

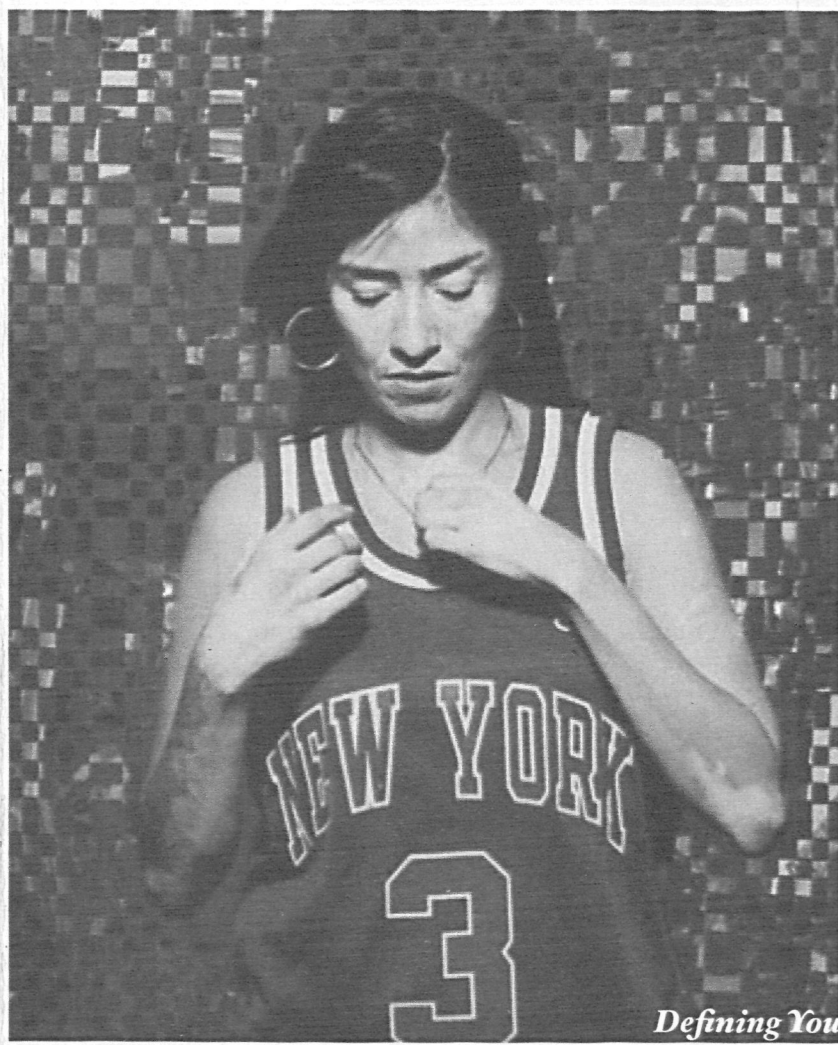
Zachary Frater: One very noticeable feature of your work is your interest in portraiture. I think that's interesting because in the history of photography, a lot of people have used portraiture to exploit people of color. I'm thinking of Edward Curtis, who photographed Native Americans in colonial times, or even in National Geographic, where people go to other countries and photograph people in this dehumanizing manner. With your photos though, a lot of your models look very comfortable, they look like they have integrity. How do you create this situation?

Gabriel García Román: So far it's been easy only because most of the people that I photograph are my friends. Even if they're not friends, I think I have a very relaxed attitude when I'm shooting. They also know everything about the project. They already know what they're in store for—I think that makes people relaxed. If you just came in not knowing what was going to happen or what those images were going to be used for, then you wouldn't get that relaxed attitude. But, like I said, I think most of that has to do with the people are my friends, or friends of friends who know my work.

ZF: Another theme I see in a lot of your work is spirituality. You have a lot of images of the Virgin Mary, and then of course the Queer Icon series. Where does your interest in spirituality come from?

GGR: The interesting thing is you said 'spirituality' whereas I feel like I use more religious iconography. I wasn't necessarily raised Catholic, but Catholicism is a very big part of Mexican culture. Even if you don't participate, it's still part of your life just because it's become a cultural thing over something religious. But I've always been fascinated by religious art, specifically in Catholic churches. I think the religious art is a lot more... It's scarier because there's a lot of blood and a lot of suffering and human hearts. It's something that I've always been scared of, I think. Scared and fascinated at the same time, just because it's so gory and so full of guilt. This is what can happen to you if you don't pray three times a day or listen to what your parents have to say. At the same time I'm also really interested in... I don't want to say gaudy, but overly decorative art, like gold leaf and any metallic colors. So I think it's more cultural than it is spiritual.

ZF: In a lot of your work, specifically the Defining You series, I feel like there's always a personal element. Would you say that the majority of your work is about you?



Defining You

the people are bi-cultural. So not only are you weaving your childhood and present self, but also your mother culture with American culture, so there's always that thread of the past and present defining who you are. Defining You is an ongoing series, and though I haven't worked on it in a while, it's not something I want to stop.

ZF: I hear what you're saying about the weaving of different cultures. I feel like to me the strength of your work is that... Firstly your images are inherently political by virtue of representing queer people and people of color. I think that when we think about the cultural landscape we are working in, it's still really important to see images of queers/people of color in a positive light. Actually, it's not about positive or negative—your images are really meditative. I'm not just looking at the image, I'm looking at the craft, and I find that really exciting.

GGR: I think that's also very important because most of my work not only has to do with handcraft and handwork, but also patterns and shapes that are throughout the entire photograph or print. It speaks to me as a young kid who was always such a loner that I would just spend most of my days in my bedroom, just staring at the ceiling getting lost in all the patterns and images I would see. I think that carries on in my work, just random patterns you can get lost in. That goes for everything that I do, whether it's furniture or sculpture or whatever, everything has to do with patterns and you getting lost, which is what I want to happen.

ZF: Do you feel that art does or should necessarily have a social purpose to it?

GGR: Not every piece of art, but there should be something social to it. For example, Defining You didn't really start off as anything social—it had more to do with aesthetics for me. But when other people saw it, they saw the political aspects of my work. Even with Queer Icons, I think the reason I started that series was because... Again, it was for me. I had learned a new technique and I wanted to use my friends. That technique reminded me so much of master artists through the Baroque period and the Byzantines with all the gold and the icons. Every time I would see something from those periods though, they're always white and European, and I wanted to change it up a little bit. I wanted to depict people of color, and then I got more specific and only wanted queer people. When queer people are represented nowadays, it's only for HIV medication, and that's the only time I see a [queer] person of color anywhere. I wanted to sort of redefine history, using an old technique with modern subject matter. In that sense I guess it is political.

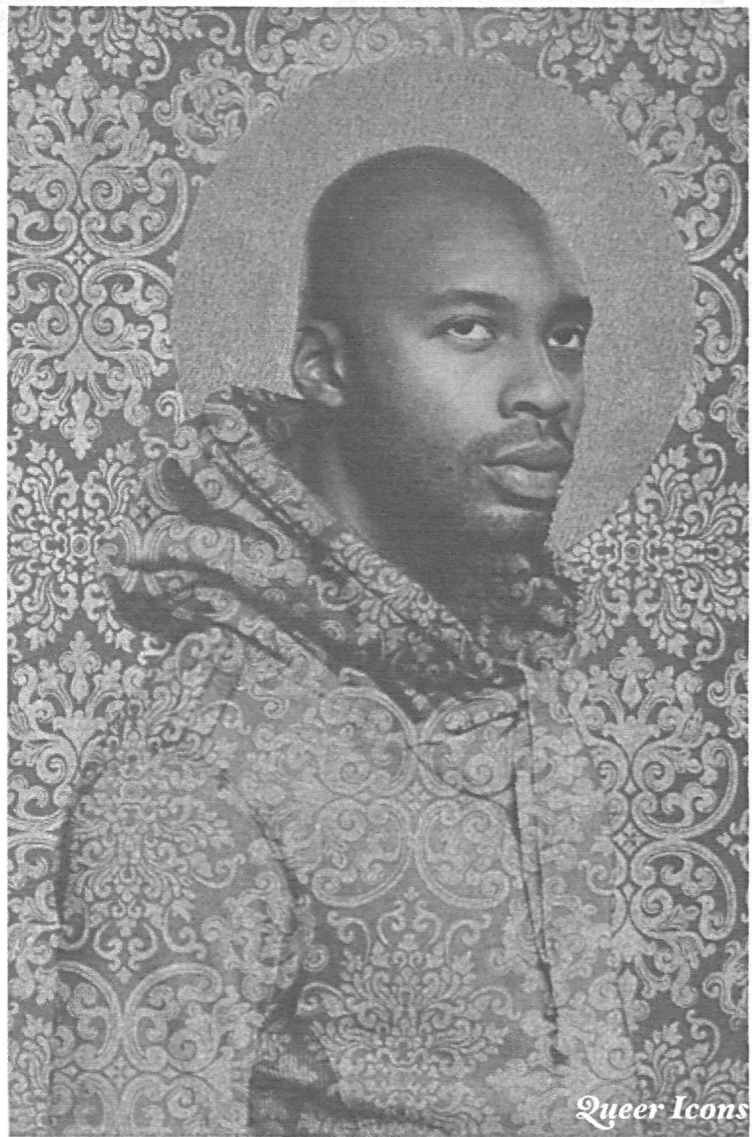
ZF: Who are some artistic role models that you draw inspiration from? Current or otherwise.

GGR: That's such a hard question. One of the main people that has influenced me throughout my life is my Dad. Going back to handwork, my Dad was always crafting something in the garage or mixing paint or working on his table saw, making something for my Mom. He was always just working on something, creating something, not in any art-related form, but just from the feeling that he had to do something. I think that's where I got the inspiration to create something and to feel connected with my hands.

ZF: How do you feel as an artist working in New York? Do you feel like there are any obstacles or frustrations, especially as a queer artist/artist of color?

GGR: I get pretty good reception and feedback around my work and the subject matter, so I don't think the fact that I'm of color or queer has been an obstacle. I mean, being in New York City is great, but it's also one of the most competitive cities. You always have to figure a new angle that you can bring, and everything has been done already! But it's just how you decide to change it. Honestly most of the work I do, I do for myself. Going back to meditation, even working and me touching everything is my therapy. I do most of the work for myself and not for a gallery. I do want other people to see it, obviously, but that's not my main goal or intention—for galleries to see.

To see more of Gabriel's work, visit his website: <http://garciagabriel.com/>



Queer Icons

GGR: Definitely. Most of my projects start with me as the initial subject, just because it's easier. I always know exactly what I want. And then, if I like the idea, that's when I ask other people to take part in it. I think all my projects have something personal, specifically the Defining You project. I came up with that idea because at the time I was going to therapy and one of the constant themes was family experiences and growing up, and everything kept coming back to patterns of behavior and patterns in generations, from your parents to your parents' parents, and how your childhood experiences define you as an adult. The idea started with that. At the time, I had a bunch of childhood photos that my mom had given me when she went back to Mexico, so I knew I wanted to do something with those prints. I started playing with weaving at around the same time of this project. Not photographs, just weaving period. Then I thought, why not weave photographs together? Obviously I didn't want to cut up the originals, so I made copies, collaged them into one big print, and wove it into the portrait. Something I do want to say about my work is that it's hand-work—my hands have to touch everything. Whether it's weaving, cutting, slicing, painting—everything is hand-crafted. My hands touch everything. The other thing that I've noticed which was unintentional—the weaving takes on a different life because most of

Women's History Month is a time to reflect on the role of women in our history and at present. It is a time to honor the women of the world, but it is also a time to think about how we treat women right here in our own City College community.

What does the music the CCNY radio plays, the events held by different organizations, and the Facebook page "CCNY Secrets" reveal about the way CCNY culture is treating, portraying and thinking about women? Walking into the NAC and hearing Juicy J rap "she put that ass off in my hand/I remote control it" does not send a message of empowerment; coming out of class into the rotunda and hearing 2Chainz's "I fucked her so good, it's a bad habit/Bitch, sit down, you got a bad atti'" does not give the impression of a community that supports and respects women. Playing this kind of music during Women's History Month (or at all) shows the level of disregard the community at CCNY has for the hearts and minds of women.

Ironically, on Valentine's Day, during the "One Billion Rising" event to end violence against women, there was another event happening: the Haitian Student Association was auctioning women and men for dates. It is important to note that just because men were also being auctioned off does not make this act "okay." It is still objectification of the body, a malady women have been dealing with for centuries that is now being transferred to men. On top of objectifying the body, have we forgotten the auctioning of slaves in our history? Or the current sex trafficking that occurs all over the world, including the U.S.? Finally, what more evidence do we need to demonstrate the problematic relationship that the CCNY community has with women than to look at the "CCNY Secrets" Facebook page. Students have anonymously posted about being molested in the library and raped in the Towers dorms. Don't let a month of women-oriented events fool you—a month of honoring, remembering and respecting women is not enough when the culture on campus does not reflect these ideals.

"When I began to look for a space to get involved and speak out I felt that I was silenced because I didn't have that authoritative personality and my 'emotional' arguments were not diplomatic/ strategic enough."

Change begins with each one of us; it begins in our very community. One way to encourage the cultural shift we need on campus to empower and respect women, as well as create a more egalitarian community, is by having a Women's Center on campus. A group of women, including myself, have taken it upon ourselves to make a Women's Center on campus a reality. Our first step was calling on women and other organizers to address gender-based violence and the misogynistic culture at CCNY, presenting a demand letter to President Lisa Staiano-Coico highlighting why a Women's Center is necessary. Our next step will be sending out a petition to gather support throughout CUNY.

Given all the oppressive music and experiences that surround us in an environment where we come to learn and grow, a Women's Center can be just what we CCNY women need. A Women's Center can provide the university and the Harlem community with a safe space for all genders and non-gender-conforming individuals. It can provide the school with a space to support women's rights, explore gender and sexuality, and foster the health and well-being of women. It can address sexual and domestic violence through counseling, outreach, and education. The Center will strive to provide an inclusive and educational environment that will encourage open dialogue and promote non-oppressive attitudes and behaviors. It will look to offer programs that are relevant to the lives of students, provide resources, and celebrate women's accomplishments. Because, let's face it, we can always use a little more women power on this campus! It will seek to educate, support, and empower all women, and will be committed to creating a more inclusive and egalitarian environment in which diversity, communication, and collaboration are all encouraged. All this can be started simply by providing women with a safe space on campus with a few comfy chairs. So come one and come all - join us in our campaign to bring a Women's Center to CCNY. Let's build a community to empower women at City College now!

What's New in April?: Arts & Culture at CCNY

Charnaé Betton

Every day, women live, love, cry, work hard, and at times do not realize the impact they have on the people around them. On March 14, 2013, City College junior Charnaé Betton guest curated an art exhibition in honor of Women's History Month in the Arts & Culture community gallery space Windows on Amsterdam, located at the corner of Amsterdam Avenue and 136th street, next to the Writing Center. Every month, the gallery displays beautiful works of art covering various cultures and genres of art, from photography, to sumi ink, etching and much more. This year's Women's History Month exhibition features 8 artists: Aleathia Brown, Wendy Leigh Curtis, Marlow Davis, Victoria De Jesus, Barbara E. Johnson, Jessica Maffia, Mariana Manolache, and Bahar Tabatabaei. The exhibition, titled Women Dream, Women Inspire, is a testament to the positive impact women have on all of us. The artists' works show that women inspire us to live, dance, be ourselves, love, be thankful, appreciate beauty, dream, and work hard. The exhibition is on display until April 12th, 2013.

Another exhibition that is open on campus for Women's History Month is called Mother's, Daughter's, Sister's, &



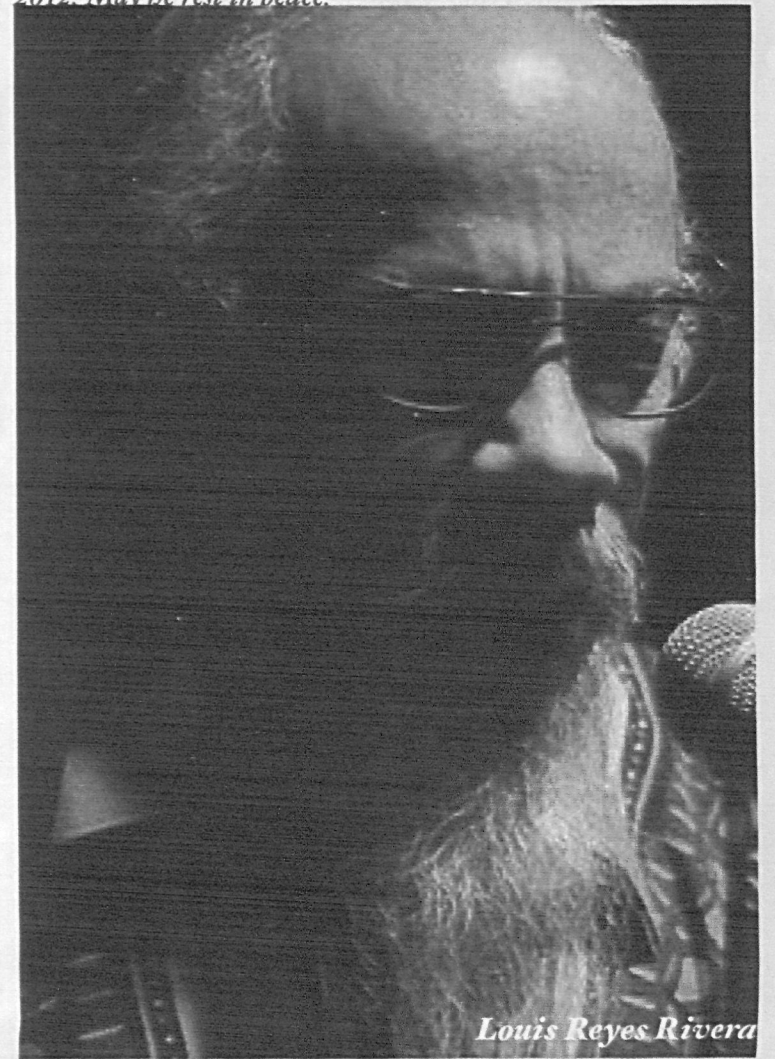
Tehmina Brohi, Naturally Big Brother, 2010, Université Paris 8 at Saint-Denis, photo

Dear Great Ancestor,

You wanted me to call you Louis, not Sir and not Baba. You did not want to be called anything to distinguish your age or outstanding contributions, just Louis. Awkwardly I tried to find a way to show you humble respect while calling you by your first name. In just a few chance meetings and phone conversations, you taught me much that I quickly tried to pass on to those around me. You held a wealth of knowledge, passion, and artistry. And you were so HUMAN you were DIVINE.

The news of your passing was told to me by a dear friend on the phone. Calmly and with resignation, I accepted hearing that I could not call you or email you again. I was about 7 months pregnant at the time and not "doing" much, so I felt useless and almost causeless. But your passing reminded the mother in me of the cycle of life. I prayed for whatever transition you faced and that I raise a child with some of your fervor. You left behind your poems, writings, and an activist legacy in The City College through The Paper. Thank you for the time you gave, the lessons you shared—the FIRE you left burning is still lit! At some times it is not as hot as others, but know we will not let this fire die...ever! Louis, you are now my Great Ancestor. I love you!

Written by former editor Taqiyya Haden in memory of our founder, Louis Reyes Rivera, who transitioned on March 2, 2012. May he rest in peace.



Louis Reyes Rivera

Scholar's II: Women Under 30, curated by the Executive Director of Arts & Culture, Dr. Myrah Brown-Green. The exhibition is on display in the entrance of Aaron Davis Hall located at Convent Avenue & 135th street. The exhibition depicts women in different aspects of life captured through art, including photography and charcoal. The works are dynamic and you don't want to miss it. This exhibition comes down April 19th, 2013.

Furthermore, look out for a new series of talks going on in the Windows on Amsterdam gallery space known as "Windows on Writers." Join us each month as English Department faculty provide insight into the intellectual & artistic lives of the prominent writers & scholars who inspired them. Lectures will be made available via video & podcast following each event. The next talk will take place on April 4th. Stay inspired, be encouraged, and open your mind to the numerous encounters to explore the arts and culture CCNY offers. For more information on Arts & Culture events, feel free to contact us at cccarts@ccny.cuny.edu, and on our Facebook page "CCNY Arts & Culture."



Zibu Angel tattoo meaning 'choose life'

Latent Rapist Bravado

Keilicia James

"Encourage every rape victim and those they love to hold their heads up high and not be afraid of acknowledging what happened." - Unknown

My rapist will never know he's a rapist. And for a long time, I wasn't sure he deserved that title, but it's his; he's earned it. Although he has admitted to forcible sex acts: holding me down on my stomach against my will, ignoring my pleas and ignoring the four times I said 'no', forcing my clothes off, fighting with me before immobilizing me with violence, he will not call himself a rapist. He stands firmly in his belief that he did not act maliciously. Two and a half years after the assault, I can say that I am no longer confused. I know what he did to me was wrong. I know that it was in no way my fault. I know that I do not have to make him, or the investigator, or the prosecutor, or anyone else understand. I know that I was victimized but that I do not have to stay victim.

Here's what happened: I was on my way to class one Tuesday afternoon. It was a warm November day, so I decided to stop for ice cream on the way. The Cold Stone Creamery is located directly next to the entrance for an apartment building owned and operated by Rutgers University's at the time. A young man, with whom I was in a student organization, lived in the building. We met each other as we were walking in our respective destinations. After a quick exchange, he said that he would walk with me to campus if I didn't mind stopping by his room with him quickly. I agreed (which I counted as my first mistake). We walked up to his room and I ignored the funny feeling in the pit of my stomach (second mistake). When we got to his room he said I could have a seat on his bed while he gathered his things. I sat on the edge and finished my ice cream. He came back shortly after, locked the door, and moved closer to me. Before I could comprehend what was happening, he had me on my back while he straddled me. I fought my hardest, told him to get off of me, "no"; he flipped me onto my stomach and forced my clothes off after hitting and elbowing me. At that point, my body went numb; I did not cry nor scream nor fight (third mistake).

He admitted to all of these things during a phone conversation recorded by the Rutgers Police Department which was facilitated by a New Brunswick prosecutor. He did not admit to raping me. The case was dropped without formally pressing charges. I could not understand what that meant. Was I not raped? Did I wrongly accuse him? What was I supposed to call what happened to me? How do I move forward? If it wasn't rape, if what happened to me wasn't wrong, then why couldn't I eat or sleep or get out of bed most days? Why did I hate everything and everyone? I'd failed all of my first semester classes; thankfully, the Dean allowed me to receive temporary grades and make up the work I'd missed while still taking classes my second semester. She also made me agree to go to weekly one-on-one counseling sessions. No one had answers to my real questions.

Months later, I realized that Rutgers did not have my best interest in mind when dealing with this case. The thing that angered me most, was that they had me sign a confidentiality agreement saying that I could not report this crime to any other police department or take any further legal action outside of Rutgers University—a blatant disregard for the laws set up to protect me and other college women. At that point, I wanted nothing more than to be away from it all. I decided that I would leave Rutgers and actually did not have much support from family or friends for some time. I felt more alone than I had ever felt before. I didn't know who was in my corner or who would fight for me, so I didn't want to fight for me. I fell into a deep and dark depression and developed an anxiety disorder which can all be lumped into a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, which I still fight with daily.

I think that men are just as confused about rape as women are. I also think that because of this confusion there lies within most men the potential to rape, although that may not be their intention. If someone can admit to committing forcible sex acts but not to be a rapist, there must be a disconnect. Where does this disconnect occur? How is it nurtured by our rape culture? The lesson is 'don't get raped'; if it were 'don't rape', I believe that the reality would be much different. It is easy for men like my rapist to reject the title because the responsibility lies with the women who will become the victims.

What were you wearing?
Clothes.

A little more specific please.
A button down tunic, leggings, and oxfords.

Had you had any previous interactions with him?
Yes.

Were any of them intimate?
No.

Had you been drinking?
No.

Is there any way that he could have misinterpreted your words or actions?
Misinterpreted "no"? "Stop"?

Are you sure the sex wasn't consensual and that you're just regretting it now?
I was assaulted.

Is it possible that you suggested that you wanted to have sex with him?
I was assaulted.

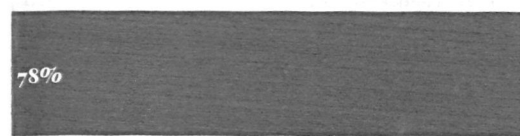
Do you understand the seriousness of your accusation?
I was assaulted.

We expect that if something like this happens to us it will happen at the hands of a stranger—a man who is obviously sick, a man with obvious problems. We make sure to go out in groups and to stay away from dimly lit areas and to walk in the middle of the street and to cover our drinks and cover our bodies as to not tempt the strangers lurking behind corners waiting to attack. The reality is that of the one in five college women that are raped one in ten is attacked by a stranger; nine out of every ten women know their assailant. Less than six percent of those men will have formal charges brought against them and less than one percent of them will be convicted. It is easier now than ever before to be raped and to not see justice. Many will say that it can, perhaps, be credited to our culture—it is socially acceptable for women to be more sexually aggressive than in past generations—or that it may be because of the way a lot of college students enjoy their free time—drinking heavily and dancing provocatively. The only reason a woman gets raped is because a man rapes her.

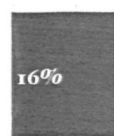
Someone almost got away with me. Life after such an assault is nothing like anyone could expect or warn. I have good days, really good days when I want to use my anger at what happened to me constructively to make a change for others. And I have bad days, really bad days when I can't get out of bed much less tackle the monster that I live with daily. There is no "getting back to normal". This is normal; this is my new normal. I can spend my days fighting against it, trying to be who I was before, trying to feel how I felt before but it'd all be for naught. I take each day as it comes and try not to allow myself more than one bad day a week and some weeks I don't even use my quota. I surround myself with people who I can build with because I know what it feels like to be torn down and too to tear down. I do things that make me happy, all the time and without question. I live life on an everyday basis, never looking too far ahead or too far behind. I have here; I have now, and you have the same. We don't get anymore but we certainly don't get any less.

Should CCNY students, faculty, and admins prioritize the creation of a Women's Center on campus?

Yes, we need this because of incidents of violence, etc



No, I don't see a need for one. Women are safe on this campus.



Other



Educational Genocide at CUNY

Khalil Vasquez

On Monday June 25th, 2012 the CUNY Board of Trustees met to decide on salary boosts ranging from 23% to 43% for presidents and administrators. While Chancellor Goldstein's own salary range was left out of the resolution, he already has an income higher than President Obama's. CUNY students, along with the Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee (RSCC) attempted to attend the meeting, but were barred while space was made for investors and those who have their hopes set on gentrifying CUNY for big profit. This is the CUNY system that was once meant for the underprivileged to receive an education and upward class mobility. And while the NYC public school system fails to educate some of the most marginalized and oppressed of communities, decisions at CUNY ensure that the majority of these communities may never get a shot at a higher education.

Matthew Goldstein, now chancellor of his alma mater, went to a radically different CUNY—a free CUNY that nevertheless excluded the oppressed and overwhelmingly poor, colored folk of NYC. Chancellor Goldstein dictates the functions and direction of CUNY along with seventeen others in the Board of Trustees (BoT). Eleven have backgrounds primarily in business finance, one is based within community affairs, and another has a background in private elite universities. The sole student trustee is an economics major. Most disturbingly, one trustee on the Board had a background in the FBI and was allegedly involved in COINTELPRO, a counter-intelligence program that unleashed terrorist acts on Liberation movements during the 60s and 70s. With these kinds of skills, what role can the BoT play in an institution supposedly for the underprivileged and working-class? The RSCC's guess is educational genocide of the most marginalized communities.

New York Times writers Tanya Caldwell and Richard Pérez-Peña have recently acknowledged that stricter admissions and higher tuition at CUNY have been reflected in the drop in Black and Latino enrollment. City College, known as the Free Academy in 1961, has had the purpose of moving up working-class people since its inception in 1847. Needless to say, like the United States itself, this banner of supposed universal inclusion only functions with established exclusion. Before 1964, City was virtually exclusively white. Those students who entered after 1964 under the College Discovery program nevertheless faced discrimination, with quotas to how many Black and Latino students may attend, as well as enforced exclusion of Black and Latino students from voting in student government, to mention a few of the struggles faced. Today, it still seems like these struggles are waged subtly. While overt racist exclusion is no longer possible, the stricter admissions, along with the raising of tuition and cutting of aid, appears to be achieving the desired results.

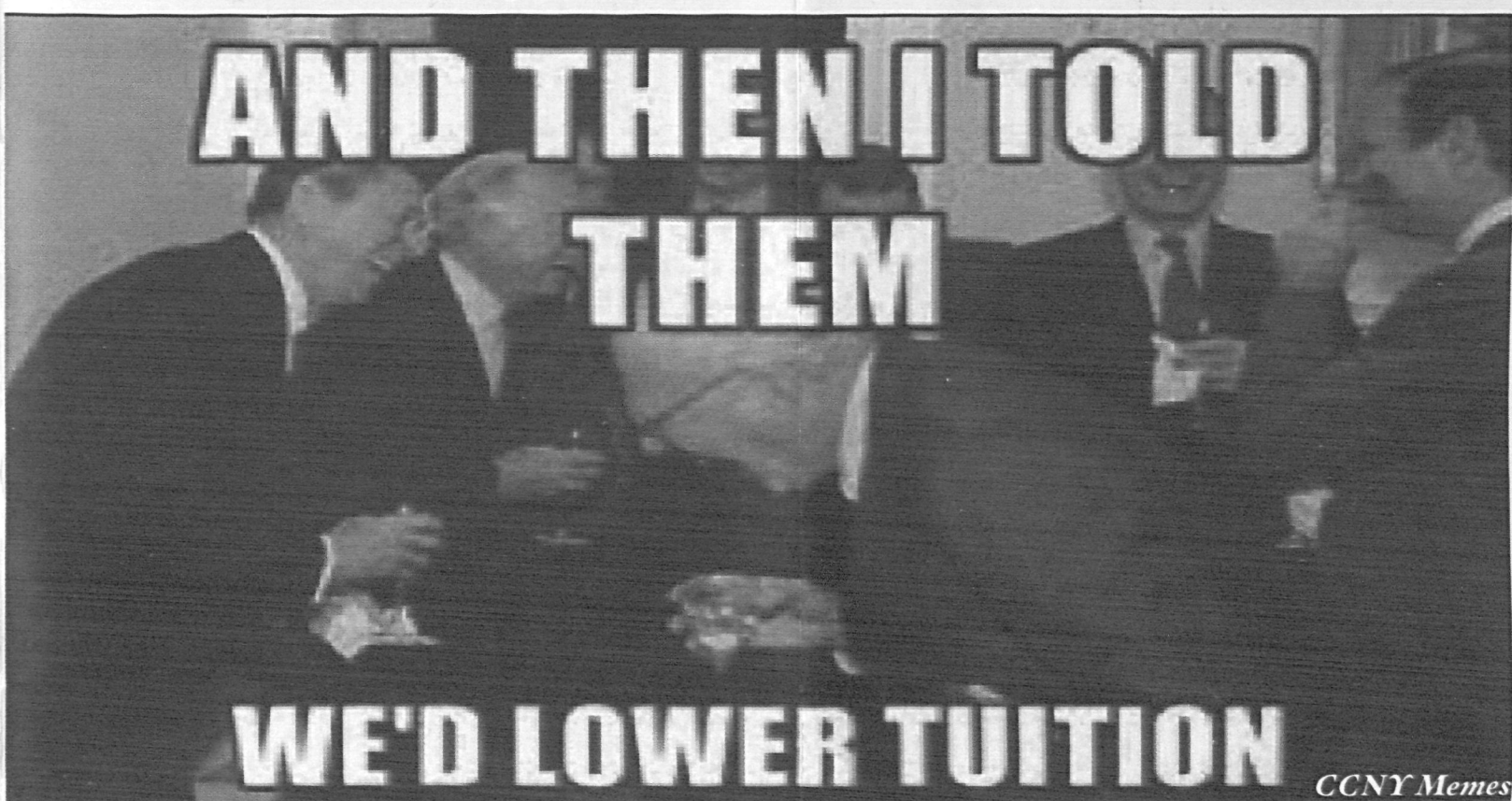
Yet while the methods of exclusion seem economic, the struggle is a political one. Radical students throughout CUNY's history have struggled for control of the institutions. In 1969, the few Black and Puerto Rican students that struck did not struggle for themselves, but for their communities and all Third World peoples. Many of these students had gone through the NYC public education system and were deprived of their own history. Access to this knowledge was seen as the first step towards liberation. Establishing ethnic studies

was among the most notable achievements in the struggle, but further talks of a Third World institute were already being had. Demands that CUNY reflect the make-up of NYC public high schools, that room be made for public high school students, most of whom were and still are Black and Latino. These were some of the most proficient demands of the time. These demands were backed by the communities they came from. Today, our struggles, like those of the past, are not simply economic, but about access. This makes it a political issue above all else.

To say that our struggle is political, we must understand the CUNY curriculum and the role it plays. The current curriculum is both Eurocentric and neglectful of women's issues and similar studies. Women's studies and Ethnic studies are either non-present at some campuses, or on the chopping block, and many standard courses are shamelessly Eurocentric. Introductory courses to Art History, Music History, and "History of the Modern World" all focus only on Western history, and are taught at campuses like Bronx Community College, where white students make up only 3% of the student body.

Collectively, we see a battlefield on the campuses. Education for Blacks and Latinos in NYC reflects a neo-liberal apartheid. In public high schools they make up roughly 70% of the student populace (32% Black/40% Latino); in the CUNY community colleges they make up 60% (29% Black/37% Latino); in the senior colleges they make up nearly 50% (23% Black/ 22% Latino); and the Graduate Center hosts only 13% (5% Black/ 8% Latino). We find these degradations as filters to exclude us from opportunities that were once showered to white working-class communities.

The RSCC calls for an end to the Board of Trustees and that the interest of NYC's most oppressed and excluded communities be at the forefront. We call for liberatory education versus the male and Eurocentric one that depoliticizes our struggles and history. Many nations that are not as affluent have universal public collegiate education, yet the argument in the US of universal education is out of the question. When a public institution that was meant for the working-class is run by bankers, we find this exclusion as the primary contradiction in our path to liberation. Therefore, the solution to liberate the student body would be through the abolition of the Board of Trustees and a student/faculty/community-run CUNY system.



Desire
Oluwatobi Ojo

The calling of two bodies,
The yearning of two minds,
The becoming of two souls,
The flaming of two fires,
The eruption of passion,
The disruption of logical thought,
The meshing of unsanctioned wants,
The solidification of bonds,
The language of lust,
The communication of longing,
The hunger for submission,
The taste of sweetness,
The smell of heaven,
The intake of bliss,
The eviction of time,
The arousal of need,
The journey to ecstasy,
Desire.

THE PAPER

a medium for people of color

Dear Readers,

The Paper is back, ya'll! We have brand new editors, brand new design, and brand new content. The Paper will be published bi-weekly from now on, so look around for these little pamphlets at least twice a month.

As a recovering publication, we are still looking for writers, editors, photographers, and other staffers to help us keep The Paper running smoothly. If you are interested in submitting articles/personal essays/poems/etc. or working with us at The Paper, feel free to e-mail us at thepaper@ccny.cuny.edu or add us on Facebook @ThePaper Ccny. Or, stop by our office, Tuesdays and Thursdays at the North Academic Center at City College, room 1/118.

Good seeing you all again,
The Paper Staff