

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lisa Cortes

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Cortés, Lisa
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lisa Cortes,
Dates:	July 14, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	11 uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:07:07).
Abstract:	Filmmaker Lisa Cortes (1960 -) began her career at Def Jam records, and then turned to filmmaking where she produced <i>Precious</i> (2009). Cortes was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 14, 2013, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_188
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Executive producer Lisa Cortes was born on December 24, 1960 in Milford, Connecticut. Although she was born in Connecticut, Cortes spent much of her youth on the streets of Harlem. She attended Milford Academy and then enrolled in Yale University where she majored in American Studies. After graduating she went into the music business where she worked with Russell Simmons and Rick Rubin, the founders of Def Jam. Cortes then joined the staff at Mercury Records. While at Mercury Records, she worked with stars such as Vanessa Williams and Brian McKnight. In 1994, Cortes was offered her own label called Loose Cannon. Loose Cannon lasted for two years until it was shut down on October 31, 1996, shortly after Cortes sued Mercury records for sexual and racial discrimination.

After leaving the music industry, Cortes turned her interests to film. She enrolled at the School of Visual Arts in New York and later the New York Film Academy. A producer and close friend, Lee Daniels, was producing *Monster's Ball* and Cortes and Daniels together subsequently collaborated on movies such as *Woodsmen* (2004), *Shadowboxer* (2005), *Tennessee* (2008), and *Precious* (2009).

Cortes founded her own company, Cortes Films in 2010. Cortes Films has produced two films *Happy Birthday to a Beautiful Woman: a Portrait of My Mother*, a film about Mickalene Thomas' mother and her struggle with aging and kidney disease, and *Kwaku Ananse* a film about West African fables of Kwaku Ananse and a young woman named, Nyan Koronhwea, attending her estranged father's funeral while trying to come to terms with her father's double life.

Heralded as a "disturbing masterwork of human survival" by *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Precious* won the Grand Jury Prize and the Audience Award at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival. *Precious* was also nominated for six Academy Awards, winning two; and was praised by publications such as *Variety* and *The New York Times*, and garnered multiple Golden Globe nominations.

Cortes was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* July 14, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Lisa Cortes was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on July 14, 2013, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 11 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Filmmaker Lisa Cortes (1960 -) began her career at Def Jam records, and then turned to filmmaking where she produced Precious (2009).

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Cortés, Lisa

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Cortés, Lisa--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Filmmaker

HistoryMakers® Category:

EntertainmentMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lisa Cortes, July 14, 2013. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Lisa Cortes, Section A2013_188_001_001, TRT: 1:29:30 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Lisa Cortes, Section A2013_188_001_002, TRT: 2:32:33 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Lisa Cortes, Section A2013_188_001_003, TRT: 3:30:46 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Lisa Cortes, Section A2013_188_001_004, TRT: 4:29:45 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Lisa Cortes, Section A2013_188_001_005, TRT: 5:28:37 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Lisa Cortes, Section A2013_188_001_006, TRT: 6:28:49 ?

- Video Oral History Interview with Lisa Cortes, Section A2013_188_001_007, TRT: 7:30:10 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Lisa Cortes, Section A2013_188_001_008, TRT: 8:33:00 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Lisa Cortes, Section A2013_188_001_009, TRT: 9:29:46 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Lisa Cortes, Section A2013_188_001_010, TRT: 10:29:40 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Lisa Cortes, Section A2013_188_001_011, TRT: 11:04:31 ?