

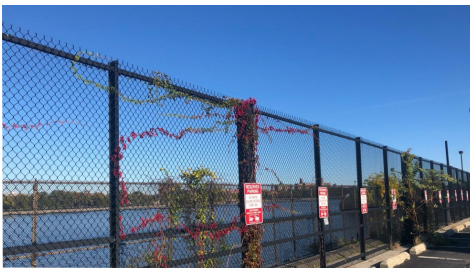
## Suffering in Silence: China Keeps Uyghur Muslims in Concentration Camps



**Activists in Brussels, Belgium protesting China's oppression of Uyghur Muslims**

(Photo Credit: Alexandros Michailidis)

**Article by Zarin Siddiqua on Page 3.**



### NEWS

**Jerome Park Reservoir Raises Concerns About Access**

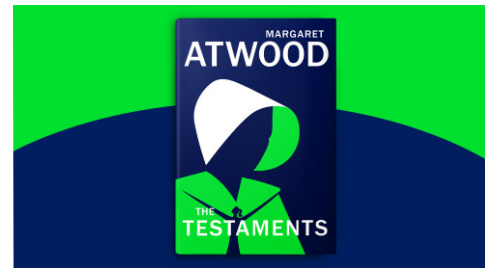
Page 5



### LIFESTYLE

**Lehman's Small Business Association Helps the Bronx Grow**

Page 16



### ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

**"The Testaments" Proves Margaret Atwood Still Has What it Takes**

Page 31

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# Suffering in Silence: China Keeps Uyghur Muslims in Concentration Camps

**By Zarin Siddiqua**

“It’s heartbreaking seeing that no one is aware of what’s happening,” said Ghofran Nagi, an undecided sophomore at Lehman, of China’s systematic targeting of its indigenous Muslim populations. “I wish that people would share this with others and come up with ideas to spread awareness and hopefully attract important people to make a change. It’s horrible that in today’s world, people still have to hide who they are and what they believe in to stay alive.”

Since 2017 over one million Turkic Uyghur Muslims, one of China’s ethnic minorities, have been detained in its Xin-

jiang region, where over 10 million Uyghurs live, according to the New York Times. It reports that in these camps, captives are forced to give up their native language and religion and are subject to political indoctrination.

In mid-November, the paper published an exposé of China’s policies based on over 400 pages of official documents that describe atrocities committed against Muslim communities who suffered a previous lack of media coverage that contributed to widespread ignorance of their plight. According to Foreign Policy, China long denied that the re-education camps even existed. The Journal of Political

Risk also reported that the Chinese government has sought to counter human-rights accusations over its re-education and internment campaign through elaborate propaganda.

However, Humaid Sabi, a senior lawyer, told Business Insider that a “very substantial number” of prisoners were “killed to order” by the Chinese government. They were “cut open while still alive for their kidneys, livers, hearts, lungs, cornea, and skin to be removed and turned into commodities for sale,” the report said. Chinese Tribunal, a human rights charity that investigates these issues, reported that



**A protest outside the Chinese Embassy in London**  
(Photo International Observatory on Human Rights).





### Activists in Brussels, Belgium protesting China's oppression of Uyghur Muslims

(Photo Credit: Radio Free Asia)

body parts were then used for medical purposes. According to the New York Times “Many members of the Uighur ethnic group living in exile are worried that their relatives back home in China are locked up in internment camps — or dead.”

Muslim community and the members of Lehman's Muslim Student Association are crushed by these inhumane events.

“What's going on around the world is devastating to anyone who has an open mind and an open heart,” said Ala Rashed, psychology and media communications senior and vice president of Lehman's Muslim Student Association (MSA). “What you are left with are people suffering. I don't even use the word dying because I feel like death for many of our brothers and sisters is their ultimate relief,

as unfortunate as that sounds.” The lack of access for foreign and Chinese press who want to cover stories in Xinjiang also makes it hard to know what is going on in the region or even predict the future, Foreign Policy News reported. The resulting lack of outcry has been observed on a global scale.

“There has been a worrisome silence from many countries, particularly Muslim-majority countries like Saudi Arabia and Indonesia that one might think would be concerned about the plight of Uighurs,” officials at Northeastern education news reported, “Some argue these countries value economic ties with China over religious solidarity with the Uighurs.”

Lehman students are also upset by the current oppression against China's Muslim community.

Foulemata Camara, a biomedical science major at Lehman said, “People sometimes tend to forget the meaning of practicing any religion you want. No one ever deserves to be treated that way just because of a religious choice.”

“We are not warmongers... our leaders and our haters have portrayed us as such and it kills me,” said Rashed. “However, hope is not lost.”

“I have friends that are scared of what is happening. They are scared to practice their faith freely without feeling that they might get attacked,” said Bricenia Diaz, a Lehman junior majoring in Psychology. “We are in the 21st century and history is repeating itself and the world is letting it happen. We are all aware of a similar genocide. Why is the world still quiet? How many more people have to die?”

# Jerome Park Reservoir Renovation Raises Concerns About Access

**By Lysa Vanible**

Jerome Park Reservoir has been under construction for close to two decades, making the presence of huge bulldozers, Ford F250 vehicles and workers equipped in orange safety vests routine for area residents. Managed by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the 15-million-dollar rehabilitation includes gatehouses, installation of new, lower fencing, and an upgraded security infrastructure and is scheduled to continue through 2021. But some contend that the upgrade of this historic site does not guarantee free access to the reservoir's amenities by locals.

The reservoir can hold up to 773 million gallons of water and supplies 10 percent of New York City's water supply, according to the DEP's website. The newly renovated Croton Branch aqueduct discharges into its southern end through two brick-lined aqueducts forming a horseshoe shape, a fitting reminder that the site originally housed the Jerome Park Racetrack where the Triple Crown was run.



**Lehman's faculty parking lot, located on the east side of the South Basin of the reservoir.**  
(Photo Credit: Lysa Vanible)



**Idling bulldozer on the western side of the North Basin along Sedgwick Avenue.**  
(Photo Credit: Lysa Vanible)



**The Jerome Park Reservoir Gatehouse Entrance.**  
(Photo Credit: Lysa Vanible)



**A concrete wall inside the Jerome Park Reservoir showing the underused North Basin water capacity.**

**(Photo Credit: Lysa Vanible)**

Professor Hari Pant, chair of Lehman’s environmental science department, explained the importance of reservoirs is due to the scarcity of freshwater.

“Only a small fraction of the earth’s water is freshwater; 97.4 percent is salt-water, 2.6 percent is freshwater. Out of 2.6 percent of freshwater, about 1.98 percent is in the ice and snow, such as ice sheets and glaciers, among the other 0.59 percent in the groundwater, which leave a tiny fraction of the freshwater in lakes, rivers and the atmosphere.” Reservoirs, he added, “are a small part of the water supply system in the world. The Western part of the United States is much drier compared to the Eastern part of the United States, hence there are more viable freshwater sources here.”





**Left: Filtration plant at Van Cortlandt Park. Right: Edward Sliva sits in the lawn of the Independence Park along the route of the Jerome Park Reservoir**

(Photo Credit: Lysa Vanible)

Professor Yuri Gorokhovic, an instructor in the environmental science department at Lehman until 2000, was employed by DEP for nine years as a manager of Geographic Information Systems in the Division of Water Quality and Control.

“The Bronx Jerome Park Reservoir is filtered at the Van Cortlandt filtration plant to remove solids like sand and mud,” he explained. “The other kind of filtration is called microfiltration, which is a process when the water is filtered to strip the suspended solids from bacteria. The job of the DEP is to keep the water clean for all residents of the Bronx.”

Residents note the slow pace of the renovation.

Air Force veteran and resident, Edward Sliva, 88, said “I’ve lived here for 30 years with my three sons and wife. The construction has been going on since my grandson went to DeWitt Clinton High School and after he graduated from four years of Lehman College.”



Others expressed concerns about access.

Lehman freshman Casselina McCord, 18, said, “as a resident of the Bronx, I have concerns about the access for the community to the reservoir’s resources to learn from this basin, so that the people would know more about what it is and how the process works. I am enrolled in an environmental science course, and it’s really about the people who have the power to do something; the people of the Bronx.”

Lehman environmental science major and international transfer student Dabibe Bardgoi, 26, said, “I am an environmental science activist; I want to protect the earth against climate change. The construction is good for the area. It won’t be good for consumption if the reservoir isn’t protected. We have to be careful of pollution.”

Pant warned: “If we don’t pay attention in protecting our freshwater sources, the world may face severe shortages of it, soon in the future.”

**Sources: The New York City Department of Environmental Protection website NYC Open Data**



**Reservoir Avenue view at the South Basin (Photo Credit: Lysa Vanible)**

# Lehman Students Angered by Reversal of LGBTQ Rights

By Jaquira Truesdale



**The Trump Administration will strip away nondiscrimination requirements.**

(Photo Credit: Evan Vucci)

On Nov. 22, the White House will strip away nondiscrimination requirements for LGBTQ citizens, and Lehman students are outraged.

According to the Human Rights Campaign, the legal change will allow the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) grant recipients and foster agencies the right to discriminate against LGBTQ citizens. The change comes despite protests from thousands of protesters who surrounded the United States Supreme Court in Washington D.C. to defend the rights of one transgender individual and two gay men who were fired due to their sexual preferences.

Many Lehman students who identify as LGBTQ members have been victims of discrimination and feel outraged by the reversal of legal protection.

Davaughn M. Riley, 23-year-old senior at Lehman and president of the LGBTQ Alliance who defines himself as a homosexual man told the Meridian, “I think what 45th President Donald Trump is doing is disgusting. He is revising all the work that has been done in our community by us and allies. It’s as if we’re seen as second-class citizens because of how we identify.”

Growing up, Riley dealt with a fair share of discrimination from men who questioned his

manhood, seeing him as less than, never considering him “one of the boys” and condemning his sexual orientation.

“Normal things like housing, healthcare, marriage or being able to walk down the street holding our partner’s hands are the rights we deserve,” he said. “The fact that this can be robbed from us is disheartening. The only thing being reinforced is toxicity and malicious behavior.”

In New York and other states, laws protect people against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. According to [nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov), anyone experiencing discrimination at work,

in housing issues, in public or anywhere else can file a complaint by phone or online.

About 46 percent of the LGBTQ community live in states where discrimination is protected, according to the Movement Advancement Project. Six percent live with little to no defense in Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee and South Dakota, while 28 states do not offer LGBTQ people any legal protections against discrimination. On the federal level, LGBTQ Americans are not protected in every corporation and were not protected under the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

In New York there are still people that get discriminated against based on their sexuality who might be afraid to come forward and file a complaint.

Riley told the Meridian he was judged at his own workplace due to his sexuality. “When it comes to lifting and moving things, my coworker thought that because I was gay, I was made of glass and would break if I moved something heavy,” he said.

Other Lehmanites who support the LGBTQ community also feel frustrated with the laws and believe their rights should be legalized.

“It makes me concerned for society, really, that people still cannot fully accept each other based on sexual preference,” said K’nicia King, a 25-year-old Mercy College graduate and bisexual woman who said she has never been discriminated against based on her sexual orientation. “It makes no sense that people are still treating their colleagues and coworkers as

outsiders when their lives are basically their own business.”

“I feel like it’s unfair. Why am I a citizen of this state and yet my rights can’t be upheld because I choose to like the same gender? It’s dumb,” said Britny Toussaint, 21, a junior psychology major who identifies herself as pansexual. “I have never experienced sexual orientation discrimination, but it frustrates me to know the LGBTQ community is constantly judged for who they are.”

“It’s horrible that even happens at the workplace. It’s 2019 and the fact that the world can’t even accept others is very sad,” said Patricia Rodriguez, 19, a Lehman sophomore majoring in biology. “I support the LGBTQ community with open arms. Love is love, right? We should all be able to love who we want to love,” she said.



**The LGBTQ Pride Flag at the Lehman campus (Photo Credit: Perla Tolentino)**



# Indigenous Communities Fight to Ban Columbus Day

**By July Torres**

Lehman students stand with efforts to remove Columbus Day as a federal holiday.

“What Europeans did to Native Americans shouldn’t be celebrated,” said Jocelyn Rodriguez, a Lehman freshman majoring in social work. “I mean, there were people there already, so he didn’t discover anything. He was simply lost.”

“A bunch of people were enslaved and killed, and we celebrate a day in honor of him discovering the land. Celebrating a holiday that has a mur-

derer isn’t right,” said Gianna Gonzalez, a junior film and television studies major. “While changing it isn’t going to bring them back, it is a way to remember what happened in the past.”

The state of New York still recognizes Columbus Day despite years of critique and recent protests at Randall’s Island where New Yorkers gathered this October to celebrate indigenous people from around the world. Attendees celebrated by appreciating Native American culture, such as traditional wear, music and food. Mayor

Bill De Blasio and Governor Andrew Cuomo, however, attended Manhattan’s Columbus Day Parade instead.

The founder of the Indigenous Peoples Day event in New York City, Cliff Matias, told the New York Times he is not surprised politicians did not show up. He expressed his excitement seeing indigenous people and allies gathered.

“This isn’t a day about protesting Columbus, it’s about celebrating indigenous people,” Matias said. “But look



**Indigenous People’s Day at Randall’s Island**  
(Photo Credit: Jeremy Dennis)

around. There's an eclectic mix of people here. Indigenous. Black people. Anglos. Allies from around the world. That makes it special."

States can choose not to observe federal holidays, and CBS News reported that as of 2019, 13 states recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day over Columbus Day, including Maine, Michigan, Alaska and South Dakota, the first state to recognize it in 1990.

As the movement for indigenous recognition continues to grow, Indian Country Today, a digital indigenous news site, compiled a list of several places in America that were holding events in support of native peoples. New York, Delaware, and Washington D.C., all held events

On Oct. 14, Lakota/Mohawk journalist Corinne Oestreich-Rice took over the Twitter account of AJ+. "Although Native Americans have discussed Indigenous Peoples' Day since the 1970s, the movement gained popularity when Bay Area Natives pushed back on a planned reenactment of Columbus' arrival," she wrote. "After this,

other cities in America followed suit to highlight that Native Americans are still here, and refuse to celebrate a murderer."

Oestreich-Rice said, "As Indigenous people of an occupied land, they expect and demand the recognition and respect of those who occupy it. The Natives are also standing up and demanding an end to the trend of Native mascots."

**The Natives  
were here first.  
They should be  
recognized."**

**—John Perez, a  
Lehman junior  
majoring in  
English**

Native American groups believe that Columbus' arrival ushered in genocide and that Columbus Day celebrates 500 years of colonial oppression, according to ThoughtCo. However, contrary to popular belief, in places like the Caribbean, indigenous people did not become extinct.

The leader of the Taíno Indigenous, Jorge Baracutei Estevez, told National Geographic that

the population did decrease. "The Taíno were declared extinct shortly after 1565 when a census shows just 200 Indians living on Hispaniola, today the Dominican Republic and Haiti." He claims that Taíno still exist because he believes that many of them ran into the mountains.

Deb Haaland, one of the first two Native American women elected to Congress, told NBC News, "Indigenous Peoples' Day is about acknowledging indigenous peoples' complex history in this country and celebrating the culture, heritage and strength of native communities everywhere." As for Columbus Day, Haaland believes that, "Celebrating Columbus Day continues a dangerous narrative that erases Native American voices and minimizes the federal government's attempt at genocide and forced assimilation."

John Perez, a junior majoring in English, told the Meridian, "The Natives were here first. They should be recognized. Why not? This land belongs to them. We should celebrate

# Homeland Security Might Be Browsing Your Instagram

By Sumana Ali



**Social Media Icons** (Photo Credit: Knowtechie.com)

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is creating surveillance programs that can monitor social media activity to rule out foreign threats, and the possibility has Lehman students alarmed.

ues to take advantage of these platforms by rapidly collecting personal information from social media users' profiles, which can be used to target religious and ethnic minorities with enhanced vetting and surveillance.

departing from, or transiting through the United States.”

These programs perform mass surveillance on non-foreign nationals or frequent travelers and people living on visas.

“I don't want my DMs in Homeland Security's database. Even if they collected my information by mistake, it's just plain invasion of privacy. We can find a better way to protect the national security,” said Alicia Rodriguez, a political science junior. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, the DHS contin-

Though these forms of surveillance programs are not new, they are rapidly growing because of Homeland Security's interest in social media surveillance. Since 2009 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has had an operating policy stating, “This directive applies to searches of electronic devices of all persons arriving in,

This new initiative to ramp up surveillance could have serious consequences for the citizens being surveilled. ICE has also faced accusations of monitoring social media platforms of undocumented immigrants. These surveillance programs in Homeland Security's hands could mean unpredictable policy and operational



changes that could incite more anti-immigrant practices.

ICE has also faced accusations of monitoring social media platforms undocumented immigrants. These surveillance programs in certain agencies' hand could mean unpredictable policy and operational changes that could incite more anti-immigrant practices.

"What if Homeland Security uses this technology with bias, and people of color and minorities are targeted because of who they are?" said Quamisha Murano, a third-year theatre major at Lehman.

This appears to be happening already with regard to certain groups. Under the Trump Administration, security screenings have been stricter than any other administration. A draft report produced at the request of the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), concluded that these characteristics provided a "baseline to identify at-risk persons." The CBP even suggested that in addition to initial screenings, these groups of people (young Muslim men) should be "continuously evaluated."

This technology is also harmful when used out of context. An algorithm targeting people for their social media posts can be the reason why refugee status is denied to a person in need.

**"Homeland Security monitoring my social media is a problem unless they are getting me more modeling gigs."**

**—Quamisha Murano,  
a third-year theatre  
major at Lehman**

A report by the Department of State stated that DHS is surveilling and using the data to evaluate the security risks posed by foreigners and travelers. DHS and other government agencies currently working on social media surveillance justify it by saying it is in the interest of national security to surveil foreigners. However, many statically supported studies oppose this notion.

The Cato Institute stated, "The chance of an American being murdered in a terrorist attack by a refugee is about 1 in 3.86 bil-

lion per year, while the annual chance of being murdered in an attack committed by an illegal immigrant is zero."

Khedivial Ka, a Lehman graduate student said, "The government should assess the needs of the population, not their own interests. If it is strictly for national security, they should surveil everyone without discrimination."

DHS collecting social media information is not only concerning because of the anti-Islamic sentiment of the administration, but the information collected at this caliber could open a door to invading the privacy of any American citizen.

Though some Americans perceive this technology as harmless because it mainly targets immigrants and foreign visa-holders, experts suggest a very high chance exists of these types of surveillance programs picking up information on unintended subjects. Most of the time this is deliberately done.

Murano said, "Social media is often how I express myself. Even though I am not posting anything wrong, I am still uneasy with someone monitoring me."

# Lehman's Small Business Association Helps the Bronx Grow

**By Esgardo Castelan**

““We have been operating since 2000 helping students from the ground up,” said Executive Clarence Stanley, a former veteran and Director of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Bronx’s office at Lehman. Through its work, 18,025 businesses have received assistance; investment records sum \$167,513,506, and at least 6,066 jobs have been created. “Not many people know about us, and we have been here for almost 20 years,” Stanley said.

The SBDC assists students at about 22 campus-based centers and outreach offices across New York state, including CUNY colleges Ba-

ruch, LaGuardia, York, Staten Island and Lehman, with the main goal of teaching the fundamentals of owning and maintaining a business.

Funded by the federal government, the SBDC has also branched out to private institutions including Pace University and Stony Brook University, whose students plan to start up a business and may not know where to start.

In partnership with The Small Business Administration (SBA) that allows them to have the funding to help students, about 30 percent of Stanley’s clients are Lehman students who are brought into the pro-

gram through internships. They then can modify these into businesses or companies, starting with just an idea.

“One of the greatest things that you can do if you want to open a small business will be to get comfortable with tech. In a century where the internet is taking over with everything being connected, the best thing that you can do is make sure you know the fundamentals of a computer,” Stanley said.

Other services programs offered by SBDC include a loan guarantee program, which grants an amount of loan and requires only paying the difference, and the immigrant



**Clarence Stanley, Director of the Small Business Development Center's Bronx Office at Lehman.**  
(Photo Credit: Nyssbdc.org)

entrepreneur program that helps immigrants obtain visas to enter the United States.

Stanley shared success stories from Lehman students and others who made their idea a reality with the help of SBDC. Their stories “can inspire and encourage others to find hope in receiving aid and knowing they aren’t alone, keeping in mind that this is happening in The Bronx, which is considered the poorest borough of New York,” Stanley said.

Rafael Alvarez, now president and CEO of an accounting, tax and financial services business, was born in the Dominican Republic and has resided in New

York for the last 25 years. After graduating from CUNY’s City College he promoted his business through the website [www.atax.com](http://www.atax.com), with the goal of helping clients achieve the American dream by owning businesses.

Sandrine Valentine is another SBDC client who owns a beauty line named Sandrine Beauty. “Sandrine worked in the fragrance industry and specialized in aromatherapy as she believed therapeutic virtues of scent can heal and uplift mind, body and spirit,” said Stanley. He pointed out that the borough “has changed for the better. The unemployment in the Bronx has changed from

14 percent to 6.7 percent.” But while the SBDC can turn business dreams into realities with their services, not many Lehman students are aware of it.

“I didn’t know there was a program like that,” said Anton Kyrylenko, a Macaulay Honors Junior.

“Wow, there is a program that can help us with our businesses?” said Raymond Burier, a Lehman junior and business administration major. “This is really useful to know since I plan on making a business in the future. Therefore, I do believe colleges should offer business consulting.”



**The Small Business Development Center logo.**  
(Photo Credit: [Nyssbdc.org](http://Nyssbdc.org))



# Kingsbridge Nail Salon Offers Spa Experience Never Seen in the Neighborhood

**By Allen Mena and Perla Tolentino**



**Walls uniquely designed with brush paint-drips, inspired by the name of the business**  
(Photo Credit: Perla Tolentino)

“Their design called my attention as I was passing by. It looks different than anything I’ve seen in this neighborhood,” said Johana Brea, a Bronx resident who works in Carman Hall, of Nail Drip, a Dominican family-owned nail salon that opened about three months ago on Kingsbridge Road. “It looks high-class, not something common around here; it’s interesting

to see new things are coming to the Bronx,” she added.

Located on 61 East Kingsbridge Road, within Lehman’s vicinity, the salon offers spa-like services and an aesthetic room for waxing and other eyebrow embellishment services.

“This nail salon creates more jobs for young people in the area and the salon inspires

young people to open up their own businesses,” said the salon’s owner and Bronx resident, Damaris Marcelino. “I believe that through effort and work everything is possible, even running a business like ours. I always think about the future in difficult moments.”

Lehman students also think highly of this new salon’s offerings.

Natalie Ramos, a 20-year-old Lehman psychology major who is also a fan of nail art said, “It’s different, fancy and pampering; they seem more clean, trustworthy and dedicated to their clients.”

“In my opinion this is wonderful: a new nail-spa that is innovative and implements new techniques that we have never experienced here in our neighborhood, said Diana Hernandez, 37, a sociology major and Lehman sophomore. “This is a refreshing new start for a business.”

“I find it very nice to see this kind of concept in the Bronx. I enjoy this new surge in customer service; especially because people think negatively

about Bronxites. This shows that we can get quality service without having to go to Manhattan,” said Unequa Figueroa, a 26-year-old philosophy major and Lehman senior.

Beyond design and hard work, product quality also forms part of the salon’s mission.

“Our wax soothes the skin, preventing irritation, and it’s such a soft product that it peels-off itself. We can take it off with our hands. This makes us unique because not many places use it,” said Cristal Pena, wife of the owner and co-manager of the salon. “Our spa pedicure gel is made out of fruits and flower petals that helps reduce foot odor and sweat.” “I have been working with very

high-end aesthetics businesses since 2011, and what I really like about Nail Drip is that it feels like family. We are trying to bring high-end services to an area where people don’t visualize it as possible,” said Chrisal Martinez, 26, who works as the salon’s cosmetology specialist in charge of body waxing, keratin lash boosting and lifting, and eyebrow shaping.

Martinez, who holds a New York state cosmetology license, confirmed that facial services will be offered in 2020. The salon also plans to be the first in the area to digitize their services.

“We are preparing to make a difference in the nail salon industry,” explained Joel Mar-



**Wine offered to clients is one of the “spa-like” aspects of the salon; the wooden sliding-door in the background leads to the esthetics room. Damaris Marcelino, mother of the owner, handing wine to the client.**

(Photo Credit: Hector Bello)

celino, a digital design graduate of Westchester College and the younger son in the family who oversees the salon's marketing. "We plan to launch an interactive website where customers can try on nail polishes and designs. When the customer makes a selection, their color choice will be sent to a technician who will assist them based on their needs."

"I gave up a franchise to come help my family with the business. We want to bring relax-

ation to the community and drive off the attention from crimes and alcoholism. I dream to teach the importance of economy to young people, to help them understand that a nine to five job won't always be the dream career." Andrea Valles, a 30-year-old employee, complimented the store's cleanliness and perks. "Hygiene is key here; this is one of the most comfortable places I've worked in. The service is excellent. We always offer our custom-

ers coffee, wine, water and the best part is that it doesn't come from your budget."

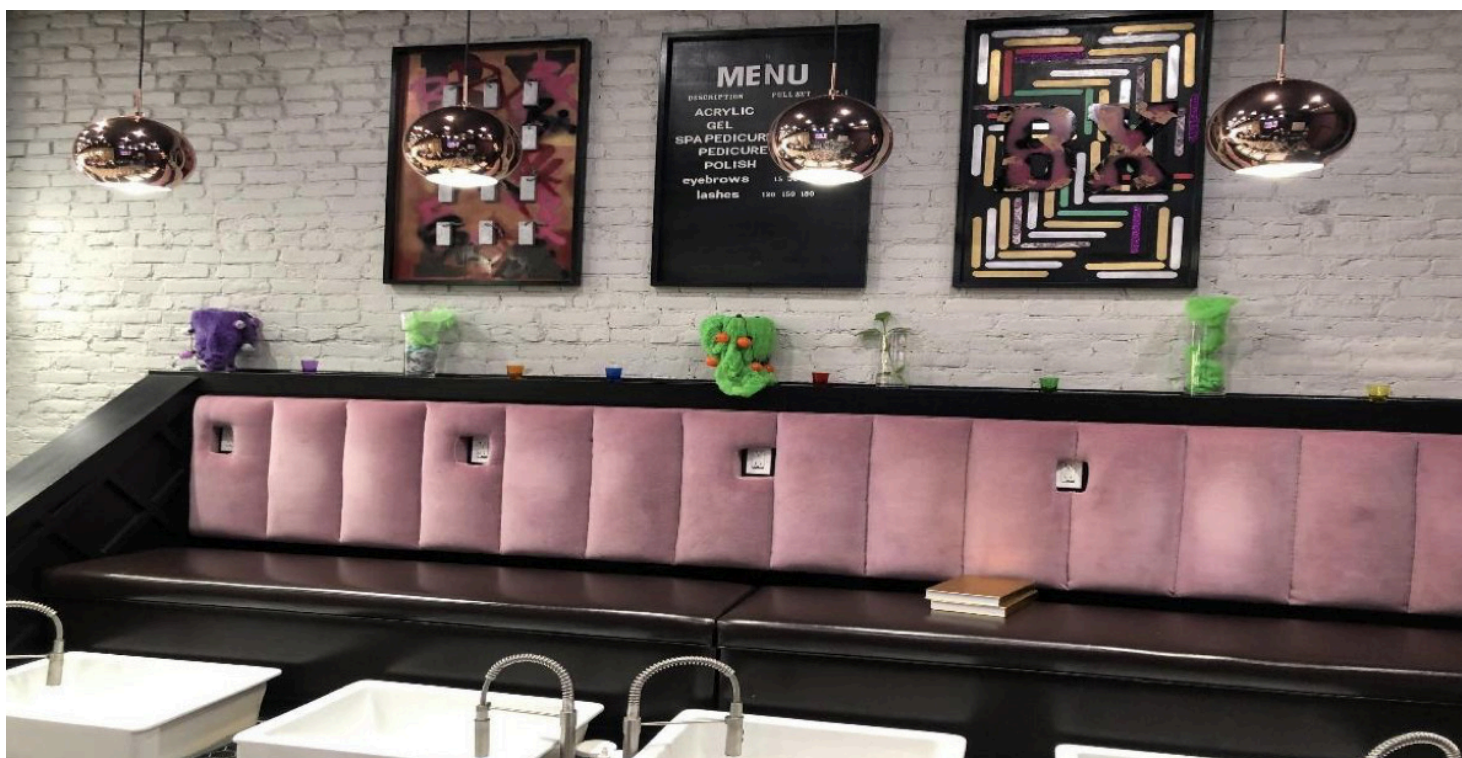
Shanae Casson, a 35-year-old Bronx resident, agreed. "I've been to all nail places in the neighborhood, but most are dirty and the staff is rude. At Nail Drip they always welcome me with a smile, and talk to me while doing my nails instead of rushing me out. I'm always served coffee, wine, juice or water. Their work is great and the prices all wonderful. I would always come here."



**With retro-looking restaurant seats and appearance, nail technicians can interact with their clients like friends having a casual meal.**

**(Photo Credit: Nail Drip NYC)**





**On the wall hangs a services board and artistic frames showcasing the letters BX, representing the Bronx.**

**(Photo Credit: Hector Bello)**



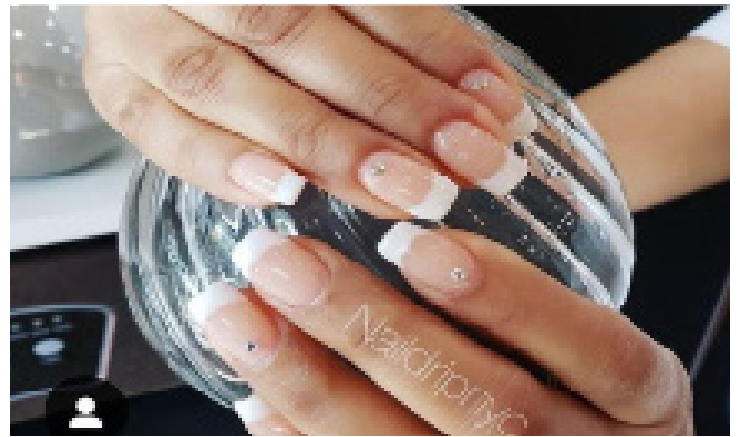
**Front of the store located half a mile from Lehman on 61 East Kingsbridge Road.**

**(Photo Credit: Perla Tolentino)**



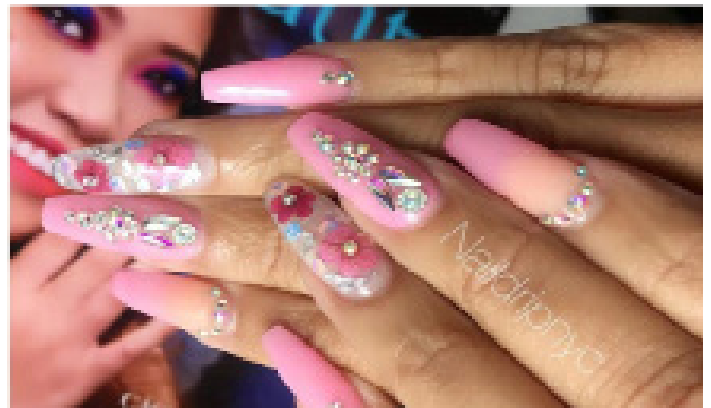
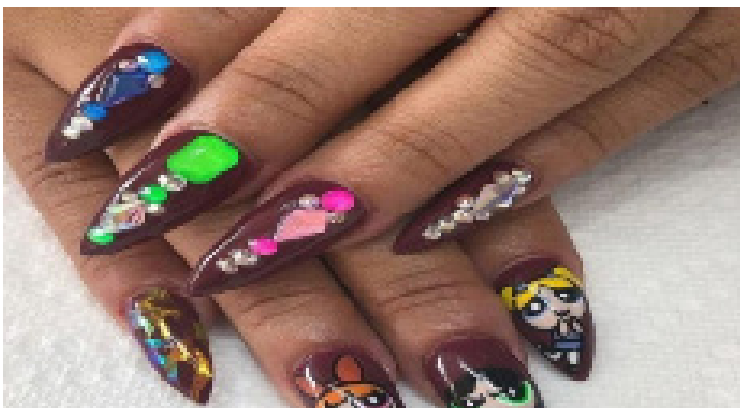
**The high-quality gel used in the spa-pedicure sessions. Employees use special plastic bags to cover the foot-tub and dispose it after every customer, for a more hygienic and safe experience.**

**(Photo Credit: Nail Drip NYC)**



**Left: The gel is available in different colors and scents. Right: Nails painted at Nail Drip NYC.**

**(Photo Credit: Nail Drip NYC)**



**Nail art techniques vary from basic and classic to elaborate and artistic. Technicians try to work with all design requests. Customers have the option of modeling their nails and their photos are shared on social media if they grant permission.**

**(Photo Credit: Nail Drip NYC)**



# NYC Women Break Barriers in Local Business

**By Brittany Aufiero**



**Cupcake Me! strawberry-topped cake**  
(Photo Credit: Britney Moss)

Co-Op City resident and shareholder Britney Moss had dreamed of baking professionally for as long as she could remember. Her dream became a reality on March 2, 2018, when she held a grand opening for Cupcake Me!, a pop-up kiosk stand, to sell her sugary treats. Over a year later, on June 6, she celebrated the grand opening of her very own storefront location in Einstein Mall.

Once a hospitality worker, Moss took a leap of faith and began marketing her cupcakes after one of her cakes received overwhelming praise at her daughter's first birthday party. On her website, she attributes her decision to get back in touch with her love for baking to her southern roots and her great aunt, who lived until the age of 102 and who always pushed her to pursue her passion.

With flavors ranging from standard chocolate and vanilla to orange creamsicle, lemon drop, and Oreo surprise, Moss consistently hits the mark in delivering fresh, delectable cakes and cupcakes. Customers have the option of buying baked goods in-store, or commissioning special orders in advance for pickup or delivery.

“Britney’s cupcakes are an original masterpiece just for your mouth,” said Lehman alumna Rhue Alice Ivy, 22, who graduated with a degree in English and philosophy. “I’ve commissioned her twice now and honestly, I won’t be going anywhere else for my birthday parties and anniversaries. Her prices are fair and her quality is worth it.” Ivy first heard of Cupcake Me! while living in Co-Op City and continues to frequent the cupcake shop even though she no longer lives in the neighborhood.

The shop is one of a rising number of small businesses owned by women. New York state law defines a small independently-owned business as one which employs no more than 100 people. Forty-two percent of businesses nation-



wide are owned by women, more than there have been at any other time in history. However, the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau shows that less than a quarter of these businesses are owned by women of color.

Black-owned small businesses often struggle to compete with larger chain stores, but Moss, a black woman, has seen rare success with Cupcake Me! due to community recognition of and support for her prized recipes. Like Ivy, other long-time fans of Moss' baked treats have become regulars. The business has five stars on Yelp, with positive reviews. Bronx residents are eager to contribute to the growth of a small business owned by a woman of color. One Yelp reviewer, Dan H. says that in addition to the great cupcakes, one of the reasons he keeps returning to Cupcake Me! is because he wants to show his support. Many days, Moss finds herself closing shop early because she's sold everything in stock.

Nathaly Ramos, 22, is a young Dominican American entrepreneur in Uptown Manhattan who has her own dreams of managing a small business. On Sept. 5, she launched Nat NYC, an online shop she uses to sell her personally-designed and packaged fine jewelry.

Like Moss, Ramos attributes the inspiration and drive for her business to the strong women around her. She de-



**Nat NYC faux leather-backed rhinestone Warmth earrings. Photo courtesy of Nathaly Ramos. (Photo Credit: Nathaly Ramos)**

scribes, "At just seven, I would observe my mom as she would sketch out beautiful detailed drawings of apparel alongside with jewelry. The view and the finished product were so intriguing that I was determined to learn how to handcraft."

On average, Ramos receives two to three orders a day. While her most common orders are the core pieces available on the website, she also takes special orders and works with clients to meet their specific needs. Each and every order comes with a satin pouch and acrylic box that is laser monogrammed by hand, then gift-wrapped.

Building Nat NYC from the ground up has been no small feat. In addition to juggling the demands of a fast-growing business and working a part-time job, Ramos is continuing her studies as a first-generation col-

lege student: "I've been quite lucky with amazing marketing and business professors who continue to root for me," she said.

In the future, Ramos hopes to transition from taking orders through her website to owning a chic storefront boutique.

From cupcakes to earrings, women of color throughout the city seem ready and willing to take the business world by storm. Cupcake Me!'s website captures the spirit of New York City's small businesses on its Meet the Baker page, where Moss describes herself in the simplest of terms: "Britney - baker, cake artist, mother, wife, daughter and CEO." Ramos and Moss are prime examples of how small businesses can continue to expand and gain recognition through community support.

# “The Addams Family” Makes a Fun and Spooky Return to Theaters

By Nelson Fernandez



## “The Addams Family”

(Photo Credit: Universal Pictures)

They’re creepy and they’re kooky, and they’re back on the big screen. More than two decades since its last appearance in 1998, the new “Addams Family” film was released on Oct. 11 that features the scary-yet-lovable gang, rendered in 3D computer animation. The animators at MGM Studios did a splendid job recreating the famous fictional family using modern animation tools, and the transitions from dark and gritty scenes to bright

and colorful settings capture the comical tone of the characters as well as the film’s story.

Directed by Conrad Vernon, known for the film series “Shrek” (2001-2010), and Gregory Tiernan, whose 2016 debut was “Sausage Party,” “The Addams Family” grossed \$59.6 million in just one week. It has come a long way from its humble beginnings. Originally a comic created by cartoonist Charles Addams in 1938, it was

later adapted into a black-and-white sitcom that lasted four seasons from 1964 to 1966. The humorously dark family had been a nostalgic childhood memory before the announcement that a computer-animated reboot was in the works.

This history means that most of the audience who grew up with the live-action films and shows were displeased with the CG character style, as they ignore current designs resembling Charles Addams’



### **Morticia and Gomez in “The Addams Family”**

(Photo Credit: Universal Pictures)

original vision for the family back in the 1930s. While it is understandable for older fans to criticize the animation based on previous adaptations, the comic reboot turned out surprisingly well.

The screenplay, written by Matt Lieberman and Pamela Pettler, tells a simple story about the family’s desire to be their creepy selves in peace. As seen in the film’s opening sequence, Gomez, voiced by Oscar Isaac and Morticia, by Charlize Theron, are attacked by pitchfork-wielding villagers during their wedding, simply for being perceived as too scary. In search of a new life, the newlyweds drive off to live in an old haunted asylum they love. Soon after, audiences are introduced to new additions to the family: the lovable and violent children. Their daughter

Wednesday is played by Chloe Grace Moretz, and son Pugsley, by Finn Wolfhard. The rest of the film makes the topic of character differences throughout the narrative, showing how people can be brought together, as opposed to torn apart.

At one point, the Addams’ prepare for “Mazurka,” a coming-of-age ceremony for young men in the family, whose traditions include performing a dance with a sword passed down to each male member in recognition of their ascension to manhood. However, Pugsley prefers explosive artillery over swords and struggles to express his true self during his turn.

Wednesday, on the other hand, finds conflict when she meets Parker (Elsie Fisher), a classmate who prompts her to begin attending junior high

school. While spending time together, the new friends switch clothing styles; Wednesday decides to wear pink and a unicorn hairpin while Parker shaves her hair and dons all black, “going goth.”

Furious at her daughter’s transformation, Parker’s mother Margaux Needler, voiced by Allison Janney, commits herself to make the Addams family’s home brighter, more colorful, and “normal.”

“The Addams Family” (2019) may have a simple story to tell, but it teaches the moral of dealing with and accepting differences in people and their cultures, which is always an important topic to discuss. This dark comedy is entertaining, and any family would enjoy watching it together.



# “Joker” Gives a Chilling Portrayal of Mental Illness

By Keisha Paul



**Joaquin Phoenix in “Joker”**  
(Photo Credit: Warner Bros. )

A gripping psychological thriller, “Joker” is a must-see for the uninitiated, as much as for DC fans who will appreciate the effort put into the eccentric portrayal of the Joker as a known villain in the DC universe. Other fans may find the portrayal of psychological imbalance intriguing, and possibly relatable.

The film was produced by Warner Bros. Pictures, DC Films, and Joint Effort. It was written by Todd Phillips, known for “Old School” and “The Hangover,” and Scott Silver, known for “8 Mile” and “The Fighter.” The iconic movie is on track to be-

come one of the most profitable superhero movies in history, according to Variety. It surpassed gross estimates of approximately \$90 million during its opening weekend in North America on Oct. 4, later becoming the seventh highest-grossing film of 2019 with a total of \$849.1 million recorded worldwide.

Through the main character, Arthur Fleck, it explores the circumstances and living conditions of the Joker who would someday become Batman’s most well-known nemesis. Set in Gotham City in 1981, the film grants audiences a glimpse

into how traumatic life events can cause and worsen mental illness. A failed stand-up comedian, Fleck lives with his aged mother in poverty in a high-crime area. He also suffers from an uncontrollable nervous system disorder that causes him to laugh during inappropriate situations. Despite his troubles, he continues to write jokes, take care of his mother and see a therapist to try to overcome his issues.

However, multiple incidents make him bitter and angry, bringing him to his breaking point. At the beginning of

the movie, he is attacked by a group of kids while advertising for an entertainment company. The kids steal his sign and beat him with it. When his boss scolds him for not returning the sign and abandoning his shift, he tries to explain what happened but to no avail. His boss demands that he either gives the sign back or pay for it out of his paycheck.

On his way home, Fleck witnesses three guys harassing a woman on the train. He tries to ignore it, but due to his disorder, he laughs uncontrollably. Subsequently, the men turn their attention towards him and beat him violently. In what is considered the key

turning point of the film, Fleck commits his first offense and feels liberated because of it.

Fleck's transformation is a thrilling experience to watch as his suppressed feelings of wanting to retaliate towards his offenders are finally released. In this eerie scene, the music and Fleck's dancing show the dark path Fleck has descended upon.

Understanding the Joker and his motives is difficult when there are no known reasons for his behavior. The film gives us the background story that we've all been missing, and seeing it in the theater makes the experience more exciting with the amplified sound system.

Throughout the plot, the music paired with the Joker's unique dance routine plays a key role in the tone of the movie.

What stands out the most is the effort put into Fleck's physical appearance. He was really skinny, which shows that not only was he physically deprived because of his poor economic status, but he was also emotionally deprived of healthy relationships throughout his life. Arthur's mental disorder, and reliance on social services and medication are issues that many impoverished people face today. Overall, the movie is worth seeing as viewers finally understand how Arthur Fleck becomes the Joker.



**Joaquin Phoenix in "Joker," on stairs located in West 167th Street in the Bronx**  
(Photo Credit: Warner Bros. )

# Bronx Female Celebs Shine in Feminist “Goodfellas”

**By Sally Barrilla**



**“Hustlers” Movie Poster**

(Photo Credit: STX Entertainment)

Audiences flooded theaters to see stars Constance Wu, Keke Palmer, and well-known Bronxites Cardi B and Jennifer Lopez in “Hustlers.” The film tells the story of Ramona (Jennifer Lopez), Diamond (Cardi B), and Destiny (Constance Wu), who desire success despite being extremely poor women of color.

Though there’s a heavy stigma surrounding stripping, “Hustlers” excels at humanizing its characters and shows stripping as a good way of earning money, especially for a diverse group of responsible and driven women of color. It

rapidly became a hit, earning \$121 million dollars at box offices worldwide as of Oct. 11.

This plot reverses the trope of the usual male cast, portraying a bunch of workers-turned-criminals. Instead, director Lorena Scafaria’s all-female cast emphasizes that women are as capable as men.

Their rise starts amidst the 2008 recession when they decide to work together to take their money-making struggles to the next level. These women’s decision to include rich white men in their scheme to earn some extra cash through

the use of drugs classifies them as modern-day “Goodfellas.”

In one powerful scene, Ramona explains to Destiny her motive behind secretly drug-ging wealthy men and robbing them. Her views on how the world run includes that the poor are constantly oppressed. With a glare in her eyes, she tries to justify her actions to Destiny.

She argues that the poor end up losing more money than they gain, whereas most Wall Street employees take home more of the bacon. Attempting to prove that even in a capitalist society, money is the key



factor that makes the world go round, Ramona tells Destiny that it is their time to shine with more money in their pockets.

Although Destiny is hesitant to participate in the scheme, she remembers her grandmother and young child, Lily, at home. Her house is about to be foreclosed on, due to lack of payments, which will leave her grandmother on the street. Since she cannot afford proper childcare for Lily, and does not have a college degree, Destiny has difficulty getting a job. As she clearly narrates her struggles, Destiny's desperation along with Ramona's words justify taking any necessary action to make some money.

Though Diamond, played by Cardi B, does not get much time on the big screen, she takes on a role as a caring, confident, and funny compan-

ion from the Bronx who also teaches Destiny how to work the pole and make clients come back for more. As a result of her colorful vocabulary, Diamond

**"The way those women helped each other is how women, in general, should be building each other up and helping one another."**

**—Davidia Boykins,  
senior English major**

comes off as a rude person trying to make money, but the more of Diamond audiences see, the more hilarious she becomes. Her character doesn't hinder other girls from making money nor from showcasing their skills; rather is she a fun-loving

girl who is willing to cash in a few bucks any way she can.

Cardi B and Jennifer Lopez's roles in the film symbolize how ordinary individuals can rise above their circumstances to make something of themselves, and Lehman students overwhelmingly supported their resilience.

"I wanted to see the movie since the first time it was announced, and honestly, I think it shows strong women who were trying to make it the best way they could," said 25-year-old senior English major, Davidia Boykins. "Yes, stripping is frowned upon, but some of the women in that movie have kids, so they're just trying to provide for their kids. The way those women helped each other is how women, in general, should be building each other up and helping one another."



**Constance Wu and Jennifer Lopez in "Hustlers"**  
(Photo Credit: STX Entertainment)

# “The Testaments” Proves Margaret Atwood Still Has What it Takes to Enthrall Readers

By **Kadija Doumbia**



## “The Testaments”

(Photo Credit: Penguin Books)

While Margaret Atwood’s “The Handmaid’s Tale” remains successful both in bookstores and on screen, its sequel, “The Testaments,” also continues to gain mass critical acclaim, selling over 120,000 copies since its release two months ago. Fans of dystopias and realistic horror novels, or even casual readers will likely find this book a worthwhile read, and those who waited anxiously with high expectations of the book will not be disappointed.

In both “The Handmaid’s Tale” and “The Testaments,” handmaids and other women are second-class citizens in the Republic of Gilead, expected to bear children for the infertile wives of powerful men, in a world ravaged by toxic wastes from nuclear fallout.

Conventional styles suggest reading “The Handmaid’s Tale” first works best, but reading “The Testaments” as a stand-alone novel promises fun as well. The sequel con-

veys the hopelessness its protagonist Offred feels about her new world and carries a more positive tone, focusing on the promising future Agnes and Daisy represent.

“The Testaments” continues from the ending scene of “The Handmaid’s Tale,” where Offred escaped Gilead with Nick alongside a group of men posing as “The Eyes,” the states’ secret police. The plot picks up 15 years after and follows the story of two

half-sisters named Daisy and Agnes who were raised in completely different worlds. Atwood gives the sisters an agency that Offred did not have as a Handmaid; their personalities and environment gives life to the story and reveals the characters' differing attitudes and actions. While Daisy grew up in Canada with her adoptive parents among women who benefit from human rights and privileges, such as reproductive freedom, Agnes knows no liberty living in Gilead, the same society as her birth mother.

One of the most surprising moments of the book takes place in chapter three, where readers are given an inside glimpse into the life of the mysterious Aunt Lydia.

Throughout the series, Aunt Lydia, who is responsible for disciplining and training the handmaids on childbearing duties, served as a source of terror more than an instructive figure. Her character exists to prove that women, too, are complicit in their own oppression within Gilead.

In "The Testaments," she describes herself, "I'm a bugaboo used by the Marthas to frighten small children - if you don't behave yourself Aunt Lydia will come and get you! I'm also a model of moral perfection to be emulated."

Aunt Lydia is one of the most powerful women in her society, and seeing the world through her image within the novel is a fascinating experience. Her legendary status

is addressed when a statue is erected in her honor, which both terrifies and flatters her.

At almost 80 years old, Margaret Atwood has demonstrated through "The Testaments" that she still has what it takes to turn fictional accounts into hot topics of the 2010s. Indeed, Atwood won her second \$50,000 British pound Booker Prize for Fiction in London on Oct. 14 this year, sharing the award with Bernardine Evaristo, who released her novel "Girl, Woman, Other."

With her latest fantasy of a dystopian world with a realistic twist on our present-day world, it's no wonder the book has gained such traction in such a short time. "The Testaments" is an emotional rollercoaster readers won't want to miss.



**Margaret Atwood**  
(Photo Credit: Wikipedia)

# Latin American Art Triennial Shows How Bonds Transgress Borders

**By Brittany Aufiero**

The Lehman Art Gallery premiered “Progressive Transition,” a new art show that raises awareness about geographical and emotional transitions Hispanics and Latin Americans have experienced worldwide, recognizing their contributions to the history, heritage and culture of the U.S.

The exhibition brings together art by 21 artists from eight different Latin American countries, and was organized by the Bronx Hispanic Festival, Inc. as a part of New York’s Latin American Art Triennial, a series of exhibits that will be showcased in 10 galleries across New York City, including BronxArt Space, Queens College Art Center and Boricua College Art Gallery.

Each unique piece is representative of a different Latin American artist, all with their own perspectives on the transitions they and those they care about have faced. Vividly colorful, the pieces appear to come alive as one makes their way deeper through the gallery.

Gracing the entrance is “Roots and Rises,” an installation by Dominican Republic-born artist Iliana Emilia Garcia. Traditional wood-and-wicker chairs from the Caribbean wrap elegantly around the base of the gallery’s iconic rotunda, suspended from the ceiling and interconnected by thin wire. The display is a vision of history and transcendence that acknowledges ordinary ob-

jects as powerful symbols of a shared human experience.

The use of chairs, common tools of physical support, also suggest networks of emotional support between individuals that can be crucial to anyone undergoing a major transition. “Roots and Rises” perfectly captures the sense of how, through the sacrifices of those who came before us, we can rise to even greater heights, just as the chairs rise up to the ceiling.

Garcia has also used chairs in her earlier work, such as in her installation “The Sage and the Dreamer,” featured in the 2018 exhibition “Bordering the Imaginary: Art from the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Their Diasporas,” curated by



**An oil painting on canvas by Martin Riwnyj of Argentina, entitled “EXODO.”**

(Photo Credit: Brittany Aufiero)





**Iliana Emilia Garcia's site-specific installation, "Roots and Rises." The work wraps elegantly around the center rotunda of Lehman's Art Gallery, greeting visitors at the door.**

(Photo Credit: Brittany Aufiero)

Abigail Lapin Darshati. Like "Roots and Rises," it was site-specific and depicted chairs as a treasured cultural heirloom and source of commonality.

In another room, the wall installation "Borders" by Ezekiel Taveras makes a powerful statement about the complex relationship between Dominican Republic and Haiti. Despite sharing the former Hispaniola island, the countries have vastly different beliefs and cultures, which often clash. Taveras' piece utilizes rope held in place by pegs to signify the contrasting worlds of the two countries, which are divided by a black painted gash. Even as they remain sepa-

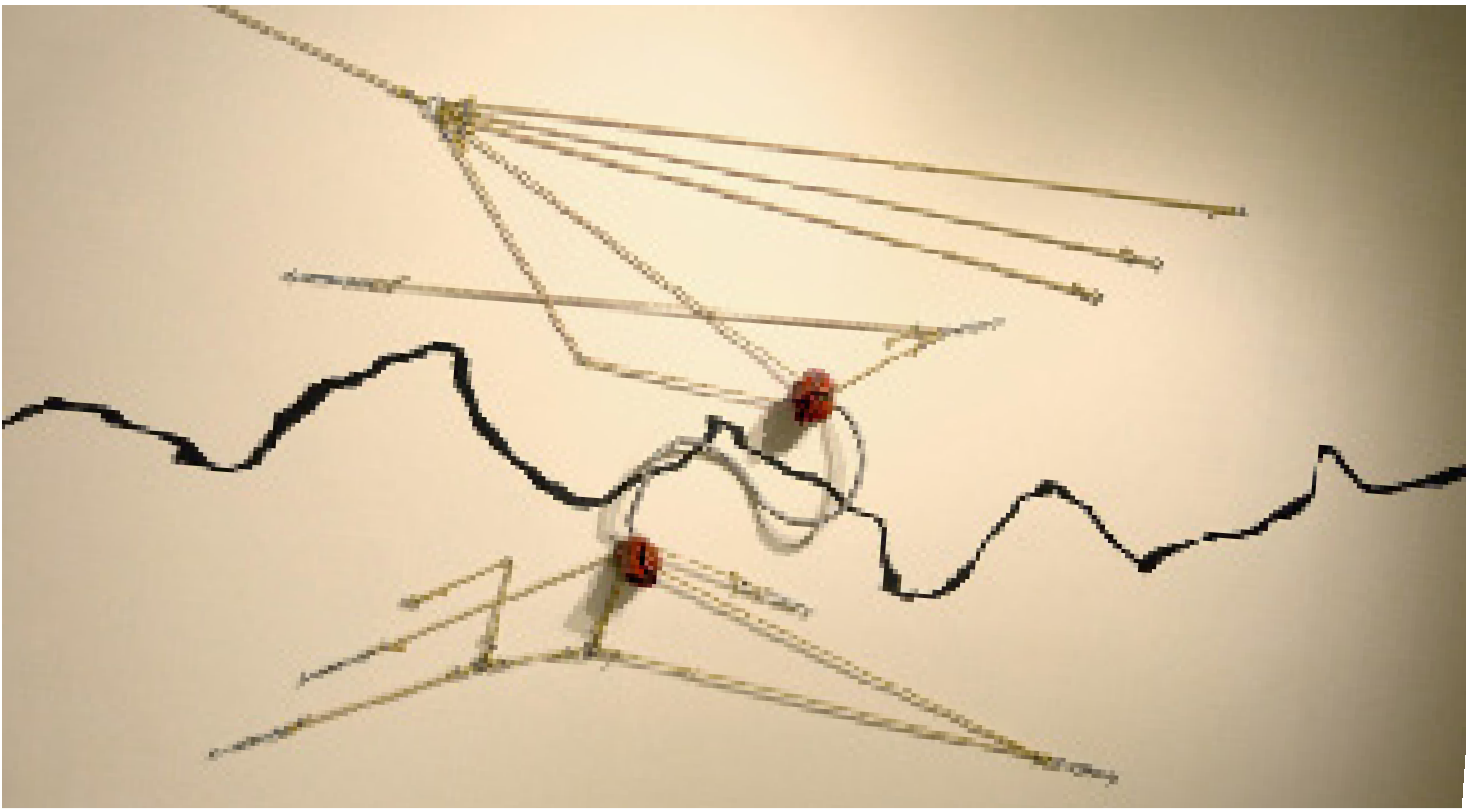
rate, Taveras connects them through a metal, umbilical cord-like link between the hearts of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. "Borders" is a moving installation that conveys how the strength of heart that underlies the people's convictions in both countries is ultimately a unifying force.

The gallery's curatorial assistant, Laura J.A. De Riggi, served as the project's venue coordinator, working closely with Director Luis Stephenberg and Chief Curator Alexis Mendoza to curate the featured installations in Lehman's unique art space.

De Riggi emphasized the fact that the artists' countries of origin are explicitly printed be-

side their names on the wall plaques describing their pieces. "Immigrants who leave their homes and settle elsewhere experience a great shift in their lives, not unlike the shift freshman students experience when they make the transition from high school to college. It's important for these students, especially, to see their heritage represented when they walk through the gallery," she said.

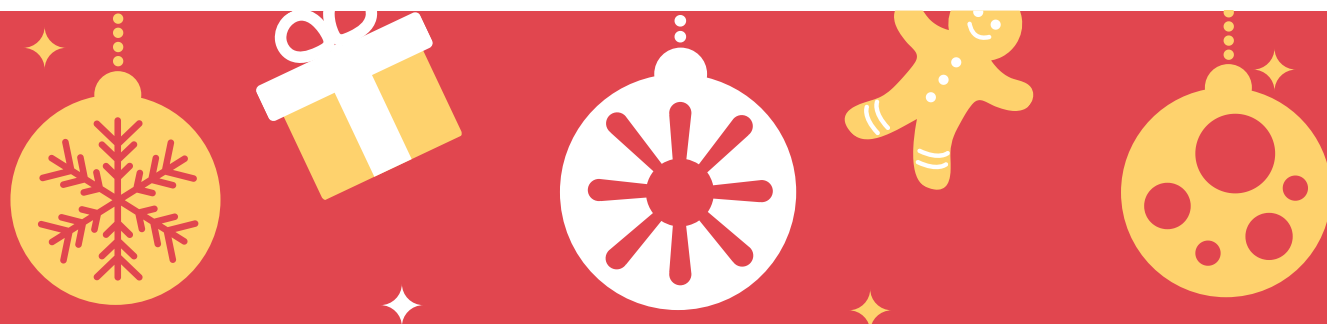
Open to the public until Jan. 25, 2020, "Progressive Transition" is an engaging portrayal of Latin American life and cultural significance. The powerful art it showcases testifies how influential an individual's origin can be to their future growth.



**An installation by Ezekiel Taveras of the Dominican Republic, entitled "Borders."**  
(Photo Credit: Brittany Aufiero)



**An oil on canvas painting by artist Jorge Posada, entitled "The Run."**  
(Photo Credit: Brittany Aufiero)



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