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# The Souls of Black Girls NEWS

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## Documentary Film, *The Souls of Black Girls* accepted as Official Selection of the H2O [HIP-HOP Odyssey] International Film Festival

*NOTE TO MEDIA: WE INVITE COVERAGE OF THIS EVENT AND WELCOME REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH THE FILMMAKER.*

**NEW YORK, NY—MAY 28, 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 5<sup>th</sup> Annual H2O (Hip-Hop Odyssey) International Film Festival taking place in **New York City**. The screening will begin at **8 P.M** on **Sunday June 10<sup>th</sup>** at in the **ImaginAsian Theatre at 239 East 59th Street**. A Q&A session will follow.

The provocative news documentary features candid interviews with young women discussing their self-image *and* social commentary from Actresses **Regina King** and **Jada Pinkett Smith**, PBS *Washington Week* Moderator **Gwen Ifill**, Rapper/Political Activist **Chuck D**, and Cultural Critic **Michaela Angela Davis**, among others. The title of the documentary derives from the seminal **W.E.B. Dubois** book *The Souls of Black Folks*.

While the film was made prior to the infamous **Don Imus** incident last month, *The Souls of Black Girls* addresses many of the issues being raised in the current national discussion of racism and sexism in the media arising from the inflammatory, on-air remarks by the former talk-jock concerning the **young women of the Rutgers University basketball team**.

*The Souls of Black Girls* takes a critical look at media images—how they are instituted, established and controlled. The documentary also examines the relationship between the historical and existing media images of women of color and raises the question of whether they 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*.

Since its completion, *The Souls of Black Girls*, has premiered at the **2007 Pan African Film & Arts Festival** in Los Angeles, showcased on **AOL Black Voices**, featured exclusively at the **Apollo Theater's "HealthTime at the Apollo"** event commemorating Women's History Month and requested

for private screenings at various institutions and organizations including Actress Terri J. Vaughn's **Take Wings Foundation**.

For more information about the screening of *The Souls of Black Girls* during the H2O (Hip-Hop Odyssey) International Film Festival, please visit <http://www.h2oiff.org/>. For more information about *The Souls of Black Girls* and screening updates, please visit the official website at [www.soulsofblackgirls.com](http://www.soulsofblackgirls.com) or [www.myspace.com/soulsofblackgirls](http://www.myspace.com/soulsofblackgirls).

### **About the 5th Annual H2O [Hip-Hop Odyssey] International Film Festival**

As the largest Hip-Hop film festival in the world, the H2O [Hip-Hop Odyssey] International Film Festival provides a platform for filmmakers to showcase and define the variety of images that depict Hip-Hop culture and its communities. This year's theme "THE WORLD IS YOURS?" highlights the Hip-Hop community of the early/mid 90's; a time when youth in the community began demanding money, power, and respect.

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