



# Discussion Guide

Season 3.0, 2011

*Rise Up (Jamaica)*, 56 minutes

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# Introduction

This guide contains suggested discussion questions to orient viewers and discussion facilitators on how best to frame conversations about the films featured in AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange, Season 3 (2011).

First there is a short list of general discussion questions that can be used to initiate a discussion of all the films after the screening or broadcast. These general questions provide a solid platform for channeling the immediate emotional response of the audience into a collective experience or narrative.

After the General Discussion Questions, each of the AfroPoP films contains content for a discussion guide to frame the historical, aesthetic and emotional reactions of the viewer in a participatory way.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Prior to screening the film, remind the audience that there will be a discussion afterwards (with the filmmaker if s/he is in attendance). It's generally a good idea to start the discussion immediately after the film with a few broad questions.

Following are some suggestions:

- What are your immediate reactions to this film?
- What did you learn from this film?
- Describe a moment in the film that you found particularly moving. What was it about that scene that was especially compelling to you?



# RISE UP

A film by Luciano Blotta

<http://www.riseupmovie.com/index.html>

TIME: 56 minutes

## Targeted Audience

- Jamaican-Americans
- Jamaican immigrants
- West Indian Americans
- "Reggae-philies"
- Emerging music artists

## Film Summary

*RiseUP* is a journey into the heart of Jamaica - the island that gave birth to the worldwide cultural phenomenon of Reggae. In a society where talent abounds and opportunity is scarce, three distinct and courageous artists fight to rise up from obscurity and write themselves into the pages of history.

With music and appearances by legends Lee "Scratch" Perry, Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare, and a slew of soon-to-be superstars, *RiseUp* follows artists in the dangerous streets, back alleys and crowded dancehalls of Kingston and the countryside. These artists demonstrate the raw power of hope and courage in a land which is largely unseen, but certainly not unsung.

## For Discussion

- *Poverty and Art*: Consider that the birth of American hip-hop has been widely attributed to an alchemical creation of art from poverty. How does the absence of economic options contribute or detract from a flourishing music underground?
- Is deprivation a necessary component of a new genre? Why or why not?
- *The Facets of Success*: Turbulence: "I'm successful in Jah and the spirit and the current and the energy. I am successful. But material wise, I have no money." Turbulence also says, "When an artist sees his face painted on the wall, it's the ultimate trophy because it means you've been accepted wholeheartedly."
  - Turbulence marvels, "I made people cry overseas." Yet he also seems frustrated that he hasn't broken into the mainstream music scene in Jamaica. Later he reflects, "I'm successful in Jah and the spirit and the current and the energy. I'm successful. But material wise, I have no money." What are the inherent conflicts or tension in how he expresses what "success" does or

doesn't mean to him?

- How is “success” defined for the underground artists?
- What part does going “mainstream” play in their feelings of succeed?
- By whom – what communities – must an artist like Turbulence be embraced before he feels successful?
- Is social justice a necessary attribute or element of Reggae music? Why or why not?
- How does this film support or contradict the position that sometimes success happens because of things the individual had little to do with?
- Consider the performer Ice's access to the Sumfest and his access to Kent Jammy, the producer. What part does the economic class of his family play in these relationships?
  - How does this access contribute or sabotage his reputation as a performer?
  - Contrast this with Turbulence's difficulty in getting DJ's in Jamaica to play his music because he doesn't have the financial resources to “pay to play.”
- Of the artists featured in the film, who is a “legitimate” artist of “the underground”?
  - What contributes to the “legitimate” status?
  - What are the benefits and attributes of this status?
- *Gender and success*: Both Kemoy and Turbulence become parents of children. How do their different genders factor into their future success as a performer who is also a parent?
  - Does it hinder either? Discuss.