



The Annenberg Center Announces Spring Film Series

KINOWATT, March 24-26

Pew x Annenberg Center, April 7, 14, 21, and 28

Spotlight on Puerto Rico, May

(Philadelphia – March 19, 2021) — The **Annenberg Center** has announced its spring film series, curated by recently appointed **Curator-at-Large for Film Maori Karmael Holmes**. The **KINOWATT micro-festival** in March explores the connections between music, technology and culture. In April, **Pew x Annenberg Center** will feature films created by Pew fellows past and present. In May, the series concludes by spotlighting the culture and heritage of Puerto Rico with the help of guest curator, **Marángeli Mejía-Rabell**, director of the Philadelphia Latino Film Festival. Specific films for May as well as several ancillary activities, such as discussions with filmmakers, will be announced shortly. At \$10 each, films are shown through an online platform and have limited windows for viewing access. Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for more information.

“The films in KINOWATT help audiences gain access to the stories of how and why certain recordings are made, how unique performances came to be, and how movements have emerged,” says **Holmes**. “In Pew x Annenberg Center, we’re delighted to highlight the work of Pew film and media arts fellows. All of the filmmakers this spring share one thing in common: a desire to make a mark upon the field.”

“The Annenberg Center’s spring film series expands our ongoing commitment to telling the stories of diverse artists and presenting a variety of perspectives,” says **Executive and Artistic Director Christopher Gruits**. “Maori Holmes, our Curator-at-Large for Film, has put together a slate of films by some of today’s most talented filmmakers, examining and highlighting connections between music, technology, and a spectrum of cultures, and shining a light on contemporary social issues.”

The **KINOWATT micro-festival** features screenings of ***Studio 17: The Lost Reggae Tapes*, Thursday, March 25, 5 PM**, about the tiny recording studio and immigrant family who forged the reggae sound and ***Dark City Beneath The Beat*, about how Baltimore’s budding creative community is using club music to re-write the city’s troubled narrative, Friday, March 26, 5 PM**. An additional film, ***Sisters with Transistors***, about electronic music’s female pioneers, is exclusively available and free for the Penn community and Annenberg Center subscribers on **Wednesday, March 24**. Please see full film descriptions at the end of the release.

Four films will be screened as part of **Pew x Annenberg Center: *Test Pattern*, Wednesday, April 7, 7 PM; *Destiny of Lesser Animals*, Wednesday, April 14, 7 PM; *Strawberry Fields*, Wednesday, April 21, 7 PM; and *Colewell*, Wednesday, April 28, 7 PM**. Please see full film descriptions at the end of the release.

With a long history of presenting film starting in the 1970s, in the 20/21 season, the Annenberg Center returns this important art form to its regular line-up to broaden its inclusive arts programming while also supporting independent film at Penn and in Philadelphia. Curator-at-Large for Film [Maori Karmael Holmes](https://www.annenbergcenter.org/maori-karmael-holmes), also Artistic Director and CEO of BlackStar Film Festival, works with Executive and Artistic Director Christopher Gruits to

develop a series of films that complement and amplify the Annenberg Center's season programming across all disciplines.

About the Annenberg Center's 2020-21 Digital Season

The Annenberg Center's 2021 spring digital season comprises livestreamed performances featuring world premieres and Philadelphia debuts by top dance companies and outstanding jazz artists, collaborative music performances, and screenings of independent films. Designed specifically for the digital stage, the live performances are broadcast using state-of-the-art digital technology from the Prince or Zellerbach Theatre, integrating live chat, and concluding with interactive discussions with the creators and performers. Livestreamed performances are available online for 48 hours after the start time for those who purchased access. Full season calendar can be accessed [here](#).

About the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts serves as a major cultural destination and crossroads connecting the University of Pennsylvania and the Greater Philadelphia region through innovative human expression in theatre, music, dance and film, serving an annual audience of over 80,000. The Annenberg Center also serves as a key resource for the arts at Penn, connecting master artists with Penn students in support of and as an enhancement to the arts curriculum. Student performing arts groups are also key users of the Annenberg Center's multiple performance and rehearsal spaces, while also staffing many operational roles throughout the academic year. In reflection of Penn's core values as a world-respected academic institution, the Annenberg Center emphasizes artistic and intellectual excellence, diversity and rigor in its presentations; prioritizes broad inclusiveness in the artists, audiences and groups it serves; manages outstanding performance, conference and meeting facilities; and stresses comprehensive event planning, production support and customer service. The Annenberg Center is a major provider of performing arts access for school children and actively engages a broad range of primary, secondary and post-secondary student audiences and inclusive constituencies from the campus, community and surrounding region. Visit AnnenbergCenter.org.

CALENDAR LISTINGS

KINOWATT

Sisters with Transistors

Wednesday, March 24, 5 PM

NOTE: This film is available exclusively and free for the Penn community and Annenberg Center subscribers. Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for more information.

Sisters with Transistors is the remarkable untold story of electronic music's female pioneers, composers who embraced machines and their liberating technologies to utterly transform how we produce and listen to music today. Theremins, synthesizers and feedback machines abound in this glorious ode to the women who helped shape not just electronic music but our contemporary soundscape. With narration by avant-garde composer Laurie Anderson, fascinating archival footage traces the history of the technological experimentation of sound, the deconstruction of its parts and the manipulation into something altogether new. While traversing a range of musical approaches and personalities, from academia to outsider art to television commercials, meet enigmatic musical geniuses including Clara Rockmore, Bebe Barron, Suzanne Ciani, Laurie Spiegel and Eliane Radigue and their peculiar way of hearing the world.

Directed by Lisa Rovner, 2020, France, documentary, 86 minutes, English

KINOWATT

Studio 17: The Lost Reggae Tapes

Thursday, March 25, 5 PM

Everyone's heard of Bob Marley, but reggae's success story began in a tiny recording studio where a little-known, Chinese-Jamaican family forged the sound. In its prime, Vincent and Pat Chin's Studio 17 recorded Bob Marley & the Wailers, Lee "Scratch" Perry, Peter Tosh, Gregory Isaacs, Dennis Brown, Alton Ellis, Carl Malcolm, Ken Boothe and many more. Political turmoil in the 1970s forced the Chins to flee Jamaica, leaving some 2,000 original session tapes behind. Fifty years later, a treasure trove of original Studio 17 tapes have been salvaged to reveal unique and stunning recordings from the golden age of reggae, many of which were unreleased and some never heard before. Led by Clive Chin, Vincent's son and protégé, artists, producers and music experts reveal stories and illuminating commentary about the music, people and influence of reggae.

Directed by Mark James, 2019, UK, documentary, 84 minutes, English

Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for more information.

KINOWATT

Dark City Beneath The Beat

Friday, March 26, 5 PM

Dark City Beneath The Beat is an audiovisual experience that defines the soundscape of Baltimore city. Inspired by an all-original Baltimore club music soundtrack, the film spotlights local club artists, DJs, dancers, producers and the city's budding creative community as they realize their dreams. Rhythmic and raw, these stories illustrate the unique characteristics of Baltimore's landscape and social climate through music, poetry and dance. From the social scene to its inspired LGBTQ community, *Dark City Beneath The Beat* showcases Baltimore club music as a positive subculture in a city overshadowed by trauma, drugs and violence.

Directed by TT The Artist, 2020, USA, Documentary, 65 minutes, English

Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for more information.

PEW X ANNENBERG CENTER

Test Pattern

Wednesday, April 7, 7 PM

Part psychological horror, part realist drama, this exhilarating debut feature from Shatara Michelle Ford is set against the backdrop of national discussions around inequitable health care and policing, the #metoo movement and race in America. *Test Pattern* follows an interracial couple whose relationship is put to the test after a Black woman is sexually assaulted and her white boyfriend drives her from hospital to hospital in search of a rape kit. Their story reveals the systemic injustices and social conditioning women face when navigating sex and consent within the American patriarchy. Winner of top prizes at the BlackStar and New Orleans Film Festivals, this gripping social thriller offers a unique exploration of institutional racism and sexism from a Black woman's point of view.

Content warning: This film includes a depiction of sexual assault.

Directed by Shatara Michelle Ford, 2020, USA, 82 minutes, English

Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for more information.

PEW X ANNENBERG CENTER
Destiny of Lesser Animals
Wednesday, April 14, 7 PM

A dream deferred...a future never dreamed of. Desperate to return to America years after his deportation, Ghanaian police inspector Boniface Koomsin finds that his newly acquired counterfeit passport has been stolen and embarks on a dangerous journey through Ghana to find it. His search is linked to a series of violent crimes, and he joins forces with a seasoned police veteran, who is still optimistic about his country. As their investigation brings them closer to the truth, Boniface finds he must choose between his dreams of a future abroad, escaping the ghosts of his past, and the reality of life in his homeland. Director Deron Albright crafts a poignant story of one man's journey to find and understand the value of his own culture.

Directed by Deron Albright, 2011, USA/Ghana, crime/drama, 90 minutes, English subtitles

Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for more information.

PEW X ANNENBERG CENTER
Strawberry Fields
Wednesday, April 21, 7 PM

Set in 1971 against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, *Strawberry Fields* tackles the minefield between cultural history and personal memory. After a visit from the ghost of her sister, rebellious 16-year-old Irene Kawai heads out west with her boyfriend in search of a better life. Meeting up with activist friends along the way, Irene unravels the history of a photo linked to her family's past, learning her parents were incarcerated in a U.S. internment camp during World War II. She detours her road trip, heading to the site of the camp in Arizona on a determined quest for the truth that will set her free.

Directed by Rea Tajiri, 1997, USA, drama, 90 minutes, English

Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for more information.

PEW X ANNENBERG CENTER
Colewell
Wednesday, April 28, 7 PM

In tiny Colewell, Pennsylvania, residents gather at the post office for mail and gossip, while the days pass quiet and serene. That is, until news comes that the office will be closing, and beloved clerk Nora (Karen Allen) is left to fight for her job and reflect on the choices she has made that kept her in Colewell for so many years. Touching, with a hint of melancholy, Tom Quinn's eloquent film is an ode to small-town life and the silent emotions that come with nostalgia and memories of the past. Infusing Nora with integrity and grace, Allen captures the intimate and often private struggle that occurs later in life, when unexpected changes occur. Heartened by a great supporting cast including Hannah Gross and Kevin J. O'Connor, *Colewell* gorgeously captures rural America, while giving space to the beauty of time passing and reflecting on what determines a life well lived.

Directed by Tom Quinn (Program Director, Film & Television at Drexel University), 2019, USA, Drama, 79 minutes, English

Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for more information.

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