

“Do It Yourself Cinema” Black filmmaker preaches

Warrington Hudlin says there no more excuses for Blacks to make their own films, at TBAAL Film

**By Antoinette Nevils
Contributing Writer**

“Don’t expect the slave master to set you free. It’s their money, they did it their way.”

The words of filmmaker and producer Warrington Hudlin were expressed unapologetically when he was recently in Dallas, as the guest speaker at The Black Academy of Arts and Letters’ 24-Hour Filmfest. Hudlin shared both fun and serious anecdotes of his experiences working with some of the greatest black stars and filmmakers. He told of his experiences as a producer working on the set of the movie *Boomerang* with Eddie Murphy, Halle Berry, Grace Jones and others. He also told the obstacles filmmakers faced back then and now, discussing the work of Spike Lee and Danny Glover and the struggles to get the backing and financial support needed to make successful films.

Hudlin added, that, today however, new media brings new opportunity.

“The gates have been unlocked and can’t be locked anymore,” Hudlin said. “The gates now are all digital, with the Internet. We have no longer any excuse not to make our movies, ...communicate.”

Hudlin said the gates cannot be locked because the Internet solves the many problems of the black film industry. With distribution now online and costs of productions lowered, people can now use cell phones or basic camera equipment to make movies with the help of the Internet and media such as YouTube. He said we can create internet channels using YouTube or our own dedicated channel and communicate.

The 24-Hour Filmfest showed six African-American films from the 1930s-1950s, giving audiences a taste of the skills and talents of black actors and filmmakers back then. Curtis King, TBAAL’s founder and president, selected different films full of different issues and subjects such as liberation, fame, and



Warrington Hudlin

family. He said the goal of the event was to spread knowledge about the history of black films and filmmakers, and to show people what filmmakers created despite their lack of money and support during the times of racism and inequality.

King said he believes these films and their issues are relatable now because the subject matters are still topics covered today. He also said this event is relatable today because black filmmakers

and artists still struggle and tackle the same issues like distribution and funding today.

The films’ characters were reflective of the times the films were made, but the important factor is that these films featured black actors as the stars and told the true lives of blacks in the 1930s to 1950s, King said. Gwendolyn Hargrove, Director of Operations of TBAAL, said these films broke many barriers by

casting a predominantly black cast, having urban and ethnic music, and having these lead characters play a variety of dominant roles that do not include stereotypical roles such as being maids, cooks, slaves, or criminals, which is what many blacks played, if that, in the early 1900s.

“Do-It-Yourself Cinema” is what Hudlin promotes for minorities. He believes with the technology now, filmmaking is easier and more accessible to minorities through online and social media. Hudlin said it’s important for not just African-Americans, but for all people of color to join together and work together to create our own films and productions if the film industry doesn’t help us.

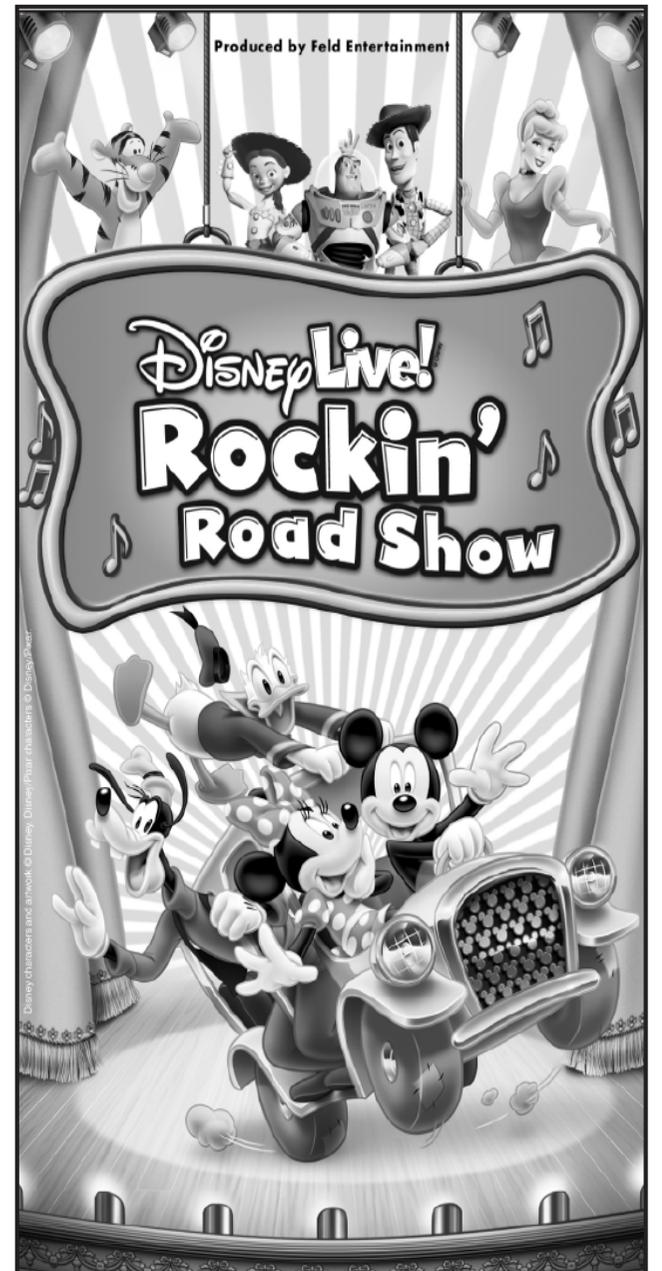
“We need to tell our stories uncut, because they put a cut on everything we do,” Hudlin said. “We can really work together in solidarity and now that the gates are unlocked, make our movies.”

Hudlin further stated people must realize that “Hollywood can’t understand

us” and so they make films based off what they know or see and insert that into films. Many white directors got their start working on black films, he said.

Hudlin believes there should be a variety of films to show the variety of African-

American culture. He admits that the big Hollywood industry can still restrict minority films and that unfortunately there is not much people can do for now about the long-winded obstacle, but that should not stop films from being made.



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