



BLACK FILM CENTER & ARCHIVE

November 2022 Newsletter

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Upcoming Event

Department of French and Italian & IU Cinema

NOVEMBER 3, 2022

Italian-Ghanian Director and Activist
Fred Kuwornu

**REPRESENTING
BLACKNESS IN ITALY**

GA 1122, 6-6:45 pm: talk by Fred Kuwornu

BLAXPLOITALIAN

IU Cinema, 7 pm (60 min): film screening
and Q & A with Director

Free tickets. Please reserve online using this QR code:

www.dotherightfilms.nyc/bio-fred-kuwornu

 **BLACK FILM
CENTER & ARCHIVE**

Sponsors: Department of French and Italian, Cinema and Media Studies, Institute for European Studies,
African American and African Diaspora Studies, Black Film Center and Archive, IU Cinema, Department of
History, African Studies Program, Hutton Honors College.

Blaxploitalian: 100 Years of Blackness In Italian Cinema - A call-to-action documentary that uncovers the careers of a population of entertainers never heard from before: Black actors in Italian cinema. Q&A with the filmmaker to follow the screening.

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Curated by Prof. Colleen Ryan of the IU Department of French and Italian. Co-sponsored by the Black Film Center & Archive.

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Get FREE tickets here: <https://am.ticketmaster.com/iucinema/buy>

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About Blaxploitalian: 100 Years of Blackness in Italian Cinema

A documentary that uncovers the careers of Black actors in Italian cinema, crafted through modern-day interviews and archival footage. The film discloses the personal struggles and triumphs that classic Afro-Italian, African American and Afro-descendant actors faced in the Italian film industry, while mirroring their struggles with those of contemporary actors who are working diligently to find respectable, significant, and non-stereotypical roles but are often unable to do so. Blaxploitalian is more than an unveiling of a troubled history; it is a call-to-action for increased diversity in international cinema through the stories of these artists in an effort to reflect the modern and racially diverse Italy. [65 mins; documentary; English and Italian with English subtitles]

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Director Fred Kuwornu is scheduled to be present. Kuwornu is an Italian of African descent, a filmmaker, and an activist-producer-educator. Born and raised in Italy and based in Brooklyn, he is best known as the director of critically acclaimed documentaries such as Blaxploitalian, Inside Buffalo, and 18 IUS SOLI.

Visit from Vernon A. Williams



Congratulations again to Vernon A. Williams who stopped by the Black Film Center & Archive the morning of October 21, prior to receiving his 2022 Indiana University Distinguished Alumni Award that evening. In addition to a 50+ year career as reporter and columnist on publications like the (Gary) Post-Tribune and the Chicago/Gary Crusader, Mr. Williams has taken active leadership roles in a host of media and culture organizations across Indiana, including: Indiana Black Expo, IUPUI's Africana Repertory Theatre, OnyxFest (the first and only Indiana theater festival spotlighting works of Black playwrights), the Indianapolis Association of Black Journalists, and the Heartland Film Festival.



During his BFCA tour, Mr. Williams checked out rare publicity materials for lost all-Black “race” films from the 1920s and artifacts from the now-defunct Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame. He, in turn, regaled the BFCA staff with stories of interviewing performer/activist Lena Horne in the late 1970s.



Visit from Delphine Letort, Charles Joseph, & the Black Camera Staff



On October 24, the Black Film Center & Archive welcomed a visit from Dr. Delphine Letort, an accomplished scholar of Black Cinema and most recent publications include *The Spike Lee Brand* (SUNY Press, 2015), Dr. Charles Joseph, Associate Professor and expert in North American Cultural Studies (both of Le Mans University, France), Dr. Michael Martin, former BFCA Director and current Editor-in-Chief of the *Black Camera Journal*, an international scholarly film journal, Allison Brown, Black Camera Editorial & Production Manager, and Cole Nelson, Black Camera Assistant Editor.



Dr. Letort and Dr. Joseph examined materials from the BFCA's William Greaves Collection and recently rediscovered footage of Spike Lee's 1987 acceptance speech for the Clarence Muse Award from the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame.



New Journey for MarQuis Bullock



October 20th, 2022 marked the last day as an archival assistant at the Black Film Center & Archive for MarQuis Bullock, who was with us from February 2021 to October 2022. MarQuis accepted a new position as a Product and Sales Development Associate with Adam Matthew Digital, a digital publishing company and a subsidiary of SAGE publications. He will primarily work forging partnerships with archival and other information institutions to procure materials for the company's new digital collections platforms and facilitate and close sales interactions for the company's digital products. Because the position is remote, upon graduating in December, MarQuis will be making a big move to North Texas to be closer to family. Though change is inevitable, leaving the BFCA is quite bittersweet for MarQuis.

He writes of his time here at the BFCA, "This place has meant so much to me and has truly been a second home. To be able to work in and contribute to an institution that centers the work and perspective of Black people in cinema, who still remain marginalized in the cinema landscape, was beyond significant and I will carry the invaluable skills, experiences, and lessons with me everyone I go as I continue my career beyond IU. Working at the BFCA has without a doubt been the best part of my experience here on campus and I am forever changed by the institution and the people I feel very blessed to have worked with here. I thank them for advocating for me, making space for me to be here, and for nurturing me as a fledgling archivist. This place is and the people within it are a treasure and I hope nothing ever gets in the way of the BFCA being all that it can be and more. I will truly miss it, especially since I will have to complete the rest of my semester here and will no longer be able to use my key and come in through the staff entrance. I will always support and advocate for the BFCA as it did for me in so many ways."

Media Services Screenings

In collaboration with 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. For the month of October (our first screening), we selected a collection of Halloween-themed titles including *Blacula* (1972), *Ganja and Hess* (1973), *Sugar Hill* (1974), *Vampire in Brooklyn* (1995), and *Bones* (2001). Stop by Media Services on Friday, November 18, and on Friday, December 16, to see more titles from the BFCA's collections!

(Sign for Media Services Screenings - "Now Showing")

NOW SHOWING:

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

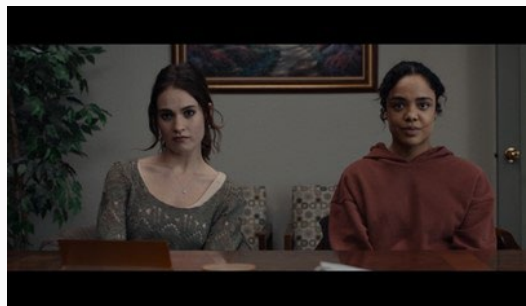


Social Media Highlights

Tessa Thompson



On October 3, we recognized the birthday of Tessa Thompson (born 1983)! Versatile across dramatic, comedic, and action roles, Ms. Thompson has taken Hollywood by storm since her breakthrough 2014 roles in Justin Simien's *Dear White People* and Ava DuVernay's *Selma*. Balancing large franchises and more intimate character pieces, Thompson has brought her talents to the *Creed* films (2015-present) as Bianca and the *Marvel Cinematic Universe* as Valkyrie (2017-present), as well as starring in *Sorry to Bother You* (2018), *Little Woods* (2018), and *Passing* (2021)—the last two of which she also executive produced.

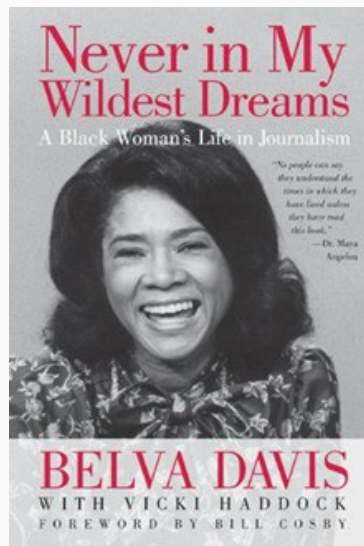


(Screenshots from *Dear White People*, *Sorry to Bother You*, and *Little Woods*, from the BFCA General Collection)

Belva Davis



October 13 marked the birthday of trailblazing journalist Belva Davis (born 1932)! One of the first female Black American TV and radio journalists, Ms. Davis's nearly 50-year career as a reporter and anchor for stations around the Oakland and Bay Area (as well as nationally through PBS) earned her eight Emmys and numerous lifetime achievement awards. From 1975 to 1993, she served as volunteer, advisor, and Board member for the now-dissolved Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame (BFHF), an Oakland non-profit dedicated to celebrating and supporting Black film artists. In 2015, Ms. Davis (along with husband, pioneering photojournalist William Moore) generously donated hundreds of paper and audiovisual records of BFHF events to the Black Film Center & Archive. These items, which include unique recordings and correspondences with dozens of film professionals (from super-stars to more obscure figures), provide a priceless documentation of Black film history in the latter half of the 20th century.



(1983 photo of Belva Davis and William Moore from the BFCA's Mary Perry Smith Collection; 2016 photo by Carrie Latimer via the IU Media School, Former BFCA Director Michael Martin looking through BFHFI photos with Bill Moore and Belva Davis, Cover of Belva Davis book, "Never In My Wildest Dreams.")



Fronza Woods

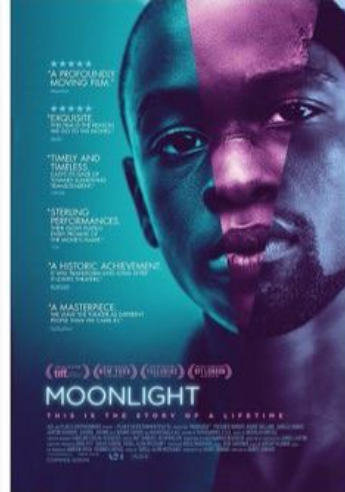


On October 20, we wished happy birthday to pioneering director Fronza Woods (born 1943)! One of the earliest Black American woman filmmakers with surviving work, Ms. Woods began experimenting with filmmaking in New York in the 1970s after experiences working with ABC television and attending community art workshops. Her two stunning resulting shorts, *Killing Time* (1979) and *Fannie's Film* (1981), broke boundaries in their tragicomic depictions of Black female consciousness, suicidal ideation, and work-a-day drudgery. Unable to earn a living in the East Coast film scene, Ms. Woods taught filmmaking at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for a period before moving to France and leaving behind the film world. After decades of obscurity, Ms. Woods's two films have begun to earn rediscovery and belated recognition. A 2017 revival screening of *Killing Time* in Brooklyn prompted New Yorker critic Richard Brody to call it "very simply one of the best short films I've ever seen," and restorations of her work are now available to stream on the Criterion Channel. In 2021, Ms. Woods wrote a lovely essay for Milestone Films on the bittersweet feeling of being a "rediscovered" artist. <https://milestonefilms.com/blogs/news/40-years-and-19-979-520-feet-from-stardom-or-the-perils-of-being-rediscovered-by-fronza-woods>



(Stills of Woods in *Killing Time* from the BFCM General Collection; Color portrait by Katherine Carey)

Ashton Sanders



On October 24, we wished happy birthday to actor Ashton Sanders (born 1995)! Mr. Sanders has appeared opposite Denzel Washington in *The Equalizer 2* (2018) and Daniel Kaluuya and LaKeith Stanfield in *Judas and the Black Messiah* (2021), as well as starred as Bigger Thomas in Rashid Johnson's 2019 screen adaptation of *Native Son*. In 2016, Mr. Sanders wowed moviegoers around the world as the teenaged Chiron in Barry Jenkins's masterpiece *Moonlight*. The film's celebrated poster, designed by Steve Reeves and Jeff Wadley with InSync PLUS and featuring Sanders's face composited with actors Trevante Rhodes and Alex Hibbert, proudly adorns a wall in the BFCa office.





(Poster and screenshot from Moonlight from the BFCA General Collection)

Ethel Waters



October 31 was the birthday of the great Ethel Waters (1896-1977)! One of the highest profile Black American stars of the early 20th century, Ms. Waters extended her talents across music, film, television, and stage. Bursting onto the Harlem Renaissance scene as a jazz and blues pioneer in the 1920s, Waters gained national fame for her performances at the Cotton Club and with Columbia Records (including the original recordings of the tune “Stormy Weather”). She parlayed her recording successes into a stage and screen career, becoming (for a time) Broadway’s highest-paid star and co-starring in rare all-Black Hollywood musicals such as *Rufus Jones for President* (1933) and *Cabin in the Sky* (1943). A dramatic turn in *Pinky* (1949) made her the second Black actor to be nominated for an Academy Award. With her short-lived *The Ethel Waters Show* (1939) and starring role in the first season of *Beulah* (1950-1951), Waters also became the first Black American to star in a TV program. Ethel Waters had difficulty finding dignified work throughout her life despite her many successes, but helped fight the color barrier in every industry she entered.



(Screenshots of Waters with Mantan Moreland from a 16mm print of *Cabin in the Sky* in the BFCA General Collection.)

In Remembrance

Sergio Mims



We celebrate the life of film critic, journalist, and historian Sergio Mims (1955-2022). A co-founder of Chicago's first Black-focused film festival, Blacklight (which evolved into the annual Black Harvest Film Festival), Mims was a beloved champion of the Chicago arts community for decades, promoting and curating countless filmmakers and events around the area. In November 2018, Mims traveled to Indiana University to participate in a series of BFCA events honoring veteran filmmaker Michael Schultz, including interviewing Schultz onstage as part of the Jorgensen Guest Filmmaker Lecture series at the Indiana University Cinema. Our sincerest condolences to all of his loved ones.



The BFCA celebrated IU Day, this year!



On April 20, the BFCA joined other programs across the Indiana University campuses and alumni worldwide in recognizing IU Day. In addition to open house tours of our office throughout the afternoon, we also participated in the IU Day block party by the Showalter Fountain, where we met hundreds of undergrads and passed out BFCA-branded pens, magnets, buttons, bookmarks, and other cool swag. Thank you to everyone who donated or stopped by our table to say hi! If you missed us, feel free to stop by our office at Wells 044 and pick up some swag. Additionally, you can still donate! Please click the link below, to support our mission.

[Donate to the BFCA](#)

**Reminder: We have a New Name, a New Logo,
and a New Website!**

Starting January 18, 2022, we are officially the Black Film Center & Archive. Our new name can be abbreviated as “BFCA”. We are also

proud to debut a new logo design and a fully updated website, featuring a cleaner, more user-friendly interface for exploring the BFCA's history and collections. Visit us at bfca.indiana.edu to check it out. An example of our new logo is in the title above. We also invite you to email us at bfca@indiana.edu with any feedback about the new site's appearance or usability, or if you encounter a technical problem.

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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