

SUBJECTS *of* DESIRE

PUBLIC SCHOOL SCREENING PROPOSAL

Bring the award-winning film to your school
with guest speaker Jennifer Holness



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.

**SUBJECTS
of
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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

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

SUBJECTS
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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 will support English + Media Literacy departments, Health and Wellness Departments and school Equity and Inclusion mandates. The film and post screening discussion can be used to create a safe space where young women and girls can celebrate Black women's beauty, voices and power, and where *all* students can re-commit to authentic understanding and allyship.

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 school culture to be more inclusive and understanding of the lived experience of Black women and girls



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.

ENGAGEMENT + EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

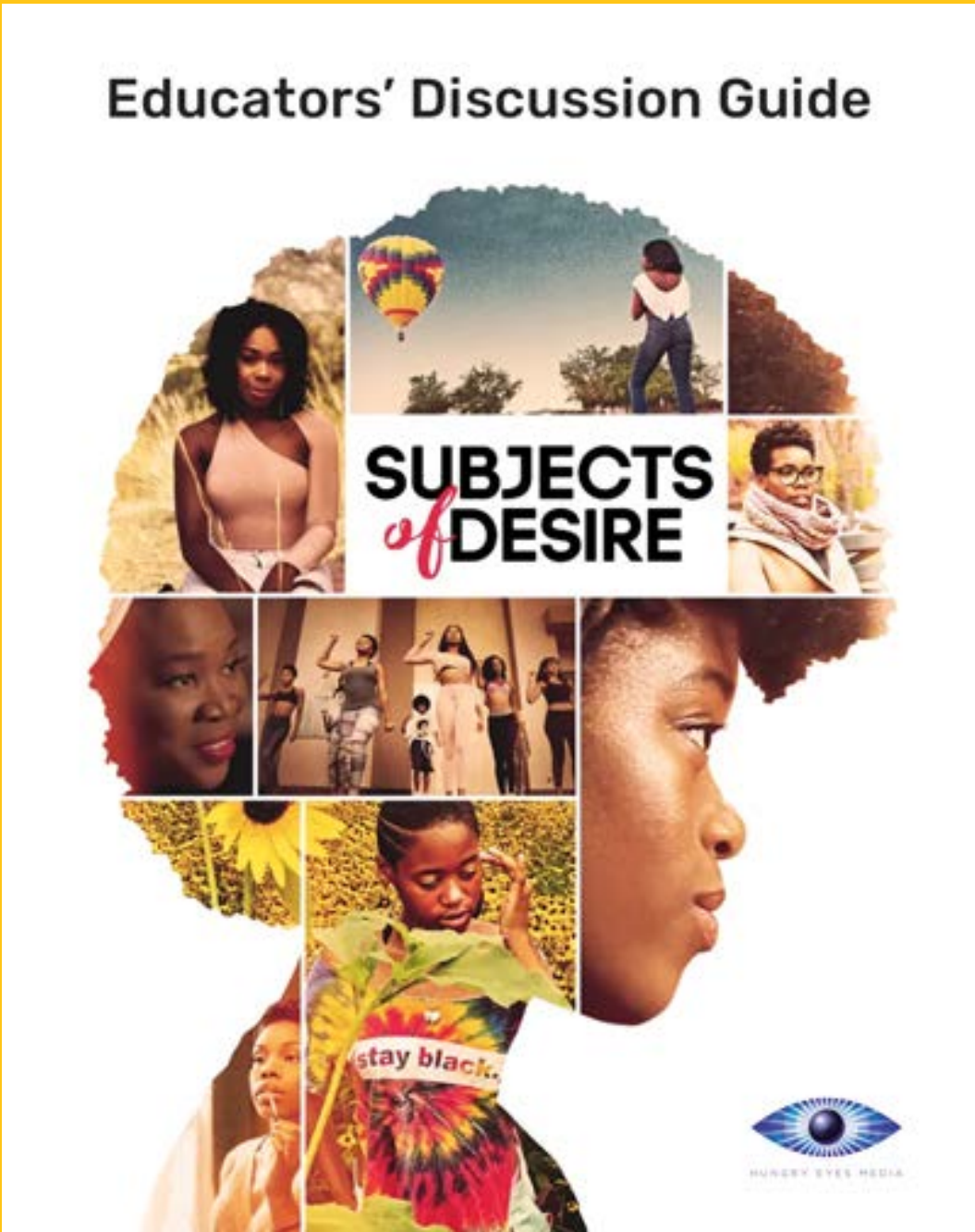
We are committed to bringing Subjects of Desire into as many schools, classrooms, and teacher training settings as possible. Because this is a film that requires unpacking in a supportive environment, we have invested considerable time in creating a companion teachers resource and discussion clip library.

**EDUCATORS DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MIDDLE + HIGH SCHOOLS**

A 30+ page resource written and reviewed by practicing educators and geared for students from seventh grade to senior high school year.

**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.


CLIP LIBRARY FOR GRADES 7-8

[DOWNLOAD CLIP LIBRARY](#)

Intro and Conceptions of Beauty

06:38

[Download Clip](#)

The Beauty Binary and Anti-Black Racism

06:26

[Download Clip](#)

WHAT YOUR EVENT COULD LOOK LIKE

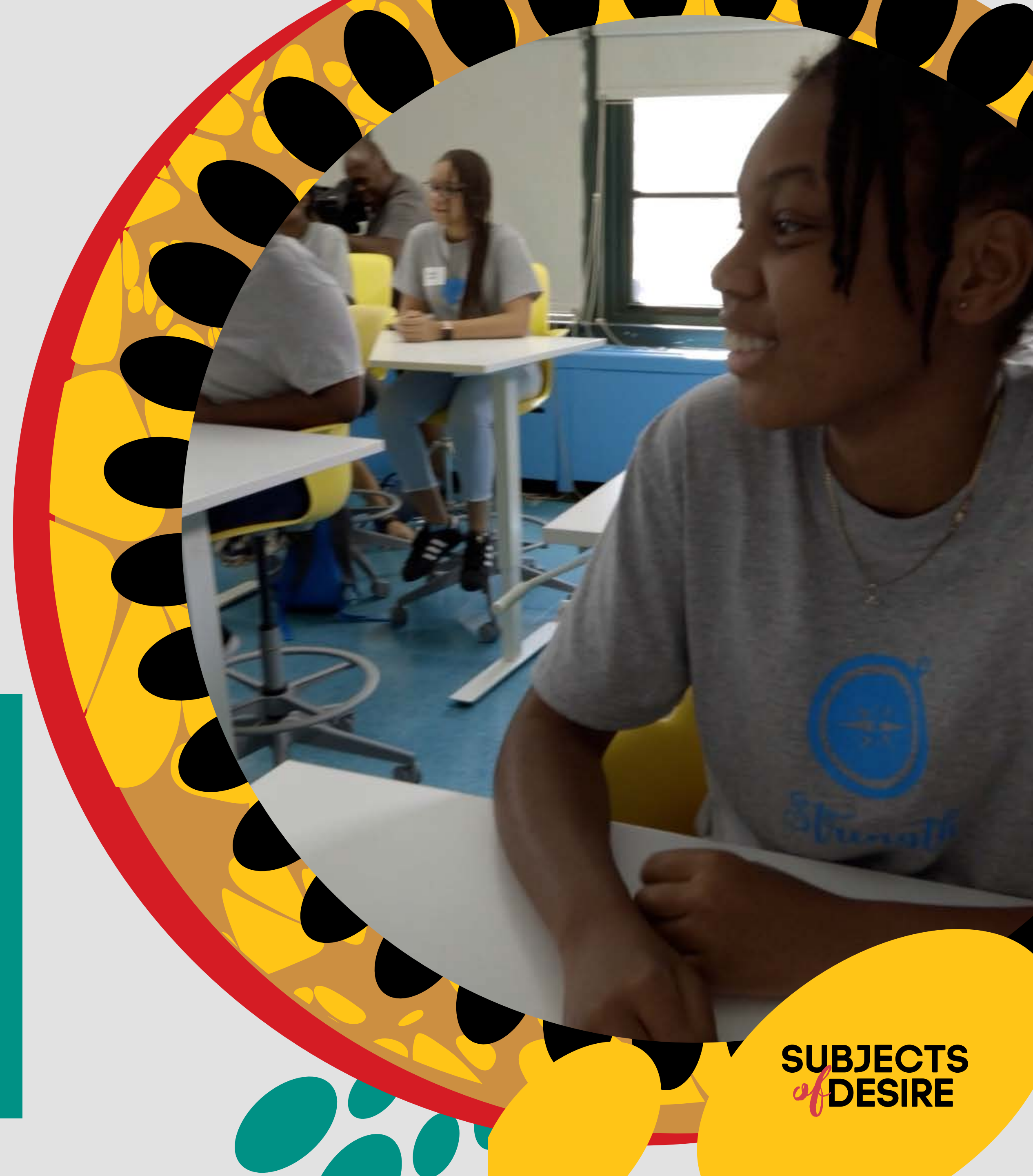
An in-person or virtual screening (89 mins)

Host an in person screening in your school's theatre or in individual classrooms OR we can set up a virtual theatre that different student groups and staff can access over the course of one school year.

Invite Jennifer Holness to speak to your class, grade, staff or entire school (60 - 90 minutes)

Who this is for: High school Health and Wellness Leads, English Departments, Media Literacy Teachers, Equity and Inclusion Leads, Staff Training/Professional Development Directors

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)



**SUBJECTS
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BASE PRICING

Screening Package

Includes school year license + ongoing access to clip library
+ educator's guide

Email info@subjectsofdesire.com for more information



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