



BlackStar Film Festival 2023

August 2-6



BlackStar
Film Festival

2023

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About Us

BlackStar Projects creates the spaces and resources needed to uplift the work of Black, Brown and Indigenous artists working outside the confines of genre. We do this by producing year-round programs including film screenings, exhibitions, a podcast, a filmmaker seminar, a film production lab, a journal of visual culture and this annual film festival.

We prioritize visionary work that is experimental in its aesthetics, content and form and builds on the work of elders and ancestors to imagine a new world. We elevate artists who are overlooked, invisibilized or misunderstood and celebrate the wide spectrum of aesthetics, storytelling and experiences that they bring. We bring that work to new audiences and place it in dialogue with other past and contemporary work. And we curate every aspect of our events to be intentional community-building efforts, connecting diverse audiences in a Black-led space centered on joy and thriving.

Learn more at blackstarfest.org/about.

Our Funders

Support for BlackStar is provided in part by Critical Minded, Ford Foundation/JustFilms, Independence Public Media Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Michael Jordan Black Community Commitment Fund, Mighty Arrow Family Foundation, Nathan Cummings Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Perspective Fund, Philadelphia's Cultural Treasures, PopCulture Collaborative, Ruth Foundation for the Arts, Samuel S. Fels Fund, Surdna Foundation, Wallace Foundation, William Penn Foundation and the Wyncote Foundation. Invaluable support is provided by the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania.

Dear beloved community,

I am ecstatic to be welcoming you to the 12th annual BlackStar Film Festival. It is ever our greatest pleasure to host our audience, filmmakers and guests in our city. Twelve is a celestial number, an expansive one — 12 months, 12 stations of the sun and moon, 12 zodiac signs. The (Black)Stars are aligning, as expansiveness has been central during our past year. As our programs expand and our network grows wider, we're making the changes necessary to more comfortably hold it all. Over the past year, our team grew significantly. Our office is bustling with activity and movement, and so is the BlackStar calendar. And we are naturally also expanding our own internal practice of teamwork, community building and collegiate solidarity. We hope that these vibes are apparent to you throughout BlackStar Film Festival week this year.

Once again we went through the film programming process with a brilliant group of curators, makers and thinkers. From January until May, this group of folks watched hundreds of hours of films, engaged in thoughtful discourse during many meetings and helped shape the program that you see at our festival this week. My warm thanks go to Ben-Alex Dupris and Kimberly Brundidge on the Feature Narrative Committee; Arjun Shankar and Melissa Bisagni on the Feature Documentary Committee; Chloë Walters-Wallace, Tina Morton and Tzutsumatzin Soto on the Short Documentary Committee; Eugene Haynes, Marcellus Armstrong,

and Tshay Williams on the Short Narrative Committee; Dessane Lopez Cassell and Wally Fall on the Experimental Committee; and the wonderful program committee chairs who make up the 2023 Selection Committee — Alia Ayman (experimental), Janaína Oliveira (feature documentary), Jemma Desai (feature narrative), Nyambura Waruingi (short documentary) and Séverine Catelion (short narrative). This deeply dedicated group of 17 folks went on a months-long journey with us that stimulated both our emotions and our intellect, forcing us to engage in serious discussion about the practice of curation, the function of film festivals, the politics of any given shot in any given film, and more. I am humbled by the focus and commitment of this group, and am honored to have worked with them all. Their deep knowledge has offered me an invaluable education.

It became apparent to us early on in the programming process that parenthood would emerge as a central theme in this year's festival, so we leaned into it. This is also a year of high queer visibility, whether via the topics and characters on-screen or the identities of the filmmakers, so we are also spotlighting queer futures in cinema in our panels. We will also engage with land-based issues — from ecology and climate to land theft and resistance. And as we have sought to bolster our accessibility practices as a festival and an organization,

we will feature several works that center disability and disability justice, and we're complementing these films with a panel workshop that breaks down accessibility in filmmaking for our filmmaker attendees (but also for everybody). We are excited to witness the conversations that our program will spark this year and look forward to being present with you, our audiences, for those.

The softest place in my heart is reserved for my beloved colleagues. I feel it is a true blessing to wake up and work with these folks every day. Akili Davis has taken on a new role as program coordinator, working more closely on our festival program than before, and acting as BlackStar 2023's accessibility coordinator. Farrah Rahaman continues in her role as our panel producer once again this year, and has been helping to shape our phenomenal panels lineup. Katy Bagli is back for another journey to produce events on "The Daily Jawn Stage," supported by our administrative coordinator, Nile Shareef-Trudeau. Lendl Tellington remains my thoughtful longtime colleague who beasts the huge undertaking of all things festival tech. Nyla Daniel is BlackStar's new public programs manager, a most delightful and organized person who gracefully stepped into her role. BlackStar operations team — Akua Maat, Autumn Faith Valdez, Jess Garz, Michele Pierson, and Sara Zia Ebrahimi — thank you all for helping us keep it together and for bringing in the funds that make our festival possible. We couldn't do anything without you all. Terri Hall, our new people and culture director, led the charge of interviewing all festival staff candidates this year and is always catching what falls through the cracks. The cult that is BlackStar communications team — some of the hardest-working people: Imran Siddiquee, Leo Brooks who designed this guide, Mariam Dembele, Pablo Alarcon Jr., who designed the 2023 festival merch among other things, Swabreen Bakr, who has returned to BlackStar, and Xenia Matthews, a 2022 lab fellow-turned communications coordinator who will also be one of our tech production coordinators at the festival. Always great love to Shauna Swartz — a patient and discerning editor who makes our words on paper as close to perfect as possible. I cannot forget the wonderful Irit Reinheimer, Marielle Ingram, and Zoë Greggs. While we don't work closely together, all of this work is made both more pleasant and seamless by your

presence. Thank you to the amazing festival staff, to our volunteers, to the board of BlackStar, and to the 2023 festival jury. Big love to our 2023 accessibility Committee members — Andraéa LaVant, Natasha Ofili and Thomas Reid — who share their wisdom, knowledge, networks and critiques with us to help us reach our accessibility goals, until we all co-create an industry where disability justice is a necessary and primary practice, and all of us have the tools necessary to welcome all of our people into our spaces.

Most special thanks go to Amber Hunnicutt, BlackStar's festival operations director. We met Amber last year when she worked as a festival staffer and caught our attention with her careful, detail-oriented work style combined with the ease with which she keeps her composure under pressure. I am in awe of all you do, Amber, and excessively grateful that you continue to work with us. To Sydney Alicia Rodriguez, my compañerx who holds it down through thick and thin. Sydney is now our artist programs manager, so they have taken on greater responsibilities at BlackStar, including leading the Filmmaker Lab and the 2023 Seminar. For two years they have also spearheaded our audio description training program as well as the AD we provide for festival films. It's amazing to have somebody in your corner who shows up as a teammate the way that Sydney does. And last but certainly not least, I am ever grateful to my beloved Maori Karmael Holmes. Every year I mention Maori's vision, guidance and leadership, without which none of us would be here doing this. But I will also add Maori's generosity to the list, which I believe is part of what makes BlackStar's vibrant energy. She is generous in spirit, thoughtfulness, materiality (a Taurus, of course) and, most importantly, grace. I will always appreciate you.

Welcome, once again, to BlackStar Film Festival 2023 and this beloved community. We are always happy to have you in our orbit.

With great big celestial love,
Nehad Khader



June 2023



Staff

BlackStar Projects Staff

Akili Davis
Program Coordinator

Akua Maat
Operations Associate

Autumn Faith Valdez
Business Director

Dessane Lopez Cassell
Editor-in-Chief, *Seen*

Farrah Rahaman
Curatorial & Research Fellow

Hope Steinman-Iacullo
Executive Coordinator

Imran Siddiquee
Chief Communications Officer

Irit Reinheimer
Associate Producer,
Many Lumens

Jess Garz
Development Consultant

Lendl Tellington
Technical Producer

Leo Brooks
Design Manager

Maori Karmael Holmes
Chief Executive &
Artistic Officer

Mariam Dembele
Marketing Associate

Marielle Ingram
Associate Editor, *Seen*

Michele Pierson
Development Manager

Nehad Khader
Festival Director

Nile Shareef-Trudeau
Administrative Coordinator

Nyla Daniel
Public Programs Manager

Pablo Alarcon Jr.
Design Associate

Sara Zia Ebrahimi
Chief Operations Officer

Swabreen Bakr
Marketing & Engagement
Director

Sydney Alicia Rodriguez
Artist Programs Manager

Terri Hall
People & Culture Director

Xenia Matthews
Communications Coordinator

Zoë Greggs
Executive Associate

2023 Festival Staff

Aidan Un
Videographer & Editor

Amber Hunnicutt
Festival Operations Director

Animah Danquah
Social Media Coordinator

Antoinette Stewart
Box Office Coordinator

Antonio Wooten
Merchandise Manager

Brandon Anaya
Festival Office Coordinator

Cienna Benn
Program Fellow

Daniel Jackson
Photographer & Editor

Dennis Nelson Jr.
House Manager

Eugene Haynes
Industry Liaison

Kamliah Clarke
Party Producer

Katy Bagli
The Daily Jawn Producer

Kerrin Lyons
Volunteer Coordinator

Koyuki Yip
Hospitality Coordinator

Lo Lloyd
Onsite Technical Production
Coordinator

Makena Jackson
Merchandise Coordinator

Meredith Finch
Virtual Festival Coordinator

Michael Moody
Box Office Manager

Mochi Robinson
Photographer

Oliver Spencer
Onsite Technical Production
Coordinator

Rachel Hampton
House Manager

Renée Colbert
Web Manager

Shaakira DeLoatch
Press Coordinator

Shak Lawrence
Print Traffic Manager

Shanti Mayers
Festival Bazaar Curator

Shaquan Battle
Videographer

Sauna Swartz
Program Guide Copy Editor

Sydney Schwartz
Festival Office Coordinator

Takia Gibbs
Box Office Coordinator

Tamira Moore
Festival Office Coordinator

Tomarra Sankara-Kilombo
Merchandise Coordinator

Board

Board of Directors

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Partner, Culhane Meadows
PLLC
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Strategic Partnerships Manager,
Airwallex

Jamila Farwell
Director of Documentary Series,
Netflix

Maori Karmael Holmes
Chief Executive & Artistic
Officer, BlackStar

Sunanda Ghosh
Nonprofit Strategy Consultant

Ted Passon
President, All Ages Productions

Creative Team

2023 Identity Design
Leo Brooks

2023 Merch Design
Pablo Alarcon Jr.

**The Daily Jawn
Identity Design**
Pablo Alarcon Jr.

Pre-Roll Animator
The Unloved

Production Partners
All Ages Productions
PASSERINE

Business Team

Accounting Services Firm
Sutro Li

Legal Counsel
Anjali Kumar

Media Relations
Cultural Counsel

Accessibility Committee

**Andraéa LaVant
Natasha Ofili
Thomas Reid**

Special thanks to ASL
interpreter **JaRon Gilchrist**

Program Committees

Experimental

Alia Ayman, chair

Alia Ayman makes and curates film and video and lives in Cairo and New York City. She is the co-founder of Zawya, an art-house cinema in Cairo, and a doctoral candidate in sociocultural anthropology at New York University. She is a programming consultant for Berlinale Forum, the International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam and BlackStar Film Festival. She has previously curated programs for Images Festival in Toronto, Flaherty NYC and Arsenal Institute for Film and Video in Berlin, among others.

Dessane Lopez Cassell

Dessane Lopez Cassell is a New York-based editor, writer and curator. She gravitates towards moving image and visual art concerned with race, gender, decoloniality and the politics of paradise. As editor-in-chief of BlackStar's journal, *Seen*, Cassell platforms film, art and visual culture writing by and about people of color, carving out more opportunities for nuanced, slow journalism.

Wally Fall

Wally Fall is a filmmaker of Senegalese and Martinican descent who grew up in Martinique. After taking evening classes on video filmmaking and editing in London, he gained much of his early experience in Europe, the Caribbean and Africa. In 2016, along with fellow filmmakers, he founded Cinemawon, a film collective dedicated to creating new spaces to screen films mostly overlooked from the Caribbean, Africa and other Afro-diasporic spaces. It operates mostly in the French colonies of the Caribbean and the Indian

Ocean. Since 2017 he is back in the Caribbean in Guadeloupe, where he lives and works. In 2021 he was a curatorial fellow at the 66th Flaherty Seminar, and his short film *Fouyé Zétwal (Plowing the Stars)* was selected at BlackStar's 10th anniversary edition.

Feature Documentary

Arjun Shankar

Arjun Shankar is an assistant professor at Georgetown University. He is concerned with the politics of help and its role in upholding systems of racial capitalism. In *Brown Saviors and Their Others*, he shows how colonial, racial, caste and class formations undergird how NGO work is done in India today. Second, he is a visual anthropologist and ethnographic filmmaker who develops decolonial, participatory visual methodologies that challenge the representation of "impoverished" and "suffering" "Third World" children.

Janaína Oliveira, chair

Janaína Oliveira is a film scholar and independent curator. A professor at the Federal Institute of Rio de Janeiro and consultant for JustFilms/Ford Foundation, Oliveira has a PhD in history and was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the Center for African Studies at Howard University. Since 2009, she has researched and made film programs mainly focusing on Black and African cinemas, working also as a consultant, juror and panelist in several film festivals and institutions in Brazil and abroad. She is the founder of the Black Cinema Itinerant Forum and was the Flaherty Film Seminar (New York) programmer for 2021. Oliveira lives and works in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Samples of her work can be found at https://linktr.ee/jana_oliveiraa.

Melissa Bisagni

Melissa Bisagni is the festival director of the D.C. Asian Pacific American Film Festival and serves on the board for the D.C. Shorts Film Festival. Melissa is a museum specialist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in the Department of Museum Learning and Programs, where she focuses on training staff in cultural competency, museum access and institutional knowledge transfer. Previous to her current role, she served for 15 years as NMAI's film and video program manager.

Feature Narrative

Benjamin Alex Dupris

Ben-Alex Dupris is Miniconjou Lakota and an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. He grew up on the Columbia River and is homesteading there with his family today. Dupris creates work that remixes traditionalism through a 21st century lens. Recent work in 2022 includes *NuWu Means the People* (director) for the Smithsonian Arts & Industry exhibit Futures, *Firecracker Bullets* (producer) for Visionmaker Media and *Inhabitants* (producer) with Good Docs. His short *Tomol Rider* (director) with Patagonia Films will be released in spring 2023.

Jemma Desai, chair

Jemma Desai is based in London. Her practice engages with film programming through research, writing and performance.

Kim Brundidge

Kim Brundidge has been in the Atlanta theater community for several years as a playwright, director, dramaturge and producer. Her work has been workshopped and performed at Actor's Express, Horizon Theater, Push Push Theater, Theatre in the Square (Marietta), Philadelphia Fringe Festival and Clark Atlanta University. She won prizes at the Georgia Theatre Conference, University of Louisville's Juneteenth Festival and the National Black Theater Conference. Her short plays have been performed in various writer's conferences and festivals. Her monologue, "I am not a black woman," is published in *New Monologues for Women by Women*, edited by Tori Haring-Smith (Heinemann, 2004). Brundidge has been a member of the Dramatists Guild and the Playwrights Center, and served on the board of Working Title Playwrights. She has been a teaching artist for the Alliance Theater, Horizon Theatre and the Fox Theatre educational outreach programs.

Short Documentary

Chloë Walters-Wallace

Chloë Walters-Wallace is a Jamaican creative with a passion for curation, travel, documentaries, dancehall and installation art. She is the director of regional initiatives at Firelight Media, where she oversees the new HOMEGROWN nonfiction shorts slate and the Groundwork Regional Lab, both programs supporting filmmakers of color in the South, Midwest and U.S. Territories. She was also guest curator of the Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers '21-'22 season and co-created the Caribbean Film Academy 2.0 at Third Horizon. Chloë was a 2022 DOC NYC

Documentary New Leaders fellow, 2021 Rockwood JustFilms Fellow, 2015 Ortique Institute Fellow, and 2007 Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow. She lives in New York, New Orleans and Jamaica, and is on the board of Third Horizon, Femme Frontera and the Color Congress.

Nyambura M. Waruingi, chair

Nyambura M. Waruingi is a writer, producer and curator at the intersection of art, culture and immersive technology. As the founder and creative director of Akoia & Company Ltd. and with over 20 years of global experience in creative and cultural industries, she experiments with unique ways to imagine new worlds through filmmaking, immersive storytelling and gaming. She has curated for Film Africa, Fak'ugesi: African Digital Innovation Festival, Games for Change Africa, No Direct Flight, European Film Festival in Kenya, Beneath the Baobabs Festival and Africa Nouveau, among many more. Currently, Nyambura is the artistic director and executive producer of Akoia's flagship project, *The Ground Screams to Whisper*, a trans-platform immersive experience about the resilience, courage and triumph of everyday female freedom fighters, which shaped Kenya's independence struggle. The project merges animation, installation arts and extended reality. #imagneradically

Tina Morton

Tina Morton is a media activist, video oral historian and associate professor of film at Howard University. Deeply committed to facilitating members of community groups in telling their own stories in their own voice, she has taught various organizations from Dakar to Philadelphia how to use media for social activism. Her award-winning works focus on documenting the oral histories of families and underrepresented communities and have screened internationally. A sample of her work includes *Severed Souls* (2001), *Belly of the Basin* (2008), *When We Came Up Here* (2016), *Build Your Own Door* (2018), and most recently, *Passtown School: Past, Present and Future* (2022). Morton has received prestigious residencies and grants, including a Pew Fellowship in the Arts grant, the Leighton Artists' Colony

residency from the Banff Centre (Calgary, Canada), 18th Street Artist Residency in Santa Monica and a Leeway Transformation Award. She is a juror for Cinema Eye Honors and the San Antonio Black International Film Festival.

Tzutzumatzin Soto

Tzutzumatzin Soto is an activist for the preservation and public access to audiovisual archives in Mexico. In 2019 she funded Archivo Mixtli, an audiovisual community archive in Xochimilco, México City. She has been part of the programming committee of Ambulante Documentary Film Festival in Mexico since 2018. This year she also coordinates a training program for community film exhibition projects in the same organization.

Short Narrative

Eugene Haynes

Eugene Haynes is a creative producer and adjunct film professor at Temple University. Formerly he was the director of productions and acquisitions at USA Films (Focus Features) and the artistic director for the Jamerican International Film and Music Festival in Jamaica, created by Emmy award-winning artist/activist Sheryl Lee Ralph. Eugene is the executive producer and co-creator of *The Adventures of Teddy P. Brains*, an award-winning animated feature film for children. He is currently executive producing an adult manga/anime series, *The Greener Grass*, centered on the history of education seen through the lens of an insect universe based on the people and culture of Philadelphia. The series provokes transformative education by providing STEAM learning resources and cognitive wellness through expressive art.

Marcellus Armstrong

Marcellus Armstrong is an artist, media programmer and educator. He is invested in archives of Blackness and queerness, and in their relationship to materials. He is originally from the suburbs of Baltimore and currently

resides in Philadelphia, where he is a 2022 Independent Public Media Fund grant recipient, a 2022-23 teaching artist-in-residence at Glen Foerd, and the 2023 Queer Materials Lab artist-in-residence at Tyler School of Art, Temple University.

Séverine Catelion, chair

Born in Martinique and living in Paris, Séverine Catelion is a producer with a keen interest in developing projects from the African diasporas and continent. She focuses on international co-productions and has partnered with companies such as Merveilles Production (Bénin), Lazennec & Associés (France), Les Films du Djabadjah (Burkina Faso), Republic of Story (Scotland) and Chronoprod (Martinique). Her current projects in development range from short to feature film and documentaries. Séverine is a multifaceted professional whose activities also include film marketing and curating. Whether she's involved in the making, programming or promoting of a film, her sole focus is to make that film meet its audience.

Tshay Williams

Tshay Williams is a Jamaican American filmmaker and artist from Amityville, N.Y. Her interest in filmmaking stems from being situated within a community of liberation-oriented artists and organizers in Philadelphia. Working in close collaboration with loved ones, Tshay creates films across documentary, fiction and hybrid forms, namely her debut narrative short film, *gales.*, which screened at BlackStar Film Festival, American Black Film Festival, Pan African Film Festival, and a number of universities and organizations worldwide. She is the recipient of awards from Art Works, Sachs Arts and Independence Public Media Foundation, and is currently developing her debut animated film, *Tell Me When You Get Home*.



The Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania congratulates the Blackstar Film Festival on its 12th year of lifting up **Black, Brown, and Indigenous voices.**



Jurors

Experimental

Awa Konaté

Curator and Founder,
Culture Art Society

Nour Ouayda

Filmmaker

Portia E. Cobb

Artist and Associate Professor,
University of Wisconsin-
Milwaukee, Department
of Film, Video, Animation
& New Genres

Feature Documentary

Loira Limbal

Filmmaker

Louis Massiah

Filmmaker and Executive
Director, Scribe Video Center

Naomi Johnson

Executive Director,
imagineNATIVE Film + Media
Arts Festival

Feature Narrative

Aseye Tamakloe

Founder, Ndiva Women's
Film Festival

Elhum Shakerifar

Producer and Curator

Jason Reynolds

Author

Short Documentary

Aiko Masubuchi

Film Programmer, Producer
and Translator

Asad Muhammad

Vice President, Impact
and Engagement Strategy,
American Documentary Inc.
I POV

Tracy Rector

Managing Director,
Storytelling, Nia Tero

Short Narrative

Carmen Thompson

Programmer and Creative
Producer

Dagmawi Woubshet

Professor, University of
Pennsylvania

DJ Lynnée Denise

PhD Candidate and DJ Scholar

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BLACKSTAR FILM FESTIVAL
AND INDEPENDENT FILM
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About BlackStar Film Festival

BlackStar Film Festival is an annual celebration of the visual and storytelling traditions of the African diaspora and global communities of color — showcasing films by Black, Brown and Indigenous people from around the world.

Since 2012, the festival has brought together filmmakers, supporters and enthusiasts through screenings, panels, workshops and conversations. This yearly gathering creates space for dialogue and opens the opportunity for greater understanding within and across our communities. The films presented by BlackStar constitute a dynamic and important collection — one that is unlike any other — because they highlight both independent filmmakers and cultural communities.

Through the festival and our other projects, BlackStar is building a liberatory world in which a vast spectrum of Black, Brown and Indigenous experiences are irresistibly celebrated in arts and culture.

#ByIndieMeansNecessary

Copy Editor:
Shauna Swartz

Festival Identity
& Layout:
Leo Brooks

Printing:
Point B Solutions
Printed in Minneapolis

© BlackStar Projects,
Philadelphia

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the **DAILY JAWN STAGE**

New this year is The Daily Jawn Stage, which will lift off from last year's evening show format to an all-day activation featuring interviews with filmmakers, performances, panel discussions and spotlight talks.

Events from the Stage will be recorded and uploaded to YouTube, as well as our watch platform, throughout the week.

Co-presented by Urban Outfitters.

**The Daily Jawn Stage
August 2-6
10am to 8pm
Commonwealth Plaza,
Kimmel Center Cultural Campus**

Visit blackstarfest.org/festival/schedule for the line-up.



Feature

Films



Above and Below the Ground

Feature Documentary | Myanmar, USA, Thailand, 2023, 84 min.
World Premiere

Jinghpaw and Burmese with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 2pm EDT
Perelman Theater

In Myanmar, Indigenous punk rock pastors and women activists are determined to protect a sacred river from a Chinese-built megadam. From Aung San Suu Kyi's broken promises to a military coup threatening their homeland, they fight back through protest, prayer and karaoke music videos.

Directed by: Emily Hong



All the Colours of the World Are Between Black and White

Feature Narrative | Nigeria, 2023, 92 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English and Igbo with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

A restrained and tender story of two men who become close in a society in which same-sex sexual relations are considered taboo and are liable for prosecution. Their dance around each other unfolds slowly, in images that are concentrated and filled with calm. A sensual and politically important film.

Directed by: Babatunde Apalowo



Between the Colony and the Stars (Entre a Colônia e as Estrelas)

Feature Narrative | Brazil, 2022, 50 min.
North America Premiere

Portuguese and French with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 2pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Estelar works in a psychiatric hospital and has visions of the past. During a water crisis in the state, she welcomes Kalil, her younger brother, to live in her house. Estelar realizes that it takes courage to review her conservative positions to deal with differences and love.

Directed by: Lorrán Dias



Coconut Head Generation

Feature Documentary | France, Nigeria, 2023, 89 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English, French, Yoruba and Pidgin English with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Wednesday, August 2, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Every Thursday, a group of students from the University of Ibadan, the oldest in Nigeria, organizes a film club, transforming a small lecture hall into a political agora where they develop a critical voice.

Directed by: Alain Kassanda



Conversations With Ruth de Souza (Diálogos com Ruth de Souza)

Feature Documentary | Brazil, 2022, 107 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

Portuguese with English subtitles

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 11am EDT
Perelman Theater

Sunday, August 6, 6pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Ruth de Souza pioneers the presence of Black actresses in theater, television and cinema in Brazil. Through conversations and archival materials, the film portrays her trajectory, spanning almost a century of life.

Directed by: Juliana Vicente



Dancing the Stumble (Mantjé Tonbé Sé Viv)

Feature Documentary | France, 2023, 63 min.
World Premiere

French and Martinique Creole with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 8:30pm EDT
Perelman Theater

In Martinique, a psychiatric daycare hospital welcomes a young artist-researcher to lead Bèlè dance and music workshops. The film crafts an intimate dialogue between the director's inner questions, the words of those who learn to live with a psychiatric diagnosis and the ancestral energy of Bèlè.

Directed by: Wally Fall



Fire Through Dry Grass

Feature Documentary | USA, 2023, 88 min.
World Premiere

English and Spanish with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 5pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Wearing snapback caps and Air Jordans, the Reality Poets aren't typical nursing home residents. In *Fire Through Dry Grass*, these young, Black and Brown, disabled artists document their pandemic experiences, their rhymes underscoring the danger they feel in the face of institutional neglect.

Directed by: Andres "Jay" Molina and Alexis Neophytides



Foragers (اليد الخضراء)

Feature Documentary | Palestine, Germany, 2022, 64 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

Arabic and Hebrew with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 3pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Foragers moves between documentary and fiction to depict the dramas between the Israeli Nature Protection Authority and Palestinian foragers. With a wry sense of humor, the film captures the inherited love, resilience and knowledge of these traditions over an eminently political backdrop.

Directed by: Jumana Manna



Gaining Ground: The Fight for Black Land

Feature Documentary | USA, 2023, 96 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 2pm EDT
Perelman Theater

In just a few decades after the end of enslavement, Black Americans were able to amass millions of acres of farmland. Today approximately 90% of that land is no longer in Black hands. Various factors have been employed to take Black land, including violence, eminent domain and government discrimination. But it is a little-known issue — heirs' property — that has had a devastating effect on Black land ownership. *Gaining Ground: The Fight for Black Land* is a timely and stirring documentary from Emmy-nominated producer/director Eternal Polk and Al Roker Entertainment that examines the causes, and effects what is being done to fight the exploitation of these issues, and how landowners are reclaiming their agricultural legacy and creating paths to generational wealth.

Directed by: Eternal Polk



Girl

Feature Narrative | United Kingdom, 2023, 87 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 8:30pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Sunday, August 6, 3pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Eleven-year-old Ama and her mother, Grace, take solace in the gentle but isolated world they obsessively create. But Ama's thirst for life and her need to grow and develop challenge the rules of their insular world and gradually force Grace to reckon with a past she struggles to forget.

Directed by: Adura Onashile



Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project

Feature Documentary | USA, 2022, 102 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Thursday, August 3, 5pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Sunday, August 6, 5pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Through intimate vérité, archival footage and visually innovative treatments of her poetry, *Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project* pushes the boundaries of biographical documentaries by traveling through time and space to reveal the enduring influence of one of America's greatest living artists and social commentators.

Directed by: Michèle Stephenson and Joe Brewster



Invisible Beauty

Feature Documentary | USA, 2023, 114 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 5pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Sunday, August 6, 8pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Invisible Beauty is a moving portrait of former model, agent and activist Bethann Hardison. Directors Hardison and Frédéric Tcheng construct an original and uniquely intimate exploration of a life well lived and shine a light on an untold chapter in the fight for diversity and representation.

Directed by: Bethann Hardison and Frédéric Tcheng



Is My Living in Vain

Experimental Feature | United Kingdom, 2022, 41 min.
United States Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 11:30am EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Saturday, August 5, 6pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Doxology

Is My Living in Vain is a meditation on the continuing history and emancipatory potential of the Black church as a space of diasporic belonging, affirmation and community organizing. Weaving together archival imagery, oral histories and 16 mm footage shot on location.

Directed by: Ufuoma Essi



It Lives Inside

Feature Narrative | USA, 2023, 100 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English and Hindi with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 8pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Sam is desperate to fit in at school, rejecting her Indian culture and family to be like everyone else. When a mythological demonic spirit latches on to her former best friend, she must come to terms with her heritage in order to defeat it.

Directed by: Bishal Dutta



Know Your Place

Feature Narrative | USA, 2022, 119 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English and Tigrinya with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 8pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Amid the landscape of a transforming city, a young boy confronts the reality of change and loss.

Directed by: Zia Mohajjerjasbi



La Lucha (The Fight)

Feature Documentary | Australia, USA, Bolivia, 2023, 89 min.
World Premiere

Spanish and Quechua with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 8:30pm EDT
Perelman Theater

When a group of people with disabilities in Bolivia unite in protest for a pension, they never imagined what was to come. Trekking the Andes in their wheelchairs, they're forced to confront a government that tries to silence them and a society indifferent to their struggle. *La Lucha* is a tribute to all those who fight for change.

Directed by: Violeta Ayala



Mafifa

Feature Documentary | Cuba, 2021, 77 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

Spanish with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Filmmaker Daniela Muñoz Barroso, who is almost completely deaf, wants to discover the identity of the remarkable musician Mafifa. Her quest leads her on the trail of an enigmatic woman, and also makes her question her own head and heart.

Directed by: Daniela Muñoz Barroso



Money, Freedom, a Story of the CFA Franc (L'Argent, la Liberté, une Histoire du Franc CFA)

Feature Documentary | Senegal, France, Belgium, Germany, 2022, 104 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

French with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 11:30am EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

In Money, Freedom, a Story of the CFA Franc, director Katy Léna Ndiaye traces the history of a currency whose roots lie in compensation for slave owners.

Directed by: Katy Léna Ndiaye



Mountains

Feature Narrative | USA, 2023, 95 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

Haitian Creole, English and Spanish with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Sunday, August 6, 8:30pm EDT
Perelman Theater

While looking for a new home for his family, a Haitian demolition worker is faced with the realities of redevelopment as he is tasked with dismantling his rapidly gentrifying Miami neighborhood.

Directed by: Monica Sorelle



A Place of Our Own (Ek Jagah Apni)

Feature Narrative | India, 2022, 88 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

Hindi with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 6pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Laila and Roshni, two trans women, are looking for a house after they are evicted from the place they rented. It soon becomes evident that their search for a home is also their ongoing search for a place in this society that wants to keep them away in a section that cannot be the center. As the search for a home continues, we realize it transcends physical spaces and biological bonds. New friendships blossom, and help comes from unexpected quarters.

Directed by: Ektara Collective



Scenes of Extraction (Sahnehaye Estekhray)

Feature Documentary | Canada, 2023, 43 min.
North America Premiere

Farsi and English with English subtitles

In-person screenings:
Saturday, August 5, 8:30pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Sunday, August 6, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Critical Reflections

Scenes of Extraction unpacks the parallel production of geological and ethnographic surveys, through amateur geological footage and official film surveys produced by British Petroleum in Iran and broader Asia. The film is an active act of listening to the moving and still images of extraction.

Directed by: Sanaz Sohrabi



Sound of the Police

Feature Documentary | USA, 2023, 90 min.
World Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 5pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Sound of the Police examines the fraught relationship between African Americans and the police from slavery to the present. The film traces the long and complex racial history in the U.S. that set the path for policing in communities of color and fuels ongoing conflicts and calls for reform.

Directed by: Stanley Nelson and Valerie Scoon



The Space Race

Feature Documentary | USA, Cuba, 2023, 90 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English and Spanish with English subtitles

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 3pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Sunday, August 6, 2pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Uncovers the little-known stories of the first Black pilots, engineers and scientists to become astronauts. Simultaneously championed and exploited as political pawns, some made it to space, while others were erased from history.

Directed by: Lisa Cortés and Diego Hurtado de Mendoza



Still We Rise

Feature Documentary | Australia, 2022, 57 min.
North America Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Celebrating the feisty First Nations activists whose resistance in 1972 continues to inspire subsequent generations, *Still We Rise* is a bold dive into a year of incendiary protest.

Directed by: John Harvey



The Taste of Mango

Feature Documentary | United Kingdom, USA, 2023, 75 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 11:30am EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

In this hypnotically cinematic love letter flowing through time and generations, director Chloe Abrahams probes raw questions her mother and grandmother have long brushed aside, tenderly untangling painful knots in her family's unspoken past.

Directed by: Chloe Abrahams



This Place

Feature Narrative | Canada, 2022, 87 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English, Mohawk, Farsi, Tamil and French with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 6pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

The emerging love between two young women is complicated by their families' histories, which bear the legacies of loss, migration and displacement.

Directed by: V.T. Nayani



unseen

Feature Documentary | USA, 2023, 88 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English and Spanish with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Sunday, August 6, 11am EDT
Perelman Theater

An aspiring social worker, Pedro, must confront political restrictions as a blind, undocumented immigrant to get his college degree and support his family. But when attaining his dreams leads to new and unexpected challenges, what will Pedro do?

Directed by: Set Hernandez

What These Walls Won't Hold

Feature Documentary | USA, 2022, 43 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Thursday, August 3, 11am EDT
Perelman Theater

Saturday, August 5, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Transmogrify

Set against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, Adamu Chan's powerful documentary *What These Walls Won't Hold* shines a light on the transformative power of love and solidarity amid adversity at San Quentin State Prison.

Directed by: Adamu Chan

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Short

Films

(Titles listed in screening order)

Venue Key:

LFC — Lightbox Film Center
SRT — Suzanne Roberts Theatre
KCCC — Perelman Theater at Kimmel Center Cultural Campus

Burgeon

Facing hard truths as we grow older.

Thurs, Aug 3, 12pm EDT at LFC

- Honolulu
- August Visitor
- How to Breathe out of water
- We Were Meant to

Caregivers

Health care, a better way.

Wed, Aug 2, 2pm EDT at KCCC

- Here, Hopefully
- The Script
- Pandemic Bread
- Bone Black: Midwives vs. the South

Critical Reflections

Co-opted images of self.

Sat, Aug 5, 8:30pm EDT at KCCC
Sun, Aug 6, 12pm EDT at LFC

- Quiet as It's Kept
- Dau:añcut // Moving Along
- Scenes of Extraction

Doxology

It's all in the music.

Wed, Aug 2, 11:30pm EDT at SRT
Sat, Aug 5, 6pm EDT at LFC

- Keeping Time
- Is My Living in Vain

Earth Songs

Reverence for the earth and what it brings forth.

Fri, Aug 4, 5:30pm EDT at SRT

- The Wind Carries Us Home
- Atopias: The Homeless Wanderer
- Tierra en Trance

Interpersonal

Relating — to others, to self.

Sat, Aug 5, 8pm EDT at SRT

- All That's Left (BlackStar Filmmaker Lab film)
- Companion
- Sweet Refuge
- An Endoscopy (BlackStar Filmmaker Lab film)
- The Difference Between Us

Kleptocene

The way of power by theft.

Thurs, Aug 3, 5:30pm EDT at SRT

- Capital
- Pacific Club
- Before I Let Go
- What the Soil Remembers

Let the Games Begin!

Competing and the spirit of competition.

Wed, Aug 2, 5:30pm EDT at SRT
Sat, Aug 5, 11am EDT at KCCC

- Accidental Athlete
- Over the Wall
- Ampe: Leap Into the Sky, Black Girl
- Alexander Ball

Matrilineage

Our mothers' stories.

Fri, Aug 4, 3pm EDT at LFC
Sun, Aug 6, 5:30pm EDT at SRT

- A Bear Named Jesus
- Amina
- Wetlands of our Mother's Tongues in Concrete
- Into the Violet Belly
- Filho

Perturbed

Under pressure.

Sat, Aug 5, 2:30pm EDT at SRT

- Sweatshop Girl
- Sundown Road
- Living Proof
- The Vacation
- The Freedom to Fall Apart (BlackStar Filmmaker Lab film)

Portraiture

The art and the people behind it.

Wed, Aug 2, 8pm EDT at SRT

- John Thunder, Good Mythology
- Sydney G. James: How We See Us
- Negra, Yo Soy Bella
- Fierceness Served! The ENIKAlley Coffeehouse

Posthumous

The immortality of memorial.

Wed, Aug 2, 6pm EDT at LFC

- Spirit Emulsion
- Mother Just a Smile
- The After: A Chef's Wish
- Sèt Lam

Progeny

Parenthood's trials, tribulations, errors and successes.

Thurs, Aug 3, 3pm EDT at LFC
Sun, Aug 6, 2:30pm EDT at SRT

- Black Santa
- Rest Stop
- We Are Griots
- The Truth About Alvert, the Last Dodo
- Ebony

Synergistic

Simply better together.

Wed, Aug 2, 12pm EDT at LFC
Sat, Aug 5, 11:30am EDT at SRT

- The Aunties
- Mirasol
- Gaps
- Look Back at It
- Team Dream
- MnM

Transmogrify

Facing down the system.

Thurs, Aug 3, 11am EDT at KCCC
Sat, Aug 5, 12pm EDT at LFC

- Beneath the Surface
- Sol in the Garden
- What These Walls Won't Hold

Venerative

Connections to the ancestors.

Fri, Aug 4, 11am EDT at KCCC

- If Heaven Had Heights
- Oba
- Birthing a Nation
- Black Girls Play: The Story of Hand Games
- Gromonmon

Vulturine

Rapacious exploitations and resistance.

Thurs, Aug 3, 2:30pm EDT at SRT

- Grape Soda in the Parking Lot
- The Last British Colony in Africa
- Goodbye, Morganza
- I Am More Dangerous Dead



Accidental Athlete

Short Documentary | USA, 2023, 7 min.
World Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Saturday, August 5, 11am EDT
Perelman Theater

Program: Let the Games Begin!

Paulette Jones Morant waxes poetic about being one of the first Black woman scholastic athletes at the University of Virginia.

Directed by: Kevin Jerome Everson and Claudrena N. Harold



The After: a Chef's Wish

Short Documentary | Pakistan, 2022, 26 min.
East Coast Premiere

English and Urdu with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Wednesday, August 2, 6pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Posthumous

After Chef Fatima Ali — fan favorite winner of *Top Chef: Season 15* — faces a tragic turn of events in her life, her brother Mohammad must take up the mantle to continue her legacy of bridging cultures through food and providing the joy of it to the underprivileged in Pakistan.

Directed by: Umar Riaz



The Alexander Ball

Short Documentary | Australia, 2022, 30 min.
East Coast Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Saturday, August 5, 11am EDT
Perelman Theater

Program: Let the Games Begin!

The Alexander Ball is an observational documentary extravaganza celebrating Samoan-Māori-Australian trans woman of color Ella Ganza and the Meanjin (Brisbane) ballroom scene as the community prepares for one of the biggest ballroom events of the year: the Alexander Ball.

Directed by: Jessica Magro



All That's Left

Short Narrative | USA, 2023, 13 min.
World Premiere

BlackStar Filmmaker Lab Film

English

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 8pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Interpersonal

Struggling to differentiate reality from imagination, Mercedes unravels as those she holds dear seamlessly pass in and out of the maze of her mind. Swimming or drowning; is she truly in control?

Directed by: Simone Holland



Amina

Short Narrative | USA, 2022, 13 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Friday, August 4, 3pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Sunday, August 6, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Matrilineage

A former astronaut struggles to come to terms with her pregnancy after losing her wife during a mission.

Directed by: Shanrica Evans



Ampe: Leap Into the Sky, Black Girl

Short Documentary | USA, Ghana, 2022, 18 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English, Twi and Pidgin with English subtitles

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Saturday, August 5, 11am EDT
Perelman Theater

Program: Let the Games Begin!

Set in the sister cities of Accra, Ghana, and Columbus, Ohio, *Ampe: Leap Into the Sky, Black Girl* is a rhythmic love letter to Black girlhood through the lens of the Ghanaian jumping and clapping game, ampe.

Directed by: Claudia Owusu and Ife Oluwamuyide



Atopias: The Homeless Wanderer

Experimental | Guadeloupe, 2023, 27 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English, Italian and Tigrinya with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Earth Songs

Atopias: The Homeless Wanderer is the second part of Daniela Yohannes' *Atopias* trilogy, which grapples with geographies of migration, generational memory and trauma. Yohannes plays a woman wandering the harsh natural landscapes of the Caribbean in search of a transformational portal.

Directed by: Daniela Yohannes and Julien Beramis



August Visitor

Short Narrative | USA, 2022, 11 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English and Igbo with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Burgeon

When her widowed mother has a male friend over for dinner, a Nigerian American teenager acts out, leading her to a deeper understanding of her mother.

Directed by: Ifeyinwa Arinze



The Aunties

Short Documentary | USA, 2022, 6 min.
World Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Saturday, August 5, 12pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Synergistic

The Aunties is based on the lives of Black farmers and culture keepers Paulette Greene and Donna Dear. It also integrates the immense and incredible legacies of Harriet Tubman and Mt. Pleasant Acres Farms.

Directed by: Charlyn Griffith Oro and Jeannine Kayembe-Oro



A Bear Named Jesus

Short Documentary | Canada, 2023, 6 min.
United States Premiere

English and Cree with English subtitles

In-person screenings:
Friday, August 4, 3pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Sunday, August 6, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Matrilineage

In *A Bear Named Jesus*, a stop-motion film by Terril Calder, we meet Archer Pechawis, who is living on the rez. At Archer's Aunt Gladys' funeral, his mom is abducted by rabid bears and converted to fundamentalist Christianity. That night, he hears a tap on the window — it's a bear named Jesus, who has come to apologize for the actions of the rabid bears. *A Bear Named Jesus* is an allegory for religious interference, with an aching yet humorous look at estrangement and mourning for the loss of someone still living.

Directed by: Terril Calder



Before I Let Go

Experimental | USA, 2022, 23 min.
World Premiere

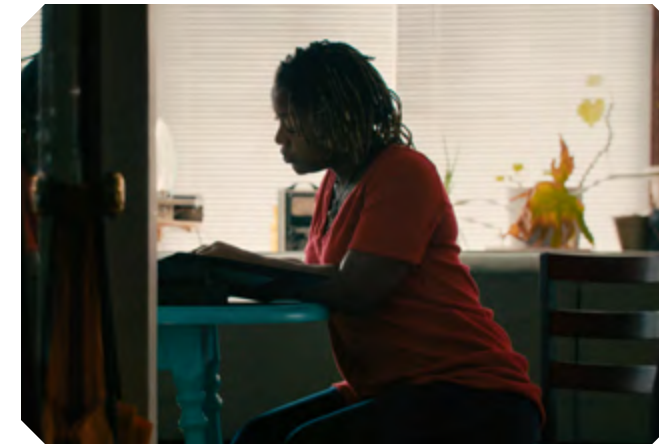
English

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Kleptocene

Five years ago, the eastside neighborhood of a town called Bad City was leveled by giant monsters called the Titans. The filmmaker was recently hired by the city to document the community's recovery efforts — and now is seeing just how different the road to recovery can look for a city, and for its people.

Directed by: Cameron A. Granger



Beneath the Surface

Short Documentary | USA, 2023, 6 min.
World Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Thursday, August 3, 11am EDT
Perelman Theater

Saturday, August 5, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Transmogrify

Trina Reynolds-Tyler, a data scientist and journalist at the Invisible Institute, investigates gender-based violence found in complaints made against the Chicago Police Department.

Directed by: Cai Thomas



Birthing a Nation: The Resistance of Mary Gaffney

Short Documentary | USA, 2023, 19 min.
World Premiere

English

In-person screening: Friday, August 4, 11am EDT, Perelman Theater

Program: Venerative

Birthing a Nation: The Resistance of Mary Gaffney explores the story of forced reproduction in the antebellum South and reveals the agency of Mary Gaffney, an enslaved woman who takes control of her body and fertility.

Directed by: Nazenet Habtezghi



Black Girls Play: The Story of Hand Games

Short Documentary | USA, 2023, 18 min.
North America Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 11am EDT
Perelman Theater

Program: Venerative

An illuminating look at the influence that hand games played by Black girls has had on the American creative landscape.

Directed by: Joe Brewster and Michèle Stephenson



Black Santa

Short Narrative | USA, 2022, 10 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Thursday, August 3, 3pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Sunday, August 6, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Progeny

Every year, Henry looks forward to his job working as a mall Santa alongside his son Otis. But as Otis grows older, this may prove to be their last holiday season as a duo.

Directed by: Travis Wood



Bone Black: Midwives vs. the South

Short Documentary | USA, Ghana, 2023, 21 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Wednesday, August 2, 2pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Program: Caregivers

Bone Black: Midwives vs. the South is an experimental documentary about the history and erasure of Black midwives in the American South and how the attack on birth workers has contributed toward the Black infant and maternal mortality crisis.

Directed by: Imani Nikyah Dennison



Capital

Experimental | Egypt, Italy, Germany, 2023, 17 min.

North America Premiere

Arabic, Italian and French with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Kleptocene

As Egypt sinks further into poverty, new cities are being erected across the country, and prisons fill with dissenting opinions. Since it is currently not possible to safely speak about this, a ventriloquist, songs and advertisements describe a seemingly bygone era of fascism.

Directed by: Basma al-Sharif



Companion

Short Narrative | USA, 2022, 5 min.

World Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Saturday, August 5, 8pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Interpersonal

An ode to the unspoken romance between cats and their humans.

Directed by: LaTajh Weaver



Dau:añcut // Moving Along Image

Experimental | USA, France, 2023, 15 min.

World Premiere

English and Kiowa with English subtitles

In-person screenings:
Saturday, August 3, 8:30pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Sunday, August 6, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Critical Reflections

In 2014, an unknown man in Ukraine tattooed a portrait of a relative of a filmmaker in his traditional Native American regalia. Stitched together from footage of the search for this man, the film interrogates what happens when the control of an image is lost and the time's circular ironies.

Directed by: Adam Piron



The Difference Between Us

Short Narrative | USA, 2023, 25 min.

World Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 8pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Interpersonal

An undocumented immigrant in Philadelphia starts to fall for a roommate she's never met — forming a connection that will test the limits of her romantic imagination.

Directed by: Imran Siddiquee



Ebony

Short Documentary | USA, 2023, 20 min.
World Premiere

English

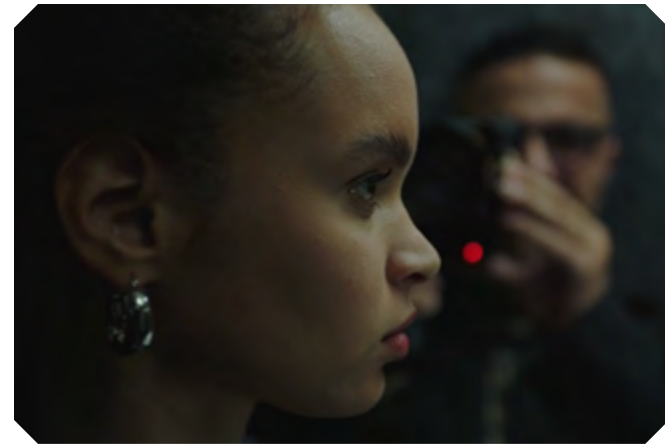
In-person screenings:
Thursday, August 3, 3pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Sunday, August 6, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Progeny

Filed over two years, a single mom raising six kids in a transitional housing program in Brownsville, Brooklyn, aims to create a better life for her children by moving them into permanent housing. A story of optimism shines from the most unlikely place.

Directed by: Sean-Josahi Brown



An Endoscopy

Short Narrative | USA, 2023, 19 min.
World Premiere

BlackStar Filmmaker Lab Film

English

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 8pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Interpersonal

A film student accompanies an Iraqi patient for his endoscopy with the agreement that he will be her subject in a documentary.

Directed by: Zardosht Afshari



Fierceness Served! The ENIKAlley Coffeehouse

Short Documentary | USA, 2021, 34 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

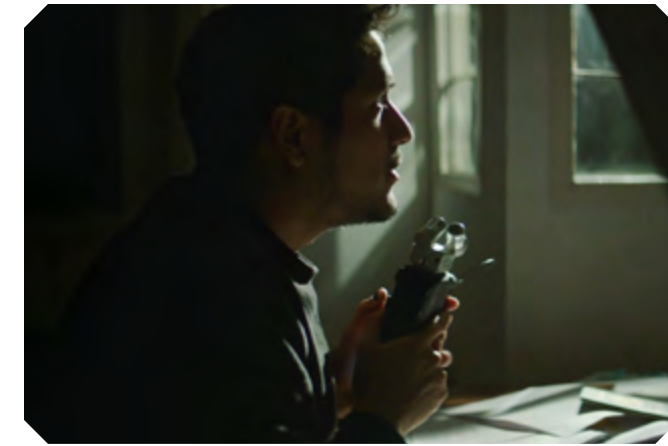
English

In-person screening:
Wednesday, August 2, 8pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Portraiture

An unsung renaissance evolved in a Washington, D.C., coffeehouse created by Black LGBTQ artists and activists. That mid-1980s venue was a safe haven and creative incubator during the onslaught of AIDS and crack — later inspiring Black, queer creatives internationally.

Directed by: Michelle Parkerson



Filho (Son)

Short Documentary | The Netherlands, 2022,
21 min.
North America Premiere

Dutch, Portuguese and English with English subtitles

In-person screenings:
Friday, August 4, 3pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Sunday, August 6, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Matrilineage

Filmmaker Tomas Ponsteen was adopted from Brazil and does not feel the need to search for his biological mother. Since revelations about adoption abuses, he wonders to what extent his choice not to search is without obligation.

Directed by: Tomas Ponsteen



The Freedom to Fall Apart

Short Narrative | USA, 2023, 24 min.
World Premiere

BlackStar Filmmaker Lab Film

English

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Perturbed

A college dropout accepts an invitation to join an elite secret society but quickly discovers their mission is less charitable than expected.

Directed by: David Gaines



Gaps

Short Narrative | USA, 2023, 11 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Saturday, August 5, 12pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Synergistic

A pubescent girl from a close-knit family finds herself at a crossroads between keeping her gapped front teeth or risking it all for the seemingly “perfect” smile.

Directed by: Jenn Shaw



Goodbye, Morganza

Short Documentary | USA, 2023, 15 min.
World Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Vulturine

In an intimate, archive-driven documentary, *Goodbye, Morganza* examines a property dispute that led to one family’s displacement from the home they’d owned since 1892. Today, their youngest daughter is left to pick up the pieces — all of them fitting within two storage units.

Directed by: Devon Blackwell



Grape Soda in the Parking Lot

Short Documentary | Canada, 2023, 8 min.
United States Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Vulturine

What if every language that had been lost to English — every word, every syllable — grew up out of the ground in flowers? Taqralik Partridge’s grandmother’s Scottish Gaelic and her father’s Inuktitut unfold in memories of her family, of pain and of love.

Directed by: Megan Kyak Monteith and Taqralik Partridge



Gromonmon

Short Narrative | Réunion, 2022, 12 min.
United States Premiere

Réunion Creole with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 11am EDT
Perelman Theater

Program: Venerative

In Réunion, runaway slaves, gone to live free in the heights of the island, build a kingdom: the interior kingdom. In this place steeped in the invisible, they will enter into connection with Gromonmon.

Directed by: Laurent Pantaleon



Here, Hopefully

Short Documentary | USA, 2023, 11 min.
East Coast Premiere

Chinese and English with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Wednesday, August 2, 2pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Program: Caregivers

Zee, a nonbinary aspiring nurse from China, strives to build a gender-affirming life in rural Iowa. After graduating from nursing school, they work tirelessly to pass their licensure exam in hopes of obtaining a work visa.

Directed by: Hao Zhou



Honolulu

Short Narrative | USA, 2023, 15 min.
East Coast Premiere

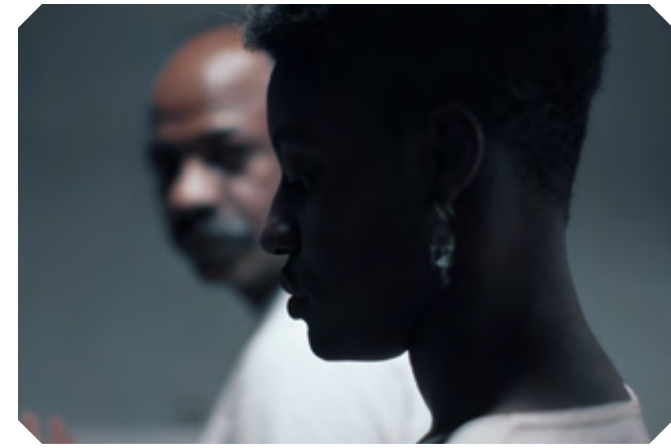
English

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Burgeon

Flaming lobsters and menstruation woes plague 12-year-old Yuki's doomed Hawai'ian beach vacation. As tensions boil over, she, her aloof father and her elegant grandmother battle bright red sunburns and the seemingly mundane family scuffles that manage to leave behind the deepest scars.

Directed by: Maya Tanaka



How to Breathe out of Water (Como Respirar Fora d'Água)

Short Narrative | Brazil, 2021, 17 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

Portuguese with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Burgeon

On the way back from swimming training, Janaina is violently approached by the police. Safe back at home, she must manage the relationship with her father, who is a policeman.

Directed by: Júlia Fávero and Victoria Negreiros



I Am More Dangerous Dead

Short Documentary | USA, Nigeria, United Kingdom, 2022, 24 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Vulturine

A poetic tribute to writer, poet and environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, who was executed alongside eight other activists for opposing the environmental damage done in their oil-rich homeland, Ogoni.

Directed by: Majiye Uchibeke



If Heaven Had Heights

Short Narrative | USA, 2023, 6 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 11am EDT
Perelman Theater

Program: Venerative

This short film accompanies an exhibit of paintings and drawings by the same title. These works are in conversation with ideas of hope and aspiration rarely considered on Black bodies. This series transposes the typically negative associations made of Black youthful dissidence into an examination of what is possible when we seek an alternative perspective.

Directed by: Dr. Fahamu Pecou,
Tremain Hamilton



Into the Violet Belly

Experimental | Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Malta, 2022, 19 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

Vietnamese, English and German with English subtitles

In-person screenings:
Friday, August 4, 3pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Sunday, August 6, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Matrilineage

Interweaving family lore, mythology, science fiction and digital abstraction, *Into the Violet Belly* captures the experimental collaboration between the artist and her mother, Thuyen Hoa, who survived a perilous sea journey while fleeing Vietnam after the end of the American War.

Directed by: Thuy-Han Nguyen-Chi in collaboration with Thuyen Hoa



Jonathan Thunder: Good Mythology

Short Documentary | USA, 2023, 14 min.
East Coast Festival Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Wednesday, August 2, 8pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Portraiture

Filmmaker Sergio Rapu follows Anishinaabe artist Jonathan Thunder as he dives deep into the inspirations behind his surrealist paintings and animations. From the killing of an iconic American hero to critical perspectives of how Indigenous people were portrayed in early children's cartoons, Thunder's art prompts viewers to take a critical look at our shared mythologies.

Directed by: Sergio Mata'u Rapu



Keeping Time

Short Narrative | USA, 2023, 33 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 11:30am EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Saturday, August 5, 6pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Doxology

A meditation on what it means to maintain continuity with the past — told through the kaleidoscopic journey of a young drummer who must learn how to guide a multigenerational band into the future after being named their new bandleader.

Directed by: Darol Olu Kae



The Last British Colony in Africa

Short Documentary | Mauritius, United Kingdom, South Africa, 2023, 19 min.
North America Festival Premiere

English and Creole with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Vulturine

In the 1960s and '70s, the U.K. forced the entire Chagossian population off their homeland so the U.S. could build a military base on the island of Diego Garcia. This film sheds a light on the human rights abuses Chagossians have suffered and their ongoing campaign for their right to return to their homeland.

Directed by: Ellianne Baptiste and Sarah Grile



Living Proof

Short Narrative | USA, 2022, 9 min.
United States Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Perturbed

On the night of the biggest live performance of his life, The Queen of the Castro succumbs to an acid trip that may derail everything he worked so hard for.

Directed by: Tina Farris



Look Back at It

Short Narrative | USA, 2022, 12 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Saturday, August 5, 12pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Synergistic

A 40-something single mother gets her groove back with a little assistance from her teenage daughter.

Directed by: Felicia Pride



Mai Jeroum

Short Narrative | United Kingdom, 2022, 15 min.
East Coast Premiere

English and Jamaican Patois

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Perturbed

On the morning of, Bev and her family anticipated the verdict of her son's trial.

Directed by: Adjani Salmon



Mirasol

Short Narrative | USA, 2023, 9 min.
East Coast Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Saturday, August 5, 12pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Synergistic

Mirasol lives a monotonous and somewhat lonely life on a farm with her mother and grandmother. One day out gardening, she finds a seedling growing in a puddle outside. She takes care of it in secret, eventually getting the courage to show her mother what she's been working on.

Directed by: Annalise Lockhart



MnM

Short Documentary | USA, 2023, 15 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Saturday, August 5, 12pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Synergistic

MnM is an exuberant portrait of chosen sisters Mermaid and Milan, two emerging runway divas in the drag ballroom community. Celebrating their joy, siblinghood and unapologetic personas, the film explores the power and beauty of being nonbinary in a community that prizes gender "realness."

Directed by: Twiggy Pucci Garçon



Mother Just a Smile (Mama dan so que Sorriso)

Short Documentary | Cameroon, Portugal, Hungary, Belgium, 2022, 18 min.
North America Premiere

Creole and Portuguese with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Wednesday, August 2, 6pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Posthumous

In order to grieve and properly say goodbye to her loved ones, Isabel Cardoso decides to share certain key moments of her life with her late mother. This is a mother-daughter relationship transcending space, time and dimension while highlighting Black womanhood and struggle in Portugal.

Directed by: Cyrielle Raingou



Negra, Yo Soy Bella

Short Documentary | USA, 2023, 18 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

Spanish and English with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Wednesday, August 2, 8pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Portraiture

Negra, Yo Soy Bella is a portrait of Mar Cruz, an Afro-Puerto Rican woman who sources strength, healing and Black pride through the tradition of Bomba.

Directed by: Vashni Korin



Oba

Short Narrative | United Kingdom, 2022,
11 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 11am EDT
Perelman Theater

Program: Venerative

In a reimagined future, the king of a Nigerian village passes. The kingmakers consult with traditional gods, and Ayo, an unsuspecting young man from Southeast London, is selected as the new Oba. Ayo is plunged into a surreal journey of reconnection and discovery as he ascends to the throne.

Directed by: Femi Ladi



Over the Wall

Short Documentary | USA, 2023, 18 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Saturday, August 5, 11am EDT
Perelman Theater

Program: Let the Games Begin!

Nine seconds — it's about all you have. Welcome to the fast-paced world of a NASCAR pit crew. *Over the Wall* is an immersive film following Brehanna Daniels, the first Black woman pit crew member and tire changer in NASCAR, as she works her way back from injury to participate in the Daytona 500, the biggest race in the sport. A testament to the power of perseverance and what it takes to be a trailblazer.

Directed by: Krystal Tingle



Pacific Club

Experimental | France, Qatar, 2023, 16 min.
North America Premiere

French with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Kleptocene

In 1979, the Pacific Club opened in the basement of La Défense, the business district of Paris. It was the first nightclub for Arabs from the suburbs. Azedine, 17 years old at the time, tells us the forgotten story of this club and of this generation who dreamed of integrating into France.

Directed by: Valentin Noujaim



Pandemic Bread

Short Narrative | USA, 2023, 23 min.
East Coast Premiere

English and Tagalog with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Wednesday, August 2, 2pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Program: Caregivers

The story of a Filipina interpreter as she works with an African immigrant doctor to converse with an elderly Filipina patient in the hospital in the ICU with COVID-19. The film features the performances of Princess Punzalan, Claire Simba and Becca Godinez — a story of agency, resilience and hope.

Directed by: Zeinabu irene Davis



Quiet as It's Kept

Experimental | USA, 2023, 26 min.
World Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Saturday, August 3, 8:30pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Sunday, August 6, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Critical Reflections

Quiet as It's Kept is a contemporary cinematic response to *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison's first novel, published in 1970. Set in Ohio in 1941, the book is an evocative illustration of the everyday particulars of colorism and its ravaging effects on the intramural.

Directed by: Ja'Tovia Gary



Rest Stop

Short Narrative | USA, 2022, 12 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English and Luganda with English subtitles

In-person screenings:
Thursday, August 3, 3pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Sunday, August 6, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Progeny

On a bus ride from New York to Oklahoma, Meyi, a young Ugandan-American girl, realizes her place in the world through her mother's ambitious effort to reunite their family.

Directed by: Crystal Kayiza



The Script

Short Documentary | USA, 2023, 15 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Wednesday, August 2, 2pm EDT
Perelman Theater

Program: Caregivers

Blending personal interviews with dramatized genre recreations, *The Script* explores the complicated relationship between trans and nonbinary communities and medical providers regarding gender-affirming care.

Directed by: Brit Fryer and Noah Schamus



Sèt Lam

Short Narrative | France, 2022, 23 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

Réunion Creole with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Wednesday, August 2, 6pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Posthumous

In an insular city's ghetto, in the midst of a trance ritual, a young girl is paralyzed by fear. She is afraid her loved ones may be hurt or even disappear. It is then that her grandmother tells her the strange tale of Edwardo, the first one of his kin to have seen and fought death.

Directed by: Vincent Fontano



Sol in the Garden

Short Documentary | USA, 2023, 21 min.
East Coast Premiere

English and Spanish with English subtitles

In-person screenings:
Thursday, August 3, 11am EDT
Perelman Theater

Saturday, August 5, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Transmogrify

A formerly incarcerated woman catches the sun as she nourishes a garden with her new community.

Directed by: Emily Cohen Ibañez and
Débora Souza Silva



Spirit Emulsion

Experimental | Canada, 2022, 8 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English and Hiwatahia/Taíno with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Wednesday, August 2, 6pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Posthumous

A connection to the filmmaker's mother in the spirit world activates Taíno culture and presence, revealing a realm unseen. Super 8 film developed with plant medicines connect earth to cosmos as flowers portray family love and ancestral sovereignty extending into the future.

Directed by: Siku Allooooloo



Sundown Road

Short Narrative | USA, 2022, 20 min.
World Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Perturbed

When three college students get stuck on an isolated road, they soon find themselves in all too familiar territory.

Directed by: M. Asli Dukan



Sweatshop Girl (Chica de Fábrica)

Short Narrative | Mexico, 2022, 16 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

Spanish with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Perturbed

Inés works as a seamstress in a sweatshop where pregnancy tests are periodically administered. When she becomes pregnant, she is sure that her condition will get her fired. She does everything she can to keep it a secret.

Directed by: Selma Cervantes



Sweet Refuge

Short Narrative | USA, 2022, 12 min.
East Coast Premiere

English and Arabic with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 8pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Interpersonal

A passionate Syrian baker spends his first Eid in the U.S. attempting to sell the sweet he's spent his lifetime perfecting: walnut baklava. As he roams the streets of Brooklyn, he bumps into a savvy Indian laddoo maker who's figured out how to appeal to one of New York's health-conscious Brooklynites.

Directed by: Maryam Mir



Sydney G. James: How We See Us

Short Documentary | USA, 2022, 16 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Wednesday, August 2, 8pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Portraiture

Visual artist/muralist Sydney G. James draws inspiration from her hometown of Detroit as she addresses the status of Black women in society, police brutality, family and community through bold brushstrokes and hues that evoke the complexities of Black reality, joy, pain and resilience.

Directed by: Juanita Anderson



Team Dream

Short Documentary | USA, 2022, 18 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Wednesday, August 2, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Saturday, August 5, 12pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Synergistic

Team Dream follows friends and competitive swimmers Ann and Madeline on their journey to the National Senior Games, where nothing — not age, race or history — will stand in their way.

Directed by: Luchina Fisher



Tierra en Trance

Experimental | Mexico, 2022, 38 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

No Dialogue

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Earth Songs

These are the dancing bodies in an agitated rapture: prelude to trance, invocation of the gods, consecration of intermittence. Here our point of view sparkles under the spell and trance of things gathered, fallen, yielding, pluvial, Mesoamerican wind, goddess breath, percussive woods.

Directed by: Colectivo Los Ingrávidos



The Truth About Alvert, the Last Dodo (La Vérité sur Alvert, le Dernier Dodo)

Short Narrative | Switzerland, Réunion, 2022, 15 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

Réunion Creole with English subtitles

In-person screenings:
Thursday, August 3, 3pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Sunday, August 6, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Progeny

On Réunion Island, little Lunet and his grandfather Dadabé set out on a quest to turn a chicken into a dodo bird, whose magic feathers might save the sick mother of the kid.

Directed by: Nathan Clement



The Vacation

Short Narrative | USA, 2022, 10 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Saturday, August 5, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Perturbed

A group of friends attempt to take a trip to the beach on the last day of summer — but when their car won't stop, they are forced to take their vacation in their car.

Directed by: Jarreau Carrillo



We Are Griots (Nous les Griots)

Short Narrative | France, 2023, 17 min.
United States Premiere

French and Soninke with English subtitles

In-person screenings:
Thursday, August 3, 3pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Sunday, August 6, 2:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Progeny

Daouda is a father from Senegal living in France. Malik, his son, wants to marry Mariama. A meeting between the families is organized around a meal. Daouda discovers that the families are from two different social castes: his is griot, and the other family's is noble.

Directed by: Demba Konate



We Were Meant to

Short Narrative | USA, 2022, 27 min.
Philadelphia Premiere

English

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 12pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Program: Burgeon

In a world where Black men have wings and their first flight is a rite of passage, Akil must defy fears, insecurities and societal barriers while discovering his perfect launch into manhood.

Directed by: Tari Wariebi



Wetlands of Our Mother's Tongues in Concrete

Experimental | USA, 2023, 11 min.
World Premiere

English

In-person screenings:
Friday, August 4, 3pm EDT
Lightbox Film Center

Sunday, August 6, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Matrilineage

Wetlands of Our Mother's Tongues in Concrete is an experimental film that explores the notions of transness, motherhood and healing. The speaker(s) find themselves dispersed between the channels of the ocean and fragments of memory as they dig into their family histories.

Directed by: Jordan Deal



What the Soil Remembers

Short Documentary | Ecuador, South Africa, 2023, 29 min.
North America Premiere

English, Afrikaans and Xhosa with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Thursday, August 3, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Kleptocene

A vibrant and diverse community flourished in the fertile South African lands. Today its elders tell the story of how their people were uprooted from neighboring lands and thrown into deserted areas; the suffering separation left scars but never transformed them into individualistic beings.

Directed by: José Cardoso



The Wind Carries Us Home (Нутгийн Салхи)

Experimental | Mongolia, USA, 2022, 11 min.
East Coast Premiere

Mongolian with English subtitles

In-person screening:
Friday, August 4, 5:30pm EDT
Suzanne Roberts Theatre

Program: Earth Songs

Through rituals of birth and death, the filmmaker and her family reconnect with their ancestral land in the Gobi Desert.

Directed by: Udval Altangerel

Jury Award Nominees

Best Feature Documentary

Above and Below the Ground
dir. Emily Hong

Dancing the Stumble
dir. Wally Fall

Fire Through Dry Grass
dirs. Andres "Jay" Molina and Alexis Neophytides

La Lucha
dir. Violeta Ayala

Best Short Documentary

The Alexander Ball
dir. Jessica Magro

A Bear Named Jesus
dir. Terril Calder

Black Girls Play: The Story of Hand Games
dirs. Joe Brewster and Michèle Stephenson

Bone Black: Midwives vs. the South
dir. Imani Nikyah Dennison

The Script
dirs. Brit Fryer and Noah Schamus

Best Feature Narrative

Girl
dir. Adura Onashile

Mountains
dir. Monica Sorelle

A Place of Our Own
dir. Ektara Collective

Best Short Narrative

Mirasol
dir. Annalise Lockhart

Pandemic Bread
dir. Zeinabu irene Davis

Sèt Lam
dir. Vincent Fontano

The Truth About Alvert, the Last Dodo
dir. Nathan Clement

We Are Griots
dir. Demba Konate

Best Experimental Film

Before I Let Go
dir. Cameron A. Granger

Into the Violet Belly
dir. Thuy-Han Nguyen-Chi in collaboration with Thuyen Hoa

Is My Living in Vain
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The Last British Colony in Africa
Mai Jeroum
Oba
The Taste of Mango

United States

Accidental Athlete
All That's Left
Amina
Ampe: Leap Into the Sky Black Girl
August Visitor
The Aunties
Before I Let Go
Beneath the Surface
Birthing a Nation: The
Resistance of Mary Gaffney
Black Girls Play: The Story
of Hand Games
Black Santa
Bone Black: Midwives vs. the South
Companion
Dau:añcut // Moving Along Image
The Difference Between Us
Ebony
An Endoscopy
Fierceness Served! The ENIKAlley
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Gaps
Going to Mars: The
Nikki Giovanni Project
Goodbye, Morganza
Here, Hopefully
Honolulu
I Am More Dangerous Dead
If Heaven Had Heights
Invisible Beauty
It Lives Inside
Jonathan Thunder:
Good Mythology
Keeping Time
Know Your Place
Living Proof
Look Back at It

Mirasol
MnM
Mountains
Negra, Yo Soy Bella
Over the Wall
Pandemic Bread
Quiet as It's Kept
Rest Stop
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Sol in the Garden
Sound of the Police
The Space Race
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In-Person Schedule

Venue Key:

LFC — Lightbox Film Center
SRT — Suzanne Roberts Theatre
KCCC — Perelman Theater at Kimmel Center Cultural Campus

Wednesday
August 2

Conversations With Ruth de Souza
11am @ KCCC

Doxology (shorts)
11:30am @ SRT

Synergistic (shorts)
12pm @ LFC

Caregivers (shorts)
2pm @ KCCC

Coconut Head Generation
2:30pm @ SRT

The Space Race
3pm @ LFC

Invisible Beauty
5pm @ KCCC

Let the Games Begin (shorts)
5:30pm @ SRT

Posthumous (shorts)
6pm @ LFC

Portraiture (shorts)
8pm @ SRT

Girl
8:30pm @ KCCC

Opening Night Party
9pm

Thursday
August 3

Transmogrify (shorts)
11am @ KCCC

The Taste of Mango
11:30am @ SRT

Burgeon (shorts)
12pm @ LFC

Between the Colony and the Stars
2pm @ KCCC

Vulturine (shorts)
2:30pm @ SRT

Progeny (shorts)
3pm @ LFC

Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project
5pm @ KCCC

Kleptocene (shorts)
5:30pm @ SRT

This Place
6pm @ LFC

Know Your Place
8pm @ SRT

La Lucha
8:30pm @ KCCC

Friday
August 4

Yoga
9am @ KCCC

Venerative (shorts)
11am @ KCCC

Money, Freedom, a Story of the CFA Franc
11:30am @ SRT

Still We Rise
12pm @ LFC

Gaining Ground: The Fight for Black Land
2pm @ KCCC

Mafifa
2:30pm @ SRT

Matrilineage (shorts)
3pm @ LFC

Sound of The Police
5pm @ KCCC

Earth Songs (shorts)
5:30pm @ SRT

A Place of Our Own
6pm @ LFC

First Friday @ The Barnes (live music)
6pm

It Lives Inside
8pm @ SRT

Dancing the Stumble
8:30pm @ KCCC

Saturday
August 5

Yoga
9am @ KCCC

Let the Games Begin (shorts)
11am @ KCCC

Bazaar
11am @ SRT

Synergistic (shorts)
11:30am @ SRT

Transmogrify (shorts)
12pm @ LFC

Above and Below the Ground
2pm @ KCCC

Perturbed (shorts)
2:30pm @ SRT

Foragers
3pm @ LFC

Fire Through Dry Grass
5pm @ KCCC

All the Colours of the World Are Between Black and White
5:30pm @ SRT

Doxology (shorts)
6pm @ LFC

Interpersonal (shorts)
8pm @ SRT

Critical Reflections (shorts)
8:30pm @ KCCC

Sunday
August 7

Yoga
9am @ KCCC

unseen
11am @ KCCC

Critical Reflections (shorts)
12pm @ LFC

The Space Race
2pm @ KCCC

Progeny (shorts)
2:30pm @ SRT

Girl
3pm @ LFC

Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project
5pm @ KCCC

Matrilineage (shorts)
5:30pm @ SRT

Conversations With Ruth de Souza
6pm @ LFC

Invisible Beauty
8pm @ SRT

Mountains
8:30pm @ KCCC

Closing Night Party
9pm

Philadelphia Filmmaker Lab

About

BlackStar is proud to present the 2023 Philadelphia Filmmaker Lab, an opportunity designed to uplift emerging and mid-career artists in the greater Philadelphia area. BlackStar serves as an executive producer, identifying mentors, instructors and collaborators while providing feedback on works-in-progress, advice for working with crew, marketing support and distribution strategy. Xfinity provided a major portion of the funding for production. The films will have their world premiere at this year's BlackStar Film Festival and will be featured on the Black Experience on Xfinity channel, a first-of-its-kind destination of Black entertainment, movies, TV shows, news and more.

The 2023 Philadelphia Filmmaker Lab directing fellows are **David A. Gaines**, **Simone Holland**, and **Zardosht Afshari**. The 2023 producing fellows are **Aaron Brokenbough Jr.**, **Elizah Turner**, **Samiyah Wardlaw** and **Stephanie Malson**.

The 2023 BlackStar Philadelphia Filmmaker Lab is presented by Xfinity, with additional support from All Ages Productions, William Penn Foundation, Independence Public Media Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, Gucci Changemakers Fund, Seven Knots Productions and Expressway Cinema Rentals.

Fellows

Aaron Brokenbough – Producer

Aaron Brokenbough is a Philadelphia-based filmmaker with over 12 years of production experience. Aaron has worked with multiple award-winning directors, writers, artists and multimedia creatives. Getting his start in community-based media, he started producing for the YouTube channel Entertainment Buffet before producing art installations. He is the co-founder and producer for SlyTree Creative, a content-focused brand-building experience.

David A. Gaines – Director

David A. Gaines (he/they) is a Black writer, filmmaker and performer born and raised in the greater Philadelphia area. His work examines Blackness, masculinity, Christianity and mental health through an intersectional lens and seeks to strengthen community through vulnerable self-expression. He is an award-winning, nationally touring poet and fellow of The Watering Hole who holds several slam poetry championship titles, including 2017 College Unions Poetry Slam Invitational Champion and fourth rank in the 2018 Individual World Poetry Slam. In 2020, he was inaugurated as the Poet Laureate of Pennsylvania's Montgomery County. In 2021, David published his first collection of poems, *soft boy*, and his directorial debut poetry short film, *fine china*, received international acclaim and won the fifth

Weimar Poetry Film Award. His work has also been featured in the National Black Arts Festival, Button Poetry, Write About Now and VICE Media, among many others. When not writing, performing or fiddling with cameras, David can be found teaching poetry to Philly youth, playing video games on his PC and searching for the best homemade pickle recipe.

Elizah Turner – Producer

Elizah Turner began her journey as a unit still photographer on non-union film sets during the off season from the music touring industry. Fascinated with the overlap of the two worlds, she has since worked in various roles providing both creative and technical production for nonprofits, production companies, musical artists and political campaigns. The steps in her career path have varied but all have one thing in common: supporting creatives to create systems and processes in the midst of chaos. Elizah's focus in the film world is centered around highlighting stories told by writers and directors through a Black feminist lens. Her north star is equally invested in work that restructures the entertainment industry to empower and earnestly engage with artists of the global majority and the power of culture.

Samiyah Wardlaw – Producer

Samiyah Wardlaw is an independent filmmaker passionate about producing diverse, innovative and unique projects. A Philadelphia native, she graduated from Drexel University with a BS in film and television. With experience on both indie and commercial sets, Samiyah has ample experience as a producer, assistant director and production coordinator. She has produced several short films and recently directed and produced her debut feature film, *Burn Out*, which is currently in post-production.

Simone Holland – Director

With their storytelling grounded in reality, Simone uses subtle surrealism as her lens. They've worked as director and cinematographer on projects

for Red Bull, Jazmine Sullivan, Bustle, Tone Stith and Jamila Woods, and was a part of the creative direction team for the 2021 BET Awards. Simone focuses on amplifying the voices of those who do not have the space. As a 2021 Emmy Award-winning camera operator and a 2019 Mural Arts Philadelphia Black Artists fellow, Simone continues to push boundaries. Cross-pollinating her creative versatility, Simone applies her multidisciplinary technical experience to her directorial and creative work as a current resident of the 2022 ROTATE program at YouTube and Wieden + Kennedy.

Stephanie Malson – Producer

Stephanie Malson is a multi-hyphenate filmmaker and producer who is drawn to telling ancestral stories. Her recent short film, *Slow Burn*, was an official selection of the Gary International Black Film Festival and the Baltimore International Black Film Festival. She produced the festival gem *Ourika!*, which premiered at the 2022 BlackStar Film Festival. She is a co-producer on the upcoming feature documentary *Ulrick*, which chronicles the life of Haitian master painter Ulrick Jean-Pierre. Her cinematography is featured in the short experimental film *We Are Free Because of Harriet Tubman*, which was an official selection of the 2021 BlackStar Film Festival. Among many work-for-hire projects, she has produced work for Intercultural Journeys, The Debbie Allen Dance Academy and ARRAY. She also teaches script writing part time at Temple University. Stephanie holds an MFA in creative writing from Rosemont College.

Zardosht Afshari – Director

Zardosht Afshari is an Iranian filmmaker whose work has screened in international film festivals in the U.S., Iran, Poland, Croatia, India and Italy. He received his MA in dramatic literature from the University of Tehran in Iran and his MFA in media arts from Temple University after moving to the United States in 2019. He currently teaches film courses at Temple University while working on various film projects.

Philadelphia Filmmaker Lab

Films

All That's Left

Through their film, director Simone Holland and producer Stephanie Malson will tell the story of Mercedes, who struggles to differentiate reality from her imagination as she embarks upon a journey of self-exploration and relationships.

An Endoscopy

In director Zardosht Afshari and producer Aaron Brokenbough Jr.'s forthcoming project, a film student accompanies a newcomer Iraqi student for a medical procedure, with the agreement that he will be her subject in a documentary.

The Freedom to Fall Apart

Directed by David Gaines and produced by Elizah Turner, the short will comprise an anthology of four disparate vignettes together questioning the function of shame within the Black American body politic.



2023 BlackStar Film Festival T-Shirt

2023 Festival Merchandise

Shop merchandise from the 2023 BlackStar Film Festival in person at the Kimmel Center or online at blackstarfest.org/shop

Tickets & Admission

All passes and tickets can be purchased at blackstarfest.org/tickets.

Passes

\$350: All-access pass

- Admission to all in-person and virtual screenings
- Admission to all in-person events, including First Friday! at the Barnes Foundation

\$175: Virtual pass

- Admission to all virtual screenings
- Admission to all virtual events

Tickets:

\$7.50: Virtual Screening Ticket

\$18: In-person Screening Ticket

*All festival venues are wheelchair accessible. If you need accommodation or have any questions about accessibility, please contact Akili Davis at akili@blackstarfest.org.

Virtual Film Screenings:

Virtual screenings for passholders and individual ticket holders will be released and available on a timed schedule. You can unlock the film screening within 48 hours of its release, and you have 24 hours from the moment you unlock it to finish watching the film.

All films and virtual events can be viewed at watch.blackstarfest.org.

If you have any trouble using the ticketing system or technical issues with your screenings, please visit watch.blackstarfest.org/help.

ACCESS Cardholders:

BlackStar is offering Pennsylvania and Art-Reach ACCESS cardholders individual tickets to virtual and in-person screenings for \$2.00. To receive the discount, use the code "ACCAR23" at checkout when purchasing an individual ticket. When arriving at an in-person event, you may be asked to present your ACCESS card at entry.

COVID-19 Safety Protocols:

We would all like to do our part to keep our community safe and healthy. Wearing masks is mandatory at all indoor venues, except briefly when eating and drinking; please be mindful of others and keep a distance. Mask wearing during outdoor events is optional but encouraged.

Membership



Help BlackStar shine!

BlackStar is able to mobilize the resources Black, Brown and Indigenous artists need to thrive because of the financial support of our members. Every time we create something, we're not solely event-producing or project-managing; we're weaving together connections between individuals and organizations and building the world we envision. Co-create that vision with us by becoming a BlackStar member through a financial contribution.

An annual BlackStar membership includes access to members-only events; waived festival submission fees; discounts on merchandise, tickets and passes; subscription to our journal *Seen*; and other year-round benefits. Contributors receive additional perks by tier, including discounts and invitations to exclusive events. Learn more at blackstarfest.org/support and join today!

For More Information

If you are interested in discussing a significant and/or multi-year gift, please contact Sara Zia Ebrahimi, Chief Operations Officer, at sarazia@blackstarfest.org.

Membership Tiers

Luminary — \$1000+

All the perks of the Star tier plus:

- Complimentary registration for BlackStar's William and Louise Greaves Filmmaker Seminar
- Gift of exclusive BlackStar merchandise item

Star — \$500+

All the perks of the Shine tier plus:

- All-access pass to BlackStar Film Festival

Shine — \$100+

All the perks of the Sparkle tier plus:

- Priority registration period for BlackStar Film Festival and other select events
- Voting privileges for exclusive member award at the festival
- Free admission to members-only artist talks and other year-round events
- Annual *Seen* print + digital subscriptions
- Program guide mailing in advance of the festival

Sparkle — \$25+

- Fee waived on film submissions to BlackStar Film Festival
- 10% off all BlackStar merchandise
- Special offers and discounts to in-person and virtual events
- Annual *Seen* digital subscription

Sponsors

Gold



Silver



Bronze



Brass



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