



PRESS RELEASE

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AFROPOP SERIES EMBRACES THE NARRATIVE

Season 16 of *AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange* series, premiering Monday, April 1, to include narrative features

NEW YORK (February 21, 2024) — *AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange*, the award-winning series by [Black Public Media](#) (BPM) and [WORLD](#), debuts season 16 on Monday, April 1. The series, renowned for its powerful documentaries, rebrands as the public media home for both documentary and narrative films about the global Black experience. In addition to real-life stories about fights for criminal and environmental justice in America, this season shines the spotlight on Kenya, with two prize-winning narrative films on redemption and resilient joy. *AfroPoP* premieres on WORLD, the [WORLD YouTube Channel](#), the [Black Public Media YouTube channel](#) and the PBS App. New episodes premiere weekly on WORLD through April 22 and PBS Plus will distribute the series to PBS affiliate public television stations across the country beginning April 1.

The series is executive produced by BPM Executive Director **Leslie Fields-Cruz** and WORLD (at GBH) Editor and Chief **Chris Hastings**. Denise A. Greene is series director/producer, Carol Bash is series associate producer and Ashton Pina is the series writer.

“Beginning this season, *AfroPoP* expands to also include narrative features, ensuring that filmmakers have multiple ways to capture the breadth of Black stories and issues,” said Fields-Cruz.

AfroPoP has presented 91 feature and short films spotlighting stories from across the African diaspora since its premiere in 2008. Noted directors include George Amponsah, Joel Zito Araújo, Violeta Ayala, Blitz Bazawule, Yaba Blay, Barron Claiborne, Rebecca Richman Cohen, Bobbito Garcia, Alain Gomis, Thomas Allen Harris, Eric Kabera, Terence Nance, Raoul Peck, Sam Pollard, Michèle Stephenson and Marco Williams.

“*AfroPoP* is more than just a series; it's a vibrant tapestry that stitches together the voices of marginalized communities, offering a platform for stories that are too often overlooked. WORLD's mission is to illuminate the many facets of the human experience through content that educates, informs and inspires,” said Hastings. “In partnership with Black Public Media, with *AfroPoP*, we continue to push experience through content that educates, informs and inspires,” said Hastings. “In

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partnership with Black Public Media, with *AfroPoP*, we continue to push boundaries, finding innovative ways to connect audiences with content that reflects their lives and experiences. Join us as we celebrate the voices, the stories and the impact of the African Diaspora on our world.”

Season 16 films include:

- *Commuted* by Nailah Jefferson, which follows Danielle Metz, as she is freed by decree of President Obama after spending half of her life behind bars. As she returns to her home in New Orleans, will she be able to find her footing and connect with her now adult children? Released during Second Chance Month, a national month celebrated each April to highlight ways to help the formerly incarcerated reenter society, *Commuted* is a copresentation of *AfroPoP* and *America ReFramed*. In 2019, Jefferson won \$100,000 in production funding for the film from BPM’s PitchBLACK pitching contest.
- *Supa Modo* by Likarion Wainaina, the magical story of Jo, a terminally ill nine-year-old Kenyan girl, and the family and village who help her fulfill her fantasy of being a superhero. The film is AFROBUBBLEGUM, a genre of art that defies prevailing narratives about Africa and instead leans into the continent’s joy, vibrancy and hope.
- *Kati Kati* by Mbithi Masya, a supernatural trip to an in-between life and death place where a woman arrives and works to unravel the mystery of her existence and that of her fellow travelers. The Afrofuturistic film is from Kenya.
- *Freedom Hill* by Resita Cox, a portrait of Princeville, North Carolina — the first American town chartered by formerly enslaved Black people — as it fights to survive frequent “100-year” floods. *Freedom Hill* is a copresentation of *AfroPoP* + *Local, USA*.

[AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange](#) can also be viewed on WORLD’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. PBS Plus will release the season to additional public television stations across the country (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 44 years, BPM has addressed the needs of unserved and underserved audiences. BPM-supported programs have won 5 Emmys, 9 Peabodys, 3 Anthem Awards, 14 Emmy nominations, and an Oscar nomination. 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 X.

ABOUT WORLD:

WORLD shares the best of public media in news, documentaries and programming. WORLD's original series examines the issues and amplifies the voices of those often ignored by mainstream media. The multiplatform 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 194 member stations in markets representing 77% of US TV households. Funding for WORLD 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. WORLD is produced by GBH in partnership with WNET and is distributed by American Public Television (APT). Find out more at WORLDChannel.org.

ABOUT PBS PLUS:

PBS Plus is a syndicated programming service for public television stations, supplementing the primetime, daily news, and children's content in the National Program Service, providing series and specials intended for various dayparts. All PBS member stations, reaching all available national TV households, have access to PBS Plus content. Annually, stations are provided with approximately 500 hours of programming via PBS Plus.

PBS Plus seeks general-audience programs with national and regional appeal that supplement PBS's National Program Service for primetime programming. PBS Plus series and specials range from "how-to" programs such as *This Old House* and food series such as *The Food Principle* to curated documentary series such as *Reel South* and arts and cultural shows such as *Austin City Limits*. PBS Plus also seeks out content that embraces our country's cultural diversity through heritage documentaries and holiday celebration programs. Half-hour lifestyle series in the food, home improvement, and other lifestyle genres are also a content priority.

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