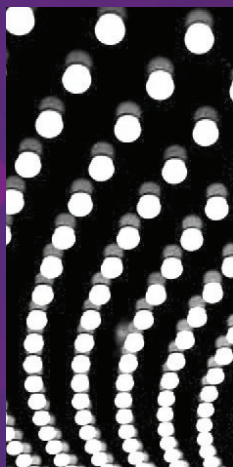


Department of
Visual and Media Arts

Fall 2020 Calendar



bright
lights
film series

Web: emerson.edu/brightlights

 /BrightLightsEmerson

 @BrightLightFilm

 BrightLightsEmerson



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



Thursday, September 17

The Dilemma of Desire

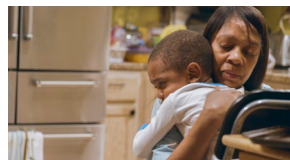
W LGBTQ SJ POC

Co-presented with the Boston Women's Film Festival

Directed by Maria Finitzo, documentary, English, 108 minutes, USA, 2020

A vérité film about female sexual desire and the powerful gender politics that revolve around NOT acknowledging female desire. We know that the female body is the primary metaphor for sexuality, saturating advertising and mainstream erotic imagery. However, female sexual desire—what women actually want—is left out of the conversation. To make matters worse, cultural, religious, and political forces in fact punish women for expressing their sexual desire. Discussion with director and producer Maria Finitzo and subjects Sophia Wallace and Dr. Stacey Dutton to follow. **CC**

Gender and sexuality justice



Thursday, September 24

Through the Night

W SJ POC

Presented as part of the Boston Latino International Film Festival

with the Boston Women's and Roxbury International film festivals and SEIU Local 888

Directed by Loira Limbal, documentary, English, 90 minutes, USA, 2020

To make ends meet, Americans are working longer hours across multiple jobs. This modern reality of nonstop work has resulted in an unexpected phenomenon: the flourishing of 24-hour daycare centers. *Through the Night* is a vérité documentary that explores the personal cost of our modern economy through the stories of two working mothers and a child care provider whose lives intersect at a 24-hour daycare center. Discussion with director and producer Loira Limbal to follow. **CC**

Economic justice and racial justice



Thursday, October 1

Bedlam

D POC SJ

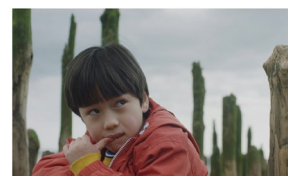
Presented as part of the Roxbury International Film Festival with Boston Jewish Film, Independent Film Festival Boston, and ReelAbilities Boston

Directed by Kenneth Paul Rosenberg, documentary, English, 86 minutes, USA, 2019

Through intimate stories of patients, families, and medical providers, *Bedlam* is a feature-length documentary that immerses us in the national

crisis surrounding care of the severely mentally ill. Filmed over five years, it brings us inside one of America's busiest psychiatric emergency rooms, into jails where psychiatric patients are warehoused, and to the homes—and homeless encampments—of mentally ill members of our communities, where silence and shame often compound personal suffering. Discussion with director and producer Kenneth Rosenberg and producer Peter Miller to follow. **CC**

Racial justice, mental health and disability justice



Thursday, October 8

The Reason I Jump

I POC D SJ

Co-presented with ReelAbilities Boston and the Roxbury International Film Festival

Directed by Jerry Rothwell, documentary, English and Krio with English subtitles, 88 minutes, USA and UK, 2020

Based on the best-selling book by Naoki Higashida, *The Reason I Jump* is an immersive cinematic exploration of neurodiversity through the experiences of non-speaking autistic people from around the world. The film blends Higashida's revelatory insights into autism, written when he was just 13, with intimate portraits of five remarkable young people. It opens a window into an intense and overwhelming, but

often joyful, sensory universe. Discussion with producer and subjects to follow. **CC**

Mental health and disability justice



Thursday, October 15

The Fight

W **LGBTQ** **SJ** **POC**

Presented as part of the Boston Women's Film Festival with Wicked Queer: The Boston LGBT Film Festival, Independent Film Festival Boston, the Boston Asian American Film Festival, and the Boston Latino International Film Festival

Directed by Josh Kriegman, Elyse Steinberg, Eli B. Despres, documentary, 96 minutes, English and Spanish with English subtitles, USA, 2020

The Fight is an inspiring, emotional insider look at how these important battles are fought and the legal gladiators on the front lines fighting them. When a mother is separated from her child, a soldier is threatened to lose his career, a young woman's right to choose is imperiled at the pleasure of a government official, and the ability to exercise our basic right to vote is threatened, the consequences can be devastating to us and to future generations. *The Fight* celebrates the unsung heroes who fiercely work to protect our freedoms. Discussion with co-directors and producers Eli Despres and Elyse Steinberg to

follow. **CC**

Gender and sexuality justice, immigrant justice, and racial justice



Thursday, October 22

Code of the Freaks

W **D** **SJ**

Co-presented with ReelAbilities Boston, Boston Jewish Film, and the Boston Women's Film Festival

Directed by Salome Chasnoff, documentary, English, 68 minutes, USA, 2020

Code of the Freaks presents a radical reframing of the use of characters who are disabled in film. Using hundreds of clips spanning over 100 years of moviemaking and a cast of artists, scholars, and activists with disabilities, it's a scorching critique of some of Hollywood's most beloved characters. This revelatory documentary investigates the power of movie imagery to shape the beliefs and behaviors of the general public toward people with disabilities, and of people with disabilities toward themselves. Drawing its title from a line from Tod Browning's notorious 1932 film, *Freaks*, *Code of the Freaks* debunks well-worn tropes—the miracle cure, the blind guy driving a car, the magical little people, the face-feelers, the sexless, the better off dead—and brings an entirely fresh perspective. It dares to imagine a cinematic landscape that

Key

- 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



A note on accessibility:
All Bright Lights films and discussions will include closed captioning for the deaf and hard of hearing, which can be enabled on our streaming platform. We will also have audio description for films as indicated.

The Bright Lights Film Series implemented an advisory last fall to notify our community about potentially disturbing content. This information will be made available for those who seek it out at web.emerson.edu/brightlights/content-advisory.

centers the voices of people with disabilities. Followed by a conversation with producers Susan Nussbaum and Carrie Sandahl. **CC AD**

Mental health and disability justice



Thursday, October 29

Councilwoman

W POC SJ EC

Co-presented with the Boston Latino International Film Festival, the Boston Women's Film Festival, and SEIU Local 888

Directed by Margo Guernsey, documentary, English and Spanish with English subtitles, 57 minutes, USA, 2019

Politicians aren't often full-time hotel housekeepers, union members, grandmothers, and immigrants working service jobs. But Carmen Castillo changes that when she wins a seat on the City Council in Providence, Rhode Island. Carmen Castillo is a Dominican City Councilwoman who maintains her job cleaning hotel rooms as she takes on her new role in politics. She faces skeptics who say she doesn't have the education to govern, the power of corporate interests who take a stand against her fight for a \$15/hourly wage in the City, and a tough re-election against two contenders—all of this while balancing the challenges of managing a full-time job cleaning hotel rooms and a personal relationship. It's

a journey behind the scenes of politics after the victory. Panel discussion with director and producer Margo Guernsey to follow. **CC**

Economic justice and immigrant justice

Preceded by a selection from *Public Servants* directed by Dan Frank, MFA '19, documentary, English, Spanish, and Hmong with English subtitles, 20 minutes, USA, 2019. Behind every political candidate are dedicated volunteers who believe it's their civic duty to convince family, neighbors, and strangers that democracy is not dead. **CC**



Thursday, November 5

Cured

LGBTQ SJ

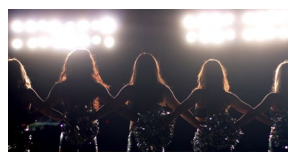
Co-presented with Wicked Queer: The Boston LGBT Film Festival

Directed by Patrick Sammon and Bennett Singer, documentary, English, 80 minutes, USA, 2020

Incorporating a trove of newly unearthed archival material—much of it unseen for decades—*Cured* takes audiences inside this riveting narrative to chronicle the strategy and tactics that led to a crucial turning point in the movement for LGBTQ rights. Indeed, following the Stonewall rebellion of 1969, the battle that culminated in the APA's decision marked the first major step on the path to first-class citizenship for LGBTQ Americans. *Cured*

sheds new light on this victory—which was far from inevitable—while situating the APA story within the larger context of the modern movement for LGBTQ equality. Discussion with director and producer Bennett Singer and guests to follow. **CC**

Mental health and disability justice and gender and sexuality justice



Thursday, November 12

A Woman's Work

W SJ POC

Co-presented with the Boston Women's Film Festival, Emerson College School of Communication, and SEIU Local 888

Directed by Yu Gu, documentary, English, 80 minutes, USA, 2019

Football and feminism collide in this feature documentary that follows two former NFL cheerleaders who file class-action lawsuits against their teams and the league, alleging wage theft and illegal employment practices. After more than 50 years of pervasive silence, these young women expose the gender inequality at the heart of America's favorite pastime, while facing exile from their communities and the job they love. Their fight is a microcosm of the battle women wage across all industries today. Discussion with director and producer Yu Gu and professors Cheryl Jackson and Lauren Anderson to follow. **CC**

Gender and sexuality justice and economic justice



Thursday, November 19

Dope Is Death

W **POC** **SJ**

Co-presented with the Boston Women's Film Festival, the Roxbury International Film Festival, the Boston Latino International Film Festival, and the Boston Underground Film Festival

Directed by Mia Donovan, documentary, English, 78 minutes, Canada, 2020

In 1973, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, along with fellow Black Panthers and the Young Lords, combined community health with radical politics to create the first acupuncture detoxification program in America. This form of radical harm reduction was a revolutionary act toward the government programs that transfixed the lives of Black and Brown communities throughout the South Bronx. *Dope Is Death* utilizes an abundant archive while giving us insight into how the acupuncture clinic rose to prominence and, despite funding challenges, still functions to this day. Some of those who benefited from the program became acupuncturists themselves. Dr. Mutulu's legacy is cemented within this profound story of community healing and activism. Discussion with director Mia Donovan to follow.

CC

Racial justice and economic justice

The Bright will be dark on Thursday, November 26, for Thanksgiving.



Thursday, December 3

The Condor & the Eagle

W **POC** **SJ** **I**

Co-presented with the Boston Women's, Boston Latino International, and Roxbury International film festivals

Directed by Clément Guerra, Sophie Guerra, documentary, English and Spanish with English subtitles, 90 minutes, Canada, Ecuador, France, Peru, USA, 2019

Never-before-seen images expose the global rise of land and water protectors across the Americas. In the midst of the burning of the Amazon, the mega-fires in Australia, and the global climate strikes, this award-winning documentary documents the ongoing collective climate awakening and the imperative of urgent change. Facing this overwhelming current political climate, a great many people are looking for answers that are adapted to today's urgency. As world climate scientists predict unprecedented global catastrophe, *The Condor & the Eagle* features Indigenous women leaders deploying unparalleled global response. Discussion with climate activists to follow. **CC**

Environmental justice and racial justice



Thursday, December 10

Queering the Script

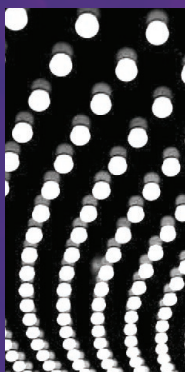
W **LGBTQ** **POC** **SJ**

Co-presented with the Boston Women's Film Festival, Boston Jewish Film, the Boston Underground Film Festival, and Wicked Queer: The Boston LGBT Film Festival

Directed by Gabrielle Zilkha, documentary, English, 85 minutes, USA, 2019

Queerness on television has moved from subtext, in series such as *Xena: Warrior Princess*, to all-out multi-season relationships between women, as seen on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Lost Girl*, and *Carmilla*. But things still aren't perfect. In 2016, a record number of queer women died on fictional shows, which broke the hearts of queer fans and launched a successful fight for better, more diverse LGBTQ2S+ representation. Stars such as Ilene Chaiken, Stephanie Beatriz, Lucy Lawless, and Angelica Ross join with the voices of numerous kickass fangirls in this fast-paced history of queer women's representation on contemporary television. Discussion with director Gabrielle Zilkha and subjects Dana Piccoli and Flourish Klink to follow. **CC**

Gender and sexuality justice and racial justice



bright lights film series

The Bright Lights series will be taking place in a virtual Bright Family Screening room space for the fall semester. These screenings will take place synchronously with a 45-minute moderated discussion to follow live. There will be an opportunity for the audience to participate and submit questions. We will be screening 12 films with a focus on social justice, including films dealing with racial, economic, environmental, mental health and disability, gender and sexuality, and immigration justice. I hope you will join us for these crucial conversations.

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 Thursday evening during the semester with the exception of Thanksgiving. Sessions are always free and open to the public, and attendance is capped at 175. This series is curated and managed by the director of programming, Anna Feder.

Contact: Anna Feder
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617-824-3805

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