Inaugural Smithsonian African American Film Festival

October 24-27, 2018

Cinema, history and culture will come together at the first-ever Smithsonian African American Film Festival, presented by the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Over the course of the week, the Film Festival will celebrate African American visual culture and film, offering attendees an unparalleled opportunity to explore cinematic works by emerging and veteran filmmakers, alongside other historic and lesser-known films that explore and celebrate African American life.

With the evolution of filmmaking technology and the growing number of platforms for films to be shown, there’s a modern day renaissance in African American filmmaking. African American filmmakers are telling diverse stories and, in that storytelling process, they are complicating people’s views of identity and the world. That’s why now, for the first time, the Museum is bringing people together for this important Film Festival, expanding on our offerings that address the issues of the past while taking on the issues of today.

By the Numbers:

- **80+** African American films from history and today, including historical, restored and rare films from the Center for African American Media Arts (CAAMA) that showcase the Museum’s storied collections.
- **15** finalists in the juried competition from a field of more than **225** submissions.
- **5** Exchanges that explore a range of ideas about film production, archiving the moving image and new media and technology.
- **3** Master Classes on Editing, Screenwriting and Cinematography, taught by preeminent African American artists in the industry: Sam Pollard, Radha Blank and Bradford Young.

Festival Highlights:

- Opening night features a preview screening of “Widows”, from Oscar-winning director Steve McQueen.
- Closing night film will be a D.C. premiere and preview screening of “If Beale Street Could Talk”, from Oscar-winning director Barry Jenkins. This is the first film adaptation of a James Baldwin novel. The screening will be followed by a conversation with filmmaker Jenkins, as well as actors Regina King, Kiki Layne and Stephan James.
- Netflix collaboration and screening of “QUINCY”, followed by a conversation with Quincy Jones and directors Rashida Jones and Alan Hicks, moderated by music critic and historian Nelson George.
- The “Black Panther” costume worn by Chadwick Boseman in the Disney and Marvel Studios film, “Black Panther”, will be on display for the first time and for one night only. The costume was generously donated to the National Museum of African American History and Culture by Disney and Marvel Studios.
- Showcasing six historically significant films that the National Museum of African American History and Culture preserved and digitally restored.
- A rare showing of ten films in their original format of 16mm or 35mm, as the filmmaker intended.

“Night at the Museum” honoring two pioneering filmmakers:

Madeline Anderson is often credited as being the first black woman to produce and direct a televised documentary film, the first black woman to produce and direct a syndicated TV series, the first black employee at New York-based public television station National Educational Television (WNET), and one of the first black women to join the film editors union.

“I Am Somebody” (30 min): In 1969, 400 poorly paid black women hospital workers in Charleston, South Carolina went on strike to demand union recognition and a wage increase, only to find themselves in a confrontation with the National Guard and the state government. Supported by such notables as Andrew Young, Charles Abernathy and Coretta Scott King, the women nonetheless conducted a strike under the guidance of District 1199, the New York based union, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. A testament to the courage of these women who would not be humbled, the now classic I Am Somebody is both an inspiring film and an important historical record.

Charles Burnett, known for his sensitive portrayal of the African American experience, is an independent filmmaker from the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles. Burnett wrote, directed, produced, photographed and edited his first feature film, Killer of Sheep (1977). In 1990 he became the first African American recipient of the National Society of Film Critics best screenplay award for To Sleep with Anger (1990).

“Killer of Sheep” examines the black Los Angeles ghetto of Watts in the mid-1970s through the eyes of Stan, a sensitive dreamer who is growing detached and numb from the psychic toll of working at a slaughterhouse. Frustrated by money problems, he finds respite in moments of simple beauty: the warmth of a coffee cup against his cheek, slow dancing with his wife in the living room, holding his daughter. The film offers no solutions; it merely presents life — sometimes hauntingly bleak, sometimes filled with transcendent joy and gentle humor.

The Film Festival is sponsored by:

Follow us on social and join the conversation @nmaahc #AAFilmFest
Why is it important to have the Film Festival now?

African American filmmaking is experiencing a renaissance. African American filmmakers are telling their stories more than ever before and, in that storytelling process, they are complicating people's views of identity and the world. That's why now, for the first time, the Museum is bringing people together for this important Film Festival, expanding on our offerings that address the issues of the past while taking on the issues of today.

How is this film festival different from other African American film festivals?

The Smithsonian African American Film Festival is about the art of filmmaking while expanding the understanding of African American cinema through works that explore the past, the present and the future. Other film festivals are primarily, if not entirely, open to new works, including documentaries, shorts and narratives. Our Film Festival focuses primarily, if not entirely, on those new works along with historical films – many that are restored and hard-to-find films – and showcases the Museum’s growing film collection.

Every aspect of the Film Festival will be a multisensory experience. For example, every film that will be screened can be tied back to a part of the Museum. The story does not have to end at the credits, and we want attendees to explore the African American experience on a deeper level, on and off screen.

What do you hope the Film Festival will add to the film industry?

We are in the midst of a new age in filmmaking, in part due to the rise of digital technology, diverse viewing platforms and global distribution. As a result, the door has been opened for more African American filmmakers and creators to tell stories that may not have made it to the screen in the past. We hope this Film Festival will serve as a national platform to view and honor films that are more than just great entertainment, but that are cultural markers in the timeline of the African American experience.

What films will be a part of the inaugural Film Festival?

There will be more than 80 films screened at the Smithsonian African American Film Festival, more than 1/4 of which come from the National Museum of African American History and Culture’s collection. These films include some of the most innovative and immersive museums in the world. Before our doors opened, there was a vision for a film festival where African American history and culture would come together on screen. The inaugural Film Festival will expand on the Museum’s unparalleled programs and experiences by celebrating African American visual culture and film. The Film Festival will provide attendees with the unique opportunity to explore cinematic works by some of the brightest emerging and veteran filmmakers, while also offering the chance to experience historic and lesser-known films that tell the stories of black experiences in America.

In addition, there will be 15 films that will premiere in the competition portion of the Film Festival. These films include narrative features, documentary features, narrative shorts, documentary shorts, animation and experimental films.

How many films were submitted for the competition, and what was the selection process?

There is a call for independent film submissions of new works opened in early 2018. The selection committee consists of 25 industry professionals, including filmmakers, film executives, curators, scholars and Smithsonian leaders. In the months leading up to the Film Festival, the committee narrowed the entries based on a set of criteria, which included technical merit, relevance to the National Museum of African American History and Culture’s exhibitions and representation of African American history and culture. The selection committee will review and judge the competition, and an overall winner will be selected from those five winners.

Who are the judges for the competition?

Nine jurors have been selected to screen the 15 films in competition:
- George Alexander, Principal, Gale Media Group
- Ayoka Chenzira, Filmmaker, Division Chair of the Arts and Chair of the Dept. of Art & Visual Culture, Spelman College
- Terri Francis, Assoc. Professor, Cinema and Media Studies, Director, The Black Film Center/Archive, The Media School at Indiana University
- Michael Gillespie, Assoc. Professor of Film, Black Studies Program, The City College of New York
- Maori Holmes, Artistic Director, BlackStar Film Festival
- Shola Lynch, Documentary Filmmaker, Curator, Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
- Michelle Materre, Materre Media Consulting, Creatively Speaking
- Dawn Porter, Director and Producer, Trilogy Films
- April Reign, Senior Director of Marketing, Fractured Atlas

The films will be judged on a set of criteria including technical merit, relevance to the National Museum of African American History and Culture’s collection, storytelling and representation of African American history and culture.

What are the film competition categories?

There are five competition categories: (1) Narrative Feature, (2) Documentary Feature, (3) Narrative Short, (4) Documentary Short, (5) Experimental & Animation. A winner will be selected by the nine jurors in each of the five categories, and an overall winner for the inaugural Smithsonian African American Film Festival will be selected from those five winners.

Will the films premiering in competition be available in wide release at some future date?

Release plans for the films are specific to each individual filmmaker. We selected these films because they are important for audiences to see, and we hope that they will be available in wide release to expand that audience.

Are there any other events beyond films that will be a part of the programming?

Yes, the Film Festival is a multi-sensory experience. In addition to the films, we will host Master Classes for the public on cinematography, editing and screenwriting, taught by preeminent African American artists in the field. Each Master
Class will be a deeper dive into an area of film. For example, on Saturday, award-winning cinematographer Bradford Young will lead a Master Class on Cinematography – teaching vital techniques in lighting, general scene composition and camera movement.

Additionally, each day of the Film Festival will feature an Exchange. The Exchanges are directed conversations addressing a pressing film industry issue, including topics like “Power of Place,” “The Great Migration: Home Movie Digitization Project,” “Code Switch” and “Media as a Tool of Social Action.” Throughout the Film Festival, there will also be a number of moderated discussions with filmmakers and film scholars.

The Film Festival is hosting “Night at the Museum.” This award ceremony will celebrate and honor two African American filmmakers: Madeline Anderson and Charles Burnett. Anderson’s *I Am Somebody* (1970) and Burnett’s *Killer of Sheep* (1978) will be screened as a part of the event and both honorees will participate in a post-screening conversation.

**Why is the Film Festival honoring Madeline Anderson and Charles Burnett?**

Madeline Anderson and Charles Burnett are pioneers in African American film. We are proud to celebrate and honor their contributions and leadership in the industry at the Film Festival’s “Night at the Museum.”

Madeline Anderson is a pioneering filmmaker and television producer who is credited as the first black woman to produce and direct a televised documentary film, the first black woman to produce and direct a syndicated TV series, the first black employee at New York-based public television station WNET and one of the first black women to join the film editors union.

Charles Burnett is a writer-director, whose work has also received extensive honors. Born in Vicksburg, Mississippi and raised in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, Burnett’s work has been praised for its portrayal of the African American experience.

**Who will attend the Film Festival?**

Tickets for the Film Festival are available to the public. The Museum attracts visitors from all over the world and we anticipate that a diverse audience of filmmakers, other industry professionals, cinefiles and more will attend.

For those who cannot attend in person, we’ll be sharing several events online, providing access to a global audience and participating in a global conversation.

**How does the public get tickets to see the films?**

The Festival Pass, Screening Pass, Night at the Museum and Master Class tickets were sold at aafilmfest.si.edu. There are also free events at the Freer|Sackler, which require online registration, and free events at the National Gallery of Art, which are walk-up only and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Is this a NMAAH event or a Smithsonian event?**

The National Museum of African American History and Culture is a part of the Smithsonian Institution and this will be the first-of-its-kind film festival dedicated solely to African American history and culture in the Smithsonian’s 172-year history. The Smithsonian African American Film Festival is being organized by the Museum’s Earl W. and Amanda Stafford Center for African American Media Arts (CAAMA), which is part of the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

**Will the Museum host film festivals in the future?**

Yes, the Smithsonian African American Film Festival will take place biannually. The next Film Festival will take place in 2020.

**Why are you planning on only holding the Film Festival every other year, and not annually?**

The National Museum of African American History and Culture puts on a wide variety of programming every year, including programs around film and entertainment. The Film Festival has been slated into our program offerings as a biennial event, and we look forward to continuing to build on the inaugural Film Festival in 2020.
“Widows” To Open Smithsonian African American Film Festival, “If Beale Street Could Talk” To Close Film Festival

Oscar-Winning Director Barry Jenkins, Emmy-Winning Actress Regina King, Actress Kiki Layne, Actor Stephan James To Join Post-Screening “If Beale Street Could Talk” Discussion Oct. 27

Films by Oscar-Winning Filmmakers To Preview Before National Release

The Smithsonian African American Film Festival, presented by the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, has announced its opening and closing film selections—joining the nearly 80 previously announced films that will be screened over the four-day event, including the 15 films that will premiere in competition in the Oprah Winfrey Theater. The inaugural film festival will open with Oscar-winning director Steve McQueen’s “Widows” (2018) and will wrap up with Oscar-winning director Barry Jenkins’ latest, “If Beale Street Could Talk” (2018).

“The film selections for our opening and closing night celebrations are the perfect bookends for our inaugural, four-day film festival,” said Rhea Combs, director of the Center for African American Media Arts (CAAMA). “We envisioned this film festival as a unique opportunity to honor our past, present and future, with films tackling tough topics and sparking conversation and veteran directors alongside emerging stars. These selections are cultural markers that will truly bring our vision to life.”

On Wednesday, Oct. 24, McQueen and co-writer and bestselling author Gillian Flynn’s modern-day thriller, “Widows,” will be screened in the Oprah Winfrey Theater. “Widows” is the story of four women with nothing in common except a debt left behind by their dead husbands’ criminal activities. Set in contemporary Chicago amid a time of turmoil, tensions build when Viola Davis, Michelle Rodriguez, Elizabeth Debicki and Cynthia Erivo take their fate into their own hands and conspire to forge a future on their own terms. “Widows” also stars Liam Neeson, Colin Farrell, Robert Duvall, Daniel Kaluuya, Lukas Haas and Brian Tyree Henry. “Widows will not be released nationally until Nov. 16.

On Saturday, Oct. 27, Jenkins’ first film since “Moonlight”, “If Beale Street Could Talk”, will celebrate its Washington, D.C., premiere at the film festival. Jenkins and actors Stephan James, Regina King and Kiki Layne will join the event and participate in a discussion after the screening. “If Beale Street Could Talk” is an adaptation of James Baldwin’s 1974 novel, which takes place in Harlem. The film tells the story of Alonzo Hunt, who is accused of raping a Puerto Rican woman. Despite having an alibi, his fiancée Tish Rivers desperately scrambles to prove his innocence while carrying their first child. “If Beale Street Could Talk” will be released in select markets Nov. 30 and nationally in January 2019.

Tickets for the inaugural Smithsonian African American Film Festival are now on sale at aafilmfest.si.edu. More information about the opening and closing night selections, as well as the nearly 80 selected films for the inaugural Smithsonian African American Film Festival can be found at aafilmfest.si.edu/discover/films.

The Smithsonian African American Film Festival is supported by Toyota, AARP, Netflix, Earl W. and Amanda Stafford and the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. Join the online conversation by following #AAFilmFest.

About the Earl W. and Amanda Stafford Center for African American Media Arts

The Earl W. and Amanda Stafford Center for African American Media Arts (CAAMA) showcases the National Museum of African American History and Culture’s dynamic image collection through changing exhibitions of still and moving images, publications and public programs. The CAAMA resource center and digital archive foster and support scholarship on the role, meaning and influence of images by and about African Americans and other people of African descent.

About the National Museum of African American History and Culture

Since opening Sept. 24, 2016, the National Museum of African American History and Culture has welcomed nearly 4.5 million visitors. Occupying a prominent location next to the Washington Monument on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the nearly 400,000-square-foot museum is the nation’s largest and most comprehensive cultural destination devoted exclusively to exploring, documenting and showcasing the African American story and its impact on American and world history. For more information about the museum, visit nmaahc.si.edu, follow @NMAAHC on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat—or call Smithsonian information at (202) 633-1000.
Netflix Partners With National Museum of African American History and Culture on Inaugural Smithsonian African American Film Festival

Netflix Will Screen New Documentary “QUINCY,” Directed by Rashida Jones and Alan Hicks

The Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture has announced that Netflix will be a partner for the inaugural Smithsonian African American Film Festival this October. Netflix, a global leader in the film industry, is supporting this first-of-its-kind film festival, where cinema, history and culture come together to celebrate African American visual culture and film. As part of the film festival partnership, Netflix will screen their upcoming documentary “QUINCY” followed by a conversation with Quincy Jones.

“QUINCY” is an intimate look at the life and work of music icon Quincy Jones. Jones is a Rock & Roll Hall of Fame-inducted record and film producer who has garnered numerous Grammys and Academy Award nominations. Directed by his daughter, Rashida Jones, and Alan Hicks, the documentary weaves never-before-seen archival footage and interviews to give a fresh look at the life and 70-year career of one of the world’s most influential musicians, producers and artists. Rashida Jones is an American actress and director. Hicks is an award-winning screenwriter and film director.

“The museum is pleased to collaborate with Netflix in order to explore important moments in the history of America through the African American lens,” said Lonnie G. Bunch III, founding director of the museum. “We are pleased this original production by Netflix is a film that honors Quincy Jones whose creativity and commitment to racial justice are an example of the best of America.”

“Netflix congratulates the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture on their inaugural film festival,” said Lisa Nishimura, vice president of Original Documentaries at Netflix. “We are thrilled to be partnering with the museum and to be bringing “QUINCY” to Washington. Through his unparalleled body of creative work, Quincy Jones has transcended racial and cultural boundaries and to have him and his story told at the museum are an honor.”

The film festival will expand the understanding of African American cinema by highlighting works that explore the past, the present and the future. Netflix partnership on the film festival aids the museum’s larger mission to go beyond the building’s walls to bring the experience of the National Museum of African American History and Culture to people around the globe.

Taking place Oct. 24–27, the Smithsonian African American Film Festival will offer works by emerging and veteran filmmakers, alongside other historic and lesser-known films that explore and celebrate African American life. The four-day festival is the first of its kind and will feature a juried film competition, film screenings from the museum’s storied collection and national film premieres.

For more information on the films and to purchase tickets, updates on activities and public events, the public may visit the website aafilmfest.si.edu. Media can also sign up for updates via this link and join the conversation using #AAFilmFest. Download images here.

The Smithsonian African American Film Festival is generously supported by Toyota, Netflix, Earl W. and Amanda Stafford and AARP.

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Since opening Sept. 24, 2016, the National Museum of African American History and Culture has welcomed nearly 4.5 million visitors. Occupying a prominent location next to the Washington Monument on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the nearly 400,000-square-foot museum is the nation’s largest and most comprehensive cultural destination devoted exclusively to exploring, documenting and showcasing the African American story and its impact on American and world history. For more information about the museum, visit nmaahc.si.edu; follow @NMAAHC on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat—or call Smithsonian information at (202) 633-1000.

About Netflix

Netflix is the world’s leading internet entertainment service with 130 million memberships in over 190 countries enjoying TV series, documentaries and feature films across a wide variety of genres and languages. Members can watch as much as they want, anytime, anywhere, on any internet-connected screen. Members can play, pause and resume watching, all without commercials or commitments.
Wakanda Comes to Inaugural Smithsonian African American Film Festival with First Display of Black Panther Costume

Film Festival to Honor Madeline Anderson, Charles Burnett during “Night at the Museum”

The “Black Panther” hero costume, worn by Chadwick Boseman in Disney’s record-breaking film, will be on display for the first time during the inaugural Smithsonian African American Film Festival. The Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture announced today that the costume will be on display during the Film Festival’s “Night at the Museum” celebration Thursday, Oct. 25. For those who can’t attend “Night at the Museum,” a virtual close up of the costume featuring the museum’s conservation team will be made available online. This special event will also celebrate the Film Festival’s honorees: Madeline Anderson and Charles Burnett.

“Our ‘Night at the Museum’ epitomizes what’s so special about this inaugural Film Festival,” said Rhea Combs, director of the Center for African American Media Arts at the museum. “We will honor two pioneers in African American film, Madeline Anderson and Charles Burnett, by screening their historic works and engaging them in conversation about the power of their films—while highlighting where film is today by showcasing something as powerful as the ‘Black Panther’ hero costume. It will truly be a night and a Film Festival that people won’t want to miss.”

Earlier this year, the museum’s Earl W. & Amanda Stafford Center for African American Media Arts (CAAMA) acquired a number of objects from “Black Panther,” including the hero’s costume. This will be the first time the costume has been on display at the museum for a one-day only experience. “Black Panther” is the first superhero of African descent to appear in mainstream American comics, and Disney’s production is the first major film based on the character. The film, like the Film Festival and the museum, provides a fuller story of black culture and identity—one that has often been overlooked, marginalized or one-dimensional.

The “Night at the Museum” program will also showcase films from the CAAMA collection and will induct a number of works of African American cinema into the CAAMA Canon, which recognizes notable films for their contributions to and understanding of African American history and culture through the moving image. During the program, the Film Festival will honor the works of filmmakers Anderson and Burnett.

Madeline Anderson is a pioneering filmmaker and television producer who is credited as the first black woman to produce and direct a televised documentary film, the first black woman to produce and direct a syndicated TV series, the first black employee at New York-based public television station WNET, and one of the first black women to join the film editors’ union. In addition to screening her “I Am Somebody” (1969), Anderson will also be a part of a post-screening conversation.

Charles Burnett is a writer-director whose work has also received extensive honors. Born in Vicksburg, Mississippi, and raised in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, Burnett’s work has been praised for its portrayal of the African American experience. After screening his “Killer of Sheep” (1978), Charles Burnett will also participate in a post-screening conversation.

More information on the Smithsonian African American Film Festival’s “Night at the Museum” can be found here. The public can purchase passes to the festival and “Night the Museum” at http://aafilmfest.si.edu

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Lonnie G. Bunch III, Founding Director
National Museum of African American History and Culture

Lonnie G. Bunch III is the director of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture. As the museum’s director, Bunch has identified the museum’s mission and is developing exhibitions and public programs and coordinating the museum’s fundraising and budget development.

Before his July 2005 appointment as director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Bunch served as the president of the Chicago Historical Society (2001–2005). There, he led a successful capital campaign to transform the Historical Society in celebration of its 150th anniversary, managed an institutional reorganization, initiated an unprecedented outreach initiative to diverse communities and launched a much-lauded exhibition and program on teenage life titled “Teen Chicago.”

A prolific and widely published author, Bunch has written on topics ranging from the black military experience, the American presidency and all-black towns in the American West to diversity in museum management and the impact of funding and politics on American museums.

Bunch has served at the Smithsonian in the past, holding a number of positions at its National Museum of American History from 1989 through 2000. As the museum’s associate director for curatorial affairs for six years (1994–2000), he oversaw the curatorial and collections management staff. While serving as assistant director for curatorial affairs (1992–1994) at the museum, Bunch supervised the planning and implementation of the museum’s research and collection programs. He also developed “Smithsonian’s America” for the American Festival Japan 1994; this exhibition, which was presented in Japan, explored the history, culture and diversity of the United States.


Bunch has served on the advisory boards of the American Association of Museums and the American Association of State and Local History. Among his many awards, he was appointed by President George W. Bush to the Commission for the Preservation of the White House in 2002 and reappointed by President Barack Obama in 2009. In 2005, Bunch was named one of the 100 most influential museum professionals of the 20th century by the American Association of Museums.

Bunch received his master’s (1976) and bachelor’s (1974) degrees from the American University in Washington, D.C.

Kinshasha Holman Conwill, Deputy Director
National Museum of African American History and Culture

Kinshasha Holman Conwill has more than 35 years of experience in arts and museum management. Since 2005, she has served as deputy director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), engaged in fulfilling the museum’s vision by cultivating fundraising campaign efforts, fostering external partnerships, expanding the museum’s collection, developing exhibitions and public programs, and administering the museum’s daily operations. A widely published author, she directs the museum’s publishing activities, serving as lead editor for projects ranging from exhibition catalogs to books on the museum’s collections.

Before joining the Smithsonian, Conwill served as the Director of The Studio Museum in Harlem after joining the museum as Deputy Director. She also served as a senior policy advisor for the Museums and Community Initiative of the American Association of Museums and project director for the New York City Creative Communities Leveraging Investments in Creativity program.

Conwill is a former board member of the American Association of Museums, the Association of Art Museum Directors, the Municipal Art Society of New York, and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

A native of Atlanta, Conwill attended Mount Holyoke College, graduated from Howard University with a BFA, and received an MBA from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Rhea L. Combs, Curator of Photography and Film
National Museum of African American History and Culture

Rhea L. Combs is supervisory curator of photography and film and the director of the Earl W. and Amanda Stafford Center for African American Media Arts (CAAMA) at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC). Combs’s exhibitions and projects at NMAAHC include Watching Oprah: The Oprah Winfrey Show and American Culture; Represent: Hip Hop Photography; Everyday Beauty: Images from the Permanent Photography and Film Collection; Through the African American Lens: Selections from the Permanent Collection of NMAAHC and Rising Up: Hale Woodruff’s Murals at Talladega College. Combs’s essays have appeared in the museum’s photography book series, “Double Exposure,” “The Public Historian,” numerous anthologies, academic journals, and exhibition catalogues on topics on African American female filmmakers, popular culture, photography and visual aesthetics. Combs has delivered lectures nationally and internationally on the power of the image, the history of African American image-makers, and black cinema.
Madeline Anderson

Pioneering filmmaker and television producer Madeline Anderson is often credited as being the first black woman to produce and direct a televised documentary film, the first black woman to produce and direct a syndicated TV series, the first black employee at New York-based public television station National Educational Television (WNET), and one of the first black women to join the film editor’s union.

Anderson went on to become the in-house producer and director for Sesame Street and The Electric Company for the Children’s Television Workshop. During the early 1970s, she also helped create what would become WHUT-TV at Howard University, the country’s first, and only, black-owned public television station. Anderson was critical of Hollywood and preferred to work outside of that system.

Anderson’s credits also include Assistant director/assistant editor of “The Cool World” (1964); producer/director of “Malcolm X: Nationalist or Humanist?” (1967); producer/director/editor/writer of “I Am Somebody” (1970); producer/director/editor of “The Walls Came Tumbling Down” (1975); executive producer of the series “The Infinity Factory” (1978); and senior producer/writer of the series “Al Manahil” (1987).

Charles Burnett

Known for his portrayal of the African American experience, Charles Burnett is an independent filmmaker from the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles. Burnett, wrote, directed, produced, photographed, and edited his first feature film, “Killer of Sheep” (1977). In 1990, Burnett became the first African American recipient of the National Society of Film Critics' best screenplay award for “To Sleep with Anger” (1990).

His other features include “My Brother’s Wedding” (1983), “The Glass Shield” (1994), and :Namibia: The Struggle for Liberation” (2007). Burnett has also made several documentaries, including “America Becoming” (1999) and “Nat Turner: A Troublesome Property” (2003) in addition to short films, such as “The Horse” (1973) and “When It Rains” (1995).

Burnett has been awarded grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the J. P. Getty Foundation. The Museum of Modern Art held a retrospective of Burnett’s work in 2011, and that same year, the University Press of Mississippi published the book, Charles Burnett: Interviews.

Fact Sheet

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Director: Lonnie G. Bunch III
Total Employees: 188
Annual Budget (federal and trust) FY 2018: $49.2 million
Number of Artifacts: close to 37,000

Background

The National Museum of African American History and Culture opened Sept. 24, 2016, on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Occupying a prominent location next to the Washington Monument, the nearly 400,000-square-foot museum is the nation’s largest and most comprehensive cultural destination devoted exclusively to exploring, documenting and showcasing the African-American story and its impact on American and world history. The museum was created in 2003 by an act of Congress, establishing it as part of the Smithsonian. In 2018, the museum earned LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) for design and construction.

Collections

The museum has about 3,000 objects on display from its collection of nearly 37,000. Highlights include:

- Harriet Tubman collection, including her hymnal (c. 1876); lace shawl (c. 1897), given to her by Queen Victoria; and family photographs from her funeral
- Jim Crow railroad car (c. 1920)
- Chuck Berry’s red Cadillac convertible (c. 1973)
- Black Fashion Museum Collection (about 1,000 items)
- Tuskegee Airmen Trainer Plane, an open-cockpit PT-13 Stearman (c. 1942) used to prepare Tuskegee Airmen for World War II combat duty
- Works of art by Charles Alston, John Biggers, Elizabeth Catlett, Jacob Lawrence, Lorna Simpson, Romare Bearden, Archibald John Motley Jr., Henry O. Tanner and Frederick C. Flemister
- Emmett Till’s casket (c. 1955)—the glass-topped coffin that held the body of 14-year-old Emmett Till, whose murder in Mississippi helped galvanize the civil rights movement
- Slave cabin from Edisto Island, S.C. (c. 1800–50)

Building Layout and Inaugural Exhibitions

Located at the corner of 15th Street N.W. and Constitution Avenue, the museum includes exhibition galleries, an education center, a theater, an auditorium, a café, a store and offices. The museum’s inaugural exhibitions focus on broad themes of history, culture and community. These exhibitions have been conceived to help transform visitors’ understanding of American history and culture and to help visitors adapt to and participate in changing definitions of American citizenship, liberty and equality. The exhibitions employ a range of interpretive and experiential strategies.
Fifth floor: Staff offices, boardroom


Second floor: Education space, resource center, the “Earl W. and Amanda Stafford Center for African American Media Arts”

First floor: Central hall, welcome center, Corona Pavilion, store.

Concourse 0: Atrium, Contemplative Court, Oprah Winfrey Theater, “A Century in the Making,” Special Exhibitions Gallery, Sweet Home Café

Concourse 1: History Gallery—“A Changing America: 1968 and Beyond”


Concourse 3: History Gallery—“Slavery and Freedom 1400-1877”

Visitation

We are more than 4 million visitors.

The museum is open 364 days a year. Regular operating hours are 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The museum is closed Dec. 25.

Since opening Sept. 24, 2016, the museum has welcomed more than 3.5 million visitors. The museum uses a free timed-pass system to serve as many visitors as possible.

Advance timed-entry passes for individuals are released the first Wednesday of each month at nmaahc.si.edu or by calling 866-297-4020.

Same Day Options

Online same-day timed passes: Visitors can obtain passes on the day of their planned visit starting at 6:30 a.m. on the museum’s website at nmaahc.si.edu/sameday.

Walk-up passes: A limited number of walk-up passes are available at 1 p.m. Monday through Friday. No walk-up passes are available on weekends due to high visitation.

For more information, visit newsdesk.si.edu and follow the museum on social media: @NMAAHC on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. SI-249-2017 3

Recent Awards

2017 Award for Excellence in Architecture American Institute of Architects (AIA|DC)

2017 Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement Themed Entertainment Association

2017 James Beard Nominee, Best New Restaurant James Beard Foundation

2017 Gold Muse in Interactive Kiosk Category American Alliance of Museums

2017 Best Teaching Mobile App American Association of School Librarians

2017 Audience Honor, Gold Shorty Award Sawhorse Media

2018 AIANY Design Awards Best in Competition Center For Architecture

2018 People’s Voice Webby Award The International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences

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