



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mural Unveiling in Bedford-Stuyvesant

In Anti-Catcalling Mural, Young Women Declare:

“I Object to Objectification”

Mural Dedication: Friday, August 28 at 10 am
1102 Myrtle Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11206

BEDFORD-STUYVESANT, NY – This summer, on the side of a Food Bazaar Supermarket in Bedford-Stuyvesant, a team of young women artists created a mural advocating against catcalling with the mural-making nonprofit, Groundswell. They worked as part of the young women’s leadership development program, Voices Her’d, in the two-month long flagship summer youth employment program, the Summer Leadership Institute. The mural, “Respect Is The Strongest Compliment,” will be unveiled at a dedication Friday, August 28 at 10 am.

Brought to national attention with groups such as HollaBack! and Stop Street Harassment, street harassment affects the feeling of safety many women feel on the street. “The majority of women have been catcalled while walking the streets of NYC,” explained youth artist Eona John about the importance of the mural. “Women are harassed to the point of fear being imprinted in their skin. I feel as though the mural made the fear and annoyance of the women of NYC come to life.”

In lessons facilitated by Lead Artist Danielle McDonald and Assistant Artist Jazmine Hayes, the young women researched and referenced concepts from feminist activist graphic art, from political posters to more contemporary works by artists such as the Guerrilla Girls, Jenny Holzer, Ellen Gallagher, and Maria Atcha-Kutcher. The team also referenced Ms. Marvel and Priya Shakit comics to help build a graphic and imaginative narrative.

“Respect Is The Strongest Compliment” uses a comic book style to show a narrative of change. On the left, a group of men depicted as zombies stumble across the mural as they catcall women, who are wary of the men. At the center, a classical statue inspired by art historical styles rejects the catcalling. To the right of the figure, women stand powerful with a series of anti-calling declarations, such as “I Object to Objectification” and “Stop.” A “To Be Continued” bubble acknowledges that the mural is just a part in the ending of street harassment, and more work must be done to change the culture that perpetuates gender-based violence.

“We want to be seen less as objects,” Lead Artist Danielle McDonald said about the mural, “and more as humans who deserve at the very least, basic dignity to walk the streets safely.”

“The Voices Her’d team addressed an issue that deeply affects community safety for all women with their mural,” said Groundswell Interim Executive Director Rob Krulak. “By creating truthful

representations of violence experienced by women, they use art as a tool for inspiration and agency, act as change agents for violence prevention, and make their voices heard.”

The team included a declaration “directed to anyone who has cat called someone or thinks cat calling is acceptable.” They remind viewers that in the case of cat-calling, “People should walk through the streets safely and with respect, and should not be violated with abusive and harassing language. Commenting on someone’s body or threatening them is not a compliment. It’s harassment.”

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SLI is made possible in part by public funds administered by the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York City Department of Youth and Community Development Summer Youth Employment Program, the Brooklyn Delegation of the New York City Council, New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, New York City Council Member Brad Lander, and New York City Council Member Stephen Levin.

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About Groundswell

Groundswell, New York City’s leading organization dedicated to community public art, brings together youth, artists, and community partners, to make public art that advances social change, for a more just and equitable world. Our projects beautify neighborhoods, engage youth in societal and personal transformation, and give expression to ideas and perspectives that are underrepresented in the public dialogue. www.groundswell.nyc

About Food Bazaar Supermarket

Bogopa Service Corp. is a privately owned company that operates 18 full-service supermarkets in the Tri-State metropolitan area (NY, NJ, CT) under the name "Food Bazaar." For more than 25 years it has been providing its communities with the flavors they love and recall from 'back home,' exotic and unique foods as well as basic essentials. It devotes aisles of space to international grocery and dairy/frozen items as well as a full-service fish market, a huge selection of local and international produce, a full service deli, bakery and custom butcher. With thousands of products waiting to be explored, Food Bazaar always provides a true culinary adventure. For more information visit the Food Bazaar website at <http://www.MyFoodBazaar.com>.