

Alliana Persaud

#BLM: ENG 4953

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Inscribe Your Truth: A Celebration of Black Women

For my #BlackLivesMatter Final Celebration of Knowledge, I chose to do a creative aesthetic for black women. My project is in the form of a ceremony that I call "Inscribe Your Truth". Inspired by the healing aspect of Beyonce's "Lemonade: A Visual Album", I decided to conduct my own gathering of women in celebration of being ourselves. Black women are so very diverse. We all have different and unique experiences that shape our lives and make us who we are. We think and talk differently. We hold our own views and have our own biases, with which we make individual decisions. We have been to different places and witnessed different things. Yet, how beautiful is it that we can all come together and share a moment? How beautiful it is that we can all come together and heal in a shared space?

My project began with my inclination to art and self-expression. I have always loved everything to do with the arts. As a child I loved drawing and painting, passions that have stayed with me now into my adult years. I recently created my own waist bead business, out of my deep love for craft-making. I am an avid "embellisher" adding accents to anything, from my clothing to my resume (I've been warned multiple times to remove the purple font). I just acquired my first calligraphy set from my best friend last Christmas, as she recalls how disappointed I was in the 8th grade, having to drop out of the calligraphy club because I could not afford my own set. I grew up with my father's family, and I can reflect on the majority of my clothing being hand-made by my

grandmother who had a passion for sewing, another gift passed down to me. I played the cello for 4 years as I love music and for a while was interested in classical composition. Lastly, I have no singing talent whatsoever but that does not stop me from bellowing out the lines to my favorite songs almost daily.

Recently, I've been working on a little personal collection of drawings that I am yet to name. They all feature black women with their eyes closed, sporting their Afros and curly-fro's. After watching Lemonade, I wanted to get together with my girls so bad. I know myself to be an introvert, however I LOVE the company of my close girlfriends and choose to spend time with them whenever I can. I thought about my drawings and the idea of creating something visual for my project that viewers could be free to interpret. Hence I sent a few of my girlfriends in San Antonio the following message which gives a little insight into the meaning of the drawings:

Hey girl are you free this evening?

I have this project to do & I'd like you to be a part of it. It's inspired by Beyoncé's "Lemonade" & takes the form of a ceremony. I want you & others to color in some of my drawings for me. Drawing & painting has always been therapeutic for me & I want to share that experience with my friends. My drawings are of black women with their eyes closed. I see them as intuitive beings that have their eyes closed as they bask in self-love. Their goal is ultimate freedom from the destructive influences of society and many of them represent different black experiences such as rejecting respectability politics & Afrofuturism. Let me know if you can take part in my ceremony & we can plan maybe a short 2 hour session either tonight or tomorrow night.

As expected, my friends were excited to hang out and chat. I had a short list of conversation questions to get us talking about things such as, “What does being a black woman mean to you?” and, “Who do you believe are the best role models for black women today and why?” But also, as expected the conversations took routes of their own and before long we were immersed in deep conversation. Everyone did not agree with one another on certain ideas. For example, one friend of mine was opposed to the idea of Rihanna being a positive role model for black women while another (and myself) were all for it. What I appreciated most was the respect we all expressed for each other. Despite our differences, we took turns listening to one another speak and this was an overall successful and pleasant experience.

I understand that my drawings are fully up for interpretation by my viewers and readers. Reflecting on Week 5’s #SayHerName Discussion by Dr. Berry, I’d like to end with the following quote:

No one is going to give you the education you need to overthrow them. Nobody is going to teach you your true history, teach you your true heroes, if they know that that knowledge will help set you free.” – Assata Shakur

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Inscribe Your Truth:
A Celebration of Black
Women

Drawings and Paintings
Art Aesthetic

I am a 22 year old international, transfer student from Grenada, W.I. majoring in English. Intersectional feminist & proud.

#BlackLivesMatter is more than just a hashtag. It is the reclamation of a truth we already know. Let us inscribe it together.

#BlackLivesMatter | #BlackWomenMatter