

Thank you for having a hearing so that people can not only share of painful memories of street harassment but also try to look for solutions.

I am known worldwide as Rokafella, one of the few girls who helped dispell the myth that women can't breakdance as powerfully as the boys/men.

I have mastered a male dominated street dance where aggression is channeled into moves that require alot of physical strength and a competitive edge. I gravitated to this dance to ventilate my anger towards men who had humiliated me around the way, groped me in trains, or forced me to have sex in their cars. I was successful in overcoming my pain via the training of dance which led to my rise in skills. At this point I am a leader in the dance community creating theater pieces, film and dance classes that point to the social interaction between genders and tracing the roots of Hip-hop. My husband and I founded Full Circle a Hip-hop theater dance company that presents the ongoing relationship between preserving and evolving the urban expression that has been embraced globally.

I strongly believe the Arts is the best way to reach youth. The media's portrayal of interactions between the sexes is very disappointing yet it permeates young people's lives at every turn. Even pop artist's choreographed actions like Justin Timberlake tearing away a piece of Janet Jackson's wardrobe (with or without the malfunction) points to how acceptable it is for a man to take what he wants regardless of consent.

In response to how people don't like Reggaeton and its portrayal of women, I wrote and perform a Reggaeton song in Spanish where I describe catcalls that stop me from enjoying my walk down the street and then I go on to share how I respond. The chorus is 'Yo No Soy Desas'..meaning -I am not one of those who enjoy the cat calling. I then go on to define what kind of woman I am. When I perform it, people enjoy it but dismiss it as an innocuous small PSA.. but back stage or when I am leaving the performance, alot of women approach me because they can relate to the message. I believe having arts courses that work in tandem with a course that addresses the need for changes in attitudes and behavior towards girls/women would help. Maybe a course that encourages the youth to analyze lyrics, and images in the media along with role reversal exercises can help. If we can get students to generate writing about their feelings, then maybe they can compose songs and stage scenes for informal showings in the school.

I am not against a man giving me a compliment or a good morning/afternoon greeting, I am opposed to the vulgarities and the stalking that I have dealt with since my teen years to present day.

Thank you once again for taking the time to see the serious affects of street harassment.

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