

PrideTO BQTE: EP07: Phillip Pike

LENGTH • 49:22

SPEAKERS

Hollywood Jade, Phillip Pike

Hollywood Jade 00:00

You're listening to Pride Toronto's Black Queer and Trans Excellence podcast, where we honour and celebrate the Black experience through the lens of the LGBTQ+ community, with honest conversations about embracing Black joy. I'm your host, Hollywood Jade!

Hollywood Jade 00:28

Coucou, bonsoir, good evening, everybody! My name is Hollywood Jade, my pronouns are he/him, and sometimes sis, depending on who I'm talking to, and whom I'm around. And I'm grateful, this has been a really awesome journey, and I couldn't think of a better way to round up the series that we've been working on then with this amazing individual. His name is Phillip Pike. He is an emerging documentary filmmaker. He's a graduate of McGill University. He's a community activist and a human rights lawyer who has taken that fight and transitioned it into making films, and put it into a media and a platform that I think is going to impact the world. But this time, I'd like to welcome Phillip to the conversation.

Phillip Pike 01:24

Hey, thank you, Hollywood. And following up on Nikoi's favourite podcast, "I'll try to be real and I'll try to be raw."

Hollywood Jade 01:35

I mean, to be fair, Sandy's a friend of mine, me and her, we've been friends for a long time, so I knew a lot of her story, so I was able to pull stuff out. But I, I, based off of your vision, and what I've seen of your work so far, I can truly tell that this is going to be an amazing conversation. And I want to get right into it. Though I mean, if you're on here, you obviously either heard of or have seen "Our Dance of Revolution", which is the history of Toronto Black queer community, it's the telling of Black queer organizing in Toronto, it's a documentary that was 35 years in the making, it's 35 years of community building, 35 years of resistance, 35 years of making Black people visible. This is the history of Black queer Toronto community, and this is "Our Dance of Revolution." I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed - I paused the documentary halfway through, and I messaged Deana, and I'm like, this is really good. I was like, I'm so sad that it took me so long to really tap in and realize what was going on, because I had heard about it in conversations and in passing, but I didn't really take the time to take it in and fill up - what an amazing piece of work you have created!

Phillip Pike 02:59

Thank you.

Hollywood Jade 03:02

I guess my first thing would be - can you talk to us, in your own words, because those are like some descriptions that I've been able to put together - but can you talk to us about what it was like, for you? what triggered? what, what, what made you want to make this documentary?

Phillip Pike 03:19

Sure. So a couple, a couple of reasons, really. I guess first and foremost, you know, as documentary filmmakers, we're in the business of telling stories, and so for me, this was a compelling story. It was a compelling story that needed, I felt needed to be told, and one that had not been told. And so that's the first piece. The second piece, I think, is that, you know, we, in many ways, we have often not been very good guardians of our own history, and so I felt that, you know, this generation, you know, we're getting up in years where we've lost one or two people already, and we're going to be losing some more, and I thought, you know, this is this, this needs to be captured, right?! It's very important. That's the second reason. I guess the third reason is, it's, it's, the story is also really part of my own story, right?! So, like, a lot of the people in the film, you know, came to this country, as an immigrant with my family. You know, at a certain point came out, at a certain point felt a need to connect to Black queer community, stumbled on to that and was it was a life altering, it was life affirming. And so yeah, so my story's sort of also interwoven in there as well, so those are the three main reasons I would say that that sort of compelled me to want to make this film.

Hollywood Jade 05:07

So would you say, based off of the description that I sort of gave, like, how would, how would you put into your own words, "Our Dance of Revolution"? Like if, if, I was like a novice, and I was like, so Phillip, tell me about this documentary that you made? How would you describe it in your own personal words?

Phillip Pike 05:25

It's, it's a story of community, right?! It's a story of what happens to transformations that can take place when people step out of, you know, their sort of comfort zones, their sort of private sphere, and kind of step out into creating community, right?! And it's about, it's about the trans-, transformations that happen in that process, both a personal sort of, individual, transformation, but also a transformation of the larger community. Right. So that's the first thing I would say. So it's a story about community building and a story about transformation. The second thing I would say is, is you know, it's a story about resistance, right, and resisting and making change, and creating space, and then holding that space, you know, and nurturing it, and, and, and, you know, sustaining it over time. So yeah, that's how I would sort of boil it down to its essence.

Hollywood Jade 06:39

I love that! You talked about two really, I think, vital things that as I've gotten older, like I started going out, I'm a first generation Canadian, so I didn't migrate here, but I started going out at like, 17, 18, and when I found the Black queer community, it was scary at first, because I was like, what is going on, but then it was like, I finally found my place of home. And you talk about it being about community and creating space and maintaining space. And I, that this is what, in the pandemic, part of what I came to understand and realize is that there was a serious lack of community, like the community that I had come out to, and I had grown up and experienced, I don't feel

like it's reflected the same way. And I think that's what's so important about the narrative that you're telling in this documentary, because it's, it's bringing us back to a place where we have to be accountable for each other, not just ourselves, like, you know what I mean?! And I think it's a really beautiful narrative that is painted so vividly through the telling of 101 Dewson Street, and, and all the different collectors that you talk about within the documentary. So I want to know what it was like for you when these people were telling you their stories, because there are some amazingly beautiful, really beautiful stories in here, like seeing Douglas, and gosh, I can't remember the other two ladies' name seeing them in the kitchen making food just reminiscing about random strangers being in there, like, what was it like, hearing these people relive, basically, their journeys to this day?

Phillip Pike 08:28

Yeah. It was a wonderful experience. I mean, most of those folks, I knew, you know, prior to making the film to some extent, right, to lesser or greater extent, because, you know, just being involved in community over the years and kind of, you know, going to events and being part of organizations, etc, etc. So some I knew less well, and so I was also getting to know them, but it was, but they're all I mean, to me, they're all, they're all they're all superstars, they're all awesome. I mean, these are, these are people who, you know, I mean, I can I can, I can rhyme off the names of Courtney MacFarlane, who's on the who I see is on the call, Douglas, who you mentioned, and Debbie Douglas and Makita and Angela Robertson - these are, you know, what I would call, sort of salt of the earth, right?!

Hollywood Jade 09:21

Ahem.

Phillip Pike 09:21

These are folks who have been out there on the front lines, building community, making change, for almost for, you know, for decades, right?! So it was, I mean, it was wonderful. Yeah, I mean, you talk about the, the scene with, with Douglas and Debbie, and Makeda at 101 Dewson. I mean, that was just electric. I, you know, I really didn't have to direct them, I just kind of just brought them together [laughing] And the electricity that you could feel that you see in the film, it was just there. I just kind of had to, you know, stand back and kind of watch it unfold. And, you know, I mean, I gave little directions to the camera person or whatever, whatever, but really, I just just observed that right? Um, and

Hollywood Jade 10:10

Yeah!

Phillip Pike 10:10

Yeah! So there's that, you know, but there's also, you know, um, you know, when you're when you're, when you're sitting in that director's chair, and you're, you're asking questions, you know, some of those interviews, like, I think, I think Douglas' interview lasted nigh on four hours, right?!

Hollywood Jade 10:32

Ahem!

Phillip Pike 10:32

There was a lot, it was a lot to tell, a lot of ground to cover. And when you're sitting there - you know, a lot of things go through your head, right. So you're trying to sort of, you know, you're trying to keep track of sort of the technical aspects of production, you know, is the lighting still okay? what about the sound? is there stuff coming in? is all of that going on? And you're thinking about your own questions, you're thinking about what the person is saying you're trying to keep track. So it's, it's a lot to kind of, that's happening at the same time. But, but yeah, it's just it was, it was a wonderful experience.

Hollywood Jade 11:05

Yeah, I could only imagine. And I'd like - again, it's it's, these are individuals and people who I have seen around since the dawn of time, like, but it's beautiful, being able to put a name to the face, and a legacy and a history to all of these organizations. Like the story well, Blockorama, like I, I know that, that story, but I didn't know it from the depths in which you gave it to us. And I think as a queer Black Canadian man and an active member of this community, I am, I feel so much richer, having watched this and heard these stories, and really understand just how much has gone into carving out and creating space for us, as queer individuals. Like it's, it's really impressive. And because I'm into history, so like, I know a lot about, like Stonewall and all of the different activisms that happened in America. I didn't realize that that same fight was going on here, because like you mentioned, we were terrible keepers of our history. So this, like it's a great telling of it. And I can't stress it enough, if you haven't seen it, watch it, if you watched it, watch it again, you'll find new things and their new information. I know this, like it says, your bio states that you're an emerging documentary director, but this is not your first documentary. Can you tell us a little bit about your previous work?

Phillip Pike 12:40

Yeah. So my first documentary was actually a feature a feature documentary called "Songs of Freedom," and it was basically about gay life in Jamaica, which is where I was born, and sort of spent the first years of, a couple of years of my life. And so "Songs of Freedom" was really about, you know, "Songs of Freedom" came out in 2003, so for me, in making that documentary, it was really about going back and, to Jamaica, and experiencing it with sort of adult eyes and adult ears. And almost in a way, asking myself the question, you know, what, what might my life have looked like, had I not left to make a, you know, emigrated with my, with my family? So I wanted, I wanted to meet those folks who are now adults, and talk to them about, you know, just the day to day life. Yeah, and then my second film is actually is a short film, completely unrelated to anything gay or Black, just wanted, I was exploring a topic that interests me. It's called "Seasons of our life," and basically interviews four people ranging in age from 11 to 100, and basically responding to the question, what is it like to be blank, where the blank is their age. So it's really a sort of a poetic documentary and exploration of, you know, our human journey from life to death, right?! Because I find that especially in Western society, which is so compartmentalized, you know, we have old people in nursing homes, we have the children in daycare, and we don't sort of often have intergenerational kind of mix. And so we don't often think about, you know, what would my life, what would my life be like when I'm 40 or 50, or 60, or 80 or 90, right?! So it's a kind of a -

Hollywood Jade 14:59

Yeah.

Phillip Pike 14:59

- are a meditation on that on that piece? Yeah.

Hollywood Jade 15:05

It's interesting, like, I think you have a very unique, maybe it's not so unique, but it's unique to me, I think you have a very interesting way of getting in to the root of a story, you know what I mean?! And like, hearing you describe "Our revolution of Dance" as like the telling of the story of community, it- and carving up space like it's it's, it's you have such a to a team, what's the word I'm looking for, like a humanitarian approach? I promise you I can see this, like you have such a humanitarian approach about the way that you go about telling your stories. Where do you think that comes from for you?

Phillip Pike 15:54

Interesting question. Um, you get points for being the first to ask me this question. In the many Q&A's that I've done, [both laughing] this one, this does not come up. Um, you know, I often tell this story - my I, as I said, I was born in Jamaica and spent the first few years of my life there, my mother was a public health nurse in Kingston, and so that involved, you know, sort of going around to different neighborhoods in Kingston, and, you know, dispensing medication and dressing people to blue and stuff like that. And it would often take her into some of the more, you know, differently privileged communities in Kingston, so a lot of the towns, Trenchtown, Denhamtown, Allentown. And on Fridays, it was a half day at school, and so, out of necessity, she would often come and pick me up and sort of drag me along on her, on her rounds, to all of these places. And so, you know, as a young child, I was probably like, you know, six or seven years old, I kind of observed that a lot of these places that she was going to look very different than sort of, you know, the, the manicured lawns of our sort of middle class existence in Uptown Kingston. And so, as a very young child, it really caused me, you know, to ask myself some questions, or to have some thoughts about the way that the world is constructed, right?!

Hollywood Jade 17:29

Wow.

Phillip Pike 17:29

And I think my mother, I've always thought of my mother as a humanitarian - that was just her, her spirit - and so perhaps I've inherited some of that in terms of, you know, the way I see the world, the way I move, I try to move in the world.

Hollywood Jade 17:45

Completely. Like it's, it's, and, and I haven't even seen your other two films yet - which I will - but it's clear and even listening to the way that she's speak that something had shaped the approach in which the way you wanted to tackle your art, because, like I mentioned in the beginning, you started off like you're a graduate of McGill University, like you are, you were on a totally different path, right?! What triggered the, the, the switch?

Phillip Pike 18:18

Yeah, um, so I was practicing, I was practicing, I was a lawyer, I graduated from McGill Law, and I was practicing law. I practiced law for about five to seven years, and just came to a point where it wasn't really feeding my soul

anymore. So I sort of came to a fork in the road, and I was, you know, thinking about what you know what the next steps of a career would look like. And so I was thinking about possibly going to graduate school, maybe teaching law, and in fact, I'd sent off applications to different graduate schools. But about the same time, I made a trip to the desert in Arizona to meet with a friend that I had met at a conference in New York, the Black Nations/Queer Nations? Conference, and he was a very spiritual person. And he was, in the time that I was there, it was sort of over the Christmas holidays, New Year's, he facilitated a ceremony in the desert called Awakening the Ancestral Heart. And so we're all kind of sad if you can imagine the scenes that in a big circle in the desert, sitting on stacks of hay that he got from his uncle, who's a farmer, and you know, there's chanting and drumming, and the whole idea was to kind of you know, as the name suggests, is to awaken the ancestral heart, right?! So to connect us to a kind of deeper understanding of who we are and -

Hollywood Jade 19:54

I love that!

Phillip Pike 19:54

- the next morning after that experience, I was in the shower and I just stopped up I want to be a filmmaker. [chuckling] It was just like it, it was not like, I sort of describe it like stepping like being in a room that you've always been in, but kind of turning up the dimmer switch. So you begin to see stuff that you kind of had a sense was there all the time, but now because someone's turned up the light a bit, you can actually see it. So it's not unfamiliar, but not totally unfamiliar, but it's still somewhat new. So

Hollywood Jade 20:32

You're an artist, you're an artist. [both laughing] That that, that what you just described is something that a lot of us search for in our journey for a long time, that some of us never find, and you realize, and you tapped in that, yes, you were good at this one thing, but there was more for you to explore. And, and in that, that shower, from that desert, ceremony, birth, the artist inside of you. And I pretty sure I can say for everybody on this call, and everyone who's seen one of your films, if not all of your films, that we are grateful that you had that awakening moment, because, boy, oh boy, if you didn't tell this story, I'd still be walking around here being like, just completely novice, like completely unaware of the work, the great work that so many people who are, we're literally at arm's reach at any given moment, have been doing and continue to do.

Phillip Pike 21:34

Yeah, I mean, yeah, legacy is important. And on that score, just want to give a shout out to Courtney McFarlane, who put together the Legacies in Motion exhibit, which is sort of a collection of artifacts. And I think some of those, if I understand correctly, some of those artifacts are still housed at the Archive, in Toronto, so it's a place where people can actually still go and physically see some of that great exhibit that, that Courtney put together.

Hollywood Jade 22:02

It's you, talk, I'm glad you mentioned Courtney, because I kind of want to shift the conversation briefly into the different people who make up this documentary. And like Courtney's poetry - first of all, your team, like, I don't know if any of them are on here, but your team killed it! The compose-, the music, the, the editing, the cinematography - all of it, I was, I was an-, and because of what I do for a living, I worked as a choreographer and

artistic director, I pay attention to the whole picture. Like and there was this one scene where when they start talking about Blockorama, and it's like, all of the drama that happened with it, the music was really like hype, and like, it almost made you want to dance. And then, when it settled, it's the music switch to this like ethereal, really pretty, really airy - I'm like, this is great storytelling, like you guys crushed it! Like it's so good! And this is me and my overactive imagination and brain paying attention to all these things. [Phillip laughing] But like, it really was great. And I just want to shout them out, because I believe in calling people's names so, Eugene, your editor, Jack Weisman, your Director of Photography, and Gavin Bradley, the Composer - like you, you have a really solid group of people who understood the assignment, and you all pass with flying colors. Okay!

Phillip Pike 23:29

Yes. Thank you. Thank you. I absolutely agree. It was, I had, I had a dream team. I mean, Eugene was fabulous, Gavin did a excellent job on the music, and Jack is a very talented cinematographer, whom I just, I saw his work in, in cinema school, and it just immediately resonated with me, and I just sort of reached out and grabbed him. So yeah, I totally, I totally agree, it was a yeah, a dream team.

Hollywood Jade 24:00

And again, like I, .. sorry, say that -

Phillip Pike 24:04

No, I just think, yeah, as you said, they got it, you know, like, they just they, they got it and they were able to translate that into a, that vision into, you know, reality the concrete, you know, the cellulite, so yeah, absolutely.

Hollywood Jade 24:20

I, I really enjoyed the all the different dynamics that it went through, and all the different community groups that it went through, and all the different iconic places that have made space available for Black queer artists. So like we talk about 101 Dewson Street, we talk about the 519 Community Center, we talk about Blockorama, we talk about Sunset Service in Toronto, like there's so much in here that it goes through and somehow you made it really seamless, like it all flows really well, there was never a part where I was like, Okay, let's get to the next topic like it all so well done - and, okay, don't cry, don't cry, don't cry, I'm not gonna cry, I'm not gonna cry - when Michelle Ross came on the screen, and the tribute that you paid to her, feels so much heavier, but I'm so grateful that this this documentation, and the things that people are saying about her in here it it, it represents like even the clips that you use like, her performing in the bar and everybody watching and people coming up and sipping, like it was a true representation of Michelle Ross. And well, Black Cat, it said at the end, it's, it was so well that like. As a tribute to an icon that we have lost, I, my hat's off to you and your team for acknowledging someone who hates to be acknowledged and she hates limelight in such a beautiful and poetic way. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention that rest in peace, Michelle Ross, an icon, a legend amongst us, and I'm grateful that that exists because she's been captured in a way that I don't think she's ever properly been captured, and my hat's off to you guys for doing such a fantastic job with that, like so. fantastic.

Phillip Pike 26:22

Thank you. Yeah, I mean, I, I actually started out, I wanted to interview Michelle to be part of the documentary, but she wasn't interested. I tried, I tried, I tried, you know, many different ways to back channels, front channels, I tried charm, but she wasn't having it.

Hollywood Jade 26:41

Nope. [both laughing]

Phillip Pike 26:42

But so many, so many people, you know, made it clear to me that you know, you have to you have to include Michelle in this documentary, she's so much an important part of the community. And so, and I think it was while I was interviewing, just drawing a blank on his name now, professor at UofT, Rinaldo and said, you know, we should mention something that we should not pay tribute to Michelle. And I thought, okay, well, let's come at this other way, instead of interviewing her, let's have others talk about her, right?! And I think that, you know, unfortunate to say that that's a perfect example of, you know, the point I was making earlier about capturing this before we lose folks, right?!

Hollywood Jade 27:29

Yes!

Phillip Pike 27:30

Because it's such, such an important part of our community. Yeah, so absolutely.

Hollywood Jade 27:35

You took it right, that was going to be my next statement, I was literally, you took right out of my mouth, I was like, this is why it's important, you know what I mean?! And, and we don't have to tell the stories at the end, we can tell the stories from where we are now, and then we can catch back up with people later and be like, so how's it been going? It doesn't have to be this, you know, time capsule of the "Oh, I'm being interviewed, so my life is over." It's, I think these narratives are so important, you know what I mean?! I think these narratives are so important, because like I said, I've been at arm's reach from all of these people for so long, and I had no idea, the work and the labour that they have put into creating space for me to go out and pardon my French, but shake my ass. Literally. [Phillip chuckling] Do you know what I mean?! Like, if it wasn't for them advocating and fighting and, and continuously pushing back and pushing for more, and asking for more, demanding more, it, we wouldn't be where we are. And I want to segue into the Black Lives Matter segment and ask you a question about when you started making this documentary, like how long of a process was it? Because you happen to capture some really iconic, great moments that a lot of people weren't aware what's going to happen, were prepared to happen, but you are right there in the thick of all of it. So can you talk a little bit about Black Lives Matter, and then stopping the parade, and you being there to capture this?

Phillip Pike 29:10

Yeah. So I actually can't take credit, because we actually weren't there, so I'll tell you, I'll tell you the story behind that. So I started sort of intentional work on the film in the summer of 2015. And so my first step was basically to interview, start, I started interviewing people off camera, you know, just recording on my iPhone, but trying to

meet with as many people as I could, especially folks in the younger generation with whom I was less familiar, and needed to get to know their story and their contribution. And so, so started, I think, July, that process. By about September, started to work on funding applications and send those off and then sort of continued to interview people. And so wasn't kind of ready, didn't have everything in place, you know, in terms of financing for the film, crew, and all of that didn't have all of that in place until 2017, so, and, of course, the stopping of the parade that took place in 2016. But again, you know, just a lot of things really came together for this, for this film to make it happen, and for that, I can only sort of acknowledge and thank the ancestors. But to share happenstance, I think it was sometime in, in the fall of 2017, you know, I was beginning to do some research, and came across this footage of BLM and connected to the filmmaker who had done that. So actually, a lot of the BLM footage is stuff that we licensed from another filmmaker who was kind of, you know, on the ground, both in 2016 for the, the parade, but also the earlier stuff like the, the encampment in front of the Toronto Police Headquarters following the death of Andrew Loku. So, you know, it was, but it was, that was pure happenstance, and you know, he was very cooperative, he agreed to share the footage with us. And so yeah, it sort of came together.

Hollywood Jade 31:29

What's interesting to me is, I didn't feel a difference, really, in the footage. So like, again, kudos to you, because I, and your team, I literally thought that, like you were there capturing these moments, because the energy behind that footage and everything else that I'm fairly confident that I know that you guys captured in all fields on one accord. And I think that's an interesting point to bring up, because it's us, it's, it's our nature, and like you said, even with them in the kitchen, you didn't have to do a lot of directing, you just sort of propped it up and let them play. And I think that, that is so much of who we are and what we do and how we represent ourselves that even through, some two different lenses, were reflected relatively similar and the same, you know what I mean?! The energy is still there.

Phillip Pike 32:25

Yeah, yeah. Because I mean, you know, like, the footage that we shot at Blocko was our own, my own crew that shot that. And, you know, we were right there on the ground. And again, I mean, Jack was just a wonderful cinematographer, and he could sort of move among the crowd and capture all of that in a way that was very, I would say, authentic, you know, and sort of, yeah.

Hollywood Jade 32:51

The footage, like the footage, it's so good like that, and it's the detailing and the way that you use it, like the scene where everybody's hugging and kissing and then Angela's talking over in that, like when, whenever she sees two black men in love, she weeps. I'm just like, the foot, it's so well done like it is it is it is very, very well done. And it tugs on your heartstrings and it, it gets you angry, and if, it makes you laugh, like, what's her name, Sharona Hall when she, when they put the quivers like murderer! [Phillip chuckling] I wasn't prepared, I wasn't ready. [both laughing] You know, so it's that there's, there's so much in this documentary and I, I am making it a viewing a mandatory viewing for me and all of my friends, because I think it is necessary that we actually understand that we stand and party and celebrate, and, and all of it on the solid shoulders of people who are a follow around a lot of them so we can thank them and we can hold them up and really put them, give them the respect and the honour that they are due for the work that they've done for all of us. And I'm grateful for that. I'm really, really grateful for that.

Phillip Pike 34:12

Amen to that!

Hollywood Jade 34:16

All right. I think I have one final, I don't really know if it's a question, but what do - how do I phrase this? - as somebody who I believe I am an active participant in this community, more so probably now in a visible way to people who don't know me, but as a member of this community, it really, watching it it really made me sad that I missed all the screenings and all the premieres and, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, in terms of the the audience and the reach, but I think they're there when I talk about the lack of community, this is an example in it for me where I'm like everybody that I know, should have seen this documentary. But I know, I'm the only person in my circle of friends who's probably seen it, right?! So what do you think we have to do to get back to a place where these organizations and documentaries like this aren't things that go over our head?

Phillip Pike 35:24

It's a good question, a difficult one. You know, I think I was thinking about how times have evolved, you know, when, for example, there's, there used to as a group, and I should mention, that there are actually four extra scenes that we weren't able to include in, in film, but which folks can watch for free. If you go to the film's website, ourdancerevolution.com, and there's a tab for extra scenes. So there for extra scenes, covering, you know, groups AYA, which was a sort of a social and advocacy group for Black queer men, GLAD - Gays and Lesbians of African Descent, so folks from the continent, we're very active on Toronto..

Hollywood Jade 36:13

House of Monroe.

Phillip Pike 36:14

House of Monroe, and Plow Masquerade, which was sort of, you know, Jimmy used to Barry's bringing of Trinidad and Tobago Carnival arts into into the pride. Yeah, yeah. And so just like thinking back to Ira, for example, you know, in that time in the 90s, when I was part of it, you know, we met we met physically, we met on the last Sunday of the month, at the 519, or, you know, in people's homes for for meals and stuff, there was that kind of interaction. Now, for example, we have the Black Gay Men's network, you know, folks meet online, I mean, obviously, because, because of the pandemic, but also thinking about, you know, I don't know, I guess I'm not a, I'm not a virtual person, I don't like the virtuous sphere. I'm still, I still love that generation, I still gravitate towards, you know, meeting in person. And so, like to go back to your question, um, I don't know. I mean, you know, I think my sense is that the film had a very good penetration here in Toronto, I mean, there were a lot of screenings. There was the premiere at Hot Docs, there was screenings that I organized at the Hot Doc Cinema up on Bloor Street, and I'm like, there was screenings me-, the screenings at the 519. So really, if you haven't seen it by now, and you know, you have a computer, I'm not sure what else we could have done to kind of get, you know, get the word out. If, I actually felt that it was we saturated Toronto, you know, because obviously, it's a film about the Toronto scene. So it's kind of-

Hollywood Jade 38:01

Yeah.

Phillip Pike 38:02

the home base. But um, but yeah, I yeah, I'm not, I'm not sure what, how to, you know, how best to..

Hollywood Jade 38:10

You answered it perfectly. It's, it's our fault. It's my fault, it's a lack of taking the time and actually researching and figuring out what this thing was about. I kept hearing about it in passing, and I remember I missed like the last screening and I was like, Why didn't anybody remind me, like it was anybody's responsibility to remind me. But I say this, because I think that it's such an important narrative, like, I think it is such a important story, especially for us as Black queer individuals, but also for other people in the queer community and our allies to see to really understand like, like, we talked about Blockorama and Blockorama was the most sought after party, and everyone's going to end there, night at Blockorama, but a lot of people have no idea of the fight it was to get Bloco to where it was, and I just, I think we need to do a better job collectively of calling these people's names and, and making sure that they are seen in the light that they deserve to be seen in. And I have neglected to do that in my own right, and I'm taking accountability and responsibility for that and doing what I can to bridge that gap between them and myself. I think, I think my, my I'm, and I'm opening this up to everybody, I think it's really just about us, making sure that we continue to call these people's names, and we continue to, to acknowledge the work that they've done because it would be terrible for another 35 years to go by before we see more community again, and we see more spaces where we feel welcomed and safe and are celebrated, not just tolerated. I'm so glad that this exists. Like, even when I think about families and generations of people who- I can share this with my mom to give her context about the work that has been going on, I can share this with like my younger queer family members and be like, there are people out here who have been actively fighting for you, because we see the, and we hear the American story, you know, with Pose and, and through all the other queer programming that exists now, but it's all from the American side, we've never I've never seen or heard the history of the Black queer struggle in Toronto for space and equality, and I think it's such an important narrative, like I cannot stress enough. If you haven't seen "Our Dance of Revolution," please go check it out. It's major, it's major. Phil, what would you like to see happen next with the documentary? I mean, it's already out, it's been out, but what's the, what's the next step for you? Is there a next step?

Phillip Pike 41:01

Um, yeah, I'm not sure. I mean, in terms of documentary, yeah, it's out there. We have a, we have a Canadian, we have a distributor, Cinema Politica. And so those links are available on the website, folks can, can rent it, purchase it, can be screened at community settings, you want to get a group of people together. It's also available on a couple of streaming services. So there's something a lot of folks in Canada might not be familiar with called KweliTV, k-w-e-l-i TV, which is basically referred to as in the States as the Black Netflix. So KweliTV is basically a streaming service that, that streams, films about the Black experience. So it's available there, they're primarily an American market. And we've just actually signed a deal with Highball TV, which is another streaming service, which has a more, slightly more international reach. And in fact, the film is going to be screening next month in Malmö, Sweden, for WorldPride. So still, -

Hollywood Jade 42:15

Wow!

Phillip Pike 42:15

a lot of - Yeah, it's still getting a lot of play and interest. You know, I have no specific plans. I mean, I've kind of, I basically, kind of, at this point, handed it off to the distributor, and they.. yeah at Cinema Politica, you know, they specifically, their, their, their focus is political documentaries, right?! Documentaries about change. And so hopefully, you know, they will continue to connect the film to, you know, folks who, yeah, you know, in that market. Yeah. Yeah.

Hollywood Jade 42:55

Listen, I'm like, someone should tell, email to Netflix. [Phillip laughing] It deserves, it's honestly, it's, I, I've watched it, like 3x. And every time I watch it, I, it I tap into something else, and I, I learn something new, and I'm enamoured by the courage, and the strength of all of these individuals, because to be Caribbean and queer in the 80s, 90s, and early 2000s, I can't even and -70 I can't even imagine, like I can.. The fear for me in 2000 and whatever was, like, it gave me anxiety, like it was insane. So I can't imagine the courage that it took to be able to do this on the frontlines in, in, in putting out publications and, and putting your names out there with a real was, it's a real thing. And I just feel like they deserve all the recognition and, that they can possibly withstand. Like what I'd like to do because again, I believe firmly in calling people's names before we get out of here. And Phillip, you can help me with this in case I've missed anybody, or and/or pronounce anybody's name wrong, but I just wanted to highlight again, all of the individuals as, well as many of the individuals that I can from the documentary, so Makita silver, Douglas Stewart, Courtney McFarland, Angelo Robertson, Diane Feltner, is it Sharon or Sharona Hall?

Phillip Pike 44:39

Sharona Hall.

Hollywood Jade 44:41

Sharona Hall Jr, Harrison, Camille Orrige, Michelle RA, my daddy DJ Black Cat, Michael Hall, Nick Redmon, Jamila Zuberi, Reverend David Lewis, who am I forgetting?!

Phillip Pike 45:02

Uhh I think you've hit most, there's probably a few. But yeah, that's I think.

Hollywood Jade 45:07

Yeah. And if I, if I forgotten you please forgive me, I just really believe it's important that we are calling these names. And I would I, as a community, I'm calling all of us to publicly, because you know, if it doesn't exist on Instagram, or Facebook, it didn't happen [Phillip laughing] to acknowledge these individuals, and, and give them the flowers while they're here. [both laughing] For real! Like, I think it's important to give people their flowers while they can smell them. I think it is necessary for us to continue to call these names, because, like, like you said, Phillip, there's a generation of people who are now picking up that mantle. I feel like in my own way, I've carried that mantle and I'm going to continue to carry it because their fight will not be in vain is basically, you know, I have this conversation with Black Cat all the time, I'm like, this is bigger than just me. And what your documentary

has proven is that through these individuals who did the work that was bigger than them, look how far we've come.

Phillip Pike 46:17

Yep, amen. We owe them a huge debt, a debt of gratitude. They really have, you know, created a space, I mean.. One of the things, you know, traveling with the film and going to different communities, and not to pick on, not to pick on Halifax, but you know, I remember, I was surprised to learn that there had never really been any organized Black queer community in Halifax, even though there is a significant, you know, Black population there.

Hollywood Jade 46:47

Yeah.

Phillip Pike 46:48

And so it really just reinforced how lucky we were how fortunate and blessed we were in Toronto, to have that sort of critical mass of folks who really, you know, came together and seized the moment right in time, in history, and sort of, you know, stepped out of their comfort zone. And, you know, it's interesting, because, you know, I think if you speak with them, and I, as I have, you know, they will, they will sometimes also say that, you know, in retrospect, it looks that way, but they were also just doing what they felt they needed to do to get along, right?! You know, I mean, they, you know, they would come around those kitchen tables and ask themselves, you know, what is it that we need, you know, what do we need to make our lives better, you know?! And they would come together and form these groups, so they formed ZAMI they formed, you know, they came together and they did Blocko, it was a reaction to a need, right?! But we are also the beneficiaries of that, that legacy and of their, their, you know, their their courage in sort of stepping out and acting, right, being activist.

Hollywood Jade 47:58

Yeah, Phillip, I, I thank you so much for your courage in, in telling the story in approaching what I can only imagine when you wrote it down in this fear, like, how am I going to accomplish that? [both laughing] There are, there's a lot of content and you, you, you manage to fit it and piece it all together. And it sort of feels like a quilt to me, it feels like a quilt of, of our Black queer activism, our Black queer community, our Caribbean- heritage, our, our, our fight our continuous fight to make ourselves not just visible, but like viable parts of this community, because we really and truly, truly are. And I, I thank you, I thank you, I thank you, thank you, thank you, I thank you. And I can tell that this came from a place of love. And like Angela said, Black queer love is a revolutionary act, and I am grateful for your revolutionary act in making this documentary. Thank you.

Phillip Pike 49:11

Well, thank you. Thank you for the kind words and thank you to Pride Toronto and yourself for giving me the opportunity to talk about the film. Thank you.