

Paving the Way for the Next Generation of German American Friendship: Consul General Powell Opens HipHop Exhibit

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Martha Cooper on HipHop and youth

File Martha_Cooper_Youth.wmv

(Words that could not be identified are marked “???”)

Interviewer: Why do you think the youth still likes Hip-hop?

Martha Cooper: I think it's 'cause they invented it and – this is my own personal opinion is that the existing adult culture, such as ballet or opera or whatever, the high arts, are just not connecting with youth. I mean, people were sending their kids to piano lessons and that – it didn't relate to their everyday lives for whatever reason. You know, times have changed, but the culture - their parents were still trying to impose adult high end culture. And they invented like an art form that relates more to comic strips. You know, it's just – they just kind of broke out and invented their own second culture, the music, the art, the dance, and wondered--

Interviewer: And the rap was after your recordings, right? When you started taking your pictures, the rap part was not--

Martha Cooper: I simply didn't photograph as much rap, because I felt like, a still photograph couldn't capture the music. You know, you're missing the essential element of what rap is, which is the words and the music. If you take a still photo, all you get is a guy with a mike.

Interviewer: Yeah, sure.

Martha Cooper: I wasn't so interested really. It wasn't my idea to document Hip-hop culture. I was documenting the things that I thought were visual, now, if I'd done more with the rap, I'd probably be rich now, because--

Interviewer: Eminem or something like--

Martha Cooper: It turned out that rappers are what everybody is interested in now, to be documented, but I didn't do much with that, because of still photographing.

Interviewer: Do you think you change – or do you feel like something, I changed somebody's life because I made this popular Hip-hop?

Martha Cooper: Well, they came up to me and said, you know – I mean, obviously with the TV I did. I got – Yeah, I mean, maybe not for the better, but (laughs). I think it set their lives off in different directions, yes. I mean, I do, like, that way. And that's a really wonderful feeling. I mean, I feel like I was really lucky, I was there at a particular time at a particular place and I had enough sense to, like, keep shooting.