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NATIONAL BLACK PROGRAMMING CONSORTIUM PICKS NEXT CROP FOR INCUBATOR

Sophomore class of NBPC's 360 Incubator and Fund to include 7 producing teams competing for up to \$150,000 in development funds for their TV, web series pilots

NEW YORK (September 8, 2016)—The nation's only nonprofit dedicated solely to media content about the Black experience has selected seven producing teams for its 360 Incubator and Fund where competitors can score up to \$150,000 in development funds for their TV and web pilots or interactive/transmedia project. The Harlem-based National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC) has launched season two of its funding initiative designed to identify innovative storytellers and to pipeline their stories about the Black experience. The selected projects enter a six-week incubator on Monday where they will work with veteran producers in their bid to win funding.

"The 360 program harnesses the experience and insight of seasoned independent filmmakers, committed public media executives and funders of diverse voices to support the vision of a talented producer," said NBPC Executive Director Leslie Fields-Cruz. "The success of the previous 360 cohort speaks to the strength of the program, so we are extremely excited about helping the next cohort realize their projects."

On Monday the new wave of producers, or 360 Fellows, embark on a two-day boot camp, which is immediately followed by a six-week incubator. Under the mentorship of experienced producers, the storytellers will hash out their projects from story idea to budget to measuring impact—and everything in between. The work is all in preparation for Pitch Black, NBPC's interactive pitch session in front of a high-profile panel of public media and industry executives and a live audience of funders, distributors and production companies, as well as public television stations interested in hosting a project through pilot development. The Pitch Black is being held on October 20 in New York City. Teams will be evaluated on their market/audience research, technical and artistic merits, relevance, team capacity and suitability to the broadcast venue. The 2015 event drew executives from public television (CPB, PBS, WORLD Channel, ITVS, POV and WNET), but also HBO, A&E, Fox, BET, Tribeca All Access and Third World Newsreel.

Boot-camp sessions include those on public media (by renowned producer and public television champion Donald Thoms), social media (by digital agency Whole Whale's Julie Leary and Meredith Esquivel), branding (by social entrepreneurship and PR/marketing firm the AM Group's Autumn Marie), media impact (media strategy firm Dot Connector Studio's Jessica Clark) budgeting (by Executive Producer & Editorial Manager for WORLD Channel at WGBH Boston Chris Hastings), virtual reality (by producer and star of MTV's "No Seasons" and "Just Being Julian" Julian Yuri Rodriguez), engagement (by Picture Motion's Darcy Heusel), and story (by "America By The Numbers" producer Sandy Rattley). Producing teams will be matched with their mentors at the event.

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“We are so excited to nurture these new voices and introduce their creative, thought provoking stories into the national conversation on mass incarceration, gentrification, health, color politics, African American culinary traditions and history and literature,” said NBPC Director of Programs and Acquisitions Kay Shaw. “We are looking forward to the impact these producers will have on public media and mainstream media for years to come.”

The seven projects chosen by a panel of industry experts include:

“Chef Ricky,” a broadcast series by Shirlette Ammons

A hybrid cooking/reality series following former “Iron Chef” contestant Ricky Moore, who moves his wife and two kids from the big city of Washington, D.C. back to his home state of North Carolina to turn the gems of his rural raising into an urban culinary enterprise in Durham.

“Invisible Universe,” a broadcast series by M. Asli Dukan and Clarivel Ruiz

A three-part documentary series following a time-traveling archivist navigating the history of speculative fiction (including fantasy, horror and science fiction) literature and cinema. In addition to exposing the racist representations of Black people in this traditionally white space, the show reveals a canon of work by Black creators who have been consciously creating their own universe.

“Selfies from the Hill,” a broadcast series by Gregory Scott Williams, Jr.

Intimate, intertwined portraits of three teenagers from Pittsburgh’s Hill District, once home to the city’s Black middle class. After years of blight, the area is now facing gentrification. Using social media content, participatory footage and interviews, the series explores the difference between our digital and physical selves and examines the barriers of race, class and criminality in one of America’s most livable cities.

“So Young, So Pretty, So White,” a broadcast series by Chanelle Aponte Pearson and Christiana Mbakwe

Weaving the lives of several compelling men and women from across the globe, “So Young, So Pretty, So White” is a window into the often-secret world of skin bleaching, unmasking what drives people to lighten their skin. The series delves into the lives of those who adhere to the practice—the lure of lighter skin and the challenges to sustain it transcend national borders—and exposes multinational corporations who exploit regional discrimination against people with darker skin tones.

“The Storyscape,” a transmedia project by Dominique Taylor and Stephanie Fields

“The Storyscape” blends entertainment and education for adults to continue a love for reading beyond our formative years. This imaginative, intellectual series encourages mature audiences to share the gift of reading with each other.

“The wHOLE,” a fiction web series by Ramon Hamilton and Glenn Martin

If mass incarceration is the New Jim Crow, then solitary confinement is the whipping post, and “The wHOLE” lays it all bare. The series offers audiences access to a rarely seen world through engaging characters and enticing drama that draws directly from real experiences—the cast and crew have spent a combined seven years in solitary confinement. “The wHOLE” opens the door to the prison within the prison.

“Urban Food Chain,” a nonfiction web series by Tiffany Judkins and Artemis Fannin

The series spotlights people seeking inventive solutions to food challenges to empower health, social enterprise and community. Hungry for change, those featured challenge the status quo. Rewriting the rules and igniting a revolution, these renegades offer up insight, recipes and innovations that inspire. “Urban Food Chain” is a gritty combination of compelling storytelling, provocative cinematography and emotive original music, with host stic.man of Dead Prez setting up each show’s theme.

The four inaugural 360 winners have continued to work to bring their projects to market. “My Africa Is” by Nosarieme Garrick and Hassatou Diallo, a TV series offering a fresh view of the African continent and its innovators, aired its pilot this February as part of NBPC’s public television series “AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange.” Garrick is currently in development for the first season of “My Africa Is.” web series “POPS” by Garland McLaurin, a humorous and enlightening view of Black fatherhood, will premiere its first season on ITVS’s digital channel and PBS.org this fall. “Pixie Dust” by Damon Colquhoun, a scripted series about a teenager with magical powers to quell her mother’s mental illness, is currently in development for its first season. “Street Cred” by Sultan Sharrief, a broadcast reality series on Detroit high school students learning entertainment producing skills to win a dream internship, is in post-production and Detroit Public Television will tease the pilot in a local feed for PBS’s American Graduate Day.

NBPC 360 partners include the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the NEA, WNET (lead partner), ITVS, KQED, Writers Guild of America East, Producers Guild of America/Diversity Committee, Made in American NYC, Silicon Harlem, Third World Newsreel and the International House.

For more information on NBPC or NBPC 360, visit www.blackpublicmedia.org or follow the organization on Twitter (@BLKPublicMedia).

ABOUT NBPC:

The National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC) is committed to enriching our democracy by educating, enlightening, empowering and engaging the American public. The nonprofit supports diverse voices by developing, producing and distributing innovative media about the Black experience and by investing in visionary content makers. NBPC provides quality content for public media outlets, including, among others, PBS and PBS.org and BlackPublicMedia.org, as well as other platforms, while training and mentoring the next generation of Black filmmakers. Founded in 1979, NBPC produces the “AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange” documentary series and manages the 360 Incubator and Fund, a funding and training initiative designed to accelerate the production of important Black serial and interactive content.

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