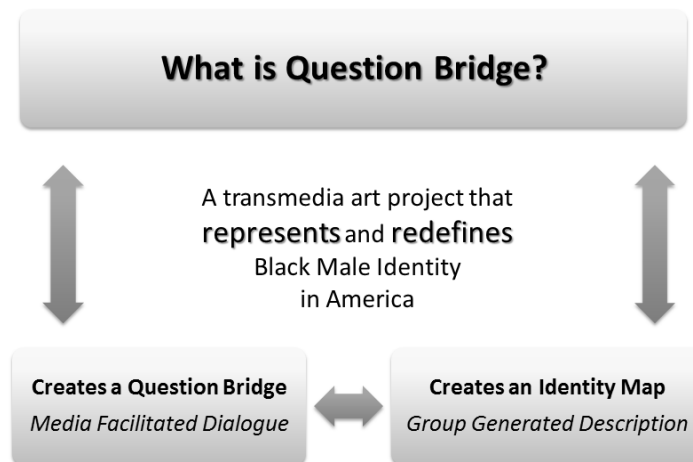


QUESTION BRIDGE

PROJECT OUTLINE

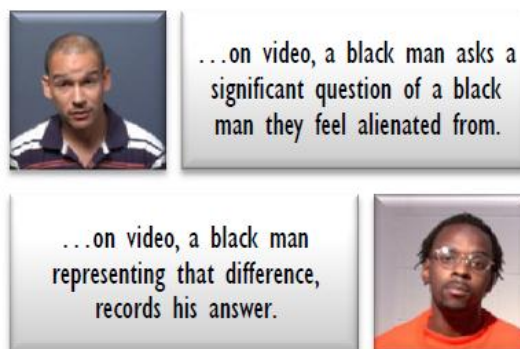
Question Bridge: Black Males is a fiscally sponsored project of the Bay Area Video Coalition and supported in part by a grant from the Open Society Institute: Campaign for Black Male Achievement, The Tribeca Film Institute, the LEF Foundation, The Center for Cultural Innovation, and The California College of the Arts.

About the Project



Question Bridge: Black Males is an innovative transmedia art project that facilitates a dialogue between a critical mass of Black men from diverse and contending backgrounds; and creates a platform for them to represent and redefine Black male identity in America. The project creates and develops a *Question Bridge* and *Identity Map* to fulfill its mission:

- *A Question Bridge* – is a media facilitated dialog among a critical mass of people within a demographic. Its core methodology is this:

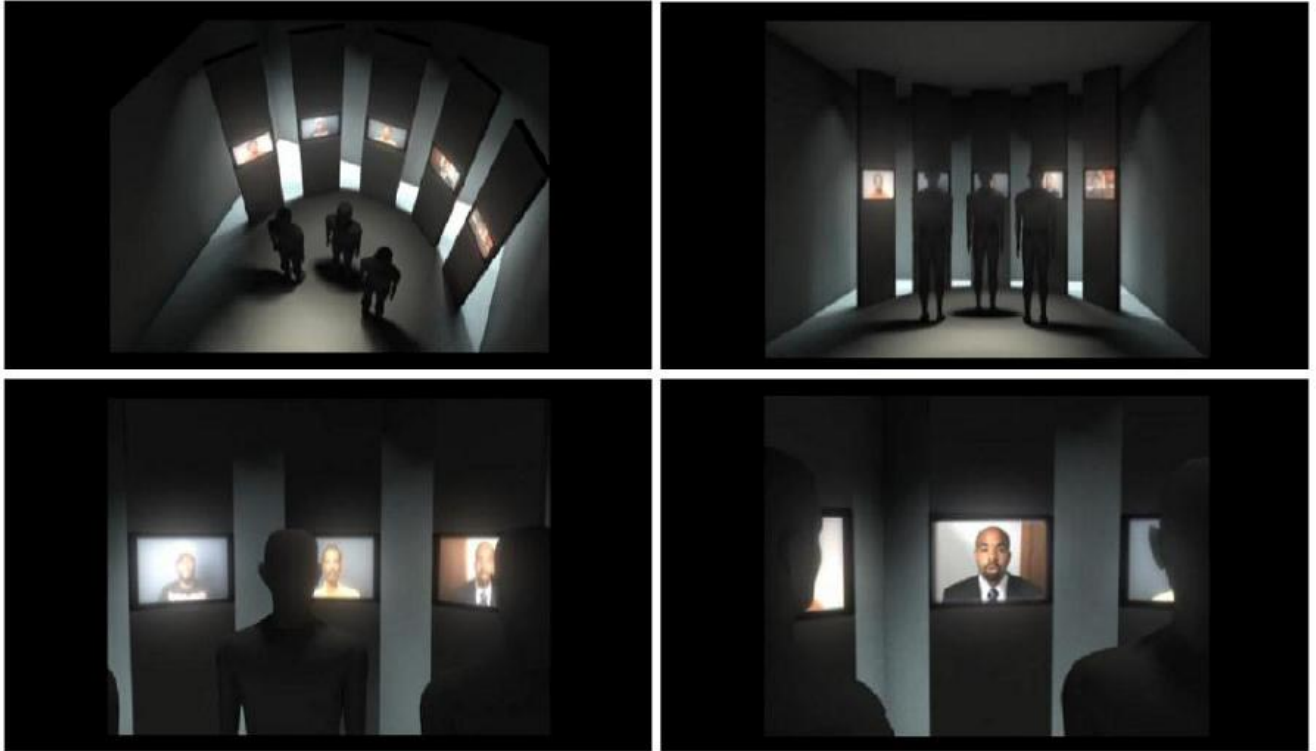


- *An Identity Map* – is a group-generated illustration of self-described identity tags within a single demographic. Black men create a profile on QuestionBridge.com with tag words that they feel describe their identity. These identity tags are synthesized into a comprehensive map that illustrates how Black men in America describe themselves. Our hypothesis is that the map will deconstruct monochromatic views of black men and expose a highly complex, dynamic, and multi-faceted view of their identity.

The *Question Bridge* and *Identity Map* are made available for people to explore in multiple ways: a website (Questionbridge.com); video art installations in museums and galleries; community events and discussions; and the high school and university curriculum.

Media Installation

Mock Installation Images - (Question: *Why do you use the N word?*)



View Virtual Mock-Up at <http://vimeo.com/10813495>

The Installation - a media installation of high quality (HD) videos, exhibited in galleries and public spaces. Question Bridge installations are structured as metaphors for the whole inner realm of black male consciousness. Several LCD embedded black panels will be installed in the space with multiple videos of black men asking and answering questions, as if having a live dialogue. The array of standing figures with embedded monitors represents an ever-changing variety of voices from within the greater community of black men. Their arrangement into an arc invites viewers of each installation into a space, where the viewers can experience and engage with the participant's diverse view-points. Additionally, video booths and computer kiosks will allow non-demographic members to respond and react to the piece.

Interactive Website



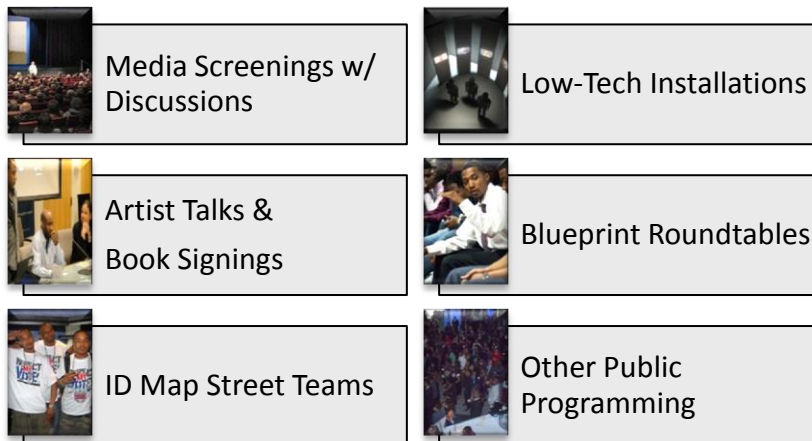
To view virtual mock-up of the web platform send email request to Kamal@questionbridge.com

The Website is the primary platform for engagement with project participants and witnesses, as well as the primary distribution channel for content. The website will be comprised of two parts:

The Question Bridge - the massive conversation between Black men mediated through video. The nearly 1000 clips already recorded will be the core content of the website and attract a critical mass of Black men to expand the conversation by submitting their own video questions and answers. Black male participants will be asked to create a “fingerprint” profile, which includes: a still image; a video introduction; and identity tags. People outside this “demographic” can access the website as privileged witnesses, barred from participating in the conversation or identity mapping process, but allowed to react to (or reflect on) the Question Bridge via video. All users can experience the content through multiple entry points: viewing the traditional short documentary of the footage; exploring the videos of questions and answers in a non-linear manner according themes that have emerged; or witnessing the Question Bridge take graphic shape through an animated/real-time mapping applications that track the themes, sub-demographics and the geographic spread of the conversation.

The Identity Map - an animated/real-time graphic illustration of the identity tags black men create on their “fingerprint” profiles. The website employs sophisticated data gathering tools to synthesize user-generated data into artistic graphic visualizations that act as dynamic (real-time & perpetually changing) Identity Map of this complex “demographic.” Basically, it acts like a Google Earth type tool for exploring the identity of Black men, moving from a macro-view composition of all the identity tags, to an intimate micro-view into the minds and hearts of individual participating black men. Identity tags may include demographics (e.g. age, religion, profession, etc.), emotions (e.g. motivated, defeated, angry, serene, etc.) or values (e.g. God, self-efficacy, money, courage, etc.). Additionally, we offer trend and time-stamped visualizations for users to explore the changing nature of identity. Along with the Question Bridge, the Identity Map will be available by website, social networking applications and mobile devices.

Community Bridge Events



In every city that the **Question Bridge: Black Males** media installations is exhibited, the project will partner with mission aligned organizations to create Community Bridge Events that:

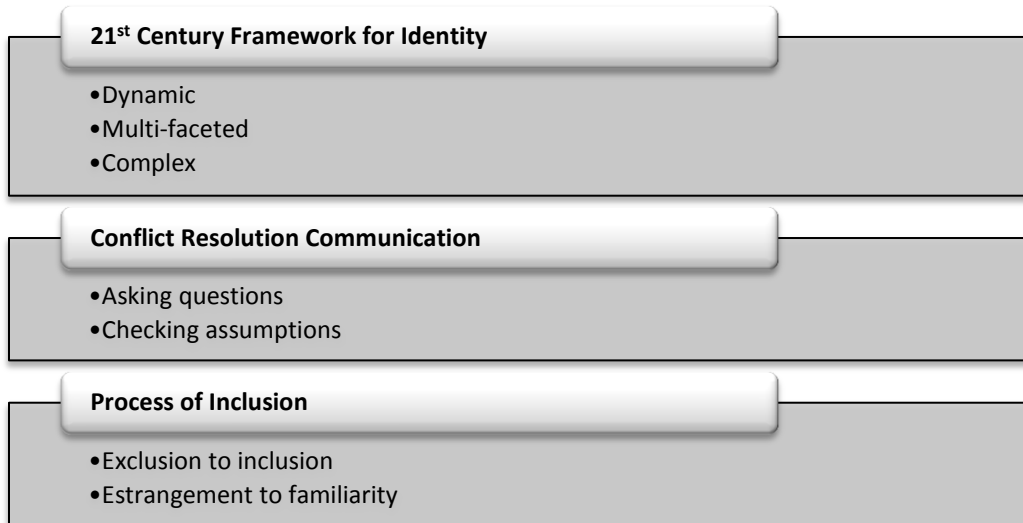
- engage people in **dialogue** about 21st Century Frameworks for understanding identity, how to support of process of moving from estrangement to familiarity within the local Black male community, and how to support the process of moving Black men from exclusion to inclusion within the local community (Blueprint Roundtables, Artist Talks, Other Public Programming);
- **cultivate** the support of local Black men to represent and redefine Black male identity in America (Identity Map Street Teams, Installation Video Booths);
- and **deliver** the curriculum to high schools and universities in the community by training educators, Teaching Artists, and mentors in how to use it as a resource.

In areas where the installation will not be exhibited, we will make a special short-film available to partner organizations that they can screen in their communities as a catalyst for dialogue. We will also offer a low-tech installation options for smaller community and art centers interested in sharing the project with their fellow community members.

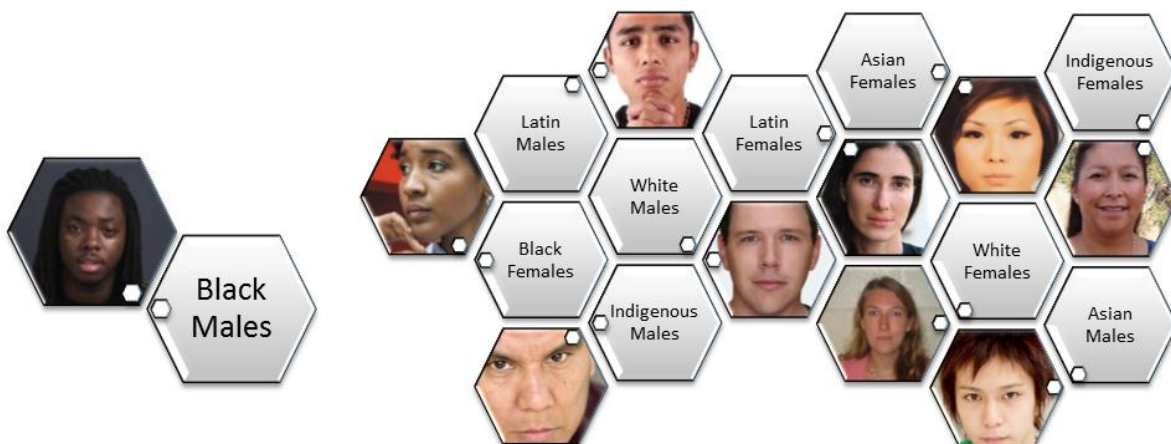
One question and answer exchange between a younger participant (Robert Edwards) and an older civil right activist (Reverend Herbert J. Oliver) sparked an idea for a multi-generational outreach component to the project. The question was: “... why didn’t you leave us the blueprint?” posed to those who brought the civil right movement to glory. The answer was: “...we dropped the ball.” Blueprint Roundtables would invite leaders from local Black organizations and youth representative from the community to discuss this question in terms of actionable pathways to the socio-economic development of black men and boys. Major themes of the conversation will be work, education, and family structure.

Curriculum & Online Learning Community

The Question Bridge curriculum uses the **Question Bridge: Black Males** transmedia art project as the catalyst for a significant learning process in 21st Century identity frameworks, conflict resolution communication models, and the process of inclusion.



Students gain skills and analytical tools to help them better negotiate an increasingly interdependent global environment, where inclusion and familiarity with the “other” is critical to closing the global achievement gap. The curriculum explores the identity and community issues of a single demographic as a model for understanding the complexity of identity and socio-economic issues in any demographic.



The curriculum offers ten-modules for educators, teaching artists, and mentors serving youth in grades 9-12. Educators will be able to choose which modules to focus on and the sequence in which to use the modules.

Curriculum Goals:



Learning Goals

- Students will learn how to use a 21st century framework for understanding identity as dynamic, multi-faceted, and complex structure.
- Students will learn how to consciously question assumptions about themselves and others based on one or limited identity tags.
- Students will research historical race and ethnicity issues in the United States of American and analyze how these issues inform the Question Bridge.
- Students will explore the dynamics of estrangement and familiarity among members of a demographic group.
- Students will explore the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion among diverse demographic groups.
- Students will learn about the dynamics of social communications and how the Question bridge model can be used to facilitate healing dialogue and resolve conflict.

Curriculum Delivery:

Free Online Downloads

- The curriculum will be available for educators to download at: QuestionBridge.com
- Free of charge with terms agreement requiring educator to fill out an online evaluation and feedback form within 6 months of accessing curriculum.

Educator Trainings

- Question Bridge education experts will be available to train educators through partner sponsored professional development seminars.

Online Learning Community

QuestionBridge.com will have a password protected online learning community for educators and students. In the online learning community...

...educators can:

- Create a profile w/ Identity Tag Cloud
- Download Curriculum
- Upload/share class replication projects
- Share best practices & outcomes
- Customize curriculum & video sequences
- Question Bridge with other educators
- Explore the Scholars Wiki

...and students can:

- Create a profile w/ Identity Tags
- Explore “school-filtered” content from the art project (The Question Bridge & The Identity Map)
- Create or participate in a Question Bridge with other students, classrooms, or schools
- View class replication projects



Why is this project important?

Question Bridge: Black Males uses the power of art and media to overcome two critical obstacles limiting the political, social and economic advancement of black men: exclusion from the other and estrangement from each other.

Estrangement to Familiarity - Question Bridge: Black Males creates a new framework for black men to own the black male label, without having to sacrifice their comprehensive and unique mix of identity attributes. They can confidently claim their race and gender, even when they do not fit the stereotype. Unfortunately, schisms within the black male “demographic” tragically divide us along geographic, economic, generational, educational, religious, cultural and political lines. These divisions tend to pit whole segments of our “demographic” against others, limiting the healthy distribution of insight and support. Question Bridge has proven to be a progressive and powerfully effective new model for resolving this estrangement. The convention of using media to safely mediate a conversation between black men from diverse backgrounds has already brought healing clarity to both participants and witnesses. This massive video exchange of questions and answers creates a platform for free expression and the broad sharing of previously isolated, or seldom shared, insights. This model builds agency in black men who participate, because the very process of being asked to formulate questions and answers is empowering for otherwise alienated men. Especially, because the convention of media as mediator makes them feel sincerely heard.

Exclusion to Inclusion - Question Bridge recognizes that our society is interdependent and all Americans are stakeholders in overcoming the marginalization of black men and boys from our mainstream culture; as well as the healthy development of their identity and socio-economic condition. The exclusion of black men and boys is not only a profound source of injustice, but it threatens the integrity and growth of our democracy as a whole. We understand the roots of this exclusion link back to our nation’s complicated history with the notion of race history, the legacy of its infrastructure and some generationally perpetuated prejudices. However, we hypothesize that a large part of this continued exclusion is a simple and malice-free lack of familiarity with arguably the most opaque demographic in America. Individuals from other backgrounds have difficulty accessing black men due to one or more limitations (e.g. geography, class, language, religion, education, or sexuality.) This lack of familiarity creates voids in understanding about the intentions, behaviors, capacities, morality, and ideologies of black men that are often filled with limiting assumptions and third party accounts. This is a dangerous practice. It cultivates fear, bias, apathy and prejudice that marginalizes black men; and stagnates our collective advancement by hindering the creation of valuable social, civic and business relationships across race and gender lines.

Question Bridge uses a unique mix of 21st Century circumstances and the magnetic power of art to create a tool for black men to define their own identity in a dynamic, comprehensive, complex and perpetual manner. For the first time ever, a critical mass of people is indoctrinated into a social networking culture enabled by unprecedented access to technology. This project is uniquely effective at shattering monochromatic stereotypes associated with “black males,” so both participants and witnesses are freed to recognize each black man as an individual with limitless potential. Individual black men are able to express agency which effectively releases them from the constraints of stereotypes which lead to low expectations. The witnesses are able to break from static 20th century thinking about identity and adopt a multi-dimensional logic for processing the bombardment of media generated data they receive about black men.

How Can You Support?

How can you support the Question Bridge project?

You can:

Partner – we are seeking mission aligned organizations who can benefit from partnering on implementing this vision. We need partnerships with education organizations, media outlets, community organizations, and art institutions. (Contact Kamal Sinclair kamal@questionbridge.com)

Donate – we are seeking contributions of funds, products, and services from individuals and institutions that believe in the vision. (Donate online at http://bavc.org/The_Question_Bridge)

Interact – we are soliciting America to witness and participate in this project by viewing the website, contributing content online, visiting installations, or attending community events. (Launching February 2012)

Promote – we are asking everyone to promote the campaign to solicit 200,000 black men to contribute to the Question Bridge and Identity Map by the end of 2014. (Launching February 2012)

For more details or for information on how to support contact Kamal Sinclair (Kamal@questionbridge.com)

About The Collaborators

Chris Johnson originated the Question Bridge concept with a 1996 video installation he created for the Museum of Photographic Arts and the Malcolm X library in San Diego, California. In 1994, he co-produced and directed *The Roof is on Fire* with Suzanne Lacy, which was broadcast on KRON. Additionally, he authored *The Practical Zone System: for Film and Digital Photography*; currently in its 4th edition. Currently, he is a full Professor of Photography at the California College of the Arts where for ten years he served as President of the Faculty Senate. He is also the Media Wall Project Manager and Public Art Management Team member for Oakland Museum/Port of Oakland.

Hank Willis Thomas completed many successful digital media works, including video exhibitions: “Winter in America,” “Progeny,” and “Along the Way” (which exhibited at the Oakland International Airport, Sundance Film Festival’s New Frontiers on Main gallery and Pangaea Day the world film festival). He is the winner of the Aperture West Book Prize for Pitch Blackness. His work was featured in the Rubell Family Collection, the Studio Museum in Harlem; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts; Wadsworth Atheneum; Oakland Museum of California; the Smithsonian; National Museum of American History; the High Museum of Art, among others. He received a B.F.A. in Photography/Africana Studies from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts; and his M.F.A./M.A. in photography/visual criticism at the California College of the Arts. Thomas received the Renew Media Arts Fellowship (Rockefeller Foundation) and a W.E.B DuBois Institute fellowship at Harvard University.

Bayete Ross Smith began as a photojournalist at the Philadelphia Inquirer, Charlotte Observer and Newsday. He received a B.S. in Photojournalism from Florida A&M University and an M.F.A. from the California College of the Arts. Bayeté’s exhibited at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival, the Goethe Institute (Ghana), the Zacheta National Gallery of Art (Poland), the Leica Gallery and Rush Arts Gallery (NYC), the SF Arts Commission’s “Art at City Hall” and the Oakland Museum of California. His work has been published in *Posing Beauty*, *SPE Exposure*, the *Society of Photographic Education Journal*, *Black: A Celebration of A Culture*, *25 Under 25: Up and Coming American Photographers*, *The Spirit Of Family* (Al & Tipper Gore), *Black Enterprise*, *Working Mother*, *Village Voice*, and more. He worked as a fellow and artists-in-residence at the Kala Institute, Can Serrat International Art Center (Spain), McColl Center for Visual Art and Southern Exposure.

Kamal Sinclair was a 6-year cast member of STOMP, the founder of Universal Arts and director of *The Beat* and *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*. She directed the 2003/2004 Oneness Awards at Universal Studios (awarding Edward James Olmos, Michael Jackson, Ed Begley Jr., Jim Hensen Muppet Company); multiple National Black Arts Festival fundraising galas (honoring Dr. Cornel West, Big Boi, Samuel Jackson, Lynn Whitfield & Jasmine Guy); multiple Woodruff Arts Center events (honoring Ambassador Andrew Young, Wynton Marsalis, Andre 3000, Jamie Foxx and Ludacris.) She served the Fractured Atlas, Children's Theatre Company NYC and CRG boards; and the Alvin Ailey Ambassador’s Council. She is the Principal Consultant for Strategic Arts (clientele: High Museum of Art, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Alliance Theatre, Young Audiences and SCAD. She graduated from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts (BFA) and GSU's Robinson College of Business (MBA).

Delroy Lindo (executive producer) has had many memorable roles in films such as David Mamet’s *Heist* and as Mr. Rose in *The Cider House Rules*. He garnered critical acclaim for his role as Rodney in Spike Lee’s drama *Clockers*; and also worked with Lee on, *Crooklyn* and *Malcom X*, earning an NAACP Image Award nomination, for his work as West Indian Archie. His other notable film credits include: the English period drama, *Wondrous Oblivion*; *The Core*; *The Last Castle*; *Domino*; *The One*; *Gone in 60 Seconds*; *Ransom* (Best Supporting Actor NAACP Image Award nomination); *A Life Less Ordinary*; *Get Shorty*; *Feeling Minnesota*; *Romeo Must Die*; *L’Exil du Roi Behanzin*; *Devil’s Advocate*; *Bright Angel*; *Mountains of the Moon*; *This Christmas* (also executive producer); and Pixar’s *Up!*. Television: Most recently starred in the Fox Drama, *The Chicago Code*. Starred also in series, *Kidnapped*(NBC). Lindo was featured in *Law and Order: SVU* (2009 NAACP Image Award); *Lackawanna Blues* (HBO) and in *The Exonerated* (Court TV). He appeared to critical acclaim in the CBS drama *Profoundly Normal*; starred as US

Supreme Court Justice, Clarence Thomas in the Peabody Award winning *Strange Justice* (Showtime); and starred to critical acclaim as baseball legend Satchel Paige in HBO's stirring drama, *Soul of the Game*. Lindo also starred as Arctic explorer Matthew Henson in *Glory and Honor* (TNT) and appeared in *First Time Felon* (HBO). Also for TV, Lindo conceived, produced, hosted, directed and co-edited documentary interviews featuring Spike Lee, Charles Burnett and Joan Chen. In Theatre, Lindo was most recently seen as Bynum, in London's Young Vic 2010 production of *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. Also in London, he appeared in *The Exonerated*. On Broadway, Lindo appeared as Herald Loomis in August Wilson's, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, receiving Tony and Drama Desk Award nominations; and *Master Harold and the Boys*, (Broadway & National Tour). He played Walter Lee in the Kennedy Center and Los Angeles productions of *A Raisin in the Sun* (Helen Hayes Award Nomination and NAACP Image Award, Best Actor). Lindo has also worked Off-Broadway, and extensively in regional theatres throughout the United States and Canada. As director, Lindo won a 2006 Los Angeles Theater Weekly Award for his work on *Medal of Honor Rag*. He also directed Tanya Barfield's *Blue Door* and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* to critical and commercial success at Berkeley Repertory Theater.

Deborah Willis, Ph.D is a 2000 MacArthur Fellow, University Professor Willis and is Chair of Photography and Imaging at Tisch School of the Arts, New York University, where she also has an affiliated appointment with the College of Arts and Sciences, Africana Studies. A 2005 Guggenheim and Fletcher Fellow, and an artist, she is one of the nation's leading historians of African American photography and curator of African American culture. Her projects include *Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers - 1840 to the Present*, *The Black Female Body in Photography*. Her most recent works are *Posing Beauty African American Images from the 1890s to the Present*, *Michelle Obama, The First Lady in Photographs*, garnered Dr. Willis 2010 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work Biography/Autobiography.

The Consultants

Jinan N. Sumler (Education Consultant) - started in education as an elementary special education teacher after graduating from Spelman College. She joined the staff of Teach For America, as a program director, where she worked to support 100 + teachers in the Greater New Orleans area. In this capacity, Ms. Sumler worked directly with superintendents, principals, university faculty and the business community. Ms. Sumler received a Masters in Education from Harvard and began working as a school improvement consultant for the Southern Regional Education Board in Atlanta. She coordinated a Successful Transitions Initiative between middle schools and high schools in the southeast region of the country. Originally from New York, Jinan returned in 2005 to work for AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) as the Northeast States Director. In this position, she works to support schools in seven states through face-to-face and e-learning professional development and coaching. Ms. Sumler markets AVID to new schools, districts and community organizations, manages AVID implementation at the school and district level and co-writes curriculum on Culturally Relevant Teaching.

Adam Huttler (Technology Advisor - Adam is the Executive Director of Fractured Atlas, a national non-profit organization that provides technology-based infrastructure for the cultural sector. They were awarded the NYC Cultural Innovation Fund (Rockefeller Foundation) and a competitive contract from the Hewlett Foundation to create the Bay Area Cultural Asset Map, a constellation of web-based applications that collectively aggregate/analyze the region's cultural activity data. With support from the Andrew W. Mellon, Doris Duke and Kresge Foundations, Fractured Atlas spearheads the creation of ATHENA, an open source software platform for the cultural sector. Additionally, the organization serves as a technology advisor to a diverse roster of partners and clients, including Misnomer's Audience Engagement Platform, Women Make Movies, Opera America, and others. In 2003, Fractured Atlas created Gemini SBS, a for-profit subsidiary that develops bespoke web-based software for non-profit organizations and government agencies, including the US Department of Education.

About The Advisors

The Advisory Board

Rachelle V. Browne (Associate General Counsel, Smithsonian Institution)
Manthia Diawara (Independent Filmmaker & Black Studies Scholar)
Amina Dickerson (Dickerson Global Advisors)
Howard Dodson, Jr. (Former Director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture)
Radiah Harper (Education and Public Programming Director, Brooklyn Museum)
Thomas Allen Harris (Independent Filmmaker)
Caran Hartsfield (Independent Filmmaker)
Seith Mann (Independent Filmmaker)
Khalil Gibran Muhammad, Ph.D. (Director of the Schomburg Center For Research in Black Culture)
Ron Platt (Birmingham Museum of Art, Curator)
Kathe Sandler (Independent Filmmaker)

The Scholarship Steering Committee

M.K. Asante, Jr., Ph.D. (Morgan State University)
Lonnie Bunch, Ph.D. (Director, Smithsonian Institution, National African American Museum of History and Culture)
Joy DeGruy, Ph.D. (Portland State University)
Manthia Diawara, Ph.D. (New York University)
Howard Dodson Jr. (Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture)
Robeson Frazier, Ph.D. (University of Southern California)
Professor Robert Hill (University of California, Los Angeles)
Robin Kelley, Ph.D. (University of Southern California)
Leslie King Hammond, Ph.D. (Maryland Institute College of Art)
Guthrie Ramsey, Ph.D. (University of Pennsylvania)
Christopher Robbins, Ph.D. (Eastern Michigan University)
Paul C. Taylor, Ph.D. (Pennsylvania State University)

Credits:

Question Bridge: Black Males was *conceived* by Chris Johnson; and *created* by Chris Johnson and Hank Willis Thomas, *in collaboration with* Bayete Ross-Smith and Kamal Sinclair. The *Executive Producers* are Delroy Lindo and Deborah Willis. **The Question Bridge** curriculum was designed by Kamal Sinclair *in collaboration with* Bayete Ross-Smith and Chris Johnson, *in consultation with* Jinan Sumler, Dr. Joy Angela DeGruy and Dr. Deborah Willis. **The Question Bridge** website concept was *conceived* by Kamal Sinclair. Original music *created* by Guthrie Ramsey and Tony Dreanan. Media *editing* by Rosa White.