

WITHOUT PLANNING PERMISSION: THE CLIMATE PLAY

A PRODUCTION BY THE BLACK MEN'S CONSORTIUM



This account describes the activities the BMC undertook in order to mount the Climate Play, from framing the central question that the story would form around, to building individual characters and weaving the story's basic structure. We played theatrical games and exercises, experimented with movement and improvised storytelling. We learned and practised theatrical techniques designed to put us at ease on the stage, finding ways to work together, reflecting and feeding back on our discoveries as emotionally strong individuals and teams.

For this production, directed by Tony Cealy, Roger acted as assistant director and technical producer. Pearl supported them both with her technical and graphics skills. Sylvia managed the costumes. Fidel accompanied rehearsals on his cello and provided incidental music for the performances. Tendai made a photographic archive of the process and took portraits of individual BMC members. Anwar recorded it all on video. Chiara oversaw the social media, Christine illustrated Esther's talk in a series of mind maps, and Seun logged the process. [Click here for the full account.](#)

[For a round-up of lessons learned from the production, click here.](#)

[Read an account here of our November 2023 productions for White Ribbon Day and International Men's Day.](#)

On 4 October 2023, the BMC premiered its latest production, **Without Planning Permission: The Climate Play**, at the Brixton House Theatre. The improvised show ran for three nights and was the culmination of months of preparation. It began with a single idea: how are black communities responding to the challenges of the climate crisis?

The process kicked off in July with a stirring presentation from reparations campaigner Esher Stanford-Xosei, who spoke to the BMC about the urgent need for Western powers to address social and environmental injustices. Esther's talk led to a period of information-gathering by BMC members. What we learned from this research was used to create the stories and characters that would populate the play.

In previous years, BMC productions had focused on stories that developed organically around a fictional black community residing on a South London estate. This time, however, the play would lay out the many sides of various debates on climate change. Everybody in the group had a chance to voice their opinion; it was these opinions we called on to inform the play we made.

