

CHAMPIONING THE CULTURE

BLK.

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KINDE

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A Zine by KINDE

Editor: Michael Makinde

Creator: Shelby Nayler

KINDE

BLK. by KINDE is our contribution to this year's Black History Month celebrations & beyond. What a weird year it is to celebrate but we should never let hard times humble us! BLK. is a representation of the achievements of Black Britons both past and present and how our culture has helped shape this country's history, culture & global influence.

We can't forget how far we've come especially within Black British entertainment. Chart topping is no longer a new thing to UK rappers from the culture. My favourite rappers are all taking a shot at the Official UK Charts, something that was unknown of a few years ago. You've got Nines who landed his first No.1 album with Crabs in the Bucket and the same with Headie One with his debut album, Edna. Our homegrown movies & TV shows are being nominated for BAFTAs, breaking records - you've got Blue Story and Top Boy as perfect examples. Our actors / actresses are getting the gigs they deserve; there's Snowfall, Bulletproof, Enterprice & FAMALAM to name a few of the recent successes. We're in the building now and I love it!

We produced this zine because I myself have been a fan of the Black British entertainment culture before it was even championed as it is today. Nowadays, I am also a contributor rather than just a fan. To see the vision for this zine through, I tagged in creators whose work I admire and felt that it was the right time to put something of this nature together. My aim is that this zine will serve as a valuable commendation to the culture. This is BLK; a creation by the people for all the people. Enjoy!

- Michael Makinde





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KINDE:

CHAMPIONING THE CULTURE

We spoke to KINDE's Founder & Managing Director, Michael Makinde to discover his thoughts on today's black culture, what it's like to be a young black business owner and his overall vision for KINDE.

Why did you start the company?

I started KINDE because it was a dream of mine from early. I had dreams of owning an empire. I didn't know exactly what that looked like but I know I wanted to be a boss. After completing my degree in Advertising & Marketing in University, I wanted to intern at an agency to get some experience under my belt. I reached out to an agency called Livity to work there for free, I just wanted to grind and I loved the culture there too. When I was 15 I used to distribute magazines for them around town and they paid me some decent bread for that. Well at the time it was...now that's chicken change. A few months after reaching out, I would be starting my internship there alongside Google. It was sick. I learnt a lot. I was sought after too as I understood youth & "urban" cultures to the tee which was starting to rise in prominence at the time. However, the go-getter in me felt capped. I just wanted to start my own thing but timing was key. My contract soon ended at Livity but I later joined a

start-up Social Media & PR agency. We worked on a big festival out in Dubai called SoleDXB. It was nice out there; a different kind of vibe. Not long after, KINDE was born.

What was it like growing up in your area?

I grew up on an estate in a place called Tulse Hill which is right next to Brixton. You grow up in these kinds of areas as a young black boy and it's kind of like you are subjected to failure. I'm not saying everybody around there are failures but it's like the conditioning of people's mentality around you is - you won't see any opportunities if you get stuck. Having that street mentality is not always bad though, it can mould you into a resilient character when in the face of certain situations beyond the four corners of the estate. For me in this game, there's no such thing as a no! When one door closes on me, I find another way in. That's what being from where I'm from has taught me. It doesn't matter who's watching you, who's praying on your downfall, you've just gotta go hard. Obviously you can still keep it professional but when you're from that kind of environment, they want you to sink. Don't sink! There's a Ray BLK lyric in **My Hood** which states; "Through concrete, flowers grow". In a nutshell, that's a reflection of my journey.

What motivates you?

My motivation comes from many different places; ima start off with the main one which is God. Just believing in God and what he reveals to you personally. People don't realise it but the Bible talks about grinding, a lot about how to hustle smart and how to become the best version of yourself. There's a lot of motivational scriptures that will help you, so when you're not 100, the Bible will definitely lift your spirits. It gives you that faith to go the extra mile. Like that's just one source of motivation. Another source of motivation is me motivating myself because I know what I need to achieve, so if it's just me being able to help my mum out more and give my mum what she needs, that's motivation. By me helping the people around me, that's enough motivation for me to continue to move forward. And then the fear of failing is my motivation too.

What is your vision for KINDE?

My vision for KINDE is to see it become a powerhouse in the entertainment and marketing industries across the world. I look at some of the big boys in the advertising/marketing game whom I rate such as Wieden & Kennedy or Mother and I aspire to build KINDE to those guys' level or even greater. On the entertainment side of things, Jay-Z's Rocnation empire would be the closest comparison. How Rocnation is; they're a company doing real stuff for the culture, they're very powerful where they sit within entertainment & sports and are constantly making moves on behalf of the people. They do dabble in marketing a bit, so I definitely see myself sitting somewhere in the midst of all of that. Ultimately, a hybrid of organisations such as W&K & Roc Nation but in my own lane and creating my own identity in the industry through content developments, event experiences, digital, brand management and more. In the long run, I want to make an

effective contribution to the culture, making KINDE a household name.

What is it like being a black man in the UK? Any challenges?

There's a lot of stereotyping and profiling around, it's like you grow up understanding that you're one of a kind. Some people may see it as rah we're being segregated and singled out but the way i see it that we're unique so we're due to have it different. Being a black man in the UK you've got to fight more, you have to prove yourself more and you have more weight on your shoulders at the end of the day. Working in an industry that's face to face most of the time, you're always dealing with clients and a lot of these companies that you're dealing with and trying to work with are conditioned to think in a certain way about black people, especially the mandem. They're used to working with their white counterparts so they don't get to know us as a community. We've been lucky enough to work with a couple of our partners, big & small, who get us and let us be us too. A client invited us to an event one time and the security (wasn't even security) asked us if we were in the right place. It's like come on bro, I'm sure everyone here didn't get that treatment. The assumption was that we weren't meant to be there. But me, I'm pushing through that door whether you like it or not. That's the kind of energy I'm moving with, you've just got to keep it stepping and show them you're meant to be where you are.

Who would you love to work with?

It's mad because I'm already working with some of my dream brands but it could only get bigger and better, we have to thank God for that. Rick Ross...I like the way he thinks, I like the attitude he has towards hustling, I feel like there's some similarities when I watch him. I kind of see him as a mentor, even though he's a distance away but

“HUNGRY, PASSIONATE, A FIGHTER”

long distance relationship, why not. If we jumped on something together we'd both put our all in, like we would achieve something proper. I had this same energy with Nipsey Huddle (God rest his soul) - just before he passed I was in talks with his tour manager about linking up to run a campaign whilst he was out in London. It would have been a crazy moment for us but I guess God had other plans.

How much impact does black culture have on UK life?

Now? Black culture has a very very VERY big impact, like back in the days it had a little but I think we're at a time right now where everybody is simultaneously kicking the door down and that's from all angles. It's not just in music & film, it's in politics as well. In sports, you've got people like Raheem Sterling, he's constantly kicking the door down, Marcus Rashford is another with the recent free school meals saga. They're standing for what they stand for and becoming a voice of reason. My favourite rappers are topping the scene right now. You've got people like Nines & Headie One doing their thing - these are street rappers from places like where I'm from leading the whole country's music scene. It's mad! We're impacting the culture in a dramatic way, we've got people like Stormzy too, he's like our Mayor. Even in marketing there's more people like myself, Shannie Mears & Christina Okorochoa kicking the door

down and making it known that we're here in the agency world.

What advice do you have for young black entrepreneurs?

Stay grounded! Find what you love and what you're good at. Don't let anyone tell you, you can't do something. You should always push yourself to the limit, the sky's the limit. Don't stop hustling. Don't stop till you have to stop. Do what you've got to do to get it. Most importantly, have faith in yourself and in the grind!

What do you think about when you hear “Black History Month?”

I remember in school we just used to learn about all the basics like MLK, Rosa Parks and all them kind of people. But I think our history runs deeper than that, it's easy to talk about the famous moments but our history is current and it runs deep. Black History is the legacy that we're leaving behind in the world. As time moves along, in schools they need to learn about what we experienced 10, 20 years ago, not just the famous historic moments? I want to see schools teach about Black History in the UK too such as who the pioneers of our rap scenes were such as Wiley, So Solid Crew etc. or films that shaped the culture such as Kidulthood. The narrative should change! Our history can't get lost. The curriculum needs to be switched up.



TOP 10 BRIT SONGS

THAT MAKE YOU PROUD TO BE BLACK
BY MIMITHMUSICBLOGGER

I'm black first and unapologetic in fact. The black experience presented the world its rhythm as the world never concerned its blues throughout history.

Black British culture is the prominent realised culture across the UK as it frontlines the entertainment field. Our contributions to the culture go far beyond the obvious, as we've sprinkled elements of our cultural aspects that have shaped the overall Black music sound.

As I reflect and wonder throughout my years, what songs are the love letters for Black Pride and Empowerment... Considering it's Black History, we are celebrating by spotlighting black musical artists whose voices and songs showed Black Brits pride and empowerment throughout the years and decades. So, let's break down the Top 10 of being black and proud.

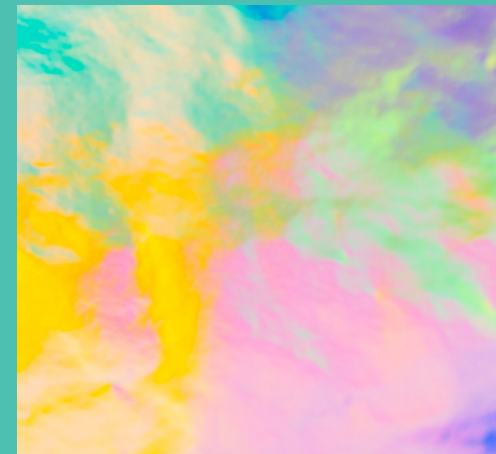


BASHY - BLACK BOYS

'Black Boys' is a tribute to all of his fellow Black Brits. The song is a pat on the back from your favourite older brother as he rapped about instilling hope in Black Brits especially. It's the perfect love letter since Bashy highlights the success of many black men and women.

ESTELLE - 1980

'1980' by Estelle was one of few representations I had as a kid, of a black woman talking about the black brit experience. She said "I touched Africa & came back darker! Knowing myself! Feeling my roots a little bit harder"



SWISS - CRY

The street classic, Cry, sampled from Michael Jackson's 'It's the Falling in Love'. Swiss took us to a raw and honest rollercoaster, from speaking to the reality of many Black Brits, and a tribute to Stephen Lawrence as he articulated himself with composure - to sounding like he was crying through the song. Our very own 'Strange Fruits' for our lost ones.

J HUS - SPIRIT

Our very own East London rapper embodied the perfect song dedicated to the kids from the block. Whatever is going on - is not about getting hung up on the mistakes of the past. Simply, using this very moment to understand we still have heart and it's okay to celebrate regardless of the basis for change. 'Even when we never had a penny, yeah, we always had spirit.'

**DAVE - BLACK (BRITS LIVE VERSION)**

The lyrics are pretty much self-explanatory, especially if the following lyrics offend others - which shows that they are part of the problem. Dave described the Black Brit pride as he rapped about the glory of our beauty, but he acknowledges the scars. The Brits were such a big moment, as he added an extra verse that calls out the elected Prime Minister Boris Johnson, pays tribute to Jack Merritt and points out the many more political and social issues within the UK.

SOUL II SOUL - KEEP ON MOVING

An old school classic from the undeniable Soul II Soul. Keep on Moving, musically oozes us about the tough times and roadblocks in our lives but we must continue to push and strive for better. Most definitely an inspirational song that breathed life into someone wanting to give up. Near and dear to our hearts as the visual gave us the representation of Black Britain.

**RAY BLK - MY HOOD**

Ray BLK's love letter to her city, South London, with her honest depiction of her hometown just like Adele's Hometown Glory and modern-day Estelle's 180. She takes us on a trip that is like growing up where they did, a day in the life of a Londoner.

MS DYNAMITE - DY-NA-MI-TEE

What an anthem. This song straddles about three different genres; to put it simply, you cannot deny how big of a hit this song is, showing us how multifaceted Ms Dynamite is as an artist. From Jamelia, Mis-Teeq to Ms Dynamite, just to name a few, had many black girls' back through the '00s & gave us life lessons from every black woman during that time. It set the tone and gave the little girls someone to look up to and something for the ladies to relate.

KANO - P'S & Q'S

If you had to convince someone to become a fan of grime music, but you could only play one song. It is the one and only P's & Q's. Kano is a certified legend in the UK Music industry and a significant contributor to Grime. The song is an absolute classic as it oozes nostalgia, the days when you had to bluetooth songs to each other on the bus coming home from school. What a time to be alive.

PA SALIEU X BACKROAD GEE - MY FAMILY

"Buss up, buss up! Ride for my killy killy"

The 2020 banger from the unofficial duo Pa Salieu and Backroad Gee letting us know about the unapologetic significance of black boy joy. The song is all about the importance of having a tight-knit circle of rides or dies.



Get with the programme

By Elizabeth Oladogba

Elizabeth is the Head of Events at KINDE. She is well versed in creating memorable experiences and sought after for her detailing techniques & exceptional event planning skills.

This year is surely one for the history books. I am sure many of us like myself, are wondering why weddings must be postponed or scaled down to only 30 people (including the bride and groom) or why we cannot have a dinner party with more than 6 people? Thousands of event professionals across the UK have been left in limbo on what we are able to do or advise our clients during the pandemic, but as the year draws close to an end we have some light! The past 6 months has had a major impact on the events industry.

Whilst this industry is reported to be worth £70 billion in direct spend, the events sector has been abandoned and businesses are still suffering from extensive setbacks due to COVID 19 and lockdown restrictions. But as organisers it's our duty to evolve and be as creative as possible. Hopefully the months of strict lockdown are behind us and we can look forward to having SAFE and comfortable interactions to its full extent. But till that glorious day returns when we can hail down the barman for another shot of Patròn or revel in a late-night party, let us enjoy what we have now! Now more than ever the public are overwhelmingly willing to adapt to social distancing measures in events as long as it allows the moment of escapism. As an organiser we must

remain up to date on the growing appetite that our audience has towards the type of experience that they want to receive. Ensuring an adaptable experience is planned here are a few tips on how to have an entertaining and memorable event whilst following the correct Government guidelines.

1. Create staggered entry and departure times

Whether it is a bottomless brunch or a food fair, creating scheduled time sessions for people to arrive and leave will enable you to manage the capacity level of your event. As well as ensure you have social distanced people by managing the flow of entry and roaming in your event. This can work well if you want to offer bespoke packages, for example you can create offers for earlier time slots and a set time for bookings of more than 4.

2. Hybrid events

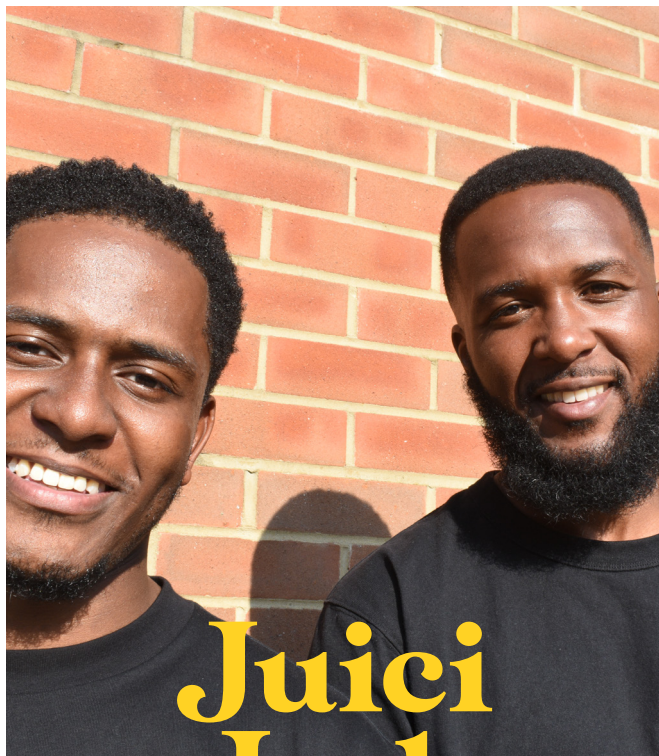
The emergence of hybrid events has risen recently. It is a combination of in person and remote attendance, mainly suitable for business based events i.e workshops or masterclasses. It's become a major way for brands and event organisers to reach a wider audience. As an organiser the creative spin you can have with hosting a hybrid event is endless. From developing engaging event marketing by allowing the limited number of attendees to win tickets through competitions or social media activity to enhancing the event reach to international audiences via virtual attendance. The flexibility and

convenience hybrid events provide will be a great way to keep your event running during this period.

3. Make the catering personal

Almost all venues and restaurants have opted for the table service to provide guests with catering. But this may not apply if your event is bespoke. A great way to have safe food displays is by creating personalised picnic style packaging. Now I'm not talking about having a basket and a couple sandwiches, I'm talking about the packaging décor and enhancing the dining experience for your guest. With branded individual boxes to lidded carafes for drinks, leave your guests feeling as though each item was specifically designed for them. Not only does this ensure the safe handling of food and beverages but it also adds a nice experiential touch to your event.

Subsequently it is inevitable that the future of events will have a 'new normal'. With heightened hygiene standards and the acceleration of contactless & self-service points, it is crucial to find ways to implement safety measures without dulling the experience of the attendee. Many industry experts have proclaimed that the rise of virtual experiences will soon be the new territory for events but I think nothing beats an in-person experience. Now more than ever people are appreciating the benefits of human interaction and I believe the yearn to converse & adventure will continue to rise.



Juici Jerk - Troy & Jarrell Johnson

Born & raised in Tooting, South London, brothers Troy & Jarrell Johnson are putting Tooting on the map with Juici Jerk. Providing GOOD home-cooked Caribbean food in their local area by bringing the best of both worlds together was their mission. Driven by their community & family, the brothers are the new age of Caribbean cuisine.



DIY HOME KITS

Since 2017 when we started out in our mums kitchen our goal was to combine traditional Caribbean recipes with a contemporary twist. Eating amongst friends and family is a massive part of our tradition and food in general is what brings our whole family together.

That's why we have launched our latest venture - Juici Jerk cook at home DIY kits. All ingredients in our kits are freshly prepared by our in-house team with the spirit for you to recreate that special meal in the comfort of your own home.

@juici_jerk
www.juicijerk.com

Jerk chicken & Uncle Wray sauce

INGREDIENTS (feeds 4)

1.5KG boneless jerk chicken thighs

Honey

Wray & Nephew white rum

BBQ sauce

All-purpose seasoning & Chicken seasoning

Chilli flakes

Walkerwoods jerk paste OR home-made jerk paste (ingredients below)

JERK MARINADE:

There are two ways to marinate your chicken:

QUICK TINGS - Add the below contents into a mixing bowl

- 12 tbsp of Walkerwoods jerk seasoning
- 2 tsp chicken seasoning
- 2 tsp all-purpose seasoning

FOR THE HOME CHEFS - Make your own marinade by processing the following ingredients

- 1 chopped Scotch bonnet (add more for that extra fire)
- 2 chopped spring onions
- 1 Tbsp Pimento seeds
- 2 Tsp Fresh Thyme
- 3 Tsp all-purpose seasoning
- 2 tsp chicken seasoning
- 1 Tbsp Ketchup
- 1 tbsp chopped ginger
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg
- 2 tbsp lime
- 1 tbsp lemon/lime juice
- 50ml water
- 4 garlic cloves
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 medium onion

UNCLE WRAY SAUCE:

Add the below contents into a pot and stir on a low heat for 10 minutes

- 580ml of your preferred BBQ sauce
- 150ml of honey
- 75ml of Wray & Nephew white rum

- Sprinkle of all-purpose seasoning & chilli flakes

METHOD

If your feeling cheffy then put all the jerk marinade ingredients in a blender/processor and blitz. Alternatively, use Walkerwoods jerk seasoning which also does the trick.

Wash the chicken with lime then marinate evenly with the jerk marinade. You can either do this the night before or on the morning of the cookup. You can use this recipe to cook on the BBQ or in the oven – whatever works best for you!

OVEN:

1. Preheat the oven to 180C Fan/220C/Gas 7. Place the marinated jerk thighs on a foil lined baking tray in the middle shelf and bake for 40 minutes, or until cooked, turning a few times throughout.
2. Remove and glaze the thighs with some of the Uncle Wray Sauce before serving.
3. Enjoy and remember to share.. if you want.

BBQ:

1. Load up the BBQ with charcoal, light and allow to cool down (till the coal turns a liddle ashy/orange with no flames).
2. Place the thighs on the grill and turn every 10 minutes depending on the heat. Repeat this 2-4 times or until cooked.
3. Remove and glaze the thighs with some of the Uncle Wray Sauce before serving and enjoy!







OREVIEWS

A talented writer and a vibrant personality; Ore is known for captivating audiences with her written pieces on all things entertainment. Passionate about music, film & TV, she is building a reputation as a go to for her thought provoking pieces.

TOP 5 FILMS

THAT MAKE YOU PROUD TO BE A BLACK BRIT



Black British life has been sorely underrepresented within the film industry – often scattered with clichéd storylines, mismatched casting or something else that takes away from the authenticity needed to fully showcase Black British-ness, it can make it hard to come across the great ones. But that's not to say there aren't gems. With funding for young filmmakers becoming more accessible, and announcements like the appointment of Fiona Lamptey (the new Director of UK features for Netflix), the future is looking bright for Black British film.

Read on for my pick of five Black British must-watch films...



ROCKS (2020)

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, Rocks couldn't get a full cinema release, and instead was released in selected cinemas and then on Netflix, to celebrate the beginning of Black History Month. But that didn't dampen its hype, and critics quickly called it one of the greatest British films ever made. It follows sixteen-year-old Shola (Bukky Bakray) and her little brother Emmanuel (D'angelou Osei Kissiedu), who live a hard life on an East London estate. When their mother abandons them and social services are alerted, Shola is forced to take Emmanuel on the run, relying on her friends to keep them from being separated. It's a much watch – a film that's so intricately authentic (references to six wings and chips, wanting to be a make-up artist and schoolgirl crushes) that it's hard to not relate, laugh with the girls and even shed a tear.



KIDULTHOOD (2006)

At the time, critics called it “unbelievably bleak” and “incredibly unrealistic”, suggesting that it didn't make sense for everything that happened in the film, too realistically have happened to one group of kids at one time. But anyone that grew up in an estate or area similar to the setting of Kidulthood watched and knew that not much about the film was far-fetched. Tackling drug deals, torture, suicide and murder to name a few, Kidulthood was a sharp reality – newspapers and critics couldn't comprehend the honesty of it all, and that's why it holds cult classic status amongst a lot of young Black British people now.



BULLET BOY (2004)

Directed by former documentarian Saul Dibb, Bullet Boy follows two black brothers from Hackney, east London. Fresh out of prison, the elder, Ricky (Ashley Walters), is just out of his teens; the younger, Curtis (Luke Fraser) is only just discovering his manhood. Ultimately, they both wind up caught up in a spiral of events over which they have little control. The film is one of many that focuses on the effects of gang culture and violence on London's Black community, but Bullet Boy manages to showcase it with an impressive sensitivity that won over critics.



BABYMOTHER (1998)

Set in West London, Anita is a single mother dreaming to make it as a singer. But living in a run-down estate in Harlesden, with little financial support, the odds are stacked against her. Byron, her babies' father (and a local reggae star), invites her to perform at his show, but backs out on the offer. A frustrated Anita launches her own group, but her world turns upside down when the death of her mother leads to a series of shocking revelations regarding her past. Babymother, with its talented female-centric cast and vibrancy, allowed UK Jamaican dancehall culture to get its big-screen moment in Julian Henriques's 1998 musical drama, and is a must-watch for a dramatisation of a culture not often explored on the big screen.



BELLE (2013)

Released in 2013, Gugu Mbatha-Raw plays the real-life 18th-century figure Dido Elizabeth Belle, the “illegitimate” mixed-race daughter of a British naval officer and an enslaved African woman. Directed by Amma Asante, the feature is a compelling and necessary contrast to the overwhelmingly white period drama genre. In the film, Dido must navigate her transition into womanhood while at the whim of perplexing social codes: too high in rank to dine with the servants, but too low in status, on account of her skin colour, to dine with her family.

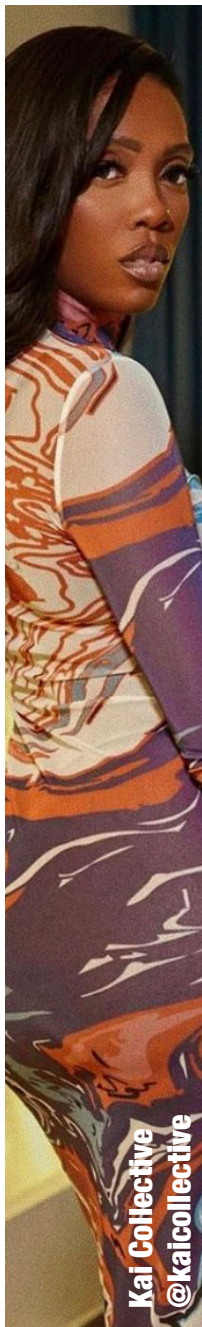
our

5 Black Owned British Luxury fashion brands you should know

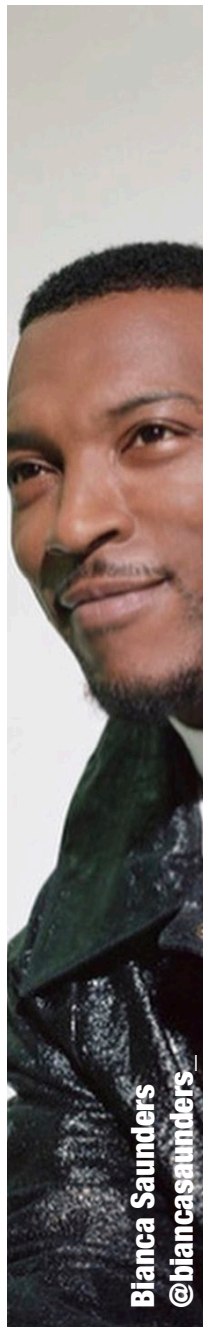
Our Maison is a platform that showcases luxury/premium wear by our people (black), for all people.
@our_maison



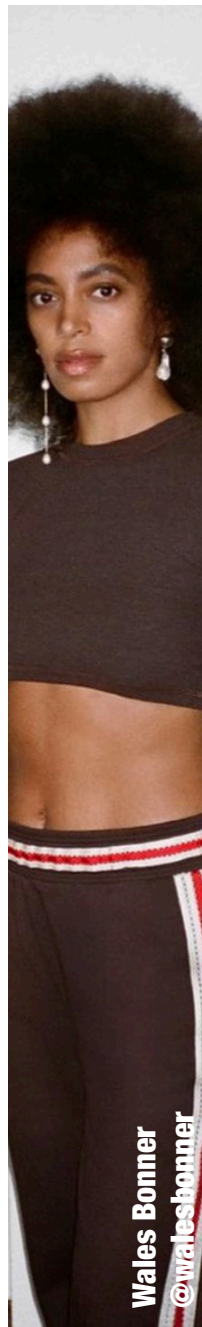
A Cold Wall
@acoldwall



Kai Collective
@kaicollective



Bianca Saunders
@biancasaunder



Wales Bonner
@walesbonner



Ahluwalia
@ahluwalia

MONEY TIPS BY FOLA DURO



Sterlings
FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS

"Fola Duro is a Financial Consultant and the Founder of Sterlings Financial Solutions whom provide alternative economic & contrarian views to the world of finance"

Fola Duro gave us his top tips on how you can make your money work for you. Whether you're a 9-5er, an entrepreneur or a business owner, the following steps could take you one step closer to not just securing the bag but maintaining it too!

- **Pay yourself!**
- **Build up an emergency fund.** Around 6-12 months of your essential bills.
- **Build up a savings buffer in financial assets and investments.** Saving in cash and saving accounts is good but you lose purchasing power over time if you don't invest.
- **SAVE in that hard money!** Allocate a portion of your earnings every month to save in physical Gold & Silver. Metals don't deteriorate, they preserve your wealth and can be passed down in generations.
- **Learn about bitcoin!** Bitcoin has been the best performing asset in the last 10 years.
- **Don't hang onto money!** Take a risk by sending money into the economy - it may just come back with friends.
- **ONE income is not enough.** Find a hobby and monetize it if you can.
- **Get a professional domain name for your email,** it makes you look more official.
- **Find a product that is selling on Ebay or Amazon,** bulk buy it on a website such as Alibaba and start selling.
- **If you own a business, BUILD your business credit.** Businesses have a score of its own so consider paying for subscriptions as a business.
- **CHARGE for your time!** There's only 24 hours in a day so make it productive.
- **Read.** Reading at least 30 minutes a day helps exercise the mind.
- **Listen to all, follow none.** You can learn from anyone - don't write off having new conversations.

@SterlingsFinancialSolutions



**BLACK IS
LIKE THE
SWEET-
EST
F***KING
FLAVOUR.
HERES A
TASTE OF
IT!**

- DAVE

**FOR THE PEOPLE FOR
THE PEOPLE FOR THE**

FOR THE PEOPLE

For The People is an initiative where we put a call-out to the people from the community to submit their work for a chance to be featured in the zine. The aim for this was to uplift the voices of those within the community that may not have access to the kind of network that some have been privileged enough to access.

Everyone needs a helping hand no matter how far up the chain they go. Besides from our favorite content creators & businesses who contributed, it was important that we offered opportunities via this zine to showcase the great level of talent that there is in the black community. The task was to create a piece of content that best expresses what it feels like to be BLK and we did just that with "For the People".

**PEOPLE FOR THE PE
FOR THE PEOPLE FO**

We will all return to the same Earth in time. But today it's...

"Caramel complexion - who's that lighty!?"

"Sunshine expression - who's that lighty!?"

"Redbone selection - who's that light-yyyy!?"

Was a common sentiment.

I grew up, identifying voice actors for fathers.

A time when neither Chadwick nor Elba were on TV

so Piccolo raised me

green, with envy the closest I could get to representation

of a coal-skin kid.

At school, "blick" lurched off the tongue like sick

whilst "Cooli" embodied the 'cool' within,

Strolling around the caves of bitter mouths

finding no shortage of homes.

Those days we'd cry

through an ice age.

In bathroom stalls, woven into

foetal, plucking b(l)ack skin

like petals.

An effort to show these bees

something beautiful

Sunken boats, a lighthouse home.

Conjuring gloriously twisted

symphonies on arms of broken instruments.

A red requiem for the dream of a dead darkie, diseased and doomed.

The 5'Ds of Dark skin diagnosed by the dammed inhabitants of this building.

Condemned.

I remember staring at mirrors and feeling so dirty.

I remember scrubbing this home I was built-in and praying that these mud stained bricks would clean.

But instead they just got ashier and ashier,

and those bees stung more and more until my Blood

and my Black were the same colour of anguish.

I began thinking this lighthouse was a mistake. This skin was a mistake.

It has brought me nothing but pain and tears/and blood and tears/and

pain and tears/

and pain and tears/and ash and tears/and pain and tears/and ash

and tears/

and pain and tears/and pain and tears/and pain and tears/and pain

and tears/

and pain and tears/and pain and tears/

and prayers!

Prayers for a new home.

Prayers to a God who looks nothing like I do.

Whose skin looks so fresh, and so clean that I was certain this God

did not make me in their image.

How could they?

I pondered and questioned and begged.

And almost gave in to a gulf of despair.

But overtime this coal-skin kid grew into a coal skin man.

And learnt to stop setting himself a bonfire.

I learnt that my God does not look like Zach Galifianakis, no my God looks like Viola Davis.

With powerfully warming eyes

which sit you down and employ you to love yourself.

My God looks like Whoopi

Goldberg, locs weighted and flowing like a solar crown.

My God looks like Lupita Nyong'o, skin as soft, and dazzling and yes as angelic, as it is dark.

My God looks like Doreen

Lawrence/and Yaa Asantewaa/

and Maya Angelou/and Idris Elba/

and Trevor McDonald/and Thierry

Henry/and Kwame Nkrumah/and

Betty Shabazz/and Malcom X/and

Fred Hampton/and Mary Seacole/

and Angela Davis/and Frank Ocean/

and Amy Garvey/and Coretta

Scott King/and Marsha P Johnson/

and Kendrick Lamar/and Piccolo/

and bell hooks/and Jordan Peele/

and Serena Williams/and Samuel

L. Jackson/and Jimi goddamn

Hendrix/and my grandma/and my

mother/and my brother/and you/

and you/and you/and you/and

you...

No, my God does not look like

Santa Claus.

My God looks like Us.

And She, does not care about how dark,

or how red,

or how yellow,

or how light,

or how white you look.

Because she looks like the universe.

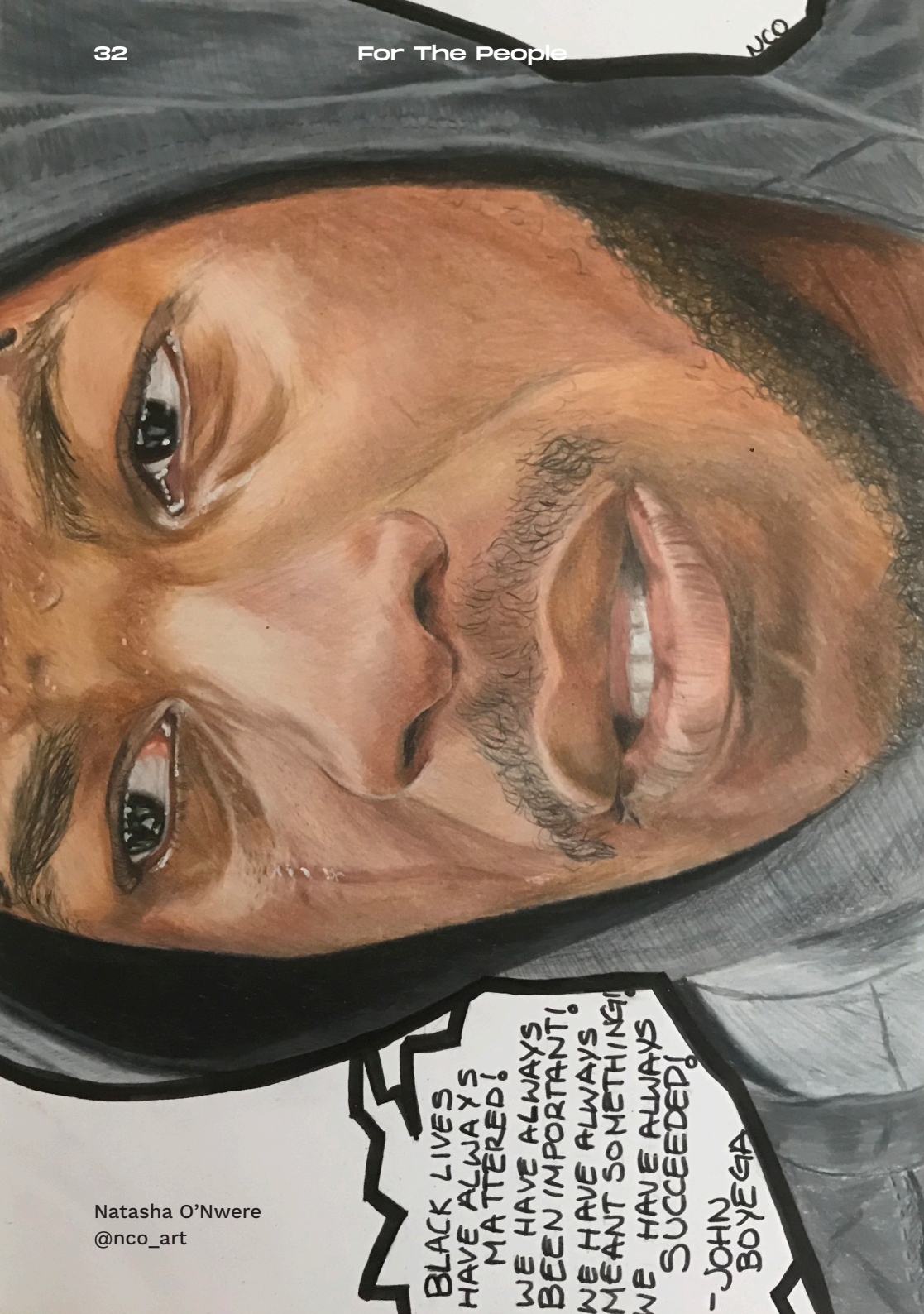
And within her, you will always find yourself

beautiful.

Kojo Apeagyei

@Kojostein

MY GOD WEARS A DURAG



Natasha O'Nwere
@nco_art

UNITY
IS A
SUPER
POWER
THEY
DON'T
WANT
US
TO
UNLOCK

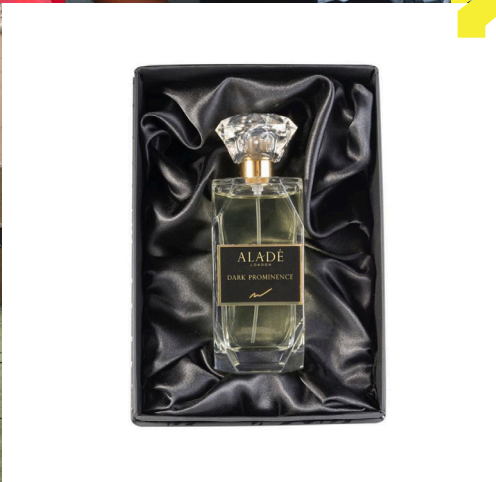
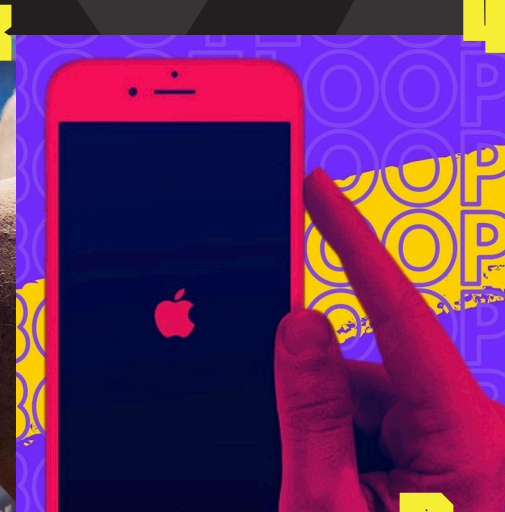
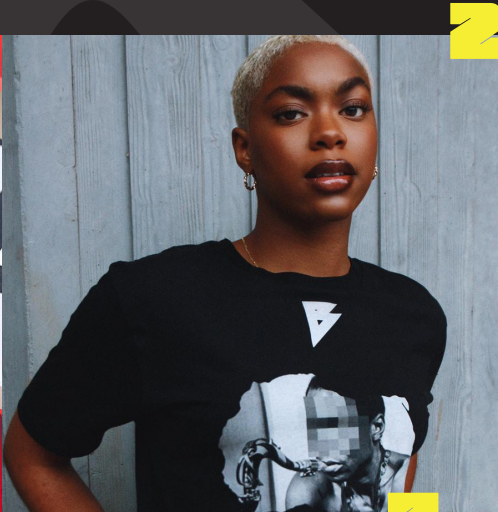
- John Boyega

BLKbiz SPOTLIGHT

Here's our top 10 list of black businesses on the rise!
Nominated by: Michael Makinde, Elizabeth Oladogba, Shannie Mears

- #1 - SIPSHACK
- #2 - BEYOND92
- #3 - VITAE
- #4 - REPATCH
- #5 - E3 EXERCISE

- #6 - CLMBXR
- #7 - ALADÉ
- #8 - VAMP SNEAKER CLEANING
- #9 - GOODMAN FACTORY
- #10 - FÉLIE



#1 - SIPSHACK

Sip our exotic, mixed fruit flavoured, Sky Juice. An authentic Caribbean thirst quencher. No gimmicks, just flavour!
@sipshack
sipshack.com

#2 - BEYOND92

A diverse clothing brand which caters to all genders with style, character & expression. The brand gives a nostalgia feel infusing 90's urban culture with a modern day dress sense.
@beyondninety2
beyond92.com

#3 - VITAE

An elegant Watches / Accessories brand supporting education in Sub-Saharan Africa.
@vitaelondon
vitaelondon.com

#4 - REPATCH

Our phones, laptops & tablets have become an extension of who we are. At Repatch we believe having your devices repaired should be as easy as ordering a pizza.
@repatch_
repatch.co.uk

#5 - E3 EXERCISE

I EMPOWER - You ELEVATE - We EXCEED = E3. My goal is to get you on the right path to achieve the results you want!
@e3_exercise
e3exercise.org

#6 - CLMBXR

"We are a climbing community filled with the soundtrack of Black-British London culture. Our community linkups are always a learning experience and are full of laughs, falls, and 'two-hands-at-the-top' victories"
@clmbxr
clmbxr.co.uk

#7 - ALADÉ

Aladé is a niche fragrance house, creating opulent African inspired perfumes for men of status in London.
@aladepfume
alade.co.uk

#8 - VAMP SNEAKER CLEANING

The fastest and most convenient sneaker cleaning service in the city. Ensuring quality everytime your sneakers grace our brushes!
@vampsneakercleaning
vampsneakercleaning.com

#9 - GOODMAN FACTORY

A community of shared knowledge on self care, starting with growing & maintaining a Goodman Beard.
@goodmanfactory
goodmanfactory.com

#10 - FÉLIE

FÉLIE a global home furnishing brand, offering contemporary and monumental décor articles. FÉLIE endeavours to deliver décor collections that are not only specific, but a reflection of the individual consumers lifestyle.
@__felie
felie.co.uk

“
**NO ONE WILL
 TELL YOU THIS,
 BUT YOUR
 BLACKNESS IS
 A SUPER POWER,
 THE ONE THING
 THE WORLD CAN
 NEVER TAKE
 AWAY**

Shannie Mears





CHAMPIONING THE CULTURE

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