

**Los Angeles Filmforum presents:  
A Conversation with Merawi Gerima**  
Online, Sunday December 18, 2020, 7:00 pm

Los Angeles Filmforum is the city's longest-running organization dedicated to weekly screenings of experimental film, documentaries, video art, and experimental animation. [www.lafilmforum.org](http://www.lafilmforum.org)

**In Person via Zoom: Filmmaker Merawi Gerima in conversation with Chrystel Oloukoi**

***Residue is available via Netflix. Los Angeles Filmforum will not be screening the film, audience members are invited to watch it before attending the conversation.***

<https://www.netflix.com/title/81264674>

Winner of the Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature and the Acting Award for its star Obinna Nwachukwu, along with receiving the honorable mention for Narrative Feature Grand Jury Prize, at Slamdance.

Los Angeles Filmforum presents Merawi Gerima and Chrystel Oloukoi in conversation discussing Gerima's film *Residue*. Gerima's film, semi-autobiographical and made with almost no-budget, defies easy categorization. Memory, loss, love, gentrification, and the remnants of the carceral system are part of the film's unique orbit.

Written and directed by Merawi Gerima, *RESIDUE* follows aspiring filmmaker Jay (Obinna Nwachukwu) returning to his childhood Washington, DC, neighborhood that has been gentrified beyond recognition. Dealing with alienation from his friends, troubled by the disappearance of his best friend, and unsure of his place in this new community, Jay confronts issues of identity, gentrification and loss.

**Merawi Gerima** is a filmmaker from Washington DC. This origin informs his work and his community-centered orientation. *RESIDUE*, his first feature, was a total communal endeavor, made possible primarily by the effort of the people it attempts to portray. Following its world premiere at the Slamdance Film Festival, *RESIDUE* was honored with the festival's Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature and the Acting Award for star Obinna Nwachukwu. *RESIDUE* is also an official selection of the 77th Venice International Film Festival's Giornate degli Autori. Gerima is a graduate from the University of Southern California (USC) School of Cinematic Arts (SCA). He is the son of celebrated Ethiopian filmmaker Haile Gerima, a legendary figure in the L.A. Rebellion film movement and filmmaker Shirikiana Aina, who also appears in the film.

**Chrystel Oloukoi** is a PhD student, a curator for the Is That Jazz Lagos Movie Club, and a film critic. Her work has appeared in *Sight and Sound*. She holds a MA in Geography from the university Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and is an alumni of the Ecole Normale Supérieure of Paris where she concentrated in Geography and Arabic studies. Her research revolves around nightlife and the politics of leisure in (post)colonial Lagos and Johannesburg. Retracing the legacies of colonialism on urban (night)life and their reinforcement by contemporary neoliberal logics, she intends to draw the contours of a

political economy of nightlife in contexts of depletion, unemployment, surplus-time and boredom, through the exploration of the complicated relation between forms of play, forms of rest and disposable bodies. Through sound, photography and video, her capstone project will interrogate places of nocturnal entertainment as sites of exhaustion and the forms of masculinities forged out of tired worlds and tired bodies.

<http://www.arraynow.com/residue>

"Residue is a fleeting and haunting lament for what is lost to gentrification, and other tolls on black life in America. But at the same, it's exhilarating and monumental, laced with the sensation that we're discovering a bold and sensitive new voice." \*\*\*\*\* in The Guardian

A haunting drama on the dangers of gentrification.

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2020/sep/17/residue-review-merawi-gerima-film>

"An arresting feature debut about a man returning home to a community that has been transformed, Merawi Gerima's Residue is honest enough about its protagonist's emotions and motivations that it's likely to cause discomfort in viewers wherever they fall on the socioeconomic spectrum. Elliptical and teasingly (but beautifully) photographed, it can give the impression of an experimental work but ultimately has a direct story to tell, one whose specificity doesn't in the least diminish its broader relevance." - John DeFore, Rolling Stone, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/residue-film-review>

"The process of filming gave me the opportunity to see that, by whatever means, every neighborhood should sprout its own storytellers. In telling my own story, tussling with my demons in an intimate way, I seem to have told a story that many people from my community feel a claim to. That's the kind of cyclical, dialectical relationship that I wish for every Black community out there—the wherewithal to stop every Hollywood filmmaker at the doorstep and say, "Who are you and what are your intentions and why do you think you can tell a story better than we can?" Because it's never true. You just have the resources to be able to tell it before we can." - Merawi Gerima, in an interview with Rosa Cartagena, in The Washingtonian.

<https://www.washingtonian.com/2020/09/28/residue-merawi-gerima-interview/>

"Coming back to the hood with a camera and a film tape thinking, I'm about to do something big. Then somebody from there just being like, "Actually, we don't need you." Actually, you're not saving us." - Gerima in an interview at No Film School, <https://nofilmschool.com/residue-filmmakers-ava-duvernay-netflix-followed>

## **Residue**

By Merawi Gerima (Writer, Director, Editor)

2020, Digital and 8mm transferred to digital, color, sound, 90 minutes

Written and directed by Merawi Gerima, Residue follows aspiring filmmaker Jay (Obinna Nwachukwu) returning to his childhood Washington, DC, neighborhood that has been gentrified beyond recognition. Dealing with alienation from his friends, troubled by

the disappearance of his best friend, and unsure of his place in this new community, Jay confronts issues of identity, gentrification and loss.

Produced by: Alex J. Bledsoe, Mulu Gerima, Alexx Temena

Cinematography by: Mark Jeevaratnam

Cast: Obinna Nwachukwu, Dennis Lindsey, Taline Stewart, Derron Scott, Jamal Graham, JaCari Dye, Julian Selman, Melody Tally, Ramon Thompson, Hasinatu Camara

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Los Angeles Filmforum screenings are supported by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture, the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles, the Wilhelm Family Foundation, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, the California Community Foundation, and the American Cinematheque. We also depend on our members, ticket buyers, and individual donors.

Los Angeles Filmforum is the city's longest-running organization screening experimental and avant-garde film and video art, documentaries, and experimental animation. 2020 is our 45<sup>th</sup> year!

Memberships available, \$75 single, \$125 dual, \$40 single student, \$225 silver nitrate..

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