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[Music]

Beyond ego, beyond self-centered fear, beyond exceptionalism,
beyond individualism, beyond headlines. This is Beyond Borders.

Brought to you by Listen and Be Heard Network.

I'm Martha Cinader. This is Beyond Borders, and I'm joined by my co-hosts and producers, J. Rodriguez Sierra, Judy Talaugon, and our special guests today are Anderson Zaka, Russell Frederick, and Ozier Muhammad.

And we're going to start off talking about this great series that Anderson and Russell are producing, "Dark Room Masters." And thank you to Ozier for suggesting this and inviting our wonderful guests and returning to the onboarders to talk with us again. Good to be back. Good to be back and good to see my buddies there in Berkeley. Really, really inspired. Really inspired Jose. You're really bringing it.

Last week we had Craig Harris and Craig went off man.

He did and I was thinking about how he was talking about, you know, the music is the message, you know, and I think the same is true in this setting about the photography and the photographers. It's not so much, you know, when we think about what's going on now and how are people trying to respond and come together. And really, it is in the photography in the things that we're doing that help us to, you know, get through and to get a message across. It's what we've really been doing. And what I love about this project in a way it's very similar to listen and be heard is that you're giving voice to your fellow photographers, presenting their voices and their points of you.

And I wonder if we could just start by talking about that. Why was that important

to both of you, Anderson Zaka and Russell Frederick to do this series?

And then beyond that, I kind of wanted to talk about how you're producing it too.

Well, it was 2021 right in the middle of the pandemic.

and Zaka and I, we were really just both coming out of some,

we were both coming out of some breakups with our relationships and we were really

just looking to be inspired and really thinking about Where we were creatively and

where some things were in the industry and how we are Film guys We grown up.

I've been this year makes 30 years. I've been photographing. I think Zaka has 20

plus and

We really just started thinking about like this art form of the dark room and and

friends we used to make and just all of the magic that takes place in the dark

room and also to what we felt that digital photography was I should say has missed

or something that was, I think,

being left out of the whole process and era of digital photography and I would say

the iPhone. And as we were thinking about just the dark room,

We then also started thinking about just how

History and the industry has

Omitted and not given proper recognition to

Really some of our heroes that have been putting in over time,

over decades and then also to how the voices of a lot of black and brown

photographers is not part of this conversation when I think of household names and

also to how history is told. So,

we started really thinking about who are these stars in our world,

but they aren't necessarily "in the industry" get the proper recognition as well as

to, But also to people who have, who have shown black and people who've shown the

black community in a very, I would say, humane, loving form that has done with such

cultural nuance and sincerity. And in a art form that really is just undeniable.

But again, when we think about who whose artwork is in the permanent collection of a lot of museums, who when you think about when you act, whenever in me teaching and Zaka teaches as well. The question I always ask whenever I'm in doing any workshop or I'm called an lecturer at a college or university, tell me some black photographers that you know and you cannot say Gordon Parks nor Jamel Shabazz. I make it very clear these are two names you not mentioned. And oftentimes, people are stuck.

And with that, this just really gives even more credibility about how I think the, how history has been told. Whose voices aren't,

I think, At the table who's who aren't who's people aren't at the table as well as to There isn't enough I would say muscle and effort being put behind some of the great people like Ozi air like a Buford Smith and

My hat too, so you know what too, our legend God bless him as he gained his wings on June 7th at the age of 89. And what a blessing that you did this documentary with him before he passed. He was the first one we called on, the first. And

We didn't come to him with this detailed proposal.

We didn't come to him, you know what? Listen, Zaka and I, we living off a rice and beans budget, okay? So we couldn't sway him with any money.

And I just called him and just said, you know what? You know, Buford, Zaka and I, we got this great We want to get back to the dark room. And we want to invite some of the greatest photographers and most important photographers of our time to have some conversations about the art form of the print as well as to what is it, these stories behind your photographs and why you've made the pictures you have. And he just said, Russell, you just tell me what day, what time,

and where I gotta be.

And here it was, we made magic, and then everyone else.

It was the same with Bertha Ozier. I gave this gentleman a call,

and he's like, "Russell, sounds fascinating. Here we are,

Joseph Rodriguez, Adama, Delfin for Woundu as well, nobody hesitated and here it is,

we are two and a half weeks in, you know over 200 ,000 views on YouTube in two

and a half weeks and you guys are our first podcast. We haven't had no press.

What an honor. What an honor it is for us. Well, yeah, we are honored, and I hope

we'll be the first of many. But let's talk a little about that.

Judy is always reminding us of the importance of archiving. And I think this is

such an important archival project just documenting so much about community and

history. What is your concept though, because you have this streaming series going.

So I would like you to tell everybody about that journey of how you conceived that

and made it happen. - So anyone could stream the series on PBS as well as All Arts

TV. So PBS is the parent company of all arts TV,

as well as it's also available on YouTube for anybody internationally who is

interested. And we have been getting a lot of love internationally as well.

So the series has been doing just really quite well.

- Yeah, I guess that's what I was referring to. So it'll also be broadcast on

television. - Right, it will be going to broadcast like in the fall, yes. - You

know, for Anderson, we just wanted to let you know what, when you jumped off,

basically what Martha's question was to Russell basically about the experience and

what led you all to produce the show and what it meant to you and of that I mean

I just uh I was introduced to you basically because of Ozzie because he's always

documenting he's documenting all of our jazz performances and I've known him for many

years and it's interesting I think the role of the photographer in music uh is so

important but just not only that but I feel like the his I think your as photographers the ability to come in and out of a place without getting involved, just coming in like this observer, it's like this magical place. And then you take it and then something strikes you and you take it and then you tell a story with it. And this is what I've seen with those of you I've learned. I mean, I got to really see this, you know, like on Friday I wanted, he disappears before we even talk. He shows up, he's like, he shows up. I was like, yo! - He's Batman. I was like yo, thank you so much for showing up, I'm so honored, I'm so honored and I wanted to make a really quick correlation with the relationship of artists and how we feel when we call on some masters who show up for us, masters who are activists, you know, and I've had that with, Craig is like that with me, he's relax like he won't show up because jave it's not your gig i'm you know don't call me to be like a as you know i'm just for you yeah you know and this is i had to understand Henry Threadgill i had to understand these things and that's not too many you know because there's always this competition and this weird thing that we've brought up in the system that we live in but uh him uh mark Rebo at the last minute He was like a last -minute call that guitarist who showed up and he's big activist, right? But he he I called him up out of the blue. He had just come from tour and I was like, dude, please what are you doing? He's like I'll show up and I said he won't do it. Anyway, he showed up. So I'm just saying sometimes there are people who show you what they care and it and it's a time that we have to remember who's there as we get older with questions ourselves as artists, You know, but you guys as photographers have this life that's very, very introspective. You know, you have, you can be a part of an understanding, but you try not to get involved. You know, you look and you observe and you sort of understand, but you're seeing it from another perspective. And then you tell that story with a lot of

eloquence. And so, and that goes for good things, bad things, everything, you know, and the role and then of course in this age of everybody has a phone and everybody's taking pictures and putting them up and you know and but there's no there's no human being behind them you know and what always tells me about art music or any other art is who are these people who make this stuff you know that tells me on the art I mean It doesn't matter how I play music and that's cool.

I could play a lot, you know, but I think it's, I always love to hear who the people who my hero, who was John Coltrane, who was the life of this person, who was the story to tell her, who was the American Indian.

I'm Martha Cinader with Judy Talaugon and J. Rodriguez Sierra.

So it's you know, I grew up in Brazil music is in my life from before I was born I mean, I'm Brazilian from real real like, you know, Kai Flyer, you know barefoot, you know, like yes, you know What I came to the US The I'm I'm also just on the same note, I'm the first and only photographer in the history of New York City to document block parties and have a book called Block Party in New York City, Soul of Summer, which I documented over 300 block parties in 10 years.

So talking about music,

yeah, yeah. So I took, so I came from Brazil, the carnival. I used to, I play a lot of percussion instruments and coming from Brazil, the block party was the closest thing that I had, you know, that I saw the community together.

And the music is a huge thing on the block party. So I documented the block party and that was magical. For ten years I did that.

Yes and And yes, and my latest book, which just came out,

it's about the drag queen scene in Fire Island, which is also very,

you know, music influence. And so yes, music has been a part of my life. And one thing I want to do here, I think it'll be real cool, it's just one minute. I

would like to play the trailer so we can hear it together because I think it's so new it's music it's jazz by the way I'm a big jazz I got a lot of jazz records in my house we are the dark room masters of culture well this is Russell Frederick and I'm Andrew Sanzika we are here live from the dark room in Brooklyn every episode really take it back and show y'all some culture with some of the most important photographers of our legendary printmakers who are going to come into the dark room with us and share the process, history, and life journey. So you don't have to travel to Timbuktu or Peru or any place to take photographs. They're right in front of it. You just have to be able to see them. But in this case, I'm using the sun as my lightroom. We all want to be seen. And photography was invented for us to be seen. There's a unique contribution of African -Americans to the world, period. - And once you catch onto it, you're like, "Oh my God." - I was able to see life, and this is why we're here. - That's the vibe, that's the vibe, that's the vibe. - Can we turn negatives? - It's positives, baby. - Tune in to Russ, to Zaka, live from the dark.

- If I could just piggyback to what Zaka's just saying,

This is super important about I think like what we all have accomplished individually but what we realize I guess also to like in the spirit in a lot of ways of of Comungay and you know with me being a part of Comungay from like 2004 And seeing what they accomplished as a group And from the 60s, you know, to now, where Kamungay was an HBCU for the most part for a lot of, you know, with black photographers, when so many of us didn't have access like how I couldn't afford to go to photography school, and here it is, I was always seeking some mentorship and just wanting to learn and I saw also to this power of the community working together and Zaka and I coming together we not only just put our creativity together we pulled our resources together and I was I grew up on this

mantra of steel, sharp and steel.

And meaning that, you know, it takes just someone the strong surface and something strong to make you stronger.

And piggybacking on the music component, and we originally put this series together, we called it The Dark Room Masters, you know, within

2021 and 2021 and then we really thought about how much, okay,

music has played a role in our lives and we are both Zaka and our both hip -hop

we come from you know with the hip -hop generation and then we thought it would just be very fitting and also to just to just really um do a little bit of a

remix and call it the dark room mcs which is really just short for the dark room masters of culture and that's exactly who all of these fine people are they are each master of culture in their own right

Yeah, yeah, yeah, I mean I start I start I mean Buford it's it's a giant This is

what I really love about Buford. It's that he was the first one and he says in

his episode I'm glad of the first one. So I don't have to follow the heavy hitters

Live from the dark room. My name is Buford Smith. I appreciate being the first one

this way I don't have to follow the heavy hitters (laughing)

- Appreciate it, we're good to go. - That's good. - That's right. - Yo, what's up

people? This is Russell Frederick. - Yo, and I'm Anderson Zaka. - Yo, we are here

live from the dark room in Brooklyn. - We have some gas for you. - Every episode,

really take it back and show y 'all some culture. - With photographers, masters,

legendary print makers who are gonna come into the dark room with us. - He hit us

so hard. He hit it so hard out of the park that I'm like I feel sorry for

everybody that's come after you bro.

And not only he set the standards for the photographers, but he set the standards

for us. He made filming due for, we understood the power of the dark room seats.

And we knew that after that, we couldn't drop the ball. Buford Smith was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. He moved to New York in the early sixties as a young man. And it was really seeing Roy Day Carava, sweet fly paper of lifebook that convinced him to really start pursuing photography. And he's a self taught photographer. He met Mr. Day Carava in 1965, 1965 after they became friends Mr. Dekaraba introduced him to the Komonga collected in Harlem And this is where it gets really good after that mr. Smith became a member of Komonga in 1965 Started, you know, we're freelancing as a photographer and teaching in the 1970s and also like I think in our 1997 he was elected a president. That's right big of the Komonga group, right? - That's right. - Yeah, and then some of his accomplishments ranged from founding the Black Photography books. - That's right, that's right. - And he was also recipient of the cultural legacy of war from the Griffin Museums. - That's right, that's right. Tell him, tell him. - Not to mention to be in the permanent collection of the MoMA of the MoMA and many other places. - So you don't have to travel-- - Right, so it was just, it was just, yeah, it was just that magical. And then the second one we were filmed in order was actually Joseph Rodriguez, which is also our mentor. And then he's so accomplished, but also so underrepresented, you know? And also you can talk more about Joseph Rodriguez, 'cause he's your mentor as well. - What was so important about the dark room you started talking about the digital versus the dark room so why was that important like to emphasize the dark room tundra double on tundra by the way i love it i love it i love it that's right yeah i caught that after a minute no It had to be high energy. We are high energy guys and we also wanted it to feel more so as if, you know, not necessarily barbershop talk, but if let's say we were hanging out in our backyard at a barbecue or we're on

the couch having, you know, with some beers and we're just chopping it up and we are really just building more so just as friends, inspiring each other. So we wanted it to be very organic and we didn't want no, you know, - Yes, that was the words. - Conditionals, if I could be very pro -co - - No man, come on, we know. (laughing) - Yes, that was the words. - You got that right. - These two have mouths like sailors. - We family, we family. (laughing) So with that we knew we wanted it and we also to be like, okay We can't be like anybody else. We we wanted to set a tone and we wanted it to be Engaging again hip -hop we wanted it to be soulful and With that we wanted to be something fresh and visually engaging, right? We because we of super visual people to be like, okay, this has to be fun. It has to be high energy.

All of the photographers we're featuring, they're dope. So their images, you know, what they all got greatest hits, multiple greatest hits albums. - Producer, man, that's the vibe. That energy is the same. It's the same for the activists. And I'm sure that Judith agrees, you have to have that passion to break through some, you know, you have to have it. Right, Judy? I mean, one of the things that you said earlier is that this is an art form. I don't want to go genre, but an art form that is exact. And you know, I spent many years in the dark room. That's the thing. You're all going to represent a culture that lives their life in the dark room, builds within the dark room, community that is untold what we do in there with another person in conversation, and the levels of critique in the artistic realm so high of a communication. You see, what Jay mentioned earlier, I don't want to be contrived about this or talk but like one form is higher than the other. But the form of critique, because it's such a highly technical art form, you can lean on technique, or you could get really creative. That's the stance and the breadth of this art form. And I love it. But the

competition gets pared down because it's so technical. You get to enjoy each other 'cause There's so much technology, you know, right with grain and, and, and, uh, lighting and, uh, you know, fools of thought, you know, so, so let me just, just verify and quantify one thing. He said, you cannot learn this unless you are with master's, you know, okay.

Word!

Absolutely Absolutely, no actors can no actors, right? You will be exposed

Conceptual and and and mixed media and one thing I want to do here. I think it'd be real cool It's just one minute I would like to play the trailer so we can hear together because it's music. It's jazz. By the way, I'm a big jazz I got a lot of jazz records on my house, but I like to play the trailer Can I play the trailer so we can kind of so we can all right. All right. I'm gonna play the trailer and Okay, we are the dark room masters of culture. Well, this is Russell Frederick, and I'm Anderson Zaka We are here live from the dark room in Brooklyn every episode really take it back and show y'all some culture With some of the photographers of our time, legendary print makers who are going to come into the dark room with us and share the process, history, and life journey. So you don't have to travel to Timbuktu or Peru or any place to take photographs. They're right in front of it. You just have to be able to see them. But in this case, I'm using the sun as my lightroom. We all want to be seen. And photography was invented for us to be seen. There's a unique contribution of African -Americans to the world, period. - And once you catch onto it, you're like, "Oh my God." - I was able to see life. And this is why we're here. - That's the vibe, that's the vibe. - That's the vibe, that's the vibe. - Are we too negative? - It's positive, baby. - Tune in to the Russ, to Zaka, live from the dark room.

You

This is Beyond Borders. I'm Martha Cinader, joined by Judy Tilogan and J.

is Sierra and our special guests today are Ozir Mohammed and the creators of the Dark Room Masters series, Anderson Zaka and Russell Frederick.

Yeah, this is such a great world that you're exposing us to you know because you know Musicians I always think as an artist, you know that Unfortunately in the jazz world or see we don't give enough we don't collaborate enough with other artists We just get into our own and and I think that was something that used to happen more. So for me meeting Osie and seeing how Craig Harris's relationship with Osie and what it means you know and how we support each other and how it creates it makes our music better. It's not just about it's about the language of expression after you've mastered a craft you know and so like this whole thing with me working with Martha has been a great thing. I'm doing sound design and creating I said let's make radio art let's talk about stories it was cathartic for her she was going through a hard time we've all been going you know and it's cathartic and also I'm like wow how did this happen I was on the road with Fred Wesley and the JB's you know with the with the you know with the with the JB's and Mace who had gotten sick and then uh and you know and he's an older cat you know he's 82 years old we do all the James Brown stuff he's a brother that stayed in the south. He, you know, and he's, you know, he's, he's a national treasure. And I was wonderful, but my fear of having to come back to myself and being the artist that I am was scary. I said, I can't be on the road for, you know, doing this. It's great. I did it for almost three and a half years or something. And I did my own stuff and my having garden. I said, who am I in the midst of this? And so my, my, my, my, the masters around me were asking me, "Jay, when you're coming back, when are you finished?" That's great. We understand what you're doing with Fred. You know, Craig is like, "Oh, I'm

glad. I know what you did it. Now let's get to work. You're in New York. Let's go to it." You know? And so having that and then Martha, I got in contact with Martha and Martha initiated our relationship as artists that we met many years ago in the 90s and started this and I'm going, "Wow, you couldn't make this up this is perfect you know it's opened up my heart to be able to for all of us so what you're doing is cathartic to us Judy as an activist is an artist and all you know serious warriors you know on all realms and I just find that to be something that's so needed and I don't know if the new generation that stuff is not taught in universities they the people that meet, they meet each other at the university necessarily, they don't necessarily meet on the street anymore. Like I've always met like when I was playing with Tito Puente, you know, I'm in the street and then you're playing with jazz artists, you know, there's a, and it's not just about the street, it's like there's something about each other, you run into each other. Artists, we're going to be seeing each other if God willing, if we do this the right way, for the rest of our lives, we'll be in each other's lives as artists and what a pleasure. And I think that that aspect of it gets lost in our societies in America, in America that we're living in now, we unfortunately seem to be, you know, we already know that that's part of the system, it's part of the design. And as people of color, we know that, that is part of the design, our fears, our loves, the stories are being told. So that Tony Morrison's book, Jazz, is not just about a jazz artist, about this life of people of color, but life of humanity beyond color now, right? Because, but of course, there's a story that people who are Caucasian have forgotten about the humanity, about the people who are there working with us have not forgotten it. - Or never even knew, you And so a series like this is important for everyone, but you did all, you did talk about the importance of wanting to focus on black and brown photographers. Maybe we could talk about,

maybe you could give us a little background on each one of those who you picked.

Obviously, Ozier is here with us with this

And so, yeah, let's start with those here. Ask him your question, but I would like to hear about each of the three groups you chose. - Not at this time.

(laughing)

Okay, well, let me pick up the mic.

This is why we're a team, right? Okay, this is why we are like, we're in DMC right now. So I'm gonna pick up the mic.

So I'm gonna pick up the mics. So I think where my bedroom was going, OZAir, was I think, what is it that you saw in us and why were you even open to working with us when I gave you that call? And what was the experience like for you?

I've known you for a long time. I didn't I didn't know Zaka and I knew that when you call That you know, this was going to be something, you know real, you know, it was going to be something beautiful really beautiful and The idea that You know to go into the dark room with you and to, you know, talk about that whole kind of environment and how it feels to be there and to create something, it's something that I do all the time.

And when I was off the screen for a few minutes, I was actually looking for some photographs because I'm printing all the time. You know, and it's something that sort of it sort of relates to the idea that you know There's something that steered us into the arts. You know if that's that was You talk about somebody who doesn't get enough attention or I guess he does not take that back It's Lee Morgan Lee Morgan was a jazz trumpeter who was part of no stable of artists and he really made a mark. He really really made a mark in jazz and he was my idol.

I take it that when I was a teenager in Chicago And at that time I was thinking

to myself, "Now, what am I going to do? Am I going to pursue this, this noble instrument or trying to figure out, you know, what am I going to do with my life?" And at the time, as a teenager, I'm just coming out of high school and I'm thinking that, you know, maybe I'll pursue this instrument or, You know, maybe I can do both, maybe I'll do photography and the instrument, but photography gave me a way in which I could kind of explore the music, you know, America is the original music. And I thought, hey, you know, I'm going to use my camera to get into these clubs and stuff and meet these musicians, these great artists.

And I struggled, I struggled with the trumpet, and I said, "Well, I think I can't do both of them. I'm in Brassburg." But this photography thing is kind of working out, you know.

This thing is not working out, so I pursued the photography. But the funny thing, there's so many things that seem to meld together in the arts.

You know, many of the photographers that I've known had had interest in music. There was a huge exhibit at the Whitney Museum about three years ago and it was all, mostly, probably all about Kamoghi, Kamoghi workshop, which Russell comes out of. And one of the things that was a common connection was music to photography. Everybody in that exhibit, almost without exception, said that they had this kind of relationship with the music, the original art form that America has produced, we call it jazz. And I you some great great photographers who were who kept kept an instrument around like like Roy de Carama Roy de Carama who hasn't been mentioned so far with somebody who encouraged me who was a friend and he was probably the most celebrated art photography out of the art community. And Gordon Parks, to me, they were on the same level. Gordon Parks more or less came out of

journalism

with his aesthetic. And Roy DeCarava came out of art.

He first, he sketched, he did a lot of portraits and sketched, he was a sketch artist. Then he picked up the camera, and then the rest, you know, just kind of grew out of that.

Roy had an alto saxophone in his life, and he would play it according to his widow, Sherry, a lot. He just says, "I have a trumpet.

I've had a trumpet since I was 15. I'm in my eighth decade. I've had a trumpet since I was 15, and I've always fooled around with it, but now I'm getting serious, 'cause you can't mess with that instrument. You know, you just, it's unforgiving, yeah. You know what I'm talking about, Jerry. You cannot play with a trumpet, you cannot disrespect it.

- Wow. - When I thought about Roy, I thought about Gordy Parks and his symphonies that he wrote and the piano that he kept in his life. But, you know, that's something that is so common with artists.

There might be something else, you know. It's one medium. Usually it isn't.

It's not a single medium. Usually there's a couple of things that they're exploring, whether it's poetry or short stories or, You know, yeah,

yeah, it's so integral to... - I think that's true across all the arts,

probably. I have a relationship with my flute as well. And it's hard to not feel

like I'm playing with it. Like you said, you know, you have to take things

seriously if you're gonna keep pursuing them, you know. - Hey,

know it was it was turntables right it was turntables for me growing up you know

what in Brooklyn with with hip hop you know what I had asthma right yeah as a

child so listen I wasn't blowing anything so with that it was about you know what

hip -hop and growing up with it and here it was it was going to some friends

houses it was the block parties where I was always trying to get close to the DJ booth where I would carry the records for some DJs and then here it was I always thought about it as I started really coming into my photography how I started to learn was I was studying you know with all these CD and album covers I had and this is what inspired me and then I'm listening to some of the lyrics and I was thinking like okay how can I kind of create like a video in some ways to some of this music with pictures and with still and I started thinking about okay this imagery yeah instrumentals like jazz because also to have loved jazz and how that was just so abstract. And then that challenged me to think even more outside of the box. So Ozeer is spot on is how, and then when I'm in my documentation of Bedside, I thought about how could I make a soundtrack that really represents this community, right? But it would be more so it's a visual soundtrack that would have the depth of like a sound track, like an audio soundtrack, like how that could be, you know, what range of jazz, it could be, you know, with blues, it could be hip hop, all the different, you know, emotions and feelings and experiences that can come out really through music, how can I do that with photography that represents the diverse spectrum of people from the community. And here it is, with that, you bring in all of that energy, Zaka coming to this country in 1997 and him telling me about how he started learning English through hip hop.

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Nobody told me how to print Wow Nobody told me how to print it was by experience and just going back and forth and I just liked blacks and that was it, dark photographs. That's the only thing I can come from my own printing, dark was that

nobody else. And later on, Eugene Smith, but I had already started doing my printing. I'm digressing resources. - We have a scene, right? Among us photographers, we call different things, but we call like the bombs, right? Or the killers.

And how many photographs that you have that are really iconic to the world and make a dream come true. Oh, wow. You know what I'm saying?

So when we go through all these years of website, you better get your, you better, you know, you know, get your tissues, get your drink He is going to make you react and when we, when we chose, you know, and then we're like, oh, what is it? Me and Roswell, like, what is he going to bring to the dark room? Is he going to bring the Muhammad Ali? Is he going to bring this? Is he going to bring that? We were so excited because we're like, if you bring one of those killers, you know what I mean? We want to, we want to, we want to study his negatives. Um, This is another thing that's really cool among us photographers to look at each other's negatives, because it's almost like how to read how your recipe is, right? You take a photographer's negative now, it's like him and go in a dark room with all your negatives are dense and beautiful. You can you can get all the range of grace in white, aim black, and that's what we did when we were in the dark room. We played together, we kicked, and he was amazing. He was not hard. Ozeir was like, okay, yes, yes, yes, we hope he says, yes. And let's see what he brings into the dark room when he blessed us. And then last but not least, we had Russell.

We had all the names. We had Originally we were going to document Hiram and he passed away as well so we couldn't catch him, we couldn't film him on time, we met him at the moment at his exhibit about the Bronx and we knew we needed to document even faster.

But in the end I said Russell you have a very compelling story, a beautiful story.

He's battling glaucoma. I almost lost my vision in my last eye.

Rosso and I shared the same eye doctor in the US and I said we gotta tell your story brother because your story is deep and he was a little you know shy I guess about it because you know as a host like he's like you know you know like I'm gonna be in the show I said nah your story is compelling and that's what we need. And Russell now, not only telling the story of his art into photography, but now he's also committed to the awareness of the glaucoma, especially in the black and brown community because it attacks us very heavily. And so that's how this election was made for the first season.

It was very, it took us four years, it took us four years to do it.

And we hope to get another season.

We're just getting started. AndersonSacca .com, right? People can look right. But let's tell people where they can hear the trailer. The DarkroomMasters Um, to hear the trailer, but they could also go to, uh, to either all arts .org, the darkroom MCs or PBS, the darkroom MCs, and they'll see the, uh, the trailers, uh, that we produced.

I watched it and it is, it is great. It really is like a packed, a packed it as you said you know and we're unbelievably we've been talking for almost an hour already and I I would like to get to briefly talk about each of the darkroom masters that you feature in the series so of course there's our friend Ozier and you mentioned Buford and both of You are accomplished photographers, each with your own website, AndersonZaka .com and RussellFrederick .com, is that right? And so maybe we could mention the other photographers who are featured in this series.

Absolutely. So we call him OG because he just simply is a mentor to many and from Brooklyn. And he just, his whole story of triumph from really rising above addiction,

being incarcerated to taking a black and white photography course taught by Buford Smith at the Brooklyn Children's Museum over here in the 70s early 80s and that's when that class you know what he saw a image of a man and a person that he could really see himself in and that changed his life forever and Buford told him that you know something, I think he told Buford that he was battling addiction. He said, "You can still shoot, "but you're gonna shoot with the camera." - I started, I was going through some prints and I saw Eugene Smith's print and I saw Angela Adams and so Lee Wickey, he kind of knew because I was always going there. You know, then I was what, 30 years younger or whatever. So he said, "Well, you know, Buford, "that print is only \$125." And I looked at it and I said, "You know, I don't like the print quality." Woo! Woo!

He bust out laughing. He bust out the shot!

That was his comment. He just bust out. I said, "Why is he laughing?" He said, "Who's this young guy saying he's laughing?" I'm not gonna pay \$125 and... I'm just because it's an anti -scientific shit. He even came back and said, "You know what, beautiful? You can make partial payments." I said, "Nah." I regret that now.

- And here it is, he never looked back and he credit his beautiful with just saving his life. And here it is, Mr. Rodriguez has just been really committed towards criminal justice with his work as well as really humanizing black in the Latino community and really I think just challenging again, challenging the way I think our stories are told. Fast forwarding to Adama, she is another I would say giant who is just brilliant from Brooklyn, people are from Sierra Leone and here it is, she really explores her in ancestry, some traditions that she's learned in culture from her family, in partaking, and with some experimental photography, working in all the above and

how she combines history, even different just textures. So much of her of her history and she just really brings it into this very coherent form of abstract photography that's just brilliant. It's science class, it's history, it's culture, and it's just genius, just genius. - I gotta tell you, I feel honored to be at the front end of claiming catalyst in the West you know, a lot of us. And I think we talked a little bit about the ebb and flow of technology. And when it was ebbing or flowing, sometimes we were practicing our chops on our acts, or, you know, we didn't get to do a technology change. The dark room started to fade, gigs started to change, and brokering more jobs became almost illusory. But in between those moments, I believe folks are still, like you, you gathered some masters in the West Coast, we got them too, but you know, there's not enough cultural centers that cultivate this, this, this generative conversation that keeps it alive, you know, it's alive in us, and we could still crank up prints like, like this master writing between us here, you know, and but a lot of us belong to community art, belong to community access. You know, so what a blessing to be amongst you, to be able to push. So that'll be my gig, is I wanna push everything about your cultural movement there. This is, this is resurrecting. This is like a renaissance to me that I used that term. Thank you, thank you. - Unity, that's So we're doing this unity, we need to get together. - We just get started. - Well, thank you for bringing them to us, Ozir. And this is what Beyond Borders is all about, to really get beyond a good conversation with each other and a little deeper understanding about process and how we present in the world and support each other. And especially in these times, that's what we really have to do. One more time for our audience, give a little pitch about the series, how people can check it out, where they should go to see it. Tune in to allarts .org, The Dark Room MCs. And if you are outside of the US,

tune in to YouTube, The Dark Room MCs. And you can, Each episode is 15 minutes, you know what long? So if you want your lunch break at work, you can watch it. If you taking a train ride back home, you can watch it. If you on the bus, you can watch it. No excuses, not boring. If you want some soul, if you want some culture, that's right, tell your homies. - Right, that's right. - Thank you so much. Russell Frederick, Anderson Zaka, OzierMohammed, and my co -producers, Judy Talaugon, J. Rodriguez Sierra. I'm Martha Cinader and this has been "Beyond Borders." Thank you for listening. "Beyond Borders" is brought to you by Listen and Be Her Network. Please visit our archives at [listenandbeher .net](http://listenandbeher.net).

(upbeat music)