

The First, World Festival of Negro Arts
Dir. William Greaves, 1966, USA, 40mins

In 1966, in Dakar, Senegal, artists, performers, writers, intellectuals and political leaders from the African Diaspora — came together to celebrate and debate the world-wide renaissance of Black culture in the 20th century. Among the dignitaries who attended were world renowned figures including President Leopold Senghor of Senegal, and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia; and among the intellectuals were Aimé Césaire of Martinique and Alioune Diop of Senegal, who led the debate on the concept of “Négritude”.

Many have seen William Klein’s seminal film on the Pan African Festival of Algiers of 1969 featuring interviews with, among others, the exiled artists and the activists of the Black Power and the Anti-apartheid Movements. Like Greaves film it was of its time. Yet this film of the first of these major Pan African festivals which took place three years earlier has been rarely seen in the UK. Capturing the spirit of Africa’s quest for liberation from 19th century colonialism, this beautifully shot film of period grey film tones also captures the style, the feel, the artistic and cultural sophistication of the people of Senegal and beyond, and of the moment, framed with Greaves’ poetic narrative. Featured artists include Duke Ellington, Langston Hughes, Alvin Ailey, and artists and performers (some very much of their time) from thirty nations around the world. But I also saw a young Ousmane Sembene and others we have come to know, who are not mentioned by name in the film: and there is a fleeting glimpse of someone who I am convinced is a young Djbril Diop Mambetey. Search the frames to see who else you can recognize!

W.E.B. Dubois: A Biography in 4 Voices
Prod/Dir: Louis Massiah, 1995, USA, 116mins
Writer/Narrators: Wesley Brown, Thulani Davis, Toni Cade Bambara and Amiri Baraka,

This film tells the story of one of the key advocates of Pan-Africanism - the intellectual movement that spanned continents and provided the context for the Harlem Renaissance and Negritude. This well crafted documentary on the long and remarkable life of Dr. William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B) Du Bois (1868-1963) offers unique insights into an eventful century in African American history. Born three years after the end of the American Civil War, Du Bois witnessed the imposition of Jim Crow laws, its defeat by the Civil Rights Movement and the triumph of African national independence struggles. He attended the first Pan African Congress held in London in 1900 and the 5th Congress in Manchester in 1945.

Du Bois’ contributions and legacy have been so far-reaching, that this four-part film, his first film biography, required the collaboration of four prominent African American writers to narrate successive periods of his life and discuss his impact on their work. The film is packed with archival footage not only of Dubois but also of his contemporaries including a glimpse of a personal favourite, the handsome and hugely talented Claude McKay in Russia.

Aimee Cesaire: A Voice for History: Part 2 'Where Edges of Conquest Meet', Dir: Euzhan Palcy, Martinique, 57mins, 1994

This is one film in the documentary trilogy *Aimee Cesaire: A Voice For History* that presents through extensive direct interviews with Aimee Cesaire, captivating historic archival film and interviews with other significant people who knew him, a biography of the poet, writer and joint architect of the Negritude movement. Africa and the diaspora feature in his life his thinking and his work, so it is no surprise that some of his seminal works such as *'Notebooks of a Return to My Native Land'* and *A Season in Congo* have inspired film and theatre artists around the globe. In this part of the trilogy, by Palcy (the filmmaker often referred to as a protégée of Cesaire and whose fiction feature films have embraced both Pan Africanism in scope and Negritude in aesthetics), Cesaire addresses the ethics, theory and philosophy of 'Negritude', with direct reference to the influence of the Harlem Renaissance, and to Pan Africanism to challenge racism of the period. The film presents the different meetings that Cesaire, as a young student in Paris in the early 1900s, had with other thinkers and intellectuals – his contemporaries - including the young Leopold Senghor of Senegal through whom he was to encounter Africa, the artist Picasso, and Cesaires' best friend, a Yugoslavian student with a 'Martiniquan connection', destined to have a unique perspective on the civil conflict that tore his own country apart in the early 1990s.

CLR James Lectures: Lectures 2 and 3 – 'The Caribbean' and 'Africa' Producer: H O Nazareth, UK, 2 x 26mins, 1983-1985

The renowned Trinidadian historian, intellectual, writer and cultural activist, CLR James, is known as one of the most significant thinkers and cultural commentators of his time. Resident in the UK at various stages of his life since the 1930s, it was in the 1980s that UK producer Nazareth managed to capture on film the eloquent reflections of the octogenarian in a series of six lectures. Each lecture was on a specific theme: Cricket, The Caribbean, Africa, Shakespeare, American Society and Solidarity; each filmed with riveted invited audiences – including many significant names in the Black media and cultural scene of the time who then engage in a Q&A with James. The lectures were shown on Channel Four Television in the 1980s but have not been seen for over 20 years, yet they have a resonance for the world we live in today.

In the ***Caribbean Lecture*** (filmed at the Commonwealth Institute) James talks about Cuba and the proposition of a Caribbean Federation, about Martinique and Guadeloupe; about Walter Rodney and Guyana; Barbados and Jamaica and about the question of African Independence.

In the ***Africa Lecture*** (filmed at the Africa Centre) he stressed that his lecture was not on Pan Africanism, but on Africa. He spoke about Ethiopia's resistance to Italian attacks and about his formation of the International African Friends of Ethiopia with Jomo Kenyatta: about meeting Nkrumah and encouraging Padmore and Nkrumah to become friends in the anti-colonial struggle – referred to as 'one of the greatest political combinations of the 20th century'. There is mention of the 1945 Congress and further commentary on the pattern of the anti-colonial struggle that swept the continent.