

Hip-Hop Rap Icon Tupac Still Controversial

Written by Robert ID2049

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Even in death the great west coast hip-hop / rap icon Tupac Shakur still causes controversy.

Artist and author Darrin Keith Bastfield, who wrote the book "Back in the Day: My Life and Times with Tupac Shakur," challenges the question posed by many literary and music critics and enthusiasts as to whether the great late hip-hop rap artist / actor / poet Tupac Shakur would ever be perceived by mainstream public as representing an intellectual aesthetic.

Staying true to his commitment to advocate appreciation of artists and respect for their works, Bastfield with his Born Busy Productions Company inevitably directs his course onto the art world with his debut film project "Shakurspeare." The film is a dramatic/romantic comedy that explores a young man's quest to make it big in the competitive world of art. Bastfield, drawing from his own life experiences and struggles as an artist, cleverly depicts the paradox found between the love for and business of art.

"I felt it was appropriate to use as the actual painting 'Shakurspeare' as the main character's creation, which through unfortunate circumstances puts him to the challenge of overcoming limiting beliefs and controversy. The painting was my vision of Tupac after he shared with me his love for Shakespeare and his desire to be a Shakespearean actor at age 16," says Bastfield. "Tupac, after my making a joke visualizing him dressed like Shakespeare, posed for me while I did a quick sketch of him. I told him that I would call the painting Shakurspeare." This item is mentioned in the chapter To Be a Shakespearean Actor in "Back in the Day: My life and Times with Tupac Shakur."

Bastfield continues, "I believe that the minds behind the artistic works of the so-called refined or high culture such as the music of Stravinsky and Berg, the novels of Conrad and Hesse, the paintings of Picasso and Wyeth, and like works of aesthetic and intellectual refinement are no more worthy of being recognized and appreciated by society than the artistic works that sprung forth from the brilliant mind of Tupac Shakur. This is why I created the painting and why I chose art as the subject of such a different and entertaining film."

The film is scheduled to go into pre-production on location in Baltimore and Los Angeles in the Spring of 2006 with the casting of popular musical artists and actors in key roles. The painting, 'Shakurspeare,' will be reproduced in a limited edition printing to support the film. Starting in Spring 2006, the original work will also be showcased in a traveling exhibition featuring other

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works created by Bastfield. For additional information, please visit the website www.shakurspeare.com