



"This film hit at the heart of why we need ethnic studies and they – these young Puerto Rican pioneers – were at the helm in the 1960s. Palante!"

Blanca Vazquez, Professional Staff Congress CUNY Union

"What a fabulous film! I was blown away, uplifted, taken back to the amazing spirit of those times and encouraged by how learning about it can fire up the young movements of today."

Prof. Rosalind Petchesky, Hunter College, City University of New York

"An essential documentary revealing a rarely examined set of events in New York City's history that has needed to be told for decades."

Michelle Materre, Creatively Speaking

MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE

THE STORY OF PUERTO RICAN STUDIES IN BROOKLYN COLLEGE

2021, 35 minutes, Documentary, United States, English, Directed by Tami Gold and Pam Sporn

Produced by Gisely Colón López, Tami Gold and Pam Sporn

Edited by Sonia Gonzalez-Martinez and Pam Sporn

Featuring music by Arturo O'Farrill, Oscar Hernández and BombaYo

A Production of the Alliance for Puerto Rican Education and Empowerment

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/477387287>

Stills: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/r66j0bcyyw7x2u2/AAA9xSxKuYz4kYWqY2eKgDU1a?dl=0>



Long Synopsis

MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE tells the story of the student-led struggle to win Puerto Rican Studies at Brooklyn College, CUNY, in the late 1960s. The documentary is a mosaic of voices, film footage, and photographs taken by student activists. This important intergenerational story highlights how students and faculty seized the moment to build upon an alliance of Puerto Rican, African American, and other progressive students forged in their communities and the civil rights movement. Together they changed the face of higher education, transforming the curriculum and expanding who gets educated. The film sheds light on the 50-year history of struggle that started with the founding of one of the first Puerto Rican Studies departments in the nation, and documents the continued movement to maintain their gains. (127 words)

Medium Synopsis

MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE tells the story of the student-led struggle to win Puerto Rican Studies at Brooklyn College, CUNY, in the late 1960s. The documentary is a mosaic of voices, film footage, and photographs taken by student activists. This important story highlights the powerful alliance Puerto Rican, African American, and other progressive students and faculty forged that changed the face of higher education with the founding of one of the first Puerto Rican Studies departments in the nation. (80 words)

Short Synopsis

This film tells the story of the student-led struggle to win Puerto Rican Studies at Brooklyn College, CUNY, in the late 1960s. Puerto Rican, African American, and other progressive students and faculty forged a powerful alliance and together changed the face of higher education with the founding of one of the first Puerto Rican Studies departments in the nation. (61 words)

“What a fabulous film! I was blown away, uplifted, taken back to the amazing spirit of those times and encouraged by how learning about it can fire up the young movements of today. The unbreakable bonds between Blacks and Puerto Ricans and students and faculty should be the big takeaway here.”

Rosalind Petchesky, Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Hunter College

“Fantastic film! An essential documentary revealing a rarely examined set of events in New York City's history that has needed to be told for decades. The story of the formation of the Puerto Rican Studies Department at Brooklyn College became the model for similar critical curricula adopted by many Universities and Colleges around the U.S., some of which remain in place today because of the activists and scholars captured in this film.”

Michelle Materre, Founder and Director, Creatively Speaking

“Wow! The energy, the pacing, the archival photos and footage, and the storytelling and storytellers! It teaches and inspires and underlines how important it is to always know the roots of our activism and our victories—on whose shoulders we stand.”

Elena Schwolsky, RN, Author and Educator

“This film illustrates how Brooklyn College students built unity and connected to the Puerto Rican community. This film hit at the heart of why we need ethnic studies and they – these young PR pioneers - were at the helm in the 1960's. Palante!”

Blanca Vazquez, Hunter College Adjunct Professor, PSC CUNY Executive BD

“What a powerful film! I'm so honored to know this legacy through all of your stories. Thanks for the inspiration.”

Dr. Anna Ortega-Williams, Asst. Professor, Hunter College

“Fantastic Film ... a beauty with all that spirit and wow what a history!”

Jane Gold, LCSW-R

“I am blown away by the subject. In very short time you conveyed an amazing story beautiful and accessibly.”

Katherine T. Acey, Director of Strategic Collaborations, GRIOT Circle

“It was wonderful to spend 35 minutes bearing witness to the Puerto Rican struggle.”

Lyn Goldfarb, Filmmaker

“A deeply moving film on an interesting and not widely known struggle. The filmmakers wove together a wonderful and inspiring story.”

Norm Cowie, Filmmaker/Educator

“Excellent. What amazing archival footage. The film helps contextualize what's happening at CUNY now!”

Jillian M. Báez, Department of Africana and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies, Hunter College

FILMMAKING TEAM

Tami Gold, Director and Producer

TAMI GOLD is broadly recognized in the documentary field as a “pioneer” for her early work using handheld video tools to document social movements and advocate for community objectives. She has created more than 15 highly visible and critically acclaimed documentary films on a variety of topics at the center of public debate in the US and internationally, including women's rights, public health, conditions for workers and labor organizing, violence and discrimination against LGBT people, police accountability and community relations, and the US relationship with South Africa. Her films have been in the most prestigious film festivals, including the Sundance, Tribeca and New York Film Festival, and have won many awards including the Audience Award at Tribeca. Her work has also been screened on public television's premiere venue for independent documentary, POV, the PBS World Channel and on HBO. She is especially known for her expertise in grassroots distribution, and the use of media for advocacy and the expression of alternative viewpoints. Tami is a Full Professor with tenure at Hunter College, where she developed our video production curriculum in the 1990s, has led student exchanges to Cuba and South Africa, and has been a leader on many fronts including her recent work directing the James Aronson Awards for Social Justice Journalism. Tami Gold is recipient of Rockefeller and Guggenheim fellowships and a Fulbright.

Pam Sporn, Director and Producer

Pam Sporn is a Bronx based documentary filmmaker, educator, and activist. She loves listening to people tell stories about standing up to injustice in their own unique, subtle, and not so subtle, ways. A pioneer in bringing social issue documentary making into NYC high schools in the 1980s and 1990s, Pam substantively contributed to the growth of the youth media movement. In addition to DETROIT 48202: CONVERSATIONS ALONG A POSTAL ROUTE, Pam's work includes the documentaries CUBAN ROOTS/BRONX STORIES, WITH A STROKE OF THE CHAVETA, REMEMBERING THE MAMONCILLO TREE, and DISOBEYING ORDERS: GI RESISTANCE TO THE VIETNAM WAR. Pam has received numerous grants and awards including: JustFilms/Ford Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Puffin Foundation, Latino Public Broadcasting, CUNY Caribbean Exchange, and the Bronx Council on the Arts.

Gisely Colón López, Producer

Gisely Colón López was born in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, and raised in New York City. As an educator and activist her work fuses her lived experiences. Gisely is an alum of Brooklyn College and currently a Ph.D student in Urban Education at The Graduate Center- CUNY. She is also a member of the Alliance for Puerto Rican Education and Empowerment, APREE.

THE FILM FEATURES (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Antonio Nadal, A.B.D., e4Deputy Chairperson, Department of Puerto Rican Latino Studies, Musician

Crecensio Morales, M.A., Director, Student Support Services, CCNY, CUNY, Deputy Director for Programs/ASPIRA of NY

Milga Morales Nadal, Ph.D, Former Vice President for Student Affairs, Brooklyn College, CUNY

Antonio Nieves, RPh, Pharmacist - Caribbean Health Organization

Esther Farmer, Former Ombudsman New York City Housing Authority, Leadership Team, Jewish Voice for Peace, NYC

The Rev. Baba Carlos Alejandro
Board Certified Chaplain, ACPE Certified Educator

César Cardona, Attorney, President, APREE

Orlando Pile, M.D., Physician - Chief Communicable Diseases (HIV)

Askia Davis, Ed.D. , Former Superintendent of Schools, Harlem, NYC

Virginia Sánchez Korrol, Ph.D, Former Chair, Department of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, Brooklyn College

Maria E. Pérez y González, Ph.D, Associate Professor, Former Chair, Department of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, Brooklyn College

Vanessa Santiago, Senior Nonprofit Professional

MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE CREDITS

Directors

Tami Gold
Pam Sporn

Producers

Gisely Colón López
Tami Gold
Pam Sporn

Editors

Sonia Gonzalez-Martinez
Pam Sporn

Camera

Tami Gold

Sound

Jose Suarez

Transcriber

Jose Suarez

Production Assistant

Crystal Noelle Rand
Jose Suarez

Music

“Bomba One”

Performed by Bomba Yo/Dr. Drum
Courtesy of Bomba Yo/Dr. Drum

“The Darkness is My Closest Friend”

Written by David Bixler
Performed by David Bixler (alto sax), Vince Cherico (drums), Roland Guerrer (percussion), Boris Koslov (acoustic and electric bass), Arturo O’Farrill (piano, Fender Rhodes piano), Jim Seeley (trumpet)
Courtesy of David Bixler and Zoho Music

“El Salon Cubano”

Written by Arturo O’Farrill
Performed by David Bixler (alto sax), Vince Cherico (drums), Alison Deane (piano), Roland Guerrer (percussion), Arturo O’Farrill (piano, Fender Rhodes piano), Ricky Rodriguez (acoustic bass), Jim Seeley (trumpet), Cecilia Tenconi (flute)
Courtesy of Arturo O’Farrill and Zoho Music

“Tintal Tintal Deo”

Written by Arturo O’Farrill
Performed by David Bixler (alto sax), Heather Bixler (violin), Vince Cherico (drums), Alison Deane (piano), Roland Guerrer (percussion), Arturo O’Farrill (piano, Fender Rhodes piano), Ricky Rodriguez (acoustic bass), Badal Roy (tablas), Jim Seeley (trumpet), Cecilia Tenconi (flute)
Courtesy of Arturo O’Farrill and Zoho Music

“Latino Jazz”

Written by Oscar Hernández (Taino Music, BMI)
Performed by Oscar Hernández & Alma Libre
Courtesy of Origin Records

“40 Acres and a Burro”

Written by Arturo O’Farrill
Performed by Ivan Renta (tenor sax), Arturo O’Farrill (piano)
Courtesy of Arturo O’Farrill and Zoho Music

“Rumba Urbana”

Written by Arturo O’Farrill
Performed by Bobby Porcelli (alto sax), Gary Valente (trombone), Jim Seeley (trumpet), Arturo O’Farrill (piano)
Courtesy of Arturo O’Farrill and Zoho Music

“Groove for Peace”

Written by Oscar Hernández (Taino Music, BMI)

Performed by Oscar Hernández & Alma Libre
Courtesy of Origin Records

“Not So Friendly Long”

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“Blue State Blues”

Written by Arturo O’Farrill
Performed by David Bixler (alto sax), Vince Cherico (drums), Roland Guerrer (percussion), Boris Koslov (acoustic and electric bass), Arturo O’Farrill (piano, Fender Rhodes piano), Ivan Renta (tenor sax), Ricky Rodriguez (acoustic bass), Jim Seeley (trumpet)
Courtesy of Arturo O’Farril and Zoho Music

“Alternate Roots”

Written by Oscar Hernández (Taino Music, BMI)
Performed by Oscar Hernández & Alma Libre
Courtesy of Origin Records

“Goat Check”

Written by David Bixler
Performed by David Bixler (alto sax), Vince Cherico (drums), Roland Guerrer (percussion), Boris Koslov (acoustic and electric bass), Arturo O’Farrill (piano, Fender Rhodes piano), Jim Seeley (trumpet)
Courtesy of David Bixler and Zoho Music

“Not Now Right Now”

Written by Arturo O’Farrill
Performed by Livio Almeida (tenor saxophone), Shawn Conley (bass), Adam

O’Farrill (trumpet), Arturo O’Farrill (piano), Zack O’Farrill (drums), Travis Reuter (guitar)
Courtesy of Arturo O’Farril and Zoho Music

“Danzon for Lisa”

Written by Oscar Hernández (Taino Music, BMI)
Performed by Oscar Hernández & Alma Libre
Courtesy of Origin Records

“Mi Canción Es Para Tí”

Written by Oscar Hernández (Taino Music, BMI)
Performed by Oscar Hernández & Alma Libre
Courtesy of Origin Records

“Letting Go Short”

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“Minor Romance”

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“Plena Con Sabor”

Written by Oscar Hernández (Taino Music, BMI)
Performed by The Spanish Harlem Orchestra
Courtesy of Six Degrees Records

Archival Photographs and Materials
Courtesy of
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Brooklyn College, CUNY

Carlos Alejandro
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Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños at
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CUNY Digital History Archive
Gisely Colón López
Esther Farmer
Hostos Community College Archives
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Antonio Nadal
Milga Morales Nadal
Antonio Nieves
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Puertorriqueños/Center for Puerto Rican
Studies, Hunter College

The Puerto Rican Alliance, Brooklyn
College, CUNY

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The “BC 19” (1969)
The “BC 44” (1975)
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