

PERFORMANCE

Jaspreet Sidhu

So, there's no Indian function that is complete without some kind of entertainment whether it be singing or performance. So, we have for your pleasure right now, we have a lovely young lady, Aditi Bhalla, Aditi has been performing and choreographing dances for over 20 years she dances Bollywood, hip-hop, contemporary and pangara to name a few styles. Being a Kenyan-born Indian growing up in Australia has allowed her to find her own space using very different dance styles and stories together. I did the aims to create impact, burst open stereotypes, and share stories through the performing arts as such she creates her work under the name dance is boundless. Aditi was part of the 2019 YouTube creators for the change program. She was one of three YouTube channels to represent Australia. The program allowed her to work alongside YouTube, The United Nations development program, and a not-for-profit organization known as all together now. Her three-part video series dancing through cultural distress explores racism and cultural understanding as well as the effects on how it has on individuals in the ethnic community. Ladies and gentlemen, please make welcome Aditi Bhalla

Aditi Bhalla

Thank you, hi everyone thanks you so much YSPN for having me here today. It's honestly such a privilege so yes just a little bit more about what I'll be doing today, so firstly, I created my YouTube channel really to break barriers of the dance content that I wanted to share and try to avoid being put into a category So the two pieces that I'll be performing today from the creators for change program, the first is called 'what they think' it's my friend Raj [02:12 inaudible] story and it explores the effect of racism that it can have on your mental health; so, Raj is one of the only Punjabi's friends I have who is currently talking about mental health within the community and among his network. Why is it so taboo? why don't we reach out, why don't we talk about it? So, let's change the dialogue today through sharing, and the second piece today is my story, who I am and it explores the cultural struggle of identity and racism and how it can impact your subconscious as well as acceptance. A lot of us have grown up in you know a mix of cultures pulling between western and Indian and while most of it is great and I love both it can be confusing growing up, and we often feel like why do we feel like we have to sometimes showcase more of one than the other in certain situations and vice versa. so maybe if I share my story then you will too and eyes will be opened so softer words shine through. These are our stories:

Music:

I wasn't okay but they could never understand, so I stopped wearing my heart on my sleeve and I just felt cold but so did the people and their accomplice they kept going too, the way I walked, the way I talked there was nowhere for this [03:42 inaudible] to go but inside my head so I let it simmer and under the shame and embarrassment [03:49 inaudible] but I can imagine all, you see when you get to a bottle there is no place to go for [03:58 inaudible] when you clean this length you have no cultural expectations to live up to I keep myself up without the burden I turned it into a story for others so that others do

not have to suffer in silence now but if people ask me are you okay I give them my heart and I make them understand this is my story.

So growing up it was normal to get comments thrown you know for being different we never discussed it though that feeling resembles what I got, your people are dirty, your skin is dirty, it's ironic that they tagged the days to get close to my collar, to my people, to my culture constantly breathing in the cultural appropriation. I wasn't always immune though I grew up being unsure of who to be what do I project to other people an Indian an Australian, I was born in Kenya so what will be accepted growing up in cultural confusion questioning myself but maybe it wasn't me I should have been questioning maybe it was a lack of knowledge or maybe just confined thoughts you see realizing me became my tower celebrating me broke down barriers and if I celebrate it maybe you will too and I still keep opening so soft to work [06:09 inaudible] this is my story.