



Fuel and Common Wealth present

PEACEOPHOBIA

created by Common Wealth, Speakers Corner
and Bradford Modified Car Club





ABOUT THE SHOW

Conceived by teenagers from Common Wealth's Speakers Corner Collective, *Peaceophobia* is about challenging the political, social and cultural narratives surrounding young Muslim men. Part theatre show, part car rally, part celebration, *Peaceophobia* will address the hostility and misunderstanding surrounding Islam. If Islam means peace, how can you have a fear of peace?

Working with members of Speakers Corner Collective and Bradford Modified Car Club we will create a performance staged in covered car parks. It will be performed by young Muslim men from Bradford and their modified cars. The cars become an insight into a quest for status, appreciation and respect in a world that is quick to write the young men off. We will collaborate with a sound artist to allow the cars to speak to each other. With high production values and verbatim storytelling, we want *Peaceophobia* to feel like a car rally with a party atmosphere and a side of chicken and chips.

It is not the responsibility of the men to change people's attitudes towards young Muslim men through the show. *Peaceophobia* will share their passion for cars and the challenges they face as drivers and, in turn, give people an insight into what makes the modified car community tick.

Peaceophobia will premiere in Bradford in autumn 2020, before touring to festivals from 2021.

CONTEXT

The idea for *Peaceophobia* was conceived by Speakers Corner Collective as part of Radical Acts, in response to the question "what radical acts do women need to take today?" For the young women in the collective, Islamophobia is a very real part of their everyday lives and they see their brothers, uncles, cousins and male friends repeatedly targeted by a media narrative that profiles them as drug-dealers, groomers and criminals.

In 2018 the teenagers of Speakers Corner worked with the Bradford Modified Car Club to stage an event where 25 cars formed a circle outside City Hall, drivers and teenagers spoke of their experiences of Islamophobia, how the word Islam means Peace, and the day finished with a big mass paint fight. This was the first stage of *Peaceophobia*. Members of Speakers Corner will continue to co-create and contribute at every level of the process.

Bradford is set to be the youngest city in Europe by 2020 with 45% of the population under 19. 25% of the population are Muslim.

Bradford has had a negative reputation for years. Cemented during the 2001 Bradford riots - the biggest riots in Europe for 25 years prior - this image has been very difficult to shake. It feels really important to tell a Bradford story with young Muslim men from Bradford shaping their own narrative, able to represent themselves in a positive way as they tell their stories to different audiences across the country.



AUDIENCES

There are passionate car enthusiasts across the country, usually - although not exclusively - young men. *Peaceophobia* is for them and how they feel about the world, exploring how they feel society sees them and how they see themselves.

Working with Local Engagement Specialists* in every location, we will engage with these people, many of whom have never engaged in theatre before. We will also work to build strong relationships with Muslim communities.

This show is political and will connect with audiences who might not be engaged with car culture or with issues concerning Islamophobia - it will be important to connect the piece with seemingly more conservative members of society to allow them an insight into the lives and passions of young Muslim men to generate/nurture understanding and connection.

Target audiences include:

- Young People of Colour (aged 14 - 25)
- Families
- Members of Muslim communities
- People with a passion for modified cars and car enthusiasts
- Adventurous contemporary theatre audiences
- People interested in politics, activism, sociology and religion

Audience Capacity: 150 (approx.)

**The idea of a Local Engagement Specialist (LES) is to employ someone local to the venue/festival who understands the local area. A key function of the LES role is to develop specific contacts with groups we are aiming to reach, and be confident and skilled in talking to people about new theatre.*



ENGAGEMENT

The engagement programme for *Peaceophobia* will be curated and facilitated by Speakers Corner, in conversation with each partner. Examples of potential activity include:

Race, taste, class and cars (One hour Q&A)

"As a symbol of independence and freedom, the car projects status, class, taste and, significantly, embeds racialisation."

Join Dr Mohammed Yunis Alam (Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Bradford) for a discussion about the identity politics of car culture. His latest book uses fascinating research from drivers, including first-person accounts as well as exploring hip-hop music and car-related TV shows, to unpick the ways in which identity is rehearsed, enhanced, interpreted.

Resisting the Counter Extremism Apparatus

(One hour panel discussion)

Common Wealth are working with acclaimed academics and activists who will be available for panel discussions, post and pre show events to discuss the impact of islamophobia and more widely how to resist Counter Extremism apparatus that has a disproportionate focus on Muslims and criminalises communities. Speakers include: Malia Bouattia (Former NUS President and campaigner with Students Not Suspects), Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan (Poet and Activist), Samayya Afzal (Muslim Council of Great Britain)



Speakers Corner Workshop

(2 hour workshop, aimed at young people)

An interactive workshop with drama exercises and discussion to explore Islamophobia, racial profiling and how media, politics and daily life intersects. Led by members of Speakers Corner Collective, Mariyah Kayat and Sajidah Shabir.

Meet the cars (and the cast!)

(One hour car meet)

A chance to meet the cars and the cast. Hear more about the inner workings of the cars, the engines, the exhausts – what modifications have been made to the cars and what they mean to the drivers. One for car enthusiasts and the curious.

TEAM

Co-Devisors | Common Wealth, Speakers Corner and Bradford Modified Car Club

Writer | Zia Ahmed

Designer | Rosie Elnile

Sound Designer | Wojtek Rusin

Lighting Designer | TBC

Cast | Mohammed Ali Yunis, Sohail Hussain and Casper Ahmed



LEAD ARTISTS

Speakers Corner

Speakers Corner is a political, creative, social space led by women and girls bringing people together to create positive action. It was formed from a need for young people to have a safe space in Bradford City Centre in 2016. It is Common Wealth's public facing site in Bradford with a programme of activity designed and facilitated by the Speakers Corner Collective, a youth programme led and facilitated by young people.

Evie Manning (Co-Artistic Director of Common Wealth)

Common Wealth credits include We're Still Here (National Theatre Wales), The Deal Versus The People (West Yorkshire Playhouse). Other theatre credits include: Ceremony (Manchester International Festival, Phil Collins), WANTED (Transform festival, Chris Goode & Company), Taxi Tales by Ishy Din (Tamasha), At Night by Louise Wallwein (Royal Exchange). Evie programmed WOW Bradford in 2016 with the Southbank Centre and is a founding member of Speakers Corner.

Bradford Modified Car Club

Lead by Mohammed Ali Yunis, The Bradford Modified Car Club has monthly car meet ups with about 200 members who come together in car parks around the city to show off their "pride and joy". The meet ups are becoming real events in a city where car culture is huge.

FUEL

Fuel work with brilliant artists to enable them to share their artistic vision. We develop and present an adventurous, playful and significant programme of live, digital, and multi-disciplinary work for a representative audience across the UK and beyond.

“One of the most exciting and indispensable producing outfits working in British theatre today.”

The Guardian

Fuel is a registered charity and a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England.

Since our story began in 2004, we have:

- produced over 130 shows, 6 festivals, 4 films, 36 podcasts, an app and three books.
- supported the development of 90 artists and companies.
- reached over 500,000 audience members and 8,750 participants.
- won 17 awards

COMMON WEALTH

Common Wealth make site-specific theatre events that encompass electronic sound, new writing, visual design and verbatim. Our work is political and contemporary.

We aim to make theatre for people who don't usually think it's for them. We're bored of theatre being for the middle classes and those that can afford it – we genuinely believe in theatre as an art form and the power it has. We think this should belong to everyone – as audience, participants and as protagonists.

Our ideas are rooted in socialist politics, working class backgrounds, a keen interest in contemporary music/theatre/art/design, the people that we meet and an idealistic ambition to shift things. We see our plays as campaigns, as a way of bringing people together and making change feel possible.

“Common Wealth will be changing the way we look at the world for years to come”

John McGrath, National Theatre Wales



FURTHER INFORMATION

Watch Peaceophobia Stage 1 online:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ngnb7NwsFXg&t=148s>

See more from Fuel:

<https://fueltheatre.com>

See more from Common Wealth:

<http://commonwealththeatre.co.uk>

The partner must provide an appropriate venue, licensing and Front of House and Box Office. Full tech rider available on request.



Company of 5: 3 actors, 1 stage management, 1 Production Manager. Producer and creative team in addition.



Touring UK from Spring/Summer 2021

CONTACT

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fuel