

African Diaspora International Film Festival Chicago Celebrates 23rd Edition

African Diaspora International Film Festival Chicago Celebrates 23rd Edition with Powerful Stories, Music Legends, and Global Voices

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, May 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The African Diaspora International Film Festival (ADIFF) returns to its Chicago home at [FACETS \(1517 W Fullerton Ave\)](#) for its 23rd annual edition, taking place June 5–7, 2026. Presented in collaboration with FACETS and the DuSable Heritage

Association, the festival features 14 films from across Africa, the Americas, and Europe, including multiple Chicago premieres. This year's program highlights stories of resilience, cultural memory, and music through a curated selection of narratives and documentaries.



ADIFF Chicago 2026 - June 5 - 7

“

We are thrilled to bring ADIFF back to Chicago and to partner once again with FACETS, a cornerstone of the city's film culture, alongside the DuSable Heritage Association.”

*Dr. Reinaldo Barroso-Spech,
ADIFF Co-Founder and Co-Director*

“We are thrilled to bring ADIFF back to Chicago and to partner once again with FACETS, a cornerstone of the city's film culture, alongside the DuSable Heritage Association. We are also pleased to welcome Tyler Michael Balentine, Host and Producer of ‘The Thursday Script’ on Que4 Radio, as a new partner this year,” said ADIFF Co-Founder and Co-Director Dr. Reinaldo Barroso-Spech. “This year's films speak through music, family, and identity, offering powerful stories that resonate across communities.”

The festival opens Friday, June 5 with a focus on African American history, featuring the Chicago premieres of

Blueprint for My People, directed by Carol Bash, a short film interweaving Margaret Walker's poetry with rare 19th-century cyanotypes; Raise Your Head Up: Freedom Colonies in Texas, directed by Richard Orton, a documentary on communities built by formerly enslaved African Americans; and the restored documentary Audre Lorde: A Litany for Survival, directed by Ada Gay Griffin and Michelle Parkerson, a portrait of the influential poet and activist.

Opening Night – Friday, June 5

In collaboration with curator Tyler Michael Balentine (Que4 Radio), Opening Night brings together stories of history, identity, and community with the screening of *Daughters*, directed by local filmmaker Sharyon Culberson, and the Chicago premiere of *Can You Stand the Rain?* by Eden Marryshow, a compelling narrative on friendship, loss, and second chances. The evening includes a reception and Q&A led by Tyler Michael Balentine.

Other highlights in the festival include:

- **Black Music Program:** ADIFF Chicago presents a dedicated program honoring artists who shaped the global musical landscape, featuring the 1958 classic *St. Louis Blues*, directed by Allen Reisner and starring Nat King Cole, Eartha Kitt, Mahalia Jackson, Juano Hernández, and Ella Fitzgerald, alongside the Chicago premieres of *Teddy Pendergrass: If You Don't Know Me*, directed by Olivia Lichtenstein, and the Emmy-nominated *The Disappearance of Miss Scott*. The film, directed by Nicole London, features the voice of Emmy Award-winning actress Sheryl Lee Ralph reading from Hazel Scott's unpublished autobiography. The screening of *Miss Scott* will be followed by a Q&A with director Nicole London.

- **Special Event:** In collaboration with the DuSable Heritage Association, the festival hosts a "Haitian Evening" featuring the Chicago premiere of *The Last Meal*, directed by Maryse Legagneur. This poignant narrative uses the power of food to explore family reconciliation and the haunting legacy of the Duvalier dictatorship. The film was runner-up for the 2025 ADIFF NYC



Opening Night film "*Can You Stand the Rain*" directed by Eden Marryshow



"*Blueprint for My People*" by Carol Bash



Closing Night film "*Sugar Island*" directed by ohanné Gómez Terrero

Public Award for Best Film Directed by a Woman of Color. The screening will be followed by a Q&A with renowned Haitian-Canadian actor Mireille Metellus.

- Closing Night: The festival concludes with the Chicago premiere of Sugar Island, directed by Johanné Gómez Terrero, a powerful Afrofuturist drama exploring identity and labor in the Dominican Republic's sugarcane fields. The film premiered at the Venice Film Festival (Giornate degli Autori), where it received multiple awards, including the Edipo Re Award for Inclusion and Sustainability, and was named Best Film Directed by a Woman of Color at ADIFF New York 2025. The screening will be followed by a Q&A with the director and a reception.

Other films in the festival include the Chicago premieres of Malês, by renowned Brazilian filmmaker and Cinema Novo figure Antônio Pitanga, set during the 1835 Muslim slave revolt in Brazil; Empire (Viften), by Frederikke Aspöck, which explores the complex social hierarchies of the 19th-century Danish West Indies; and Outdoor School, by Ime N. Etuk, a moving story of childhood and homelessness in Portland, Oregon.

☐☐ TICKETS AND PASSES

- \$14 General Admission
- \$10 General Admission for members
- \$25 Opening Night Programs (film + Q&A or panel + Reception)
- \$20 Closing Night Programs (film + Q&A or panel + Reception)
- \$15 Haitian Program Screening + Q&A
- \$70 All-Access Festival Pass
- \$30 Day Pass – Friday
- \$40 Day Passes – Saturday & Sunday

☐ Tickets & Info

Purchase tickets and explore the full Chicago lineup at <https://facets.org/programs/adiff-chicago-2026/>

More information available at ☐ www.nyadiff.org | www.facets.org

☐ 212-864-1760 or 773-281-4114



[ABOUT ADIFF](#)

Founded in 1993 and based in Harlem, the African Diaspora International Film Festival (ADIFF) is a minority-led nonprofit bringing global Black experiences to the forefront through cinema that engages history, culture, and contemporary life.

ABOUT FACETS

Founded in 1975, FACETS curates cinematic experiences that deepen human connections.

The ADIFF Chicago is made possible thanks to the generous support of FACETS Film Forum, ArtMattan Productions, and the Dusable Heritage Association.

For screeners, press information, and interviews for the ADIFF Chicago contact Diarah N'Daw-Spech (Info@NYADFF.org).

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