



CHICAGO
FILM
SOCIETY

2019 Annual Report



2019 in pullquotes

*“Indefatigable.” — Ray Pride, **Newcity***

*“A small but mighty organization of cinephiles that exists to maintain, restore, and preserve cinematic treasures on film.”
— Lisa Trifone, **Third Coast Review***

*“Wonderfully eclectic taste and a real talent for unearthing obscurities.”
— Nina Metz, **Chicago Tribune***

Screenings

The Chicago Film Society presented 64 individual film programs in 2019, with 60 feature films and 81 short films screened.

Total attendance was 6,960 across 5 venues.

3 programs featured visiting filmmakers:

Sean Baker, director of *The Florida Project* (2017)

Nicolas Rey, member of the Paris artist-run film lab L'Abominable

Tim Hunter, screenwriter of *Over the Edge* (1979)

14 programs featured the Chicago premieres of new prints or restorations:

Computer Chess (2013) — new print commissioned by CFS

False Faces (1932)

Rock 'n' Roll High School (1979)

Fragment of an Empire (1929)

The Editor's Notebook (1950) — new restoration by CFS

Finishing School (1934)

Trust (1990) — new print commissioned by CFS

Transatlantic (1931)

Bridges-go-round (1958)

The Florida Project (2017)

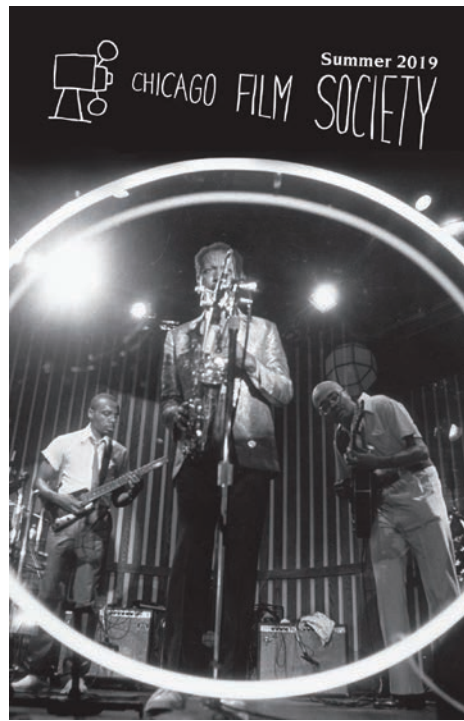
Old Boyfriends (1979)

Queen of Diamonds (1991)

The Signal Tower (1924)

New Orleans Street Parade (1968)

We had some of our best-attended shows ever in 2019, including *The Florida Project* with Sean Baker in person, and a rare screening of the 1931 Chicago city symphony *World City in its Teens: A Report on Chicago*.



Film writing

Having a distinctive program booklet — and distinctive, informative style of writing film descriptions — is crucial to the Film Society's identity. By establishing that there are people thoughtfully working behind the scenes to program the movies, we prepare our audience to think of films in new contexts.

In 2019, CFS produced three program booklets containing 63 original film descriptions written by our staff and interns.

On our blog, we published an interview with director Hal Hartley in conjunction with the new 35mm print of his film *Trust*, commissioned by CFS this year.

Screening collaborations

Screening collaborations in 2019 included:

CHIRP Radio

Screenings of ROCK 'N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL and DRUMLINE.

Chicago Park District

Pop-up home movie screening in Humboldt Park as part of the Chicago Onscreen Local Film Festival.

Home Movie Day at the Chicago History Museum

Co-presented the annual Home Movie Day event with Chicago Film Archives.

HotHouse

Screening of DANIEL as part of HotHouse's "On Whose Shoulders?," a series dedicated to re-examining the legacy of the Communist Party USA.

Jazz Institute of Chicago

"Jazz on Film" series — 8 programs in honor of JIC's 50th anniversary.

Manual Cinema

Screening of THE ADVENTURES of PRINCE ACHMED, followed by a shadow puppetry demonstration.

Mosaic Albany Park Arts Festival

Screening of THE DEVIL, PROBABLY.

Nitrate Picture Show at the George Eastman Museum — Rochester, NY

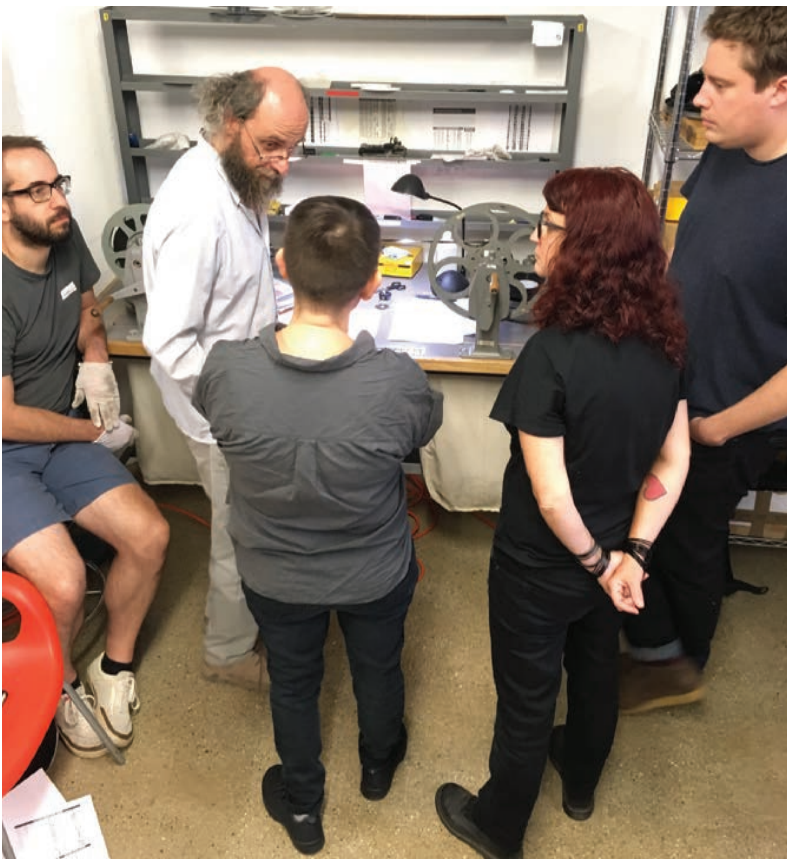
CFS donated a rare nitrate film print of 1940 cartoon "The Tempermental Lion" to the George Eastman Museum and presented it at NPS.

Northeastern Illinois University Cinematheque class

A recurring for-credit NEIU class for which students attended 6 CFS screenings per semester. 25 NEIU students took this class in 2019.

Saturday Silent Cinema at the Music Box Theatre

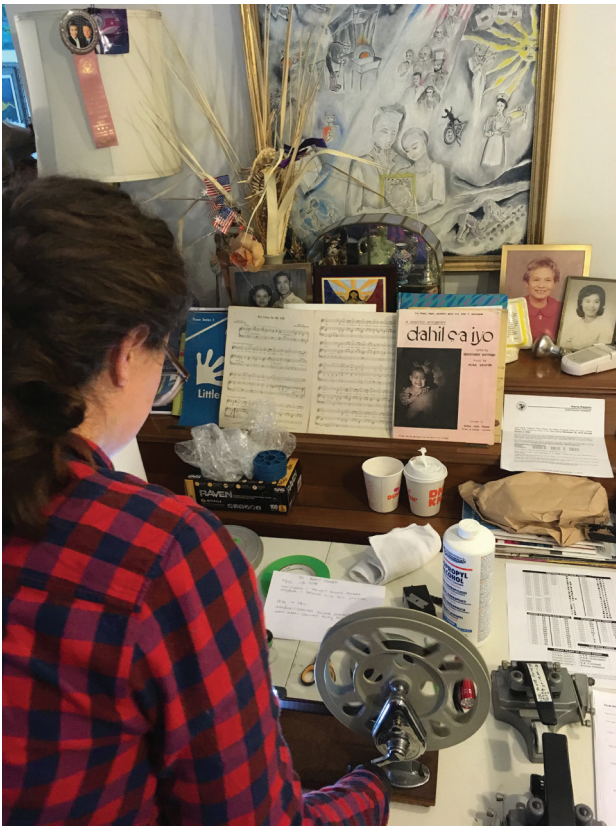
CFS curates the monthly silent film program at the Music Box Theatre. In 2019, CFS presented 12 programs with a total attendance of 2,254.



16mm Film Projection Workshop

In September 2019, with support from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Underground Film Festival, the Film Society hosted our second-ever archival film projection workshop. These workshops are an important part of our mission of keeping the skillsets required to project film alive and well. Our workshops focus on improving projection skills and sharing knowledge and experience between projectionists and film handlers with different backgrounds.

This year's workshop focused on 16mm film projection, and was attended by 12 professional film handlers from institutions including Hampshire College, Rice University, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and UC Berkeley. French filmmaker and film lab engineer Nicolas Rey from Paris lab L'Abominable and Kevin Rice from Milwaukee's artist-run film lab Process Reversal served as workshop instructors and co-organizers alongside CFS staff. The workshop was supported by donations of materials from Urbanski Film and Boston Light & Sound. *Big thanks* to Chicago Film Archives and Full Aperture Systems for donating space and equipment.



Chicago Area Archivists Day of Service with the Filipino American Historical Society of Chicago

The Chicago Area Archivists — a not-for-profit volunteer group of archivists, librarians, and historians and similar professions in the Chicago metro area — holds an annual Day of Service event intended to connect with local organizations and offer archiving services of local experts. In 2019, Kristin MacDonough (a member of CAA) and Rebecca Hall (a member of CFS) decided to organize DoS and focus the event on the Filipino American Historical Society of Chicago (FAHSC), an organization with a unique collection of home movies documenting events in Chicago's Filipino American community throughout the 20th century.

The Chicago Film Society presented a compact workshop on film inspection to volunteers from CAA and FAHSC, allowing them to begin inventorying, assessing, and accessing this important collection.

Preservation

CFS self-funded the preservation of *Joan Goes to Misery*, an early film by former Chicago Reader critic and artist Fred Camper.

In collaboration with the Museum of Modern Art, the Academy Film Archive, and Harvard Film Archive, CFS commissioned a new print of Hal Hartley's 1990 film *Trust* from the original camera negative.

With support from the National Film Preservation Foundation, CFS preserved *The Spider and the Fly*, one of the earliest surviving American home movies with synchronous sound.

CFS's Kyle Westphal organized a presentation about the preservation of *The Spider and the Fly* at the 2019 conference of the Association of Moving Image Archivists in Baltimore. The presentation, entitled "The Spider and the Fly: A Talking Case Study," featured perspectives from film digitization engineer Jeff Kreines of Kinetta, archivist and scholar Kate Dollenmayer of the Academy Film Archive & Center for Home Movies, and film lab technician Andrew Tamburrino of Colorlab.



Frames from THE SPIDER AND THE FLY



TRUST — New print commissioned in 2019 by CFS

Film collection loans

In 2019, the CFS grew its collection of 35mm and 16mm film prints by acquiring 75 prints of feature films and 150 short films.

In the fall, films from Chicago Film Society Collections were featured in a 16 film “Chicago Film Society Presents” series at the **Wisconsin Cinematheque**.

Films from CFS Collections were also presented at the **Nitrate Picture Show** at the George Eastman Museum in Rochester, NY; at the **Association of Moving Image Archivists** annual conference in Baltimore, MD; and at **Los Angeles Home Movie Day** at the University of Southern California.

Films from the collection also screened at:

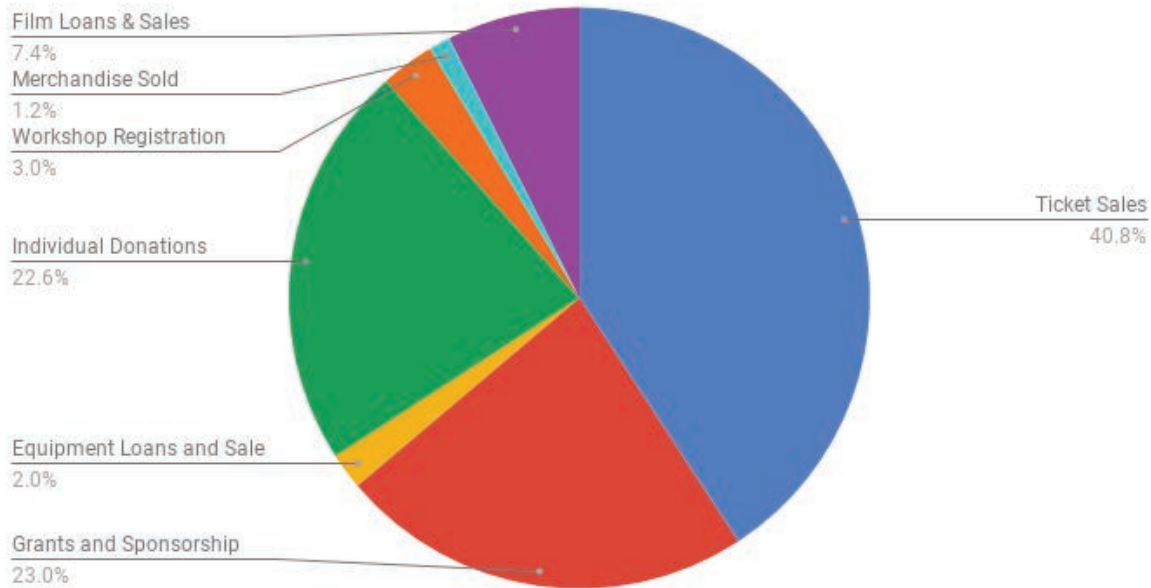
- Austin Film Society (Austin, TX)
- Cineclub Film Society (Montreal)
- Film Forum (New York City, NY)
- International House Philadelphia (Philadelphia, PA)
- Museum of Modern Art (New York City, NY)
- Northwest Film Center (Portland, OR)
- Toronto International Film Festival

In total, attendance was 2,938 at "out of town" screenings made possible by loans from the CFS film collection.

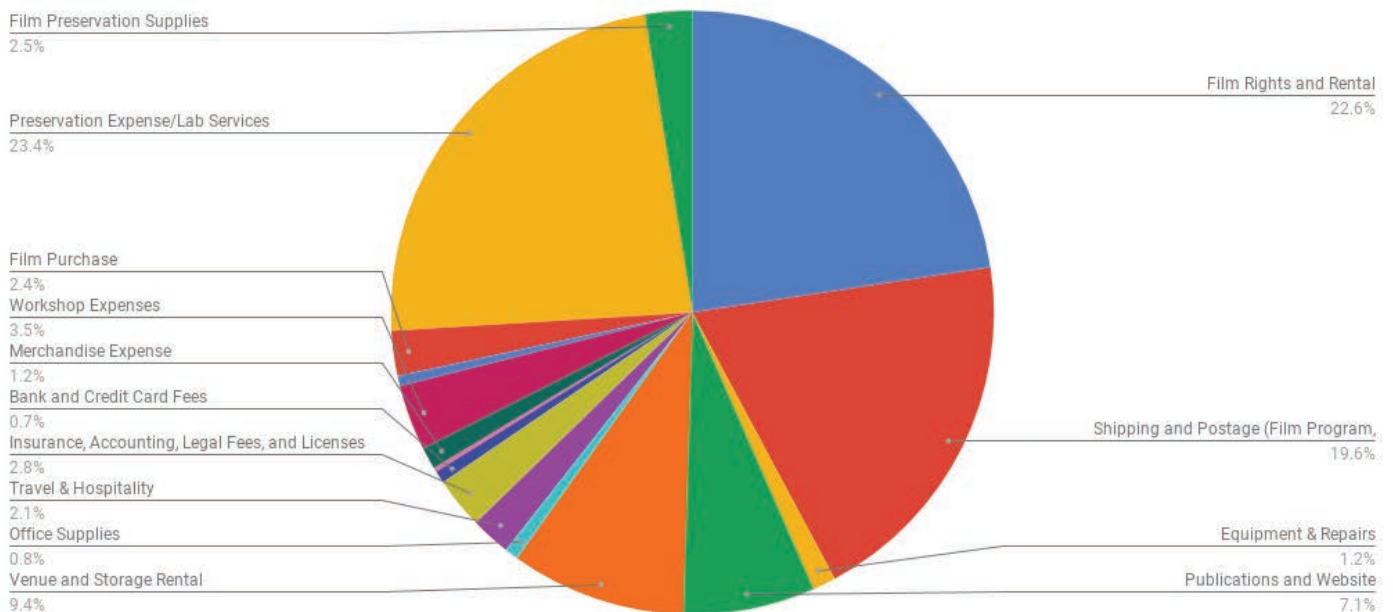
2019 Financial overview

We're very grateful to have the support of **nearly 100 individual donors** this year, as well as the support of the National Film Preservation Foundation, our major source of funding for film preservation projects.

Total income: \$93,202



Total expenses: \$83,363



Web programs

New and continuing web programs in 2019 included:

Booth Talk — private Google Group

A discussion group for those working in film projection or related fields to share questions or knowledge.

Celluloid Chicago — celluloidchicago.org

An online listing promoting and documenting every film-on-film screening in Chicago since 2013.

Directory of Analog Film Exhibitors — analogdirectory.org

A comprehensive list of theaters, festivals, and organizations screening analog film on a regular basis, publicly viewable online

Leader Ladies Project — leaderladies.org

A digital collection of "leader lady" lab calibration images, making visible the layers of hidden labor that go into making a film print.

Sprocket School — sprocketschool.org

A public online wiki for information related to film projection, film handling, and film history. Collaboratively edited by projectionists, archivists, and film handlers around the world.

Film frame rubber stamps

This year we got tired of drawing film-frames by hand on our film inspection reports and took action, creating rubber stamps to do it for us. They are now available for purchase at chicagofilmsociety.org

Stamps have been purchased by film handlers at the following institutions:

Academy Film Archive (Los Angeles, CA)

Alamo Drafthouse (multiple locations)

Ambler Theatre (Doylestown, PA)

Cal Arts (Santa Clarita, CA)

Enjoy The Film (Chicago, IL)

FilmScene (Iowa City, IA)

Fotokem (Los Angeles, CA)

Olympia Film Society (Olympia, WA)

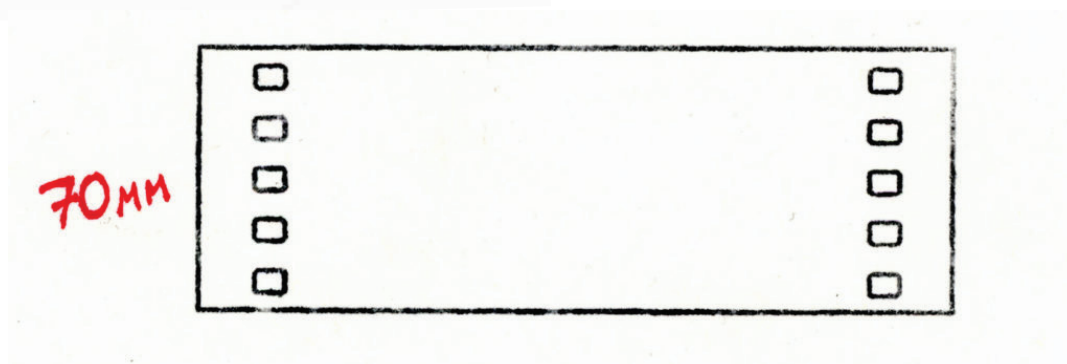
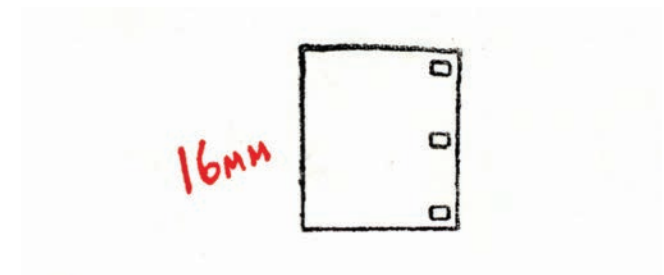
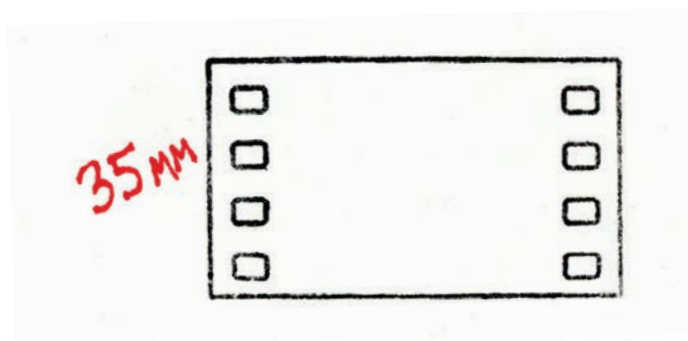
Music Box Theatre (Chicago, IL)

Microlights (Milwaukee, WI)

Shotgun Cinema (New Orleans, LA)

Ragtag Cinema (Columbia, MO)

University of North Carolina School of the Arts (Winston-Salem)



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Frame enlargements on the front cover photographed by Rebecca Lyon and Julian Antos. From top, left to right: *The Cry of Jazz*, *Nude on the Moon*, *Drifting Clouds*, *Crossing Delancey*, *Trust*, *Faces*, *The Signal Tower*, *Drumline*, *Fragment of an Empire*, *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take 1*, *Christopher Strong*, *Miracle Mile*, *Cartoon Girl*, *World City in its Teens: A Report on Chicago*, *Hold Me While I'm Naked*, *He Ran All the Way*.



***TOP: Manual Cinema explains paper animation techniques.
BOTTOM: Delivering CFS film prints to Wisconsin Cinematheque.***