



PRESS RELEASE

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AFROPOP TAKES DEEP DIVE INTO BLACK ART

Season 15 of documentary series on Black life premieres on Monday, April 3

NEW YORK (February 21, 2023) — The popular documentary series *AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange* is celebrating its landmark 15th season with a deep dive into Black art, the first time the series is presenting an entire season centered around a single theme. The award-winning public media series about Black culture and life, co-produced by [Black Public Media](#) (BPM) and [WORLD Channel](#), will immerse viewers in the worlds of internationally recognized artists including trailblazing choreographer/dancer/director Bill T. Jones, international recording star and activist Angélique Kidjo, trailblazing visual artist Bill Traylor, traditional Mozambican dancer and storyteller Atanásio Nyusi, and iconic jazz musician Thelonious Monk. The season premiere, *Can You Bring It: Bill T. Jones and D-Man in the Waters*, will stream exclusively on [Black Public Media's YouTube channel](#) starting at midnight ET on Monday, April 3, and broadcast at 8:00 p.m. ET on WORLD Channel later that day. New episodes of the series, which is distributed and co-presented by [American Public Television](#) (APT), will premiere weekly on WORLD Channel through May 1.

“When we created *AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange* it was our hope that we would be able to bring stories of modern Black life to public media audiences and help augment viewers’ ideas of what Black life is and can be,” said Leslie Fields-Cruz, BPM executive director and *AfroPoP* executive producer. “Witnessing the series reach its 15th season, a landmark that is the result of the work and drive of so many people over the years, is an awe-inspiring and humbling moment that fills me with great gratitude.”

The series, which shines the spotlight on all corners of the African diaspora, premiered in 2008. With this season, it will have presented 87 feature and short films from noted creatives such as George Amponsah, Joel Zito Araújo, Violeta Ayala, Samuel “Blitz the Ambassador” Bazawule, Yaba Blay, Barron Claiborne, Rebecca Richman Cohen, Bobbito Garcia, Thomas Allen Harris, Eric Kabera, Terence Nance, Raoul Peck, Sam Pollard, Michèle Stephenson and Marco Williams.

WORLD Channel is enormously proud to have been the home of *AfroPoP* since 2010, and to have joined forces with BPM to executive produce the series in recent

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years,” said Chris Hastings, executive producer for WORLD Channel at GBH in Boston. “As this one-of-a kind series celebrates its 15th anniversary with a spotlight on the contributions of Black artists to global culture, we are excited for what the future holds for new and untold stories.”

Spanning the globe to spotlight the power of Black art, this season of *AfroPoP* transports viewers to Benin, France, Mozambique, and the United States with the following films:

- [Can You Bring It: Bill T. Jones and D-Man in the Waters](#) Rosalynde LeBlanc and Tom Hurwitz’s study of eminent choreographer Bill T. Jones’ masterpiece ballet “D-Man in the Waters.” The groundbreaking work of art was first performed by the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company in 1989 in response to the devastating impact the AIDS crisis had on its members and friends. Decades later, former company member turned dance professor LeBlanc — and Jones — work to bring the dance to life with contemporary students born well after the height of the global health crisis (April 3). The 90-minute film is an *AfroPoP* special presentation.
- [Queen Kidjo](#), Claire Duguet’s enlightening exploration of the career and global impact of international superstar and activist Angélique Kidjo. The film follows Kidjo as she reflects on her journey from her roots in Benin to her musical reign as African music legend (April 10).
- [Bill Traylor: Chasing Ghosts](#), Jeffrey Wolf’s portrait of the life of a unique American artist who, in his late 80s, started to draw and paint, both his memories from plantation days and scenes of a radically changing urban culture (April 17).
- [The Sound of Masks](#), Sara CF de Gouveia’s illustration of a prize-winning dancer of Mapiko — a traditional masked dance done exclusively by male members of the Makonde community of northern Mozambique as a tool to challenge colonization during the Mozambican War of Independence — and his work to keep the rituals alive. (April 24).
- [Rewind & Play](#), Alain Gomis’s exposé of the glaring disrespect shown to legendary jazz musician Thelonious Monk during a 1969 appearance on French state television while the iconic pianist was in Paris for the end of his European tour (May 1).

Denise A. Greene is *AfroPoP*’s producer/director, Carol Bash is series associate producer and Ashton Pina is the series writer.

[AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange](#) can also be viewed on WORLD Channel’s [YouTube channel](#) and on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [PBS.org](#) and the [PBS Video app](#). The program is available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming

devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO. APT will release the season to public television stations across the country on Monday, May 1. For viewing information, check local listings.

To find out more about *AfroPoP*, visit <https://worldchannel.org/show/afropop/> or <https://blackpublicmedia.org/afropop/>.

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

ABOUT BLACK PUBLIC MEDIA:

Black Public Media (BPM) supports the development of visionary content creators and distributes stories about the global Black experience to inspire a more equitable and inclusive future. For more than 40 years, BPM has addressed the needs of unserved and underserved audiences. BPM continues to address historical, contemporary, and systemic challenges that traditionally impede the development and distribution of Black stories. For more information, visit blackpublicmedia.org and follow BPM on Instagram and Facebook and @BLKPublicMedia on Twitter.

ABOUT WORLD CHANNEL:

WORLD shares the best of public media in news, documentaries and programming. WORLD's original series examine the issues and amplify the voices of those often ignored by mainstream media. The multicast 24/7 channel helps audiences understand conflicts, movements and cultures from around the globe. Its original work has won a Peabody Award, an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Award, an International Documentary Association Award, a National News and Documentary Emmy Award, two Webby Awards and many others honoring diversity of content and makers. WORLD is carried by 193 member stations in markets representing 75% of US TV households. Funding for WORLD Channel is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts and Artworks. WORLD is produced by GBH in partnership with WNET and is distributed by American Public Television (APT). Find out more at WORLDChannel.org.

ABOUT AMERICAN PUBLIC TELEVISION:

American Public Television (APT) is the leading syndicator of high-quality, top-rated programming to the nation's public television stations. Founded in 1961, APT distributes 250 new program titles per year and more than one-third of the top 100 highest-rated public television titles in the U.S. APT's diverse catalog includes prominent documentaries, performance, dramas, how-to programs, classic movies, children's series, and news and current affairs programs. *Midsomer Murders*, *America's Test Kitchen*, *AfroPoP*, *Rick Steves' Europe*, *Pacific Heartbeat*, *Christopher Kimball's Milk Street Television*, *The Indian Doctor*, *Legacy List with Matt Paxton*, *Lidia's Kitchen*, *Kevin Belton's New Orleans Kitchen*, *Simply Ming*, *The Best of the Joy of Painting with Bob Ross*, *Front & Center*, *James Patterson's Kid*

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Stew and *NHK Newsline* are a sampling of APT's programs, considered some of the most popular on public television. APT also licenses programs internationally through its APT Worldwide service and distributes Create®TV — featuring the best of public television's lifestyle programming — and WORLD™, public television's premier news, science and documentary channel.

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