

INTRO

00:02.450 --> 00:32.090

Jess Brough: Welcome to Before the Applause - an audio programme for hybrid arts festival Fringe of Colour Films. We are going to be hearing from the filmmakers and artists who are behind the films in this year's festival programme. Some of these films will make you laugh, many will challenge you, and others will be thoroughly dismantling in their ability to find their way straight to your heart. Please enjoy hearing from the people behind these remarkable films and this continuation of their stories.

DIALOGUE

00:32.090 --> 02:36.290

Cecilia Lim: My name is Cecilia Lim, and I made a short film titled Pagpapa(-)alam: To Wish You Well, So You Know. The film opens up with a shot of two East Asian humans walking down the street in Queens, New York, USA. There's a younger one that is holding the older one's arm. And you hear the sound of a cane striking the cement sidewalk. The music is layered with the narration. And then there's also a layer of sound that is just street sound. Many of the shots are taken outside on the streets of Queens. And the narration is a poem that I wrote. And really, the film is an audiovisual poem, and it's really a montage of images. And my friend Leo Ferguson, who is a native New Yorker, mixed heritage, Black and Jewish man, I've been friends with him for 20 some years. He created an original score. I think what we talked about was wanting to enhance the mood of the film and really give a sense of the arc. Also the transformation that happens in this short film. We wanted to use a lot of physical sounds, so there's a lot of clapping because we're both community organisers and we wanted to give this sense of empowerment, um, and the way that we can use our bodies and our minds to enact social change in the world. So all of the sounds that you hear are enhancing that mood, that movement wanting to both be affirming to those who are experiencing the film, but also have it be something that people can be moved by, moved to action, hopefully.

[FILM CLIP]

03:06.970 --> 09:22.370

I wanted to make a film that captured the way that these communities here in Queens over the past few years, really during the pandemic years, how our communities have been practicing care, and specifically how the women and femme workers of colour have been practicing care in these communities. The film was actually commissioned by the Centre for Cultural Power, which is an Art and Cultural organisation based in California, USA. And the person there who came up with the idea the film is part of a few films about care economies in Queens. There's something very unique about the communities in Queens. Queens is often referred to as a place in the world where many different types of people coexist and cohabitate. There is something very specific to this place. And I wanted to capture that specificity of people in place living together, but also the way that each culture and group of people is distinct, but the actions are universal in a way, or could be universal. So that was the impetus in making the film. Language is a huge part of culture, right? Language represents what a group of people, and even a group of non human people, have figured out about not only how to survive and thrive, but everything they've learned about a place. And it

was important to me to have these distinct cultures represented through language in the film, both in the poem, but also the version of the film that is part of. The festival has the original caption burned in, as well as Bangla and Spanish. But I actually have the film translated into maybe six other languages, depending on who the audiences are. Then I'll burn versions with the languages that will make the film the most accessible to the audience that's going to receive it. The primary audience for this film is the women and femme workers of Queens. The film was intended as a tribute to them, to lift up their work and their role in our society and also to be an affirmation to them personally to be an acknowledgment again, affirmation and also to give them a place to rest and kind of re up for the work, the everyday work that they're engaged in, of loving and protecting our communities. So I've had a chance to screen the film with a number of groups, maybe ranging in size. And it's been really heartening to see the reception folks have come up and shared with me about the way that I was able to capture these moments that these kind of micro moments of care that happen every day, all throughout the day and we don't have the chance to slow down and notice them and take them in and appreciate them. And it's been very kind of affirming myself to get that feedback. Talking about a wildest dream of mine, I actually included one of my wildest dreams in this film, and it's captured in the animation where you see, um, this place in Queen's Diversity Plaza. It's a site of gathering of protest and celebration in our community. And you see it transform from concrete plaza surrounded by concrete buildings to an old growth forest that's filled with trees, hardwood trees that have been native to this land like oak, black walnut, sassafras and white pine. And to me, it would be an amazing dream to realise, because it would mean that we as a people valued plant life in the same way that we value human life and non-human life and understood that we can't just cover everything over with concrete and expect to thrive as a society. You've probably heard of this idea, right, that we are our ancestors? Wildest dreams. I imagine that it was someone who was raised in an indigenous community or someone who has deep connection to the ways of life that their people lived before colonization. But that idea of being our ancestors wildest dreams, that's kind of what I was trying to imagine for myself when I was thinking about, okay, well, what would be a wildest dream that I could offer and maybe encourage others to think of that for themselves? I'd love to just share this, like, a little bit of thinking about film, like how I've thought about film as an intervention in the society. Like, an opportunity to fortify, to entertain, for sure, but also to shift. How we understand the world and to encourage and support folks, to make the leap from kind of being somebody who receives to somebody who's playing an active role in transforming the world. And again, all of my art is in service of liberation. It's in service of social change. What would it be like if we all really value, like, that the way something was made was as important as what we were making. We would be on our road to that liberated world we're trying to get to.

OUTRO

09:22.370 --> 10:18.000

Jess Brough: Fringe of Colour Films 2023 takes place from the 23rd to the 29th June, but this audio programme will be available in perpetuity. If you are listening to this before the festival, we hope you can join us either online or in-person in Edinburgh, and if you are listening after the festival, you can stay up-to-date with our work at fringeofcolour.co.uk. This podcast was brought to you by Fringe of Colour Films, a hybrid arts festival for Black people and People of Colour. This series is presented by me Jess Brough, produced by Halina Rifai

and Fringe of Colour, theme music by Xavier LaCroix and is supported by Creative Scotland.
Thank you for listening.