DC Labor FilmFest
May 1–30

AFI Silver
THEATRE and CULTURAL CENTER

Organized and presented by the Labor Heritage Foundation and the AFI Silver, this annual series features a wide-ranging selection of films about work, workers and the wider issues affecting workers' lives. **Union members receive Silver Cinema Club (Star level) ticket discount. Must present union card.**



Opening Night

THE OLD OAK | Wed, May 1, 7:00; also screens Sat, May 4, 4:15

Intro by Lane Windham, Associate Director, Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor and Seth Harris, Power At Work

Co-presented by the Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor at Georgetown University and Power At Work.

THE OLD OAK is the last pub standing in a once thriving mining village in northern England, a gathering space for a community that has fallen on hard times. There is growing anger, resentment and a lack of hope among the residents, but the pub and its proprietor, TJ, are a fond presence to their customers. When a group of Syrian refugees move into the floundering town, a decisive rift fueled by prejudices develops between the community and its newest inhabitants. The formation of an unexpected friendship between TJ and a young Syrian woman named Yara opens up new possibilities for the divided village in this deeply moving drama about loss, fear and the difficulty of finding hope. Following the 2020 release of his SORRY WE MISSED YOU, legendary British director Ken Loach, who is 87 years old, announced that THE OLD OAK would be his final film. DIR Ken Loach; SCR Paul Laverty; PROD Rebecca O'Brien. UK, 2023, color, 113 min. NOT RATED



MODERN TIMES | Mon, May 6, 6:45

Co-presented by Metro DC Democratic Socialists of America.

Charlie Chaplin's Little Tramp gets trapped in the coils of automation — at one point literally — so frenziedly tightening screws on the assembly line that, once off it, he compulsively tightens buttons on women and later becomes the guinea pig for an efficiency-promoting feeding machine run amok. Inspired by René Clair's À NOUS LA LIBERTÉ, this corrosive satire on the dehumanizing effects of technology gives its screeches, groans and grinds more lines than the actors. It's also one of Chaplin's most lighthearted works, with highlights including his helpful waving of a red flag dropped by a departing truck just as a Communist demonstration marches up behind him. DIR/SCR/PROD Charlie Chaplin. U.S., 1936, b&w, 87 min. NOT RATED



IN THE AISLES [IN DEN GÄNGEN] | Wed, May 8, 6:45

Intro by Lane Windham, Associate Director, Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor

Co-presented by the Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor at Georgetown University.

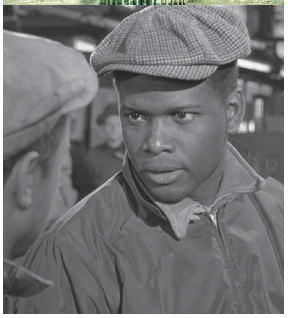
When the reclusive Christian (Franz Rogowski, TRANSIT) takes a job working the night shift at a big-box store, his new manager, Bruno from the Beverage Department (Peter Kurth, BABYLON BERLIN), teaches him the lay of the land and the delicacy it takes to operate a forklift. Christian becomes enamored by his charming but mysterious co-worker "Sweets Marion" (Sandra Hüller, ANATOMY OF A FALL), with whom he begins to share flirtatious break-room coffees and conversations. An affecting and bittersweet glimpse into the shared connections of a motley group of workers, IN THE AISLES quietly celebrates the beauty in the day-to-day and the collective pride we take in our jobs with dark humor and nuance. DIR/SCR Thomas Stuber; SCR Clemens Meyer, from his short story; PROD Jochen Laube, Fabian Maubach. Germany, 2018, color, 125 min. In German with English subtitles. NOT RATED



FINDING THE MONEY | Thurs, May 9, 6:45

Q&A with filmmaker Maren Poitras and subject Stephanie Kelton moderated by Sara Nelson, International President of AFA-CWA

An intrepid group of economists is on a mission to instigate a paradigm shift by flipping our understanding of the national debt — and the nature of money — upside down. We all use money, yet the questions of what it is and where it comes from remain elusive. FINDING THE MONEY follows former chief economist to the U.S. Senate Budget Committee Stephanie Kelton on a journey through Modern Money Theory, or "MMT," to unveil a deeper story about money, injecting new hope and empowering democracies around the world to tackle the biggest challenges of the 21st century, from climate change to inequality. DIR/PROD Maren Poitras. U.S., 2023, color, 95 min. NOT RATED



EDGE OF THE CITY | Mon, May 13, 7:00

Martin Ritt's film directorial debut, reminiscent of ON THE WATERFRONT for its depiction of a dangerous and corrupt dock-working world on New York City's Hudson River, features Sidney Poitier in his first top co-star billing. John Cassavetes plays Axel Nordmann, a drifter with a mysterious past who, newly arrived in New York, starts work as a stevedore on the docks. Toiling in the crew of the contemptible Charlie Malick (Jack Warden), who shakes him down for kickbacks, Axel befriends Tommy Tyler (Poitier) and then leaves Malick's crew to work with him, which earns both men the murderous ire of Malick. Ruby Dee shines in an early role as Tommy's wife, Lucy. DIR Martin Ritt; SCR Robert Alan Aurthur; PROD David Susskind. U.S., 1957, b&w, 85 min. NOT RATED

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THE PROMISED LAND [BASTARDEN] | Wed, May 15, 6:45

Denmark, 18th century. A retired army captain with humble origins, Ludvig Kahlen (Mads Mikkelsen, ANOTHER ROUND), makes a deal with the king: successfully settle Jutland and ascend to nobility. Arriving with nothing but a shovel and sheer willpower, Kahlen refuses to yield to the harsh landscape, dreaming of planting imported German potatoes. With the help of a runaway couple, a priest and a precocious orphan, he makes progress, but his unhinged noble neighbor Frederik de Schinkel (Simon Bennebjerg) will stop at nothing to prevent his success. As tensions escalate and violence erupts, the singularly focused Kahlen must decide just how much he is willing to risk. Mikkelsen, reuniting with A ROYAL AFFAIR director Nikolaj Arcel, delivers a star turn in this rollicking period Danish Western filled with romance, intrigue and revenge. DIR/SCR Nikolaj Arcel; SCR Anders Thomas Jensen, from a novel by Ida Jessen; PROD Louise Vesth. Denmark/Germany/Sweden, 2023, color, 127 min. In Danish with English subtitles. NOT RATED



MATEWAN | Mon, May 20, 6:45

Intro by James C. Benton, director of the Race and Economic Empowerment Project at the Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor

Co-presented by UMWA (United Mine Workers of America), Metro DC Democratic Socialists of America, the Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor at Georgetown University and the Claudia Jones School for Political Education.

This American labor classic is based on the 1920 showdown between West Virginia coal miners and coal company agents hired to prevent them from unionizing. As organizer Joe Kenehan (Chris Cooper, in his film debut) explains, "They got you fightin' white against colored, native against foreign, hollow against hollow, when you know there ain't but two sides in this world — them that work and them that don't. You work, they don't. That's all you got to know about the enemy." The cast includes James Earl Jones, Mary McDonnell, David Strathairn and Will Oldham; with Oscar®-nominated cinematography by Haskell Wexler. DIR/SCR John Sayles; PROD Peggy Rajski, Maggie Renzi. U.S., 1987, color, 135 min. RATED PG-13



25th Anniversary

OFFICE SPACE | Wed, May 22, 7:00

Intro by Seth Harris, Power At Work

Co-presented by Nonprofit Professional Employees Union (NPEU) - IFPTE Local 70 and Power At Work.

"I could burn this place down." The perennial DC Labor FilmFest favorite OFFICE SPACE returns for its 25th anniversary! Ron Livingston, Ajay Naidu and David Herman star as three disgruntled workers at the dreary, fluorescent-lit office of Initech who learn of impending layoffs at the company and hatch a scheme to embezzle from their greedy bosses; co-starring Jennifer Aniston, Stephen Root, Gary Cole, John C. McGinley and Diedrich Bader. Director Mike Judge's theatrical debut was largely ignored upon release but has become a veritable ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW for cube-farmers everywhere. DIR/SCR/PROD Mike Judge; PROD Daniel Rappaport, Michael Rotenberg. U.S., 1999, color, 89 min. RATED R



UNREST [UNRUEH] | Tue, May 28, 7:15

New technologies are transforming a 19th-century watchmaking town in Switzerland. Josephine, a young factory worker, produces the unrest wheel, swinging in the heart of the mechanical watch. Exposed to new ways of organizing money, time and labor, she gets involved with the local movement of the anarchist watchmakers, where she meets Russian traveler Pyotr Kropotkin. DIR/SCR Cyril Schäublin; PROD Michela Pini, Linda Vogel. Switzerland, 2022, color, 93 min. In Swiss-German, French and Russian with English subtitles. NOT RATED



WORKING CLASS GOES TO HELL [RADNIČKA KLASA IDE U PAKAO]

Thurs, May 30, 6:45

Five years after a factory fire claimed the lives of several workers and, with them, the primary livelihood of a rural Balkan town, the plant's union is met with a debilitating blow in their fight for reparations. Long suspected of causing the fire in order to privatize their property, the owners have successfully evaded legal consequence, and the workers are cast as ungrateful nuisances, obstinate in the face of capitalistic progress. Stoic labor leader Ceca (Tamara Krcunović) refuses to give up hope, but her position grows tenuous as the collective develops a fascination with the pagan practices of its newest member, Mija (Leon Lučev). After Mija leads the union in a ritual that belies a satanic undertone, strange occurrences are reported around town, including the enigmatic manifestation of a decrepit man seen stalking the most corrupt citizens. DIR/SCR/PROD Mladen Đorđević; PROD Milan Stojanović. Serbia/Greece/Bulgaria/Montenegro/Croatia/Romania, 2023, color, 127 min. In Serbian with English subtitles. NOT RATED