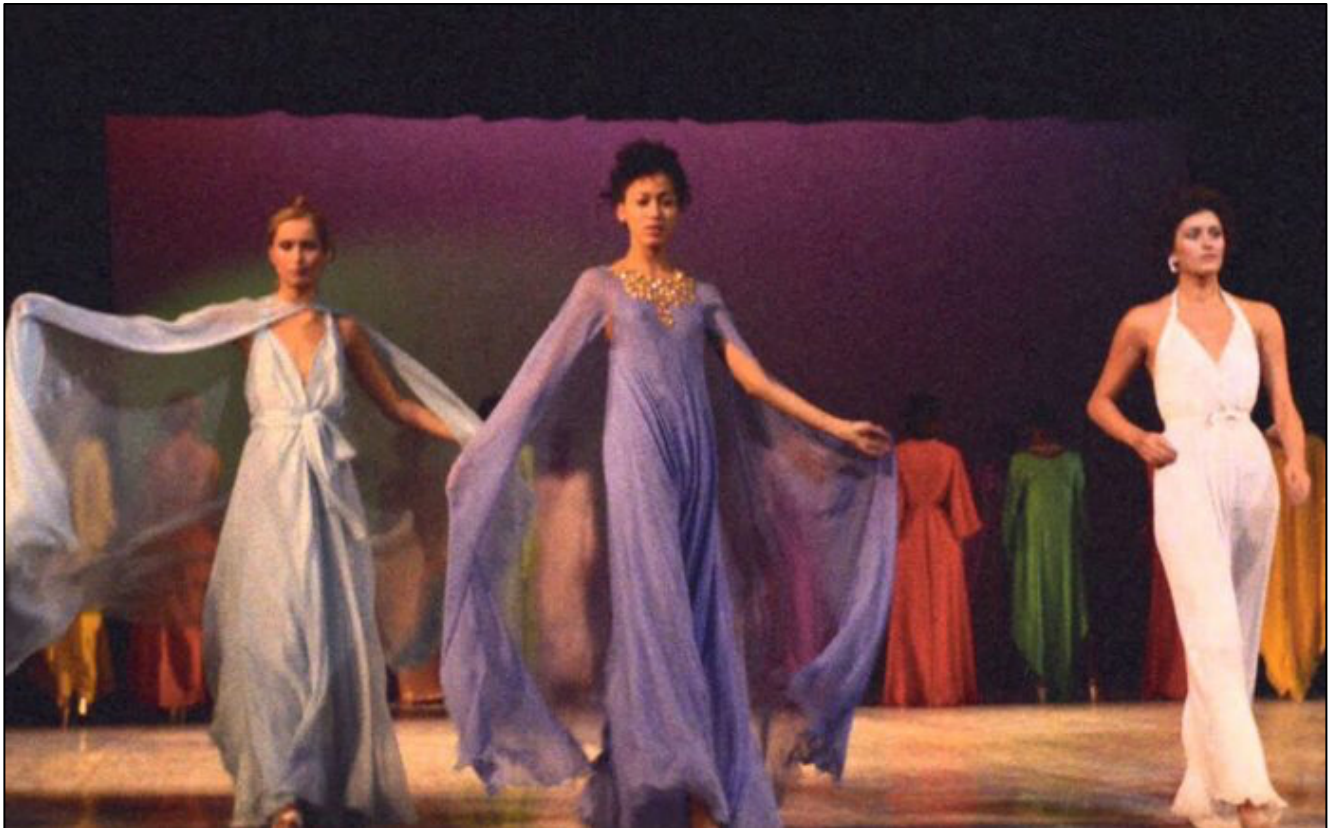


The show must go on: Black Documentary Film Festival returns after COVID

By **BREANNA COOPER**

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Still from “Versailles ’73: American Runway Revolution,” which will be screened at the Black Documentary Film Festival on Aug. 14. (Photo provided)

The inaugural [Black Documentary Film Festival](#) was scheduled for April 10-11, 2020, at Central Library. A grand opening ceremony and fashion show were scheduled to celebrate the feature film, “Versailles ’73: American Runway Revolution,” and 20 films celebrating Black life and culture were on the lineup.

And then COVID hit.

After a year of social distancing and virtual events, the Black Documentary Film Festival is gearing up to finally celebrate in person. For two days starting Aug. 13, attendees can choose from 31 films celebrating art, parenthood and exploring the effects of racism across the globe.

Organized by Eric Winston, filmmaker and former vice president for Institutional Advancement at Columbia College Chicago, the festival kicks off at 6 p.m. with a reception ahead of a screening of Paul Saltzman's 2009 documentary "Prom Night in Mississippi."

The documentary follows a Mississippi high school's first integrated prom — in 2008. Featuring Academy Award-winning actor Morgan Freeman, who paid for the prom, the movie highlights the racial tension in the town as a result of the prom, including a student who worried he would be kicked out of his house for attending.

After the screening Saltzman and IUPUI professor Leslie Etienne will answer questions from the audience.

At 8 p.m. Aug. 14, audiences can watch a screening of Deborah Riley Draper's 2012 documentary "Versailles '73: American Runway Revolution."

The movie depicts the 1973 battle between American fashion designers and members of the French haute couture establishment, which Draper said she was inspired by.

"It's Paris, it's New York, it's beautiful clothes," Draper said. "There were 12 Black women in the middle of this incredible moment in the '70s when the world was changing culturally, and they brought that change. I wanted to tell those stories."

Each of the films will be screened for free at Indianapolis Public Library's Central Library location starting at 10 a.m. Aug. 14. Winston, who lives in Xenia, Ohio, said he chose Indianapolis because of the size of the city and its sizeable African American population.

"I hope to have this festival be on the minds of the citizens of Indianapolis and that they welcome the festival," Winston said in a previous interview. "I hope they feel very good about what the festival is bringing to them in terms of timely and thoughtful films about the African American experience."

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit ibdff.com.

Contact staff writer Breanna Cooper at 317-762-7848. Follow her on Twitter @BreannaNCooper

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