The Stuart Hall Project

Friday, November 6 • 2:00–5:00 p.m.
Black Cultural Center Auditorium

2:00–3:15 p.m. Roundtable Discussion of the Life, Writing, and Politics of Stuart Hall
with Dennis Dworkin, History Department, University of Nevada, Reno;
Bill Schwarz, School of English and Drama, Queen Mary, University of London;
Hortense Spillers, Department of English, Vanderbilt University;
Richard Blackett, History Department, Vanderbilt University (moderator)

3:15 p.m. Screening of the Film, The Stuart Hall Project, will begin immediately after the panel discussion.

5:00 p.m. Reception at the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities will follow the film screening.

Director John Akomfrah recalls that for many in the 1970s, "Stuart Hall was kind of a rock star...one of the few people of colour we saw on television who wasn’t crooning, dancing, or running." Hall came to Britain from Jamaica as a Rhodes scholar and became one of Britain’s most visible left-wing writers, activists, and public intellectuals. Best known in the United States as a cultural theorist and director of Birmingham’s Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Hall was among the leaders of the British New Left. On issues pertaining to class, race, gender, youth culture, post-colonialism, and the rise of Thatcherism, Hall spoke with a clear voice that continues to resonate after his death last year. The Stuart Hall Project is an elegiac tribute, scored to the music of Miles Davis.

Born in Accra, Ghana, John Akomfrah moved to London with his family following the military coup that overthrew Kwame Nkrumah. In London, Akomfrah was among the founders of the Black Audio Film Collective (1982-98) that was dedicated to exploring Black British identity. His first film, Handsworth Songs (1986), was filmed during the 1985 Handsworth riots in Birmingham and won the British Film Institute’s Grierson award for the year’s best documentary film. Akomfrah continues to make documentary films, layering archival footage, photography, and music.

This event is co-sponsored by the Department of History, Department of English, Cinema & Media Arts, African American & Diaspora Studies, Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities, and Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center