

Milwaukee Film – Cultures & Communities

Cultures & Communities Festival 2021

September 6th-12th, 2021

ORIENTAL THEATRE SCREENINGS

[9to5: The Story of a Movement](#) *(both in-person and virtual)*

The latest film from Oscar-winners Julia Reichert and Steve Bognar (*American Factory*, DOC NYC 2019) explores a pivotal but little remembered intersection of women's rights and labor rights. In the early 1970s, secretaries and other female office workers were underpaid, undervalued, unable to advance, and often subject to sexual harassment. In the wake of the Women's Liberation Movement, a group of women in Boston finally had enough, joining together to begin 9to5, a movement that would sweep the nation with irreverent, attention-getting actions to demand meaningful change—and later inspire the eponymous hit film and song.

[All Light Everywhere](#)

ALL LIGHT, EVERYWHERE is an exploration of the shared histories of cameras, weapons, policing and justice. As surveillance technologies become a fixture in everyday life, the film interrogates the complexity of an objective point of view, probing the biases inherent in both human perception and the lens.

[All the Streets Are Silent](#)

In the late 80s and early 90s, the streets of downtown Manhattan were the site of a collision between two vibrant subcultures: skateboarding and hip hop. Narrated by Zoo York co-founder Eli Gesner with an original score by legendary hip-hop producer Large Professor (Nas, A Tribe Called Quest), *All the Streets Are Silent* brings to life the magic of the time period and the convergence that created a style and visual language that would have an outsized and enduring cultural effect. From the DJ booths and dance floors of the Mars nightclub to the founding of brands like Supreme, this convergence would lay the foundation for modern street style. *Paris Is Burning* meets *Larry Clark's KIDS*, *All the Streets Are Silent* is a love letter to New York—examining race, society, fashion, and street culture.

[All These Sons](#)

Chicago's South and West sides are infamous for their eye-popping murder rates. Seeking to stem the scourge of crime plaguing their neighborhoods, two men—one atoning for having committed a senseless murder as a youth—create community-based self-help programs to offer mentorship and healing to young men likely to be either victims or perpetrators of gun violence. Seeking understanding rather than judgement, the film witnesses these young men doing the hard work to examine their rationales and fears, often revealing the deep trauma that feeds the cycles of violence that leave all parties damaged. The film follows program participants Shamont, Zay, Charles as they struggle to tame their past demons and, with the guidance of their mentors, face a brighter future.

[Crip Camp](#)

The liberation movements around race, gender, and sexuality have been well-documented. Now *Crip Camp* shines a light on the overlooked, but equally important, disability rights movement. Its origins trace back to Camp Jened, a haven for disabled teens in the early 1970s, down the road from Woodstock. Directors Nicole Newnham and Jim LeBrecht (a former Jened camper himself) trace

how the camp members became the nucleus for a legal and societal crusade that's still ongoing. Filled with the spirit, music, and humor of the era, the film shows how "some success stories only grow more powerful with age, and their ability to inspire action is timeless"

[Minari](#)

A tender and sweeping story about what roots us, *Minari* follows a Korean-American family that moves to a tiny Arkansas farm in search of their own American Dream. The family home changes completely with the arrival of their sly, foul-mouthed, but incredibly loving grandmother. Amidst the instability and challenges of this new life in the rugged Ozarks, *Minari* shows the undeniable resilience of family and what really makes a home.

[Queering the Script](#)

Stars join with the voices of numerous kickass fangirls in this fast-paced history of queer women's representation on contemporary television, not only charting the evolution of queerness on the small screen, but also demonstrating the extraordinary impact of activism on its many diverse fans.

[Son of Monarchs](#)

After the death of his grandmother, a Mexican biologist living in New York returns to his hometown nestled in the majestic monarch butterfly forests of Michoacán. The journey forces him to confront past traumas and reflect on his new hybrid identity, launching him on a personal and spiritual metamorphosis.

[Summertime](#)

Over the course of a hot summer day in Los Angeles, the lives of 25 young Angelenos intersect. A skating guitarist, a tagger, two wannabe rappers, an exasperated fast-food worker, a limo driver—they all weave in and out of each other's stories. Through poetry they express life, love, heartache, family, home, and fear. One of them just wants to find someplace that still serves good cheeseburgers.

[Swan Song](#)

Get ready for the outlandish true story of the Liberace of Sandusky, Ohio! When retired hairdresser Pat Pitsenbarger is offered \$25,000 to style an estranged friend for her funeral, he does the only sensible thing: he escapes his nursing home and hitchhikes into town with a sign boasting "free beauty tips." As Pat makes his way through his now-alien hometown shoplifting beauty supplies, he finds himself reconnecting with friends, confronting old rivals, and facing the demons of his past.

[The Big Scary S Word \(both in-person and virtual\)](#)

With debates on income inequality and healthcare becoming increasingly prevalent, and figures like Senator Bernie Sanders rising to prominence, socialism has found a new relevance. As Americans confront 21st century issues, the allure of the economic system attracts politicians and everyday citizens alike to its cause. Through a comprehensive history and expert interviews, Yael Bridge's film unravels the decades-long debate around this misunderstood ideology.

[The Fight](#)

This inspiring and vital film follows lawyers from the American Civil Liberties Union as they battle the Trump administration over cases of immigration, abortion, LGBTQ equality, and voting rights. We watch the lawyers in action as they meet with desperate clients and plot legal strategies for critical cases including one that goes to the Supreme Court. The filmmaking team known for *Weiner*

and Couples Therapy join forces with producer Kerry Washington (Scandal) to create an uplifting portrait of attorneys on the front lines of upholding American liberties.

[The Neutral Ground](#)

In December 2015, the New Orleans City Council voted to remove four Confederate monuments from public grounds. A forceful group of critics protested the decision, and fearing retaliation, no crew would agree to remove the statues. To comedian and writer CJ Hunt, these protestors' fanatical loyalty to the losing side of a 160 year-old war seemed like ideal material for a short, satirical internet video. But as he filmed the conflict surrounding the monuments, a bigger story began to reveal itself.

[Virtual Screenings](#)

[A Place to Breathe](#)

A PLACE TO BREATHE explores the universality of trauma and resilience through the eyes of immigrant and refugee health care practitioners and patients. This feature-length documentary intertwines the personal journeys of those who are transcending their own obstacles by healing others. Combining cinema vérité and animation, the film highlights the creative strategies by which immigrant communities in the U.S. survive and thrive.

[And Then They Came for Us](#)

Seventy-eight years ago, Executive Order 9066 paved the way to the profound violation of constitutional rights that resulted in the forced incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans. Featuring George Takei and many others who were incarcerated, as well as newly rediscovered photographs of Dorothea Lange, And Then They Came for Us brings history into the present, retelling this difficult story and following Japanese American activists as they speak out against the Muslim registry and travel ban. Knowing our history is the first step to ensuring we do not repeat it. And Then They Came for Us is a cautionary and inspiring tale for these dark times. Please partner with us to share this critical story.

[Building A Bridge](#)

The tragic 2016 Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando and the apparent apathy of his peers prompted Father James Martin, a New York-based priest, author, and journalist to pen the book, Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity. The publication and subsequent appearances on outlets from Colbert to Fox News made him something of a celebrity, beloved by many and denounced by those who claim he's a heretic.

[Chasing Childhood](#)

What if all this well-intended hovering, fear and over-scheduling has backfired? The film takes us to three communities that are trying to shift culture to create room for play and independence with the hope of raising kids to become competent, healthy, and happy adults.

[Finding YingYing](#)

In June 2017, Chinese student Yingying Zhang's dream of earning her PhD in America morphed into a nightmare when she disappeared from her college campus, sparking a desperate search for her whereabouts. Characteristically cautious, Yingying would not typically put herself in harm's way—but what if trouble came looking for her? Fellow student and filmmaker Jiayan "Jenny" Shi joins forces with Yingying's family on their quest for answers, sharing the hope and pain of finding their beloved daughter.

[Ferguson Rises](#)

Before George Floyd, before Breonna Taylor, before America knew about Black Lives Matter, there was Michael Brown, Jr. On August 9th, 2014, in Ferguson Missouri, Darren Wilson, a white officer, fatally shot an unarmed Brown, and in the days that followed protest, anger, frustration and fear took over the city and it's community. Six years later, a new story emerges, one filled with hope, love and beauty. Through interviews from community members, including Dorian Johnson, who was with him that day, and Michael Brown's father, this documentary illuminates the stories from within the city since that time, including the dreams and desires of its citizens to move beyond the limited and all-too-common narratives of racism and division in the media. The film reveals the humanity within the people of Ferguson, who represent all of us, and the communities in which we live.

[The Heartland](#)

Separated into three chapters, we explore the childhood experience for Black kids growing up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. From the moments when they lost their innocence to the outwardly expression that defined their voices, Black kids in this city proclaim that Milwaukee will always be theirs.

[Materna](#) (Wisconsin only)

Jean (Kate Lyn Sheil), Mona (Jade Eshete), Ruth (Lindsay Burdge), and Perizad (Assol Abdullina) are four radically different women whose lives are separated by race, culture, religion, and class but connected by the complexities of motherhood. When they face a threat on the New York City subway, their shared isolation suddenly becomes a shared connection, inextricably bounding their lives together.

Mission Joy- Finding Happiness in Troubled Times

Inspired by the international bestseller *The Book of Joy*, the documentary welcomes viewers into intimate conversations between two men whose resistance against adversity has marked our modern history. Through rare archival footage and affecting animation, the documentary reflects upon their personal hardships as well as the burden both men carry as world leaders dedicated to bringing justice to and fighting authoritarianism in their communities.

[No Straight Lines: The Rise of Queer Comics](#)

No Straight Lines tells the story of five scrappy and pioneering cartoonists who depicted everything from the AIDS crisis, coming out, and same-sex marriage, to themes of race, gender, and disability. They tackled the humor in queer lives in a changing world, and the everyday pursuits of love, sex, and community. Their work is funny, smart, and profound, and provides a unique, uncensored window into LGBTQ lives from the 1970s onward, beginning at a time in which there was no other genuine queer storytelling in popular culture. Equally engaging are their personal journeys, as they, against all odds, helped build a queer comics underground that has been able to grow and evolve in remarkable ways.

[Reflection: A Walk with Water](#)

It's difficult to overstate the importance of water: anywhere life exists, in any form, water plays an essential role in the ecosystem. But in his documentary *Reflection: a walk with water*, filmmaker Emmett Brennan makes the compelling argument that society has lost touch with this delicate and crucial place water occupies in the environment. Taking a several-hundred-mile trek on foot along the Los Angeles Aqueduct, Brennan joins like-minded activists on a mission meant to raise awareness about California's water crisis. Beyond the toll the aqueduct has taken on the land,

California's misuse of water has caused water shortages, released toxic dust particles into the air, and left many areas vulnerable to massive wildfires.

Scenes from the Glittering World

In the furthest reaches of the Navajo Nation, at the most remote high school in the continental U.S., three Indigenous students maneuver through the vagaries of adolescence in hopes of realizing their dreams, all while balancing the responsibilities of family, the realities of attending a remarkably small school with shrinking resources, and the stunning yet relentless isolation of the surrounding landscape. As Granite, Ilii, and Noah grapple with their own challenges, their stories shine and veritably vibrate with the singular energy of youth—the pulsing potential that seems on the cusp of either being triumphantly realized or tragically quashed. In a series of moving, and at times humorous vignettes, this beautifully cinematic film is a poetic chronicle of their daily lives, set in the context of the warmth of the Diné community.

A Sexplanation

Alex Liu wants to talk about sex. A lot. Now a thirty-something gay man, his childhood in the Bay Area featured kindly parents who never broached the subject and meager sex ed in school—producing a charming and attractive young adult who on the inside was roiling with repression and shame. *A Sexplanation* is Liu's titillating and highly amusing quest to break this cycle, probing the failures of our country's sex education, the proliferation of pornography, and the stigma that is still attached to sex in America today.

Stateless

In 1937, tens of thousands of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent were exterminated by the Dominican army, based on anti-black hatred fomented by the Dominican government. Fast-forward to 2013, the Dominican Republic's Supreme Court stripped the citizenship of anyone with Haitian parents, retroactive to 1929. The ruling rendered more than 200,000 people stateless, without nationality, identity or a homeland. In this dangerous climate, a young attorney named Rosa Iris mounts a grassroots campaign, challenging electoral corruption and advocating for social justice. Director Michèle Stephenson's new documentary *Stateless* traces the complex tributaries of history and present-day politics, as state-sanctioned racism seeps into mundane offices, living room meetings, and street protests. At a time when extremist ideologies are gaining momentum in the U.S. and around the world, *STATELESS* is a warning of what can happen in a society when racism runs rampant in the government.

Strike a Pose

In 1990, seven young male dancers - 6 gay, 1 straight - joined Madonna on her most controversial tour. On stage and in the iconic film *Truth or Dare*, they showed the world how to express yourself. Now, 25 years later, they reveal the truth about life during and after the tour, when they were ambassadors to the world on behalf of the LGBT community during the height of the AIDS epidemic. *STRIKE A POSE* is a dramatic tale about overcoming shame and finding the courage to be who you are.

The Death of My Two Fathers

The Death of My Two Fathers is a deeply personal journey of facing that which we often fear most: death and ourselves. By bearing witness to the reality of his father's life, and death, Sol Guy unpacks the meaning of fatherhood, family, race, and identity to realize that we must all face where we come from in order to be more prepared for who we may become.

Try Harder

For many of us who have endured the grueling college admissions process, it might be hard to imagine that what we experienced is dwarfed by the rigor of today's prerequisites. At Lowell, one of San Francisco's top-rated public high schools, the competition to get into one's dream college is brutal. With an overwhelmingly Asian American student population, being brilliant is the baseline and senior year is a pressure cooker of anxiety. Director Debbie Lum's lens goes beyond the usual one-dimensional story of stressed-out seniors and stereotypical cliques. *Try Harder!* is a compassionate invitation to see the intricate ways that class, race, and opportunity intersect in the American education system. Along the way, the film captures the euphoria of acceptance letters and the raw disappointment of rejections. In the most diverse American generation yet, admission to a good school isn't simply about the next four years; it's an essential part of one's identity.

[Twenty Pearls: The Story of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority](#)

Narrated by Phylicia Rashad, "Twenty Pearls" journeys through 113 provocative years. Only 40 years past the emancipation of enslaved African Americans, nine Black college women enrolled at Howard University, where they organized and built a sisterhood in 1908 now known as AKA.

[Unlearning Sex](#)

Told through a deeply personal lens, this film explores sexual assault and trauma – and how these experiences intersect with race, class, and sexual orientation – with complexity and sensitivity.

[Wild Indian](#)

Two men learn to confront a traumatic secret they share involving the savage murder of a schoolmate.

EVENTS

Opening Night keynote conversation with Michelle Williams

Michelle Williams is a Grammy Award winning singer and actress who rose to fame as a member of Destiny's Child, one of the best-selling female groups of all time. In her new memoir "Checking In: How Getting Real About Depression Saved My Life — and Can Save Yours," Williams opens up about her journey with depression, suicidal thoughts, prioritizing mental health and the importance of her faith, family and friends. Join us for a candid conversation about mental and emotional health, and the benefits of "checking in" with self, family and friends.

C&C Fest Closing Night and Awards

Once the show ends, the party begins! For those of you who can't get enough of a good thing, DJ Bizzon starts spinning sweat-inducing favorites immediately following our awards celebration. You know how he does it.

Re-orienting the Oriental Theatre

In 2018 Milwaukee Film took over operations of the historic Oriental Theatre, a nearly century-old lavish theater palace whose design and name are prime examples of the concept of Orientalism. As part of the Festival's focus on representation, identity, and inclusion, we invite you to join us for a frank panel discussion (featuring Adam Carr and Nancy Wang Yuen) speaking to the historical use of "Oriental" in American culture and cinema, kicking off a multi-year interrogation of our cinema's name and decor.

Culture Clash: Fusing Culinary Traditions That Bring Us Together

"Though it takes many flavors and forms, barbecue is at the heart of food culture in dozens of nations throughout the world. Join us at Company Brewing for a mouthwatering evening of conversation and cuisine, curated by Tarik Moody, host of Radio Milwaukee's foodie podcast ""This Bites."" We'll kick things off with culinary historian, barbecue judge, and James Beard Award-winner Adrian Miller (featured in the Netflix series High on the Hog) discussing the rich culture of Black barbeque, pitmasters, and restaurateurs throughout our nation's history. Follow that up with our main course - a one-of-a-kind culinary event featuring two chefs from different backgrounds (Jason Alston, founder of Heaven's Table Barbecue and Alex Hanesakda, founder of SapSap in Racine) coming together to create a unique menu bridging African American and Laotian cultures into a wonderful Barbecue feast they've titled ""Culture Clash: Soul P'hunk."" This very special event will nourish your mind, body, and soul!

Amplify & Activate Milwaukee's Tech Ecosystem

In partnership with Nadiyah Johnson of the Milky Way Tech Hub and the Diverse Dining initiative, join us for a talk and design thinking session focused on defining actionable steps for our city to spear head a new and inclusive tech hub model that can be replicated nationally. During this session, attendees will meet and talk in a structured and creative way, that creates collaborative alliances and builds community through a shared meal.

Community Family Friendly Pop-Up Cinemas

Free of charge

Locations: COA Goldin Center and United Community Center/Latino Arts

Taking film and discussion out of the Oriental and directly into the community, C&C Fest will host a series of family friendly, free pop-up screenings in partnership with several neighborhood organizations throughout the city.

Black Space Group Therapy Sessions and Clinician Cultural Competency Panel

Founded by Dr. Lia Knox, Darius Smith and Corey Fells, Black Space offers free, group therapy sessions to help normalize seeking professional help for mental health issues. In collaboration with C&C Fest, Black Space will offer group sessions for women, men and LGBTQIA+ communities as well as a session on cultural competency and overcoming bias for providers and clinicians.

Pre-Opening Night Mixer - Higher, Further, Faster: Entrepreneurship and Innovation

In order to retain talent in the Milwaukee area and ensure entrepreneurship and innovation thrive, it's going to be a group effort, and that's exactly what this special networking mixer has to offer! Kick things off with a panel headed by tech, small business, and development entrepreneurs discussing the opportunities for black and brown people in our beautiful city. Then wrap things up by forming new and lasting connections during a happy hour/networking mixer to help foster collaboration in our community.

A sense of belonging: Exploring Sociocultural Identity and Well-Being

In partnership with the Roberto Hernandez Center at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee Film curates a dialogue about intersecting social identities within

underrepresented communities. This virtual panel discussion will explore topics such as the significance of belonging (social group membership), the fluidity of multi-layered individuality, and the impact of cultural identity on intergroup relations.

Let's Talk About... Sex Education (virtual event)

Talking about sex is still a taboo. The shame and guilt associated with sex leaves communities, especially young people, susceptible to inaccurate information. This event brings together educators to have an open and candid discussion about sex education and the impact on young people.

Black Birth: A Community Conversation and Resource Fair

The short film *Black Birth* serves as the backdrop to a community dialogue about the joys, fears, complexities, and disparities of Black motherhood in America. Following the film screening will be a panel discussion including an OB-GYN physician, community doula, African American breastfeeding expert, and other maternal-fetal care specialists, as well as a resource fair featuring leading healthcare providers.

At-Risk Youth, Stollies, and Reckless Driving

"Auto theft is a major problem in Milwaukee, resulting all too often in car chases and crashes. To examine this critical issue, Milwaukee Film has partnered with FUEL Milwaukee's Race Bridge webinar series for a conversation about the city's crisis of stolen cars and reckless joyriding. This event is intended to encourage continued public dialog about this ongoing dilemma affecting our community.

All the Streets Are Silent After Party

Once the film stops, the party begins. Extend the hip-hop, skateboarding nostalgia with a 90s themed hip-hop afterparty featuring Dj Why B, great drink specials, and lots of pizza.

Around the Table: Stories of Food and Culture

Building on Thursday's Culture Clash Barbeque tasting, Ex Fabula curates a culinary-themed StorySlam, melding together narratives about the culinary experiences that shape our lives. Join a group of hand-selected tellers as they take you on a personal journey recalling personal stories that took place around the dinner table.

Art of Coping in collaboration with TRUE Skool

Will present a short inspirational film featuring the journey of 14 youth who presented in a six week session of Art of Coping followed by a youth focused panel discussion. In addition to the conversation, there will be a photo and art gallery of content made by AOC participants as part of their experience. This event is free and all ages. The Art of Coping is designed to create opportunities to influence positive practices through skill-based experiences for self-healing, regulation, and joy. These experiences allow the participant to identify practices that resonate with them personally to incorporate into their daily lives making them their own expert in the design of their wellness.

Queering the Fandom: Fanfic, Cosplay, and Community

The film *QUEERING THE SCRIPT* takes us into the world of LGBTQ pop culture fandoms, from cosplay to fanfiction writing. LGBTQ fans have created their own self-representations using beloved characters from TV and comics, all while building inclusive communities. Expanding on the themes of the film, *QUEERING THE FANDOM* is an event that brings together practitioners of these fandoms

from Milwaukee and the Midwest to discuss topics of inclusion, representation, and queer fandom community.