

**Excellence in the Arts : Entry # 229**

**Is your organization a 501(c)3 nonprofit?**

Yes

**According to your 501(c)3 letter, in what town is your official office located?**

Hartford

**Where will your project be performed or exhibited?**

Hartford

**Will this activity occur after February 1, 2023?**

Yes

**Are you a recent grantee?**

No

**Organization Name**

Cinestudio

**Organization's IRS Tax ID #**

260042514

**Principal Contact Name**

Lew Michaels

**Title**

Executive Director

**Email**

[Lmichaels@cinestudio.org](mailto:Lmichaels@cinestudio.org)

**Phone**

(860) 297-5191

**Address**

300 Summit Street  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106  
United States  
[Map It](#)

**Website**

<https://cinestudio.org>

**Amount requested this application**

\$4,500.00

**What is the organization's mission/vision statement?**

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The mission of Hartford's Cinestudio is to celebrate film as art and to provide diverse audiences an eclectic mix of the world's best cinema experiences, presented at the highest technical level in a classic movie palace-like setting.

### Provide a brief history of your organization and its activities.

Cinestudio has a long standing reputation for its wide diversity of programming, legendary projection, and superb sound quality. Equipped with the highest quality 4K Digital Cinema systems, Cinestudio has also retained its top-of-the-line physical film of 35mm and 70mm projectors for use in studio archive presentations.

The film obsessed students who founded Cinestudio in 1970 located a home in the Clement Chemistry Building and, within two years turned it into a beautiful recreation of a 1930s film house. Cinestudio held its grand opening to the public on February 16, 1970. The grand opening was completely sold out, featuring a double feature of Alice's Restaurant and The Beatles' Yellow Submarine. Cinestudio continued to make its mark by screening controversial new cinema: foreign classics like the works of Swedish director Ingmar Bergman and the debut of eventual cult favorites like The Rocky Horror Picture Show. To this day Cinestudio shows such epic veteran films and new creative masterpieces in a daily celebration of the Art of Cinema. We are also home to Out Film CT Queer Thursdays and April in Paris, our Festival of French and Francophone Cinema now over 20 years old.

Cinestudio continues to provide a unique opportunity for young people to learn how to operate a fully professional movie theater to the highest technical standards. Two founding members, James Hanley and Peter McMorris, have guided the theater since its inception, and now manage its day-to-day operations, including all nightly projections. Cinestudio runs as a cooperative, with a staff of approximately 50 student and community volunteers running showings seven days a week.

In 2002, Cinestudio was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit arts organization. The theater is independent of Trinity College, although it still occupies the same space in the Clement Chemistry Building. It is a theater unique to any in the country.

### Describe the demographics of your audience/people served by your activities.

Unfortunately, we have not collected its demographics. The new Executive Director with the support of the CT Office of The Arts and CT Humanities, we are looking to incorporate ways to measure our audience. We understand how important this information is both internally and also for funders, so they can see what populations we are serving and engaging with. We hope to share more concrete information about the people and communities we do by this time next year.

### Describe your organization's governance.

An Executive Director oversees daily operations. Cinestudio hired its first full-time Executive Director in Sept. of 2021 after the institution's founders announced their retirements. The ED reports to a board of thirteen directors, meeting five times over the year, with its annual meeting in April. During the last two years, the Board has met remotely, with at least 85% of members attending. The Board performs an annual review of the Executive Director in September.

### Describe the diversity of your board.

Of 13 directors:

23% female, 61% male, 16% did not disclose.

7.75% Hispanic or Latinx, 54% White, 7.75% Black, 15.25% are 2+ ethnicities or races, 15.25% did not disclose.

7.75% LGBTQ+, 92.25% did not disclose orientation.

We are committed to IDEA but also honest with ourselves that change is not instant. Keeping it top of mind allows change to happen organically and more sustainably in board development, hiring, and programming. We have work to do, but we are

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excited to be doing it.

**What percentage of your board makes personal financial contributions to your organization?**

Although our organization does not have a set financial requirement that board members need to meet, in FY 22, all of our board members contributed to Cinestudio in addition to their purchasing of tickets and volunteer hours.

**Project Name**

Celebrating African American Directors in the world of cinema

**Is this project related to the Visual Arts?**

Yes

**Will the artists associated with this project be financially compensated?**

No

**Project Description**

Cinestudio is looking to screen four February films celebrating African American cinema directors. The objective is to celebrate the directors and use the films as an opportunity to engage in community and conversations. We plan to reduce ticket prices by half for the run of the films and offer free tickets for anyone producing a Hartford Public Library card. We hope that with these two price points, as well as advertising in non-traditional marketing media outlets for Cinestudio, we can engage with members of the community to invite them to Cinestudio. We hope that these actions help to remove financial and cultural roadblocks that perhaps have stopped community members from joining us at Cinestudio on the campus of Trinity College.

**Project start/opening**

02/03/2023

**Project end/closing**

03/02/2023

**Project venue**

Cinestudio

**Project town**

Hartford, CT

**Admission fees, attendance, and activity details**

We are looking to program one film per week, screening each day during the month, and highlighting a different African American director each week. Sunday, during the film's run, will include a talkback after the 2 pm screening. We hope for 120 people per run of the film. We will offer free admission for those who present their Hartford library card and a half-price ticket (\$5) for everyone else.

**How do you intend to promote/market this project?**

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We plan to continue to grow our partnership with the Hartford Public Library to promote the program and the benefits of showing your library card for free admission. We plan to use local media channels for advertising the reduced ticket price ticket for the month of these films. We will also use our email blasts, website, and social media.

### **How is your organization going to use Roberts funding?**

We plan to use the budget to pay for the film rights and shipping of films and for advertising in locations and media that we have not traditionally explored, for example, Northend Agents and other local media outlets.

### **How will Roberts support be recognized?**

We will recognize funding support from the Roberts with the inclusion of your logo and text indicating that this program is made possible, but the generous support in our weekly emails promoting the series of films and our posters that are created. We will also include the above information on our website and will provide a link to a site if you choose. Lastly, our social media efforts will include information about the program's funding.

### **What is your organization's definition of artistic excellence?**

We define artistic excellence as a mastery of cinematic technique, which is then used to share a perspective of one's ideas and concepts in a thought-provoking or interesting way while ensuring cinema as art.

### **How does this project align with that definition, and how does it advance your mission?**

Cinestudio has long been a champion of independent film and films that may not have been considered "mainstream enough" or "too sensitive" of a topic to show. But for over 52 years, we have strived to be a place where we could take a chance to show a film that would spark a dialogue. We have been a place that has given voice to filmmakers that perhaps would have difficulty getting films shown. This funding will allow us to highlight once again and celebrates a marginalized group of directors and bring their work to the big screen.

### **How will your audience and the community benefit from this project?**

First, it's an opportunity to invite people to Cinestudio for programming that, in the past, perhaps has not been given the platform it deserves. It's a chance to bring the community together to have conversations via moderated talk-backs and discuss issues of the day and how they relate to the films.

### **How will this project be evaluated?**

We plan to use a few different metrics to evaluate our program. First, we will assess overall attendance. Second, we will dive deeper into our survey questions to see where our attendees come from and other demographics. We also will track student engagement.

### **Cover letter**

- [Roberts-Grant-Cover-letter.pdf](#)

### **Board list**

- [Board-Diversity-Matrix-7-27-28.pdf](#)

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### **IRS 501(c)3 determination letter**

- [IRS-tax-exempt-letter\\_2006-05-25.pdf](#)

### **Financial statement**

- [Cinestudio-990-and-990-T-6-30-2021-Public-Inspection-Copy.pdf](#)

### **Last year operational budget**

- [Cinestudio-FY22-Results\\_MvM-Est\\_2202-07-17.pdf](#)

### **Current year operational budget**

- [Approved-Cinestudio-FY-23-Budget.pdf](#)

### **Balance sheet**

- [Cinestudio-September-22-Financials.pdf](#)

### **Project budget**

- [Celebrating-African-American-Directors-in-the-world-of-Cinema-proposed\\_budget.pdf](#)

### **Does your organization produce an annual report?**

No

### **Has your organization adopted a strategic plan?**

Yes

### **Strategic plan**

- [Cinestudio-Strategic-Plan-FINAL\\_post-Board-meeting.pdf](#)

### **Does your organization have a formal policy or organizational commitment to ensure that visual artists are financially compensated?**

No

### **Other materials?**

- [Proposed-Films.pdf](#)

Addressing the above question of artists being financially compensated for their work on this project.

We did contact the Roberts Foundation's Executive Director and explained that while we do not directly compensate the artists, we are a theatrical booking house which means we go through distributors to get our films and pay fees and licensing

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fees as part of that distribution agreement.

**Have you contacted the Executive Director by email or phone to discuss this proposal?**

Yes

**Is your cover letter signed by your senior executive? on your letterhead? with your official office address?**

Yes