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12 Days In Senegal: An Artist's Journey



Synopsis

In March 2014, I came across a professional development grant offered by the University of California, Riverside. I had just been hired to teach West African dance in the Department of Dance as a physical education class for the general student body. With all my credentials in dance, I felt compelled to visit the motherland to gain firsthand knowledge and education on the subjects of West African dance and culture. This sabbatical journey was a long-awaited dream. The twelve-day sabbatical included Senegal's cultural destinations: Dakar, Pink Lake, Saint Louis, Saly/Mbour, and a tour of the 'Door of No Return'; on Beer (Goree) Island. While there, I maintained three daily journals: a written journal, a video journal, and a sketch journal. From those works, I created a video documentary that includes the guided tour of the 'Slave Mansion' on Beer Island, a greeting card collection called the 'Sankofa Collection' that features the twelve sketches and a photo of me jumping into the ocean at Beer Island, and a photo poetry book titled *I See Hip-Hop Afrika*, as well as this book, which is my twelve-day account of the journey. Travel along with me as I take you through the rich cultural countrysides and cities of Senegal. You will laugh, you will cry, you will be intrigued by the people and places I encounter, as well as enjoy the sketches I create from each day's experience. My prayer is that you find something useful in these accounts. Something that will help you see the world, and our place in it, a little clearer. A hope that in these words you find some peace in knowing and loving Africa. And in this book, you are consoled by the beauty that is our homeland.

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