

Naomi Westerman
Barbra Streisand

Bush Theatre Protest Series

Oh, doesn't she look just like Barbra Streisand? Her daughter doesn't look anything like her. Funny that, looks like her dad. Still, probably for the best.

They meant nose, they meant I don't have my mum's nose. And Barbra Streisand, who my mum very much did not look like, is code for big nose. And we all know what that's code for.

My mum was sent to war when she was so much younger than me. She lived on a kibbutz on the front lines and slept with an Uzi under her bed every night. Once she came across an abandoned house in the desert, rotting food still on the table. Once she came across perfectly preserved skeletons and once an Egyptian jet Soviet provided strafed the jeep she was driving and everyone but her died.

And I'm not condoning the atrocities inflicted by the Israeli government on the Palestinian people, the Nabka, the occupation, the murders, the genocide, months of relentless bombing in response to Hamas's own genocidal attack on Jewish people. But I just kind of think that if you're a white person with no connection to the Middle East and you never say a single word about racism in your own country, your neighbourhood, your industry, you do nothing to acknowledge your own white privilege, much yet systemic white supremacy.

But you're the first one to charge into battle as the anti-racism police. The second it's a minority group being accused of 'doing the racism-ing'. The minute it's time to play goody minority versus baddie minority. If you thought you were being a good ally by putting a black square on Insta, if you treat a Free Palestine poster as the trendy Free Tibet t-shirt of the 21st century, if you complain that British Jews voicing fear about anti-Semitic attacks in London are playing the victim. If you hashtag MeToo but stay silent on Hamas using rape as a military tactic because we all know Jews don't really count. If you think every Jew owes you an opinion on Israel, if you care deeply about Palestinians, but not the systemic oppression of Israeli Bedouins or the forced sterilization of black Israeli Jews, if you act like a Middle East expert on social media but have never even heard of those last two, then I'm sorry, but I just think that you're a massive racist.

Because you can't beat racism with more racism. Hating us won't un-oppress Palestinians.

I do look like my dad. Meaning my nose isn't big or small. It's a very standard medium sized, completely unnoticeable nose. A generic nose. It was said if Cleopatra's big, beautiful nose had been shorter, the whole world would have changed.

If my nose was bigger, would you hate me?

Credits:

Written and performed by: Naomi Westerman

End slide reads:

Bush Theatre Protest Series

We believe the connection between art and protest is vital.

The Bush Theatre's Protest series is a platform for artists to shed light on injustices that persist in our world.

bushtheatre.co.uk/protest