

PRESS RELEASE

The Souls of Black Girls NEWS

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Documentary Film, *The Souls of Black Girls* accepted as Official Selection of the Pan African Film & Arts Festival

LOS ANGELES, CA—January 10, 2007—*The Souls of Black Girls*, a documentary written, edited and produced by Daphne S. Valerius has been officially selected as a participant of the 15th Annual Pan African Film & Arts Festival taking place in Los Angeles February 8-19th. The provocative news documentary features candid interviews with young women discussing their self-image *and* social commentary from Rapper *Chuck D*, Actresses *Regina King* and *Jada Pinkett Smith*, *Washington Week* Moderator (PBS) *Gwen Ifill* and Cultural Critic *Michaela Angela Davis*, among others.

The Souls of Black Girls, produced as a fulfillment of the Journalism Masters Program at Emerson College, takes a critical look at media images and examines the relationship between the historical and existing images of women of color in the media. The documentary also raises the question of whether or not women of color may be suffering from a self-image disorder as a result of trying to attain the standards of beauty that are celebrated in media images.

"As a young Black girl, I grew up feeling very much like the ugly duckling compared to my peers as a result of not looking a certain way, much like Pecola Breedlove of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. By putting together this documentary, it allowed me to uncover and examine why I, along with many other women of color, feel the need to manipulate our physical appearances," says Valerius who based the documentary on her undergraduate research at St. John's University entitled, *Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence: The Effects of Mass Media on Women of Color...Forgotten*.

The title of documentary also bears historical significance and meaning, deriving from the book, *The Souls of Black Folks*, published in 1903 by Scholar W.E.B Dubois. "W.E.B Dubois introduced in his writing the idea of the Negro suffering from a double-consciousness condition within the United States. I decided to take this concept a step further by illustrating how Black women suffer from a triple consciousness condition, having to be a Negro, an American and a woman within our society and also having to define our own standard of beauty," stated Valerius.

The Souls of Black Girls will premiere for the first time at the 15th Annual Pan-African Film & Arts Festival taking place at the Magic Johnson Theatres in Los Angeles and will include a Q & A session with its producer after the screening. For more information about the screening of *The Souls of Black Girls* during the Pan-African Film & Arts Festival, please visit www.paff.org or the documentary website www.soulsofblackgirls.com.

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