

The logo for Newham London, featuring the text "Newham London" in a white sans-serif font, with a white swoosh underline that starts under "Newham" and ends under "London".

Newham London

LGBT+ HISTORY MONTH 2023

AN ILLUSTRATED CHRONICLE

CONTENTS

LGBT+ History Month Cabaret Night <i>Opening Gala</i>	4
DRAG QUEEN STORYTELLING <i>With Poppy Redfern</i>	10
Self, Identity and Creation Zine Workshop <i>With Mia Maxwell</i>	14
Supporting Trans People of Colour <i>A Conversation with Sabah Choudrey</i>	18
THE INSPECTION <i>Film Screening + Q & A</i>	26

HOW GOOD DOES IT FEEL TO BE IN THIS ROOM?
ACKNOWLEDGING AND CELEBRATING QUEER CULTURE!
WE'VE ALWAYS F*CKING EXISTED!



OPENING GALA

STRATFORD TOWN HALL
FEBRUARY 3RD

Featuring

HOST

CRYSTAL B*LL*CKS



NEWHAM'S LGBT+ MONTH EVENTS BEGAN WITH A SPECTACULAR
EVENING OF BURLESQUE AND CABARET PERFORMANCES CO-ORGANISED BY
QUEER CREATIVES & ART COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS, RAZE COLLECTIVE!

THE PERFORMERS:

BOLLY
ILLUSION

AMAZI-HOOPS



SOPH BRAIN



A.T.



SOME OF THE BOOKS POPPY READ TO US:



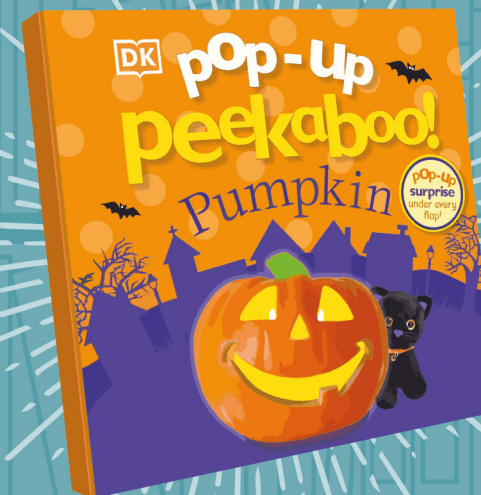
"NOT YET A YETI"

Written by Lou Treleaven
Illustrations by Tony Neal



"PRINCE & KNIGHT"

Written by Daniel Haack
Illustrations by Steve Lewis



"POP-UP PEEK-A-BOO! PUMPKIN"

By DK Publishing

SELF, IDENTITY & CREATION ZINE WORKSHOP

WITH MIA MAXWELL

STRATFORD
LIBRARY

FEB 11TH

ZINE MAKING WORKSHOP

WHAT IS A ZINE?

A zine can be anything you want.. Its usually a folded document like a handmade magazine. Its a kind of creative medium - like a painting or a book. You can use zines to share a story, share ideas, and share who you are. It can be personal, they are often political, and circulated through marginalised subcultures, but they can also be silly, fun things for pure enjoyment!

YOUR THEME

Today I want us to think about

THE
CREATIVE
SELF

Think about:

- What is creativity?
- Who am I?
- What is my contribution to my community?

★ - Finish the sentences:

- I create because.....
- I believe in.....
- I want to change.....

@femzinelondon
@miamaxwell

MIA SHOWS US HOW TO MAKE... A MINI 8-PAGE ZINE!



WORKSHOP INTRODUCTION TRANSCRIPT:

"YOU MIGHT KNOW ALREADY, BUT A ZINE IS LIKE A KIND OF PORTABLE ARTWORK. IT'S A BOOK, NORMALLY FOLDED, DIY-INSPIRED PIECE OF CREATIVE ART. IT'S REALLY, REALLY OPEN ENDED! THERE ARE POETRY ZINES, CREATIVE ART ZINES, ZINES THAT ARE HUMOROUS. SOME ZINES ARE VERY INFORMATIVE. SO IT'S AN REALLY AMAZING BECAUSE IT'S JUST SO OPEN!"



"ZINES DID START FROM A VERY POLITICAL PLACE - AS KIND OF UNCENSORED INFORMATION SHARING WITHIN A COMMUNITY, WHICH IS POTENTIALLY WHY THEY'RE HAVING A LITTLE MOMENT. AGAIN, THEY'RE COMING AROUND AGAIN! IT'S SOMETHING I'M QUITE PASSIONATE ABOUT; IT IS SOMETHING OFFLINE, SO YOU CAN SHARE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY WITHOUT HAVING TO THINK ABOUT THE ALGORITHM OR LIKES OR BEING CENSORED.

I THINK IT'S QUITE A POWERFUL TOOL IN THE KIND OF CREATIVE WORLD THAT WE LIVE IN NOW. I COULD TALK ABOUT THESE THINGS FOREVER! SO I'M GOING TO SHUT UP!!"



"THE MAIN THREE THINGS WE'RE THINKING ABOUT TO MAKE A REALLY GOOD ZINE VISUALLY, IS YOUR COLLAGE, YOUR DRAWING AND YOUR WRITING. THINK ABOUT THOSE THREE ELEMENTS. AND YOU WILL MAKE SOMETHING WHICH LOOKS REALLY DYNAMIC. IT'S REALLY STRAIGHTFORWARD. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A GOOD DRAWER IN ORDER TO DRAW SOME GOOD STUFF. YOU SHOULD KIND OF HAVE AN AIM WITH IT AND THAT WILL HELP YOU COMPLETE SOMETHING THAT YOU'RE REALLY, REALLY PLEASED WITH!"

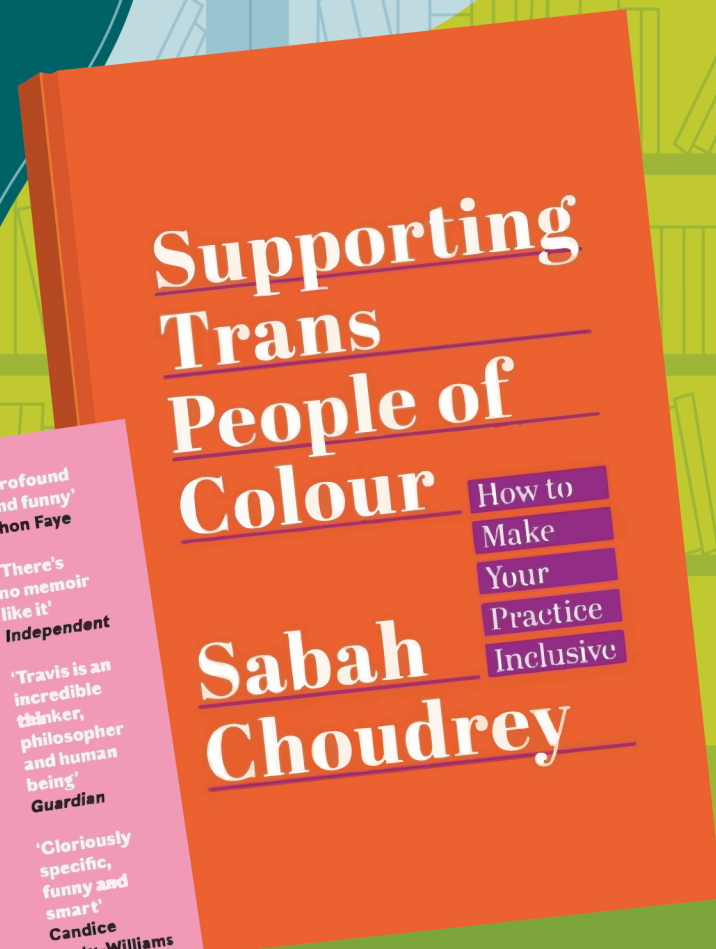
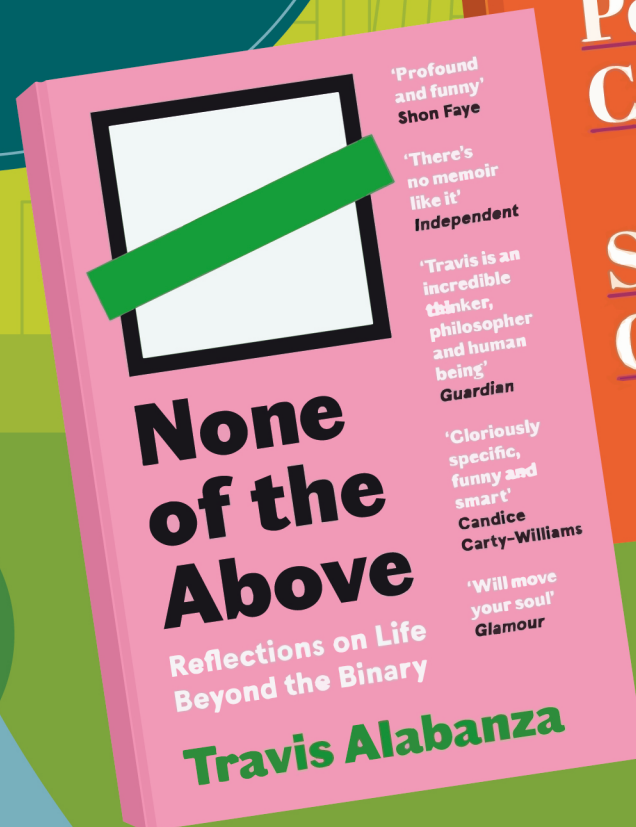
"FEEL FREE TO USE SOME OF THE PROMPTS. ALSO FEEL FREE TO MAKE YOUR ZINE ABOUT WHATEVER YOU WANT. MAYBE YOU'VE ALREADY COME HERE WITH A KIND OF IDEA! LOOK THROUGH THE WORKSHEET: THINK ABOUT WHAT KIND OF THEMES YOU MIGHT WANT TO CREATE FROM ANY OF THE PROMPTS THERE. YOU CAN ALSO JUST GRAB SOME PAPER AND DO YOUR OWN MIND MAP OR WHATEVER YOU WANT. THINK ABOUT WHAT THEME IS AND THEN GO FROM THERE! HOWEVER YOU WANT TO WORK THOUGH! I'M CLOSING THE DOOR SO WE CAN KIND OF GET INTO A VIBE! BUT YEAH, ENJOY!!"



SUPPORTING TRANS PEOPLE OF COLOUR:

IN CONVERSATION WITH
SABAH CHOUDREY
HOSTED BY TRAVIS ALABANZA

FOREST GATE
LIBRARY
16TH FEB



TRAVIS ALABANZA

What do you feel, when you had written this book, that it confirmed?
What did you feel it confirmed about trans people of colour within the UK and our communities?



SABAH CHOUDREY

SUPPORTING TRANS POC

TRANSCRIPT EXCERPT:

TA: I'm so excited to have this conversation with Sabah today. I'm a writer, and also a friend of Sabah's. If you haven't already read this book, it is so incredible and was really inspiring for me in writing my own book, because I felt like there weren't a lot of books in the UK, that were really specific about the intersecting needs of trans people of colour. And as we're here during LGBT History Month, and at such a pertinent and time for trans people, I think what Sabah's work does, both in the book, and in their wider youth work and work route, Gendered Intelligence, is remind us that even when we're focusing on certain communities, there are still details in that: communities and specifics of the different types of people within that community that have needs that we need to address. And I think Sabah does that so beautifully. So we're gonna get to hear Sabah reading, then I'm going to ask some questions. Because we're in a library and normally, I think we have to be quiet in the library, I'm gonna resist that! And so I'm going to introduce Sabah, and then you, the audience, is just going to cheer and clap really loudly! Because the inner me that was always too loud in libraries wants to outdo that! So yes, Sabah, introduce yourself!



SC: Thank you! Yes, it is really good to have an amplified voice in the library! Yeah! Thanks for coming! And thank you, Marion, wherever you may be, and Forest gate library for hosting us. This is really fun! I was just saying to Travis, it's so funny: We're sandwiched between like Poundland and Iceland! Like, BAM, here we are! Thank you to the BSL interpreters we've got today. Thanks, everyone for showing up. I think I always like to say that because it's just really nice. Like, I don't know - it never gets old, thinking people actually want to come and talk to you about being a trans



person of colour and about 'trans people of colour' things. So I'll introduce myself. Did I do that? Did you do that? Okay. Hi, I'm Sabah, I wrote this book, 'Supporting Trans People of Colour.' And yes, my background is in youth work. I work for a national trans youth charity. I do a lot of public speaking and writing and I'm a psychotherapist in training. I also foster cats, which is the most exciting thing you will hear about me all evening! And yeah: I'm gonna talk to you a little bit about my book and I will share a couple of extracts as well.

So! This book, it started as an idea, maybe, oh god, like, over five years ago now, I think maybe like 2013? 2014? It started off as a little booklet called 'Inclusivity: Supporting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Trans People'. And it was just something that I really needed to exist at the time. I was doing a lot of talking about being a trans person of colour, and having the same conversations over and over again and asking people to do the same things. Here's the same five top tips, I'm going to tell you. I'll make them snappier each time, but it's the same information and I was really lucky to have the opportunity to put that into a little pamphlet which was downloaded thousands of times. And I was, like, okay, so some people believe that others might need this. People need all this information in one place. Then I was approached by publishers, publishers who have a great array of books aimed at people of all ages around gender diversity. And yes, I was in a really fortunate position where they approached me and they were like:

'Hey, we saw you wrote this guide. Please, write this book!'

And I was like: 'Oh my god, no! I've never written a book before. I'm not an author. I don't do this stuff. I just talk about it. And I write it down sometimes, and sometimes people listen!'

So I think it was about two years of this kind of this internal feeling of, I guess, impostor syndrome: you know, thinking that I'm not the person for the job before actually deciding to put down a proposal and think: well, maybe, just maybe I am. Maybe this is something that I can put together - it'll have my name on the front but inside, it's going to have so many other voices. I think what I found difficult was that I was writing this book about supporting trans people of colour and I'm only one of them. How can I make sure that this isn't just about me. This is about so many of us. So I try it for about three years, and managed to put together this very, very chic looking book if I do say so myself! I can't believe I'm holding it now really because, and this will sound weird, but, it wasn't the book that I wanted to write.

This isn't a book that I've been wanting to write because I don't want to write about how to do better, or how to support us and what to do to include us really but it was the book I needed to write and it was the book that I needed. So it's here. I'm sure we'll talk a little bit more about what's inside it and all the other things that happen around it, but I will share a few words. Events like this are so encouraging and nourishing! So here we go:

PASSAGE FROM 'SUPPORTING TRANS YOUTH OF COLOUR' READ BY SABAH CHOUDREY:

"History month is around many things such as education, celebration, and commemoration. They're an opportunity for schools, universities, workplaces, and charities to share histories that aren't often known to spotlight local, LGBTQ and black trailblazers and role models, and to take the opportunity to do more for the LGBTQ and black people that they work with or support. From running panel discussions and campaigns and launching resources to running a new curriculum or extracurricular activities or partnering with LGBTQ and black organisations. There are many ways to honour LGBT history minds.

Ruby Bukhari, one of the event coordinators of the first South Asian Heritage Month which happens in July in the UK, writes:

'There's a clear demand for further investigation and conversation on gatekeepers. colorism, systematic and structural racism and lack of opportunities.'

Commemorating history and heritage should not shy away from the injustice of slavery, colonialism and imperialism that have shaped trans people of colour or TPOC communities and identities today. Instead, confront the discomfort and don't allow history to repeat itself by learning from it. History months do face criticism from LGBTQ, black, and people of colour communities when this doesn't happen, where we are erased and silenced once more, misheard and misrepresented. History months can clearly miss many of the same nuances



and planning that have been previously mentioned when delivering campaigns (that was in a previous chapter). Approach history months with an intersectional lens and critical lens. Look back on the history that we have been taught and view with the trans or gender diverse lens or a black lens. Where are trans people of colour within history? Just because they aren't on the page in front of us, doesn't mean that they weren't there or contributing to the history that we're told. Be critical and be curious. History is not neutral or objective. It shows when we only platform white celebrities and historical figures during LGBTQ history month, or when we have only predominantly men, cisgender people or non-black people of colour during Black History Month. We are not just celebrating one identity or one community during these months, when we don't celebrate the whole community. The whole community has not been seen. Trans people of colour and Black trans people have contributed so much as activists, fighters and speakers and it's the same systems of oppression that they were fighting that erase their contributions from history. There is so much connection in the fight for human rights and historically, LGBTQ and Black movements have supported each other. Black LGBTQ activists shaped the civil rights movement: Bayard Rustin, Stormé DeLarverie, Ernestine Eckstein, Phill Wilson and Miss Major Griffin-Gracy and trans women of colour-led LGBTQ movements: Marsha 'Pay No Mind' Johnson and Sylvia Rivera to name a few.

The Stonewall uprising also known as the Stonewall Riots has been documented and retold as an event that defined the LGBTQ rights movement that we know today. However, it was not possible without the dedication and leadership of trans women of colour committed to the survival and rights of LGBTQ homeless youth, sex workers and people of colour. Acknowledge the failings of archivists, curators and storytellers. When we can only find the same white cisgender or heterosexual stories, we can speak out about the erasure or omission. This in itself tells a story. Do not continue cycles of erasure. Include the activists and changemakers we're still missing, such as youth, disabled and intersex voices. We must preserve TPOC legacies and ensure that we know that they have paved the way for all of us to be here today. This is what we do - trans people of colour - we continue to exist, we persist, we will continue to build spaces where we can do so safely and comfortably when other spaces turn us away. We will continue to model what it looks like when our community is cared for through protests, pandemics, uprisings and rulings, there is so much our communities have been through and can get through together. We build our homes with full

hearts, not four walls, and we rewrite what it means to feel safe as trans people of colour through the internet and beyond. We do this with patience. As trans people, we learn to wait to hold ourselves and each other whilst nothing changes and with power as queer people, we make waves. And when nothing changes we resist, we protest, we know how to make change happen, with passion and compassion as people of colour. We lead each other by the hand and we lead movements by the heart. I want to end on the wise words of the Queensland Aboriginal activist group who reminds us that our struggles are all connected, our guidance will take us forward, and the benefits felt by one person will be felt by many. If you have come here to help me, you're wasting your time. But if you've come here, because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." Thank you!

TA: I'm about to question that: I remember when I was doing my book, all the stuff I didn't like and now I realise why you ask it, though, because it's, fascinating to hear! But I guess I really want to know: Who did you envision this for? I think sometimes people assume that every book written by a trans person of colour is for EVERY trans person of colour. But I often think that sometimes it's working on multiple levels. And I definitely felt like that with your book. So I'm interested to know, who was intended for this book? And then maybe you might have an anecdote or a story about someone that's received it and tell us about their response to the book...



SC: I say, this book is for anyone who works with people, because if you're working with people, then you're going to be working with people like us. I wanted it to be for the community organisers who are the people who were creating spaces for us, and I guess, for the people who were holding the spaces, which I kind of was drawn to when I first came out as trans. I want them to be able to hold space for us better. It's for the doctors who don't really understand our experiences. It's for therapists who try their hardest, but then still don't really see the person in front of them. What's been interesting



is seeing other trans people of colour pick this book up, especially young people I work with, and they're just like, oh, my god, you wrote this book? And I'm like, yeah, but I didn't write it for you - it's not you who needs this book, you know? You just support yourself but maybe I am not seeing that actually, there is something in there that they can take from it and it's really heartwarming to see that. But it's also kind of heartbreaking, because I'm like, oh, there isn't a book that has trans people of colour on the front cover. And that's why they're drawn to it. And I get it. And I mean, it just makes me want to write the book that's for them, really.

It's just been really nice to have this book in libraries - I mean getting contacted by libraries who say: Hey, we're going to do this thing. And I'm like, wow!? My local library! That means it's for anyone. People can just pass by and see it on a shelf, instead of having to search, 'How to be an ally' on Google. I need to start work on that search engine optimization(!!)

TA: I really appreciate that! It's interesting, I've actually seen young people with the book in the YA section of the library. And when I was reading it, I felt like, although it's clearly for people that are instructing spaces, I think, actually it's the power of seeing us referenced. I can imagine being younger, maybe I'm 13, I'm not running a youth group so maybe some of it isn't useful. But just seeing that there are footnotes with people that look like you or that are from your background really helps. I think, to solidify us as people that deserve to hold space and be archived and - not that books make you important - but I think when you're younger, obviously books have such a statue: if we're in them, we're worthwhile. You said that referencing isn't your forte, but I love that there's just a reference list FULL of us and it's what makes me really geek out on it. I think it's a testament to how long you've been doing youth work as well.



THE INSPECTION + Q&A

FILM SCREENING AT STRATFORD PICTUREHOUSE



52101046331

Picturehouse

SCREEN: 02

DATE:

PRICE:

SEAT: N15

23/02/2023

0.00

STANDARD
SCREEN: 02
SEAT: N15



564 3976852101046331

PRICE: 0.00

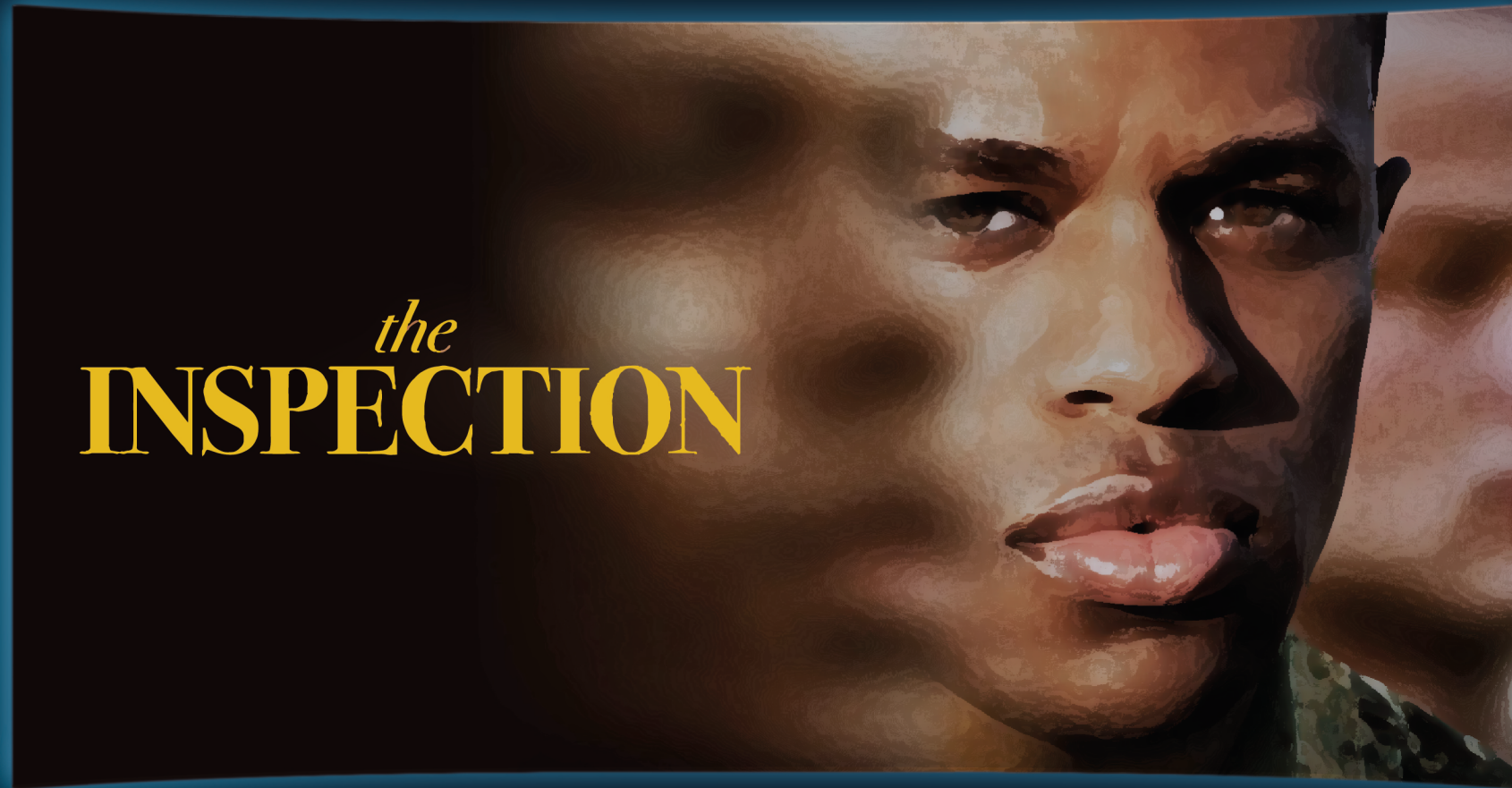
23/02/2023

TIME: 19.45

Written and directed by Elegance Bratton, *The Inspection* (2022) is an American drama which tells the story of a homeless young black man who despite a strained relationship with his homophobic mother and limited opportunities, enlists in the Marine Corps. Ellis French (portrayed by Jeremy Pope) endures intense boot camp training and life-threatening hazing as he unsuccessfully hides his sexuality.

In attendance to discuss some of the themes present in the movie were the night's organisers - Priscilla and Andrina from Newham Community Cinema, spoken word poet Ovy Uki, photographer & content creator, Donnie Sunshine and ex-military veterans charity trustee of Haig Housing, Patrick Gascoigne.

the INSPECTION



Q&A TRANSCRIPT



QUESTION: The film has pretty racially diverse characters who are training alongside the main character and experiencing their own prejudices and we know America is a racist country BUT do you think that white queer people in the military have a different experience to black queer people in the military?

DONNIE SUMMERTIME: I think the film pushed the narrative when it came to queerness a lot more. I think, whenever there are multiple oppressions that you're experiencing in multiple ways, it can definitely have many different nuances. And I think it was important, for me watching this is, that racism wasn't a big factor in this film, because it's a whole other thing to really take on and I think it was something that we can just acknowledge and see that this narrative was solely based on sexuality. I think that's also a story that can be quite like raceless. In that sense, even though the protagonist was black, I don't feel like the story was based on his race and his blackness - though the nuances were definitely there when it came to his mum. I feel like it just really pushed the message along a lot when it came to like the LGBTQIA plus perspective in the armed forces.

PATRICK GASCOIGNE: I totally agree on that. The issue I think, was very accurately portrayed around sexuality, and race. It's interesting to note that the military here has come a long way but still has some distance to go. We still have bullying. Predominantly there, in the U.S. I'd say, in the army, it's known as hazing and it's something which there's been a lot of work to make it very clear is not acceptable, ever. Under any circumstances. Whatever you achieve at the end, we do not have to resort to bullying to do that. I might have noticed one slight inaccuracy of the film, I

think it's probably around funding. The bootcamp is a lot tougher than was portrayed and the assault course - you should see some of the real assault courses! So you've got high wire stuff, 40 feet up, and there isn't a safety net underneath. From there, you can sometimes see the next clearing where you see the the army ambulance just waiting, just in case anyone doesn't make it.

When I joined the Navy - I joined the Navy in 1972, so that's really old - at that time, we did not have a single black person in any of the guards regiments in the British Army. We did have a people of all races in the Navy - that goes back to Nelson's time. That's not to say there wasn't a lot of prejudice and bigotry and racism. There was and it's sometimes it was very, very subtle. So even, black members of the Navy would actually be racist themselves against their own people. I remember once, strange enough, doing a night shoot in Portsmouth and the ranges are a bit more modern than the ones shown in the film. We had our Sergeant at the part known as firing area. Then we had a naval Seaman call Williams, who was an Afro Caribbean gent, a lot of fun, very good sailor. And this white marine Sergeant was running up and down saying 'Williams, for God's sakes smile so we can see where you are!' Which of course everyone thought was terribly funny. But the sad thing was Williams was the one who laughed the most. And so that sort of racism, at that time was ingrained and it's taken us a long time to get away from that. And it's not just that, you know, sexism, misogyny, there are still issues there.



QUESTION: Do you think that, in some way the squad leader was really hard on Ellis, because they had a similar struggle to go through as black men in that industry. Maybe he was trying to toughen him up to a certain degree and that's why he was harder on him than anyone else. And I wonder if anyone on the panel picked up on that in the film?

DONNIE SUMMERTIME: I think that is definitely something that I could see but I think there was a disparity between how he treated Ellis versus the other black man that was there. I think we do see with black people or people of colour, sometimes, as you say, we do end up being even harder, because it might be that you have something to prove. There is also this thing we've been taught, that we have to work twice as hard to be seen as equal. So it's this concept of really trying to push that masculinity through. I think I also misspoke as well, because there definitely was a line on racism, which wasn't really focused on the black character, but more on the character we assume was of Middle Eastern descent. I also felt like that connection between Ellis and other character who was queer, also shows this concept of unity between oppressed groups, and us all looking out for each other. So I did see that there. I feel like the film pointed out differences, more than anything. And it's the idea of 'if you're not the same, you're going to be chastised for it AND we're going to try and make you assimilate. It was that scene where he was crying toilets and said 'There's nothing that I can do for them to see me differently.' And I think that is a big lesson: Sometimes no matter what you do, to try to fit in and there's, there's literally nothing you can do. I feel like there are going to be people that are going to respect them because they've seen the work they've done. But outside of that, in the wider military and the Marines, how would they be received as queer people? I'm assuming the abuse would be just as high outside of the training.



QUESTION: I feel is there is something about this film happening at this point in time, and the subject matter of the film - it's thriving with LGBT inclusion, visibility and permissibility. I just wonder though, is the selling point and the power of the film around reinforcing ideas of patriarchy, as black people oppressed by our unchecked patriarchy. I was feeling that the film has that ability to sell something that goes under the radar and that we need to be more vigilant. I enjoyed the film - there were some beautiful moments but I was just wondering about that issue...

OVY UKI: I think this is the second movie I've watched that featured a gay black male lead character. I last watched Moonlight with Mahershala Ali and that was so heavy. I think these movies touch upon a pattern of mental health for black gay men. And I think men in general. We talk about how black men don't cry in society. I feel like all the men in the film, display that they were going through something, that they had the challenge of getting through the course. And we had the one guy, the Latino guy who was having problems at home and no one managed to see that Ellis French was coming down with his own problems. His bullies made out like: 'You've got the biggest thing going on, and we're gonna get you for what you've got going on.' By focussing on that they forgot about their own problems, instead of coming together and seeing that they needed some unity here because they're all facing the abusive squad leader. So I think the movie touches on that. For me, it reminds me that it's important to check up on our black men in society. And then even more importantly, this is a reminder to check up on your queer, black male friends as well as your as your queer POC male friends, because I feel like a lot of men don't express themselves because they feel like it's not manly to do. Whereas being female talking for myself, I find it very easy to lay my emotions on the table, and I'm not perfect. Not everyone finds that easy to do. But I think just having someone to talk to is key. Rejection was like a huge thing in the film as well! Being rejected by his mum, and then coming to the military, and then being rejected by everyone else. I know I probably couldn't have done it myself. It was such a fight and it was really beautiful to see that to he got to the end and was just trying to prove something to his mum. I think a lot of us probably have that feeling and that emotion when it comes to our parents, those of us who might have experienced rejection from my parents (I know I have) and there's this feeling that you want to keep proving yourself to them and show that you really did that! Up until the end, I was just so moved by the fact that he said to his mum that he wasn't going to give up on her - just so beautiful. So yeah, the takeaway for me is: mental health, mental health, mental health!



QUESTION: I wanted to pick up on your point and further discuss relationships between black males and their mothers, particularly in the film, the one between the main character and his mother and I wonder if there were any similarities for any of you - I know many of us here could relate and have difficult relationships with their mothers - I know I do. Being gay, it's something that is really, really difficult in the Black community. How was it for you Donnie, coming out as a Black man? Did you feel accepted?

DONNIE SUNSHINE: It's funny, watching their relationship triggered me a lot. I don't have a great relationship with my mother but it had nothing to do with my sexuality, funnily enough. So luckily, obviously I'm blessed and fortunate to have a really supportive family and friendship network. One thing that has been an issue is, myself and my siblings don't have a great relationship with my mother because we don't think she did the best that she could. I feel like, as in the black community, we black women who are so amazing and do so much, I think the ones that don't do as much get a co-sign of, of like, every mother is a good mother - you only get one mother where as the way we see fathers is completely different. So for me, I have a really great connection with my father and a lot of times, family members or friends of mine will tell me that I need to mend the relationship with my mother because I only have one but I don't really see them saying the same thing to other people about their fathers. The actual thing that triggered me in this film was something the film didn't show: it didn't show me a great love or connection. It showed me this concept of looking for approval and even at the end for me, I saw this pattern, especially for queer black people, fighting for acceptance and sometimes we need to let go. Not everyone needs to - I'm not speaking for everyone - but I do believe in the beauty of having chosen family or having other people that really accept you for

who you are. It can be really toxic, holding on to these relationships just because of blood and loyalty. It can really suppress you and hold you back and a lot of people suppress themselves. A point about the main character being feminine was mentioned earlier and I wanted to say there are a lot of black men (and women and femmes dependent on how you identify) and no matter what the gender is we always suppress elements of ourselves to make ourselves more palatable when we're at certain people's houses, or our grandparents or our cousins, because we don't want to embarrass our family, or we don't want to overdo it. And sometimes our acceptance is based on how palatable we can be, you know, because it's like, well, you don't hate me, you haven't been outwardly negative to me, so therefore, I shouldn't do anything that makes you uncomfortable. And by default, that makes us uncomfortable. So that was the thing that triggered - that connection. I've seen it play out time and time again in our community and I think sometimes it's a point that needs to be broken.

AUDIENCE COMMENT : I had no intention of speaking up tonight but I don't want to leave here with the idea that we need to seek approval. They need OUR approval. We are shining lights in our communities. So that last bit with the character's mother? For me, there was a moment when I believe he was saying, you know, YOU need to seek my love because I am very special. Gay, LGBTQ people in our communities are extraordinarily special. And I would say they work very, very hard to overcome so much, especially in the military or any other institution like that. So far from them needing to be approved of, they need to be appreciated. That's all I wanted to say!





*This zine was created to
document the events that
took place in Newham during
LGBT+ History Month 2023.*

*Special thanks to:
Newham Council*



ILLUSTRATED BY
SHAVEN RAVEN DESIGNS