MILWAUKEE FILM
ANNUAL REPORT
2020
Even before 2020 became the year of adaptation, Milwaukee Film was looking to share the story of how we've transformed. Though we'll always be known for our signature Milwaukee Film Festival, our nonprofit has taken on operating the Oriental Theatre, investing in education programs to shape the next generation of filmmakers and film-lovers, and using film and conversation to foster empathy and equity within our community.

We had big dreams in early 2020 for sustaining our growth. But then March stormed in, and everything we do had to be adapted.

Putting our plans on hold, like many of you we began to make new plans from scratch. We chose to shut down our theater on March 13, never expecting it would still be closed as 2021 opens. We discovered new ways to deliver independent film to our audience, straight to your sofa. We figured out how to continue our renovations on the magnificent Oriental Theatre. And while most of Milwaukee’s cultural festivals were canceled, we somehow put on two 15-day Festivals within less than two months.

There were challenging times for Milwaukee Film this year and waves of uncertainty that briefly blocked our vision to a path forward. Looking back, we’re in awe of the work we were able to do - and the incredible response we received from our supporters.

Our outlook for 2021 is still not clear, and we’ve certainly learned to expect the unexpected. But after the outpouring of support we received from the community throughout 2020, there’s little reason to doubt that Milwaukee Film will emerge from this next year stronger and more connected to the community than ever.
Our mission is to entertain, educate, and engage our community through cinematic experiences.
122

Number of tickets purchased for March 13 at the Oriental Theatre, the last day the cinema was open to the public.

2

Number of 15-day virtual film festivals we presented in 2020, an incredible feat as many arts and culture organizations had to cancel their major events.

$614,451

Total COVID-19 relief Milwaukee Film received in 2020 to help our organization navigate the effects of the pandemic.
ORIENTAL THEATRE

It’s hard to think back to early 2020, but we did have a chance to show some outstanding films at the Oriental Theatre, including “Parasite,” “Just Mercy,” and “CatVideoFest.” Since closing our doors to the public in mid-March, we’ve made massive progress in restoring the main house, all while planning for the time when we can safely reopen.

780: SEATS REPLACED IN THE MAIN AND EAST HOUSES OF THE ORIENTAL THEATRE

3,604: SQUARE FEET OF CEILING RESTORED IN THE THEATER’S MAIN HOUSE
Some of the films have altered my understanding of major global and local issues. The films have inspired important conversations and have brought me joy. I especially love the Oriental Theatre feeling like the home of such important work.” - 2019 MILWAUKEE FILM FESTIVAL ATTENDEE
MILWAUKEE FILM FESTIVAL

The cornerstone of Milwaukee Film’s programs, our annual Milwaukee Film Festival (MFF) pivoted from buzzing, cheering crowds to big, comfy couches. The Festival experience was wildly different in 2020, but we were delighted that the essential components weren’t lost in translation. This year’s Festival still featured:

- 66,286 attendees at our all-virtual Festival films and events
- 1,232 Festival passes sold
- 1,735,092 minutes of film viewed over the 15 days of the Festival
- $186,318 amount raised through membership and donations for the Double-Up Challenge issued by our friends Dick Gallun and Judith McGregor

A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

GROWING UP MILWAUKEE

I USED TO GO HERE

BLACK BEAR

MILWAUKEE FILM 2020 ANNUAL REPORT
Milwaukee Film is a wonderful aspect of our community, even if virtual this year, and the curated films are thought provoking, educational, heart-opening and entertaining.” - MFF2020 ATTENDEE
CULTURES AND COMMUNITIES PROGRAMS

In the first year of our new Cultures and Communities initiative, the critical importance of this program couldn’t have been clearer. Our Cultures and Communities programs seek to lift the voices of historically underrepresented groups, including those identified by race/ethnicity, age, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic or citizenship status. In February, this department created rich programming to celebrate and honor Black History Month. Both the disproportionate impacts of the coronavirus on communities of color and the ongoing acts of racism-fueled violence that we saw in 2020 were part of the conversations that we led during our second annual Minority Health Film Festival in September.

513: MHFF PASSES SOLD
WE ARE THE RADICAL MONARCHS

AMERICAN MUSLIM
50: FILMS SHOWCASED DURING THE MINORITY HEALTH FILM FESTIVAL (MHFF)
“Your focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion continues to impress me. I am fully supportive and turn everybody I know on to Milwaukee Film whenever possible.”

- 2020 MILWAUKEE FILM FESTIVAL ATTENDEE

4: BOTH THE NUMBER OF FILMS AND EVENTS THAT WERE PART OF 2020’S BLACK HISTORY MONTH

25: SHORT AND FEATURE-LENGTH FILMS FEATURED IN THE GENREQUEER PROGRAM DURING MFF2020
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Beyond screening movies, Milwaukee Film’s vision is to foster deeper audience engagement with film and to serve our community. Our education programs are critically important elements of this work. Just like every school, we shifted our programs this year to a virtual world and found that we could still foster connections for educators and students alike to grow in their learning.

$102,000: AMOUNT OF CASH AND SPONSORED SERVICES AWARDED TO 10 FILM PROJECTS THROUGH THE BRICO FORWARD FUND

MARQUISE MAYS, 2020 BRICO FORWARD FUND RECIPIENT

STUDENTS WHO TOOK PART IN OUR INAUGURAL HIGH SCHOOL FILMMAKING COURSE, WHICH SHIFTED TO A VIRTUAL PLATFORM AFTER MARCH
We absolutely LOVED the Reel Talk. My students were very passionate about the content of the film. They brought their own experiences to the table and I think they really appreciated Nate (one of the directors of *Invisible Lines*) listening and talking to them.”

- ERIN BRODZELLER, EDUCATOR
2020 ANNUAL FUNDERS

LUMINARY - $100,000+:
Bader Philanthropies, Inc
Donald and Donna Baumgartner
Herzfeld Foundation
Marianne and Sheldon Lubar
Allan H. (Bud) and Suzanne L. Selig

VISIONARY - $50,000+:
Argosy Foundation
The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation
Brico Fund
Heil Family Foundation
Herb Kohl Philanthropies
Judith McGregor and Richard Gallun
Ken and Kate Muth
National Endowment for the Arts
Christine Symchych and Jim McNulty
David and Julia Uihlein
The Yabuki Family Foundation

INNOVATOR - $20,000+:
Anonymous
John Axford
Greater Milwaukee Foundation
Johnson Controls Foundation
Kelben Foundation, Inc.
Nicholas Family Foundation
Lacey Sadoff Foundation
Cynthia and Jim Stoll
Werner Family Foundation

2021 MILWAUKEE FILM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD CHAIR
Ken Krei

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
John P. Bania
Alexander P. Fraser
Patti Keating Kahn
Immediate Past Board Chair
Tracey L. Klein
Emilia Layden
Secretary
Marianne Lubar
Susan Mikulay
Kenneth W. Muth
Joseph A. Rock
Treasurer
Kimberly Walker

MEMBERS
Chris Abele
Donna Baumgartner
Kristina Bell
Elizabeth Brenner
Lori Brissette
Kathryn Murphy Burke
Héctor Colón
Karen Ellenbecker
Jeff Fitzsimmons
Carmen Haberman
Susan Haise
Katie Heil
Jasmine M. Johnson
Michael J. Koss Jr.
Alexander Lasry
Steve Laughlin
Michael R. Lovell
Joan Lubar
Steve Mech
Mark Mone
Heidi Moore
John Ridley
Lacey Sadoff
Dave Stamm
James E. Stoll
Julia Taylor
John Utz

EMERITUS MEMBERS
Tom Barrett
Jacqueline Strayer
“In the craziest time we have lived in, you all created an amazing experience.”

- 2020 MILWAUKEE FILM FESTIVAL ATTENDEE