

Cannes Classics 2021 lineup features ‘The Killing Floor’

The UCLA Film & Television Archive was involved in the film’s digital preservation

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LOS ANGELES (Jun. 29, 2021) – The 1985 independent film [The Killing Floor](#), which the UCLA Film & Television Archive digitally preserved in 2019, will be screened on July 15 at this year’s Cannes Film Festival. The film is part of the festival’s [classics lineup](#), a celebration of the history of cinema and a showcase of archival masterpieces on the big screen.

Early stages of the film’s restoration involved the UCLA Archive’s digital lab scanning the 16mm original negative to 4K resolution. The film’s original negatives and materials are deposited in the Archive’s Sundance Institute Collection, a program that ensures the long-term preservation of independent films.

The Killing Floor, which originally screened at Cannes in 1985, chronicles the story of a southern Black migrant who works in a large Chicago slaughterhouse during World War I. He joins with European immigrant workers in an effort to build the first interracial union in the slaughterhouses, only to confront rising racial and ethnic tensions.

“Strikingly, the film’s story is more relevant than ever,” said Elsa Rassbach, the film’s producer and co-screenwriter. “It explores the true story of the courageous attempts of ordinary people to overcome structural racism through solidarity 100 years ago. In the same spirit of solidarity, the union cast and crew and the Chicago community in 1983 enabled production of this ambitious indie film on an unusually small budget, believing this to be a story that must be told. We are all most grateful to the Sundance Institute, UCLA Film & Television Archive and Deluxe Entertainment Services Group for assisting the nonprofit production company Made in U.S.A. Productions in restoring this work in a beautiful 4K restoration, thus making the film available again to audiences today.”

In collaboration with Made in U.S.A. Productions, the Archive initiated the digital restoration of *The Killing Floor* in 2018 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1919 Chicago Race Riot. The film was screened at the Billy Wilder Theater as part of the [2019 UCLA Festival of Preservation](#).

“The inclusion of *The Killing Floor* in Cannes Classics is a monumental achievement fitting for a film that surfaces complex injustices with vision and artistry,” said May Hong HaDuong, director of the Archive, a division of UCLA Library. “Portraying the events that unfolded before the Chicago Race Riot of 1919, the film’s crucial message of unity foregrounds issues of racism and social justice that are currently at the center of international discourse. The UCLA Film & Television Archive shares the honor of preserving this important independent film with the Sundance Institute and Deluxe Entertainment Services Group, and salutes the director, Bill Duke, and Elsa Rassbach for this incredible honor and bringing this vital story to life.”

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.

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