



2023 Annual Report

preserving the analog movie ecosystem since 2011!

Press for CFS in 2023

"The peripatetic Chicago Film Society is the most devoted to the repertory film experience, showing only on 16mm and 35mm in multiple locations across the city, including the Music Box, Northeastern Illinois University and Siskel. Co-programmer Kyle Westphal says the group sees a sturdy audience for repertory, particularly after the pandemic."

— Ray Pride, **Newcity**

"...when I look at the work being done by labor-of-love organizations like the Chicago Film Society, Washington, D.C.'s Suns Cinema, Baltimore's Beyond Video, Paris's RE:VOIR, and many, many others I could name of similar ilk, I can almost convince myself that cinema can hold out against the continual onslaught on the arts by Silicon Valley creeps and censorious killjoys of all stripes."

— Nick Pinkerton, film critic for **Film Comment**, **Sight & Sound**, **Artforum**, etc.

"It's like getting a nice dinner rather than going to Jimmy John's," Julian Antos, the executive director of the Chicago Film Society, said, referring to the Midwestern sandwich chain."

— **The New York Times**, in an article about 70mm film screenings

Film screenings around Chicago

Our screenings give Chicagoans direct access to unique analog film prints from film archives, the vaults of major film studios, artists & filmmakers, and the collections of private individuals.

In 2023, we held 59 screenings at 7 Chicago venues, with a total attendance of nearly 9,000.

Read on for some of this year's screening highlights!



▲ *The biggest crowd in Comfort Film's history for an outdoor screening of Maya Deren films presented by CFS.*



▲ *A packed house at the Music Box Theatre.*

Our 8th year of residency at Northeastern Illinois University

Since 2015, we have presented public film screenings in the Auditorium on the campus of NEIU, in residency under the auspices of NEIU's Department of Communication, Media, and Theatre.

We can't believe it's almost been a decade!



▲ *Critic Jonathan Rosenbaum introducing
The Plot Against Harry at NEIU.*



This year also marked the debut of a new initiative at NEIU: teaching a once-a-semester introductory workshop about analog film as a technology and artistic medium to NEIU students enrolled in "NEIU Cinémathèque," a one-credit class open to all NEIU students.

◀ *NEIU students watching the 16mm animation loops
they created in our workshop.*

Monthly silent films at the Music Box Theatre

Our silent film programs this year showcased a range of archival discoveries, including restorations from major film archives that had never screened in Chicago before, thanks to our partners at the Museum of Modern Art, George Eastman Museum, the UCLA Film & Television Archive, the HMH Moving Image Archive at the University of Southern California, and the San Francisco Silent Film Festival.

We've been blown away by the turnout for some very unusual silent films this year, including over 150 people for *Pour don Carlos*, a rare war thriller starring Musidora.

These screenings featured live accompaniment from a variety of Chicago-based musicians and composers:

- The Alvin Cobb, Jr. Trio
- Jay Warren
- Dave Drazin
- Maxx McGathey
- Nicholas White
- MIYUMI Project Experimental Japanese Ensemble



*Alvin Cobb, Jr. composed an original score to accompany the 1925 film *Body and Soul* and performed it live with the Alvin Cobb, Jr. Trio.*

Technicolor Weekend

Vintage IB Technicolor prints — irreproducible, lithograph-like artifacts of the motion picture film industry at its technological peak — are among the rarest objects that appear on our calendar. We have always made a point of showcasing these prints in our programming, so giving them their own weekend-long sidebar at the Gene Siskel Film Center seemed like a natural evolution.

Technicolor Weekend featured seven programs of vintage Technicolor 35mm prints sourced from our own collection and from the collections of private individuals. Films screened included *The Wizard of Oz*, *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, and *Bulworth*.



Attendees experiment with a hands-on demonstration of Technicolor-style color separations before a Technicolor Weekend show.



*A frame from the vintage print of *The Wizard of Oz* shown at Technicolor Weekend, which CFS borrowed from a private collector for the occasion.*

A second edition of Celluloid Now

"Chicago Film Society's herculean efforts to preserve and champion analog film could very well turn intimidating, but Celluloid Now circulated nothing but warmth through its four days of programming."

— Olivia Hunter Willke, *Ultra Dogme*

Like many of our projects, Celluloid Now began as a spreadsheet. As we began keeping track of every living filmmaker in the world who was working in analog film, it quickly became clear that the number opportunities for emerging and established analog filmmakers to screen their work was not proportional to the work being produced. Thus, Celluloid Now – a showcase of new short films and restorations shot and exhibited on celluloid – was born.



The second iteration of Celluloid now included:

- 56 new films from filmmakers in the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Belgium, Canada, France, Spain, and the United Kingdom.
- Four new prints from young filmmakers — Kioto Aoki, Nolan Barry, Ellery Chalmers, and Jiayi Chen — commissioned expressly for Celluloid Now.
- A live optical sound performance by Tomonari Nishikawa
- A retrospective of Chicago experimental cinema featuring rarely screened work by Jean Sousa, Tatsu Aoki, and Sharon Couzin.

Celluloid Now 2023
was supported by

The Andy Warhol
Foundation for the Arts

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT for the **ARTS**
arts.gov

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FILM OFFICE



What does the audience think?

There's nothing more enjoyable than talking to our audience after the show, but since not everyone gets to experience that, here are few reviews of our shows found on the popular cinephile social media website Letterboxd this year:



★★★★½ Rewatched by **ZMoney** 23 Jan 2023

I've seen this film countless times and theres no way around the fact that it is often boring but goddamn is it so cool in its first 20 and in moments after. And a perfect rep crowd at the music box/chicago film society? what can be better. People laughing and having fun respectfully yet joyfully? impossible rare but thats what the movies are about folks!



★★★★½ Watched by **p m** 18 Mar 2023

Fantastic Oedipal Western from Phil Karlson. Here the end of The West is not just the closing of the frontier or transcontinental rail but something far more annoying: the spoiled children of those who made fortunes in the frontier. Van Heflin is a wealthy horse baron whose endless tales of his previous gunfighter glory days drive his son to homicidal madness.

Like all the greatest Westerns this packs an incredible level of depth and complexity into a lean, economical package.

Pair with *Hud* for the ultimate in films about evil sons.

The technicolor release print (65 years old!!) presented on behalf of the Chicago Film Society looked stunning. CFS once again proving they are far and away doing the best, most vital programming in the city.

♥ 1 like



★★★★★ Rewatched by **Mikey Brzezinski** 18 Jan 2023

35mm

I've never had a bad time watching this film and frankly, I don't think I ever will. Kinda life changing to see this on the big screen. Up there with *Modern Times* and *Three Colors: Red* for films that I truly believe have kept me alive. Shoutout to CFS for the cheeky programming of Ben Harrison's *Glee Worms* right before this. A brilliant shot and chaser.



★★★★★ Rewatched by **Robert Loerzel** 17 Mar 2023

I believe this is the first time I've ever seen this movie in a theater—and what a great way to see it: on a Technicolor 35 mm print from the 1950s, presented by the Chicago Film Society as part of a Technicolor weekend at the Gene Siskel Film Center. It was a packed house, so it was delightful to hear the audience reactions. I noticed some visual details in the movie for the first time — and it was as endearing as ever.



★★★★½ Watched by **Torajima** 26 Jul 2023

Definitely sneaks up on you.

Mulling over the idea of the physicality of art, I appreciated that we were watching one of the few 35mm prints available.

35mm print discovered in the basement of Facets Multimedia, screened with permission from Victor Erice. Chicago Film Society at NEIU.



★★★★½ Rewatched by **Scott Dunham** 18 Mar 2023

Extra 1/2 star for an impressive original-release Technicolor print. Thanks, Chicago Film Society.

♥ 2 likes



★★★★½ Watched by **miersten** 19 Dec 2023

Harold meadows, you stuttering, dog biscuit-eating stud. Adorable silent film accompanied by quite the organist and sound effects artist. Can already picture a contemporary remake with John Reynolds (holy Harold Lloyd doppelgänger) and Margaret Qualley. Thank u Chicago film society

New and in-progress film preservation projects

Chicago Film Society doesn't just show prints – we're also committed to making new prints and new negatives to facilitate preservation and access. We're always working on a few projects at any given time. Right now we're focused on:



Three films about the Bolex 16mm camera

These short films on the operation of the Bolex 16mm camera were made by students of Tatsu Aoki at SAIC in the early 2000s, but finished prints were never made... until now

Preservation funded by CFS.



Demon Lover Diary

A Midwestern crackpot confessional nonfiction landmark directed by Joel DeMott.

Preservation funded by the National Film Preservation Foundation and the Women's Film Preservation Fund.



8 films by Heather McAdams

Hilarious, hand-made films by Chicago comics artist and film collector Heather McAdams made between 1980 and 1995, including *The Scratchman*, *Holiday Magic*, and *Fetal Pig Anatomy*.

Preservation funded by the National Film Preservation Foundation.

Completed film preservation projects on screen

We preserve films — by making new negatives on modern, chemically stable polyester film base — to ensure their survival into the future. We also preserve films to make sure that they remain available on film to exhibitors all around the country who would like to screen them.

In 2023, our recently-completed preservation projects received some prominent showings:



The Films of Edward Owens

The films of Chicago filmmaker Edward Owens, preserved in 2022, continue to tour the country following last year's New York Film Festival bow. Owens's films screened at the Gene Siskel Film Center, the Flaherty Film Seminar, Pittsburgh Sound + Image, the Ann Arbor Film Festival, and many more. The films were also featured at 2023's Association of Moving Image Archivists conference in Tulsa, OK, which included a panel on the restoration with Carolyn Faber, Emily Martin, and Kyle Westphal.

Preservation funded by the National Film Preservation Foundation and the Film Foundation.



Doll Messengers of Friendship

Doll Messengers of Friendship, preserved 2019, was featured in the renowned "Amazing Tales from the Archive" program at the San Francisco Silent Film Festival in July. A new 35mm print screened, along with a lecture about the dolls' international preservation adventure. *Doll Messengers* also screened at the Music Box Theatre, with live accompaniment by MIYUMI Project Japanese Experimental Ensemble.

Preservation funded by the National Film Preservation Foundation.



The Films of Fred Camper

Our preservations of Fred Camper's quintet of 16mm experimental films from 1967 - 1969 premiered in New York at the Museum of the Moving Image and Anthology Film Archives and later played at the University of Chicago Film Studies Center. All screenings included extended recollections from Fred Camper.

Preservation funded by the National Preservation Foundation and the Film Foundation.

Film collection loans

The Chicago Film Society's film collection of over 3500 individual items in 16mm, 35mm, and 70mm is an essential resource for cinematheques, festivals, and museums around the world. Many of the titles in our collection are unavailable from commercial distributors and archives. We make the collection available to any venue with archival projection facilities.

In 2023 we made 25 loans to other cinemas and institutions, including:

The Yards (James Gray, 2000, 35mm)
Metrograph — New York, NY

Red Rock West (John Dahl, 1994, 35mm)
Texas Theatre — Dallas, TX

Holy Smoke (Jane Campion, 1999, 35mm)
Alamo Drafthouse New Mission — San Francisco, CA

Livin' Large (Michael Schultz, 1991, 35mm)
Wisconsin Cinematheque — Madison, WI



The Boy Who Liked Deer (Barbara Loden, 1975, 16mm)
Arsenal Cinema — Berlin, Germany

The Spider and the Fly (Harry & Lill Fulscher, 1938, 16mm)
Century of 16mm conference
at Indiana University — Bloomington, IN

Hana-Bi (Takeshi Kitano, 1997, 35mm)
Brooklyn Academy of Music — Brooklyn, NY

In 2023, a total of 2,273 people outside of Chicago attended screenings made possible by loans from the CFS film collection.

Collaborations

In 2023, we brought CFS-style programs to new audiences through a variety of partnerships, including:

Association of Moving Image Archivists

Edward Owens panel and screening at annual archivist's conference, with the SAIC Flaxman Library's Carolyn Faber & Emily Martin, and CFS's Kyle Westphal.

Buddy Chicago

Buddy hosted a screening of Super 8 films during Celluloid Now, and provided a space for "To Discipline a Rock," a looping 16mm film installation by Chicago filmmaker Jiayi Chen which was on display for most of October.

Chicago Park District

Hands-on 16mm animation workshop at Chicago Park District / Douglass Park.

Chicago History Museum

Home Movie Day, annual community archiving event co-presented with Chicago Film Archives.

Mana Contemporary / Monira Foundation

Jonas Mekas Open Archives Exhibition, with a panel with CFS's Cameron Worden and Sebastian Mekas.



A Super 8 screening at Buddy Chicago during Celluloid Now 2023.

Midwest Film Festival

Analog Film Night at Gene Siskel Film Center, with discussion moderated by Julian Antos

San Francisco Silent Film Festival

A screening of CFS's preserved silent short subject "Doll Messengers of Friendship," with a lecture by CFS's Kyle Westphal.

World Music Festival Chicago

A program of 16mm films by filmmaker Gautam Valluri at the Chicago Cultural Center in conjunction with World Music Festival Chicago.

Supporting artists & other organizations



One scrap at a time

CFS provided free scrap film to be used as a raw material by students in a collaborative film workshop led by artist Emily Francisco at **Hillyer** in Washington, DC.



Film projectors for everyone

CFS loaned 16mm projectors and other equipment to:

- **The Chicago Underground Film Festival**
- **the Milwaukee Underground Film Festival**
- **Block Cinema**
- **artist Lyra Hill**



Filipino home movie heritage

CFS provided storage space, access to film inspection equipment, and instruction on film inspection for the **Filipino American Historical Society of Chicago** to examine and inventory their collection of 16mm and Super 8 home movies documenting Filipino American life in Chicago and the Midwest.

Film projection workshops

In 2023 we taught multiple analog film handling workshops, both as guests in other cities and here at home, for Chicago filmmakers, curators, and projectionists. Block Museum workshop attendee and experimental filmmaker Paige Taul said of the experience, “How do you prevent something from becoming obsolete? It’s through this kind of exchange of information.”



Projection Workshop at the Block Museum of Art

Evanston, IL

This two-day workshop was intended for a broad audience of film students, artists, and working projectionists and covered fundamentals of 16mm and 35mm projection and archival film handling.



16mm Microcinema Projection Workshop

Toronto, Canada

This afternoon-long workshop focused on 16mm projection in a microcinema or pop-up screening context. It was copresented by CFS and Process Reversal as part of "Analogue Resilience: A Film Labs Gathering," hosted by LIFT.



Projection and film handling training for museum staff

Washington, DC

CFS taught workshops for the projection staff and curators at the National Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian, covering the critical skills required to present archival motion picture film prints in a professional setting.

Our new office

When CFS began, it was largely run out of our co-founders' apartment in Hyde Park. As we've taken on more projects, more staff, and more films, we needed more space to keep up with all our responsibilities.

We moved into a new office in January 2023, with room for spare parts, inspection benches, collection processing areas, and a small screening area to evaluate new additions to the collection and answer prints from our preservation initiatives.



January 1, 2023



May 1, 2023

Digital resources

CFS screens films in Chicago, but we're part of a broader ecosystem of analog exhibition that needs a free exchange of information, expertise, and encouragement to survive and thrive. We facilitate conversations among our peers and document the breadth of film exhibition in Chicago and around the world to demonstrate the resilience of analog media. Each of these projects grows a little more every year!

Analog Film Exhibitors Directory analogdirectory.org

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

Booth Talk

A private listserv for those working in film projection or related fields to share questions or knowledge. Now with over 200 members!

Celluloid Chicago celluloidchicago.org

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

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.



Some of the most recent additions to our Leader Ladies Project which receives frequent submissions from film workers around the world.

2023 Financial overview

Expenses

Staffing	\$42,857
Rent & Utilities	\$29,859
Film lab & preservation services	\$27,564
Admin & operations expenses (insurance, accountant, transportation, etc.).....	\$15,978
Film Rights, Rentals, and Purchases.....	\$13,123
Shipping	\$12,163
Program Booklets, Website, & Handbills	\$10,279
Equipment, Supplies, and Repairs.....	\$7,417

Total 2023 expenses: \$159,240

Income

Grants	\$87,760
Ticket Sales	\$28,254
Individual Donations.....	\$24,978
Workshops.....	\$19,485
Film & equipment rentals and sales.....	\$14,678
Other income (merch, consulting, etc.)	\$5,376

Total 2023 income: \$180,531

The ones who made it all possible in 2023

Core Staff

Julian Antos, *Executive Director*

Rebecca Hall

Rocío Irizarry Nuñez

Rebecca Lyon

Tavi Veraldi

Kyle Westphal

Cameron Worden

With help from

Tristan Ives

Tim Morefield

Gabriel Wallace

Getong Wang

Board of Directors as of 2023

Julian Antos, *CFS co-founder*

Raul Benitez

Mimi Brody

Edo Choi

Rebecca Hall, *CFS co-founder*

Steven Lucy

Brigid Maniates

Kyle Westphal, *CFS co-founder*

Artemis Willis

Advisory Board

Brian Block, *Whitney Museum*

Lori Felker, *DePaul University*

Andy Uhrich, *Washington University*

General Operating funds



Film preservation projects



Celluloid Now

The Andy Warhol
Foundation for the Arts



We are also profoundly grateful to the 82 individuals and households who donated to CFS in 2023, to our 129 Patreon supporters — and to every person in the audience who buys a ticket.



A Force For Better Living Through 16mm