BAMcinématek and ActNow Foundation present the third annual New Voices in Black Cinema, Feb 15—18

Spoken word poet Saul Williams (Aujourd’hui), director Adam Leon (Gimme the Loot), and more special guests in person

Featuring a performance by Williams in BAMcafé

10 New York premieres including one of Film Comment’s best unreleased films of 2012, Aujourd’hui, Slamdance selection Big Words, The Undershepherd starring Isaiah Washington, and more

The Wall Street Journal is the title sponsor of BAM Rose Cinemas and BAMcinématek.

Brooklyn, NY/Jan 18, 2013—From Friday, February 15 through Monday, February 18, BAMcinématek presents New Voices in Black Cinema, the third annual festival presented by the Fort Greene-based ActNow Foundation. Reflecting the wide spectrum of views and themes within the African diasporan communities in Brooklyn and beyond, the series features 10 New York premieres and special guests at nearly every screening. Home to ActNow programs since 2009, BAMcinématek continues this partnership by providing a showcase for new and established voices in black independent cinema.

Curtis Caesar John, New Voices in Black Cinema Festival Director and head of film programming for ActNow Foundation, says of the partnership with BAMcinématek, “This is an exciting third year for us: we have more New York premieres than ever before, a fantastic mix of standout local talent as well as directors from Senegal, Italy, and Canada, and filmmakers who have been burning up the festival circuit.”

Among the 10 New York premieres in this year’s festival is Alain Gomis’ Aujourd’hui (Tey; 2012—Feb 16)—one of Film Comment’s best unreleased films of 2012—starring internationally acclaimed writer, musician, and spoken word poet Saul Williams as a man with just 24 hours to live, roaming the streets of Senegal in an existential daydream. Williams will appear in person for a Q&A after the screening, followed by a spoken word performance in BAMcafé. Also making their New York premieres are Russ Parr’s The Undershepherd (2012—Feb 17), a provocative portrait of a minister (Grey’s Anatomy’s Isaiah Washington) transformed into a ruthless businessman; Alfons Adetuyi’s High Chicago (2011—Feb 16), about a man who starts gambling to bankroll his dream of opening a drive-in in Africa; Neil Drumming’s Big Words (2012—Feb 15), premiering at this year’s Slamdance Film Festival, which follows the reunion of a once-promising hip-hop trio on the eve of Obama’s history-making election; and Chinonye Chukwu’s stirring family drama alaskaLand (2012—Feb 17).

New Voices in Black Cinema also boasts a number of award-winning films and festival selections, including Adam Leon’s debut feature Gimme the Loot (2012—Feb 18)—winner of the SXSW Grand Jury Prize, nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best First Feature, and an official selection at Cannes’ Un Certain Regard. Leon’s “funny, smart-mouthed, high-energy comedy” (J. Hoberman), which has drawn comparisons as diverse as Ozu and commedia all’italiana, follows a pair of teenage graffiti artists who hatch a plan to get revenge on a rival gang by tagging a New
York landmark. Also screening is the devastating new documentary *The Central Park Five* (2012—Feb 17), "a concise, informative, and upsetting chronicle" (A.O. Scott, *The New York Times*) of the persecution of five young black and Latino men, several of whom will appear in person for a Q&A following the screening, wrongly accused of the 1989 rape and assault of the Central Park Jogger in 1989—a crime which galvanized the city. Legendary documentarian Ken Burns along with his daughter Sarah Burns and her husband David McMahon investigate their long journey to exoneration in this official selection of Toronto and Telluride.

Screening on Sunday, February 17 is Joshua Sanchez’s acclaimed ensemble drama *Four* (2012), which takes place in the course of one evening when a black, middle-aged married man goes on an Internet date with a white teenage boy, and his precocious young daughter pursues a man of her own. Based on the play by Pulitzer Prize finalist Christopher Shinn and starring *The Wire’s* Wendell Pierce (nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for his role in the film), “the film’s unblinking, nonjudgmental focus on this illegal relationship, and its extremely articulate and pointed dialogue, put it squarely in the post-New Queer Cinema tradition” (Stephen Holden, *The New York Times*).

This year’s documentary selections include Andy Mundy-Castle’s *The Fade* (2012—Feb 15), which connects the stories of four barbers in Ghana, Jamaica, the US, and the UK; Oliver Hardt’s *The United States of Hoodoo* (2012—Feb 16), which explores the influence of African religion on American artists such as Nick Cave, Darius James, and Ishmael Reed; and Jason Orr’s *FunkJazz Kafé: Diary of a Decade* (2012—Feb 16), an examination of the fabric of soul music and the challenges it faces in the mainstream music industry, featuring interviews with Erykah Badu, Cee Lo Green, Cornel West, and more; all making their New York premieres.

Since its inception, ActNow Foundation has presented stories about race, love, family, cultural differences, self-empowerment, the corporate world, and the toils and aspirations of the working, middle, and upper classes, with a declared mission statement to “promote and preserve independent films and theater that reflect the infinite range of African diaspora images across the globe.” In addition to *New Voices in Black Cinema* at BAMcinématek, ActNow Foundation curates the *Short Film Collective* and is currently working on theater productions for 2013. The complete *New Voices in Black Cinema* schedule and film descriptions are below.

**Screeners available upon request.**

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**Fri, Feb 15**
1:30pm: *18 Ius Soli + Beale St. Blues*
4pm: *The Fade*
7pm: *Big Words*
9:45pm: *The Kill Hole*

**Sat, Feb 16**
12pm: *The United States of Hoodoo*
3pm: *High Chicago*
6pm: *Aujourd’hui (Tey)*
9:15pm: *FunkJazz Kafé: Diary of a Decade*

**Sun, Feb 17**
1pm: *The Central Park Five*
4pm: alaskaLand
7pm: Four
9:45pm: The Undershepherd

Mon, Feb 18
1pm: Stones in the Sun
4pm: Unbreakable: Shorts Program
7pm: Gimme the Loot
9:45pm: No Homo

Film Descriptions

18 Ius Soli (2011) 50min New York premiere!
Directed by Fred Kuwornu
Italian law denies citizenship to young people born in Italy to immigrant parents. This documentary examines the injustice faced by 18 girls and boys born in Italy to parents from Africa, Asia, and South America.
with Beale St. Blues (2012) 25min
Directed by Kecia Benson.
A controversial documentary about struggling blues musicians on Beale Street in Memphis—the home of classic blues clubs and players.

Fri, Feb 15 at 1:30pm Q&A with Fred Kuwornu and Kecia Benson

alaskaLand (2012) 76min New York premiere!
Directed by Chinonye Chukwu.
With Alex Ubokudom, Chioma Dunkley.
An Alaska-raised Nigerian named Chukwuma struggles to balance his cultural heritage with the pressures of the world around him. After a family tragedy leads to a two-year estrangement from his younger sister, the siblings reconnect in their hometown, finding new friction yet inching closer to reconciliation.
with 4-1-9 (2012) 15min
Directed by Alexander Etseyatse.
Two British-Nigerian brothers are involved in an illegal family business. One brother wants to end it while the other wants to continue on.

Sun, Feb 17 at 4pm Q&A with Chinonye Chukwu and Alexander Etseyatse

Aujourd’hui (Tey) (2012) 86min New York premiere!
Directed by Alain Gomis.
With Saul Williams, Djolof Mbengue.
Today is the last day of Satché’s life. Though he is strong and in good health, he accepts his imminent death as he walks through the streets of Senegal, taking in the sites of his past as if he were looking at them for the last time: his parents’ house, his first love, the friends of his youth, and his wife and children. Acclaimed actor, musician, and poet Saul Williams stars in this stirring, reflective drama.
Sat, Feb 16 at 6pm Q&A with Saul Williams followed by a performance in BAMcafé

Big Words (2012) 97min New York premiere!
Directed by Neil Drumming.
With Dorian Missick, Gbenga Akinnagbe.
On the eve of President Obama's history-making election, three Brooklyn friends, once members of a promising hip-hop trio, cross paths once again and discover that some things never change. Former frontman John, once known as Big Words, is now a struggling IT guy who raps only to himself. James is a publicist living with his boyfriend, far removed from the days when he rhymed about getting girls. DJ Malik still spins records, but he wants the old days back. Together again, the guys reckon with the past and dreams deferred.
Fri, Feb 15 at 7pm Q&A with Neil Drumming and producer Matt Smith

The Central Park Five (2012) 119min
Directed by Ken Burns, Sarah Burns, David McMahon.
This devastating new documentary explores the grave miscarriage of justice in the aftermath of what Mayor Ed Koch named “the crime of the century.” Following the rape and assault of a white jogger in Central Park in 1989, five young black and Latino men were arrested amid a wave of media sensationalism that all but cemented the public’s perception of their guilt. Legendary documentarian Ken Burns, along with his daughter Sarah Burns and her husband David McMahon, revisits the long road to their exoneration, taking a careful and timely look of a city seething with racial tensions.

Sun, Feb 17 at 1pm Q&A

The Fade (2012) 75min New York premiere!
Directed by Andy Mundy-Castle.
This intimate documentary captures the lives of four Afro-descendent barbers in Ghana, Jamaica, the US, and the UK over the course of seven days. Interweaving their colorful stories, the film examines the cultural disparities among their locations.
Fri, Feb 15 at 4pm

Four (2012) 74min
Directed by Joshua Sanchez.
With Wendell Pierce, Aja Naomi King, Emory Cohen.
A steamy July 4th evening brings four people together in twin tales of seduction and conflicted desire. Joe, a black middle-aged married man, is out on an Internet date with June, a white teenage boy, while Abigayle, Joe’s precocious daughter, is out with a hot, wisecracking Latino basketball player named Dexter. As they get to know each other intimately, their realities are tested and the outcome is bracing.
with Breaking Night (2012) 10min
Directed by Yolonda Ross.
A girl flees a dire situation with her boyfriend at home and has an experience that transforms her life forever.
Sun, Feb 17 at 7pm Q&A with Joshua Sanchez and Emory Cohen

FunkJazz Kafé: Diary of a Decade (2012) 134min New York premiere!
Directed by Jason Orr.
Atlanta’s underground music scene comes alive in this vibrant documentary narrated by the innovators of an important—and in some cases overlooked—era in black culture. Spanning the late 1980s to the early 2000s, the film chronicles the evolution of the FunkJazz Kafé Arts & Music Festival, in the process examining the roots of soul music and the challenges it faces in the mainstream music industry. The film includes special appearances by Erykah Badu, Cee Lo Green, Chuck D, Cornel West, Kevin Powell, Roy Ayers, Doug E. Fresh, and more.
Sat, Feb 16 at 9:15pm Q&A with Jason Orr

Gimme the Loot (2012) 81min
Directed by Adam Leon.
With Ty Hickson, Tashiana Washington.
Malcolm and Sofia, two determined teens from the Bronx, are the ultimate graffiti writers. When a rival gang buffs their latest masterpiece, they hatch a spectacular plan to get revenge by tagging an iconic New York City landmark—but need $500 to pull it off.
Mon, Feb 18 at 7pm Q&A with Adam Leon and cast

High Chicago (2011) 98min New York premiere!
Directed by Alfonso Adetuyi.
With Colin Salmon, Karen LeBlanc.
A windswept mining town serves as the backdrop for this dramatic tale of one man’s risky leap into the big time. Forty-two-year-old Sam (the charismatic Salmon, in a commanding performance), a hard-drinking father of three, an ex-Navy man, an ex-miner, and a soon-to-be ex-husband, starts gambling full-time to bankroll his crazy plan to open a drive-in theater in Africa.
Sat, Feb 16 at 3pm Q&A with Alfonso Adetuyi
The Kill Hole (2011) 92min
Directed by Mischa Webley.
With Chadwick Boseman, Billy Zane, Tory Kittles.
A troubled Iraq War veteran is forced to pursue one of his own in the wilderness of the Pacific Northwest. Along the way, the two must confront a war crime that has long haunted them both.
Fri, Feb 15 at 9:45pm

No Homo (2012) 78min New York premiere!
Directed by Goddey Asemota.
Lance and Dame are aspiring fashion designers who sell custom shirts on the streets of SoHo. Because of their love of fashion the two are constantly questioned about their sexuality. As a gag they make a shirt with the logo “NO HOMO” on the front and sell them at their stand, which leads to their unlikely meteoric rise in the fashion world.
with Harriet Returns (2012) 9min
Directed by Marquis Smalls.
Harriet Tubman comes back to life to free young black men from the “mental slavery” of their sagging pants and carefree use of the N-word. But she meets her match in two young New York City rappers.
Mon, Feb 18 at 9:45pm Q&A with Goddey Asemota and Marquis Smalls

Stones in the Sun (2012) 93min
Directed by Patricia Benoit.
With Edwidge Danticat, Thierry Saintine, Patricia Rhinvil.
Amid political violence in Haiti, a young couple, two sisters, and a father and son are transported to New York, where they must confront the truths of their interlocked pasts. Widely acclaimed author Edwidge Danticat (Krik? Krak!) gives a moving performance as a teacher drawn into the social upheaval that surrounds her.
Mon, Feb 18 at 1pm

The Undershepherd (2012) 100min New York premiere!
Directed by Russ Parr.
With Isaiah Washington, Lamman Rucker, Malinda Williams and Vanessa Bell Calloway.
When the head preacher of his church plans his retirement, mild-mannered LC (Washington) is overcome by his access to power and money earned through his ministry, and slowly transforms into a ruthless business man.
Sun, Feb 17 at 9:45pm

The United States of Hoodoo (2012) 100min New York premiere!
Directed by Oliver Hardt.
Shaking up traditional ways of thinking about race, religion, and rationality, this documentary explores the influence of African religion on American popular culture. Darius James, Ishmael Reed, Danny Simmons, and Nick Cave are among the musicians, artists, miracle healers, gumbo cooks, and Mississippi blues men depicted in this examination of American culture, whose cultural diversity, allure, and vitality has depended on a host of ethnic influences.
Sat, Feb 16 at 12pm

Short Film Showcase: Unbreakable
From awkward encounters to mystical ones and from back-alley life and death negotiations to family dynamics that put one’s morality to the test, these short films capture the reality of families bonded by blood but not much else, those that consist of friends who have each other’s backs, and those we pass on the streets in our own neighborhoods every day. Featuring award-winning shorts Barbasol by Ralph Scott, Record/Play by Jesse Atlas, Carlos Seaton’s Karim., and more.
Mon, Feb 18 at 4pm Q&A with directors

About BAMcinématek
The four-screen BAM Rose Cinemas (BRC) opened in 1998 to offer Brooklyn audiences alternative and independent films that might not play in the borough otherwise, making BAM the only performing arts center in the country with two mainstage theaters and a multiplex cinema. In July 1999, beginning with a series celebrating the work of Spike Lee, BAMcinématek was born as Brooklyn’s only daily, year-round repertory film program. BAMcinématek presents new and rarely seen contemporary films, classics, work by local artists, and festivals of films from around the world, often with special appearances by directors, actors, and other guests. BAMcinématek has not only presented major retrospectives by major filmmakers such as Michelangelo Antonioni, Manoel de Oliveira, Shohei Imamura, Vincente Minnelli (winning a National Film Critics’ Circle Award prize for the retrospective) Kaneto Shindo, Luchino Visconti, , but it has also introduced New York audiences to contemporary artists such as Pedro Costa and Apichatpong Weerasethakul. In addition, BAMcinématek programmed the first US retrospectives of directors Arnaud Desplechin, Nicolas Winding Refn, Hong Sang-soo, and, most recently, Andrzej Zulawski. From 2006 to 2008, BAMcinématek partnered with the Sundance Institute and in June 2009 launched BAMcinemaFest, a 16-day festival of new independent films and repertory favorites with 15 NY feature film premieres; the fifth annual BAMcinemaFest will run from June 19—30, 2013.

Credits

The Wall Street Journal is the title sponsor of BAM Rose Cinemas and BAMcinématek.

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Brooklyn Brewery is the preferred beer of BAMcinématek.

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General Information

Tickets: General Admission: $12
BAM Cinema Club Members: $7, BAM Cinema Club Movie Moguls: Free
Seniors & Students (25 and under with a valid ID, Mon—Thu): $9
Bargain matinees (Mon—Thu before 5pm & Fri—Sun before 3pm no holidays): $8

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place, is the newest addition to the BAM campus and houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas is Brooklyn’s only movie house dedicated to first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming. BAMcafé, operated by Great Performances, is open for dining prior to BAM Howard Gilman Opera House evening performances. BAMcafé also features an eclectic mix of spoken word and live music for BAMcafé Live on select Friday and Saturday nights with a special BAMcafé Live menu available starting at 8pm.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center; D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue
Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center
Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM
Car: Commercial parking lots are located adjacent to BAM

For ticket and BAMbus information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit BAM.org.