

Turning Point

Sweet Patootee Arts, video installation

“They needed to get out under any circumstances, because it was a slave mentality in the place.” Miss B, interviewed 1999

Oral testimonies have inspired immersive, irreverent storytelling. Caribbean melodrama and comedy are used to spotlight ‘freedom’ in Britain’s former slave colonies after the First World War. Ordinary Black men and women, at the bottom of the colonial social ladder, are brought out of the shadows. All is evoked in four monologue-style performances combined with projection, and 3D sound.

Building the Panama Canal, and First World War experiences, fuel sharp-tongued sparring and brazen defiance... It’s a new era for Black identity and pride: **Turning Point**.

Funded by Arts Council England, Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, The Arsenal Foundation, and Crowdfunder donations.

About the artist

Tony T was born in London’s East End. His Caribbean Black heritage and Britain’s colonial history are touchstones for storytelling. The stories explore neglected journeys of Diaspora, identity, race, class, and gender. Public participation drives an interdisciplinary practice framed by his research and writing. Tony’s work embraces personal testimony, filmmaking, performance, sound design and new media.

In 1996 Tony established production company Sweet Patootee Ltd with Rebecca Goldstone. They launched non-profit company Sweet Patootee Arts in 2017.



Sweet Patootee Arts



LOTTERY FUNDED

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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Please note, these films contain content which some visitors may find upsetting or distressing.

Cedric's story: Jamaica 1920

It's early morning.
A water break
during the harvest
of a dense tall
sugarcane field.
Machete sharpener
and former soldier



Cedric Dunn (Ashley D. Gayle) is a survivor of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. He recounts his experiences, facing down taunts of 'wartime coward'. But his insights are also profound challenges to notions of Black inferiority.

Running time: 9 Minutes

Velda's story: Barbados 1920

It's mid-morning.
A country town's
vibrant open-air
market pauses
on the arrival of a
bedraggled fugitive.



Velda Moe (Veronica Beatrice Lewis) is an agricultural labourer wanted on a charge of 'assaulting a White overseer in pursuance of his duty'. She's ready to go to jail so her mother can keep her job and home on the plantation. But she'll have her say first.

Running time: 11 Minutes

Beulah's story: Jamaica 1920

It's noon. Meal
break in the harvest
of a dense tall
sugarcane field.
Women labourers
crowd the ox cart
of long-lost Beulah



Towne (Suzette Llewellyn). Charismatic Beulah gives a bawdy account of her adventures in Panama, living and working as a man. She learned to 'pass', gained a wife and lovers, and went from fear to living... but can she live and work here without hiding?

Running time: 11 Minutes

Cephus' story: Barbados 1920

It's mid-afternoon.
Gossips forget
fugitive Velda's bold
show that morning
when a quarrel
erupts to delight
the busy open-air



market. 'Rich-mahogany' General Store Manager, Cephus Carter (Paterson Joseph) models his new hat to onlookers. Then his 'light caramel' sweetheart Peroosha Bryce tongue-lashes him for selling rum that disgraces her First World War-veteran brother. Cornered in public, he must choose – 'Blackness' or 'betterment'?

Running time: 9 Minutes

If you have been affected by the issues raised in *Turning Point*, these organisations can offer advice and support:

MIND has a confidential infoline providing information and signposting to tailored services. Their website has a comprehensive list of organisations that can support people affected by racism.

0300 123 3393

mind.org.uk

Combat Stress provides a confidential mental health helpline for serving and ex-service people with PTSD, depression and anxiety disorders.

0800 138 1619 (24 hours)

combatstress.org.uk

Rape Crisis England & Wales offers confidential support and information to people in England and Wales who have survived any form of sexual violence, no matter how long ago. They also provide immediate support to friends and family on how to support survivors of sexual violence.

0808 802 9999 (12–2:30pm and 7–9:30pm daily)

rapecrisis.org.uk

PTSD Resolution provides treatment to veterans and reservists to enable them to resolve the mental health problems associated with military trauma.

0300 302 0551

ptsdresolution.org