

Mas



Spectrum

Analysis

Introduction

Caribbean carnival is, as the label suggests, is carnival brought to this country from the Caribbean.

Unfortunately the label does not represent the complex range of ingredients that combine to form carnival as we know it across the UK.

The term carnival is more of a collective noun applied to a range of activities developed across different cultures over thousands of years.

In general historians believe that the origins of modern carnival lie in the festivals of ancient Rome and Greece such as the Kalends and Bacchanaal or Dionysia. These in turn originated in the festivals of ancient KMT, that North African empire conquered and occupied by the Greeks and renamed Egypt.

The Christian church gathered these festivities under its religious banner in an attempt to bring their practitioners into the fold. They were, in effect, standardised as pre-Lenten celebrations the term carnival meaning variously to set aside or to elevate oneself (vale or levare) from meat (carne) for the privations of Lent. Carnival is officially the last indulgence before Lent.

Carnival was brought to the Caribbean by the European slave masters with their other Christian traditions.

Africans, having been allowed to participate in carnival took to it as their own. It was the one activity with which they could engage in numbers without fear of arrest. However, as with most European traditions

Africans took it in name only introducing into carnival a range their own traditions and values.

Carnival differs across the Caribbean but the most popular form of Caribbean carnival in the UK originated in Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad has a relatively high representation of South Asian and Native American people's. These have contributed to the look and feel of carnival there. Particular examples are the large floats drawn from the Muslim festival of Hosay and the abundance of feathers drawn from Native American traditions.

So whilst the label may read Caribbean carnival the content represents Africa, Europe, Asia and the Americas. With spirituality drawn from Christian, Native American, Islamic and traditional African faiths.

This accounts for much of the passion and energy that has come to represent carnival.

Caribbean Carnival has been in Lancashire since the 1970s. It is celebrated annually around the last bank holiday in May. At one time it boasted the largest procession outside of Notting Hill. Today, as a result of cultural depreciation it is a much smaller, less spectacular affair. However, it continues to be one of the largest, best supported festivities in the county. It also marks the start of the carnival season in the UK which sees carnivals parade through the streets of most British towns and cities until the end of August.

Most spectators are oblivious to the hard work and dedication that goes into making the event possible. The individual bands that 'play mas' (masquerade) on the day are volunteer led and provide their own resources relying heavily on local people with a passion for carnival. This book is a photographic insight into the workings of one of our more established carnival bands, Spectrum.

It attempts to show the development from raw energy to choreographed spectacle as ideas for dance, performance, art and design come together for the total creative experience that is carnival.

We would like to thank Spectrum and all its members for their tolerance and support and the Heritage Lottery for their belief in and funding for this project.

Spectrum

Formed by Phillip Duncan (right of picture) Spectrum has been around since.

Each year the band works with around 50 young people transmitting cultural practices across generations and into the future.

The band also includes older people as well as people of different cultural orientations, all parading under the banner of Caribbean carnival.

In addition to playing mas Spectrum also perform at community events and work on cultural projects at other times in the year.



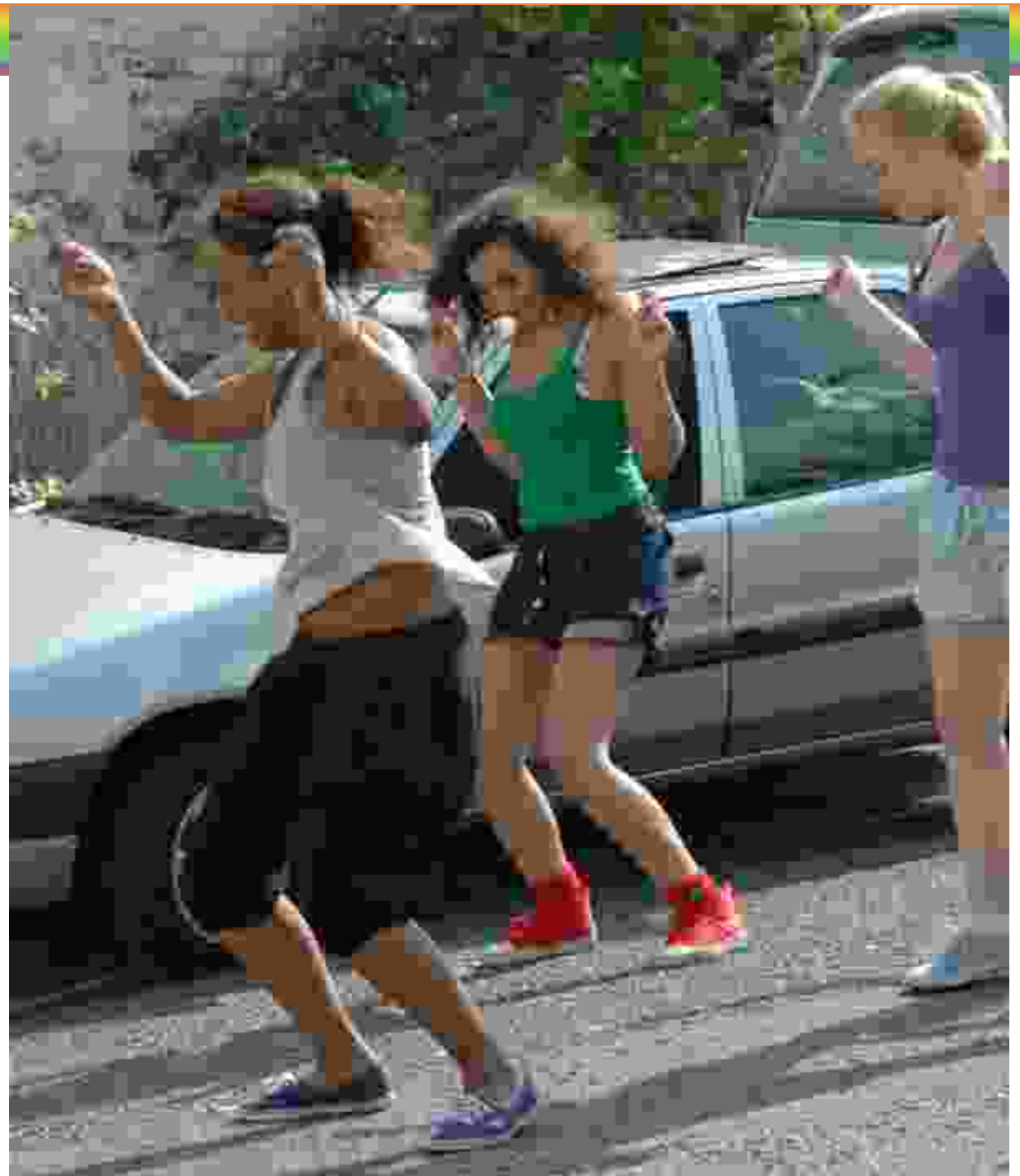
The Work Begins with rehearsals...



Dancing in the streets. Why practice indoors when the weather is so...Caribbeanish



A choreographer choreographing





Everyone has their place. The two choreographers leading the troupe in rehearsals

Band members bond as they attempt to learn the routines





In the studio



The King & Queen get special attention



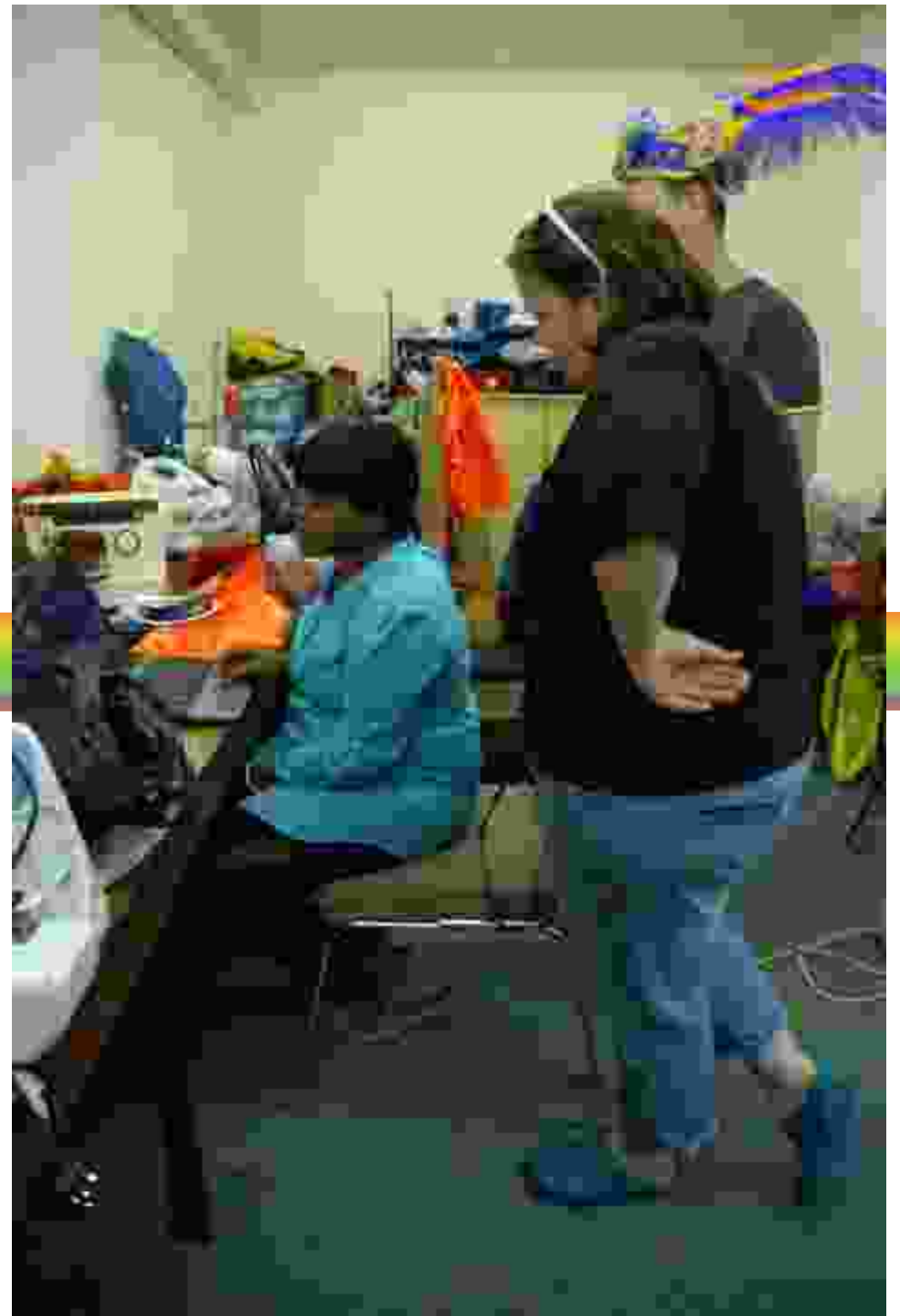




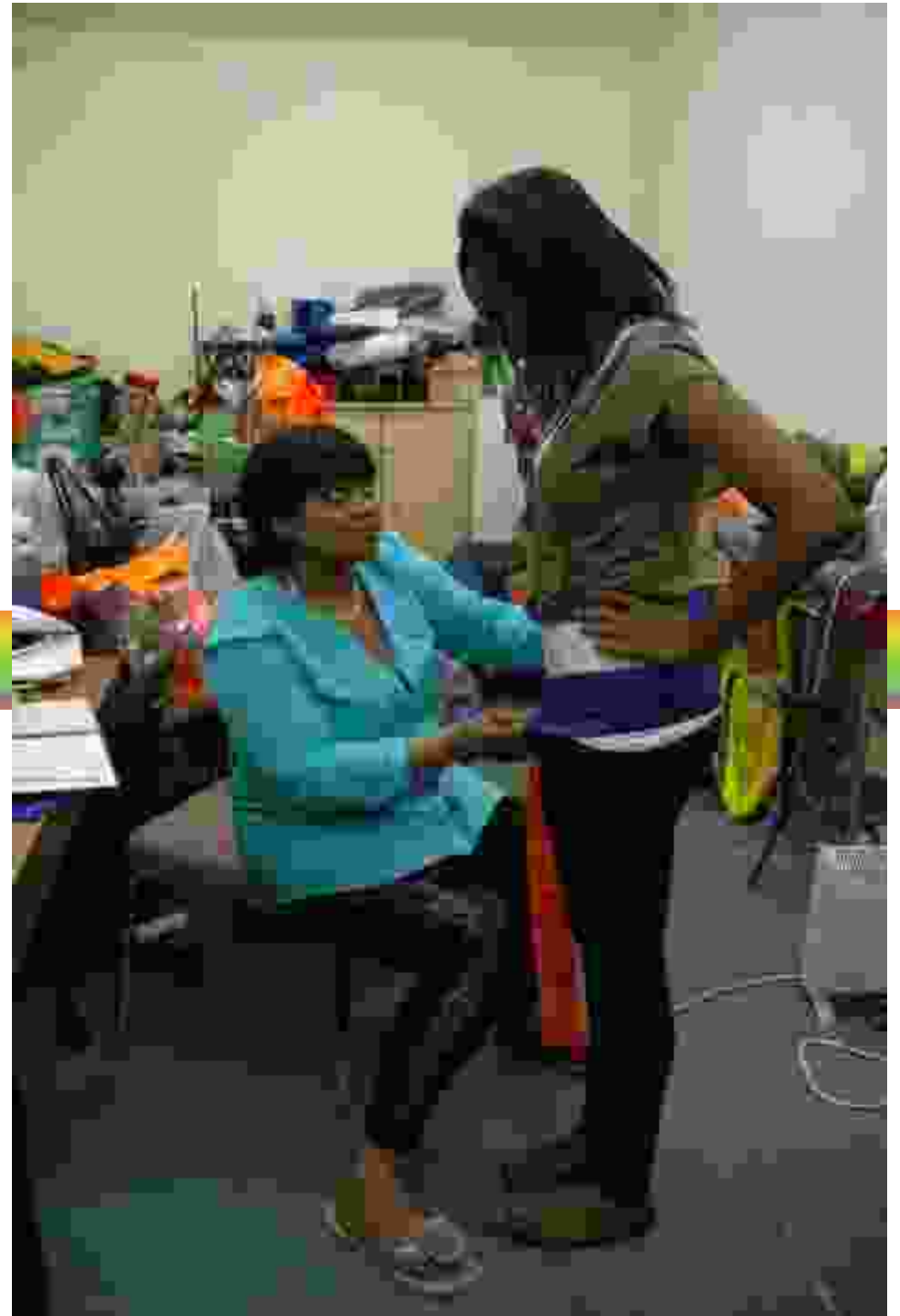


the creative chaos of the design studio

Members of the creative team mull over design issues.



Jessie gets and early fitting







The King is pleased with his fitting

Attention to the smallest detail...

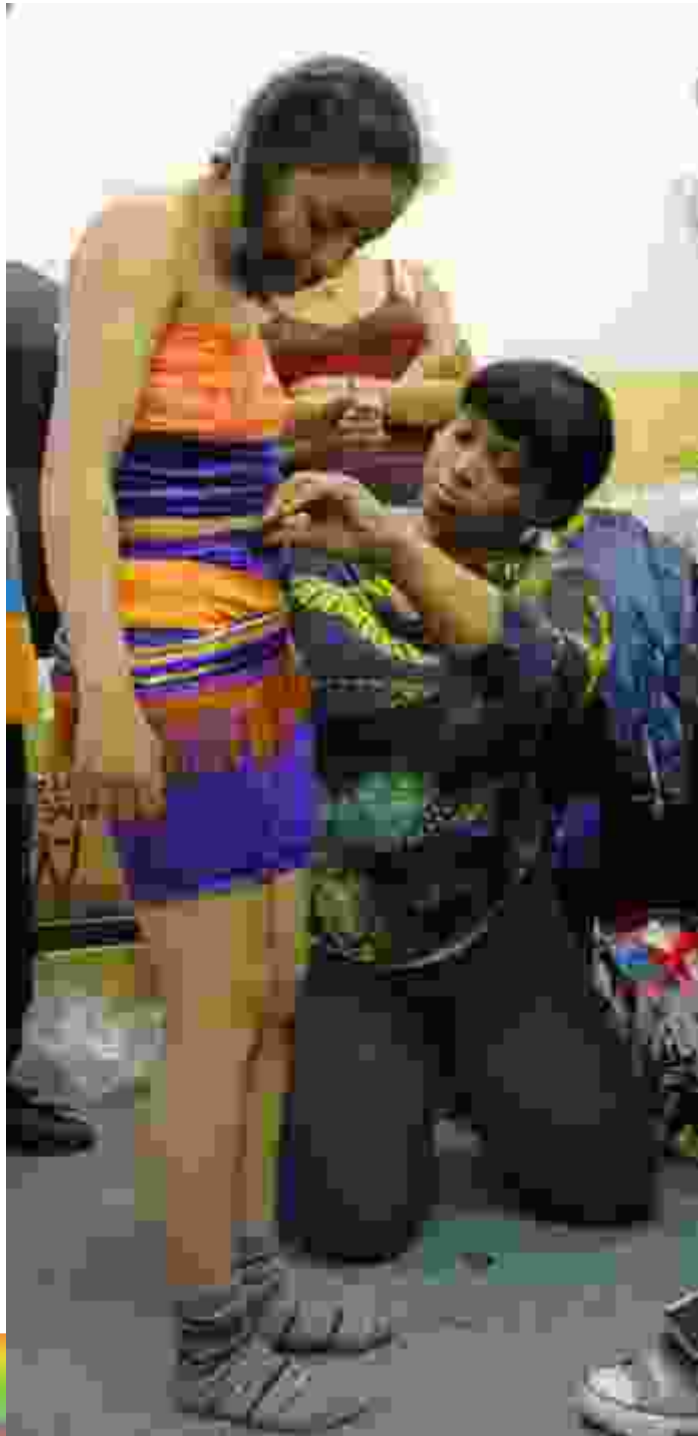


Carnival costumes are not held together by glue and tape



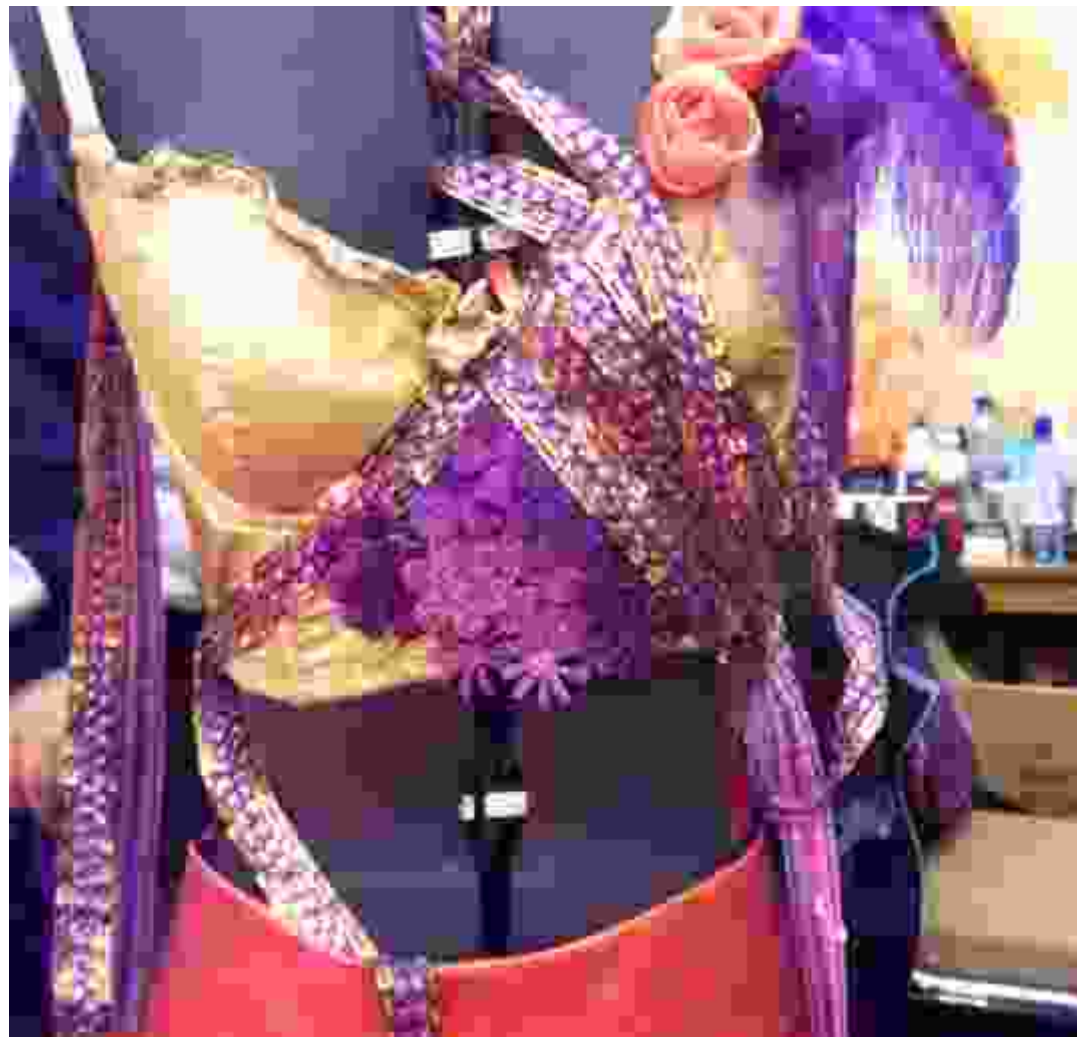






Costumes are tweaked for individual style and morality





The Queens costume takes shape









The Calm Before The Big Day...







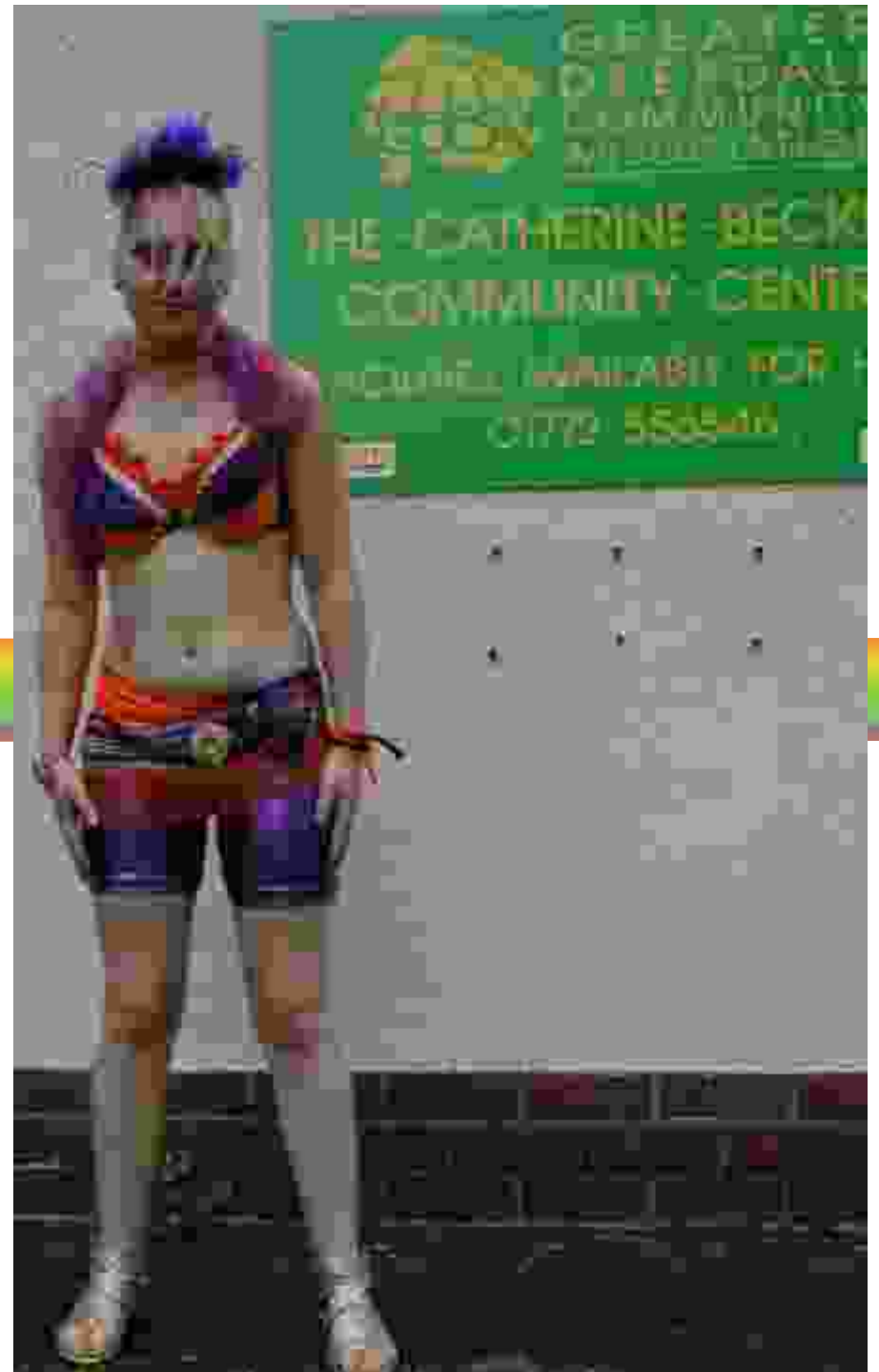






Carnival Day - Getting Ready...

Everything is transported to the Catherine Beckett Centre,
closer to the carnival's setting-off point







Each One Help One

Not until the make-up is on...please!

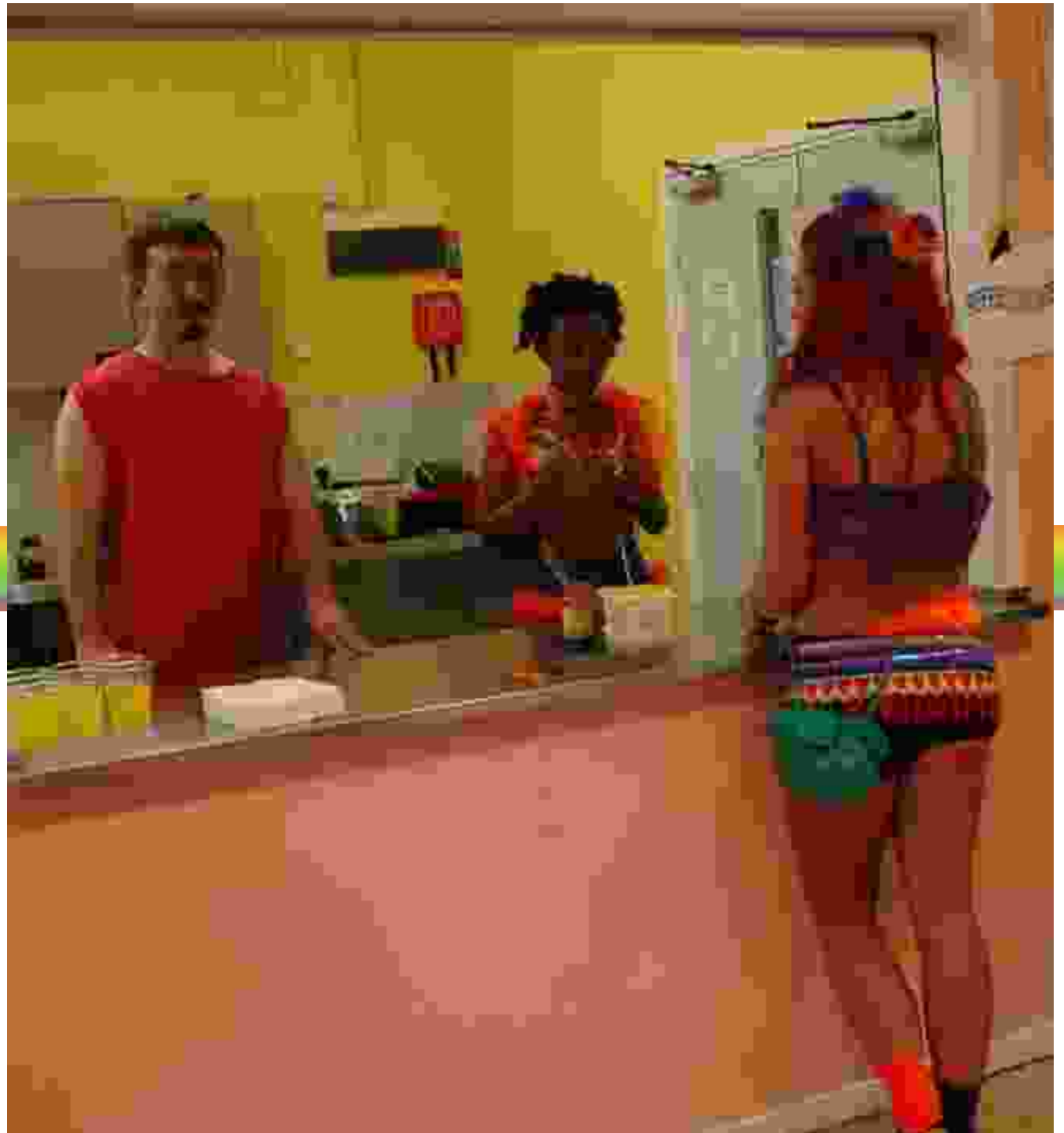






Becky gets her finishing touches

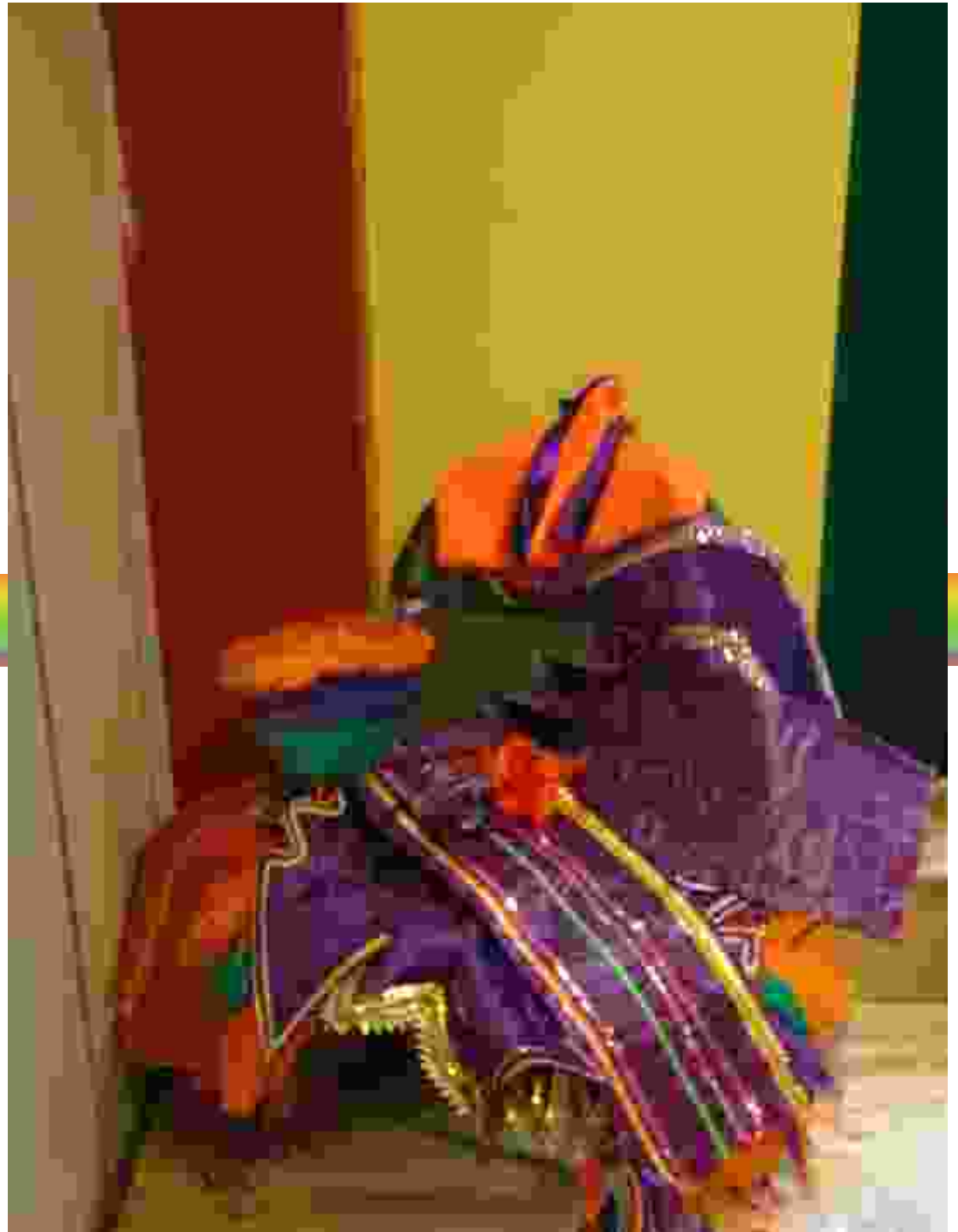
The King has other duties to perform





It's a family affair

The costume is ready, even though the wearer isn't





You're never too old to be excited



The moment draws nigh









On the road

On the Road...

Leaving the park





Age gap?



Keeping order





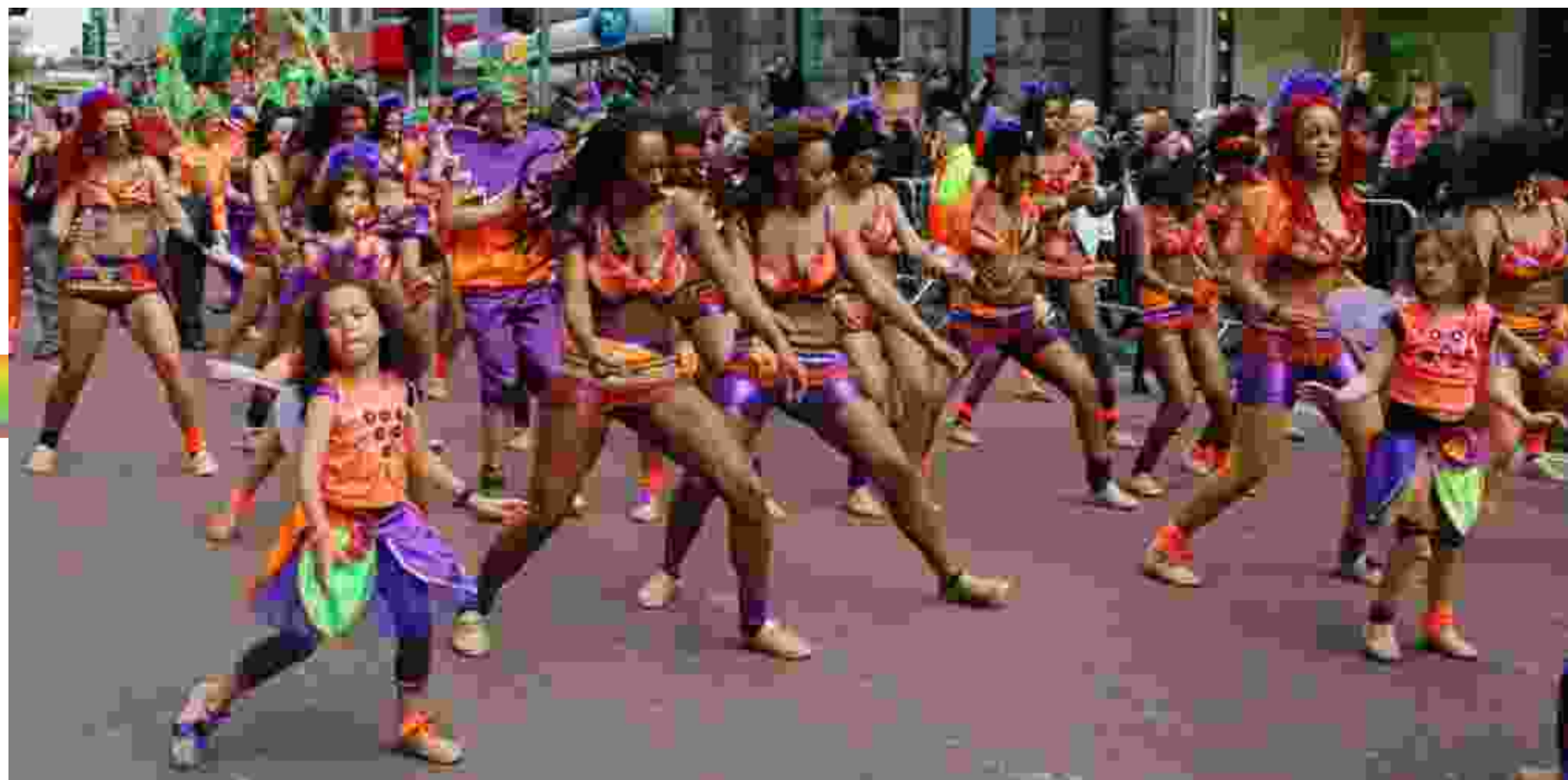














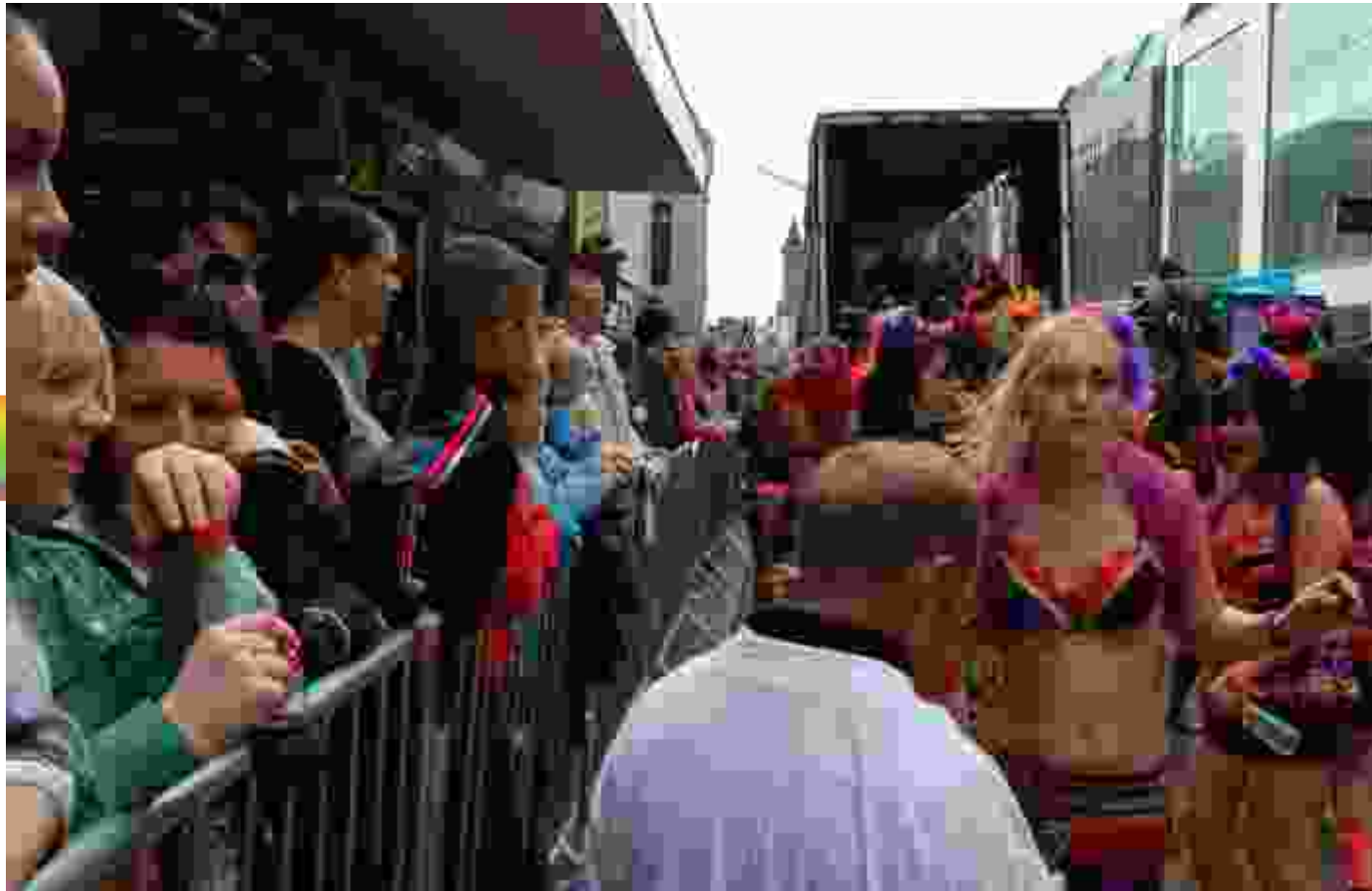






...3 Ahhhhhh!





The crowd gets involved



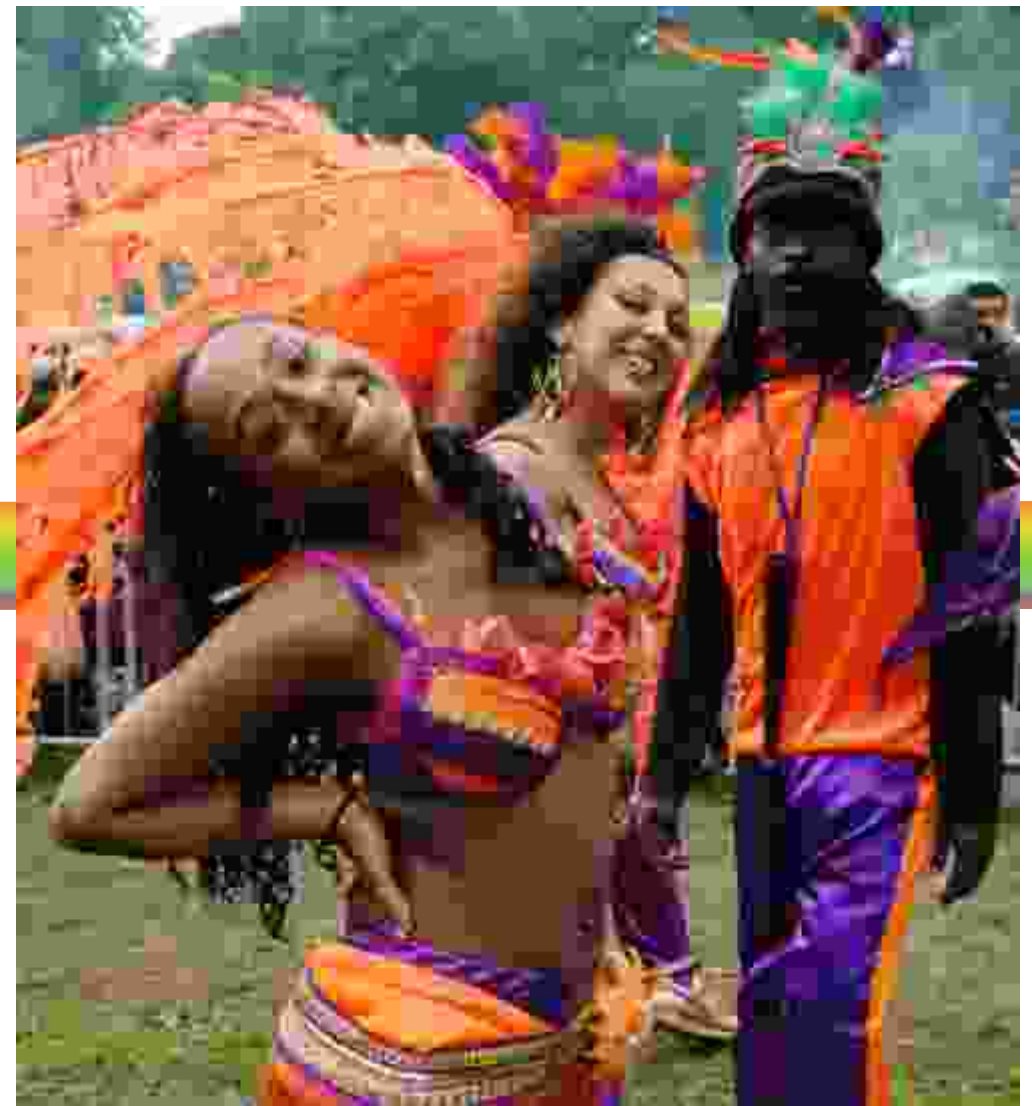
The road is coming to an end

At the Park...

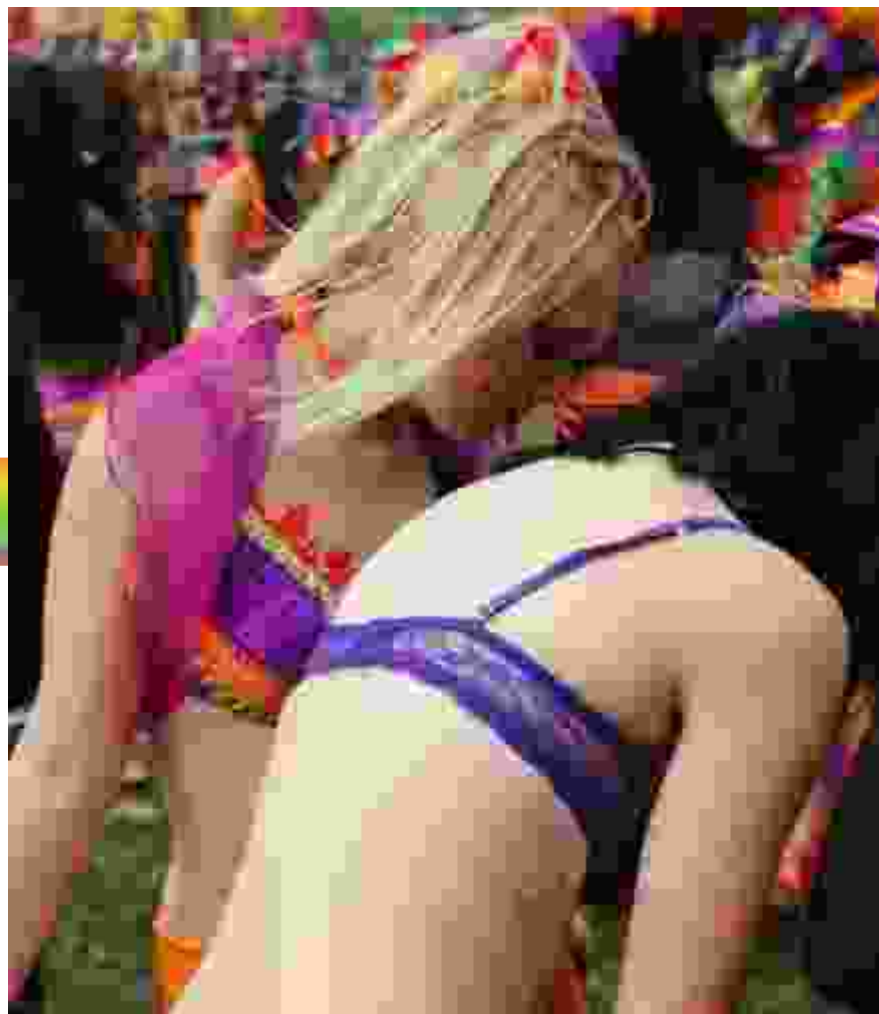
Bands gather waiting for their turn to perform on stage and the final judging.



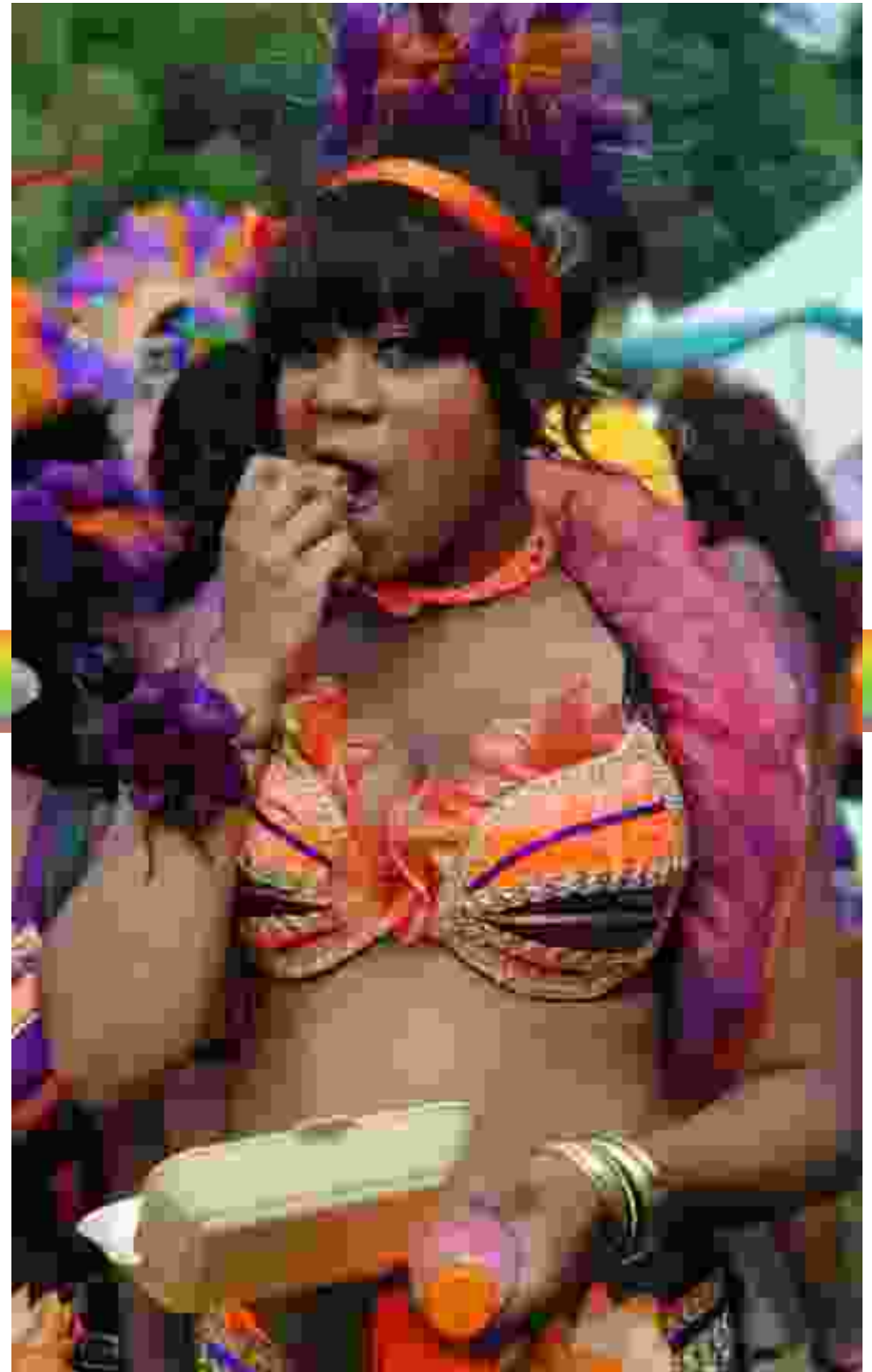




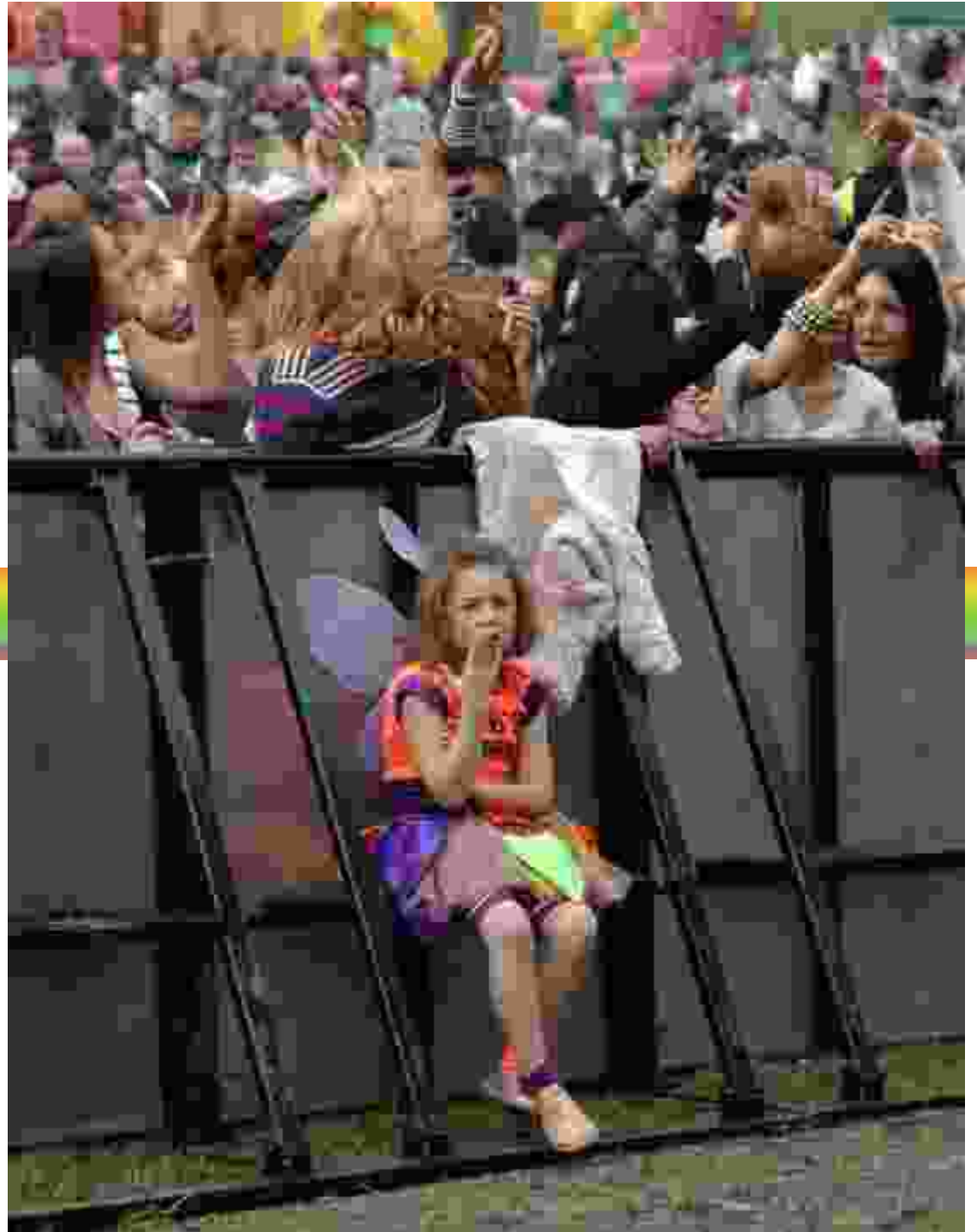




Keeping the figure topped-up









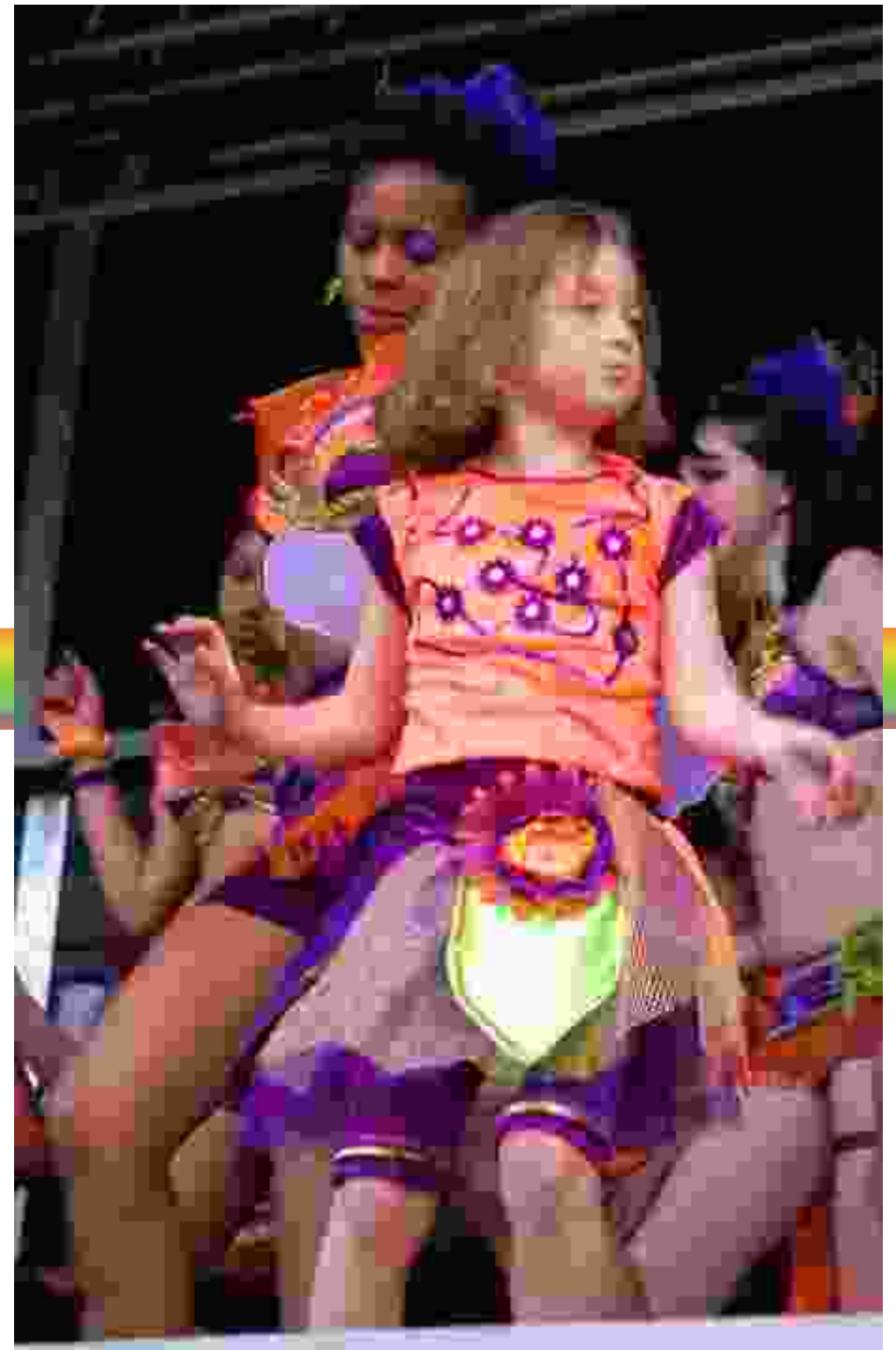
on the stage, ready to go

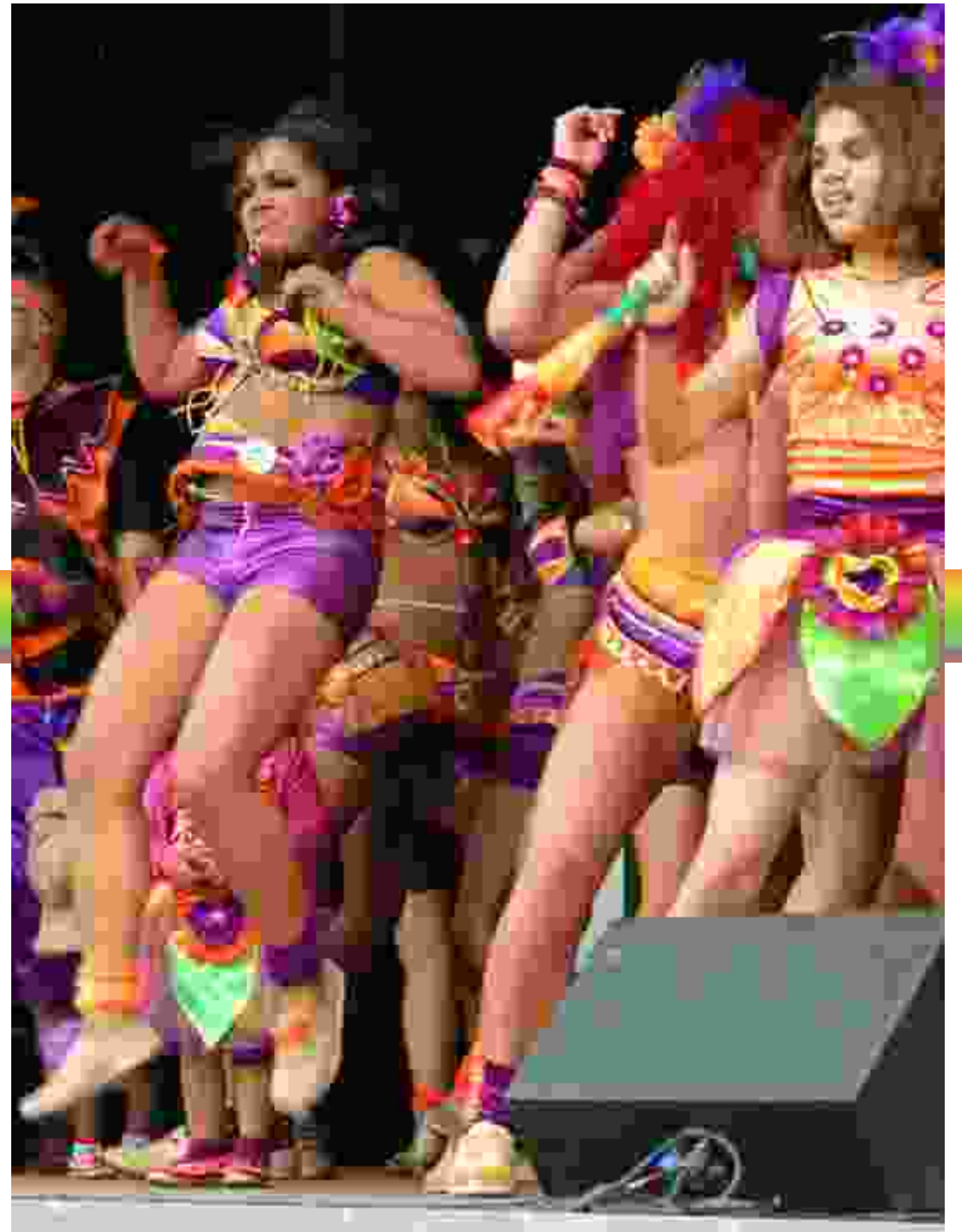


















and the winning band is...



...SPECTRUM!



The Carnival is Over but the Work Continues...

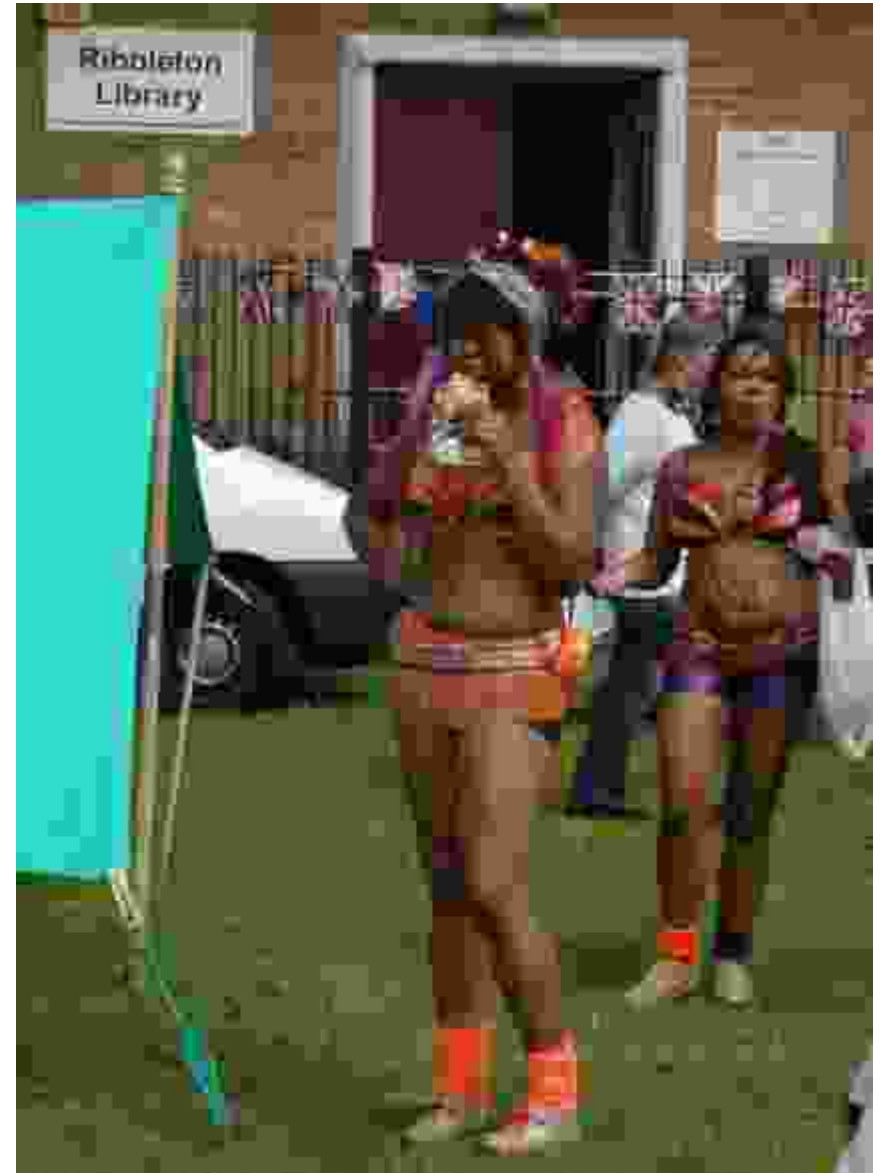


Supporting a City Council event on Preston's Flag Market

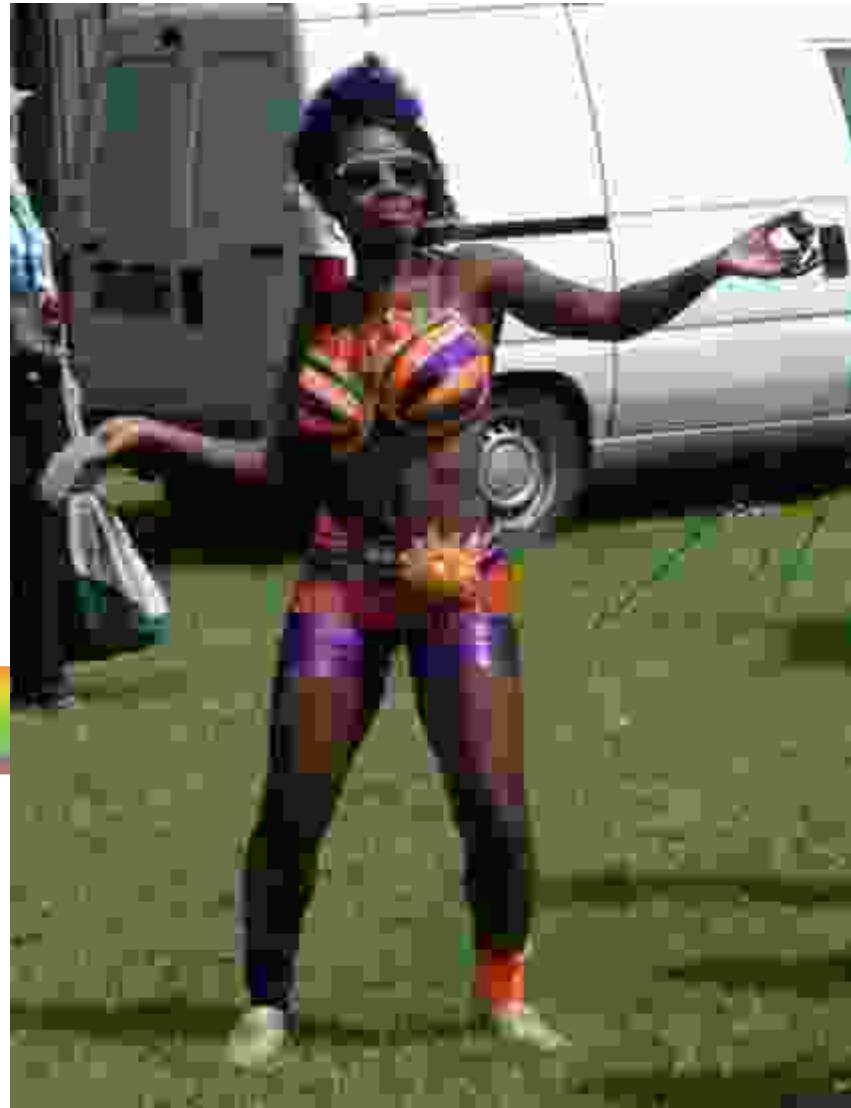


Ribbleton Library performance for Gateway





Each prepares for the performance in their own way





Father & daughter in rhythmic harmony









Some of the elements that make up the Spectrum