you. I - just curious to know more about the charity work that you're doing, you know, you started a charity, it's got a charitable status in the UK, it's also based in South Sudan. Can you tell us more about what it is and what it is that you're doing?

Emmanuel: Yeah, so I created a charity called Gua Africa that work with families, individuals to help them overcome the effect of war and poverty. And so when I first did my music, actually the charity was the driving force, I did not understand that you could make money from music. I was just doing it because I was spreading stories, I was mobilizing young people. The drawing point that actually pulled me is because there was so many young people that time and I was wondering how - I'm responsible, they were looking up to me, what do I say, what does a leader say. They voted for me, you're gonna be our secretary general or you're gonna be the founder of this, so there was a group of young people, we formed something called CASSY, Consolidation Association for Southern Sudanese Youth. And that time, I didn't know what to do, and so - but I was very intuitive, but I lacked that sense of logic but I just used the intuition at that moment of following what is the right thing to do. And so we used to clean people houses, they would give us money, and then sometime we bumped into someone who owned a school and they said okay, how many - why you guys cleaning houses? Because we want an ex-child soldier here to go to school. And that's how it started. Some would get a scholarship. So cleaning cars, cleaning people toilets, cutting fences, we were not good at them, but we tried our best to do that, but it started that way. And then music came after, because I had nothing

else to provide so what can I - then looking at this, great people, looking at them, how they're influencing people, so okay I'm gonna jump into this for myself. First I did it to help me because it made me happy, but the messaging, what can I put to bring other people so they can learn something. You know, that was the early beginning, was more driving to support GUA Africa. Then I got paid, I used to put all my money back to supporting. I took me a while to actually realize oh actually, this is my money, I should keep it for myself. So 95 percent of what I used to get used to just go and help somebody, then over the years I made it 10 percent, started reducing it and started getting more of a percentage to myself and trying to look for collaboration to get other people to walk with me, so we can join our resources to support change. So through GUA Africa now, we were able to create a school, build a school that put two thousand kids in school, and now we have a - young people that have got PhDs, who have got doctorates, so now they're doctors, medical doctorates, and we have got businessmen, we have got lawyers, we have got engineers. And it was just an idea and up to now, people still think like this guy is so massive, he has a lot of money. But I just still kept the basics, the simple things, like one at a time, finding another person to work with, put that one person in school, because I understood the importance of education. You know, if you want to free somebody, educate them. You know, because knowledge is the real power to strengthen your conscious mind so you can manifest things, and so - and I pushed for knowledge all of the time, and now GUA Africa is still there, and I have other initiative that I just released now where I wanna tour, I wanna have hundred people to host me in their houses or office or whatever they feel like, and just hundred people. And one person throwing that event, I come tell my story, do music, cozy simple event, ten to twenty people. And the idea of this is for every host who host me, they will - to put a refugee child in school and they will to impact 350 young people in a school visit, which can later turn on - if you look at it hundred young people in school, you know, war refugees, and then you look hundred

school visits, that's 35,000 young people impact. And so I wanna go back to the basic, how did I began. I used to do house tours, you know, so I'm gonna go back, instead of this club. When you got a little few people, the commitment is stronger and the impact is greater, because sometimes we rely on the masses and the masses want to hurry. So how can we find these individual people to fill and to be a part of a movement.

Simona: Awesome. Thank you so much.

Gilad: I wish we had three hours to sit down with you.

Emmanuel: Oh no, you can - if you have enough {Simona laughs}, you can cut whatever you want, but if you wanna direct people onto the site, it's mylifeisart.org

{Theme music fades in}

Gilad: My name's Gilad Cohen.

Simona: And I'm Simona Ramkisson.

Gilad: This podcast is edited and produced by Brandon Fragomeni and Alex Castellani. Our associate producer is Ron Ma.

Simona: The Hum is an initiative of JAYU, a charity that shares human rights stories through the arts.

{Theme music fades out}

Gilad: Support us making more podcasts like these by donating at jayu.ca/donate.