

February 24, 2022

**Lewis Center for the Arts’ Program in Visual Arts presents**

***The Need to GROW* and a Q&A with filmmaker Rob Herring**

***Continuing the 2022 Black Earth Film Series organized by Deana Lawson in collaboration with Tina Campt***

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**Photo Caption:** An image fromRob Herring’s and Ryan Wirick’s award-winning documentary film, *The Need to GROW*

**Photo Credit:** Courtesy of Rob Herring

**Who/What:** Filmmaker Rob Herring screens his award-winning documentary film, *The Need to GROW* (2018), a film co-directed by Ryan Wirick following pioneers of cutting-edge agricultural technology as they fight to localize sustainable food systems and regenerate Earth’s dying soils, followed by a Q&A discussion via Zoom as part of the Black Earth Film Series. The Series is organized by Princeton’s Dorothy Krauklis ’78 Professor of Visual Arts Deana Lawson in collaboration with Visiting Professor in the Program in Visual Arts and the Department of Art and Archaeology Tina Campt.

**When:** Tuesday, March 1, at 6:00 p.m.   
**Where:** James Stewart Film Theater at 185 Nassau Street

**Tickets:** Free and open to the public; tickets required through University Ticketing at [tickets.princeton.edu](https://tickets.princeton.edu/online/default.asp). All guests must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to the maximum extent, which now includes a COVID booster shot for all those eligible to receive it. Additionally, all guests must wear a mask when indoors. Speakers may be unmasked while presenting.

**Accessibility:** Guests in need of access accommodations are asked to contact the Lewis Center at [LewisCenter@princeton.edu](mailto:LewisCenter@princeton.edu) at least one week prior to the event date.

**For more information:** <https://arts.princeton.edu/events/black-earth-film-series-the-need-to-grow/>

PRINCETON, NJ – The Lewis Center for the Arts’ Program in Visual Arts at Princeton University presents the film *The Need to GROW* (2018) and a Q&A with its award-winning director/producer Rob Herring to continue the Black Earth Film Series. The series is organized by Princeton’s Dorothy Krauklis ’78 Professor of Visual Arts Deana Lawson in collaboration with Visiting Professor in the Program in Visual Arts and the Department of Archaeology Tina Campt. The in-person screening and Q&A with Herring via Zoom will be presented on Tuesday, March 1 at 6:00 p.m. in the James Stewart Film Theater at 185 Nassau Street. All guests are required to get a ticket in advance through University Ticketing at [tickets.princeton.edu](https://tickets.princeton.edu/Online/default.asp). Guests are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to the maximum extent, which now includes a COVID booster for all those eligible to receive it, and to wear a mask when indoors. Audience members in need of access accommodations are invited to contact the Lewis Center at [LewisCenter@princeton.edu](mailto:LewisCenter@princeton.edu) at least one week prior to the event date.

With an estimated 60 years of farmable soil left on Earth, *The Need to GROW* offers an intimate look into the hearts of activists and innovators in the food and agriculture movements, including Alicia Serratos, an eight-year-old Girl Scout challenging the environmental ethics of Girl Scout cookies; Erik Cutter, a renegade farmer and pioneer in organic, zero-waste urban regenerative agriculture struggling to keep his land; and Michael Smith, the CEO of Algae Aquaculture Technologies and inventor of the Green Power House. Rosario Dawson served as executive producer and narrator on the film; Ryan Wirick is Herring’s co-director, co-producer and editor. *The Need to GROW* won awards for Best Documentary at the Sonoma International Film Festival (2018), at the Beaufort International Film Festival (2019), and at the Edmonton International Film Festival, as well as Best Environmental Film at the Sedona International Film Festival (2018). The film was selected into the American Documentary Film Festival (2018), the Newport Beach Film Festival (2018), and the Catalina Film Festival (2018), among others.

Director, producer, cinematographer, and writer of *The Need to GROW*, Herring is a graduate of Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, where he received the Drama Award for Film and TV. He also worked on the environmental documentary film, *GMO OMG* (2013), which won the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the Asheville Cinema Festival and the Lighthouse International Film Festival, the Jury Award for Documentary Feature at the Berkshire International Film Festival, and the Best Documentary Film Award at the Environmental Media Awards. He produced *The Relationtrip* (2017), a coming-of-age romantic movie, which won Best Cinematography at the BendFilm Festival and the Grand Jury Prize at the Dallas International Film Festival. His film *Nothing in Los Angeles* (2013), a romantic comedy-drama that he co-directed and produced, won Best Filmed Screenplay at the Hollywood Reel Independent Film Festival, Best Narrative Feature at the Los Angeles Movie Awards, and Best Comedy Feature at the Studio City Film Festival, among other awards. As a musician, Herring headlined the Rock for Nature concert in Berlin with his songs about health and eco-activism. When he is not making films and music, Herring is a Certified Holistic Health Coach.

The Black Earth Film Series is, on one hand, a meditation on Earth’s landscape through a deep dive into one of the primary materials that supports and sustains it: soil. It engages soil in its most elevated state, as nutrient rich black soil that nurtures and enriches a multitude of species. On the other hand, it hones in on Earth as a social ecology inhabited, shaped, and enlivened by Black genius. The series will continue on March 22 with filmmakers Kahlil Joseph, Onye Anyanwu and Bradford Young screening several films and joining in roundtable conversation with Lawson and Campt and conclude on March 29 with a screening and virtual Q&A with filmmaker John Akomfrah.

Lawson, a member of the Princeton faculty since 2012, was the recipient of the 2020 Hugo Boss Prize awarded by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation by a jury of international critics and curators, the first photographer to win this prestigious biennial award. She received an honorarium of $100,000 and a solo exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum in 2021. Lawson’s work was included in the 2017 Whitney Biennial, *New Photography 2011* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and she had a solo exhibition at The Art Institute of Chicago in 2015. She has participated in group exhibitions at The Studio Museum, Harlem; MoMA P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center; Artists Space in New York; and the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art in Atlanta. Her work has been published in *The New Yorker, TIME Magazine, BOMB, The Collector’s Guide to New Art Photography, Photo District News, Time Out New York, Contact Sheet #154*, and *PQ Journal for Contemporary Photography*. In addition to the Hugo Boss Prize, Lawson is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, the John Gutmann Photography Fellowship, a Rema Hort Mann Foundation Grant, an Aaron Siskind Fellowship Grant, and a New York Foundation for the Arts Grant.

In addition to being a visiting professor at Princeton this year, Campt is Owen F. Walker Professor of Humanities and Modern Culture and Media at Brown University and a Research Associate at the Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Centre (VIAD) at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. She is the author of four books: *Other Germans: Black Germans and the Politics of Race, Gender and Memory in the Third Reich* (2004); *Image Matters: Archive, Photography and the African Diaspora in Europe* (2012); *Listening to Images* (2017); and *A Black Gaze* (2021).

The film series is supported through the John Sacret Young ’69 Lecture Series fund. Sacret Young, who passed away in June 2021, was a 1969 graduate of Princeton and an author, producer, director, and screenwriter. He was nominated for seven Emmy Awards and seven Writers Guild of America (WGA) Awards, winning two WGA Awards. He was perhaps best known for co-creating, along with William F. Broyles Jr., *China Beach*, the critically acclaimed ABC-TV drama series about medics and nurses during the Vietnam War, and for his work on the television drama *The West Wing*. Young also received a Golden Globe and a Peabody Award, and his original mini-series about the Gulf War, *Thanks of a Grateful Nation*, was honored with his fifth Humanitas Prize nomination.

To learn more about this event, the Program in Visual Arts, and the over 100 performances, exhibitions, readings, screenings, concerts, and lectures presented each year at the Lewis Center, most of them free, visit [arts.princeton.edu](https://arts.princeton.edu/).

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