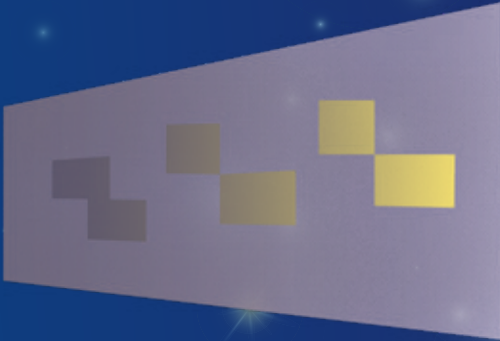


Emerson
COLLEGE

Department of Visual and Media Arts

Spring 2024 Program



BRIGHT LIGHTS
CINEMA SERIES

Web: emerson.edu/brightlights

 /BrightLightsEmerson

 @BrightLightFilms

 @BrightLightsEmerson

Every Thursday at 7:00 pm
during the semester

All screenings are free
and open to the public.

Key

- BIPOC** Directed by BIPOC filmmakers and/or amplifying BIPOC stories
- D** Directed by disabled filmmakers and/or amplifying stories about disability
- EC** Emerson College community
- EN** Cinema dealing with the Environment
- F** Feminist (Bath Film Festival rating)
- GD** Gender diversity (directed by filmmakers of marginalized genders)
- I** International cinema
- Q** Directed by queer filmmakers and/or amplifying queer stories
- SJ** Social justice cinema



A Note on Accessibility: All Bright Lights films will include open or closed captioning as indicated. Several films presented have descriptive audio available as indicated. All trailers and conversations will have open captions, which will appear for all viewers. For more information on accessibility in the Bright, visit websites.emerson.edu/brightlights/how-to-attend/accessibility.

The Bright Lights Film Series implemented an advisory in Fall 2019 to notify our community about potentially disturbing content. This information will be made available for those who seek it out at websites.emerson.edu/brightlights/content-advisory.

How to Access Screenings

All screenings are free and open to the public and seating is available on a first-come basis. Doors open at 6:30 pm. Tickets are no longer required. We reserve 15 seats for Emerson College faculty and staff until 15 minutes before show time. Any Emerson classes or community organizations attending as a group or anyone needing guaranteed seating for accessibility reasons may reach out to brightlightsemerson@gmail.com to reserve seats.

COVID Protocols

A Shared Code of Conduct between ArtsEmerson (hosts of the Bright Lights Cinema Series) and patrons can be found at artsemerson.org. Mask-wearing is strongly encouraged at all times while indoors at the theatre but is no longer required for most performances and events. For folks who require a socially distanced seating location or who have other questions or concerns, please contact the Box Office by phone at 617.824.8400 or by emailing tickets@artsemerson.org to arrange seating that accommodates your needs. Masks and face shields will also be available at the theatre upon request.*

If you or a member of your party is feeling sick, experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, or has been in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 10 days, please stay home. No one should come to the venue if they are not feeling well. It is within our values to create a safe space for everyone, full stop. All staff at the Theatres of Emerson College are working to ensure the health and safety of all who are sharing these spaces. Maintaining our community's health and safety requires the effort of all involved. By committing to this Shared Code of Conduct, you are not only protecting yourself, but fellow guests, artists, and staff. Please do all you can to help keep all of us safe. We cannot wait to see you at the theater!



Thursday, January 25

Saltburn



Co-presented with the Boston Women's Film Festival and the Boston Underground Film Festival

Directed by Emerald Fennell, drama/thriller, English, United States and United Kingdom, 131 minutes, 2023

Struggling to find his place at Oxford University, student Oliver Quick finds himself drawn into the world of the charming and aristocratic Felix Catton, who invites him to Saltburn, his eccentric family's sprawling estate, for a summer never to be forgotten. A beautifully wicked tale of privilege and desire. Discussion with Emerson College Associate Professor Ken Feil to follow.



Thursday, February 1

Israelism



Co-presented with the Boston Palestine Film Festival, If Not Now, Kavod, Boston Workers Circle, Jewish Voice

for Peace, Boston Students for Justice and Palestine and Faculty for Justice in Palestine

Directed by Erin Axelman and Sam Eilertsen, documentary, English, United States, 84 minutes, 2023

When two young American Jews raised to unconditionally love Israel witness the brutal way Israel treats Palestinians, their lives take sharp left turns. They join a movement of young American Jews battling the old guard to redefine Judaism's relationship with Israel, revealing a deepening generational divide over modern Jewish identity. Discussion with directors Erin Axelman and Sam Eilertsen to follow.



Thursday, February 8

So Unreal



Co-presented with the Boston SciFi Film Festival, the Boston Women's Film Festival, and the Boston Underground Film Festival

Directed by Amanda Kramer, documentary/sci-fi, English, United States, 101 minutes, 2023

A documentary that is both a history and philosophical exploration of cyberspace cinema, from 1981 to 2001 (*The Matrix*, *Tron*, *Tetsuo*, *eXisTenz*, and beyond). Narrated by pop culture icon Debbie Harry, the film examines cinema as a conduit for humanity's fear, anxiety, elation, and obsession over the emerging technology at the end of the millennium. Discussion with director Amanda Kramer '02 to follow.



Thursday, February 15

The Disappearance of Shere Hite

GD Q SJ

CC AD

Co-presented with the Boston Women's Film Festival, the Independent Film Festival Boston, GlobeDocs, and the Salem Film Festival

Directed by Nicole Newnham, documentary, English, United States, 118 minutes, 2023

Shere Hite's 1976 bestselling book, *The Hite Report*, liberated the female orgasm by revealing the most private experiences of thousands of anonymous survey respondents. Her findings rocked the American establishment and presaged current conversations about gender, sexuality, and bodily autonomy. So how did Shere Hite disappear? Discussion with director Nicole Newnham to follow.



Thursday, February 22

Unidentified Objects

Q D F BIPOC

CC

Co-presented with the Boston Underground Film Festival, Wicked Queer: the Boston LGBT Film Festival, Cinefest Latino, and the Boston SciFi Film Festival

Directed by Juan Felipe Zuleta, comedy/drama/sci-fi, English, United States, 100 minutes, 2022

Peter is a misanthropic dwarf hiding from the world in his shabby New York City apartment. But an unexpected visit from his upbeat—and possibly unhinged—neighbor Winona forces him out of his shell and onto an impromptu road trip. Their destination? What she believes to be the site of an upcoming alien visitation in the wilderness of rural Canada. On their increasingly surreal odyssey, Peter and Winona will encounter bickering lesbian cosplayers, shroom-addled survivalists, and even extraterrestrial highway cops. But the farther they go and the more their trauma comes to light, it becomes clear that the only thing more nerve-wracking than being abducted is being alone in the universe. Discussion with director Juan Felipe Zuleta and actor Matthew Jeffers to follow.



Thursday, February 29

Bad Press

GD SJ BIPOC

CC

Co-presented with the Roxbury International Film Festival, the Salem Film Festival, the Independent Film Festival Boston, the Boston Women's Film Festival, Harvard University Native American Program, United American Indians of New England, GlobeDocs, and North American Indian Center of Boston

Directed by Rebecca Landsberry-Baker and Joe Peeler, documentary, English, United States, 98 minutes, 2023

When the Muscogee Nation government abruptly repeals its landmark Free Press Act to muzzle the tribe's hard-hitting news outlet, defiant and foul-mouthed journalist Angel Ellis charges headfirst into a historic (and surprisingly funny) battle to restore her tribe's press freedoms. An enthralling, edge-of-your-seat nail biter that unfurls with the energy and suspense of a political thriller, *Bad Press* is a timely and unprecedented documentary about a lone journalist fighting a corrupt system for her fellow citizens. Discussion with directors Rebecca Landsberry-Baker and Joe Peeler and journalist Angel Ellis to follow.



Thursday, March 7

Sacred Nations: Short work by contemporary Indigenous storytellers



Co-presented with the Roxbury International Film Festival, Harvard University Native American Program, United American Indians of New England, and North American Indian Center of Boston

This program, curated by Lisa Simmons, celebrates the vibrant diversity and rich cultural tapestry of Indigenous communities around the world. The program is a carefully curated selection of films that illuminate the stories, traditions, and struggles of Indigenous peoples, offering a powerful platform for their voices to be heard. Each film has been selected with a deep respect for Indigenous perspectives, shedding light on the unique histories, traditions, and contemporary issues faced by these communities. From remote landscapes to urban environments, these films capture the essence of Indigenous identity, resilience, and the

ongoing pursuit of preserving Indigenous cultures that shape our global heritage.

Lisa Simmons is the founder and president of The Color of Film Collaborative, Inc. (TCOF), an organization of actors, producers, directors, and others with an interest in creating and supporting positive images of people of color in film, theater, and other media. The Color of Film Collaborative co-produces the Roxbury Film Festival, a festival that celebrates the vision and the voice of independent filmmakers of color. Discussion with curator Lisa Simmons, MA '17, and filmmakers to follow.

The Bright is closed March 14 for Spring Break.



Thursday, March 21

The Persian Version



Co-presented with Bagche Farsi School, Boston PYPE, the Roxbury International Film Festival, the Boston Women's Film Festival, the Boston Asian American Film Festival, and Wicked Queer: the Boston LGBT Film Festival

Directed by Maryam Keshavarz, drama/comedy, English and Farsi with English subtitles, United States, 107 minutes, 2023

Coming from two countries at odds with each other, Iranian American Leila (Layla Mohammadi) strives to find balance and embrace her opposing cultures, while boldly challenging the labels society is so quick to project upon her. When her family reunites in New York City for her father's

heart transplant, Leila navigates her relationships at arm's length in an effort to keep her "real" life separate from her family life. However, when her secret is unceremoniously revealed, so are the distinct parallels between her life and that of her mother Shireen (Niousha Noor). Punctuated by a bright color palette, snappy comedic relief, and vibrant dance numbers, *The Persian Version* delivers an honest portrayal of a woman who remains unapologetically herself, blended seamlessly into a heartfelt story about family, belonging, and the undeniable influence of pop music. Discussion with director Maryam Keshavarz to follow.



Thursday, March 28

King Coal



Co-presented with Independent Film Festival Boston, the Salem Film Festival, the Boston Women's Film Festival, the Emerson College Office of Sustainability, and the Engagement Lab

Directed by Elaine McMillion Sheldon, documentary, English, United States, 80 minutes, 2023

A lyrical tapestry of a place and people, *King Coal* meditates on the complex history and future of the coal industry, the communities it has shaped, and the myths it has created. Oscar-nominated filmmaker Elaine McMillion Sheldon reshapes the boundaries of documentary filmmaking in a spectacularly beautiful and deeply moving immersion into Central Appalachia where coal is not just a resource, but a way of life. While deeply situated in the communities under the reign of

King Coal, where McMillion Sheldon has lived and worked her entire life, the film transcends time and place, emphasizing the ways in which all are connected through an immersive mosaic of belonging, ritual, and imagination. Emerging from the long shadows of the coal mines, *King Coal* untangles the pain from the beauty and illuminates the innately human capacity for change. Discussion with director Elaine McMillion Sheldon, MFA '13, to follow.



Thursday, April 4

Stopmotion



Co-presented with the Boston Underground Film Festival

Directed by Robert Morgan, animation/horror, English, United Kingdom, 94 minutes, 2023

Ella Blake, a stop-motion animator struggling to control her demons after the loss of her overbearing mother, embarks upon the creation of a film that becomes the battleground for her sanity. As Ella's mind starts to fracture, the characters in her project take on a life of their own. *Stopmotion* is a distinctive and utterly original psychological horror film that explores themes of control, creativity, and madness. Discussion with director Robert Morgan to follow.



Thursday, April 11

Queendom



Co-presented as part of *Wicked Queer: the Boston LGBT Film Festival* with the *Boston Underground Film Festival* and the *Boston Women's Film Festival*

Directed by Agniia Galdanova, documentary, Russian with English subtitles, United States and France, 98 minutes, 2023

Gena, a queer artist from a small town in Russia, dresses in otherworldly costumes made from junk and tape, and protests the government on the streets of Moscow. Born and raised on the harsh streets of Magadan, a frigid outpost of the Soviet gulag, Gena is only 21. She stages radical performances in public that become a new form of art and activism. By doing that, she wants to change people's perception of beauty and queerness and bring attention to the harassment of the LGBTQ+ community. The performances—often dark, strange, evocative, and queer at their core—are a manifestation of Gena's subconscious. But they come at a price. Discussion with producer Igor Myakotin to follow.



Thursday, April 18

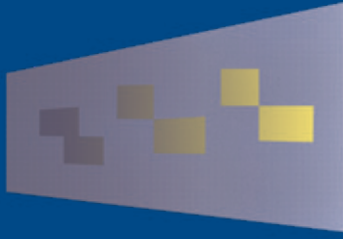
American Fiction



Co-presented with the *Roxbury International Film Festival* and the *Independent Film Festival Boston*

Directed by Cord Jefferson, drama/comedy, English, United States, 117 minutes, 2023

Cord Jefferson's hilarious directorial debut confronts our culture's obsession with reducing people to outrageous stereotypes. Monk is a frustrated novelist who's fed up with the establishment profiting from "Black" entertainment that relies on tired and offensive tropes. To prove his point, Monk uses a pen name to write an outlandish "Black" book of his own, a book that propels him to the heart of hypocrisy and the madness he claims to disdain. Discussion with faculty to follow.



BRIGHT LIGHTS CINEMA SERIES

The Bright Lights Cinema 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 filmmakers of marginalized genders and crafting a diverse program including BIPOC filmmakers with a commitment to highlighting Indigenous stories, queer cinema, and films dealing with disability.

Emerson College, Boston, resides on the ancestral and unceded lands of the Massachusetts people, whose name was appropriated by this Commonwealth. The Bright Lights Cinema Series makes a commitment to amplifying the voices of Indigenous filmmakers and highlighting the stories of the original stewards of this land and encourages all of us to work toward the continued self-determination of Indigenous peoples the world over. Screenings take place every 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, and seating is on a first-come basis. This series is curated and managed by Head of Film Exhibition and Festival Programs Anna Feder.

Contact: Anna Feder
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GLOBEDOCS

