



March 2023 Newsletter

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Happy Women's History Month



The BFCA's collections include hundreds of original posters and promotional materials from productions across the breadth of Black film history. We rotated in a new themed exhibit of posters (entitled "A Woman's Touch: Black Women and the Power of Solidarity") to observe the start of the Fall 2022 semester. If you are

in Wells Library, please stop by our reception area on the ground floor level for a quiet place to hang out or study while being surrounded by beautiful historical examples of Black film promotional art.



(Wells Library, Ground Floor, shared study space.)



Bridgett M. Davis visits the BFCA: 25th Anniversary of Naked Acts, Master Class, & more...

The Black Film Center & Archive was honored to welcome back multi-talented writer, novelist, teacher, and filmmaker Bridgett M. Davis on Thurs., Feb. 23. Ms. Davis is Professor of Journalism and the Writing Professions at Baruch College, CUNY, where she instructs classes in creative writing and screenwriting. She is the author of two novels, *Shifting Through Neutral* (2004) and *Into the Go-Slow* (2014), as well as the New York Times Editors' Choice memoir *The World According to Fannie Davis: My Mother's Life in the Detroit Numbers* (2019). Her film directorial debut *Naked Acts* (1996) was a landmark feminist exploration of Black women's sexuality and body image, capturing a rich period of '90s independent cinema when increasing numbers of BIPOC film artists were expanding the range of acceptable Black screen representations.



(Dan Hassoun, Bridgett M. Davis, Amber Bertin, Ja Quita Joy Roberts, Essence London)



(Bridgett M. Davis reviewing collections materials.)



(Dan Hassoun, Assistant Archivist, and Bridgett M. Davis)

Ms. Davis led a special Master Class from 11am-12:30pm at the BFCA office (Wells 044) on Thurs, February 23, where she led participants in an intimate conversation about her writing and filmmaking techniques and experiences as an independent filmmaker. Many thanks to all of the attendees and amazing questions.



(BFCA Interim Director, Rachael Stoeltje and Bridgett M. Davis.)



(Master Class, with Bridgett M. Davis.)

The Q&A with Bridgett Davis and IU Prof. Elena Guzman was incredible. Special thanks to Prof. Guzman for hosting this post-screening dialogue with Ms. Davis! Thanks to all of the attendees, as well.



(Prof. Elena Guzman and Bridgett M. Davis.)

Ms. Davis is posing by our special exhibit from the BFCA including original materials from the production of Naked Acts. It is still available to view in the IU Cinema's basement level until the end of the Spring 2023 Semester.



(Bridgett M. Davis and Naked Acts exhibit)

While on campus, Ms. Davis visited with professors and former BFCA Directors, Dr. Akin Adesokan and Dr. Michael Martin, along with Black Camera Staff.



(Dr. Akin Adesokan and Bridgett M. Davis)



(Dr. Michael Martin, Bridgett M. Davis, Cole Nelson, Joseph Roskos)

Black Filmmaker Interviews

The Black Film Center & Archive holds hundreds of rare interview recordings documenting the stories of Black film artists. In our ongoing monthly series, "The Black Film Center & Archive Presents: Black Filmmaker Interviews," we will widely publish one previously-unreleased interview from our collections. The series continues with a conversation with filmmaker Julie Dash, recorded October 29, 2006 with then-BFCA director Michael T. Martin at the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

https://media.dlib.indiana.edu/media_objects/hx11z3002

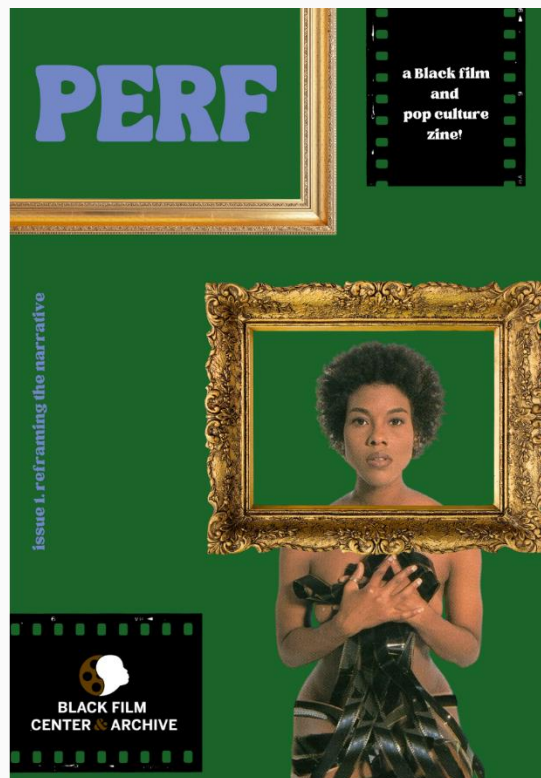


(Julie Dash)

Julie Dash is one of the most prominent and acclaimed members of the L.A. Rebellion (a movement of independent filmmakers who expanded the possibilities of Black screen representation from the 1970s-1990s). Beginning with her short films like *Diary of an African Nun* (1977) and *Illusions* (1982), Ms.

Dash began developing a compassionate, lyrical body of work exploring the Black female experience. Her feature debut, the stunning *Daughters of the Dust* (1991), was hailed during its release for its striking visual design and experimental use of Gullah dialect, and made history as the first film by an African American woman to receive general theatrical distribution. In her subsequent music video and television work, including TV movies like *The Rosa Parks Story* (2002), Ms. Dash has continued her life project of giving nuanced voice to the struggles and achievements of Black women.

A new adventure: The Black Film Center & Archive ZINE!!



(Front cover of March 2023's Zine)

Archival Assistants Eva Stuart and Essence London are spearheading the publication of Perf, a new zine project designed to increase BFCA visibility and to inspire engagement with the rich tradition of Black film. Zines are mini magazines that have historically combined radical-leaning literature with a do-it-yourself (DIY) aesthetic. The title Perf references internet slang for the word "perfect" as well as the perforations in motion picture stock. We envision the contents including everything from Black film history to glimpses into the film preservation process, and more. Issue #1 focuses on reframing the often dismissive mainstream view of Black film in higher education and encourages readers to go beyond restrictive curriculums and educate themselves through community events and the BFCA's resources. There's also a filmmaker spotlight on Bridgett Davis, who was gifted the very first copy of the zine during her recent visit!



(Eva Stuart and Essence London, BFCA Archival Assistants)

“I’ve made zines with friends in the past and noticed increasing numbers of DIY zines in the IU music and art scenes, and as Generation Z continues to mimic and worship vintage aesthetics, I thought it could be an effective way to reach undergrad students. I wanted to connect film students with the invaluable resources we have at the BFCA, as well as bring visibility to Black film in our community.” - Eva

The first issue of Perf can be found at numerous locations around campus and Bloomington, but the BFCA office remains the best place to pick up your copy. The second issue is set to be published in early April and will focus on home movies and personal film preservation.



(Eva Stuart and Essence London, BFCA Archival Assistants)

Black ArchiveZ Pop-up Exhibit at the Lilly Library

On Wed, February 15, IU’s Lilly Library (in partnership with the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center) hosted a Black History Month pop-up exhibit highlighting

the history and legacy of the Black Panther Party. The BFCA contributed materials to the exhibit, with our archivists onsite to answer questions.

Congratulations to all of the departments that collaborated on a successful event and thanks to everyone that came out!



(Top: Amber Bertin, BFCA Archivist, shows materials to Dr. Gloria Howell, Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center Director. Bottom: Various attendees.)



BFCA Co-sponsors Sojourner Truth Festival of the Arts at Univ. of Chicago

The BFCA was proud to co-sponsor the University of Chicago's Sojourner Truth Film Festival of the Arts. The event commemorates an historic 1976 festival of the same name, held at New York's Women's Interart Center, that brought together pioneering groups of Black feminist artists and activists to celebrate, analyze, and advocate for the then-emerging body of work by Black women filmmakers. The first festival focused on Black feminist film issues (predating the rise in Black women filmmaking output in the 1980s and 1990s), this '76 event featured screenings, performances, lectures, and panel discussions with figures such as Camille Billops, Monica Freeman, Madeline Anderson, Ayoka Chenzira, Carol Munday Lawrence, and many others.



(The 2023 Co-Sponsors of the Sojourner Truth Film Festival of the Arts.)

The BFCA's Interim Director, Rachael Stoeltje, attended and conducted a workshop on film preservation. She was thrilled to connect with so many amazing people, such as Julie Dash, our featured Black Filmmaker interviewee for March. Here are a few pictures from her point of view, to enjoy!



(Various participants, filmmakers, and the LA Rebellion members.)





Congratulations on 15 Years at IU, Ja Quita Joy Roberts!

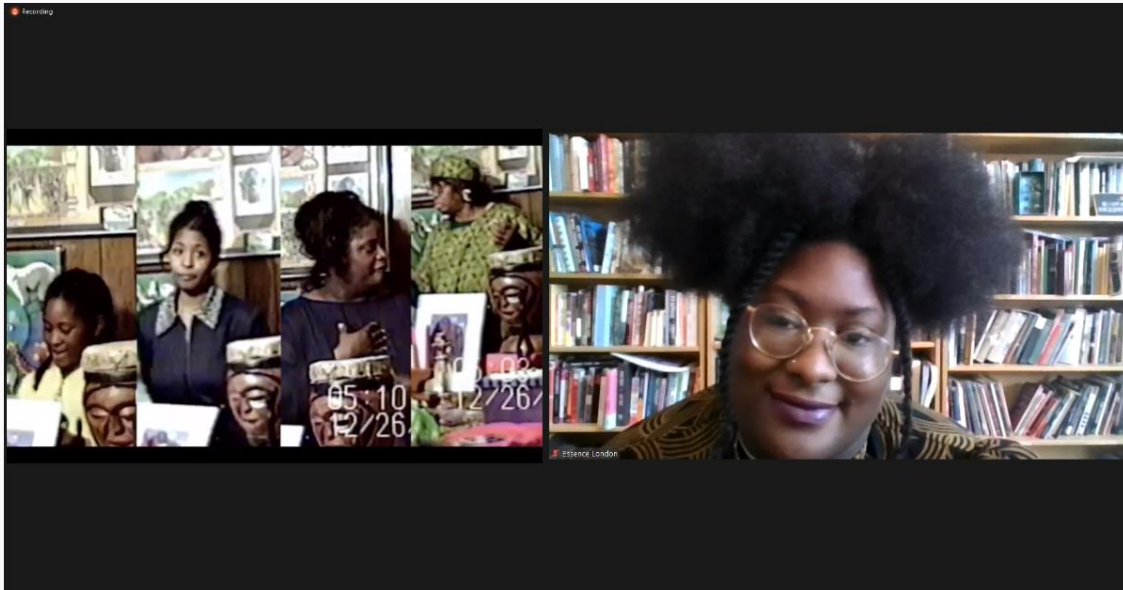
This month marks 15 years as Appointed Staff at Indiana University, for our Finance & Office Administrator! Congratulations, Joy!



(Ron McFall, Media School Director of Administration and Strategic Initiatives, and Ja Quita Joy Roberts)

BFCA Spotlight

Archival Assistant Essence London attended the Royal Anthropological Institute's virtual conference March 6-10, 2023, hosted from the UK. She presented her short *matriline ritual* with an accompanying creative paper titled "How to Use Home Movies as a Rememory Tool" in the panel Autoethnographic Film as a Site of Self-Making. Indiana University graduate students Corryn Anderson and Narmeen Ijaz also presented, and Assistant Professor & Friend of the BFCA Elena Guzman facilitated the conversation.



(Essence London and a screenshot of her film, *matriline ritual*.)

IU Day 2023 is April 19th!



Join us virtually on our social media pages, as we participate in the IU Day celebration! The Black Film Center & Archive is the go-to resource of Black film experiences and memories, and you can support our programs and research outreach by making a donation starting April 1st! #IUday

Saint Omer Screenings hosted by The Ryder Magazine & Film Series



**Fri, March 24 at 7pm • Sat and Sun, March 25 and 26 at 4pm and 7pm IU
Fine Arts Theater • [Purchase Tickets](#)**

**Sat and Sun, April 1 and 2 at 4pm and 7pm
IU Radio & Television Theater • [Purchase Tickets](#)**

When asked why she killed her infant daughter, the accused, a young Senegalese-French woman – a PhD student writing on Wittgenstein – answers,

“I don’t know. I hope this trial can help me understand.” What would compel such a shocking act, and why would an accomplished writer obsessively attend the woman’s trial? The complex mysteries at the heart of this absorbing, wholly original take on both the courtroom drama and the African immigrant experience, unfold like a Russian nesting doll of gazes and projections. Is the accused a liar, a victim, a sorceress, or all of the above? In her first fiction film, Senegalese-French documentarian Alice Diop uses her sharp eye for political realism to craft a captivating portrait of motherhood amid cultural isolation.

in French with subtitles • 122 minutes

Shortlisted for the 2023 Academy Award® for International Feature Film.

A complex and brilliant film... [Alice] Diop creates a wide-ranging and probing drama... to explore such critical matters as the nature of personal and national identity, the multigenerational traumas of migration, France’s ongoing political and cultural failures to reflect its ethnic and racial diversity, and, centrally, the very power of language to create images and to embody realities... [with] mightily inventive cinematic craft.

– Richard Brody, *The New Yorker*

Brilliant. Extraordinary. Spellbinding. A stunner of a narrative debut... probes the mysteries of the seen and the unseen. Supremely intelligent and haunting. With remarkable stealth and concentration, Diop rewires the generic circuitry of the courtroom drama, avoiding its natural inclination toward sensationalism and grandstanding.

– Justin Chang, *Los Angeles Times*

Performing Memory Through The Archive Talk & Film Screening with Johanna Tesfaye



Filmmaker, artist, and researcher Johanna Tesfaye interrogates the imperial archive as a project and process of power.

Wednesday, March 29, 2023, 4:00pm, at the IU Libraries Screening Room (Wells 048); Free, no ticket required.

The imperial archive functions as a project and process of power. Housing plundered and dispossessed objects and stories, it credentials imperial narratives and legitimizes the perpetual violence and dispossession of all peoples. Archival structures reify who gets to tell stories, whose stories are told, and how. How might those dispossessed through hegemonic archival practices transform the archive into a praxis of recollection? What might creative practices that counter imperial archives, and ultimately epistemologies rooted in violence,

look like? Building off the cosmos of academic and creative work of queer Black filmmakers, artists, and scholars, this talk will outline memory performance to re-establish the temporal body. This talk will include a screening of *How Those Who Were Sent Away Wept and Made a Plan*, a short experimental film utilizing research, historical artifacts, and performance. Inspired by Ethiopian emperor Yohannes' letter to Queen Victoria in 1872, requesting the return of stolen Ethiopian objects, the film looks at Ethiopian history and myth as it relates to Black diasporic identity and its representation in the archives.

Johanna Tesfaye is an artist, researcher, and therapist. Her creative and academic work utilizes film, sound media, art exhibition work, historical documents, and fiction/non-fiction text to synthesize historical narratives. Her focus is on Black temporal realities that interrogate the archive, re-imagining and documenting a cosmos of work, thought, and life in pursuit of alterity. Her work extends to numerous performance pieces and film experiments.

Sponsored by the Black Film Center & Archive.

Media Reserves Screenings

In collaboration with IU Media Services, once a month, films from the Black Film Center & Archive's collections will be shown on the large screen in Media Services' public area, conveniently located right outside our main entrance on the ground floor of the Wells Library. Stop by Media Services on Friday, March 24th to see titles from the BFCA's collections!

NOW SHOWING:

*A Selection of Films from the
Black Film Center & Archive's Collections*



Limited Spring Break availability.

Our Spring Break availability will be limited. Please be sure to email us at bfca@indiana.edu, to schedule an appointment. Warm wishes and safe travels! We'll be back to regular hours beginning Monday, March 20th.



Social Media Highlights

Zelda Harris



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Universal Pictures Presents

Crooklyn
A SPIKE LEE FILM

From left: SHARIF RASHID, ZELDA HARRIS, TseMACH WASHINGTON, CARLTON WILLIAMS and CHRIS KNOWINGS play five siblings growing up in Brooklyn in the 1970s in Spike Lee's moving comedy-drama "CROOKLYN".

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Photo by David Lee

On Feb. 17, we celebrated the birthday of actor/performer Zelda Harris (born 1985)! Following small roles on shows like Sesame Street at age 6, Ms. Harris won an open audition over 1,000 other child actors for the lead character of Troy Carmichael in Spike Lee's beloved coming-of-age drama Crooklyn (1994). She went on to appear in The Baby-Sitters Club (1995), as well as another Spike Lee joint, He Got Game (1998). Since receiving her Bachelor's from Princeton and a Master's in Education from UCLA, Ms. Harris has focused her talents toward teaching and academic advising. An active musician, she also leads the neo-soul group Zelda and the Lo Los.



(Crooklyn publicity photo from the Black Film Center & Archive's General Collection; headshot of Ms. Harris © Vanie Poyey Studio)

Kaycee Moore

Feb. 24 marked the birthday of actor and activist Kaycee Moore (1944-2021)! Raised in Kansas, Ms. Moore moved to California for an acting career in the 1970s, where she met budding UCLA film students like Charles Burnett, Billy Woodberry, and Julie Dash, whose daring, social realist works on Black American life would be known as the “L.A. Rebellion.” Ms. Moore’s powerhouse starring roles in Burnett’s *Killer of Sheep* (1978), Woodberry’s *Bless Their Little Hearts* (1983), and Dash’s *Daughter of the Dust* (1991) were praised in her NY Times obituary for their “outsized impact” on American cinema and depictions of Black life. Ms. Moore would only appear in one more film (Kevin Willmott’s *Ninth Street* in 1999), eventually dedicating most of her professional life to advocacy for Black Americans with sickle cell disease in her role as founder and Executive Director of the Kansas City chapter of the Sickle Cell Disease Association.



(Screenshots of Ms. Moore in *Killer of Sheep* and *Daughters of the Dust* from the Black Film Center & Archive’s General Collection)



Lupita Nyong'o



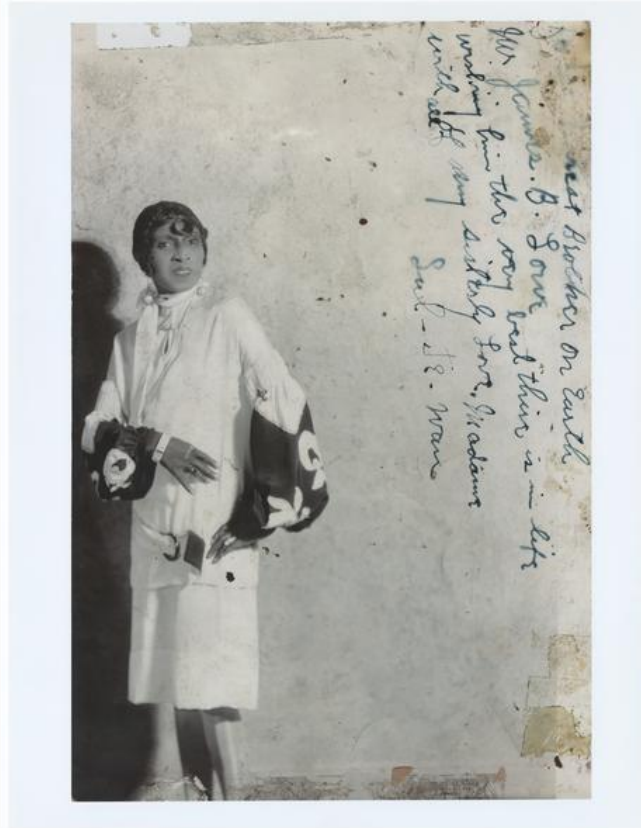
*A Film by
Lupita Nyong'o*

On March 1, we wished happy birthday to Oscar winning actor Lupita Nyong'o (born 1983)! Critically and popularly renowned for her unforgettable roles in *12 Years a Slave* (2013), *Us* (2019), and the *Black Panther* films (2018 & 2022), Ms. Nyong'o is a prominent advocate for workplace gender equality, animal welfare, and Black women's self-image. In 2009, before her launch to stardom, Ms. Nyong'o wrote and directed *In My Genes*, a documentary about discrimination against albino people in her native Kenya.



(Screenshots from *In My Genes* from the BFCAs General Collection; headshot by Emma McIntyre via Getty Images)

Madame Sul-Te-Wan



Happy birthday to Nellie Crawford (1873-1959), better known as Madame Sul-Te-Wan, one of the earliest Black actors to work as a contracted film performer! A prolific character actor in the movies for over 40 years, she appeared in dozens of Hollywood productions, including *King Kong* (1933), *Imitation of Life* (1934), *Sullivan's Travels* (1941), and *Carmen Jones* (1954). Sul-Te-Wan's career was hampered by a segregated film industry that only allowed her subservient (and often uncredited) roles like natives, maids, or cooks. Nevertheless, Sul-Te-Wan carved out a space for herself in the film world, and her legendary grit and self-advocacy helped open the door to many other talented Black actors who would continue the fight for equitable screen representation.

In 1986, Sul-Te-Wan was posthumously inducted into the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame, Inc. (BFHFI), a California-based non-profit dedicated to recognizing and celebrating the work of Black cinema artists. The organization acquired a stately oil painting of Ms. Sul-Te-Wan (date and artist unknown), depicting her in the kind of

grand, centralized, and dignified posture she was too often denied in her professional life.



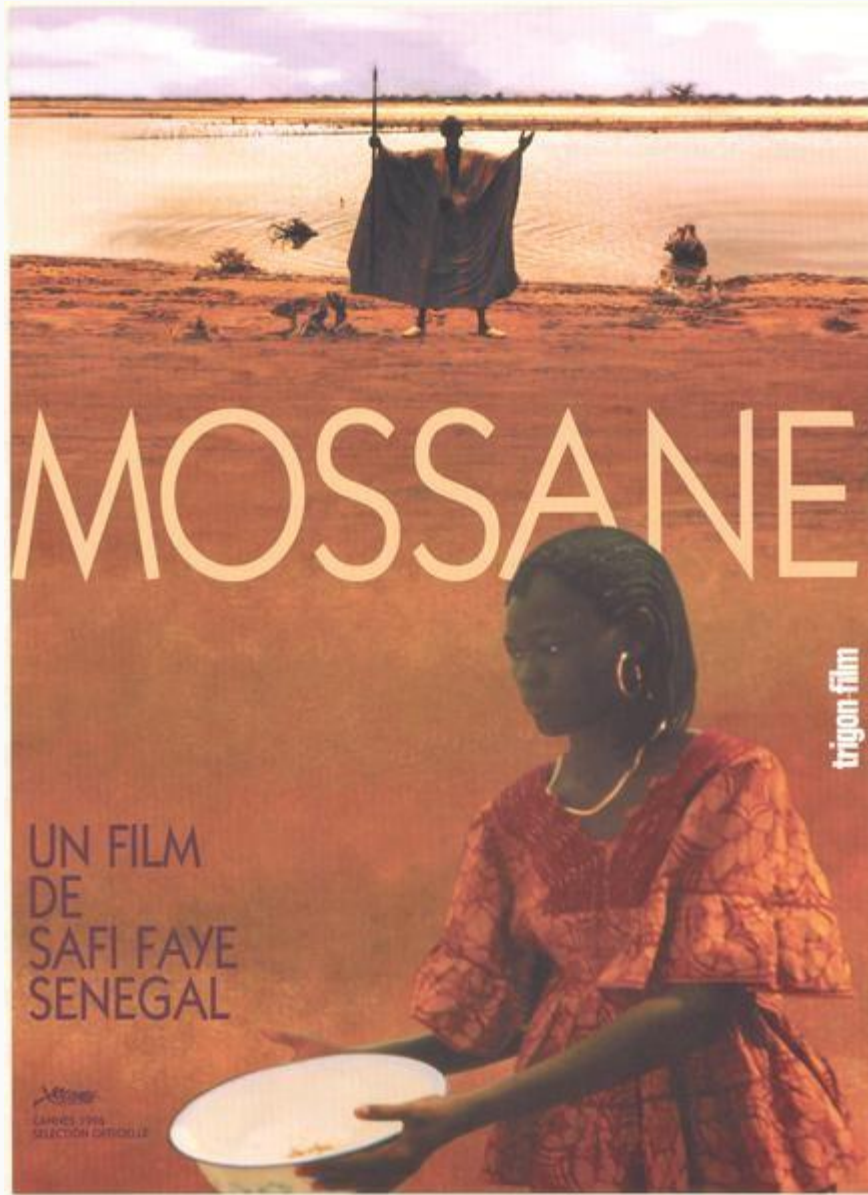
(Photo of Sul-Te-Wan from BFCA General Collection; painting from the Mary Perry Smith Collection)

In Memoriam

Safi Faye



The BFCA honors the work and legacy of Senegalese filmmaker Safi Faye (1943-2022), who passed away on Feb. 22 at age 79. Faye made cinematic history when her film *Kaddu Beykat* (1976), chronicling daily life in a small Senegal village, became the first feature by a Black African woman to be commercially distributed. The recipient of a PhD in ethnology, Dr. Faye was a pioneer of *cinéma vérité* techniques blurring fiction and documentary and a patient chronicler of African women's experiences across films like *Selbe: One Among Many* (1983) and *Mossane* (1996). Our condolences to her loved ones.



(Promo image of Mossane from the Black Film Center & Archive's General Collection; headshot by Fethi Belaid via Getty Images)

Matterport Scan - We've Gone 3D!

Can't physically visit our office? How about a virtual visit instead? The BFCA office on IU Bloomington's campus was recently given a Matterport 3D scan courtesy of the Indiana University IU3D Team. Check out this unique interactive virtual tour, featuring our space, amenities, and several featured items from our archival collections, such as the item pictured below! (Simplex 35mm Projector donated by Jon and Jennifer Vickers from the Vickers Theatre and the collection of Kenneth Marks).

Click the link below and then the play button in the bottom left corner for an automated tour or click around and explore the space at your leisure.

<https://bfca.indiana.edu/about/virtual-tour.html>



For more information about the BFCA, please visit our website www.bfca.indiana.edu. To subscribe to our blog, please visit our blog page <https://blogs.iu.edu/bfca/> and click on "Subscribe" in the bottom right of the screen. [Please consider ways to give](#), to continue our efforts and supporting our [mission](#). We sincerely thank you all for your support. We would not be able to complete all of our wonderful programs and awesome events, without your help.

Warmest regards,
BFCA Interim Director and Staff



THE MEDIA SCHOOL

BLACK FILM CENTER & ARCHIVE

Indiana University Bloomington



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