

REPORT

*prepared for La Peña Cultural Center with support from The Ford Foundation
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COMMUNITY FORUM

The Ford Foundation • New York, NY
November 5, 2003

The Community Forum gathered over 100 artists, activists, funders, and community advocates from across several fields of work - including youth development and rights, community and cultural organizing, arts and culture education, political and voter mobilization, aesthetics creation and production, theater and the literary arts, media literacy, gender and sexuality, community and resource development, human and civil rights, and juvenile justice - all working with or within Hip-Hop performance forms. Sponsored by La Peña Cultural Center with support from The Ford Foundation, the forum was held and hosted at The Ford Foundation in New York City. The gathering facilitated an exchange of community stories, artistic work, field approaches, generational perspectives, inter-disciplinary methods, and discussions of intersecting social issues and contexts. The participants worked toward formulating strategies to continue, and also cross-pollinate, efforts to connect work across varying arenas, diverse issues, generational divides, and local and global community sites.

The Community Forum followed an artist retreat focused on Hip-Hop influenced aesthetics held two months earlier, and complimented and built upon a series of Hip-Hop activism funder briefings.¹ A conscious effort was made to bring together Hip-Hop activists and Hip-Hop theater artists, to merge their continuing field conversations into an expanded collective dialogue around social justice issues, with a goal toward shifting paradigms of community organizing, social movement, human and artistic perspective, and resource-building.

MAJOR FINDINGS

I. Background & Overview

Following the welcome and introduction by The Ford Foundation's Media, Arts & Culture Unit, members of the Future Aesthetics Artist Planning Committee set the stage for the Forum by introducing the Hip-Hop theater aesthetic as more than just an artistic element to be performed, but an energy that incorporates historical and community legacies previously unrecognized and/or subsumed by the "commercial mainstream." Moreover, Hip-Hop aesthetics open up new and alternative spaces for marginalized and under-resourced communities to revision democratic ideas and practices in a more diverse world that includes multi-generation practitioners, global cultures and regions, and under-represented populations such as youth, women and LGBTs (Lesbians, Gays, Bi-sexuals, and the Transgendered). Though the Forum's (and initial Future Aesthetics Artist's Dialogue held in September 2003) focuses primarily on Hip-Hop theater forms, the notion of Hip-Hop aesthetics (inclusive of its traditional four elements: DJing, MCing, B-Boying, and Graffiti Art) as inherent to social consciousness work positions Hip-Hop culture and arts as more than mere expression but, in fact, as dynamic, proactive energies in building communities. Also, situating Hip-Hop culture and aesthetics more firmly within its global origins and influences illuminates how the expressive arts are intrinsic to social justice movements throughout the world as well as within the United States.

In addition to this framework, the presence of Hip-Hop theater, dance and performance artists of multiple generations opened a space for various modes of storytelling - from performance and oral history, to factual presentations of statistics and theories, to honest exchanges around process, to sharing ideas of products, solutions, and changes to create and leverage better, more just and equitably-resourced communities throughout the U.S. and the globe. This variety manifested in several forms and contexts throughout the day, illuminating common themes, points of both divergence and convergence, and exposing gaps where continuing issues and questions remain. Choreographer and dancer Rennie Harris set the stage, with an illuminating oral history enhanced by illustrative movement of the evolution and history of Hip-Hop dance, and its touchpoints with his own artistic development. With incisive narrative, with humor, and incorporating movement, puppetry and music, a second performance presentation showcased Hip-Hop theater artists speaking to a range of issues such as, racial and sexual identity politics, mental illness, and divergent perspectives on U.S. politics from different economic classes. The work is multi-layered, simultaneously personal and communal, widespread yet localized, and through Hip-Hop aesthetics, rendered intimately accessible, educational, visceral and real.

Setting a context for Hip-Hop activism, journalist and author Jeff Chang explained that the current wave of Hip-Hop activism maintains a culture of resistance that reaches back several decades. The first wave of Hip-Hop activism hit in the 1970s with Afrika Bambaataa as the first Hip-Hop activist and the Zulu Nation as the first Hip-Hop activist organization, coming into full force in the 1980s with the politicized messages of New York-based rap group, Public Enemy. The second wave gained steam during the mid-1990s, in response to the flashpoint of increasingly commercialized “gangsta rap” (ushered in by the Compton, CA-based rap group, N. W. A.) and corresponding attacks upon Hip-Hop culture by the Civil Rights generation, as well as in the face of the passage of more stringent laws and initiatives aimed at youth in poor and under-resourced communities. Two distinctions highlight the difference between the civil-rights generation of the 1950s and 1960s and the current Hip-Hop generation that was born and raised from the late 1960s, through the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, into the new millennium:

- 1) Decades of decentralization in government, policy, and neighborhood development forces the current generation to “face many lunch counters,” simultaneously, on the local level, on streets, neighborhoods, school boards, city councils, and state legislatures, and not one centralized place such as the National Mall in Washington, D. C. In addition, the national legislative arena is no longer conducive to creating a federal mandate like the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- 2) The organic, multi-headed, and poly-cultural nature of contemporary Hip-Hop activism mixes culture and activism in ever-evolving ways that are often difficult to understand and clarify fully. Also, the global contexts of this work expand its framework past U. S.-centered ideas of civil rights toward a concept of human rights around the world.

With this background in mind, some questions were put forth to frame the conversations for the day:

- As the Hip-Hop generation matures, what is it doing to move from cultural power into political power?
- What will a Hip-Hop generation agenda look like?
- What are the obstacles and issues that the Hip-Hop generation must still overcome to take its place on the global stage?

II. General Themes

What Is The Hip-Hop Generation Doing To Move From Cultural Power Into Political Power?

The Community Forum was structured as a combination of large auditorium presentations and performances as well as several smaller break-out sessions. A morning plenary session in the auditorium set frameworks for break-out sessions focusing on the issues, concerns, and needs of activists of the Hip-Hop generation. Moderated by Jeff Chang, the morning plenary speakers included: Miguel Garcia, Assets Building & Community Development Program, The Ford Foundation; Taj James, Movement Strategy Center; Favianna Rodriguez, Visual Element/Eastside Arts Alliance; Malika Sanders, 21st Century Youth Leadership Project; and Billy Wimsatt, League of Young Voters. The afternoon began with a performance showcase that illuminated varying presentations of Hip-Hop theater forms as a foundation for afternoon break-out sessions that addressed continuing issues, elements, and needs in the Hip-Hop aesthetics field and for artists of the Hip-Hop generation. The showcase featured Regie Cabico; Rha Goddess and Baba Israel; Gabe Gonzales-Charlestream; Danny Hoch; Marc Bamuthi Joseph; Will Power with DJ Reborn; and Steve Sapp, Midred Ruiz, Gamal Abdel Chasten and Rokafella of Universes; with EmCee Steve Sapp.

A. Hip-Hop Activism

Political engagement

Session Leaders: Baye Adofo, National Hip Hop Political Convention; Jacqueline Berrien, Peace & Social Justice Program, The Ford Foundation; Billy Wimsatt, League of Young Voters

- Arts and culture can reframe political and policy issues, discussing them in ways that make them more accessible to everyday people. Thus, activists utilize Hip-Hop aesthetics with an eye toward increasing participation and engagement in political processes, and especially to engage marginalized voters, particularly youth, in politics and participation as a lifestyle, not a single event.
- Activists cite lack of collaborations and venues to share information as a barrier in their efforts to expand and have more impact. They would like to engage the arts more fully by commandeering key spaces with artistic performances to dramatize elections and social issues, training artists to become more adept at voter organizing, and encouraging the inherently joyous energy of Hip-Hop culture and arts as a mobilizing force for the political organizing.

Alliance-building

Session Leaders: James Bernard, Project Forum on Race and Democracy; and Makila Sanders, 21st Century Youth Leadership Program

- Building linkages across church, labor and community groups highlights the need to work on inter-generational dynamics within and across activist movements. The diversity of the Hip-Hop movement is both its strength and its weakness. Structural barriers exist in that an older generation often takes the initiative to hold conversations across generational lines, because they have access to the resources to do so, but then the agenda may be set in ways that do not enable positive interactions with younger generations. Also, "life course" stages for different generations play an important role in the amount of time and energy people have to commit to forging alliances.
- Alliance-building is a long-term process of developing relationships that needs to be nurtured over time. Funders often look to people and organizations that are more established; thus, there is no long-term investment in the financial well being of emerging groups and individuals. A need exists for intermediaries who understand the philanthropic terrain and could speak to both the activist and foundation sides of the equation in order to facilitate more useful and clarifying dialogues.

Prison-industrial complex (PIC)

Session Leaders: Jakada Imani, Books Not Bars/Freedom Fighter; Kim McGillicuddy, Youth Justice; Kate Rhee, Prison Moratorium Project

- Grassroots work around the prison-industrial complex (PIC) has emerged just within the last decade, during which prison expansion occurred with the advent of more discriminatory criminal laws and sentencing guidelines. That, in tandem with the decline in public funding of education, has resulted in imprisonment of an ever higher and disproportionate number of minorities, especially minority youth. A prevalent practice in PIC work is to build coalitions for youth to address and combat these issues and policies.
- Initially, prominent commentary on the PIC came from criminal justice "experts" and "criminologists" that studied behavior. PIC activists go beyond just behavior and examine the political and social structures that enable and support this phenomenon. Poverty, military, welfare and prison issues are tied together; education and incarceration issues are also intertwined. Thus, PIC work is more expansively framed as a matter of political and social will.
- In PIC work, Hip-Hop culture is utilized to prepare crowds for mass mobilizations and get people comfortable at rallies and for meetings in prisons, easing a path for greater communication. In this case, Hip-Hop aesthetics provide a framework for a common language

through culture. Activists would like to redress the cruelties and inequities of the prison system through artwork and Hip-Hop. For example, "raptivism" brings Hip-Hop activism into the public realm and has proven a dependable and successful vehicle for political expression and message distribution.

Youth Development

Session Leaders: Loren Harris, Assets Building & Community Development, The Ford Foundation; Taj James, Movement Strategy Center; James Kass, Youth Speaks

- "We must realize and recognize the art that is activism, but also understand that oft times activism is a form of art," said Taj James, community activist. Is the power of Hip-Hop culture in the art form or the collective action? As much as art does not and should not exist in a vacuum, and can be more empowering if shared, the more buy-in there is to Hip-Hop as an art, the more danger exists that its wide-spread acceptance may be detrimental and counter to the origins and modus operandi of Hip-Hop as a resistant and antagonistic, anti-Establishment cultural form. Because of its highly organic energies and localized elements, Hip-Hop activism is, by nature, decentralized. To create a collective vision from these circumstances in order to challenge prevailing theories of power will not be easy.
- A disconnect exists between funders, local activism institutions, regional/national networks and learning communities. The youth development field still struggles with definitions of terms such as "Hip-Hop activism," "youth organizing," and "youth development." Though funders appreciate the improvisational energies of Hip-Hop culture and activism, it was pointed out that if the activists do not define themselves and their work, others will do it for them.
- Hip-Hop activism cannot define all youth organizing because not all young, marginalized peoples identify with Hip-Hop culture. In that light, the future of Hip-Hop activism and organizing is unclear. It is also not clear where the movement may transition to as its youth leaders mature. Is Hip-Hop activism inextricable from youth development work? What transferable skills are developed within Hip-Hop activism that can be nurtured and pushed to another level for long-term social change work?

Arts & Cultural Activism

Session Leaders: Uday Joshi, Project 2050/New World Theater; Thenmozhi Soundararajan, Third World Majority

- Arts and culture Hip-Hop activism is usually based on media literacy, focusing on the importance of strengthening the voice and involvement of youth and people of color in activist media production, to counter prevailing images, and to revision new ones through media

technology. A main goal is to generate active participant engagement in media-making and interpretation, rather than just passive consumer consumption.

- Some continuing obstacles in this work include:
 - Infusion of progressive Hip-Hop messages into mainstream media is difficult. Since a majority of youth interactions with most media is as consumers, not designers, it is difficult, constant work to educate and maintain greater media literacy.
 - Politicians, religious leaders and commercial interests co-opt Hip-Hop as a form of messaging and advertisement for unintended causes.

B. *Hip-Hop Aesthetics*

Hip-Hop vs. Hip-Hop

Session Leaders: Toni Blackman, MC, Educator, Activist; Kamilah Forbes, Hip-Hop Theatre Junction; Kwikstep, Full Circle Productions

- A lot of contemporary performance that is labeled “Hip-Hop” is not informed by, nor demonstrates reverence for, the classical forms of the four main elements. Each element has its own standards of quality, distinct historical evolution, and continuing aesthetic debates. However, to have a more comprehensive conversation of this subject, mainstream Hip-Hop artists or “mediocre” Hip-Hop art needs to be included in the discussion as well.
- Some continuing barriers in the development of quality Hip-Hop aesthetics include the fact that Hip-Hop art is marginalized by the mainstream artistic community, often labeled as “fringe,” “urban” or “black.” This is characteristic of many forms of resistance art. Also, the mainstream Hip-Hop industry profits from mostly mediocre Hip-Hop artists and culture, an ongoing challenge for Hip-Hop artists that work to preserve high quality standards and artistic excellence in their work. In terms of funding, funders often require Hip-Hop artists and activists to either narrowly define their work or do not deem it “legitimate” enough.
- Some suggestions for sustainability include: teaching individual artists to set up different sources of income when strategizing one’s career; encouraging and supporting Hip-Hop art organizations in diversifying their own funding sources; and cultivating donors from the Hip-Hop generation that will become patrons and benefactors of quality Hip-Hop art and institutions.

Incubating New Work

Session Leaders: Marc Bamuthi Joseph, The Living Word Project, Youth Speaks; Rokafella, Full Circle Productions; Mark Russell, Performance Space 122

- Hip-Hop theater is at a new stage of development, expanding the traditional four elements into more hybrid forms, experimenting with fusion, illuminating that Hip-Hop aesthetics are not static. Yet many traditional performance and artistic institutions have a difficult time with both the notion of “quality Hip-Hop aesthetics” as well as the ever-evolving nature of these aesthetics into newer forms and alternative structures.
- A continuing challenge in the incubation of new work is that there are few, if any, artistic spaces within which to develop aesthetics and/or performance. Arts organizations have difficulty serving as support systems because they are continually under-resourced. Thus, both artists and non-profit arts organizations that would like to support this work would benefit from more resources and services.
- Making connections between community-based groups, theatre settings, universities, and artist communities to build alliances for resources and make lateral connections to cultivate innovation could both support and maintain artists in this field, especially as they transition from the “emerging” to “established” stages in their aesthetic development and artistic careers.
- Some artists are concerned that Hip-Hop not become the new “multicultural” box into which all artists of the generation must fit. Hip-Hop should be an expansive, and not the only, definitional category.

International Hip-Hop

Session Leaders: Marinieves Alba, International Hip Hop Exchange (IHX); Vee Bravo, Estilo Media Project; Cristina Verán, Journalist, Historian, Educator.

- The origins of Hip-Hop culture are trans-national, having evolved from Afro-diasporic communities that had migrated throughout the Americas. Hip-Hop aesthetics have been adapted, with shifting meanings, to meld with various communities and their own histories in the United States and in a variety of international settings. Yet international Hip-Hop’s identity is not solidified and is difficult to consolidate. In addition, most of its critics still view it as an inferior imitation of an American art because they are not familiar with its indigenous forms world-wide.
- Hip-Hop culture has been a more explicit tool for social activism in other national contexts, particularly in Latin America. It has been utilized to create organizing and mobilization tools for international social change, served as a highly accessible media outlet for people of color, and been strategically linked with popular social, political, and indigenous movements around

the globe. Thus, Hip-Hop culture would be more rightly situated as a dynamic form of movement-building and community organizing. Hip-Hop culture is not just an aesthetic, but is inherently rooted in progressive activism.

- Continuing challenges and issues include:
 - Recent travel between the United States and other countries for international Hip-Hop artists has been difficult because of the consequences of the U. S. “war on terror.” For example, Jonzi D, the British MC and Hip-Hop artist from the UK, could not attend the Community Forum because of excessively stringent visa guidelines. Such barriers hinder international learning and exchange.
 - Globalization and commercialization constantly threaten to dilute international Hip-Hop culture and aesthetics exchange, potentially reducing its expressions to mere consumer product. Yet such “negative” aspects of wide-spreading Hip-Hop culture and its impacts in this context must be assessed; that which is vilified cannot be extricated from a comprehensive conversation of the subject.
 - Global exchange is complex in the face of continuing issues of power and resource. Such exchanges have the possibility of ending up as American gate-keeping, with the United States controlling or monitoring the images, messages, and artists that get mass distributed or exposed to larger publics in America and around the world.

Great Adventures in Scarcity and Exploitation

Session Leaders: Miguel Garcia, Assets Building & Community Development Program, The Ford Foundation; Rha Goddess, Divine Dime Entertainment Productions; Lenora Pace, Theater Director

- Perceptions of scarcity, exploitation and abundance come from a deeply personal, experiential place for each individual, often tied to ways of being in the world. Thus, definitions will vary, depending on how these elements play out in life, art and work. In order to address issues of scarcity, one must create a new personal vision to reject prevailing concepts of scarcity.
- Scarcity has a lot to do with scale. For the most part, individuals have not been conditioned to, and therefore do not, live lives of abundance - spiritually and emotionally as well as in the material sense. Scarcity is often framed in terms of competition and distributing value, as a win/lose situation. Thus, notions of scarcity often inform how exploitation issues may play out.
- Traditional relationships between funders and artists vary according to individual experience. Funders are under pressure to scale up and consolidate for greater impact. Yet the nature of Hip-Hop culture and its aesthetics is scaled down and widely divergent. Thus, funders cannot replicate “best practices” and models exactly. It all boils down to: What are the ways people

think? What innovations are there to scale, keeping in mind that in the scaling up, one may dilute the organic?

- In connecting the conversations across disciplines, a commitment to create a structure that encourages paradigm change around resources must also be developed. Locating common points of reference between funders, artists, activists, and communities would enhance and deepen these continuing discussions. Meanwhile, artists might benefit from becoming entrepreneurs that understand the economic underpinnings of “leverage,” keeping themselves connected to other fields of work and larger, evolving philanthropic conversations around resources.

Representations of Gender & Sexuality

Session Leaders: Sarah Costa, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation; Aya de Leon, Writer, Performer; and Rennie Harris, Rennie Harris Puremovement

- The four elements of Hip-Hop culture are non-traditional fields for women because of several characteristics, including Hip-Hop’s emphasis on technology, its emphasis on images of physical strength, and an atmosphere of constant danger towards women. Hip-Hop theater offers women a traditional entry point that can facilitate a merger with the non-traditional Hip-Hop space to develop their voices, as well as others previously restricted or shunned by traditional Hip-Hop roles and venues.
- Opportunities do exist for progressive intervention in this arena for both genders. For example, the aggressive Hip-Hop cipher role is contrary to most women’s conditioned positioning, thus women are often diverted to the fiction, poetry and spoken word arenas to explore and develop their creativity. Yet poetry, fiction and spoken word are transferable skills and could potentially transform the traditional concept of the cipher. In addition, Hip-Hop has often served as a strong rite of passage for men in America. Yet Hip-Hop culture historically showcases a narrow band of male emotions and very limited male archetypes. Theater allows for a greater range of emotions for men and a diversity of archetypes. Thus, Hip-Hop theater can also expand notions of masculinity and maleness.
- Sexuality perspectives and expressions within Hip-Hop culture have expanded in recent years. LGBTs and Queers have come of age with the advent of homo-hop and the notion of homo-thugz. Homophobia is very much a part of male conditioning specifically, and has been encouraged in general, so this nascent work is very exciting, emerging from a combination of the larger LGBT Liberation Movement and of queer folks raised in Hip-Hop culture as part of the Hip-Hop generation.

III. *Points of Convergence*

What Could A Hip-Hop Generation Agenda Look Like?

Some general themes highlighted points of convergence between Hip-Hop aesthetics and Hip-Hop activism throughout the Forum:

- Hip-Hop aesthetics and activism link seemingly disaggregated areas of work, policy, and peoples. Hip-Hop activists aim toward creating progressive politics in mobilizing ways, addressing a variety of issues such as environmental justice, youth rights and juvenile justice, prison work, immigrant rights, and anti-racism. Hip-Hop artists express their arts to address social issues and concerns, including the economies of scale regarding scarcity and exploitation that have both personal and communal implications, representations of gender and sexuality, the creation and maintenance of quality aesthetic standards, incubating new work, and exploring capacities for international Hip-Hop support and exchange. Both activists and artists struggle against "mainstream" culture and politics. Yet both fields attempt to revision a more just and expansive democratic society in the U. S. and around the world. Also, in their daily struggles to continue and further this work, both require extensive education and re-education work on several, complex levels, with mostly youth, but also inter-generational populations.
- Both fields evince a holistic view of cause and effect, and thus attempt to hit several policies simultaneously, "re-mixing" the social perspective and layering several issues on top of one another. In many ways, this generation has expanded beyond the notion of internal "multi-oppression" of individuals to address external "multi-strategic fronts" that impact whole communities and populations. Much of the work is process-oriented and relationship-focused. In teasing out the holistic ways this generation reaches out and engages communities, various examples of how activism informs the arts and conversely, how the arts engage and express the activism, illuminates nascent models and methods of community-building
- "Hip-Hop theater can assist in finding the 'prose' of Hip-Hop culture - the long story that connects to other stories," stated Aya de Leon, writer and performance artist. In its language(s), Hip-Hop culture offers a more accurate reflection of contemporary society's global and technological complexity, requiring a more conscious listening. Hip-hop aesthetics offer metaphors for how to "listen" and address social issues on simultaneous fronts. For instance, by utilizing the notion of the "re-mix"² as a tool to write new layers, to layer on top of existing lyrics, or to craft prevalent commercial/mainstream pieces to suit more original individual stories or truths, one can replace degrading content with something more empowering, thus creating new foundations to work from for progressive messages and actions. Inasmuch as Hip-

Hop aesthetics can provide an accessible language for Hip-Hop activism, so can Hip-Hop theater, with its more expansive opportunities to rework images and roles, offer a more expansive articulation of the Hip-Hop generation's emergent possibilities.

- Hip-Hop culture is a microcosm of larger society. Its limits, and its opportunities, are a reflection of a more complex, multi-layered environment. It is too easy to scapegoat Hip-Hop culture for the evils visited upon it by larger social perceptions and mores. Old paradigms of thought, perspectives, and their accompanying assumptions must be re-examined. For example, the notion of "artists as cultural workers" may be outdated, having emerged from an earlier era of social consciousness. Social change efforts are now being driven by arts and culture work not just as a tool but as an integral energy and dynamic force in the work, appealing not just to the visceral nor just the intellectual, but both, hand-in-hand.

IV Obstacles & Issues

What Must Be Overcome For the Hip-Hop Generation To Step Up To The Global Stage?

- Activists and artists came to the Forum with different expectations, contexts for meeting, and separate collective preparations. Activists approached the Forum as a "conversation of organization"; artists approached it as a "conversation of transformation." Funders wanted more concrete definitions and clear-cut "best practices." These differing contexts impacted the interface between the funders, artists and activists throughout the day.
- A need for clear definitions of, and within, each arena of work is necessary - terms such as "Hip-Hop culture," "Hip-Hop aesthetics," "Hip-Hop theater," "Hip-Hop activism," and "Hip-Hop philanthropy" require clarification. Critical assessments of the work, self-analysis of methods and impact, and cross-comparisons to other ways and sites of working are also necessary. Though encouraging convergence of these fields may leverage greater power for resources, resistance shall always remain to retain individual originality and contexts of the work for and by its communities.
- In terms of inter-generational dynamics, older folks may find it difficult to get past the culture piece to get to the activism. How do you pull the lens off such a youth-centered focus and tie this work to deeper and longer legacies of social movements and change?
- Women often resource the men's work in Hip-Hop culture. If resources are not set aside for women specifically, they are often not allocated. Funders could aim to ensure better gender

balance in arts organizations by stipulating this more concretely within their grant-making initiatives.

- What about non Hip-Hop populations that do this work? Who is *not* at the table for these conversations that *should* be?
- Funding strategies and categories are not conducive to working across Hip-Hop's hybrid art and activism approach, nor to reaching grassroots youth movements.

NEXT STEPS

As radio personality Davey D stated in the March 2003 conversation, Hip-Hop activists are “doing the work where no one is looking.” Choreographer Rennie Harris expands upon this for artists when he states “living art is always teaching as well.” New roles and visions are emerging within the evolving social and cultural movements of the Hip-Hop generation. So where can the Hip-Hop generation go from this moment, into the future? Some suggested next steps include:

- Continue this nascent work, seeding collaborations to maintain and push forward its development. Keep having conversations at national gatherings, conventions, and conferences such as the Hip-Hop Theater Festival, the National Hip-Hop Political Convention, the Council on Foundations annual conference, or even in conjunction with more mainstream and commercial events like the NFL Super Bowl, the NBA All-Star Game and national award shows (as is the case with cross-sector discussions that Ford Foundation Program Officer Miguel Garcia has recently facilitated).
- Each sector (Arts, Activism, and Philanthropy) would benefit from time and space to independently hone their collective field visions before the conversations across sectors. To do so would allow for better points of accessibility, and thus, entry into discussions, debates and developments across communities:
 - Activists need a focused dialogue for themselves and their fields of work, similar to the Artist Dialogue in September 2003, to clarify definitions, work through issues, share “best practices” with one another without the presence of funders, and share their own experiences with the dynamics and structures of the philanthropic field and other resource entities.

- Artists need to develop an ongoing structure for how to continue the work they have recently initiated, perhaps a point person to coordinate transitions into a next stage of development. Also, regional issues, standards of quality aesthetics, and creating an infrastructure model to maintain their connectivity continue to be issues.
- Funders need basic education about Hip-Hop culture and activism before being able to understand the nature of the work. Such education would generate more logical funding strategies to resource this work, creating better chances for greater impact.
- Resource knowledge-building in both the activist and artist fields for collection, documentation, preservation, and continuing education. For example, the first two Hip-Hop activism discussions spawned a series of white papers, published via the Funders Collaborative for Youth Organizing (www.fyco.org). As part of this Future Aesthetics project, the artists have generated this set of reports documenting their collective conversations, a forthcoming anthology of practitioner essays, and archival footage of their performances at each of their own two gatherings³. In terms of Hip-Hop philanthropy, the Active Element Foundation has supported this type of work for some time and has published the **Future500**, a national directory of prominent U. S. youth organizations, a majority of which are involved in Hip-Hop activism (www.Future500.com). These are only some of the existing products within the field(s) and outside of it that could contribute to wider education and dissemination efforts.
- Connect to networks and coalitions that link local organizing to larger movements. For example, the Future Aesthetics Artists' Directory and artists' list-serve, maintained by La Peña Cultural Center (www.lapena.org) are initial attempts to seed these efforts. A larger directory for the Community Forum, including all activists, artists and funders in attendance, would be beneficial to keep communications open and options for continued conversation, accessible.
- Deepen relationships within and between the Hip-Hop activist and artist sectors and then, with funders. Develop a structure for gatherings that facilitate an organic atmosphere for discussions that engage all three sectors in ongoing conversations instead of just "presentations" for information, that move toward action, next steps, and areas of convergence that enhance the work across sectors.

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To request a copy of the Future Aesthetics DVD, email: intervalarts-hiphop@yahoo.com

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ARTISTIC SHOWCASE PERFORMERS

- Will Power with DJ Reborn (San Francisco, CA & New York, NY)
- Rha Goddess & Baba Israel (New York, NY)
- Regie Cabico (New York, NY)
- Marc Bamuthi Joseph (San Francisco, CA)
- Gabe Gonzales-Charlestream (Amherst, MA)
- Danny Hoch (Brooklyn, NY)
- Steven Sapp, Mildred Ruiz, Gamal Abdel Chasten and Rokafella of Universes (Bronx, NY)

SPEAKERS AND BREAKOUT SESSION LEADERS

- Juan Berumen - La Peña Cultural Center (Berkeley, CA)
- Toni Blackman - Freestyle Union (Washington, DC)
- Baye Adofo-Wilson - Lincoln Park/Coast Cultural District, Inc. and National Hip-Hop Political Convention (Newark, NJ)
- Marinieves Alba - International Hip Hop Exchange (New York, NY)
- James Bernard - Project Forum on Race and Democracy (New York, NY)
- Alison Bernstein - Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program The Ford Foundation (New York, NY)
- Jacqueline A. Berrien - Governance and Civil Society unit, Peace and Social Justice Program, The Ford Foundation (New York, NY)
- Vee Bravo - Independent Media-Maker and Activist, Estilo Media Project (Brooklyn, NY)
- Jeff Chang - Author, former Senior Editor of Politics at Russell Simmons' *360hiphop.com*, founding editor of *ColorLines* magazine and a co-founder of the Hip-Hop indie label, *Sole Sides* (Berkeley, CA)

- Sarah Costa - Education, Sexuality & Religion Unit, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation (New York, NY)
- Aya De Leon - Performing Artist, Writer and Slam Poetry Champion (Oakland, CA)
- Kamilah Forbes - Hip-Hop Theatre Junction (New York, NY)
- Jon Funabiki - Media, Arts & Culture Unit, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation (New York, NY)
- Miguel Garcia - Community & Resource Development Unit, Assets Building & Community Development Program, The Ford Foundation (New York, NY)
- Loren Harris - Community & Resource Development Unit, Assets Building & Community Development Program, The Ford Foundation (New York, NY)
- Rennie Harris - Rennie Harris PureMovement (Philadelphia, PA)
- Jakada "J" Imani - Ella Baker Center for Human Rights (San Francisco, CA)
- Taj James - Movement Strategy Center (Oakland, CA)
- Marc Bamuthi Joseph - Performance Artist, Writer, National Poetry Slam champion (San Francisco, CA)
- Uday Sharad Joshi - New WORLD Theater at the University of Massachusetts (Amherst, MA)
- James Kass - Youth Speaks (San Francisco, CA)
- Kwikstep - Hip-Hop Dancer, Performance Artist and Music Producer, Full Circle Productions (North Bergen, NJ)
- Kim McGillicuddy - Organizer, Youth Justice Coalition/Free LA! (Los Angeles, CA)
- Rha Goddess - Performance Artist and Activist, Divine Dime Entertainment, Ltd. (Forestburgh, NY)
- Kate Kyung Ji Rhee - Prison Moratorium Project (New York, NY)
- Lenora Pace - Theater Director, Dramaturge and Developer (Brooklyn, NY)
- Favianna Rodriguez - Visual Element (Oakland, CA)
- Rokafella - Hip-Hop Dancer and Performance Artist, Full Circle Productions (North Bergen, NJ)
- Mildred Ruiz - Co-Founder, Universes (Bronx, NY)
- Mark Russell - Executive/Artistic Director, Performance Space 122 (New York, NY)
- Malika Sanders - Activist and former Director, Twenty-First Century Youth Leadership Movement (Selma, AL)
- Sylvia Sherman - La Peña Cultural Center (Berkeley, CA)
- Thenmozhi Soundararajan - Third World Majority (Oakland, CA)
- Roberta Uno - Media, Arts & Culture Unit, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation (New York, NY)
- William "Upski" Wimsatt - Journalist and League of Independent Voters (New York, NY)
- Clyde Valentin - Hip-Hop Theater Festival and Co-Founder, *Stress Magazine* (Brooklyn, NY)
- Cristina Verán - Journalist, Historian, Educator and United Nations Correspondent (New York, NY)

FORUM PARTICIPANTS

- Davey D - Historian - Journalist, DeeJay & Community Activist
- Jaishri Abichandani - Queens Museum of Art
- Bill Aguado - Bronx Council on the Arts
- Alberta Arthurs - StreamingCulture
- Caron Atlas - Consultant
- Quang Bao - Asian American Writers Workshop
- Kimberly Bartosik - Surdna Foundation
- Roberto Bedoya - Consultant
- Ted Berger - New York Foundation for the Arts
- Philip Bither - Walker Arts Center
- Beth Boone - Miami Light Project
- Claudine Brown - Nathan Cummings Foundation
- Helen Brunner - Albert A. List Foundation
- Emilya Cachapero - Theater Communications Group
- Ben Cameron - Theater Communications Group
- Kim Chan - Association of Performing Arts Presenters
- Ben Chavis - Hip Hop Summit Action Network
- Lillian Cho - Asian American Arts Alliance
- Yahnnes Cleary - Economic Development, Assets Building & Community Development Program The Ford Foundation
- Rachel Cooper - Asia Society
- Diana Coryat - Global Action Project
- Larry Cox - Human Rights Unit, Peace & Social Justice Program, The Ford Foundation
- Pat Cruz - Aaron Davis Hall
- Jabril Davis - Youth Task Force
- Tanya Diaz - Tides Foundation, SF
- Jose Dominguez - D.C. Arts Commission
- Marilyn Donini - Altria Foundation
- Gita Drury - Active Element Foundation
- Cathy Edwards - Dance Theater Workshop
- Susie Erenrich - Media, Arts & Culture Unit, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation
- Oskar Eustis - Trinity Repertory Theater
- Richard Evans - Emc.Arts
- Gertrude Fraser - Education, Sexuality & Religion Unit, Peace & Social Justice Program, The Ford Foundation
- Chris Gentile - Emc.Arts
- Jaribu Hill - Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights
- Jessica Holland - Tides Foundation, NYC
- Dana Hughes - Communications, The Ford Foundation
- Cheryl Ikemiya - Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
- Omana Imani - Underground Railroad
- Gayle Isa - Asian Arts Initiative
- Joan Jeffri - Research Center for Arts and Culture, Teachers College, Columbia University
- Jee Kim - Surdna Foundation
- Bakari Kitwana - Writer
- Barbara Klugman - Sexuality & Reproductive Health, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation
- Maurine Knighton - 651 Arts
- Sally Kohn, Governance & Civil Society Unit, Peace & Social Justice Program, The Ford Foundation,
- Irene Korenfield, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation,
- Anna Lefer - Open Society Institute
- Chauncy Lennon - Economic Development Unit, Assets Building & Community Development Program, The Ford Foundation
- Becky Lentz - Media, Arts & Culture Unit, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation
- Ruby Lerner - Creative Capital Foundation
- Marcus Littles - Community & Resource Development, Assets Building & Community Development Program, The Ford Foundation
- Marc Masterson - Actors' Theater of Louisville

- Dave Mazzoli - Media, Arts & Culture Unit, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation
- Vera Miao - Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing
- Sam Miller - New England Foundation for Arts
- Marcyliena Morgan - The Hip Hop Archives, Harvard University
- Heather Moss - Education, Sexuality & Religion Unit, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation
- Jim Nicola - New York Theater Workshop
- Mitty Owens - Economic Development Unit, Assets Building & Community Development Program, The Ford Foundation
- Christine Peng - Global Action Project
- Renata Petroni - Arts International
- Janice Petrovich - Education, Sexuality & Religion Unit, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation
- Barbara Phillips - Human Rights Unit, Peace & Social Justice Program, The Ford Foundation
- Carol Pollack - Human Rights Unit, Peace & Social Justice Program, The Ford Foundation
- Renny Pritikin - Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
- Kate Rhee - Prison Moratorium Project
- Betsy Richards - Media, Arts & Culture Unit, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation
- Petra Riviere - Bronx Museum of Art
- Rosabla Rolon - National Association of Latino Arts & Culture
- Bird Runningwater - Native American Program, Sundance Institute
- Diane Sanchez - East Bay Community Foundation
- Greta Scharnweber - Education, Sexuality & Religion Unit, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation
- Baraka Sele - New Jersey Performing Arts Center
- David Sheingold - Dance Theater Workshop
- Jael Silliman - Human Rights Unit, Peace & Social Justice Program, The Ford Foundation
- Julie Simpson - Columbia College Chicago
- Alvin Starks - Open Society Institute
- Tracey Sturdivant - National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
- Lynn Szwaja - Rockefeller Foundation
- Kofi Taha - Active Element Foundation
- Eddie Torres - Media, Arts & Culture Unit, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation
- Rhea Vedro - Artist Youth Educators International Collective (A.Y.E.)
- Renee Villaneueva - Education, Sexuality & Religion Unit, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, Ford Foundation
- Alaka Wali - Field Museum, Chicago
- MK Wegmann - National Performance Network
- Vanessa Whang - National Endowment for the Arts
- Margaret Wilkerson - Media, Arts & Culture, Knowledge, Creativity & Freedom Program, The Ford Foundation
- Talvin Wilks - New WORLD Theater

¹ The 1st Hip-Hop activism discussion, *Move the Crowd: The Emergence of Hip-Hop Activism*, took place on July 17, 2002 at the Open Society Institute in New York, NY, and the 2nd Hip-Hop activism discussion, *Constant Elevation: The Rise of Bay Area Hip-Hop Activism*, took place on March 6, 2003 at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, CA. The initial Hip-Hop aesthetics conversation, *Future Aesthetics: The Impact of Hip-Hop Culture in Contemporary Performance Artist Dialogue*, was held on September 15 & 16, 2003 in San Francisco, CA, at both the ODC Theater and Youth Speaks, sponsored by La Peña Cultural Center, in partnership with the Hip-Hop Theater Festival

² "Re-mixing": what a turntablist DJ does with several, seemingly disparate songs, musical samples and/or other sound bites.

³ To request a copy of the Future Aesthetics DVD, email: intervalarts-hiphop@yahoo.com