



CLEAR LINES FESTIVAL TO ADDRESS SEXUAL ASSAULT AND CONSENT THROUGH ART, COMEDY & PANEL DISCUSSIONS BRINGING TESTIMONIES FORWARD

Not the Booker prize winner Winnie M Li and activist Tania Mendes announce full line-up of the second edition of Clear Lines Festival, including comedy stars Sara Pascoe and Tiff Stevenson

1-3 December, Rich Mix, London

In the midst of the #MeToo movement and a growing public awareness around sexual misconduct, a dedicated group of volunteers are bringing back Clear Lines Festival for its second edition, taking place from 1st to 3rd December 2017 at Rich Mix in London. Clear Lines brings together a lively line-up of artists, speakers, activists, survivors, academics, and therapists to address sexual assault, abuse, and consent through the arts and discussion. The festival aims to replace the shame and stigma around these issues with insight, understanding, and community.

Winnie M Li, Artistic Director of Clear Lines, is herself a rape survivor and author, whose novel *Dark Chapter* recently won *The Guardian's* Not The Booker Prize 2017. She set up Clear Lines in 2015 with psychologist Dr. Nina Burrowes and a group of volunteers, including **Tania Mendes**, Festival Director.

Winnie M Li said:

"There is something so isolating about the aftermath of sexual violence, and victims often feel they should stay silent because no one wants to hear their stories. But #MeToo has proven how many stories are out there, and how they need to be heard. With Clear Lines, we're trying to collectively devise creative ways of storytelling, healing and challenging rape culture. Through the arts and comedy, we can bring to life the human side of these experiences, in ways that emotionally reach audiences and lead to connection and understanding."

This year's programme includes award-winning comedians **Sara Pascoe** and **Tiff Stevenson**, *New York Times* best-selling novelist **Marti Leimbach**, psychologist and policy consultant **Dr. Nina Burrowes**. Theatre, film screenings, stand-up comedy, and spoken word all feature in artistic showcases, alongside Q&A discussions about art and the lived experience of gender-based violence.

Run entirely with crowdfunding and the good will of those involved, the festival was started in 2015 by a small group of activists, artists, and therapists who felt a space was needed to talk openly and honestly about experiences of sexual assault and abuse. Now, with #MeToo trending, they feel that space is needed more than ever.

Tania Mendes, Festival Director, said:

"Clear Lines provides the space to tackle what can be the difficult subject of consent and sexual assault, whilst currently sitting alongside the momentum currently seen with the #MeToo campaign, we hope that more people will be open and come forward to listen and contribute to this discussion. There isn't a single voice or experience. The goal is to make a festival like Clear Lines redundant in the future. But for now, this platform is needed and we're calling out to everyone to take part in a problem that impacts and is entangled within all of society. There is a shift in attitude and we need to embrace it and collectively ask ourselves how we can help. Now is the time."

Two years after its founding Clear Lines is growing, with foreign filmmakers flying in to present their films. Li and Mendes are planning to secure funding in the future so the scope of the festival can expand outside London to the UK and beyond.

In addition to responding to #MeToo, Clear Lines 2017 will also highlight the intersectionality of experiencing sexual abuse and assault, with sessions focusing on disabled survivors, LGBTQ survivors, and BAME or ethnic minority survivors.

For images click [here](#)

Most events are free but booking is required: <http://bit.ly/2zZSxbY>

For the Clear Lines website: <http://clearlines.org.uk/>

Watch Clear Lines speakers share their experience in "[One of us](#)"

For more information, images and media requests, please contact Cécile Beauvillard Burman
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NOTE TO EDITORS

WINNIE M LI

Winnie M Li is an author and activist. Her debut novel, DARK CHAPTER, is winner of The Guardian's Not The Booker Prize 2017 and will be translated into eight languages worldwide. Partly inspired by her own assault, it explores a rape from the perspective of both victim and perpetrator. A Harvard graduate and former film producer, Winnie is now Co-Founder and Artistic Director of the Clear Lines Festival, the UK's first-ever festival addressing sexual assault and consent through the arts and discussion. She is also a PhD researcher at the London School of Economics, researching the uses of social media by rape survivors to share their experiences and form a community. Winnie has appeared in The Guardian, The Mail on Sunday, The Times, The Independent, The Irish Times, BBC World News, BBC Woman's Hour, and RTE Radio One, among other media outlets. <http://winniemli.com>

TANIA MENDES

Tania Mendes is a communications director and activist. From the commercial world she has lead and launched brands nationally and internationally and has a tacit understanding of consent from a corporate perspective. Passionate about gender equality and corresponding respect and justice, Tania is also a lead volunteer for Girl Guiding and WAGGGS as a leader and a global advocate for girls' rights, alongside working with UN Women National Committee UK on their current #drawaline campaign as part of 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women.

DR NINA BURROWES

Dr Nina Burrowes is an independent psychologist who helps people understand the psychology of child sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual assault, rape and domestic abuse. She has carried out research with sex offenders, survivors, and young people who are learning about consent. Nina regularly trains police officers, prosecutors, judges, health professionals, therapists and anyone involved in child protection throughout the UK and beyond. She is the author of 'Responding to the challenge of rape myths in court: A guide for prosecutors' and two books on sexual abuse 'The courage to be me', an illustrated guide for anyone in the early stages of disclosure, and 'Eyes open to sexual abuse: What every parent needs to know'. She is also the creator of the online video series 'Sexual abuse. The questions you've never had the chance to ask' and a co-founder of Clear Lines Festival, the UK's first festival about sexual assault. She is a regular contributor to media coverage of sexual abuse and has appeared on BBC's Woman's Hour, The Moral Maze, Sky News, Channel 4 News, The Telegraph, The Guardian and The Observer. <https://ninaburrowes.com/>

CLEAR LINES FESTIVAL

It's time to talk about sexual assault. Every hour, the equivalent of one man and over ten women are raped in England and Wales. One in five girls and one in twelve boys will be sexually abused. With so many people affected by this issue, Clear Lines was born out of the need to create an open, honest, and inclusive conversation, using the arts

and discussion to replace the shame and silence with insight, understanding, and community. In 2015, Clear Lines festival raised over £7,000 in five weeks to stage the festival, produced events with over 60 artists and speakers involved in sold-out panel discussions, showcases and workshops.

Clear Lines was founded to be diverse, inclusive, and accessible, providing a platform for the talents and perspectives of survivors to be heard.