

# FY2023 ANNUAL REPORT



# Dear Film Enthusiasts,

This past year was a big year for us at the MSP Film Society, one on which we look back with a sense of elation, inspiration and gratitude.

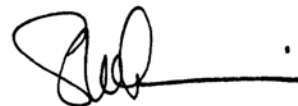
In early 2022, with support and encouragement from many longtime friends and patrons, and as the pandemic was beginning to subside, we took an educated leap of faith. With a vision to create a welcoming physical destination celebrating the art of cinema as it was always meant to be experienced, with a crowd and on the big screen, we assumed all operations and programming at the venue that had become our hub in 2010, the St. Anthony Main Theatre in Minneapolis' historic riverfront neighborhood.

We refurbished and renamed our theatre The Main Cinema and, one year into our new chapter, we are thrilled to report that we have become a point of pride for the neighborhood, with strong and growing attendance and broad enthusiasm for our enhanced in-person film exhibition and for our efforts to spearhead the revitalization of the riverfront.

For us, cinema is not just a window but a bridge to the world, and is most powerful when experienced collectively. "Everyone, after all, has a thirst for community." So, after the long isolation of the pandemic, we are grateful for the opportunities that are shaping a future for our organization. We are also elated and inspired by such clear appreciation and demand for our unique slate of films from across the globe.

In the coming year, we look forward to further expanding our reach, embracing new perspectives, convening a diversity of audiences and artists, and enriching the cultural fabric of our region. With your ongoing support, we will continue to bring the enlightening and enchanting world of cinema to our community.

*We do it for you; we can't do it without you...*



Susan Smoluchowski  
Executive Director



# FY2023 IN REVIEW

FY2023: July 2022 - June 2023

The Film Society of Minneapolis St. Paul (MSP Film), founded in 1962, is a dynamic non-profit exhibitor of international independent cinema. Our mission is to foster an appreciation of the art of film and its power to unite, inform, and transform individuals and communities.

*"I leave The Main Cinema after a movie that has made me laugh and cry -- and I feel changed. My attitudes are challenged. Thanks to the power of great movies from around the world, I learn about different cultures and people by walking in their shoes for a couple of hours. This is the power of the great films offered by the MSP Film Society."*

## OUR NONPROFIT MISSION DEFINES US

Since our founding, MSP Film has uplifted the art of film and its profound ability to transcend boundaries and transform communities. As we reflect on our 2023 fiscal year, we celebrate our enduring commitment to bringing the world of cinema to the doorstep of our audiences, while nurturing connections that resonate across cultures and time.

We are an artist, audience and member-driven organization, with more than **3,000 committed individuals supporting our mission through their memberships each year.**

In June 2022, with a long-term lease in hand, we entered our first year as full-time operator and curator of global and local independent films for the five-screen The Main Cinema in Minneapolis' Historic St. Anthony Main. Over that year, in a successful pivot back to theatrical exhibition after the long pandemic, we brought more than **500 films from around the globe** to our community, films that for the most part would not otherwise be available here, and **more than 90,000 people returned to our theater to experience our unique cinematic offerings.**

In a world defined by global interconnectivity but also deep-seated divisions, we recognize the imperative of promoting understanding, empathy and unity, especially through art. The Main Cinema embodies this principle. At our destination, diverse voices intertwine, stories that illuminate our shared humanity are told, and all are welcome to share in the magic of cinema.

## A KALEIDOSCOPE OF PERSPECTIVES

At MSP Film, diversity isn't just a buzzword; it's at the core of our mission. Our audiences reflect the rich tapestry of our community, encompassing Latin American, Southeast Asian, East and West African, Balkan, Native, and African American cultures. In partnership with community organizations, we have drawn thousands of new attendees from diverse communities, fostering understanding and dialogue. We've worked to dismantle barriers to access, ensuring that under-resourced communities can revel in the benefits of our programming.

In alignment with our commitment to diversity and inclusion, we collaborated with BIPOC curators who played a pivotal role in the film selection for MSPIFF 2023. Our programming showcased films by BIPOC filmmakers, bringing together narratives that resonate with Minnesota's multicultural communities.



## YEAR-ROUND THEATRICAL RUNS

Our strategy is to present a cross-section of the best of current cinema in theatrical runs on each of our five screens at The Main Cinema: from the international film fare from across the globe which is the core of our mission, to first-run Hollywood films that appeal to a broader audience, to independently made US 'art-house' films by local filmmakers and artists from around the country.

As crowds began to gather again after the pandemic, we launched our new chapter at The Main. With strong early audiences for Baz Luhrmann's **ELVIS**, Jordan Peele's **NOPE**, and **MARCEL THE SHELL WITH SHOES ON**, and much enthusiasm expressed for our newly refurbished venue, we could see a bright future unfolding...



Minneapolis St Paul  
International Film Festival

**CINE LATINO**





## CENTERPIECE FILM FESTIVALS

Festivals are key events for film exhibitors like MSP Film, and for independent filmmakers as well, who consider festivals important marketing tools. Designed to celebrate and promote the art cinema in all of its wonder and with all its perspectives and, as importantly, to foster cultural interconnection, they provide a destination and space for audiences and artists to gather, learn, enjoy and exchange.



# CINE LATINO



## CINE LATINO FILM FESTIVAL OCTOBER 2022

The **2022 Cine Latino Film Festival**, celebrating the 10th anniversary of our annual presentation of the best new Latin American, US Latinx, and Ibero Cinema, was a great success. Cine Latino pays homage to the diversity of these regions' inhabitants, the immensity and beauty of their geographies, the richness of their cultures and their long histories of fine filmmaking.

Highlights included welcoming seven filmmakers ranging from Ecuador, Spain, USA, Mexico, and El Salvador; a juried Bright New Voices Award to **OUT OF SYNC** by Juanjo Giménez Peña, marking the 10th anniversary of this showcase of emerging artists and supported by AMC Networks; and the presentation of six US premieres including **WALLS CAN TALK** by Carlos Saura and **THE TEACHER** by Tito Jara.





## MINNEAPOLIS ST. PAUL INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL APRIL 2023

MSP Film is best known for its annual centerpiece, the **Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival (MSPIFF)**. Presented every April, MSPIFF is the largest international arts event in the region. MSPIFF42 in April 2023 was our first fully in-person festival since 2019, and it fostered many connections and much dialogue. This vibrancy was carried forward to a successful fall Cine Latino. These festivals are pivotal for celebrating cinema, and more importantly, for fostering cultural exchange. Celebrating its 42nd anniversary, MSPIFF 2023 was a beacon of cultural convergence, bringing 190 new international films and 150 visiting filmmakers to our community. It attracted more than 30,000 attendees during its two-week run, reaffirming its position as a cultural cornerstone.

MSPIFF 2023 Highlights included **IT'S ONLY LIFE AFTER ALL** about the iconic Indigo Girls, the much anticipated new drama from Bill Pohlad, **DREAMIN' WILD**, and inspirational screenings by audience award and jury winners like the moving autobiographical Canadian drama **RICEBOY SLEEPS** by Anthony Shim, the exuberant comedy **FLAMIN' HOT** by Eva Longoria, and the tender beauty of Chilean filmmaker Maite Alberdi's **THE ETERNAL MEMORY**, to name just a few.





## MONTHLY SERIES

A key strategy as we embark on this new chapter, our monthly film series are designed to explore films more deeply, and to generate conversation and exchange.



★★★  
FIRST THURSDAY FILMS  
@ THE CAPRI

Capri

## FIRST THURSDAY FILMS @ THE CAPRI

We continue to offer free monthly screenings followed by post-screening conversations at and in partnership with the Capri Theater in North Minneapolis. This program, curated by North Minneapolis resident and MSP Film Senior Programmer, Craig Rice and designed for those who live in the neighborhood, includes a range of films previously shown at The Main, like **LAKOTA NATION VS. UNITED STATES, TILL,** and **NOPE.**

Cinema  
Club

## CINEMA CLUB

'Like a book club for cinephiles.' On the second Saturday of each month at 11am, **Cinema Club,** launched in October 2022 as a member perk, showcases new (and sometimes older) films of note followed by discussions with filmmakers and/or experts on the topic of each film. Moderated by Megan Feeney, it has drawn sell-out crowds since its inception with our screening of Todd Field's remarkable **TAR,** followed by a conversation with musicologist Dr. Rena Kraut. Other screenings include 'The Two Daniels' equally extraordinary surprise hit **EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE** and Celine Song's poignant, multi-award-winning **PAST LIVES,** followed by a conversation with playwright Gethsemene Herron.



## MN MADE

Putting a spotlight on MN's film ecosystem and artists, MN Made is our long-running MSPIFF Program celebrating the dynamic range of films made by Minnesota filmmakers and artists. Highlights this year included: MSPIFF42 Audience Choice Award Winner **40 BELOW: THE TOUGHEST RACE IN THE WORLD; CUE THE STRINGS - A FILM ABOUT LOW**, with special guests Director Philip Harder and musician Alan Sparhawk in attendance; **PAY OR DIE**, with Directors Rachael Dyer and Scott Alexander Ruderman in attendance; and **MINNESOTA MEAN**, with director Dawn Mikkelson and guests from the roller derby attending. Launched in FY 24, MN Made is now a monthly screening series as an extension and expansion of our celebrated MSPIFF Program, bringing more opportunities for films by Minnesota artists to reach local audiences.



## STRENGTHENING EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES THROUGH OUR NEXTWAVE PROGRAMS

Empowering minds through film education remained a core tenet of our mission. We deepened our commitment to education and outreach programs, offering free virtual screenings and discussions to schools and community groups. Over 5,000 students and educators engaged with our educational content, expanding their horizons through the power of film. We provided more than 1000 memberships to students at the University of Minnesota and other colleges, fostering a deeper connection with the younger generation. Local filmmakers are offered deeply discounted passes, and their work is always prominently featured in our programs as we continue supporting and celebrating our local artistic community, paving the way for a new generation of filmmakers and audiences alike.



## IMPACTFUL PARTNERSHIPS

MSP Film also partners with a variety of cultural institutions and niche festivals to bring unique and exciting perspectives to audiences. A few of the bespoke festivals we partner on include:

**SOUND UNSEEN** featuring films about music, arts, and alternative subcultures; **THE ITALIAN FILM FESTIVAL**, presented in partnership with the Italian Cultural Center; **TWIN CITIES ARAB FILM FESTIVAL**, showcasing new films representing a wide range of Arab cultures and regions, presented in partnership with Mizna; **THE GREAT NORTHERN FESTIVAL** celebrates our cold, creative winters through programming that invigorates the mind and body; and **IL CINEMA RITROVATO ON TOUR**, a partnership between Archives on Screen, MSP Film, and the Cineteca di Bologna featuring a curated selection of newly restored archival films from Bologna, Italy.



## SOME OF OUR PARTNERS OVER THIS PAST YEAR INCLUDED:

Twin Cities Public Television/TPT; Minnesota Public Radio/MPR; The MN Consular Corps and Consulates and Embassies around the US (from Brazil, to Czech Republic, Poland, Mexico, Canada, UK, France, Norway, Germany, Japan, Australia, Somalia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Iceland, Finland, China, Korea, Thailand, and more), American Swedish Institute, Graywolf Press, Milkweed Editions, Magers and Quinn, Germanic American Institute, Alliance Française, Italian Cultural Center, Japan America Society of Minnesota, Iranian Cultural Collective, Sexual Violence Center, Woman's Club, Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research (HACER), Amigos de España, BORIKEN, Celtic Arts Junction, Doors Open Minneapolis, Latino Communities United in Service (CLUES), Norway House, CornerHouse, Conservation Corps, The American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), Lavender Magazine, Minneapolis American Indian Center, MIGIZI, Surly Brewing, Hmong Chamber of Commerce, Film North, MN Film & TV, Asian Americans Advancing Social Justice, UMN Sustainable Agriculture, International Affairs and Language Departments, Humphrey School, Mizna, Coalition of Asian American Leaders, Minneapolis Institute of Art/MIA, Walker Art Center, St. Catherine University, MN Opera, MN Orchestra, Minnesota Women in Film and TV (MNWiFT), Docuclub, Take Action Minnesota, Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens, Guthrie Theater, Minnesota Farmers Union, and So Many More

## VISIONARIES CIRCLE

Jim Gerlich, Roger Hale & Nor Hall, Lili Hall, Michelle & Bill Pohlad, Mary & Paul Reyelts, John & JuLee Rimarcik, Penny & Bill George, Nancy & Rolf Engh, Kelly & Mike Palmer, Karla Ekdahl & Peter Hutchinson, Joseph Haro, Mark Andrew, Julie & Charlie Zelle

## MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL FUNDERS

Cedarwoods Foundation, KNOCK Inc., The McKnight Foundation, Star Tribune, AMC Networks



## **STAFF**

Susan Smoluchowski, *Executive Director*

Jesse Bishop, *Programming Director*

Judy Hawkinson, *Development Director*

Maury Steinman, *Business Manager*

Craig Rice, *Senior Programmer*

Kelly Nathe, *PR Manager & Programmer*

Bryce Warren, *Technical Director*

Tanner Deml, *Membership & Ticketing Manager*

Ethan Vander Broek, *Graphic Designer & Programming Coordinator*

Kendall Murphy, *Community Engagement Coordinator*

Andy Windels, *Manager of The Main Cinema*

Tony Brown, *Graphic Design, Digital Marketing, Website, Advertising*

Sarah Kass, *Development Consultant*

Alissa Simon, *MSPIFF Programmer*

Hebe Tabachnik, *Cine Latino Programmer*

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Jim Gerlich, *Board Treasurer, Principal, Cedarwoods Foundation*

Lili Hall, *President/CEO KNOCK inc.*

Zach McMillan, *Music & Film Producer*

Abdi Mohamed, *Journalist*

Kelly Palmer, *Community Leader*

Christopher Schout, *Business Owner and Theater Producer*

Rob Silberman, *Board Secretary, Professor of Art History, University of Minnesota*

Susan Smoluchowski, *Executive Director, MSP Film Society*

Marcelo Valdes, *Architect, Professor of Architecture, U of M*

## **FOUNDERS**

Al Milgrom, *Founder, Film Society, 1962*

Tim Grady, *Founder, Minneapolis Film Festival, 1981*

## **BOARD MEMBERS EMERITUS**

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Maria Antonia Calvo

Tim Grady

Mark Tierney

Karla Ekdahl

Richard Cohen

Max Musicant

Frances Wilkinson

Anne Carayon

Tom DeBiaso

Karen Sternal

Stephen Zuckerman

## **INCOME & EXPENSE SUMMARY**

*July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2023*

### **INCOME**

Individual Contributions .....	<b>\$302,316.56</b>
Memberships .....	<b>\$380,485.00</b>
Grants & Sponsorships .....	<b>\$1,220,659.62</b>
Ticket and Concession Sales .....	<b>\$1,538,537.88</b>
In-Kind .....	<b>\$158,310.00</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME .....</b>	<b>\$3,600,309.06</b>

### **EXPENSES**

Programs .....	<b>\$2,536,185.08</b>
Administration .....	<b>\$881,102.43</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES .....</b>	<b>\$3,417,287.51</b>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

**[mspfilm.org](http://mspfilm.org)**