

CINEMA

Ackbar Reese Age Group

AFRICAN CINEMA

During the colonial era, Africa was represented on film exclusively by Western filmmakers. The continent was portrayed as an exotic land without history or culture. Examples of this kind of cinema abound and include jungle epics such as Tarzan and The African Queen, and various adaptations of H. Rider Haggard's 1885 novel titled King Solomon's Mines.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rt0sDaqxmA>

In the French colonies Africans were, by law, not permitted to make films of their own. This ban was known as the "Laval Decree". The ban stunted the growth of film as a means for Africans to express themselves politically, culturally, and artistically. In 1955, however, Paulin Soumanou Vieyra - originally from Benin, but educated in Senegal - along with his colleagues from Le Group Africain du Cinema, shot a short film in Paris by the name of Afrique Sur Seine (1955). Vieyra was trained in filmmaking at the prestigious Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinematographique (IDHEC) in Paris, and in spite of the ban on filmmaking in Africa, was granted permission to make a film in France. Afrique Sur Seine explores the difficulties of being an African in France during the 1950s and is considered to be the first film directed by a black African.

Before independence, only a few anti-colonial films were produced. Examples include Les statues meurent aussi by Chris Marker and Alain Resnais about European robbery of African art (which was banned by the French for 10 years) and Afrique 50 by René Vauthier is about anti-colonial riots in Côte d'Ivoire and in Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso).

Watch them here (remember to turn on closed caption -cc - for English subtitles)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5Pb9nykjQA>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vb3DkkggPtaQ>

Also doing film work in Africa during this time was the French Ethnographic filmmaker, Jean Rouch. Rouch's work has been controversial amongst both French and African audiences. With films like *Jaguar* (1955), *Les maitres fous* (1955), *Moi, un noir* (1958), and *La pyramide humaine* (1959), Rouch made documentaries that were not explicitly anti-colonial, but which challenged many received notions about colonial Africa and gave a new voice to Africans through film. Although Rouch has been accused by Ousmane Sembene - and others - as being someone who looks at Africans "as if they are insects," Rouch was an important figure in the early development of African film and was the first person to work with several Africans who would go on to have important careers in African cinema (Oumarou Ganda, Safi Faye, and Moustapha Alassane, to name a few). Because most of the films prior to independence were egregiously racist in nature, African filmmakers of the independence era - like Ousmane Sembene and Oumarou Ganda, amongst others - saw filmmaking as an important political tool for rectifying the erroneous image of Africans put forward by Western filmmakers and for reclaiming the image of Africa for Africans.

The first African film to win international recognition was Ousmane Sembène's *La Noire de...* also known as *Black Girl*.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRNeVX2AJ3Q>

It showed the despair of an African woman who has to work as a maid in France. The writer Sembène had turned to cinema to reach a wider audience. He is still considered to be the 'father' of African Cinema. Sembène's native country

Senegal continued to be the most important place of African film production for more than a decade.

The **cinema of Nigeria** grew quickly in the 1990s and 2000s to become the second largest film industry in the world in terms of number of annual film productions, placing it ahead of the United States and behind the Indian film industry. According to Hala Gorani and Jeff Koinange formerly of CNN, Nigeria has a US\$250 million movie industry, churning out some 200 videos for the home video market every month.

Nigerian cinema is Africa's largest movie industry in terms of both value and the number of movies produced per year. Although Nigerian films have been produced since the 1960s, the rise of affordable digital filming and editing technologies has stimulated the country's video film industry. The Nigerian video feature film industry is sometimes colloquially known as Nollywood, having been derived as a play on Hollywood in the same manner as Bollywood.

Nollywood movie:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZ1Cfyg0II8&wide=1>

SOCIAL IMPACT: ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF BLACK STEREOTYPES IN AMERICA

Ethnic Notions was the first major work of acclaimed African American filmmaker Marlon Riggs (1957–1994). Narrated by actress Esther Rolle and featuring commentary by noted scholar Barbara Christian, legendary filmmaker Carlton Moss, and others, the documentary explores the

origins and evolution of black stereotypes in America. As he locates each figure within its proper historical context, it becomes evident that they were not simply arbitrary products created for mass entertainment. To the white ruling class, these caricatures functioned as important elements of social control. In particular, Riggs's insightful analysis of the Sambo figure demonstrates how racial myths were constructed according to the shifting politics of white supremacy.

Click on the link: "**WATCH ETHNIC NOTIONS ONLINE**" after you click on the link below. **This content will be on AfroQuiz.**

<http://knowledgeequalsblackpower.tumblr.com/post/14417347112/watch-ethnic-notions-online>

NOTE: If the link above does not work, please cut and paste the following text to your browser:
knowledgeequalsblackpower.tumblr.com/post/14417347112/watch-ethnic-notions-online

BLACKS IN LATIN AMERICA - BRAZIL: A RACIAL PARADISE?

(Documentary by Prof Henry Louis Gates Jr.)

Watch the full documentary linked below to learn about the connection between Brazil and its ancestral roots in Africa.

This content will be on AfroQuiz

<http://video.pbs.org/video/1906000944>

References:

<http://knowledge.sagepub.com/view/blackstudies/n122.xml>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_Africa

BLACK PIONEERS OF CINEMA IN CANADA

Although the history of the Black film industry had its genesis in America, we must not forget Canada's involvement in the industry. Pierre Elliot Trudeau enacted the Multiculturalism Policy in the 1970s, which "allowed for the beginning opportunities for African-Canadians in cinema."¹

The number of African-Canadians making films four decades ago was infinitesimal. Fil Fraser was one of the few writing, producing and directing documentaries for television in the 1970s. At around the same time, Claire Prieto came along, making films with dramatic themes. Prieto, who is married to American playwright Charles Fuller, said Fraser and the

¹ <http://www.excal.on.ca/main/not-always-in-black-and-white-torontos-black-film-industry/>

late Jennifer Hodge and her husband Paul De Silva were the only visible minority filmmakers she knew when she came to Canada from Trinidad & Tobago in the early 1970s.

The life and work of **Jennifer Hodge de Silva** (1951-1989)



represents part of a milestone in Canadian film history, and in African-Canadian filmmaking in particular. She was among the first Black pioneers (and African-Canadian women) to make substantial inroads in the Canadian film and television industry in the 1970s.

Her work forms part of the beginning of a body of diverse films created by minority filmmakers. Working mainly in the documentary genre in a style described as realist social-issue documentary, her work in the 1980s established the dominant mode in African-Canadian film culture. She demonstrated a set of concerns and a mode of production that could be called "Black liberalism." Hodge de Silva's films went beyond the coverage of topics related to the African-Canadian community; she maintained that her work was defined by a broader interest. Her films included areas such as the Second World War, prison reform and Native peoples. While her career ended prematurely due to her early death from cancer at the age of 38, many of the subjects and issues raised in her films, as well as her interpretation of them, remain relevant today. Jennifer Hodge de Silva was born on January 28, 1951 to Cullen Squire Hodge and Mairuth Vaughan Hodge Sarsfield, in Montréal, Quebec.²

Fil Fraser is a broadcaster, journalist, biographer, television program director, human rights activist and a radio, television and feature film producer. His career has spanned over half a century. He is the first Black Canadian broadcaster.



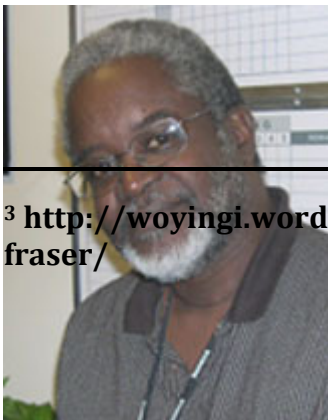
² <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/women/030001-1253-e.html>

He was awarded the Order of Canada in 1991 for his contributions to Canadian broadcasting and journalism. Fil was born to Caribbean parents in a French Canadian community in the East End of Montreal in 1932. Fraser began his career in Canadian broadcasting as a teenager when he hosted the afternoon teen program Club 800 on Radio CJAD. He worked for various organizations and lived in various provinces during the early years of his career. After working in the field of education for a while, In 1969, he became the program director of Canada's first educational television station, the Metropolitan Edmonton Educational Television Association (MEETA), forerunner of Alberta's ACCESS TV NETWORK, which went on the air in March, 1970. He was the "co-anchor" for CBC Edmonton's supper hour news and public affairs program from 1971 to 1973. In 1974, Fraser got to host his own show, the Fil Fraser Show, on ITV Television. During that same year, he founded the Alberta Film Festival, now known as the Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association (AMPIA) awards. The same period, he formed his own production company and wrote, produced and directed several educational films for television. After founding his own production company and writing, directing and producing several educational films for television, Fraser produced one of Canada's most successful feature films, Why Shoot the Teacher? Starring Bud Cort (Harold and Maude). In 1979, Fraser founded the Banff International Television Festival.³

Why Shoot The Teacher:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=122JVAfQiJw>

Roger McTair is a director, poet, professor and writer who lives in Toronto, Canada. He has had short stories air on CBC Radio and BBC



³ <http://woyingi.wordpress.com/2010/10/06/black-canadian-profile-fil-fraser/>

Radio. He was born in Trinidad and Tobago on October 7, 1943. McTair came to Canada in 1969. He went back to Trinidad and Tobago for a while, and then returned to Canada in 1970. He started making movies in 1979. Mainly his career has focused on documentaries. His first film was called; it's Not an Illness. It was about being able to run while pregnant to the very end. This film garnered McTair a finalist position at the Genies (Canada's version of the Oscars). It also won an award with a medical association in California. McTair has done some work with Vision-TV. His almost complete filmography also includes Hymn to Freedom done in 1994 with Almeta Speak Productions. Children Are Not the Problem done with the Congress of Black Women of Canada in 1991. Jane-Finch Again done with Prieto-McTair Productions in 1997. Different Timbres that was a short at 14 minutes. His latest film was Journey to Justice done in 2000 for the National Film Board.⁴

Journey To Justice:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THHKEJaSNJw>

African Canadian Cinema today

Clement Virgo is a contemporary Canadian filmmaker who created popular movies such as, Rude (1995), Love Come Down (2000), and Poor Boy's Game (2007). It is stated that Virgo is "the most prolific and recognized African-Canadian director, he is, in a sense, our Spike Lee."

Currently, two of the largest collections of African-Canadian cinema reside at the York University Library in Toronto and at the National Film Board of Canada libraries in Toronto and Montréal. It is a testament to the students of York, and Canadians at large that the Black film industry is an important aspect of our past, present, and future.

⁴ <http://kakonged.wordpress.com/2009/07/19/creating-things-profile-of-roger-mctair-originally-published-on-impowerage-com/#more-1997>

There have been several initiatives to showcase the growing Black film industry in Canada. For example, the Canadian Black Film Festival was launched on September 25, 2009. The goal of this festival is to raise the profile of global films and filmmakers of African descent, with special emphasis on Canadian culture and content.

Likewise, on February 5, 2011, the Ontario Black History Society launched its first annual Black International Film Festival. Both organizations are bringing awareness to the growing Black film industry in Canada with the hope of inspiring young creative talent. The Ontario Black History Society is currently organizing the 2012 Black International Film Festival.

Warren Salmon, president of First Fridays, promotes the Black film industry by showcasing trailers in addition to having filmmakers speak about their work. First Fridays is a community activity club that organizes monthly events focused on raising awareness, networking, and information sharing in Toronto and throughout North America. According to Salmon, Black films get the bulk of their recognition through word of mouth.⁵

⁵ <http://www.excal.on.ca/main/not-always-in-black-and-white-torontos-black-film-industry/>



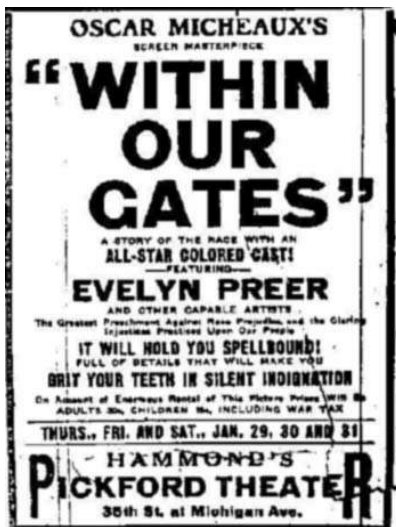
BLACK FILM TECHNOLOGY PIONEERS

Silent

Oscar Devereaux Micheaux (January 2, 1884 – March 25, 1951) was an American author, film director and independent producer of more than 44 films. Although the short-lived Lincoln Motion Picture Company produced some films, he is regarded as the first major African-American feature

filmmaker, the most successful African-American filmmaker of the first half of the twentieth century and the most prominent producer of race films. He produced both silent films and "talkies" after the industry changed to incorporate speaking actors.⁶ African-American feature filmmaker, the most successful African-American filmmaker of the first half of the twentieth century and the most prominent producer of race films. He produced both silent films and "talkies" after the industry changed to incorporate speaking actors.⁷

The first major African-America motion picture, *Within Our Gates* (1920), is a silent film by the director Oscar Micheaux



preceding his less popular 1917 film, *The Homesteader*. *Within Our Gates* portrays the contemporary racial situation in the United States during the early twentieth century, the years of Jim Crow, the revival of the Ku Klux Klan, the Great Migration of blacks to cities of the North and Midwest, and the emergence of the "New Negro". Released on 12 November, 1920 in the US, it was part of a genre called race

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Micheaux

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Micheaux

films. The plot features an African-American woman who goes north in an effort to raise money for a rural school in the Deep South for poor Black children. Her romance with a black doctor eventually leads to revelations about her family's past and her own mixed-race, European ancestry. The film portrays racial violence under white supremacy, and the lynching of a black man. Produced, written and directed by Oscar Micheaux, it is the oldest known surviving film made by an African-American director.⁸

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1E0NrcnwAE>

Sound

A sound film is a motion picture with synchronized sound, or sound technologically coupled to image, as opposed to a silent film. The first known public exhibition of projected sound films took place in Paris in 1900, but decades would pass before sound motion pictures were made commercially practical. Reliable synchronization was difficult to achieve

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Within_Our_Gates

with the early sound-on-disc systems, and amplification and recording quality were also inadequate. Innovations in sound on film led to the first commercial screening of short motion pictures using the technology, which took place in 1923.⁹

The Exile is a 1931 American film by Oscar Micheaux, also.



Released on May 16, 1931 in the US, this is a drama-romance of the race film genre, it was Micheaux's first feature-length talkie, and the first African American talkie; it was the first sound movie featuring an all-black cast.

Adapted from Micheaux's first novel, *The Conquest* (1913), it has some autobiographical elements: like the film's central character Jean Baptiste (played by Stanley Morrell), Micheaux spent several years as a cattle rancher in an otherwise all-white area of South Dakota.¹⁰ Baptiste falls for a young white lady whom he later on marries after going through turmoil due to racial barriers. The couple settles in South Dakota.

Color

⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sound_film

¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Exile_%281931_film%29

Color motion picture film refers both to unexposed color photographic film in a format suitable for use in a motion picture camera, and to finished motion picture film, ready for use in a projector, which bears images in color. The first color cinematography was by means of additive color systems such as the one .A simplified additive system was developed and successfully commercialized in 1909. These early systems used black-and-white film to photograph and project two or more component images through different color filters. With color motion picture film, not only is the luminance of a subject recorded, but the color of the subject, too. This is accomplished by analyzing the spectrum of colors into several regions (normally three, commonly referred to by their dominant colors, red, green and blue) and recording these regions individually. Current color films do this by means of three layers of differently color-sensitive photographic emulsion coated onto a single strip of film base.¹¹ The advancement of technology allowed more black filmmakers to produce color motion pictures hence contributing to the sophistication of the industry as a whole.

Gone with the Wind is a 1939 American period romance film adapted from Margaret Mitchell's Pulitzer-winning 1936 novel. The film was the longest American sound film made

¹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_motion_picture_film

up to that time – 3 hours 44 minutes, plus a 15-minute intermission – and was among the first of the major films to both include black actors and to be shot in color (Technicolor).¹²

Animation

Animation is the rapid display of a sequence of images to create an illusion of movement. The most common method of presenting animation is as a motion picture or video program, although there are other methods. This type of presentation is usually accomplished with a camera and a projector or a computer-viewing screen, which can rapidly cycle through images in a sequence. Animation can be made with either hand rendered art, computer generated imagery, or three-dimensional objects, e.g. puppets or clay figures, or a combination of techniques. The position of each object in any particular image relates to the position of that object in the previous and following images so that the objects each appear to fluidly move independently of one another. The viewing device displays these images in rapid succession, usually 24, 25 or 30 frames per second.¹³

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gone_with_the_Wind_%28film%29

¹³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animation>



Peter Ramsey is an American film director, illustrator and storyboard artist. His first job in Hollywood was painting a mural, but soon he was working as a storyboard artist and production illustrator on 26 films including *Predator 2*, *Backdraft*, *Independence Day*, *Fight Club* and *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*. He was a second unit director for *Poetic Justice*, *Higher Learning*, *Tank Girl* and *Godzilla*. Aron Warner, the producer of *Tank Girl*, producer suggested he join DreamWorks Animation. After initially being uninterested, Ramsey joined DreamWorks Animation as a story artist for *Shrek the Third* and *Shrek the Halls*. He was chosen to direct *Rise of the Guardians*, based on William Joyce's *The Guardians of Childhood* books, making him the first African-American to direct a big budget animated feature.¹⁴

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Ramsey