

‘New Voices, New Visions’: UCLA cinema series spotlights today’s Indigenous filmmakers

Screenings run from June 2 to 18 and are free to the public

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LOS ANGELES (Apr. 27, 2023) – In recent years, a new generation of Indigenous filmmakers has exploded onto the scene, producing thought-provoking and genre-defying works that draw on their personal and intergenerational experiences and use the moving-image medium to tell stories in creative new ways. From June 2 to 18, the UCLA Film & Television Archive and the UCLA American Indian Studies Center will celebrate the vision of these artists with [*Imagining Indigenous Cinema: New Voices, New Visions*](#), a survey of contemporary Indigenous film and video featuring — and programmed by — some of the most exciting and innovative Indigenous artists working today.

Made by Indigenous artists creating on and with the land base currently known as the United States and the Indigenous Nations within, more than 40 short and feature-length works will be screened over nine nights spanning three weekends at the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum in Westwood and at the Vidiots theater in Eagle Rock, complemented by panel discussions and in-person conversations with filmmakers like **Fox Maxy** (June 2 and 4), **Christopher Kahunahana** (June 3), **Blackhorse Lowe** (June 3) and **Sky Hopinka** (June 18). All showings are free to the public. This project was made possible with support from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association and California Humanities, a nonprofit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

“By crafting narratives that center their own stories, cultures and experiences, and by experimenting with unconventional modes of filmmaking, today’s Indigenous filmmakers are offering new ways of resisting dominant representations and are actively working towards decolonizing the medium,” said May Hong HaDuong, director of the Archive, a division of UCLA Library.

“Breaking against colonial notions of storytelling, land, placement and forms of joy, *Imagining Indigenous Cinema* brings audiences a comprehensive portrayal of the varied identities and cultures that exist within Indigenous communities,” she said.

In crafting the series’ comprehensive approach, the Archive partnered with curators Anpa’o Locke (Hunkpapha Lakota and Ahtna Dené) and Colleen Thurston (Choctaw) and drew on the expertise of staff and faculty at UCLA’s American Indian Studies Center. “We appreciate the efforts the Archive has made to engage with Indigenous curators, scholars, the staff at our center and filmmakers,” said the center’s director, Shannon Speed (Chickasaw), professor of American Indian studies, gender studies and anthropology at UCLA.

The series kicks off [June 2](#) with *Gush* (2023) Fox Maxy’s new feature, which uses documentary footage, television clips, animation and other formats to explore themes of self, friendship and

trauma, and continues on [June 3](#) with Christopher Kahunahana's *Waikiki* (2020), a surrealist exploration of trauma in a post-colonial Hawaiian society, and Blackhorse Lowe's *Chasing the Light* (2016), a dark comedy about American Indian urban life. The [June 4](#) program includes four short, conceptually innovative Fox Maxy films featuring a dynamic variety of visual and audio elements, including lo-fi camcorder footage, iPhone recordings, archival images and contemporary music.

On [June 9](#), the series highlights works by **Adam and Zack Khalil** of the Ojibway community of Sault Ste. Marie in Michigan, including three shorts and the feature *INAATE/SE* (2016), an experimental documentary that critiques museum culture and settler-colonial imperialism. The weekend continues with a focus on the Khalils and their collaborators: [June 10](#) features several shorts, plus the feature-length *Empty Metal* (2018), an experimental faux-documentary about activist groups who aim to start a revolution against the U.S. government, and the [June 11](#) screening spotlights several shorts that examine the institutional policies and scientific imperialism that have shaped the Indigenous American experience.

The series' final weekend starts with a [June 16](#) lineup featuring *Love and Fury* (2020), a documentary by **Sterlin Harjo**, co-creator of the TV series *Reservation Dogs*, that follows several Indigenous artists in their careers, and two shorts by Indigenous creators. A program of shorts by a variety of Indigenous artists follows on [June 17](#), many taking a nonlinear approach to storytelling and touching on topics of Indigenous existence and resistance, from the reclamation of traditional matriarchal ceremonies to the activism of poetic expression and depictions of eternal love. The series culminates [June 18](#) with an evening dedicated to the films of Sky Hopinka that includes five shorts exploring memory, language and place.

"We're excited to share this series, which highlights the emergence of a new era of Indigenous cinema — one that focuses on reclaiming Indigenous narratives and stories through increased visibility," said the series' Indigenous co-curators, Locke and Thurston. "These films and video works challenge colonial frameworks and embrace raw authenticity while expanding Indigenous storytelling into a realm of radical freedom of expression."

The series has been guided by an all-Indigenous group, including humanities advisor Adam Piron (Kiowa/Mohawk), who directs the Sundance Institute's Indigenous program, and an advisory committee made up of Maya Rose Dittloff (Blackfeet, Mandan, Hidatsa), Patricia Gomes (Purepecha), Aiko Little (Oglala Lakota), Gabrielle Norte (Cahuilla/Cupeño) and Emma Robbins (Diné).

"In tandem with the past decade's proliferation of accessible technologies, Indigenous artists have been able to push aesthetic boundaries, experiment and filter their culturally specific perspectives into increasingly personal filmmaking," Piron said. "This survey not only provides the latest developments but is also a celebration of Indigenous artists creating work on their own terms."

Screenings will take place at the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum and at the Eagle Theatre, the new home of Vidiots Foundation, as well as livestreamed when possible.

All programs are free through June 2024, thanks to a gift from an anonymous donor.

For program details and admission information, visit cinema.ucla.edu. Schedules and speakers are subject to change.

A limited edition poster was created by Los Angeles-based artist River Garza (Tongva) to represent the series.

Below are each day's program summaries with short film notes.

June 2, 7:30 p.m.

Gush (2023)

Fox Maxy's debut feature film is an explosive and expansive collage of images and sounds that has been shaped over the past decade. Through a mix of documentary footage, television clips, animation and other formats, Maxy rhythmically explores themes of self, friendship and trauma that are connected by a pulsating sound, keeping the viewer at the edge of their seat.

In person: Q&A with filmmaker Fox Maxy

June 3, 7:30 p.m.

Waikiki (2020)

Christopher Kahunahana's feature debut presents a surrealist exploration of trauma in a post-colonial society within Hawaii. Kea is a Native Hawaiian hula dancer who is trying to escape an abusive relationship and has an accident that changes the trajectory of her journey. Exploring the impacts of colonialism in Honolulu, *Waikiki* showcases the difficulties Hawaiians face in building meaningful lives in a society that prioritizes tourism over its culture and sovereignty.

In person: Q&A with filmmaker Christopher Kahunahana and filmmaker Blackhorse Lowe

Chasing the Light (2016)

Riggs, a broken-hearted stoner currently “living the sober life,” drifts between Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico, in a day filled with eventful run-ins and high-spirited characters. Blackhorse Lowe directs and stars in this day-in-the-life dark comedy set in a contemporary urban Indian existence. Utilizing a nearly observational-style black and white cinematography punctuated by metal and noise music, Lowe creates an on-screen world that is fully grounded within a sunlit Southwestern Indian alt-aesthetic.

In person: Q&A with filmmaker Blackhorse Lowe and filmmaker Christopher Kahunahana

June 4, 3 p.m.

Artist Talk: Fox Maxy + Films

Fox Maxy's enthusiasm for filmmaking is electric, contagious and personal. Blending a dynamic variety of visual and audio elements in her films, including lo-fi camcorder footage, iPhone recordings, archival images and contemporary music, she takes viewers through a deliberate, thought-provoking journey in every frame. With her operating on the forefront of conceptual filmmaking, we are honored that Maxy will join us for a screening and conversation about her genre-defying short works.

- **Fighting Looks Different 2 Me Now (2022)**
9 min.
- ✨⊕🌟❑♥ⓄⓉⓀⓄⓀⓃⓄ☆ **m(a)t(e)r(i)a(l)s** ✨ (2021)
11 min.
- **San Diego (2020)**
32 min.

- **Maat** (2020)
30 min.

In person: Q&A with filmmaker Fox Maxy

[June 9](#), 7:30 p.m.

INAATE/SE + short films

- **Culture Capture: Terminal Addition** (2019)
What does a monument signify? Jim Fletcher, “award winning actor,” introduces a surrealist examination of the settler obsession with image-making and institutional collecting.
- **A Justice Advancing Architecture Tour** (2021)
Animated blueprints, and archival documents and Hawaiian language launch an affecting investigation into the colonial architecture of the occupied Kingdom of Hawai’i.
14 min.
- **The Original Shareholder Experience** (2022)
In hyper-saturated faux infomercials, a Pueblo spokesperson hawks increasingly problematic cultural “product lines” for the Freedom Company. A caustic commentary on appropriation, Petyr Xyst’s award-winning short dissects the fictitious consequences of putting Indigenous culture up for sale.
13 min.

INAATE/SE (2016)

An ambitious first feature by Adam and Zack Khalil, *INAATE/SE* summons the violent discord of colonization into a documentary narrative that decomposes into dissonant elucidations on the Seven Fires Prophecy as it relates to their own Ojibway community of Sault Ste. Marie. This early work introduces the critique of museum culture and settler-colonial imperialism, thematically present throughout their subsequent work. This screening kicks off a weekend of programming featuring work made by the Khalils and collaborators.

[June 10](#), 7:30 p.m.

Empty Metal + short films

- **Mayfly** (2022)
A female scientist of Indigenous descent creates new life using artificial intelligence in a quest for freedom and maternal resolution.
9 min.
- **Pō’ele Wai** (2022)
A young Indigenous weaver discovers she’s being poisoned by the polluted waters she works in and goes through a transformative experience that reflects the interconnectedness of the land and water.
19 min.
- **Fluid Bound** (2021)

An animated short that explores the complex relationships and battles between body and souls through the lens of Two-Spirit, Mestizo identity.

8 min.

- **New Myth** (2021)

New Myth is a documentation of a performative action to repair our future relationship to water, exploring the concept of "Monster Slayers" and the agency we have to combat the oppressive systems of our present day.

6 min.

- **Winyan Yamni / Three Dreams** (2021)

This short film explores the Lakota filmic gaze through the dreaming methodologies of the Double Woman, a mythic figure who empowers women to bead and was credited with the discovery of quillwork.

14 min.

- **CYANOVISIONS** (2020)

CYANOVISIONS is a transdisciplinary speculative short fiction film that explores the relationship between humans and cyanobacteria in symbiotic scenarios of the future.

14 min.

Empty Metal (2018)

Empty Metal is a politically charged film that uses an interchanging narrative that follows the story of five activist groups who aim to start a revolution against the U.S. government. The underground punk scene shapes the film's style, and the central themes explore mass surveillance, oppression and morality. With its tense and captivating atmosphere, it blends faux-documentary and experimental techniques to offer a striking commentary on current politics that will make you reevaluate what you think you know.

[June 11](#), 7 p.m.

Deconstructions

Unabashedly confrontational and anti-colonial, this shorts program examines institutional policies and scientific imperialism that have shaped the Indigenous American experience. Weaving narratives of human/land interrelationships and pairing striking cinematography with a reclamation of archival footage, filmmakers create stories of both introspection and resistance. These films embody the critical psyche of the colonized, while demanding accountability of the colonizer—all while maintaining a defiant resilience grounded in place-based identity.

- **We Live** (2019)

A land-based performative action that examines extraction and explores the ethos of Indigenous futurism.

3 min.

- **Report** (2015)

A musical composition where the instruments played are firearms. Here, tools of violence are transformed into mechanisms for musical resistance.

4 min.

- **Culture Capture: Crimes Against Reality (2020)**
Images of Indians are juxtaposed with those of monuments, deconstructing the meaning behind capturing and controlling Indigenous likeness.
9 min.
- **Pahá kiŋ lená wakhánj (2017)**
A non-linear conceptual journey of space, time and historical Indigenous movements.
9 min.
- **Faces, Displays, and Other Imaginary Things (2020)**
The relationship between Indigenous land and Indigenous labor is examined on a drive through the Pacific Northwest.
10 min.
- **Fever Dream (2021)**
A clash of image, sound, artificial intelligence and narration that exposes danger, denial and illusions. And aliens.
11 min.
- **From Sea to See (2014)**
A meditation on the legacy of Manifest Destiny and the greed of taking what cannot belong to anyone.
8 min.
- **Out of Nothing (Canada, 2018)**
Weaving scientific exploration with the origin stories of the Shinnecock Nation, this short documentary questions origins and looks at the fascination of wanting to know where we came from.
15 min.

[June 16](#), 7:30 p.m.

Love and Fury + short films

- **My Soul Remainer (2017)**
Experimental violinist Laura Ortman performs her song, “My Soul Remainer,” while Jock Soto, former principal dancer for the New York City Ballet, acts as the enthralled observer. Ortman deconstructs Mendelssohn’s violin concerto in E minor—the recognizable strain transforms into Ortman’s signature plucky loop-based chords, resulting in an ethereal composition that fills the vast on-screen landscapes. *My Soul Remainer* was included in the 2019 Whitney Biennial.
6 min.
- **Wampum / DSW JSJJ (Canada, 2019)**

An unapologetically hypnotic electro-pop melody is layered with Muscogee, Cherokee and English language, dance and dress in this documentation of Elisa Harkins' performance piece "Wampum / DSW JSJJ," demonstrating how Indigenous culture succeeds in all its forms, past, present and future.

6 min.

Love and Fury (2020)

Through intimate conversation and critical observation of Indigenous creatives such as Laura Ortman, Cannupa Hanska Luger, Black Belt Eagle Scout and Micah P. Hinson, director Sterlin Harjo brings audiences deep into the arts community of which he himself is a part. The nuanced portraits of each artist and their interactions with Harjo reveal an honest intimacy through the occasion of communal storytelling. Using humor as a vehicle through which to speak truth, colonialism is confronted head-on and with biting wit. *Love and Fury* is Harjo's latest film, released the year prior to the 2021 premiere of his breakout television show, *Reservation Dogs*.

[June 17](#), 7:30 p.m.

Realizing Futures

From the reclamation of traditional matriarchal ceremony to the activism of poetic expression and depictions of eternal love, this program of short films showcases world-building narratives of Indigenous existence and resistance. Centering joy, gratitude and resilience acts as a powerful reminder of the potentials of narrative change in storytelling practice, and in the creation of Indigenous futurisms. Together, these films offer a non-linear approach that reflect how these Indigenous filmmakers see themselves, and the past-present-futures of their communities, and stories.

- **Shadow holding shape to experience the energy of the sun (Muscle, Bone & Sinew) (2021)**
Two futuristic creatures perform a dogmatic monologue focusing beyond colonialism—"We must practice maintenance rather than preservation."
5 min.
- **Chaac & Yum (2022)**
Queer joy transcends time and space in this love story rooted in Chaac, the Mayan deity of Rain, and Yum, the Mayan deity of corn.
12 min.
- **Gently, Jennifer (2019)**
Jennifer unexpectedly experiences an awakening and her first kiss within the pages of a magazine.
9 min.
- **Long Line of Ladies (2022)**
A Karuk community reclaims their matriarchal tradition of celebrating a girl's transition to womanhood.
22 min.

- **They Told Me "Apikaan" Means Braid** (2013)
Originally an 8mm installation conceived as a loop, *They Told Me "Apikaan" Means Braid* serves as a reminder of the cyclical nature of language and tradition.
3 min.
- **This is the Way We Rise** (2020)
For Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio, poetry is an act of resistance and an empowering tool for advocacy.
12 min.
- **Diiyeghan naii Taii Tr'eedaa** (We Will Walk the Trail of our Ancestors, 2021)
Gwich'in cultural identity is intermeshed with the caribou. In this intergenerational story, an elder teaches his granddaughter about the reciprocal relationship.
6 min.
- **I am Home** (2023)
Grandma Betty Slim reflects on Diné identity and resilience—though we are all different, we are all made of the earth, and remain strong throughout time.
3 min.

June 18, 7 p.m.

An Evening with Sky Hopinka

Sky Hopinka, a Ho-Chunk Nation member, is a renowned contemporary Indigenous filmmaker whose work explores memory, language and place. While his films intertwine personal stories with larger contexts, they are meditative with their use of imagery and soundscapes. This collection of shorts places earlier works from Hopinka in conversation with his most current film, showcasing the woven narrative of resiliency and resistance. We are honored that Hopinka will appear in person to discuss his work, along with an in-depth conversation on his style and approach to the moving image.

- **Jáaji Approximately** (2015)
8 min.
- **Dislocation Blues** (2017)
17 min.
- **Fainting Spells** (2018)
11 min.
- **Cloudless Blue Egress** (2019)
13 min.
- **Sunflower Siege Engine** (2022)
12 min.

For all programs' details and admission information, please visit cinema.ucla.edu. Schedules and guest speakers subject to change.

Program co-curated by

Anpa'o Locke (Hunkpapha Lakota and Ahtna Dené)

Anpa'o Locke is an Afro-Indigenous writer, filmmaker and curator who is Húnkpap̃ha Lakota and Ahtna Dené, born in the Standing Rock Nation. She currently resides in Tiwa territory in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She was a 2022 Full Circle Sundance Institute Fellow. She received her degree in Film Studies from Mount Holyoke College, where she honed her craft of creating films that explore the Native diaspora experience and offer a critical analysis of Indigenous activism and environmentalism. Her passion for 35mm, Super 8, and 16mm filmmaking and photography is evident in her work and is a driving force behind her creative expression.

Colleen Thurston (Choctaw)

Award-winning filmmaker, educator and curator from Tulsa, Oklahoma. Colleen has served as the co-Executive Director of the Fayetteville Film Festival, the Film Programming Assistant at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and the founding Director of Programming of Tulsa American Film Festival. She is currently a programmer for Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival and the Project Lead for Native Lens, a collaborative Indigenous digital series for Rocky Mountain PBS and KSUT Tribal Radio. Colleen has produced work for the Smithsonian Channel, Vox, illumiNATIVE and museums, public television stations, and federal and tribal organizations. She holds a position as an Assistant Professor at the University of Oklahoma where she teaches documentary studies and film production. Colleen is a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Humanities Advisor

Adam Piron (Kiowa/Mohawk) is a filmmaker and curator based in Southern California. Piron currently serves as Director of Sundance Institute's Indigenous Program and is a co-founder of COUSIN, a collective supporting Indigenous artists expanding the form of film.

Advisory Committee

Maya Rose Dittloff (Ukkayǔ'kwīyinnimāakii) is a Blackfeet, Mandan and Hidatsa writer and director.

Patricia Gomes (Purepecha) is a film producer and oversees the LA SKINS FEST film festival as well as founded the Native American youth media and tech-based workshops.

Aiko Little is a Native-American (Oglala Lakota) & Filipina writer, actor and Vice Chair of the WGA's Native American Indigenous Writer's Committee.

Gabrielle Norte is a Cahuilla and Cupeño filmmaker, photographer, and Master of Library and Information Science graduate student at University of California, Los Angeles.

Emma Robbins is a Diné artist, activist, and community organizer.

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 500,000 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.

About the UCLA American Indian Studies Center

The UCLA American Indian Studies Center (AISC) was founded in 1969 as a research institute dedicated to addressing American Indian issues and supporting Native communities. The AISC serves as a hub of activities for Indigenous students, staff, faculty, alumni, and community, as well as serving as a bridge between the academy and indigenous peoples locally, nationally, and internationally. We foster innovative academic research by students and faculty, publish leading scholarship in the field of American Indian Studies, and support events and programming focused on indigenous issues. The Center also works in collaboration with some of the country's most influential and respected scholars writing and teaching in American Indian Studies today.

Vidiots is a Los Angeles based video store and film hub; screenings for this series will coincide with the grand opening of the new location in Eagle Rock.