

# YOUNG COURT

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THEATRE  
YOUNG  
COURT



**CUTTIN IT** by Charlene James  
Schools tour 2018  
Resource pack

# Production Information

## Original Production

First performance at the Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Upstairs, Sloane Square, London, Wednesday 15 June 2016.

## Current Production

Tour of Secondary schools in London and Birmingham, January, 2018.

CAST (alphabetical order)

Muna **Jessica Kennedy**

Iqra **Marieme Diouf**

CREATIVE TEAM

Direction **Anastasia Osei-Kuffour**

Set and Costume **Joanna Scotcher**

Light **Azusa Ono**

Sound **Ella Walthstrom**

Production Manager **Marty Moore**

Assistant Direction **Anne-Christelle Zanzen**

Casting **Amy Ball** (Royal Court)

Voice **Hazel Holder**

Production Manager / CSM **Nick Hill**

DSM **Mica Taylor**

Company Manager **Joni Carter**

Costumer Supervisor **Rosey Morling**

Movement **Shelly Maxwell**



## Context of the play

Teenagers Muna and Iqra get the same bus to school but they've never really spoken. Muna wears Topshop and sits on the top deck gossiping about Nicki Minaj's latest beef, while Iqra sits alone downstairs in her charity shop hand-me-downs.

They were both born in Somalia but come from different worlds. But as they get closer, they realise that their families share a painful secret. CUTTIN IT tackles the urgent issue of FGM in Britain.

**This production is generously supported by the Wellcome Trust, with additional support from the Clifford Chance Foundation and John Thaw Foundation.**

# Live theatre review: Directing

## Director Questions for CUTTIN' IT

- What was your artistic vision for CUTTIN' IT? 00:06 - 03:07
- What did you do when you first sat down with the text? How did you work with Charlene? 03:07 - 05:35
- How do you work collaboratively with the rest of the creative team? 05:35 - 07:27
- How was approaching the sensitive issue in the play? What research did you do as a director? 07:27 - 09:05
- How did you approach the text with the actors? 09:07 - 12:26
- How did the actors approach the monologues? 12:26 - 13:11
- Could you tell us about your staging choices for CUTTIN' IT and why you chose to stage in that way? Considering proxemics and relationships between character and audience? 13:11 - 14:39
- What do you want the audience to take away from the production? 14:39 - 16:25
- What advice would you give to a young person who is interested in directing? 16:25 - 18:33



**Director – Anastasia Osei-Kuffour**

# Live Theatre Review: Directing

## Facts and Questions

Ask the students to read a scene from *Cuttin it* and create a column of facts and questions. Ask them to then answer the questions with research, or decisions.

## Physicality

Ask the group to create a list of personality traits for Muna and a list for Iqra from what you've deciphered in the text e.g. Iqra thinks she is invisible. Muna is often late for school.

Get the group to walk around the space, call out different decisions from the personality list, the students should move around the room performing these without speaking.

READ OUT AROUND 5 DIFFERENT THINGS FROM THE LIST.

Get everyone to stand still, close their eyes and pick Muna or Iqra (do not say who out loud) ask them to think about all the things they now know about them, visualise their lives and the people around them, their bedrooms, their favourite object, something they dislike, a place they feel happy, a place they feel sad.

Ask the class to open their eyes and move around the space as this character without talking. Find themselves in two groups; all the Muna's and all the Iqra's. The students mustn't talk, discover this through physicality.

## Subtext

Once in pairs of a Muna and an Iqra, ask the students to choose a section of the text. Take 5 mins on their own and write the subtext of the characters lines; what are they actually thinking, feeling, what do they want to say but cannot? Come back together and ask them to perform the subtext out loud, then perform the scene straight with the intention of the subtext.



# Live Theatre Review: Set Design

## Designer Questions for CUTTIN' IT

- What inspires your ideas as a designer? What creative processes do you use?  
00:08 - 02:58
- How do you work collaboratively when designing a piece of theatre?  
02:58 - 04:14
- Please can you tell us about your costume choices?  
04:14 - 06:48
- What emotions do you intend to invoke in the audience through your design?  
06:48 - 07:53
- What were the challenges of designing the piece?  
07:53 - 09:51
- What piece of advice would you give to a young person interested in design?  
09:51 - 10:39



**Designer – Joanna Scotcher**

# Live Theatre Review: Set Design



## Costume

Using pictures of lots of different styles of shoes, ask the class to choose a pair and create a character from the pair of shoes they pick. Who are they? How old are they? What is their socio-economic background? What do they look like? What do they do for a living? Are they at school?

Ask the class to go online shopping and find the rest of their outfit to match their shoes and from what you have discovered about them.

## Central Image

Ask the students to think about someone close to them e.g. their brother, best friend. then to think about the central image of that person. If you could create a picture that represented them, what would be in it? Give students time to think about what that image consists of. Get them to think in detail about the picture. Ask them to think about the colours, the light, the sounds, and the emotional impact. Ask the class if anyone would like to describe their image to the rest of the class. Ask the rest of the class to consider what sort of person this might be based on the description of that image.

Once they've explored this way of thinking for someone they know well, split them into groups and ask them to imagine a central image for the play. What would be the central image of the play? Consider the feeling and emotion of the play. Ask the groups to draw the central image of the piece. Make sure they are not too literal with their image, get them to think about the essence of the play and abstract their thoughts.

## Mood boards and space

Ask the students to write down a list of 25 objects Muna would have and Iqra would own using information from the text.

Using these objects ask them to create a mood board, design a space for each character using pictures from magazines, printed off pictures and drawings. This could be elements of the different locations you see them in, in the play or they choose one location.

Place the two spaces next to each other and decide which things link to your central image and message of the play. Decide what you want to keep and what you want to throw away. Think about how you can make this space as minimal and abstract as possible but still keep the essence of each character.



# Live Theatre Review: Sound Design

## Sound Designer Questions for CUTTIN' IT

- What inspires your ideas as a designer? What creative processes do you use? **00:08 – 01:23**
- How do you work collaboratively when designing a piece of theatre? **00:23 – 02:46**
- Tell us about the design for CUTTIN IT, what references did you use? What influenced your design? What were your final choices? **02:46 – 07:45**
- What emotions do you intend to invoke in the audience through your design? **07:45 – 09:17**
- What were the challenges of designing the piece? **09:17 – 10:31**
- What piece of advice would you give to a young person interested in design? **10:31 – 12:39**



**Sound Designer – Ella Walthstrom**

# Live Theatre Review: Sound Design

## Feeling Music

With your students, create a list of different underscores from three different genres of film. Ask the pupils to free write for 1 min whilst listening to each piece of music. Have a discussion: How did the music affect what they were writing? Did what they were writing about change? Did they like some moments more than others?

## Genres of music

Discover with the students what the different types of genres of music are. Ask the students to look at sections of the *Cuttin' it* script and think about what genre of music matches that section of the play. Choose songs that match that section of the play and then ask them to try and minimalise the song/ sound choices until it is an extra character in the scene, it doesn't distract from the action.

## Script analysis & Sound design

Ask the class to cut the script into chunks, then split them into groups of four and ask them to make a list of all of the sounds in that scene. Ask them to think about how sound can determine location and situation. Then, create a live soundscape as a group. Ask one person to read the monologue as the rest of the group perform the soundscape.



# Live Theatre Review: Lighting Design

## Lighting Designer Questions for CUTTIN' IT

- What inspires your ideas as a designer? What creative processes do you use? **00:08 - 02:47**
- How do you work collaboratively when designing a piece of theatre? **02:47 - 03:47**
- Tell us about the design for CUTTIN IT, what references did you use? What influenced your design? **03:47 - 05:02**
- How do you feel the design reflects the context of the play? **05:02 - 05:47**
- What emotions do you intend to invoke in the audience through your design? **05:47 - 06:19**
- What were the challenges of designing the piece? **06:19 - 06:56**
- What piece of advice would you give to a young person interested in design? **06:56 - 07:36**



**Lighting Designer – Azusa Ono**

# Live Theatre Review: Lighting Design

## Exploring space

Ask the class to imagine a space where they feel safe. Ask them to think in detail about that space and answer the following questions.

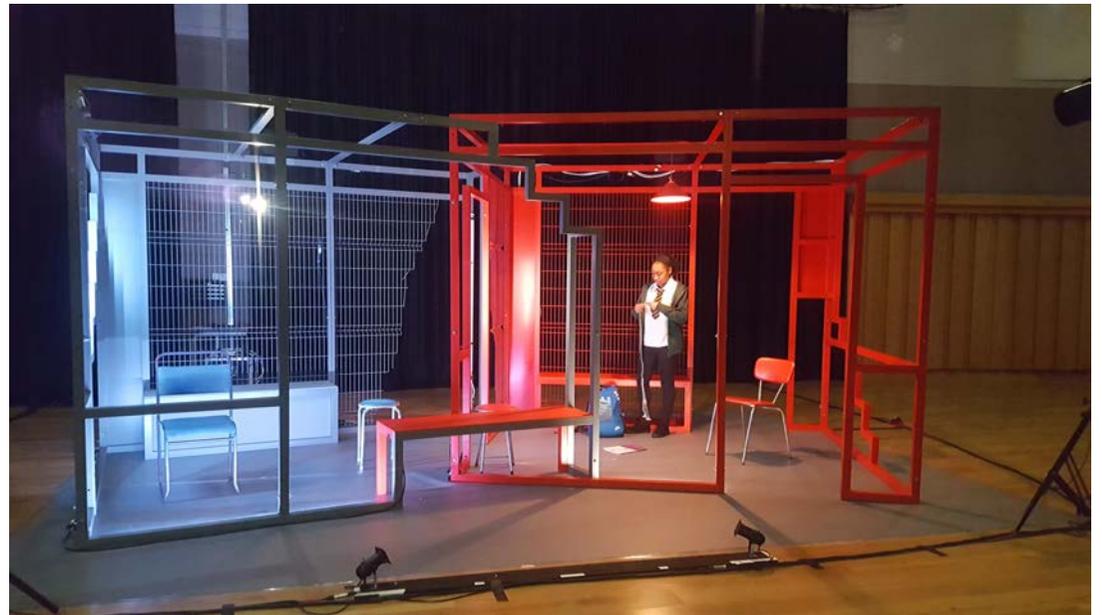
- What is the emotion attached to this place?
- Where is the light source?
- What direction is the light coming from?
- What is the most important light? The light from the window? The bulb? The darkness?

Ask the class to get into pairs, not to tell their partner their location but to describe the light to them. They should ask their partner what emotion they would attach to that place.

In their pairs, ask them to think about if they were to put this on stage what would they need. Would they use a spotlight? Side lighting? Practical lighting (lighting built into the set e.g. lamps)? A general wash? What colour gels would they use?

Ask the class to draw a picture of where they would place the lights to create this space on stage. Perhaps ask them to use different audience/ staging configurations such as proscenium, thrust, traverse, in the round and see how that would affect the light and shapes the light makes.

This can be tested using a torch and gels (or gel like sweet wrappers).



# FGM Resources

The list below are different organisations that focus on helping young girls and women who have been victims of FGM or have experienced any form of violence or abuse. Click on the organisation to be taken to their website.

## **FORWARD**

(Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development) is committed to gender equality and safeguarding the rights of African girls and women.

## **Sister Fa**

A Senegalese rapper and activist campaigning against FGM

## **Childline**

Our tips and techniques, ideas and inspiration, can help you feel more in control. And you access them in your own time, at your own pace!

## **Samaritans**

We offer a safe place for you to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you. You don't have to be suicidal.

## **The Hideout**

For children and young people who have experienced or are worried about abuse.

## **Think U Know**

For children, young people, who have experienced sexual abuse, and for parents and carers and professionals who are worried.

## **Oiimysize**

Youth led website about healthy relationships.

## **The Mix**

Support for under 25s on relationships, drugs, alcohol, mental health, and crime.

## **Brook**

Sexual health for under 25s.

## **Integrate UK**

A youth led charity that empowers young people to take an active and positive role in transforming the society they live in

## **Solace Women's Aid**

Exists to bring an end to the harm done through domestic and sexual violence to all survivors and in particular women and children. Our work is holistic and empowering, working alongside survivors to achieve independent lives free from abuse.

## **Reporting FGM**

Resources explaining healthcare professionals' duty to report cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) in girls under 18.

## **TES Lesson Plan**

### **28 Too Many**

Our vision is a world where every girl and woman is safe, healthy and lives free from female genital mutilation.

## **NSPCC: Ending Female Genital Mutilation**

### **Daughters of Eve**

A non profit organisation that works to protect girls and young women who are at risk from female genital mutilation (FGM).

# Disclosure Information

An individual may want to confide in you about a situation that has occurred to them. Some disclosures may be years after the abuse; due to the individual not understanding the severity or the person they were afraid of has left. The delay in the disclosure should not cause doubt in the truthfulness.

## **Do:**

- Keep Calm
- Listen very carefully
- Be sympathetic
- Ask if you can take notes
- Be aware of the possibility that medical evidence might be needed
- Tell the person that:
- They did a good/right thing in telling you.
- You are treating the information seriously.
- It was not their fault
- Explain that you must tell your safe guarding officer and, with their consent, the manager will contact Adult Services, Health and/or Police. The manager will, in specific circumstances, contact Adult & Community Services or Torbay Care Trust without their consent but their wishes will be made clear throughout.

## **Do not:**

- Press the person for more details.
- Promise to keep secrets (you can never keep this kind of information confidential).
- Pass on the information to anyone other than those with a legitimate “need to know”, such as your Line Manager.
- Make promises you cannot keep (such as, “I will never let this happen to you again”).
- Contact the alleged abuser.
- Be judgmental (for example, “Why didn’t you run away?”).
- Gossip about abuse.
- Stop someone when they are telling you what has happened to them, as they may never tell you again.

## **You must:**

- Make a note of what the person actually said, using his or her own words and phrases.
- Describe the circumstance in which the disclosure came about.
- Note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time.
- When there are cuts, bruises or other marks on the skin use a body map (see following pages) to indicate their location, noting the colour of any bruising.
- Make sure the information you write is factual. You may wish to indicate your own opinion or a third party’s information. If you do, ensure the separation is made very clear.
- Use a pen or biro with black ink so that the report can be photocopied. Try to keep your writing clear.
- Sign and date the report, noting the time and location. Be aware that your report may be needed later as part of a legal action or disciplinary procedure.

# CUTTIN' IT Workshop

## Aims

- Gain an understanding of FGM, the different types, the repercussions and the law.
- Encourage a relatability of the characters to the students
- To develop a shared understanding of the pressures of and from 'other'
- Explore similarities and differences between each other and the characters
- Explore the idea of connection and empathy with others
- Work with and deepening an understanding of the characters within a text.

## Resources:

- Blank copy of female genitalia diagram
- FGM common questions & answers
- Questions for group work around their worlds

## Warm up activity

### Similarities and Differences

**In Pairs or Threes**, discuss similarities and differences between each other (Can't be visible, going to the same school or boy and girl, same hair colour etc.)

**Explain** Direct Address: Speaking directly to the audience. Iqra and Muna use direct address throughout the play, with sections of conversing with each other.

**Ask pairs or threes** to share back their similarities and differences in direct address; must say their name and one similarity and partner says their name and one difference

**Explain** difference and similarities between Iqra and Muna

#### Similarities

- Muslim
- same school
- Somalian
- Victims of FGM

#### Differences

- Iqra been in country for 4 months/  
Muna grew up in England
- Iqra is isolated/Muna quite popular in school
- Different opinions on FGM
- Iqra lives with her 'aunty'/  
Muna lives with her mum and sister

## Introduction

### Safe Space (5 mins)

- This is a safe space, everything we discuss is confidential however if you disclose to us, we will need to pass it on to a safeguarding officer. You are able to sit out of the session if you feel uncomfortable (find a space/ liaise with teacher)
- We will do our best to answer questions as we go along but we can answer at the end/ signpost to materials.

### Name & preferred pronoun (5 mins)

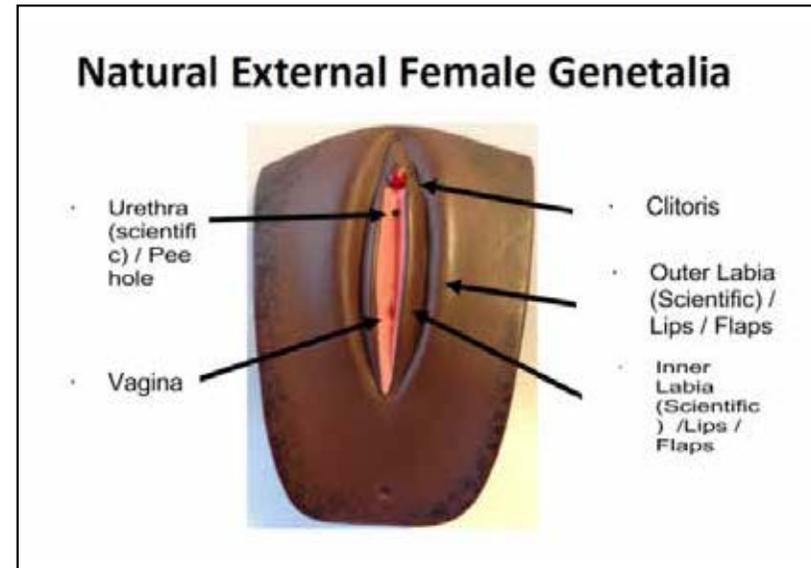
- Round Circle

### Circle countdown (2 mins)

- Back into the circle before count to .....5-10 secs
- Rehearse it in the space
- Will countdown from 10 if want you in circle

### Understanding FGM (35 mins)

- In pairs, label the empty diagram of the female genitals (2 mins)
- Show them what it looks like, what each part is for – who was right?  
What is each part for? (2 mins)



1. **Urethra:** Where females urinate from
2. **Vagina or Vagina hole:** Is for sexual intercourse, periods and childbirth
3. **Clitoris:** For stimulation and pleasure during sexual intercourse
4. **Outer Labia:**  
To protect from infections and stretch during childbirth
5. **Inner Labia:**  
To protect from infections and stretch during childbirth

### Explain that each section is important and has a purpose.

- What is FGM?
- Definition: Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there's no medical reason for this to be done. (1 min)

## **Discuss the different types of FGM**

Discuss as a class the different types, the possible complications of each and why they would take place.

### **Type 1**

**Partial or total removal of the clitoris and/ or hood of the clitoris.**

- Ask them to remember what the clitoris is for
- Removal of the clitoris, removes pleasure
- Why?
  1. A woman is not meant to feel pleasure
  2. A woman is only meant to reproduce
  3. Decreases infidelity

### **Type 2**

**Partial or total removal of the clitoris and/ or hood of the clitoris with total or partial removal of the inner lips.**

- Ask them to remember what the labia are for
  1. Removes protection; increasing the risk of infections
- 2. Childbirth would be very difficult and painful as labia can't stretch

**Why might these different types of FGM occur?**

1. Deemed to be attractive
2. Makes women more marriageable
3. Clear indication that FGM has taken place
4. Highlights purity and cleanliness
5. Considered to help with childbirth (which is scientifically wrong)

### **Type 3**

**External genitals removed with or without the removal of the clitoris, and the vaginal opening stitched closed (also known as infibulation)**

- The rarest type of FGM
- The type that the characters have experienced in the play
- A 1cm - 2cm hole left for the Urethra and vagina
  1. Extreme difficulties in childbirth ( If a woman gets medical support they would be able to have a cesarean or the vagina can be opened up under anesthetic. Without this, and commonly, they would go through natural childbirth causing tearing of the stitching)
  2. Urinating can take up to an hour
  3. Menstrual cycle can last up to a month
  4. Increase in infections and diseases
  5. Sexual intercourse extremely painful. Often considered a celebration if husband has difficulty penetrating, highlighting the celebration of taking the women's virginity.

### **Type 4**

**All other harmful procedures, including pricking, cutting or burning the clitoris, cutting or scarring the vaginal opening or stretching the labia.**

- Anything other than the other types would be classified as type 4
- Even a small prick and/or scrape would still be considered FGM
- A piercing on the female genital would still be noted as FGM (even though consented to, as it's a modification to the genitals)
- Women tend to not remember some type 4 procedures or realise its wrong

**Pairs information game** – The answers are placed around the room, find the answers that match the question. Let the group know there is more than one answer to the questions. Read out the questions and students read out the answers. Explain each question with answer to ensure understanding

(10 mins)

### **What are the health benefits and risks for FGM?**

- There are no health benefits
- Short term risks include; shock, severe blood loss and urine retention.
- Long term risks include; recurrent bladder infections, infertility, childbirth complications, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and pain during intercourse.

### **What is the law in the UK?**

- FGM has been illegal in the UK since 1985. Later, victims of FGM were given the right to anonymity, to prosecute when FGM happens overseas, and failing to protect someone from FGM.
- In 2016, the NHS recorded 5,500 cases of FGM. Since it's been made illegal, there have been no convictions.
- If caught, offenders can face a large fine and a prison sentence up to 14 years.

### **Explain consider why there hasn't been any convictions?**

- Young women can be scared to come forward.
- FGM usually done by community elders and/or family members
- Police educate the families as first priority before convictions

### **Is FGM a Muslim tradition?**

- FGM is not linked to religion, but culture. It is practiced by people of different faiths, including Christianity, Islam and Judaism.
- Muslim scholars and leaders do not consider the practice of FGM to be part of the teaching of Islam and it is not referenced in the Quran.

### **What's the difference between Female Genital Mutilation and Male circumcision?**

- Female circumcision is a term used to describe the practice that does not take into consideration the harm associated with it.
- There can be medical reasons for male circumcision whereas there are no health benefits for FGM.

**Explain** FGM used to be called female circumcision but is not equivalent to male circumcision

### **Where is FGM most commonly practiced and at what age?**

- FGM practice is concentrated across the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Some of the highest prevalence rates are in Egypt, where FGM became illegal in 2008. There has been a small reduction in the number of girls cut, but there is still a lot of support for the practice.
- It is done at different ages, usually before puberty, on girls under the age of 15.
- In half the countries where FGM is practiced it is done on girls under 5, and in some countries, like Yemen, it is done at birth.

**Explain** There are misconceptions around children and babies not being able to feel pain, but this isn't the case.

Children are easier to influence and easier to force the act upon.

## What are the most common reasons used to justify FGM?

- The most common justification is that it is rooted in culture and tradition that has been passed down through generations.
- Common justifications for FGM are closely related to fixed gender roles and perceptions of women and girls as gatekeepers of their family's honour.
- In many cases is closely linked to strict expectations regarding women's sexual "purity" and lack of desire.
- In some societies, the prevailing myth is that girls' sexual desires must be controlled early to preserve their virginity and prevent immorality.
- In other communities, FGM is seen as necessary to ensure marital fidelity and to prevent deviant sexual behaviour.
- Some of those who support FGM also justify it on grounds of hygiene, with notions that female genitalia are dirty and that a girl who has not undergone the procedure is unclean. Where such beliefs are prevalent, a girl's chances of getting married are materially reduced if she has not undergone the procedure.
- FGM is also sometimes considered to make girls attractive.
- FGM is a cultural practice, and therefore not being cut can result in being ostracised from the community, and therefore are not societally accepted and have difficulty forming friendships and relationships.

**Ask** what they have learnt about the main reasons for FGM, what are their responses to these?

### Who carries out the procedure and how?

- The majority of FGM is done by community elders, practitioners of traditional medicine, relatives, and sometimes even barbers.
- In Egypt and Indonesia, it is most commonly practiced by medical professionals.

- Trained health-care providers are likely to use equipment like scalpels, but traditional healers often perform FGM using pieces of glass, razor blades, and thorns — without an anaesthetic.
- Without access to medical supplies or facilities, traditional medicine practitioners resort to using things like dust to stop bleeding, and the unsterile environment in which the girl has the surgery and recovers may encourage infection and complications.

**Explain** medical professionals don't do it in hospitals. Also, medical professionals or community elders charge more to use clean utensils. Dirty utensils increase the risk of infections and HIV.

### Share back with group and discuss. (5 mins)

- As we've discovered, FGM is not linked to a religion or a particular culture. However, in the play you're seeing the characters happen to be Muslim. FGM is part of ingrained societal pressures around the purity of women. As you've discovered, FGM is a practice which is seen as becoming an adult, being pure, marriageable, and can be seen to be associated with cleanliness.
- What we've also discovered that it's very much linked to external pressure and expectation from peers, family and community, and other. While some of you may have experienced FGM, we're going to move forward and talk about different pressures that we experience from others.
- What practices do we/you engage with that stem from societal pressures?
- Ways of gaining acceptance? That modify our bodies? Which make us clean or what we perceive to be attractive? or represent a step into adulthood? We're often not necessarily aware of them

**In small groups on your flipchart paper, respond to the titles. Split in to four groups with a question from below: (5 mins)**

## **Questions**

- How do we conform to the pressure of being physically “attractive” to “other”?
- What pressures does advertising put upon us to be seen as “clean”?
- In what way do we modify our bodies in response to pressure from “other”?
- In what ways do we feel pressure from “other” to become adults?

## **Examples:**

- douches
- deodorants
- fresh tampons
- wipes
- Piercings/ tattoos
- Make up
- Plastic surgery
- Drinking
- Drugs
- Going to a club
- Losing virginity – perhaps feeling pressure around this
- Shaving
- waxing
- Skin bleaching
- Vaginoplasty
- Labial reduction
- Watching porn
- Starting work/ college
- Marriage
- First holiday with friends
- Going to a friends
- First boyfriend/ girlfriend
- First kiss

**Ask the students to show an image of external pressure in their groups, ask the rest of the class to discuss what they can see.**

**What is a still image?** (5 mins)

**Relate** western pressures to FGM and highlight the similarity in social pressures

- Examples
- Thinking behind FGM is very similar to plastic surgery and vaginoplasty.
- Social pressures such as wearing makeup and modifying ones body is similar to thoughts of FGM being more attractive
- Ideology that women should be clean and pure; pressures around keeping virginity are linked in FGM and our society

## **Script work**

Charlene has written *Cuttin' it* as though the characters are writing in their diaries, you have an uncensored view of their worlds. These characters are your age, their experiences of external pressures are different but they find a connection.

**Read pages 11–13**, what are the similarities and differences? (5 mins)

**Images:** show 1 key moment of external pressure demonstrating that they are worlds apart. Title of your image is *Worlds Apart*. Two people performing in the space. (5 mins)

Bring your image to life and show a connection between them. (5 mins)

**Wrap up:** Think about the connection of the characters in the play, find the things that bring them together despite their differences. Think about the external pressures the characters face. (2 mins)

Sign post to resources and websites on FGM and violence against women and girls. (2 mins)

# More about Young Court

Young Court is the Royal Court's participation programmes for young people aged 8–25, for Primary and secondary schools and supporting and working with teachers through CPD, master classes and resources.

Young Court aims to encourage young people to discover their power to influence and change theatre, giving them a platform to experiment, question and innovate, placing young people at our centre and fostering a live dialogue in which their views and ideas are valued and can inform our work.

For more information on Young Court and it's programmes visit [royalcourttheatre.com/young-court](http://royalcourttheatre.com/young-court)

To book a workshop or bespoke project please email us at [youngcourt@royalcourttheatre.com](mailto:youngcourt@royalcourttheatre.com).

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