



THE HANSON FILM INSTITUTE PRESENTS

A Rare Screening of Oscar Micheaux's Film Masterpiece

WITHIN OUR GATES

with Eminent Black Cinema Scholar Pearl Bowser

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Citizens of Southern Arizona will be given a rare opportunity to see a landmark film by the “father of African American cinema,” Oscar Micheaux, when the Hanson Film Institute presents a Tucson premiere theatre screening of the 1919 silent screen masterpiece *Within Our Gates*. Eminent, New York-based Black film history scholar Pearl Bowser will introduce the film and conduct a discussion with the audience after the screening. The film will be presented with live piano accompaniment. The event will take place on **January 22, 2006; 12-2 at The Loft Cinema, located at 3233 East Speedway Boulevard (www.loftcinema.com).**

The most prolific African American filmmaker in American cinema, Oscar Micheaux wrote, produced, and directed more than 40 independent films between 1919 and 1948. *Within Our Gates*, his second film, is the earliest surviving feature by an African American. Lost for 70 years, *Within Our Gates* was rediscovered at the Filmoteca Espanola in Madrid, Spain and restored by the Library of Congress in 1993. The film was named to the Library of Congress's National Film Registry. The 35mm print being screened on January 22 was provided to the Hanson Film Institute courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art.

Made just four years after *Birth of a Nation*, *Within Our Gates* is both an unflinching portrayal of the gross violations perpetrated by whites against blacks, and a determined call for black idealism. The film stars Evelyn Preer as Sylvia Landry, a Southern teacher with a traumatic past as she loses her surrogate family to a white lynching mob and journeys North to seek sponsorship of a school for African American children.

The original publicity for the film stated that it is “full of details that will make you grit your teeth in silent indignation!” and several local censor boards banned the film for fear it would incite more “race riots.” Repeatedly cut by censors who deemed the sequences of lynching and attempted rape too incendiary, few saw Micheaux's film as he intended it. A powerful and enlightening cultural document that deals with racism and economic oppression of blacks, *Within Our Gates* is still relevant today.

The guest speaker for the event, *Pearl Bowser*, is an internationally recognized programmer and archivist, specializing in African American and African film. Through her

work, Mrs. Bowser has brought independent Black American cinema to audiences globally. She is the director of African Diaspora Images, a collection of historical and contemporary films, audiotapes, and memorabilia documenting black film history. Mrs. Bowser co-directed and coordinated the research for the award winning documentary, *Midnight Ramble: Oscar Micheaux and the Story of Race Movies*.

She is the co- author of the prize-winning book *Writing Himself Into History: Oscar Micheaux, His Silent Films and His Audiences*. In 2005 the Society for Cinema and Media Studies in London, England presented Pearl Bowser an Honorary Lifetime Membership Award for Distinguished Contributions to the Profession.

This special event was organized by the Hanson Film Institute in collaboration with The Loft Cinema, the University of Arizona Africana Studies Program, the University of Arizona Martin Luther King and Black History Month Celebration Committee, The Hanson Film Institute Black Media Events Support Committee, and the University of Arizona College of Fine Arts and the Department of Media Arts.

Tickets for the event are **\$8.00 for the general public, \$5.00 for students and seniors, and \$4.50 for members of the Tucson Film Society at the Loft**. Tickets can be purchased in advance by credit card by calling 322-LOFT. Tickets will also be available at the door starting one hour before the screening.

The Jack and Vivian Hanson Arizona Film Institute (Hanson Film Institute) offers programs for students, emerging filmmakers, and media entrepreneurs who want to contribute significantly to the art and/or business of filmmaking and have an influential role in the film industry. Serving diverse, underrepresented, and new voices, the Hanson Film Institute creates and advances a dynamic understanding of the collaborative dimensions of the art and business of film. The Hanson Film Institute provides and supports educational programs, public events, and creative projects.

The Hanson Film Institute operates under the auspices of the University of Arizona College of Fine Arts and in partnership with the Department of Media Arts. The Institute collaborates with interested University units, in particular the Eller College of Management, and with diverse community organizations. #
