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POST-1994 SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE

BORN NAKED

IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY

Queer Theory

Gender – the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other.

Transgender (he/him, she/her, et al) – relating to a person whose sense of identity does not correspond with their birth sex. Trans-identifying individuals do not always succumb to the societal pressure to be passable as either female or male. It is not necessary to pick a fixed point. For many, the transition is fluid and ongoing.

Cisgender (he/him or she/her) – relating to a person whose sense of identity corresponds to their birth sex.

Pangender/Non-Conforming/Non-binary (they/them) - an individual who describes themselves as not gendered - maintaining the potential to subscribe but actively refusing to do so. Often these individuals hold strong political beliefs that gender binaries do not exist or that it is a social construct that can be ignored. Many individuals in this category seek to adjust their appearance to reflect their non-gendered status.



*We are all born
naked...
the rest is drag.*

IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY CONT.

Queer Theory

Sex - either of the two traditional categories (male and female) into which humans and most other living things are divided on the basis of their reproductive functions.

Intersex - people born with a variation between male and female anatomy and/or genetics. Variations are endlessly diverse.

Heterosexual – a person who is sexually attracted to people of the “opposite” sex/gender.

Homosexual – a person who is sexually attracted to people of their own sex/gender.

Bisexual - sexually attracted to both men and women.

Gay – a homosexual person, usually a man.

Lesbian – a gay woman.

LGBTQI+ - lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, +includes all.

DRAG - the performance of masculinity, femininity or other forms of gender expression. A drag queen is someone (usually male) who performs femininity and a drag king is someone (usually female) who performs masculinity. The term may be used as a noun as in the expression *in drag* or as an adjective as in drag show.



*If you can't love
yourself... how in the
hell can you love
someone else?*

POSTMODERNISM AND QUEER THEORY

Non-Binary - The idea that there are only two genders is sometimes called a “**gender binary**,” because **binary** means “having two parts” (male and female). Therefore, **non-binary** is one term people use to describe genders that don't fall into one of these two categories, male or female. Think about the meaning of gender-fluid...

WHY IS NON-BINARY A POSTMODERN “WORD”?

Postmodern theory defies classification and grand narratives. **THUS** non-binary is postmodern because it defies classification as either one or the other gender, **AND** it defies the grand narrative that there are only two genders.



"DRAG" EXPLAINED

*Why do you label me?
Labels are so passé...*



- ★ The origin of the term *drag* is uncertain; the first recorded use of *drag* in reference to actors dressed in women's clothing is from 1870.
- ★ For much of history, drag queens were men, but in more modern times, cisgender and trans women, as well as non-binary people, also perform as drag queens.
- ★ In a 2018 article, Psychology Today stated that drag queens are "most typically gay cisgender men (though there are many drag queens of varying sexual orientations and gender identities)".
- ★ Examples of trans female drag queens, sometimes called trans queens, include Monica Beverly Hillz and Peppermint.
- ★ Cisgender female drag queens are sometimes called faux queens or bioqueens, though both terms are problematic: *faux* carries the connotation that the drag is fake, and the use of *bioqueen* exclusively for cisgender females is inaccurate since trans female queens also have female bodies.
- ★ Drag queens' counterparts are drag kings: performers, usually women, who dress in exaggeratedly masculine clothing. Trans men who dress like drag kings are sometimes termed trans kings.



<https://www.out.com/art-books/2018/4/16/exhibition-unveils-secret-history-drag-through-ages>

- ★ Another term for a drag queen is *female impersonator*. Female impersonation has been and continues to be illegal in some places, which inspired the drag queen José Sarria to hand out labels to his friends reading, "I am a boy", so he could not be accused of female impersonation.
- ★ American drag queen RuPaul once said, "I do not impersonate females! How many women do you know who wear seven-inch heels, four-foot wigs, and skin-tight dresses?" He also said, "I don't dress like a woman; I dress like a drag queen!"



<https://bungalower.com/event/a-brief-history-of-drag-kings/>



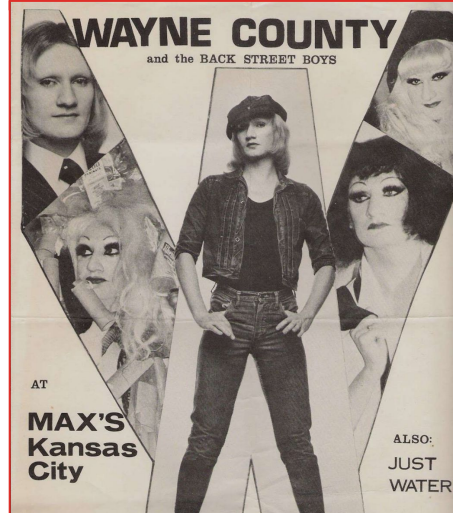
<https://www.documentjournal.com/2019/09/from-elizabethan-era-actors-to-rupaul-discover-the-radical-glamorous-history-of-drag/>

Further Reading:

<https://transequality.org/issues/resources/understanding-drag>

<https://www.impactfestival.co.uk/blog/the-history-of-drag-queens>

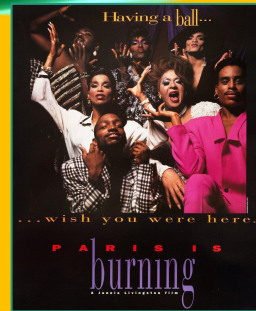
<https://allthatsinteresting.com/history-of-drag-queens>



DRAG DEFINED

- ★ Drag is a **gender-bending art form** in which a person dresses in clothing and makeup meant to exaggerate a specific gender identity, usually of the opposite sex.
- ★ While drag's main purpose has been for drag performance and entertainment, it is also used as self-expression and a celebration of LGBTQ+ pride. A typical drag show will include lip-syncing or dance, and performers often have elaborate clothing, hair, and makeup.





HISTORY OF DRAG

- ★ Drag has deep roots in Western culture, specifically in theatre when women weren't permitted to perform on stage so men would play female roles. Drag performers were featured as far back as **Ancient Greece** and carried on through **Shakespearean times**.
- ★ In the **nineteenth century**, female impersonators began to use the medium as a performative art, especially in vaudeville shows. In the 1880s, the first drag queen, William Dorsey Swann, hosted drag balls at his home. By the early twentieth century, drag was tied to the LGBTQ+ community—a community that was marginalised in the United States—and it was no longer part of popular mainstream entertainment. Instead, performances became a major aspect of city nightlife, especially in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York City.
- ★ After the 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York City and through the 1990s, gay culture and gay pride built mainstream support, and with that came popular drag culture as well.
- ★ Films like the 1990 documentary Paris Is Burning, which chronicled African American ball culture in New York City's Harlem neighbourhood in the late 1980s, and The Birdcage, a 1996 comedy about a gay couple who run a drag cabaret in Miami's South Beach neighbourhood, helped bring drag into mainstream American culture.

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

APARTHEID ERA (TO PROVIDE UNDERSTANDING TO THE CONTEXT)

- ★ Under South Africa's ruling National Party from 1948 to 1994, **homosexuality was a crime punishable by up to seven years in prison**. This law was used to harass and outlaw South African gay community events and political activists.
- ★ In January 1966, the **Forest Town raid** on a large party in Forest Town, Gauteng led to further restrictions on gay and lesbian South Africans.
- ★ Despite state opposition, several South African gay rights organisations formed in the late 1970s.
- ★ However, until the late 1980s, **gay organisations were often divided along racial lines** and the larger political question of apartheid.
- ★ The **Gay Association of South Africa (GASA)**, based in the Hillbrow district in central Johannesburg, was a **predominantly white organisation** that initially avoided taking an official position on apartheid.
- ★ The **Rand Gay Organisation** was **multi-racial** and founded in opposition to apartheid.
- ★ **Hubert du Plessis**, one of the most prominent South African composers of the 20th century, was proudly and openly gay yet also a staunch supporter of the National Party and composed many nationalist works. He was outspoken about his sexuality, however, and appeared before Parliament in the late 1960s to protest the tightening of sodomy laws.

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

APARTHEID ERA (TO PROVIDE UNDERSTANDING TO THE CONTEXT)

- ★ In the country's 1987 general election, GASA and the gay magazine *Exit* endorsed the National Party candidate for Hillbrow, Leon de Beer. The campaign brought to a head the **tensions between LGBT activists who overtly opposed apartheid and those that did not**. De Beer was the National Party's first candidate to address gay rights, and advertised for his campaign in *Exit*. It was the general opinion of the gay community of Hillbrow that their vote was the deciding factor in de Beer's ultimate victory.
- ★ From the **1960s to the late 1980s**, the South African Defence Force forced white gay and lesbian soldiers to undergo various medical "cures" for their sexual orientation, including castration for homosexuality. The treatment of gay and lesbian soldiers in the South African military was explored in a 2003 documentary film, titled *Property of the State*.
- ★ Organisations such as the Organisation of Lesbian and Gay Activists (OLGA) worked with the African National Congress to include protections for LGBT people in the new Constitution of South Africa.

A more detail timeline, stemming from the Dutch Settlers.

All the information on socio-political context is taken from Wikipedia.

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

POST-APARTHEID ERA

- ★ In **1993**, the African National Congress, in the *Bill of Rights*, **endorsed the legal recognition of same-sex marriages**, and the interim Constitution **prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation**. These provisions were kept in the new Constitution, **approved in 1996**, due to the lobbying efforts of LGBT South Africans.
- ★ As a result, **South Africa became the first nation in the world to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in its constitution**.
- ★ Two years later, the Constitutional Court of South Africa ruled in a landmark case that the law prohibiting homosexual conduct between consenting adults in private violated the Constitution.
- ★ In **1994**, during his inauguration speech as president, **Nelson Mandela** stated the following:

In 1980s, the African National Congress was still setting the pace, being the first major political formation in South Africa to commit itself firmly to a Bill of Rights, which we published in November 1990. These milestones give concrete expression to what South Africa can become. They speak of a constitutional, democratic, political order in which, regardless of colour, gender, religion, political opinion or sexual orientation, the law will provide for the equal protection of all citizens.

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

POST-APARTHEID ERA

- ★ The **gay pride flag of South Africa**, designed by Eugene Brockman, is a hybrid of the LGBT rainbow flag and the South African national flag launched in 1994 after the end of the apartheid era. Brockman said "*I truly believe we (the LGBT community) put the dazzle into our rainbow nation and this flag is a symbol of just that*".
- ★ The stated purposes of the flag include celebrating legal same-sex marriage in South Africa and addressing issues such as discrimination, homophobia, corrective rape and hate crimes.
- ★ The flag is a gay pride symbol that aims to reflect the freedom and diversity of the South African nation and build pride in being an LGBT South African.



SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

POST-APARTHEID ERA

- ★ In **1998**, Parliament passed the **Employment Equity Act**. The law protects South Africans from labour discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, among other categories.
- ★ In **2000**, similar protections were extended to public accommodations and services, with the commencement of the **Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act**
- ★ In **2006**, the National Assembly voted 229–41 for a bill allowing **same-sex civil marriage**. However, civil servants and clergy can refuse to solemnise same-sex unions.
- ★ Not all ANC members supported the new law. Former South African President Jacob Zuma was among its most outspoken opponents.
- ★ Unlike Zuma, his successor **Cyril Ramaphosa** is considered LGBT-friendly and has a positive record regarding LGBT people and their rights.

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

POST-APARTHEID ERA

- ★ In **2017**, he said in a recorded video clip to celebrate LGBT History Month:

It is a sad truth that in our nation the LGBTI community are amongst the most vulnerable and marginalised. They suffer discrimination, violence and abuse. We must as a nation do better than what we are now. We are all born the way we are. We need to support, embrace and respect each other. When we treat each other with dignity, we are all more dignified. When we treat each other with respect, we are all more respected. It is upon us all to contribute to the creation of a more just, equal and safe society. Every South African must hold themselves, our communities, our institutions and our government accountable for upholding our laws and for protecting the rights of all in South Africa.

- ★ In **2019**, Cyril Ramaphosa included lesbian and gay people in his presidential inauguration speech, saying:

Let us end the dominion that men claim over women, the denial of opportunity, the abuse and the violence, the neglect, and the disregard of each person's equal rights. Let us build a society that protects and values those who are vulnerable and who for too long have been rendered marginal. A society where disability is no impediment, where there is tolerance, and where no person is judged on their sexual orientation, where no person suffers prejudice because of the colour of their skin, the language of their birth or their country of origin.

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

POST-APARTHEID ERA

- ★ The **Alteration of Sex Description and Sex Status Act, 2003** allows a person to change, under certain conditions, their sex recorded in the population registry.
- ★ Under the act, three types of people may apply to the Department of Home Affairs for a change of the sex description in their birth record: **people who have undergone surgical or medical sex reassignment, people whose sexual characteristics have evolved naturally, and intersex people.**
- ★ The applicant must submit **medical reports** describing their situation; in the case of intersex people they must also submit a psychological report stating that they have lived for two years with their chosen gender identity.
- ★ Once an application is approved the Department will issue a new birth certificate and identity document. The change in sex is valid for all purposes, but does not affect any rights or obligations the person had before it occurred.
- ★ The law was **criticised** by the Cape Town Transsexual/Transgender Support Group because it **requires medical or surgical treatment before a change can be registered**. Conversely, the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) objected to the act based on the belief that sex is biologically determined at birth. The ACDP and National Action were the only parties to vote against the bill in the National Assembly.

BORN NAKED

Production History

This version of *Born Naked* is an adaptation of Stephen Kotze's original student production. Kotze's original one act play was performed by Oratile Ndimande and Murray Hines from Lebone II – College of the Royal Bafokeng. Their production first premiered at the Lesedi Theatre as part of the 2016 Festival of Excellence in Dramatic Arts. It was later performed at the National Arts Festival and Lebone II – College of The Royal Bafokeng in Rustenburg as the winning FEDA play.

The **intention** of the original production was **to celebrate and educate audiences** about the transformative power of drag as an escape into beauty and love, whilst at the same time highlighting the injustices of homophobia and transphobia. Ultimately, the play was about self-discovery and emphasizing ideas of self-love and that we are all born equal.

The original play was then **DECONSTRUCTED** and adapted by Hijinks/ZikkaZimba productions in 2019 and **localised against a real event** - the murder of Thapelo Makutle in 2012.

In this form, the play has reached audiences around the country and continues to be an advocate for change. **Keeping Thapelo's memory alive is a weapon against discrimination.**

Article on Thapelo:

<https://mg.co.za/article/2012-06-28-gentle-mans-brutal-murder-turns-spotlight-on-intolerance/>





*Thapelo Makutle
Killed on Jun 9, 2012*

HEADLINE: Thapelo Makutle, gay pageant winner, killed and 'beheaded' in apparent hate crime...

Thapelo Makutle, 24, recently won a Miss Gay pageant in the small town of Kuruman, and volunteered for a gay and lesbian rights group that worked in rural communities. He was reportedly killed early Saturday following an argument over his sexuality with two unidentified men.

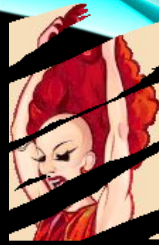
The men followed Makutle back to his rented room in Kuruman, broke down the door and attacked him, according to Shaine Griqua, director of the group LEGBO Northern Cape. Makutle's body was "severely mutilated," LEGBO said in a statement. "His throat was so badly slit, and it was near decapitation". "Unconfirmed reports from witnesses state that Thapelo's genitalia was severed and inserted into his mouth," the statement said, adding: "There are no signs that this was an attempted burglary, rather [it] is evident that [he] was killed because of his sexual orientation".

Makutle, who went by the nicknames ThaBling and **Queen Bling** and self-identified as gay and transgender, was a "well-mannered and principled human being," Griqua told South African website MambaOnline.

HATE CRIMES

- ★ A hate crime (also known as a bias-motivated crime or bias crime) is a **prejudice-motivated crime** which occurs when a perpetrator targets a victim because of their membership (or perceived membership) of a certain social group.
- ★ The act is motivated in whole or in part by prejudice or hatred regarding **an aspect of the victim's identity** (such as their race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation).
- ★ Hate crimes are often **premeditated**.
- ★ There are few laws against them, specifically hate crimes about someone's sexual orientation and identity.

THEATRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE



- ★ Broadly defined, **social justice theatre** is **theatre** that provokes in the audience an **empathetic response** to characters suffering various forms of injustice.
- ★ Theatre for social justice and change is **theatre for activism** - using theatre to **raise awareness** on (human) rights issues by **educating the audience**, and creating **empathy** and **connection**.
- ★ Human rights activism relies on an ability to tell stories to diverse audiences that will **inspire action toward justice**. In this way, theatre can be **healing**, shape **identity** and be **transformative** for audiences and performers alike. It is then a **theatre for education**.
- ★ Other forms include: Theatre of Healing, Theatre of the Oppressed*, Theatre of Identity, Theatre of Transformation, Educational Theatre
- ★ Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed is worth reading up on - read this [article](#) and this [Wikipedia Page](#).

“Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it.”

Augusto Boal



PLAYWRIGHTS' INTENTION

- ★ *Born Naked* was devised by **Kirsten Harris, Kopo Jake Nathane** and **Lethabo Bereng**.
- ★ To **raise important questions** about gender identity, queer representation, gender based violence (GBV), binary bias, cruelty of humanity, othering, racism, toxic heteronormative thinking, and hetero-exclusive colonial conformity in South Africa **BUT encouraging the audience to take responsibility for creating the answers**.
 - There are elements of Protest Theatre in this intention, but it is more postmodern in its style - there is no grand narrative or universal truth presented and therefore, WE, the audience, must become the **meaning-makers and determine the truth**. Theatre humanises and sensitises us, but we must do the transformative work as active citizens of our country.
- ★ The devisers of this play **intend to create change in theatre and be a part of the evolution of society**. This is understood better when looking at Matt Adams' (from Blast Theory) comment: *"to be an activist is to be someone who can boil something down to a position that can be acted upon... but good art is doing something that's the opposite. If you know what you're being told about, it's already bankrupt"*.
 - *"The focus is on changing the world in the room, not always using the room to try and change the world"*.
Chris Johnston

PLAYWRIGHTS' INTENTION

- ★ “Theatre is at its best when it argues back to society” - Chris Johnston, author of Disobedient Theatre.
 - Disobedient Theatre sets out to create opportunities for **socially therapeutic and dissident art initiatives** in places such as prisons, schools and communities. It uses awkwardness to spur creativity and encourages dissonance, not to create harmony, but for the audience to resonate with the stories.

- ★ The following are some identifying elements of Disobedient Theatre in performance:
 - **Improvisation onstage** - Blaq Widow's broken shoe in the 2022 performance at St Benedict's and scene one
 - **Talking directly to the audience and them answering** - preset and scene one.
 - **A playing of the same status as the audience** - in scene one, the introduction to the the audience “*Oh, how rude of me, I haven't introduced myself. My name is Blaq Widow, with a “Q”*).
 - **An energy that is bigger and more raucous than any “traditional” acting style** - see acting style (characters) and lip synching.
 - **Talking openly about current politics** - often occurs in scene one, such as reference to corruption in the arts, mostly in Newtown (script). In 2020, it refers to privilege at Saints.
 - **A sexiness and intellectual smartness on stage** - Blaq Widow's use of puns, “*And you can call me Michelangelo, because I'm out here sculpting with my heels, my legs, my dress and...*”.
 - **Use of irony and satire** - “*Ahh! Clearly we have some home for the sexuals in the audience tonight*”.

- ★ This piece of theatre is argues against what society presents to its people. The intention is to tell the story of Thapelo and the community that he lived in, because people were **tolerant** of Thapelo, **not accepting**. The text is there to **deconstruct heteronormative narratives**. When injustice becomes law, resistance becomes a duty.

GENRE & STYLE: POSTMODERN SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE

The play is distinctly postmodern in its style:

- ★ Focuses on the **mini-narratives** of Blaq Widow and Queen Bling and **deconstructs** the master narrative of heteronormative thinking. The **multiple perspectives** evident in the play are from the creation process, which involved thorough research from multiple individuals.
- ★ **Truth is relative** - identity, concept of beauty and femininity.
- ★ Encourages **non-binary thinking** - in Scene 1, they discuss the importance of being yourself and not worrying if you have a “wors” or “snoekfish”.
- ★ **Deconstruction** – dramatically (the deconstruction of the well-made play into an episodic structure) and theatrically (the episodic scenes flow into one another without a traditional curtain/black out, even though there are flashbacks). The themes also reveal deconstruction of the grand narrative of heteronormative brainwashing.
- ★ **Death of the author** – the play was reimagined and recreated from a text written in 2016, It is a devised work, by the actors and director, and the audience are encouraged to create their own meaning from the various symbols and motifs.



GENRE & STYLE: POSTMODERN SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE

- ★ **Playful and irreverent** - particularly in Scene One, but peppered throughout the play to build a relationship with the audience. In Scene 4, Blaq Widow and Queen Bling discuss the lip kit that Blaq Widow said was a “*revlon lip kit*” and jokes that it was actually a “*clicks lip kit*”.
- ★ **A pastiche (supermarket of styles)** - Protest Theatre in the intention, Epic Theatre in the theatricalism (meta-theatre), Drag Performance, lip syncing, realism in the subtle acting moments, symbolism in the props and costume, stand up comedy, storytelling, Commedia dell’arte lazzi.
- ★ **Performances are not fixed but are flexible** - the actors work with the audience to create unique moments, and scene one is rewritten for each new location and space.
- ★ **Breaks down the 4th wall between audience and performers** as Blaq Widow and Queen Bling interact extensively with the audience (even moving into the auditorium).
- ★ **Self-reflexive / meta-theatre** – recognises that it is theatre, creating a play-within-a-play - referring to the lighting technician “*Barry*” (Barry Strydom).

GENRE & STYLE: POSTMODERN SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE



- ★ The **satirical nature** of the play makes the social issues more digestible, but we are also made to feel uncomfortable whilst we are educated.
- ★ The various styles contribute to the **intimate actor-audience relationship**. And, as a result, the audience empathise with the characters.
- ★ The **mini-narratives** of the characters reveal their emotions, struggles, dreams and aspirations so that they become relatable and real to us.

- ★ The play is broken up into **four parts**: Preset, Prologue, Scenes 1 - 12 (each with their own title), Epilogue.
- ★ The **loose episodic structure** unpacks the plot - Sechaba's show; Sechaba's vision; the introduction of Queen Bling; Sechaba is introduced into the House of Bling; Competition; Thapelo's murder.
- ★ The structure allows for a **fast pace**, introducing us to many elements of the characters quickly. This further helps to create an **intimate actor-audience relationship**.

STRUCTURE

PLOT & STRUCTURE

- ★ **PRESET:** Occurs as the audience enter the auditorium. It is important as it sets the **intimate actor-audience relationship** as **Blaq Widow dances and lip syncs** to well-known songs that have a deeper meaning or play a role later on in the performance (see MUSIC at the end).
- ★ **PROLOGUE:** The **Cover Girl** song is well-known because of the drag artist **RuPaul**. We get the sense that we have gone back in time. Another performer comes onto the stage, who is **Queen Bling**. The line, *"That was her favourite number"*, suggests to the audience that she has passed away.





PLOT & STRUCTURE

- ★ **SCENE ONE - BLAQ WIDOW:** Scene One is always rewritten to suit the audience.
- **Knockin' on Heaven's Door by Randy Crawford** plays. It could just be a transition song, or symbolic of the death of Queen Bling.
 - Blaq Widow continues to **interact with the audience**. She improvises and relates to the audience's context. For example, when performing for St Stithians, she refers to the demographics of the school as perceived by the public and parodies the school warcry.
 - She also interacts with the lighting designer, Barry to indicate **metatheatre**.
 - She **breaks the fourth wall** throughout the scene, flirting with the audience, reacting to their energy.
 - **Intertextuality** is evident when she refers to Hitchcock's *The Birds*; and the well-known phrase from Snow White, "Mirror mirror on the wall".
 - She uses **humour to address serious issues**, such as privilege and the social and class divide.
 - She **mixes South African languages** (English, Afrikaans, Sesotho, Setswana) and uses **crude language** such as "wors" referring to a penis and "snoek fish", referring to vaginas.
 - When Queen Bling enters, Scene One ends.

PLOT & STRUCTURE

★ SCENE TWO - QUEEN BLING:

- Scene begins with Queen Bling answering Blaq's comment regarding the mirror in the previous scene, "*Queen Bling is the fiercest of them all*". **Queen Bling is Blaq Widow's Drag Mother**, someone who acts as a mentor for a young drag queen. As such, she has more power than Blaq Widow.
- **Queen Bling introduces herself to the audience**, speaking about being "*trapped in that phase*" and reflects the fact that people once said she was only in a phase. She did not experience a "phase". It is simply who she really is. When she says "*I am a true and articulate representation of the 21st Century*", she is **deconstructing heteronormative narratives**.
- The song **I am Woman by Helen Reddy** relates to Queen Bling's character as she identifies as female. The song symbolises how strong and ready she is to overcome harmful heteronormative thinking.
- Blaq Widow gets too excited and steals the spotlight from Queen Bling, which is where the scene ends.

★ SCENE THREE - THE GENDER BENDING ILLUSIONISTS:

- **Intertextuality** - Queen Bling "*Condragulations*", from RuPaul's Drag Race.
- Queen Bling - "*A drag queen is a gender-bending illusionist - the consummate entertainer*" refers to how clothing can change someone's look.
- Blaq Widow exposes that **Queen Bling is not a real woman, yet** (because she is transgender). Queen Bling takes hormone pills (estrogen) as part of her transition process.
- Midnight Train to Georgia by Gladys Knight is changed to **Midnight Train to Pretoria**, more **intertextuality**, and introduces the next scene.

PLOT & STRUCTURE

★ SCENE FOUR - JOURNEY:

- This scene is a **flashback**, and focuses on how the two characters **met on a train over a three week process**. They tell the audience their truth and their relevant background.
- The actors use the platform and sounds to indicate a train, making the audience imagine the potential set. The changing of sides indicates time passing.
- **Week 1** - Sechaba is 16 and was just kicked out of his house by his dad. Queen Bling is 22 and is going to her first appointment with her psychiatrist to become a woman.
- **Week 2** - Sechaba realises that the world and nation are not ready for him. Queen Bling is 22 and realises the process will be long and complicated.
- **Week 3** - Sechaba is still 16 but this time he is looking for a friend. Queen Bling is still 22. She is broke but she has saved just enough money for her “*top surgery*” (breasts).
- **Queen Bling and Sechaba meet on the train** and we are introduced to the **motif of lip smacking**. Queen Bling gives Sechaba her case of lipstick. We learn of **past trauma** when Sechaba says that he was hit because he was gay. Queen Bling assists Sechaba with his “*coronation*” (induction) into the drag world.





SCENE FIVE - HOUSE OF BLING:

- Vogue by Madonna is playing in the background.
- Queen Bling speaks about her **lessons and rules**. Lesson 101 is the costume. Rule 1 - no discrimination, other than against all fashion faux pas. Rule 2 - Queen Bling's authority is not to be questioned.
- **Queen Bling reminisces about her past** and when she was first on stage. This monologue is a **direct address** to the audience. Lesson 102 is the make-up. Queen bling gives Sechaba shoes but struggles to let them go. This creates a comedic moment. Lesson 103 is the catwalk. Sechaba learns how to walk in high heels as it is a new experience for him. A lot of comedic elements are brought into how Sechaba walks, with specific reference to a **Commedia dell'arte lazzi - supermarket of styles**.
- There is a sense of the **passing of time** as Sechaba becomes more confident in his walk, and a **sense of vulnerability** in his transformation story that lures the audience in. Blaq Widow is born.
- Sechaba and Queen Bling **prepare for Miss Gay Jozi**. RuPaul's Sissy That Walk fades in and they start speaking about the Miss Gay Jozi preparation. We know something went wrong as Blaq Widow doesn't want to tell this "*horrific situation*". Scene ends.



PLOT & STRUCTURE

★ SCENE SIX - MISS GAY JOZI:

- They take the train to the pageant in another **flashback scene**. Another **comedic moment** occurs when they “speed off” but, in actuality, Queen Bling struggles to push the platform towards centre stage. The physical movement is slow and laboured which contrasts the fact that they “sped off”.
- The moment where Blaq Widow sits on the platform while Queenie stands above her represents a **shift in the power dynamic**. The lighting has become cooler, with colours like blue and teal, representing a cold and hostile environment. The costumes are similar to each other. The skirts are the same with a different top, symbolising the drag mother and drag daughter. Blaq Widow is getting out of hand.
- Poker Face by Lady Gaga starts playing and the tension disappears. Blaq Widow faces the back and voices the pageant announcer. Blaq Widow mentions Ms Somizi Mhlongo (one of the first Black South Africans to publicly announce that he is gay) and Evita Bezuidenhout.
- The two characters prepare for the pageant. “*Don’t fuck it up*” is an **intertextual reference** to RuPaul’s Drag Race. Run The World (Girls) by Beyonce starts playing introducing the start of the pageant. C.U.N.T stands for Charisma, Uniqueness, Nerve and Talent. The two characters **prepare for the interviews** and Blaq Widow has stolen Queen Bling’s speech. Queen Bling gets payback and exposes Blaq Widow’s past. Blaq Widow turns his back to the audience and voices the host. He plays multiple roles in this scene.
- Blaq Widow and Queen Bling are in the **top four** and have to lip sync for their life - more intertextual reference to RuPaul’s Drag Race. The two queens lip sync to try and outplay the other. They lip sync Waterloo by Abba. Blaq Widow is ‘revealed’ when Queen Bling rips off her wig. She strips off her skirt and throws it onto Queen Bling. They begin **beating each other and fighting**. They stop when they know they “*fucked it up*”.

PLOT & STRUCTURE

★ SCENE SEVEN - BOY:

- They **meet back at the train station**, both disappointed and simultaneously enraged by what has happened. They start blaming each other. Queen reminds Blaq that the heels, makeup, dress, wig that she is wearing, all belong to Queen. Blaq Widow replies by saying *"You're just a silly, confused little boy."* She smacks her lips aggressively to mimic and antagonise Bling. There is silence for the rest of the scene.
- The lights crossfade to signal that the train has arrived. Both actors take their positions back-to-back on the 'train'. They use their voices to make train sounds (an element of Poor and Protest Theatre). The train ride ends, they look at each other and **go their separate ways**. Queen Bling moves stage left and Blaq Widow moves stage right to go back to her dressing table.

PLOT & STRUCTURE

★ SCENE EIGHT - IF I KNEW THIS THEN:

- The lighting state shifts to indicate **the present moment**.
- Blaq Widow is standing in front of her dressing table whilst holding onto Queen Bling's red earrings. This scene is composed of Blaq Widow's monologue where she expresses her **utter regret and frustration**. She admits that she could have done things differently. She blames it on the fact that it was because she was young and naive. She explains their preparation process and how hard the two of them worked for that moment. She is disappointed in herself for saying the insensitive things that she said and regrets it entirely.
- The scene ends in silence. Blaq moves behind the mobile platform where Queen Bling is now seated.



SCENE NINE - BORN THIS WAY:

- Blaq and Queen reconcile. It begins with Queen criticising Blaq who is still wearing Brut. Blaq's reply links to how **society disapproves of trans people or people of the LGBTQ+ community**. "*I can't be wearing Britney Bitch ko s'kolong*". In this, the audience picks up how Blaq Widow cannot be her true self at school or else she will be judged. She has to live and pretend to be someone she is not out of fear.
- Blaq Widow apologises profusely for what she said and did to Queen Bling. Queen Bling speaks about how she has grown to become resilient - "*Enough concealer to keep them out.. Eyeliner thick enough to stop the tears... Waterproof mascara to bat away their spit*". This shows how **she blocks out the hatred and discrimination using makeup**. Something that was frowned upon for men to use and something that is worn exaggeratedly in drag. They reconcile and begin talking about Queen Bling's surgery.
- Blaq speaks about her **fear and worries regarding the surgery** and Queen replies with "*I rise*" showing how she is ready for the next journey in her life. The "*I rise*" makes reference to Maya Angelou's poem, which is repeated in the final scene. The two speak about the surgery. Blaq is scared of the discrimination Queen will face in hospital whilst getting this procedure. Blaq Widow suggests that Queen has the procedure at Groote Schuur because the treatment is better. Queen Bling's reply indicates where she came from "*... Northern Cape to Gauteng*". Queen Bling also shares that her ID still has her other name. It hasn't changed because she hasn't had the surgery yet. She does not give this name but we are familiar with the message and whose story is being told, so we know her real name was Thapelo.
- The scene ends with Queen Bling telling Blaq Widow that the next part of becoming a womxn has arrived as next week she will "*be on the midnight train to Pretoria*" to go for her first surgical procedure. She is getting her implants.

PLOT & STRUCTURE



SCENE TEN - BORN MAPONAPONA:

- The scene continues with the conversation between Blaq and Queen about the surgery. Blaq expresses how excited she is for her and introduces her big plans to for Blaq Widow and Queen Bling to take on the **2013 National Arts Festival** and have a show called “Born Maponapona.”
- Blaq explains that she will be Zola (she places a cap on her head when she says this. By doing so she transitions into a masculine version of Zola) and Queen will be Unathi but Bling is disinterested as she doesn’t do festivals. Zola and Unathi’s Sana Luwa (That’s the Way Love Is) starts to play. As the volume increases, the lighting state changes. Blaq Widow entices Queen Bling until she gives in and the **two of them start the lip sync routine.**
- Blaq Widow says it is “*too ratchet*” and hatches a new plan to “*head off to the Caucasian slopes of Sandton, to the Caucasian slopes of Hollywood, [Bling] as QiQi Dee and [Blaq] as Elton John*”. This second plan satisfies Queen Bling. Elton John and Kiki Dee’s Don’t Go Breaking My Heart starts to play and the two of them perform this number together. They love every moment. Queen Bling finishes the dance, steps off the platform and moves to her dressing table. Blaq Widow, as usual, gets carried away and continues to dance excitedly. Queen Bling stares at Blaq Widow. Embarrassed, Blaq Widow stops dancing and moves to the dressing table to help Queen Bling with her costume. Queen Bling suggests that the two are in the **mood to celebrate and wants a girls night out.** The scene ends with Queen Bling saying “*let’s get ready*”.

PLOT & STRUCTURE



PLOT & STRUCTURE

★ SCENE ELEVEN - THREE BEATS:

- Both actors are standing at Queen Bling's dressing table. Queen Bling picks up the **red cape** from her dressing table and places it around her shoulder. Blaq Widow says that she wishes she could go out with her. She doesn't because she needs to study for Matric exams. They begin their makeup ritual. "*Lips. Eyes. Contouring. Beat*" Both: "*Amen amen.*"
- Blaq Widow closes her eyes and when she opens them, she starts to move forward as Queen Bling turns around to move upstage and slowly **becomes a memory of the past**. This moment is **spiritual and ritualistic**.
- The scene ends when the lighting state changes gradually as we return to the **present moment** with Blaq Widow.

★ SCENE TWELVE - THAPELO:

- Blaq Widow remembers that that was the last time she saw Queen Bling. "*Seven years, and it still feels like yesterday.*" She recounts the events that are a **direct reference to the story of Thapelo Makhutle**.
- Thapelo was out with friends one night at the local tavern. *Paradise Road* starts to play softly in the background. Queen Bling stands on the mobile platform staring into the audience with no emotion. Blaq tells the audience how an argument started when two men approached Bling and questioned her gender and sexuality. What happened to Thapelo is explained in detail to the audience. At the end of the performance, we find out that Queen Bling's real name was Thapelo. The final scene **captures the argument against society about what happened to Thapelo**. Blaq Widow turns to the audience and to the rainbow flagged skirt and criticises South Africa for allowing such an act of hatred to happen. "*South Africa, my home. Your home. Our home. We did this. Maybe, if we keep talking about it, then Thapelo's death would not have been in vain.*" Blaq Widow sits on the edge of the mobile platform clutching Queen Bling's costume. The volume slowly increases. The lighting state slowly starts to shift, lighting up Queen Bling. *Paradise Road* plays louder.

PLOT & STRUCTURE



EPILOGUE - PARADISE ROAD:

- Blaq Widow sings Joy's Paradise Road at Queen Bling's feet. Queen Bling is standing over her and slowly **raises her arms to the heavens to reveal the red cape as blood red angel wings**. As Blaq Widow sings, Queen Bling slowly moves her head as though she is watching over Blaq Widow, lovingly and tenderly.
- The song and lighting fade simultaneously. There is a black out and the scene ends.



Check out the DRAG dictionary of words on the link below. There are many words and phrases that have become mainstream which have their origins in DRAG culture. https://rupaulsdragrace.fandom.com/wiki/RuPaul%27s_Drag_Race_Dictionary

LANGUAGE & DIALOGUE

- ★ The language and dialogue in the play create a **localised South African landscape** with its extensive use of South African vernacular and slang. Examples: “moghel”, “bhuti”, “yeses wena”.
- ★ The language is **relatable and familiar**. This also helps the audience to get to know the characters, understand their inner worlds, hopes and aspirations. Queen Bling: “*Ke ngwanyana wa ‘champagne darling’*”.
- ★ The use of **comedy (vocal and body language)** “*It doesn’t matter if you are her (patting her groin grotesquely) serving like a wors or snoekfish*”, as well as the **improvisational dialogue** and interaction with the audience (Scene One), help to promote the intimate actor-audience relationship.
- ★ There is extensive use of **queer vernacular**, which helps to educate and navigate the audience through the world of Drag: “*condragulations*”.
- ★ The language is **postmodern** as it challenges heteronormative restrictions on the use of language and helps the characters speak their own truths: Queen Bling “*I am Womxn*”.

Blaq Widow (she, her)

- ★ 25 year old gender non-conforming Sesotho speaking drag artist from Soweto. This is the age she is in the story - seven years after Queen Bling's death.
- ★ She is 18 when Queen Bling is killed.
- ★ She is cisgender but moves fluidly between her femininity and masculinity.
- ★ Blaq Widow's given name is Sechaba. As a young boy, Sechaba was sent away by his mother due to the conflict between him and his father. Sechaba went to live with his grandmother in Soweto.
- ★ He was 16 when he met Queen Bling on a train.

Queen Bling (she, her)

- ★ An imagined character. We see her as Blaq Widow remembers her.
- ★ Queen Bling is a 24-year-old Setswana womxn from the Northern Cape. She identifies as a transgender womxn. This is the age when she died.
- ★ Queen Bling was born in 1988, raised in the Northern Cape and later moved to Soweto near Johannesburg. The character of Queen Bling is loosely inspired by the life of Thapelo Makhutle.
- ★ She is Blaq Widow's Drag Mother. She was 22 when she meets Sechaba on the train.
- ★ She was in the process of legally transitioning through top surgery.



CHARACTERS

Acting Style

- ★ There is a **heightened theatricality** to the physical and vocal expression of the characters, bordering on realism but with more visceral energy (disobedient theatre).
 - This is evident during Scene 11: Three Beats. The motif of the three beats and the various lessons such “*lips, eyes, contouring, beat*”.
 - All the moments of lip syncing - “Don’t Go Breaking My Heart”, the Preset and various other moments.
 - Even emotional moments, such as in Scene 9: Born This Way when Queen Bling quotes Maya Angelou’s poem “I Rise” in response to Blaq Widow’s interrogation.
- ★ This theatricality is **juxtaposed** with the sincere, more subtle emotions expressed during more sombre moments, such as Queen Bling’s death as described by Blaq Widow in Scene 12: Thapelo.

ACTING STYLE



THEMES

★ Fantasy, Escape and Transformation out of Violence

- Blaq Widow's memories of Queen Bling, experienced in the flashback scenes such as the Prologue, are mostly ones of joy and resilience, regardless of the circumstance of her death - Stage direction: *Queen Bling exits as Blaq Widow swirls in a circle with her eyes closed, enjoying the moment, music and memory.*
- The final image in the epilogue, as Queen Bling raises "*the red cape as blood red angel wings*" symbolises the phoenix rising from the ashes, just as victims of hate crimes should be able to. Her gold butterfly bodice also represents metamorphosis and transformation.
- **Queen Bling was not accepted as a child.** "*That christmas, I got the truck that was next to her (doll) in the display and I thought a girl like that would never be caught in a truck like this...*"



THEMES

★ Deconstructing Homophobia & Transphobia

- Queen Bling's line *"don't worry baby girl, all the best Queens have fallen. It's how you pick yourself up and slay that runway"* is symbolic of the discrimination experienced by many members of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- The many examples where Blaq Widow directly confronts members of the audience (such as the bird seed breasts) creates discomfort and re-examination.
- RuPaul's famous quote, *"We're born naked, and the rest is... drag."* which shows that everyone is born human.
- Blaq Widow scrutinizes Queen Bling for taking what she believes is *"testosterone builders"* which is actually H-R-T. In response she says *"This theatre and this country have no place for you prejudice."* Pg46
- When Sechaba is being introduced to drag by Queen Bling, Queen Bling lists her rules *"One, there is no discrimination, other than against all faux fashion."* Pg55



★ Queer Identity and Discovering One's Personal Truth

- Queen Bling is assured in her identity as a *“true and articulate representation of the 21st Century... still ‘trapped’ in that ‘phase’”*.
- Blaq Widow's acceptance of herself is evident in the line: *“years and years of black eyes, years, and years of crying myself to sleep led to this one moment... a moment where the QUEEN was born”*.
- Queen Bling always used to say to Blaq Widow *“it doesn't matter if here you are serving a wors or a snoekfish, you are who you are. So be yourself, paint that canvas!”* Pg33
- When Queen Bling is giving Sechaba her first ever pair of heels, she tells her that *“these are not just heels, these are elevators lifting you up to the heavens.”* Pg57
- When Queen Bling is sharing her struggles of getting transition surgery and Blaq suggests going to the Western Cape to get it, she responds that *“This is not a road trip, it's a life change.”* Pg81

THEMES



THEMES

★ Rebirth & Redemption after Previous Queer Erasure

- Queen Bling's strength is captured in the lyrics of Helen Reddy's song I Am Woman.
- The characters are powerful because they have survived hate and discrimination, Queen Bling: *"The words - they tear into you, beat you back into the thing you hate... I know the mask I have to wear and it's strong - 3 beats strong"*. Queen Bling's response to Blaq Widow's concerns over her surgery, *"I rise"*.



★ The Power of Friendship and Sisterhood

- The effort and time (6 months) that Queen Bling invests into Sechaba to help him transform into Blaq Widow was her own choice. Blaq states: *"And for the first time someone had seen me for who I was. Someone that didn't want to hit me for no reason"*.
- Even after the debacle of Miss Gay Jozi, they forgive one another.
- When they first met on the train, *"When Blaq... first saw me on the train, I didn't see him..."* while for Sechaba, *"The first time I had seen her, I saw her completely."* Even though this was their first interaction, they still became friends even though Queen Bling never noticed her. -pg51
- After their fight where Blaq Widow calls her a *"confused boy"*, Queen Bling tells Blaq Widow in response to her comments that *"All those months I suffered to create you and all you give me are headaches... I've had enough of those family fights - I left that a long time ago. And now, finally, I am so close to my transition..."* -pg79



THEMES

★ The Promise of a Real Rainbow Nation

- Blaq Widow reminds the audience of the part they have to play in transforming our nation into one of acceptance, love and community: *“South African, my home. Your home. Our home. We did this. Maybe if we keep talking about it, then Thapelo’s death would not have been in vain”*. Scene 12
- *“Humanity.”* Blaq Widow about Thapelo’s death and how there was none. Scene 12
- The South African flag skirt should symbolise ‘home’ and inclusion, but it does not in the play - it is used as a criticism, much like designer Mattijs van Bergen’s and artist Oeri van Woezik’s skirt, representing 72 countries where homosexuality is still outlawed.
- *“Home affairs is one big pothole”* that won’t allow Queen Bling to change her ID to have her name as it still has her other name (dead name). *“They won’t change it until I have had surgery. They don’t understand that surgery won’t change who I am, it will make me look like the person that I already see in the mirror, the person I was born to be.”* -pg81



THEMES

SYMBOLS & MOTIFS & RITUALS

- ★ **Mannequin head:** memory of Queen Bling, foreshadows Thapelo's beheading.
- ★ **Mobile platform:** ideas of travel, escape, transition.
- ★ **Suitcases:** represents a journey, both a literal and figurative. Blaq Widow's transformation from Sechaba to Blaq Widow. Queen Bling's transition from male to female. It signifies the journey taken by people of the LGBTQIA+ community or by trans people. It also represents the memories of Thapelo so they are contained and not forgotten.
- ★ **Shoes:** when Queen Bling hands over the shoes to Sechaba, it symbolises Sechaba's induction into the world of Drag and her inclusion in the "House of Bling". As Blaq becomes more confident in walking in the shoes, she becomes more confident in herself.
- ★ **Make-up ritual, with the sound effects and repetition:** symbolises the identity of the "House of Bling"; acceptance and induction into the world of Drag; a sense of achievement when Blaq gets the routine right.





SYMBOLS & MOTIFS & RITUALS

- ★ **South African flag dress:** criticises the violence, ignorance & hatred still prevalent in our supposed Rainbow Nation. South Africa is meant to be home but this society allows something like this to happen.
- ★ **Dressing tables:** linked to the identity of each character; transformation as they are bedazzled (much like the character's bedazzle themselves as they dress up in drag); escape into a new reality.
- ★ **Red Cape:** the red represents the violence experienced by many members of the LGBTQIA+ community, the lifting of the wings could be a symbol of an angel and reference to the Maya Angelou's poem title "*I rise*" from Scene Nine, there is also the element of the phoenix rising from the ashes transition, as Blaq Widow looks up to Queen Bling it becomes a memory. The red cape is also referred to in Scene 5, as the clothes Bling's admires on the dress up doll in the shop window (who also wore a gold bodice and black skirt).

ART OF DRAG

Cooper Coyle AKA Sugar's
[makeup tutorial](#)



- ★ The process of getting into drag or into character can take hours. A drag queen may aim for a certain style, celebrity impression, or message with their look. Hair, make-up, and costumes are the most important essentials for drag queens. Drag queens tend to go for a more exaggerated look with a lot more makeup than a typical woman would wear.
- ★ Some people do drag simply as a means of self-expression, but often drag queens (once they have completed a look) will go out to clubs and bars and perform in a "drag show". Many drag queens do dress up for money by doing different shows, but there are also drag queens that have full-time jobs but still enjoy dressing up in drag as a hobby.
- ★ Many parts of the drag show, and of the drag queens' other intellectual properties, cannot be protected by intellectual property law. To substitute the lack of legal protection, drag queens revert to social norms in order to protect their intellectual property.

WIGS & COSTUME & MAKE-UP

LIP SYNC AS AN ART FORM

- ★ In a lip sync performance, drag performers create their own theatre. The lip sync is the ultimate form of drag expression because beauty and art being wrung out of artifice is at the very heart of drag.
- ★ A good lip sync isn't merely about artifice, however. A talented lip- sync artist will find and express their own truth, separate from the original vocal artist's intent.
- ★ A truly masterful lip-sync artist will remix the emotions of a song, filter them through their own character and life experiences, punctuate them with exaggerated flourishes that almost act like a conductor's movements, and play with the audience's emotions and expectations like a virtuoso. It's like a remix without actually remixing.
- ★ Drag is often about repurposing or remixing from the dominant culture. Whether it's delivering a pastiche of Hollywood tropes or commenting on more important matters with political parody, whether it's serving realness or skewering social norms, the art of drag is constantly taking something "normal" and making it something ... else.
- ★ It is worth noting how the **music in the play adds to the narrative, revealing the emotions, struggles, dreams and aspirations of the characters.** The music also helps to create a bond with the characters. It reveals their inner worlds and through the music, the characters become relatable and real to us.



- ★ **SETTING:** A theatre, in the present moment.
- ★ **SET DESIGN:** is **flexible** and allows the characters to shift between the past and the present moment. We move between the present moment in the theatre but travel with the characters onto trains, into houses and the 2012 *Miss Gay Jozi* Drag Queen competition.
 - The set design, with all its colourful props and set pieces, **mirrors the beauty, colour and escapist feel of the Drag World.**
 - In the middle of the stage is a **small rectangular mobile platform stage on wheels**. This small mobile platform is covered with **kitsch LED lights**.
 - The one **black dressing table on wheels** with a chair is positioned stage right and it is adorned with props (makeup), feather boas adorning the mirror, and sequined fabric draping the bottom.
 - Another **dressing table and chair** is hidden backstage. During Scene 2, Blaq Widow fetches it from backstage and positions it stage left. It is dusty, but also adorned with feathers and props.
- ★ There are many **props** used throughout the play, such as the **large old brown suitcase** positioned off centre right. These are discussed under symbols.

SETTING & SET DESIGN



LIGHTING:

- ★ The **colourful** lighting employed throughout the duration of the play further adds to the **irreverent and theatrical atmosphere** of the production and represents the colourful nature of the Pride flag.
- ★ The lighting transports the audience between the 'theatrical' **memories** of the characters and the naturalistic reality of the **present**.
- ★ It also assists with the **meta-theatre** as the house lights are brought up to include the audience and they get the impression that they are attending an actual Drag show.

LIGHTING



LIGHTING TERMINOLOGY

- ★ **Colour** – *monochromatic* (one colour, effectively simple, stark); *complementary* (two complementary colours used together to create a contrast – green and red); *triad* (three colours to create a sense spectacle); *adjacent* (two colours next to each other on the colour wheel to create a faded, natural look); *warm and cool colours* to indicate naturalism or atmosphere (**warm - red, yellow & amber** = danger or comfort, daylight, sunset and sunrise) (**cool – blue, green & magenta** = sadness, distance, eeriness, night time). **There are NO rainbow colours and please use these colour names** (not pink/purple).
- ★ **Shape** – you can refer to **gobos** that create specific shapes (can be used as a cut-out shape on a par can – not that popular anymore – or an intel light).
- ★ **Position of fixtures** – *Backlighting* (fixture is placed upstage shining towards the audience); *Footlight* (fixture is placed on the floor, either downstage or on the sides, shining up towards the actors' faces); *Front lights/FOH Lights* (fixtures appear above auditorium to create a wash across the stage); *Downlighting/Top Lights/Top Side Lights* (fixture is placed above the stage shining down on to the actors' heads or on the side of the stage shining across the actor's head); *spot light* (singular fixture which isolates the actors on stage).
- ★ **Other than a follow spot or an intel light flashing or swirling, lighting cannot “move”** – it can only get brighter (more intense/sharper) or faded (less sharp/softer).
- ★ **There is NO DARK LIGHTING.** Lighting can only be dimmed.
- ★ **Shadows** can be created by focusing the beam of different fixtures and avoiding a general wash.

SONGS

PRESET:

- ★ Girls Just Want to Have Fun by Cyndi Lauper (<https://youtu.be/iRr5EasAg84>).
- ★ LoveGame by Lady Gaga (<https://youtu.be/1mB0tP1I-14>).
- ★ Believe by Cher (<https://youtu.be/nZXRv4MezEw>).
- ★ Respect by Aretha Franklin (<https://youtu.be/6FOUqQt3Kg0>).
- ★ Heart of Glass by Blondie (<https://youtu.be/BrcvwOkIWkA>).
- ★ Black Widow (ft. Rita Ora) By Iggy Azalea (<https://youtu.be/u3u22OYqFG0>) - song starts 1:42 seconds in.
- ★ I Wanna Dance With Somebody by Whitney Houston (<https://youtu.be/2dzf4T3RbEc>).
- ★ I'm Coming Out by Diana Ross (<https://youtu.be/zbYcte4ZEgQ>).
- ★ What's Love Got To Do With It by Tina Turner (<https://youtu.be/qsfeq7k34c0>).

SONGS

PROLOGUE - SCENE 12:

- ★ Cover Girl by RuPaul (<https://youtu.be/gycbV9iSTLg>).
- ★ Knockin' On Heaven's Door by Randy Crawford (<https://youtu.be/HVA-Elh88l0>).
- ★ We Are Growing by Margaret Singana (<https://youtu.be/9u7o-jRe6DI>).
- ★ Weekend Special by Brenda Fassie (<https://youtu.be/2g0hYgsy4Vc>).
- ★ I am Woman by Helen Reddy (https://youtu.be/DlMgZa_2wEs).
- ★ Don't Stop Believin' by Journey (<https://youtu.be/1k8craCGpgs>).
- ★ Vogue by Madonna (<https://youtu.be/fJXv48yWuk4>).
- ★ Sissy That Walk by RuPaul (<https://youtu.be/xV27kZDMboc>).
- ★ Poker Face by Lady Gaga (<https://youtu.be/oG-4Uvhm4ll>).
- ★ Run the World (Girls) by Beyoncé (https://youtu.be/XC7eRmnfZ_A).
- ★ Waves by Mattia Cupelli (<https://youtu.be/d2TqpolPwZo>).
- ★ Beautiful Build up music "Glory" by FesliyanStudios (<https://youtu.be/zEq73szLJPw>).
- ★ Waterloo by ABBA (https://youtu.be/Sj_9CiNkkn4).
- ★ Sana Luma (That's the way love is) by Zola ft. Unathi (<https://youtu.be/62SwesxUwJ8>).
- ★ Don't Go Breaking My Heart by Elton John & Kiki Dee (<https://youtu.be/z0qW9P-uYfM>).
- ★ Paradise Road by Joy (<https://youtu.be/gIGj8nrE5Xs>). (also in the epilogue).

SONGS

CURTAIN CALL/POST-SHOW:

- ★ I Am What I Am by Gloria Gaynor (https://youtu.be/ifxKMz_BkDg).
- ★ Ashes by Kopo Jake Nathane (<https://youtu.be/leAc8lgH1Rw>).
- ★ Just Dance (ft. Colby O'Donis) by Lady Gaga (<https://youtu.be/ACNwMzZejQQv>).
- ★ Mad As Hell (ft. Umlilo & Stash Crew) Rainbow Riots (<https://youtu.be/KAUNX-BBy3c>).



RELEVANCE & EFFICACY



GLOBAL & SOUTH AFRICAN RELEVANCE:

- The gay panic defense law in the USA , in which a person can claim to have acted in a violent manner due to temporary insanity, allow for the murder, manslaughter and assault of transgender people and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. It must be noted that gay/trans panic is not an affirmative legal defense; it is a tactic to strengthen the defense by playing on prejudice. It has, however, been used to not only explain a defendant's actions, but to excuse them as well. As from 2019, only eight American states have banned this 'law' has a means to excuse their act of violence. Countries which have had similar versions to this law include Australia, New Zealand, the U.K and the Philippines.
- There are **64 countries where being gay is still illegal**. "Gay-activity" is illegal in these countries. Born Naked encourages people to challenge their own concepts of gender and gendered beauty through its dialogue and postmodern style, which is effective in educating the audience about the relevant issue presented to them.
- A few names of those who have lost their lives from hate crimes: Siphamandla Khoza, Andile 'Lulu' Nthuthela, Nathaniel "Spokgoane" Mbele, Lonwabo 'Jack', Noxolo Nogwaza. Here are more.
- This article outlines various impacts on members of the LGBTQIA+ community, including hate crimes, economic disempowerment, religious discrimination (and support). This article outlines statistics from 2021, documenting specific attacks and pending cases. This article shows how in 2023, little has changed.

RELEVANCE & EFFICACY



RELEVANCE FROM THE PLAY:

- Scene 12 highlights Thapelo's death, hate crimes and discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community. This scene challenges the audience and leaves it to them, "*We, South Africa*" to bring about the necessary change, without giving the audience the plan of action to follow. The audience is left to decide how they can bring justice and transformative action.
- The symbolic images of the **red cape** and the representation of the **phoenix rising from the ashes** are relevant because Queen Bling rises above the pain and promotes a rebirth of healing.
- The postmodern style of the play encourages the deconstruction of master narratives that challenge the audience, whether they are members of the LGBTQIA+ community, allies, discriminators, or somewhere inbetween. This play speaks to everyone.
- One of the **themes** of the play promotes the interrogation of one's identity, encouraging freedom of expression, broadening horizons and introspection to be authentically yourself. This is something that is relevant in our society as people are being brought up to fit a 'mould' and not express themselves authentically, as they would be criticised for doing so.
- The play was **first produced in 2019**, yet little progress has been made, and that is why the play is still relevant and should be performed so that the relevance and importance is still being communicated to educate and promote change. [Review 1](#), [Review 2](#), [Review 3](#), [Review 4](#).