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KOHL'S TO PRESENT THE 2022 CULTURES & COMMUNITIES FESTIVAL; FULL FILM LINEUP AND HEADLINING GUESTS ANNOUNCED

Chef Bryant Terry, Author Nina Jankowicz, and actor J. Alphonse Nicholson are among the special guests attending the film festival, which closes with Reading Rainbow documentary *Butterfly in the Sky*

MILWAUKEE, WI - Tuesday, August 2, 2022 - Milwaukee Film announced Tuesday the complete list of in-cinema and virtual films for the 2022 Cultures & Communities Festival, September 14-18, presented by Kohl's—a leading sponsor of the organization's Cultures & Communities Initiative.

"We're proud to support Milwaukee Film and the 2022 Cultures & Communities Festival -- an important event that sparks conversation and critical dialogue each year around the healthcare inequities that exist for people of color every day," said Michelle A. Banks, Kohl's chief diversity and inclusion officer. "Film is a unique opportunity that gives an inside look into diverse cultural perspectives and lived experiences, and we're appreciative of Milwaukee Film for making this event so accessible to the Milwaukee community."

The line-up, which includes feature films such as Colin Kaepernick documentary *Kaepernick & America*, and *Hazing*, filmmaker Byron Hurt's penetrating expose into the physical and psychological trauma of pledging rituals, also offers a bit of Gen-X nostalgia in Closing Night film *Butterfly in the Sky*. The acclaimed documentary from co-directors Bradford Thomason and Brett Whitcomb chronicles the cultural impact of the long-running PBS program *Reading Rainbow* and its charismatic host, LeVar Burton.

In addition to in-person and virtual films, the Cultures & Communities Festival will host various public conversations and social events at venues around the city featuring local panelists and national speakers. James Beard award-winning author, chef, and food justice activist Bryant Terry and actor J. Alphonse Nicholson—who plays the character "Lil Murda" on the popular Starz series *P-Valley*—headline a list of special guests that includes the former executive director of the United States Department of Homeland Security's Disinformation Governance Board, Nina Jankowicz, and Rosa Parks biographer, Milwaukee native Dr. Jeanne Theoharis.

"I know it sounds cliché, but we really do have something for everyone this year," said Milwaukee Film Chief Innovation officer Geraud Blanks about the festival's diverse schedule of films and events.

Terry and Nicholson appear on the evening of Thursday, September 15, both part of moderated conversations. Terry joins Food for Health Director of Advancement & Engagement Rayna Andrews for an interactive talk about the intersections between poverty, structural racism, and food insecurity at the organization's headquarters (2007 N Doctor M.L.K. Jr Dr.), while Nicholson will participate in a "clips and conversation" style discussion at the Ivy House (906 S. Barclay St.) about his role as "Lil Murda" on the hit Starz Series *P Valley*.

Jankowicz is scheduled to speak as part of the “TechEquity” symposium on Friday, September 16, at 88Nine Radio Milwaukee (220 E. Pittsburgh Ave.), and Dr. Theoharis will join filmmakers Yoruba Richen and JohannaHamilton for the post-screening conversation for Opening Night film *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*.

All-access hybrid film passes for the festival, which includes in-person and virtual screenings, are currently available at mkefilm.org for an early bird rate of \$75 for Milwaukee Film members and \$100 for non-members. Passes increase to the regular price of \$100 for members and \$125 for non-members on August 16, when the full program schedule is announced and individual tickets for in-person events and cinema screenings go on sale. No tickets will be sold for virtual screenings.

The in-person and virtual cinema line-up includes (hybrid screenings where noted):

- **American Justice on Trial / Takeover** (hybrid)
(dir. Andrew Abrahams, Herb Ferrette | USA | 2022 / dir. Emma Francis-Snyder | USA | 2022)
Two shorter documentaries exploring stories of resistance—the Young Lords' 1970 takeover of a South Bronx hospital and the culmination of Black Panthers founder Huey Newton's Oakland murder trial.
- **Battleground**
(dir. Cynthia Lowen | USA | 2022)
An urgent, timely window into the intersection of abortion and politics in America, following three women who lead formidable anti-abortion organizations to witness the enormous influence they wield.
- **Beyond Ed Buck** (hybrid)
(dir. Jayce Baron, Hailie Sahar | USA | 2022)
Starting from the tragic murders caused by white Democratic political donor Ed Buck, this film expands that lens to consider structural racism and transphobia within supposedly progressive queer communities.
- **Butterfly in the Sky**
(dir. Bradford Thomason, Brett Whitcomb | USA | 2022)
For over 25 years, *READING RAINBOW* (starring LeVar Burton) was a staple on PBS, instilling a love of reading for a diverse young audience. This terrifically nostalgic film explores why this worked, tracing the show's origin story and plotlines.
- **Daughter of a Lost Bird** (hybrid)
(dir. Brooke Swaney | USA | 2020)
DAUGHTER OF A LOST BIRD follows Kendra, an adult Native adoptee, as she reconnects with her birth family, discovers her Lummi heritage, and confronts issues of her own identity.
- **Disfluency** (hybrid)
(dir. Anna Baumgarten | USA | 2021)
After failing her final college class, Jane returns home to her family's lake house and comes to terms with the confusing trauma that derailed her senior year.

- **Fly So Far** (hybrid)
(dir. Celina Haydee Escher | Sweden/El Salvador | 2021)
A grave warning of how far state control of women's bodies can go, FLY SO FAR follows Teodora Vásquez, sentenced to thirty years in a Salvadorean prison after she suffered a stillbirth.
- **Hayden & Her Family** (hybrid)
(dir. May May Tchoa | USA | 2020)
HAYDEN & HER FAMILY follows the nuanced and intimate adoption journey of an American family raising seven biological children plus five special needs Asian orphans.
- **Hazing** (hybrid)
(dir. Byron Hurt | USA | 2022)
Weaving his own personal experience with hazing into larger narratives, director Byron Hurt explores power, groupthink, gendered violence, and the functions of collective trauma across a range of pledging rituals in this incisive documentary.
- **I Didn't See You There** (hybrid)
(dir. Reid Davenport | USA | 2022)
Spurred by the spectacle of a circus tent outside his Oakland apartment, a disabled filmmaker launches into an unflinching meditation on spectacle, (in)visibility, and the corrosive legacy of the Freak Show.
- **Kaepernick & America** (hybrid)
(dir. Tommy Walker, Ross Hockrow | USA | 2022)
KAEPERNICK & AMERICA explores the intersection between Colin Kaepernick's anthem protests and the reactions they spurred in the United States, revealing unique insights into America's ongoing racial turmoil.
- **Liquor Store Dreams**
(dir. So Yun Um | USA | 2022)
LIQUOR STORE DREAMS is an intimate portrait of two Korean American children of liquor store owners who set out to bridge generational divides with their immigrant parents in Los Angeles.
- **New Jersey Drive**
(dir. Nick Gomez | USA | 1995)
From executive producer Spike Lee comes a thriller about a crew of car thieves who find their lives at risk when a police lieutenant becomes determined to take them down.
- **Marvelous and the Black Hole** (hybrid)
(dir. Kate Tsang | USA | 2021)
MARVELOUS AND THE BLACK HOLE follows Sammy as she befriends a surly magician (Rhea Perlman) who helps her navigate her inner demons and dysfunctional family with sleight of hand magic.

- **Oyate** (hybrid)
(dir. Emil Benjamin, Brandon Jackson | USA | 2022)
OYATE shares the perseverance and struggles of Water Protectors at Standing Rock and other Native leaders and activists, braiding together a moving range of responses to ongoing injustices for Indigenous cultures, territories, languages, and lives.
- **Relative** (hybrid)
(dir. Tracey Arcabasso | USA | 2022)
When filmmaker Tracey Arcabasso Smith confronts her childhood sexual abuse, she unearths a pervasive history of multigenerational abuse in her seemingly-idyllic family, forcing her to make an impossible decision: to stay silent and let the cycle continue or to speak up and risk losing the family she loves.
- **Sell/Buy/Date**
(dir. Sarah Jones | USA | 2022)
Comedian Sarah Jones reflects on her controversial one-woman show as she embarks on a journey to better understand sex work and her own personal relationship to it.
- **Sign o the Times**
(dir. Prince | USA | 1987)
This 35th anniversary 4K restoration captures a musical genius in his prime. Prince's performance of a lifetime is sure to get you out of your seat and dancing in the aisles.
- **The Exchange. In White America. Kaukauna & King 50 Years Later** (hybrid)
(dir. Joanne Williams | USA | 2022)
Milwaukee's Rufus King High School and Kaukauna High School participated in a 1966 exchange program culminating in a production of IN WHITE AMERICA. Now, over fifty years later, the original participants come together with a new generation.
- **The Loyola Project**
(dir. Patrick Creadon | USA | 2022)
In 1963, the Loyola Ramblers of Chicago broke racial barriers on their way to a national championship. Now, nearly 60 years later, this legendary team is reexamined by Loyola basketball player and co-captain Lucas Williamson.
- **The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks**
(dir. Johanna Hamilton, Yoruba Richen | USA | 2022)
The unexpected story of Parks and her life beyond the historic bus boycott, *The Rebellious Life*, reveals the intent behind her activism, her radical politics, and her courage.
- **Wandering: A Rohingya Tale** (hybrid)
(dir. Olivier Higgins, Mélanie Carrier | Canada | 2020)
In 2017, 700,000 people of the Rohingya Muslim minority fled Myanmar, escaping genocide. This immersive and poetic film brings us to the biggest refugee camp in the world, where Rohingya stayed before moving on to cities like Milwaukee.

- **When Claude Got Shot**

(dir. Brad Lichtenstein | USA | 2021)

When Claude Motley is shot during a visit to Milwaukee for his high school reunion, he realizes there's no escaping gun violence and the ripples of trauma it causes. When he discovers his assailant was shot two nights later by another attempted victim and is now paralyzed, it complicates thinking of any such crime as singular. Tracing this case through the criminal justice system, this documentary asks how and if these cycles can be broken.

- **Wildhood** (hybrid)

(dir. Bretten Hannam | USA | 2021)

Two-spirit Mi'kmaw teenager Link is just discovering his sexuality when he finds out his presumed dead mother may be alive and embarks on a quest to find her.

Additional virtual-only titles include:

- **Abortion Helpline, This is Lisa**

(dir. Mike Attie, Janet Goldwater, Barbara Attie | USA | 2019)

At the Philadelphia abortion helpline, counselors arrive each morning to a nonstop ring of calls from women and teens seeking to end a pregnancy but can't afford to.

- **And Then They Came For Us**

(dir. Abby Ginzberg, Ken Schneider | USA | 2017)

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 complicated story of the Executive Order 9066 that resulted in the forced incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans.

- **Coded Bias**

(dir. Shalini Kantayya | USA | 2020)

An exploration into the fallout after MIT Media Lab researcher Joy Buolamwini's discovery that facial recognition does not see dark-skinned faces accurately and her journey to push for the first-ever legislation in the U.S. to govern against bias in the algorithms that impact us all

- **The Neutral Ground**

(dir. CJ Hunt | USA | 2021)

In 2015, director CJ Hunt was filming the New Orleans City Council's vote to remove four confederate monuments. But when death threats halt that removal, Hunt sets out to understand why a losing army from 1865 still holds so much power in America.

- **Power To Heal**

(dir. Charles Burnett | USA | 2018)

An hour-long documentary chronicling the historic civil rights struggle to desegregate American hospitals and secure equal and adequate access to healthcare for all Americans.

- **Speed Sisters**

(dir. Amber Fares | Canada | 2015)

Checkpoints set up by the Israeli military, and social expectations don't stop members of the Middle East's first all-women racing team as they speed between the cities of the West Bank in high-octane car races.

- **Two Of Us**

(dir. Filippo Meneghetti | France | 2019)

Nina and Madeleine have a sweeping romance that spans decades. In their old age, they live quiet lives with side-by-side units in their lavish apartment building. But their love has remained a secret, and Madeleine's refusal to come out to her daughter complicates matters when a shocking development shakes up their lives. Director Filippo Meneghetti brings this tender drama to the screen to prove that true love conquers all.

Pop-up Cinemas (special free screening events hosted with local partners at non-traditional venues throughout Milwaukee).

- **Lubar Entrepreneurship Center**

Boss: The Black Experience in Business

(dir. Stanley Nelson | USA | 2019)

- **Latino Arts, Inc.**

El Barrendero

(dir. Miguel M. Delgado | Mexico | 1982)

About Milwaukee Film

Milwaukee Film is a nonprofit arts organization dedicated to entertaining, educating, and engaging our community through cinematic experiences, with a vision to make Milwaukee a center for film culture. Milwaukee Film operates the magnificent Oriental Theatre, a historic cinema palace committed to high-quality and accessible film and education programming.

About Cultures & Communities Festival

Established in 2019 as the Minority Health Film Festival, Cultures & Communities Festival is a five-day cultural event featuring groundbreaking films, distinguished speakers, and public forums highlighting the intersections of arts & culture, health & wellness, and equity & inclusion.

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