

# *Mujer, Madre, Latina: Navigating Identity*



Gender, Dress, and Society (SBS 3201)  
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As a single Latina mom in New York City, you embody a tapestry of identities and experiences. Your gender identity as a woman shapes your perception of self and how you navigate societal roles. Being Latina infused my life with the richness of cultural heritage, language, and values, adding depth to my interactions in the diverse landscape of the city. As a senior student majoring in the Business and Fashion of Technology, this course gave me valuable insights in relations on how one feels everyday about my appearance. The course allowed one to visit areas of myself that one has never reconnected or rekindled. Motherhood is central to my identity as it showcases my resilience, love, and determination as one navigates the challenges of raising a child alone. Juggling work, childcare, and finances, you exemplify strength and resourcefulness in providing for my family. My dress and appearance are reflections of my individuality and cultural pride, whether embracing traditional styles or blending with the diverse fashion of New York. Within the bustling metropolis, you find community and support among fellow Latinas, single parents, and New Yorkers, forging connections amidst the vibrant tapestry of city life.

Pursuing my undergraduate degree while navigating economic constraints, my journey embodies struggles and pains that allowed me to lean towards healing myself. Despite facing numerous challenges, one serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration to others in similar circumstances. Balancing the demands of academia with the responsibilities of parenthood, you demonstrate unwavering commitment and strength, showing that with perseverance, anything is possible. One's journey highlights the importance of education as a pathway to empowerment and social mobility, inspiring others to pursue their dreams regardless of the obstacles they may encounter.

Through my experiences and insights, one has had the opportunity to contribute positively to my society. By advocating for issues affecting marginalized communities, such as single parents, and minorities, you amplify voices that are often overlooked and advocate for change. Engaging in community initiatives and volunteering one's time and resources, to play an active role in supporting fellow single mothers and empowering youth from similar backgrounds. One's dedication to education and personal growth not only benefits yourself and your family but also creates ripple effects that uplift and empower those around you.

Protecting your child from harm is not just a moral imperative but a fundamental responsibility of society. Children are our most vulnerable members, and it is our duty to create safe environments where they can grow, learn, and thrive without fear of harm or exploitation. Whether it's shielding them from physical dangers, such as violence or abuse, or safeguarding their emotional well-being by fostering nurturing relationships and supportive communities, we must prioritize their safety above all else. This entails not only enacting and enforcing laws that protect children from harm but also cultivating a culture that values their rights, listens to their voices, and ensures that their needs are met. By investing in prevention, early intervention, and

support services, we can create a world where every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential, free from harm and full of hope for the future.

Art serves as a vital conduit for healing among single moms, offering a sanctuary for emotional expression and self-discovery. Through various mediums like painting, drawing, or sculpting, they find a space to channel their emotions, whether joy, sadness, or hope. Engaging in artistic endeavors provides not only relaxation and stress relief from the demands of single parenting but also a means for introspection and self-exploration. Artistic expression fosters empowerment, allowing single moms to claim their narratives and celebrate their strengths. The visual artist Sue Tsai is known for her captivating artwork, often exploring themes of love, relationships, and personal growth. Her art resonates with single mothers or anyone navigating the complexities of relationships and parenthood. Art has a way of speaking to diverse experiences and emotions as many have used as a source of inspiration or reflection. Through Sue Tsai's art, one has been able to connect with the pains of society. Sue Tsai says "A strong woman deeply rooted in love becomes unshakable in her faith. Many will find peace under her shade. Through the storms, flowers may be lost but she will find her will. Women don't fear the fire, they become it. Women don't get lost in the storm, they are built from it." Having patience with oneself and we learn to see different areas of ourselves. Standing in your power and believing that the pain is necessary to blossom.

The T-shirt that one created is a reflection of the struggle, confusion, and missed judgment that one experiences every single day. Through the power of survival and designing a shield, storytelling the character and attitude that one has. First, one wanted the background *color* to be green, representing my lioness zodiac sign. One created seven *wrapped* resistance points through the T-shirt as the number represented the seventh letter in the alphabet, the letter G. It also represented that one's son was born on the seventh of September. The shape and structure of the cotton T-shirt are boxy and loose-fitting. I hand-dyed this T-shirt using a Kumo Shibori method including *wrapping* tight yarn loops scattered throughout the shirt to create a tie-dye effect. One then bought 70 (9mm) assorted jingle bells as the loud sounds of one's rebellious teenage years of making unconscious decisions and not considering the consequences. The stubbornness of one's decisions reflects on the hard metal *texture* of each bell as not listening to advice became part of my attitude, as I continued to repeat the same mistakes. Secondly, the assorted purple Pom Poms reflect on conscious growth but are more understanding of which sacrifices need to be made to see the clear vision of one's journey. One hand-painted a letter "G" on the left-hand side with the *colors* pink and green as it represented my name, Giselle. Analyzing the relationships that bring you life or death, and understanding who makes you emotionally insecure. A pink floral LED string lights with clear wire that reflect on the healing spaces of one's soul. As a lioness, we tend to hunt during storms and become big eaters for our dreams. One has always had an eye for fashion as the spray of artificial leaves represents the growing pains of my struggle of being a single mother at such a young age and raising my child on my

own. The survivors want to protect, provide, and profess into something more than average. The three roses reflect on my past, present, and future as they are *wrapped* with my son's name Eden. Clearing one's vision by removing toxins from my environment, my thoughts, and my mind will always be a challenge but I appreciate every chapter of it. The patches on the sleeve reading "muscle mami" were never part of the plan but through the tears of accepting my mistakes and not sabotaging myself, it became my point of peace. Through physical training, one has allowed herself to work on her insecurities, and see a bright future. Lifting and power training is more than feeling the pump in your muscle, it is demonstrating to yourself that you're stronger than what you think and you appear. Being fearless of the journey to pursue a new version of yourself by allowing your mind to control your body. Lastly, one clipped the ornament of a petite stylist doll with a green fur skirt, a denim jacket with assorted sequins, and black with gold pumps as it was gifted to one years ago and it can be compared to the stylish petite woman that one has always been.

Appendix

Figure 1, Mujer, Madre, Latina T-Shirt






Figure 2, Suet Sai's Artwork



## Reference

*Nathaniel, A. (2020, July 29). How to grow in christ: The Christian advocate. The Christian Advocate | All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 2 Tim 3:16 KJV. <https://thechristianadvocate.org/how-to-grow-in-christ/>*

*Sue Tsai on Instagram: “a strong woman deeply rooted in love becomes unshakeable in her faith. many will admire her strength from afar while few will find peace under her shade. through the storms flowers may be lost but she will find her soul. women don’t fear the fire, they become it. women don’t get lost in the storm, they are built from it. #InternationalWomensDay .” Instagram. (n.d.-a). <https://www.instagram.com/p/BRYbHZrAefp/>*