



**NEW EXHIBIT** - NOW BOOKING

**THE BLACK FAMILY ON FILM: From Mammy to Madea**  
**A movie poster exhibit from the Separate Cinema Archive**

The earliest cinematic representations of the black family were overwhelmingly negative: black men as docile slaves, sexually aggressive brutes, or thieving louts; black women as dowdy, rag-headed Mammies; and black children as comic little primitives in need of “civilizing.” Early independent black filmmakers, such as Noble M. Johnson and Oscar Micheaux, attempted to offer more balanced portraits of black family life by introducing new character types and situations that countered the racist representations; yet the big Hollywood studios continued to rehash old formulas with their plantation sagas and jungle films. The Second World War, however, heightened racial awareness and brought about sweeping social changes that reverberated in the film industry. The ensuing years ushered in a new era of black heroes, a new wave of black directors, and new depictions of black family life that challenged derogatory stereotypes. And while far too many films still draw on outdated racial formulas, it seems clear—as **THE BLACK FAMILY ON FILM** demonstrates—that black representation has advanced considerably over a century of filmmaking and that the evolution of Mammy to Madea signals a welcome direction in cinematic depictions of the black family.

Exhibit Contents: 30 framed original movie posters and accompanying text panels.  
Minimum booking period of one month with additional months donation opportunity

See the exhibit online at [www.SeparateCinema.com](http://www.SeparateCinema.com)