Scalarama Scotland Roundtable | 21st June 2020 | Transcript

[Megan Mitchell] Hello everyone, welcome to today's Scalarama meeting. How are we all? Well, we're all muted first of all. So just a quick reminder of our roundtable etiquette for people who are new, you're all muted to begin with but we'll open up to hear from everyone towards the end of the meeting so don't worry if you've got some questions and things. If you do have any questions or comments throughout the meeting or the chats please use the chat bar. We've developed a bit of a shorthand over the last couple of months on these sessions so if you agree with a point you can put a little plus sign in the chat, thanks to Tamara for Take One Action Film Festival for that tip. We really do welcome all contributions from everyone in the room but I would ask you be respectful and thoughtful in anything that you may say. So for those of you who don't know me, for you whose it might be your first session with us,I'm Megan Mitchell, I'm the Producer of Matchbox Cineclub and I've been co-ordinating Scalarama Scotland's online sessions, thanks to funding from Film Hub Scotland.This is the fourth in the six monthly sessions that we're running this year. So ordinarily these workshops would take place in the wonderful CCA in Glasgow, and they would offer practical advice and networking for new and established independent exhibitors. But of course, due to the world that we're now living in, we're taking everything online and doing just fine.It's been a pleasure to be joined by colleagues from across the UK and North America and Europe over the past months. And you can check out our previous sessions on our website, which I think Sean's going to link in the chat. Just a slight note, I have a vocal tic. So when I'm talking I'm a squawk like a bird and it can be quite high pitched if you're wearing earphones. So just a little note on that. So today, we're joined by a really great group of guest speakers. We'll be hearing from Anthony Andrews from We Are Parable, Um Mohamed, Clare Reddington from Watershed and Toki Alison from Inclusive Cinema, about insights and practical ways that you can make our thinking, events and our organizations a bit more inclusive, especially when it comes to race. So unfortunately, Samar Ziadat from Dardishi is unwell and can't be with us today but we're going to share a link to their website in the chat for everyone to check out. If you don't know Dardishi, Dardishi is a great Glasgow-based, community-focused zine and arts festival that showcases Arab and North African women's contributions to contemporary art and culture. Samar established Dardishi but she also works across Glasgow Zine Library and the Scottish Queer International Film Festival so hopefully we can hear from Samar in another session in future. But thanks to the wonders of the internet you can also attend a Dardishi screening this Thursday. Dardishi will be screening Naila and the Uprising, a documentary that chronicles Palestinian women's political contributions to the most vibrant, nonviolent mobilization in Palestinian history - the First Intifada in the late 1980s. Tickets are on a sliding-scale pay what you can afford, and the screening is Thursday from 2pm. So we'll share some links to tickets and the event. If you can't make it and you do have a platform, we've also shared a tweet from Dardishi that you can retweet if you're so inclined to spread the word. Before we get into today's roundtable, I just wanted to acknowledge how intense the past month since we last met has been, especially for our Black colleagues. I'm going to share some resources in the chat box especially to the Film and TV Charity who have an online platform called WhiteWall with discussion boards and resources as well as 24 hour helpline and online chat, if you are feeling overwhelmed, please do reach out and seek some support if you need it. And it's okay to do that. So, usually in our intro before I kick off into the round table, I'll share some interesting news and updates for exhibitors, but

there is one important document that I wanted to share this week, or this month, before we kick off. our last month before we kick off. With Black Lives Matter movement bring racism to the forefront of discussions globally and within our sector, and white people who have a privilege to not face this every day, we may feel like there's some things that you can still learn and there's certainly some things that we can be doing better to address this in the sector.. And I say we as a white woman, in a white organization of two white people, and Scotland where our sector is blindingly white. And at best does a disservice to our audiences and non-white colleagues and at its worst facilitates and perpetrates violence towards them. I wanted to share Jemma Desai's This Work Isn't For Us which is a very insightful and challenging document in regards to this, and I would urge everyone to dive into it and examine their own practices and complacencies when it comes to race in the creative sectors. But today's guests are already doing things to bring about and move forward practical changes and modeling ways we can do better, in some really exciting and fun ways. Especially our first guest. So I'm going to invite Anthony from We Are Parable to tell us a bit about We Are Parable and I think that he's got a little slideshow as well to share with us.

[Anthony Andrews] Hi, everyone. Thanks for coming. So I think you guys have got the slides. So I'm going to just present and just tell you where to go, is that right?

[Megan Mitchell] Yeah. Sean, are you happy to fire up the slides and screen share? There we go. Wonderful.

[Anthony Andrews] Cool. Okay, so, yeah, so thanks. Thanks for Megan and the team for having me today. Thank you all for joining. So my name is Anthony Andrews, and I'm the Creative Director and co-founder of a company called We Are Parable. And over the next 10 minutes or so I'm going to tell you a little bit about We Are Parable, what we do, why we exist. And tell you a little bit why we believe experience over everything is the mantra that we follow, and something that our audience really relates to. So if we go to the next slide, please. So who we are, essentially, I'm Anthony Andrews, in that image is my wife and co-founder, Teanne Andrews. And essentially, we are an award winning film exhibition company. We've been going since 2013, when we had the idea of screening one of our favorite films, Coming To America, which we hadn't seen in the cinema before. So we thought, "Let's go, go to a local cinema and see if we can screen this film." Somewhat serendipitously, it was celebrating, the film was celebrating its 25th anniversary, which gave us another reason to try and do something different with the screening. So we thought rather than just essentially stick people in the cinema and show the film we though, let's try and create an immersive experience where we had rose bearers and African arts and crafts makers and poets and performers and musicians, and really try and immerse people in the African culture and more importantly the environment of the film. And that's something that we've been doing for the last seven years, really just trying to build on the environment of the film, and make it as immersive and culturally relevant as possible. So if we go to the next slide, please. So you know why we exist is really important. So we believe in championing films that feature and are made by people that look like us,, so essentially Black films for Black people. And what we want to try and do when we screen those films is to create

experiences, as I just mentioned before, those culturally relevant experiences around the films, which feature people that look like us, that celebrate our culture as much as possible. So you're seeing a celebration of culture on screen with Black faces, and hopefully, you know, Black filmmakers and writers and directors and producers behind the camera. And what we try and do is as an extension of that celebration, it's a celebration of culture, when you go into the foyer when you go and take your seat, to really, you know, to really bring out the cultural relevance of the film. So if we go to the next slide, please. So, our mission is really clear. And this is our North Star when it comes to everything that we do. So essentially, it's to provide audiences across the UK with opportunities to experience and respond to Black Cinema in culturally relevant, innovative and memorable ways. So that's really what we do for everything. We really want people to understand the culture, and really try and celebrate that in as many ways as possible, we want to be innovative and how we do that. So sometimes it might be something as sort of conventional and simple as a Q&A, where we discuss key themes with film or it could be something like the example I'm about to show you, which is a bit more expansive and a bit more ambitious. So that leads quite nicely into the next slide where the best example of how we provide those culturally relevant moments, or it's actually the slide after, but how we do it is by screening films and creating memorable and unforgettable experiences. And the best example of that is Black Panther, or, as many people call it, the people's premiere. So what we did with this event, BFI and Disney approached us about doing an event for Black Panther, which would be the world's first public preview screening of the film. So what we thought again, we wanted to really have that immersive environment and, you know, really try and bring people into the environment of the film. So we had the idea of creating an Afro-futuristic kingdom. So, to that end, we would have cosplayers, as you can see, in that image, we have an African arts and crafts marketplace, with interior designers, craft makers, writers, fashion designers, really trying to best bring the best of Africa to the BFI Southbank as much as possible. And we wanted to really try and place our guests in Wakanda, in the film. You know, the film very much celebrates Wakanda as this Africa African utopia and that's what we tried to do with with this particular event. So what was...what was really ground-breaking about this event is that it was about creating a space for Black people. This is the first event that we did with the BFI Southbank and from that event to other events that we've done in that space. Recently, people always haul us up and say, "Okay, you're doing the veteran, the BFI Southbank, what's the dress code?" So there's a lot of people within our audience, primarily Black people, who have never been to South Bank, who doesn't who don't think that's a space for them, despite it being a publicly funded space and organisation. They simply feel that the space isn't for them. And we're really here to try and break that stigma down to say that, "No, this space is for you. And this is content that's here for you." So, you know, with these 700 attendees and with the other people that we've been able to attract to our events, we really want to try and create confidence in our audience that this is a space for them, and they can be celebrated in that space. And so, if we go to the next slide, please. So the S.O.U.L. Film Festival is again another extension of the work we do, where we're trying to create culturally relevant experiences. And this is a film festival that we co-founded with four other creatives. And this was the event that we did in August last year, with some of our short film-makers, essentially, the film, the S.O.U.L. Film Festival is all about giving a platform to Black British film-makers, as much as possible. So if you look at what's

happened with "BAFTAs So White", you look at, I don't know if you guys have read Steve McQueen's piece in The Guardian that came out last night, just about, you know, the inherent racism that's in the film and TV industry. When you take all those things into account, you see why it's so important to have platforms like this, where we're celebrating our Black British film-makers as much as possible. There's no reason why these films can't exist on the BFIPlayer, for example, there's no reason why these films cannot show on Random Acts on Channel 4, so what we're trying to do is create a platform that allows these things to happen. We have got partners such as Channel 4, such as Sony. We're working with them continually, again, to try and expand the platform and try and give these film-makers the opportunities they deserve to extend their careers and grow their work as much as possible. So if we go to the next slide, please. We also worked with eOne one on the Queen & Slim campaign at the start of the year, which feels like absolutely years ago. So we worked with eOne, not only on a special preview event that we did at BFI Southbank, where we sold out a screen in record time, but we also did four other screenings. So we were the marketing partners for that campaign, where we targeted a younger audience and we hired an intern to provide her with some film exhibition experience of how to market an event and how to promote and, you know, work on producing a number of events. So if we can go to the next slide, please. So, as I mentioned, we hosted five screenings around London, we worked with that intern, and we also created some pre-events where we worked with a zine-making facilitator, arts facilitator, who held free zine-making workshops, where we were making montages from, you know, from particular images, Black images from magazines, and sort of curating them to have themes such as love, fear, hope, some of the themes that are explored in the film, again, to allow people to have a deeper relationship with the film. So if we go to the next slide, please. So at the BFI Southbank where we did the main preview, as I mentioned, we sold out the capacity in about 10 minutes. We had a poetry session from a young person in the round, as you can see in the top image, who, you know, it was the first time she had performed to such a, such a massive group of people and she did amazingly well. We had the photo booth set up so people could re-enact the same iconic image that was...that that was depicted in the film. And we also collaborated with a whisky house to produce a one-off Queen & Slim branded bourbon. So if you've seen the film, there's a pivotal scene where the two characters are having a drink of bourbon water while they're on the run. So we wanted that to be a nice kind of tangible takeaway that the audience could have with them and remind them of the event. So if you go to the next slide, please. So some of the results that we had, so over five events, we had almost 1,500 attendees across those five events, we had 5.6 million online impressions, with a calculated online sentiment of around 98%, was all positive. And then, from the five screenings that we did, that was 12% of the total preview box office revenue. And that's the biggest sort of amount that we've ever generated in terms of revenue for any five events, so we're super proud of that. And we did attract a really diverse, a really young audience, who were looking not just to watch the film, because there's so much anticipation about the film, it was about how they watched the film, and I've got some stats a bit later to talk about why experience is so important, especially for young and Black audiences. So if we go to the next slide, please. So I've got just a few testimonials from people that we've worked through such as Annabel Grundy, some of you may be familiar with her, just talks about, you know, the purpose and vision that we try and bring to

every event again, trying to bring the culturally relevant experiences to every event that we do, so the picture there is when we recreated a barber shop, the Desmond's barber shop, Desmond's sitcom from the '90s. We recreated that shop in spaces all around the UK and we've got the creator of Desmond's, Trix Worrell, sitting in the chair, and we tried to create that experience while showing episodes of Desmond's, so it's really about trying to, again, provide those moments of cultural relevance for our audience. And the second slide again, it's just another quote from Into Film, so if we go straight into the next slide, if possible. So, just a few stats to finish up on. So, 80% have our audience say that our events provided them with a worthwhile cultural experience. So that's something that I'm saying over and over again, because I think it's massively important. I think, when you're trying to attract Black, Asian and other ethnic groups as an audience, I think it's really about, you know, providing them with authentic cultural moments that really speak to their experience as people of colour or people of a particular group, and I think that's what we try and do and that's what we work hard to try and create at our events. So if we go to the next slide, so 99% of our attendees rate our events as very good or good. I'm still working on the 1%. One day, I'll be able to say, very closely, I'll be able to say 100% of people think our events very good. I'm still working on that 1% of people that don't! So, yeah, that's obviously a great stat and something that we work hard to try and maintain as much as possible. And then if we go to the next slide, please. And this is probably like my killer slide, because I think this really ties into the idea of experience over everything. So 95% of our audience, an overwhelming amount of our audience, say that experiences, whether those experiences are as simple as a Q&A or they're performances, or they're photo booths or art exhibitions, or art workshops, no matter what they are, they're the most important thing about the about the event. So, you know, one of the things that I kind of struggle with is the fact that I loved watching Da 5 Bloods last weekend, the new Spike Lee film on Netflix, but I just couldn't help but think, "Oh, my God, how amazing this be in the cinema, with all the other stuff around it?" And our audience feel the same way. It's about how you experience the film, not just watching the film, and then having thoughts about it. It's about the whole package, and how can you package it up in a way that makes culturally relevant sense to our audience, as much as possible. So that's, that's something that we're really happy about and happy our audience are kind of on the same page with us on that. So I think that brings me to the end of the slides. So a bit of a whistle-stop tour. Is that the last slide? I'm just trying to remember. That is the last slide. So it's a bit of a whistle-stop tour in terms of what We Are Parable do, but what I would say, you know, when it comes to trying to attract audiences, from different ethnic backgrounds, I think, again, it is about, you know, providing that authenticity that, that, you know, really reflecting their culture back to them. But, you know, if you don't feel that you are confident in doing that, it's about reaching out to groups who are already speaking to those audiences as much as possible. I think there was one other stat that I, that didn't go up there, it was about 80% of our audience are from the Black, Asian and minority ethnic audiences. And we have a third of the audience is from LGBTQ communities as well. So with the LGBTQ communities, we've reached out to particular groups within London and Birmingham and Bristol, worked with them to try and attract those audiences. So it's a case of realising that, you know, we don't know much about that community and about the, the interests and the, you know, the kind of nuances that are involved in you know, reaching out to that community. So we worked with organisations who

had a much stronger insight. So I would say doing that and doing that on a consistent and regular basis is how you really attract these audiences. So, yeah, that's me.

[Megan Mitchell] Thanks so much, Anthony. And I think that that's such a good point about reaching out and knowing where your limitations are. Like, I think as executives and programmers, we'd all like to think that, you know, because we watch films and we know it all. But we don't and I think even for Matchbox over the last year, we've worked with Queer Classics in Glasgow quite a bit. And we've seen the growth of LGBTQ+ audiences from that initial partnership. And it definitely gave us access to audiences and an understanding of audiences that I don't think we would have had otherwise. But thank you so much for sharing that with us. I'm now going to throw to Um. You may know Um if you were involved in the BFI's Anim18 season. Um is also an ICO FEDS alumni and has presented and written across industry on cultural blind spots and race. So, hello, Um, how are you?

[Umulkhayr Mohamed] Hi, everyone. I'm good. Thank you. So, yeah, so I'm gonna be speaking to kind of film organisations in particular, and how they can be more aware of how their own racial backgrounds inform their work and the issues that might arise from that if everybody in the organisation is white, or the majority is. But just to begin, I guess, I will say, I should say that when I was preparing to do this, I was kind of thinking very specifically about the moment in time that we find ourselves in, so I think that's really informed how I want to have these conversations going forward, because I am feeling a lot of frustration at the moment in terms of these conversations, a lot of the times, feel like it's like we're talking about racism we're nowhere near. And, but at the same time, I've been kind of heartened to see that, I think for the first time really, there are conversations about systematic oppression happening in the mainstream and I really want to support that as much as possible and champion a kind of different way of approaching this that really holds people to account for how they benefit from their privilege. So, to begin with, like how whiteness...how I believe whiteness informs the work that we do. And just to start with programming, I think, particularly programming in independent cinema, I would say that we are in a kind of unique position. And it's one of the reasons I really love independent cinema. And that is, we have the choice, we have the chance and the choice to kind of look back at film history and really give people a chance to see films that they might not see otherwise. And how this relates to race would be kind of using that as a chance to look at films that have been historically ignored for very specific reasons. I was having a conversation with a colleague about a year ago now about this. And it's... the thing that kind of stands out to me is... the reason why these films have been historically ignored and kind of wiped out of the canon or excluded from the canon is quite clear. It's linked to race at least. But because that initial erasure was so well executed, we find ourselves in a position where you really have to dig, to find these films and find these film-makers that we want to champion, that haven't had that chance. And it's all about priorities, essentially, it's about finding the time and the resources to choose to prioritise these films and not always go for the film that is well... the films are most well documented in the canon. And also I would say programming is also... you can link it to race in the fact that there is this category called Black cinema. And there isn't this category called White Cinema. And it's this constant otherring where... which upholds the status quo. And it's this thing of essentially

reinforcing this belief that whiteness is neutral and everything else isn't. So when it comes to choosing and programme films that aren't Black or don't have a Black cast or a film-maker, etc, connected to them, I would really kind of urge you all to look at how whiteness is presenting itself in these films. And I talk about it a lot with my friends who are also people of colour. There are films that I see all the time and I think, "Oh, wow, that's a really white film." And we know what that means, but it's never articulated in the programming or the marketing of that film in the same way that Blackness is within, like, programme notes and marketing. And when it comes to kind of like community engagement work, I think, for me... the issue... I mean, how race relates to this is... I would say it kind of... Like, say you are a predominantly or exclusively white-staffed organisation who wants to, like, be a welcoming space for people of colour to engage with film, like, the basis to do that in a sustainable way is by building trust. Because, in essence, what you're asking people of colour is, when you invite them in, is that they will leave any and all interactions with your organisation feeling respected and welcome. So if we're kind of working from those parameters, what I don't see a lot around... the discussions I don't see happening around community engagement is why, in the first instance, these communities question whether they would be respected or welcome within your organisation. And you may think, "Well, okay..." You might kind of bat it back and say, "Well, these organis... these communities are hard to reach. They're not giving us the benefit of the doubt." But in our lived experience, we are rarely given the benefit of the doubt. So it's coming at it from a different perspective entirely and saying, "Why should predominantly white organisations be seen as inclusive unless we can pin or identify a very clear example of them not being." So, firstly, it will be the staff itself. [Inaudible] ..Don't work, then it's, like, that's the first question in my mind is, like, "Why aren't there any people of colour working in this organisation?" Particularly when you're working in cities and communities that are racially diverse. So, it's a matter of not asking others to give you the benefit of the doubt and understanding how the systematic kind of problematizing of people of colour informs the way that they want to engage with your organisation or stops them from engaging with your organisation. And then, if you look more into, like, how you function as an organisation, just the simple concept of professionalism. Like, if I was to ask you all now, considering your organisations, "Do you think that, like, the way that you choose to interact both internally and externally, like, reflects a degree of professionalism?" I would assume that many of you would say, "Yes." You might, you might say... You will probably say "yes" because you assume that to be a good thing, something that we should be striving towards, but my perspective, personally, as a Black woman, is I really hate the concept of professionalism. As far as I'm concerned, it exists to create a set of, like, rules and boundaries that, in principle, are just meant to make the work environment, like, more efficient and, like, conducive to what the organisation is trying to achieve. But, in practice, like, these rules and boundaries have been created with a certain...only a certain group in mind. And what that means is that many people who kind of fall out of that certain group - which I don't need to kind of spell out here - find that they have to leave parts of their authentic selves at the door, so to speak. And, on top of that, they have to hold themselves to higher standards than others, simply because they are aware that they will be more harshly judged. And there's kind of no two ways around it, as far as I'm concerned. Western professionalism is rooted in white supremacy. And I started to list down a couple of examples of...to kind of help prove my point here. But going back to what I said

earlier, I really want to move this conversation towards a point where people of colour are trusted when we say something is linked to or upholds white supremacy, rather than being asked to over-explain why that is the case. Because it's our lived experience, so I'd rather focus on the solution. And as far as I can see it, the solution is quite a simple one. It's to start from scratch. It's to develop an office culture or organisation culture that everybody in that organisation feeds into and is able to, like, actively say, "This is the parameters that I need set in order for me to feel like myself at work and feel like I don't have to kind of uphold this... this fallacy that whiteness is the norm." And... And then I guess the other side of the coin when it comes to organisations, like, how you function in an organisation and how that links to race is a lot of conversation at the moment is around wanting to hire more diverse people. And as if that will, like, solve the issue of, like, racism in our sector. And as far as I can see it, like, that's the first step not the last step in developing an inclusive organisation and I think too many organisations see hiring diverse staff as the final step. And the reason why I say it's not the final step is because it's quite clear to see, if you were to compare, like, the freelancers who work in our sector, and the people who are linked to organisations, and particularly, like, well-funded organisations, the group of freelancers are often a way more diverse group. And I've been having a lot of conversations with people… [inaudible] ..recently, and it's actually shocking how many of those conversations have led to people saying, "I've chosen to be a freelancer," or "to set up my own organisation, because I found the organisations that currently exist are oppressive," like, point blank, period, just are oppressive. Like, we don't see ourselves... We see working in organisations as detrimental to our mental health, let alone, like, if we were given a chance to work in those organisations, but that's a whole other conversation. It's like, your environment is not healthy. And even if you are to...like, if you find an organisation and you work within it, so often I see, like, people of colour in a sector being overlooked when it comes to career progression, when their white counterparts aren't being overlooked, and I can see the talent they have. So it's clearly not to do with them as individuals. And then we have to, I guess, look at the truth of the matter, which is, they're being overlooked because they are people of colour. So just to kind of like wrap up, I think, for me... if...as organisations, if you want to check and see, like, if you're on the right path with any of this, I just think there's a couple of things that need to be done. First of all, really understanding what accountability looks like in practice. Like, I'm sure you've all seen the numerous statements have come out since Black Lives Matter happened. And, and it's...the language is so often, like, "We will listen and we will learn." What's not being said and what I think should be said is, up until this point, we have perpetuated the situation. We are the reason why we're in this situation currently. And it's not being said to protect, like, reputation and... But what's not being understood is, by not saying in as plain as language as that, you are focusing on, like, the optics of the situation over the reality, and the reality is, we all know, like, how you've, like, supported the situation. Like, we have these conversations amongst ourselves. Like, we know what's happening. And it's time to just come out and say it, kind of thing. And that is absolutely the first step in building, like, real trust and inviting communities that you have marginalised to hold you to account. Like, you can't do that... This is not something that white organisations can do on their own. This is not, like, a situation where the people who have ostracised communities are the ones who are equipped to no longer ostracise. Like, you've you've already done the damage. Like, it's time to readdress the

power imbalances that are at the root of this. Also, I think you really shouldn't... How do I say this? You shouldn't feel good while doing this work. And I say that to say, like, when you are addressing your own privilege, like, that is something that you should... Like, not feel good about. I don't know how else to say it. Like, I feel... I'm saying this, I know this, the topic at hand is, like, race and, like, I don't have any privilege in that matter. I have privilege in other ways. And I feel like crap about it all of the time. And I think, like, really, like, sitting with that feeling is an important part of, like, addressing it because so often I see people really, like, connected to the idea of them being, like, good people who, like... And, of course, like, good people don't uphold systems of oppression, right? People are so, like, married to that self image that instead of sitting with that feeling and acknowledging and listening, what ends up happening is they throw it back to the people who are most affected, and ask for examples and evidence to prove their point. And, yeah, you're not doing it right if you're doing that. So, yeah, I guess I'll finish there. Thank you.

[Megan Mitchell] Thank you so much. There was so much in there. Like, I have like eight pages of notes. And I think that a lot of what you're saying is conversations that, sadly, have been had before in this sector, but I do think that you're right in saying that we're in a moment in time where we are seeing certain organisations, maybe institutes of film in Britain, who are putting out these statements to take note of the moment in time and are saying like, "Now, we're going to be anti-racist. Before we were, like, not racist, but we don't want to talk about how. We weren't racist before, we're just gonna, you know, be anti-racist because we've said we're going to be anti-racist, with no real accountability or commitments to change. So I think you're right in saying that that accountability and that discomfort for organisations like that, it should be something that's not easy. And I don't think that these conversations should be simple. So thank you so much for your time. So, off the back of that, we're now going to to an organisation who I've invited in today because I think that, comparatively, looking at certain institutes of film in Britain's statement, compared to that of the Watershed's, where they've set out some clear and public commitments to change, where they do have a timeline of change is something that's promising. So I'm going to invite Clare Reddington to join us and she's going to discuss a wee bit about their statement where they've outlined some of the changes that they're looking to achieve and have went public with in light of Black Lives Matter, but are possible pre-existing commitments. So Clare, are you happy to take over?

[Clare Reddington] Hi, yeah. Hi, everyone. I'm gonna just talk really quickly about where we find ourselves today and about some of the learning that we've gone on over the last couple of years. It very much is a snapshot of how we find ourselves today. I've got no doubt that there is much more... I mean, I know there's much more we can do. We're trying to articulate that. So I was a little bit reluctant to speak today, because I think it's sort of...because I don't want to pretend that we've got any answers. But the statement is in the chat, so you can you can have a look. And I guess what it felt important to me was in the way that Um has articulated most of what I would like to say already so beautifully. Like, taking some responsibility for the situation that we find ourselves in and where Watershed has made mistakes and there are many places where we've made mistakes. In case you don't know who we are, Watershed is a 38-year-old

media centre in Bristol. We have three cinema screens. We're the home for the Film Hub Southwest. And we have Pervasive Media Studio, which is a kind of creative technology research lab. Being in Bristol is an interesting place to be at the moment. It's a city where independent spirit is really highly valued but where inequality of opportunity has been unchecked for far too long and where leadership of the culture sector in no way matches the city's demographic. And partly the response to tearing down the Colston statue is, of course, all of the righteous feelings of that injustice that have been in the city for too long. Our commitment as Watershed's representative programme goes back a really long way. We can look back to partnerships and things like Black Pyramid 26 years ago and we can look at our audience-facing programmes through the cultural cinema, we can look at what we're doing with Film Hub, Pervasive Media Studio and Rife. We understand diversity is both a social responsibility and an innovation imperative. And yet, our sustained commitment to representative programme only goes to underline, I think, the paucity of progress we've made in the make-up of our own organisation. So whilst 80% of our board is from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background, currently only 7% of our staff is, so whilst I don't think it's the only step we should take, actually making sure that our recruitment is addressed appears is incredibly important to us. Partly, I think this is about ongoing commitments to to diversifying our staff have been held executive and board level and haven't somehow managed to be spread across the whole organisation. So we're about to move our plans and looking at targets for diversity away from the exec team to create detailed recruitment plans that are held by every manager in every department, because, obviously, how we might need to address how we recruit in our cafe bar is very different to how we might need to address how we recruit for programme. We think that until we make inclusion an explicit part of how every team understand its own success, we won't be able to move forward. Of course, I wanted to just note that, like many others in the sector, Watershed is suffering pretty badly at the moment - we are facing redundancies, and we're not going to be in a position to hire anyone in the near future - but although that's incredibly painful, it seems like a really good time to put all this stuff in place that's needed for when we're going to regenerate and grow. How do we use this time to really think about what are the policies, behaviours, ways of holding ourselves to account so that then when we do grow and again in the future, we'll be able to grow equitably? Watershed's commitments that you see in our statement were made before lockdown by our cross department, a cross departmental inclusion group, We take an intersectional view of inclusion and work to try and address barriers across programme, across audiences and across our own teams. We publish them to hold ourselves to account more publicly than we have done before. And I just wanted to say a few words about things we've learned. The first is around timescales. So, despite the feelings of anger, responsibility, sadness and guilt that loads of us are feeling at the moments that make us want to change everything overnight, I think it's dangerous to do so. So, I'm a person who is always quick to act but... And I'm definitely not saying don't act, but to build that trust that Um was talking about, we need to make tangible commitments and hold ourselves to account. I think if we rush stuff in this area, we might make stuff that only scratches the surface at best. And probably at worst, the unintended consequences of our actions might cause further exclusion. So considering and co-designing with the communities that we want to include seems like the right way to work for me. I've had the absolute pleasure of working with

an inclusion producer called Zahra Ash-Harper for the last two years, who was working at Watershed and she's now freelance, and she talks about slow, loving inclusion, where there is time for healing, for trust building, to understand the context of the change that's needed. And I guess so much of the inequality that we're looking at intersects where white supremacy intersects with capitalism and the patriarchy. We need to really have a think about the kind of interconnected systems that we're looking at and how we can design different ways of working for the long game. So, it's vital we ensure our programmes are representative and our staffing reflects the demographic of the UK, but, obviously, that's not enough. And I think one of the mistakes that lots of white-led organisations are making at the moment is they're looking at how to be more inclusive in their own practice, without committing time and resources to strengthen the infrastructure of organisations founded and led by people of colour. We have to ensure that those organisations, that those artists, that those film-makers are at the table, so we have to ensure that everyone has access to the same opportunities, that people hear about things in the same way. So for Watershed as a funded organisation, I think that means I have to think about how do I leverage all of the resources I have access to? How do I leverage the networks and the systems of experience that I've had the privilege of, in the service of that cause, in the service of their cause? And I think, for funders, we need to think about how things like match funding, at the very beginning, creates further systems of inequality of who can apply. So we need to, like, really redesign the systems at every level. I also wanted to just say something that we that we learned about the hard work and emotional toll that doing include inclusion work takes. So especially for people of colour, if it's your job to mitigate, address and fix the structural barriers that you yourself face on a daily basis in a white organisation, it's going to take an exceptional toll. So I think that we need to ensure that inclusion work isn't done on its own, that it has a support structure that wraps around it, that includes mentoring, emotional support, regular check-ins, and really good ways of dealing with conflict. That's the thing that I don't think that the sector is good at at all, is how do we hold competing tensions and conflicts where sometimes interesting inclusion needs lay in tension with each other? How can we have really good ways of talking that through and supporting the people who really experienced this stuff every day? That's probably all I wanted to say for now. Thanks.

[Megan Mitchell] Thanks so much, Clare. And I think it is really important, like you were saying, about that ability to understand moving forward, what the impact is when we do make change, and making change for change's sake, isn't necessarily beneficial if we've not fully thought about the structures that that changes working within. And so we're going to throw Toki Allison just to reiterate, because there's quite a few people who'd quite like to ask questions. So once Toki's presented a wee bit about the resources that Inclusive Cinema have correlated in light of Black Lives Matter, we will throw to people in the room to ask questions. So, if you have a question, you can message myself, Sean, or just drop it in the chat and we'll throw to you. But we'll throw to Toki just now, so that she can tell us a wee bit about what Inclusive Cinema has been up to.

[Toki Allison] Thank you. Can you hear me all right? All right, my internet disappeared earlier, so I had to run into a different room. So if it just disappears... Yeah, if it all goes wrong, then

somebody wave at me. I just want to say thank you to the three of you for those...yeah, really important kind of messages and thoughts, really. I think it's really important that we kind of maintain the momentum of what people are thinking about at the moment. And that, yeah, that we don't lose this sort of opportunity really, to sort of galvanise everybody's attention and kind of create the change that is very, very, very long overdue. So, I'm not going to kind of present anything, because I think a lot has been said already. I really just wanted to share some resources from Inclusive Cinema. Oh, can I just initially ask, could you either do the plus or do the reaction of like, raise your hand or whatever if you've heard of Inclusive Cinema before? Because that would just help me be aware of how many people know about it and how many don't. Thank you. That's really helpful. Fab. Just needed to know whether I need to do a harder job with the marketing! So this is our website. Can you guys see that? Is that showing up for everybody? Yeah, great. So this is obviously our site. So, please feel free at any time to come here and look for stuff. Inclusive Cinema is a Film Hub Wales-led initiative. And it's not just for Wales. It's for the whole of the UK. And we're funded, obviously, by BFI and part of the Film Audience Network. So this project is something that we deliver on fairly shoestring budget, we put together lots of resources, we try and dovetail in with the other areas of the Film Audience Network. So, supporting on kind of programming, on training, and just trying to work as best we can within and support the membership. So I hope a lot of you are aware of us. I just wanted to show you here that this is kind of not a very intersectional set-up. But this is our site at the moment. So, if you did want to look specifically around different audiences or areas of concern, this is something you can look at. So you can kind of click on a group, as it were. And then also you can search under different types of kind of action that you might want to undertake as an exhibitor. I'm just going to hide everybody. And then you can just run a search on our site and you should get a whole load of really nice resources. Not going to take credit for a lot of these. We do produce our own how to guides but a lot of this is just really great stuff that's already been produced by other people. Apologies if you can hear my dog shouting in the background. So, yeah, there's loads of reports on here. Some of them are more current than others. There's also loads of case studies, and some useful videos and insights, as well as kind of articles. So, please make use of it. And if you feel like things are missing, or you're aware of things that you feel we should be championing, then please let us know, because we want to share that with the exhibition sector. So this is the... We put together a very quick resource, just for something to reference. Just to let everybody know that the film hubs, collectively, we're working on a kind of pledge and a set of actions that we feel like we need to deliver as a kind of pledge to kind of Black Lives Matter but also really, rather than focusing, as we always do, on kind of the marginalised communities that we reference, I think it's really more about like, how do we look at our whiteness in the way that Umhas referenced, really. How do we kind of get more reflective and more interrogative and more critical of what the systems and cultures are that we're kind of operating in. So, initially, we've just put this together, but we are doing some work in the background, but, obviously, there's quite a few different organisations that need to weigh in, in terms of, they've got different sort of requirements of what their freedoms are within their organisations, who they work with, how their boards are run. So there's quite a lot of work going on there. And we will keep you updated as and when that changes. At the moment, we just wanted to really flag a lot of the organisations who are doing really great work in the UK. So

some of them are listed here and if you feel like any missing, please let us know. So these are kind of Film Audience Network members. Then there's also a lot of resources here, some of which may be hopefully familiar to you, because maybe you've been doing some reading over these past few weeks and months and years. There's a great list here which has lots of film titles that you might be interested to watch and look at and potentially programme. There's anti-racism resources here. This guide is really excellent. There's just loads of stuff. I'll just show you. Can you see this Google Doc, everybody? So this doc is really brilliant. I would just really recommend you kind of work your way through it. Really, that's what I'm kind of doing at the moment. There's always more to learn, right? So, yeah, so make use of it. And, yeah, there's just some really important messages and learning going on in there. This was something that Um brought to my attention a couple years ago, which is the White Privilege Checklist and I feel like it's something that everybody should, should go through, really, that process of just, really, the things that you just don't think about that...that count in your favour. You know, it's just a really important kind of personal reflection moment that can really make you realise how you stand and how you can be a strong ally, even if you question that or worry at times. This is also something that's come to my attention more recently, which I found quite interesting. So, The 7 Circles of Whiteness, which was created by Alishia McCullough, which looks at sort of different different levels of kind of white experience and behaviours and actions. And I think we could probably all agree that we would really like to be right down here in circle seven. But maybe some of us are still operating on some of the actions around these. I certainly know that I have definitely done some of these things in the earlier circles, which I don't feel very proud of. So I feel like, yeah, it's really helpful to look at this as well and just kind of, yeah, be honest with yourself, you know, and think about and take some learning around how we can kind of structure our behaviour in a different way, personally, and then how that can impact on the organisations and how we can use our power in better ways with the people we're working with. There's also this resource, which I just wanted to flag, finally, I don't want to take up too much of their Q&A time. But this is a really, really great resource that is quite blunt and upfront about what white institutions should be doing and thinking about it, if you're looking to welcome and work with artists of colour, and some of the kind of homework that you need to do, really, before you start talking to people and trying to get them to participate with you, so I'm not going to go through it blow by blow, but it's a really interesting piece of work and I would recommend everybody have a read of it, and you can purchase it. And there's a sliding scale purchase based on what your kind of income or spending power is. So, take a little look at that as well. I think those are the main things to share with you. And then the only other thing I wanted to mention is that we are working on a resource at the moment. So, we've conducted some interviews with Black and POC exhibitors. And we are kind of working on something around sort of supporting, you know, BAME audiences, audiences of colour and how that works. But I'm also aware that that piece of work really needs to now consider impacts of COVID and what that really means for audiences, and also, it really needs to kind of have a focus around interrogating whiteness, and not just be kind of "Let's other this group," and you know, come up with strategies around how we work with people. I think there's a lot of like...there's a lot of homework to do first, basically. So that'll be something that we address in that resource as well. And then lastly, I guess I would just say, if there's stuff that you would find useful if you have

case studies or insights that you'd like to share, if you feel that there are things missing, or things that you feel like the Film Audience Network or the hubs need to be thinking about, then I would ask you to talk to me about that and talk to us and talk to all your hub representatives as well. Because, you know, it's our role to kind of be that conduit, and also to kind of represent and support exhibition. And we want it to be an equitable place that thrives on, like, cultural diversity, not… [She chuckles] Not what it is maybe at the moment, which is still a big work in progress. You know, just kind of want to see things progress a little faster than they have been. Hope that's all okay. I'm going to end it there. But, yeah, hit me with any questions and stuff, as and when.

[Megan Mitchell] Perfect. Thank you so much, Toki. So we're going to enter into the little Q&A, let's have a chat section of today, so if you do have any questions for any of the speakers, or just any insights yourself, please feel free to either raise your hand and we can unmute you or you can stick it in the chat. One thing that I did want to touch on first of all, and jumping off of just what Toki's touched on particularly in light of COVID, was throwing back to Anthony at We Are Parable, I have had a wee look at some of the research that you're just beginning to undertake in terms of Black audiences and when we re enter cinemas pre-vaccine during COVID, and how that's quite a high anxiety, low-confidence situation at the moment, and I was wondering if you had any insights into what considerations, particularly exhibitors who maybe aren't venues themselves, Scalarama exhibitors are maybe working closely with smaller venues or we have our own events that we're somehow able to protect audiences. So I was just wondering if there was any insights in that that you might have?

[Anthony Andrews] Yeah, sure. So, yeah, just to give everyone some context, basically, we...we've been on a couple of industry calls over the last couple of months about how cinemas return and open up for audiences, in light of the lockdown being lifted. And obviously, you look at that work being done, but then you also look at the news and the stats about Black, Asian, other ethnic groups. being much more susceptible to dying from COVID. So we were asking the question, what additional measures can be put in place to help, to make these groups feel much more confident when they enter into cinemas? And essentially the answers back weren't really ones where we could be satisfied with, especially as, as the main audience, the main crux of our audiences are Black audiences. So we, we've spoken to Toki, we've spoken to a few people at the BFI who have commissioned us to do this research about audience confidence in going back to cinemas after lockdown. So we've had just shy of 1,000 responses, which has been amazing, over four days. But what we've...some of the snapshot insights that we've seen is that, you know, information is key to almost every group but especially for Black and Asian groups, it's absolutely key. So, feeling like they are completely informed about how they need to act when they're in the cinema. You know, is it a two-metre gap, is it a one-metre gap? How are cinemas going to implement that? Are there going to be temperature checks? Can we bring cash? How many groups of people do we bring, people with a social bubble? So really about cinemas being super clear, exhibitors being super clear, about exactly how social distancing is going to work in a cinema, that seems to be the main concern. Obviously, we've got another

week ago on the survey being open, but that's really a key concern for audiences, that we specifically speak to.

[Megan Mitchell] And we'll include a link to the survey. If we don't have it in our link sheet, we'll send that out after this so that hopefully other organisations within here can share that out with their audiences too. Um, I wanted to come back to you, because I thought you touched on some quite interesting points about the conversation now being at a point where it should turn. I know that we've all been in diversity and inclusion workshops and conferences and conversations for years and years now, it seems. But I was wondering, and this may be a bit personal but do you feel that there's a level of fatigue or frustration, particularly for Black and ethnic minority colleagues when they're having to continually undertake these conversations around diversity and inclusion and how we should be moving forward?

[Umulkhayr Mohamed] I would say not fatigue around the conversations happening in general. It's more how the conversations are structured. So, what I mean by that is... And I'm - I don't want to say I myself... It's difficult. So, like, I've run workshops myself, to do with racial diversity and inclusion and all these things before and I feel like we're still at a point where we are centring white feelings, like, above all, like, white people need to be made comfortable while having these conversations. And because that's what we're working, like, from, it just, like...in practice, that looks like people of colour doing a lot of extra emotional labour to, like, check their tone and not say things as bluntly as we would like to say, for example, or give people the benefit of the doubt or answer, like, very simple questions that people could Google, constantly, because "at least they're asking." So, like they're... I mean, they're not, like, outright being racist, so I can't have a go at them, kind of thing. But it's those things, what... It might be the only interaction, or the only time that white people are having these conversations, but it's not the only time that we're having it. We're having these conversations constantly, because we live in a predominantly white society. So it's just this sense of, like, just being very tired of... having to prioritise the feeling of people who benefit from my oppression. Like, that's a very, like, yeah, heavy thing to have to carry. But I will say, in light of, like, the past, I feel like since since Black Lives Matter, and it's recent, like, resurgence, I feel different, in that...I don't care to protect white feelings any more because I really don't want to be having these conversations for the rest of my career. Like, I'd really like to put this to bed at some point in my life. And that... And to do that, I think it's really, like, necessary for me to stop sugar-coating things and supporting other people of colour to do the same. But it's really difficult. Like I wish I could say things. Like, even what I've said today, I feel like I could have said it in a more blunt way that would reflect my feelings. I just... It's conditioning, essentially. It's like I've been conditioned not to do that, because I've been conditioned to understand that that's not safe for me to do. So, yeah. That's my feelings on that.

[Megan Mitchell] Thanks, Um, and thanks for being so honest, I would hope that we would get to a point with our sector where we're not having to have those conversations at that pitch and making people feel unsafe - not white people - around these conversations. I was going to throw the floor in case anyone has any questions that they would like to ask themselves. This is

always the really great leap into the unknown. No. Wonderful. Oh, no, wait... Helen Wright has asked a little question in the chat. "It seems a lot of these discussions assume that institutions want to change. I think we all know that there are people in positions of power in film exhibition institutions who do not want to change and are actively blocking it, even if they public say otherwise, particularly here in Scotland, I'm going to go ahead and say. How can we address that? How can we individually be held to account, particularly by funders? Where it seems the responsibility should lie." I don't know. Does anyone want to pick that up? Anthony, Um, even Toki or Clare? Do you think that people in positions of power should be held accountable by funders and how do we hold ourselves to account? Oh, Helen is unmuted. Sorry, I'm talking over Helen.

[Helen Wright] No, it's fine. I don't need to add anything. I just want to say, I don't... No-one else should feel obliged to talk to that because I know it's... because it is quite difficult and I, you know... It is the case that we all rely for our... making our livings, getting paid on this work, so it's difficult to speak out about stuff but, um... Yeah. Just in case anyone else wanted to...

[Clare Reddington] I wonder how we hold them to account, because, in a way, one of the problems, of course, is parental funding structures, where funders are kind of holding anyone to account, or not, is problematic. It's sort of like we need an ecological view of how we hold people to account, that hasn't got the linearity of funders at the top. Because, as you say, often they're not doing the greatest job themselves. I wonder, like in another world, like, we would turn down the money that we didn't want from the people who weren't representative enough themselves. And that's, like, we have to work to those things.

[Megan Mitchell] Anthony, I think you had something to say?

[Anthony Andrews] Yeah, I think what I would say, especially as an exhibitor who, you know, reaches out to and interacts with Black audiences, I think that there is a sense from our peers, that there can only be like one Black exhibitor, who has access to the funding. And I think that is... that is a mind-set that really needs to change and that that only changes by funders being really transparent about, you know, the fact that, you know, this money is for, you know, you to attract these audiences. It's not about just one audience...one exhibitor, like the sort of golden child of all, all exhibition, being able to, you know, get money and be able to do all these things. It's about so many people coming through the door. But I think that's a real challenge for funders to try and get past. You know, there's a lot of exhibitors out there who feel that they just can't get access to funding because this one spot for reaching out to Black audiences is taken by someone else. So, I think that's something that really needs to be challenged and hopefully dismantled.

[Umulkhayr Mohamed] I think, just to add on to that, I think it starts with demanding transparency from funders and from organisations. I think having information is, like, the first step in challenging certain decisions that have been made. So, yeah, that's my only like addition. We need to be having conversations where it's, like, we want more transparency. And if the people in power come back and say... like, give reasons not to do that, then we need to

challenge. We need to be less kind of asking at this point and more demanding, because like, essentially, like, we just all stopped working and I think they changed very, very quickly.

[Megan Mitchell] Yeah, and I think that there's something in that, in terms of funders, because we can obviously look at the large scale, but I'm wondering for Scalarama exhibitors who are maybe the smaller exhibitors who are only organisations of one or two people, and they are receiving patchy funding, what type of practical things that these types of exhibitors, and that includes Matchbox can be doing to make these conversations easier to facilitate these types of changes that will have a longer impact? Anyone? Just dismantle it, I think, probably. If we start pulling it down from the bottom from the ground up. You know, to joke on that, but I do think, as independent exhibitors, and a lot of people in this room are smaller, independent exhibitors who maybe are a bit more light-footed, who are, you know, precarious employment situations at the time but also, we don't necessarily have to answer to larger funding bodies at all points and can make your own decisions. I think that we're seeing that a lot in response to the current situation with COVID. We saw that with hashtag #canceleverything. Herb Shellenberger spearheading that and independent exhibitors taking the choice to stop their events and shut down their venues before there was any larger organisational or government directions from that. So I think that there is a possibility for change on the micro level that will make change on the macro level. I'm hopeful. Is there any other questions from the room? There's just lots of really nice chat going on in the chat bar. We will compile all of this into a little blog thing for everyone. So, if there's no more questions from the room, I just wanted to thank everybody for their time. I don't want to sook up too much more time and also I think that we've heard a lot from speakers today on resources and things that we can be going about and doing ourselves and I think that that's entirely correct that we should be putting the emphasis on ourselves as white exhibitors to be undertaking this type of change and challenge for ourselves. And Scalarama Glasgow has just asked a question. Sean, would you like to ask the question?

[Sean Welsh] I just put it into the thread. I'm not sure if it's a question or I'd welcome people's thoughts. Like, I've said that for smaller, white-led organisations - like Matchbox is only two people, two white people, two white, straight people - I wonder if there's a wariness to programme films to or on behalf of Black and minority ethnic audiences, or LGBTQ+ or feminist and so on. And that we've found that collaboration is the best answer to that. And I just wondered - the best answer to that concern - and I just wondered if anyone had any thoughts on that, and if that was fair to say. And that was, that was my point.

[Anthony Andrews] Yeah, I mean, if I could jump in there, I'd say, I think you've got it spot on. I think collaboration has always been something that, that we really subscribe to. I think if, you know, an example, a recent example that I've seen is that, you know, a lot of streaming platforms such as Netflix, they've got their Black Lives Matter programming and every other film is, you know, a systemic murder or a, you know, a horrific killing or, you know... And it's, like, Black trauma everywhere. It's like, we are more than Black trauma. You know, we have Black joy, we have stories of, you know, we are ordinary people, we have stories that go across the spectrum and all we're seeing now is, you know, you know, the stories of crime and injustice.

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And these stories are very important, but they are one part of a wider experience, lived experience of Black people. And I think by, you know, collaborating with organisations who are doing the work, who are reaching out to the community and actually having conversations with, you know, particular groups, I think you're able to understand exactly the stories that people want to be told, rather than, you know, assuming a lot about, you know, the stories that you think should be told.

[Clare Reddington] Perhaps that collaboration is where you can also think really laterally about what each of you have and how you can share skills or resources and networks across your specific programming. So it might be that there's specific skills that you have, the people you're collaborating with, one, as well as the other way round. And so I think we always try to broaden out a collaborative partnership, to work out how we can each be in service of each other's kind of organisational dreams as well as the programmatic dreams at that point.

[Megan Mitchell] Yeah, and I think that collaboration, particularly on the scale that some of the Scalarama exhibitors operate on, when we're slightly smaller and only is a couple of us in the organisation, that collaboration is a way that we can start to address our own limitations of knowledge and lived experiences and how we then present that to our audience. Because I think, at the end of the day, we're all doing this, because we want our audiences to come and have like, really fun experiences, but if we're not presenting a wide range of experiences on the screen, then that's limiting our audiences. So, if anyone's got any more questions, please do fire them in the chat. I wanted to round off, because I know that it's quite a heavy conversation and particularly in the last few weeks, it's been really intense, so I just want to ask our contributors, what is the most joyful experience that you've been able to create or have had in the cinema? Toki, will I start with you?

[Toki Allison] Ooh, on the spot. Um... That's quite tricky because I don't really… [She laughs] I haven't programmed for quite a long time. I have to cast my mind back. [She chuckles]

[Megan Mitchell] "Nothing is joyful," says Toki.

[Toki Allison] No, there are lots of joyful things. I'm just trying to think which is the most. I think, actually, for me, it's probably been those times when we've, you know, I've managed to get, I guess, an audience to attend to really haven't been to cinema for a really long time or felt like it wasn't for them any more. And this has happened particularly around sort of like getting older audiences back to cinemas, actually, who just really fell out of like the habit. And kind of having a kind of multi arts approach. So, having that kind of cinema as one part of an entire event. I think that always brings like a kind of richness of experience and stronger discussions and just a much more memorable time. So, for me, it's been though those moments that, like, when you see that sort of real spark of, "Yeah!" You think, you know they're going to come back again. That would be mine.

[Megan Mitchell] Clare, joyful Watershed experience?

[Clare Reddington] I also just felt extremely like my brain just shut down, because like, the idea of even being together in a space at the moment feels so far away from anything that is possible. There hasn't been so much joy recently. But we did work fairly recently on the Musicals season with Compass Presents, and I thought of it because there are some similarities between the We Are Parable work around around Compass's kind of forefronting of the experiential. And so we did a flashmob Singing In The Rain dance in the harbour side. And that was... Just seeing people who'd actually practised - I had not practised - who'd actually practised and were dancing with umbrellas was, like, oh, to be together in space, thinking about cinema.

[Megan Mitchell] Thank you, Claire. And we've just had a really good question from Joe in the chat. And not to flip to Um and Anthony, but Joe has asked if your experiences as a person of colour or Black should define your programming or how you are approaching programming? And also, what is your joyful experience? Oh, no! There you go. I mean... I mean, definitely, it's...it's a difficult thing because I think, like, thinking of, like, an ideal situation, I think, like, who we are as people should inform our programming because that's, like, a rich, there's a richness in that that we can draw from. The issue is when only people of colour are expededed to like specialise in films that are related to them. Because it does, like, put you in a box, so to speak, and that it might not kind of marry up with your personal, the genres or whatever that the kinds of films that you are personally attracted to. So I think people should be, like, driven by what, like, naturally, like, draws them. And I think naturally, like, who we are as people feeds into that. But that should be something that everybody has a chance to do. Yeah. And joyful experiences. I've really struggled with this as well, which is terrible to say, but I did think back to when I was working at Chapter and one day, I think it was... Yeah, it was Isle of Dogs had come out and I was working on an animation season at the time. And everyone in the office just went and watched the film and it was really lovely. So, yeah, I mean, I feel like, as programmers, we rarely get the chance to just go and watch a film and enjoy it for what it is, so it was nice to do that, like, with my colleagues.

[Megan Mitchell] Oh, I can't wait to get back to cinema. And, Anthony, do you have any insight and Joe asks, as a BAME person, should programming inform or your background inform your programming? And also, what is your most joyful We Are Parable experience?

[Anthony Andrews] I'm going to be greedy and ask for two really joyful experiences. But, in order to answer the first question, I think it's almost impossible to separate your background from your programming ability, in my opinion. And I do agree with Um in many senses that you know, Black people are often encouraged or, you know, expected to only programme Black films. One thing I've always really wanted to do is do a Edgar Wright Ice Cream Trilogy experiential event, and that's something that I really want to do. But, you know, whether the you know, whether the...the anticipation or expectation of what we're supposed to do fits in with what I'd love to do is another thing, but I do think your background is... Yeah, yep. Toki. Got one, got one attendee, that's great. But, no, definitely, it's, I think it's really hard to separate the two. But I think there are occasions where certainly, as a programmer myself, I definitely want to break out of doing

just one thing and actually celebrate the whole sort of spectrum of what I'm interested in as a film fan. So, yeah, hopefully that answers the question. In terms of two joyous moments, so the first one was, again, the Musical season. So what we did for musicals, we had a season called The Art of the Black Visual Album, where we celebrated visual albums by Black artists. And one thing we did was celebrate Purple Rain, but we had a live Prince tribute band play in an Art Deco cinema in South London to an audience of about 200 people. So we showed the film and then we played Prince hits all night. So to have a live band on stage playing music was just, like, it was like a proper pinch yourself moment and people just dancing in the aisles. It was, like, truly just, like, a spectacular night. So that was one. And then the second one was again last year for Blue Story. We did a preview of Blue Story at BFI Southbank. And if any of you guys have seen Blue Story, it's kind of like a film of two halves. The first half is very playful, very joyful, just, you know, being a teenager in London, running around, going to different parties and stuff. And in that part, there's a scene with the main characters and they're in the... they're partying, and there's one guy who's trying to dance with a girl and it's just real comedic moment. And, you know, the sound, the cacophony of sound that came up from that moment, and I just looked around and it was just all Black faces looking back at me and I was like, "That's why we do what we do." Going back to what I said earlier, it's about creating spaces for our audience, not feeling like they have to wear a black tie and shoes to go to the BFI, but feeling like, "I'm going to the BFI, I'm going to be around people who make me feel safe, who make me feel confident, and see a film that represents me on stage." Like that was a real, like, almost a tear came to my eye because I was like, "That's why we do what we do." So that was a real sort of like, pinch yourself moment as well. So, yeah.

[Megan Mitchell] Thank you so much, Anthony. What a great note to wrap up on. So I just want to thank all of my guests today... Sorry, my cat just, like, spat at me. ...Thank all of my guests today, Anthony, Um, Clare and Toki, for all of your insights. I hope that everyone that has been in the room today takes away something with them today. And if you have any friends or colleagues who would like to access the recording, we'll be posting it on the Matchbox website, with transcript and captions. If there is anyone in the conversation today that you would like to connect with, please do reach out or you can reach out to myself or Sean and we'll be happy to do e-mail introductions and connect people up. The next Scalarama session will be on the 19th of July. And our next session will focus on accessibility for events both online and in-venue. We'll be joined by Alison Smith, who works across various festivals in Glasgow, including SQIFF and Take One Action, to increase access. So I just want to thank everybody so much for participating today and for everyone's insights and I hope you have a good Sunday. Thanks so much, guys. Thanks so much, Um, Anthony, Clare, Toki. Thank you.

[Anthony Andrews] Thanks a lot, guys. Thank you.

[Megan Mitchell] And now it's, like, the awkward Zoom end, 'cause you're, like... People are still saying, like, thank you, and you're just like... waiting and it's rude to leave. Well, thank you so much.

[Umulkhayr Mohamed] Thank you, guys.

[Anthony Andrews] Thanks a lot. Bye.

[Megan Mitchell] See you later!