

Who are we and why are we here? Why are we talking today about stereotypes? Like how did we come from last week being in this space and today sitting down recording a podcast on stereotypes?

Sorry.

Yeah, go ahead.

So, we came in last week to look at the art and basically react to it and understand what was going on.

Mm hmm. And a lot of the things that we either watched or read or looked at... the artist was trying to break stereotypes that were put on Indigenous women.

We just started texting about it and we decided, you know...

to explore stereotypes that we've placed on others and that have been placed on us.

O.K.

When we explored the gallery like it provoked thoughts on the way we've experienced stereotypes.

Our process was...

Oh yeah, wait. So, we're supposed to talk about how we overcome them or how we like it, not necessarily ignore them.

And that's interesting, not having the conversation just be like, "Oh, I, I, I'm thrown these oppressive judgments", and leaving it there, but like having a discussion about how... what we can do about them.

Yeah. All right. What was the question?

So, a stereotype based on the description is an oversimplification of something, right? And it's an oversimplification because our identities as human beings are composed of so many different traits, right?

Yeah. Mm hmm.

We code switch a lot. And so when I'm at school, I sound intellectual, and when I go to work it's completely different, you know... the way I speak to my friends or family.

Exactly.

So, code switching. So, we get stereotyped... and it's not even like our full selves because we are ourselves, like, only showing one facet.

Mm hmm. Right. Well, it's half the time we have to.

Exactly.

Because, for example, if I speak at school the way I speak at work, they'll be like, "Oh, she's unintelligent."

Also, like, I feel like regardless of how you carry yourself, people are going to, like, perceive you a certain way. Like, even for me, people always just assume I'm aggressive and like, I won't be doing anything, you know? I'm just... I don't know. Yeah. Like, I don't put my hands on anybody. And, like, they'll just automatically assume that I'll, like, hurt them. So, it's like...

And you're so chill... you just sit there.

Yeah, like, I don't be talking to nobody.

And, "hurt them" ... Like, that's intense!

It's fear, you know?

Yeah. Like if you react or even if you don't react, you know, like, oh, it's just going to...

"You're aggressive."

Yeah, why can't we like be passionate. Or why can't we just try to explain something?

It's always like you're loud and you're wrong.

Mm hmm. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

People like... not that they... they try to, like, get us to that point.

Exactly!

You know what I mean, and then when we're, like, and we're fed up, like, that's when they're like, "Yo, you're overreacting... it's not that deep."

But, like, you've gotten me to this point, like, even if you don't... they might not do it purposely, but it's like they're doing it.

Yeah.

And I feel like they know what they're doing.

Subconsciously.

Exactly.

Yeah, yeah.

To get us to the point where we need to raise our voice to be heard, you know? And then... and then they think that.

Exactly.

They think it's aggression or...

Yeah, as if we're just trying to be loud and stuff.

Exactly.

Or if you're serious with them, you're like, fully talking. Fully like, not fun, but fully, like, honest. Like, yeah, I want to tell you this like this because this reason...

It's like if the stereotypes about women, because women are... I grew up being told like, oh, you're, you're too emotional or you're not... women are not rational. That is layered on top of what you're saying, like being a woman of color, right? Being a Black woman, it's just like these layers of stereotypes that intersect.

Like, if you feel like, okay, you have an obligation to dress a certain way depending on where you go.

Mm hmm... the codes.

I mean, yeah.

I could give an example. I don't know because I don't know if this is what you really mean... I'm just...

I'm like, at school, we have uniforms, right? And like, you know how Black women, we have like a bit more of a figure, like we have, you know, a buttocks.

Mm hmm.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

When I wear my skirt, sometimes it like it rises, but it's not like I'm doing it on purpose. Like, it's just because of... you know what I mean?

Yeah, yeah. Mm hmm. It's... at the back. Yeah, exactly.

Like, "Well, you're trying to show off."

But it's like, it's just really, like...

Your body.

Like, I'm not trying to...

It's natural... it's like that.

Oh, like... and they'd be stopping me in the hallway and say, "Put on your skirt."

But, like, it's not even rolled, this is just how it is. And they're trying to make it into something that it's really not... type of thing.

But yeah, I understand what you're saying. They're always trying to make something into something that it's not and try and basically... they want to make it seem like we're trying to be extra, especially as young Black women. But in reality, that's just not the way it is.

It's also with clothes too... because I'll buy a regular sized shirt, but it's going to hug me because I have big boobs.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

But it's like also, even if you're wearing the same thing as a white person, you know, they're always going to see it differently on you if you're a person of color, like regardless of what it is.

For example, I have coworkers that will, like, go out and come to work, wearing crop tops and like, not a sweater. But when I do it, if I wear leggings and a crop top, best believe I have a hoodie on, or a shawl because I can't...

Yeah...

Something to cover up...

Because I can't just walk around...

I have the same... I have the same thing... I always do that. I put a crop top or anything a dress... I'm just going to put a jacket on top. It's a fear I've always had. And our mothers don't stop asking us... we're at events, "Why don't you remove your jacket, it's really hot outside" ... No, sorry.

Well, that's because you're conscious of the snap judgment...

Exactly.

That people will make of you... And, you know, even though you want to wear this outfit.

You don't want to be oversexualized because of what you have on you know?

Exactly.

Or even so, like my cousin.... I remember a couple weeks ago, it was my cousin's birthday, and she had like a dress, but it was...

Like a strapless.

Strapless dress.

And when she arrived, she had a little scarf around here. And then when it was time to eat, like she wanted to just take it off because it was getting hot, everyone's dancing and stuff. And then my grandma was like, "Oh, put it on, keep it on."

But it's like, why is that an issue?

Yeah, but it's also just like regardless of what it is, you know, like fashion has just changed a lot.

So, it's like they don't see the overview of how our generation is dressing and they just assume that it's you over-sexualizing yourself when, in reality, that's just our fashion now.

It's just the way that the youth dresses and like hoops and stuff like that used to be popular for them, but now they oversexualize it for young people, you know?

So, there's a gap in terms of stereotypes. There's a gap between generations.

Yeah. Because like, they associate it with something else. Like if you wear hoops then you're a hoe, you know, but it's just like fashion. It's just what you like. It's not like how you carry yourself.

Yeah.

It's so funny because, well, the camera can't really see this, but my hair's pink.

And so even family members that I've seen, who are older than me, in the last I'll say three days, have been like, "Why is your hair like that?" like "Take it off – it's unnecessary."

My dad said it, my grandfather said it, and my neighbor who's also my aunt said it.

And I'm just like, "Why are you guys worried about my hair?"

It's not on your head like...

Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Like, stop!

No one is sticking it to your head, forcing you to walk around like, it's O.K.

Like I relate to the whole hair situation, because when it comes to, like, doing your hair as a Black woman, like, it changes the way people approach you.

And the way you look also.

That too.

Yeah, the way you look. And I feel especially like going to a predominantly white all-girls school being in that situation was really anxious because it's like, "Oh, you did this with your hair today!"

And, then they're like all up in your hair.

They want to touch it.

Touch it and it's just like...

White people still want to touch...

It's like they don't get it.

It's like... c'mon, we've learned like...

They will start petting you... like you're a little kitty, basically.

So, let's flip it around here. Is it ... so stereotypes are maybe true sometimes in the sense that white people do that.

For sure. Yeah.

Like it's a stereotype that white people do that. And it's true.

Right? Yeah.

What were you saying about being presentable at school?

Um.

Um.

Yeah, I was just kind of sharing that, like, it's nerve-racking to kind of always have to deal with that, and it's just like, depending on, like how you're like, if I have a wig versus like having braids, like, it's so, like. Like I stand out a lot more and then people start like, is it your real hair? And then they start like doing all that. But I also feel like it's not only like a generational thing, but it's also like history.

Like Black women have always been fetishized or like, seen as, like entertainment. And so, like, that kind of trickles down until like now where people are always kind of looking or like expecting us to still kind of conform.

Like, I remember, okay, this is like my last year math teacher... so, last year, I was like, so into my hair, I would have a new hairstyle because my mom's a hairdresser so she could do my hair like any time, you know?

Yeah.

And my math teacher, every single time I have a new style, she would come in, she would bring her camera and go, "Oh, can I take a picture?" "My daughter loves hair like this."

"Can I, can I..."

"Oh, so nice the braids, and how did you do this, and can I do this to my hair?"

And it fits into what she comments on right when she's performing.

She's like, "You've placed me and Indigenous women in these roles in media and film over and over. You want me to be this role? I'll take it and I'll run with it."

You know, this is... I had noted this... It totally links to the history you're talking about.

Does the construction of stereotypes that are placed on you, like what of that comes from colonialism, from the fact that maybe your ancestors were colonized, you know, the place they were from. Like... how does that trickle down?

There's also some Matriarchy in there too... well just like with men, like, deciding how... what we should wear, what we should do with our bodies...

Literally everything.

You know, from where we come from... my... you always need to ask your husband the authorization to do something with your body.

Mm hmm.

Or else it's viewed as something that you didn't do right?

Or an object...

Yeah.

Mm hmm.

Sasha and Destiny, y'all look kind of quiet. What y'all thinking over there?

You're smiling.

I was agreeing with her, I don't know.

Mm hmm.

Have you experienced any... stereotypes?

Stereotypes, at your age.

Yeah, basically just at school, like people.

Only hair, that's it.

What about your hair? Like they touch my hair without authorization. Mm hmm, yeah, it's annoying. And then they asked a lot of questions about it and the style, like when it gets rough and all like that.

And that's really it.

So, I have a question for you. Do you think that, for example, you get treated differently when your hair is in like a puff like it is now versus when it's in braids.

Yeah.

O.K. And people are just generally nicer to you when it's down and whatnot.

Yep!

I experience that too.

Shayah and Sasha because you guys generally have like looser curls. Do you think that you guys get treated the same?

Lately, this girl at school, it really rubbed me the wrong way.

She started off by petting me. Like I turned around and she was already touching my hair I was like, "Yes?"

And, she was like, "I just want to say like, you have the good type of Black hair."

Yeah.

I was like... I didn't say anything... I was like...

"You know, you know who my mom is, like you've seen her, you've talked to her like, why would you say that?!"

You should not be saying that... why would you...

"So, anyone who doesn't have hair like mine, what do you think?"

She was like, "Well, it's messy."

I was like...

Is she Black?

No! No!

That is crazy, that is OD, like yeah, yeah.

Yeah.

I was going to say, getting into the "How do we overcome those things?", I feel like we just have to start embracing it. Yeah, cause I'm not to mention, like, we put so much gel in our hair. Yeah, we comb it, we flat-iron it. We put a lot of heat and it's damaging.

It's expensive!

So honestly, I've been trying to wear my hair out more...

because the money and the stress that it's causing my hair, it's not worth it. So yeah, I encourage you guys to wear it out.

That's why we are cutting it all off.

But what other parts of your intersectional identity do people make snap judgments on?

Yeah.

Skin color.

People make snap judgements on you...

What do they assume?

Yeah.



You're darker than her. She's lighter than you.

So yeah, my sister's lighter than me and people be like, "Oh my God, she's so cute". And then, they'll turn on my last sister and they'll be like, "Oh...". They look at her differently just because of her skin tone.

And the point of views of our different, like tans of skins are really taken sometimes a little too far. That's why Black women, like older Black women, they whiten their skin, like.

Oh, that reminds me, that's like a big thing in Jamaica.

That's a big thing, just in general. Yeah.

Black women, whiten in their skin, just to look lighter and to be, like, more appreciated in the...

You know, what's crazy too, is that it goes both ways. Like, people who are a lot lighter are trying to darken their skin and it's just like this constant back and forth of trying to, like, look like each other.

Yeah, yeah.

Because you know, what it is, it's because, and this goes way back to slavery. So, for example, if you guys don't know, lighter skinned Black people were considered house slaves.

So, they got to come inside, and they actually tend to like the slave masters and whatnot versus the people who were darker skinned were outside in the field slaves. And they had to tend to the land and do all the cultivating and basically build the free world.

Anyways!

But also, like, raped.

Yeah.

Well, a whole bunch of stuff.

But this whole thing and this is why a lot of the time when I see, or when I hear my like male friends say like, "Oh, I would prefer to date, for example, a lighter skinned Black woman", I'm like, "You're falling for the tricks that have been put in place from since like 500 years ago to separate us!"

Like, "Why are you doing that?"

So, whenever I hear, like, "Oh, light skin versus dark skin." For example, you referred to yourself as lighter skinned than your sister. Don't do that. You're Black. And that's it.

Yeah.

Yeah, exactly. That's what people don't understand in general.

When people talk about the history of colonialism, it's not the history. Those constructs, those social stereotypes are still alive and well today.

Right?

That has... it's been ingrained in white people and it's been... it keeps being endured by other people, you know, by people of color, but also patriarchy for women... like so many normative stuff that colonialism brought about is still... We still deal with it. It's not gone.

Like, the same aspect is used between Blacks. I won't lie, I've not seen, but heard. You... apparently us, some Blacks use it against each other. That's what creates division.

Looking a certain way for a very long time and still to this day allows you probably to have a better job, to make more money, to be more respected as a person slash a woman. You know, it's... there's a reason why even within internally in communities, we put each other down, right.

Everyone's kind of trying to survive.

You just said something that made me think of another stereotype that you tend to go through. You said getting jobs. And I had an old supervisor who had a unique name, and so he applied for a job and didn't get it because of his name and then reapplied for the job and changed his name to something more like European or like white and got the job.

You know, people who like in high school, like when the Asian kids would come, they have to change their name. And, I was, that was always like, so wild to me.

That's crazy. You're coming into my country. Like, sorry, your name is not it. Let's change it to fricking... but yeah, it's...

Do you catch yourself having stereotypes regarding people's class?

The most immediate example I can think of is... So, when I was going into college, I really didn't want to go to Marianopolis because I would go with all of the rich kids who went to private school, and I don't want to surround myself with people like that.

Yeah.

I ended up going to Marianopolis.

So, this time around, when I was going to university, I was like, I'm definitely not going to McGill because, you know, there's a whole bunch of upper-class people. And, when I stereotype other people, I would say it's probably other Black people. But the Black people of like the upper-class, because you see them walking around with their Chanel bags and whatnot, and they're wearing like Burberry coats to class. And I'm like, O.K., personally I find that a little extra but if that's all that's in your closet, then, O.K.

But what bothers me is that you act like you're superior to everybody else, but at the end of the day, God forbid you get stopped by the police, you're still Black. So, stop acting like you're different.

That's good. Yeah. Yeah.

And that's... yeah. Solidarity across... we have very different... Everyone has a very different identity. But how can we be like in solidarity with the traits that are similar. Right? That's really, really interesting.

If I think of myself, I totally stereotype rich people. I don't give them the benefit of the doubt. I think they haven't lived through hardship.

I'm like, I dismiss that they might go through difficult stuff. I'm like, "No it's all been like silver spoon." And I stereotype rich people because they stereotype working class people like me.

Right.

Yeah.

It's interesting, this reverse thing we do, it's like...

It's only like it's human. Like we're all going to judge each other regardless. But with having these social constructs, like, it just intensifies it even more.

And then because it's come from like such a long time ago, it's still repeating. And like, these discussions don't necessarily happen too often. So, like, people don't. Well, I guess people don't really know how we can, like, deconstruct.

But it's also like you shouldn't feel like you have to hide who you are for anybody else, you know.

Exactly.

And how can we catch when we do it ourselves?

I mean, that's a bit hard.

It is. Eh?

We just have to be intentional and mindful.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know.

Hold each other accountable.

Yeah.

Or if you just have an assumption about someone because either they're rich or they're white or whatever... just keep it to yourself. It's just an opinion, you know? Not everybody has to hear it.

Yeah. And I try to be like, "Well, if I'm... I'm not just one thing, I'm so many things, then probably everyone else is." Right?

It's... we're talking a lot about microaggressions that, you know, what's the difference?

I feel like stereotypes turn into microaggressions.

Yeah.

Mm hmm.

So, for example... I don't know. Just saying a Black woman was wearing her natural fro out... Stereotype would be like thinking that her hair is unclean or that it's I don't know. Anyway, something like that.

Microaggression would be actually vocalizing it, "Your hair, it is so messy". "What about it?"

“It’s out of control” type thing.

Exactly.

Something like that.

I don’t think it’s that blunt.

I feel like it's underlying like...

Yeah... a little bit more.

You’re saying one thing but you're meaning something else.

Implying...

Yeah, yeah, yeah!

Like, “You’re so brave coming out with your hair looking like that!”

That’s not a compliment.

Yeah, yeah!

Your family member, who kind of touched on it and it was like with body size or people who are a little bit larger, like, “Oh, you’re so brave for wearing that... when it’s like...”

Mm hmm.

Why?!

Yeah.

Have you ever stereotyped a white person and been surprised?

No. No.

They always deliver on the white supremacy?

Yeah. Yeah. In some way...

Including me?

No. No, you don't...

Spill the tea... spill the beans...

You know...

Veronica’s like, “Speak up!”

Because we didn't already have thoughts about you like that... you know?

Going back to the... "Have you ever stereotyped a white person and been wrong?"

Personally, no. But then you brought up yourself as an example, I think it's because in different ways we're kind of the same.

So, for example...

I'm like...

Other than the fact that we're two different races.

Of course...

But we're women... we identify as women...

You're not some rich snobby white girl that's just coming in like, "Hey, guys, this is what we are doing today, and bla bla bla."

You actually take the time to hear us out.

Exactly.

You like hear us out.

Yeah.

And, also you take accountability for like the stuff that white people do.

You don't exclude yourself from your own history.

You defy what you say. You'd say something and be like, okay, I mean, this way or that way for all of us to understand in our ways.

Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

You also grew up with a little bit of a struggle yourself. So, like, you get what it is. Not so that all Black people struggle, but I'm trying to say is that we had a similar upbringing.

That's it.

Like, and this is maybe the biggest thing about in my life that I've realized that has helped me understand the world better. Is that exactly what we're talking about? People come from different things. They don't just come from one thing. People... we grew up... we're given certain things. And how those things intersect may have caused different hustles and different struggles in different ways, right? So, there's like, it's surprising the connections we can have with people who actually, it would seem from the snap judgment, from the stereotype, we would be very different.

Mm hmm.

And bottom line, women's solidarity

If we had to like try to... how do we want to conclude?

Thank you, guys for tuning into... Spilling the Tea!

Is that how we wrap it up?

Yeah, so good. Join us next week for a talk on...

We should have done this before. Like, yeah, we can make it a series guys...

We can make it a series!