

UCLA Film & Television Archive rings in 2022 with new in-person screenings

Free winter programs at the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum run from Jan. 7 to March 26

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LOS ANGELES (Dec. 6, 2021) – Following a successful [return to in-person programming](#) this fall, the UCLA Film & Television Archive welcomes audiences back to the Billy Wilder Theater for a diverse winter lineup of screenings, talks and tributes that celebrate new and preserved cinematic gems and highlight some of the often-overlooked aspects of moving image history.

“This season’s screenings illuminate the untold stories, the forgotten wonders and the spaces ‘between’ that are best shared in the communal expanse of the big screen,” said May Hong HaDuong, director of the Archive, a division of UCLA Library. “We’re thrilled to bring the rich imaginings of visionary artists and writers to the theater, including James Benning, Anita Loos, Asghar Farhadi, Miriam Petty and over three-dozen pioneering queer filmmakers. Our theme this year — ‘See the Bigger Picture’ — encapsulates the vision that we are better when widening our view and looking beyond the frame.”

All public programs are free through June 2022, thanks to a gift from an anonymous donor.

Jan. 7–Feb. 27

[Pioneers of Queer Cinema](#) (12 programs, a retrospective of 33 films)

Drawn primarily from the collection of the Outfest UCLA Legacy Project, the largest publicly accessible archive of LGBTQ moving-image media in the world, and presented in collaboration with Outfest and IndieCollect, this series reflects a collective commitment to sharing LGBTQ+ media in order to bring together diverse communities for wide-ranging, often radical explorations of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Appearing in person as part of the screenings will be filmmakers Zackary Drucker, Rob Epstein, Gus Van Sant, Jan Oxenberg, Jenni Olson, Donna Deitch, Peggy Rajski and Arthur Dong and Dirty Looks Inc. creative director Bradford Nordeen.

For details and screening times, visit cinema.ucla.edu.

Jan. 9–28

[Two Films From Iran](#)

In anticipation of the spring 2022 UCLA Celebration of Iranian Cinema — an annual survey of new films from Iran and the Iranian diaspora — the Archive presents two works, by visiting filmmakers Niki Karimi and Asghar Farhadi, both of whom will appear at their screenings.

- Jan. 9, 7 p.m.
Final Whistle (2011)
In person: Writer-director Niki Karimi

In her third feature, Karimi explores the sharp divisions in Iranian society from an explicitly personal perspective. “Final Whistle” tells the story of a well-known filmmaker (played by Karimi) who is suddenly confronted by her own privilege and the limits of fame when she becomes entangled in the personal struggles of a film extra hired to do reshoots. The screening marks the 10th anniversary of the film’s release.

- Jan. 28, 7:30 p.m.

A Hero (2021)

In person: Writer-director Asghar Farhadi

In inimitable Farhadi fashion, the emergent irony of the film’s title is intricately linked to the story’s mounting suspense when a seemingly good deed plunges Rahim (Amir Jadidi) into a very public struggle to negotiate — and manipulate — the contradictory social, legal and cultural forces of Iranian society. After shooting his previous feature, “Everybody Knows” (2018), abroad, Academy Award winner Farhadi returned to his native country for “A Hero,” which won the Grand Prix at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival and shows the writer-director at the top of his form.

Special thanks to the Archive’s community partner, the [Farhang Foundation](#).

Jan. 14–March 13

[Archive Treasures](#)

This program showcases works from the Archive’s extensive holdings, which comprise one of the largest moving image collections in the world. Included in this series will be rarely screened gems presented in original and restored prints.

- Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m.

The Docks of New York (1928)

Live musical accompaniment by Cliff Retallick

Director Josef von Sternberg’s penultimate silent feature (his final silent work, “The Case of Lena Smith,” from 1929, is lost) displays the earliest, strongest evidence of the densely layered ethereality that would distinguish his later collaborations with Marlene Dietrich. Set almost entirely in a seedy portside tavern where the doomed and desperate carouse, the film stars George Bancroft as a brutish steamship stoker whose 24-hour leave becomes a transformational journey of the soul after he rescues a waif (Betty Compson) from the chilly waters and the two fall in love.

Thunderbolt (1929)

While “Docks of New York” finds von Sternberg prowling the shadowy corners of a self-contained world, “Thunderbolt,” his first sound film, moves between two different worlds. Notorious hood Thunderbolt (George Bancroft, who was nominated for an Oscar) is already on the lam as the film opens, while his longtime moll Ritzy (Fay Wray) makes a play for a different future with a young bank clerk who lives with his mom. While Ritzy may yearn for staid routine, there’s no doubt where von Sternberg’s sympathies lie when Thunderbolt sneaks her out to an African American speakeasy teeming with life — and talent, including Louise Beavers and singer Theresa Harris.

- March 13, 7 p.m.

Smog (1962, Italy)

Director Franco Rossi offers an atmospheric meditation on the pervasive alienation and class systems inherent in mid–20th-century Los Angeles, as seen through the outsider perspectives of an Italian attorney (Enrico Maria Salerno) and the small circle of Italian expatriates he encounters during a two-day layover while en route to Mexico City. Rossi’s unique, street-level

view of the City of Angels features a number of midcentury modern landmarks, from LAX to the Pierre Koenig–designed Stahl House.

[Archive Talks](#)

For this series, leading historians and scholars of moving image media discuss their work and present screenings related to their research.

- Feb. 19, 7:30
Miriam J. Petty, author and professor at Northwestern University
In her groundbreaking book “Stealing the Show: African American Performers and Audiences in 1930s Hollywood,” Petty presents vital, fresh perspectives on the careers of Hattie McDaniel, Bill “Bojangles” Robinson, Louise Beavers and other Black stars who established themselves as onscreen icons while navigating the inequitable production practices of the classical Hollywood era. As part of this program, Petty will give a brief presentation on her research and writing, followed by a screening of “Stormy Weather” and an onstage conversation.

Stormy Weather (1943)

The second all-Black cast studio film of the 1940s (following MGM’s “Cabin in the Sky”), Twentieth Century Fox’s “Stormy Weather” — a loose biopic of Bill “Bojangles” Robinson — features a dazzling string of performances by an all-star cast, led by Robinson himself. With knockout turns by Robinson, Lena Horne, Cab Calloway, Ada Brown, the Nicholas Brothers and others, the film celebrates a generation of Black performers and presages the generations to come. “Stormy Weather” was directed by Andrew L. Stone and written by Frederick Jackson, Ted Koehler and H.S. Kraft.

Jan. 21–March 19

[Archive Television Treasures](#)

This series highlights rarities and important works from the Archive’s vast television collection— one of the largest in the U.S., with more than 170,000 holdings documenting the entire course of American broadcast history, from the late 1940s to the present.

- Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m.
Directed by Ivan Dixon: “The Sty of the Blind Pig” (1974)
Preserved by the UCLA Film & Television Archive
KCET’s production of Phillip Hayes Dean’s critically acclaimed play, first presented by the Negro Ensemble Company in 1971, examines the volatile relationship between a mother and daughter torn by generational change amid the backdrop of the burgeoning civil rights movement. Director Ivan Dixon artfully brings the claustrophobic teleplay to a forceful boil, with Mary Alice delivering a harrowing performance of depth rarely seen in prime-time television.
- Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m.
Brought to You in Living Color: “The Chevy Mystery Show” (1960)
Recently preserved by the UCLA Film & Television Archive
“The Chevy Mystery Show” is an early example of a recurring television series produced on color videotape, with the show’s eye-popping sets and wardrobe intended to take full advantage of NBC’s beautiful “living color.” The technically innovative pulp mysteries boast noirish twists and the notable contributions of esteemed actors like Agnes Moorehead and beloved horror icon Vincent Price.
- March 19, 7:30 p.m.
14th Primetime Emmy Awards: 60th Anniversary Screening (1962)
Preserved by the UCLA Film & Television Archive

Co-presented with the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences

Brimming with Kennedy-era New Frontier verve, 1962's Primetime Emmy Awards highlights the still-developing medium of television at the crossroads of midcentury. Presented live by hosts Bob Newhart, Johnny Carson and journalist David Brinkley, the broadcast features an array of talent, with future icons Carol Burnett, Don Knotts and Peter Falk collecting Emmys from star presenters ranging from Eartha Kitt to Jack Webb. The screening includes the original broadcast's commercials.

This series is made possible by the John H. Mitchell Television Programming Endowment.

Family Flicks

Once again, the Archive and the Hammer Museum have teamed up for a free matinee screening series of new and classic family-friendly films from around the world.

- Feb. 20, 11 a.m.

Matinee (1993)

Recommended for ages 10 and up

Key West, October 1962: Movie-obsessed teen Gene spends most afternoons huddled in a theater with his kid brother. On the same day President Kennedy takes to TV to warn of a potential nuclear attack, B-movie producer Lawrence Woolsey (John Goodman, in a role modeled on William Castle) rolls into Gene's town and decides the local atmosphere is ideal for the premiere of his latest over-the-top creature-feature, "Mant!"

March 4–6

[Contested Landscapes: Three Digital Features by James Benning](#)

In recognition of filmmaker James Benning's 50 years as a creator of singular and uncompromising films, videos and installations, the Archive and the Hammer Museum present a weekend of three features that span the artist's years of working with digital technology, including the U.S. premiere of a major new piece, *THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA* (2021).

Long considered a consummate craftsman of 16mm film, Benning transitioned to digital technology in 2009, quickly achieving a comparable level of mastery with this new medium. Throughout the decades, he has been best known for his elegantly framed landscape studies — built on rigorous conceptual and formal structures — that slowly and subtly become fields of evidence and revelations of discovery. The indefatigable Benning has produced more than 30 feature-length films and videos, as well as numerous shorts and museum installations, that deal with the perception of reality and underlying social implications. Each Benning film becomes an encounter with time and the unexpected — in ways that can only be achieved through cinema.

- March 4, 7:30 p.m.

Ruhr (2009)

In person: James Benning

"James Benning, one of the most fascinating figures in American independent cinema, makes his eagerly awaited entrance into the digital realm with absolutely stunning effect. 'Ruhr' — which is also the first film Benning has shot entirely outside the United States — is a meditation on the notion of terra incognita. Faced with the unfamiliar landscape of Germany's Ruhr Valley, the cradle of heavy industry in that country, and a new medium, he turns the film into a process of slow discovery. As Benning uses HD to continue his exploration of duration in seven masterfully composed shots, minute events and nuances of changing light suggest a complex balance between permanence and mutation in the Ruhr's industrial landscapes, marked, not least, with the ubiquitous presence of immigrant labor." —Bérénice Reynaud, REDCAT

- March 5, 7:30 p.m.
Stemple Pass (2012)
In person: James Benning
 “A humanistic portrait enveloped in landscape and duration, James Benning’s ‘Stemple Pass’ is made up of four shots of the densely wooded brae of a mountain behind his home, the same site on which he reconstructed American techno-terrorist Ted “Unabomber” Kaczynski’s cabin. Narrating excerpts from a miscellany of Kaczynski’s writings, Benning’s steady cadence communicates the humble pursuits of a man searching for autonomy in nature and for freedom from institutionalized power, two tenets that resonate through the core of American individualism. Advocating for horrific insurgence and exhibiting a complete disconnection from the peripheries of human morality and compassion, much of Kaczynski’s dogma is decidedly repellent; as a result, the film unfolds as an exegesis on the revolutionary ethos that informed Kaczynski’s homespun terror, tempered by Benning’s dedicated eye (and voice), characteristic patience, and resolute empathy.” —Pleasure Dome
- March 6, 7 p.m.
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (2021) — U.S. premiere
In person: James Benning
 Both elegiac and lovingly rendered, critical and celebratory, this film is Benning’s paean to the ideals and hard truths of the American cultural landscape. Emerging from the era of COVID-19 and its social restrictions, Benning’s THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (an updating of the 1975 film with the same title co-made with Bette Gordon) portrays the country’s 50 states, plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, as sites that exist in the imagination as well as through representational sounds and images. But while the film is meditative and reflective in ways that are characteristic of Benning’s earlier work, this is a landscape that is haunted by its past, evidence of which can be seen, heard and felt throughout the film.

Special thanks to the Archive’s community partner, [Los Angeles Filmforum](#).

March 11–26

Women’s Work: How Gender Shaped Cinema

Women have been instrumental to the development of cinema since the dawn of motion picture production, though most traditional histories have done little to highlight their contributions to the labor and artistry of filmmaking. This series shifts the popular approach to film history away from the director’s chair and instead focuses on other key areas of expertise, including screenwriting, producing, editing, cinematography, costume design, story editing and clerical work. The quarterly program will expand the understanding of the work women did behind the camera and behind the scenes in silent cinema, midcentury moving-image production and beyond.

- **Spotlight on Screenwriter Anita Loos** (5 programs)
 Anita Loos’ best-known screenplay, “Gentlemen Prefer Blondes” (1928), represents just one screenwriting jewel in a dizzying collection — over 120 in total — produced by the spirited novelist, actor and memoirist over her six-decade career. The Archive features some of her career bests over five nights, with special in-person guests whose research has centered on Loos’ legacy. For details and screening times, visit [cinema.ucla.edu](#).

The Archive’s [Virtual Screening Room](#), launched during the pandemic, will continue to offer online access to a broad spectrum of Archive-curated programs.

For details, updates, registration information and important health guidelines, please visit [cinema.ucla.edu](#).

About the UCLA Film & Television Archive

A division of UCLA Library, the Archive is internationally renowned for rescuing, preserving and showcasing moving image media and is dedicated to ensuring that the visual achievements of our time are available for information, education and enjoyment. The Archive has over 450,000 film and television holdings conserved in a state-of-the-art facility at the Packard Humanities Institute Stoa in Santa Clarita, CA, that is designed to hold materials ranging from nitrate film to digital video at all preservation standards. Many of the Archive's projects are screened at prestigious film events around the globe.

The Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum is the home of the UCLA Film & Television Archive's public programs. The theater is among a handful of venues nationwide able to exhibit an entire century's worth of moving images in their original formats. From the earliest silent films requiring variable speed projection all the way up to cutting-edge digital cinema, the Wilder can accommodate an array of screen technologies.

For more information, please contact Marisa Soto at (310) 489-6002 or msoto@cinema.ucla.edu.