



EVENTS

Spike Lee in Conversation

Director, writer, actor, producer, author and NYU Grad Film tenured professor Spike Lee is to receive a BFI Fellowship, the highest honour bestowed by the BFI. The fellowship recognises Lee's pioneering body of work, which has spanned over 30 years and has chronicled Black lives through bold and inventive cinematic works of art from feature films and documentary to television, music, commercials and books.

The fellowship is presented to Lee at a special celebration event at BFI Southbank, hosted by BFI chair Tim Richards and BFI chief exec Ben Roberts, with an in-depth on stage Q&A with Spike Lee and accompanied by a screening of *Summer of Sam*.

'I am honoured and excited to be awarding Spike Lee the prestigious BFI Fellowship,' said Richards. 'Lee has such a distinctive voice as an auteur, unafraid to challenge ideas of race, gender and class throughout his career with his unique cinematic style. A true renaissance man and pioneer, he has excelled in so many art forms, staying original, fresh and as relevant to contemporary audiences as those who have enjoyed his work for over 30 years. I am delighted to be celebrating his enormous talent and individuality with a BFI Fellowship.'

Spike Lee said: 'I'm Blessed To Live Up To My Ancestors Credo 'DEEDS, NOT WORDS'. I Thank The BFI For Helping Me in Continuing My Generations Of Family Legacy. Peace And Love. YA-DIG? SHO-NUFF.'

While in the UK, Lee will also visit teams at the BFI National Archive, who have liaised with him on a new 35mm print of *Malcolm X* (1992), made possible thanks to funding from the National Lottery, to premiere at the BFI's inaugural Film on Film Festival taking place at BFI Southbank, 8 to 11 June 2023. Lee was last at BFI Southbank in August 2018 for a Q&A screening of *BlackKkKlansman* (2018), which was simulcast to cinemas UK-wide.

Born in Atlanta in 1957 but raised in Brooklyn, New York City, Shelton Jackson Lee received his MFA in Film Production at NYU/Tisch. After graduation, he founded 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks, based in Brooklyn. A cinematic original, Lee has stamped his personality onto a range of bold and powerful subjects, producing cinematic works of art that display his skill and ability to showcase outspoken and proactive socio-political critiques and challenge cultural assumptions about race, class and gender identity, through his keen direction, fresh dialogue, striking visual style and pitch perfect use of music.

Lee has directed and produced over 30 films since his first feature film, the independently produced *She's Gotta Have It* (1986), which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival receiving the esteemed Prix de la Jeunesse Award. *Do the Right Thing* (1989), earned Spike Lee his first Academy Award nomination for best original screenplay and was recently voted 24th film in the top 100 *Sight and Sound* Greatest Films of All Time Critics' Poll 2022. Lee was awarded an Honorary Oscar in 2015 for his lifetime achievement and

contributions to the state of motion picture arts and sciences. Both *Do the Right Thing* and *Jungle Fever* (1991) screened in competition at Cannes. In 2018 Lee returned to the Cannes Competition with *BlackKkKlansman* (2018), where it won the Grand Prix. *BlackKkKlansman* went on to win the Oscar for best adapted screenplay and BAFTA for best adapted screenplay. In 2021 Spike Lee was named the president of the jury at the 74th edition of the Cannes Film Festival.

Lee's extensive filmography reveals a fascinating mix of genres, including real life crime thriller (*Summer of Sam*, 1999, *BlackKkKlansman*, 2020) heist movie (*Inside Man*, 2006) revenge thriller (*Oldboy*, 2013), war drama (*Da 5 Bloods*, 2020), sports film (*He Got Game*, 1998), biopic (*Malcolm X*, 1992), musical (*School Daze*, 1988, *Chi-raq*, 2015) and satirical comedies (*Bamboozled*, 2000, *She Hate Me*, 2004). Spike Lee also directed all 19 episodes of the hit Netflix series *She's Gotta Have It* (2017 to 2019). Most recently, he has entered into a new creative partnership with Netflix, which will see him directing and producing narrative features under a multi-year deal with the streamer.

Spike Lee has also produced several documentaries, including the Academy Award-nominated *4 Little Girls* (1997) and the Peabody and Emmy Award-winning films *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts* (2006) and *If God Is Willing and Da Creek Don't Rise* (2010), all with HBO.

In addition, his Michael Jackson documentaries, *Bad 25* (2012) and original *Michael Jackson's Journey from Motown to Off the Wall* (2016), were both critically acclaimed. Spike Lee also directed and produced *American Utopia* (2020), the concert film made of David Byrne's Broadway performance of the show and album of the same name (which screened nationwide at the BFI London Film Festival). In addition to his prolific film career, Lee has directed and produced numerous music videos, including promos for Public Enemy, Prince, Stevie Wonder, Arrested Development, Naughty by Nature, Chaka Khan and Bruce Hornsby, and began commercial work in 1988 with his legendary Nike Air Jordan campaign.

Spike Lee has combined his extensive creative experience into yet another venture with DDB Needham to create Spike/DDB, a full-service advertising agency. Lee has also authored several books, including *Five for Five*, a pictorial reflection of his first five features, *Best Seat in the House*, with Ralph Wiley, and two children's books *Please, Baby, Please* and *Please, Puppy, Please*, co-authored with his wife Tonya Lewis Lee.

As a pioneering Black filmmaker Spike Lee has paved the way for a new generation of Black directors including Ryan Coogler (*Black Panther*) Jordan Peele (*Get Out*), Barry Jenkins (*Moonlight*) and Ava DuVernay (*Selma*). He began teaching a course on filmmaking at Harvard in 1991, and in 1993 he joined the faculty at NYU/Tisch in the Graduate Film Programme, where he was appointed artistic director in 2002, a position which he still holds today. He is a tenured professor of film at NYU's Graduate film programme.

While in the UK to receive his BFI Fellowship, Lee will take a masterclass with young filmmakers.

Lee joins an eminent list of BFI Fellows including Martin Scorsese and Thelma Schoonmaker, Satyajit Ray, Tilda Swinton, Sir David Lean, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, Sir Steve McQueen, Akira Kurosawa, Nicholas Roeg CBE, Orson Welles, Sir Ridley Scott, Ousmane Sembène Bernardo Bertolucci and Souleymane Cissé.

SPIKE LEE

Born 20 March 1957, Atlanta, GA.

Selected filmography

All as director

All USA unless stated

FILMS

- 2020 **Da 5 Bloods** + writer/producer
David Byrne's American Utopia + producer
- 2018 **BlacKkKlansman** + writer/producer
Passover + producer
- 2016 **Michael Jackson's Journey from Motown to Off the Wall** + producer
- 2015 **Chi-Raq** + writer/producer
- 2014 **Da Sweet Blood of Jesus** + writer/producer
- 2013 **Oldboy**
- 2012 **Red Hook Summer** + writer/producer
Bad 25 + producer
- 2008 **Miracle at St. Anna** (USA/Italy) + writer/producer
- 2006 **Inside Man**
- 2004 **She Hate Me** + writer/producer
- 2002 **25th Hour** + producer
- 2000 **Bamboozled** + writer/producer
The Original Kings of Comedy + producer
- 1999 **Summer of Sam** + writer/producer, cast as John Jeffries
- 1998 **He Got Game** + writer/producer
- 1997 **4 Little Girls** + producer
- 1996 **Girl 6** + producer, cast as Jimmy
Get on the Bus + producer
- 1995 **Clockers** + writer/producer, cast as Chucky
- 1994 **Crooklyn** + writer/producer, cast as Snuffy
- 1992 **Malcolm X** + writer/producer, cast as Shorty
- 1991 **Jungle Fever** + writer/producer, cast as Cyrus
- 1990 **Mo' Better Blues** + writer/producer, cast as Giant
- 1989 **Do the Right Thing** + writer/producer, cast as Mookie
- 1988 **School Daze** + writer/producer
- 1986 **She's Gotta Have It** + writer/producer/editor, cast as Mars Blackmon
- 1983 **Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads** + writer/producer/editor

TV

- 2021 **NYC Epicenters 9/11-2021**½ + producer (TV mini-series)
- 2017–19 **She's Gotta Have It** + executive producer/creator
- 2017 **Rodney King** + producer (TV special)
- 2015–16 **Spike Lee's Lil Joints** + producer (TV series)
- 2014 **Jerrold Carmichael: Love at the Store** (TV special)
Katt Williams: Priceless: Afterlife (TV special)
- 2013 **Mike Tyson: Undisputed Truth** (TV special)
- 2010 **If God Is Willing and da Creek Don't Rise** + producer (TV mini-series)
- 2009 **Kobe Doin' Work** + producer
Passing Strange (TV film)
- 2006 **When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts** + producer (TV mini-series)
- 2005 **Miracle's Boys** (TV mini-series, episodes: 'New Charlie' and 'Bond of Brothers')
- 2004 **Sucker Free City** + producer (TV film)
- 2002 **Jim Brown: All-American** + producer
- 2001 **A Huey P. Newton Story** (TV film)
- 1999 **Pavarotti and Friends for Guatemala and Kosovo** (TV special)
- 1998 **John Leguizamo: Freak** (TV special)

SHORTS

- 2020 **New York, New York** + writer/producer
3 Brothers: Radio Raheem, Eric Garner and George Floyd + writer/producer
- 2019 **Impact**
- 2017 **Brave: Visions for Moncler**
- 2014 **Mo'ne Davis: I Throw like a Girl** + producer
- 2007 **Lovers & Haters**
- 2005 **Jesus Children of America** + producer (France/Italy, segment of **All the Invisible Children**)
- 2002 **We Wuz Robbed** (Germany/UK/USA, segment of **Ten Minutes Older: The Trumpet**)
- 2001 **Come Rain or Come Shine** + writer/ cinematographer
- 1995 **Sarah Moon** (segment of **Lumière and Company**)
- 1981 **Sarah** + writer
- 1980 **The Answer** + writer
- 1979 **Last Hustle in Brooklyn** + writer

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