

# Janelle Monáe, Fahamu Pecou inspire at 'I Am Not Your Negro' Atlanta screening

By Yvette Caslin | January 30, 2017



(Photo Credit: RobinLori Photography, LLC)

*I Am Not Your Negro*, a bold, new documentary inspired by legendary writer James Baldwin, created by master filmmaker Raoul Peck and narrated by Hollywood A-lister Samuel L. Jackson, moves one step closer to winning an Oscar for "Best Documentary Feature." The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced the official nominations for the 89th Academy Awards® on Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2017, bringing the dream one-step closer.

Following the announcement, Peck, the film's director, shared his thoughts on winning a nomination:

"I'm grateful and joyful to be nominated for *I Am Not Your Negro*. All of our partners and the entire team are joining me to thank the Academy members who participated in the vote of this incredibly humbling nomination. We would like to thank especially the James Baldwin Estate and Gloria Karefa-Smart, James Baldwin's sister. Baldwin had developed a clear narrative about America's historical denial and irrational relationship with race and articulated it freely in the media during his lifetime. I'm not sure this kind of raw and profound expression would be tolerated today - even though it is more than ever necessary. I want to congratulate the other nominees who have made amazing films, most of whom are dear friends. Thank you."

On that evening in Atlanta, musical superstar and social critic/activist Janelle Monáe and Civil Rights icon Ambassador Andrew Young engaged with students, press and influencers at a private screening.

Hosted by famed visual artist and scholar Fahamu Pecou, the evening kicked off with a special presentation by Janelle Monáe, who shared background on a special connection that her label, Wondaland Records, has with James Baldwin and his work. She then recited a moving excerpt from Baldwin's *Notes from a Native Son*, which set an empowering tone for the event.

At the end of the screening, the film received a standing ovation, which was the perfect setup to the final highlight of the evening — an intriguing talkback panel discussion moderated by Morehouse Cinema, Television and Emerging Media Studies (CTEMS) director Dr. Stephane Dunn, which featured Ambassador Andrew Young; Clark Atlanta University African American Studies professor Dr. Daniel Black; Morehouse College assistant professor of English, Dr. Francine Allen; Georgia Equality Field organizer, Rob Woods and Fahamu Pecou. The discussion explored everything from the past and present of race relations, the countenance and impact of James Baldwin during the Civil Rights movement, the relevancy of the documentary to the social issues of today and thoughts on where we go from here.

Noted attendees included Egypt Sherrod (HGTV's "Flipping Virgins"); DJ FaDelf, celebrity DJ, author and motivational speaker; Jack A. Daniels, psychotherapist, five-time bestselling author and Host of FYI's "Black Love"; Marshawn Evans, author, NBC's "The Apprentice"; Christopher Hicks, director of the Mayor's Office of Film and Entertainment; and Jerika Head-Stewart, founder, Hat-titude Big Hat Brunch.

*I Am Not Your Negro* opens nationwide on Friday, February 3.