

## Valerie Waldron's Final T-Shirt Essay

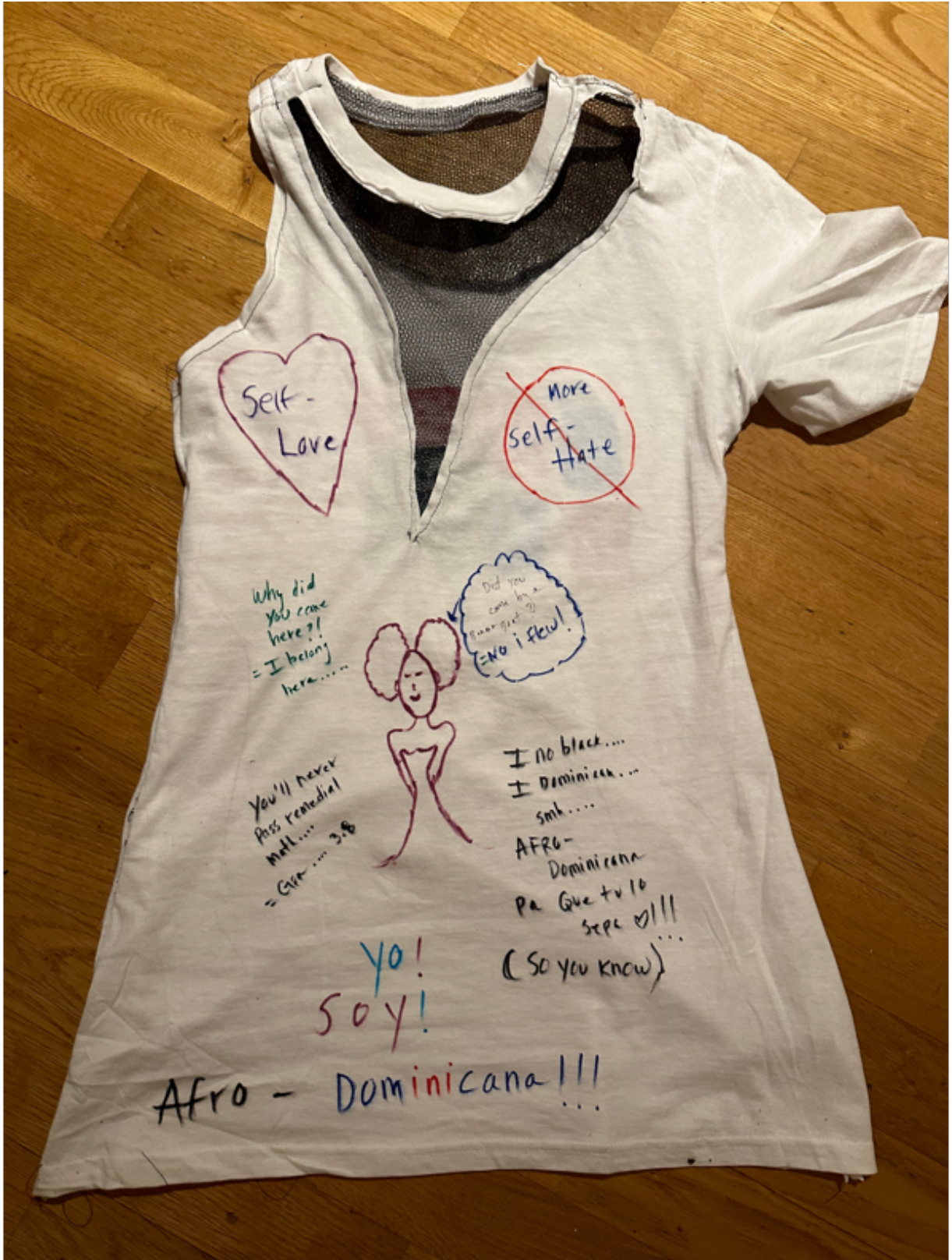
### My Elegant Afro-Dominican Story

Hello, my name is Valerie Waldron, I'm a senior at New York City College of Technology, and I'm studying to get my bachelor's degree in business of Fashion Technology. One of the most influential people that I have come to love a little bit more and more each day was the person that I didn't know that I was molding and that was me. Being true to my roots as an Afro-Dominican woman of color was an element of myself that I didn't realize I was putting down since I arrived in the United States at the tender age of 6. From the moment, I got to this country I was forced to learn English because I needed to "blend" in and was constantly teased by other children from my grade to "go back to my country" or worse asked "How did you get here by boat, or did you swim here" let's be frank I wished to not be Dominican or rather be European because I thought that if I was another race then kids would like me better. From my hair being permed every other month to smooth out my edges from its true puffiness where the true Spanish girl I was born to be was transformed from my roots to someone I wasn't.

When I got my shirt, I got it from a fabric store called "Save a Thon" located at 1887 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, New York, NY 10029. The shirt that I chose was *100% cotton* I chose this shirt because the assignment entailed using a white t-shirt to create your own t-shirt symbolizing who I am in society by using the front & back of the shirt to showcase this. First, I *adhered a lace lining* at the front of my shirt and towards the back of the dress with a *black mesh* material onto the white t-shirt, the material of the black mesh was made from *recycled plastic*. The *black mesh* on the

front and back of the t-shirt is to symbolize the true *texture* of my hair which shows the ongoing *transformations* that my hair went through just so that I could fit in with societal appearance rules. Then, I *adhered* to the back of my t-shirt a half-African/ Dominican flag to show where I come from and that I'm proud to be from there. Also, I decided to *insert* the quotes that I heard throughout my childhood and then my response to them when I was younger. Finally, I wanted this piece to be colorful, so I added a lot of color and excitement to showcase how proud I am to be me today.

How I made the t-shirt was a lot of planning and strategizing because when I got to the store, I went to pick up the t-shirt but then a few pieces caught my eye and so I picked the things that I got inspired by. I did have a few influences that influenced me like things that I found interesting, and I wanted my t-shirt to showcase me and the things I found imperfect about me at the time. I wanted to show how I depicted myself so many years ago and how those negatives turned into positives because those past moments helped redefine me in society and how I symbolize the negatives/ positives. I decided to cut one of the sleeves off the t-shirt because I believed that it would give it this edgier style that I was going for and I hemmed it using my sewing machine to make it look neater and presentable. This t-shirt symbolizes everything that I felt like I internalized all my life and it still proves to this day that I'm a proud Afro- Dominican woman.



Self-Love

~~More Self-Hate~~

Why did you come here?!  
= I belong here....



Did you come here?  
= No i flew!

You'll never pass remedial  
= Girl .... 38

I no black...  
I Dominican...  
smh....  
AFRO-Dominicana  
Pa Que tu lo sepe!!!  
(So you know)

Yo!  
Soy!

Afro - Dominicana!!!



