

MARTHA DIAZ

Gallatin School of Individualized Study

Master of Arts, May 2010

Hip-Hop Culture as a Tool for Human Rights and Social Change

Specialization: Building Social Capital, Safer Cities, Education and Media Reform



Martha Diaz is a mother, community organizer, educator, media producer, archivist, social entrepreneur, and the founder and president of the Hip-Hop Association (H²A). She is an award-winning leader who has been dedicated to elevating and innovating local communities through the power of Hip-Hop culture for over 15 years. Her impact can be traced to her early days as a young apprentice for the late Ted Demme, producer and director of the influential television show *Yo! MTV Raps*. Through her own production company, Akasha Entertainment, Martha implemented socially conscious projects and worked with a diverse list of clients such as: Hakuodo Agency, SONY, Americans for the Arts, UNESCO, Black Filmmaker Foundation, International Music Council, UN-HABITAT, and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement.

Starting with the establishment of the Hip-Hop Odyssey (H²O) Film Festival, By mobilizing filmmakers, executives, activists, artists, and educators, Martha would form the award winning community building organization - *Hip-Hop Association* [H²A]. Starting with an idea of creating the *Hip-Hop Odyssey* [H²O] international film festival, Martha would also develop the *Hip-Hop Education* [H²Ed] initiative and other projects with the same strategy of activating and uniting the community. Now in its 7th year, the H²A is the recipient of the *Union Square Arts Award* and it's considered one of the leading international Hip-Hop institutions. The mission of the H²A is to facilitate social justice, education and media reform, cross-cultural understanding, economic sustainability, and civic engagement, while preserving Hip-Hop culture for scholarship and future generations. The H²A empowers the community through programming, youth and leadership development, human rights advocacy, educational resources, and distribution mechanisms.

Martha is the co-creator of the *Hip-Hop Education Guidebook Series*, and is releasing her second book entitled, *Fresh, Bold and So Def: Women In Hip-Hop Changing The Game* in September 2009. Through the Womanhood Learning Project initiative, Martha created the *Ladies First Fund*, the first grant for women in Hip-Hop dedicated to fostering the next generation of social entrepreneurs. She also launched *H2ONewsreel*, the first Hip-Hop media and education resource distribution label catering to the education market. Martha is Co-founder and Director of the *Hip-Hop Education Center for Research, Training, and Evaluation*, a partnership with the H²A and the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education Reform at NYU.

Martha has been invited to participate as a curator, speaker, moderator, and workshop facilitator at numerous arts and educational institutions, conferences, and social forums across the US and abroad, including: Hip-Hop and Social Change Conference, the Family and Community Violence Prevention National Conference, World Youth Forum, National Association for Latino Independent Producers Conference, NYC Council's Middle School Task Force, The Rose and Erwin S. Wolfson Center for National Affairs Speaker's Series, Hip-Hop Congress, Rap Sessions, Cultural Agents Initiative at Harvard University, and The Elizabeth Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum. Martha is completing her Master's Degree on *Hip-Hop Culture as Tool for Human Rights and Social Change* at the Gallatin School for Individualized Study at New York University. Martha is the recipient of the Catherine B. Reynolds Scholarship, Black Lily Emerging Leader Award, and Mary Chung Nia Award. She serves on the Yonity Arts Advisory Board, The Laundromat Project Artist and Community Council, and is a Clinton Global Initiative University member.

MARTHA DIAZ

WORK EXPERIENCE

Hip-Hop Association (H2A), New York, NY

President, Jan. 2002 – Present

- Founder of the Hip-Hop Association (H2A), an international non-profit organization that uses Hip-Hop culture as a tool to facilitate critical thinking, foster social change & unity, by empowering communities through the use of media, technology, education & leadership development
- Visionary & creative director of the H2A with duties that include: fundraising; supervising & training staff; programmer & curator of over 50 events in 5 years; developing & cultivating relationships with community leaders and partners
- Producer of the Hip-Hop Odyssey International Film Festival, Hip-Hop Education Summit and Defuse News Service that includes TV specials, radio shows & a monthly newsletter

Akasha Entertainment, New York, NY

Principal, June 1992 – Present

- Freelance/Independent producer, director, talent coordinator, brand and marketing developer, and consultant for different arts, education, and media institutions, advertising and marketing companies, and distribution networks.
- Started career as personal assistant to the late Producer/Director, Ted Demme on YO! MTV Raps, Hangin'w/MTV, MTV Jams, and the feature films: Who's The Man? and The Ref.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Stop The Violence Movement, National

Advisory Committee Member, Apr. 2008 – Present

PENCIL (Public Education Needs Civic Involvement in Learning) Program, Bronx, NY

Principal For A Day at IS 217, Oct. 2007 - Present

Black Girl Rock Awards, New York, NY

Host Committee Member, Oct. 2007

Katrina Information Network, National

Advisory Committee Member, Aug. 2007 – Present

New York City Council Middle School Task Force, New York, NY

Task Force Member, May 2007 – Present

Hip Hop Congress, National

Advisory Committee Member, July 2006 – July 2007

EDUCATION

New York University, Gallatin School for Individualized Study, New York, NY

Candidate for Master of Arts, May 2010

Specialization: Building Social Capital, Safer Cities, Education and Media Reform

Fairleigh Dickinson University, NJ

Bachelor of Arts, 1992

Major: Communications

Minor: TV & Film Production

City College of New York, New York, NY
Graduate Studies, Education – Literacy, 2002-2003

DISTINCTIONS AND AFFILIATIONS

- NYU Reynolds Graduate Fellowship in Social Entrepreneurship, 2008
- Black Lily Emerging Leader Award, 2008
- Union Square Arts Award, 2007
- Teaching Fellowship, 2002
- Trinity College, Panelist, April 2007: “Women in Hip-Hop: How is Hip-Hop Helping or Hurting Roles of Women Internationally?”
- University of Rochester, Panelist, April 2007: “Hip-Hop's Intent: The History and Future of Hip-Hop, Entrepreneurship and Women”
- University of Alaska, Workshop Facilitator, April 2007: “Developing Yourself Is Your Career - Hip-Hop Student Leadership Conference”
- New York University, Moderator, March 2008: “Hip-Hop and Education: Uniting Communities – Latino Unity Conference”
- Urban League Young Professionals, Workshop Facilitators, March 2008: “Power is Knowledge is Shared: Spoken Word and Media - We Are Hip-Hop: Remixing the Art of Social Change – Anchorage Conference”
 - Ladies First! The Power of Women Community Leaders & Entrepreneurs in Hip-Hop – We Are Hip-Hop: Remixing the Art of Social Change Conference
- Hunter College, Moderator, March 2008: “WAR (Women Armed and Ready): Reel Images of Women in Hip-Hop – NYC Grassroots Media Conference”
- New School University, Moderator, March 2007: “The Role of Women in Hip Hop, and The Power of Hip Hop As A Tool For Organizing”
- Academy for Creative Education and the Arts, Workshop Facilitators, May 2007: “Hip-Hop Culture For Personal and Community Development”
- Clemson University, Panelist, June 2007: “Gender and Hip-Hop: Does Hip-Hop Hate Women? – Rap Sessions: Community Dialogues on Hip-Hop”
- University of Ohio, Keynote Speaker, July 2007: “Hip-Hop Congress Annual Convention”
- University of Wisconsin, Workshop Facilitators, July 2007: “Bigger Than Hip-Hop: The Role of Women, Globalization and Social Entrepreneurship - Hip-Hop and Spoken Word Summer Teacher Institute”
- United Nations Association/George Washington University, Moderator, October 2007: “The UN and Hip-Hop: Bridging The Gap - United Nations Week”
- St. John’s University, Panelist/Curator, November 2007: “The Global Impact of Hip-Hop Culture”