In 1976, an extraordinary group of Black feminist artists and activists organized the first ever Black women’s film festival: the Sojourner Truth Festival of the Arts. Films by Michelle Parkerson, Ayoka Chenzira, Edie Lynch, and Madeline Anderson, among others, were screened. The festival was simultaneously a celebration of the emerging world of Black women’s filmmaking as well as a radical call for the kinds of socio-political and institutional changes necessary for a Black women’s film culture to thrive.

Four decades later, The Sojourner Truth Festival of the Arts, 2023 commemorates the 1976 festival with “Creating a Different Image: Black Women’s Filmmaking of the 1970s-90s,” a nine-week screening series held in conjunction with Professor Allyson Nadia Field’s winter 2023 course on Black women’s filmmaking of the 1970s, and a multi-day symposium about the original festival and the tradition of Black feminist filmmaking. Course screenings have been free and open to the public as part of the Film Studies Center’s “Open Classroom” series, which invites members of the public to attend and take part in course screenings and discussions. The final symposium, featuring roundtable conversations with some of the original festival participants and contemporary artists, provides an opportunity to reflect on the past and future of Black women’s filmmaking.

The Sojourner Truth Festival of the Arts, 2023 was organized by Allyson Nadia Field, Monica Freeman, Yvonne Welbon, Hayley O’Malley, and Michael W. Phillips Jr.
THURSDAY, MARCH 2

5:00pm
Terrace Seminar Room (Logan 801)
Welcome Reception for Invited Participants

7:00pm
Screening Room (Logan 201)
Screening: Interior Lives
Post-screening Q&A with Aarin Burch, Zeinabu irene Davis, S. Pearl Sharp, Cauleen Smith, Fronza Woods, and Yvonne Welbon (moderator)

FRIDAY, MARCH 3

8:30am
Performance Penthouse (Logan 901)
Reunion: Black Creatives Connect, Reunite, and Remember
Closed Session for Invited Participants

11:00am
Screening Room (Logan 201)
Welcome by Organizers & Keynote by Michele Wallace
Keynote respondent: Shola Lynch

12:30pm
Terrace Seminar Room (Logan 801)
Lunch Break for Invited Participants

SATURDAY, MARCH 4

9:00am
Performance Hall (Logan 128)
Welcome & Roundtable Conversation:
Histories & Futures of Black Women’s Filmmaking
Participants: Ayoka Chenzira, Nina Collins, Zeinabu irene Davis, Michelle Parkerson, Chanelle Aponte Pearson, Stefani Saintonge, and Yvonne Welbon (moderator)
Sponsored by Black Public Media

5:30pm
Screening Room (Logan 201)
Special Tribute to Madeline Anderson
Presented by Ava DuVernay and Monica Freeman

SUNDAY, MARCH 5

9:00am
Neubauer Collegium (5701 S. Woodlawn)
Feminist Media Histories Roundtable Discussion on Curation & Programming
Participants: Ina Archer, Cheryl Chisholm, Monica Freeman, Jennifer Lawson, O.Funmilayo Makarah, Yvonne Welbon, and Hayley O’Malley and Allyson Nadia Field (moderators)
Sponsored by Feminist Media Histories

11:00am
Neubauer Collegium (5701 S. Woodlawn)
Workshop: Archival Preservation for Filmmakers
Participants: Rachael Stoeltje, Director, Indiana University Moving Image Archive and the Black Film Center & Archive; Amber Bertin, Archivist, Indiana University Black Film Center & Archive; and CK Ming and Ina Archer, Media Conservation and Digitization Specialists, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture
Sponsored by the Black Film Center & Archive