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Bronx Rhymes: Location Based History of Hip-Hop

By [Scott Lachut](#), PSFK Labs

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Bronx Rhymes is an interactive project that combines physical location and digital mobility to trace



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Bronx Rhymes is an interactive project that combines physical location and digital mobility to trace the roots of hip-hop in the Bronx where the genre is said to have been born. The project is the brainchild of interactive designers, Masha Ioveva and Claudia Bennett, as a means of exploring different facets of musical history across a variety of mediums. An unlikely pair to serve as the ambassadors of hip-hop perhaps, but with their thoughtful approach the duo has created an engaging portrait that chronicles the early days of rap, while leaving plenty of room for it to grow. In areas around the borough near specific landmarks – clubs, buildings where prominent figures lived or schools they attended – posters have been thrown up with 160 character rhymes providing details about each spot and what happened there. The audience is invited to respond through SMS text messages with verses of their own, sharing their unique perspectives on the neighborhood, the people or simply responding to the rhyme – in essence “battling” which is rap in

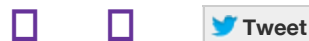


its purest and most raw form.

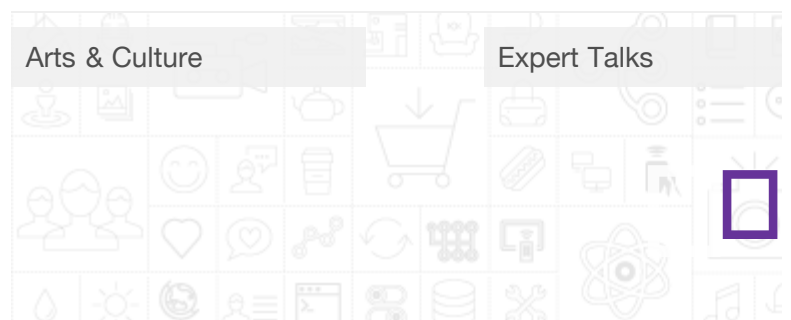
Though some might question why other mobile platforms, such as instant message and Twitter weren't built-in, the group felt that given the ubiquity of cell phones, text messaging opened the door for the most participation during the beginning stages of the project. And while viewers are encouraged to visit these sites in real time, there is also an online component allowing visitors to take a virtual tour via Google Maps and upload their lyrics through the website. As the piece evolves, loveva and Bernett hope to add in greater interactive capability and give the project more of presence in the community through contests and inter-borough "battles."

A Flickr slideshow of the project is viewable [here](#).
[MediaShift: BronxRhymes Uses Locality, Maps to Track History of Hip-Hop](#)

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