

# Black film, art take centre stage

## EVENT PREVIEW

### Edmonton Black Film and Art Week

**Where and when:** Various venues downtown and at the University of Alberta. Films will be screened Friday to Monday at the Metro Cinema (Zeidler Hall at the Citadel Theatre); the Stanley A. Milner Library Theatre and the SUB stage (main floor of U of A Students' Union Building). The visual arts exhibit is on display Friday to Sunday in the Milner Library Theatre foyer and adjoining room.

**Information:** Visit [www.artepreta.com](http://www.artepreta.com) or <http://blackfilmandart.blogspot.com>

GILBERT A. BOUCHARD  
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The first Black Film and Art Week has been organized to fill a vacuum in this city's upcoming annual celebration of Black History Month.

"In the past, ... they had all kinds of events for Black History Month apart from events that focused on film and the visual arts," says organizer Yo'vella Ellis-Mizrahi. "It felt ... (like) this was an appropriate time to do something like this."

So Ellis-Mizrahi created Arte Preta, "black art" in Portuguese. The group is presenting five films, international and Canadian fiction and non-fiction offerings, at both screenings and discussion sessions featuring filmmakers Dana Inkster



Yo'vella Ellis-Mizrahi with a painting by Cam Wallace titled *Recliner*

SHAUGHN BUTTS, THE JOURNAL

and Daphne S. Valerius.

The festival's visual art component is a nine-artist exhibit in the lower foyer of the Stanley A. Milner Library featuring work by Lara Chauvin, Cam Wallace, Emmanuel Bara Layilo, Elsa Robinson, Shumba Ash, Moernike Olaosebikan and Vincent T. Joachim.

"This show includes work by black artists as well as artists ...

who have produced work that has black subjects," Ellis-Mizrahi says. "I want people coming to the show to not only see and recognize the skills and talent of black painters, but to have work on display that reflects images of blacks in art. This is something we don't always see enough of in galleries and art shows.

"It would be great, too, if the

show could help create connections between black artists who come from different communities in the city, maybe even create a community of black artists."

As for the film component, Ellis-Mizrahi had several fine films produced and starring black filmmakers and actors from which to choose. She focused on cinematic content, exploring specific cultural and historic issues that would be most relevant to Black History Month.

This curatorial choice means she's presenting everything from a light comedy (*I'm Through With White Girls: The Inevitable Undoing of Jay Brooks*) to more challenging fare such as *Bamako*, a hybrid love story-turning-sour with a political edge. (The film symbolically puts the International Monetary Fund on trial, accusing it of causing a portion of Africa's fiscal and political woes.)

In particular, Ellis-Mizrahi chose films that explore how the media perpetuates stereotypes and impacts how people see themselves. Valerius's *The Souls of Black Girls* looks at how popular images of black women are created and how in turn they contort the self-esteem of women and girls.

The festival is multi-disciplinary. A screening of *Queens of Sound: A Her-story of Reggae and Dancehall*, a documentary about the female side of reggae and dancehall music in Jamaica, will feature a live performance by the female-fronted reggae group Souljah Fyah.