

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### ‘AFROPOP: THE ULTIMATE CULTURAL EXCHANGE’ RETURNS

Season 12 of series focused on stories on today’s global black experience  
premieres at 8 p.m. ET/ 10 p.m. PT on Monday, January 20, on WORLD Channel

**NEW YORK (December 3, 2019)** — *AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange* returns in January for its 12<sup>th</sup> season, exploring stories of modern life in the African Diaspora with a slate of documentaries journeying through Brazil, Nigeria, Turkey, South Africa, the U.S., Liberia and beyond. Premiering on WORLD Channel at 8 p.m. ET/ 10 p.m. PT on Monday, January 20, 2020, in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the season opens with Joel Zito Araújo’s *My Friend Fela*, an exploration of music, liberation and the enduring ties of the Pan-African family. New episodes of *AfroPoP* — which remains the nation’s only public television documentary series dedicated to life, art and culture from across the African Diaspora — will debut every Monday through February 17. Executive produced by Black Public Media (BPM), the series is co-presented by distributor American Public Television (APT), which will release it to public television stations nationwide on February 6, 2020.

Episode one brings viewers new insight into two of the founders of the Afrobeat music genre. *My Friend Fela* examines the often-complicated life of the Nigerian icon and Afrobeat titan Fela Kuti through the memories of his friend and official biographer Carlos Moore, the musician’s friends, wives and bandmates. Araújo explores pan-African politics and other forces that influenced Kuti’s life and his genre-shaping music. The film will be immediately followed by *Birth of Afrobeat* by Opiyo Okeyo, a hybrid live-action/animated short film capturing legendary drummer Tony Allen during a 2017 performance as he recounts how he and Kuti helped lay the groundwork for what would become Afrobeat.

“This season of *AfroPoP* will bring stories that introduce audiences to new and unsung trailblazers in the Diaspora and provide new viewpoints on stories and lives we thought we knew,” said Black Public Media’s Executive Director Leslie Fields-Cruz, an *AfroPoP* co-executive producer.

The line-up continues with *Amina* (January 27), director Kivilcim Akay’s documentary following a 29-year-old Senegalese immigrant living in Turkey, working to reconcile the ever-growing rift

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between her dreams of reuniting with her daughter and finding a career in modeling with the harsh realities of her life; Shamira Raphaëla and Clarice Gargard's ***Daddy and the Warlord*** (February 3), a captivating look at Gargard's trip to postwar Liberia to uncover the truth about her father's work and involvement with the infamous war criminal Charles Taylor; and ***Gilda Brasileiro: Against Oblivion*** (February 10), directors Viola Scheuerer and Roberto Manhães Reis's profile of one woman's quest to challenge a culture wishing to ignore its ties to slavery after she discovers documents exposing an illegal 19<sup>th</sup> century slave-trading post in the Brazilian rainforest.

The season finale (February 17) is ***Twelve Disciples of Nelson Mandela*** by Thomas Allen Harris, a deeply personal documentary exploring the bonds between fathers and sons. Harris delves into the life of the man who raised him, B. Pule Leinaeng ("Lee") — a foot soldier of the African National Congress — and the legacies Lee and his comrades created as they led lives of exile in their fight to free South Africa. Capping off a night exploring the fight for liberation will be ***Spit on the Broom*** by Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich, an experimental short on the United Order of Tents, a clandestine organization of black women organized in the 1840s during the height of the Underground Railroad.

In addition to their television broadcasts, the films of *AfroPoP* season 12 will also be available for streaming on [worldchannel.org](http://worldchannel.org) beginning on the day of their broadcast premiere.

*AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange* is co-executive produced by Leslie Fields-Cruz and Angela Tucker. The program is produced and directed by Duana C. Butler with the generous support of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information on the series and its episodes, visit [www.blackpublicmedia.org](http://www.blackpublicmedia.org). For viewing information, check local listings or visit [www.aptonline.org](http://www.aptonline.org).

## ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

### ABOUT BLACK PUBLIC MEDIA:

**Black Public Media (BPM)**, formerly the National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC), is committed to enriching our democracy by educating, enlightening, empowering and engaging the American public. The nonprofit supports diverse voices by developing, producing and distributing innovative media about the black experience and by investing in visionary content makers. BPM provides quality content for public media outlets, including, among others, PBS and PBS.org and BlackPublicMedia.org, as well as other platforms, while training and mentoring the next generation of black filmmakers. Founded in 1979, BPM produces the *AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange* documentary series and manages the 360 Incubator + Fund, a funding and training initiative designed to accelerate the production of important black serial and interactive content.

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### **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, news and current affairs programs, dramas, how-to programs, children's series and classic movies. *America's Test Kitchen From Cook's Illustrated*, *Cook's Country*, *AfroPoP*, *Rick Steves' Europe*, *Christopher Kimball's Milk Street Television*, *Front and Center*, *Doc Martin*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Lidia's Kitchen*, *Kevin Belton's New Orleans Kitchen*, *Simply Ming*, *The Best of the Joy of Painting with Bob Ross*, and *P. Allen Smith's Garden Home* 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. To find out more about APT's programs and services, visit [APTonline.org](http://APTonline.org).

### **ABOUT WORLD CHANNEL:**

Based at WGBH in Boston, **WORLD Channel** tells stories that humanize complex issues. WORLD shares the best of public media in news, documentaries and fact-based informational programming that helps us understand conflicts, movements and cultures that may be distinct from our own. WORLD's original content offers a national platform to makers examining issues too often ignored by mainstream media. These emerging and master filmmakers spotlight a diversity of voices, telling stories not heard elsewhere. WORLD has won a Peabody Award, an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Award and numerous national honors—including an RTNDA Kaleidoscope Award, a Media for a Just Society Award, two Lesbian & Gay Journalist Awards, a Gracie and an Asian American Journalists Award. Carried by 154 partner stations in markets representing almost 64% of US TV households, WORLD can also be experienced via [WORLDChannel.org](http://WORLDChannel.org) and social media platforms.

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