



Central Falls Fashionistas
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcL-Lti0gy8>

planning, I didn't imagine this many people would come. When you looked out from the stage, it was just a sea of faces."

ZuKrewe member Casimiro Pereira agreed. *"I walked out feeling so happy. I walked out ecstatic. There's so much negativity in our community, especially among young people from this neighborhood who's got problems with people from that neighborhood. This night just goes to show that we're all one community and can support one another."*

Lessons Learned

AS220 Youth is an art studio, and when youth come into our space, it's with the expectation that they're going to make something. Engaging youth in a more academic pursuit—like ethnographic research—was challenging. Success came when we made research a means to an end, with the end being a big party for the whole community. As soon as the lights went down at the end of the show, youth began asking when the next one was going to happen. If we do move forward with another fashion show, we plan to dedicate more time on the front end to folkloristic research. We'd love to bring Smithsonian curators and educators to AS220 to run workshops on sartorial traditions and "artisans of style."

Behind the Lens: Girls of Color in the Media at the Museum of the African Diaspora

by **Indiia Wilmott**

This community program puts African American adornment traditions at the heart of our media literacy program. Many of our lessons begin with an activity about a particular type of adornment and then we look critically at how that tradition is depicted in various media outlets. For example, we recently studied African American hair adornment and then took an in-depth look at the natural hair social media movement. Once the girls had a historical reference for their traditions, they were able to look at current trends with a more critical eye. I found that hair adornment is a great way to get girls to open up about how media can shape how we see ourselves.



Questions asked in our activities include: Who's in charge of the messaging? What exactly is the message being sent to young women of color? How does this messaging make them feel about their own identity? These important questions contribute to the success of our lessons, which we have learned must include these factors: celebrating women of color, analyzing the current media messaging surrounding women of color, and asking how such messages make the girls feel.

Our hope with Behind the Lens is that we inspire our girls not only to look at social media, reality television, magazines and other media with a critical eye, but also create or share content that they want to see and that they want others to see. They can start a Tumblr page, Pinterest board, or Facebook community with the purpose of sharing positive images and stories about women of color. In addition, we have given them the groundwork to help them speak up when they see something that looks or feels wrong because they understand the power behind dress, adornment, and media.