



SENIORS FREE SCREENING

Reel Stories: An Oral History of London's Projectionists

+ Q&A

Enjoy this premiere of a film exploring the unseen work behind the cinema screen. In this revealing documentary the filmmakers consider the types of people who become projectionists, their varied experiences, and the skills and dedication required for this unique role. With the continuing move to digital projection, this film is a celebration of a profession at a time of great change.

bfi.org.uk

From the date of the first projected film by the Lumière Brothers in France in 1895 projectionists have been the behind the scenes technical experts locked up in soundproof rooms, the silhouettes occasionally seen as we look back and up from our cinema seats at the little windows from which are projected the films that have entertained, terrified and beguiled us. The projectors themselves, often Heath Robinson like machines, with film snaking through them, have required great skill and dedication to run. With the recent move to digital projection most cinemas now do not require those skills and we want to record the working lives of projectionists in the heyday of this dying art.

What type of person becomes a projectionist?

What are the skills required and how did they get them?

What are the machines like?

What's it like, night after night, sitting in that noisy little room, alone, overlooking a theatre full of people?

These and many more are the questions explored to preserve and share this wonderful history.

Reel Stories is a project set up and run by educational charity digital:works.

Working with the BFI on the South Bank for this project which is part of our 'Working London' series that explores and records the history of various aspects of work in London. Working with historians, local archives and digital:works staff, a team of volunteers were trained in research skills, oral history interviewing and recording skills.

The project has recorded 20 wonderful oral history interviews with some of London's cinema projectionists.

The interviews have been edited to make a documentary film and a series of podcasts. The full interviews and materials collected during this project will be deposited with the BFI Archives and Bishopsgate Institute.

The project website houses all of the full interviews, the podcasts, the film and covers the progress of the project.

reelstories.org.uk

REEL STORIES: AN ORAL HISTORY OF LONDON'S PROJECTIONISTS

Made by: digital-works [Sav Kyriacou,
Matthew Rosenberg]

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Funded by: National Lottery Heritage Fund

Made with:

Emily Allen
Cece Asembo
Chris Conway
Charlie Denchfield
Brian Godfrey
Sarah Hackney
Susie Hilmi
Scott Keir
Sam Riley
Charlie Usher
George Warren

Interviewees

Peter Bell
Charles 'Jock' Brown
Michael Ford
Victor Gallucci
Barrie Gilbert
Steve Grey
Peter Howden
Amanda Ireland
Ali Kayley
Peter Knight
Vicky Mansfield
Ron Pearce
Kore Pendragon
Alexa Raisbeck
Isaias Romano Pena Samboy
John Sharp
Dom Simmons
Nigel Wolland
Greg Woodward
Andrew Woodyatt

UK 2022©

55 mins

REGULAR PROGRAMME

Seniors Premiere: Reel Stories: An Oral History of London's Projectionists + Q&A

Tue 5 Jul 11:00

Seniors' Free Matinee: From Trinidad to Lagos + Q&A with author Stephen Bourne

Tue 5 Jul 14:00

Art in the Making: Give Us This Day + intro

Thu 14 Jul 18:10

Silent Cinema: Phil-for-Short + intro by BFI Curator Bryony Dixon

Sun 17 Jul 13:10

Experimenta: The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies?! + live experimental music introduction by The Howling

Wed 20 Jul 18:15

Woman with a Movie Camera: The Mirror Has Two Faces + intro by BFI Events Programmer Kimberley Sheehan

Thu 21 Jul 18:00

African Odysseys: Commemorating Marikana

Sun 24 Jul 12:00-17:40

Relaxed Screening: Electricity + intro and discussion

Mon 25 Jul 18:15

Projecting The Archive: The Bay of Saint Michel (aka Pattern for Plunder) + intro by BFI curator Josephine Botting

Tue 26 Jul 18:30

Terror Vision: Blood Games

Thu 28 Jul 18:20

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goes down.

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