

# SUBJECTS *of* DESIRE

COMMUNITY  
SCREENING PROPOSAL



HUNGRY EYES MEDIA



# ABOUT THE FILM

Subjects of Desire explores the cultural shift in North American beauty standards towards embracing Black female aesthetics and features while exposing the deliberate and often dangerous portrayals of Black women in the media.

From society's new fixation on the 'booty', fuller lips, the dramatic rise of spray tanned skin, ethnic hairstyles, and athletic bodies, some argue that Black women are having a beauty moment. But others, primarily Black women, argue that traditional Black features and attributes are seen as more desirable when they are on White women.

Told from the point of view of women who aren't afraid to challenge conventional beauty standards, the film is partially set at the 50th Anniversary of the Miss Black America Pageant, a beauty pageant that was first created as a political protest.

[WATCH TRAILER](#)



Subjects of Desire is a culturally significant, provocative film that deconstructs what we understand about race and the power behind beauty.

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# AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

## AWARDS

**Top 10 Audience Award** - Hot Docs

**Cultural Spirit Award** - New Hope Film Festival

**Best Documentary** - DC Black Film Festival

**Best Documentary** - San Francisco Black Film Festival

**DOXX Award for Best Documentary** - Tallgrass Film Festival

**Best Documentary** - CineFAM Film Festival

**Canada's Top 10 Films** - Toronto International Film Festival

**Most Influential People in Canadian Film** - The Globe and Mail



## NOMINATIONS

**Grand Jury Award for Best Documentary** - SXSW

**Best Documentary** - Bentonville Film Festival

**Best Canadian Documentary** - Calgary International Film Festival

**Mind the Gap Award** - Mill Valley Film Festival

**Spirit Award** - Mill Valley Film Festival

**Gordan Parks Black Excellence in Filmmaking** - Tallgrass Film Festival

**Best Documentary Audience Award** - American Black Film Festival

**Best First Feature Documentary** - Pan African Film Festival

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# NOTABLE PRESS MENTIONS

"The 50th Miss Black America pageant is backdrop to a nimble, idea-packed doc that acts as an excellent primer on Blackness and the beauty ideal."

*VARIETY*

"In a great way, it's like getting a semester's worth of discussion ideas about the topic in 100 minutes, as conveyed through experiences, knowledge, and wisdom of the Black women who are interviewed and celebrated."

 RogerEbert.com

"Fascinating, educational, and insightful, Subjects of Desire should be seen widely and considered thoughtfully by people of all colors, not least to make small inroads in reframing the weight placed on Black women to contort themselves into what is expected of them."

 ALLIANCE OF  
WOMEN FILM  
JOURNALISTS

"In Subjects of Desire, the 50th Miss Black America pageant provides a springboard to explore a cultural shift from past stereotypes of Black womanhood to today's Black girls and women embracing African aesthetics, from Black natural hairstyles to skin tone."

*THE*  
*Hollywood*  
REPORTER

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# NOTABLE EXPERT REVIEWS

“The film can be a beacon of hope for racialized girls.... and a tool for non-racialized girls to have to think about and reflect on the ways they may be perpetuating negative stereotypes about girls and women who identify as Black.”



**Belinda Longe**

Superintendent of Education, TDSB

“Our hope is that the Subjects of Desire community facilitation guide will enable diverse girls and young people in Canada to explore these critical issues for themselves and get empowered and equipped as advocates for gender justice.”



**Paulette Senior**

Canadian Women's Foundation

“The film is informative and empowering: it tackles Black beauty's historical roots, from the intersectionality of race, class, and power, in smart and compelling ways. I consider it one of the most powerful anti-racist and decolonial teaching tools available to educators and researchers.”



**Amina Mire**

Associate Professor, Carleton University



# JENNIFER HOLNESS



**Award-winning Director  
Founder of Canada's Black Screen Office  
Globe & Mail's 2022 Most Influential People in Canadian Film**

Jennifer brings a fresh, authentic perspective to telling powerful, thought-provoking stories. Jen has worked as a documentary filmmaker for nearly 20 years. She is the Executive Producer of Maya Annik Bedward feature doc, *Black Zombie*, that is in production with CBC's Doc Channel. She was recently awarded the CMPA's Indiescreen Established Producer of the year Award in recognition of her contribution to Canada's film industry and her incredible career achievements. Jen has directed her first feature documentary, *Subjects of Desire*, about Black women and beauty that will have its world premiere at SXSW and it will air on TVO and Crave in Canada. Jen who is passionate about Black Canadian History ( and redressing the lack of) is producing her first History Channel Series, *BLK: An Origin Story*. She will serve as a series showrunner and a director with partner Sudz Sutherland.

***"At Hungry Eyes Media we believe films can play an important role in building cultural capital in ways that can lead to positive social change."***

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# WHAT CAN THE FILM DO?

Subjects of Desire can support girls mentorship programs, women's rights groups, Black-led advocacy groups, community health and wellness organizations and more. Bring the film to your staff, your donors, your Board or program participants.

## THE FILM WILL:

- 👉 unpack media misrepresentation, biases, and negative stereo-types of Black women and girls
- 👉 educate around damaging cultural appropriation trends
- 👉 celebrate Black women and girls, their beauty, their power, their stories
- 👉 inspire interracial conversations and build allyship around the themes explored in the film
- 👉 strengthen organizational culture to be more inclusive and understanding of the lived experience of Black women and girls



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# IN THE LOOKING GLASS

Extreme and pervasive stereotypes of Black women have endured in North America for centuries, framing our collective consciousness about the very nature of Black women.

- ❖ **The Mammy** myth depicts Black women as a servant, happy to put her master's needs before hers. This character created as a response to critics of slavery's harshness, was used to show that Black women were actually content with their lives.
- ❖ **The Jezebel** myth portrays Black women as promiscuous- sexually insatiable, available, and slutty. This character was created during the slavery period as a way to justify sexual abuse towards enslaved Black women.
- ❖ **The Sapphire** more commonly known now as the "angry Black woman" is an irrational and emasculating woman, always expected to be negative and angry.





# IN THE LOOKING GLASS



As Black girls and women attempt to navigate this narrow and damaging maze of tropes that dominate mainstream media, they encounter a funhouse mirror of sorts- barely recognizing the distorted images that stare back.

To further complicate issues of Black female identity, cultural appropriation by women of other races is an ongoing phenomenon. Blackfishing (as it's commonly called now) has happened throughout history with contemporary examples spanning from Bo Derek's 'exotic' braids in the movie '10' to more recent examples of the Kardashian-Jenner family.



# MORE THAN JUST HAIR

For most Black women and girls, hair is a lot more than just hair. It can cause barriers in the classroom, workplace and in community spaces like restaurants and stores due to discrimination.

In the US, the national CROWN Act (Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) provides protection for race based hair discrimination. So far, in Canada, there isn't any similar sweeping federal rule but people are pushing for that to change. In Ontario, MPP Jill Andrew presented a petition called "Protecting Our Crowns" to the Ontario Legislative Assembly this March.



**US House passes Crown Act which would end hair discrimination**

**Black people deal with hair discrimination everywhere. Will Canada take a cue from the U.S.'s CROWN Act and end it?**

**Zara employee accuses store of discrimination over her hairstyle**

**A Black AGO worker was told her hair could 'scare' customers. The gallery agreed that was discrimination and promised to do better. A year later, she's still fighting for justice**

**Eighth-Grader Sent To Principal's Office For Her Natural Hair Being 'Too Poofy'**

A Toronto principal told the teen that her hair was unprofessional.



# COMMUNITY TOOL KIT + DISCUSSION CLIP LIBRARY

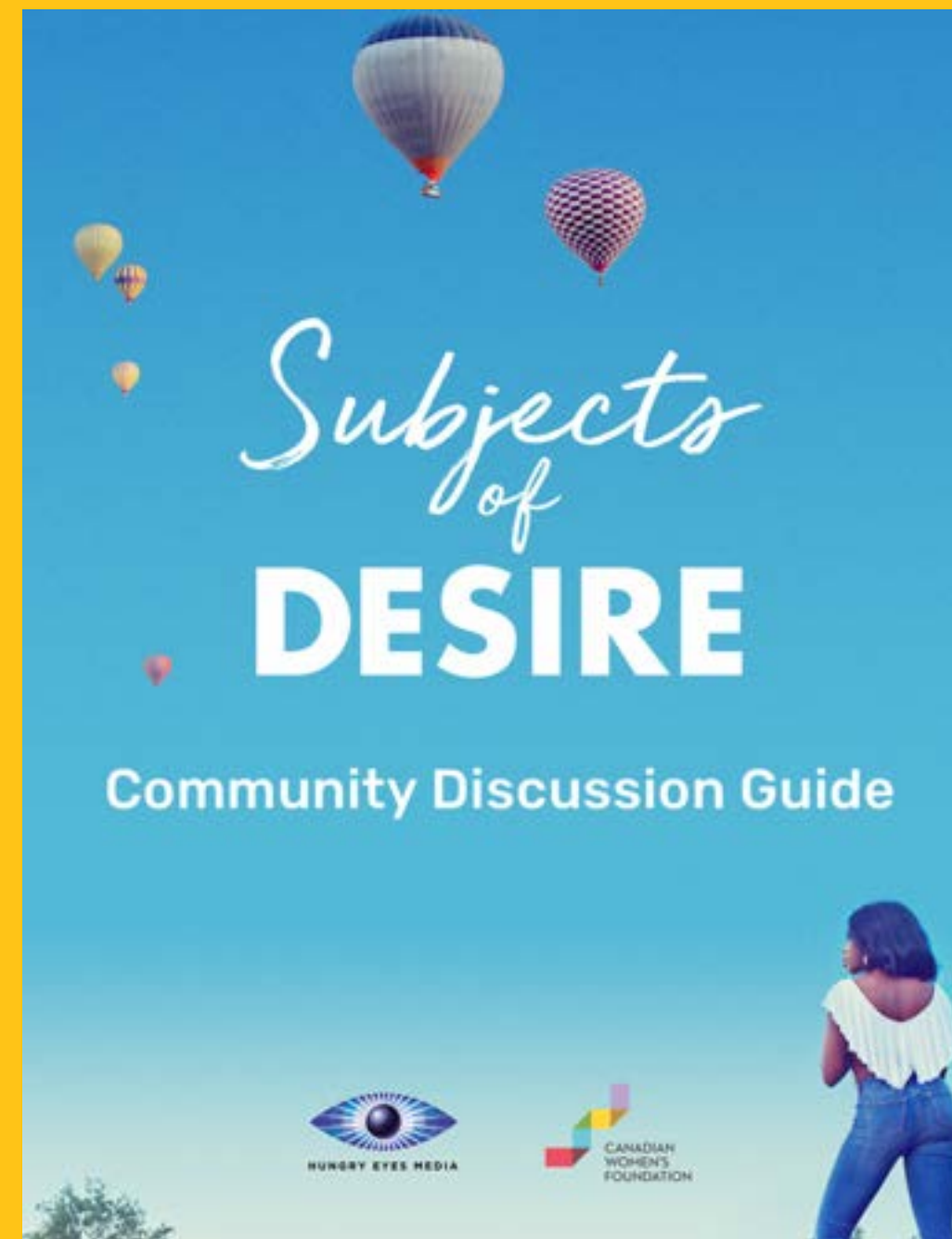
We are committed to bringing Subjects of Desire into as many community settings as possible. Because this is a film that requires unpacking in a supportive environment, we have invested considerable time in creating a Community Facilitation Guide with accompanying discussion clip library.

## **COMMUNITY DISCUSSION GUIDE**

A unique digital package developed by the Canadian Women's Foundation to equip youth-focused organizations, programs, and groups in Canada to use Subjects of Desire to enhance their programming.

## **THEMED DISCUSSION CLIP LIBRARY**

Engaging bite-sized conversation starters for those who don't have time to screen the whole film, or to draw audiences back into one aspect of the film quickly.



### CLIP LIBRARY


Please note the following clips are for educational use only. To view the clips online, click on the play button on each of the videos. To download a clip to play offline, click the download clip option below the video.

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#### CLIP LIBRARY FOR GRADES 7-8

[DOWNLOAD CLIP LIBRARY](#)

Intro and Conceptions of Beauty

[Download Clip](#)

The Beauty Binary and Anti-Black Racism

[Download Clip](#)



# WHAT YOUR EVENT COULD LOOK LIKE

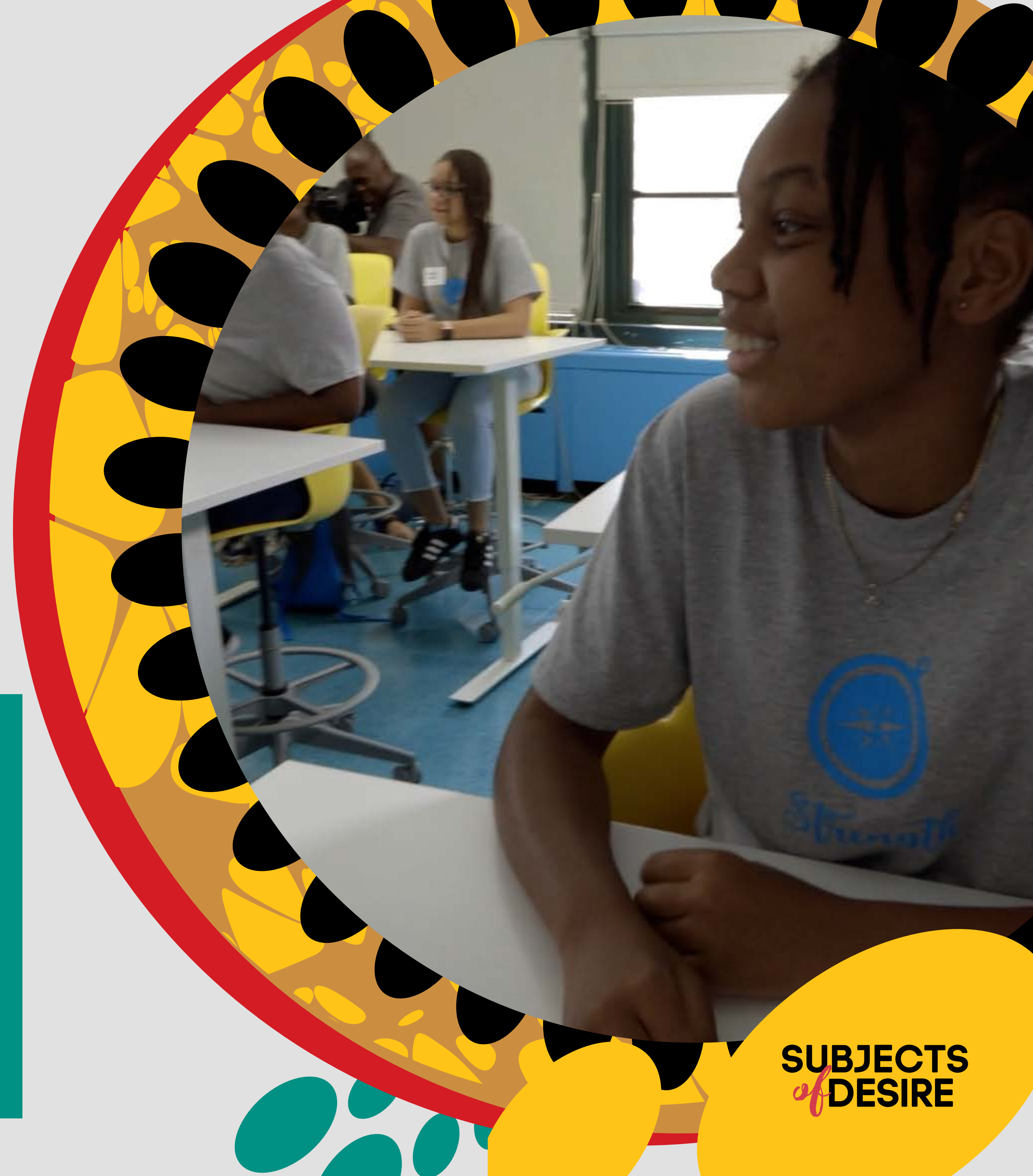
## **An in-person or virtual screening (89 mins)**

Host an in person screening at your office, a local community centre, or nearby independent cinema OR we can set up a virtual theatre that your group can access over the course of three months.

## **Invite Jennifer Holness to speak to your staff, Board, program participants, potential constituents or donors (60 - 90 minutes)**

**Who this is for:** Girls mentorship programs, women's rights groups, Black-led advocacy groups, community health and wellness organizations, and more.

**When:** Bookings are open for anytime.  
Potential commemorative dates that can be tied into your event include **Viola Desmond Day** (Nov. 8), **International Women's Day** (Mar. 8), **Black History Month** (Feb)



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# BASE PRICING

## Screening Package

Includes a three month virtual screening room window + permanent access to Community Guide + Online Clip Library. Admission fees are permitted.

<b>Small Organization</b> (0-3 Paid Staff)	<b>\$150</b>
<b>Medium Organization</b> (4-10 Paid Staff)	<b>\$300</b>
<b>Large Organization</b> (10+ Paid Staff)	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Jennifer Holness Guest Speaker Fee</b>	
<b>In-Person</b>	<b>\$750</b>
<b>Virtual</b>	<b>\$350</b>





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