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2. Abstract

Howard University's Department of African Studies and Department of Media, Journalism and Film proposed project titled: Gender, Language and Hip Hop in South Africa and Tanzania. The project will engage in critical dialogues around the ways in which gender and language intersect and inform the making of hip hop cultures in South Africa and Tanzania. The format for these discussions will be a series of documentary shorts. The shorts will investigate the involvement of female and male artists in the rap and graffiti scenes in South Africa and Tanzania. The shorts will also investigate the broader social and cultural significance of the participation of women in hip hop's masculine culture. The films will lastly interrogate the reappearance of debates around language and art, as hip hop artists grapple with identity and language choice in different ways as shaped by the distinctive cultural contexts of both South Africa and Tanzania, but in ways that have implications for the entire continent. The films will be shot on location and will be aired in the US, Tanzania and South Africa, as well as distributed digitally. The project also aims broaden awareness, reach, and impact of African hip hop culture by bringing some of the artists to the US for dialogue and direct engagement with academic communities and public audiences.

3. Narrative

Section 3A. Nature of the request:

Howard University is requesting an NEH Media Production grant for $650,000 to produce a documentary series centering on questions of gender and language in hip hop culture in South Africa and Tanzania. The project will result in the production of 6, 30-minute, documentary shorts. The mini-documentaries will also be edited into a full length, 2 hour documentary. The project will be accompanied by educational guides that will allow educational institutions and community groups to utilize the documentaries in discussions around language, gender, culture, and hip hop. The purpose of the project is to facilitate audience understandings of important conversations happening around language and gender in South African and Tanzanian hip hop communities, and for audiences to see how those conversations intersect with global conversations around language and identity, as well as gender and representation. Finally, the purpose of the project is to show how African artists are contributing to hip hop culture in different, and often progressive, ways. The grant would provide needed funding to produce and distribute the documentary series, which has a spring 2021 release date.

Howard University, via the Department of African Studies and the Department of Media, Journalism and Film, has worked to position itself at the forefront of research on hip hop culture in Africa, as well as excellence in filmmaking and film production. The university has become recognized for its leadership and support of interdisciplinary scholarship in African studies, as well its production of award winning and critically acclaimed film projects. This film project will further the university's contribution to broader, global, conversations around language, gender, identity, and hip hop culture. Film allows these conversations to occur on different, more accessible platforms outside of academia. Film allows these conversations to reach broad and diverse audiences in

Section 4 Script

Treatments: Short 1 and 2. The Language of Graffiti in Tanzania and South Africa:

The first two short films seek to address the language of graffiti and its historical and contemporary function. Both hip-hop graffiti practitioners and scholars have recognized the importance of graffiti's existence in the prehistoric past. Ancient graffiti sites have been discovered and turned into cultural heritage sites throughout the African continent. Essentially, these two films ask the question: What happens when contemporary graffiti writers come face-to-face with their ancient past? Two separate Media Teams will document Tanzanian and South African graffiti writers as they travel by road from Dar es Salaam to central Tanzania to visit the Kondoa Ancient Rock Sites and from Cape Town to the San Rock Art Sites in the Cedarburg Mountains and natural reserve in Clanwilliam, South Africa, respectively. In capturing these two separate road adventures through visual and audio documentation, consisting of periodic interviews with graffiti writers, academics, experts and tour guides, these short films mainly profiles selected graffiti writers while exploring the art form as an historical language of public communication and cultural resistance in Africa.

The films will pose questions such as: To what extent do contemporary graffiti writers identify with ancient graffiti art? What are the similarities and differences between ancient rock art and contemporary graffiti art? What did contemporary graffiti writers learn from visiting ancient graffiti sites in their respective home countries? In what ways has graffiti transformed over time and place? What is the history of hip-hop graffiti in Tanzania and South Africa? What kinds of cultural, political and social messages do contemporary graffiti writers seek to convey? What languages do contemporary graffiti writers use and why?

At each cultural heritage site, tour guides will be interviewed, providing pertinent information and context on the rock art paintings, their meanings and social function. Dr. Seth Markle will also be interviewed about the history of hip-hop graffiti in Tanzania while experts and scholars such as Emile Jansen, Dr. Adam Haupt and Dr. Quentin Williams will shed light on the salient features of hip hop and graffiti culture in South Africa, examining the politics of this visual art movement in the contexts of language, censorship, and citizenship. The films, however, will primarily revolve around contemporary graffiti writers and therefore will feature four graffiti writers from Tanzania's Wachata Crew (Mejah, Local Ism, Medy and Kala Singa) and four graffiti writers from Cape Town (Falko, Ekon, Freddy Sam and Nardstar). Interviews with these graffiti writers will take place before, during and after the road trips, providing personal perspectives on how being graffiti artists shapes and informs their African identities. In closing the film, graffiti writers will create murals in Dar es Salaam and Cape Town inspired by their journey to the ancient rock sites.

Treatment. Short 3. Graffiti Art and Women's Empowerment in Tanzania and South Africa

The third short film focuses on women and gender by exploring the nature of African women's participation in graffiti/street art cultures. The experiences of

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