LABOR OF LOVE AND ART: THE COOP'S FILM NIGHT SERIES

November 10, 2026



ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON

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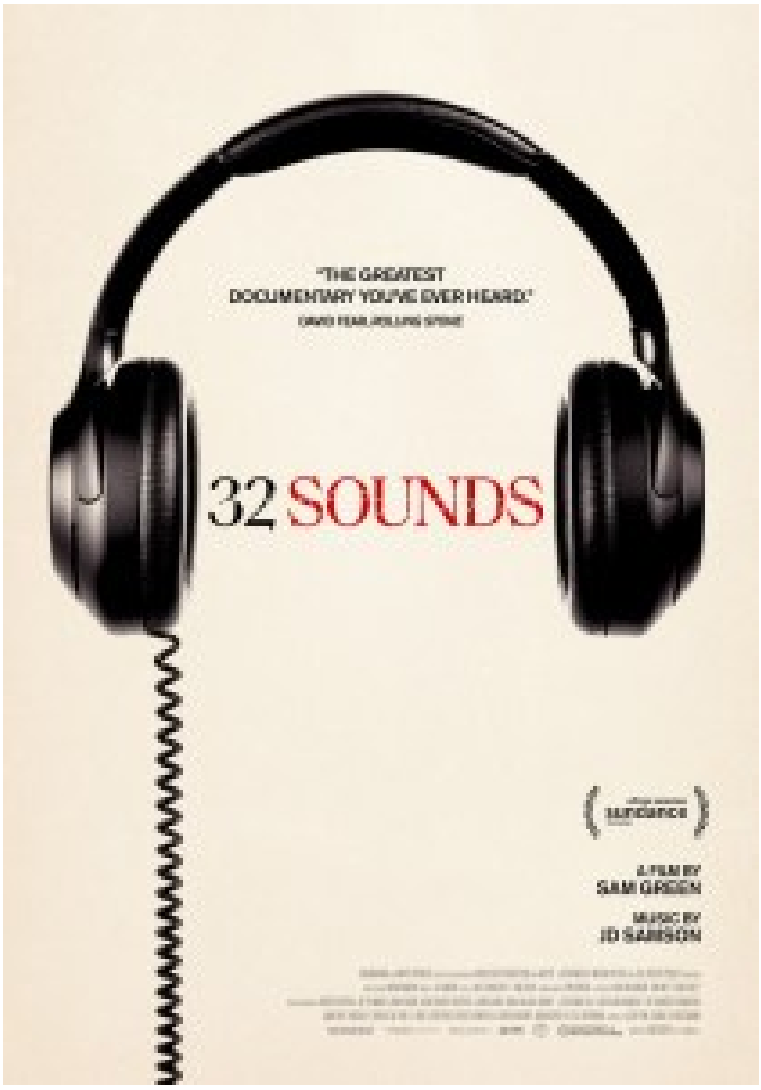
By Kim Velsey

Though mention of the Park Slope Food Coop brings to mind a number of defining features—including a fantastic cheese selection, local produce and bulk nuts—movies are not among them, at least for most people. But for the past 14 years, the Coop has

hosted a film screening every month or so, showing films made or worked on by Coop members, followed by a Q&A with the filmmakers, some of whom are documentary directors or editors, and others cinematographers, producers or screenwriters.

“I’ve been working in the film industry for 30 years—mainly editing documentary features—and I’ve met so many other filmmakers through the Coop,” says Gabriel Rhodes, who alongside his wife Jennifer Miller, runs the Coop’s Film Night, which is held at 7 p.m., usually on a Thursday, approximately ten times a year.

Besides the Coop member connection, there are few other hard and fast requirements. Films have ranged from *Flood*, a documentary that Katy Scoggin made about her relationship with her estranged evangelical father, to *Listening to Kenny G.,* a movie about the saxophonist for which Naiti Gámez served as cinematographer. There was *32 Sounds*, an immersive film about sound co-produced by Nora Wilkinson. July’s film night featured a selection of films made by Hope Hall, who worked as the principal videographer in the Obama White House from 2011 to 2017 and also makes more experimental work. A Coop member since the early 2000s, Hall says that as a mentor and teacher, she most often shows her work to specific groups—social activists, undergraduates ans aspiring filmmakers—and chooses tightly focused programs for each group. For the Coop, she was able to pick a far more wide-ranging selection. “It was lovely and freeing to present for my Coop community. I didn’t feel like I had to think about programming in any sort of didactic way. Sort of like when you’re working at the Coop and you’re just a person on the planet. I felt like, ‘Wow, this is me.’ It was everything from extremely personal to 100 percent propaganda.”



Poster from 32 Sounds

Films come via member submissions, word of mouth and some sourcing on the couple's part, for example, by following up with filmmaker members about upcoming projects. They prefer films that are somewhat family friendly, but don't shy away from weighty subjects, either—screening, for example, *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed*, the Oscar-nominated documentary edited by member Amy Foote about photographer Nan Goldin and her fight to hold the Sackler family accountable for the opioid crisis. Every year, Rhodes and Miller also try to schedule a selection of shorts. "We get to show films that people don't usually see or weren't distributed," says Miller. "Films that were a labor of love. Niche-y in a good way."

Rhodes has been working the Film Night shift since 2012, when another member con-

vinced him to join the film committee she'd started. When she left a short time later, Rhodes took over the operation. Miller, a magazine photo director, joined a few years after that. "Before this, I'd done many different jobs: I did the laundry shift, I did nuts and cheese, I did walking, I did stocking, I did the 5 a.m. CHiPS shift," she says.

> "I WOULD GET ON THE LOUDSPEAKER AND SAY, 'TONIGHT WE'RE SCREENING A FILM. COME UPSTAIRS AND BRING YOUR DINNER. WE'LL HAVE A Q&A AFTER.' PEOPLE WOULD LEAVE THEIR CARTS DOWNSTAIRS AND COME UP."
>
> *GABRIEL RHODES*

For years, Film Night was held in the meeting room upstairs, where there was a projector. The setting gave the screenings an air of serendipity—you never knew who'd wander in. "I would get on the loudspeaker and say, 'Tonight we're screening a film. Come upstairs and bring your dinner. We'll have a Q&A after,'" says Rhodes. "People would leave their carts downstairs and come up."

During Covid, the screenings shifted to Zoom—Quicktime files are now shared with attendees and the Q&A is streamed over Zoom. While Rhodes and Miller both miss the sense of community and impromptu connection that the in-person gatherings fostered, Rhodes says it's nice that people can join from home now. Screening turnouts are attended by anywhere from eight to 30 people. "No matter how many people we have, the conversation is always amazing," he says. "Coop members are a really savvy audience and they love to ask questions. They ask the best questions, become really engaged, tell personal stories." It's also a unique opportunity for aspiring and up-and-coming filmmakers, Miller says: "You get to ask questions of professionals in an intimate setting."

The December 3rd screening will be *Food Coop*, a movie made a decade ago by Tom Boothe, who has since moved to Paris and opened a co-op modeled on Park Slope's.

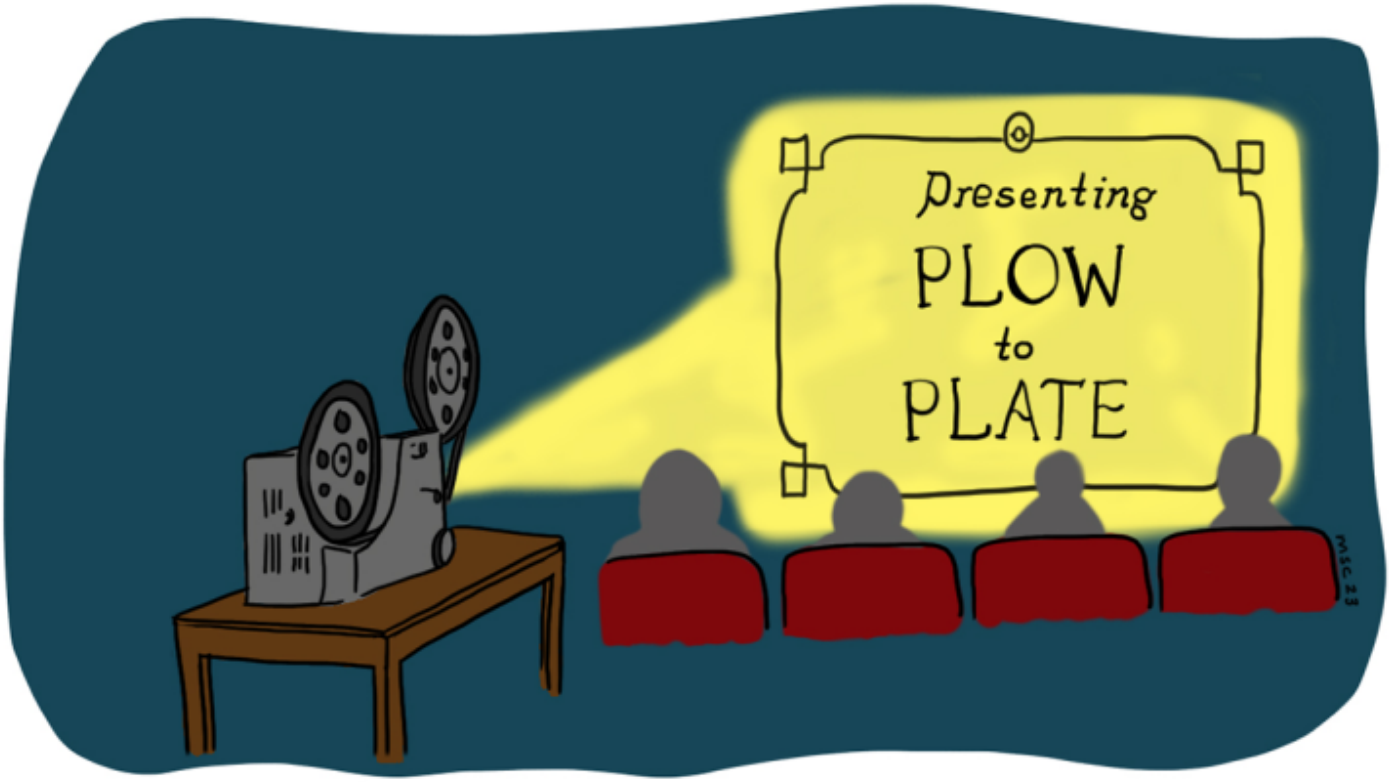
“It will be a cool way to celebrate the Coop,” says Rhodes. “Where else are you going to see that movie? Especially with the filmmaker, who will be joining us from France.”

To learn about future screenings, email Jennifer Miller at jlymiller@me.com to sign up for the Film Night listserve. Screening dates are also listed in the *Linewaiters’ Gazette*’s calendar.

Kim Velsey has been a Coop member since 2020. When she’s not writing for the Gazette*, she’s a staff writer at* New York *magazine.*

PLOW TO PLATE PRESENTS: “JAMES HEMINGS: GHOST IN AMERICA’S KITCHEN”

November 10, 2026



By Adam Rabiner

DNA evidence has all but confirmed that Thomas Jefferson fathered children by Sally Hemings, the woman he enslaved—old news by now, and the reason her name is familiar to most Americans. Less known is that Sally had an exceptionally accomplished older brother, James Hemings (1765–1801). *James Hemings: Ghost in America's Kitchen* opens with words flashing on the screen that sum up the breadth of James Hemings's life: master chef, valet, maître d'hôtel, teacher, slave, patriot. The lack of recognition for his contributions to the American culinary story is why he is the "ghost in America's kitchen," and the filmmakers aim to shed light on that hidden history.

His story slipped into obscurity for many reasons. He died young, possibly having "drunk himself to death" after failing to become Jefferson's first White House chef. As

a free man, Hemings insisted that Jefferson formally request his service in a letter; Jefferson demurred and offered the position to a white man instead. Chef Ashbell McElveen, the film's main narrator, thinks murder is the likelier explanation.

> HEMINGS FEELS GHOSTLY BECAUSE HE LEFT SO FEW PHYSICAL ARTIFACTS BEHIND. NO PORTRAIT OF HIM EXISTS. YET THE AMERICAN FOOD LANDSCAPE WE KNOW TODAY WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT HIM.

Hemings feels ghostly because he left so few physical artifacts behind. He spoke both English and French. At 19, he accompanied Jefferson to Paris, where he was professionally trained as a chef and served as Jefferson's personal cook. Yet the only handwritten documents currently attributable to him are a 1796 kitchen inventory and a handful of recipes later transcribed by members of his family. No portrait of him exists. Yet the American food landscape we know today would not be possible without him. He is credited with inventing—or at least popularizing—ice cream, macaroni and cheese, whipped cream, crème brûlée and even French fries, and is often called one of America's culinary founding fathers and the granddaddy of all Southern chefs. The film reveals little about his day-to-day life, but his impact on Southern cooking (including barbecue) and American gastronomy runs deep.

The documentary also argues that Hemings's choices extend beyond foodways. In Paris, Jefferson never declared James enslaved, as French law required. As such, had Hemings petitioned the French government for his freedom, he would have jeopardized French funding of the Revolutionary War. And when Jefferson returned to the new United States three years later, Hemings chose to go with him as a slave rather than remain a free man in France—hence his standing, in the film's telling, as an American patriot.

Jefferson pledged to free Hemings on the condition that he keep cooking for him and teach Hemings's brother Peter—another enslaved household member—everything he

knew. Peter, gifted in other ways, never became the brilliant, innovative chef James was. James was a teacher, as the film notes, but perhaps not the most successful one.

If culinary racism erased James Hemings from history, this film works to restore him to his rightful place. Too little of his daily life survives for the filmmakers to truly flesh him out—the man on screen is no longer a ghost, but he is lightly sketched. He's a shadow beside the larger-than-life white contemporaries whose lives were better documented and whose reputations were better preserved. Still, James Hemings is finally getting his due. The Hemings descendants in the film are proud of their line to the third president, but they take special pride in descending from the man who set the template for fine dining in America.

James Hemings: Ghost in America's Kitchen: Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2026

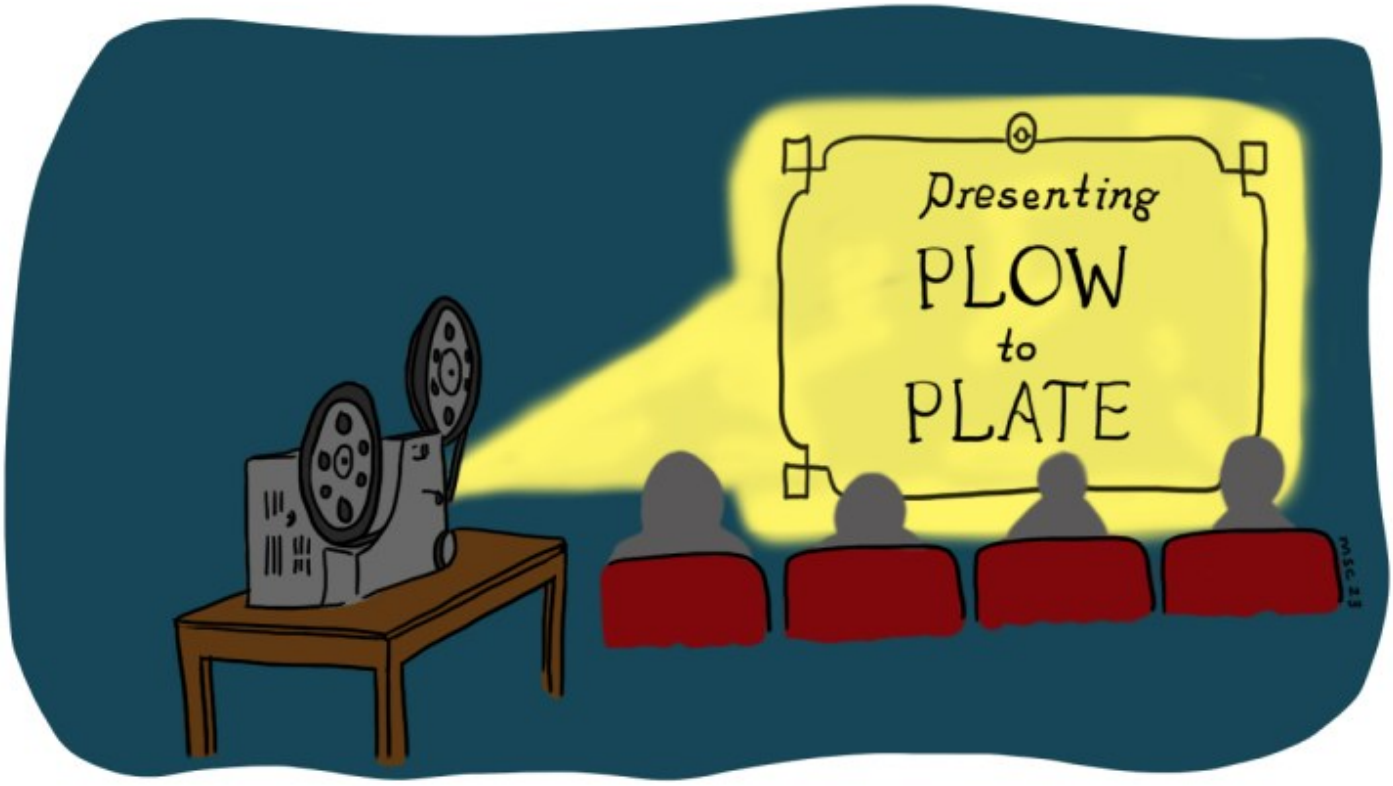
After signing up for the Plow to Plate mailing list, you'll receive the screening link. You can view the film upon link receipt—or any time, on demand

ABOUT US

Plow to Plate, presented by the Safe Food Committee of the Park Slope Food Coop, is a film series focused on food. Its goal is to educate the community about food-related topics and issues, such as how food is sustainably cultivated, harvested, distributed, prepared and served. All screenings are FREE and open to the public.

PLOW TO PLATE PRESENTS: "FEEDING THE SUPER RICH"

November 10, 2026



By Adam Rabiner

Those of a certain age might mistake *Feeding the Super Rich* for a long-lost episode of *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. It's a television documentary series filmed 30 years later for a new generation. While the rich have only grown more opulent in that span, Robin Leach's signature sign-off, "champagne riches and caviar dreams!" still holds true.

Unlike the former show, which aired from 1984 to 1995 and featured all manner of decadence, this newer reality television series (2015 to 2019) fixates exclusively on what, how and to some extent why the billionaire class eats the way it does. The answer to that is often: simply to impress. Here, precious metals won't adorn a sink, but 24-karat gold leaf may top the $1,000 Golden Opulence Sundae, wrap macarons or dark chocolate tortes, or even encase a steak.

Of course, food is more than just sustenance for the non-super-rich. It delivers pleasure and can represent family or community. A Facebook post of an exquisite dish on an indulgent night out at an expensive restaurant might also signal privilege. But for

the super-rich, food is often used as entertainment and spectacle to impress fellow billionaires, show off and convey status. These rich folk live in a different world entirely. Episode one features Bubble Food, a catering company that exclusively serves these folks, and boy, oh boy, do these people live in their own bubbles.

> DESPITE THE TRAPPINGS, EXTRAORDINARY LUXURIOUS SETTINGS AND FANCIFULNESS, IN THE END, IT IS ALL JUST FOOD.

It might seem too insufferable to immerse oneself needlessly in the lives of the uberwealthy. But, fortunately, the yacht owners summering on the Côte d'Azur, the private jet owners and the mansion dwellers are peripheral. They issue silent commands for $3,000 bottles of Rémy Martin, which send their underlings scattering to fulfill their every culinary desire. But they are mercifully offstage, at most referenced hilariously by those who satisfy their whims. Chef Jeremy Kelly relays a story about his boss, a Russian oligarch, who overloads a blini with way too much Beluga Caviar and joyfully forces him to eat the disgusting concoction. It is a funny story that illustrates the contrast between the expensive ingredients and the actual culinary experience.

Instead, *Feeding the Super Rich* typically focuses on the entrepreneurs who make a living in this exclusive, rarefied world. There is a modest, middle-class husband and wife who are attempting to create a new food fashion trend by producing, marketing and selling snail eggs, which they are branding as "Escargot Pearls." Another businessman brainstorms how to keep his small catering company alive and profitable, and stumbles upon the idea of expanding his catering from just private planes to people's homes.

One delightful, humorous and eccentric character is William Hanson, a young English gentleman who teaches high table manners and etiquette to Dalia, an heiress from Uzbekistan who loves everything English and wants to comport herself properly among her friends in the British aristocracy.

Despite the trappings, extraordinary luxurious settings and fancifulness, in the end, it is all just food. The super-rich still eat the same trendy things that everyone else does, be that kale, wheat germ powder, goji berries, hemp protein seeds or Mānuka honey. Hell, some of them even have a penchant for Marmite, though by the time it makes its way from England to a grocery store in Nice, to the loading area of a middle-man like Bubble Company, or to the galley of a billionaire's yacht, the original price of €2.5 become a final delivered price of £80.

The true revelation is not that the super-rich eat that much differently from the rest of us. We've probably had a dish presented with culinary flair and a puff of smoke. Rather, it's these folks do not care about price. They blithely throw parties at £1,000 a head. They'll order a kilo of king crab at that price with the same insouciance as you or I will order an egg roll at a Chinese take-out joint.

Though we may feel a pang of envy as they unthinkingly order their Japanese Wagyu beef from cows indulged with beer and personal massages, or oysters and sea urchins shipped in from the cold waters of the Arctic Ocean, most of us don't feel the need to be so showy and ostentatious. Give us a cold craft beer and a decently made medium-rare cheeseburger and we are just as happy.

Feeding the Super Rich Tuesday, May 12, 2026

To receive a screening link, visit our website.

Adam Rabiner lives in Ditmas Park with his wife, Dina.

REVISITING THE BATTLE OF SEATTLE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE EDUCATION SQUAD

November 10, 2026

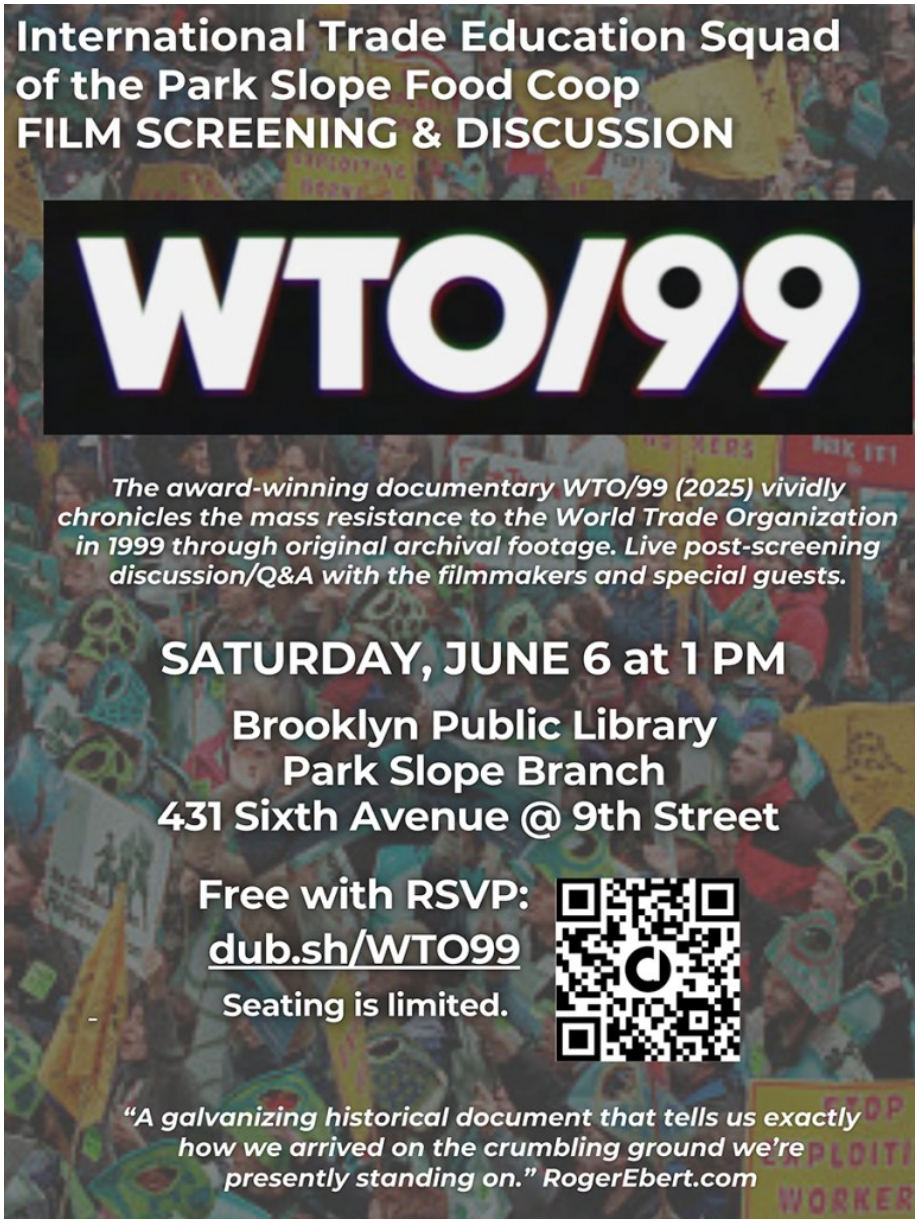


Film Screening: *WTO/99*

May 5, 2026

By Jen Epstein, for ITES

In an effort to promote dialogue around the issues of trade, globalization and corporate power, the International Trade Education Squad (ITES) is thrilled to announce its first in-person event since the worst days of the COVID epidemic: a screening of WTO/99 and panel discussion in conversation with the filmmakers and leaders from the trade justice movement. Join us at 1pm on Saturday, June 6th at the Park Slope branch of the Brooklyn Public Library. Details and required RSVP here: dub.sh/WTO99.



ABOUT THE FILM

On November 30, 1999, more than 40,000 people worldwide across the political spectrum, young and old, from union steelworkers to farmers, faith leaders to college students, assembled in downtown Seattle's bustling shopping district with one unified goal in mind: to shut down the World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial conference and prevent decisions impacting the lives of everyday citizens from being made behind closed doors.

DEFTLY EDITED ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE SHOWS HOW THIS QUICKLY DEVOLVES INTO A GRISLY, VISCERAL SHOWDOWN BETWEEN AN OVER-ARMED POLICE FORCE AND WORKING PEOPLE.

Solely using archival footage, the new documentary film *WTO/99* is a chronological breakdown of the events as they occurred in real time over the three-day period that the conference was scheduled to take place. The film is produced in part by PSFC member Debra McClutchy, alongside filmmaking team Ian Bell, Alex Megaro and Laura Tatham. In an article for *Filmmaker* magazine co-authored by Bell, Megaro,and Tatham, the filmmakers note spending more than two years "living" in the footage of the largest U.S. demonstration on record since the Vietnam War. They combed through nearly one thousand hours of material captured by protestors on the ground as events unfolded.

The demonstrations began as peaceful acts of civil disobedience. The protestors wanted to sound the alarm and have their voices heard over increasing fear of environmental degradation. They were also concerned about the erosion of labor protections leading to more U.S. jobs being offshored, and potential violation of international law.

Deftly edited sequential archival footage obtained from a range of perspectives and sources shows how this quickly devolved into a grisly, visceral showdown between an over-armed police force and working people. This is a chilling foreshadowing of the militarized policing seen more recently in the streets of Ferguson and Minneapolis. As the drama unfolds, audiences are offered glimpses of the representatives of the real perpetrators: the suited, briefcase-carrying negotiators for corporate interests. We see this come to the forefront in the documentary, with Niketown and Starbucks franchises serving as the backdrop for the protests.

Only hours into the first day of the conference, political pressure from the Clinton administration contributed to a series of missteps and wayward decision-making from

Seattle Mayor Paul Schell and Police Chief Norm Stamper. They instructed local law enforcement to deploy rubber bullets and tear gas against protestors. Up to that point, demonstrators—through peaceful means—had successfully obstructed delegates from gaining entry to the conference.

In *Filmmaker* magazine, Bell, Megaro and Tatham recount listening to tapes of police radio communications from that week and being struck by how starkly the recorded narrative diverged from the lived experiences of protestors. They wrote, “we heard officers warning one another of protestors wielding chains and pieces of wood with nails sticking out—the footage shows neither.”

News outlets likewise offer a clouded, often stilted perspective. They chose to focus on covering a small handful of looters who vandalized storefronts, rather than the thousands of peaceful protestors clubbed over the head and pelted in the eye with rubber bullets by officers clad in riot gear.

There are no spoilers here: who prevails and who is defeated during an unprecedented moment in U.S. history is an ongoing point of discussion. It’s a conversation that we need to have in 2026, as all of us bear witness to increasing political unrest and polarization across the nation and worldwide. What the film offers is a moving recreation of events as they unfolded. It invites us to reflect on what was gained and lost, on police overreach in service of interests that don’t reflect the will of the people, the latent power of collective action and what that means for us in the present day.

To learn more about the WTO and trade issues outlined in the film, please check out these recommended sources and consider following us on Bluesky.

MORE INFORMATION ON THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO)

https://www.iatp.org/sites/default/files/10_Reasons_to_Dismantle_the_WTO.htm

https://www.iatp.org/sites/default/files/Whats_Wrong_with_World_Trade.htm