

INTRO

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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

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I'm Danny Bailey, and I am the filmmaker of Soft Bwoi. At the start of the film, you are just greeted with the harsh realities of just where we live as Black folk. I almost call it like a concrete jungle. And then it kind of like, you know, like, the estates, they, like, stick out, like, almost like jagged teeth. It just perpetuates and, like, highlights the hostility where I grew up. Then we move into this world where you almost peel back those jagged teeth and then it dips into almost, like, the colour. And all of these almost, like, cartoon character-esque characters that are, like, inside, like this, like, crustacean of just the ghetto.

[FILM CLIP]

So the concept of Soft Bwoi kind of stems from me being a kid, actually. Just like my uncles, like, throwing away, oh, you're soft, you're soft, you're soft, you're soft bwoi, your soft. At the time, it never felt like a negative thing. It just felt like it almost felt comforting to me. That another part of my masculinity, whatever that is, was being seen as soft. I wanted to kind of play with this idea of how Black men are perceived in society and also how, as Black men, we have prescribed to those negative notions. Yeah, whether it's our fault or not, whether we found comfort and ease in those archetypes, and also and, like, denying that softness about ourselves. I kind of look at that as, like, balance, like, the masculine and the feminine. And this idea of the Soft Bwoi being the ultimate balance of those two is where that idea was born. For me, movement was my very, very first language. Even before I could talk, I could dance, I could move. Like, my mum talks about me, about taking me to, like, Nottingham Carnival in the pram, and I would just, like, be moving. That was my idea of expression. And actually, as an artist myself, as a human being, when I'm not moving or practicing movement, I get quite locked. Like, my throat chakra is all the way locked up. So it's important for me to move. I also see that as quite a decolonial practice because in the society that we live in, we're expected to just keep all of our emotions inside and almost words are like an unnecessary filter sometimes when I can just explore that through my body. In the film, the words was the last thing that I did, I made the film. Well, this time we started off with making costume and styling. Then we did the movement, then we filmed it, then we made the music. And then afterwards, I was like, okay, it feels like there needs some words here. So, yeah, revolution is radical change to me, but also radical change doesn't have to be like, oh, we're going to burn down this building. Maybe there's a building inside of ourselves that needs to be burnt down. For me, we have so many conversations about toxic masculinity and not enough conversations about how we can make it not toxic. I'm very solution-based, and it's very, very important for me to observe how, um, colonisation

has dictated my ideas about success, my relationships, the way I treat the earth and the way I treat myself. Revolution radicalisation for me, starts off with self and breaking down these things. And actually, I was like, for me to become soft, white, I had to accept my divine feminine. But also in that there's so much danger outside for Black men and for, um, femme presenting people to black. Femme presenting people to walk in their divine feminine. It's dangerous outside. Why is it dangerous? I rewatched Black Exodus, a film that I made a couple of years ago. And Kelechi Okafor is one of the narrators in the film. And she said it just sticks out to me. She said our power would be immense. And that's what they're afraid of. What have I been told to keep away out of fear? Not my own fear, out of society's fear. And what happens if I just start walking in it and be brave? And that's what Soft Bwoi is about. It's about being brave to be who you truly are and not who society tells you should be. The music is so important in the film. Within my upbringing and my ideas of storytelling, I feel like I can note parts of my life by music. And that has been so important in my upbringing and my understanding of myself and my growth, actually, from a child to now, I feel like music has matured with me and my ideas about music have matured. I worked with Cyrus Brandon on the soundtrack for the film. And my main note for Brandon was the vibration. I need that bass to feel like it's in your heart. You know, like when you go carnival and you're behind a truck and the base is just, like, healing. And that is the aspect that I wanted to reveal to my audiences, is the healing power of music and vibration and the vision that it makes. Where does vision start? It starts from inside of you. It starts from the vibration of you and then it comes out. That was music. And also the fact that it's dance form music. The fact that we go from silence sometimes, like, straight into noise. That is like, excruciating into like oh, it's like it's jagged, it's it's all of these things. It's all encompassing.

OUTRO

08:22.990 --> 09:19.000

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.