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BLACK PUBLIC MEDIA ANNOUNCES 2023 PITCHBLACK FORUM AND AWARDS

Hosted by comedian Sir Alex and supported by Netflix, the PitchBLACK Awards will honor prolific documentary filmmaker Yoruba Richen

NEW YORK (February 27, 2023) — [Black Public Media](#) (BPM) will hold its sixth PitchBLACK Forum — the largest pitch competition for Black, independent filmmakers and creative technologists in the United States — on April 25 and 26. Winners of up to \$150,000 in project funding for new documentary filmmaking and immersive media projects will be announced at the PitchBLACK Awards on April 27, honoring award-winning filmmaker and educator **Yoruba Richen** and emceed by Baltimore-based comedian **Sir Alex**. PitchBLACK and the PitchBLACK Awards will take place at The Green Space in Manhattan.

PitchBLACK will be supported in 2023 and 2024 by [Netflix's Fund for Creative Equity](#), a dedicated effort to help build new opportunities for underrepresented communities within entertainment. This new grant from Netflix builds on previous support awarded in 2020 to BPM, a major funder for and champion of Black filmmaking, and helped make the formerly biyearly event an annual industry opportunity for Black creatives.

"We are so happy to have Netflix continue its work with our organization through this partnership," said **Leslie Fields-Cruz**, executive director of BPM. "Just as Netflix helped change the way audiences find and consume their entertainment, we at BPM are confident that this partnership will help us continue our work to help Black and independent storytellers and creative technologists forge new paths."

Since it launched PitchBLACK in 2015, BPM has awarded more than \$1.5 million to 17 different projects, some of which have premiered on PBS, WORLD Channel, Create and PBS Digital. Program alumni have produced for PBS, CNN, Showtime, Netflix, HBO, BET, NBC, The CW and more.

The PitchBLACK Forum is a high-stakes funding competition for documentary and immersive media producers/directors developing new projects about the Black experience. Producers and technologists vie for awards of up to \$150,000 in funding in front of a panel of media professionals and an in-person and virtual audience of funders, distributors and industry leaders.

This year's forum culminates BPM's [360 Incubator+ program](#), an intensive three-month fellowship under the mentorship of veteran producers offering participants an opportunity to develop a film, web series or engagement project. The event includes the PitchBLACK Film Forum on Tuesday, April 25; and the PitchBLACK Immersive Forum on Wednesday, April 26. Winners will be announced the evening of Thursday, April 27, during the PitchBLACK Awards honoring Richen, whose works have captured the joys and trials of Black life, with films about

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Rosa Parks, Harry Belafonte, the killing of Breonna Taylor, and more. With the honor, Richen joins the ranks of other BPM Trailblazer Award winners **Orlando Bagwell**, **Joe Brewster**, **Michèle Stephenson** and **Marco Williams**.

BPM also will present the Nonso Christian Ugboke Fellowship to a yet-to-be announced recipient. The fellowship is named after BPM's late director of digital initiatives.

The PitchBLACK Immersive Forum and PitchBLACK Awards will stream live on BPM's social media channels. The PitchBLACK Film Forum is invitation-only.

Additional sponsorship opportunities are available by contacting Alisa Norris, BPM's fund development and corporate partnerships manager, at alisa@blackpublicmedia.org. Entertainment industry executives and funders wishing to attend the PitchBLACK Forum in person may request access at <https://forms.gle/XpcR5MUWEzL667zS8>.

PitchBLACK 2023 is sponsored by Netflix and Gimlet Media, with additional support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

For more information on BPM, visit blackpublicmedia.org. Follow the organization and watch the events at @blackpublicmedia on Instagram and Facebook and @BLKPublicMedia on Twitter.

ABOUT...:

Yoruba Richen is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and educator whose work has been featured on multiple outlets including PBS, Netflix, MSNBC, HULU, HBO, Frontline, Field of Vision and New York Times Op Doc. Her recent films include: *The Rebellious Life of Mrs Rosa Parks*, which was nominated for a Critics Choice award; *American Reckoning* (2022), part of Frontline's award-winning multi-platform series *Un(re)solved*; Emmy nominated *How it Feels to Be Free* (2021); Peabody and Emmy nominated *The Sit In: Harry Belafonte Hosts the Tonight Show* (2020); and *The Killing of Breonna Taylor* (2020). Her 2019 film, *The Green Book: Guide to Freedom*, premiered on the Smithsonian Channel; and her films *The New Black* (2013) and *Promised Land* (2010) won several awards before being broadcast on PBS' *Independent Lens* and *POV*, respectively. Yoruba has won a Clio, the Creative Promise Award at Tribeca All Access and was a Sundance Producers Fellow. In her role as the founding director of the documentary program at City University of New York's Newmark Graduate School of Journalism, she is preparing future generations of documentary storytellers. She also is a featured TED Speaker, a Fulbright fellow, a Guggenheim fellow and a 2016 recipient of the Chicken & Egg Breakthrough Filmmaker Award. In 2014, Yoruba was named to the Root 100s list of African Americans 45 years old and younger; and in 2020, she was recognized among BPM's 40 Game Changers as part of the organization's 40th anniversary celebration of influential and prolific Black media storytellers.

Comedian **Alex "Sir Alex" Robinson** hails from Baltimore. He has been featured on Kevin Hart's and Comedy Central's "Hart of the City" series. Alex also produces and hosts one of the longest operating bi-weekly attractions in Baltimore. Every other Sunday night, you can catch live entertainment with "Sunday's @ The Port" in the Baltimore area. Follow Sir Alex to continue to keep up with his shows and events at @Sir_AlexR on all social media platforms!

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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.

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