



# Film

## BAM presents ***Black 90s: A Turning Point in American Cinema***, May 3—22, an exploration of a pivotal era for black filmmakers

March 29, 2019/Brooklyn, NY—From Friday, May 3 through Wednesday, May 22, BAM presents ***Black 90s: A Turning Point in American Cinema***, a nearly three week-long program of films, both low-budget art films and classic blockbusters, from an era of explosive creativity and newfound studio support for black filmmakers.

The 1990s witnessed a historic number of films made by African-American directors who blazed new aesthetic pathways and who created touchstone works that continue to inspire contemporary filmmakers. Bringing together popular hits and unsung gems, this expansive series surveys the rich variety of genres and styles—from indie drama to comedy to romance to noir to queer cinema—upon which black filmmakers left their mark, making crucial strides in a fight for more complex representation that continues today.

The series opens with a focus on the 1990s work of trailblazing filmmakers from the LA Rebellion, a generation of artists who studied at UCLA and created a black alternative to classical Hollywood. Opening night kicks off with Charles Burnett's ***To Sleep with Anger*** (1990), a poetic realist masterpiece that weaves strains of black folklore, surrealism, and macabre comedy, with a mesmerizing performance by Danny Glover. It screens with a new 35mm print of Burnett's short film ***When It Rains*** (1995), and will be followed by a Q&A with Burnett. Other films include Zeinabu Irene Davis' innovative, century-spanning parallel romances in ***Compensation*** (1999); LA Rebellion leader Haile Gerima's time-traveling portrait of the horrors of slavery and the power of revolt, ***Sankofa*** (1993); and Julie Dash's dreamy evocation of early-20<sup>th</sup>-century Gullah life and black womanhood, ***Daughters of the Dust*** (1991).

The series continues with a new restoration of multimedia artist Cauleen Smith's long-unseen ***Drylongso*** (1998), a black feminist murder mystery-buddy movie-romance, screening with the short ***Fragrance*** (Abel-Bey, 1991); Kasi Lemmons' atmospheric Southern Gothic melodrama ***Eve's Bayou*** (1997), screening with ***Dreadlocks and the Three Bears*** (Larkin, 1991); Maya Angelou's only film as a director, the portrait of black Southern family life, ***Down in the Delta*** (1998); and Leslie Harris' indie cult classic ***Just Another Girl on the I.R.T.*** (1992).

The series will also highlight queer classics of the era, including Stephen Winter's searing satire of government apathy towards the AIDS crisis, ***Chocolate Babies*** (1997), screening with the fantasy short ***Anemone Me*** (1990), co-directed by Bruce Hainley and celebrated playwright Suzan-Lori Parks; ***The Watermelon Woman*** (1996), Cheryl Dunye's watershed New Queer Cinema exploration of black lesbian identity and the history of black women in Hollywood; ***A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde*** (Griffin & Parkerson, 1995), a portrait of the remarkable feminist thinker, screening with the short ***Black Nations/Queer Nations?*** (Frilot, 1995); and Marlon Riggs' final feature ***Black Is... Black Ain't*** (1994) and his short ***Anthem*** (1991), both screening as part of an event co-presented with BAM Humanities, ***Essex Hemphill: Remembering and Reimagining***.

***Black 90s*** not only celebrates the independents and art films of the decade, but also blockbusters and popular classics that shaped culture. Music is the star in video auteur Hype Williams' Manhattan-set dancehall reggae drama, ***Belly*** (1998), starring Nas and DMX; the great hip-hop film ***Juice*** (Dickerson, 1992), starring Tupac in his first major film role, with a soundtrack composed by Naughty By Nature, Eric B. & Rakim, Too Short, and Cypress Hill; infectious hip-hop time capsule ***House Party*** (Hudlin, 1990); and Robert Townsend's Motown-inspired star-is-born drama ***The Five Heartbeats*** (1991).

Social issues come to the fore in the critique of rampant Reagan-era capitalism, ***New Jack City*** (Van Peebles, 1991); the award-winning slice-of-life neorealism of the Red Hook-set ***Straight Out of Brooklyn*** (Rich, 1991); the Hughes brothers' operatic and shattering ***Menace II Society*** (1993); and the hood



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drama sui generis, John Singleton's *Boyz n the Hood* (1991), screening with the stirring spoken word short *Why Am I a Threat?* (Perry, 1993). Connecting these films to a Hollywood history that erased black actors and filmmakers are two stylish neo-noirs: Bill Duke's hardboiled adaptation of crime writer Chester Himes' *A Rage in Harlem* (1991) and Carl Franklin's sophisticated detective film *Devil in a Blue Dress* (1995), with Denzel Washington as novelist Walter Mosley's gumshoe Easy Rawlins.

Comedy and romance also play a prominent role in the series, with the stoner comedy that gifted the world "Bye, Felicia," *Friday* (Gray, 1995); an underrated Eddie Murphy vehicle, the subtly subversive battle-of-the-sexes *Boomerang* (Hudlin, 1992); a 20<sup>th</sup>-anniversary screening of *Girls Trip* director Malcolm D. Lee's classic *The Best Man* (1999); *Bébé's Kids* (Smith, 1992), the first mainstream animated feature made expressly for black audiences; and *Chappelle's Show* director Rusty Cundieff's gangsta rap *Spinal Tap*, *Fear of a Black Hat* (1993). John Singleton's *Poetic Justice* (1993), starring Tupac and Janet Jackson, and the smart, sexy Chicago-set romantic comedy *Love Jones* (Witcher, 1997) both present tender visions of black love. The series showcases the great female stars of the era (and today) with *Set It Off* (Gray, 1996)—starring Jada Pinkett Smith, Queen Latifah, Vivica A. Fox, and Kimberly Elise—and the woman-power mega-hit *Waiting to Exhale* (Whitaker, 1995), starring Whitney Houston, Angela Bassett, Loretta Devine, and Lela Rochon. There will also be a special program celebrating the similar moment black creators experienced in 90s television.

The series concludes with three classics by Brooklyn cinematic ambassador Spike Lee: one of his most complex and virtuosic works, his furious-sad response to the early 90s cycle of hood movies, *Clockers* (1995); the explosive New York drama of sex, drugs, and interracial romance, *Jungle Fever* (1991), for which Samuel L. Jackson won a special Best Supporting Actor award at Cannes; and a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary screening of Lee's masterful evocation of pre-gentrification Bed-Stuy, *Crooklyn* (1994).

**For further press information, please contact:**

**Shelley Farmer at 718.724.8023 / [sfarmer@BAM.org](mailto:sfarmer@BAM.org)**

**Black 90s: A Turning Point in American Cinema Complete Schedule:**

**Fri, May 3**

7pm: *To Sleep with Anger + When It Rains*

**Sat, May 4**

2pm: *Compensation*

4:30pm: *Daughters of the Dust*

7pm: *Sankofa*

**Sun, May 5**

4pm: *Just Another Girl on the IRT*

6:30pm: *Eve's Bayou + Dreadlocks and the Three Bears*

9pm: *Down in the Delta*

**Mon, May 6**

4:30pm: *Down in the Delta*

7pm: *Drylongso + Fragrance*

**Tue, May 7**

4:30pm: *Eve's Bayou + Dreadlocks and the Three Bears*

7pm: *Chocolate Babies + Anemone Me*

**Wed, May 8**

7pm: *The Watermelon Woman*

9:15: *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde + Black Nations/Queer Nations?*



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## **Thu, May 9**

4:30pm: *To Sleep with Anger + When It Rains*  
7pm: *Black Is... Black Ain't*

## **Fri, May 10**

7pm: *Friday*  
9:15pm: *Set It Off*

## **Sat, May 11**

7pm: *New Jack City*  
9:30pm: *Belly*

## **Sun, May 12**

2pm: *Straight Out of Brooklyn*  
4pm: *Menace II Society*  
6:45pm: *Boyz N the Hood + Why Am I a Threat?*

## **Mon, May 13**

4:30pm: *Boyz N the Hood + Why Am I a Threat?*  
7pm: *Juice*

## **Tue, May 14**

7pm: *Devil in a Blue Dress*  
9:15pm: *A Rage in Harlem*

## **Wed, May 15**

4:30pm, 9:30pm: *Love Jones*  
7pm: *Poetic Justice*

## **Thu, May 16**

7pm: *Waiting to Exhale*

## **Fri, May 17**

6:45pm: *The Five Heartbeats*  
9:30pm: *Fear of a Black Hat + Oreos with Attitude*

## **Sat, May 18**

6:15pm: *Black 90s TV Event*  
8:45: *The Best Man: 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Screening*

## **Sun, May 19**

2pm: *Bebe's Kids*  
3:30pm: *House Party*  
6:15pm: *Boomerang*

## **Mon, May 20**

5pm, 8pm: *Clockers*

## **Tue, May 21**

5pm, 8pm: *Jungle Fever*

## **Wed, May 22**

7pm: *Crooklyn*

[About BAM Film](#)



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Since 1998 BAM Rose Cinemas has been Brooklyn's home for alternative, documentary, art-house, and independent films. Combining new releases with year-round repertory program, the four-screen venue hosts 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. BAM has hosted major retrospectives of filmmakers like Spike Lee, Chantal Akerman, John Carpenter, Manoel de Oliveira, Luis Buñuel, King Hu, and Vincente Minnelli (winning a National Film Critics' Circle Award prize for the retrospective), and hosted the first US retrospectives of directors Arnaud Desplechin, Hong Sang-soo, Andrzej Zulawski, and Jiang Wen. Since 2009 the program has also produced BAMcinemaFest, New York's home for American independent film, and has championed the work of filmmakers like Janicza Bravo, Andrew Dosunmu, Lena Dunham, and Alex Ross Perry. The 12-day festival of New York premieres, now in its 11th year, runs from June 12—23, 2019.

## Credits:

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## General Information

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 (between Lafayette Ave and Hanson Place), houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas features first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey Theater) 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

For ticket information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit [BAM.org](http://BAM.org).