waves

a visual examination of international surf culture within the black diaspora
PROJECT SUMMARY

Waves will follow surfing as it expands to indigenous and African peoples across the globe. From Jamnesia Surf Camp to Surfers Not Street Children, this multimedia project {a film and photography book} will document surfing, a proven therapeutic sport, and its adaptation/interaction with the Black Diaspora across the world while juxtaposing this phenomenon with international surf tourism.

FULL PROJECT PROPOSAL

Surfing as we know it today originated in Polynesian Cultures some 2-3 thousand years ago. It is speculated that it arose as an easy way for fishermen to ride back to shore. Eventually the Polynesians arrived at Hawaii, where the soon to be sport would be discovered by the western world. In Hawaii, surfing became entirely integrated into their social hierarchy system. The Upper Class were typically filled with the best surfers, allowed access to the best beaches, and rode waves on the largest and best boards. Surfing at a location or on a board outside of your class was in some cases punishable by death.

The arrival of New England Missionaries almost caused the extinction of surfing in the 1800s. It was considered a hedonistic act. It was while surfing was being maintained by a resilient few in Hawaii that it spread to California where it blossomed after being picked up by the American counterculture. It is in California that boards as we know them today began to take their technological roots {shortboards, fun boards, fish boards etc}.

Surfing has recently shown to be incredibly effective in treating PTSD and depression. Organizations such as Operation Surf have successfully used surfing along with ocean therapy to give a new sense of hope to those in need. It is highly likely that it is also effective in treating numerous other ailments of the mind.
We plan to travel and capture Surfers Not Street Children of South Africa, Jamnesia of Kingston Jamaica, Ahanta Waves of Ghana, the Bureh Beach Surf Club of Sierra Leone, and the rivalry between the Sunset Surf Club and Vanimo Surf Club of Papua New Guinea.

Surfers Not Street Children of South Africa is a youth mentorship project centered around at risk children and homeless youth. The Surfhous, only 10 minutes from the beach in Durban, acts as a center where youth can receive addiction counseling, vocational training, and life-skill counseling.

We personally discovered Jamnesia of Kingston Jamaica while location scouting for our experimental short Jamaica. The locals of Bull Bay recommended we catch Billy Mystic to get the scoop on the local areas. We came to find an entire surf school, that often takes in local black youth to learn and use their boards. When the surf isn’t up at Copa, you can see Rastafarian culture creating its own version surf culture before your eyes in the youth.

Ahanta Waves Surf School is owned and ran by Ghanaian locals. Albeit the sport is not widespread, they offer surf lessons.

Bureh Beach Surf Club is where we’re expecting to find a culture of surf intermingling with the black diaspora but have no definitive proof that such is happening. We hope to explore this community of only double digits surfers in this town 2 hours from Freetown. Here surfers offer surf and lifeguard lessons, first aid and home-cooked meals to the nearby community. Also, Sierra Leone’s tourism economy is beginning to expand; it may be interesting to see if this affects this local surf community in any way.
Papua New Guinea is the one, and a great example, of a section of the black diaspora in which surf is comparatively not that new. Introduced in the 1980s by an Australian pilot who left a surfboard behind, surf in Papua New Guinea has become a breeding ground for intense tribal surf club rivalries. Unlike popular vacation destinations such as Bali or the Mentawis Islands, Papua New Guinea has proven to be incredibly resistant to surf tourism and its destructive economic and environmental side-effects. We would specifically like to find a story in the tense interactions between two major Surf Clubs ran by two of the island’s greatest former surfers; The Vanimo Surf Club and the Sunset Surf Club.

PROPOSED PROJECT COUNTRIES

South Africa
Ghana
Sierra Leone
Jamaica
Papua New Guinea

• SOUND DESIGN

All sound tracks made and scored by the music team. Sounds, dialogue and interviews on trip. Occasional voice over.

• INSPIRATIONS

Endless Summer is the hit cult surfing film that everyone knows. Though it’s beautiful for what it is and what it’s left in it’s wake (a heightened popularity of the sport of surfing, countless other surf documentaries and this new sport of surf cinematography), it was also inherently problematic. There’s numerous examples of racism, from black face to the use of the word “savages” while talking about a group of
African peoples they were interacting with on their trip. The film is also laden with sexism, and avoided diving into any of the political complexities of the time.

From our research, we know the origins of surfing originated in early Polynesian cultures, but the history of swimming in black communities is irrevocably intertwined with the racism and oppression. Additionally, we know that surfing is a proved therapeutic sport. Not only do we want to encourage the integration of the sport into the black diaspora, we also want to document how it already does exist, always has existed.

Comparable films to this project are “View From A Blue Moon” and “Splinters”. Aesthetically, we’re inspired by “Process” dir. by Kahlil Joseph, and the works of Khalil Allah (“Khamaica” and “Field Niggas”).

CURRENT STATUS AND NEEDS

This film will be incorporated as a subsidiary LLC of ISO, a film production company. ISO is at the end of it’s first experimental short, Summer Somewhere. At this point, we’re ready to take investment capital in the project. We’re looking for $10,000 for 5% equity and an Associate Producer’s credit.
TIMELINE

The target public premiere date for Waves is Spring 2020.

May - August 2018:
- Fundraising period
- Research period (Hamilton NY)
- Scheduling complete

September 2018:
- Preproduction period
- Booking travel accommodations

October - December 2018:
- Travel period

February - August 2019:
- Post-production period
- Editing period
- Sound design period
BUDGET

Camera Equipment

- Red Digital Cinema Package
- Underwater Housing
- RIG / Drone
- Insurance
- Sony A7S2 (behind the scenes documentation)

Total; ~$10,000

Travel (estimates)

- Flight from NYC to Jamaica; $400
- Flight from NYC to Ghana; $1500
- Flight from Accra Ghana to Freetown Sierra Leone; $750
- Flight from Freetown Sierra Leone to Durban South Africa; $4,000
- Flight from Durban South Africa to Papua New Guinea; $2,000
- Public Transit (Cumulative) ~$3,000

Total; ~$12,000

Food and Lodging (estimates)

Total: ~$23,000

Emergency (estimates)

Total; ~$5,000

TOTAL: $50,000
Brandon Alexander, Director, BALEX.CO

Spring 2018 - Independent film
Summer, Somewhere // Writer, Director

Spring 2017 - Cofounded ISO

Spring 2016 - Independent Film
BARDO // Director

Spring 2016 - Aliiwe Exhibit

Winter 2016 - Publication in Colgate Scene

Fall 2015 - Captured by the Lens Exhibition

Summer 2015 - Eye Love You Camp
Founding Member, Head of Marketing, Documentarian, Photography Instructor

Fall 2015 - Between Us Performance
Collaboration with artist Hana Van der Kolk

Fall 2015 - present - Paid Student Video Journalist
Communications Department

Fall 2014 - Publication in The Point
Volume 18 Issue 1

Fall 2014 - Opening DJ for DJ Enuff
Palace Theatre, Hamilton NY

Fall 2014 - Opening DJ for DJ Sliiink Palace Theatre, Hamilton NY
Fall 2014 - present - Freelance Work
Client List // Colgate University Art Department, Colgate University Commons, Tri-Delta Gamma Sigma Chapter (Colgate University), Lepenseur Youth and Family Services, Silver Room Chicago, 13th Annual Sound System Block Party, Alexander Swain Denim, New Kingz, Roosevelt The Titan, ELAW, Woden Marketing

** for more work go to balex.co
Lauren Sanderson, Executive Producer, LAURENSANDERSON.CO

Spring 2018 - Independent Film
Summer, Somewhere // Exec. Producer

Winter 2017 - Publication in the Colgate Scene

Winter 2017 - Publication in the Maroon News

Winter 2017 - Book deal
Debut book of poems forthcoming // Write Bloody Publishing

Winter 2017 - Publication in Beecher’s Magazine

Fall 2017 - Publication in Storm Cellar Literary Magazine

Spring 2017 - Cofounded ISO

Summer 2017 - Feature Poet
WoW Production // dir. Felicia Cade

Spring 2016 - Independent Film
BARDO // Executive Producer

Spring 2016 - Publication in Colgate Portfolio

Fall 2014-present - Colgate Women’s Varsity Volleyball Team

** for work visit www.laurensanderson.co