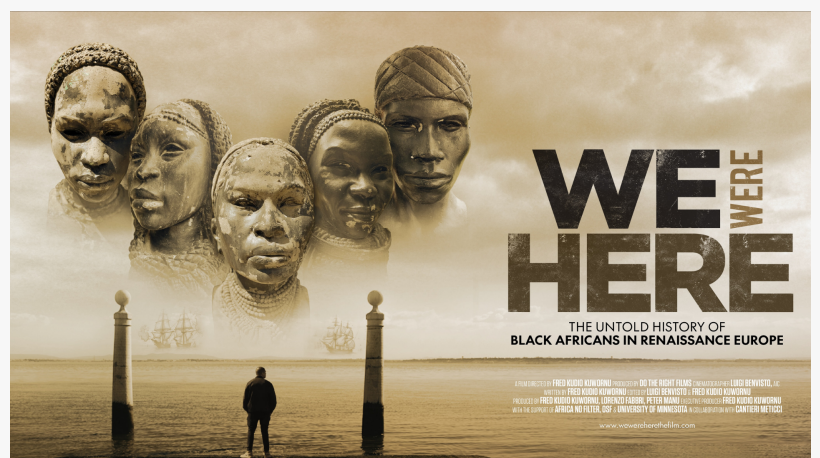


We Were Here Venice Biennale Film on Blacks in Renaissance Europe Enters Oscar Consideration for 2026

We Were Here, premiered at La Biennale di Venezia, highlights Black Renaissance lives across Europe as it joins the 2026 Oscar race

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, December 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- We Were Here – The Untold History of Black Africans in Renaissance Europe, the multilingual documentary by filmmaker Fred Kudjo Kuwornu, exhibited in the Central Pavilion of the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, has officially entered Oscar Consideration for the 2026 Academy Awards in the category Best Documentary Feature. Rooted in historical scholarship, visual analysis and transnational research, the film brings back to light the untold presence of Africans in Renaissance Europe, a chapter that remained overlooked for centuries.



Poster of We Were Here – The Untold History of Black Africans in Renaissance Europe, the 63-minute documentary exhibited at the Venice Biennale and now in Oscar consideration.

“

We are reclaiming a chapter of European history that was erased for centuries and bringing these stories back to the world”

Fred Kudjo Kuwornu

Premiered at the Venice Biennale curated by Adriano Pedrosa, where it was viewed by more than 700,000 visitors, We Were Here has already established itself as one of the most original historical documentaries of the year. In 2025, director Fred Kudjo Kuwornu was honored with the Dan David Prize 2025, the world’s largest award for outstanding historical research, recognizing innovative projects that reshape public understanding of the past.

Following its theatrical release in New York on October 10, 2025, the documentary has already been presented in over 60 screenings across the United States, including universities, museums and cultural institutions, demonstrating its academic, cultural and historical relevance. Additional

screening tours are planned for 2026 in both Europe and the United States, along with further engagements in Brazil, where the film resonates strongly with Afro Brazilian and diaspora communities.

Filmed across Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Brazil, the documentary reconstructs the trajectories, identities and roles of African individuals who lived, worked and participated in European society during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Through interviews with leading historians, art historians, archivists and museum curators, alongside extensive visual analysis of Renaissance paintings and archives, *We Were Here* reveals how Africa and its diaspora were deeply woven into the cultural, political, intellectual and artistic life of early modern Europe.



A scene from *We Were Here – The Untold History of Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, featuring a reenactment of one of the historical figures whose stories were erased from Europe's past.

The film follows six remarkable figures whose lives highlight the complexities of African presence during the Renaissance. Among them is Alessandro de' Medici, Duke of Florence, considered the first ruler of a European state with documented African ancestry. The documentary also explores the life of Juan Latino, born enslaved in Granada and later the first Black university professor in European history. Another central figure is Ne Vunda, the African ambassador to the Vatican who died in Rome in 1608 and is buried at Santa Maria Maggiore, the same place where Pope Francis has expressed the wish to be buried one day. The narrative includes João de Panasco, the African knight represented in Portugal's Kings Fountain, and Benedicto il Moro, born in Sicily in 1524 to enslaved parents and later venerated across Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela and the United States. Finally, the documentary highlights the many Black women portrayed in Renaissance artworks, who played crucial roles as caretakers, healers and trusted members within European households.

We Were Here speaks directly to contemporary discussions about race, identity, cultural memory and the legacy of colonialism in Europe and the Americas. The documentary examines how Black African presence in Renaissance Europe has been systematically minimized or erased in mainstream narratives, demonstrating instead that these individuals influenced diplomacy, intellectual life, religious culture and the arts of the period.

The film is multilingual, fully subtitled in English, and has a running time of 63 minutes, making it suitable for a two hour public program including screening, Q&A, academic lecture or panel. The documentary is currently available for private institutional screenings and preview opportunities

for museums, universities, cultural centers, embassies and public programs.

[Watch the full trailer here.](#)

[Visit the film's FYC page for Academy members.](#)

Learn more [We Were Here – Official Website](#)

About the Director

Fred Kudjo Kuwornu is an Afro Italian filmmaker, scholar and cultural producer based in New York and the founder of Do The Right Films. His work explores African diaspora histories, transnational identities and cultural memory. Kuwornu is the recipient of the Dan David Prize 2025 and has presented his films and lectures in academic and cultural settings across Europe, North America, Africa and Latin America.

About the Film

We Were Here – The Untold History of Black Africans in Renaissance Europe is a multilingual, pan European documentary filmed across nine countries. Through archives, artworks and scholarly testimony, the film reconstructs a hidden chapter of early modern history and reveals global connections between Europe, Africa and the Americas.

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