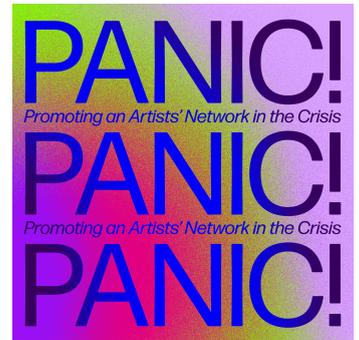


PANIC! Bursaries

Thahmina Begum

Transcript of *The Colour Palette: How can art aid healing from Racial Trauma?*



TITLE SCREEN:

The Colour Palette

9 Creative Laboratories

3 Generations

1 Question

How can art aid healing from Racial Trauma?

Dear racist, On the day of the incident when you chased my brother in Holbeck in 2005, my brother was chased by a group of English men just for being a Muslim. He was walking to Holbeck to see his friend, your gang chased him into the industrial estate. This is where my brother felt his life was going to end. Luckily enough, he managed to climb the sharp railings to save his life, his hands were cut deep. He wanted... He waited for your gang to go so he could safely walk home. When he got home, as a family, we were all scared and felt angry. I used to walk to work near the industrial estate. After the incident, I started taking the bus. Your actions affected the whole family and put fear into the Muslim community. Then I thought, I would like you in your gang to educate yourself on how to stop being racist. I would like you to meet Muslims in the community and talk to them and understand how your actions affect people mentally and physically. I think you should also educate your kids, friends, family and people of similar mindset to you. I think you should go on a restorative justice programme to get closure for yourself and victims of racism.

Sounds like really, to the point where this is what I want to do.

By doing this, I would actually want to re-meet racist people and I would actually want you know, like to explain to them how their actions affect us. It makes me a little bit more... like not scared, if that makes sense.

Participant 2 1:50

It's a bit of everything. My emotions, I guess when things happen, especially like the rioting that happened a good few years ago when I was single and the 7/7. That really, really affected me a lot. I remember I only just past driving, and erm, I used to think there's a bomb under my car. And I used to cry so much. So I think it's the feeling of anger and explosions and rain inside you, like, you know, it's a bit of everything. And I remember telling my dad, that can we just go stay back home? Because I thought going...

Thahmina

What to Bangladesh?

Participant 2

Yeah, I thought going to Bangladesh would be safer than staying here at that time. Because there was rioting, there was racism - everything due to those bombings. Yeah, not that 9/11 It didn't affect me that much, in the 9/11. I used to work in a white company, then. Well, it was full of Whites, obviously English, but they were really good. Yeah, there was they were really good. But the 7/7 did affect me quite a bit. Yeah, yeah.

Thahmina

And how long was it before things started getting better for you?

Participant 2

Then I got married didn't I? (laughing)

Thahmina

So something definitely went down.

Participant 3 2:55

(Spoken in Bengali) I just cried when I came from Bangladesh, I thought

to myself 'is this the life in London?' Who would want to come to London if they knew...

Participant 4 3:04

Everybody's got to... everybody's got the right to be who they want to be... Regardless of what religion it is, you treat people humanely, and you treat people kindly. Her family member to get married. Yeah? Her family made her get married. And she had a daughter out of this marriage. And then she she wasn't happy. Obviously. She didn't feel happy. She wanted to be with a woman. So she went and she went and she had a relationship with a woman. And through this relationship, I don't know what happened with her. Yeah. But through this relationship. She's she hated her daughter. I think it was because, you know, the way that she was forced into the marriage and stuff like that. She hated the daughter and she killed her daughter. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. And at the same time, there was an incident where there was a white man who killed his entire family. Yeah, right. He was in the media. He was portrayed as being mentally ill. This woman was portrayed as being a Muslim and showing scriptures of you know, we call it of whatever and stuff like that saying that, er, because she was gay. Yeah, Muslims did not, they were putting Muslims right out in front of them. And... But nothings got to do with the religion... It's the individual, it's your character. It's your character that chooses what you wanna do,

Participant 5 4:31

In my early 20s when I was taking my driving lessons and my instructor was English Yeah, and this guy, white guy, just passed by in the open car park, and he just said, oi, 'Why are you giving her lessons for? Stick to your own car. You shouldn't be doing this.' And my instructor said 'Salma, stay in the car' He made me feel safe. We didn't come or come out until he was gone.

Participant 6 4:59

(Spoken in Bengali) I was walking along. He came behind and stole my bag... everything was inside, my money, cards, my keys... I like Beeston I have my own people here. If I were in trouble or in need, I would feel

scared if I lived in a white area.

Participant 7 5:30

About wearing masks... they didn't want to wear masks because they're gonna turn into Muslims. It's not that easy to turn into a bloody Muslim. People do not eat Halal food because it might turn them Muslim! Halal food is the safest food on the planet.

Thahmina

So do you think that's racist? Wearing face masks but not being banned from Niqabs?

Participant 7

Yeah of course it's racist!

Thahmina

Yeah, yeah. A lot of, there's a lot of ironies isn't there. That, you know, it feels like there's one rule for one, one section of society and another rule for another section of society, isn't it?. Whereas now it's become normal for everyone to wear face masks, isn't it?

Participant 7

Yeah. But I wouldn't feel safe wearing a Niqab. I would wear this anywhere in the next 5 years. But I wouldn't feel safe wearing a Niqab.

Thahmina

Why wouldn't you? Why wouldn't you feel safe?

Participant 7

No, I think I'll get those looks. Yeah. And I'll get those terrorist remarks. A mask is a mask, it's for the environment. Everyone knows that But no, yeah.

Thahmina

So you because of your fear, it's stopping you, it's stopping you doing your own religion or what you feel.

Participant 7

Yeah.

Thahmina

So basically, it's stopping you from living the life that you want to live?

Participant 7

Yeah, it's not to say that we have to wear a Niqab. No, but it is what, Salma said. How ironic is it that you feel safer to wear a facemask than to actually, to wear a Niqab, Which is exactly the same thing, isn't it.

Are you recording this because this really needs recording, yeah?

(laughs) I still want I still got an apology from Boris Johnson. (Laughs and chatting) Because we were called letterboxes. Yeah. And he still has not apologised to this day, and I want an apology.

Participant 8 7:17

Well, I was wearing a scarf right? yeah, you know when you get to that stage where you thinking, oh you're ready to wear a scarf and watching my friend wear it, I'm like: okay, I'll wear it. That day I came in because I had Science yeah and there was this guy that got kicked out of South Leeds and he came into our school. You know what he did? because I was, I went to sit down on the table and he pulled my scarf down.

Participant 9 7:44

(In Bengali) So I was going to school one day, and he jumped behind me, we were so scared, I was 12 and my little sister was 10.

Thahmina

What, so he jumped ya?

Participant 9

Yeah

(In Bengali) Oh my god. And we were scared!

Participant 10 8:10

So in the 1990s when I were in high school, about 14 or 15. I was going home one day, and you have to walk over a bridge to get to the other side, erm, from Holbeck to Beeston, and there was the police van sat under the bridge, knowing full well that there were these English men, about 30 English men in the 20s - early 30s, chasing young Asian kids home and they chased them up the hill, the police did nothing, they just sat there. They hit them, they cut them, sliced them on the face with a knife, one of them went rolling down the hill, they even hit a girl. They wasn't bothered. And that were in the 1990s. And they had like small little pocket knives. And that's what they were slashing them with. And the police just sat there and did nothing, that would really really scary, it kinda like, scary. And so blatantly, racist. And it really put you off going back to school, because you kept thinking that might happen to you. Could that happen again? Cos we were there, we actually got chased by them. So we were there. Yeah, I'm one of the people that got chased by them.

Thahmina

If anybody ever happens to someone you don't know, but when it's happened to you, you realise, like, how scary is, you know what I mean?... for them to be coming out, as well.

Participant 11 9:21

(In Bengali) I was scared to say anything to neighbours, they drew on the walls... scared to say anything, they will let the dogs out on us.

Thahmina 9:53

Do you want to know about your own Bangladeshi history and your own cultural history?

Participant 12

Is there even any history or?... (laughing, muttering, chatting)

Participant 13

Yeah innit, we learn about Indian history (mumbled). Not like, no,

Participant 14

We don't, we learn about white people.

Especially white people. We learn about white people. We learn about white people. We learn one day about Black people.

Thahmina

Which Day? Is it Black History Month?

Participant 14

We only have one day though

Participant 15 10:16

Dear Racist, In 2019, I was sat in the hospital waiting patiently for my Mum's appointment to be called. Me and my mom was talking our language as my Mum doesn't speak English. As we were talking, other English patients kept looking back at us and tutting at us, like we were committing a crime. I felt really angry and frustrated as my mom didn't, at the time realise what was happening. My Mum felt scared and just told me not to say anything. I kept all my emotions inside me. As I didn't want to worry, my Mum. I would like to tell the people with respect every religion, and it doesn't matter what language is spoken. People need to understand that just because we're in UK doesn't mean everyone knows how to speak English. And it shouldn't be an issue. It should be advertised that English isn't an issue and it should be spoken freely.

Participant 16 11:05

Dear racist. We was all in the office discussing something when you made a comment about my headscarf. Hijab. You made a comment saying 'like that Samosa on your head.' I didn't know what to say to you at that very moment. But I felt very uncomfortable, awkward and embarrassed. I felt angry at you but didn't say nothing to you. I couldn't say nothing to you, as he was high up in the ranks than me, which made it worse. For me to be I need you to understand and educate yourself on my religion, culture and the fact I am different from you. But I am a human being just as you are, I too have feelings and emotions. I still have value. You need to learn to respect and accept everybody as they are. Do

you like to be made fun of because of who you are? Would you like to be name-called? Simply because of what you wear on your head? How would you feel? I need you to ask yourself all these questions. Would you like it if a member of your family went through the same incident as myself? I do not want another person like me to suffer. Why do you so please learn to respect each and every one.

Participant 16 12:10

When something happens to ya, and you know, you go home and it lingers over you for two or three days, you know, some things do actually linger me for two or three days. And I think, why do I feel like this? And why am I keep thinking of it? But I don't know what the real thing is. I just keep thinking and it takes about two or three days before you know it actually goes away from your mind.

Participant 17 12:38

Dear Racist, In winter of 2018, I visited London for a prestigious networking and research event, which you also attended. It was a pleasant and professional event until you mentioned that I was probably there because I had a brown mom at home waiting for me to make money. And this changed my view on what looked like an outwardly professional, prestigious event, knowing that people like you were in the crowd, whether it was a joke or not, was not made clear. So it's difficult for me to see it as anything but racist. I'd like to ...you to know that though at the time you took me by surprise and made me second guess my professional choices. I also realised that not everyone is like you and I've been fortunate enough to meet individuals and groups that support equality and race and diversity in all industries. These individuals work hard to make sure people like you are not heard or given a spotlight.

Thahmina

How do you feel right?

Participant 17

You know, I felt like therapy. That actually did feel like therapy.

Thahmina 13:35

Definitely, definitely, I think it's what's been good is that you've all had different things, but when, when I've broken it down to you to realise the whole point of this project was to realise like, it has to do with black lives matter, but how disproportionately our Bangladeshi communities have been infected by COVID.

Participant

Whats come out of this some of the incidents that's happened to us. We don't realise it's actually racism. We just take as though maybe it's just meant to be, honest. But now that we've gone into depth, we do now realise it is racism. Yeah, that's good. Yeah, so quite good. On that note, we'll finish it there.