

FALL 2011

COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND

What a great workshop at the College of Staten Island! I was so excited to dust off my mask, get back on the road and teach some theatre.

The ride on the SI ferry was beautiful and as my first time on Staten Island I was amazed at how big it was!

The students were a mix of performers and "non performers," but by the end of the workshop you couldn't tell which was which. You could tell there were students more hesitant about learning improv from Gorillas, but we showed them how to get nice and loose.

We started with some warm ups to get them out of their self consciousness, playing my favorite game, "YES!" In this game, one person does a big physical movement with a sound and then everyone shouts "YES!" and repeats it. The students had great fun pushing their own boundaries. And "YES" is such a great word.

We moved on to creating their own devised pieces made up of a few elements: a choreographed dance, a strong entrance and exit, and a short scene with defined characters. It was incredible to see the once hesitant students suddenly leading their group when it came time to use their creativity.

The pieces were all excellent, bursting with life. Everyone had an amazing time performing and working as a team to create something original. Some pieces had themes of strength (even letting out their own "GRR!" which I can't help but think was inspired by the Guerrilla Girls On Tour) and playfulness. Some even used Michael Jackson for inspiration. But the one thing that defined all of the performances was that you could see the growth and confidence in each of the performers and how well they had used their creativity to have fun as an artist.

Until we meet again on the Staten Island Ferry or elsewhere,
Yours,
Audrey Hepburn

Dear Book,

Just back from The College of Staten Island - the college with the best theater stats we have ever seen in a college! This year the students are putting on two plays, both written by women. They also have a course that focuses on women in theater and an awesome women's center. Located in the former Willowbrook State School, (a state-supported mental hospital), the College of Staten Island, has a beautiful and expansive campus. The

stairway that led from the theater to our dressing room though was outfitted with a hefty barred door - that reminded us of the building's history.

Our tech crew was stellar - we totally wanted to guerrilla-*nap* our baboon boy and all-around-tech-rock-star, Dan. And the student volunteer actor, Amy, was quick, witty, and nailed every line. I wish we could have stayed longer and gotten to know more people. Personally I think Staten Island could be a perfect 'natural habitat' for a band of Guerrilla Girls [when we're not] on Tour.

Hope to see you on the road!

Xxxx,
Eva La Gallienne

Hey Diary,

I went to Staten Island and all I brought you back was this diary entry! Ha Ha!

If you're free this week I suggest you go. The ferry ride is lovely and the leaves are peaking. Peaking orange and yellow and red that is!

What do they say? Hindsight is 20/20. If I had hindsight my day planner would have looked like this:

Wednesday the 9th:

1:30 (ish) - Debar~~k~~ ferry. Meet up with Ellen after slight confusion. Basically very few people are picked up from the ferry so there was not a clear place to do this. Breaking rules all ready.

1:30 - 2:00- Take a beautiful ride through Staten Island to the College. Enjoy the harbor and the fall foliage.

2:00 - 4:00 - Meet incredible crew and do wicked fast and professional tech.

4:00 - 5:00 - Play in hallways. Record videos.

5:00 - 6:00 - Finish tech with incredible student volunteer who took the name Frieda Kahlo.

6:00 - 7:00 - Eat. More play in hallways. Warm-ups.

7:00 - 9:00 Do show and Q and A to warm and attentive audience who after slight hesitation about hugging a feminist will jump in and participate. Hear from audience member women do not just need to vote women also need to run for political office on all levels. Receive news during show after an incredible version of 'Lesbian, Vagina, Feminist' the song moves up on the Netherland pop charts to #11. Raise your voices and you can affect change.

Thursday the 10th:

1:30 - 3:30 - Do a workshop. Come to conclusions. In many workshops you see people who are eager to jump in and you also see people who begin with their arms crossed, or their eyes down. They are nervous and uncertain. Then you start working and they hopefully open up to the experience. In this particular workshop everyone opened up. It was a big beautiful class full of expression. I could only come to the conclusion that in their lives these students know trust, stability, guidance, support, generosity. They know it in at least one area of their lives - home, school, friends, relationships - and probably more. I think that's why this workshop opened up so much and everyone glowed. Those who had that trust from the beginning kept it, those who didn't found it, and they all offered it to each other. If I could, I would send this workshop out as my holiday card for all to be inspired by in the New Year.

Monkey Love,
Edith Evans

ROLLINS COLLEGE October 2011

It's been nearly 2 weeks since I returned to the Guerrilla Girls on Tour headquarters from Rollins College... and I have finally recovered from the high of feminism-gone-wild, otherwise known to as the Veteran Feminists of America celebration. I'll spoil the ending by saying that our last night there, the night of our performance, we opened our dressing room door and there stood Gloria Steinem – larger than life and by that time a familiar presence to us, Ms. Steinem floated into the room and apologized for interrupting our warm-up – she needed a place to wait for her ride to the airport. At every meeting Gloria – as she insisted everyone call her - was incredibly gracious, engaged, and well, down right awesome. We all flew high during the show - truly a performance of a life-time, blessed by the goddess herself.

Now back to the beginning. We left New York on a warm late-October morning and landed in Orlando FL amongst a sea of families headed to Disney World. After a short drive to Winter Park, we met up with Gail, of the Winter Park Institute, and settled into our home-away-from-home, a condo tucked away on a 'quiet' street, right next to the train tracks - more on that in a bit.

It had been a while since I was in the south and the Spanish moss and technicolor palms calmed my senses immediately. We had a fun and energetic theater workshop with the students our third day there. They were open and ready to try anything - movement, vocalizing, games, and tons of improvisation followed. Then, on to a poster-making workshop the following day - talk about a group that needed nearly no guidance. They gathered, shared ideas, broke into groups, and collaborated through 3, sometimes 4, drafts of their ideas, refining their message into ready-to-go campaigns.

We participated in a panel discussion on sexual violence and gender equality the next evening of our residency. This was interesting and highlighted several things. First, the need to have a more clearly defined topic. This was perhaps too broad. Second, know your audience. I have seen this a lot - a women's center brings in speakers who are prepared to talk to uninformed students, but the audience is full of advocates looking for more information. And so the group feels talked down to but people don't really know how to say 'OK - let's get to the level 2 or 3 version of this talk.' Third, a major sticking point in 'rape education' still seemed to be the presumed 'yes' and so girls need (apparently) to learn to use the 'hard no'. Which, while frustrating is also a policy issue, as some campuses have rules that promote consensual - must hear a 'yes' - sex and this campus has no such policy.

Finally we are back to the show - and what a show it was! Nearly 30 minutes longer than usual because so many people were happily sharing, participating, chanting with us, hugging us, and willing to share their own stories, up-coming events, experiences, hot flashes :), and voices.

Signing off for now...
Eva

Hello Again! Back on the road to Winter Park Florida!

MONDAY

We acclimated. This means we went to Winter Park Whole Foods. It was amazing. Huge. Wide aisles. And NO LINES. I tried to explain to the woman at the register in NYC you have to set aside at least 10 minutes to get through the line and you get in one of four lines that feed into the registers. She did not understand that. I explained again. She smiled but I knew that really meant she still didn't understand me and was being polite. Also, you may think Guerilla Girls on Tour favorite food would be bananas, but actually we all had dried organic apricots in our baskets.

TUESDAY

I took a walk through Mead Gardens. It's a nice small park with a sign warning you about the possibility of alligators in the water. I did not see any alligators. There was no sign warning you about the mosquitoes who had a blast chewing me to inflamed pieces. I was very itchy for the rest of the trip. Also, my fourth finger on my right hand swelled so much at the joint from a bite I couldn't move it til Sunday. Needless to say this fascinated me and I stared at it whenever I had a free moment.

We also had a rehearsal. I was very giggly.

WEDNESDAY

Workshop Wednesday. Today's workshop was for the theater students. It's so hard to get

out of your head. One of the hardest things a performer has to accomplish. How do you think and not think at the same time. It's almost like trying to walk and run at the same time.

Most favorite comment from the Q and A: I didn't realize activist theater companies still existed. (That's not a word for word quote but you get the point. We need to be LOUDER AND MORE VISIBLE).

THURSDAY

Thought Provoking Thursday. Today's workshop was in making posters. An extra plus: The posters will actually be shown in a campus gallery.

We also had rehearsal. I do not think I was as giggly (which is a good thing, although I inspected my swollen finger at least 97 times).

FRIDAY

We did something in the afternoon that I cannot remember. Was it rehearsal? Yes. We had tech rehearsal. What a beautiful concert hall. To be honest, we got off to a rocky start. However once all the pieces came together it went very smoothly. Left very happy. Right happy as well.

In the evening before the panel discussion Gloria Steinem stopped by to say hello. Can you see me still smiling?

We also got to hear her speak. Can you see me still smiling?

Can you see me still smiling?

SATURDAY

The day of many things.

Met Gloria Steinem again and Patricia Schroeder. Still Glowing. Beat that Canyon Ranch.

Goodwill - I forgot my belt at home and had to buy another one. I was also hoping to pick up an interesting bowling shirt but I guess that's more a mid-western thing.

The show - This was a performance for the students of Rollins College and to celebrate the 45th Anniversary of the Modern Feminist Movement. There were many students and many Veteran Feminists and Feminists in the audience. It was fabulous. The most audience participation we've ever had. AND we stopped for a hot flash. Not a news bulletin, a hormonal thing.

Drinks -We went out for drinks afterwards. Spent most of the evening talking to Maria (who was the woman responsible for bringing us here) about taking ballet as an adult. Lovely.

SUNDAY

The return flight home was uneventful. As soon as I got home I soaked in an apple cider vinegar bath and all my swellings went down.

I'm still smiling. And glowing. Feminists Rock.

October 29, 2011

Dear Old Book,

The past week we have been in residence at Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida as part of their fabulous Winter Park Institute which brings together “leading scholars and artists not simply to give a lecture or performance, but to engage and share time and ideas with our students...” <http://www.rollins.edu/wpi/>

During the week we led workshops in combining activism and art and ended it all with a performance of “Feminists Are Funny” in Tiedtke Hall on October 29th. All of our activities coincide with the celebration of the 45th anniversary of the modern feminist movement and there are many important feminists here including Gloria Steinem, NOW President Terry O’Neill, Eleanor Pam and congresswoman Patricia Schroeder.

It was wonderful to feel like you were in the thick of feminism, going from feminist workshop to feminist group dinners to speeches, panels and informal chats. There are old and young feminists here, new and seasoned feminists; angry and happy feminists all sharing, questioning and hugging each other.

Some of my memories of the week include a young theatre student asking us: “You are an activist theatre company? Isn’t that, like, old?”

During the panel discussion we found that some professors do not want to identify as feminists. That some students fit into clear gender stereotypes while most do not. That the mandatory freshman orientation play that trains students on how to address date rape and sexual violence on campus was not booked this year. That the hot line number for anyone who has been sexually assaulted on campus is incorrect on the flyers. That those flyers can't be put up because there are no flyers allowed on campus. That a film crew wanted to shoot here but said it didn't look like a college campus because there were no flyers anywhere. That some students put up flyers anyway. That some feminists are comfortable jumping down anyone's throat who attempts to disempower them. That this readiness to stand up for the feminist cause is a good thing but can also be a bad thing because it can keep us from engaging in productive dialogue. That this lack of dialogue makes feminism feel stagnant. That wearing our gorilla masks around Halloween makes people think we are just adult trick or treaters. More about our performance of "Feminists Are Funny" in part 2.

PART 2:

Our performance. There is something that happens between audience and performance when the fourth wall is truly broken and there is a click moment: they know what you mean when you say what you say...you know what they mean when they clap, chant, stomp, holler and cheer. IT is this moment of clarity that every performer strives to achieve every time you go out on stage. It is this moment that was achieved during our performance of "Feminists Are Funny" at tziki hall on October 29, 2011...the actual 45th anniversary date of the founding of the modern feminist movement.

Yes we could feel the ghosts of feminists past and the stirring of feminist's future all during the show. But the strongest feeling came from the feminists present who packed the house. We asked them to participate and they obliged in full force. This is the kind of connection you just can't buy or count on but that happens in live theatre. We were all one. We were all on the same page. We celebrated feminism and being feminists and it felt like we moved mountains. Patriarchy was dead for those 60 minutes of "Feminists Are Funny" and we all floated free and equal. Ah...if only every day was October 29th, 2011 in txiki hall .

Until the next time we connect in that beautiful, live theatre way.

- Aphra Behn

SUMMER 2011

LINCOLN CENTER DIARIES

June 19, 2011

Dear Diary,

Three days later and I'm still reeling from our show at the David Rubenstein Atrium at Lincoln Center - Target Free Thursdays! on June 16th. The day started with a marathon 4-hour rehearsal. We then donned our new bright yellow jumpsuits designed by GGOT costumer Liz Claiborne and headed out. We quickly learned how difficult it is to hail a cab in New York City dressed as a Guerrilla Girl on Tour! Thank goodness for our rock star tech grrl Laura Keene. She saved the day and whisked us off to Lincoln Center. Upon arrival we were greeted by the amazing staff and coordinators of the Atrium - and instantly felt at home. The show was a huge success and a fun romp through historical and current feminist and LGBTQI events and issues. At the end we were asked why we felt LGBTQI issues were relevant to our stated mission of focusing on discrimination and racism. Why do 'queer issues' become so important to feminists? Because the people of a culture cannot be free if one group is being discriminated against. The concerns of every minority group are the concerns of feminists. We then posed with audience members for photos - everyone from young feminists, to baby dykes, to a mom and her [5-year-old] daughter. The mom with the young girl told me that she was a single mom and that she went through college - as a women's studies major - with her child. She pointed to her daughter and said 'she's been to tons of feminist events already' - her face was full of pride and her smile absolutely lit the room. Last to leave were a group of senior citizens who came together in a van from their senior center. With walkers and canes they lined up, smiling and thanking us all for the show. We often look out on multi-generational audiences - but this time a truly diverse, and completely full group met our masked gaze. Many thanks to all!

Until next time – Eva Le Gallienne

Dearest Blog,

A place you would take refuge in only if you were desperate to escape one more summer thunderstorm your mother didn't warn you about. That is how I remembered the public atrium at Lincoln Center. Not any more. The David Rubenstein Atrium at Lincoln Center is gorgeous and green. The die-hard regulars enjoy sandwiches and Wi-Fi and Target Free Thursdays.

We members of Guerrilla Girls On Tour! didn't know what to expect. The audience is used to jazz music. They want their jazz music. They show up for their jazz music. Who are we? A bunch of feminist in masks and bright yellow jump suits carrying around a supply of ripe bananas and not so ripe statistics. Are we swanky? NO. Are we smooth? NO. Are we a little be-bop? Nah. But we did rock the house. Can I say that? Why not.

Thank you audience. Thank you playwright in the front row whose jaw hit the floor at the unbelievable statistics of women playwrights on Broadway from 1908 to the present. Thank you lovely woman in the front row who was holding too much in her hands to snap so tapped her feet instead. Thank you lovely man audience right who stepped in as the “question from the audience” guy when the first audience member backed out. Thank

you first audience member for pulling out your glasses and giving the “question from the audience” your best shot. Thank you two lovely ladies from the all girls high school for loving the show and having a chat afterwards. Thank you younger sister from the Florida University who started the feminist blog on her college campus. Thank you older sister for introducing her. Thank you Julia Miles for producing plays by women and announcing those from your seat in the audience during “announcements from the audience”. Thank you everyone for supporting the Marriage Equality Bill. Thank you toddler for joining in the chant during the sound check. You are precious and adorable.

It was a happy, happy night.

xoEdith Evans

Dear GGOT Diary,

Wow! What an amazing show! We just performed at The Atrium at Lincoln Center. Lincoln Center! Can you believe it? It was all in honor of Gay Pride Month. And now, with the new ruling honoring gay marriage in New York, how apropos! We're so current :)

Right before we began making our entrance, I could feel that my wig was a little tighter than normal. And, as we grew nearer to the stage, I could feel it ejecting itself off of my head! It was like it was alive, and wanted no part of me! I just prayed that it would stay on, and not come flying off during our dance sequences! I tried to make jokes, but it was a serious deal. I never have wig problems! Eventually, I was able to move around enough pins to insure that I wouldn't lose it.

Finally, I could fully focus on the show - our energy was so high that the audience quickly got swept away in our feminist furor!

For me, there were two highlights of the night. The first came when I went into the audience to find a guy feminist. I looked out, and spotted a man who looked perfect. So, I go to him and ask him to participate in the show by reading a question. At first he was really excited. He even asked if he should come on stage! But then when it was time to read he started fumbling for his glasses, and it became pretty evident that he couldn't do it....the words just weren't coming out right, then he looked at me and goes 'What does this mean?' I, myself, became confused! Do I walk away from this guy, and find someone else? Or should I force him, in true Julia Child style, to read the damn card? I decided to ask him what he wanted to do, and as I figured, he did not want the job. So now, on to find someone else! I asked the guy next to him. Nope. He wasn't into it. I called out into the general audience. No takers. I began feeling a little disheartened. Like I had blown the joke, and now, no one would be into it. But then, the girls started motioning toward a man who would do it! And he was great. Thank Goddess!

The second highlight was when we debuted our new song "Lesbian, Vagina, Feminist!".

The audience sang, and clapped along with us. We totally rocked out with our vaginas out, and it was so much fun.

Thank you Lincoln Center – Next stop Avery Fisher Hall!

Xxxx

~Josephine Baker
