

Emanuel Honors Black Women & Shares Portrait Series



Toronto artist Emanuel pays homage to the resilience of Black women with his single “Black Woman.” He wrote the song after watching the historic 1971 conversation between James Baldwin and Nikki Giovanni. There were thoughts about Black history and his relationship to Black women. In a press release for the song he states that:Â

“I walked in hearing these chords and it literally just hit me – it was like I was seeing a music video in my head – and I just started singing about my mom . . . I had watched the video of a conversation between James Baldwin and Nikki Giovanni and there’s a very gritty question that they circle aroundÂ when they talk about the relationship between the Black man and the Black woman and how does one support one another and what that looks like in a world filled with hurdles and glass ceilings and people really trying to break you down on both sides, so how do you balance out affection

and love and real support. That definitely sparked my pondering of my relationship with the Black women in my life and on the relationship between Black men and Black women in general from my view. So in that way, that conversation directly informed the type of thinking that I was in. But in that moment, I heard those chords and just started singing and we got down the larger portion of the song just in that first freestyle. When I was hearing myself sing it, I felt like 'This is powerful. This is speaking to me. This is how I want my music to speak to people.' It was a really special moment."

Emanuel also launched a digital portraiture series to acknowledge the prominent Black women in Toronto's artistic and advocacy communities. There are portraits of creative director and curator [Ashley McKenzie-Barnes](#), artistic director [Weyni Mengesha](#), writer and producer [Kathleen Newman-Bremang](#), financial service executive and podcast host [Naki Osutei](#), and creative director and choreographer [Tanisha Scott](#). The portraits can be seen on Emanuel's [Instagram](#) page.