



# Black Film Festival Returns with Expanded Programming

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by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

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**SOUTHAMPTON, NY-**

The eighth annual Black Film Festival presented by the African American Museum of the East End returns to Southampton this week, running Nov. 7 to 10 with four days of feature film and documentary screenings, panel discussions, and, on Friday, Nov. 8, a custom blend of spoken word and live jazz at the Southampton Cultural and Civic Center.

Brenda Simmons, chair of the African American Museum of the East End, said of the annual event in a phone interview this week that “part of our mission is to promote appreciation of African American culture by creating programs that will help our youth succeed in school and in life.”

As a part of the effort to create this kind of programming, the Black Film Festival has grown since its inception from a one-day event into the four days of programming being offered this year.

Simmons noted that the festival organizers are “very excited” about one change this year. The “All-Day Film Festival” running from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday—the traditional centerpiece of the event—will be at a new venue—will be at a new venue: Stony Brook Southampton’s Duke Lecture Hall in Chancellors Hall in Shinnecock Hills, NY.

The festival gets underway on Thursday with a free Opening Night Screening of the Sarah and Ken Burns documentary, “Central Park Five,” at 6:30 p.m. at the Southampton Cultural Center on Pond Lane in Southampton.

The film details the notorious 1989 “Central Park Jogger” case, in which five black and Latino teenagers were convicted of raping a white woman in Central Park. After the five men had spent between 6 and 13 years each in prison, a serial rapist confessed to the crime.



“Central Park Five” a documentary by Sarah and Ken Burns

Thursday’s screening will be followed by a panel discussion. Panelists include one of the Central

Park Five, Yusef Salaam; Dr. Anael Alston, former NYS Principal of the Year and award-winning educator; the Rev. Kirk Lyons Sr., a founder and Senior Servant Leader of the transnational anti-racism project Brothers Keepers; Kyle Braunskill, director of Safe Harbor (Prison) Mentoring; and licensed clinical social worker Audrey Gaines.

On Friday, the evening of Spoken Word/Live Jazz starting at 7 p.m. at the Southampton Cultural Center will feature jazz, rock, funk and R&B musician Charles Certain of the group Certain Moves. He will be joined by special guest jazz performer Sheree Elder and a number of poets who will share the stage until 9 p.m.

Admission is \$20 per person, with proceeds helping to fund the annual Black Film Festival.

The schedule for Saturday's all-day festival of free screenings at the Stony Brook Southampton campus includes four features and one short film, running from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

David Hickson's 2003 film about a young boy's odyssey in South Africa, "Beat the Drum," is the first film of the day, running from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Next up, from 1:15 to 2:50 p.m., is "Beasts of the Southern Wild," the 2012 independent film by director Benh Zeitlin that garnered four Academy Award nominations. The film, adapted by Zeitlin and playwright Lucy Alibar from her one-act play, is a fantasy drama about a 6-year-old girl's courageous and life-affirming struggle to contend with the challenges of poverty, her dying father, mystical beasts released from the polar ice by global warming, and a hurricane that drowns the isolated bayou community where she lives.

From 3 to 3:10 p.m. on Saturday, writer, director, and editor KareemaBee will screen and talk about her 5-minute film, "Tug O War." KareemaBee was one of the 2013 scholarship recipients for the 20/20/20 film program offered at Stony Brook Southampton in association with independent film producer Christine Vachon's Killer Films.

From 3:15 to 4:30 p.m., a screening of an episode from the 1977 television mini-series, "Roots," will be followed by a Q&A with the episode's director, John Erman, and the actress Tina Andrews, who played the girlfriend of the central character, Kunta Kinte.

The final screening of the day, from 4:45 to 6 p.m., will be "I Am Slave," the 2010 thriller from director Gabriel Range based on the real-life experiences of Mende Nazer, who was abducted at age 12 from her village in the Sudan and sold into the slavery.

On Sunday, the festival returns to the Southampton Cultural Center for two free screenings starting at 2 p.m.

The first film will be "Prison Terminal: The Last Days of Private Jack Hall," a moving cinema verité documentary made this year that goes inside one of America's oldest maximum security prisons to tell the story of the final months in the life of a terminally ill prisoner, Jack Hall and the hospice volunteers, they themselves prisoners, who care for him.

The second film will be Academy award-winning producer/director Nigel Nobel's "Voices of Sarafina!" (1988), a documentary film made with members of the young South African cast and

based on the 1987 Lincoln Center Theater/Broadway musical “Sarafina!” The play retold the causes and the story of what is now known as the Soweto Uprising of June 16, 1976, a series of protests led by high school students in the streets of Soweto.

Funding for the 2013 eighth annual Black Film Festival was made possible in part by Suffolk County Community Development, Stony Brook Southampton and the Town of Southampton. The organizers also expressed thanks to Southampton Cultural Center, The Innocence Project and the Village of Southampton.

**BASIC INFO: The Eighth Annual Black Film Festival** takes place from Thursday to Sunday. It is sponsored by the African American Museum of the East End. Admission is \$20 per person, with proceeds helping to fund the annual Black Film Festival.

Screenings on Thursday, Friday and Sunday are held at the Southampton Cultural Center, 25 Pond Lane, Southampton Village, NY 11968. [www.southamptonculturalcenter.org](http://www.southamptonculturalcenter.org).

Screenings on Saturday take place at Stony Brook Southampton’s Duke Lecture Hall in Chancellors Hall, 239 Montauk Hwy., Southampton, NY 11968. [www.stonybrook.edu](http://www.stonybrook.edu).

For information, call Brenda Simmons at 631-873-7362.

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