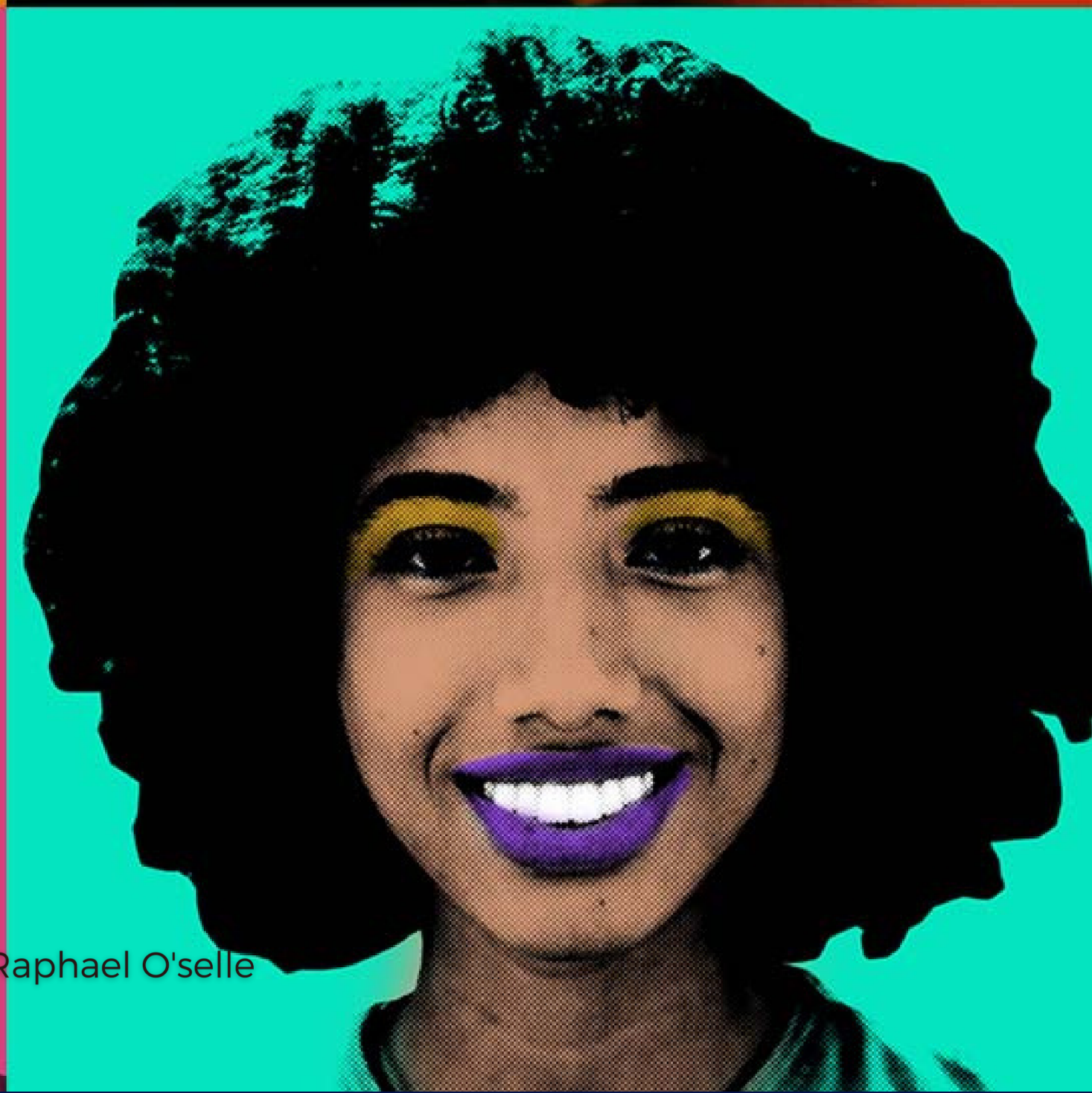
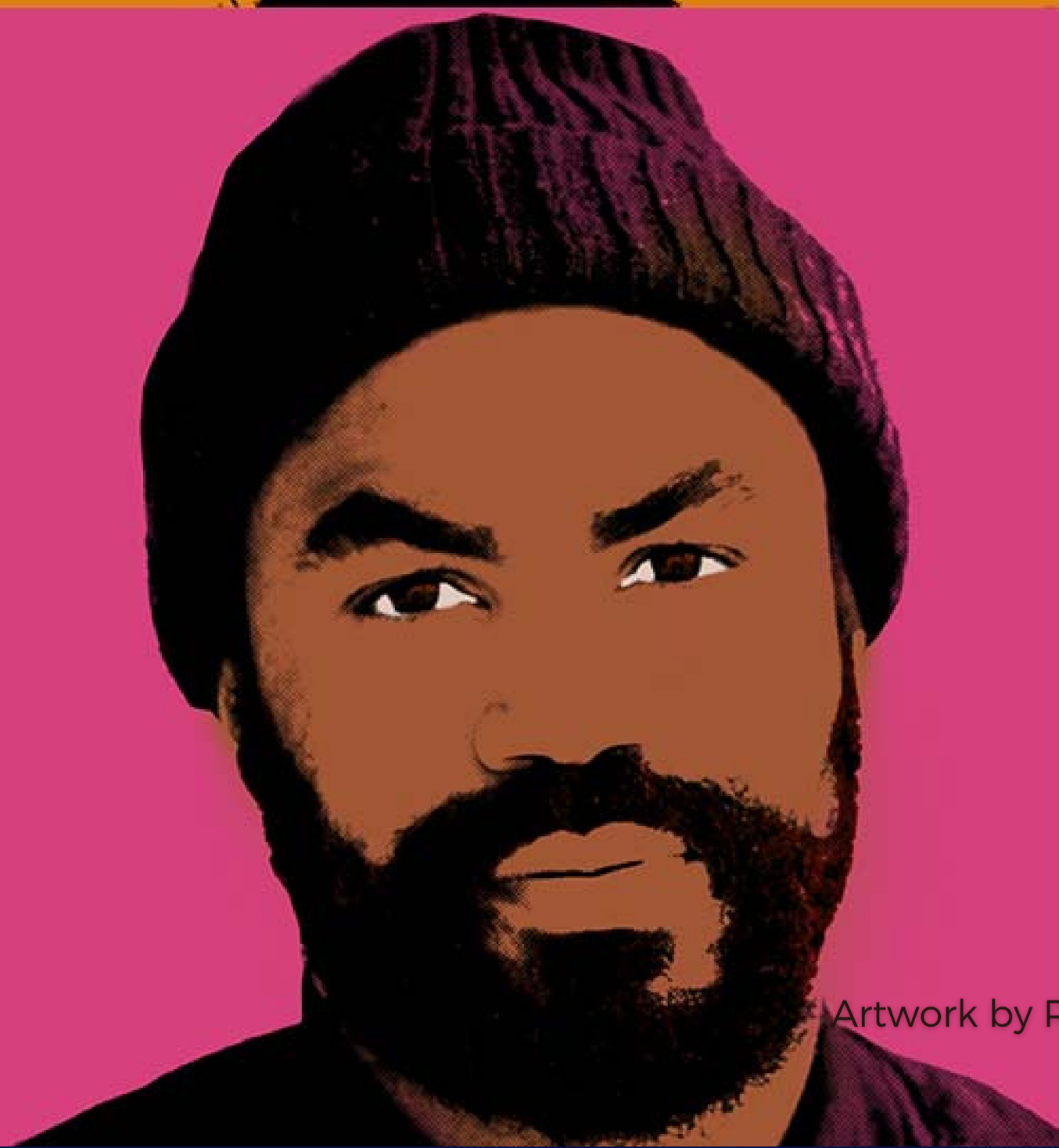
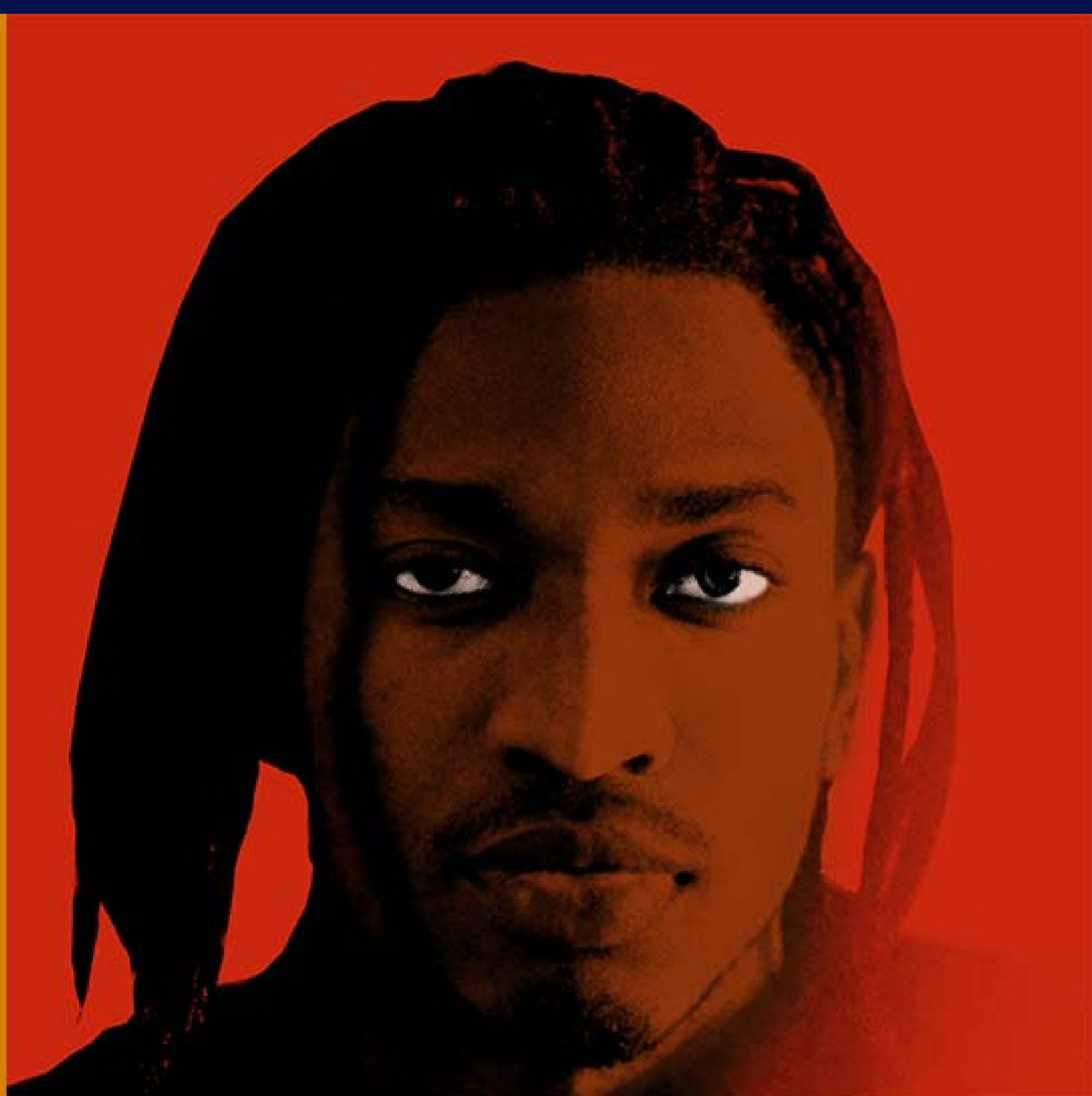


BLACK INTROVERT WEEK UK

23-27 OCTOBER 2023

THE INTROVERT PROFESSIONAL: HYBRID WORKING GUIDE

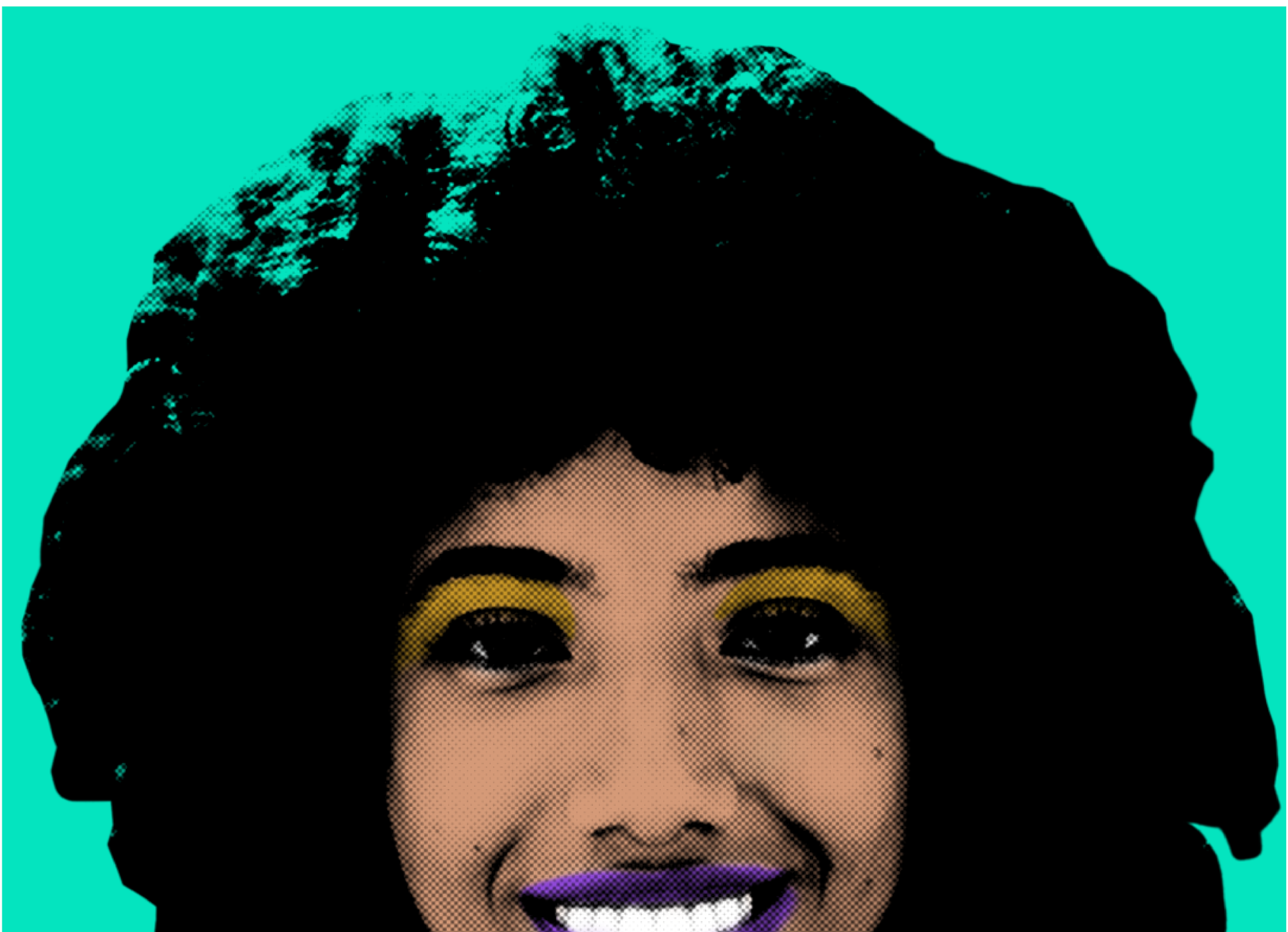


Artwork by Raphael O'selle

welcome

Black Introvert Week (BIW) UK is a new initiative supporting teachers and employers to better understand how to recognise and nurture the talents of introverts, with a particular focus on its intersection with race.

From inclusive hiring to helpful conversations – this guide provides practical tips for professionals wanting to give added voice to one of the country's most misunderstood communities.



Introversion and extroversion defined

You've probably heard this personality trait explained in many different ways. To make this one stick, here's a story about Olu and Shola, inspired by author Simon Sinek.

Olu wakes up each morning with five gold energy coins. With each social interaction or over-stimulating environment, Olu hands over one of his coins.



By the end of the day, he's completely spent and needs time to recharge – either alone or in a low-stimulating environment.



Shola, on the other hand, wakes up each morning with no energy coins. With each social interaction, she receives a gold coin (let's call this one dopamine).

By the end of the day, Shola is rich in energy.

The difference between the two is how one gains or drains energy. It's that simple.

But what's the difference for Black introverts?

Perception versus reality

A perceivably low-key, often quieter and thoughtful individual, who navigates the world with the intersectionality of race, Black introverts live with a unique feeling of social exhaustion. Here's an insight into why.



"Why don't you talk?"

"You're so quiet!"

My demeanour is more laid back and quiet, and I'm a more private, reserved person. People are perplexed by me because I don't fit into their perception of how a Black woman should behave.

"He never comes out with us."

"Why doesn't he speak up?"

I'm a listener and observer. I'm reading the room, taking it all in as I process and really put thought into what I want to say. I'll keep thinking about this tonight, and follow-up with an email or stop by the CEO's office in the morning to share my views.



"If we aren't wearing our hearts on our sleeves and aren't living our lives out loud, colleagues are unable to read us, so they wonder if we're engaged, if we're a team player, if we like them, if we can be trusted." – Jeri Bingham, founder, Black Introvert Week US.

Recruitment
and retention

Tips for hiring managers



Hiring manager tips

Introverts are an asset to every workplace. Here's how you can encourage introverts to choose to work, and stay, in your organisation.

Facilitate personable interviews

Provide options for one-to-one conversations in your interview process. Introverts thrive in personable environments.

Multi-panel interviews can be stressful for introverts; extroverts are stronger performers in this exhibitionist-style setting.

Offer flexible working options

The open-plan style of offices is purpose-built for extroverts to succeed. (See gold coin story on page 3).

Create private spaces for quiet working and provide your colleagues with adaptive working hours to take advantage of quieter office periods.

Invest in personality diversity training*

Personality diversity became a global discussion during the Covid lockdowns as colleagues shared their struggles and triumphs while working remotely. By offering ongoing training, you will create a culture of greater inclusion that signals to quieter colleagues you are invested in their success.

*Black Introvert Week UK can provide your people managers with training on how to give parity of voice to your introverted and extroverted colleagues. Contact Richard Etienne on [**info@blackintrovertweek.uk**](mailto:info@blackintrovertweek.uk) for more information.

Inclusive working
environments

Tips for people managers



Many Black colleagues are often a minority within an organisation and can find it difficult to fit in. Couple that with being an introvert and it's doubly hard.

Creating an introvert-inclusive workplace

Put introverts into leadership positions

Did you know Barak Obama is a self-proclaimed introvert?

For many, the perception of a strong leader is one who possesses the sociable and charismatic traits often attributed to extroverts. Introvert leaders are thoughtful decision-makers who are good listeners and tend to be highly focused individuals.

Facilitate inclusive social activity

Provide non-obligation opportunities for your team to socialise and remember it doesn't always have to be after work and in a pub.

Consider extended lunches together, choosing different days (not just Fridays) and using a Doodle poll when arranging after-hours fun.

Remember: No-one is a pure introvert

“...such a person would be found in a lunatic asylum” posited psychologist Carl Jung, who coined the introvert and extrovert terms. Invite your team to complete personality quizzes to find out how their introversion adapts to given situations. This way you'll learn how your team compliments one another's strengths.

Try: [16personalities.com](https://www.16personalities.com)

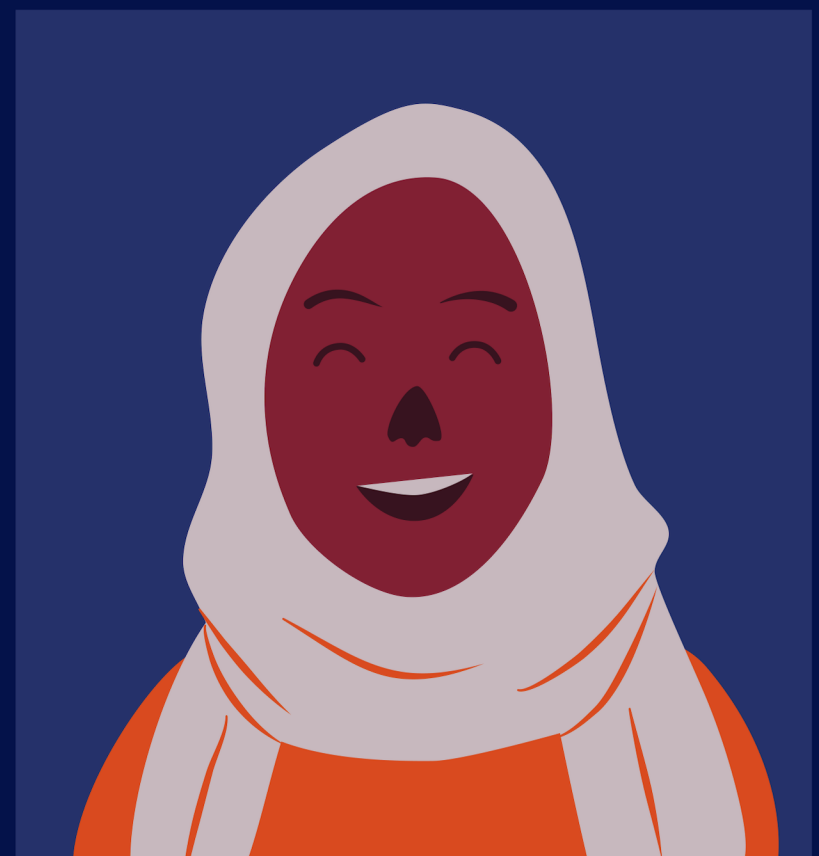
Musical chairs

Wherever possible, rotate roles and responsibilities such as meeting chairing or minute taking. All will benefit from the diverse views shared from an alternative lens while upskilling the team.

Creating an introvert-
inclusive workplace
(part two)*

Tips for senior leaders

*Download the 2021
Black Introvert Week UK
handy_guide for part one



Creating an introvert-inclusive workplace

Update the way you communicate

Many introverts prefer written forms of communication where they can take their time to formulate a considered response

Consider your weighting of email or online chat versus in-person communication. Doing so will allow your introvert colleagues to be more productive and engaged in their various responsibilities.



Limit working group sizes

Collaboration is key to problem-solving and is encouraged for both personality types. Introverts thrive in smaller groups due to greater relationship building and being given more time to formulate a response (before getting cut off!)

You can cut down on chaos by following Jeff Bezos' two-pizza rule. If you can't feed a team with two pizzas, it's probably too big.

...and if you're unable to limit sizes

It will need greater pre-planning from working group leaders. For example, sharing papers reasonably ahead of the meeting or asking specific individuals to prepare certain ideas. That will give the introverts of the group time to reflect on what they want to say, thereby encouraging greater inclusion and output.

Creating an introvert-inclusive workplace

Have non-meeting days

Meetings can be a drain on energy for all participants, especially for introverts. Consider the following before scheduling a meeting:

Do you really need to pull that colleague away from their work (that you probably tasked them with) to meet? If non-urgent, could the information be shared in a group chat for discussion? Do all colleagues need to stay for the full duration?

Consider the typical company structure of ‘thinkers’ (senior roles) and ‘doers’ (junior roles). Now couple that with the data showing only 1.5% of Black Britons hold senior exec positions*. This means that the Black introverts in your teams are less likely to have the capacity to meet as frequently as their ‘thinker’ peers.

Making these reflections before sending that meeting invite will ensure your introverted colleagues’ energy is best utilised.



*<https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/article/1744977/black-employees-hold-just-1-5-per-cent-of-senior-roles>

If you enjoyed this little book of big ideas...



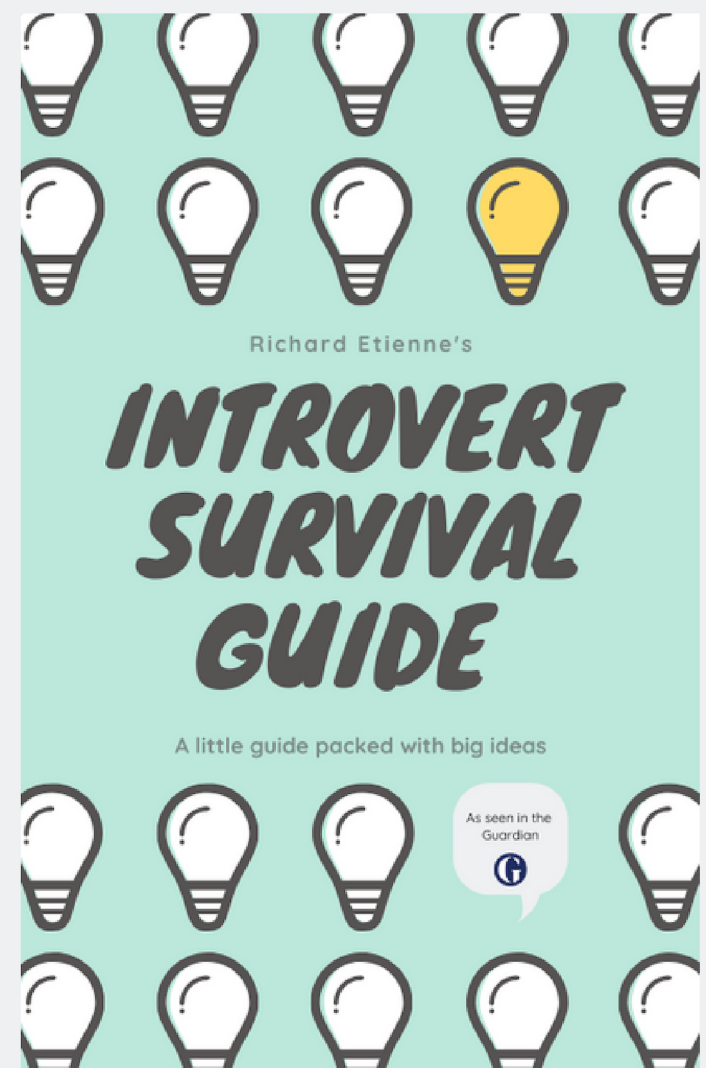
BIW UK Founder,
Richard Etienne

1

You will thoroughly enjoy my Introvert Survival Guide ebook.

From improving your well-being at work (whether in person or remotely) to boosting your leadership presence – this guide has everything you need to truly grow your potential.

Download your free copy from www.richardetienne.co.uk



2

I host a series of masterclasses and one-on-one sessions on introversion in the workplace to help you if:

- you consider yourself introverted
- you want to become bolder in your professional life
- you are about to change careers or enter the professional workplace for the first time
- you manage a team and wish to identify with and develop introverts

Contact me to book a session for you and your teams today.
me@richardetienne.co.uk | [linkedin.com/in/richardetienne](https://www.linkedin.com/in/richardetienne)

Organisations I have helped include:

