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VISIONARY DOCUMENTARY “ASSEMBLY” PREMIERES ON PBS’S INDEPENDENT LENS JUNE 22, FUSING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WITH GLOBAL BLACK QUEER EXPRESSION

Internationally Acclaimed Artist Rashaad Newsome Creates an Immersive Exhibition That Combines Technology, Voguing, and Community To Reimagine Art and Identity

(San Francisco, CA) April 27, 2026—Following artist Rashaad Newsome as he creates a visionary exhibition exploring the evolution of Black and queer culture through contemporary voguing, “Assembly” will premiere June 22, 2026, on PBS’s INDEPENDENT LENS. The film is a melting pot of voices, histories, visions, and technology, demonstrating how art can serve as both a mirror to society and a tool for liberation.

Preparing to unveil “Assembly,” a groundbreaking, large-scale multimedia exhibition at New York’s Park Avenue Armory, Newsome, a Black queer artist from the American South transforms the 55,000-square-foot hall through video projections, holograms, and dynamic collaborations between dancers and musicians. In blending visual art, performance, and artificial intelligence, he showcases the global evolution of voguing while honoring Black and queer resistance and calling for a more liberated future.

“I’m proud that ‘Assembly’ is coming to INDEPENDENT LENS because it highlights artistic expression as a way to preserve culture, explore identity, and spark dialogue,” said Lois Vossen, founding executive producer of INDEPENDENT LENS. “We’re always looking for stories that challenge assumptions, and ‘Assembly’ reflects our commitment to diverse perspectives and powerful storytelling that encourages audiences to reflect on shared human experiences.”

Newsome retraces his own path, from his Louisiana childhood to his exploration of the early-2000s ballroom scene. As a multidisciplinary artist traveling to museums worldwide, Rashaad witnesses voguers integrating regional dances into their movements and demonstrating the fluidity of the art form. Formed in resistance to racism and homophobia, voguing flourishes within new cultural contexts.

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Rehearsals for “Assembly” unite performers from Brazil, Japan, Senegal, and Ukraine, dancing alongside the descendants of legendary voguers. Rashaad’s artistic vision confronts patriarchy, imperialism, and white supremacy and inspires patrons to envision a more equitable future together. “Assembly” moves beyond the bounds of a traditional documentary, interlacing Newsome’s creative process with electrifying performances and the lived experiences of his collaborators.

“Assembly” will premiere on PBS’s INDEPENDENT LENS on June 22, 2026, (check local listings) and will be available to stream on the [PBS app](#) and [PBS Documentaries YouTube Channel](#).

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Rashaad Newsome, Director/Producer

Rashaad Newsome is a multidisciplinary artist who explores Black and queer culture and whose work blends collage, sculpture, film, music, technology, and performance. He has exhibited at numerous art institutions and created 15 short films. He was a visiting artist at the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence.

Johnny Symons, Producer/Director

Johnny Symons is an Emmy Award-nominated filmmaker specializing in LGBTQ+ documentaries. His work has premiered at Sundance, Full Frame, and SFFILM, screened at more than 250 international festivals, won more than 25 awards, and been broadcast in over 20 countries. He is a professor at San Francisco State University’s School of Cinema, where he serves as documentary coordinator.

CREDITS

Director	Rashaad Newsome Johnny Symons
Producers	Rashaad Newsome Johnny Symons
Executive Producers	Carrie Lozano Lois Vossen Royd Chung

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

Independent Lens is an award-winning documentary series that fosters understanding, seeks to build empathy, and encourages a more united society. Produced by ITVS, *Independent Lens* documentaries have premiered on PBS for 25 years and streamed on YouTube, helping Americans foster deeper connections between communities and themselves. From the Oscar-nominated *I Am Not Your Negro* to the Peabody-acclaimed docuseries *Philly D.A.* and the Emmy® award-winning *The Invisible War*, *Independent Lens* provides viewers with in-depth, nuanced storytelling reflecting the experiences of people from a variety of voices and communities. Funding is provided by the Action Circle for Independent Lens with major funding from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Acton Family Giving, Ford Foundation, and Jonathan Logan Family Foundation, with additional support from Artemis Rising Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, Park Foundation, Brandt Jackson Foundation, the deNovo Initiative, and RandomGood Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Stream anytime on the PBS app or on the PBS Documentaries YouTube channel. Learn more at pbs.org/independentlens

ABOUT ITVS

Independent Television Service (ITVS) is the largest co-producer of independent documentaries in the United States. For more than 30 years the San Francisco nonprofit has funded and partnered with documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning titles and premieres them on our Emmy Award-winning PBS series, INDEPENDENT LENS. ITVS titles appear on PBS, WORLD, NETA, and can be streamed on various digital platforms including the PBS app. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Acton Family Giving, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, Park Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit itvs.org.

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