

SECOND TRIMESTER



HELLO! IT'S ME, KRISHNA

I WANTED TO TELL YOU A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHY WE'RE HERE TODAY



THE PERSONAL

My partner, Logan, and I started talking about having a baby in early 2020. Around the same time, I told my mum I wanted to get pregnant... and she freaked out. She had questions that I'm sure many other parents have had. And it prompted her to tell me stories about her own life, things I couldn't place alongside the version of her I'd always known. It took me a while to see her as someone who existed before I did. Someone who made a life in a country far from home, carrying things she never told me about. Until now. This show is an exploration of that.



THE POLITICAL

What you're about to watch is our real lives, our real stories, our real relationship on stage as a trans person and their mum.

We're making this show at a strange and frightening time for trans people. Anti-trans rhetoric in the UK and across the world is growing louder by the day, fuelled by the media and governments. Sometimes the most political act is also the simplest one. A mum and her trans kid (albeit an adult!), on stage together. At a moment when trans people are being told we are too complicated, too controversial, too much—my mum showing up, night after night, to stand on stage with me is our own kind of answer to all of it.

And in my mum doing this with me, it has also created a space for her own story to be told. When we don't often get to hear about the experiences of older women of colour in mainstream media, this felt equally important to us.

THE TRILOGY

Second Trimester is part of a trilogy of work titled the **M/OTHERHOOD PROJECT**, exploring my journey into parenthood from a trans perspective. This trilogy has been developed in collaboration with my creative producer **Ruby Glaskin**. First Trimester, the prequel to this, was a one-of-a-kind durational experience, where I interviewed hundreds of participants live on stage, in a quest to find me and my partner the “perfect” sperm donor.

The debut run of First Trimester in London was filmed for Sperm Donors Wanted!, a short documentary funded by the Netflix Documentary Talent Fund. You can watch it below!

Directed by my partner **Logan Rea**.



N DOCUMENTARY
TALENT FUND

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THE FORM

When my mum told me her life story, it felt made up. Like the plot of a Bollywood film (a genre my mum *loves*). So we leaned into it! The cinematic melodrama, the feeling that real life is sometimes stranger and more devastating than anything a writer could invent. As an artist who works across TV, film and theatre, Second Trimester borrows from all forms, using cameras and live documentation to help tell this story on stage. We collaborated with video and projection designers **idontloveyouanymore** to bring this element to life!



THE THEME

The theme of Second Trimester is *choice*. Or more precisely—the lack of it. While making the show, we've been thinking a lot about the ways in which queer and trans people are denied choice in family-making. About the ways my mum, as an older woman of colour, has had choice taken from her: by institutions, by culture, by circumstance. So it felt politically and artistically important that this show be built around giving my mum, Geetha, as much agency as possible in how she navigates each show.

Which raises the obvious question: how do you actually do that?!



CODING & THE INTERFACE

Over the course of this trilogy, my practice has evolved to think about how live performance can be made with non-performers. Coding has become a big part of that, developed in close collaboration with our creative coder **Suzanna Hurst**.

On stage, my mum Geetha has an interface (navigated via her trusted iPad). At key moments it presents her with options: how does she want to approach the next scene? Does she need a rest? Is she ready to go OFF SCRIPT into territory we haven't rehearsed, questions I've never asked her, real conversations between us that neither of us can predict?

The interface does two things at once. It embeds care into the work, giving my mum the ability to navigate the show's more challenging moments differently each night, depending on how she's feeling emotionally, physically, and creatively. And two, the coding acts as a dramaturgical tool to allow non-performers, like my mum, to inhabit the stage genuinely and safely as themselves while maintaining a robust dramaturgy to the piece.

ON SCRIPT/OFF SCRIPT

Some of what you'll see tonight is scripted. Some of it isn't. My mum and I will be using the interface to move between the two, toggling between rehearsed moments and genuinely unscripted ones. Making this show has meant getting to know my mum in ways I never expected. But that's the thing about parents, there's always more to them than we think, stories they never found the right moment to tell. How well can we ever really know our parents? That question lives at the heart of this show. Tonight is part of that ongoing quest.

THE AD BREAKS

Every so often, you'll notice us pause for a rest. From the very beginning of making *Second Trimester*, we knew that rest had to be embedded into the fabric of the work itself. My mum is not a professional performer, and has health issues that mean a sit down and a breather is welcome. As well as this, depending on where we are on the tour, I may or may not be pregnant. So we've built a show that can accommodate all of that, at every stage. Rest isn't a weakness in the work, it's a part of it. So when the ad break comes: settle in, chat to the person next to you, or text your mum. We'll be back.

MY MUM WANTS TO SAY SOMETHING TOO...

To the audience: thank you for being here tonight. To have you here, witnessing this, allowing these stories to be seen and heard, is something I am very grateful for. Because I am gradually healing through this show. It is liberating to stand up here and tell my story without being judged. I am not a performance artist. I came into this not really knowing anything about theatre. At times it felt overwhelming and I definitely had moments of anxiety, wondering if I would get it right. But what I discovered was the power of the team around me. They were very warm, encouraging and supportive, and I felt less and less inhibited as the days went by.

When I found my own place in the production, I realised that growth often happens when we step into the unknown. This experience showed me that theatre isn't just about the performance, it's about community, courage, and the joy of creating something meaningful together. Being part of this show has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my life, especially because I am sharing it with my child. I learned that supporting your child isn't just about saying you're proud, it's about showing up, celebrating their identity, and growing alongside them.

I hope that what you see tonight resonates with you in some way. I hope it brings comfort, recognition, or simply a moment to pause and feel. Thank you for your openness, your empathy, and your time. It truly matters.

With love,
GEETHA



THE VILLAGE

This trilogy is a family-affair (literally). And it really does take a village!

Lead Artist & Writer: Krishna Isth
Performer & Co-Creator: Geetha Shankar
Director: Milli Bhatia
Creative Producer: Ruby Glaskin
Creative Coder: Suzanna Hurst
Video Designer: idontloveyouanymore - Anna West & Davi Callanan
Dramaturg: Paula Varjack
Set & Costume Designer: Ting - Huan 挺歡 Christine Urquhart
Lighting Designer: Joshua Gadsby
Sound Designer: Joe Jackson
Sound Designer & Composition: XANA
Theme Composition: Holly Khan
Movement Director: Jennifer Jackson
Associate Movement Director: Gabriella Schmidt
Production Manager: Benji Huntrods
Technical Stage Manager: Florian Lim
Design Associate: Moa Johansson
Narrator: Shivam Gupta
Script Dramaturg: Saraïd de Silva
Outside Eye: Emma McManus
Wellbeing Support: Sabah Choudrey
Artist Access Support: Lottie Vallis
Pregnancy Support: Josefeen Foxten
Hair & Make Up Support: Rachel Porter
Voice Coach: Gurkiran Kaur
BSL Support: Deepa Shastri
PR Associate: Joy Parkinson
Marketing & Branding Creative Director: Emily Drake
Graphics & Brand Design: Rob Wallace, Josh Quinton, Logan Rea
Audience Connectors: Gayithiri Kamalakan & Jamie Locke
Senior Producer for BAC: Oscar Owen

Special thanks to: Pelin Basaran, Ella Gamble, Hiranya Griffith-Unny, Pedro Melo, Moses Mansaray, and the entire team at Battersea Arts Centre. Raidene Carter, Louisa Borgcostanzi Potts and Arts Admin. Reena Kalsi, Rosie Scudder, Mary Osborn, Harry Clayton Wright, Unni Krishnan, Jess Latowicki, and to everyone who joined our open R&D processes along the way and shared experiences and thoughts so generously.

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BRING YOUR FOLKS NIGHTS

To honour the themes of Second Trimester, we're hosting two special nights. Bring your guardians or elders, watch together, and join us after for free chaat by **Vegetarian Brown Girls** and chai by **Maji**.

Friday 17 April - South Asian folks & their guardians

Wednesday 22 April - queer people & their guardians

Book your spot on Battersea Art Centre's website.

WELLBEING SPACE

We have a trained wellbeing practitioner in a dedicated space nearby. They're available if you want to speak to someone at any point during the performance and for 45 mins after. BAC's FOH staff will be able to guide you to the well-being room (on the ground floor). This space is available to anyone who needs it.

Second Trimester is a Making Waves Major Commission and Produced by Battersea Arts Centre. Made possible with funding by Arts Council England and Cockayne 10th Anniversary Grants for the Arts. Additionally commissioned by Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, Cambridge Junction, Gulbenkian Arts Centre, Marlborough Productions, SICK Festival and Unlimited.

Making Waves is a new national commissioning and touring programme, led by BAC and bringing together the diverse strengths of a network of 11 national partners. The Making Waves network represents a broad range of venues, festivals and organisations across the UK. The Making Waves partners are Battersea Arts Centre, Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, Cambridge Junction, FABRIC, The Gulbenkian Arts Centre, Lancaster Arts, Lowry, Norfolk & Norwich Festival, SPILL Festival of Performance, Unlimited and formerly MAYK.