



For Immediate Release  
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**PIECE ORANGE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS  
“TEARS” SHORT FILM STARRING SIERRA FERRELL &  
OZZIE JUAREZ PREMIERING AT FRESH GRASS FESTIVAL**

*Screening as part of the Fresh Scores program at MASS MoCA - silent films with a composed original score - director Zinzi Gugu Johnson's fine art debut showcases a soulful exchange of tears for lost love, each other and the world at large.*

[\[Preview the film\]](#)

(LOS ANGELES, CA – SEPT 4, 2024) – Director Zinzi Gugu Johnson debuts her short film “Tears” with live score from cellist Andrew Yee on Saturday, Sept 21st at the Fresh Grass Festival in North Adams, MA during their Fresh Scores program screening at the Hunter Center within MASS MoCA at 2:30pm EST. It is a film about a real-life encounter wherein two non actors met for the first time and then wept together in earnest. Shot on 2-Perf 35mm film, we see artists Sierra Ferrell and Ozzie Juarez cry privately, together.

“I believe deeply in the healing power of crying for reasons related to joy and pain. I take the world’s problems personally, and this is both a blessing and a curse for me and probably the world” says Johnson.

Building on her work in the music scene over the past 13 years, she pulled together a superstar cast and crew to bring this film to life. From onscreen co stars - country artist Ferrell and painter on-the-rise Juarez, to VICE seasoned cinematographer Tyler Weinberger, stop animator and Tom Waits collaborator, Ri Crawford and the indie hair & makeup darling Leticia Llesmin, the talent matched the need for analog film stock and the shared vision shows on screen.

Filmmaker Zinzi Gugu Johnson imagined the look and the void-like context of Tears in a deep trance. Yet its simple setup is in direct and obvious conversation with Marina Abramović's "A minute of silence." It is part of a larger ongoing body of work called Feelings.

More personally, Zinzi produced, directed, wrote and edited Tears to say goodbye to someone she loved more deeply than herself, "or perhaps I made it to say hello and I love you to myself, for the first time in a long time, instead of goodbye to the other...or a little of both." she adds. Zinzi has been making music related films for over a decade. "I have big ears and love to listen more than to speak."

"Tears" is accompanied by a live musical score from trans cello starlet Andrew Yee. She composed the music for the piece and performs it with her signature grace, style, and Jimmy Hendrix-like bravado. Cello music is the simplest way to open the heart and soul; the cello is as expressive as the human voice. The way Andrew plays is sure to inspire embodied listening and watching.

Tears is a cathartic offering. Knowing that there is no narrative besides the soulful exchange of tears, the crying between man and woman becomes something bigger than another tale about the dark side of love. The simplicity in concept empowers their performances. The tears are real, for the most part. It takes little imagination for viewers to project onto the crying what may be provoking said emotional release. It could be the endless and ongoing global conflict. It could be this precarious moment on which our planets' complex ecosystems hinge-the tipping point. It could be political anxiety. Perhaps the viewer sees something more personal, a relentless and toxic pattern, deeply grooved into their own lived experience. Black oil-like droplets slide down cheeks and out of frame, a literal on the nose reference to modernity's most formidable catch-22.

The film is long enough to give space and time to experience, and best of all - to feel, whatever feelings may well up whilst watching (not limited to sadness, the crying is absurd and surreal intentionally). Whatever internal chaos can be quieted by the simplicity and direct nature of Tears, this is an invitation to sit still and be quieted.

Sierra Ferrell has been Zinzi's dearest friend for as long as her birdlike (traumatized) memory can record. Yes, the greatest voice of our generation, but also a godmother to Zinzi's three children and a source of inspiration and energy for what now seems like the entire world. The idea of a conversation built entirely from crying and looking back and forth came from real life experiences that Sierra had with a particular lover, and the stories Zinzi heard about this wordless expression moved her deeply. Lastly, Sierra's most recent album is called "Trail of Flowers" and the two agreed that "Tears" was the perfect name for this project, in its quite and sincere homage, acknowledgement and apology for a genocide of a similar title.

Finding the man to cry across from Sierra was easy. When Zinzi first approached new friend and esteemed Latinx, Los Angeles-based painter Ozzie Juarez to cry with Sierra, he agreed immediately - saying simply, "I cry every day."

And with that, and some goosebumps, please enjoy.

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**WHAT: "Tears" Premiere at Fresh Grass Festival**

**WHEN: Sat. September 21st,**

**WHERE: MASS MoCA**

**WHO: Director Zinzi Gugu Johnson, composer/cellist Andrew Yee**

**WEBSITE:** 

**ARTIST STATEMENT (on the film "Tears"):**

Tears is a response to American Imperialism. Crying, overwhelmed by the military industrial complex and lost in a void of despair, two cultural icons meet in sorrow. Caught on Panavision, the wordless conversation between singer Sierra Ferrell and painter Ozzie Juarez takes place in Andrew Yee's eery cello soundscape, with Msaki moaning prayers for mercy. Tears drip down in reverence for an empire in free fall, a warming planet, endless war, mass extinction, our self poisoning by micro plastics, uncertain and fearful futures, and mothers choosing not to bring babies into a world on fire... Yet, it is a tearful catharsis. Wherever deep feeling exists; wherever human compassion and perseverance exist, there is hope for change. Crying is a divine channel for emotional release, and this cinematic endurance piece aspires to offer some peace and release to its audience. With a background in music content in an era of shortening attention spans, the 20:43 minute length of Tears is an intentional choice meant to challenge viewers to sit still for long enough to feel the full scope of their emotional landscape.

Director and mother, Zinzi Gugu Johnson is a Jewish South African American artist working at the cross section of music and visual art who feels the moral obligation of privilege deep in her bones. Here, in her film Tears, crying is a loud, albeit wordless call to collective action. Zinzi knows that the choices made by this living generation are humanity's last chance for an inhabitable Earth.

Let deep sadness move you to change what you can and accept what remains.



#### DIRECTOR ZINZI GUGU JOHNSON BIO:

Zinzi Gugu Johnson is a filmmaker based in Ojai. She got her BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in photography and feels comfortable playing in most traditional fine art mediums. She is a mother of 3 who sees people as animals. Zinzi takes the worlds' problems personally, and considers herself a patriot and an art making diplomat. Her motivation is leaving a legacy of good, earnest work on a planet in peril.

#### SIERRA FERRELL BIO:

One of the brightest young luminaries in roots music today, Sierra Ferrell brings a dose of beautifully strange magic to everything she touches. Since the arrival of Long Time Coming (her acclaimed debut LP for Rounder Records), the West Virginia-born singer/songwriter/multi-instrumentalist has earned the Emerging Act of the Year prize at the Americana Honors & Awards, collaborated with the likes of Margo Price, the Black Keys, Shakey Graves, Zach Bryan, Diplo, and Old Crow Medicine Show, and enchanted audiences all over North America and Europe with her high-spirited and dazzling live performance. On her new album Trail Of Flowers, the Nashville-based artist expands her sound while deepening the urgency of her songs, often revealing a wealth of wisdom within her wildly imaginative storytelling.

#### OZZIE JUAREZ BIO:

Ozzie Juarez (b. 1991, Compton, CA) is a multidisciplinary artist who uses the realms of painting and sculpture to honor and revitalize ancient and recent cultural artifacts, languages, and histories. Inspired by the techniques, collaborations, ambitions, and ephemeral qualities of unsanctioned public art, Juarez incorporates excerpts of paintings he observes across the LA landscape into his own work. His ongoing interest in the construction of shared experiences and identities can be equally attributed to time spent as a scenic painter specializing in physical simulation at Disneyland. The omnipresence of American cartoon culture—with its roots in racial stereotypes and its exoticization of global cultures—weaves itself effortlessly into Juarez's motifs.