Nurturing Numbers

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Nurturing Numbers

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts of Bard College

by
Maya Miggins

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2023
Dedication

With love, this project is dedicated to Rodolfo Sanchez, my Tata. He was a teacher for 30 years in Williams, Arizona, “a big kid at heart”, and always “tried to create an atmosphere of stability” for the many kids he worked with in and outside of the classroom. This project was influenced by the work and dedication he had for the Spanish speaking families and their kids he helped in translating and teaching English too. He was the main reason I wanted to create rest and artistic support as a resource for students of color who are leaders at this institution.

Rodolfo Sanchez
January 12th 1943 - December 25th 2021
Acknowledgements

To the students I worked with over the semester. I thank you for the warm conversations and time we spent together.

To my beloved family, my friends, my teachers, and my heart that have gotten me through these past couple of years and given me support in any form. I thank you.

To those who financially supported me in continuing my education here at Bard College throughout my four years here. I thank you.

To those who supported my family in every form during one of the hardest years we ever experienced. I thank you.

With love and immense gratitude.
Artist Statement

How do we tend to community, as a gardener tends to a garden? A garden is meant to sustain, to feed, to support. Nurturing Numbers, calls to focus the continuous need for active care within predominantly white institutions towards students of color. Within these institutions, students of color work tirelessly to build resources from scratch for the student body. Nurturing Numbers was created as a communal space of healing and rest for students of color that live within the Bard Community. Through a series of expressive arts workshops that I developed over the Fall semester, Connecting Roots, Mending Space, and Networking Breathwork, were a collection of workshops facilitated throughout the Spring Semester. Providing rest as a resource and accessible art for Students of Color across Bard’s campus who work tirelessly to continue creating safe communities here at this institution. The titles are reflective of the questions and meditations raised within each workshop amongst the students. Nurturing and providing restful and artistic spaces not only to students of color but the entire student body. Providing access to art and communal gathering as a form of collective and personal healing for the community as a whole.

All the art, rest, and communal reflection is archived within the Garden. The canvases and conversations shared during:

*Connected Roots* - As a group, students practiced breathwork and movement-based exercises to ground themselves in the space and build trust in the group as they worked throughout the workshop. After the movement-based portion students worked together on large pieces of seed paper canvas with a variety of plant-based materials following expressive arts prompting. The seed paper canvases, embedded with lavender and chamomile seeds are physically planted within the bowls handmade by the students. Using the time to slow down, write and reflect on the concept of our roots and how we bring ourselves into our communities, formed in temporary spaces. The bowls in the garden are temporary vessels, made with care, holding chamomile and lavender seeds, with the intention to grow and foster rest over time.

*Mending Space* - “We meld and bend into the individuals who stand today, shattered, retouched, and fired again, standing tall mended with care”. As a group, students worked with their hands, working with clay collected from Bard Farm. Molding the clay into ceramic bowls and pots together. Attempting to mend comfort, restoration, and support through our interactions that seem to push our bodies to capacities we weren’t meant to push. Taking the time to slow down, and work with the clay from the soil, processing rock after rock to create a starting point. A foundation from scratch. Following the ceramics workshop, students ended with a color meditation. This meditation is a form of breathwork and visioning practice, where every exhale fills the room with the color of focus.
Networking Breathwork - What food reminds you of comfort or home? What memories pop up for you? What meals do you love to share with loved ones? Together as a group, students shared dishes that brought us comfort growing up and their recipes. On Bard’s campus it can be difficult to obtain ingredients to make our authentic comfort meals from home. For students who couldn’t bring the food that they love, they brought food that brings them comfort now to share. During the potluck students came together to reflect and share what rest means to them and reflect on the semester as well as their time here at Bard. After the potluck, students came full circle, coming back to the canvases they worked on together when they were first getting to know one another. Planting their seeds and conversations at the garden together.

All in all, this workshop series was built to be a reprieve from the student and work life stress and further connect as a community. Throughout the viewing of the Garden installation, I hope to do the same for anyone who visits the garden. A garden that is built to host community, conversation, and connection. In the garden journal box, place your photos, your recipes, your thoughts on what community, rest and support mean to you inside. Building a collective archive of what community means, within the garden.
NURTURING NUMBERS

On View / May 13th-20th
Opening Reception / May 13th 5-8PM
Reception Potluck / What meal brought you comfort growing up? Bring to share...

Location / Community Garden
Bard College
Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12512

Maya Mignon Senior Thesis Installation