

NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY

ACTING & FILM SCHOOL *The Most Hands-on Intensive Programs In The World*

- [HOME](#)
- [PROGRAMS](#)
- [ABOUT US](#)
- [ADMISSIONS](#)
- [INTERNATIONAL](#)
- [LOCATIONS](#)
- [NYFA NEWS](#)
- [STUDENT RESOURCES](#)
- [REQUEST INFO](#)
- [APPLY NOW](#)

NYFA Headlines

- [News](#)
- [Headlines](#)
- [NYFA Blog](#)
- [NYFA in the News](#)
- [Alumni News](#)
- [Guest Speakers](#)



Looking at Black Inequality in Film: An Infographic

April 03, 2014

2013 was a landmark year in Black film with such box office smashes as *The Best Man Holiday* and *Lee Daniel's The Butler* and critical darlings like *12 Years A Slave* and *Fruitvale Station* making a significant mark on mainstream culture. After a decade in which black cinema has been limited to just a few established filmmakers, there appears to be real momentum in Hollywood towards encouraging new and daring voices in Black film, as epitomized by *12 Years a Slave's* Academy Award for Best Picture last month.

However, this is not the first time that audiences have embraced a variety of diverse and accomplished Black films, only for Hollywood studios to turn their attention back to more mainstream fare. In an attempt to place this current renaissance in Black Hollywood in a greater historical context, the New York Film Academy has put together a comprehensive infographic to detail 100 years of Black cinema while looking at more recent data to see how Black filmmakers and performers have been represented and employed over the past six years.

In defining "Black Film," we are referring to films in which the story centers around lead characters who are of African descent. By putting together this infographic on the state of Black inequality in Hollywood, our goal is to present a series of talking points to initiate a discussion on the role of African Americans in Hollywood and what performers, filmmakers, and audience members can do to promote real equality in Hollywood.

NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY PRESENTS BLACK INEQUALITY IN FILM

While 2013 was not a 'breakthrough' year for African-American filmmakers, it was undoubtedly a monumental one. However, Hollywood has gone through such periods before, with a substantial disparity between how Black performers and filmmakers are portrayed and employed still remaining firmly in place. As producer **Will Packer** says,

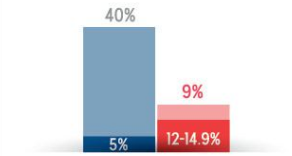
“ It is imperative that the next generation of young black filmmakers realize that their power is in their unique perspectives, unique skill sets and unique stories. Standing out is a good thing in Hollywood. ”

This infographic highlights the advances made by Black filmmakers over the past century and the obstacles that still exist in 2014.

REPRESENTATION ON FILM

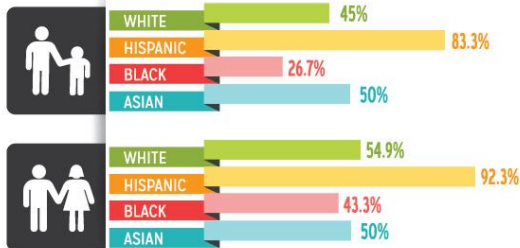


In the top 500 grossing films from 2007-2012, 12.4% of speaking characters were portrayed by Black actors vs. 75.8% of White characters

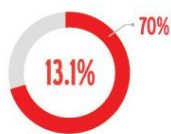


40% of the top 100 grossing films from 2012 showed Black characters as less than 5% of the speaking cast while only 9% of films showed Black characters as 12-14.9% of the speaking cast

MALE DOMESTICATED ROLES IN 2012 FILMS BY RACE/ ETHNICITY



26.7% of Black actors are portrayed as caregivers and 43.3% as partners in a committed relationship, the least of any racial group



70% of the top 100 grossing films in 2012 featured Black characters on screen at a rate below that of the U.S. census, which is 13.1%

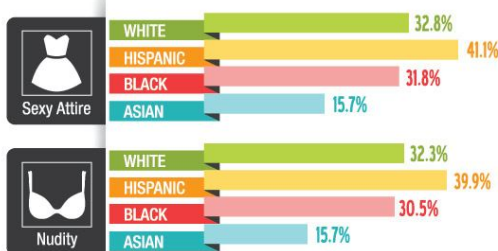


When a non-Black director is behind the camera, only 9.9% of on-screen speaking characters are Black compared to 52.6% when a Black director is in charge



Of the approximately 866 films in the Criterion Collection, only 5 feature Black directors

BLACK SEXUALITY ON SCREEN IN 2012 FILMS



Black characters are twice as likely to wear sexy attire or show nudity as Asian characters, but not as likely as White or Hispanic characters

TIMELINE

1910
William D. Foster forms the Foster Photoplay Company, the first independent African-American film company.

1915
The era of 'race films'—movies made for African-American audiences featuring all Black casts—begins with the formation of the Ebony Film Company, resulting in the creation of roughly 500 films. Most companies and films were created by White filmmakers.

1919
Oscar Micheaux creates The Micheaux Book & Film Company, going on to direct forty films aimed at an African-American audience that served to counter the stereotypes propagated by Hollywood during the era of 'talkies' along with other filmmakers like **Spencer Williams** and **William Alexander**.

1920s
While race films proved popular and lucrative, they are primarily shown in segregated theaters in the south and Black neighborhoods in the north.

1925
Paul Robeson rises to prominence through the film *The Emperor Jones* and goes on to be one of the first Black actors to play serious roles until his passport was revoked in 1950 through the efforts of Senator Joseph McCarthy who opposed the actor's progressive politics.

1927
Lincoln Perry, better known by his stage name Stepin Fetchit, breaks through with the film *In Old Kentucky*, going on to become the first major Black movie star, typically playing characters that reinforced Black stereotypes as being lazy and subordinate.

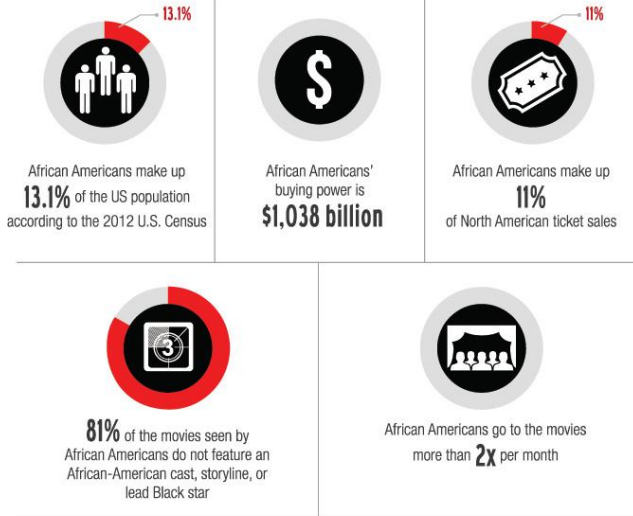
1930s
As Hollywood studios begin to make films with all Black casts, the independent Black cinema created through race films is absorbed into the studio system and disappears by 1950.

1940
Hattie McDaniel becomes the first African American to win an Academy Award for her portrayal as Mammy in *Gone with the Wind*.

1942
Lena Horne becomes the first Black performer to sign a long-term contract with a major Hollywood studio and makes her debut in *Panama Hattie*.

1940s
The NAACP begins meeting with studio executives to improve portrayals of African Americans by decreasing the use of stereotypes and increasing the opportunities for African Americans behind the camera.

VIEWING HABITS



In 2013, the total domestic box office for the top 5 Black films combined is less than the box office take for the #1 grossing film of the year. However, when one accounts for each film's budget and its Return On Investment (ROI), many of the films have a similar ROI as *Catching Fire* with mostly smaller budgets.

FILM	BUDGET	WORLDWIDE BOX OFFICE	ROI
<i>The Hunger Games: Catching Fire</i>	\$130 million	\$864.3 million	664.8%
<i>Lee Daniels' The Butler</i>	\$30 million	\$176.6 million	588.7%
<i>42</i>	\$40 million	\$95.0 million	237.5%
<i>The Best Man Holiday</i>	\$17 million	\$71.6 million	421.2%
<i>After Earth</i>	\$130 million	\$243.8 million	187.5%
<i>12 Years a Slave</i>	\$20 million	\$171.6 million	858.0%

*The budgets are of the production budgets and do not include marketing costs.

INFLUENTIAL BLACK FILMMAKERS



STEVE MCQUEEN DIRECTOR

McQueen has adeptly made the move from short films to art house darling with the riveting trio of films *Hunger*, *Shame*, and 2013's *12 Years a Slave*, for which he won an Oscar for Best Picture.



KASI LEMMONS DIRECTOR, ACTRESS

Lemmons emerged as a filmmaker with 1997's *Eve Bayou*, which was a critical darling, and has since followed it up with films including *The Caveman's Valentine*, *Talk to Me*, and 2013's *Black Nativity*.



WILL PACKER PRODUCER

One of the most successful African-American producers in Hollywood with such hits as *Stomp the Yard*, *Obsessed*, and *Think Like a Man*, Packer secured a three-year first-look producing deal with Universal Pictures and is already having a blockbuster 2014 with *Ride Along* and *About Last Night*.



LEE DANIELS ACTOR, PRODUCER, DIRECTOR

Having made a splash producing *Monster's Ball*, Daniels became a director of note with 2009's *Precious: Based on the Novel "Push" by Sapphire*, which was nominated for a Best Picture Oscar. 2013's *Lee Daniels' The Butler*, has grossed over \$175 million dollars worldwide.



GINA PRINCE-BYTHEWOOD DIRECTOR, SCREENWRITER, PRODUCER

After receiving an Independent Spirit Award for Best First Screenplay for *Love & Basketball*, Prince-Bythewood has stayed busy in film and TV, directing *The Secret Life of Bees* and this year's upcoming *Blackbird*.

MALCOLM LEE

1950s
1960s
1963
1969
1971
1970s
1986
1989
1991
1990s
1999
2000s
2013
2014

Large productions featuring all-Black casts are embraced by Hollywood and, in line with the Civil Rights Movement, challenge social segregation and prevailing racial attitudes.



Sidney Poitier's career in the 60s is indicative of the changes coming to Hollywood and he, along with **Harry Belafonte** and **Dorothy Dandridge**, were given roles denied to other Black actors and actresses.

William Walker and the NAACP successfully negotiate with SAG to include a non-discrimination clause in SAG's standard Theatrical Agreement.



The first film released by a major studio written and directed by an African American, **Gordon Parks' *The Learning Tree***, is released.



Melvin Van Peebles independently finances *Sweet Sweetback's Badasssss Song*, ushering in Blaxploitation, and studios begin capitalizing on this heroic yet stereotype-reinforcing genre.



In tandem to Blaxploitation, a smaller movement of independent Black filmmakers called the LA Rebellion emerges centered around UCLA's film department.



Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It* signals a new era of Black independent film known as the "New Black Wave," serving to counter the stereotypical depictions of African Americans in studio films.



Lee's *Do the Right Thing* and **John Singleton's *Boyz n the Hood*** (1991) bring the Black independent film movement to the mainstream by showing African Americans in more realistic roles while also achieving box office success.



Julie Dash becomes the first female African-American director to have a nationally released film with *Daughters of the Dust*.



While the early 1990s saw the rise of independent Black cinema and new auteurs like the Hughes Brothers, mainstream African-American stars remain far and few between, with Roland Emmerich having to lobby hard for Will Smith to be cast in *Independence Day*.



African Americans make up 20 percent of the movie-going public but only 2.4 percent of the Directors Guild of America membership.



While **Denzel Washington** and **Halle Berry** make history by earning Oscars in the Best Actor and Best Actress categories, the decade sees a sharp decline in the number of Black films produced by Hollywood.



A surge in Black films is seen at the box office with movies like *Lee Daniels' The Butler*, *The Best Man Holiday*, and *Twelve Years a Slave* dominating critics' lists and the box office.



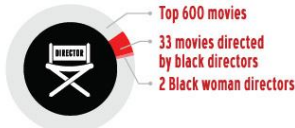
The momentum from last year continues with the success of the **Tim Story**-directed, **Will Packer**-produced *Ride Along*, which has



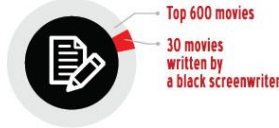
MALCOLM D. LEE
DIRECTOR, SCREENWRITER, PRODUCER
 Lee has carved out his own niche within Hollywood's studio system releasing such successful films as *The Best Man*, *Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins*, and 2013's smash *The Best Man Holiday*.

already banked over \$146 million worldwide in addition to other high-profile black films like *About Last Night* drawing substantial audiences to the theater.

BEHIND THE SCENES



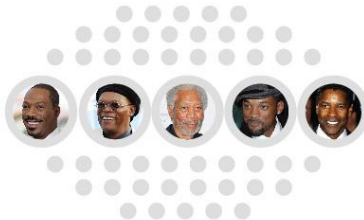
33 of the top grossing 600 movies in the past 6 years were directed by a black director, and only 2 were directed by women



30 of the top grossing 600 movies in the past 6 years were written by a Black screenwriter



According to Forbes Magazine's list of the highest paid actors of 2013, only one, **Denzel Washington**, is African American and none of the top paid actresses are African American



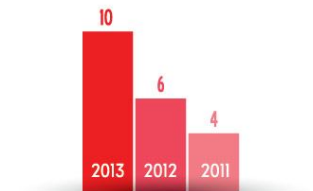
5 of the top 50 grossing actors of all time are African-American men—**Eddie Murphy, Samuel L. Jackson, Morgan Freeman, Will Smith, Denzel Washington**



Tyler Perry, the top grossing African-American director, is not included in the top 50 highest-grossing directors, none of whom are Black



Black directors make up only 4% of the Directors' Guild of America



In 2013, 10 of the top 100 grossing films were Black films compared to 6 in 2012 and 4 in 2011



In the early 2000s, Black actors played 15% of roles in film and TV, but today it has fallen to 13%

FINDING SUCCESS OUTSIDE OF THE STUDIO SYSTEM



NEWARK BLACK FILM FESTIVAL:

The longest running Black film festival in the US, NBFF turns 40 this year, and is a leading platform for African-American and African Diaspora cinema.



AFRICAN-AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL RELEASING MOVEMENT:

Founded in 2011 by filmmaker Ava DuVernay, AFFRM is a grassroots organization focused on distributing quality Black independent movies across the US that showcase the variety of Black voices in film.



AMERICAN BLACK FILM FESTIVAL:

Originally called the Acapulco Black Film Festival from its inception in 1997, the ABFF has grown to be one of the most important festivals for black filmmakers, having helped launch the careers of Ryan Coogler, Emayatzy Corinealdi, and Will Packer.



CODEBLACK ENTERTAINMENT:

Founded in 2005 by African-American entrepreneur Jeff Clanagan, CodeBlack is the first independent, vertically integrated African-American-owned studio and in 2012 partnered with Lionsgate Films to create CodeBlack Films.



PAN AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL:

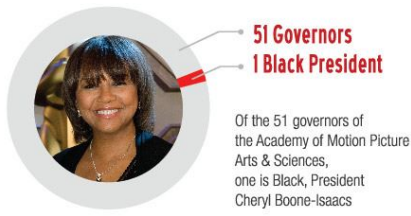
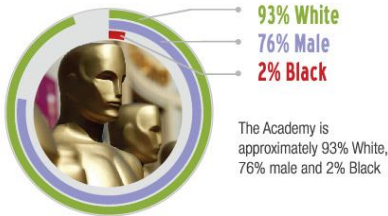
Co-founded by Danny Glover in 1992, PAFF is an annual festival that takes place every year in Los Angeles and showcases Black films that reinforce positive images and help combat negative stereotypes, showing over 150 new films.



HOLLYWOOD BLACK FILM FESTIVAL:

Considered the "Black Sundance," HBFF is a four-day film festival held annually in LA founded in 1998 by Tanya Kersey to highlight the careers of emerging and established Black filmmakers.

REPRESENTATION IN AWARDS



	2014	1990	1970	1950	1929
Best Picture				512 total nominations	5 Nominations = 1 Winner
Best Actor				422 total nominations	20 Nominations = 4 Winners
Best Actress				426 total nominations	10 Nominations = 1 Winner
Best Supporting Actor				390 total nominations	16 Nominations = 4 Winners
Best Supporting Actress				390 total nominations	17 Nominations = 6 Winners
Best Director				423 total nominations	3 Nominations = 0 Winner
Best Writing (Adapted Screenplay)				427 total nominations	5 Nominations = 2 Winners
Best Writing (Original Screenplay)				365 total nominations	3 Nominations = 0 Winner
Best Cinematography				585 total nominations	1 Nomination = 0 Winner

EMERGING VOICES IN BLACK CINEMA



RYAN COOGLER
DIRECTOR, WRITER

Having burst into the limelight in 2013 with his Sundance Grand Jury Prize-winning film *Fruitvale Station*, Coogler is next set to direct the Rocky spinoff *Creed*.



LENA WAITHE
DIRECTOR, PRODUCER

Rising to prominence with her web series *Twenties*, Waithe is poised to make her way to film producing the upcoming and much buzzed about *Dear White People*.



SHAKA KING
DIRECTOR, WRITER, PRODUCER

Making his feature film debut in 2013 with the wonderfully nuanced romance of *Newlyweds*, King has kicked off 2014 in fine style by winning a \$25,000 grant as part of his Someone To Watch Film Independent Spirit award.



TANYA HAMILTON
DIRECTOR, WRITER

Gaining notice for her short film *The Killers*, Hamilton landed on many critics' radar with 2011's *Night Catches Us*, earning her the 2011 Sundance Grand Jury Prize.

<http://annenbergl.usc.edu/sitecore/shell/Applications/-/media/PDFs/RaceEthnicity.aspx>
http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2010/02/100_years_of_black_cinema_oscar_michael_melvin_van_peekes_spike_lee_kasi_jemmons.html
<http://www.ameba.com/blog/2010/01/eric-s-blog/black-cinema-part-i-race-movie-the-silent-era.html>
<http://reachingblackconsumers.com/2012/04/black-buying-power-continues-to-rise/>
<http://www.bet.com/news/national/2011/05/24/study-says-black-moviegoers-don-t-watch-just-black-films.html>
<http://online.library.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01544.x/abstract>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_actors_by_total_box_office_gross
<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/black-thor-actor-blasts-debate-164048>
<http://www.npr.org/blogs/codeswitch/2013/12/30/256592777/films-with-black-actors-directors-go-to-11-in-2013>
<http://exhibits.library.duke.edu/exhibits/show/africanamericansinfilmm>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_black_Academy_Award_winners_and_nominees
<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/envelope/movienow/la-et-mn-diversity-oscar-academy-members-20131221.0.6955164.story#axzz2oyCTuZcX>
<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/03/oscar-voters-94-white-76-men-and-an-average-of-63-years-old/284163/>
<http://www.the-numbers.com/keyword/African-American>
<http://www.therap.com/best-man-holiday-12-years-a-slave-the-butter-hollywood-black-filmmakers>
<http://www.mpsa.org/resources/3037b7a4-58a2-4109-8012-58ca3abdf1b.pdf>
<http://www.greencine.com/static/primers/black-1.jsp>
<http://blogs.indiewire.com/shadowandact/the-classification-of-a-film-as-a-black-film-erroneous-and-limiting>
<http://blogs.indiewire.com/shadowandact/there-s-snapshot-of-the-year-2013-in-black-film>
<http://www.bet.com/celebrities/photos/2012/04/black-film-to-debut-at-number-one-at-the-box-office.html#092911-shows-bet-star-cinema-trivia-no-money>
<http://www.blackenterprise.com/mag/fade-to-black-2/>
<http://blogs.indiewire.com/shadowandact/the-top-10-grossing-black-films-of-2013>
<http://boxofficemojo.com/yearly/chart/?yr=2013>
<http://boxofficemojo.com/yearly/chart/?yr=2012>
<http://boxofficemojo.com/yearly/chart/?yr=2011>
<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/yearly/chart/?yr=2010>
[http://www.boxofficemojo.com/yearly/chart/?yr=2009](http://boxofficemojo.com/yearly/chart/?yr=2009)
<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/yearly/chart/?yr=2008>
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>

**NEW YORK
FILM
ACADEMY**

Embed This Image On Your Site (copy code below):

```
<div style="clear:both;"><a href="http://www.nyfa.edu/nyfa-news/black-inequality-in-film-infographic.php">**Deborah Shariff** → Michael Johnson • 4 months ago

Michael I agree on all your points, however I believe that what black folks are tired of (Slavery movies) is always having some white person saving us. For example when I attended film school I produced a period film on the friendly relationships between Africans and Native Americans during the 1700's and how they formed Maroon Settlements in the Blue Mountains of North Carolina away from their white enemies. Trust me there were no White heroes. It was the Blacks and Natives who were the heroes and sheroes. That's what folks are interested in, just my humble opinion; Even at the end of 12 years a slave, the main character hugged a white man for saving him from slavery.....! I'm tired of it, and I'm sure many black folks are tired of it too!

8   • Reply • Share >**Larry** → Deborah Shariff • 3 months ago

That film about Africans and Native Americans sounds interesting.

  • Reply • Share >**Quick** • 4 months ago



Very informative! Sharing on my blog -

^ | v • Reply • Share >

ALSO ON NEW YORK FILM ACADEMY

WHATS THIS?

### Never Waste A Second: An Interview With Diego Foyo

2 comments • 18 days ago



Catya Chavez — Honor a quien honor merece. Great Interview!

### Most Expensive Animated Movies Of All Time

1 comment • a month ago



Guest — Toy Story 3 and Monster University.

### Q&A With Michelle Potterf, Chair, Dance Dept., New York Film Academy

2 comments • 2 months ago



Simon Sedorenko — Hi Ekia...it's never too late to follow your dreams. We offer summer camps for high school ...

### 13 Tips On Surviving In The Acting Industry

1 comment • 2 months ago



Victor Hugo Sousa — Wow! it really helps, thanks

Subscribe

Add Disqus to your site



## Request Free Information

First Name\*  Last Name\*

Email Address\*

Phone Number\*

Mailing Address\*

City\*  State

1 AFA degree programs are offered only at the [New York Film Academy Los Angeles](#) campus.

[Y-](#) [AREAS of STUDY -](#) [ADMISSIONS](#)  
[LA](#)

- [Film](#)
- [Acting](#)
- [Animation](#)
- [Cinematography](#)

- [Tuition & Dates](#)
- [Semester Dates](#)
- [Admissions Requirements](#)
- [Scholarships](#)

[SCHOOL LOCATIONS](#) [CONNECT WITH NYFA](#)

- [New York City](#)
- [Los Angeles, CA](#)
- [Abu Dhabi, UAE](#)
- [Sydney, Australia](#)
- [Gold Coast,](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Tumblr](#)

Zip Code  Country\*

--- Select ---

Preferred Start Date\*

--- Month ---  --- Year ---

Program Type\*

--- Select ---

Program of Interest\*

--- Program ---  --- Program ---

Location of Interest

--- Select ---

How Did You Hear About Us?\*

--- Select ---

Please Specify:\*

Highest Level of Education:

--- Select ---

Have You Served in the U.S. Military?

Yes  No

phy  
g  
/  
1  
itre  
rts

3

k 10003 United States  
ny

- [Digital Editing](#)
- [Documentary](#)
- [Game Design](#)
- [Performing Arts](#)
- [Photography](#)
- [Producing](#)
- [Screenwriting](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [Veterans & Military](#)
- [Housing Information](#)
- [Australia](#)
- [South Beach, Florida](#)
- [Florence, Italy](#)

**ABOUT NYFA**

- [Contact Us](#)
- [Visit Us](#)
- [Open House](#)
- [Faculty](#)
- [Testimonials](#)
- [FAQ](#)
- [Online Brochure](#)

**WORKSHOP LOCATIONS**

- [Harvard University](#)
- [Disney Studios, Florida](#)
- [Paris, France](#)
- [Beijing, China](#)
- [Shanghai, China](#)
- [Doha, Qatar](#)
- [Kyoto, Japan](#)
- [Mumbai, India](#)
- [Jakarta, Indonesia](#)
- [Moscow, Russia](#)
- [Seoul, Korea](#)

- [Instagram](#)
- [Google+](#)
- [Youtube](#)
- [Vimeo](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [FourSquare](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [Flickr](#)

\* Required Information



ned and operated by the New York Film Academy and  
rvard University, or Disney Studios.



