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Nipples are Magic

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Nipples are Magic

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts of Bard College

by
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Around last year when it was time to start getting serious about what my senior project would be, I was at a turning point in what I wanted out of my theater practice. Acting has always been my main form of engaging with theater. I find embodying other stories to be a thrilling process. Diving into a character and working to see how we fit together is one of my true loves. Being a Black actress who works in predominantly white spaces, I often end up cast as characters in which their oppression is the main point of the plot. While I know that stories like that are worth telling and can be important, it was definitely starting to take something out of me. I felt like my artistry would only ever be defined by my hurt.

With other Black artists I've been in community with, they've expressed feeling the same thing. I remember doing an experimental theater project for queer artists of color in the city I lived in at the time. After rehearsals, our cohort would hang out and sound off about the local theater scene.

"We have to build this shit ourselves, no one's gonna do it for us", one of the artists had a tendency to pontificate and had decided now was the time for yet another grand speech.

"I wanna writhe on the floor for no reason and be applauded for it like the white girls in my program", my other friend chimed in.

"No I want to writhe on the floor AND have it mean something", Someone else countered.

All of the group would go back and forth like that. It was toward the beginning of my college career and I was a little bit shy about being around so many artists I was excited to work with. I sat back, took it all in and nodded along vigorously. To be honest,

at the time, I didn't truly understand what my cohort was getting at. I was in the mindset that any part I was given was something I should be grateful for.

By the time I'd gotten further into learning theater in a higher education setting, my cohort's feelings became my own. Always being one of less than 5 Black people in my entire theater program (at both my first college and at Bard) definitely leads to situations that have me questioning whether majoring in theater is worth it.

When I transferred to Bard, I was enchanted by the thought of creating a senior project. The words of my cohort often rang in my head. Sproj seemed like an opportunity to do WHATEVER the hell I wanted. I was practically salivating at the thought of it. I decided my senior project would be nothing short of my magnum opus. I'd create something genius, something groundbreaking, earth shattering actually. In my sproj daydreaming, this project would encapsulate everything that I hoped my future in theater making would look like.

Ok, record scratch. By the summer before senior year, I'd only taken one playwriting class (shoutout to Nilaja Sun <3!). I'd never directed anything either. All of that in mind, I was undeterred and determined to have a script by the start of the fall semester. By the time the fourth of July hit, I scaled the goal back to an outline. When summer ended and I was back on campus, a part of me still believed that a script would simply appear from thin air. I knew that bodies were important to me for the show. I saw slow motion titties bouncing and ass shaking in front of the audience. But the actual mechanics and logistics of how we get to that moment? Totally lost on me. Probably something that more classes in directing or playwriting would have helped.

I found a lot of comfort in colloquium. We were all buzzing with ideas. And moreover, most of us weren't very far in actualizing them. I felt a lot of relief in talking to other seniors and hearing about the specific things they were struggling with. In retrospect, I think I let myself be a little too comfortable in that. I'd write down a thought in my notes app and decide that was enough writing for the week. I'm not intending to be down on myself when I describe my slow moving writing process. I have a tendency to procrastinate and rely heavily on inspiration. Advice that I got from my advisor (much love for you Daaimah!!) that I wish I'd taken to heart sooner was to set aside time to write. I think I would have greatly benefitted from a regiment. When it got to the point of the semester where fifty things are due at once and there's chaos in my personal life all at the same time, it was too easy to tell myself, "there's no creative spark in me right now, there's no point in writing".

While I am a big proponent of rest, I think what I was doing wasn't that. It was self sabotage. Most of my theater education prior to transferring to Bard was in analyzing plays. I got really good at picking apart a piece and I noticed that I would use that same mentality when I was attempting to write something of my own. I waited for a strike of genius or some sort of spark to burst out the perfect play for me. I learned that the spark can't be my fuel. The spark keeps me excited about the work but it's the routine that completes the work. The writing becomes strong over many drafts. I got to a point where I was letting my lofty goals for senior project intimidate me into actually writing anything. As deadlines approached and passed, I let myself get too wrapped up in what my senior project was supposed to be.

I would say the turning point in the writing process was my first production meeting. I didn't have a full script, just bits and pieces of what I had been envisioning to show to the team. I gave the team my vague spiel and just felt completely unprepared. I looked at the room full of people that were there to help not just my ideas come to life but those of the majority of the senior theater majors. I felt like a blaring neon countdown sign appeared. It's one thing to play around with my own time but to do that to other people who were a part of making this show happen (among many others), was not a thoughtful way of collaborating at all.

Over winter break, I sat down and got a draft together. There wasn't really a secret to it. It just needed to get done and that blaring countdown was bright as ever. After some editing, I was not in love with my script. I felt it didn't explicitly capture the grandeur that I'd gotten wrapped up in achieving. Over break, I worked a lot on deducing what was a priority for me with my senior project. I thought hard about the elements of the show that were integral to my version of success for a senior project.

Pleasure Activism by Adriene Maree Brown had been a guiding force in this process. At its base, pleasure activism is the idea that moving towards justice can and should be a nourishing experience. Personally, I wouldn't call myself an activist. I work from a place of incredible love for Black people across the diaspora. Black joy and Black comfort are the pillars of my art. With all that being said, I wanted an all Black cast. And with that Black cast, I wanted them to experience a rehearsal process that I wish I had more often. One that was less centered in output, that made space for pure fun, and most importantly didn't rely on displaying and replaying trauma. I was able to let go of perfectionism in the writing process by letting go of making sense. It was easier to

detach from making meaning when I decided I could focus that energy in living out that meaning. I thought about the ways I could incorporate pleasure activism into the rehearsal process and it got me really excited to begin to jump into it.

The casting process was a bit stressful for me mainly because it all had to happen online. There was a point where I was worried that I would have to add non-Black actors to the show because not enough people were signing up. But thanks to my amazing friends who were willing to give me some of their time to make this show happen, I was able to keep it the way I had hoped it would look like when I wrote it. Although no one explicitly says they are Black in the script, I knew the things I wanted to achieve with the show wouldn't be able to happen if the cast wasn't entirely made up of people from the African diaspora.

Our first rehearsals were online. They were choppy and full of technical difficulties. When we got back to campus, we hit the ground running. I was constantly emailing and scheduling rehearsals to try and get the show on its feet by February. As I said, most of the cast were friends of mine. It was great to already have a relationship with my cast members, it made building a relationship between those of them who didn't know each other easier. Another thing about having friends in the cast was having people who felt comfortable (gently) questioning some of my ideas that didn't make sense or just cheering me on as a director. They were incredibly flexible with their schedules and committed to creating something we could all be proud of.

Personally, I sometimes found difficulty in stepping into my role as a director. I wanted to challenge myself in the sphere of writing and directing instead of going the acting route for my senior project. And I can say that it was 10000% a challenge. Since I

was directing a show that I had written, I felt extremely protective of the piece. I was really lucky that I had amazing actors who were incredibly skilled at teaching me about my own characters. By this I mean that they all took their parts and made it their own. It was less about what I had originally ~envisioned~ and more about how each actor spent time with their character and grew them into something that was even better than what I wrote. Something that fit them and their own personalities. Directing was more collaboration than dictation for me.

I felt awkward stepping into my director pants. I had to learn to be decisive and trust my instinct. Something that was important to me in collaborating with my artists was having structure. I've had experiences with devised shows in which it felt like I couldn't trust the director. Like they were using the model of a devised piece to not do the work of a director. So it was crucial to me that my creative collaboration had a starting off point.

I ended up doing segmented rehearsal times because the cast was on the larger side and they all had so many other commitments. For me, it meant that I was doing some sort of rehearsals basically every weekday. I was cognizant of how much time I was being given from my cast's insane schedules so I worked hard to keep rehearsals concise and only call people if it was absolutely necessary. Two of my cast members were also my roommates so we'd find time in between breakfast or before a class to squeeze in a mini rehearsal. Because I was so willing to switch to director mode at a moment's notice, I had a hard time separating my sproj from other aspects of my life. My classwork was put on the back burner, I'd have stress dreams about the show, it felt like our show was becoming my whole life.

Though there were a ton of moving parts to get the show to opening night, I truly felt proud of the rehearsal process we had created. I'd come in with a loose plan of what needed to get done, usually that would mean targeting a certain couple of pages in the script. For one on one rehearsals, that would mean honing a certain point or couple of lines that needed some attention. Me and whoever was called for rehearsal that day would do a check in together. I like starting with asking what color they were feeling that day. It's a question that leaves space for as much or as little vulnerability as they want to give. Then we'd stand up and speak a little bit about what we were ok with touch-wise that day. Sometimes that check in was an invitation for hugs after a hard day, other times it was a warning because they were testing out a new natural deodorant.

Based on what information was gathered I'd then go into the rehearsing of the scenes. For me, the first run through is to see what naturally occurs. From there I'll have the actors tell me what felt comfortable and what felt crunchy. I might ask a question like, "how did you feel about that?" or "I noticed you did X, let's explore that more". I enjoyed learning the rhythm of my actors. I loved the little in sync moments we'd have when there was something an actor wanted to rework that I also wanted to work on. I was learning to read the cast. Rehearsal was a collaborative effort that was as much for them as it was for me.

I felt a responsibility to make sure the cast was showcasing something they could be confident in and proud of. It was clear that everyone in the cast was working toward that goal and excited to explore their boundaries. It was through our rehearsal process and open conversations that I came to the conclusion that I wouldn't be featuring nudity in this iteration of the show. We were running low on time and I had to assess my

priorities. It was more important for me to focus our time on sharpening the scenes than to try and push in the nudity for nudity's sake. I didn't want to introduce nudity unless I could be certain that it'd feel natural on stage to the actors. We weighed our options, but ultimately decided it didn't make sense for this showing. It was times like these that I strongly felt the symbiotic relationship of me and my cast.

While rehearsals were happening, I was also dealing with the production side of the show. My second production meeting I went in more prepared. I was buzzing with excitement and the feeling felt mutual from the team. I left the meeting feeling energized! There was plenty that needed to get done but I felt supported. I was so appreciative of how willing they were to work towards something spectacular. Though there were times where it felt like I was being hit with reality check after reality check (butter smushing on stage is a hazard, the budget wasn't going as far as I had hoped, covid restrictions with audience participation, etc.), I felt like every meeting was bringing the show closer to real life. Working with production was a lesson in asking for help. Good things came out of me asking for clarification or speaking through a concern or simply saying "I don't know".

It wasn't until right before dress rehearsal that the cast was able to do a full run of the show all together in person. Some of the cast didn't know each other well but the routines we had established in rehearsals leading up to this full run made it easy for all the actors to work together. We ran through the show and danced and laughed. I was quite pleased with the group I got to work with. Throughout the rehearsal process, I tried to be cognizant of pushing vulnerability and closeness with the castmates because that is a huge pet peeve of mine when doing shows. I think it's irresponsible to force a

feeling. Trusting that the actors are good enough to carry out the show regardless of if they have personal relationships was good enough for me. Though I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the cast seamlessly got along. It made me really happy to see people across majors and classes get to know each other.

As an actor I'm used to having a comfortable week leading up to opening. Of course nerves still exist but at that point there's familiarity with the script and a solid understanding of the character I'm embodying. My experience directing, there was no such moment. Dress rehearsal week had so many tiny fires to put out. I felt on edge and burnt out. Although I didn't get the comfortable moment pre opening that I was used to, I felt myself coming into my own as a director. I learned when and how to stand up for myself. I got skilled at advocating on behalf of my actors. The director pants were starting to fit nicely on me.

Our last run before opening was special. It was the spark that I had been chasing in the writing stage come to life on the LUMA stage. We got to see all of the elements we had been working on together but separately blend into one living and breathing piece. After that last rehearsal, I sprinted backstage to greet the cast because I was so excited. I was met with squeals and hugs. The way the show was meant to go was crystal clear. It was all becoming real.

Sitting in the audience side during opening night was a strange experience for me. Since the people that I would ask to come with me to the show were *in* the show, I sat by myself and held my breath as the stage lights went up. At this point I knew the show like the back of my hand, and yet I still got wrapped up in the weird world we had created together. I've used the word comfortable a lot in this paper but I think it's a really

important feeling to emphasize. Both Kim and Joanna (who played the magicians) had something special about them that made it easy for me as an audience member to trust the two of them to lead us through this magic show. It was silly, it was weird, it was fun. Closing night was the same deal, something electric had happened on that stage.

Throughout the whole senior project process, I played Solange Knowles' FUBU to death. It was a spell that kept my priorities straight. Similar to the words of my cohort members, I kept laser focus on who my play was intended for.

Can I say that the script is the best thing I ever have or will write? No, and I am quite ok with that. Can I say that I am proud of the finished product? Absolutely.

Community networks of care is something that fits into what makes Pleasure Activism work. Freedom isn't a singular pursuit. My sproj only started to come together when I left the cocoon of my artist's ego to ask for help and in turn I was able to experience the brilliance that comes out of collective effort.

From its inception, I knew I wanted to include a tangible element to measure the show's success. Collecting money for Bard mutual aid was less about the number and more about what the money meant. The audience was curious enough in what the magicians were creating to invest some of their money into it. It was definitely a triumph that they wanted to play along and buy into the magic. I was nervous that the money collecting aspect of the show wouldn't translate well because of all the covid restrictions we had to adhere to in order to have audience participation. There were so many moments of play we had to drop because they were not covid safe. We practiced audience interaction but it's not something that's easy to practice without an audience. All of that said, every single run of the show (including dress rehearsals), we made

money. In total we raised \$521.63 Bard mutual aid. There's something about the power that's wrapped up around money that gave us a little extra fuel. After every rehearsal we'd count the money and dance around with it. Within the pleasure revolution, I am still figuring out my place but something that I know that I have a knack for is getting creative with raising funds.

Aside from the material success, something that I was really proud of was how much my cast loved being a part of the show. Whenever I'd get a text after a rehearsal from one of the cast members talking about how much fun they had, it would have me with a permanent smile from ear to ear for the rest of the day. After the first show, the post show high was palpable. We were all yelling and jumping and congratulating each other.

One of my collaborators told me they were really happy they ended up doing the show because it made them feel invincible. Another one told me that having an all Black cast made them feel comfortable to be expressive in a way that they had not been able to in other aspects of their life. And another half joked that they should have been a theater major.

Keeping in mind just how busy this group was, it is such a compliment to my directing ability that they enjoyed the process more than I had hoped. The cast was comprised of seniors, stem majors, and student athletes among others. I can't overstate how grateful I am for their time and how proud I am that it was worth their while.

As for what becomes of the magic after senior project, I am still interested in continuing to push myself out of my acting comfort zone. I am beginning to notice that

my acting process is strengthened by working on other pieces of the puzzle. I would love to try my hand in more of the production side.

I am a believer in composting my work. I am more than satisfied with where we landed with Nipples are Magic. I can see myself using bits and pieces from the show in later shows but I want that specific piece in its entirety to have ended on the LUMA stage. The nipples and nudity that I had been excited for didn't end up in this show but I am still curious about nakedness in stage and excited to explore that in other works.

I also would love to learn more about intimacy coordination. I would be interested in taking a class on it and maybe even seeking out certification in it. To me, the juiciest parts of theater making is in the making. And I believe that process should be full of play and freeing of inhibitions. I want to educate myself more on how to do that safely and comfortably for every artist involved in that process.

This year stressed me out to no end. I needed something to cope so I turned to baking. If it's not apparent by now, I'm not shy about being goal oriented. Which is why baking spoke to me. I follow the steps of a recipe and at the end I get to reward myself with something delicious. Throughout the rehearsal process I'd bring my cast the results of my stress baking. During dress week I made enough cookies to feed a small army—aka the production team and my cast, who I have so much love and respect for. Even after Nipples are Magic closed, I kept on with the baking. Turning on the oven and making something delicious gave me a sense of control when it was hard to feel that in other sectors of my life. All that baking led to Val, who played Chef, and I teaming up together to create Love Potions Bakery. Love Potions is a vegan bakery that specializes

in unique flavored cookies and allocates 10% of our profits to a commissary fund for incarcerated individuals.

Since my sproj showing, it's been nice to have the cookie business as an outlet. Creating Nipples are Magic taught me how it's possible and rewarding to instill my values into everything I create. Love Potions probably won't continue after I graduate, same as how Nipples Are magic won't exist in the same iteration as it was performed this semester.

I embrace change, and the unknown, and creative communities. More than embracing it, I bite into it. And it is sweet.



Chef and Magician 2 a sticky sweet moment together.

Nipples are Magic

Characters:

Magician 1- ditzy, loves hard, love language is words of affirmation (libra)

Magician 2- straight laced, motherly kind of love, love language is acts of service (taurus)

Bunny- submissive man, love language is acts of service (capricorn)

Chef- good with her hands, charming, love language is quality time (scorpio)

Buzz- human sized vibrator, doesn't speak English. Only buzzes. Love language is physical touch (Sagittarius)

Ensemble- wearing brown lingerie/body suits, any sort of circus freaky talents (splits, kicks, even dancing) is a plus.

Setting:

The pleasure dome. A Madonna Inn-esque room ([madonna inn room 218](#)). Variations of pink. Whole floor is tarp.

Open on Magician 2 in a robe and killer heels. She's pacing around a room and checking a clock occasionally. The room is furnished with a heart shaped bed, a dresser, fluffy rug. Super cutesy space. Think Madonna Inn. In comes Magician 1 bursting onto stage. She still has her robe on and maybe a hair scarf as well. She looks surprised by the audience in front of her.

Magician 1:

Oh my God they came so early.

Magician 2:

No babe, the issue here is your chronic lateness.

Magician 1:

She's frantically fluffing out hair and unrolling as she's speaking

Are you serious right now? There were so many moving parts! Do you know how hard it is to find kumquats this time of the year?? Or synching the cannons to go off at the same time?? And don't even get me started on thi--

Magician 2:

--Shhh shhh you're giving away too much too early.

She motions to Magician 1 that she likes what she's wearing.

Magician 1:

You're right, you're right.

Magician 2:

Are the others here?

Magician 1 peaks behind the curtain and we hear lots of commotion. Footsteps, things moving, voices. Sounds like a circus. She closes the curtain back up.

Magician 1:

Some of them.

Magician 2:

How about this, you introduce us a little bit then we'll bring someone out to get them nice and warmed up.

Magician 1 **mischievously grinning**:

Oooh I like that.

Alright listen up everybody, welcome to the ~magic show~!

She does big jazz hands and electricity comes out

Cool, right? Ugh I've been waiting so long for this. We're your magicians for tonight. You may refer to me as magician 1 and this sexy sorceress over here as magician 2. If you couldn't tell, we're close. Like would share a menstrual cup close.

Magician 2:

That's disgusting. And untrue.

Magician 1:

We have lots of fun surprises and we can't wait to explore with you. Phones on please.

Magician 2:

Welcome to our Pleasure Dome. We're so pleased that you took the time to join us.

Ground rules:

1. Play along

Magician 1:

We encourage noise. Oohs & aaahs, laughter...moans. We want it all.

Magician 2:

2. Play safe

Magician 1:

Hands to yourself!

Magician 2:

3. Keep your pocket books close and at the ready

Magician 1:

Ooooh tell us more

Magician 2:

Tonight's show is as much fun as it is an experiment. As you can see we have our venmo information up here. Throughout tonight you will be prompted to put a little something in the tip jar. Sometimes those tips will lead to an extra little surprise if we're feeling generous. At the end of the night we will tally up all the money we've raised and send it to mutual aid funds focused on rest.

Magician 1:

And for those who brought cash we didn't forget about you.

Magician 2 places a top hat on the dresser. Behind the dresser is Bunny. Dressed in latex and rabbit ears. Audience can't see Bunny just yet.

Magician 2 takes a carrot by the bed stand and waves it above hat.

Both Magicians:

Oh bunnyyyyy!

Bunny "comes out of hat". Carrying a bag full of tricks for later and wearing latex mask+rabbit ears.

Magician 1:

This is bunny, everyone say hi bunny

Wait for audience to say hi bunny. Might repeat line a few times until audience complies.

Magician 2:

Oh they're so good to us.

Bunny hops over to the audience side.

Magician 1:

If you have cash, waive your hand up and our sweet pet will pass you the collection plate. Take care of him for us.

Magician 2:

I'm feeling a little snackish, anyone else?

Looks around audience, gets confirmation from a few audience members

Magician 1:

Starving... You know who makes the best snacks??

Both:

Chef!

Magician 1:

You'll love her, everybody has a crush on her.

Magician 2:

And if we're lucky maybe she'll make us some juice.

Magician 1:

Yeah everybody loves her juice.

Magician 2:

Can we show them?

Magician 1:

Lemme check

She peaks backstage to see if Chef is ready. Runs back, to magician 2 smiling. A charming girl in an apron and simple outfit comes out with a basket filled with fruits and vegetables. She walks around the pleasure dome and blows kisses/flirts with the audience.

Chef:

Who's hungry?? She takes out gloves from her apron then fishes out 3 oranges from the basket and begins to juggle. The magicians sit on the bed and admire her.

Magician 2:

She's so talented

Magician 1:

And dreamy! You forgot dreamy

Magician 2 *to audience*:

I bet if you tip chef she'll show you that thing.

Magician 1:

Mmmm I wanna see that thing

The chef and magicians riff with the audience and each other until they feel like they've made enough tips.

Chef:

So that thing they're talking about is my juicing technique. I've got a few extra oranges so some of you can follow along. Bunny, hop to it.

Bunny passes orange halves, gloves, and disposable bowls to ~ 4 audience members, whoever looks the most enthusiastic.

Chef:

The secret to juiciest juice no matter the fruit is... teasing it.

She holds up the orange half and starts to finger it. She can freestyle what she says here as long as she continues to verbally guide the audience through her process.

{possibly have a projected video of what she's doing to the orange}

The magicians cheer her on. As chef presses deep into the orange half and juice comes out, she starts to sniffle.

Magician 2:

Are you...crying?

Chef *in between sobs*:

Uhh yeah it's just, everything reminds me of her.

Starts to wail

Magician 1:

Pause the juicing! What's up chef?

Chef:

I'm sorry everyone. I'm not usually like this. It's just me and my ex just broke up and I thought it was fine, I was cool. There are other fish in the sea. But I can't take my mind off this feeling.

Magician 2:

What does it feel like?

Chef:

Fucking bleak to be honest. I used to wake up and immediately get out of bed. Now I can't. I thought the covers were too heavy, but that wasn't it either. It's me. I'm the heavy. I wake up, sit in bed on my phone and wait for it to tell me bad news. It's terrifying outside, did you know that? I can't tell if things have always been this awful and I chose to hide behind love or if she really took all the world's brightness when she left. I'm sorry, I hate that I'm like this right now.

Begins to cry again.

Magician 2:

Hey let's take a second and breathe ok? *(she gestures to audience)* you can join in too ok?

1

2

3

In.

1

2

3

out.

She leads everyone through this for a couple of rounds.

[to chef] Take a while and tend to your heavy, we can skip the snacks for now.

Chef sniffles and exits the stage

Magician 1:

Ummm ok so this is not going as planned.

Magician 2:

That is abundantly clear. How about this: I'll show you a trick if you show me one too.

Magician 1:

Deal. You first.

Magician 2 does a card trick related to boobs. Still ironing out the logistics.

Magician 1:

Damn that was pretty good. Ok, you ready for this? Hands please. You have perfect hands I don't think I tell you that enough.

Magician 2 shows audience her hands

Ring please.

She hands her the ring and with a slight of hand trick makes it disappear.

In an exaggerated magician's voice 1 says:

I will now use the power within to make this ring reappear!!

She does some silly hand motions and nothing happens. Tries again. Nothing. One more time, still nothing.

Magician 2:
That was an heirloom.

Magician 1:
I-

Phone rings (It's a banana, not a real phone).

Magician 2 picks up a banana phone, starts chatting with someone, Magician 1 is still looking for her ring, motions to audience and tries to ask if they've seen the ring.

Magician 2 seems to perk up after the phone call.

Magician 1:
Who is it???

Magician 2 with a knowing grin:

Folks, our next guest is a little bit of a wild card. The funniest comedian I know, they definitely have a way with words. Please welcome to the stage BUZZ!

A spotlight descends on stage and everything else goes black. Out waddles a human sized hitachi magic wand with a microphone. It steps into the light, lights come up just enough for the magicians to be seen as well but focus should mainly be on Buzz.

Buzz:
BZZZZZZ BZZZ BZZ

Magicians bust out in laughter, the success of this scene is contingent on how the magicians react to Buzz. Buzz should embody the comfort with the stage that popular comedians have. Relaxed but animated.

Buzz:
BZ BZ BZ BZ BZZZZ

Magicians are amused and build off with bit. Based on their reaction Buzz is the funniest comedian ever.

Buzz:
BZZZZZZ BZZZZ BZZZZZZ

At this point, magicians should be rolling on their heart shaped bed with laughter. Like can't breathe kind of laughter. Buzz takes a little bow and buzzes offstage.

Magician 2:

Leave it to Buzz to sprinkle some life back into things.

Magician 1:

I mean... *she gestures to money screen as a reminder to tip Buzz.*

Magician 2:

Ok so, back to my ring.

Magician 1:

I think we should check on Chef.

Magician 2:

You're right... I wonder how she's holding up.

Magician 1:

Hey Chef? One sec

She goes backstage. Comes back with Chef.

Chef:

I'm at a point where I'm like, what's this all for, you know? The world is quite literally ending and you want me to make a butter sculpture? It just feels—

Magician 2:

Here wait, sit down a minute. Let me read you something.

She sits chef down bed time story style. Magician 2 takes a book off the nightstand. It's Pleasure activism by Adriene Maree Brown. Before she starts reading she whispers something to magician 1. Magician 1 nods and heads backstage.

Magician 2:

This book right here, Pleasure Activism, is why we do what we do. Whenever I get into a doomsday spiral, I defer to it. I guess it's kind of my spell book. Can I see what it has for you?

Chef nods. She pages through the book, lands on the page she was looking for and smiles.

Magician 2:

These words are from Audre Lorde:

clears throat and begins to read. She has a comforting reading voice

“During World War 2, we bought sealed plastic packets of white, uncolored margarine, with a tiny intense pellet of yellow coloring perched like a topaz just inside the clear skin of the bag. We would leave the margarine out for a while to soften, and then we would pinch the little pellet to break it inside the bag, releasing the rich yellowness into the soft pale mass of margarine. Then taking it carefully between our fingers, we would knead it gently back and forth, over and over, until the color had spread throughout the whole pound bag of margarine, thoroughly coloring it.

Instrumental version of Vibin out with (((O))) begins to play lightly

🔴 *Fkj - Vibin' Without (((O))) - BEST INSTRUMENTAL EVER??* (song subject to change). *Magician 1 comes back out with a group of people (ensemble). Some are cartwheeling/spinning/hula hooping etc etc onto stage. A few are carrying buckets with unwrapped sticks of butter. Big smiles, minimal to no clothes depending on actors comfort.*

I find the erotic within myself. When released from its intense and constrained pellet, it flows through and colors my life with a kind of energy that heightens and sensitizes and strengthens all my experience.”

Magician 1 *yelling above music:*

Don't you get it?? We need the yellow! All of this right here? This is yellow.

Lights go yellowish on the stage. Music swells and continues to play as they dance and squish the butter. Laugh with it, throw it around. Convince chef to come and play with the butter. Some of ensemble hugs and others kiss. Even Buzz comes out to play. At one point Magician 1 reaches behind one of ensemble's ear and pulls out magician 2's ring. She holds it up triumphantly and puts it back into Magician 2's hands. The magicians look at each other and smile.

Magician 1:

And for our last trick

Both magicians:

ABRACADABRA

CONFETTI+GLITTER rains from around. Bunny is tossing fake flowers into the audience.

Ensemble continues to dance, those who are comfortable are near naked now. They slowly peel away til just the magicians are left on stage.