

The Smirnoff Sound Collective Fosters Diversity Within Electronic Music In Collaboration With Artists And Industry Leaders
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NEW YORK, Dec. 1, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- Since its birth in 2014, the Smirnoff Sound Collective, the SMIRNOFF™ brand's international music platform, has inspired a more inclusive world through electronic music.

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The Smirnoff Sound Collective is taking a stand against exclusivity and the lack of diversity within electronic music through the launch of a new artist mentorship program that will lead its push for electronic music industry leaders to be more inclusive of underrepresented communities and individuals.

"Diversity in the electronic music community has been a topic of discussion within the industry, and a passion of SMIRNOFF for quite some time," said Justin Medcraft, SMIRNOFF Global Senior Brand Manager. "It's quite astonishing to us that last year only 10% of electronic music headliners were women. When you look at other communities such as the African American community and the LGBTQ community, you find a similar lack of representation throughout the industry. That needs to change and we hope to put forth acts that do so this year and moving forward."

The Smirnoff Sound Collective's new artist mentorship program, announced at last night's industry launch event in Brooklyn, NY, will give more artists an opportunity for success while inspiring other industry leaders to use their platforms to make a positive impact toward change. Joining them in that mission is Mixmag, the world's biggest dance music and clubbing destination, which has already committed its support of the program.

The program will bring electronic music industry experts, such as Roy Davis Jr., Bob Moses and Katie Longmyer together with up-and-coming artists, such as Tygapaw, Cakes Da Killa and Kissey. By bringing leaders in the industry together with new faces on the rise, the goal is to give a diverse group of artists the tools to be successful and to help them learn from one another in a space where all genders, races, and sexual orientations are heard. The artist mentorship program will be a year-long ongoing program that will include two three-day retreats where artist mentors and mentees will come together and create new experiences. At these retreats, artists – both seasoned and new – will collaborate on new tracks to be released by record labels facilitated by the Smirnoff Sound Collective.

Several of these artists attended, and performed at, the official launch event last night in celebration of the Smirnoff Sound Collective's mentorship program. They gathered with top industry professionals and electronic music legends and toasted over SMIRNOFF No. 21 cocktails to celebrate the beginnings of a new shift towards diversity. Many of the cocktails served were custom created by the artists as a way to show their appreciation for their new partnership with SMIRNOFF. Following the Smirnoff Sound Collective's program launch and pledge for diversity, Mixmag was the first industry leader to align with SMIRNOFF in creating a shift toward diversity. They announced their own plans to commit to 50% of their future magazine covers including a female artist.

The launch event, including artist performances, was livestreamed via Mixmag and can be viewed [here](#).

Earlier this year, the Smirnoff Sound Collective took the first of many steps to achieve its goal of inclusivity by taking part in vital discussions and leadership initiatives at TEDxNewYORK and Amsterdam Dance Event. Panels at these events shared deep, actionable conversations about creating a more diverse community within electronic music.

Part of achieving that purpose is continuing the ongoing conversation to bring this issue into the spotlight. The Smirnoff Sound Collective will continue to share the diverse stories of artists around the world through its short-form documentary series "Tribes" and use it as a catalyst to push forth change in the electronic music community. "Tribes" episodes to-date include "Tribes: DISCWOMAN," "Tribes: NAAFI" and "Tribes: DIRTYBIRD." A new documentary as part of the Tribes series will be released in March.

SMIRNOFF reminds you to pace yourself while celebrating good vibes and to always drink responsibly.

Smirnoff Sound Collective Mentorship Program Participants:

- **Mentors:** Roy Davis Jr., Bob Moses, Katie Longmyer, Daouda Leonard, Kevin Saunderson, Nat Esten, Toby Andrews, Julia Willinger, Olga Zegers, Carlos Correal
- **Artists:** Nomi Ruiz, Kissey, Julia Govor, Tygapaw, Nina Dioz, Cry Baby, Gina Turner, Autograf,

About the Smirnoff Sound Collective

The Smirnoff Sound Collective is the SMIRNOFF™ brand's international music platform that was created with the goal of inspiring a more diverse and inclusive world through electronic music. The Smirnoff Sound Collective will achieve this through the development of short-form and long-form content pieces that share inclusive stories told through music, artist collaborations and by hosting unique experiences that bring different cultures of artists and fans together. The Smirnoff Sound Collective is also a sponsor of Mixmag Labs across the world in cities including New York, Los Angeles and Sydney.

About SMIRNOFF

The SMIRNOFF brand, the world's number-one selling premium spirit and the top-selling vodka by volume, in the United States, traces its heritage back to 19th century Russia. As the most awarded vodka brand in the world, SMIRNOFF has always been known for quality and is enjoyed responsibly in 130 countries around the world. For more information, log on to www.smirnoff.com.

About Diageo

Diageo is a global leader in beverage alcohol with an outstanding collection of brands including Johnnie Walker, Crown Royal, Bulleit and Buchanan's whiskies, Smirnoff, Cîroc and Ketel One vodkas, Captain Morgan, Baileys, Don Julio, Tanqueray and Guinness.

Diageo is listed on both the New York Stock Exchange (DEO) and the London Stock Exchange (DGE) and our products are sold in more than 180 countries around the world. For more information about Diageo, our people, our brands, and performance, visit us at www.diageo.com. Visit Diageo's global responsible drinking resource, www.DRINKiQ.com, for information, initiatives, and ways to share best practice.

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