

Presenting ‘American Neorealism, Part Two’ from June 3 – July 31

Free to the public at the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum

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LOS ANGELES (May 16, 2022) – The UCLA Film & Television Archive continues its survey of the impact of Italian Neorealism on American cinema by presenting [American Neorealism, Part Two: 1984–2020](#).

This showcase of 22 films across 12 nights will feature work by directors Garrett Bradley (*Below Dreams*), Charles Burnett (*My Brother’s Wedding*), Eliza Hittman (*Never Rarely Sometimes Always*), So Yong Kim (*In Between Days*), Jim McKay (*Our Song*), Kelly Reichardt (*Wendy and Lucy*) and Chloe Zhao (*Songs My Brothers Taught Me*). The films vibrantly illustrate the continued relevance and vitality of the form and reflect the diversity of today’s America. In this [UCLA Newsroom story](#), Paul Malcolm, film programmer at the Archive and co-curator of the series, explains what defines the genre and how the films were selected.

The series runs from June 3 through July 31 at the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum at UCLA. Admission is free for all screenings through June 2023, thanks to a gift from an anonymous donor.

- June 3, 7:30 p.m.
[Songs My Brothers Taught Me](#) (2015)
Chloé Zhao’s stunning directorial debut tells the story of a young man (John Reddy) emerging into adulthood on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, as viewed through the loving eyes of his sister (Jashaun St. John). At times hauntingly tragic, *Songs My Brother Taught Me* reveals a basic humanity at its core that is ultimately lyric and uplifting: it’s little wonder Hollywood sought out this gifted director from the independent ranks.

The Rider (2017)
Writer-director Chloé Zhao followed up *Songs My Brothers Taught Me* with another powerful and poignant story of survival drawn from the lives and landscapes of the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Brady Jandreau (Lakota Sioux) plays a character loosely based on his own experiences, a young rodeo star sidelined by injury who must grapple with life out of the limelight and on the edge of poverty.
- June 4, 7:30 p.m.
[My Brother’s Wedding](#) (1983)
Pierce (Everett Silas) stays busy taking care of self-appointed errands around his South Central neighborhood but for all his apparent energy, he remains directionless. When a

friend returns home after prison, Pierce's lack of ambition comes into sharp focus and choices will have to be made. Charles Burnett's follow up to *Killer of Sheep* is a warm, generous and powerful portrait of a neighborhood, a family, and a young man in transition.

Residue (2020)

After studying film in Los Angeles, Jay (Obi Nwachukwu) returns to the Washington, D.C. neighborhood where he was raised with plans to set a movie there. With signs of gentrification everywhere, Jay struggles to reconnect with his past while writer-director Merawi Gerima illuminates the multiple histories that converge and clash over just a few city blocks. It's a deeply personal activist vision that celebrates a people's strength and perseverance.

- June 10, 7:30 p.m.

[Sugar](#) (US, Dominican Republic, 2008)

At first *Sugar* appears to be the traditional tale of an up-and-coming athlete as Miguel, a star ballplayer from the Dominican Republic, tries to make it to the major leagues. But as he comes to question his life's dream, directors Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck draw us into a whole culture of immigrants whose vibrant but too-often invisible lives help weave the fabric of a changing America.

En el séptimo día (On the Seventh Day, 2017)

A Mexican immigrant working hard in Brooklyn, José (Fernando Cardona) only takes a break on Sundays to play soccer. When his boss tells him he's needed the same day his team is playing in the championship, he's forced to choose between work and joy. Writer-director Jim McKay (*Our Song*) draws much humor, insight and tension counting down to José's day of decision as part of a larger portrait of the immigrant community he turns to for help.

- June 17, 7:30 p.m.

[The Other Side](#) (Italy/France, 2015)

Roberto Minervini continues his exploration of American life with this terrifying glimpse into the frustrated dreams that in many ways, fueled the events of January 6, 2021. Filmed in Louisiana, the film alternates between the lives of two real life drug addicts and the far-right militias on their periphery. Their unspoken connection is the driving force of the film: a path from disenfranchised personal lives to a divided nation barely hanging onto its soul.

Tangerine (2015)

Sean Baker's *Tangerine* brilliantly captures the milieu of the transgender sex workers who live on the Hollywood streets. Kitana Kiki Rodriguez plays Sin-Dee Rella, a just-released parolee on the hunt for her loser pimp boyfriend, while her friend Alexandra (Mya Taylor) tries to check her drug-infused high octane energy. Along the way we get an up-close look at their lives in both desperation and dignity.

- June 18, 7:30 p.m.

[Frownland](#) (2007)

If one were to picture a modern American version of Edvard Munch's *The Scream*, it would be Ronald Bronstein's *Frownland*. Dore Mann gives an unforgettable performance as a lost 20-something drifting through the indignities of daily life. Mann never acted again after this searing role, and when one sees the darkness his character wanders amidst, one knows

why. If it all sounds miserable, it is—but in all the right ways, somehow finding a heart within its horrors.

Wendy and Lucy (2008)

Wendy and Lucy tells the tale of Michelle Williams' Wendy en route to an Alaska she may never reach, along with her faithful dog Lucy. Wendy is the cultural heir to Richard Linklater's early vagabond anti-heroes, exploring American byways with precious little to offer in the way of fulfillment, amidst a culture of stultifying comforts. Reichardt paints an indelible portrait of two souls just trying to get by in a land that doesn't care.

- June 26, 7:00 p.m.

[Our Song](#) (2000)

In this touching tale of three teenaged girlfriends coming into adulthood in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, Kerry Washington's breakout performance stands out, but Melissa Martinez and Anna Simpson shine alongside her. The choices they make are the crux of this poignant and beautiful tale that acclaimed director Jim McKay calls "the coolest, most gratifying creative experience I ever had."

In Between Days (U.S./Canada/South Korea, 2006)

Let's call this North American neorealism, as it's set in Canada: Jiseon Kim delivers a touching naturalist performance as teenaged Korean immigrant Aimie, adapting to a new city and new life. Sarah Levy's intimate winter cinematography gives the film a palpable sense of its frozen, snow-bound location, or rather, a dislocation that haunts the immigrant community in which she lives.

- July 16, 7:30 p.m.

[Never Rarely Sometimes Always](#) (U.S./U.K., 2020)

Never Rarely Sometimes Always was deservedly awarded a special jury prize at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival for Neorealism, even though no such prize exists. Newcomer Sidney Flanigan is a revelation as the young teen who travels from her small town in Pennsylvania to New York City for an abortion where she braves an inhumane system with a touching mix of tenderness and strength.

- July 17, 7:00 p.m.

[Man Push Cart](#) (2005)

Writer-director Ramin Bahrani critically acclaimed, post-9/11 immigrant story announced the re-emergence of neorealism in American independent cinema. In the wee hours of the Manhattan morning, Ahmad (Ahmad Rzavi) grinds out a living from a pushcart, a Sisyphean existence that Bahrani frames against Ahmad's more personal struggle to get his life back on track in a new country.

Chop Shop (2007)

Luring customers into a repair shop in the Willets Point area of Queens, Ale is a 12-year-old street kid already well-versed in the hustle as he works to save money, along with his older sister, Isamar (Isamar Gonzales), for a food truck and, hopefully, a way out. Writer-director Rahmin Bahrani surveys this almost post-apocalyptic world through Ale's eyes, a child surviving at the cut throat fringe of late capitalism.

- July 22, 7:30 p.m.
[Below Dreams](#) (2014)
Adapted from interviews she conducted with passengers she met on a Greyhound bus traveling from New York to New Orleans, director Garrett Bradley's impressive feature debut follows three 20-somethings—an unemployed father, a single mom and a new arrival from New York—as they grapple with the challenges of adulthood as inflected by their varied circumstances. Fusing the documentary and the subjective, Bradley deftly binds their complex inner lives to the life of a city itself in transition.

It's Impossible to Learn to Plow by Reading Books (1988)

Before achieving international acclaim with *Slacker*, Richard Linklater made this startling and little-seen precursor on Super 8mm for \$3,000, shooting and starring in the film himself. It loosely follows Linklater's travels across the country, and his meetings with friends and strangers. But the real tale is in its depiction of that moment some find in their 20s, when one is adrift in the world with time aplenty and no real destination.

- July 24, 7:00 p.m.
[Ballast](#) (2008)
Shot throughout in a wintry blue light, the Mississippi delta itself appears bruised by the loss and hurt at the core of writer-direct Lance Hammer's Black-centered family drama. In the wake of a young man's death by suicide, his twin brother, his estranged ex-wife and his 12-year-old son are forced to confront the past to find a way forward together. A multiple award-winner at Sundance in 2008, *Ballast* remains a singular, hauntingly poetic masterwork of 21st century independent filmmaking.

George Washington (2000)

George Washington loosely follows a racially mixed group of kids and teens in North Carolina, and a tragedy that transforms their lives. At the center of the storm is George (Donald Holden), who subsequently assumes a super hero persona and wanders the area in costume performing good deeds. Director David Gordon Green balances the scenario's surrealism with the dead serious performances of its non-professional cast and the stark beauty of the environment and rural landscape.

- July 29, 7:30 p.m.
[Ruby in Paradise](#) (1993)
After leaving home in rural Tennessee for the Florida coast, Ruby tells a friend, "I got out without getting beaten or pregnant so I'm doing okay." But okay isn't enough for Ruby who begins a journey to discovering herself on her own terms. A pioneering regional filmmaker, writer-director Victor Nunez tells Ruby's story through reflective rhythms in tune with her new hometown, itself a liminal space of lives all heading somewhere else.

Strange Weather (1993)

Shot on the Fisher Price Pixelvision toy camera, *Strange Weather* chronicles the daily lives of four listless crack addicts hanging out in a Miami apartment at the onset of a hurricane. This is a different spin on neorealism: many who viewed it thought it was pure documentary, even though Peggy Ahwesh adapted it from co-director Margie Strosser's stories of her sister's down-and-out life.

- July 31, 7:00 p.m.
[Border Radio](#) (1987)
Allison Anders, Dean Lent and Kurt Voss co-directed this stunning early feature while they were still grad students at UCLA. Ostensibly the tale of a punk musician (played by Chris D. of the Flesh Eaters) who hightails it to Ensenada after stealing unpaid money owed to him, it's as much a loving portrait of the L.A. indie music scene at the time.

For details, registration information and the latest 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.

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