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THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE VANGUARD

Spring 2025, Issue 5 vanguard.blog.brooklyn.edu @thebcvanguard Wednesday, March 12th

A SATURATED LENS



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Cover by: Tony Lipka Photos by: David Roze

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The Fare Ain't Fair: December 12th Movement Organizes Against Proposed MTA Fare Hikes

By Key Jones-Ford
Content Creator

A Brooklyn-based civil rights and activist group is taking a stand against the MTA to attempt to delay the incoming fare hike in 2025. #TheFareAin'tFair was a campaign slogan introduced during a town hall on March 2 by the December 12th Movement.

The December 12th Movement, herein D12 Movement, was started in 1987 by five members of the Black Power movement: Elombe Brath, Sonny Abubadika Carson, Coltrane Chimurenga, Father Lawrence Lucas, and Chairperson Viola Plummer. According to their website, the D12 Movement is described as "a Black human rights organization." Named for the day they started in 1987, they serve as a political activist organization that focuses on mobilizing communities around reparations, housing, criminal justice, education, and other causes to better the living of those in New York City.

"One of our primary goals is to educate, agitate, and organize the masses of our people to the question; us being a self-determining people. That we, those of us that face these problems, are the ones that have the solutions," said Ariana Freeman, a member of the D12 Movement and a speaker at the meeting.

The meeting took place at New Canaan Baptist

Church, and went over a few statistics, such as the 25% poverty rate in NYC based on 2023 data. "Low-income New Yorkers are highly reliant on public transportation," one of their slides read, "with 58% using subways and buses as their primary mode of travel." 1 in 5 New Yorkers struggle at the moment to afford public transportation.

In December of 2024, the MTA voted on its 2025 budget, which included a 4% increase to its fares according to Spectrum News. This 4% fare hike would raise the current \$2.90 fare for the mainline trains and bus systems to \$3. This hike is set to be put into effect in August of 2025. This marks the second increase in the last year, the first being in 2023 when the fare was raised from \$2.75 to \$2.90, and continues the MTA's pattern of raising the fare on average every two years.

In a move to recognize the issue of access to public transit, the MTA has a program to reduce the cost of fares for struggling citizens. The Fair Fares NYC program was established in 2019, with the goal of reducing the fare for those who are at or below the federal poverty line by 145%. Currently, around 360,000 people are enrolled, but over a million New Yorkers can qualify for the program and are not enrolled.

However, the program does not do enough,

according to the D12 Movement's speakers and members. Freeman stated during her panel that an individual New Yorker making the current minimum wage of \$16.50, assuming they are working full time and year-round, would not qualify for the program. The average New Yorker would need to be making close to \$67 per hour in order to have all their basic needs met according to research reported by ABC News, which includes public transportation. The current minimum wage does not allow for a New Yorker who lives alone to reliably afford the fare.

This is the base of the foundation for the "Fare Ain't Fair" campaign. "The first and primary goal of the campaign is the expansion of the free fare program," said member Christopher Joseph. "We want to expand that to include folks who are at 400% of the federal poverty level or below."

"It's not just low income families," one of the speakers said during his presentation of the statistics. "It's also middle income people. [They are] impacted by the prices, and they will be impacted by the fare hike. This just solidifies the need for us as working class people to work together on things that impact us, versus thinking of it as 'just a low income family thing.' This is about all of us."

Also in attendance

was New York State Senator Jabari Brisport, who represents the 25th Senate District. He came as a supporter of the D12 movement and to learn about their current campaign. "I was part of the pilot program to put the five free bus lines a couple years ago. What we're trying to do now is expand that to 15 buses between each borough," Brisport said. "I'm trying to learn about the Fare Ain't Fair [campaign] and what I can promote, including any actions around the MTA meetings." Of obstacles to their goal, Brisport cited the wealth imbalances within the city, "the multimillionaires and billionaires who try to bend New York City to their will."

Freeman also pointed out that this year would have been Malcom X's centennial, or 100th year. The D12 Movement is seeking to embody his ideals and goals this year and moving forward. "Doing the Fare Ain't Fair campaign, the big push this year is planting ourselves on [Malcom X's] shoulders; what did Malcom see at that time that we may not be seeing? What would he be looking at now?"

Keenan Toure, another member of the D12 Movement, gave the maximum goal of their campaign. "Free, free for all. A union president called for that decades ago, and that's what we are trying to work towards."

The next planned Fare Ain't Fair coalition meeting is March 15; as of this article's writing, a time and location have not been posted. Their next planned day of action will be attending the MTA Board Meeting that is to occur on Wednesday, March 27.

Those interested in more information can email the organization, infod12movement@gmail.com



Attendees sitting together in New Canaan Baptist Church as a panelist speaks./Key Jones-Ford

Hunter College Palestinian Studies Professor Job Rescinded Over Controversial Qualifications

By Victoria Keraj
News Editor

On Feb. 25, Governor Hochul made a statement ordering for a CUNY-Hunter College job listing looking to hire a Palestinian studies professor to be removed on the basis of the job description.

The job post, which can be viewed in the New York Post, sought a Palestinian studies professor who analyzes issues such as “settler colonialism, genocide, human rights, apartheid, migration, climate, and infrastructure devastation,” among other areas of expertise.

According to the New York Post, a Hochul spokesperson stated, “Governor Hochul [...] directed CUNY to immediately remove this job posting and conduct a thorough review of the position to ensure that antisemitic theories are not promoted in the classroom.”

CUNY chancellor Matos Rodriguez made a statement siding with Hochul on the job post as “divisive, polarizing and inappropriate.” The statement confirmed that action was taken to ensure

Hunter college remove the listing and that “CUNY will continue working with the Governor and other stakeholders to tackle antisemitism on our campuses.”

Many CUNY faculty opposed Hochul’s decision and felt as if her urging CUNY to demand Hunter remove the job posting was a breach of academic freedom.

The Professional Staff Congress (PSC) of CUNY, a union for CUNY faculty, sent a letter to the governor calling her actions “an overreach of authority” and wrote that “an elected official dictating what topics may be taught at a public college is a line that should not be crossed.”

CUNY members who sided with Hochul felt that a supposed class concerned with the issues the job post brought up would be overly critical of Israel.

“To make a Palestinian Studies course — completely about alleged Jewish crimes — is akin to courses offered in the Nazi era which ascribed all the world’s crimes to the Jews. This course takes antisemitism to another level at CUNY,” Jeffrey Wiesenfeld,



Pro-Palestinian protesters at City College, location of Governor Hochul’s scheduled press conference./Courtesy of David Lynch

a former CUNY trustee, told The New York Post.

The job was originally posted after Hunter President Nancy Cantor received feedback that students wanted “more attention to Palestinian Studies,” according to The New York Times. The NYT also reported that, after the position was ordered to be taken down, a Hunter spokesperson said “[The school] will be reviewing the posting process and look[s] forward to adding scholars with expertise in this subject

matter to our distinguished faculty.”

Hochul was to appear at a press conference at City College to address the citation, but cancelled the event due to security concerns according to The Columbia Spectator. College groups organized a protest at City College, stating, “If you believe in Palestinian liberation and the right to organize without repression, organize to call her out. CUNY students, faculty, and community members

can and should hold her accountable.” The Columbia Spectator also reported that two students at the protest were arrested.

According to TheNation, when relisting the position, “[T]he hiring committees [...] opted to cut—instead of replace—the line about the subject areas under consideration in the new job listing.” As of now, there is no listing on CUNY’s job posting site for a Palestinian studies professor of any kind.

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Fill in the puzzle so that every row across, every column down and every 9 by 9 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

Solution

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BC Muslim Students Association and Muslims Giving Back Host “Grand Iftar”

By Paulina Gajewski
Editor-in-Chief

The Bedford Room of the Student Center was transformed with drapery, vines, and backdrops as the sun set on the evening of Thursday, March 6. Students convened across the halls as they signed in and greeted faces, familiar and new, with wide smiles. The Muslim Students Association (MSA) and Muslims Giving Back (MGB) organization, in collaboration with the Undergraduate Student Government (USG), held the fourth annual Grand Iftar celebration for the BC community.

“Iftar, the meal that breaks the fast during Ramadan, holds significant importance for the Brooklyn College community, particularly for Muslim students, faculty, and staff,” Iqra Rani, president of MGB, told The Vanguard. “This event serves as an opportunity for community building, spiritual reflection, and cultural exchange.”

Ramadan, a holy month in Islam, began this year on March 1. Muslims who celebrate Ramadan fast from dawn to sunset, abstaining from food and drink, and praying throughout the day. For most, it is a time of community and reflection. Having an event like this is integral to many Muslim

students on campus.

“It is important to the BC community because it shows appreciation and respect,” Eva Chowdhury, attendee and member of the Bangladesh Student Association (BSA), told The Vanguard. “We Muslims are a big part of Brooklyn College, but a lot of times we face discrimination, so having events like an iftar party shows to us that the school cares about us being here.”

The evening began with a speech by leaders, followed by a recitation of a fragment from the Qur’an, the central religious text of Islam. Both the MSA and MGB played pivotal roles in bringing the evening to life.

“The MSA organized a team to pick up food from local restaurants while others set up tables with tablecloths, plates, water bottles, and dates,” Abdullah Alnayeem, treasurer of MGB, told The Vanguard. “Once the food arrived, they placed it on the tables, making sure everything was ready. Just before iftar, they did a final check to ensure everything was set for guests to break their fast.”

Following the formalities and prayer, students then broke their fast, many with the provided dates. Dates, symbols of blessing and sustenance, are often eaten to emulate traditions rooted



Attendees wait to break their fast./Courtesy of Bangladesh Student Association

in the Qur’an.

“For Muslim members of the college, iftar is a time to observe religious practices, reinforce their faith, and share the experience of fasting with others,” Rani told The Vanguard. “It also fosters a sense of solidarity, as they come together to break their fast after a day of spiritual reflection and self-discipline.”

Apart from the iftar celebrations and events surrounding Ramadan, these groups also support the community by providing events throughout the semester. This month is also a month of charity, and MSA and MGB came together to raise funds for their

“Charities of the Month”: Halal Food Connections (HFC) and AwladAlNeel. Though the event itself has transformed since its inception in 2022, this aspect has remained stagnant.

“Yes, and a lot has changed and a lot hasn’t,” John R., attendee and graduate student at BC, told The Vanguard. “For one, each year we try raising money for charities of the month.”

The mission of HFC is to “combat food insecurity by ensuring access to nutritious, halal meals.” AwladAlNeel is a non-profit organization that aims “to preserve and celebrate Sudanese culture,” according to its mission statement.

“Our group supports the community by hosting fundraisers and collecting donations to help countries in need,” stated Umme Rahman, club connector for MGB. “We also organize events where people can relax, enjoy great food, and connect in a welcoming space.”

Community-centered events and fundraisers aren’t just held during Ramadan, but all semester. In previous semesters, the MSA and MGB held a series of fundraising bake sales, charity weeks, and educational lectures and discussions on global issues. This semester, MGB aims to raise awareness through its events pertaining to the state of Kashmir.

“Give us more room to talk [...]. [Some countries globally] cannot break their fasts in the same way as us, but they hold onto faith,” John stated. “Ask us questions, offer us space at your table, but above all, hear our demands.”

Students hope to continue the thread of support and solidarity not solely in these clubs, but across the campus.

“By hearing Muslim voices you can support us, by standing with us when we are facing discrimination,” Chowdhury stated. “The school should provide more funds to the clubs so they can hold more events like this because these events help feed people and spread joy.”

The Grand Iftar also provided an opportunity for students outside of the community to learn more about the Muslim community and its respective traditions.

“For the broader college community, iftar events often provide a chance to learn more about Islamic traditions, promote inclusivity, and create a space for dialogue among people of diverse backgrounds,” Rani stated. “This encourages cultural understanding and strengthens the sense of unity and respect within the diverse student body and faculty.”



Iftar attendees pose for a group photo./Courtesy of Bangladesh Student Association

“For a Safe and Healthy World”: Masako Wada’s Experience as a Nuclear-Bomb Survivor

By Ezae Darby
Opinions Editor

Surviving an atomic bomb is a catastrophic event that is quite hard for most to fathom. This unique reality is one that some people understand too well, one of those people being the Assistant Secretary General of Nihon Hidankyo, Masako Wada. On Thursday, March 6, the BC Cancer Center (BCCC), BC Center for Health Promotion, department of Health and Nutrition Sciences (HNSC), and American Cancer Society hosted a conversation with Wada. The talk was moderated by Kiyoka Koizumi, a professor in HSNC.

During the talk, she discussed not only her personal experiences with surviving the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, but also touched upon her organization and what they hope to accomplish.

“There are 195

countries in the world and trillions of independent countries, but my question is...is Japan really an independent country?” Wada stated. “We lost the war and were occupied. A lot of information was stolen.”

Wada went on to talk about the pressure of other worldwide powers on controlling the decision-making of the Japanese government.

“I wonder if the reason Japan isn’t banning nuclear weapons is because they are being influenced by other countries,” she stated.

Wada then began to discuss her mother’s experience before the bombing.

“It was a usual lunchtime. Suddenly, she heard a tremendous sound. The green mountains surrounding the city turned to brown [...] A long line of people escaped the fire from the epicenter and headed to the northern part of the city.”

She went on to describe the graphic aftermath, going into great detail about the injuries that many people sustained.

“From a distance, the people staggering down looked like a line of ants but in fact they were rows of burned and injured, chocolate-covered people,” Wada stated. “They had no clothing on and their hair was blooded and matted by horns and burns [...] People who collected the bodies from the roadside grabbed their limbs and threw them into the carts so casually.”

Wada posed a question to the audience: “What is human dignity? Should human beings be treated like this?”

Wada then went on to talk about the unfortunate nature of the situation in the U.S.. She explained how those in charge of the Manhattan Project, the military program in the U.S. that developed the atomic bomb, lied to the American public and said that no one was suffering from



Nihon Hidankyo’s Attorney General, Masako Wada, speaking to students./Ezae Darby

radiation. Going even further, stating: “Those who were doomed to die, had died.”

Wada continued, talking about the effect on Japan as a whole following the bombings. She provided the audience with some data to help everyone better understand the weight of this tragedy.

“The number of deaths from the epicenter was 147,000 in Hiroshima and 90,000 in Nagasaki.

65% of them were women, children, and the elderly. 50% of them died while being cared for by someone,” she stated.

Wada also found it important to bring attention to the organization she works with, Nihon Hidankyo. According to the Nobel Prize’s official website, the organization is a grassroots movement comprised of people who survived the Hiroshima and

Nagasaki bombings.

The organization aims to promote the social and economic rights of all Hibakusha, the term used for bombing survivors, and to ensure that no one ever has to be subjected to the tragedy that they endured.

Following the creation of Nihon Hidankyo and its popularity after some time, the organization was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 2024.

“Nuclear weapons are an injustice that must be abolished by the humans that invented them. It is a role of public justice and consciousness to accumulate small efforts to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons,” Wada stated. “We are finally seeing a light illuminating to achieve our goal.”



Maria Contel, director of the Brooklyn College Cancer Center, speaking to students./Ezae Darby

Breaking Barriers: BCAP Hosts Mental Health Presentation

By Emily Nixon
Staff Writer

On March 4, the Brooklyn College AANAPISI Project (BCAP) hosted the Hamilton Madison House (HMH) for a presentation about the underrepresentation and prevalence of mental health struggles in Asian American communities.

Connect Project Director Fanny Kuang emphasizes the fact that Asian Americans is a broad term that encompasses various cultures in Asia. "I also like to bring up just the term 'Asian American' itself does not describe everybody," said Kuang. "We are not a monolith. We actually have, you know, more than 100 languages. If you look at China itself, there's like over 50 ethnicities, and there's so many countries."

One major issue plaguing Asian Americans is the lack of research regarding their demographic, according to Kuang.

"My personal issue about this demographic, and the way it's described as of right now, is that there is a very big lack of research about the community," said Kuang. "There actually wasn't even any data at the Pew Research Society or Company until about 2018."

The overall size of the Asian American demographic causes lapses in specific data being collected, which nullifies the efficacy of the results researchers find.

"There is also the problem where the demographic is so big that there is a high chance of under-recording," said Kuang. "So, a lot of the things you're learning about from these specific resource places, or sources is not really representative of the community as a whole."

Kuang said that she got the information for her presentation from the Pew Research Center, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association,

and the 2020 U.S. Census.

Lack of access keeps most Asian Americans from being acknowledged in studies, according to Kuang.

"In terms of under-recording, [...] usually this is due to just lack of access," said Kuang. "People not knowing this research is being done, they're not being reached. When you really think about it, most research is done in university settings like [BC]."

Asian Americans are not the only demographic consistently disregarded

from ages 15 to 20. This is only from 2018 to 2022," said Kuang. "That number has only risen since then."

The history of mental health struggles in Asian Americans is not new, despite the lack of research until recently.

"Back in the 70s, [...] about 70% of Southeast Asian refugees that did seek treatment," said Kuang. "This is just the ones that sought treatment, so we don't know about the ones who are suffering alone, they were diagnosed with PTSD."

Studies conducted now

come in for treatment when they talk about mental health symptoms or they talk about depression or anxiety, it actually presents as sleep problems," said Kuang. "Instead of saying, 'I'm depressed' or 'I'm anxious,' they'll say, 'I have trouble sleeping.'"

Ng said that this biological symptom complaint style is not only present in Chinese Americans but also found in "older generations or even immigrant families."

When participants in HMH surveys were asked to list complaints about their lives, those

you know where to go for mental health treatment?" said Ng. "Most said yes, but they only said yes because 'I can just ask my PCP ... They could not identify where to go for mental health treatment."

Researchers are not the only ones to blame for underrecording. Participants are scarce in these studies due to the cultural values of their home countries.

"In a lot of Asian American communities, we are collectivistic," said Kuang. "Which means that we place importance of the community, of the society, over ourselves individually, and that causes a bit of a clash with doing therapy in itself."

Therapy and talks about mental health do not come naturally to those from collectivistic societies.

"A lot of, I guess, traditional therapy will tell you to separate yourself [...] It's what keeps Asian Americans away from therapy," said Kuang. "Because there's this idea that there's only one way to do therapy, which is to cut everyone off."

Asian Americans from collectivistic societies often do not have other systems of support outside of their families.

"Sometimes, that's [cutting contact] not always possible because growing up in these families, a lot of us find family to be a really big support system," said Kuang. "No matter how toxic they are, no matter how problematic the relationships are, that's still your biggest support system [...] It's a source of comfort, even though it causes you great amounts of distress."

Students interested in future BCAP events can find them on Instagram, @bcap.brooklyn.



Connect project director talking with BCAP staff before the event./Emily Nixon

by studies. The basis for psychological research is often based on an exclusionary model to gather data subjects, according to Kuang.

"That's also the problem with psychological research. It's based on 'WEIRDD'. Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic Demographics," said Kuang.

The HMH occasionally does surveys of communities in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. One study revealed some disheartening truths about the community.

"The numbers for suicide, it was a leading cause of death for Asian Americans

show that a majority of Asian American young adults experience mental issues affecting their sleep.

"52% [of survey responses] experience anxiety, sleep problems, and depression in the last two weeks," said Janice Ng, Connect community liaison. "This past [survey] was 25 and above [in the age range of participants who responded affirmatively]."

Often, Chinese Americans describe their mental health symptoms as physical aches and pains rather than giving voice to their mental state, according to Kuang.

"Something interesting to note about the sleep problems there; a lot of Chinese Americans that do

who responded said their primary complaints were "public safety, eating disorders, and financial issues," according to Ng.

Another participant responded to the survey saying, "My friend passed a couple of weeks ago, making four people I've lost in four months," according to Ng.

Another point of lack of access in the Asian American community was discovered when the HMH added a question asking if participants knew where to go to receive mental health treatment, and most responded that they would ask their primary care provider (PCP).

"We also asked, 'Do

CUNY Students Attend “Youth Day of Action” in Albany

By Ezae Darby
Opinions Editor

On March 5, climate change action organizations TREEage, the BC Sustainability Club and New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) came together in Albany, New York to rally for bills to be passed in support of combatting climate change. This was their fourth annual “Youth Day of Action,” in which over 600 NY-based students, both in high school and college, attended the rally with the objective of having their futures prioritized by politicians.

The two organizations, along with its participants, aimed to get the following bills into the attention of New York State politicians: “Solar on Schools,” which would commit \$500 million to install solar panels and geothermal energy in schools, and the FUND Campaign for New York State, which reflects the need for climate-resilient New York State.

In addition, the NY HEAT Act would deliver relief to New Yorkers struggling to pay their energy bills, as the bill aims to prevent low-to-moderate income customers from energy bills more than six percent of their income. Low-income residents currently spend an average of 15% of their income on these bills, as according to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE).

Moreover, this bill “[...] amends the Public Service Law and the Transportation Corporations Law to ensure that state regulation and oversight of gas utilities realize the climate justice and emission reduction mandates established by the CLCPA,” according to eany.org.

Advocates also aimed to ensure New York’s climate progress. According to earthjustice.org, Governor Hochul has continued to delay and backtrack on

key state climate goals after the release of her 2026 Executive Budget proposal.

With these in mind, supporters gathered at the Albany Capital Center.

Prior to the rally, participants came to the stage to generate momentum for the rally. They were also joined by the Lieutenant Governor of NYC, Antonio Delgado, who came to demonstrate his support as well.

Delgado spoke about his personal experience as a person of color in the political space and offered some words of wisdom to the participants at the rally. He emphasized the importance of using love to achieve his goals and represent particular districts and how he encourages young people to do the same.

“We did it with love, we showed up, we listened, we were thoughtful to people and worked it out,” Delgado stated. “When you do that, real change is possible. As you make your moves around and advocate, do so with real purpose and with love.”

Following these words of encouragement, the participants split into groups and headed to their respective rallies. The groups transitioned to the capitol building and headed to the politically iconic staircase, which became a

popular place for activists to have their voices heard.

Tons of students gathered on the staircase, each showcasing their unique signs and messages for politicians to hear. Messages on signs included: “Fund Climate for Greener Schools,” “Fund our Future”, and other words of support for the bills.

Following the rally, student groups split up and had the opportunity to meet with several district representatives and their assistants. Some of these representative teams included those of William Colton, who represents the 47th district and oversees the community of Kings Highway in Brooklyn, NY.

During these meetings, students spoke about their personal experiences and advocated for more sustainable initiatives to be put in place on their campuses. Students from BC spoke about the recent pipe bursts that occurred on campus, as well as the degradation of many buildings in the school.

Chris Eachus, a member of the New York State Assembly from the 99th district, offered a few pieces of advice during his meeting with students.

“Students should pay attention to the bill being passed on March 10, the one house budget,” Eachus stated. “I don’t know what



Lieutenant Governor of New York, Antonio Delgado, presenting a speech to participants at the rally./Ezae Darby



A student group, led by lobby leader and president of TREEage at BC, Leila Tazi./Ezae Darby

the federal government, Washington, DC, is gonna do [...] We’re building a budget that says we’re gonna get every cent because we deserve it.”

Students and staff from organizations at BC also spent the day lobbying. Their goal transcended just the BC campus, as they aim to create lasting connections with others.

“I, personally, as a youth organizer, want to utilize

the connections I made and make them long-lasting coalitions,” Leila Tazi, president of TREEage, stated. “So whether it’s through providing more resources for education, helping them get their own TREEage clubs started, or simply helping them with their own forms of advocacy, I really want to stay connected and united.”

Attendees at Albany stressed the importance of student voices and their unique perspective on these issues.

“Students offer a very important perspective,” Idrees Ilahi, CUNY director for TREEage, told The Vanguard. “The funny thing about the long-term climate crisis is that we are the most affected. We are the ones inheriting the burdens that the older generations put on us. We’re reshaping the narrative to focus on climate injustices, schools, and the role they play in it.”



Students rally with their signs on the million dollar staircase./Ezae Darby

The BC Pre-Law Society: Making Law an Accessible Practice

By T'Neil Gooden
Features Editor

Brooklyn College's Pre-Law Society is breaking barriers by being the first association that focuses on making law accessible to undergraduate students. The society provides students with case studies, mock court cases, and access to schools with some of the best law programs in the tri-state area.

"Our main goal for the Pre-Law Society, just broadly speaking, is for students to have an opportunity to have resources here on campus," Danish Saleem, the secretary of the Pre-Law Society, told The Vanguard. "Our mission statement reads: We firmly believe that it is important for us to learn how to advocate for ourselves before advocating for others. I see that in the form of attending conferences or asking questions, networking, and going to different events."

The Pre-Law Society wants to emphasize to students that there are resources and assistance on campus that will provide them with the tools they need to move deeper into their law practices.

"The Pre-Law Society specifically hopes that through our events, whether it is panels that we wanna have or law school/campus visits that we wanna have, or general meetings, and other events, students get the resources that they need to help them navigate this entire process," Saleem said.

The society wants students to understand

that their doors are open to all students, even those whose majors are not related to law in any way.

"It's not only open to students who already decided that they want to go to law school, it's also open to students who are deciding to pursue it, because that's also a very big part of this process," Diana Reyes, the president of the Pre-Law Society, told The Vanguard.

"Whether they want to go

to law school or not. We would want students to have those resources because personally, as a pre-law student myself, it's been hard navigating this entire process."

The association aims for students to know that there are individuals who are willing to help them navigate law school, undergraduate studies, and everyday college student problems.

"We connect with a lot of different people, either here on campus or outside of campus," Reyes

said. "We want students to have those resources that I personally did have here at BC."

Along with resources, the society wants students to understand that there is a community that is available to work with them on any questions or concerns they may have with all the genres of law, from sports to immigration.

faculty.

"[The society will] be a great opportunity for students to connect with students from different backgrounds, different interests, be a part of a community that's going through a process that can oftentimes be hard," Reyes said. "There is also a lack of representation. In the legal field, it's very male-dominated and predominantly white as

well. So you'll also see a diverse body of students here

process, and she leads that program," Reyes told The Vanguard. "So we're also trying to build that connection between the CUNY School of Law and then Brooklyn College. So we're inviting her, and she's coming March 20th to do an LSAT boot camp class."

Lastly, the Pre-Law Society wants students to know that they are continuously available to assist any individuals who are experiencing hardships, inquiries, and conflicts within their undergraduate law practices.

"I want people to know that the Pre-Law Society is as open and as accessible to all students. You can email; we are always active and always responding to students, we are always looking to help students and always support and elevate the student body that is interested in pre-law," Ari Tirado, vice president of the Pre-Law Society, told The Vanguard. "We definitely look to bridge that gap between undergraduate onto what may be pre-law school and understanding that it is a very difficult task. It is a very demanding task, but there is a community here on campus that is here to help, like I was just saying, and advocate for our students."

Students who are interested in joining the Pre-Law Society can go to their Instagram page, @bcprelawsociety, to learn more.



The Pre-Law Society logo./Courtesy of @bcprelawsociety

"Building community. Some of us do have similar interests, but it's also important for us to meet different people from different backgrounds, have different interests, and stuff like that. That's what we hope with the Pre-Law Society," Reyes told The Vanguard.

The society emphasizes the importance of being versatile and diverse in the law field. Having a BC-based law society will generate a district for BC students and

within Brooklyn College that are pre-law members."

The society will put on events that will introduce students to individuals within the field of law and help prepare students for any upcoming exams.

"We're partnering up with Carolyn Nelson from the CUNY School of Law and the Justice to Pipeline Program. She's the director of that program, and she has an extensive background in the LSAT preparation

BC Art Gallery Reveals Two New “Saturation” Themed Exhibitions

By Jaida Dent
Arts Editor

On March 4, the Brooklyn College Art Gallery opened its doors for its newest installation. Curated by Professor Bentley Brown, the gallery presents two exhibitions: Deborah Willis's “Saturation: Beauty in the Everyday” and Mason Webb's “Sonic Saturation”.

“One thing I really want to do in curating [the exhibition], is create an exhibition that puts an artist from a previous generation in conversation with an artist from a younger generation [...] I really like this pairing of two approaches that are totally different, but are focused on the same trajectory of feelings,” Brown told *The Vanguard*.

Having previously worked with both artists, Brown views these exhibitions as conversations between one other rather than two separate bodies of work. The exhibitions incorporate an array of mediums, which students can take away as a source of inspiration for both their art and where they can go in their careers.

“I want students to say, ‘I can, I’ve been, I have access to the highest level of art making and I can do that too,’” said Brown.

The first collection, Willis' “Saturation: Beauty in the Everyday”, honors the photographer and curator who uses her work to document and highlight the beauty of the Black experience. She is also a professor and chair of the Department of Photography & Imaging at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University (NYU).

“When we think of Black people, I want to show a broader narrative that we are, you know, as we struggle,

we have fun, we have joy, we have beauty,” said Willis.

Saturation in art is seen as the vividness or intensity of a color. Willis' work falls in line with this theme as she uses and manipulates saturation to enhance the stories told in her photography.

“Sundays in Harlem” gives a perspective of the Black experience through the lens of religion with the influence of American Poet and Playwright Langston Hughes' fictional character, Jesse B. Semple, otherwise known as “Simple”. Hughes was a powerhouse in poetry and literature and rose to prominence by being at

theme with saturation as the eyes are drawn to white clothing worn by everyone photographed in contrast with the darkness of their skin or even the metallic glow of the instruments.

While the word saturation assumes colors of a bright intensity, it is also present in dull or muted shades. “Carrie at Euro Salon, Eatonville, Florida” may not be saturated in color, but rather in story. This collection creates a thread of connection between artist and photographer, Carrie Mae Weems, with Zora Neale Hurston, another prominent figure from the



Deborah Willis posing in front of her works in the art gallery./Paulina Gajewski

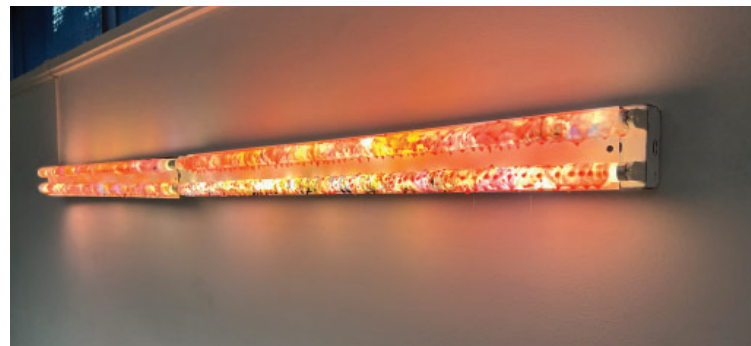
the forefront of the Harlem Renaissance, a movement of African American art during the 1920s and 30s.

Willis cites both Hughes and Semple as sources of inspiration for these photos, as documenting Sunday services allows her to “reconstruct an imagined past”. The works fall in

Harlem Renaissance.

Carrie is photographed in a beauty shop in the same town where Hurston grew up and would create her work. The usage of cool colors in the photos allows the attention to be placed on the entire piece, rather than a singular point. Willis combines an over-the-shoulder shot with the usage of mirrors to allow viewers to see Carrie's reflection both up close and from a distance. The place provides and creates beauty, while also being beautiful in itself for being a place of community and safety for Black women.

“Mirrors are central to my work in terms of the idea of reflection and looking for not only self-approval,



Mason Webb “Quaker”./Jaida Dent

but also the idea of women embracing their own beauty is what I am thinking about,” said Willis.

The second collection is Webb's “Sonic Saturation”. Webb is a multidisciplinary artist with roots in the fashion and music scene in Atlanta. Webb's collection of

the wall behind it. Webb's approach to saturation is magnified by the piece's title and its reference to religion. Webb cites his experience and knowledge of religion as elements carried in his work and uses light as a means to recreate a spiritual setting.

“In Quaker religion, their church is like a big open area and then they have a skylight and that's their meeting with God. [It creates] this kind of feeling of blessings and new chapters and those moments can have spiritual impact,” said Webb.

Saturation goes beyond what is seen, but also encompasses what is heard, as demonstrated in Webb's “Tar One”. The piece consists of speaker equipment surrounded by stainless steel covered in text writing and paint. Webb's exhibition was accompanied by music from Gwai Mak, an Atlanta and Los Angeles-based artist. The inclusion of music pays homage to Webb's influences as well as providing a sensory experience for viewers.

The works displayed in both collections use saturation to make viewers consider what is important in an image or a piece of art. The pieces also harmonize together in a way that makes the viewers rethink concepts like religion and beauty through the eyes of artists from two different walks of life.

“Don't be afraid to explore and don't let everything feel too precious. As artists, you're supposed to take chances and you're supposed to go for things,” said Webb. “I just hope for young students here to see that you can go crazy, build huge things and push the limits of material itself.”

The exhibitions will be on view in the Art Gallery at 0400 Boylan Hall until April 1.



Deborah Willis “Carrie at Euro Salon, Eatonville, Florida”./Jaida Dent

“Take You to the Garden of Eden”: Rami’s Reviews on Lady Gaga’s New Album “Mayhem”

By Rami Mansi
Managing Editor

Everyone was asking her for new music, “Joker 2” underperformed at both the box office and with critics, the musically-inclined yet detrimentally outspoken Azealia Banks was tweeting about her, and pop music was forgetting its once legendary roots through recent lackluster performances. Gaga had one chance to feed pop music and she cooked a five-course meal worthy of a Michelin star.

After being kindly persuaded to go back to her dark pop roots by fiancé Micheal Polansky, Lady Gaga has come back stronger than ever in her seventh studio album, appropriately titled “Mayhem”. A dark-pop album that is fueled by sub-genres of electronic, 80’s disco, dance-pop, industrial, synth-pop, and soft rock, Gaga is back in her element. But what makes this album so in tune with Gaga’s aesthetic and mindset? Why is Gaga’s fan base divided over this album? Why should you go listen to the album?

This is Rami’s Reviews, where we review all things pop culture; and for this issue: “Category is dance... or die.”

Starting with the music itself, this album boasts 14 tracks, including the Grammy award-winning soft-rock collaboration with singer Bruno Mars, “Die With A Smile.” The first three tracks of the album, lead single “Disease”, follow-up single “Abracadabra”, and fan-favorite “Garden Of Eden”, all stay within the same family of musicality: dark pop songs with a heavy bass line and electronic beats built to dance with your lover on the dancefloor. Moving into track four, the album turns away from its dark pop roots and turns into an electro-grunge anthem that begins the album’s poignant storytelling. The song “Perfect Celebrity” details Gaga’s relationship with the

music industry.

Here is where the album takes a dividing turn with listeners, as the next seven tracks show a different side of the album. “Vanish Into You” is a nostalgic melancholic song that contains a lyric that Gaga has considered to be one of her favorites: the oxymoronic line, “It was cold in the summertime.” Going further into the tracklist, we see strong influences of Prince and Michael Jackson in the 80’s pop, disco-inspired, and songs, “Killah”, “Zombieboy”, “Lovedrug”, “How Bad Do U Want Me”, “Don’t Call Tonight”, and the first hinted song of the album, “Shadow Of A Man”. The last three songs all keep the same energy of ballads of varying lyrical energies: the sensually explicit “The Beast”, Gaga’s favorite song of the album about her love with her fiancé, “Blade Of Grass”, and the hit collaboration, “Die With A Smile”.

Through all of its sonic twists and lyrical turns, “Mayhem” is a powerhouse album built for the dancefloor of a packed club, singing with your friends at karaoke, or dancing alone in your room. It presents itself as a standout from this year’s releases, from the 2000s-inspired pop beats of rising popstar Tate McRae’s “So Close To What”, the dark ambient Drone album “Perverts” from Ethel Cain, or the avant-garde-techno-trance album from electronic artist FKA Twigs. “Mayhem” stands against the grain as an album built off the authenticity of its artist, so authentic and in tune with her sound Gaga honors herself with the sound she’s built her career off of.

The title of the album, “Mayhem”, is chosen not for its literal definition of chaos, but for a character that Gaga says she created to embody her demons.

In an interview with ELLE Magazine, she says, “The album was called ‘Mayhem’ to memorialize a piece of me and a piece of life that is not always easy to accept, [...] I



Standard album cover for Lady Gaga’s 7th studio album “Mayhem”./Courtesy of Interscope Records

am also a hopeful person. I’m also somebody who is a dreamer, but what I think I ultimately arrived at is; it’s all of the fractures of who we are and the fractures in the world and the mayhem of that brokenness that ultimately teaches us the power of joy, and dancing and crying and laughing and listening to music and holding your friends and your family and repeat!”

This album is Gaga at her best: She is emotional about her love on “Blade of Grass”, she gives listeners the made-for-the-dancefloor hits they’ve been craving with both singles, and she enters into new territory with “Killah”. Gaga is her best when she is not stagnant on one genre, and in this album, genres are simply just a funny concept. However, this diversity does not stick to solely dark pop, as she has done with her second studio album, “The Fame Monster”, which was exclusively dark pop with other electronic subgenres and did not sit well with some fans.

In a popular internet forum entirely based on

Gaga’s work, Gaga Daily, some users claim that she had “bait and switched” fans into thinking that the album would only be dark pop with the evidence being the two singles being said genres. However, what fans seem to not understand is the fact that Gaga had been clear from the start on what genres this album would be demonstrating.

As stated in an ELLE interview, Gaga discusses how she played around with the idea of genres in “Mayhem”.

“I don’t know how am I going to get this industrial sort of pseudo-2000s beat to go with this electro grunge sound, and how am I going to get this kind of Bowie funky record to mesh with this 80s synth-pop [...]”

The album is a take on the music Gaga grew up with as a music lover born in 1986: Micheal Jackson, Prince, David Bowie. All these musical influences led Gaga to create the sound she did for “Mayhem”, and we should all be thankful for it.

During an era filled with content, social media videos, a new team fueled to

help Gaga succeed, and fans all over the world rejoicing, Gaga accomplished her goal of reuniting pop music lovers around the world, to an extent, and bringing back the Gaga everyone loves, but in her free mind and body.

However, a subtle character lies within the deep text of the album, a lingering sense that something is off and not quite perfect; Gaga herself even named the character “Mayhem”. But that feeling, that motif of chaotic energy, is controlled by Gaga’s voice and freedom to enrapture it, and one thing that never left Gaga, no matter what character she took on or whatever criticism she received, is Gaga’s unwavering stance on love and freedom for all.

Making the listener want to vanish into her through her larger-than-life vocals and thundering bass, Lady Gaga truly is the cure to our disease.

Women's Softball Team Are Ready To Swing Into a New Season

By Allen Mardakhayev
Staff Writer

As a new softball season begins, the BC Bulldogs step onto the field with renewed energy since their last season, new goals, and a hunger for success. The softball team had been working hard in the offseason, building chemistry, and redefining their skills as new faces emerged in the team and veterans were able to display their work ethics and team standards moving forward. After their performance last season in their CUNYAC Championship, the softball team intends to remain focused and disciplined as they are more determined than ever to make this year, one to remember.

Last season, the Bulldogs women's softball team closed out with an 11-17 record. In the postseason of the 2024 season, the softball team went 6-6 in conference play and ended up in fourth place after a competitive match resulting in a loss to Baruch College in the CUNYAC Championships.

All-star player and pitcher, Danielle Guzzardi, believes and trusts in this team and all that they hope to accomplish as they aim to win it all this year at the CUNYAC Championships.

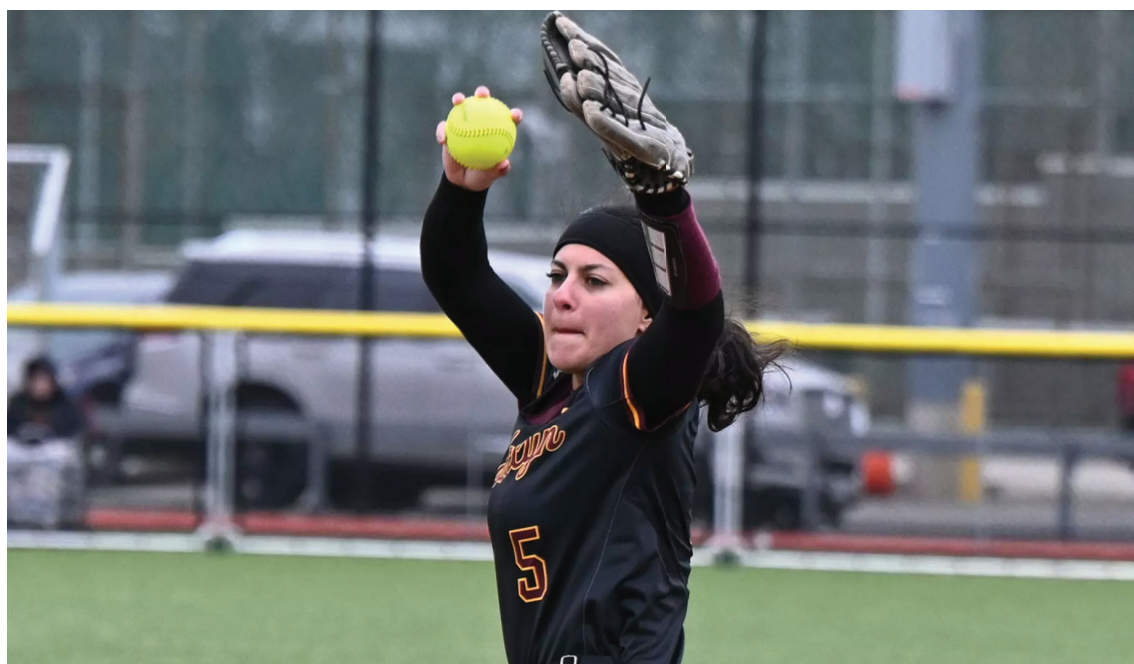
"Trusting my teammates is the most important part of the game as a pitcher. I have full faith in them to make the plays behind me after the ball gets put into play," Danielle Guzzardi told The Vanguard. The senior pitcher was optimistic heading into this new season and as anticipation rises, it's pivotal

for attitude to be a key component to shaping the team's path in the postseason.

"My team motivates me the most, they are constantly cheering and uplifting one another both on and off the field. I know every time I step on that dirt that my team has my back" Hailey Johnston told The Vanguard. The Bulldogs have a great connection with one another that can guide them to a successful season.

Returning veteran, Dasha Goodman, stepped into another year on the diamond and brings her leadership qualities with her. She intended on leading by example on and off the field for the benefit of her and her team.

"Going into this season I want to build on everything we started as a team last year and everything I personally began three seasons ago at Brooklyn College," Goodman told The Vanguard. "I have put in a lot of work during the off-season, and want to focus on consistently putting balls into play and continuously making my team, coaches, and myself proud." Goodman has brought back her initiative to the team she's been loyal to for the past three



Bulldogs player pitches./Courtesy of BC Athletics

seasons.

Beyond the season opener, several big games lie on the horizon as the Bulldogs start their season. They are first facing off against numerous opponents in the Fastpitch Dreams Spring Classic located in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, from March 5 until March 9.

On March 5, the Bulldogs were set to face off against Wilkes University and Kenyon College in a doubleheader matchup. Harsh weather

conditions, however, resulted in a cancellation against Wilkes University and a postponement match against Kenyon College for March 7.

On March 6, the Bulldogs were set to face Waynesburg University and Grove City College, but they were unable to hold off against either team. Waynesburg was in the lead by 3-0 at the beginning of the game, and Goodman responded with a score for the Bulldogs. This, however, would not be enough to rebound, and the game resulted in a loss of 1-9.

Later in the day, the Bulldogs played against Grove City College, which culminated in a subsequent loss of 2-12.

On March 7, the Bulldogs played against Kenyon College following their recent postponement which resulted in a Bulldogs halt by Kenyon College. Kenyon won the game via a score of 11-0.

On March 8, the Bulldogs squared off

against two opposing teams, Albion College and Keystone College. The Bulldogs lost to Albion with a score of 3-16.

The Bulldogs had their first victory of the season against Keystone College. Keystone started with 2-0 in the first inning, but the Bulldogs responded with four runs. Ultimately, the Bulldogs won via a score of 8-5.

On March 9th, the Bulldogs clash against their final opponents, Penn State Harrisburg and Dean College. The Bulldogs were unable to withstand the heavy offense from Penn State Harrisburg and were defeated with a score of 0-9. However, the Bulldogs ended the day with an impressive win over Dean College with a score of 7-5, which marked the end of the softball team's experience in the Fastpitch Dreams Spring Classic.

After returning from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, the Bulldogs are set to take on Yeshiva University in a double header live at the Brooklyn College Field on March 11.



Bulldogs on the field during the game./Courtesy of BC Athletics

Stitched in Legacy: How Bisa Butler Honors Shirley Chisholm Through Quilted Art

By **Serena Edwards**
Content Creator

Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Congress and BC alumna, has left her impact across communities.

The Brooklyn Museum hosted a talk that reflected on a work of art portraying Chisholm and its intersection with her legacy. Two speakers led the conversation: Bisa Butler, a Howard University alumna and artist known for life-size quilted portraits, and Barbara Bullard, the president of the Shirley Chisholm Cultural Institute (SCCI). Both came together at the Brooklyn Museum to talk about the impact of Chisholm and what inspired the portrait that Butler created. The conversation was moderated by Stephanie Sparling Williams, curator of the American Art exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum.

The piece that is referenced in the talk is part of an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum titled "Toward Joy: New Frameworks for American Art." This exhibit is a reinstatement with multiple art pieces in honor of the museum's 200th anniversary, emphasizing the

modernism of American art through a BIPOC feminist lens.

Chisholm, who had roots at BC, had passed laws to improve CUNY resources. She passed legislation to bring the Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) program at CUNY, which still functions today. Chisholm was the first woman to run for presidency.

Butler compared the portrait to the first piece she did, which was a portrait of her grandfather who she never got to meet.

"My artwork has always come from a need within me to know myself and know what happened before," Butler said. She continued to talk about what inspired the piece. Butler compared her life as an artist to the battles Shirley Chisholm had faced, the similar drive and determination resonated with who she was as an artist.

"Shirley Chisholm has become a huge beacon because she was so powerful and determined and refused to back down," she stated. There were other figures that Butler was thinking of portraying, but Chisholm was the one that resonated with her the most.

"I was always going to do a portrait of



(L to R) Barbara Bullard, Bisa Butler, and Stephanie Sparling Williams talk about the impact of Shirley Chisholm./Serena Edwards

Shirley Chisholm, that's unequivocal," Butler continued. She wanted to choose someone who was for the people.

"What's an exemplary human being? Who do I wanna be like?" Butler said. "I had hundreds of photos of Shirley Chisholm on my computer and I thought now was the time, I didn't know we'd be in this time, I didn't know that Harris would have ran for president," expressed Butler. She stated that Chisholm's inspiration made her feel like this was a need.

"I really wanted to do something special for Brooklyn. I wanted to do something for the legacy, and I almost felt like I owed it to her," Butler stated.

Bullard touched upon Chisholm's legacy and how she had met Bill Howard, financial advisor and close friend to Chisholm, and his fight to keep Chisholm's legacy alive. The SCCI serves as a legacy of who Chisholm was when she was alive, serving the community and staying connected with one another.

"When I met him I realized that one man was fighting for people to remember her because her legacy was systematically

erased," Bullard stated. This influenced her to look further into the fight for Shirley Chisholm.

Butler discussed how she was able to combine everything and bring Chisholm's personality to life through her art. She explained the little details she chose to enhance when she designed this piece.

"I used fabric to tell a story [...] I was choosing African fabrics to say our roots started before we got here and before we got to whatever colonial outpost we began to go to," stated Butler. She continued by talking about how the fabrics tell the stories; she connected the use of present events to the story of Chisholm.

The Alabama Brawl chair, a motif used in the work that drew on the Montgomery Riverfront Brawl, connected to the famous saying of Chisholm's: "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair."

Butler incorporated the chair within the design of the piece to connect the two stories. "The folding chair gives reference to when this was made [...] gives multiple meanings and the chair had to be a part of it because it was something she said a lot but it was also just timely

that it was used a lot."

Bullard touched upon who Chisholm was and emphasized that she was a visionary and for the people.

"She worked for the people fearlessly to the point that a lot of people didn't like her," Bullard stated. She also emphasized that Chisholm made sure to represent Brooklyn in everything that she did. "She brought Brooklyn to DC, she didn't bring DC to Brooklyn."

Bullard also spoke about how the SCCI is still keeping Chisholm's legacy alive throughout the Brooklyn community. The institute recently worked on a project with Lefferts Gardens housing.

"We were able to repurpose fabrics and create superhero capes because everyone is a superhero [...] we look at Shirley and say she's our hero, but I think what Chisholm wanted us to say is that we were all superheroes," Bullard stated. "I think that it's the arts that are going to allow us to dream and imagine the world we wanna live in, and create that world."



Bisa Butler's life-size portrait of Shirley Chisholm featured in the exhibit./Serena Edwards