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Amherst Cinema announces phased reopening March 12

One year after being closed due to the pandemic, the Cinema will once again open its doors for small group ticketed screenings

[Amherst, MASS.] Amherst Cinema announced today it will open its doors to the public for small group ticketed screenings on March 12, exactly one year after closing due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Executive Director Yasmin Chin Eisenhauer said with safety as its top priority, the Cinema will be operating at a significantly reduced capacity as part of a phased reopening plan.

“For the safety of our employees and customers, and out of an abundance of caution, we are proceeding with care,” Eisenhauer said. “As it is safe to do so, we will open the Cinema to increased audiences.”

During the closure, the Cinema has made a number of safety upgrades to its facilities. These include:

- Installing plexiglass barriers at all point-of-sales locations.
- Installing all-new theater seats that feature easy-to-clean surfaces
- Increasing fresh air intake in all spaces and upgrading the HVAC system with virus-blocking UV filters and ionizers.

The Cinema has also implemented health and safety protocols, and participates in CinemaSafe—a voluntary national program developed and supported by leading epidemiologists to support a safe return to movie theaters.

Eisenhauer said movies have provided a much-needed respite from the pandemic, and the show has gone on at Amherst Cinema during a year of unprecedented challenge and change. After closing to the public, it launched Virtual Cinema, a program that enables the Cinema to offer new release titles for home audiences. During the past year, the Cinema has featured more than 150 films and hosted 50 live events. Virtual Cinema remains its primary mode of exhibition and community engagement.

On March 12, Amherst Cinema will reopen with the theatrical release of award-winning and Oscar frontrunner films *NOMADLAND* (starring Frances McDormand and directed by Mount Holyoke

College alum Chloé Zhao), and MINARI (starring Steven Yeun and written and directed by Lee Isaac Chung).

“We’re opening with two buzzworthy films ideally suited for the big screen experience, and just in time for Oscars® nomination announcements,” Eisenhauer said.

She added that increasing access to the big-screen experience and making it more affordable to all members of the community are key elements of the Cinema’s reopening plan.

During the past four months, the Cinema has offered a fee-based private theater rental program. That program concludes on March 7, Eisenhauer said, and the Cinema will shift to small group ticketed screenings. Small groups are defined as a party of 1-5 people. Tickets are \$10.75 for general admission and \$7.50 for Cinema members.

Details on how to choose films and purchase tickets online are available at www.AmherstCinema.org. All tickets must be purchased in advance and online while Amherst Cinema’s physical box office remains closed. The Cinema will offer a limited concessions menu to ticketholders.

Salman Hameed, chair of the Amherst Cinema Board of Directors, said the Board is “extremely pleased to see the efforts being made in making cinema-going more inclusive.” He said this aligns with the organization’s mission to “inspire, inform and entertain through the universal language of cinema arts and to serve as a cultural and educational resource for all.”

That mission hasn’t wavered during the past year, Hameed said, and it now points to a more hopeful future.

“We are grateful to our community for all the support we’ve received during this difficult time,” Eisenhauer said. “Speaking on behalf of the Board and staff, this reopening represents a bright spot for Amherst Cinema. We look forward to welcoming our community back to the big screen to experience the full magic of the movies—and yes, there’s popcorn!”

[Click here for Amherst Cinema's full health and safety precautions.](#)

[Click here to read more about this program: small group ticketed screenings FAQ.](#)

About Amherst Cinema

Amherst Cinema is an independent, nonprofit arts and education center brimming with world-class programs. The comfortable, fully accessible theater offers state-of-the-art projection and sound and is a welcoming crossroads for all. Amherst Cinema presents over 250 programs a year on four screens in more than 35 languages. The Cinema’s innovative education program for schoolchildren, See-Hear-Feel-Film, uses the immense power of cinema to teach young learners how to write their own stories. For more information, visit www.amherstcinema.org.

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