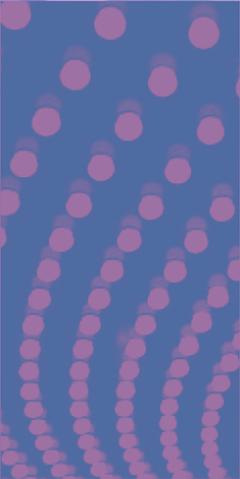


Emerson
COLLEGE

Department of
Visual and Media Arts



bright
lights
film series

Spring 2018 Calendar

Web: emerson.edu/brightlights

 /BrightLightsEmerson

 @BrightLightFilm

 BrightLightsEmerson



All screenings are free and open to
the public and start at 7:00 pm.

Paramount Center
559 Washington Street
Boston, MA



Mother!

Tuesday, January 30

Mother!

Directed by Darren Aronofsky, mystery/thriller, 121 minutes, USA, 2017

A couple's relationship is tested when uninvited guests arrive at their home, disrupting their tranquil existence. From filmmaker Darren Aronofsky (*Black Swan, Requiem for a Dream*), *Mother!* stars Jennifer Lawrence, Javier Bardem, Ed Harris and Michelle Pfeiffer in this riveting psychological thriller about love, devotion, and sacrifice. Discussion led by VMA Associate Professor Harlan Bosmajian and Director of Religious and Spiritual Life & Campus Chaplain Harrison Blum to follow.

F

Thursday, February 1

One of Us

Directed by Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady, documentary, 95 minutes, USA, 2017, English and Yiddish with English subtitles



One of Us

One of Us explores the opaque world of Hasidic Judaism through a cadre of fascinating characters. Through unique and intimate access over the span of three years, acclaimed observational filmmakers Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady (*Jesus Camp, Detropia*) delve into the lives of three brave individuals who have recently made the decision to leave the insular ultra-orthodox community at the expense of all else, including relationships with their family members and—in one case—their personal safety. With a sensitive and compassionate eye, *One of Us* chronicles the aching cinematic journey of people in search of a personal freedom that comes only at a very high cost. Discussion with alum editor JD Marlow to follow.

W SJ EC

Tuesday, February 6

Good Time

Directed by Josh and Bennie Safdie, drama/thriller, 101 minutes, USA, 2017

After a botched bank robbery lands his younger brother in prison, Constantine Nikas (Robert Pattinson) embarks on a twisted odyssey through New York City's underworld in an increasingly desperate and dangerous attempt to get his brother out of jail. Over the course of one adrenalized night, Constantine finds himself



Good Time

on a mad descent into violence and mayhem as he races against the clock to save his brother and himself, knowing their lives hang in the balance. Discussion led by VMA Affiliated Faculty Robert Ribera to follow.

D

Thursday, February 8

Loving Vincent

Directed by Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman, animation/drama, 94 minutes, UK/Poland, 2017

Loving Vincent is a stunning, fully painted animated feature, starring Douglas Booth and Oscar-nominated Saoirse Ronan that explores the life and controversial death of Vincent Van Gogh, told by his paintings and by the characters that inhabit them. The intrigue unfolds through interviews with the characters closest to Vincent and through dramatic reconstructions of the events leading up to his death. Discussion led by VMA Professor Cher Knight to follow.

W F D I



Loving Vincent

Tuesday, February 13

The Blind Boys of Alabama: How Sweet the Sound

Directed by Leslie McCleave, documentary, 89 minutes, USA, 2016, English with subtitles

The Blind Boys of Alabama first met in the 1930s at a segregated state-run vocational school and these friends since childhood comprise the last of the great Gospel quartets. Combining verite shot over 10 years with current and archival performances, the film examines the past, present, and future of the group. Discussion led by director and VMA Assistant Professor Leslie McCleave to follow. This film will be presented with audio description for the vision impaired.

EC W POC SJ D



The Blind Boys of Alabama

Thursday, February 15

Heroin(e)

This screening will take place at 5:00 pm (instead of the usual Bright Lights screening time of 7:00 pm)



Directed by Elaine McMillian Sheldon, documentary, 39 minutes, USA, 2017

Once a bustling industrial town, Huntington, West Virginia, has become the epicenter of America's modern opioid epidemic, with an overdose rate 10 times the national average. This flood of heroin now threatens this Appalachian city with a cycle of generational addiction, lawlessness, and poverty. But within this distressed landscape, Sheldon highlights three women working to change the town's narrative and break the devastating cycle of drug abuse one person at a time. Fire Chief Jan Rader spends the majority of her days reviving those who have overdosed; Judge Patricia Keller presides over drug court, handing down empathy along with orders; and Necia Freeman of Brown Bag Ministry feeds meals to the women selling their bodies for drugs. As America's opioid crisis threatens to tear communities apart, *Heroin(e)* shows how the chain of compassion holds one town together. Discussion led by director to follow via Skype.

W SJ EC

Key

- F** Feminist (Bath Film Festival rating)
- W** Directed by women
- POC** Directed by or featuring people of color
- EC** Emerson College community
- D** Dealing with disability issues
- I** International cinema
- LGBTQ** Dealing with LGBTQ issues
- SJ** Social Justice cinema
- COM** Comedy

About the "F-Rating"

The F-rating was founded by Holly Tarquini at Bath Film Festival 2014, where she wanted to highlight films that feature prominent women both behind the camera and in front of it. Every film that ticks "yes" to one of the following questions receives the F-rating of approval:

- (1) Does it have a female director?
 - (2) Is it written by a woman?
 - (3) Is/are there complex female characters on screen who exist in their own right (not simply there to support the male lead)?
- The F stands for *feminist*. Feminism is:

"The belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities." We believe that feminism benefits everyone.

<http://f-rated.org>



The Killing of a Sacred Deer

Tuesday, February 20

The Killing of a Sacred Deer

Directed by Yorgos Lanthimos, drama/thriller, 121 minutes, UK/USA/ Ireland, 2017

Dr. Steven Murphy (Colin Farrell) is a renowned cardiovascular surgeon presiding over a spotless household with his ophthalmologist wife Anna (Nicole Kidman) and their two exemplary children, 12-year-old Bob (Sunny Suljic) and 14-year-old Kim (Raffey Cassidy). Lurking at the margins of his idyllic suburban existence is Martin (Barry Keoghan), a fatherless teen who Steven has covertly taken under his wing. As Martin begins insinuating himself into the family's life in ever-more unsettling displays, the full scope of his intent becomes menacingly clear when he

confronts Steven with a long-forgotten transgression that will shatter the Murphy family's domestic bliss. Discussion led by VMA Distinguished director in Residence Reggie Life to follow.

F I

Thursday, February 22

The Florida Project

Directed by Sean Baker, drama, 111 minutes, USA, 2017

Set on a stretch of highway just outside the imagined utopia of Disney World, *The Florida Project* follows six-year-old Moonee (Brooklynn Prince) and her rebellious mother Halley (Bria Vinai) over the course of a single summer. The two live week to week at "The Magic Castle," a budget hotel managed by Bobby (Willem Dafoe), whose stern exterior hides a deep reservoir of kindness and compassion. Despite her harsh surroundings, the precocious and ebullient Moonee has no trouble making each day a celebration of life, her endless afternoons overflowing with mischief and grand adventure

as she and her ragtag playmates fearlessly explore the utterly unique world into which they've been thrown. Unbeknownst to Moonee, however, her delicate fantasy is supported by the toil and sacrifice of Halley, who is forced to explore increasingly dangerous possibilities in order to provide for her daughter. Discussion led by VMA Assistant Professor Korbett Matthews to follow.

F



Free in Deed

Tuesday, February 27

Free in Deed

Directed by Jake Mahaffy, drama, 100 minutes, USA, 2017

Set in the distinctive world of storefront churches, and based on actual events, *Free in Deed* depicts one man's attempts to perform a miracle. When a single mother brings her young boy to church for healing, this lonely Pentecostal minister is forced to confront the seemingly incurable illness of the child... and his own demons as well. The more he prays, the more things seem to spiral out of his control. Discussion led by producer and VMA Assistant Professor Mike S Ryan to follow.

POC D EC



The Florida Project

Thursday, March 1

Lady Bird

Co-sponsored by the MIT Women Take the Reel Series

Directed by Greta Gerwig, drama/comedy, 94 minutes, USA, 2017

Christine "Lady Bird" McPherson (Saoirse Ronan) fights against but is exactly like her wildly loving, deeply opinionated and strong-willed mom (Laurie Metcalf), a nurse working tirelessly to keep her family afloat after Lady Bird's father (Tracy Letts) loses his job. Set in Sacramento, California, in 2002, amid a rapidly shifting American economic landscape, *Lady Bird* is an affecting look at the relationships that shape us, the beliefs that define us, and the unmatched beauty of a place called home. Discussion led by Institute for Liberal Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies Assistant Professor Eileen McBride to follow.

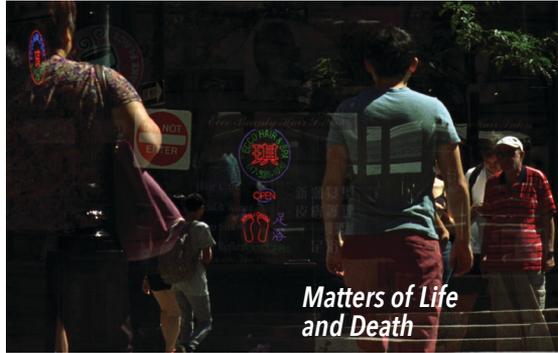
W F



Tuesday, March 13

Matters of Life and Death

Short films by Robert Todd



Emerson Professor Robert Todd presents a selection of his latest 16mm films in a program of cinematic poems that follow the changing tides of the living world, and the shifting textures of both inner and outer light. Films containing both unity and distance: a space to come together as we stand (and walk) apart, a reflection of our fragmented worlds that seem to overlap, a shared illusion of community, rendered harmoniously, entering the envelope of life, moving through and touching upon its many layers, with their embedded joys and sorrows. Discussion with filmmaker and VMA Professor Rob Todd to follow.

EC

Thursday, March 15

In the Hills and Hollows

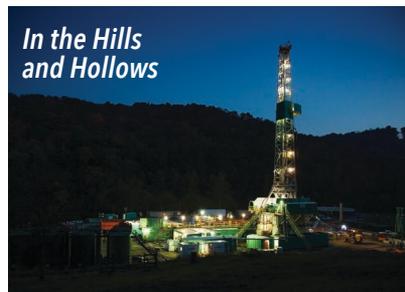
Co-sponsored by the MIT Women Take the Reel Series

Directed by Keely Kernan, documentary, 77 minutes, USA, 2016.

The boom and bust coal

industry that has dominated the landscape of West Virginia for over a century is being replaced by natural gas. *In the Hills and Hollows* documents the lives of rural West Virginians and their communities, steeped in history and heritage, responding to yet another uncertain future. Discussion with director and MFA candidate Keely Kernan to follow.

W SJ EC



Tuesday, March 20

Sighted Eyes/Feeling Heart

Co-sponsored by Wicked Queer and the MIT Women Take the Reel series



Directed by Tracy Heather Strain, documentary, 118 minutes, USA, 2017

Sighted Eyes/Feeling Heart is the first-ever feature documentary about Lorraine Hansberry, the visionary playwright who authored the groundbreaking *A Raisin in the Sun*. An overnight sensation, the play transformed the American theater and has long been considered a classic, yet the remarkable story of the playwright faded from view. With this documentary, filmmaker Tracy Heather Strain resurrects the Lorraine Hansberry we have forgotten—a passionate artist, committed activist, and sought-after public intellectual who waged an outspoken and defiant battle against injustice in 20th-century America. The film reveals Hansberry’s prescient works tackling race, human rights, women’s equality, and sexuality that anticipated social and political movements on the horizon. Discussion led by Writer, producer, director Tracy Heather Strain.

W SJ POC LGBTQ

Thursday, March 22

Unrest

Co-presented with the ReelAbilities Film Festival and MIT Women Take the Reel Series

Directed by Jennifer Brea, documentary, 98 minutes, USA, 2017

Jennifer Brea is an active Harvard PhD student about to marry the love of her life when suddenly her body starts failing her. Hoping to shed light on her strange symptoms, Jennifer grabs a camera and films the darkest moments unfolding before her eyes as she is derailed by M.E. (commonly known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome), a mysterious illness some still believe is “all in your head.” Panel discussion on myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome to follow. This film will be presented with audio description for the vision impaired.

W POC D SJ



Unrest



Barracuda

Tuesday, March 27

Barracuda

Co-sponsored by the Independent Film Festival of Boston and MIT Women Take the Reel Series

Directed by Julia Halpern and Jason Cortlund, drama, 100 minutes, USA, 2017

A young British woman named Sinaloa comes to Texas to find Merle, her half-sister by way of their dead country musician father. It doesn’t take long for Sinaloa to charm her way into Merle’s life, and her singing awakens something in Merle and erases any lingering doubts about their shared bloodline. But an all-too-familiar chaos comes with it, which soon starts to unravel Merle’s stable world. Discussion led by director and VMA Assistant Professor Julia Halpern to follow.

W F EC

Thursday, March 29

Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri

Directed by Martin McDonagh, drama, 115 minutes, USA, 2017

After months have passed without a culprit in her daughter’s murder case, Mildred Hayes (Academy Award winner Frances McDormand) makes a bold move, painting three signs leading into her

town with a controversial message directed at William Willoughby (Academy Award nominee Woody Harrelson), the town's revered chief of police. When his second-in-command Officer Dixon (Sam Rockwell), an immature mother's boy with a penchant for violence, gets involved, the battle between Mildred and Ebbing's law enforcement is only exacerbated. Discussion led by VMA Associate Professor Jean Stawarz to follow.

F



Three Billboards

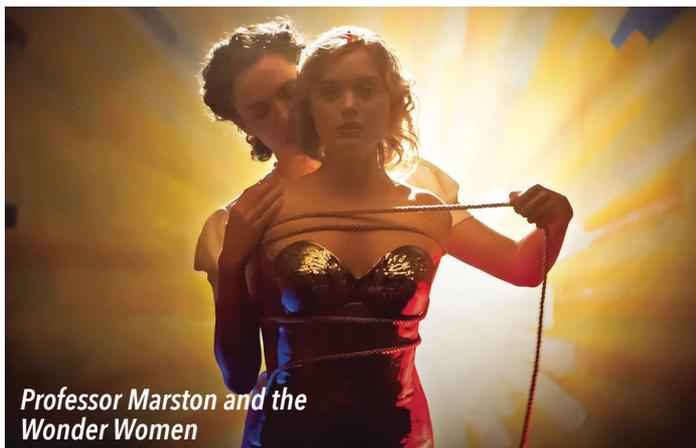
Tuesday, April 3

Professor Marston and the Wonder Women

Co-presented as part of the Wicked Queer: Boston LGBT Film Festival

Directed by Angela Robinson, drama, 108 minutes, USA, 2017

In a superhero origin tale unlike any other, the film is the incredible true story of what inspired Harvard psychologist Dr. William Moulton Marston to create the iconic Wonder Woman character in the 1940s. While Marston's feminist superhero was criticized by censors for



Professor Marston and the Wonder Women

her "sexual perversity," he was keeping a secret that could have destroyed him. Marston's muses for the Wonder Woman character were his wife Elizabeth Marston and their lover Olive Byrne, two empowered women who defied convention: working with Marston on human behavior research while building a hidden life with him that rivaled the greatest of superhero disguises. Discussion led by VMA Assistant Professor Sarah Zaidan to follow.

W F LGBTQ SJ

Thursday, April 5

BPM (Beats per Minute)

Co-presented as part of the Wicked Queer: Boston LGBT Film Festival

Directed by Robin Campillo, drama, 140 minutes, France, 2017, French with English subtitles.

In Paris in the early 1990s,

a group of activists goes to battle for those stricken with HIV/AIDS, taking on sluggish government agencies and major pharmaceutical companies in bold, invasive actions. The organization is ACT UP, and its members, many of them gay and HIV-positive, embrace their mission with a literal life-or-death urgency. Amid rallies, protests, fierce debates, and ecstatic dance parties, the newcomer Nathan falls in love with Sean, the group's radical firebrand, and their passion sparks against the shadow of mortality as the activists fight for a breakthrough. Discussion led by VMA Senior Scholar-in-Residence Ken Feil to follow.

F LGBTQ SJ



BPM



I, Tonya

Tuesday, April 10

I, Tonya

Directed by Craig Gillespie, comedy/drama, 119 minutes, USA, 2017

Based on the unbelievable but true events, *I, Tonya* is a darkly comedic tale of American figure skater Tonya Harding and one of the most sensational scandals in sports history. Though Harding was the first American woman to complete a triple axel in competition, her legacy was forever defined by her association with an infamous, ill-conceived, and even more poorly executed attack on fellow Olympic competitor Nancy Kerrigan. Craig Gillespie's *I, Tonya* is an absurd, irreverent, and piercing portrayal of Harding's life and career in all of its unchecked—and checkered—

glory. Discussion led by VMA Associate Professor Miranda Banks to follow.

F COM

Thursday, April 12

The Disaster Artist

Directed by James Franco, comedy, 104 minutes, USA, 2017.

The Disaster Artist details the incredible true story behind the making of *The Room*, a 2003 film that quickly became a cult hit due to its reputation as "the Greatest Bad Movie Ever Made." This comedy-drama chronicles its production and how it emerged from the friendship between weirdo auteur Tommy Wiseau (James Franco) and struggling actor Greg Sestero (Dave Franco). Discussion led by VMA Assistant Professor Ed Lee to follow.

COM



The Disaster Artist

The Bright Lights Film Series is sponsored by the Department of Visual and Media Arts at Emerson College. The mission of the series is to create community through cinema and welcomes both Emerson faculty, students, and staff as well as the general public. Bright Lights seeks to create an environment where cinema is not only viewed and appreciated but where a dialogue is fostered and a community of media makers, academics, and aficionados are engaged and supported. The series is committed to screening at least 50 percent of films directed by women and crafting a diverse program including filmmakers of color, queer cinema, and films dealing with disability.

Screenings take place every Tuesday and Thursday evening during the semester with the exception of occasions when the College is closed (such as holidays, spring break, inclement weather). Sessions are always free and open to the public. This series is curated and managed by the director of programming, Anna Feder.

Contact: Anna Feder
Director of Programming
anna_feder@emerson.edu
617-824-3805

the **NON-FICTION**
CA:RT:EL

Short films to precede documentary features curated by alum Kori Feener of the Non-Fiction Cartel. The Non-Fiction Cartel is a working collaborative that supports, creates and enhances short form, documentary media making in New England. www.thenonfictioncartel.com.