

Pride

a project proposal by Andrew Esiebo

Below follows a brief outline of the artist's proposal, as well as a short description of the emotion behind the project, as submitted by the artist on 1 April 2010. The further development of the proposal can be followed online at <http://imagineartafter.org>

Brief Outline

Pride is a series on men's hair barbers and the spaces in which they operate across west Africa. Though hair barbing is considered as a low class profession, the work is of great social importance as the styles and looks they create are a key part of people's identity, regardless of their class or social status. I am keen to find out about the pride, which barbers derive in the job as well as documenting the different styles and how they use the spaces they operate from across major cities in west Africa.

Emotion Behind the Project

Even though barbing is often considered a low class profession it is an important tool to help people create and project their identities and it gives the people working in the profession a great sense of confidence and pride. A barber I met in Lagos told me that even though he is only considered a common barber that his work had given him access to important people and he even counted an ex-president amongst his clients. This brought him a great sense of pride and I am interested in exploring the role barbing plays in social mobility. Also, the shop spaces were places where people not only meet to look good but they also serve as a melting point for people from all walks of life. I plan to travel across various major west African cities by road (from Nigeria to Mauritania), documenting the popular hairstyles in different cities as well as the stories of individual barbers and the appropriation of their space for hair cutting.

Logistics

Principal medium: Photography

Location(s) of production: Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Cote d' Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra-Leone , Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania

Production budget indication: between £3,500-£10,000