



MILESTONE FILM PRESENTS  
A FILM BY **SHIRLEY CLARKE**

A MILESTONE FILM RELEASE DIRECTED AND EDITED BY SHIRLEY CLARKE  
PRODUCED BY KATHELIN HOFFMAN MUSIC BY ORNETTE COLEMAN  
CINEMATOGRAPHER ED LACHMAN STARRING ORNETTE COLEMAN  
DENARDO COLEMAN GENE TATUM WILLIAM BURROUGHS  
AND PRIME TIME RESTORED BY UCLA FILM & TELEVISION ARCHIVE  
PRESENTATIONS BY ROSS LIPMAN ©1984 CARAVAN OF DREAMS PRODUCTIONS  
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## ORNETTE: MADE IN AMERICA

### a musical jazz journey

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Directed and Edited by..... Shirley Clarke  
Music by..... Ornette Coleman  
Produced by..... Kathelin Hoffman (now Kathelin Hoffman Gray)  
Principal Photography ..... Ed Lachman  
Additional Photography (1983-1984) ..... Baird Bryant, Hilary Harris, John Heller  
Additional Photography (1968)..... Shirley Clarke, Bob Elfstrom  
Creative Consultant ..... Johnny Dolphin  
Associate Producer ..... Lorraine T. Miller  
Supervising Editor ..... Iris Cahn  
Sound Editor ..... Sanford Rackow

A Caravan of Dreams Production

### Starring

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Ornette Coleman  
Prime Time (Denardo Coleman — drums; Charles Ellerbe — guitar; Sabir Kamal — drums; Albert McDowell — bass; Bern Nix — guitar; Jamaaladeen Tacuma — bass)  
John Giordano conducting the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra  
Demon Marshall and Gene Tatum *as the young Ornette Coleman*

### With

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Ed Blackwell, William Burroughs, Caravan of Dreams Ensemble Theater, Don Cherry, James Clay, Denardo Coleman, Jayne Cortes, Charles Ellerbe, Brion Gysin, Charlie Haden, Hamri & The Master Musicians of Jajouka, The Ibadan Musicians of Nigeria, David Izhenson, James Jordan, Sabir Kamal, Albert McDowell, Bern Nix, Mayor Bob Bolen, Bob Palmer, Dewey Redman, George Russell, Jamaaladeen Tacuma, John Rockwell, Viva and Martin Williams.

### Restoration Credits

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35mm Laboratory ..... FotoKem  
Sound..... John Polito, Audio Mechanics  
Preservationist ..... Ross Lipman, UCLA Film & Television Archives  
2K Master ..... Shawn Jones, NT Audio & Video  
with Ed Lachman, Ross Lipman, Kathelin Gray & Dennis Doros

77 minutes. Color and B&W. Aspect Ratio: 1.66:1. Mono.  
©1984 Caravan of Dreams Productions. A Milestone Film Release.  
Filmed on location in Fort Worth, Texas; New York City; Nigeria; and Morocco.  
Thank you to Deborah Snyder, Synergetic Press

### Projection Notes

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Sound: Mono. For optimal projection, set aspect ratio to 1.66, and use reel one opening sequence as guide for framing. For reel 2, projectionist will need to wait to set framing when bottom title band appears, running horizontally across the screen. The projectionist should position the title band to run across the very bottom of the screen. This setting should work for all reels. (This is because the film was shot in a variety of aspect ratios, and inattentive widescreen framing will likely result in the title band being cropped.)

## Restoration Notes

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ORNETTE: MADE IN AMERICA has been preserved from the original edited 35mm negative, which incorporates blow-ups from a variety of archival sources as well as Shirley Clarke's and Ed Lachman's Super-16mm original camera footage. John Polito of Audio Mechanics did the sound restoration.

## Background

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*Ornette: Made in America* is essential for anyone hoping to understand the history of jazz and the fertile creative exchange that highlighted the 60's and 70's in America. It is a portrayal of the inner life of an artist-innovator.

The innovative techniques that director Shirley Clarke and producer Kathelin Hoffman Gray employed in this film very closely parallel the music of the man who is its subject. Clarke defied traditional documentary formats to reveal Ornette's extraordinary vision through her equally extraordinary filmmaking artistry.

*Ornette: Made In America* captures Ornette Coleman's evolution over three decades. Ornette came home to Fort Worth, Texas in 1983 as a famed performer and composer. Documentary footage, dramatic scenes and some of the first music video-style segments ever made, chronicle his boyhood in segregated Texas and his subsequent emergence as an American cultural pioneer and world-class icon. Among those who contribute to the film include William Burroughs, Brion Gysin, Buckminster Fuller, Don Cherry, Yoko Ono, Charlie Haden, Robert Palmer, Jayne Cortez and John Rockwell.

Critically acclaimed when it released in 1985, the film is even more significant today. Coleman's influence has increased over the years, while Clarke and Hoffman Gray's interpretation of his life and times remain as fresh and exciting as ever.

The film focuses on the struggles and triumphs of Ornette Coleman's life as well as on the inspired intelligence that spawned his creativity and ensured his success. Clarke's footage includes Ornette in conversation with family and friends; excerpts of interviews, riffs and travels, along with footage of his performances—in his hometown of Fort Worth, TX, in New York, in Morocco and beyond—presents the most comprehensive record of his career available.

*Ornette: Made in America* explores the rhythms, images and myths of America seen through the eyes of an artist's ever-expanding imagination and experience.

*"A film of extraordinary originality, talent and interest. This is not just a film about a great musician... It is, as the title suggests, also a film about America ... and it is brilliant."*

— Richard Roud, Film Society of Lincoln Center

## Kathelin Hoffman Gray reminisces

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In 1981, I was searching for an artist to open the Caravan of Dreams, a new arts center being built in Fort Worth, Texas. The center would have a nightclub, theatre, production company and artists' quarters. I visited my old friend, the *New York Times* critic, John Rockwell, who said 'Do you know that Ornette Coleman is from Fort Worth?'

It took a month to find him: former agents, friends, etc., until I finally tried the phone directory. The address listed was a dilapidated old school house in the center of the drug trade in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. I left a message there with a woman who didn't acknowledge knowing Ornette Coleman. The next day I received a call from a soft-spoken man who said he'd meet me for lunch. That's the origin of this movie.

Since the center was named Caravan of Dreams, I thought it appropriate to ask him what his dreams were to return to his hometown, where he'd left some 40 years before, leaving behind a history of being a shoeshine boy in the segregated South, off to Los Angeles then the Five Spot in New York for his historic sessions at that

club. My colleague John Dolphin Allen and I met Ornette in his schoolhouse and Ornette said he wanted to do everything: a nightclub act, a symphony, chamber music, and a record. Of course I thought it'd make a great film: a poor boy from a shack next to the railroad tracks returns as symphony composer.

All of those dreams clicked in Fort Worth. It was time to roll back the segregation of cultural institutions. Caravan was the first fully integrated one in the region. The local police insisted we'd have riot police stationed in the club. We insisted that at least they be in plain clothes. Never once was there a problem however; this was a special place where anyone of any background could enter and feel free. Something like Rick's Cafe American in the film *Casablanca*.

Ornette pulled out old videotapes and 16mm film stock from underneath his bed, from his so-called closet. The 16mm film was from footage Shirley Clarke had shot in the late 1960's. It seemed to me that she was the logical person to continue her unfinished film, so I visited her at the storied Chelsea Hotel. I subsequently moved in to the Chelsea and we commenced our three-year collaboration. Every New Year we spent with Viva at the Chelsea.

Shirley and I wanted to film in Super 16 to be more flexible in the documentary process. But in 1982, that was a new format. We screened Ed Lachman's *Draughtsman's Contract*, done in S16, and liked his work. We did numerous tests at Duart Film Lab, to determine how our multi-format film would blow up to 35mm. We used every format — film and video — that had ever been produced in the process of making this film. Doing so, we stretched the boundaries and definitions of filmmaking. Ed was a dream to work with. Duart Labs worked with us closely and contributed much, as did Broadway Video.

We also pulled from the resources and personnel of Theatre of All Possibilities for some of the dramatic and dance sequences.

I moved into the Chelsea Hotel after the primary shooting in Fort Worth, and Shirley and I worked in her studio apartment, editing on 3/4 inch Umatic. We also had a team run by production supervisor Iris Cahn who edited in 35mm, and occupied an old closet elsewhere in the Chelsea for additional editing.

Ornette stopped in on a regular basis. Ornette and I were focused on making a film about the creative process of a pioneering artist. Shirley was focused on continuing the story she had begun in the '60's, of a musician and his relationship with his son. We wove these themes together in the shooting along with John Dolphin's interest in the story of a poor black kid returning home as a symphony composer; a classic 'rags to riches.'

We decided to use the symphony score as the underlying 'script,' exploiting nonlinear means of storytelling, utilizing archival shots from 16mm and outdated video formats; 3-minute 'music video' dream and flashback sequences (which was a nonstandard format in the early 1980's as MTV had not become yet established); talking heads in TV cartoon frames — a development of Shirley's *Portrait of Jason* work; an in-depth exploration of ideas such as Buckminster Fuller's and themes of the then-robust manned space travel initiatives; the influence of North African culture that impacted American artists living in Tangier in the '60's and '70's (people like William Burroughs, Tennessee Williams, Paul Bowles and Allen Ginsberg); and lastly, the intellectual and experiential basis of jazz and blues emanating from the American South.

To me, this film encapsulates the strand of essence American culture represented by such figures as Walt Whitman, Jack Kerouac, Robert Altman and many others who saw the artist as an explorer into truth and beauty as represented by the deeply American values of inner and outer freedom, and the epic search for truth.

Ornette and Shirley both embody these values, and I was honored to work with them, and with John Dolphin Allen, for 3 years to jointly pursue these aims. This film is a result of that collaboration.

## Synopsis

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1983. Fort Worth, Texas. There is a re-enactment of the Luke Short and Tim "Long Haired Jim" Courtwright gunfight on Main Street. That original duel took place on February 8, 1887 outside the White Elephant Saloon



where the two dangerous men had argued. Short fired first, taking off Courtright's right thumb. Courtright attempted to switch his gun to the uninjured hand — pulling a “border shift” — but he was too slow. Luke Short killed him with a shot to the chest.

After the re-enactment, Fort Worth's mayor Bob Bolen presents Ornette with the key to the city on the courthouse steps and proclaims that day, September 23, 1983, “Ornette Coleman Day.” That night, Coleman performs at the opening of fellow Fort Worth native and billionaire philanthropist Ed Bass' Caravan of Dreams music complex. The film cuts to this performance of Ornette's symphony *Skies of America* with the John Giordano-led Fort Worth Symphony at the city's Convention Center. There's also a performance of Ornette's *Prime Design/Time Design* by a string quartet under the geodesic dome in Caravan of Dreams' rooftop garden (later released as a separate album), along with an interview with his son (and Prime Time's drummer), Denardo.

It's 1968 and Ornette is playing with Denardo and bassist Charlie Haden. He speaks with his young son about his future prospects as an artist. We're now in the early 70s with Clarke's 8mm and 16mm footage of Ornette visiting Nigerian tribal musicians and the Master Musicians of Jajouka. Ornette then revisits the small house right next to the train tracks where he was born and reminisces with the home folks. Then he's back in NYC talking music with composer George Russell and the late jazz scribe Robert Palmer.

Shirley Clarke stated her attempt to emulate Coleman's free jazz style in her brilliant directing and editing of the film. Eschewing a standard pace, plot structure or consistent recording medium, Clarke cuts to such clips as the theater troupe from Caravan of Dreams prancing down the street, Washington D.C.'s shanty “Resurrection City” in 1968 and experimental music videos shot on video. The latter videos explore a prominent visual motif of the film — The Caravan of Dream's neon logo of the red square, orange circle and blue triangle. The young Coleman, played by Demon Marshall and Gene Tatum, appear in flashbacks, and in the present-day where Ornette's older self watches over the boy.

An interview with Denardo near the end of the film recounts a particularly harrowing story when six teenagers robbed, tied up and severely beat Ornette while he lived in a dilapidated schoolhouse on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Only a few months later, both Denardo and Ornette were attacked in the same building by other thugs, to which Ornette suffered a punctured lung. Both of these incidents took place in 1982 and '83, only a couple years before the film's release in '85. Ornette offers his plans to convert this poor building into a school of music, taking the violence he has faced in stride and promising better futures for the children after him.

The penultimate sequence contains two seemingly contradictory anecdotes from Coleman. Against footage of astronauts, Coleman speaks about his desire to go out in space because he is “not interested in what's going to happen when” he passes, but rather what he “can experience while [he] is alive.” He quotes Buckminster Fuller, from the last lecture he attended of his, “There's no such thing as up and down — there's only out.” He predicts that the human form will never die. This segues into another segment where Coleman shares a story — with a psychedelic television by his side that displays the young version of himself portrayed in the movie as well as trippy, undulating images of provocative icons and women — about his conflicted lust for women and his desire to remove it. He once visited his doctor to request castration, to which his doctor suggested circumcision first, as a symbolic gesture. He obliged yet still felt sexual urges. Coleman concludes, because of this operation, that physical intimacy “has nothing to do with what you think or believe — it has more to do with who you think you are affecting and what you think you are affecting.”

The film ends with the finale of the *Skies of America* set that has been interpolated throughout the film's duration. The immediate reception afterwards is documented through handheld cameras as journalists, jazz enthusiasts and ordinary civilians congratulate Coleman and are taken aback by his warm demeanor. The bottom scrolling titles used throughout the film roll the last time as credits, and a final shot of Coleman smiling at the camera dissolves to red as the end credits begin.

## Skies of America (from the original program)

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To inaugurate its opening festivities, the Caravan of Dreams commissioned Ornette Coleman to present the world premiere of the full version of his “Symphony No. 1, Skies of America.

The symphony was inspired by Coleman's visit to an American Indian reservation in Montana, where he was touched by the immensity of the sky "which has had more changes under it in this century than any other country." The image of those skies inspired him as a symbol for freedom and creativity.

The 96-piece orchestra plays eight themes, and the Prime Time band plays eight themes, each theme having its own movements and harmonic structure. Each movement is written free of key, instead each instrument plays in its own concert key. Throughout the piece, there is a musical dialogue between the jazz band and the orchestra. The voicing of the orchestra is written in very high parts to create a feeling of the different moods of the sky, in daylight, nighttime and, finally, the twinkling of stars. The sections with the jazz band are danceable and earthy, evoking images of the activities of the activities that occur under the Skies....

Coleman's music is based on his Harmolodic Theory, in which the "melody and harmony are based on those intervals that carry a human quality when played in the right pitch. Melody conveys the phrasing of a human voice. Rhythm patterns should be more or less like natural breathing patterns. Movement is defined by the shape of the action that is expressed in a given piece.

### Shirley Clarke (October 2, 1919 – September 23, 1997)

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Shirley Brimberg was born in 1919 New York to a very well-to-do family. The first child, she was soon followed by two sisters, Elaine and Betty. Her father Samuel Nathan Brimberg was a Polish-Jewish immigrant who made his fortune in clothing manufacturing. Her mother, Florence, came from wealth as well. Florence's father, an immigrant from Latvia with a genius for metal work, had made his own fortune as the industrial inventor of the Parker Kalon tap screw for metal. (Much of his story and the three sisters' early childhood can be discovered in Elaine Brimberg Dundy's excellent autobiography, *Life Itself!*)

Shirley was an indifferent student with learning disabilities — most likely dyslexia. She only learned to read in fifth Grade and to write in seventh. "My parents spent a fortune on tutors in order to get me promoted from one grade to the next."

After her father lost his fortune in the stock market crash of 1929, he quickly (according to Elaine, that night) became angry and violent, taking out his frustrations on his three daughters. Elaine wrote: "Shirley argued with Daddy, pitted herself against him, knowing full well the denunciations and derisive mockeries she was subjecting herself to. It made dinner a living hell. But she stood her ground. Nevertheless, I know his constant

disapproval took its toll on her. She was wounded by him in a way that would last for the rest of her life... During her film career this same spirit of rebellion made her dig in..." (From *Life Itself*!, page 40.)

Three years later, Brimberg left the clothing business to head Universal Steel Equipment. He regained much of his fortune and the family moved to an apartment at 1185 Fifth Avenue. But the beatings and the family's deep unhappiness continued.



Early home movies show a young Shirley deeply tanned and prancing and somersaulting with her sisters on the front lawn of their summer home (see above). There is a joy in her movement. In high school at the prestigious Lincoln School, she discovered herself.

In a later interview, she related: "To be popular in your class at Lincoln, you didn't have to be rich or good looking or have famous parents — though there were a lot of students who had all three — but you had to do something you would be known for. We had a class poet, a class chess player, a class actor, a class chemical engineer, and so on. But there was one thing we didn't have."

And that ... was a dancer.

Dance was to be Clarke's salvation through her difficult teenage years. She attended a number of colleges including Stephens College, Bennington College, the University of North Carolina and Johns Hopkins University. After she had taken all the school's dance courses, she would move on to another. Deciding that she was ready for professional instruction, she left college and returned to New York to study dance with some of the major figures in the field including Martha Graham, Hanya Holm and Doris Humphrey. Clarke also took on several administrative roles in the dance community. The year 1942 was momentous as she staged her first choreography at the 92nd Street YMHA and, to escape her family (she later said), she married lithographer Bert Clarke. He was described as a charming man, a gourmet cook and a talented book designer with his own printing press. He was fifteen years her senior. Their daughter Wendy was born two years later.



A previously unpublished photo of a young Shirley Clarke dancing at the University of North Carolina. Courtesy of Wendy Clarke.

However, by the early 1950s, with a young daughter and an aging body, Clarke decided to try filmmaking. The Brimberg family had always had a motion picture camera — there are home movies dating back to the early 1920s — and Shirley had received a 16mm camera as a wedding present.

*"Most of the dance films I'd seen were awful and I figured I could do better. Essentially, film's a choreographic medium."* — Los Angeles Times interview, 1976

Shirley Clarke started out with what she knew best — dance and movement — and she quickly became an esteemed filmmaker at a time when only a handful of women worked in the field. (There were Mary Ellen Bute, Maya Deren, Ida Lupino and Helen Levitt to name a few.) She studied filmmaking with Hans Richter at the City College of New York, and made her first film, an adaptation of Daniel Nagrin's ballet *Dance in the Sun*, in 1953. The film featured fluid intercuts from interior and exterior locations and did not (as dance films traditionally had) cut between long shots and close-ups of the dancers, which Clarke believed broke up the original patterns of expression in the choreography. She believed that "dance as it existed on the stage had to be destroyed in order to have a good film and not just a rather poor document." (From Gretchen Berg's "Interview with Shirley Clarke," *Film Culture*, no. 44, Spring 1967: 52.)

Clarke's conversations with fellow dancer and filmmaker Maya Deren encouraged her to further her progress. There was a love-hate relationship between the two women pioneer filmmakers (Deren reportedly invited Clarke to come to her apartment to view Deren's films — and then charged her admission), but Deren inspired Clarke to see natural human movement as a form of dance as pure as the abstract movements she had previously been filming. Dance, in Deren's interpretation, was an extension of the human consciousness in planes not "anchored in conventional spatiotemporal logic." Clarke's *In Paris Parks* (1954) manifested this concept, although its style differed greatly from Deren's because of its disregard for a rigid structure of motion and because of its upbeat jazz music, which reflected the idea of abstract movement itself. Clarke would later go on to further include jazz, which itself challenged traditional values in music, in almost all her soundtracks. She definitely aimed to challenge established values in cinema in her own work. *In Paris Parks* is one of her finest



early films and it all started by accident. Clarke had traveled to Paris to make a film about the famed mime Étienne Decroux. She arrived with her camera, her equipment and her daughter Wendy in tow, only to find that he had gone off to Italy. She was in a fury, but with nothing to do, she found herself taking Wendy to the park. On the second day, she realized that the playing of the children was in itself a dance. So she made “a dance of life.”

Clarke returned to New York to become a full-time filmmaker, enrolling in the City College of New York’s film program. She joined the Independent Film Maker’s Association and entered her dance films into competitions. Her third film, *Bullfight*, is the only filmed performance of the legendary choreographer Anna Sokolow. Its success, winning awards at the 1955 Edinburgh and Venice Film Festivals, along with awards for her other short films, solidified Clarke’s career. By 1958, Clarke had become a leading figure in the world of avant-garde film.

Her 1957 film, *A Moment in Love* was named one of the ten best nontheatrical films of the year by *The New York Times*. Clarke was also chosen, along with other filmmakers, to create short film loops depicting scenes of American life for the United States Pavilion at the 1958 Brussels World’s Fair. She became known as an advocate for the small independent film community in New York, and soon after began to turn towards social issues in her filmmaking.

In 1958, she, Irving Jacoby and Willard van Dyke started a short film on 666 Fifth Avenue (known as the Tishman Building), then a year under construction. Working in 35mm for the first time, she called it “a musical comedy about the building of a skyscraper.” They received an Academy Award nomination for *Skyscraper* (1960). As her fame grew, so did her ambition.

Clarke was now a vital part of the burgeoning post-war American film movement. She was one of the first— and the only woman — signers of the New American Cinema manifesto in 1961. She, like many of her contemporaries, was influenced by the works of Lionel Rogosin (*On the Bowery*), James Agee (*The Quiet One*), Helen Leavitt (*In the Street*), Roberto Rossellini (especially *Open City*) and the cinema vérité filmmakers.

Clarke’s sister Elaine (married to critic Kenneth Tynan and a noted author) wrote in her autobiography that she was the first to suggest to Shirley that she consider a play by a friend of hers, Jack Gelber, for her first feature. Controversial from the start, “The Connection” had opened to negative reviews, but within a few months, had become the hit of New York theatre. Elaine convinced Shirley that the play had a ready-made audience and a cast that was perfect for the film. Elaine set up a meeting between the playwright and the filmmaker. Gelber later described Clarke as “a rushing river. Warm, quick, garrulous, laughing at the slightest provocation, she seemed ready to jump at any new experience out there.”



Taking the raw, graphic depiction of drug addicts that he had written for the stage, Gelber and Clarke changed the character of the director Jim Dunn to a filmmaker and added a level of humor by poking fun at the world of cinema vérité movement. And while constricted to a single set, Clarke combined the French New Wave’s mobile camera with a whirling choreography of movement and jazz unseen in independent film before. The film was a hit at Cannes, but it was promptly banned by government censor boards for indecent language and a struggle ensued to have it theatrically screened in the United States. After a two-year battle, the producers and director

ultimately won in court and as important as it was judicially, it was sadly a case of too little too late as the film lost its timeliness and failed at the box office. Among filmmakers, it was highly influential but the film has been sadly out of distribution since the early 1980s.

*"For years I'd felt like an outsider, so I identified with the problems of minority groups. I thought it was more important to be some kind of goddamned junkie who felt alienated rather than to say I am an alienated woman who doesn't feel part of the world and who wants in."* — Los Angeles Times interview, 1976



*"Right now, I'm revolting against the conventions of movies. Who says a film has to cost a million dollars and be safe and innocuous enough to satisfy every 12--year--old in America?... We're creating a movie equivalent of Off Broadway, fresh and experimental and personal. The lovely thing is that I'm alive at just the time when I can do this."* — Shirley Clarke, 1962

Clarke's next film, *The Cool World*, was based on a Warren Miller novel. Significantly, it was another collaboration with actor Carl Lee. The son of actor Canada Lee, Carl had been one of the stars of *The Connection* (as Cowboy) and during the filming the pair fell in love. Clarke told her sister that he was the great love that she had been waiting for all her life. After the screening of *The Connection* at Cannes, Shirley took off with Carl for a year in Europe. Elaine later wrote that by that time the polite young man she had known was already heavily into drugs and dealing. Carl and Shirley's relationship was tumultuous but lasted more than twenty years until his death in 1986.

*The Cool World* was another melding of harsh reality (this time, set in Harlem), music and choreography. Produced by Fred Wiseman, it has rarely been seen since the 1960s. The film opened at the Venice Film Festival. Clarke attended the festival with Carl, her mother, her daughter, Wendy and her niece, Tracy Tynan. (Tynan went on to marry filmmaker Jim McBride whose film *David Holzman's Diary* is reminiscent of Clarke's work.) Sadly, *The Cool World* is now only available in worn 16mm prints from Wiseman's Zipporah Films.

In 1964, Clarke directed *Robert Frost: A Lover's Quarrel with the World*. The famed poet was 88 years old and it was filmed shortly before his death. The film revealed Frost's warmth and charm as he appeared at speaking engagements at Amherst and Sarah Lawrence Colleges. Clarke combined this footage with conversations about Frost's work, scenes of his life in rural Vermont and reminiscences about his career. Shot for public television, Clarke reportedly struggled with her producer and unhappy with the final film. But *Robert Frost: A Lover's Quarrel with the World* won the Academy Award for Best Documentary that year and she attended the ceremony.

The stress of finishing and releasing *The Cool World* (she had many arguments with her producer Wiseman), difficulties with the Robert Frost film and the death of her father brought about a crisis in Clarke's life. In January 1965, she left Lee and entered a rehab facility in Connecticut. After that, with the help of Elaine, she moved into the Hotel Chelsea, a legendary haven for artists, authors, musicians and members of New York's arts community. Shirley lived in number 822 — one of the coveted "penthouses" with access from the roof that were slightly larger than the tiny rooms in the rest of the building — and her apartment quickly became a focal point for the New York cultural scene. Elaine remembers that Shirley had two poodles in those days. Their dinner —

hamburgers without the buns or fries — was delivered every day from the Chelsea's legendary restaurant, El Quixote.

Clarke's fourth feature, *Portrait of Jason*, proved to be a completely different kind of project from her other films. It is perhaps her masterpiece. Stripping away the contrivances of fiction, Clarke pursued the purest of cinéma vérité while still challenging its perception. *Portrait of Jason* would be one person, one interview and made to look unedited. (The film, however, was brilliantly cut by Clarke and two assistants over the course of several months.) Clarke and Lee chose as their subject Jason Holliday (formerly Aaron Payne), a gay African-American cabaret performer with a knack for drama. They filmed him over the course of one evening in her Chelsea Hotel apartment. Holliday's stories — involving racism, homophobia, parental abuse, drugs, sex and prostitution — would have been shocking for the day if his candor and humor had not charmed both the filmmaker and viewer. The film balances on a fine edge between truth and dramatic performance, tragedy and humor, trust and abuse. It remains a greatly respected and vital LGBT film. Although preserved by MoMA from a used 35mm print, it too has not been commercially available since the 1980s. Milestone has acquired the rights to *Portrait of Jason*, and has discovered the master materials. A new restoration will be under way from the Academy Film Archive.

Despite the success *Portrait of Jason*, Clarke found it increasingly difficult to find financing for her films. In 1969 Clarke received a grant from the Museum of Modern Art to develop a system where video could be used to edit film. Although a remarkably prescient idea, foreshadowing the introduction of non-linear editing systems by five years, it was too far ahead of the technological curve and failed. This experience, however, intrigued Clarke and she started experimenting with the medium. Around this time, she also became interested in making a documentary on controversial jazz figure, Ornette Coleman, but the project remained unfinished for many years.

*"Video allows for an emotional response on the part of the person editing. What's going to change is that you're going to have the same kind of freedom that actors have on stage, yet you can record it. It allows the filmmaker to stay in the creative process longer."*

— Los Angeles Times interview, 1976

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Clarke experimented with live video performance, returning to her roots as a dancer. She formed the Teepee Video Space Troupe at her Hotel Chelsea penthouse. This group included video artists Andy Gurian, Bruce Ferguson, Stephanie Palewski, DeeDee Halleck, Vickie Polan, Shridher Bapat, Wendy Clarke and many others. The troupe worked in and around the hotel. Other participants included many of her neighbors in the building, including Viva, Arthur C. Clarke and Agnes Varda. (Around this time, Clarke appeared as herself in Varda's feature film, *Lion's Love*.) Many of these videos are in need of preservation — film historian and archivist Beth Capper is currently leading a project to catalog and preserve the documents and videos of the group. Please see her invaluable site <http://teepeevideospacetroupe.org/> for more information.

*"If you're not a character when you're over sixty, you're nothing."* — Shirley Clarke

Clarke became a professor teaching film and video production at UCLA in 1975 and stayed there for the next ten years. During this period, she also directed two video works based on the theater pieces by Sam Shepard and performed by Joe Chaikin. *Savage/Love* (1981) was a monologue by a murderer and *Tongues* (1983) has Chaikin speaking on life and death.

In the 1980s, theater and film producer Kathelin Hoffman decided that she wanted to create a documentary about Ornette Coleman and discovered that Clarke had started one years before. She hired Clarke and worked with her to create the fifth and final feature film of Clarke's career, *Ornette: Made in America*. The documentary was very well received and marked a cinematic comeback of sorts for Clarke. Once again, she was on the cutting edge of film style — merging documentary techniques, video art, music videos and architecture into a meaningful statement. The celebratory premieres and career retrospectives that came with the film were personally satisfying for Clarke. She told her colleague DeeDee Halleck: "Things are changing. I recently had five retrospectives. There's a sense of respect when I walk into a room. I was always on my way up and now I realize I'm no longer on my way up."

It was widely known that she had a deep love for anything related to Felix the Cat; the opening shot of the Felix Bar in *Ornette: Made in America* is an overt homage to the cartoon feline, much like a Hitchcock cameo. Wendy

Clarke also points out that her mother often included images of human skulls in her films — not as symbols, but simply because she liked them.

However, in thinking about their days working together, the producer of *Ornette: Made in America*, Hoffman (now Kathelin Hoffman Gray) noted that Clarke was beginning to show signs of the Alzheimer's disease that soon took over the last decade of her life. As she reached her 70th birthday, Clarke was enjoying taking a look at the past and anticipating the future, just as memory loss started to take it all away from her.

When she became incapacitated, longtime friends David and Piper Cort took Shirley in to their home in Massachusetts. The three had met late in the 1970s through video and soon she and David were working on many projects together. Clarke spent her last years of her life with them, and the Corts made her as comfortable as they could. In 1997, Clarke had a stroke that left totally incapacitated. The Corts and her daughter Wendy filled Clarke's room at the Deaconess Palliative Hospice with photos and objects that she had cherished while friends and relatives visited. Fifteen days later, on September 23, Shirley Clarke died.

There were obituaries and tributes from around the world — many captured her talent, her generosity to her friends, her contribution to film and video and her ability to inspire the next generation of filmmakers. But for a filmmaker that specialized in subject matter that was intended to shock audiences, perhaps the most shocking aspect of Shirley Clarke's career is her lack of recognition in today's film history. Acknowledged by dozens of filmmakers as a major influence, there is still not one single book devoted to Shirley Clarke's life and work, nor has there been a significant release of her films. Milestone's PROJECT SHIRLEY is intended to present as many of her films in beautifully restored versions as possible and to bring her indomitable spirit back into this world.

## JAZZ PORTRAIT 'ORNETTE' 20 YEARS IN THE MAKING Los Angeles Times, January 22, 1986, by Don Snowden

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"I wasn't trying to make a 'documentary' of Ornette Coleman," said director Shirley Clarke in her room at the Chateau Marmont. "I hope nobody goes to this film expecting a record of Ornette's musical life because that's not what it is.

"We wanted people to come away feeling a certain way about somebody and knowing a little bit about his music and its relation to him. Ornette is not violently well known (outside the jazz world) and that had something to do with my choosing to make a film that could appeal to people who just want to see this kind of film making and don't have to know it's about Ornette."

Clarke's ground-breaking portrait of the celebrated saxophonist/composer, "Ornette: Made in America" (at the Fox International through Monday), would qualify as unusual even if it was a straight documentary. It took the veteran, New York-based director 20 years to complete the film.

Clarke was a dancer who studied with Martha Graham before she moved out of performing and into the movie world in the late '50s. She became well known in independent film circles in the early '60s for her films "The Connection" and "The Cool World" before directing a 1964 documentary on poet Robert Frost that won an Academy Award.

She met the saxophonist through a mutual friend, Yoko Ono, during a mid-'60s Parisian sojourn. When an independent New York producer approached Clarke to do a movie about jazz, she embarked on a film centered on Coleman's decision to use his 11-year-old son Denardo as the drummer for his group.

But the original project foundered in 1969 when the producer disliked a partially completed version of the film. Clarke engineered her firing from the project to avoid being liable for \$40,000 in expenses and the footage spent the next dozen years gathering dust under people's beds.

The experience shook Clarke so much that she abandoned films for the fledgling video field. Video techniques played a central role in assembling and completing "Ornette: Made in America."

"Video allows for an emotional response on the part of the person editing," Clarke said. "What's going to change is that you're going to have the same kind of freedom that actors have on stage, yet you can record it. It allows the film maker to stay in the creative process longer."



The film project was resurrected in 1983 when the Caravan of Dreams Performing Arts Center in Fort Worth, Tex., opened its doors by engineering Coleman's first hometown appearance in 25 years. Producer Kathelin Hoffman formed a production company to capture the event and Coleman suggested that Clarke be contacted.

The core of "Ornette: Made in America" is a nightclub set by Coleman's Prime Time band, a performance of his "Skies of America" symphony combining Prime Time with the Fort Worth Symphony and scripted segments dramatizing some early childhood memories there. The film captures much of the improvisational flavor and unorthodox structure of Coleman's singular musical style.

"I knew I was connecting to the way he sounded because the first thing I laid down was the sound," Clarke said. "Then I decided what images were going to go with that particular sound. I shot every single piece we used without knowing what I was going to do with it.

"Having laid the spine down, which was his music, I edited to the music. That's where the rhythms and energy came from. The film looks like how Ornette sounds and has the same basic thinking."

Clarke's use of rapid-fire editing, the juxtaposition of images and its non-linear story line gives the film a far more sweeping scope than a standard portrait of an artist. She now views the 16-year delay in completing "Ornette: Made in America" as a blessing.

"Had I finished the film at the original time, it would not have been a particularly wonderful film and probably a disaster. The fact that we had those extra years, that technology changed and the Caravan of Dreams people entered our lives, allowed a totally different thing to happen. I think it's advanced the technology of film making by a big bang."

### Ornette Coleman (March 9, 1930 – Present)

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Born in Fort Worth, Texas on March 9, 1930, Ornette Coleman's early musical training began in a small Baptist Church. By the time he was 14, he had taught himself to play the saxophone (he has gone on to also play the trumpet and violin) and at age 22, he moved to Los Angeles. With the enterprising spirit that has characterized his entire career, Coleman acquired an education in music composition.

For most of the 1940s, Coleman paid his dues, performing in rhythm and blues shows across the South — where in Baton Rouge half a dozen thugs nearly beat him to death in addition to destroying his tenor saxophone. In the early 1950s, his experimentations were rarely appreciated and he lived without fanfare in Los Angeles.

"Ornette Coleman has consistently been ahead of his time," wrote Robert Palmer in the New York Times. "Mr. Coleman has been genuinely visionary."

Pat Metheny, who collaborated with Coleman on the 1986 album *Song X*, said Coleman is “a man who made his own music, his own way, with a body of work to show for it that stands as one of the great musical achievements of this era.”

It was in 1958 that Coleman started attracting attention when he moved to New York City and began a series of performances that changed the history of jazz. Renowned jazz critic Martin Williams, in the October 1959 issue of *Jazz Review*, proclaimed, “I honestly believe ... that what Ornette Coleman is doing on alto will affect the whole character of jazz music profoundly and pervasively.”

His seminal 1959 album *The Shape of Jazz to Come*, with its activist title, stirred debate that has not settled even today — Ken Burns’ 2001 *Jazz* miniseries largely dismissed the whole avant-garde movement. Often, his acclaim was sometimes met with skepticism by traditional jazz enthusiasts. But with the support of established jazz figures like John Coltrane and Charles Mingus as well as appreciation from ‘serious’ composers like Leonard Bernstein and Gunther Schuller, Coleman weathered the backlash to his unorthodox style.

It was with *The Shape of Jazz to Come* that the famous quartet of Coleman, trumpeter Don Cherry, bassist Charlie Haden and drummer Billy Higgins struck the first notes of a jazz revolution. “Lonely Woman,” one of Coleman’s most famous works, features an accented bass line, slow, sorrowful horns and snappy drumming that turned traditional modes of bop and bebop, as well as the burgeoning modal jazz theory, on their head.

With the 1961 album *Free Jazz—A Collective Improvisation by the Ornette Coleman Double Quartet*, this nascent genre found a name for itself. Released on stereo with two different, simultaneous audio tracks — the left channel had Ornette Coleman on alto saxophone, Don Cherry on pocket trumpet, Scott LaFaro on bass and Billy Higgins on drums while the right audio channel had Eric Dolphy on bass clarinet, Freddie Hubbard on trumpet, Ed Blackwell on drums and Charlie Haden on bass — *Free Jazz* was the first LP-length improvisation. “I never called the music that I wrote ‘free jazz,’” Coleman once claimed in an interview with Ralph Quinke. But for the journalists, studio executives, record store owners and patient listeners at home, there had to be one name with which to call this new approach, and the liberating title that adorned this album proved perfect.

Following a concert at The Town Hall on December 21, 1962, Coleman retreated from the music scene for over two years. Exhausted by the way in which he had to market himself — “In jazz the Negro is the product,” he said in A.B. Spellman’s book, *Four Lives in Bebop* — Coleman ventured into different fields that did not end up too fruitful. Opening his own club, founding his own publishing company and working on his “harmolodics” music-theory book all did not see to their ends.

The years following proved kind to Coleman. His son, Denardo, made his record debut on his father’s album *The Empty Foxhole*, recorded in late 1966 when Denardo was but only 10 years old.

The other extraordinary events of Coleman’s life at this time were his sabbaticals to Nigeria and Morocco. A little late to the world music movement — Don Cherry visited Morocco in 1964 and George Harrison famously embraced Indian music in the mid-60s — Coleman’s visits nonetheless invigorated a newfound perspective on music as a medium with spiritual, healing and communal properties. After his experience at the Moroccan village of Joujouka, Coleman revisited his work with the sights and sounds of musicians effortlessly syncing erratic tempo changes and non-tonal chord structures fresh on his mind.

Indeed, it was around this time that Coleman began publicly writing and talking about his ambitious ‘harmolodic’ theory. A neologism of “harmony,” “movement” and “melodic,” harmolodics is difficult to define but can be described from a distance as a subversion of traditional roles of creator and consumer to inspire the most jaded layman to create. Telling Stefan Lamby “that I really believe ... that someone who’s never picked up an instrument can pick up [one] and play something that someone who’s been playing all his life never thought of playing,” Coleman believes his theory transcends musical application and enters philosophical territory, embracing a postmodern, interconnected ‘will to power’ ideology that Nietzsche (or Derrida) could have formulated. And when words fail to define his ideas, his polymodal, hemiolitic musicianship more than substitutes for explanation.

*Skies of America*, his orchestral jazz composition he first composed for the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1972, was not as radical a jump as it would have been for many other, more traditional musicians. After all,

Coleman was constantly breaching boundaries. Eleven years later, Ornette revived this work for the Fort Worth Symphony and it pulses as the lifeblood throughout *Ornette: Made in America*.

Erroneously dogged with the reputation as a musician in perpetual poverty, Coleman definitely has suffered and gone hungry for periods of his life. *"I wasn't so interested in being paid. I wanted to be heard. That's why I'm broke,"* he was quoted as saying in a 2009 article in Esquire. But he always asked top dollar for his talent, and received it, especially in the later years. He seeks to break free from the limitations that have plagued his upbringing and contributes capital to not only the betterment of his life but, more importantly, to those after him. The dilapidated school that he sought to convert into a community arts center as seen in the film is a testament to this.

*"How can I turn emotion into knowledge? That's what I try to do with my horn."*  
— Esquire, 2009.

In the decades that have followed, Ornette has won international acclaim. He has performed in the White House and was the first jazz musician to win a Guggenheim Advanced Scholarship. In both his jazz and classical works, he has been highly influential, eschewing tonality and prior structures like bebop and modal jazz while embracing dissonance, ensemble synchronization and lucid improvisation.

Ornette continues to tour the world and win over acclaim by new generations of musicians and critics. His music, style and, above all, ideas are still revolutionary to this day. Ornette Coleman is one of the foremost innovators in 20<sup>th</sup> century jazz history. In 1991, Canadian director David Cronenberg tapped Coleman to perform Howard Shore's score for *Naked Lunch*. The acclaimed film was adapted from the Beat masterpiece by William S. Burroughs, an acquaintance of Coleman who appears in *Ornette: Made in America*. In 2004, Coleman won the prestigious Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize for "a man or woman who has made an outstanding contribution to the beauty of the world and to mankind's enjoyment and understanding of life." In 2007 he won a lifetime achievement Grammy award and the Pulitzer Prize for Music, the first jazz musician to do so. In May 2010 the University of Michigan bestowed an honorary doctorate on Coleman besides President Barack Obama.

Any interview reveals an unquestionable genius and curious provocateur; his harmolodic theory crams all the ineffable thoughts in his mind under one umbrella ideology. But there is an innocent naivety to Coleman that he has freely admitted. When first picking up the Eb alto saxophone that he taught himself, Coleman misinterpreted the transposing necessary for his instrument, wherein an ABCDEFG concert scale is not his sax's standard concert scale (CDEFGAB is.) Instead of starting from scratch, Coleman took this misunderstanding in stride, experimenting with standards of tonality that he would eventually raze. Ornette Coleman is a genius, revolutionary, philosopher, citizen, father, and, above all, a free spirit.

*"I didn't need to worry about keys, chords, melody if I had that emotion that brought tears and laughter to people's hearts."* — Esquire, 2009.

## Denardo Coleman (April 16, 1956 — Present)

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The gifted son of Ornette Coleman and Jayne Cortez, Denardo Coleman has furthered his father's legacy and created his own with prodigious skill and an innate connection to harmolodic theory. Starting drums at the age of six, Denardo learned much from his father, developing from a young age a talent for avant-garde jazz.

At only ten years of age, he played drums on Ornette's 1966 album *The Empty Foxhole*. From 1966 to 2006 and every decade in between, Denardo has performed on ten of his father's albums and played alongside other respected Coleman collaborators such as James Blood Ulmer, Jamaaladeen Tacuma and Pat Metheny. As a consistent member of Prime Time, he has been instrumental in the development of free and funk jazz over the 1970s and 80s, providing the rhythmic groundwork for Ornette and the rest of the band's innovation.

## Charles Ellerbe

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A 14-year member of Ornette Coleman's Prime Time group, Charles Ellerbe has played guitar not only with the legendary Coleman but also with such jazz and pop icons as Sun Ra, Charles Earland and The Trammmps.

The native Philadelphian has played on seven Coleman albums, from 1977's *Dancing in Your Head* to 1988's *Jazzbühne Berlin '88, v.5*. He has traveled around the world with Coleman and Prime Time, starting with one of their first gigs in France and eventually traversing across the globe to Iceland, Haiti and Japan.

Ellerbe's current band Matrix 12:38 makes use of his 15-year harmolodic education under Coleman. Rhythm, melody, tone and structure are all analyzed from the unorthodox viewpoint of an Ornette Coleman student.

## Bern Nix

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With tremendous respect from his peers and an accomplished career, Bern Nix is an incredibly talented guitarist. A graduate from Berklee School of Music in 1975, Nix has worked for decades to be the best guitarist he can possibly be.

From 1975 to 1987, Nix served as an original member for Ornette Coleman's Prime Time band. Coleman held him in high regard and considered Nix's musicianship perfectly compatible with his own approach: "Bern Nix has the clearest tone for playing harmolodic music that relates to the guitar as a concert instrument." As a member of the Prime Time band, Nix recorded the following six albums with Coleman: *Dancing in Your Head* (1977), *Body Meta* (1978), *Of Human Feelings* (1982), *In All Languages* (1987), *Virgin Beauty* (1988) and *Jazzbühne Berlin '88 Vol. 5* (1990).

A true practitioner of Coleman's 'harmolodics' theory, Nix once outlined its importance in a January 1988 issue of *Guitar Player*: "With the harmolodic concept, a musician no longer worries about chord changes, stylistic constraint, or conforming to the rigid arithmetical tyranny of the bar line. Diatonic tendencies can be occasionally indulged, but they must by and large be eschewed. Players are encouraged to see that one note can go in any number of directions. That one note also represents other possibilities." Nix eschews traditional roles of composition and tuning in line with the system he learned from Coleman and, in turn, helped Coleman further expand. Since 1985, Nix has helmed The Bern Nix Trio. He has also been voted among the Top Ten Jazz Guitarists by Down Beat magazine. While never hitting mainstream popularity, Nix has bettered the music landscape through his considerable skill and kind heart.

## Jamaaladeen Tacuma (June 11, 1956 — Present)

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A gifted and spellbinding musician, Jamaaladeen Tacuma has enchanted audiences for years. As a young teen, Tacuma played with organist Charles Earland before attracting the attention of Ornette Coleman at just 19 years of age. With Tacuma's funky rhythms and lyrical melodies, Prime Time took on the unique identity.

Tacuma has led a successful solo career, releasing critically acclaimed albums as well as collaborations with other jazz musicians like Wolfgang Puschnig, James Blood Ulmer, James Carter, Courtney Pine and Nona Hendryx. His 1988 album *Jukebox* was nominated for a Grammy award (Best Jazz Album of the Year).

While relatively reclusive in the 90s, Tacuma released a track, "Mirakle," in 2000 that Allmusic called one of the "most important recordings" of the year. Tacuma received a Pew Fellowship in the Arts in 2011. He has released three solo albums within the last five years and performs frequently around the world, to ever-increasing fans of all ages.



## Charlie Haden (August 6, 1937 — Present)

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A legendary jazz bassist in the ranks with Charles Mingus and Paul Chambers, Charlie Haden has had a storied career spanning seven decades with no signs of slowing down. Born August 6, 1937 in Sheandoah, Iowa, Haden was raised as a singer in a musical family. After contracting a mild form of polio at the age of 15 that damaged his vocal cords, he developed an interest in jazz music that he channeled into playing the double bass. With ambitions to make it in Los Angeles, Haden raised money as the house bassist in Springfield, Missouri's *Ozark Jubilee*.

Haden's 1957 move to Los Angeles started strong, playing with free jazz pioneer Paul Bley before making history with Ornette Coleman with 1959's *The Shape of Jazz to Come*. With nine albums as Coleman's double bassist, including the highly influential *Free Jazz: A Collective Improvisation*, he set the amorphous template for avant-garde jazz that few musicians have harnessed to such ability.

A prolific musician, Haden led the Liberation Music Orchestra, a free jazz collective that experimented in political, gospel, Latino, African and various other types of music, in the 1970s. He released four albums with the group and later started the jazz group Old and New Dreams with fellow Coleman collaborators, Don Cherry, Ed Blackwell and Dewey Redman. From 1976 to 2008, Haden released 22 solo albums, three of which won Grammy Awards for Best Jazz Instrumental and Best Latin Jazz Album.

Haden is clearly one of the most respected bassists in music business, period. His contributions to music extend beyond jazz. In addition to playing with jazz icons Geri Allen, Michael Brecker, John Coltrane, Dizzy Gillespie and 12-time collaborator Keith Jarrett, Haden has also recorded with Ringo Starr, Yoko Ono, Beck, Ginger Baker, Elvis Costello and even Robert Downey Jr. Recipient of the 2012 NEA Jazz Masters Award, Charlie Haden is still making music and gifting the world with his talents.

## William S. Burroughs (February 5, 1914 — August 2, 1997)

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If 20<sup>th</sup> century literature started with the ramblings of Conrad, Joyce and Faulkner, it only got even stranger with its next genius, William S. Burroughs. Named "the most important writer to emerge since the Second World War" by J.G. Ballard, Burroughs emerged from the smoldering ruins of war as an iconoclast, outlaw and icon. He led the revolutionary Beat movement alongside close friends Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, chronicling — and by censors' opinions, glorifying — drug use, sexuality and postmodernist ideals.

His seminal 1959 opus *Naked Lunch* stands as one of the greatest novels of its time, though upon publication it was infamous more for its subversive content than literary craft. Facing bans across the country, the novel was the center of a landmark judicial decision by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court which reversed its Boston ban, citing its artistic merit as a qualification for free speech over its obscenity. The shocking masterpiece has since received its due praise.

Burroughs' often-disturbing work was likely influenced by a life of self-abuse and tragedy. Burroughs was a notorious drug addict for major phases of his life, drawing from his experiences in his work. His debut 1953 novel *Junkie* was a clear, pseudo-non fiction confessional. He also had a troubled relation with his son, William S. Burroughs Jr., who was even more severely addicted to drugs and alcohol, directly leading to his death by cirrhosis. In the most personal of Burroughs' misfortunes, he accidentally shot his wife Joan Vollmer in a drunken game of William Tell. The 1951 death was a catalyst for much of his work, as he wrote in 1985's *Queer*, "So the death of Joan brought me in contact with the invader, the Ugly Spirit, and maneuvered me into a life long struggle, in which I have had no choice except to write my way out."

The tortured and gifted William S. Burroughs was an active force in art and culture until his death on August 2, 1997, in Lawrence, Kansas. It is ironic that a man, who had traveled the world, living in Mexico, England, France, Germany, Colombia and Morocco, died less than 300 miles away from his birthplace in St. Louis, Missouri. Burroughs traced his artistic lineage all across the globe yet remained a distinctively American treasure.

## Kathelin Hoffman Gray, Producer

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Kathelin Hoffman Gray (on Twitter as @Kathelin) is a producer and director of cultural, ecological and scientific projects. She has had an accomplished career in theater, with forays into film, dance, music and literature. At the age of 18, she co-founded the Theatre of All Possibilities, which toured internationally for 20 years. She has produced and directed countless plays, and has worked to extend the role and manifestation of the artist in society, since her beginnings as a dancer at San Francisco's Haight Ashbury. Gray has made her mark on numerous genres and mediums. She has founded a publishing house, record label, and numerous arts centers. She is also the Managing Director of Ecotechnics Maritime. Its research vessel, the Heraclitus, has been exploring the origins and futures of human cultures — sailing the oceans, coral reefs, rivers, lakes and estuaries since 1975. Currently, she is working on Godfrey Reggio's newest film and a "quantum gravity" art piece with physicist Fotini Markoupoulou. One tribute to her is particularly noteworthy: Ornette Coleman's composition, *Kathelin Gray* that is now a standard classic among jazz musicians.

*"Kathelin Gray's life embraces and redefines the meaning of the artistic. A kindling spirit in the Sixties' Haight Ashbury, Gray's ardent intelligence has since contributed to bodies of knowledge concerning group dynamics, ancient and contemporary cultural expression and the exploration of inner and outer space. With theater as a conceptual framework, her experimentation with the emotional, intellectual and physical realms of human experience has left its mark around the planet. Playwright, director, actress, dancer, musician and composer; founder of a theater company, publishing house, record label and several performing arts centers, Gray's multifarious collaborations reconfigured the territory of the avant-garde.*

*Equally impassioned with the science of drama as the drama of science, she co-founded the Institute of Ecotechnics to examine humanity's relationship with the technosphere and the biosphere, and was a seminal force in the creation of Biosphere II. Gray's most influential achievement is the articulation of an artistic neotype, an individual capable of an extraordinary breadth and intensity of experience, one who is free to act, able to transform understanding into any number of manifestations, all vividly inspired and inspiring." — Maria Golia*

## Edward Lachman, Director of Photography (March 31, 1948 — Present)

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Edward Lachman is one his generation's most gifted and versatile cinematographers, acclaimed for his photography in a number of diverse genres and a recipient of numerous awards, including an Academy Award nomination.

Born in 1948 in Morristown, New Jersey, Lachman received a Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University in 1965 and then studied painting at Ohio University. Lachman has been a familiar figure in the modern independent film movement since it took hold in the early 1970s. His cinematography debut in 1974 was *The Lords of Flatbush*, a low-budget film that starred a young Sylvester Stallone, Henry Winkler and Perry King. In 1980, he worked on *Lightning Over Water*, codirected by Wim Wenders and Nicholas Ray and documenting Ray's penultimate days trying to make a film before succumbing to cancer. Lachman collaborated with a number of influential independent directors through the late 70s and 80s, such as Werner Herzog (*La Soufrière*), Maroun Bagdadi (*Les petites guerres*), Wenders (*Tokyo-ga*), David Byrne (*True Stories*) and, of course, Shirley Clarke.

Lachman began to direct photography in financially fruitful ventures as well, starting with *Desperately Seeking Susan* in 1985. The controversial 1987 picture *Less Than Zero*, with a breakout performance by a 22-year-old Robert Downey Jr., was cut and tamed by studios, much to the anger of cinematographer Lachman and author of the source material, Bret Easton Ellis. Not afraid of controversy, Lachman, along with Larry Clark, co-directed 2002's *Ken Park*, a graphic look at teenage sexuality and relationships. International bans on the film's content prevented it from reaching a large audience.

In 1994, Lachman was invited to join the American Society of Cinematographers, where he has been one distinguished member among only 340 other prestigious cinematographers. In the years since, Lachman has achieved his greatest fame. Known for his collaborations with director Todd Haynes, Lachman has shot *I'm Not There*, miniseries *Mildred Pierce* and *Far From Heaven*, the latter of which he received an Oscar nomination for Best Cinematography. He has worked with Steven Soderbergh on *Eric Brockovich*, Sofia Coppola on *The Virgin Suicides* and Robert Altman on *A Prairie Home Companion*, Altman's last film. Quite familiar with the festival circuit, he directed photography for Ulrich Siehl's *Paradise: Love*, which was screened in competition at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival.

## The Christian Science Monitor

### March 14, 1986/DAVID STERRITT

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If the independent movie world has a reigning queen, it must be Shirley Clarke, who has been marching — and filming and thinking and experiment — to her own drummer for some three decades now.

Her latest work, a documentary on saxophonist Ornette Coleman, stands with her best films of the past. It also sums up the most important currents of her career, weaving them into a colorful fabric that reveals as much about her own preoccupations — with music, families, race relations, the passage of time, and the poetic possibilities of time, and the poetic possibilities of film — as about the man whose life, career and thoughts the movie explores.

To learn more about *Ornette: Made in America* and its history, I visited Clarke in her digs at the Chelsea Hotel here, which has long been a home base for artists and writers. Clarke began filming *Ornette: Made in America* around 20 years ago — taking shots of her sax-playing friend just for fun, not realizing he would eventually become the subject of a full-length movie. Although she had used on-screen jazz musicians in her 1960 drama “The Connection,” a groundbreaking study of drug abuse, she had no interest at that time in making a whole movie on jazz, and declined when a producer suggested such a project.

It was a Coleman concert that changed her mind a few years later. The drummer of his group had recently quit, and Coleman — in the kind of risky move that has peppered his career — had invited his son Denardo, who was about 12 years old, to join the combo.

“I thought this would be an interesting way to get into jazz on film,” Clarke recalls, “as a father-and-son story. Those are always interesting.”

She got together with Coleman periodically over the years, adding more footage to her filmed record of his progress. When it seemed right to assemble her material into final form, she approached the task in the spirit of happy improvisation — not patching together a standard biography but splicing images, words, and sounds into a quirky cinematic spree that unfolds the saga of Coleman’s career while visually evoking the boundless “free jazz” flights of his unpredictable music.

Clarke has never taken a Hollywood-type view of film as an art. Her approach, she says, sprang not from cinema schools or textbooks but from her first experiment (or improvisation) with a movie camera. After photographing a friend as he danced on a beach, she found the footage “embarrassing” to look at. So she filmed him doing the same dance in a theater, and — in a stroke of inspiration — intercut the two versions without worrying about “realism,” so a leap that started on sand might finish on stage.

“That was the only good idea I ever got,” says Clarke with a smile, “and I still have it! All the things I have done grew from that seed... the idea that time and space are totally different on film. There are many variations on the theme, but all my work has to do with what film itself is.” Her interest in video is a direct extension of this interest, “like the next step in a dance you’re learning.”

Clarke sees herself as a practical sort of visionary, unable to learn from theory or instruction, but quick to get the hang of a new technique or technology (including computers, her latest artistic tool) by simply picking up the equipment and starting in, figuring out the details as she goes along. She has never thought of technical devices as an end to themselves, moreover, always using them to explore social issues and problems — especially racism, which she calls “our greatest ill” — through screen images and stories...

In her ode to Ornette, she treats such masters as art, music, fathers, songs, blackness, and whiteness with the bright, mercurial flexibility of a wailing jazz soloist. Like its maker and its star, the movie is eccentric and puzzling at times. But it’s always stimulating and one-of-a-kind original, too.



## Dancer as Filmmaker: The Cinematopsichorean World of Shirley Clarke by KATHELIN HOFFMAN GRAY

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Though Shirley Clarke's name is not known to the average moviegoer, filmmakers such as Ingmar Bergman, Godard, Agnes Varda and Otto Preminger regarded her as one of the most influential directors in film history. Scorsese's first sequence in Michael Jackson's *Bad* was inspired by Clarke. What is seldom discussed is the importance of dance in forming her aesthetic and her experimental breakthroughs. Clarke began her career as a choreographer and dancer, and brought a dancer's sensibility into film in the 1950's and 60's, and then into the evolution of video, creating new cinematic expressions of time and space.

She was born Shirley Brimberg in New York City in 1919 to wealthy immigrants. Like her inventor grandfather, she was an ambitious innovator. On a mission to escape her tyrannical father, Clarke took advantage of New York's intellectual and artistic accessibility and discovered modern dance, which was open to women as creators. No ballet for her, she was drawn to the excitement of modern dance, to "free" dance, and at age 14 she aspired to become the next Martha Graham. She trained in the Graham method, the Doris Humphrey-Charles Weidman technique, and went on to study with Hanya Holm. Thus the Dalcroze emphasis on physical awareness and sensual experience of music guided her subsequent evolution as a filmmaker. She had validation of the intelligence of her body.

Through Dalcroze methods, she learned experience of rhythm, which later became the core of her creative process as director and editor. She was kinetic physically and mentally, with a dancer's body and a quick and prolific intellect. Clarke would say in the '80's, 'I cannot pay attention to or remember anything that does not move.'

The dance world gave more recognition to women, and this fuelled her ambition. That her father forbade her to become a dancer only encouraged her. She developed sympathy for the 'underdog': women, black culture, artists, drug culture, and everything that was anathema to the wealthy and prejudiced high society in which she was raised. She formed an idiosyncratic feminist politics that drove her life: as she would say, a 'gentle anarchy.' "There's no question that my career would have been different if I was a man, but if I were a man I would be a different human being."

In her early 20's, she slowly realized that she would never be the next Martha Graham. She turned to filmmaking, and began with dance films. Clarke wanted above all to succeed. She never discussed her failures, so she never shared anecdotes about her life as a young dancer, not even with her daughter Wendy. However, she did love to speak of her affair with the Indian contemporary dancer, Uday Shankar, brother of musician Ravi. She moved on, but dance was in her for good.

### ***Free Dance***

In the late 50's, Clarke studied filmmaking at CCNY with Hans Richter, who had done *Rhythmus 21* (1921) possibly the first abstract film ever made. Later, she considered herself "part of European filmmaking-- people like Rossellini and DeSica and Fellini. I was pals with Godard and that whole bunch. That's who I identified with." (Interview DeeDee Halleck)

Consistent with her training with Holm, Clarke didn't *portray* her subjects but rather *entered into* their interior space and revealed their inner movements, in almost an expressionist sense. Based in her experience with live performance, she became fascinated with projecting the body's movement into space, the occupation of simultaneous spaces and realities, and space/time discontinuities. She was also interested in the act of artistic creation and altered states. Immediacy and energy were always qualities of her work. With a dancer-as-cinematographer, the viewer internalizes the camera technique, so that a first person point-of-view is experienced through mirroring the proprioceptive sense of the camera operator.

Her first film was the ecstatic *Dance in the Sun* (1953), with Daniel Nagrin. Clarke films the dance in continuity but shifts interior and exterior locations, studio to beach and back. She begins to choreograph with the camera

itself. "All... I discovered about the choreography of editing and the choreography of space/time came from making that very first film." (Interview with Lauren Rabinowitz) This work is an obvious homage to Maya Deren's *Meditation on Violence*. Deren, who influenced generations of artists, also trained as a dancer and worked as Katherine Dunham's assistant. Clarke said, "Maya Deren was a great revolutionary, a great astonishment on the scene." (Interview with DeeDee Halleck). Deren and Clarke are two of the few women of their day who made it into the 'official' list of historic film directors. In *Bullfight* (1955) and *A Moment In Love* (1957), with Anna Sokolow, Clarke began to dance with her camera, which lingers and caresses Sokolow. In the revolutionary *Bridges Go Round* (1958), her inanimate subject waltzes, boogies and leaps. In it, she references the roller coaster sequence of Rene Clair's 1924 Dadaist film, *Entr'acte*. Music was always central to her, and she commissioned two scores, one electronic, by Bebe Barron, and the other, jazz, by Teo Macero.

*The Connection* (1961) and *The Cool World* (1964) are political films, with the underdog as the subject - musicians, black culture, druggies- and Clarke related to them via her experience as a woman. The notoriety of Wigman's 1929 *Hexentanz* had always inspired Clarke, who embraced the inclusion of the dark side of human character in herself and her subsequent work. *The Connection* was made during the New York of cool jazz, of Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, collective improvisation in jazz and theatre, Happenings, West Side Story, and Warhol's *Sleep*. A group of jazz musicians, including the great Jackie McLean, await their drug connection. Possibly the transcendental sound of the cool jazz genre was not even possible without key players' heroin use. In the heroin-induced cool of the film, isolation pours through every pore of the image stream and the jazz score.

*The Cool World* was the first commercial film set in Harlem (Dizzy Gillespie cameos) and was a prototype for such filmmakers as Spike Lee. That same year she won an Oscar for her documentary on U.S.A. Poet Laureate Robert Frost, a very different cultural type!

*Portrait of Jason* (1967), is possibly the greatest 'talking head' film of all time, though in actuality, it does not fit into any category, but explores in an ad nauseam digression, the possibilities of verité. The camera remains steadfastly stationary as the subject, an ageing alcoholic gay hustler-slash-would-be nightclub performer, gradually loses inhibitions in the course of the interview, and creates his ultimate performance. It is a contemplative narrative: Jason describes and enacts his outrageous life; the director/camera is the still meditator on that life. The viewer becomes, over the course of the film, acutely aware of the fact that, although Jason moves more and more the camera does not, in a marathon of motionlessness. This contrasts with all her other works. It is edited from a single 12-hour session, and she releases the subject to develop his own rhythms, physical intellectual and emotional, like a Dadaist 'found' choreography. Jason (Aaron Payne) is simultaneously the most fascinating and banal person you could ever meet.

### **Betty Boop and the Avant Garde**

Clarke was acutely aware of the role of the avant garde in popular culture, as a sort of siphon for The New.

She had 2 personal symbols which make an appearance in each of her films: Betty Boop, the character created by legendary animator Max Fleischer, and Felix the Cat, cartoons both created in the 1930's. Betty Boop was the sex symbol of early animation, a flapper from the Jazz Age, with surreal, sexual and complex psychological elements, and I always felt that Clarke identified herself with that character, even dressed like her, however I doubted that she could have kept up with a rendition of The Lindy by Betty Boop. Felix the Cat was an irreverent animation, like Shirley's nonconformist character. Known for his huge grin, Felix nevertheless smoked, frowned, and played jazz. Both cartoons had elements of vaudeville, both came out of the jazz age.

She also passionately loved Busby Berkeley, the film choreographer of massive kaleidoscopic numbers, circa 1940's. She would mention him admiringly during video work in *Ornette*. The sex sequence towards the end of *Ornette*, with its unfolding flowers and winking women, is strongly reminiscent of Berkeley's hallucinogenic musical number, "I Only Have Eyes for You," in the film *Dames*. *Dames* prompted Warner Brothers to coin the term cinematerpsichorean, which is also a good term for Shirley's work.

### **Immediacy and simultaneity: Video and Performance Installations**

In 1970, Clarke received funding from the Museum of Modern Art in New York to explore working in another field, and used the money to buy a complete video setup. For the next few years, her pyramid penthouse on the roof of Hotel Chelsea became headquarters for a band of experimental film-makers and artists who called themselves the Tee Pee Videospace Troupe. Even the science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke was involved.

All the new waves passed through New York as film evolved, video was introduced, performance shifted into the streets and rooftops, galleries and churches. The Judson Dance Project, St. Marks Poetry Project, and Film-Makers Collective, operated at the same time in the 60s. The 70s brought CBGB's, The Kitchen, Einstein on the Beach video art, NY's War on Graffiti, and hip hop. The postmodern dance movement permeated other mediums. Shirley shared a similar sensibility, but felt that film as a medium was politically bolder than dance. The development of video and the progression of technology influenced everyone. Handheld cameras were introduced in the early 1900s, and filmmakers created more and more innovative ways to use them, strapped onto their bodies, on improvised stands. When the more ergonomic Bolex and 16mm film was introduced in the 20s, it allowed increased experimentation and allowed body movement to become a part of the cinematic 'point of view' and aesthetic. With her background and orientation as a dancer, Clarke was poised to take advantage of developing technologies over the next decades.

The Sony Umatic Portapak with hour-long cassettes was released onto the market in the early 70s, and artists of many disciplines made use of the new technology. Portable cameras allowed dance-like camera work, capturing a more kinetic technique, so not only the subject dance, but so does the camera operator. Video put image-taking into the hands of political progressives. Clarke successfully partnered with Ricky Leacock and D.A. Pennebaker, filmmakers and engineers, to help move the handheld camera technology along. Video was not, in those days, seen in theatres but exclusively on monitors. Live action was possible, as were multiple monitors. Clarke saw that her great aims, compresence and instantaneity, were possible. Suddenly, as she dreamed, one could project the body into different places at the same instant.

She used many techniques of filming and editing to influence the viewer on a pre-rational or unconscious level, through rhythm and movement. In Powell/Pressburger's *The Red Shoes*, Moira Shearer executes the famous pirouette sequence while spotting her future impresario in the audience, surprised when she notices he has in quick turn, vacated his seat. Clarke's abrupt pans, blurs, are transitions that intentionally track the visual field of a dancer's turn, in a private protest against professional dancers' spotting, she would joke.

Cinema was for Clarke a tool to express verbally inchoate ideas and feelings, the momentous scope of unconscious processing within any individual body and mind. With video editing, she could, with the touch of a finger, instantaneously translate the lightening-fast flow of emotion into editing cuts.

In her video work, *Tongues and Savage/Love* (1982-3), the actor Joe Chaikin's discontinuous expression as a result of his stroke, is taken into a dimension of hyperreality. In these 2 masterpieces of Chaikin, author/narrator Sam Shepard, and Clarke's directorial choreography, create a whirlwind of morphed images, sound, alternate personalities, stream of consciousness and tempo, which overcome the viewer in an ecstasy of virtuosity.

## **Her Last Film**

I produced and collaborated with Clarke on her last film, *Ornette: Made in America* (1985). She always wanted to do a film on the scale of the musicals her mentor, Hanya Holm choreographed- *My Fair Lady*, *Camelot*, and *Kiss Me Kate*. We did a full length feature, as dear Shirley would say, "Just like a real movie" - rolling credits, with a 'real film's aspect ratio', widescreen. But this film was hardly a *Camelot*; it was the life of legendary avant garde musician Ornette Coleman. Clarke was liberated and uncompromising as always, and, as she had mastered her directorial and editing techniques and style, she achieved 'free dance' in film. We had a certain rapport because both of us had originally trained in dance, I with Anna Halprin who had also trained Yvonne Rainer and influenced many others, including The Living Theater's *Paradise Now*. During the months of editing, we would often visit The Joyce dance theatre around the corner, to see performances. At dinner before, she would always order salads, occasionally some chicken, and a glass of white wine. "A dancer has to keep her figure," she'd laugh. Her dancer's body is apparent from photographs of her directing. She had an inherent grace and ease with her body.

Many of the characters of her life up to that time passed through our editing rooms in the Chelsea Hotel. In this film, the various strands in her creative came together: the avant garde, jazz, classical music, race and gender issues, film, video, radical and precise intellect, generational transmission, sexuality, heightened consciousness, dance as inspiration... She laid down the music track first, the performance of Coleman's symphony, *Skies of America*, so the music became the 'plot'. Flashbacks, interviews and oneiric sequences show Coleman is at the same time performing in the Texas of his youth, New York of his present, and throughout his professional and personal life. Clarke worked with temporal and spatial discontinuities, seeking the ability to 'be present' in different places at the same time. We were both focused on recreating the inner life of a creative avant garde artist. Ornette Coleman lives in polyrhythms, thinks in a lyrical mode. In this work Clarke achieved her most intimate aim, portraying the inner life of a pioneering artist.

Her own process was to create a cognitive map based on a motor space/time: a kinesphere. To connect with a filming or editing, she would sense the musical score, or the musicality of the scene/dialogue. To test just-completed rough edits, we would sometimes stand and move to the shape and tempo of the images.

Some examples of her techniques for consciousness-shifting: During the nightclub dancers' sequence, she used rapid focus change to reference state of consciousness shifts, with spontaneous soft focus. In the 'geodesic dome' sequence, when Coleman talks about Buckminster Fuller and his own music theory, the rapid, nearly stroboscopic, edits alternate in complementary colors to create an optic hallucination, a state-change, as can be experienced during a creative act. The 'music video' shorts that appeared throughout the film were often based on Ornette's dreams. When music scenes didn't contain enough energy, Clarke and I would enlist dancers to perform for the music performers, to raise the artistic stakes. Her mentor, Hanya Holm, died at the age of 99. Clarke died in 1997, 4 1/2 years later. Her film of Ornette Coleman also became the final portrait of Shirley Clarke, for she was all about her work.

#### FOOTNOTE:

She worked with and influenced a long list of culture creators: science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke (no relation), director Peter Brook; filmmakers Robert Frank, Ricky Leacock, Nicholas Ray, Peter Bogdanovich, Milos Forman, Jonas Mekas, Agnès Varda, Harry Smith, Paul Morrissey, Severn Darden, Stan Brackage; Zen writer Alan Watts; poets Gregory Corso, Allen Ginsberg, and Peter Orlovsky; jazz giant Ornette Coleman, video artists Nam June Paik, Shigeko Kubota, the Vasulkas, Shalom Gorewitz; Joe Chaikin, Sam Shepard, Judith Malina, Julian Beck, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Andy Warhol- the list goes on, and on into the future.

## Milestone Film & Video

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Milestone enters its 22nd year of operations with a reputation for releasing classic cinema masterpieces, new foreign films, groundbreaking documentaries and American independent features. Thanks to the company's work in rediscovering and releasing important films such as Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep*, Kent Mackenzie's *The Exiles*, Lionel Rogosin's *On the Bowery*, Mikhail Kalatozov's *I Am Cuba*, Marcel Ophuls's *The Sorrow and the Pity*, the Mariposa Film Group's *Word is Out* and Alfred Hitchcock's *Bon Voyage* and *Aventure Malgache*, Milestone has long occupied a position as one of the country's most influential independent distributors.

In 1995, Milestone received the first Special Archival Award from the National Society of Film Critics for its restoration and release of *I Am Cuba*. Manohla Dargis, then at the *LA Weekly*, chose Milestone as the 1999 "Indie Distributor of the Year." In 2004, the National Society of Film Critics again awarded Milestone with a Film Heritage award. That same year the International Film Seminars presented the company its prestigious Leo Award and the New York Film Critics Circle voted a Special Award "in honor of 15 years of restoring classic films." In November 2007, Milestone was awarded the Fort Lee Film Commission's first Lewis Selznick Award for contributions to film history. Milestone/Milliarium won Best Rediscovery from the Il Cinema Ritrovato DVD Awards for its release of *Winter Soldier* in 2006 and again in 2010 for *The Exiles*.

In January 2008, the Los Angeles Film Critics Association chose to give its first Legacy of Cinema Award to Dennis Doros and Amy Heller of Milestone Film & Video "for their tireless efforts on behalf of film restoration and preservation." And in March 2008, Milestone became an Anthology Film Archive's Film Preservation honoree. In 2009, Dennis Doros was elected as one of the Directors of the Board of the Association of the Moving Image Archivists and established the organization's press office in 2010.

In 2011, Milestone was the first distributor ever chosen for two Film Heritage Awards in the same year by the National Society of Film Critics for the release of *On the Bowery* and *Word is Out*. The American Library Association also selected *Word is Out* for their Notable Videos for Adult, the first classic film ever so chosen.

Important contemporary artists who have co-presented Milestone restorations include Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Barbara Kopple, Woody Allen, Steven Soderbergh, Thelma Schoonmaker, Jonathan Demme, Dustin Hoffman, Charles Burnett and Sherman Alexie.

"They care and they love movies." — Martin Scorsese

## Milestone Would Like to Thank the Following:

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Deborah Snyder  
Kathelin Hoffman Gray  
Ed Lachman  
Wendy Clarke  
Shawn Jones, NT Audio/Video  
Jan-Christopher Horak, Eddie Richmond, Ross Lipman, UCLA Film & Television Archive  
John Vanco and Harris Dew, IFC Center  
Scott Eyman and Lynn Kalber  
Association of Moving Image Archivists ([www.amianet.org](http://www.amianet.org))  
D. Adrian Rothschild (trailer)  
Scott Meola, Simplissimus (poster design)  
Oscilloscope Laboratories

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