

2nd Annual!

Black History Month Film Festival 2024

I, Too, Sing America

Langston Hughes

African Americans and the Arts

February 3, 10, 17, 24-25 | Free Admission

Scottsdale Baha'i Faith Community Center

6910 E Shea Blvd, Scottsdale, AZ 85254

(480) 219-3281

Showtimes & Registration: <https://www.scottsdalebahai.org/blackhistory2024/>

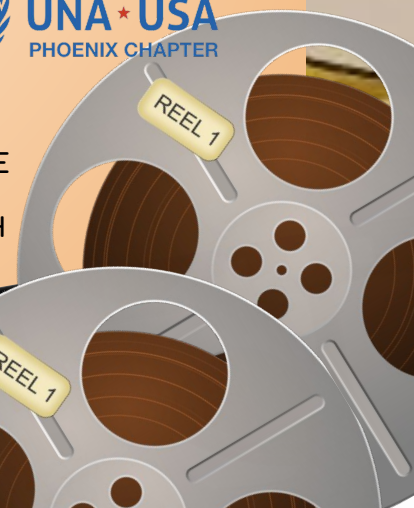


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UNA USA
PHOENIX CHAPTER

SPONSORED BY THE RACE AMITY DISCOURSE COMMITTEE OF THE BAHAI'S OF SCOTTSDALE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NAACP-MARICOPA COUNTY BRANCH, ARIZONA FAITH NETWORK, PHOENIX SANKOFA PROJECT, & UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION- PHOENIX CHAPTER



Welcome!

The Bahá'ís of Scottsdale, AZ, welcome you to our Community Center and are proud to sponsor with our partners the *I, Too, Sing America* Black History Month Film Festival that celebrates Black History as American History. Dawning in mid-19th century Persia and established in the United States by 1895, the Bahá'í Faith upholds the essential oneness of humankind predicated on justice, education, gender equality, harmony between science and religion, and the elimination of racial prejudice that is notably referred to as America's "most vital and challenging issue." The guiding principles included in this program – truthfulness, oneness, justice, and unity – are taken from the sacred Bahá'í Writings.

*I, Too**

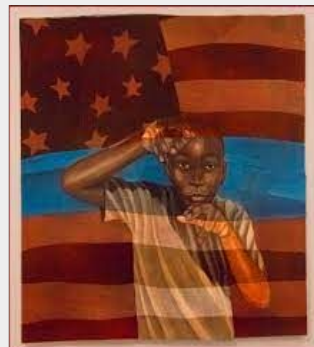
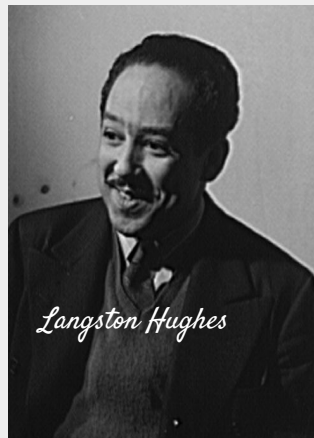
I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

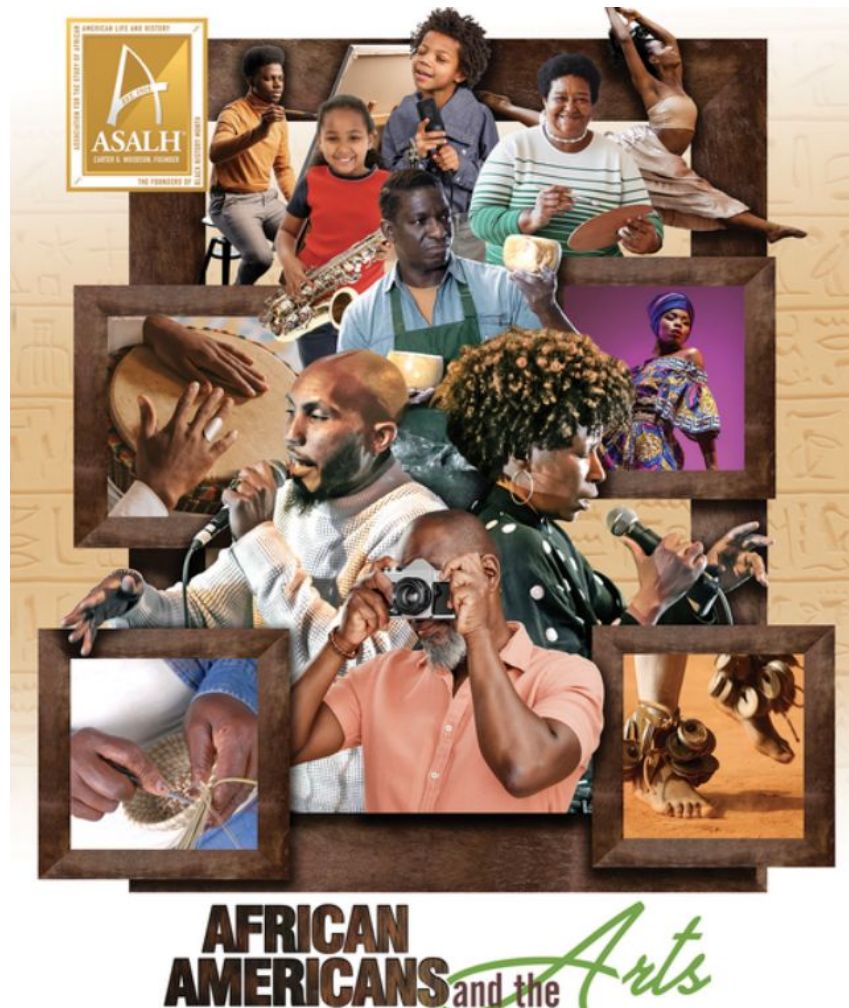


He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body. — Bahá'u'lláh

I, Too, Sing America captures the aspirations motivating this film festival: That America – as a country, idea, and ideal in waiting – must seat everyone at her table. Building on more than a decade of programming by the Public Discourse & Social Action Task Force of the Bahá'ís of Scottsdale to further human rights, interfaith understanding, and racial unity, the film festival offers the chance to learn about the African American experience through the art of cinema. Today's proliferation of streaming media options makes watching movies at home with those who typically share our experiences and points of view easier than ever. The *I, Too, Sing America* Film Festival creates a space for the meaningful conversations that follow – with people we might not otherwise encounter – as we strive towards realizing a racially just and unified community.

*From *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, published by Knopf and Vintage Books. Copyright © 1994 by the Estate of Langston Hughes. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Harold Ober Associates Incorporated.

Black History Month 2024 Theme



The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) boldly asserts that "Western intellectuals denied or minimized the contributions of people of African descent in the arts as well as history, even as their artistry in many genres was mimicked and/or stolen." The creative works of African American artists have served as a powerful tool for preserving their history and culture. Their work has had a profound impact on cultures across the globe, inspiring and influencing people in countless ways. Undoubtedly, contributions made by African American artists have left a permanent mark on the world, and their legacy will continue to inspire generations to come. See <https://asalh.org/black-history-themes/> for more information.

Saturday, February 3

African American Women and Their Voices

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: TRUTH

Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues. —‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The Color Purple (1985, PG-13)

- 1:30 pm: Doors open & light refreshments
- 2:00 pm: Welcome & film showing
- Audience discussion facilitated by Nichet Smith

About the theme. According to the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), Black women have played a significant role in various artistic genres throughout American history, society, and culture. Their contributions have enriched American culture, inspired audiences around the world, and broken barriers. However, they have often been overlooked by the mainstream. Considering this, NMAAHC aims to spotlight the contributions of African American women in literature, performing and visual arts, film, and music. African American women such as Phyllis Wheatley, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Nina Simone, Lena Horne, Pearl Bailey, and Dinah Washington inspire us to continue pushing boundaries and creating art that resonates.

About the film. *The Color Purple* is a novel by Pulitzer Prize winner Alice Walker. The book was adapted into a film by Steven Spielberg in 1985 and a stage musical in 2005. This epic tale depicts the journey of an uneducated and abused African American woman who lives in a small town in Georgia between 1909 and 1947. The story is about empowerment and self-realization, which includes several common themes, such as God and spirituality, race and racism, gender roles, violence and suffering, and self-discovery. The movie is acclaimed for its female characters' depth and eloquent use of Black English vernacular. The film stars Whoopi Goldberg (Celie), Danny Glover (Albert), Oprah Winfrey (Sofia) and many other outstanding performers. A new film version was released on December 25, 2023. For more, visit <https://nmaahc.si.edu/stories/african-american-women-arts>.

About the facilitator. Ms. Smith is the Principal of Public Relations, Purchasing and Business Development for Level 3 Design Group in Los Angeles, CA. After graduating from Arizona State University with a Bachelor of Science in Justice Studies and a minor in Spanish, she began her career working closely with Reverend Dr. Leon H. Sullivan, founder of the International Foundation for Education & Self Help (IFESH), an organization dedicated to eradicating poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa, which required Ms. Smith to travel extensively throughout the African continent. Ms. Smith has worked with the White House, Ambassadors, and other Heads of State worldwide. Her many charitable efforts include traveling to the Middle East on a United Services Organization tour and co-founding R.A.K.E (Random Acts of Kindness) Project, Inc., a grant-making nonprofit.

Saturday, February 10

African American Art on Canvas

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: ONENESS

Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. — Bahá'u'lláh

Black Art: In the Absence of Light (TV-MA)

- 1:30 pm: Doors open & light refreshments
- 2:00 pm: Welcome & film showing
- Audience discussion facilitated by Nancy Peace

About the theme. African American art is a vibrant expression of the rich and diverse culture and heritage in the African Diaspora. It encompasses a wide range of mediums including visual and performing arts, literature, fashion, folklore, language, film, music, architecture, and the culinary arts. Sculptors like Edmonia Lewis and painters like Henry O. Tanner are just a few examples of the contributions made by Black artists to the world of art. At the beginning of the 20th century, millions of African Americans migrated from the rural South to the urban North in search of better economic opportunities and to escape racial prejudice, segregation, and violence. Many settled in Harlem in New York City, which became the epicenter for the flowering of African American culture known as the Harlem Renaissance. Cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, and New Orleans were also home to many Black artists. Members of the armed forces, such as band leader James Reese Europe, and artists such as Langston Hughes, Josephine Baker, and Lois Mailou Jones, brought Black culture and aesthetics to the world stage. The beauty developed by the Black artist was instrumental in the fight against the subjugating concepts of Jim Crow and eugenics.

About the film. *Black Art: In the Absence of Light* is a 2021 HBO documentary directed and produced by Sam Pollard that explores two centuries of art by African Americans. Inspired by the work of the late artist and curator David Driskell, this film spotlights the indelible contributions of African American artists in today's contemporary art world including Theaster Gates, Kerry James Marshall, Faith Ringgold, Amy Serrano, and many others. For more, visit <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/08/arts/design/black-art-hbo-review.html>.

About the facilitator. Ms. Peace holds a Bachelor of Science in nutrition from Arizona State University and a Master of Education from Northern Arizona University with a concentration on human relationships. Her career choices have been in food and nutrition and educational development. Ms. Peace owned and operated a catering and event planning business in the San Francisco Bay Area for many years. In the second half of her career, she focuses on educating our youth in disadvantaged environments. Ms. Peace has served as a school principal and an ELA teacher in K-12 educational settings.

Saturday, February 17

Art Imitating Life: Policing & Mass Incarceration

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: JUSTICE

The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice... — Bahá'u'lláh

The Hate U Give (PG-13)

- 1:30 pm: Doors open & light refreshments
- 2:00 pm: Welcome & film showing
- Audience discussion facilitated by Princess Lucas-Wilson

About the theme. Like the pupil of the eye that illuminates consciousness of the physical world, African Americans shine a perceptive light on the human condition forged through hundreds of years of enslavement, Jim Crow segregation and terror, police brutality and disproportionate levels of incarceration. When seated at America's table, African American artists provide focus, insight, and resilience required for a critical examination of our current reality and finding a path forward. For more, see *The Pupil of the Eye* at

<https://www.amazon.com/Pupil-Eye-African-Americans-Bahauallah/dp/1890101001>.

About the film. Based on Angie Thomas' 2017 young adult novel, *The Hate U Give* examines the way society uses stereotypes of African Americans to justify violence and racism. These stereotypes protect white communities from reflecting upon systemic racism, which perpetuates discrimination. The film provides an honest portrayal of how police brutality affects communities of color. Produced and directed by George Tillman Jr., the film stars Amandla Stenberg, Regina Hall, Russell Hornsby, Lamar Johnson, KJ Apa, Sabrina Carpenter, Common, and Anthony Mackie. For more, visit

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5580266/plotsummary/>.

About the facilitator. Ms. Lucas-Wilson serves as a Vice President and Chair of the Public Safety Committee for the Maricopa County Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) where she conducts quarterly forums on policing/public safety with police departments, reviews law enforcement policies, and works collaboratively with community partners on a range of justice and equity issues. Ms. Lucas-Wilson holds a Master of Social Work and a Certification in Public Management. She has worked as a counselor, practitioner, cultural competency curriculum developer and trainer, and executive in the public and private sectors. She is currently an instructor in the Mesa Community College Counseling Department. She has taught courses in social work, public policy, advocacy, community practice, counseling, and victimology at several community colleges and Arizona State University. She grew up in Phoenix, AZ, and has seen the challenges affecting our communities. Her son recently graduated Arizona State University law school.

February 24 and 25

Hip Hop 50th Anniversary, And It Don't Stop!

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: UNITY

So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. — Bahá'u'lláh

Fight the Power: How Hip Hop Changed the World (TV-14)

Saturday, February 24

- 1:30 pm: Doors open & light refreshments
- 2:00 pm: Welcome, Episodes 1 *The Foundation* & 2 *Under Siege*
- Audience discussion facilitated by Willie Manns & Ramiro Russell

Sunday, February 25

- 1:30 pm: Doors open & light refreshments
- 2:00 pm: Welcome, Episodes 3 *Culture Wars* & 4 *Still Fighting*
- Audience discussion facilitated by Willie Manns & Ramiro Russell followed by Closing Dinner and Festival Celebration!

About the theme: In 1973, in the Bronx, New York, DJ Kool Herc and Coke La Rock along with many other Black and Hispanic youth invented a new creative culture, which they called Hip Hop. This culture consists of five foundational elements: Knowledge, DJing, MCing, breakdancing, and graffiti. From the bold expressions of spray paint on trains to the dynamic moves of popping, locking and B-boying, Hip Hop has inspired and united people around the world and from all walks of life. It has remained a vital force in political, social, and cultural spaces for over fifty years giving voice to issues such as racial violence in inner cities, sexism, and economic disinvestment with its primary message of unity.

About the film: This year marks the 50th anniversary of Hip Hop culture. PBS's series *Fight the Power: How Hip Hop Changed the World* explores Hip Hop's origins, underscores its cultural impact across the globe, and shines a light on the individuals who have helped shape it from the beginning. For more, visit

<https://www.pbs.org/show/fight-power-how-hip-hop-changed-world/>.

About the facilitators: William "Spray" Manns grew up in 1970s East Harlem, New York City. He is a progenitor of Hip Hop culture, break dancing in venues around the City with his crew, the *High Voltage Rockers*, and garnering a reputation as a top graffiti artist. Willie attended the Fashion Institute of Technology and has used his craft to inspire young people in schools, the Boys & Girls Clubs, and in the Bahá'í community. He holds a Master of Occupational Therapy degree and resides in Scottsdale, AZ, with his family.

Mr. Russell is a former trainer to NBA players, athletes and celebrities, and former executive at FOX and NBC TV. He was CEO of JustClickMedia USA, a Southeast Asian Media Firm headquartered in Singapore with offices in India, Malaysia, and the United States. A seasoned motivational speaker and host on R2fact TV, he has been featured for his women empowerment and anti-bullying seminars. Mr. Russell is the author of *Johnny Wolf*, a children's book on diversity and inclusiveness, and *Domestic Silence*, his memoir on child abuse, surviving domestic violence, and vindication from a wrongful prison conviction. Mr. Russell serves on several nonprofit boards. He graduated with a degree in sociology and is applying to medical school. Mr. Russell resides in Scottsdale, AZ, with his family.

Why is Black History Month Celebrated in February?

Black History Month dates back to 1926 when Dr. Carter G. Woodson, founder of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), established “Negro History Week” during the second week of February because it encompasses the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass – both great American symbols of freedom.

BRIEF TIMELINE:

- ❖ **1912:** Dr. Woodson establishes ASALH.
- ❖ **1926:** Dr. Woodson establishes Negro History Week, precursor to Black History Month.
- ❖ **1969:** Kent State University black educators and students first propose Black History Month.
- ❖ **1976:** First federal observance where President Ford proclaims, “In the Bicentennial year of our Independence, we can review with admiration the impressive contributions of black Americans to our national life....”
- ❖ **1986:** U.S. Congress designates February as “National Black History Month.” Ronald Reagan issues Presidential Proclamation 5443 stating, “the foremost purpose of Black History Month is to make all Americans aware of this struggle for freedom and equal opportunity.” Learn more at <https://asalh.org/about-us/about-black-history-month/>.

2024 Black History Month Planning Group:

Sheila Afnan-Manns
John Dugas
Dr. Arnett Duncan
Dr. Karen Hardin
Jerome Johnson
Princess Lucas-Wilson
William Manns
Nicholas Mentha
Bijan Mozaffari
Nancy Peace
Dr. Angelita Reyes
Tess Ridgway
Azuin Russell
Ramiro Russell
Nichet Smith
Paulette Smith
Dr. Camilla Westenberg



Artwork: William “Spray” Manns