

IN THE MAKING



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***American Masters*, Firelight Media and Topic Launch New Documentary Short Film Series *In the Making* October 14**

Emerging BIPOC filmmakers spotlight fellow BIPOC cultural artists across a variety of disciplines

(NEW YORK -- October 13, 2020) ***American Masters*** and **Firelight Media** present ***In the Making***, a new documentary short film series following the lives and journeys of emerging BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) cultural artists who bring insight and originality to their artistic craft. The series will be available to stream Wednesday, October 14 on pbs.org/americanmasters and the PBS Video App, with episodes premiering on the [American Masters YouTube channel](#) on Wednesdays. Through a new distribution partnership with **Topic**, ***In the Making*** will also be available this fall for U.S. and Canadian audiences on [Topic](#), First Look Media's new streaming service.

Featuring eight cinematic and character-driven shorts by emerging BIPOC filmmakers, most of whom graduated from Firelight Media's Documentary Lab, ***In the Making*** explores the artistic process of up-and-coming creatives through non-fiction storytelling.

Damon Davis: Apologue for the Darkest Gods – Filmmaker Elissa Blount Moorhead provides a look into the art of award-winning, post-disciplinary artist Damon

Davis, the St. Louis native whose work spans illustration, painting, printmaking, music, film and public art that explores the African American experience.

Bunky Echo-Hawk: The Resistance - Filmmaker Ben-Alex Dupris explores how the reality and resistance of Native Americans inspires the work of Pawnee artist Bunky Echo-Hawk, igniting discussions about environmentalism and Native American rights, among other topics.

Anik Khan: Street Level – Filmmakers Sofian Khan and Joseph Patel explore the music of Anik Khan, the Bangladesh-born, Queens, New York-raised hip-hop artist whose music sketches the immigrant experience with rare poetic flare, incisive depth and a whole masala of influences at his fingertips.

Amyra León: Strange Grace – Filmmaker Malika Zouhali-Worrall provides a portrait of Amyra León, the musician, poet, author and activist who channels deeply personal experiences of pain and healing into raw, majestic, and often cathartic performances that celebrate love, Blackness and womanhood.

Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio: This is the Way We Rise – Filmmaker Ciara Lacy documents Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio, a Kanaka Maoli wahine poet, activist and academic, and her continued work towards justice for Hawaii’s native population.

Maia Cruz Palileo: Becoming the Moon – Filmmaker Ligaiya Romero explores the life and work of Maia Cruz Palileo, the multi-disciplinary, Brooklyn-based artist who examines themes of migration and the permeable concept of home in her works, inspired by the oral history of her family’s arrival in the United States from the Philippines.

Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah: The New Chief – Filmmakers Amitabh Joshi and Erik Spink spotlight Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, the Grammy-nominated, modern jazz musician from New Orleans who defies the expectations of jazz while challenging how music is taught in universities nationwide.

Vincent Valdez: The Beginning is Near – Filmmaker Ray Santisteban highlights Vincent Valdez, the San Antonio, Texas-born artist who emphasizes themes of social justice, memory and ignored or under-examined historical narratives in his work.

“Who are the next American Masters? This series offers us a chance to feature up-and-coming artists and to continue to expand our digital presence,” said Michael Kantor, executive producer of ***American Masters***. “Thanks to Firelight, ***In the Making*** also showcases the

next generation of filmmakers. I think all our audiences will be wowed by these creative bright lights, and Topic is a great additional home for these incredible stories.”

“Firelight is thrilled to continue our valuable creative partnership with **American Masters** on **In the Making**,” said Stanley Nelson, filmmaker and co-founder of Firelight Media. “Supporting emerging BIPOC filmmakers has always been central to our organization’s mission, and we are so pleased to be working with a wonderful new partner, Topic, to present this series of films showcasing so many dynamic and diverse artistic voices behind and in front of the camera.”

“We’re thrilled to be working with our new partners, Firelight, **American Masters**, and WNET. Topic aims to continually shine a light on underrepresented and emerging filmmakers and artists, and we couldn’t be happier to be part of this amazing launching pad for the unique voices that comprise **In the Making**,” said Ryan Chanatry, general manager of Topic.

In the Making will be available for streaming on all station-branded PBS platforms, including pbs.org and the PBS Video app, which is available on iOS, Android, Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV and Chromecast. The series will also be available to stream in the U.S. and Canada on Topic’s streaming service via [Topic.com](https://topic.com), as well as Topic channels on Apple iOS, AppleTV, Android, Amazon Fire TV and Roku, in addition to Amazon Prime Video Channels, Apple TV Channels, and Roku Premium Channels.

In the Making is a production of Firelight Media in association with THIRTEEN’s **American Masters** for WNET. Executive producers for Firelight Media are Stanley Nelson, Marcia Smith and Loira Limbal. Executive producer for **American Masters** is Michael Kantor.

Support for **In the Making** is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Support for **American Masters** is provided by Rosalind P. Walter, Judith and Burton Resnick, Lillian Goldman Programming Endowment, Seton J. Melvin, Cheryl and Philip Milstein Family, Vital Projects Fund, The Philip and Janice Levin Foundation, The Blanche & Irving Laurie Foundation, The André and Elizabeth Kertész Foundation, Ellen and James S. Marcus, and the Leslie and Roslyn Goldstein Foundation.

Support for **Firelight Media** is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Ford Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Nathan Cummings Foundation, NY Community Trust Van Lier Fellowships, Wyncote Foundation, Andrus Family Fund – a program of the Surdna Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

Websites: pbs.org/americanmasters, <http://facebook.com/americanmasters>, [@PBSAmerMasters](https://twitter.com/PBSAmerMasters), <http://youtube.com/AmericanMastersPBS>, <http://instagram.com/pbsamericanmasters>, #InTheMaking

About Firelight

[Firelight](#) is a premier destination for non-fiction cinema by and about communities of color. Firelight produces documentary films, supports emerging filmmakers of color, and cultivates audiences for their work. Firelight films have garnered multiple Primetime Emmys, Peabodys, and Sundance awards. Among them, *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool*, *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*, and *Freedom Riders*. Firelight Media's programs include the Documentary Lab, an 18-month fellowship that supports emerging filmmakers of color; and Groundwork, regional labs which support early stage filmmakers in the American south, midwest, and U.S. Territories. In addition to a focus on excellence in filmmaking, Firelight develops strategies, partnerships and materials to reach and engage diverse audiences and maximize the impact of documentary films.

About Topic

[Topic](#) is the new streaming service from [First Look Media](#), curated for a curious and engaged audience seeking smart, provocative and meaningful entertainment. Launched last year, the rapidly growing service features North American premieres and exclusive programming from around the world, complemented by a diverse slate of originals. Recent programming includes: the weekly comedic variety series *Second City Presents: The Last Show Left on Earth*; *Down from London* from executive producer Sharon Horgan; horror anthology series *Soul City* from filmmakers Coodie and Chike; BAFTA TV Award nominee *The Virtues* from filmmaker Shane Meadows starring Stephen Graham; Maria Bamford's discussion show on mental health, *What's Your Ailment?!*; and critically acclaimed documentary and narrative films such as *Behemoth* and *We Need to Talk About Kevin*. Topic is available to US and Canadian audiences on [Topic.com](#), Apple iOS, and AppleTV, Android, Amazon Fire TV and Roku, in addition to Amazon Prime Video Channels, Apple TV Channels, and Roku Premium Channels.

Topic is part of Topic Entertainment, the entertainment arm of First Look Media, which includes the streaming service and [Topic Studios](#), the award-winning studio that develops, finances and produces provocative and entertaining programming for all platforms including theatrical, streaming, television and podcasts. From Academy Award® winning films (*Spotlight*); to documentaries (*The Fight*, now available in theaters and on-demand with Magnolia, and *Mucho Mucho Amor*, streaming on Netflix); to television (the docu-series *Love Fraud* premiering on Showtime August 30, and *Losers* on Netflix); and pioneering podcasts (*Missing Richard Simmons* and *Running from COPS*, *Anthem* written by John Cameron Mitchell & Bryan Weller, featuring Glenn Close, Cynthia Erivo and Patti LuPone, and the investigative podcast *Somebody* with iHeartMedia).

About WNET

WNET is America's flagship PBS station: parent company of New York's [THIRTEEN](#) and [WLIW21](#) and operator of [NJTV](#), the statewide public media network in New Jersey. Through its new [ALL ARTS](#) multi-platform initiative, its broadcast channels, three cable services (THIRTEEN PBSKids, Create and World) and online streaming sites, WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than five million viewers each month. WNET produces and presents a wide range of acclaimed PBS series, including *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *American Masters*, *PBS NewsHour Weekend*, and the nightly interview program *Amanpour and Company*. In addition, WNET produces numerous documentaries, children's programs, and local news and cultural offerings, as well as multi-platform initiatives addressing poverty and climate. Through THIRTEEN Passport and WLIW Passport, station members can stream new and archival THIRTEEN, WLIW and PBS programming anytime, anywhere.

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