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**HARLEM CDC GRANT WILL SUPPORT
125TH STREET VENUE FOR BLACK AND LATINO INDEPENDENT FILMS**

ImageNation's Sol Cinema (ISC) will be Harlem's first minority-run "art house" movie theater dedicated to progressive media by and about people of color

The Harlem Community Development Corporation (Harlem CDC) announced a grant of up to \$75,000 from its Community Initiatives Program Fund (CIP) toward the development of a single-screen "art-house" theater within the site of the former Mart 125 at 260-262 West 125th Street, directly opposite the legendary Apollo Theater.

Dedicated to independent film and other progressive media by and about the black and Latino communities, the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) have pledged their support to the Sol Cinema, citing it as another important attraction to the resurgent 125th Street cultural corridor.

"The ImageNation Sol Cinema will highlight local and world culture to draw Harlem residents and tourists from around the world," said Moikgantsi Kgama, Founder and Executive Director of the ImageNation Cinema Foundation. "The Sol Cinema will serve as a beacon for all people who love the arts, culture and who care about humanity," Kgama added.

Mart 125, an indoor mall for Harlem street vendors, was itself a cultural icon in the 1990's before it was shuttered in 2001. The redevelopment of the site facing 125th Street will be consistent with the recent New York City rezoning plan's aim to enhance the cultural vibrancy of the block, while protecting the site from potential development at odds in both scale and spirit with the existing streetscape.

"I am very excited about the limitless possibilities that ImageNation brings to Harlem," said Harlem CDC board member and City Council Majority Whip Inez E. Dickens. "ImageNation is under the direction of young and progressive individuals dedicated to excellence in African-American art, while at the same time embracing the art and culture of all peoples. ImageNation exemplifies the late Dr. Barbara Ann Teer's vision of our Village of Harlem being 'a worldwide cultural destination.' This grant will help ImageNation take the rightful place it has earned in the Mart 125 site," Council Member Dickens said.

The Harlem CDC grant will primarily be used to provide the non-profit ISC with consulting and administrative services needed to launch a \$3 million capital campaign to support the theater's opening

and initial operations. The 100-seat, environmentally green black-box theater plans to offer 35mm and digital video screening platforms, and a state-of-the-art sound and lighting systems for live performances.

ImageNation expects ISC to open in 2013, with a projected gross economic impact of nearly \$900,000 in new sales in the Harlem community. Thomas G. Lunke, Harlem CDC Director of Planning, expects ISC to be a boon to the 125th Street cultural economy, while providing local residents and tourists with high-quality cinema and live entertainment.

“It is culturally, socially and economically important, that this site will be the first of many to incorporate the goals and objectives laid out by the city and community for the future of Harlem’s main street, said Lunke. “It will provide a blueprint for other property owners to develop similar projects on this and other important Harlem streets.”

Harlem Community Development Corporation, a subsidiary of Empire State Development Corporation, serves the greater Harlem community through planning and implementing a range of community development and revitalization initiatives for restoring Upper Manhattan as an economically stable and culturally vibrant community. The Board of Directors of Harlem CDC established the Community Initiatives Program in 2001 to make grants and loans to community-based organizations to assist feasibility, planning or design studies related to future economic development projects.

For more information on Harlem CDC and its economic development and urban planning initiatives visit www.harlemcdc.org.

ImageNation Cinema Foundation, is a Harlem-based media arts organization founded with the goal of establishing a chain of art-house cinemas dedicated to progressive media by and about people of color. Through a variety of public exhibitions and programs, ImageNation fosters media equity, media literacy, solidarity, cross-cultural exchange and highlights the humanity of Pan-African people worldwide. For more information visit <http://www.imagenation.us>