

November 26, 2019

Report Corcoran Women's Committee Grant Award Supporting ARTLAB

Project Award Timeline: April 2019 - Oct 2019

The Hirshhorn's ARTLAB addresses the needs of teens throughout the Washington, DC metropolitan area who lack access to current technologies — a challenge that has created a gap in skills that are essential for success in today's digital-driven workforce. This area is extremely economically polarized, with pockets of high-poverty neighborhoods nestled within more affluent communities, as well as entire high-poverty Wards.

According to the DC Government, the District's young people struggle to find entry level employment opportunities. Just 13.2% of 16-19-year-old District residents are able to find paid unsubsidized employment which results in more than 14,000 young people being categorized as "disconnected youth" due to unemployment and non-enrollment in school. Jobs that pay a livable wage require workers to have educational credentials, a mix of hard and soft skills and some form of work experience. Consequently, as the region's economy grows to include more digital and tech sector jobs, a lack of 21st century skills puts this audience at a severe disadvantage when applying for college, technical programs and employment. ARTLAB fills this critical need by offering education, skills-based training, and work experience to this underserved community.

Through its highly successful *Emerging Artists Program*, ARTLAB offers teens opportunities to advance their digital media skills by applying to receive individualized instruction on specific projects with artist educators and mentors. In 2019, ARTLAB intentionally focused its summer and fall internship programming into intensive educational opportunities in broadcasting, audio engineering, music technology, and film production. These areas have historical disparities for formally recognizing women and people of color in leadership positions despite their impact, involvement, and guidance.

Utilizing the generous support from the Corcoran Women's Committee, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden's ARTLAB Program was able to recruit and hire Kosi Dunn, a local professional artist educator holding unique skills in youth development, podcasting, music production, poetry, and audio engineering. As the newest mentor and artist educator for ARTLAB, Kosi made a valuable contribution for ARTLAB's summer and fall intensive internship programs. His work was so successful and impactful for ARTLAB teen participants that the Hirshhorn has engaged Kosi as a mentor and educator for upcoming spring programming.

Kosi conceptualized, facilitated, and hosted the summer Podsquad and late summer/early fall School of Hip-Hop internship experiences as lead educator and mentor. Both programs were intentionally developed to help level the digital production field; open doors for more women and people of color in broadcasting, sound engineering, and film production; and mentor the next generation of directors and producers.



Kosi Dunn Bio

Mandla 'Kosi' Dunn is a South African-American writer from PG County, Maryland. Kosi completed a bachelor's degree at the University of Maryland - College Park in Transmedia Storytelling, a major he developed through the Individual Studies program which explores the intersection of speculative fiction and emerging media. Kosi currently serves as ARTLAB's Artist Mentor and Musical Performance Coordinator. He has performed poetry at venues such as the Kennedy Center, the Arena Stage, and the State Theater in South Africa and occasionally DJs under the moniker DJ PLOT TWIST.

ATLAB Podsquad

Podsquad was an 8-week skill-based intensive internship experience focused on podcasting and all aspects of film production in which 15 students were selected to create a series of podcast videos to feature during the Smithsonian National Museum of American History's annual National Youth Summit – a nationwide webcast viewed by more than 200 secondary schools and universities focused on truly innovative STEAM education. Final teen produced Podsquad broadcasting videos may be accessed at the link provided below:

2019 National Youth Summit [PodSquad videos](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1mKiVh7sj3p9z8qAD0igEEocuaDnGSxqi?usp=sharing)
(<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1mKiVh7sj3p9z8qAD0igEEocuaDnGSxqi?usp=sharing>)

To execute the program, Kosi worked in partnership with educators at the National Museum of American History to design and implement a program with hands-on experiences and training. The National Youth Summit collaboration between the Hirshhorn's ARTLAB and the National Museum of American History was supported with funding from the Coca-Cola Foundation and additional funding from the Smithsonian Youth Access Grants Program and the Smithsonian's American Women's History Initiative.

With the Podsquad experience and the support of the Corcoran Women's Committee, ARTLAB has achieved the following goals and successes:

1. Produced a curriculum focused on providing youth an expanded knowledge of women in American history while providing professional development in the key areas of audio engineering, on-air broadcast, film production, effective research, public speaking, leadership, and team collaboration.
2. Mentored and supported 15 teens to develop three professional broadcast videos for a nationally webcasted screening in the National Museum of American History's 2019 National Youth Summit.
3. Executed an 8-week intensive multi-media internship program dedicated to uplifting and exploring the stories of American women in civic history through podcasting and film.

School of Hip-Hop (SOHH)

Following the successful implementation of the Podsquad focused internship program, the Hirshhorn received frequent requests for similar programming and internship opportunities from ARTLAB's general studio teen participants and inquiries from new ARTLAB teens. Subsequently, ARTLAB secured an additional grant from the Smithsonian's institution-wide special initiative, Smithsonian Year of Music, to build upon the recent success and maximize the momentum and interest generated through the Podsquad program.. The additional funds served as match funds to support Kosi's design of a second 8-week intensive internship experience entitled ARTLAB's School of Hip-Hop (SOHH).

Mirroring Podsquad, ARTLAB's SOHH served as an artistic and professional development opportunity for teens to explore major fields of entertainment while producing a collaborative project dedicated to their community. The program operated as a late summer/early fall internship in which 15 teens residing in the DC-metro area examined key elements of music production and lyrical performance while being mentored and led by Kosi to compose an original compilation mixtape. The program culminated with *DC Collide*, the Hirshhorn's first large-scale outdoor community concert event highlighting the talents of over 44 youth performers, and three of the District's most dynamic youth serving programs. *DC Collide* was hosted on the Hirshhorn Museum's plaza, offering youth artists a performance platform that included over 1,300 visitors.



One of the over 44 youth performers showcased at Hirshhorn's *DC Collide*.

With the support of the Corcoran Women's Committee and the award from the Smithsonian Year of Music, Kosi was able to design and execute ARTLAB's School of Hip-Hop program, allowing ARTLAB to achieve the following goals:

1. Design an intentionally focused curriculum that supported 15 teens in developing professional skills in audio engineering, music production, on-stage performance, songwriting and composition, and public speaking.

2. Host a community concert joining youth serving programs, schools, and creative arts educators in the DC-metro area.
3. In addition to Kosi Dunn's lead mentorship and coordination role—supported by the Corcoran Women's Committee's award—ARTLAB was able to hire two highly skilled guest artist educators with unique skill sets to provide additional mentorship and training for program participants.
4. Facilitate an 8-week paid-internship program that promoted collaborative and skill-based digital learning through the examination of hip-hop.
5. Execute the Hirshhorn Museum's first large scale community concert showcasing the talent of 44 youth performers residing in the DC-metro area to over 1,300 museum visitors.
6. Secure partnerships with three local youth serving spaces in the DC-metro area, including: Girls Rock! DC, Dreams and Creations Performing Arts Center and Suitland High School's Center for Visual and Performing Arts.
7. Elevate the Hirshhorn Museum's initiative to connect its programming with the District's creative community.



One of the many groups showcased at Hirshhorn's *DC Collide*.



DC Collide audience members enjoying the Hirshhorn's first large scale community concert.

Impact of Support

The generous award from the Corcoran Women's Committee was utilized to engage Kosi Dunn as a mentor and guest artist for the Hirshhorn's radically inclusive ARTLAB program. Kosi's dynamic skillset and mentorship acumen made him a perfect addition to the ARTLAB team and our innovative and nurturing approach to learning, which greatly increased the Hirshhorn's ability to offer intensive internship opportunities that foster the boundless creativity of DC's disadvantaged youth and provide dynamic hands-on experiences with art and technology.

Having made such a major impact in ARTLAB, Kosi has been added as an ARTLAB core staff member, and he now serves as ARTLAB's Musical Performance Artist Educator. With Kosi's help, a population of youth interested in exploring audio engineering, audio mixing, on-stage performance and professional broadcast as potential career fields has emerged and is currently being sustained.

Under Kosi's leadership, SOHH has been expanded into a weekly program with participants receiving frequent requests for performance bookings inside and outside of the Hirshhorn Museum. Further, Kosi has implemented monthly Hirshhorn teen open mic programming to accommodate the continuous requests from SOHH participants for additional on-stage performance opportunities.

More impressively, through SOHH, Kosi has led the release of ARTLAB's first compilation mixtape featuring eight original songs written and produced by teens. The mixtape, *ARTLAB's School of Hip-Hop* is now available for live streaming on SoundCloud, [here](#). Kosi is currently working with a set of 17 teens to release a second School of Hip-Hop mixtape in December 2019.

Financial Report: Kosi Dunn Contractual Services Applied to Corcoran Women's Committee Award Totaling \$15,000

Invoice Amount	Date Expended	Dunn Mentorship Work Period
\$3,600	1-Jul	5/16/19-6/16/19
\$3,000	29-Jul	6/16/19-7/15/19
\$3,000	13-Sep	7/16/19-8/9/19
\$3,377	23-Sep	8/16/2019-9/15/2019
\$3,000*	23-Oct	9/16/2019-10/15/2019

*Total invoice split funded: \$2,023 supported by Corcoran Women's Committee Award and \$977 supported by 2019 ARTLAB operational funds.

The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden deeply appreciates the Corcoran Women's Committee's generous award to support ARTLAB in 2019. With your support, we have been able to provide intentionally focused internship opportunities for 30 DC area teens with access to professional technology and hands-on experiences and training in the digital production and broadcasting fields. Moreover, Podsquad, School of Hip-Hop, and *DC Collide* provided platforms to showcase these young artists, producers, and broadcasters to local and non-traditional audiences, including the greater audience of the National Youth Summit for Podsquad teens. Thank you again for your collaboration and commitment in helping Hirshhorn provide opportunities that are essential to teens' growth—cognitively, socially, and creatively.

Supplemental Attachments

1. Link to School of Hip-Hop enrollment [application](#)
2. Link to ARTLAB Summer 2019 [School of Hip-Hop Mixtape](#)
3. Link to School of Hip-Hop [Summer 2019 Curriculum](#)
4. Link to additional School of Hip-Hop *DC Collide* Summer 2019 [community concert photos](#) featuring over 44 local teen artists
5. Link to 2019 National Youth Summit [PodSquad videos](#)