

# Thembisa Mshaka

## Biography

Creative executive, author, producer, filmmaker, activist, and entertainment branding specialist Thembisa S. Mshaka has been in love with words, music and media for as long as she can remember. Honored to be appointed the first copy director in Creative Services for BET Networks, Thembisa contributed to the 2008 Emmy-winning Rap-It-Up HIV/AIDS awareness campaign and conceived campaigns for top rated shows including *The BET Awards*, *BET Honors* and *BET Hip-Hop Awards* since their inception, and conceived campaigns for several original programs including *The New Edition Story*, *Being Mary Jane*, and *Real Husbands of Hollywood*. A skilled talent director, she has been blessed to work with a broad array of greats, from the late Don LaFontaine (King of Movie Trailers) to supermodel Selita Ebanks and Academy Award® winners Mo’Nique and Jamie Foxx.

As Senior Advertising Copywriter for Sony Music, Thembisa created the award-winning global ad campaign for Lauryn Hill’s solo debut album, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* along with multiple campaigns for Will Smith, Destiny’s Child, Beyonce’, Wyclef Jean, NAS, Jill Scott, Wu-Tang Clan, Maxwell and others, contributing to the sale of over 170 million units worldwide in just 5 years. Prior to joining Sony Music, Thembisa was the first Black person and first woman to hold the position of Rap Editor at *Gavin* magazine, *The Most Trusted Name In Radio*, where she coined the phrase ‘Generation NeXt’ and broke many of today’s world-class hip-hop and soul artists (The Roots, Busta Rhymes, D’Angelo, Common, Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, The Lady of Rage, Timbaland).

A frequent on air guest (including Hot 97-NY’s *Street Soldiers*, *Sway In The Morning*, and TV One’s *Celebrity Crime Files*), Thembisa is asked to share her insights across all platforms, including social media as a keynote speaker at #140conf London. At the request of KRS-ONE, Thembisa joined him to declare Hip-Hop a Culture of Peace at the United Nations. She is an advisory board member of the Universal Hip Hop Museum and non-profit organization, GiveLyrics.

A contributor for Huffington Post and Okayplayer.com, her writings have been published in print and online, in text books (*25 Hip-Hop Icons*, Edited by Mickey Hess, Greenwood Press), anthologies *Sometimes Rhythm*, *Sometimes Blues* (Edited by Taigi Smith, Seal Press), and in business non-fiction through her own book, *Put Your Dreams First: Handle Your [entertainment] Business* (Grand Central Publishing), named among the Top 15 Hip-Hop Lit titles by AOL. Her first feature screenplay, *Islamic Speed Dating*, is complete, and she has *Throwin’ Shade*, an LGBT docu-series, in pilot negotiations. A Los Angeles native, Thembisa holds a degree in International Relations and Ethnic Studies from Mills College in Oakland, California. A graduate of the film producer program at New York Film Academy, Thembisa is a multiple festival selected writer-director and producer of three short films. Connect with Thembisa on Twitter @putyrdreams1st and @officiallipgame on Instagram.

