



In **V**isible
Colours

**MEDIA
BLITZ:
BLACK,
WHITE or
in
COLOUR**



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Colour codes

Your nametag has been colour-coded. Please go to the workshop room with the corresponding colour. The workshop room will have a coloured sheet taped outside the door. Please, match the colour of the sheet with your nametag.

red: Developing Images

blue: Cultural Diversity in the Media

black: Cultural Diversity in the Media

purple: Women in the Film/Video Industry

green: Becoming Media Literate

orange: Becoming Media Literate

Please remember to bring:

- *pen
- *this guide
- *address of Robson Sq.
- *lunch

All *plastic nametags* must be returned to the In Visible Colours staff after the program. A box will be provided outside of the auditorium to collect the plastic nametags.

Directions to Robson Square Media Centre:

The Robson Square Media Centre (Robson Square on the map) is at **800 Robson**, where the Vancouver Art Gallery steps are situated. On the side of the Art Gallery steps (from Robson Street), you can enter Robson Square Media Centre. Go down the flights of stairs, pass the food fair until you are down-stairs. There will be signs and ushers inside, available to guide you. Please register at the registration table between 8:30 to 9:00am.

Black Mother Black Daughter,
Sylvia Hamilton and Claire Prieto,
1989, 29 mins

An artfully constructed documentary that is sensitive to its subject matter, **BLACK MOTHER BLACK DAUGHTER** recovers the history of Black women in Nova Scotia. It underscores what director Sylvia Hamilton describes as "the double whammy of being Black and female"; at the same time, it celebrates the courage of these women by focusing on their sense of pride and their determination to overcome the obstacles they face.
Source: NFB

Color Schemes, Shu Lea Cheang,
1989, 28 mins

A brilliant composition using the metaphor of a washing machine to illustrate the cycles of soak, wash, rinse and extract in the laundering of native and ethnic groups in America. At times comical and at times deadly serious, this satirical piece reclaims images of colour by using colour to correct them and to restore their vividness. **Color Schemes** debunks the myth of the American melting pot.
Source: Third World Newsreel

Hairpiece: A Film for Nappy-headed People,
Ayoka Chenzira, 1982
10 mins

In a society where beautiful hair is defined as that which blows freely in the wind, nappyheaded people have a raw deal. **Hairpiece** is a humorous and satirical work on the conflicting images faced by Black women as they learn to live with dominant standards of beauty and the physical attributes of their Black heritage.
Source: Film News Now

Kumekucha, From Sun Up,
Flora M'mbugu-Schelling,
1987, 28 min.s

This upbeat film paints a compelling portrait of the lives of African women as they struggle to make ends meet. The dawning day marks the beginning of an endless struggle. Yet the women are undaunted by the challenges they face. Instead, they celebrate by creating innovative ways to deal with their economic condition and by renewing their source of hope.
Source: West Glen Films

To develop a critical analysis of media messages is quite a task. We tend to take these messages for granted and often assume that they represent the "real world." There are some questions that can help us begin this critical process and analysis:

**Does the mass media's portrayal of teenagers represent you or your friends?*

**What are the differences between "on-the-screen" teenagers and "real life" teenagers?*

**Do the teenagers on screen wear similar fashions as you do?*

**Would you want to wear similar fashions as the teenagers on screen?*

**How do you think advertisement during television programming affects you?*

**List your favourite programs and ask why they are your favorite.*

These questions can be explored in group discussions or in essays.





MEDIA BLITZ: BLACK, WHITE or in COLOUR

One of the purposes of **Media Blitz: Black, White or in Colour** is to help teachers and students gain an informed perspective of the role of mass media and popular culture. Media literacy skills are important for anyone who wishes to understand a world that is profoundly influenced and shaped by the mass media.

Media Literacy, what is it?

Media literacy is the process of acquiring skills which can be used to gain an informed and critical understanding of the nature of the mass media, its techniques and their implications. More specifically, it is education geared towards understanding the process of how aspects of the world around us are made meaningful.

Media Blitz explores these impacts by provide participants with the opportunity and knowledge to produce media messages.

Although media messages frequently appear to be mirrors of reality, they are, in fact, carefully crafted constructions - the results of countless decisions, conscious and unconscious. Meaning and impact are created through selection, context and juxtaposition, as well as formal elements such as shape, colour, light and composition.

Media Blitz examines the process of image construction as it applies to the messages we receive of the Third World, as well as notions we entertain about the concept of development. For example, common images of the Third World emphasize its negative aspects such as the devastation, extreme poverty, traditional lifestyles and rural backgrounds of the people. In contrast, the film, *From Sun Up*, provides a positive and affirming view of Tanzanian women as they confront the endless demands of physical and emotional survival. We are rarely provided with this type of representation which stresses the spirit and strength of African women. The question arises as to why some images tend to be communicated more readily than others.

Everyone has a reality construct - a sense of what the world is and how it works. The media influence our sense of reality by shaping images into clear (visual) representations that resemble reality. Thus, media have the potential to affect social and political behaviour in a variety of ways.

Because some of the terms we use are complex definitions, we have defined some of the key terms below to contextualize the issues raised in this program.

construct: build; put or fit together from sources: "The media constructs," refers to the act of producing a story for media purposes. These stories (ie. programs, news items, advertisements) are constructed by the media with the intention to represent a universal perspective. A sense of reality is often constructed by news media. News items are put together to resemble a realistic situation. Yet, they often portray one particular perspective.

framing: the use of the edges of the film frame to select and compose what will be visible on screen. Imposing boundaries and limits on how one sees; it involves emphasizing some aspects and omitting others. In the media, it imposes particular perspectives or understandings on media messages.

juxtaposition: to place elements side by side. By placing elements side by side, one can create associations or contrasts (similarities or differences).

mass media: audio, visual and print media such as television, radio, advertisements and newspaper, can affect a large population simultaneously and instantaneously. It is probably the most important factor in shaping our views of the world and guiding our interpretation of reality.

media: vehicles or systems for the transmission of information or entertainment. i.e. books, comics, graffiti, clothes, music — as vehicles, they influence the form and content of the messages they transmit.

sex-role stereotyping: stereotypes are confining. Sex-role stereotypes are set portrayals of sex-appropriate appearance, interests, skills, behaviours and self-perceptions. For example: A boy who cries is not masculine and a young woman who does not wear makeup is un-feminine. Stereotypes prescribe individuals with a more limited range of acceptable appear-

ances, feelings and behaviours. Origins of the word “stereotype” can be traced to its use to describe the printing-plate cast. It denoted fixing or perpetuating a mold in an unchanging form.

Third World: by Third World, we refer to Africa, parts of Asia, Latin America, Middle East and the Caribbean. Traditionally defined as the lesser developed countries because of their lack of industry, low standards of living, access to consumer goods, this definition revolves around notions of opposition. Third World characteristics are opposite to those of the First World. First World countries include: Britain, United States of America, and parts of Europe which have undergone industrialization, expansion of markets, rapid advancement in technology and so on.

women of colour: by women of colour, we are referring to those women previously denied a voice by virtue of being different from the mainstream in dominant societies and countries. Their difference lies in the colour of their skin. Unfortunately, this is not a neutral difference, it is a difference which has historically been infused with negative connotations. For our festival, we reclaim this term to deconstruct existing images and reconstruct our own identities.

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Suggested Activities:

After Media Blitz, you can further the development of critical analysis, especially in the area of media literacy. Here are some suggested activities for school groups, classes, individuals...

1. Write an article on Media Blitz similar to the activity in the afternoon workshop. Submit it to the school paper/publication or to your class/teacher. You can also turn it into a radio program with an interview format or documentary format. Tape your report, submit it to school radio or take it to Co-op, CJIV or CITR radio (contact phone number is listed in the guide).
2. Attend screenings at In Visible Colours. Program guide included in this package.
3. Get involved with existing publications or radio at school. If there is none, ask teachers if they would like to help create one with you and your peers. Most schools have a PA system to accommodate very simple broadcasting. Publications can consist of photocopied sheets stapled together.
4. Form a film/media group that could meet weekly or monthly to rent films and have discussions.
5. You can write a script for video or performance. Encourage your drama department or English department to use your script, perform it or produce it. Most schools or homes have some kind of videocamera equipment. If not, use a camera to help you visualize your script.
6. Suggested film/videos:
 - Killing Us Softly**, distributed by National Film Board, is an eye-opener on the psychological impact of advertising. This film will stimulate discussion about stereotyping and about the power of advertising to shape attitudes and, consequently, behaviour.
 - Developing Images**, distributed by IDERA films, is a wonderful film on media literacy and development. Using step by step constructions of images of development, it contrasts them to diverse images of development.
7. There are several groups that you might be interested in contacting. Look through the resource list and explore!
8. You or your class/school can rent films from several places. Get catalogues from Women in Focus Society, National Film Board, IDERA films and see some creative works produced by Canadians, women, people of colour, Third World people, etc.
9. When you see/hear distasteful productions from any media source, write your complaint and send it to Media Watch. They can give you information on how to lodge formal complaints.

A Resource list/contact list:

Artist is a nonprofit magazine produced by volunteers who are active in the visual, literary or performance arts or organizing for affecting social change. Areas of particular interest: Youth, Arts, Issues. address: #310 - 310 Water Street, Vancouver, B.C. phone 255 - 4071

CITR/UBC radio is a students run radio station. Call today for training. address: 6138 SUB Boulevard, Vancouver, V6T 2A5 phone:228-CITR

CJIV/SFU radio is a students run radio station. Call today for training at 291-4423

In Visible Colours, an International Women of Colour and Third World women Film/Video Festival and Symposium. address: c/o 849 Beatty Street, Vancouver, V6B 2M6 phone: 685 - 1137

Co-op Radio is a nonprofit community radio station. Volunteer training is on Fridays, noon hour. Train for all areas of radio programming. phone: 684 - 8494

IDERA Films, films and videos specializing in development areas, Catalogue available. address: 2524 Cypress, Vancouver B.C. phone: 738 - 8815

MediaWatch, independent Canadian women's organization dedicated to improving the portrayal of women in mass media. address: #250 - 1820 Fir Street, Vancouver, V6J 3B1 phone 731 - 0457

National Film Board, produces and distributes Canadian films and videos. Catalogues available, address: #300 - 1045 Howe Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 2B1 phone 666 - 3838

Public Dream Society aims to revive community arts and artists' role in the community. Volunteer opportunities for production, performance, cross-cultural visual and performing arts. address: Box 22058, Station B, Vancouver, V6A 3Y2 phone: 879 - 8611

Vancouver Art Gallery, free tours and hands-on workshops available upon request. Free Art Gallery on Thursday 5-9 pm. address: 750 Hornby, Vancouver, B.C. phone: 682 - 4668

Women in Development is a study group exploring areas pertinent to women and developing images. address: 5243 Nancy Street, Greene Way, North Vancouver, V7R 4N2 phone: 987 - 6691

Women in Focus Society, an Arts and Media Centre for women. Catalogues available for films/videos. address: 849 Beatty Street, Vancouver, V6B 2M6 phone: 682 - 5848

Youth Art Works is a group consisting of 15 to 24 year olds who operate their own studio space and art gallery. They plan workshops on media production. You are invited to participate in their programming and planning. address: 1156 West Third Street, Vancouver, B.C. phone 988 - ARTS