

# INNER WOUND REAL

A FILM BY CARRIE HAWKS



2022 | USA | 15 min

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**“Open(s) up a space of conversation between the film and its audience.”**

-- Elena Guzman, PhD, Assistant Professor African American and African Diaspora Studies and Anthropology

## Logline

*Inner Wound Real* relays the story of three BIPOC folks who self-injure, then find new ways to cope in a 15 minute animated documentary. [Watch the trailer.](#)

## Synopsis:

*Inner Wound Real* tells the story of three BIPOCs who used to self-injure, then seek out new ways to cope in a 15-minute animated documentary. Each participant's story has its own distinct visual style. The chapters are independent puzzle pieces that together form the film. Everyone self-harms in some way such as smoking, excessive drinking, or eating unhealthy foods, yet self-injury carries a unique stigma. While most media depictions of self-injury focus on able-bodied white cis-women, this project focuses on three individuals: an Indian cismale, a Black transgender non-binary person, and a Filipinx queer femme. Each of the participants found a different way to move beyond self-injury through the Arts, including acting, drawing, and tattooing. The variety of family backgrounds and identities shows how this practice spans across racial, ethnic, and gendered groups.

As we're in the midst of a global health crisis and large amounts of racial violence, rates of self-harm and suicide are rising. Self-harm among LGBTQIA+ teens is twice as high than the rate for heterosexual teens according to WebMD. The film does not traumatize viewers with graphic imagery, but rather presents a flow of emotions. In *Inner Wound Real*, each participant's story has its own distinct visual style created by a separate animator. The film has an experimental visual style mixed with a more traditional audio interview that follows a semi-narrative structure.

### Chapter I: Vick, 32, SouthEast Asian descent, cis-male (he/him) | New York

Peering into a dark tree crevice, we begin Vick's story. As a kid in Maryland, he didn't make friends easily and felt alone. The screen shows his too-long, awkward body moving through uncharted territory. Self-injury allows him to connect with his emotions and punish himself for not fitting in. The seeds of self-harm spread out in an abstract web. When he's fully immersed in self-harming, he sinks into a sea of color. He does not have control over his behavior. Even though his mother found one of his scars, she never questioned his cover story. Vick appears in the tree crevices. The self-harm becomes too intense, and Vick explores new ways to express himself through acting. A new group of friends

allows him to begin a fresh start. He goes from climbing up to standing. No longer floating in the abyss, he has friends and relinquishes shame.

### **Chapter II: Simone, 36, Black, Non-binary (they/them) | Queens, NY**

On screen we see Simone's thoughts taking abstracted form. The small kiddie scissors open and close, as rectangles divide and shift. Ribbons of a cassette tape stream about in chaos. Simone, recounts their tension and desire to find a release from abuse and overwhelming emotions. Underneath the flurry of ribbons and scratches, we see how they've used self-harm to channel their emotions. Despite this practice, they attempt other ways to communicate their feelings through visual art. Ultimately, they liken their scars and self-harm to being trans. They don't tell everyone, but if they can share their body and story, then they feel the potential for a closer connection.

### **Chapter II: Raychelle, 29. Filipinx femme (she/her) | Seattle, WA**

A window opens up to a lush vegetation scene. As a child of immigrants, Raychelle felt she would never live up to the expectations of her parents who had worked hard to reach the U.S. They are symbolized in large figures that extend offscreen. Without a queer and BIPOC community, she turns to self-harm and drinking, becoming someone she doesn't recognize. This continued for years until she covered some scars with a tattoo. She changes coping mechanisms and dives into tattooing herself. She realizes that we all need help, just given to us in different ways.

## **About the Filmmaker**

Carrie Hawks confronts self-imposed and external assumptions about identity in order to promote healing,



particularly in relation to Blackness, gender, and queer sexuality. They work in animation, drawing, collage, sculpture, and performance, often incorporating humor. Their film *black enuf\** was nominated for a New York Emmy, won Best Documentary Short at Trans Stellar Film Festival, was broadcast on American Public Television's World Channel in 2019, and screened at over 40 festivals including Ann Arbor and BlackStar. They are an Assistant Professor of Illustration at Parsons, The New School, and have curated programs for the Ann Arbor Film Festival and ASIFA-East.

### **Director's Statement**

When I was 16, I hated myself. I tried coming out as bisexual to my mother; her suggestion: conversion camp. Hard pass. I felt ugly, at times, I would dissociate from my body. People teased me for not being Black enough, wearing thrift store clothes, and not straightening my hair. There was a crippling emptiness inside of me that I thought everyone could see. Drinking: why put myself in a situation with less control? I wanted to find a way to concentrate on the present and feel something.

I could not control what was happening around me, but I could control what was happening to my body. And that's why I cut. Fortunately my best friend saw my scars and made me promise never to do it again. I loved her enough to keep that promise. Years later, I loved myself too.

I touch on those experiences in my film, *black enuf\** On tour, people only asked questions one-on-one about self-harm, too much stigma for the audience. Students asked how to cope with depression, I want to answer them in a unique way.

*Inner Wound Real* is an animated doc with three chapters, each story's visuals are unique to the character. All find ways of healing through the arts. By sharing their stories, the film addresses many of the stress, anxiety, and troubles that I faced and many that I did not. Each person has a individual situation and by sharing varied stories, the film offers insights into their internal experiences. The audience gains insights into experiences that may seem foreign to them, or identify with what the participants are confronting. Working with two talented animators, we concentrated on illustrating the spirit of the stories rather than recreating exact visuals being described. The film avoids violent imagery so as not to traumatize or sensationalize.

## Key Team Biographies



### **Chelsea Moore (Producer)**

Chelsea Moore (she/they) is a femme filmmaker & producer working hard to cultivate healing work & relationships with queer creators. They operate Sour Peach Films, a queer production company based in Brooklyn. Her producing work has screened at over 50 festivals internationally including Tribeca, Iris Prize, Outfest, NewFest, Inside Out, & BFI Flare.



### **Véronique N. Doumbé (Editor)**

Véronique has roots in Cameroon (Central Africa) and Martinique (West Indies). She was born in France and raised in Cameroon, France and Ivory Coast. She is both a narrative and documentary storyteller who wears multiple hats as producer, director and editor. Her first feature documentary Denis A. Charles: an interrupted conversation about Free Jazz drummer Denis Charles won Best Documentary Production at the XVII Black international cinema in Berlin and the Audience Award at Detroit Docs in 2002. Now available online on kweli.tv. She has directed music videos and shorts films. Her first short Luggage, which she wrote, directed, and edited, was screened at the Short Film Corner

in Cannes in 2007. The Birthday Party, written by Sherry McGuinn, won the Best Micro mini Award at Reel Sisters of the Diaspora Film Festival in 2009 and the Dikalo Award 2009 for Best Short at the Pan African Film Festival in Cannes. She co-directed Woman to Woman (2013) with her daughter Malika Franklin. She was the editor and co-producer of “Imbabazi: Le Pardon”, Rwandan genocide survivor Joel Karekezi’s first feature. The film won the Nile Grand Prize at the Luxor African Film Festival in 2014. It is distributed in the US through Global Lens Series and can be streamed on Amazon. She is currently developing Raising Zuly, a feature length documentary about a girl growing up with Down Syndrome in Barcelona with her mother, tap dancer Roxane Butterfly





### **Sakshi Jain (Animator)**

Sakshi is an animator and illustrator from India, based in Brooklyn. Her work comprises of delicate lines in black ink, sometimes filled in with muted earthy colors. Working directly with a pen leaves a chance for errors and she feels her work is done when a mistake has effectively become part of the artwork. She draws on a small scale and what she draws is simply inspired from her immediate surroundings; a common connection between her and everyone else, a space we all share but yet in our own worlds. Her work has been shown by Center Pompidu, part of American Illustration 41 chosen works and has

been recognized by many festivals round the globe. Sakshi is excited for her contribution for some upcoming nature projects.



### **Pilar Garcia-Fernandezsesma (animator)**

Pilar is a freelance animator and fine artist from New York. In her spare time she makes a variety of short films ranging in style and genre, some of which have shown at festivals like Slamdance, Annecy and Animafest Zagreb. Pilar enjoys making both 2D animation and stopmotion films, and often uses elements of mixed media in her films by combining traditional and digital elements. Her new film, 'Colony', is currently on its festival run.



### **Mauricio Escamilla (composer, sound designer)**

MOWRI is a sound design artist, music producer, composer, drummer, percussionist and audio engineer based in Queens, New York. Having a decade of experience composing and designing for theatre, film, and live music performance, MOWRI thrives within creative collaboration and experimental applications. MOWRI's artistic calling began at a young age- drawing and illustrating with detail. Drawn to percussion around the age of 10, MOWRI began concert percussion training and quickly moved to the drum kit - self trained, practicing alone and with other musicians in school, forming several

bands. Already performing live as a teenager, he then pursued studies in Kinetic Imaging as well as sound design. Focusing more on the audio element, MOWRI clung to audio recording, editing, and mixing techniques, as well as experimental sound design performance- creating solo performances using tube televisions, DVD players with animations, and original sound design, along with his drum kit. Diving into postgraduate experimental original sound design creation from 2011-2012 in Edinburgh, Scotland, MOWRI created interactive and reactive performances using light sensors, drum triggers, Max/MSP programming, and improvisation techniques to create intricate performances. Living and working in New York City as an audio engineer, sound design, artist, and composer, MOWRI has further developed their digital music production style and technique, creating for a variety of media and entertainment ranging from theatre, film, and live performance. MOWRI's work can be expressionistic in the sense of creating to create / expressing to paint a picture, location, ambient. Yet, lately MOWRI has been collaborating with social justice organizations and collectives, steering MOWRI's work to contain more social commentary. A spotlight on inequity, prejudice, corruption, and an intolerance for discrimination has been the main theme for MOWRI's upcoming E.P; with a juxtaposition to beauty, experimentation, and expressive music for dance.



### **Naeema Jamilah Torres (Impact Producer)**

Naeema is an award-winning, Chicago-area filmmaker originally from New York City. As a writer, director, and producer, she aims to tell stories that unpack notions of womanhood, complex ethnic identities, and legacies in the Americas through visual and audio mediums. Her work has screened at a number of festivals, including New Orleans Film Festival, San Francisco Doc Fest, and St. Louis International Film Festival. Naeema's passion for non-fiction storytelling led her to impact producing, as well as crafting documentaries. She holds a BFA in film from CUNY City College and an MFA in Documentary Media from Northwestern University.



### **Sonja Perryman (Creative Consultant Producer)**

Sonja is a screenwriter, producer, and educator with a passion for telling female-driven, diverse stories that explore socially relevant issues in humorous and unexpected ways. Sonja graduated with honors from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts with a BFA in drama, and went on to perform in numerous critically acclaimed theater productions throughout the country. After working as an actress for almost ten years, Sonja felt a call to participate in health and wellness initiatives in her community and worked as a health educator for youth and their families throughout South Los Angeles. She went on to receive her Masters in Public Health from UCLA's Fielding School of Public Health and upon graduation, used her research and storytelling

skills as Director of Research & Development at Wise Entertainment, where she oversaw numerous television projects and also served as associate producer on Hulu's six-time Emmy-nominated television show, East Los High. She is also associate producer on Time 2 Surrender, an award-winning short film written, directed, and starring actor Elvis Nolasco and executive produced by Spike Lee. She is currently a writer on the Facebook Watch show, Five Points, executive produced by Kerry Washington and Jon Avnet and has a development deal for a half-hour television show that tackles issues around black female identity through the lens of reality television. Sonja serves on the board of FYI Films, a non-profit that teaches filmmaking to incarcerated youth, and has been a guest lecturer and keynote speaker at institutions around the country, including: UCLA, USC, Webster University, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, The Geffen Theater, Johns Hopkins University, and many more.

## Main Production Credits

Director	Carrie Hawks
Editor	Veronique Doumbé
Executive Producer for Black Public Media	Leslie Fields-Cruz Denise A. Greene
Producer	Chelsea Moore A SOUR PEACH FILM PRODUCTION
Animators	Carrie Hawks Pilar Garcia-Fernandezsesma Sakshi Jain
Sound Design	Mauricio Escamilla
Composer	Mauricio Escamilla
Creative Consultant Producer	Sonja Perryman
Mental Health Consultant	Jennifer Zelaya
Research Assistants	Patricia McEvers Sarah Chien
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Generous Funders	Jerome Foundation Black Public Media Brown Girls Doc Mafia

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### Learn more at:

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