



BLACK PUBLIC MEDIA BREAKS DOWN BARRIERS FOR TECH ARTISTS

National film and immersive media funder pushes Black stories into the future at Torrents in DC this November

WASHINGTON (October 29, 2024) — Black Public Media, the Harlem-based national media arts nonprofit that funds, distributes and develops Black film, television and immersive projects, is propelling creative technologists and Black stories into the future. Determined to raise the visibility of Black makers who use technology to make art, films and experiences, the organization's immersive media unit, BPMplus, returns to Torrents: New Links to Black Futures, a popular arts and culture festival produced annually by CulturalDC. Building on the success of its standing-room only 2023 Torrents panel, the arts nonprofit is expanding its BPMplus Art & Tech Showcase this year to include two panels, featuring seven makers from three continents. The free event, which takes place on Saturday, November 16, from noon to 4:30 p.m. will be held at and sponsored by Songbyrd Music House in Washington. A networking mixer will follow the showcase.

Billed as an interdisciplinary series that celebrates creative future-building through visual arts, technology, music, film, and performance, Torrents is produced by CulturalDC, a nonprofit that produces unconventional creative-placemaking activations around D.C. via partnerships with community members, artists, real estate developers, city officials, and other stakeholders. Now in its third iteration, Torrents runs November 14 to 17 in Washington.

Launched in 2018, BPMplus provides grants, training and networking for producers and technologists using emerging technologies as their mediums. BPMplus makers typically use augmented reality, motion capture, artificial intelligence and similar technologies to make their projects. The department offers fellowships, artists-in-residence programs, immersive tech workshops, creative technology showcases and the PitchBLACK Immersive Forum, the nation's largest pitch competition for independent, immersive works about the Black experience.

This year's BPMplus Art & Tech Showcase at Torrents is, again, moderated by BPM's Director of Emerging Media Lisa Osborne, a veteran immersive and experimental media producer who has worked with American Film Institute and Sundance Institute's New Frontier programs.

"As AI and other new technologies become more embedded in our daily lives, it is important that access to these tools is available for everyone during their liminal or pre-commercial phases," said Osborne. "For decades, tech training, grants and other opportunities have been funneled into the hands of a few, essentially imprinting biases that exist in old or traditional media onto new storytelling tools, long before they gain mass adoption. Our BPMplus programs strive to counter that larger tendency in the tech, film, arts and philanthropic worlds by giving our immersive filmmakers and artists a seat at the table, to ensure a future where all communities are represented."

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Presenting artists — all BPMplus Fellows, whose projects span the gamut from an augmented reality garden to an experimental documentary about preserving family histories — include: Baff Akoto, *Collateral Echoes* (2025); Damien McDuffie, Juneteenth AR.T Hack and Black Terminus AR.T Hack (2024); Ethel-Ruth Tawe, *Image Frequency Modulation* (2025), winner of the PitchBLACK Immersive Forum 2024; LaJuné McMillian, *The Portal's Keeper* (2024), winner of PitchBLACK Immersive 2023 for their project, *The Unseen*; MaryAnn Talavera, *The ORIXA Project: Planet Aris* (2024); Georgiana Wright, *Synthetic Ferality* (2024); and Andrea Walls, *Variance: Ritual for a Home* (2024), another PitchBLACK Immersive 2024 winner. Sessions run from noon to 1:30 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The networking mixer from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. will feature a cash bar.

Songbyrd Music House is located at 540 Penn Street NE, Washington, DC. Register for the free event at <https://bit.ly/BPMplusshowcase>. Doors open at 11:30 am.

For more on Black Public Media, visit <https://blackpublicmedia.org> or follow BPM on YouTube at @BlackPublicMedia; at @BlkPublicMedia or on Facebook, Instagram; and on TikTok at @BlackPublicMedia. Follow #bpmplus during Torrents.

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 45 years, BPM has addressed the needs of unserved and underserved audiences. BPM-supported programs have won five Emmys, 10 Peabodys, three 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. BPMplus, a division of Black Public Media, provides immersive artists and creative technologists with critical support and funding for projects using emerging technologies. Since its inception in 2018, BPMplus has supported 26 artists and awarded nearly \$300K in grants through fellowships, residencies, virtual production classes and mixers.

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