

UCLA Film & Television Archive welcomes audiences back to in-person screenings

Free fall programs at the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum run from Nov. 12 to Dec. 18

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOS ANGELES (Oct. 11, 2021) – This fall, the UCLA Film & Television Archive is [opening its theater doors](#) with a lineup of new and classic titles from around the world, including recent restorations, rare TV treasures and filmmaker tributes, plus special in-person guests.

“The Archive is thrilled to welcome back audiences with free screenings at the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum,” said May Hong HaDuong, director of the Archive, a division of UCLA Library. “Our brilliant programmers and curators have lined up a series of moving image experiences that will allow us to reimagine the world through the eyes of others. Together, we can experience art collectively and safely — to see humanity on screen, around us and within us..”

All public programs are free through June 2022, made possible by a gift from an anonymous donor.

Nov. 12, 7:30 p.m.

Opening night

The UCLA Film & Television Archive and the Hugh M. Hefner Classic American Film Program present two Los Angeles restoration premieres on 35mm.

“Mystery of the Wax Museum” (1933)

This legendary horror classic was the last and best of Hollywood’s two-color Technicolor features. A fire destroys sculptor Ivan Igor’s (Lionel Atwill) London museum, with its dazzling array of historical wax figures. When Igor opens a new museum in New York City, people and corpses suddenly begin to disappear, and his daughter (Fay Wray) becomes ensnared in the mystery. Director Michael Curtiz’s innovative camera work is accentuated by Anton Grot’s ethereal production design and Ray Rennahan’s cinematography.

“Doctor X” (1932)

One of the most gruesome of the early sound horror movies was also the first filmed entirely in two-color Technicolor. A series of brutal murders involving cannibalism occur under a full moon near Dr. Xavier’s (Lionel Atwill) laboratory, whose residents include his daughter (Fay Wray) and a quartet of weird scientists. Will reporter Lee Taylor (Lee Tracy) unmask the Moon Killer in time? “Doctor X” was scripted by Robert Tasker and Earl Baldwin, with exquisite production design by Anton Grot.

In person: Alan K. Rode, author of “Michael Curtiz: A Life in Film”

“Mystery of the Wax Museum” and “Doctor X” were restored by the UCLA Film & Television Archive and the Film Foundation, in association with Warner Bros. Entertainment, from 35mm two-color Technicolor nitrate print sources. Preservation funding was provided by the Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation.

The fall program continues through Dec. 18 with premieres of new restorations, favorites from the Archive's television collection, a spotlight on trailblazing cinematographer James Wong Howe and more.

Nov. 13, 7:30 p.m.

“Chameleon Street” (1990) — Los Angeles restoration premiere

The sole directorial feature from Black writer-director-actor Wendell B. Harris Jr., “Chameleon Street” portrays the true story of Detroit-based con man William Douglas Street Jr., who posed as an Ivy League student, magazine reporter, gynecological surgeon and corporate lawyer in a legendary stint of socioeconomic ladder-climbing. The Archive is proud to present the Los Angeles theatrical premiere of this nearly lost masterpiece of independent Black cinema, which has been newly restored from the original camera negative by Arbelos Films.

Nov. 19, 7:30 p.m.

“Ralph Story’s Los Angeles”: On the Move!

Join historian Alison Martino of [Vintage Los Angeles](#) for a celebration of the beloved local television series “Ralph Story’s Los Angeles,” which ran from 1964 to 1970. The retrospective will feature rare excerpts and two complete episodes exploring the city through its unique and, in some instances, forgotten modes of transportation. Topics will include a detailed history of the 5-cent tram on the Venice boardwalk, a look at Pacific Electric Red Cars, a trip by boat through the Los Angeles sewers and more.

In person: Alison Martino of Vintage Los Angeles

This event is made possible by the John H. Mitchell Television Programming Endowment.

Nov. 20, 7:30 p.m.

“Careless Crime” (Iran, 2020)

Iranian writer-director Shahram Mokri (“Fish & Cat,” “Invasion”) constructs an intricate cinematic puzzle that evokes the Cinema Rex tragedy, a 1978 act of arson that killed an estimated 420 moviegoers and sparked the Iranian revolution. Through long takes and a roving camera, Mokri weaves multiple storylines — an arsonist plot, a student film group screening, a film-within-a-film about a police investigation — into an enthralling, devastating portrait of a contemporary Iran seemingly trapped by its revolutionary history in an infinite loop of tragedy.

In person: Writer-director Shahram Mokri

Special thanks to the Archive’s community partner, the [Farhang Foundation](#).

Dec. 4, 7:30 p.m.

Through the Lens of James Wong Howe

One of the most widely sought-after cinematographers during Hollywood’s Golden Age was Chinese-born American James Wong Howe, who is today considered one of the most innovative directors of photography of all time. Arguably the first to make use of deep focus photography, Howe was consistently at the vanguard of technological ideation. For the filmmakers whose visions he rendered possible, Howe’s eye created a distinct richness. The Archive is proud to present two 35mm prints from our collection that highlight his masterful work.

“Sweet Smell of Success” (1957)

To execute the film’s distinct nocturnal look, Howe modeled “Success” after photojournalist Weegee’s uncompromising images of street-level life in New York City. On location for just a few short weeks in Manhattan, the crew shot between midnight and 6 a.m. to make use of the harsh lights of Times Square and Broadway. Howe’s prowess in etching with shadow

adds a “crisp, threatening, noir-like” hardness that director Alexander Mackendrick was seeking for this biting satire.

“Seconds” (1966)

Character actor John Randolph plays Arthur Hamilton, a frustrated banker who undergoes a procedure that transforms him into the younger, fitter painter Tony Wilson (Rock Hudson) in this John Frankenheimer film. Every production detail gives “Seconds” its lingering, eerie sensibility. Often using multiple hand-held Arriflex cameras and various fisheye lenses to drastically distort the image, Howe realized the film’s unique aesthetic in collaboration with art director Ted Haworth, whose labyrinthic, warped sets aid in attaining the film’s unsettling, abstract mise-en-scène.

Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m.

“Sambizanga” (Angola/France, 1972) — Los Angeles restoration premiere

When a dockworker in an Angolan port city is arrested for attempting to organize his fellow laborers, his wife, Maria (Elisa Andrade), makes the arduous trek from their small village to plead for his release. Director and co-writer Sarah Maldoror’s gripping adaptation of José Luandino Vieira’s novella recounts the events preceding the armed struggle against Portuguese rule beginning in 1961.

In person: Annouchka de Andrade, daughter of Sarah Maldoror

Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m.

Outfest UCLA Legacy Project presents:

The Andrew J. Kuehn Jr. Foundation preservation premiere of director Jamie Babbit’s short film “Stuck,” along with her feature-length “But I’m a Cheerleader.”

“Stuck” (2001)

Two aging lesbians in a long-term relationship get into a heated argument that leads to an unfortunate traffic accident deep in the California desert.

“But I’m a Cheerleader” (1999)

Now a venerated LGBTQ+ cult classic, this brilliant satire takes the heinous trend of gay conversion therapy and stretches it to hyperbolic heights. High schooler Megan Bloomfield (Natasha Lyonne) is more interested in listening to Melissa Etheridge than kissing boys, which spurs a panicked parental intervention and a road trip to True Directions. Bucking the film industry’s “dead lesbian” trend, Babbit ushered in a new cutting-edge queer comedy for a generation in real need of a laugh.

In person: Director Jamie Babbit

Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m.

Playhouse 90: “Alas, Babylon” (1960)

Broadcast two years before the Cuban missile crisis confronted the world with the dire possibility of a catastrophic thermonuclear war, this prime-time network television drama offered viewers a shockingly realistic look at the potential horrors of the atomic age. Narrated with solemn resignation by noir veteran Dana Andrews, the controversial production won critical praise and condemnation for daring to portray the tragic aftermath of a major nuclear conflict with the U.S.S.R.

This event is made possible by the John H. Mitchell Television Programming Endowment.

Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m.

“The Red Shoes” (U.K., 1948)

A brilliant composer and a gifted young ballerina fall in love, displeasing the impresario of the world-class ballet company where they work and leading the young lovers to a terrifying emotional precipice. This timeless classic was magnificently restored to 35mm using both traditional photochemical and cutting-edge digital processes, bringing its astounding production design, sumptuous color palette and revolutionary treatment of dance on film to vivid new life.

In person: Peter Sellars, theater and film director, distinguished professor in the UCLA Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance, and founding director of the Boethius Institute at UCLA, will introduce the film.

“The Red Shoes” was restored by the UCLA Film & Television Archive, in association with the British Film Institute, the Film Foundation, ITV Global Entertainment, Ltd., and Janus Films.

The Archive’s [Virtual Screening Room](#), launched during the pandemic, will continue to offer online access to a broad spectrum of Archive-curated programs.

For details, updates, registration information and important health guidelines, please visit cinema.ucla.edu.

About the UCLA Film & Television Archive

A division of UCLA Library, the Archive is internationally renowned for rescuing, preserving and showcasing moving image media and is dedicated to ensuring that the visual achievements of our time are available for information, education and enjoyment. The Archive has over 450,000 film and television holdings conserved in a state-of-the-art facility at the Packard Humanities Institute Stoa in Santa Clarita, CA, that is designed to hold materials ranging from nitrate film to digital video at all preservation standards. Many of the Archive’s projects are screened at prestigious film events around the globe.

The Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum is the home of the UCLA Film & Television Archive’s public programs. The theater is among a handful of venues nationwide able to exhibit an entire century’s worth of moving images in their original formats. From the earliest silent films requiring variable speed projection all the way up to cutting-edge digital cinema, the Wilder can accommodate an array of screen technologies.

For more information, please contact Marisa Soto at (310) 489-6002 or msoto@cinema.ucla.edu.