

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3 · WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS · JAMES BRIDGES THEATER

LA Rebellion member Ben Caldwell showed his film in a classroom in this school, and his professors and classmates booed him.

He saw the trap laid to provoke him, and he refused to step into it. He kept making films to uplift his community. In Leimert Park he built KAOS Network, where for four decades he has opened the tools of filmmaking to young artists in his community. His work continues.

Moctesuma Esparza walked these same halls as one of the students who fought for the Ethno-Communications Program to exist. On August 29, 1970, Black, Asian American, and Chicano students from that program went together into East Los Angeles to film the Chicano Moratorium.

Requiem-29, directed by David García and produced by Moctesuma, now sits in the National Film Registry. He went on to produce for the screen for half a century, and today he builds Milagro Cinemas, returning theaters to neighborhoods the industry left behind. He serves on our Executive Board. His work continues.

The ripples of the rebellion. Rippling in Leimert Park. Rippling in Norwalk. Rippling in Larry Clark's *As Above, So Below*, which we screen this afternoon. Rippling for every student in this theater.

The film historian and screenwriter Josslyn Lockett in her book *Towards A More Perfect Rebellion* chronicles how this began with leadership. The chancellor, the dean and the chair wanted this

school to look like Los Angeles, and they opened its doors. Inside and outside just walking around LuValle, Charles Burnett and his classmates were assumed to be other than students.

This building was a site of the infliction of pain. Students were booed in its classrooms. Elyseo Taylor, who founded Ethno-Communications, sent memos that went unanswered, and his program was called a stepchild in its own department. Josslyn Luckett names this “produced forgetting.” The filmmakers made their work through it, and much of that work nearly disappeared until the Archive went looking for the prints.

Last night we unveiled a plaque: THE LA REBELLION WAS HERE. The building that held the harm now holds the memory. It will be remembered.

My own advisor and longtime TFT professor and LA Rebellionn alumnus Bob Nakamura's story continues in his son, Tadashi Nakamura, who made *Third Act*, a film about the godfather of Asian American cinema, his dad: the director of *Manzanar*, a founder of Visual Communications, a filmmaker whose work still shapes Asian American cinema. Rippling. Rippling.

People say the LA Rebellion ended in the spring of 1992. That same spring, Los Angeles rose up after the Rodney King verdict. I arrived at this school that fall, as an inheritor. Dawn Suggs, Sandra Peña, Nicole Jefferson and I came in the same cohort. Cauleen Smith arrived the year after. Ongoing inheritance. Women of color filmmakers who did not arrive at a welcoming place. The sexism and the harassment were here. We made our films anyway.

This year, as Dean, I assign our school *Sexual Citizens* by Jennifer Hirsch and Shamus Khan, on assault and harassment on campus. There can be no obstacles to education. Every obstacle deprives the industry of its leaders and its talents.

Community filmmaking has fought for a place here, and it always will. The LA Rebellion's vision is a cinema that grows from the talent and serves the community it comes from. On Thursday night, our Artist in Residence Lauren “Keke” Palmer placed herself in the line of Julie Dash, Barbara McCullough and the LA Rebellion, and told our students: you are the one who tells your story. She took social media to task in the name of freedom and community. Freedom is measured only by community uplift and what you are doing for the next generations.

Welcome to the TFT and UCLA Law Impact Summit.

Last night Charles Burnett gave us *Killer of Sheep*. Today we ask what films do once they leave the screen. Feel the ripples.

The LA Rebellion answered that question fifty years ago. These students made films for their neighborhoods, screened them in community centers and churches, and carried them into movements. In their particularity, they redefined American cinema and accessed universality. *Requiem-29* documented a march as it happened. *Cruisin' J-Town* and *Manzanar* returned Japanese American history to the community that lived it. *Chicana* put women at the center of their own history. Impact was the method that defines TFT. Ripples.

Kimberlé Crenshaw, of our partner school, gave us the word intersectionality for lives shaped by more than one system at once. The LA Rebellion put those lives on screen. *Illusions*, with a

Black woman passing inside a Hollywood studio. *Compensation*, with two Black Deaf women a century apart. Josslyn Luckett asks us to read these films together, across communities, because that is how they were made.

Scholars have always framed this work here. That is the vision and the practice of UCLA. We know our story and we tell our story. As an academy, whether they recognize it, we shape the industry, necessarily. We train its artists. We develop the languages for greater understanding. The industry must help, because we bring the rebellion to bear that makes representations that better reality and fulfill the promise of cinema itself to feel for others.

Higher education is under attack in this historical moment. So we partner. We bring the lawyers in, and they bring the storytellers in. Together we create the narrative by which we define our school. This is where films are made, and where lawyers are born to protect our right to speak.

This is One UCLA. Integrity, excellence and belonging are our True Bruin Values. Two schools take responsibility together for the right to speak and the right to tell our own stories.

That is why this summit belongs to two schools. The Documentary Film Legal Clinic at UCLA Law gives filmmakers the legal footing to tell hard truths and protect the people in their films. TFT gives them the craft and the community. This morning we screen *Razing Liberty Square* with Katja Esson. This afternoon our panel takes on distribution, philanthropy, community engagement, and how we measure what a film changes. Then Larry Clark, welcome back, Professor.

The commemoration continues past today. The ripples continue. In 2027, we experience Zeinabu irene Davis's *Spirits of Rebellion: Black Cinema at UCLA*. In Summer, the mural goes up. In 2028, the poster project. We are working with the Archive to reach every Rebellion alumnus we have not yet brought back.

My call to action. Our students and faculty make the work that keeps us the number one school and puts our students' films in the Library of Congress for changing American cinema. We did that. We do that. Support the mural and the poster project, so every student who enters this school sees what was made here and what they can make. We are not done, we keep going.

Thank you to Dale Cohen, whose clinic made this partnership possible. To Professor Ellen Scott, who leads this work with me. To Amber Payne and the Black Film and Theater Initiative. To Crystal Santana and the team who built these two days.

Dale, the floor is yours.