

GENE SISKEL FILM CENTER

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**GENE SISKEL FILM CENTER
OF THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO
ANNOUNCES THE FULL PROGRAM FOR THE
29TH ANNUAL BLACK HARVEST FILM FESTIVAL**

**Featuring a John Singleton Retrospective with Justice Singleton in person;
Cord Jefferson's satirical comedy *AMERICAN FICTION*; *BLACK BARBIE:
THE DOCUMENTARY*; *MAXINE'S BABY: THE TYLER PERRY STORY*; and
more**

Member tickets & festival passes on sale now!

CHICAGO, October 11, 2023—The School of the Art Institute of Chicago's Gene Siskel Film Center is pleased to announce the **complete festival program and schedule** for its **29th Annual Black Harvest Film Festival**. This highly anticipated event will take place in person at the Gene Siskel Film Center from **Friday, November 3, through Thursday, November 16**. The 29th Black Harvest Film Festival proudly showcases **20 feature films, 10 short film programs,**

special presentations and engaging discussions, in addition to a heartfelt tribute to the visionary director **John Singleton**. The festival will facilitate Q&A sessions, celebrations and special events, with star appearances and special guests including directors, cast members and a vibrant community of Black filmmakers and enthusiasts.

The 29th Annual Black Harvest Film Festival celebrates “**Revolutionary Visions**,” the history, politics and art honoring the remarkable legacy of revolutionary struggle across the Diaspora and the Black experience worldwide.

In recognition of the significant contributions of the late **Sergio Mims** (*Sunrise and Sunset 1955-2022*), cofounder of the Black Harvest Film Festival, this year’s festival pays homage to his legacy as a visionary and film pioneer. Twenty-nine years after he first envisioned Black Harvest, his unwavering dedication to Black uplift and the Black cinema community has left an indelible mark. The festival stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of Black visionaries and the timeless wellspring of Black creativity that resonates across generations.

“It brings me immense joy and honor to serve as lead curator for the 29th Annual Black Harvest Film Festival, a stunning celebration of ‘Revolutionary Visions.’ Together, we bear witness, testifying on each other’s behalf, seeing one another, recognizing that our shared history tethers our futures,” said **Black Harvest Film Festival Lead Curator Jada-Amina Harvey**.

Black Harvest Film Festival Highlights

- **Opening Night, November 3:** NBC Chicago entertainment reporter LeeAnn Trotter will emcee the night, presiding over a showcase of select Black Harvest Film Festival short films and the announcement of the winners of The Richard and Ellen Sandor Family Black Harvest Film Festival Prize. This year marks the sixth year that a \$1,000 prize will be awarded to a short film, and the third year a \$2,500 prize will honor a feature film. The Black Harvest Film Festival jury, featuring the esteemed Maya S. Cade, Justice Singleton and Paige Taul, will grace the occasion to announce the Sandor Prize winners. Following the program, attendees are cordially invited to a reception in the lobby.
- **John Singleton Retrospective:** John Singleton’s cinematic legacy will be honored with a five-film retrospective. Filmmaker, scholar and poet Justice Singleton, son of the late John Singleton, will join for an engaging in-person discussion.
- **Chicago Premiere of *MAXINE’S BABY: THE TYLER PERRY STORY*:** The festival will conclude on November 16 with the Chicago premiere of *MAXINE’S BABY: THE TYLER PERRY STORY*, a tender and intimate portrait of the billionaire writer, actor, filmmaker, studio head and media mogul, with directors Gelila Bekele and Armani Ortiz in person.
- **Special Presentation of Cord Jefferson’s *AMERICAN FICTION*:** A special presentation of Cord Jefferson’s satirical comedy *AMERICAN FICTION*, based on Percival Everett’s 2001 novel *Erasure*, starring Jeffrey Wright, Tracee Ellis Ross, Issa

Rae, Adam Brody, Erika Alexander, and Leslie Uggams.

- **Chicago Premiere of *BLACK BARBIE: THE DOCUMENTARY*:** The Chicago premiere of Lagueria Davis's documentary *BLACK BARBIE: THE DOCUMENTARY*, capturing the profound impact of Black Barbies on girls, followed by a virtual director Q&A.
- **Screening of *SYMBOL OF THE UNCONQUERED*:** A special screening of Oscar Micheaux's timeless 1920 silent film *SYMBOL OF THE UNCONQUERED*, accompanied by a live, improvised electronic music score performed by the talented trio of saxophonist Edward Wilkerson and guitarists Jeff Parker and Jonathan Woods.
- **Homegrown Stories:** The Black Harvest Film Festival will proudly showcase several homegrown stories, including:
 - Two collections of locally made short films
 - ***NO COP ACADEMY: A DOCUMENTARY***, Caullen Hudson's chronicle of the city of Chicago's plan to build a state-of-the-art "cop academy"
 - ***KINKY AND LOVING IT***, David Weathersby's empowering documentary highlighting the transformative potential of reclamation, plus a post-screening kink vendor fair and reception

Tickets and Passes

Festival passes and individual member tickets for the Black Harvest Film Festival are [available for purchase](#). Tickets will be available to the general public on Friday, October 13.

- Tickets are \$13, with Film Center members paying only \$6.50 per ticket.
- Students with a valid school ID pay \$8.
- SAIC students, staff and faculty pay \$5 for regular film presentations.

Black Harvest Film Festival passes are \$60 and can be redeemed for six regular film presentations (excluding Opening Night). Film Center members will pay only \$30 for the six-film festival pass.

Opening Night tickets are \$40 (general audience), \$35 for students and \$25 for Film Center members and SAIC staff, students and faculty.

Full Program

Showtimes and guest appearances are subject to change.



FEATURE FILMS

Find feature film stills [here](#).

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4 (11:45am) & TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7 (5:45pm)

GAINING GROUND: THE FIGHT FOR BLACK LAND

2023, dir. Eternal Polk

USA, 96 min.

In English / Format: Digital

In the wake of emancipation, many Black Americans reclaimed their ancestral soil, amassing acres of land. Yet, with nearly 90% of that land lost, there is little to show for it. In *GAINING GROUND: THE FIGHT FOR BLACK LAND*, executive produced by Al Roker, systemic forces that relentlessly wage war on Black liberation are unveiled. Cheer on Black landowners as they reclaim their heritage, generational wealth and birthrights.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4 (2:30pm) & SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11 (6:30pm)

NINE DIVINE

2023, dir. Jurian Isabelle

USA, 95 min.

In English / Format: Digital

We embark on a journey with a tween navigating the foster care system, discovering her inner magic as her art becomes a refuge from a painful past. When her brother vanishes, her intuitions strengthen, leaving her to wonder if she's losing her mind or finding her purpose in a world designed for her demise. As she races toward destiny, she embarks on a journey of self-discovery, an embodiment of #BlackGirlMagic within the reveries of Black girlhood.

Director Jurian Isabelle scheduled to attend.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4 (7:15pm) & WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8 (8:30pm)

BAD LIKE BROOKLYN DANCEHALL

2023, dirs. Ben Di Giacomo, Dutty Vannier

USA, Jamaica, 90 min.

In English / Format: Digital

With electrifying rhythms and lyrical mastery, dancehall music ignited Brooklyn's alternative scene in the 80s and 90s. Young Jamaican immigrants carrying their homeland's sonic traditions sparked this cultural phenomenon. Executive produced by Shaggy, director Ben DiGiacomo's debut documentary explores the genre's evolution within New York City's vast soundscape, paying homage to the trailblazers and lovers of dancehall and inviting everyone to join the vibrant "dutty" oasis where being bad gets good.

Director Ben DiGiacomo and producer Amy DiGiacomo scheduled to attend November 4.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 (12:30pm) & FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10 (6:00pm)

BETYE SAAR: READY TO BE A WARRIOR

2023, dir. Angela Robinson Witherspoon

USA, 78 min.

In English / Format: Digital

Wielding a paintbrush, Betye Saar steadfastly forges her own path with the mantra "Make Better Art." Her unwavering determination disrupted art conventions, paving the way for experimentation and conceptualism, ultimately sparking the Black women's movement. Now in her 90s, this icon from the L.A. neighborhood of Watts is documented in this vivid portrait of her remarkable ascent in the art world and how she continues to carve an indelible mark in history.

Producer Abdul Malik Abbott scheduled to attend.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 (12:45pm) & SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 (6:00pm)

NO COP ACADEMY: THE DOCUMENTARY

2023, dir. Caullen Hudson

USA, 69 min.

In English / Format: Digital

As the city of Chicago devised a plan to invest \$95 million into a state-of-the-art "Cop Academy," youth took to the streets in protest of the burgeoning police state. This urgent call to action captures the heartbeat of Chicago's grassroots political prowess, led by a chorus of the city's revolutionary youth and their communities. *Presented with open captions.*

Members of the filmmaking team scheduled to attend November 5; director Caullen Hudson scheduled to attend November 12.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 (2:30pm) & SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 (2:15pm)

SUMMER OF VIOLENCE

2023, dir. Nicki Micheaux

USA, 111 min.

In English / Format: Digital

In the summer of 1993, a young law student defies her father's wishes and chooses poetry over jurisprudence. Amidst the backdrop of escalating gang violence and family estrangement, she

wields the power of her words to unite her community. Yet when tragedy claims a loved one, she is compelled to embark on a journey of reconciliation with her family—a poignant testament to the healing balm of poetic justice.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 (7:00pm) & MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6 (8:30pm)

HOW I LEARNED TO FLY

2023, dir. Simon Steuri

USA, 104 min.

In English / Format: Digital

Two Black teenage boys come face to face with uncertainty when they find themselves mysteriously abandoned by their parents. As they embark on a journey of survival and self-discovery, they uncover moments of beauty, newfound meaning and a love that endures. This poignant story highlights the strength and determination of Black boyhood despite profound adversity.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6 (6:15pm)

AMERICAN FICTION

2023, dir. Cord Jefferson

USA, 117 min.

In English / Format: Digital

AMERICAN FICTION is Cord Jefferson's hilarious directorial debut, which confronts our culture's obsession with reducing people to outrageous stereotypes. Jeffrey Wright stars as Monk, a frustrated novelist who's fed up with the establishment profiting from "Black" entertainment that relies on tired and offensive tropes. To prove his point, Monk uses a pen name to write an outlandish "Black" book of his own, a book that propels him to the heart of hypocrisy and the madness he claims to disdain. (MGM)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8 (6:00pm) & SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11 (4:45pm)

KINKY AND LOVING IT

2023, dirs. David Weathersby, Mr. Scott

USA, 44 min.

In English / Format: Digital

KINKY AND LOVING IT is an empowering documentary highlighting the transformative potential of reclamation. Celebrating how Black folks reclaim agency over their desires, bodies and identities, *KINKY AND LOVING IT* is a liberating journey into the transformative power of radical acceptance, reclamation and love within the world of Black kink.

Director David Weathersby scheduled to attend.

Tickets to November 8 screening include a post-screening kink vendor fair and reception.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8 (7:45pm) & WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15 (8:15pm)

HOMESHOPPERS' PARADISE

2022, dir. Nancy Mac Granaky-Quaye

Germany, 90 min.

In German with English subtitles / Format: Digital

In the heart of the trailer park, Lisa, a Black punk, fights to protect her community from corporate vultures. Her overnight transformation to a home-shopping channel television host thrusts her into a fateful reunion with her estranged father, who shares her precarious on-screen stage. Their fiery partnership illuminates the exploitation of corporate interests, a revelation that piques suspicion from the network's manager. As the truth unfurls, Lisa and her comrades unearth the enigma of her double consciousness, forging a collective fight to protect all they hold dear.
Director Nancy Mac Granaky-Quaye scheduled to attend November 8.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9 (6:15pm) & SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11 (8:45pm)

MOUNTAINS

2023, dir. Monica Sorelle

USA, 95 min.

In English, Haitian Creole, and Spanish, with English subtitles / Format: Digital

In the heart of Miami's Little Haiti, a vibrant immigrant family lives out their reality within the paradigm of "the American Dream." Xavier, a local construction manager, father and husband works to secure a life for his family amidst the sweeping waves of gentrification in their neighborhood. A melodic familial portrait unfolds with generational discoveries that resonate with anyone who has a history.

Tickets to any screening on November 9 include a 5:00pm Female Filmmakers Happy Hour hosted by Chaz Ebert, with complimentary drinks and light bites.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9 (7:30pm) & SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11 (2:00pm)

KEMBA

2023, dir. Kelley Kali

USA, 118 min.

In English / Format: Digital

KEMBA reveals the interior realities of a Black woman living and loving in the aftermath of the War on Drugs. A young college student, Kemba Smith finds herself under the spell of a dope boy, a romance that ultimately leads to her incarceration. Her life evolves into a battle for redemption through unwavering faith and boundless determination. Kemba's journey serves as a resounding testament to the transformative power of indomitable will—a triumphant resurrection from the ashes of the carceral system's inferno.

Producer Lana Link and Kemba Smith scheduled to attend November 9 and 11; director Kelley Kali scheduled to attend November 11. Tickets to any screening on November 9 include a 5:00pm Female Filmmakers Happy Hour hosted by Chaz Ebert, with complimentary drinks and light bites.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10 (8:00pm) & SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 (1:30pm)

BLACK BARBIE: A DOCUMENTARY

2023, dir. Lagueria Davis

USA, 100 min.

In English / Format: Digital

In 1980, a new Barbie hit the scene and she was Black! **BLACK BARBIE: A DOCUMENTARY** follows the personal journey of Beulah Mae Mitchell, who devoted 45 years to Mattel and

witnessed the profound impact of Black Barbies on girls. Prior to her arrival, self-realization was imposed upon by white beauty conventions. The timely doc captures how this doll marks a transformative moment of Black femininity within the cultural narrative.

Director Lagueria Davis scheduled to attend via virtual Q&A.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 (3:45pm) & WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15 (6:00pm)

MAX ROACH: THE DRUM ALSO WALTZES

2023, dirs. Ben Shapiro, Sam Pollard

USA, 82 min.

In English / Format: Digital

From the shadows of Jim Crow to the crescendo of the Civil Rights movement, from the birth of jazz to the expanses of Hip Hop and beyond, American jazz drummer, composer and bebop pioneer Max Roach's life and legacy live on with a resounding and enduring rhythm. Featuring a vanguard of Black legends and luminaries including Roach himself, Abbey Lincoln, Questlove, Quincy Jones, Harry Belafonte, Sonny Rollins, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Abdullah Ibrahim, Randy Weston and more, this documentary is a testament to musical atonement in the midst of cultural evolution and social change.

Directors Ben Shapiro and Sam Pollard scheduled to attend via virtual Q&A.

CLOSING NIGHT

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16 (6:00pm)

MAXINE'S BABY: THE TYLER PERRY STORY

2023, dirs. Gelila Bekele, Armani Ortiz

USA, 115 min.

In English / Format: Digital

Writer, actor, filmmaker, studio head and media titan Tyler Perry is America's consummate multihyphenate. But underneath this entertainment behemoth is a man working humbly to heal his childhood trauma by transforming his pain into promise. *MAXINE'S BABY: THE TYLER PERRY STORY*, a nod to his mother's love, is a tender and intimate portrait of visionary and innovator Tyler Perry and his harrowing but faithful road to the top of an industry that didn't always include him. With unfettered access, directors/filmmakers Gelila Bekele and Armani Ortiz lead us into the inner world of a man whose story has never fully been told as he becomes a father and a media mogul with a mission to pave his own road to the top. The product is a profound lesson on remembering where you came from so you can know where you want to go. (Amazon)

Directors Gelila Bekele and Armani Ortiz scheduled to attend.



A CELEBRATION OF JOHN SINGLETON

Find John Singleton film stills [here](#).

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4 (6:15pm)

HIGHER LEARNING AND AN EVENING WITH JUSTICE SINGLETON

1995, dir. USA, 128 min.

In English / Format: 4K Digital

Join artist Justice Singleton for this screening, followed by an intimate conversation about his father's life and career. In John Singleton's vignette of college life, a constellation of sun-kissed stars gather at the fictitious Columbus University. Galvanized by Malik (Omar Epps), the eager young adults are fettered when a white classmate finds community among neo-Nazis. The campus becomes a crucible of heightened tensions, deepening the fault lines of race, class and gender. Amidst this potent convergence of rebellious youth cultures, the journey toward self-realization becomes a pulsating narrative of transformation and strife. It echoes the complexities of a decade where cultural renaissance thrived alongside the challenges of forging one's identity in a rapidly evolving world.

Tickets include a complimentary beverage.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6 (6:00pm)

POETIC JUSTICE

1993, dir. USA, 109 min

In English / Format: 4K Digital

Janet Jackson and Tupac Shakur shine in this timeless Singleton masterpiece where artistry collides with sacrifice. Justice (Janet Jackson), a gifted young poet, seeks refuge in her poetry, finding solace in writing as grief takes its toll. Encouraged by friends, she sets out on a journey to Oakland, where the ingénue crosses paths with Lucky (Tupac Shakur), a charming boy from around the way. As much as they run from it, they inevitably find themselves catching feelings for each other. Will this love transcend the chasm of their differences and the weight of their trauma?

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8 (6:15pm)

BOYZ N THE HOOD

1991, USA, 112 min.

In English / Format: 4K Digital

In his riveting directorial debut, Singleton follows Jason “Tre” Styles III (Cuba Gooding Jr.) as he relocates to South Central L.A.’s Crenshaw neighborhood to live with his father. College-bound in a community scraping to jump him in, Tre must navigate young love and chosen family amidst the challenges of teenage life at the crossroads of gang violence and police terror.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10 (8:15pm)

SHAFT

2000, USA, 99 min.

In English / Format: 35mm

In the dawn of the new millennium, Samuel L. Jackson graced the screen with a cool and captivating portrayal of Shaft, brought to life by the visionary Singleton. Singleton’s unique touch infused the franchise with his distinctive brand of realism and rich cultural aesthetics. Follow the guardian of justice as he delves into the underbelly of New York City in pursuit of justice for an innocent Black man’s life.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13 (8:15pm)

BABY BOY

2001, USA, 130 min.

In English / Format: 4K Digital

A glimpse of a love supreme blossoms in the heart of South Central L.A. in a stunning portrait of a young Black father ensnared by a carceral world. Jody’s (Tyrese Gibson) sense of direction is stifled within an urban landscape where criminalization shadows Black men, obscuring their potential for transformation and growth. To break free from this generational curse, he must hold a mirror to his blemishes and embrace the path to his own rebirth.

SHORT FILM PROGRAMS

Find short film stills [here](#).

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4 (12:00pm) & WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15 (6:00pm)

EXPERIMENTS IN BLACK EXPERIENCE

2021-2023, dirs. various

USA, Jamaica, 96 min.

In English / Format: Digital

This collection of experimental shorts takes an immersive journey through radical imaginings and new frontiers. Namir Mustafa Fearce’s *I’M BUILDING ME A HOME* (4 min.) offers a unique glimpse into the morning routine of Fearce’s two sisters and grandmother before church, blending sound from a Negro spiritual with a ballroom track to juxtapose church and ballroom as spaces exalting the Black ecstatic experience. Ja’Tovia M. Gary’s *QUIET AS IT’S KEPT* (26

min.) presents an introspective exploration of identity and silence in contemporary America. With *GHETTO BIRDS IN US...LET THE SKY TOUCH MY SOUL* (5 min.), director Lamar Robillard soars through the Black—without restraint. Leah Solomon's *JIGNA* (20 min.) is an experimental homage inspired by Monique Wittig's novel *Les Guérillères*. In *TETHER* (16 min.), director kelechi agwuncha pays tribute to childhood memories through a Nigerian masquerade. Asari Precious Aibangbee's *OMWAN'EKHUI* [person of Dark Skin] (15 min.) is an experimental documentary highlighting the multifaceted talents and experiences of dark-skinned Black folks. And Joseph Douglas Elmhirst's *BURNT MILK* (10 min.) centers around Una, a young Jamaican woman in the UK, as she reflects on her cultural heritage while she makes a traditional dish.

Select filmmakers scheduled to attend.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4 (3:45pm) & SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11 (1:30pm)

FROM THE BLOCK: SURREAL

2023, dirs. various

USA, 86 min.

In English / Format: Digital

This enchanting collection of homegrown narrative shorts weaves captivating tales of spellbinding tenderness and endurance. Shiloh Tumo Washington's *ONE FOR MY BABY* (22 min.) is a unique romance story that unfolds in reverse, revealed through memories triggered by improvisational music. In McKenzie Chinn's *A REAL ONE* (16 min.), Lauren and Keisha, two friends from a working-class neighborhood in Chicago, face a significant test of their friendship when a closely guarded secret is revealed. Cache Petters-Matthews' *CURSE BREAKERS* (15 min.) explores three generations of women dealing with generational trauma. In Monty Cole's *WHOLE* (13 min.), we journey with 12-year-old Brandon Moore as he grows up in the suburbs grappling with his sense of Black identity. And in *BROKE DOWN DROWN* (20 min.), director Marquis Simmons explores the harsh realities of poverty, death and hopelessness in a tough Chicago neighborhood.

Content consideration: This program contains themes of abuse and violence.

Select filmmakers scheduled to attend.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4 (4:45pm) & SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 (5:15pm)

BRANCHES & ROOTS

2022-2023, dirs. various

USA, Canada, 85 min

In English / Format: Digital

In this evocative anthology, journey through a diverse tapestry of narratives that navigate the complexities of incarceration, family bonds, moral dilemmas and motherhood—and find common ground. Justin Emeka's *SIX WINTERS GONE STILL* (10 min.) reimagines a scene from Shakespeare's *Richard II* in a contemporary Black cultural context. Siblings embark on an emotional drive upstate to visit their incarcerated father in Monique Wilhoit's *JAHLEEL & STAR* (12 min.) In *WHAT THEY FOUND* (14 min.), director Ryan Darbonne explores the moral dilemma faced by two Black men who stumble upon a dead white man during a fishing trip. Khaled Ridgeway's *WHERE LIFE BEGINS* (14 min.) follows a Senegalese immigrant's journey to motherhood; and Murry Peeters' *WOMAN MEETS GIRL* (17 min.) portrays a captivating

encounter between an introspective older woman and an extroverted younger sex worker. Kevin Coleman-Cohen's *PRETTY BOY* (18 min.) tells the story of a homeless Black teenage boy surviving the streets of St. Louis.

Content consideration: This program contains themes of abuse.

Select filmmakers scheduled to attend.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4 (9:30pm) & SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11 (9:00pm)

NIGHTSCAPES & REVELATIONS

2022-2023, dirs. various

USA, 85 min.

In English / Format: Digital

Settle into night's enigmatic embrace with this electrifying collection of shorts promising laughter, suspense and prophetic happenings. In Marc G. Pitre's *UNKIND CUT* (14 min.), a vasectomy consultation takes an amusing twist. In Gregory James Foxx Jr.'s *THE DUPPY MAN'S WALK* (19 min.), a restless spirit haunts his family's land. Aaron's urgent need for a haircut takes a humorous turn when his barbers have other plans in mind in Tyler Anthony Davis' *LINING* (11 min.), and in Xzaviah J. Stone Sr.'s animated *NALB NOUM* (11 min.), a group of teens seeks the truth behind folklore. In *TASTE* (17 min.), Bobby Huntley's dramedy travels to a dystopian future where women's reproductive rights have vanished, leading two women to explore psychedelic truth tabs during blind dates. And in C.C. Randle's *A MIND OF ITS OWN* (13 min.), a young woman faces microaggressions after a bold hairstyle change.

Select filmmakers scheduled to attend.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 (4:45pm) & SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 (12:00pm)

BLACK ACROSS SPACE AND TIME

2023, dirs. various

USA, 89 min.

In English / Format: Digital

Sci-fi, coming-of-age, social commentary and cosmic romance coalesce in this ethereal program. With *THE LOVE MACHINE* (10 min.), director Jasmine Lynea combines intriguing sci-fi elements to challenge our understanding of love. Tari Warieb's coming-of-age story *WE WERE MEANT TO* (28 min.) explores a society where Black men gain wings when they reach manhood. In *BEFORE I LET GO* (24 min.), director Cameron A. Granger reveals the recovery efforts in the town of Bad City after its destruction by monsters. Katrina Brook Flores' *ASSAMAN* (15 min.) takes us on a mesmerizing journey into a cosmic love story. In Johnny Kirk's *THE FOURTH* (12 min.), a group of young Black and Latino friends in California endure a police encounter on the 4th of July.

Content consideration: This program contains themes of violence.

Select filmmakers scheduled to attend.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 (5:45pm) & MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13 (6:15pm)

AFRICA WORLDWIDE!

2022-2023, dir. various

USA, Rwanda, Spain, Canada, France, Brazil, 72 min.

In English, Spanish and Portuguese, with English subtitles / Format: Digital

Embark on a poignant journey across the Diaspora, where tales of reunion, racism and ancestral connections converge, from Carine Munyana's intimate *CACOPHONY* (15 min.), where an untimely high school reunion and a visit from a tenacious friend shape a day, to David Ontoria's *CONGUITO* (15 min.), which follows Malik's quest to reconnect with a long-lost friend while navigating racism. With *IN THE WHITENESS* (5 min.), director Niya Abdullahi explores the power of poetry and movement in a displaced Harari-Ethiopian woman's life, while Amartei Armar's *YAA* (20 min.) immerses us in the intergenerational struggles of Ghanaian women in an unfamiliar land. Finally, in *LAST SUNDAY* (17 min.), directors Joana Claude and Renan Barbosa Brandão boldly reimagine the timeless parable of the Virgin Mary.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6 (8:15pm) & MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13 (8:30pm)

SISTERS OF THE YAM

2022-2023, dirs. various

USA, 73 min.

In English / Format: Digital

In this collection—named after the bell hooks novel—we explore the range of enduring love between women, keepers of each other's secrets. In Caitlyn Johnson's *BAD BLOOD* (12 min.), young Olivia hides the truth about getting her period for the first time. With *BOSOM* (12 min.), George Ellzey Jr. delves into the reunion of estranged sisters during their mother's funeral. In Jordan Joseph's *SISTERS* (13 min.), Jac and Maya navigate their complicated relationship. In Felicia Pride's joyful *LOOK BACK AT IT* (12 min.), with the help of her daughter, a forty-something single mother gets her groove back. Niya Abdullahi explores the intricacies of identity and expression among Black Muslim women and girls in *FOR BLACK MUSLIM GIRLS* (9 min.), and in Bashir Aden's *A SWEETNESS OF LAPSE* (15 min.), best friends Ava and Mina experiment with "reality shifting," leading to a transformative journey to resurrect a friend who passed away.

Select filmmakers scheduled to attend.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9 (8:30pm) & WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15 (8:30pm)

PHENOMENAL WOMEN

2022-2023, dirs. various

USA, 80 min.

In English / Format: Digital

In this captivating selection of films, we feel through the complex waters of queerness, love and desire. Searit Kahsay Huluf's *BUNA* (18 min.) explores an infatuated chef's descent into sapphic obsession. In Ashley Versher's *BRIEF EXCHANGES* (12 min.), Tanya experiences a daylong affair filled with flirtatious banter in the heart of NYC. In Nana Fobi Duffuor's *CONFIRMATION* (12 min.), a God-fearing mother confronts her feelings about her son's queerness. The complexities of a young couple's summer love are explored in Ryan G. Cameron's *FORKS IN THE ROAD* (15 min.). Tajana B. Williams offers a cosmic love story with *SALONE LOVE* (5 min.), while Taylor Dominique Mason's *GRIST* (18 min.) explores the healing journey of a genderqueer musician within an underground community.

Content consideration: This program contains themes of abuse.

Select filmmakers scheduled to attend.

Tickets to any screening on November 9 include a 5:00pm Female Filmmakers Happy Hour hosted by Chaz Ebert, with complimentary drinks and light bites.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11 (11:00am) & SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 (11:00am)

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

2021-2023, dirs. various

USA, South Africa, 102 min.

In English / Format: Digital

Young filmmakers and protagonists showcase their indomitable spirit and resilience in this showcase of youthful determination. In Benjamin Mullholland's *THE LAKE MERRITT MONSTER* (17 min.), Ollie quests to rescue his mother from the grasp of a ferocious beast. Victorious F. Mcleod's *CRAYONS* (16 min.) is a journey through a young boy's colorful imagination, and Jenn Shaw's *GAPS* (12 min.) explores the gaps between a tween's self-acceptance and perfection. In Monique Morton Derouselle's *RISING DAWN* (15 min.), we witness Dawn baton twirl her way to confidence, while Addison Belhomme's *A THIN LINE BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE* (6 min.) showcases young Ayanna's activism. In *FATHER'S DAY* (27 min.), director Tumelo Lekna delves into the intricacies of family matters, and in Ivan Rome's *TIKTOK CHALLENGED* (9 min.), a grandmother-grandson duo join forces in hopes of finding TikTok fame.

Select filmmakers scheduled to attend.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11 (4:00pm) & MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13 (6:00pm)

FROM THE BLOCK: FOR REAL

2023, dirs. various

USA, 67 min.

In English / Format: Digital

An evocative assemblage of true Chicago love stories, celebrating Black love through the eyes of artists, midwives and househeads—for the culture. In *DEAR BLACK ARTIST* (22 min.), we are introduced to director Rachel S. Gadson's documentary series featuring 77 Chicago artists discussing their creative journeys, barriers to access and hopes for the future of Black artists. Lawrence Agyei's *FOR THE CRIB* (5 min.) provides an intimate look at the South Shore Drill Team during the 2021 Bud Billiken Parade. The story of Eric Williams, who fell in love with Chicago house music and built a thriving business around it, is documented in Lonnie Edwards and Tobi Shinobi's *TWENTYFIVE* (12 min.); and in Mia Harvey's *WITH WOMAN* (28 min.), Star, a Black midwife in London, advocates for home births among Black women in light of high maternal mortality rates in hospitals, despite legal restrictions.

Select filmmakers scheduled to attend.

SPECIAL EVENTS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4 (2:15pm)

MEET THE CURATORS: JADA-AMINA HARVEY AND NICK LEFFEL

Join us for a free afternoon conversation with the curators of the 29th Black Harvest Film Festival, Jada-Amina Harvey and Nick Leffel. In this intimate gathering, they will present a selection of personal works, offering insights into their filmmaking and curatorial processes, and the remarkable films gracing this year's festival. This engaging conversation will be moderated by esteemed cultural worker Camille Bacon. Together, they traverse the cinematic terrain, meaning-making, and the power of cinema that has guided them toward the orbit of cultural stewardship.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 (3:00pm)

CHICAGO COMMUNITY FILM WORKSHOP SHOWCASE: VOICES OF THE SOUTH SIDE

For over five decades, the Community Film Workshop of Chicago has supported African Americans and people of color in the film industry. This free showcase features 12 captivating short films, each highlighting diverse voices and stories, covering topics from violence prevention to science fiction, community gardening, gentrification, caregiving, intergenerational mentorship and entrepreneurship. These films beautifully reflect the rich tapestry of our community. Join CFWC and the Black Harvest Film Festival in celebrating the authentic voices of South Side storytellers.

Followed by a reception with light refreshments.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9 (6:00pm)

A different kind of tender

2023, dir. Katherine Simóne Reynolds

USA, 41 min.

No dialogue / Format: Digital

In *A different kind of tender*, we journey alongside The Queen, portrayed by Reynolds herself, through the Rust Belt landscapes of Cairo and Brooklyn, Illinois. Once thriving industrial hubs, now marked by abandonment and transformation, the towns provide a poignant backdrop to The Queen's quest for healing and belonging. The keloid, a scar-like growth that transcends the original wound, symbolizes the profound outward expression of healing and its sensitivity to renewal. Amid the scars of industrial ascent and decline, The Queen navigates the intricate interplay of recovery, Black femme imagination, as a means to heal. Her journey emerges as a powerful and poetic reflection on healing, belonging and the reclamation of identity in a world in flux. Reynolds, a multidisciplinary artist, masterfully weaves together portrait photography, video, choreography, sculpture and installation to scour the socio-emotional landscapes of Blackness and the essence of "Black Work" in our contemporary milieu.

Followed by a conversation with Katherine Simóne Reynolds and Black Harvest Lead Curator Jada-Amina Harvey.

Tickets to any screening on November 9 include a 5:00pm Female Filmmakers Happy Hour hosted by Chaz Ebert, with complimentary drinks and light bites.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10 (6:00pm)

THE CRY OF JAZZ

In an immersive screening experience, filmmaker Terence Nance (*THE OVERSIMPLIFICATION OF HER BEAUTY*, "Random Acts of Flyness") and Chicago-based composer Angel Bat Dawid

excavate Edward O. Bland's 1959 archival treasure *THE CRY OF JAZZ*. Connecting jazz to Black history, witness performances by luminaries like Sun Ra, John Gilmore and Julian Priester, and a mesmerizing dance between rehearsed and improvised jazz. This visionary film, a harbinger of the early Black Power movement, penetrates the soul of an era.

Followed by a live performance and conversation with Terence Nance and Angel Bat Dawid.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11 (12:30pm)

BLACK CREATORS PANEL, HOSTED BY BLACK FILM CLUB CHI

Join Black Film Club Chi for a candid discussion about tackling the obstacles of getting funded as a Black creator. This free conversation will explore director challenges, Hollywood gatekeeping, content choices, the impact of the recent writer's strike and the struggle to not be put in a box as a BIPOC creator, and will be followed by a lively networking mixer. Black Film Club Chi is a Black nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and amplifying the voices of Black storytellers in film and media arts. Black Film Club Chi believes that by providing a safe space to showcase and amplify work, they can contribute to the community-building experiences for Black storytellers and foster meaningful connections with diverse audiences.

Panelists will include Rachel S. Gadson (director, DEAR BLACK ARTIST), Sarah Minnie (producer, A REAL ONE) and David Weathersby (director, KINKY AND LOVING IT).

Secure your free ticket at siskelfilmcenter.org/blackcreators. Ticket holders must be seated five minutes prior to the start of the program. Unused tickets will be offered to walk-up guests.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11 (7:00pm)

THE SYMBOL OF THE UNCONQUERED

1920, dir. Oscar Micheaux

USA, 54 min.

Silent / Format: Digital

The historic Blacklight Film Festival, commemorated as part of the 50th Anniversary of Chicago Filmmakers, joins forces with the esteemed Black Harvest Film Festival to presents a special screening of Oscar Micheaux's timeless 1920 silent film *SYMBOL OF THE UNCONQUERED*, accompanied by a live, improvised electronic music score performed by the incredibly talented trio of Edward Wilkerson Jr., Jim Baker and Jonathan Woods.

Learn more about the musicians, film and Blacklight Film Festival at siskelfilmcenter.org/symbol.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14 (6:00pm)

THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO'S VISITING ARTIST PROGRAM PRESENTS: JACOLBY SATTERWHITE IN CONVERSATION WITH JADA-AMINA HARVEY

Artist Jacolby Satterwhite is celebrated for a conceptual practice addressing crucial themes of labor, consumption, carnality and fantasy through immersive installation, virtual reality and digital media. Satterwhite's work has been presented in numerous exhibitions and festivals internationally, including the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis; Haus der Kunst, Munich; Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea; and Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio. His work is included in the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki;

Museum of Modern Art, New York; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others. Satterwhite has collaborated with several musicians, including Solange Knowles in 2019 on her visual album *When I Get Home*, and Perfume Genius in 2022 on his album *Ugly Season*.

Fullerton Hall, Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Ave. Free and open to the public.

Registration is not required.

Learn more at saic.edu/events

About the Black Harvest Film Festival

Each year since 1994, the Gene Siskel Film Center has presented the annual [Black Harvest Film Festival](#), the midwest's largest and longest-running Black film festival. Cofounded by the late **Sergio Mims** and celebrated as one of the largest Black film festivals in the world—and the only month-long Black film festival in the Midwest—the Black Harvest Film Festival is a celebration of independent films that tell the stories and explore the images, heritage and history of the full range of Black experience. The Black Harvest Film Festival features Chicago premieres of features, documentaries and shorts; filmmaker appearances; panel discussions and special events. The Black Harvest Film Festival supports the Gene Siskel Film Center's ongoing mission to present inclusive and insightful programming.

The Film Center extends its gratitude to Gilead Sciences Inc., BMO Harris, ComEd, The Richard and Ellen Sandor Family Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council, who **have generously provided funding for this year's festival.**

Media sponsors include NBC 5 Chicago and WTTW Chicago.

Festival hospitality sponsors are The Godfrey, StayPineapple and theWit.

Media partners are WBEZ Chicago, *The Chicago Reader* and *The Bulletin*.

About the Gene Siskel Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

The [Gene Siskel Film Center](#) is Chicago's premier art house cinema in the heart of the theater district, bringing film lovers together for an unparalleled movie-going experience. The Film Center presents a curated collection of eclectic international, independent and classic cinema with festivals and year-round programming while striving to provide a welcoming space reflective of Chicago's diverse community. As a public program of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Film Center fosters dialogue that sets films in historical and cultural context through panels, lectures and filmmaker conversations.

About the School of the Art Institute of Chicago

For more than 150 years, the [School of the Art Institute of Chicago \(SAIC\)](#) has been a leader in educating the world's most influential artists, designers and scholars. Located in downtown Chicago with a fine arts graduate program ranked number two by *U.S. News and World Report*, SAIC provides an interdisciplinary approach to art and design as well as world-class resources, including the Art Institute of Chicago museum, on-campus galleries and state-of-the-art facilities. SAIC's undergraduate, graduate and post-baccalaureate students have the freedom to take

risks and create the bold ideas that transform Chicago and the world—as seen through notable alumni and faculty such as Michelle Grabner, David Sedaris, Elizabeth Murray, Richard Hunt, Georgia O’Keeffe, Cynthia Rowley, Nick Cave and LeRoy Neiman.

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