

APOLLO

MEDIA ADVISORY

Apollo Film Presents
ImageNation's Cocktails and Sol Cinema:
MUSE: Black Art Unseen,
featuring short documentary and experimental films by
Ben Proudfoot, Kris Bowers, Kahlil Joseph, Julia Jansch, Jorge
Rivera and Philippe Roc

Film screenings to be followed by a
panel conversation with select directors

Virtual program to stream on the Apollo's Digital Stage

WHAT: On **Thursday, May 20 at 7:00pm ET**, the **Apollo Theater** and **ImageNation** bring together a diverse collection of short films by Black creatives in an array of genres from documentary and experimental to psychological thriller in an evening that explores the creative process from four different perspectives. ***ImageNation's Cocktails and Sol Cinema: MUSE: Black Art Unseen*** fuses music, movement, and visual presentation to challenge systems of traditional and mainstream creativity to ask the questions: "What drives us to innovate?" "How does our creativity impact communities?" and "How do we honor our legacies and find freedom through self-expression?"

Presented quarterly, the Apollo Film and ImageNation series features independent films primarily directed by people of color that explore the history, examine social issues, and highlight the humanity of Pan-African people in the genres of drama, science fiction, animation, comedy, documentary, experimental, and emerging media.

The line-up for ***MUSE: Black Art Unseen*** includes:

- Sundance Film Festival selection and Oscar-nominated ***A Concerto is a Conversation*** (2021), executive produced by **Ava DuVernay** and featuring Emmy Award-winning, Grammy nominated composer **Kris Bowers** who has created scores for Netflix's "Bridgerton" and *When They See Us*. In this film, a virtuoso jazz pianist and film composer tracks his family's lineage through his 91-year-old grandfather from Jim Crow Florida to the Walt Disney Concert Hall. [Watch trailer.](#)
- ***Music is My Mistress*** (2017), directed by **Kahlil Joseph**, director for Beyonce's *Lemonade*, created by luxury fashion house KENZO, and starring **Tracee Ellis Ross**,

Jesse Williams, Kelsey Lu and Ish from *Shabazz Palaces* and *Digable Planets* in this shapeshifting new film where music is much more than mere sound and rhythm.

- 2020 Tribeca Film Festival winner *My Father the Mover* directed by South African writer/director/producer **Julia Jansch**. In this film, a girl's father calls himself a "Mover." Using African dance moves, he helps kids in Khayelitsha township to transcend their hardship (drugs, poverty and abuse) and "find their superpowers." The Mover is also a single father, and while he has helped many kids, he still has difficulty getting his own daughter to find her own powers. But in a tender moment together, this is all about to change. [Watch trailer](#); and
- *Rhyme Animal* (2007) by **Phillippe Roc** and **Jorge Rivera** and starring the late **Craig "muMs" Grant** and **Al Thompson**. *Rhyme Animal* features an ambitious Brooklyn DJ riding the coattails of an up-and-coming rapper. One problem: the rapper might also be a cannibalistic serial killer. [Watch trailer](#).

The virtual screening will be followed by a panel discussion featuring filmmakers **Kris Bowers, Julie Jansch, Phillippe Roc** and **Jorge Rivera** and moderated by ImageNation's Moikgantsi Kgama. *MUSE: Black Art Unseen* is dedicated to playwright, poet, and actor Craig "muMs" Grant, who unexpectedly passed away earlier this year.

WHERE: *MUSE: Black Art Unseen* will stream on the Apollo Digital Stage (www.apollotheater.org/digitalstage).

WHEN: **May 20 at 7:00pm ET.**

TICKETS: Tickets are \$12 for the general public and \$10 for students and Apollo A-List Members, and are on sale now at <https://www.apollotheaters.org/event/cocktails-and-sol-cinema-black-art-unseen/>.

ABOUT THE APOLLO THEATER

The legendary Apollo Theater—the soul of American culture—plays a vital role in cultivating emerging artists and launching legends. Since its founding, the Apollo has served as a center of innovation and a creative catalyst for Harlem, the city of New York, and the world.

With music at its core, the Apollo's programming extends to dance, theater, spoken word, and more. This includes the world premiere of the theatrical adaptation of Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me* and the New York premiere of the opera *We Shall Not Be Moved*; special programs such as the blockbuster concert *Bruno Mars Live at the Apollo*; *100: The Apollo Celebrates Ella*; and the annual *Africa Now! Festival*. The non-profit Apollo Theater is a performing arts presenter, commissioner, and collaborator that also produces festivals, large-scale dance and musical works organized around a set of core initiatives that celebrate and extend the Apollo's legacy through a contemporary lens, including the *Women of the World (WOW) Festival* as well as other multidisciplinary collaborations with partner organizations.

Since introducing the first *Amateur Night* contests in 1934, the Apollo Theater has served as a testing ground for new artists working across a variety of art forms and has ushered in the emergence of many new musical genres—including jazz, swing, bebop, R&B, gospel, blues, soul, and hip-hop. Among the countless legendary performers who launched their careers at the Apollo are Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, James Brown, Stevie Wonder, Gladys Knight, Luther Vandross, H.E.R., D'Angelo, Lauryn Hill,

Machine Gun Kelly and Miri Ben Ari; and the Apollo's forward-looking artistic vision continues to build on this legacy. For more information about the Apollo, visit www.ApolloTheater.org.

ABOUT IMAGENATION

ImageNation Cinema Foundation is an innovative Harlem-based non-profit created to develop cinemas and audiences for independent films and music, that depict the global Black experience. ImageNation's goal is to empower Black communities by presenting a variety of public programs that foster media equity, media literacy, solidarity, cross-cultural exchange and highlight the humanity of Pan-African people worldwide.

Led by Moikgantsi Kgama (Founder & Executive Director) and her husband Gregory Gates (Executive Producer), ImageNation has hosted film screenings, live music performances and other cultural events for more than 200,000 people worldwide since its inception in New York City in 1997. ImageNation currently presents the quarterly social Cocktails & Sōl Cinema in partnership with the Apollo Theater and the ImageNation Outdoors film series. In addition to hosting year-round programs at the Film Society of Lincoln Center, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and New York City Parks, ImageNation has presented internationally in South Africa, Scotland and Canada and domestically at Harvard University, MASS MOCA and in Dallas, TX, Los Angeles, CA, Baltimore, MD and Washington DC. Programs have featured appearances by leading filmmakers such as Spike Lee, Lee Daniels, Stanley Nelson and Ava Duvernay to name a few. ImageNation is developing The Sol Cinema Cafe, a Harlem-based “click and mortar” boutique cinema highlighting global Black film and culture. ImageNation is also a founding partner in ARRAY, a national film distribution collective, founded by Ava DuVernay.

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