



# Stories We Shared

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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# Our Year Together



**Ann Hicks**

*Chair, Board of Directors*

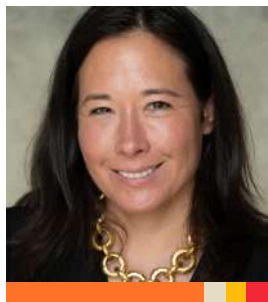
As we reflect on 2024, we are filled with deep gratitude and pride for a year that reaffirmed the power of film and storytelling to inspire, connect, and transform. Our mission remains rooted in the belief that a single story can open minds, spark conversation, and build bridges across communities — and this year, that mission resonated more strongly than ever.

Thanks to your unwavering support, we welcomed eager and engaged audiences to our theaters for a bold and diverse slate of films — from powerful documentaries and international cinema to emerging voices that are reshaping the landscape of independent film. Our education programs expanded, filling the Media Arts Lab with energy, imagination, and students of all ages.

2024 was also a year of innovation and renewal. With a continued commitment to inclusion, accessibility, and environmental sustainability, we introduced new initiatives and partnerships that broadened our reach and deepened our impact. None of this would have been possible without the passionate community of filmmakers, educators, donors, members, and film lovers who make our work meaningful.

This Annual Report offers a glimpse into the milestones we achieved together. As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our vision: to be a vibrant cultural hub where great storytelling and great audiences meet.

Thank you for being part of the JBFC story.



**Mary Jo Ziesel**

*Executive Director*

# Memorable Moments

## John Pizzarelli and Friends: Jazz on a Summer's Day

Jul. 27

A full day of jazz at the Burns, hosted by John Pizzarelli! Following captivating live performances and documentary screenings, the celebration continued with great food, drinks, and music in the Take 3 Wine Bar & Café. Part of our Sounds of Summer series, this memorable program was presented in memory of Maria Traversa, longtime Jazz Sessions Series Curator and cherished friend of the JBFC.



**“What Jacob Burns does for the community is invaluable.”**

—Matthew Russell,  
JBFC Member

## An Evening with Martin Scorsese

Aug. 2

Legendary Academy Award-winning director, producer, and screenwriter Martin Scorsese returned to the Burns for a Q&A following the documentary, *Made in England: The Films of Powell and Pressburger*. This memorable discussion was moderated by JBFC Board President Janet Maslin.



**“The JBFC exhibits excellence in everything it does.”**

—Mindy Berkower, JBFC Member





## Director's Cut: Emerging Screenwriters, Spanish Language Cohort

Sep. 17–Nov. 14

We offered our first-ever Spanish language course, a screenwriting intensive for 10th and 11th grade high school students. Led by Stony Brook University screenwriting instructor Tristan Rodriguez, the course consisted of 15 engaging sessions at the Media Arts Lab. The short film scripts were performed by professional actors for a live audience at the JBFC Theater on November 21.

See page 15 for a summary of our 2024 Director's Cut: Emerging Screenwriters Fellowships, English and Spanish Language Cohorts.

NYU Tisch School of the Arts



## A Wicked Fun Time in Pleasantville

Nov. 22, Opening Day

After two decades as one of the most beloved and enduring musicals on the stage, *Wicked* made its long-awaited journey to the big screen as a spectacular, generation-defining cinematic extravaganza. We hosted a variety of creative events and special screenings to make *Wicked* a magical experience for fans of all ages.



**"I'm grateful that the JBFC continues to thrive. It is a cinematic haven, and I'm proud to be a part of this vibrant community!"**

—Maria Martinez-Zanghi, JBFC Member

## Take 3 Wine Bar & Café Opening

Apr. 11

We were proud to unveil the Take 3 Wine Bar & Café, located on the third floor of the Theater. This exciting addition reaffirms our commitment to enhancing shared experiences and deepening community engagement. Take 3 is a welcoming space for people to gather before or after enjoying a film, offering gourmet bites, fine wines, craft beers, non-alcoholic drinks, brewed beverages, and other locally sourced treats against the backdrop of captivating art exhibits.

Take 3 was made possible thanks in part to a generous gift from JBFC Board Member Ginny Gold in honor of her husband, Marty Gold, who passed away in 2017. A wine connoisseur and the President and CEO of Martin Scott Wines, Ltd., Marty was a member of the JBFC Board of Directors for many years, serving as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee.



Ginny Gold with members of her family at the opening of the Take 3 Wine Bar & Café



# Environmental Sustainability Initiative



**Environmental  
Sustainability  
Initiative**



Thanks to a generous gift from an anonymous donor, we completed the first phase of our Environmental Sustainability Initiative (ESI).

In addition to replacing incandescent ceiling lights in the David Swope Theater, Theater 2, and Theater 3 with LEDs, Phase One included converting to compostable supplies at the concession stand and Take 3 Wine Bar & Café. Designated bins are strategically placed throughout the Theater to facilitate responsible waste disposal. All organic items are collected and processed to create nutrient-rich compost. This same waste disposal system is also being used at the Media Arts Lab.

With the support of the JBFC community, we look forward to continuing our focus on Phase Two, which includes enhancing our education programs with environmentally conscious films and activities for students of all ages, creating a student environmental film festival, implementing energy-efficiency methods, and deepening strategic partnerships.

# Connecting Through Cinema



“There is no greater magic than seeing an old film in the theater.”

—Don Gibson, JBFC Member



“I love when films at the Burns let me ‘meet’ people from other times and places and circumstances.”

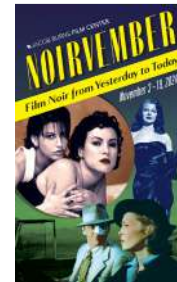
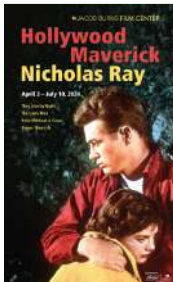
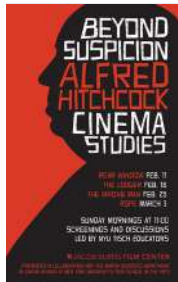
—Amy Ewing, JBFC Member

# 2024 Series



“We LOVE Jacob Burns! Many thanks to your entire staff for their graciousness, and for always providing us with fantastic entertainment and educational experiences!”

—John & Cynthia Rubino, JBFC Members



“Thanks for all you do to bring culture, beauty, and insight to Westchester County.”

—Ann Umemoto, JBFC Member



**CLICK HERE**  
for the list of  
films we  
screened  
in 2024.

# Special Guests, Special Moments

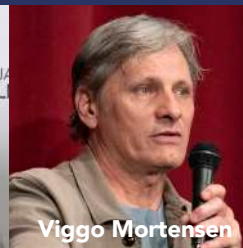
Just a few of the 180 special guests who entertained, educated, and inspired us this year:



Martin Scorsese



Pamela Anderson



Viggo Mortensen



Carrie Coon



Ron Howard



Renée Elise Goldsberry

"I came back here to celebrate this place. You're lucky to have it."

—Viggo Mortensen



James Ivory



Tim Robbins



Bob Mackie



Edward Burns



Vicky Krieps



RJ Cutler



Gia Coppola



Alex Gibney



Ben Stiller



Thelma Schoonmaker

**CLICK HERE**  
for the list of  
special guests  
who joined us  
in 2024.



**392**

films shown



**5,146**

screenings

**15**

original series



**6**

screenings  
in 3D

**663**

open caption  
screenings

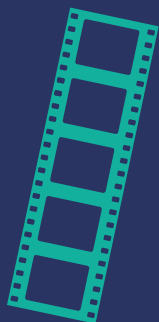
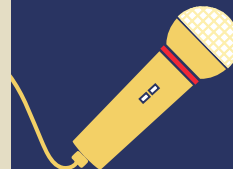


## 2024 By the Numbers: A Year in Review

**FILM**

**180**

special guests



**8,186**

minutes of  
35mm film  
screened



**20**

sensory-friendly  
screenings

Films screened from

**24**

countries



# Inspiring Students, Sparking Creativity

**“I am grateful to the JBFC staff now and in the past for developing such relevant and impactful programming and educational opportunities.”**

–Samuel North, Ossining High School Teacher



Our media education programs remain a powerful catalyst for creativity, empathy, and social change through the power of film. Through dynamic screenings, workshops, and deep filmmaking experiences, we empower students to become discerning viewers, skilled storytellers, and socially conscious citizens. Each year, more than 70% of the students who experience our creative approach to education come from under-resourced schools and participate free of charge, including transportation to and from the JBFC campus.

**“We truly appreciate the continuing generosity of the JBFC in providing extraordinary opportunities to our students and community.”**

–Eric Katz, New Rochelle High School Teacher

# School and Community Programs

We are dedicated to enriching students' lives through a variety of school and community programs. Over 5,000 students participate each year in workshops, field trips, and other activities that provide them with the opportunity to engage directly with film while building community.



## Show, Don't Tell, Grades 5-12

In a three-hour workshop at the Media Arts Lab, students discover the meaning of "show, don't tell," learn basic shot types and storyboarding skills, and construct a short scene of their own. The experience culminates in a celebratory screening of their projects.



## Classroom to Screening Room, Grades 3-12

Classroom to Screening Room features films that enrich students' study of literature, history, science, world languages, and the arts. Education faculty and special guest speakers provide social, historical, and aesthetic context for the film, and facilitate post-screening discussions. Our carefully **curated film library** features an inclusive collection of stories from around the world. These animated, documentary, and narrative films invite students to engage with new cultures and build empathy through incredible characters and personal stories.

**"Classroom to Screening Room is a MUST class trip experience for all students!"**

—Casimir Pulaski School Teacher, Yonkers



### **Community Matters Student Screenings, Grades 9-12**

Community Matters Student Screenings include a film followed by a moderated discussion with members of the creative team and/or staff from partnering organizations. All Community Matters Student programs are offered to students free of charge.

**“I cannot thank you enough for all you do for students and schools. So many students don’t have the means to go on regular trips or to go to the movies and we appreciate it immensely.”**

—Lauren Crowley, White Plains High School Teacher

**CLICK HERE** for a list of our 2024 Education Partners.

### **What’s The Story?, Grade 3**

Through three consecutive field trips to the Media Arts Lab, students participate in a writing- and creating-based visual literacy program designed to improve storytelling and writing skills. Students watch a variety of animated, live action, fiction, and non-fiction films from around the world, while exploring basic tools filmmakers use to bring their stories to life.

**“Your dedication to enriching young minds through cinema is truly commendable. You made our students feel welcome and they thoroughly enjoyed the JBFC experience. The memories and lessons learned will stay with them for a lifetime.”**

— Vicenza Persampieri, Eastview Middle School Teacher



# After-School Programs

In addition to serving more than 5,000 students in grades 3–12 through our school and community programs, we provide immersive after-school courses, high school fellowships, summer camps, and adult education courses for film-lovers of all ages.



## Director's Cut: Emerging Screenwriters

Sep. 17–Nov. 14

We are proud to continue offering screenwriting intensives for high school students in collaboration with NYU Tisch School of the Arts. We expanded the program in 2024 with an English Language and a Spanish Language cohort. The two cohorts met in different parts of the Media Arts Lab at the same time, which allowed students to come together for dinner, interact, and share their learning experiences. Each cohort had its own culminating event in November, which featured a live table read at the JBFC Theater.

**UPDATE:** Director's Cut has expanded in 2025 to include **Director's Cut: Documentary Filmmaking**, in collaboration with NYU Tisch School of the Arts and Imagine Entertainment, and **Director's Cut: Narrative Filmmaking**, in collaboration with NYU Tisch School of the Arts.

**“The JBFC offers me more opportunities to express myself than at my school.”**

– Jack, JBFC Student, Director's Cut English Language Cohort

**“This was a motivating experience for me. It changed me emotionally by getting to know people and connecting with their stories.”**

– Jhonny, JBFC Student, Director's Cut Spanish Language Cohort

**CLICK HERE** to read more about the English language cohort.

**CLICK HERE** to read more about the Spanish language cohort.

## Summer Camp

Jul. 1–Aug. 16

Our summer intensive day camps provide emerging young artists with the opportunity to choose from two dynamic experiences: making short films in **Filmmaking Camp**, or bringing their wildest ideas to life in **Animation Camp**. We keep classes small, ensuring personal attention in a nurturing and supportive learning environment with tight-knit group collaboration.



## Fundamentals of Filmmaking

Apr. 6–May 23

In this intensive pre-collegiate course, participants learn the craft of filmmaking through the creation of an original short film. On the last day of class, students showcase their work for family and friends at the JBFC.

**“It was cool experimenting with different filmmaking tools at the JBFC. I had never used such high-quality tools before!”**

– Sean, JBFC Student, Fundamentals of Filmmaking

## Filmcraft 101

Oct. 16–Dec. 18

This course gives students the opportunity to experiment with cutting-edge cameras and editing software, master camera tricks and lighting magic, and unravel the secrets of great visual storytelling – all culminating in student screenings for family and friends!



# JBFC Kids

JBFC Kids introduces young audiences to film by celebrating cherished stories both new and old, revisiting those that are overlooked, and highlighting cultures from around the world. It is our mission to cultivate a new generation of cinema lovers.

**JBFC Kids screenings take place every Saturday along with monthly sensory-friendly screenings on select Sundays.**

**UPDATE:** As of April 1, 2025, tickets for JBFC Kids family programming are just \$5 for everyone. Inclusive and affordable family programs are made possible thanks to the JBFC's Connecting Our Community Fund.

**“It was a great experience! I love that lots of families attended and that kids and parents were singing along together.”**

—Nicole Sarrubbo, JBFC Member



## Frozen Sing-A-Long

Jan. 7

Families attended a special sing-along edition of the beloved Disney movie *Frozen*. This event was highly popular, drawing children and parents from all over the local area.

**“We have special needs teenagers and they absolutely loved the sing-a-long event. Thank you for a perfect experience!”**

—Mike Morse, JBFC Member





**62**

free buses provided  
for under-resourced schools



**18**

screenplays created by  
high school fellows

**5,011**

students  
served



## 2024 By the Numbers: A Year in Review **EDUCATION**



Grades

**3-12**



More than

**3,500**

students from  
under-resourced schools



**25**

short films created in  
after-school programs  
and summer camp



# Artist Support



**“I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to immerse myself in such a creative and inspiring environment at the JBFC. This residency provided the perfect space for me to focus on my work and explore new ideas.”**

—Anahit Ghazaryan, JBFC Artist-in-Residence

**“The JBFC residency offered a wide range of essential resources to support the delicate stage of my film project. It was an ideal environment to focus deeply on refining the film’s cut.”**

—Filippo Piscopo, JBFC Artist-in-Residence

# Artists-in-Residence

In 2024, the JBFC supported seven Artists-in-Residence from across the country and around the world.



“The JBFC gave me the time and space to really create beyond the boundaries of the industry and to get deep into my creative process.”

—Santiago Giralt, JBFC Artist-in-Residence

“The energy here is crazy inspiring! This opportunity opened a window to my vision for both the work I’m creating now and the journey still ahead.”

—Lala Aliyeva, JBFC Artist-in-Residence



[CLICK HERE](#) for the 2024 Artists-in-Residence.

# Special Fundraising Events

## Igniting Film and Education Celebration

Sept. 16

We were proud to recognize three individuals who embrace film and education and have been involved with the Jacob Burns Film Center since the beginning: Heidi & Richard Rieger and Stephen Lang. All proceeds from this important event benefited our film and education programs.





## Heidi & Richard Rieger

### *David Swope Leadership Award*

It is fitting that Heidi & Richard Rieger received the David Swope Leadership Award, named after one of our founding leaders. Heidi & Richard have been involved with the Jacob Burns Film Center before we opened our doors in 2001. They believed in the promise of a cultural arts and education center inspired by the power of film and helped to make a bold dream a vibrant reality. Heidi & Richard have remained by our side every step of the way through their generous support and meaningful commitment to our mission. A JBFC board member for the past eight years, Heidi is a passionate champion of our education programs.

**CLICK HERE** for the list of donors to our Igniting Film and Education Celebration.

## Stephen Lang

### *Vision Award*

We were honored to present Stephen Lang with the Vision Award. Well-known for his acclaimed performances in James Cameron's *Avatar* and *Avatar: The Way of Water*, Stephen Lang is a distinguished and award-winning actor and playwright, who is equally at home in theater, television, and film. A member of the board of trustees of the Eugene M. Lang Foundation, Stephen Lang is committed to effecting change in arts and culture, education, health and human services, and justice. An early and enthusiastic supporter of the Jacob Burns Film Center, we enjoyed paying tribute to Stephen Lang's artistic, philanthropic, and humanitarian achievements.

We also presented the **New Lens Awards** to JBFC Educators and Alums Detroit Hamell and Cassidy McKenna. Detroit and Cassidy began their journeys with the JBFC in elementary school. Every summer camp and after-school program fueled their passion for filmmaking. A few years ago, Detroit and Cassidy progressed from JBFC students to educators, inspiring young students to explore the fundamentals and joys of filmmaking at our Media Arts Lab.



# Murder Mystery Dinner

Nov. 22

The Jane Peck Gallery was transformed into a scene of intrigue and suspense for the sold-out Murder Mystery Dinner Party – the grand finale to the Noirvember: Film Noir from Yesterday to Today series. All proceeds from the night supported the JBFC's film and education programs.



**“This idea was a hit, and everyone did an excellent job on execution. I hope that it comes together again next year!”**

—Avery Little, JBFC Member



# A Tribute to Our Community



Our community comes together each year to learn, laugh, explore, grow, create, and inspire. We thrive off the generosity of thousands of people who share our commitment to fostering and furthering connection through film. We remain dedicated to opening hearts and minds, thanks to our engaged, passionate, and generous community.

We are deeply grateful for your support, which makes our mission possible.

**“I am privileged to engage with the JBFC’s programs. We need the Burns now more than ever.”**

—Steven Cove, JBFC Member

## Annual Giving

Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2024

We rely on annual gifts beyond membership support to sustain our vibrant and vital programs. While we deeply appreciate all gifts at every level, we are pleased to recognize our major annual supporters.

**CLICK HERE** for our 2024 Major Supporters.

## Ignite Education

Jan. 1–Sept. 30, 2024

We are committed to empowering students to become discerning viewers, skilled storytellers, and socially conscious citizens. Over 70% of the more than 5,000 students who engage in our programs each year come from under-resourced schools and participate free of charge, including transportation to and from the JBFC campus. All contributions to Ignite Education were matched dollar for dollar, up to \$125,000. The Ignite Education Challenge was made possible thanks to the generous support of Ann and Weston Hicks, Stephen Apkon and Marcina Hale, and Leslie and Benjamin Arnow.

**CLICK HERE** for our Ignite Education Donors.



## Supporting Our Film Community

2024 Year-End Giving Campaign

Our devoted community inspired the JBFC Board of Directors to match ALL year-end contributions received by December 31 dollar for dollar up to \$125,000. We are profoundly grateful to our donors for their thoughtful and generous contributions to our year-end giving campaign.

**CLICK HERE** for our Year-End Donors.



The JBFC is proud to receive support from



Council on  
the Arts



**6,380**  
memberships



**86**  
community  
partners



**1,442**  
donors who made  
contributions  
over and above  
membership support

**23%**  
increase in  
Instagram  
followers



## 2024 By the Numbers: A Year in Review **COMMUNITY**

**209**  
films seen by  
JBFC's top  
moviegoer



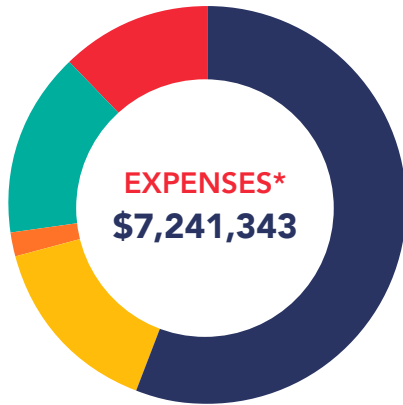
**72**  
collaborative social media posts, reflecting  
partnerships with peer organizations,  
nonprofits, special guests, JBFC  
educators, local influencers, and more



**25,027**  
bags of popcorn sold

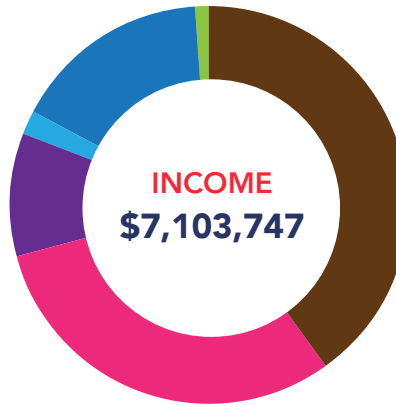
# Operating Financials

FY 24: OCT 1, 2023 – SEPT. 30, 2024



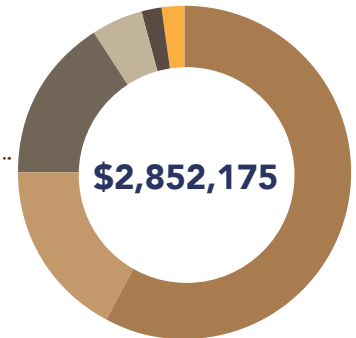
- Film Programming – 56%
- Education – 15%
- Artist Support – 2%
- Management – 15%
- Fundraising – 12%

*\*Does not include depreciation*



- Contributions – 40%
- Tickets/Concession Sales – 31%
- Membership – 10%
- Education – 2%
- Endowment Draw – 16%
- Other – 1%

## CONTRIBUTIONS



- Individuals – 58%
- Foundations – 17%
- Special Events – 16%
- Government – 5%
- Corporations – 2%
- In-Kind – 2%

**CLICK HERE** for a copy of the 2024 audited financial statements.

For further information, please contact Judy Exton at [jexton@burnsfilmcenter.org](mailto:jexton@burnsfilmcenter.org) or 914.773.7663, ext. 414.

## Media Arts Lab/Executive Offices

405 Manville Rd.  
Pleasantville, NY 10570

914.773.7663

## Theater

364 Manville Rd.  
Pleasantville, NY 10570

914.747.5555

## Residence for Visiting Artists

5 Grant St.  
Pleasantville, NY 10570

 JACOB BURNS FILM CENTER

[burnsfilmcenter.org](http://burnsfilmcenter.org)

Thank You for Your Support!

