

# Institute of Contemporary Arts

PRESS RELEASE

*What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?*  
A film by Roberto Minervini

UK & Ireland Release: 18 October 2019



ICA CINEMA is pleased to announce its newest release, *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?*, directed by Roberto Minervini.

This release follows the director's cut's UK premiere in April 2019, presented by the ICA at its annual film festival, FRAMES of REPRESENTATION.

Minervini is known for telling stories of the American South, documenting personal journeys that often reveal wider social forces. In *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?*, Minervini chronicles the lives of Black communities in the Southern states, further investigating the roots of social inequality in the US. Previous features by the director reflect his strong interest in portraying contemporary American society, including *The Other Side* (2015), *Stop the Pounding Heart* (2013), *Low Tide* (2012) and *The Passage* (2011).

The ICA is releasing *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?* in the UK & Ireland from 18 October. To coincide with the release, Minervini will introduce the film's screening at the ICA on 18 October, followed by further introductions at other UK venues.

*What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?* is the latest release by the ICA's in-house distribution agency, ICA CINEMA, which brings groundbreaking films from underrepresented and emerging filmmakers to UK audiences. Since its relaunch in 2016, ICA CINEMA has distributed over 20 releases, supporting innovative, boundary-pushing work from international filmmakers.

## Details

*What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire? (director's cut),*  
dir. Roberto Minervini

Italy | USA | France, 2019, 106 min.

English

[Trailer](#)

### OPENING SCREENING

18 October 2019, introduced by director Roberto Minervini  
ICA Cinema

### KEY FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

Venice International Film Festival, 2018 (World Premiere)  
Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), 2018  
New York Film Festival (NYFF), 2018  
Busan International Film Festival 2018  
BFI London Film Festival, 2018, Award Best Film – Grierson Award  
(Documentary Competition)  
Viennale - Vienna International Film Festival 2018, Audience Award  
Mar del Plata Film Festival 2018, SILVER Best Director, SILVER  
Best Actress (Judy Hill)  
Sevilla European Film Festival, 2018  
International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), 2019  
FICUNAM, 2019  
CPH:DOX, 2019  
Play-Doc International Film Festival, 2019  
Visions du Réel, 2019  
FRAMES of REPRESENTATION, 2019  
Sheffield Doc/Fest, 2019  
Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, 2019

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

‘My hope is that this film can facilitate a much-needed discussion on race and the current plight of African Americans who, now more than ever, are witnessing the intensification of hate crimes and discriminatory policies. Because, like Judy Hill [one of the film’s protagonists] said to me: “After Katrina, we lost it all, but if you care about us, we still have a lot left to give.”

During the main shoot in 2017, I concentrated all my efforts on working with four main characters/contexts: Judy and her large family, two young brothers named Ronaldo and Titus, Chief Kevin of the Mardi Gras Indians, and the Black Panthers. Judy tries to keep her family afloat while dealing with the looming shutdown of her bar business and her 87-year-old mother’s eviction, both results of the ruthless gentrification of traditionally Black neighbourhoods.

Ronaldo and Titus try to make sense of their mother’s teachings, while waiting for the release of Ronaldo’s incarcerated father. The revolutionary Black Panthers conduct investigations to uncover the truth behind racially motivated killings in Louisiana and Mississippi and stage demonstrations to protest police brutality.



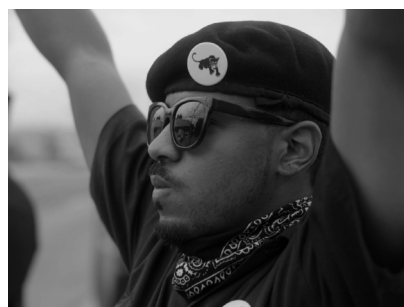
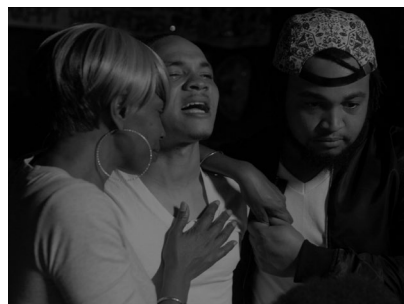
I started a long journey, which began in August 2015, when I conceived the initial project of *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?*. From November 2016, we pre-shot for a few weeks and looked at several characters. Meanwhile, we were able to establish deep bonds with several people, and gained access to neighbourhoods and communities that are off-limits to most. I soon realised that most of the people I met felt strongly about two dramatic events in Louisiana's recent history: Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the killing of Alton Sterling in 2016. Both events are the result of institutional negligence, of a socioeconomic divide between rich and poor, and of strong endemic racism. Moved by anger and fear, people wanted to get a chance to tell their stories out loud.'

## SYNOPSIS

A blistering meditation on the state of race in America, Roberto Minervini's *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?* chronicles the lives of Black communities in the Southern states, where the tragic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina remains acutely felt as police brutality claims lives with intolerable regularity. Following several threads, including the New Black Panther Party's preparations for a large-scale protest against police violence, the film documents the lives of those who have been marginalised by the media and alienated by failing institutions. *What You Gonna Do When the World's on Fire?* captures the pressures of everyday existence for many Black Americans, while finding moments of beauty, joy and radical togetherness.

## DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Roberto Minervini is an Italian-born film director who lives and works in the US. After teaching documentary filmmaking in the Philippines, Minervini moved to Texas in 2007, where he directed three feature films: *The Passage*, *Low Tide*, and *Stop the Pounding Heart*. This trilogy was presented and awarded at some of the world's most renowned film festivals including Cannes, Venice, Toronto, and Rotterdam. In 2014, *Stop the Pounding Heart* won the David di Donatello Award for Best Documentary. *Louisiana (The Other Side)*, his fourth film, premiered at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival, competing in the Un Certain Regard section.



## Notes to Editors

### ICA CINEMA

The ICA opened its first dedicated cinema when it relocated to The Mall in 1968. Since then, the programme has presented the most challenging and underrepresented aspects of international narrative cinema, documentary practices and experimental moving image works that test the boundaries of film and video media, and often of the cinema auditorium itself.

The ICA's in-house distribution agency, ICA CINEMA, was relaunched in 2016, bringing groundbreaking films from underrepresented and emerging filmmakers to UK audiences. Since 2016 it has distributed over 20 releases, supporting innovative, boundary-pushing work from international filmmakers. Recent releases include RaMell Ross' Oscar-nominated *Hale County, This Morning, This Evening*, Wang Bing's *Dead Souls* and Mariano Llinás' 14-hour-long *La Flor*. Upcoming releases include Thomas Heise's *Heimat is a Space in Time* (22 November 2019) and Zhu Shengze's *Present. Perfect* (January 2020).

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For booking information, please contact:  
[theatricalbookings@ica.art](mailto:theatricalbookings@ica.art)

### UPCOMING RELEASES

#### 22 November 2019: *Heimat is a Space in Time*

An essayistic portrait of a family through 20th-century German history. Dir. Thomas Heise, Germany/Austria 2019, 218 min., German with English subtitles.

#### Early 2020: *Present. Perfect*

A collage of intimate footage shared by twelve Chinese online streamers. Dir. Zhu Shengze, USA/Hong Kong 2019, 124 min., Mandarin with English subtitles.

### INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

Founded in 1946 by a collective of artists, poets and their supporters, the Institute of Contemporary Arts is an independent organisation and registered charity which supports the most pressing debates in contemporary culture. The ICA stages groundbreaking exhibitions, performances and keynote lectures by many of the world's leading thinkers. Previously home to the Independent Group, the ICA played a pivotal role in the development of Pop art and charted the course of punk, performance art and independent cinema. The ICA staged the first institutional exhibitions by Francis Bacon, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Tacita Dean, Damien Hirst, Mike Kelley, Mary Kelly, Barbara Kruger, Gerhard Richter, Dieter Roth, Cindy Sherman, Nancy Spero, and Cosey Fanni Tutti and early exhibitions by Bernadette Corporation, Robert Mapplethorpe, Steve McQueen and Tino Sehgal; many now historic performances including those by Laurie Anderson, Einstürzende Neubauten and Yoko Ono; legendary concerts by The Clash, Throbbing Gristle, The Smiths, David Bowie

and The Beastie Boys; and critical discussions by the likes of Kathy Acker, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Stuart Hall and Homi K. Bhabha. The ICA Cinema and its dedicated artist's film programme continue to showcase independent film and support pioneering filmmakers including Chantal Akerman, Kenneth Anger, Matthew Barney, Derek Jarman, Ken Loach and Laura Poitras. From its home on The Mall – the geographic heart of the UK establishment – the ICA is an organisation in which different modes of cultural production thrive on the mutual engagement with one another, and a programme that speaks to the challenges of the 21st century. [www.ica.art](http://www.ica.art)

## VISITOR INFORMATION

Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 12–9pm

Location: Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Mall,  
London, SW1Y 5AH

Admission:

Cinema + exhibition ticket peak £13 /off peak £8

Concessions for under-18s or over-65s, disabled people, job seekers allowance claimants, Westminster residents and education groups

Free for Red Members, discounts for Green & Blue Members

For information about tickets and membership, please contact:

[sales@ica.art](mailto:sales@ica.art) / +44 (0) 20 7930 3647 / [www.ica.art](http://www.ica.art)



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