NEW YORK – Gabourey Sidibe is stepping into a new role this winter as host of "AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange" – an innovative documentary series highlighting contemporary life, art and pop culture in the African Diaspora.

Best known for her Oscar- and Golden Globe-nominated depiction of the title character in the Lee Daniels' film, "Precious," Sidibe also made waves with her hilarious performance in "Tower Heist" opposite Ben Stiller and Eddie Murphy. The fifth season of "AfroPoP," produced by Black Public Media, will premiere at 6:00 p.m. on public television's WORLD channel, on Tuesday, Jan. 22, continuing on Tuesdays weekly through Feb. 5.

This season, "AfroPoP," which consists of various independent films, brings viewers on a journey into human and women's rights struggles throughout the world.

Co-presented by the Center for Asian American Media, Eliaichi Kimaro's "A Lot Like You" (January 22) follows the half Korean, half Tanzanian sexual abuse survivor and filmmaker as she explores her African roots and learns about the sexual violence faced by her aunts and other women in the Chagga culture. "Dear Mandela" (January 29) by Dara Kell and Christopher Nizza, captures the demonstrations of residents of the Durban shantytowns as they fight for the decent living conditions promised by the post-apartheid government and challenge the African National Congress (ANC). Directors Violeta Ayala and Daniel Fallshaw uncover modern-day slavery in refugee camps in Western Sahara in "Stolen" (February 5) entangling themselves in a high-stakes thriller.

In her role as host, Sidibe frames each episode's content, adding her personal concerns about the issues portrayed.

"This season of 'AfroPoP' helps give voice to those who truly need to be heard," said the Brooklyn native, Sidibe, whose father hails from Senegal. "I'm happy to help bring these stories to the American public and raise awareness of issues of vital concern to women and men in Africa as well as all who care about human rights."

"Gabourey's energetic spirit and connection to the youth culture made her the perfect choice to host the series this season and we are happy to have her as such an integral part of 'AfroPoP,'" said Black Public Media vice president and director of programming, Leslie Fields-Cruz. Fields-Cruz is also co-executive producer of the series.

Sidibe burst onto the scene in 2009 with her stunning portrayal of "Precious" in the film based on the novel 'Push' by Sapphire. Her efforts earned her an Academy Award and Golden Globe nominations, with an array of other nominations and awards.

Sidibe will next film the fourth season of the Golden Globe nominated Showtime series, "The Big C," opposite Laura Linney.