



PRESS RELEASE

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AFROPOP PAINTS PORTRAIT OF VISIONARY BLACK ARTIST NELLIE MAE ROWE

Special Juneteenth screening at Atlanta's Tara Theatre is set for *This World is Not My Own*, a genre-blending documentary featuring Uzo Aduba, Amy Warren and Andrew Young

NEW YORK (June 3, 2026) — Black Public Media's Peabody Award-winning series *AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange* continues its 18th season July 2 with *This World Is Not My Own*, an award-winning, artfully layered documentary about the acclaimed self-taught artist Nellie Mae Rowe. The film premieres ahead of July 4 — Rowe's birthdate in 1900 — and as the nation prepares to mark the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

On Friday, June 19, at 7:30 p.m., the documentary will have a special Juneteenth screening in conjunction with the High Museum of Art at the Tara Theatre in Atlanta. The screening will be followed by a talkback with High Museum curator Katherine Jentleson and members of Rowe's family who appear in the film, great-nieces Cathi Perry and Cheryl Mashack. Tickets are available via Tara Theatre at: <https://www.taraatlanta.com/movie/this-world-is-not-my-own-2024-2/>.

Directed by Opendox filmmakers Petter Ringbom and Marquise Stillwell and executive produced by Stillwell and dream hampton, the film won the Jury Award for Best Documentary at the Mendocino Film Festival, a Best Documentary Award Special Mention at the Palm Springs International Film Festival and the Best Cinematography Award at the Atlanta Film Festival. *This World Is Not My Own* traces Rowe's life across the 20th century, from her birth on July 4, 1900, and childhood as the daughter of a sharecropper and formerly enslaved father to her late-life emergence on the national art scene. Three-time Emmy® Award winner Uzo Aduba and Broadway veteran Amy Warren bring Rowe and her friend, arts patron and gallery owner Judith Alexander, to life through voice and movements. The film, which was produced by Ruchi Mital, also includes an appearance by civil rights leader Andrew Young.

At the heart of the film is the unlikely friendship between Rowe and Alexander, two women from vastly different worlds who found connection through art and a shared refusal to be confined by the expectations around them. Alexander came from one of the South's

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prominent Jewish families and was the daughter of Henry Alexander, a segregationist attorney. Their families' connections deepen the film's exploration of race, class, religion, gender and the long reach of history.

This World Is Not My Own combines traditional documentary storytelling with animation, scripted scenes and intricately constructed sets inspired by Rowe's famed "Playhouse," the home she filled with drawings, handmade dolls, chewing gum sculptures, found objects and vivid expressions of a spiritual, deeply personal worldview.

"As the nation approaches America 250, *This World Is Not My Own* reminds us that the American story has always been shaped by artists like Nellie Mae Rowe, whose imagination, persistence and creative freedom helped redefine America's cultural landscape," said Leslie Fields-Cruz, executive director of Black Public Media and executive producer of *AfroPoP*. "Her work is a radiant example of the Black creativity that has enriched our nation, and this film captures the beauty, complexity and power of her legacy."

This World Is Not My Own is the first feature-length documentary to premiere exclusively on BPM's [YouTube channel](#).

Season 18 of *AfroPoP* opens June 15 with *Listen to Me*, the debut film from maternal health experts Kanika Harris and Stephanie Etienne. The documentary follows three Black women through pregnancy, birth and early motherhood, bringing the Black maternal health crisis into sharp focus while calling for accountability, healing and change. The film premieres on the PBS App and PBS.org, with viewers encouraged to check local listings for broadcast times.

Listen to Me will also air later in the month on WORLD, which feeds at the same time to all time zones. Broadcast times are listed in Eastern Time; viewers in other U.S. time zones should tune in at the corresponding local time. The film airs Wednesday, June 24, at 7 p.m. ET; Thursday, June 25, at 12 a.m. ET, which is 9 p.m. PT on Wednesday, June 24; Thursday, June 25, at 8 a.m. ET and Saturday, June 27, at 1 p.m. ET.

The final film of the season, planned for November, will be announced later this year.

AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange remains the only U.S.-based public media program solely devoted to independent documentaries and narrative films about contemporary life, art and culture across the African diaspora. BPM saved the series from the brink after a 2025 Congressional vote rescinded \$1.8 million that had been allocated to it. As a result, the series is expected to reach its 100th film presentation this season.

Since its premiere in 2008, *AfroPoP* has presented films by an array of award-winning and noted filmmakers, including George Amponsah, Joel Zito Araújo, Violeta Ayala, Blitz Bazawule, Yaba Blay, Barron Claiborne, Rebecca Richman Cohen, Daniel Fallshaw,

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Luchina Fisher, Bobbito Garcia, Alain Gomis, Thomas Allen Harris, Eric Kabera, Terence Nance, Raoul Peck, Sam Pollard, Michèle Stephenson, Anisia Uzeyman, Marco Williams and Saul Williams.

Denise A. Greene is the series producer/director of *AfroPoP*, which is presented with the generous support of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

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

ABOUT 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, five 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.

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