Set in motion

The New York State Council on the Arts
Celebrates 30 Years of Independents
Set in Motion is made possible with generous support from A. Robert Towbin, Richard Schwartz, Mortimer Levitt, Time Warner, Inc., the Aaron Diamond Foundation, in-kind support from Post Perfect, Inc., with additional funding from the New York State Council on the Arts.

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915 Broadway
New York, New York 10010
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MISSION STATEMENT

The New York State Council on the Arts is dedicated to preserving and expanding the rich and diverse cultural resources that are the heritage of the people of this State. Through government funding and all other means within its power, the Council seeks to support and strengthen:

—The freedom of artists to exercise their creativity, aspiring to all the best in all artistic forms, without interference or censure,

—The right of New Yorkers of all ages, wherever they may be within the State, to learn about and experience, first hand, the varied and rich cultures of our people,

—The ability of arts groups and organizations to serve their communities by presenting artistic works of quality.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"Set in Motion" is part of a Council initiative designed to draw attention to the work of New York State artists and develop new audiences for their work. We acknowledge with special thanks Leanne Mella, an independent curator who served as consultant to the Council in the development of the concept and programming of "Set in Motion." We thank Mary Hays and the Council's Planning Committee for their conviction and support in realizing this program. Special thanks to Barbara Haspiel for her 30-year commitment to the Council and especially her unflagging support for independent film and video in the state. The title, "Set in Motion," is borrowed from Jane Aaron's film of the same title. We thank her for her generosity. We also wish to express our great gratitude to the editor of this publication, Lucinda Furlong.

We also thank the many film and video makers, curators and administrators who so generously provided advice and technical support to the organizers of this project, especially David Azarck, Russell Connor, Penelope Danneberg and the staff of the New York Foundation for the Arts, Ada Griffin, John Hanhardt, Jean Haynes, Chris Hill, Ralph Hocking and Sherry Miller Hocking, Kate Horsfield, Warrington Hudlin, Rodger Larson, Donna Levis and the staff at Post Perfect, Barbara London, Jonas Mekas, Marie Nesthus and the Donnell Media Center staff, Ruby Rich, Chuck Riechenthal, Ira Schneider, M. Serra, Bill Sloan, Steve Soba, Cecile Starr, Parry Teasdale, Arthur Tsuchiya, Lori Zippay and the Electronic Arts Intermix staff, the staff of the Media Arts Program, National Endowment for the Arts and the staff of the Media Center of the Visual Studies Workshop. We are also grateful to the video- and filmmakers and their distributors for their enthusiastic participation.

We deeply appreciate the generous support of our funders, Mr. A. Robert Towbin, Mr. Richard Schwartz, Mr. Mortimer Levitt, Time Warner, Inc., and the Aaron Diamond Foundation. Time Warner committed its support for "Set in Motion" early in the project's development and has long provided access to facilities and audiences for many New York producers. In the years to come, as new technological possibilities emerge alongside film and video production, we look forward to new opportunities for artists, and other creative funding and programming partnerships with Time Warner.

Debby Silverfine
Linda Earle
GOVERNOR'S STATEMENT

The New York State Council on the Arts has a mandate from the Legislature to maintain the "paramount position of this State in the nation and the world as a cultural center."

"Set in Motion," created around works funded by the New York State Council on the Arts over the past three decades, demonstrates how imaginatively and well the Council has met its challenge in the art forms of film and electronic media. We should never forget that New York was the original home of film-making. The Council's work in this area has both reinforced our State's successful efforts to regain our importance within the film industry as well as contributed to making New York a positive environment to make independent films and an important center for talent to live and work.

It is a pleasure, then, for me, to salute the Council on its success, and to wish it many more years of imaginative funding support to one of this State's greatest assets: our artistic talent.

Mario M. Cuomo
Governor

The New York State Council on the Arts, almost from its inception in the 1960s, had the vision to support individual artists working in electronic art forms and independent film.

At the time, film already was recognized as an art form. But in the case of electronic media, not only was it completely ignored as having any artistic relevance, in some quarters it was looked on with complete disdain.

The Council decided that both art forms needed to be encouraged, and it made a decision to support film and electronic media with an ardor that has never flagged, in good times and bad.

In film, the Council deeply believed that it was its role to give the individual a voice in what was, until then, a medium dominated entirely by the studio system, which had effectively silenced individual creativity and anything smacking of being ahead of its time or a little different. Effectively, we provided a place where support for diverse points of view and a variety of esthetics was encouraged.

The same belief guided us in the area of video and audio, but here we went a step further because we consciously helped to actively create what would come to be recognized as a new art form when, as we noted above, no one else cared or even recognized it as such.

We have maintained this commitment to film and electronic media in good funding times and bad, and we are extremely proud of the results. Just think of the diversity represented by just these three people who got their first "break" through Council funding—Spike Lee in mainstream films, two-time Academy Award winner Barbara Kopple in documentaries, and Nam June Paik, whose contribution to the development of video art is inestimable.

We would also like to recognize Debby Silverfine, the head of the Electronic Media and Film Program at the Council, and her staff, and Linda Earle, head of the Individual Artists Program for their dedication and superb work in bringing "Set in Motion" to fruition.

It is a deep pleasure, then, to be able to present this festival which, in many ways, is representative of the history of independent film and video making over the past three decades.

Kitty Carlisle Hart, Chairman
Mary Hays, Executive Director
On behalf of the National Endowment for the Arts, I congratulate the New York State Council on the Arts on your "Set in Motion" exhibition and catalogue.

From the beginning, the Council has recognized the importance of film and support for individual artists, and this touring exhibition helps focus attention on the breadth and quality of this enterprise. You have helped set in motion a number of productions that underscore the natural partnership of New York and film. You set in motion the art form that plays in our minds as if in a dream and we as a society remain entranced by the flickering images in the dark.

Jane Alexander
Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts
“Set in Motion” is comprised of films and videotapes funded between 1961 and 1993 as part of the New York State Council on the Arts’ dual commitment to fostering the work of creative artists and promoting the development of artistic forms and disciplines. “Set in Motion” grew out of a series of planning meetings held by NYSCA’s staff and Council members. In light of recent debates in the media and in legislative corridors about the value of art in American culture, and the role of public money in supporting the preservation of our cultural heritage, the time seemed right to review NYSCA’s mission and accomplishments. This retrospective reflects a generation of public support for the creative work of New York State’s film- and videomakers. Its astonishing variety of visions has given us an opportunity to reflect on NYSCA’s role in broadening access to the tools of image-making, surely one of the most important hallmarks of cultural change in our society over the past 30 years. In reviewing the many films and tapes produced with NYSCA support, we became reacquainted with titles that helped launch careers or garnered international critical acclaim, and many other works that pioneered forms and techniques later used by studios and broadcast media.

Private philanthropy had long helped support the state’s major cultural institutions and had indirectly supported arts enrichment programs at various settlement houses and community centers. But it took the establishment of the State Arts Council to begin to develop services and programs statewide. “Early in 1960, the New York State Legislature, through a bill introduced by Senator MacNeil Mitchell and with strong personal backing from Governor Nelson Rockefeller, established a precedent among state governments by passing an act which was broadly designed ‘to make recommendations concerning appropriate methods to encourage participation in and appreciation of the Arts.’”

From its earliest years, the Council recognized the growing interest in film exhibition, production and training and considered the potential of supporting this work. Quality foreign films and emerging talents of the “American New Wave” were attracting interest through a limited number
The formative years of the Council’s programs in film and video were grounded in, and sustained by, a conviction that film and video had as much potential to stir, startle, transport, entertain, and inform as the more traditional arts, and often more. In concert with superb teams of panelists, we allocated support on the principle that advancing the work of artists in film and video would advance both the media themselves, and the appreciation of audiences. The Council had been created by a powerful arts enthusiast, Governor Nelson Rockefeller, and there was a sense of optimism and a belief that support should include the exploration of cultural terrain. Creating the programs themselves was a dynamic, evolving process involving passionate discussion in panel meetings and lively interaction with the community of media artists. We tried, in undertaking this serious business, not to take ourselves too seriously, and we had fun. The programs did nurture and support the creation of vital, visionary and historically important work. Audience interest and discrimination were broadened and deepened. And so it continues.

Peter Bradley
Director of Film, TV/Media and Literature Program, 1966–77

of cinemas and film societies. The New Yorker and Bleecker Street Cinemas, Cinema 16, the Filmmakers’ Cinematheque and the Museum of Modern Art’s Film Department in New York City, and the International Museum of Photography/George Eastman House in Rochester were devoted to revivals and the “artfilm.” At the same time, public libraries in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Rochester were collecting and circulating classic and independent films to new audiences. The Council later supported many of these and other exhibition venues, and developed a program of support to libraries that allowed wider geographic distribution of films to rural and urban areas.

Other new entities were also changing the face of the media landscape. Public television was expanding its universe of interests beyond instructional programming. New types of TV documentary and talk show formats emerged, including Black Journal and Tell It Like It Is. The Ford Foundation began to fund independent filmmakers in 1964, and, in 1965, the Rockefeller Foundation began funding artists for experimentation with video. Also during this time, CBS produced Alwin Nikolais’ first video image-processing experiments.

In 1961, the Council had commissioned Robert Bell to make Watching Ballet, a 16mm film with Jacques D’Amboise and Allegra Kent demonstrating ballet technique. The film, completed in 1963, was used in the Ballet Society’s touring educational programs. In August 1965, NYSCA Executive Director John Hightower convened an advisory group to discuss ways the Council could help disseminate distribution information and tour films to communities throughout the state. The group included Ralph Hetzel, the acting head of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; Margareta Akermark, from the Museum of Modern Art’s Film Library; Amos Vogel, founder of Cinema 16 and Program Director of the newly-founded New York Film Festival; and producers Arthur Meyer and Dore Shary, who soon after became the first Commissioner of New York City’s Department of Cultural Affairs.

Within the year, NYSCA had created the Film Project, and, under the direction of Peter Bradley, began sponsoring tours of contemporary art that included filmmakers and artists exploring multi-media and newly emerging small-format video. In 1967, the Film Project’s work was formalized within the agency as the Film Program. A variety of film-related activities followed, including screenings in secondary schools, colleges and film societies, at which critics and experts would speak; as well as support for independent film and video production. From the beginning, diversity was a key
aspect of the Council’s support for media. NYSCA embraced experimental forms as well as traditional ones, professional as well as training opportunities. There was a strongly held belief that communities in rural areas and inner-city neighborhoods, and students of all ages deserved access to the arts, both as practitioners and as audiences. NYSCA-funded community youth workshops offered production training alongside classes in dance, drama, music and painting. Hands-on workshops for youth, it was felt, helped to develop more adventurous audiences. In addition, professional workshops began to attract artists from other disciplines and provided supportive environments for those with limited access to production opportunities within the industry.

The Council added support for electronic media in 1970, when small-format video presented new possibilities for artistic experimentation and grassroots journalism. As with the development of its Film Program, funding for media acknowledged the importance of connecting artists and audiences early on. NYSCA helped seed programs in video training, production and exhibition throughout the state. Public TV stations were funded to work with independent producers and provide an outlet for their work. And in 1972, the Rockefeller Foundation and NYSCA helped established the TV Lab at WNET/13, which gave artists access to broadcast-quality equipment. University-based programs such as SUNY Buffalo’s Center for Media Study, Syracuse University’s Synapse Studio, and the Experimental Television Center—first a project within SUNY Binghamton, later incorporated—provided access to resources, equipment and faculty for many emerging artists. The Council also encouraged a number of New York City-based video production groups to work in other areas of the state in order to share their know-how and enthusiasm with arts and community groups interested in creating local television. A number of production collectives found receptive communities, and relocated to Jamestown, Woodstock and Lanesville to create early community cable and low-power television projects.

Training and access programs, and increased exhibition and distribution venues stimulated production of scores of tapes and films during this period. While there had been occasional production funding and commissions since the beginning, and film projects were funded with increasing frequency during the early 1970s, it wasn’t until the Council developed a more comprehensive relationship to the field that it began to directly support production. Though not a formal category of support, a dozen filmmakers and 20 media artists received production funding in 1974. Film
production funding increased dramatically the following year when NYSCA launched the Bicentennial Film Project with matching monies from the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1978, both the Media and Film Programs developed guidelines to meet the growing number of applicants and to provide instruction to artists new to the grants application process. In 1984, the Council created the Individual Artists Program to oversee direct support for film and video production.

The Council has always attempted to respond energetically to the full spectrum of artist-initiated activity in film and electronic media including narrative, documentary and experimental forms. The scope of work supported has included films and videotapes demonstrating both promise as well as accomplishment. These projects represent the artist’s vision and point of view. They are produced outside the studio system with funds from savings, families, friends, NYSCA and other funders. The artists (in most cases the director) who conceive these projects maintain artistic control over all aspects of production. Styles, genres and budgets vary considerably.

By design, there is no typical NYSCA project, no prescribed funding agenda in terms of content or form. This is insured by the centrality of the Council’s peer panel grant review system. Over the years, panels have been comprised of literally hundreds of artists, programmers, teachers and curators from every corner of the state. Their job is to advise the Council by reviewing written applications and artists’ work samples and to recommend support. Because of the volume of activity in New York State, funding has always been highly competitive. Artistic and demographic diversity on the panels means that in a typical year, 1990, for example, NYSCA funded 48 projects including pre-production support for a first feature by Todd Haynes; an installation work by video artist Mary Lucier; technical research for an interactive narrative based on African storytelling by Collis Davis; animation by Maureen Selwood; and documentaries on such diverse subjects as Atlantic City (by Michael Penland), psychologist Evelyn Hooker (by Richard Schmeichen) and civil rights activist Dollie Robinson (by Melvin McCray). Budgets for these works ranged from $7,000 to $200,000.

The work in this series was selected by Debby Silverfine, Director of the Electronic Media and Film Program; Linda Earle, Director of the Individual Artists Program and Leanne Mella, a consulting independent curator. Organized to showcase a wide range of aesthetics, artists and genres, this project by no means exhausts the territory and the multiple histories of independent film and video. Of the

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I was a young professional just starting on a career path when I came to NYSCA, and it proved to be an extraordinary and rigorous training ground. The aspirations of NYSCA reflected the fierce visions, starting creativity, and the vigorous spirit of its applicants. The Film Program was jam-packed with applicants whose energy, vigor, imagination and dedication established New York as the nation’s premier community for independent production, training and advocacy. I felt very privileged and challenged to work with such a talented and occasionally irascible group of individuals.

Nancy Sieren
Arts Consultant
Director, Film Program, 1978-80

NYSCA dollars encouraged artists to create works that might have, to use a phrase that I think more grantmaking agencies should honor, “more soul than success.” Nam June Paik, the Korean-born video artist, once wrote, “A thorough study of video must start with the horse, for the horse was the fastest communications medium up to the invention of the telephone in 1863.” I am proud of NYSCA for supporting those numerous artists who make the “leap,” connecting the horse and video.

Da Sil Kim-Gibson
Independent Producer
Director, Media Program, 1985-88
hundreds of titles considered, many outstanding works have not been included. We hope that “Set in Motion” will spark renewed interest in earlier works, introduce titles to new audiences and help artists to discover a broader public for their next efforts.

One area of activity not included in this exhibition is audio/radio art. The Council has supported an impressive range of productions, artists' residencies at public radio stations around the state, and has sponsored seminars and workshops designed to increase exposure to innovative work. We hope that NYSCA-supported audio work will be the subject of a series at a later date.

Finally, the essays and statements in this catalogue are by the “eye-witnesses” to the development of independent media. They speak to the role that public funding has played in helping to create a space for media art in a commercial universe and in promoting a diversity of vision and expression.

Notes

2 Internal memo, “Initial Meeting on Council Film Project, August 13, 1965.” Session convened by John Rightower, Executive Director, and Omar Lerman, Consultant, Performing Arts Program.
3 Participating groups in the screening series received initial membership in the American Federation of Film Societies. The project was supported by NYSCA, the National Council on the Arts (the earlier name of the NEA and now its governing body), the State Education Department and the Motion Picture Association of America.
4 Production and workshop opportunities have been funded through the Adaptors (Brooklyn) Apparatus Productions (NYC), Asian CineVision (NYC), Black Filmmaker Foundation (NYC), Camera News (NYC), Collective for Living Cinema (NYC), Downtown Community Television (NYC), Electronic Arts Intermix (NYC), Experimental Intermedia Foundation (NYC), Experimental Television Center (Owego), Film and Video Workshop (Brockton), Global Village (NYC), Hallwalls (Buffalo), Intermedia Arts Center (Bayville), Ithaca Video Project, the Kitchen (NYC), Latino Collaborative (NYC), Media Bus (Lanesville), Media Study (Buffalo), Millennium Film Workshop (NYC), Portable Channel (Rochester), Staten Island Community Television, Squeaky Wheel (Buffalo), Synapse Studio (Syracuse), Visual Studies Workshop (Brockton), White Ox (Brockton), Women’s Interart Center (NYC), Women/Artist/Filmmaker (NYC), Women Make Movies (NYC), and Young Filmmakers (NYC); now known as Film/Video Arts.
For me, this occasion calls up two emotions—a great deal of personal satisfaction and joy.

To explain first the personal satisfactions, I have had the great privilege of being at the Council and serving the people of the State of New York for 29 years. For the lion's share of that time, I have occupied a capacity or another, beginning as Assistant, passing through the ranks, and now, in the position of Deputy Director of the Agency. As for the joy, how could I feel it when I see the breadth—and depth—of the work being presented, at least in part thanks to Council funding? It may well be that pride comes before the fall, but in this case, it's coming before the show. So let's get on with "Set in Motion"—something in which every New Yorker can take pride.

Barbara Haspiel
Deputy Director

Movie Bus
showing films by teenagers at outdoor screening in Bedford-Stuyvesant, sponsored by the Children's Cultural Foundation, 1967.

Set in motion

Programs

The films and videotapes presented here are thematically organized into 21 programs reflecting the breadth and diversity of New York's independent media. All of them have been produced outside the studio system, with support from friends, families, personal income, grants and funds from the New York State Council on the Arts. From animation, documentary and narrative to experimentation in mixing forms, each of these works speaks to the realities and dreams of these artists and the many communities from which they originate.

Jane Aaron
Set in Motion
1986, 4 min.
Pure whimsy reigns in the filmmaker's studio as ribbons, boxes and other cast-offs are brought to life in a whirling dance. Aaron's pixilated animation demonstrates that the materials for making art are indeed everywhere.

Jonas Mekas
Harry Smith Picks Up His Check
Mekas's diary films have poetically chronicled New York's arts culture. Here, his camera captures the late experimental animator, Harry Smith, as he is presented with a grant check from the Creative Artists Project Service (CAPS).

Harry Smith
Early Abstractions
1959-62, 23 min.
Smith's early animations are pure abstractions, created frame by frame using techniques of painting directly on 35mm film. Originally silent, Smith later added a soundtrack using the music of the Beatles. Funding allowed Smith to circulate his early films and begin a new project that remained unfinished at the time of his death.

Robert Bell
Watching Ballet
1963, 35 min.
Produced by On Film, NYSCA and the Ballet Society. Shot in an unadorned studio, filmmaker Robert Bell allows the grace and skill of dancers Jacques D'Amboise and Allegra Kent to energize the screen. The Council's first funded film, commissioned in 1961, this work demonstrates ballet technique using excerpts from George Balanchine's ballets.

Meredith Monk and Bob Rosen
Ellis Island
1981, 28 min.
Monk is an artist who is equally adept at producing work for theater and for film. Shot on location before the restoration of this historic site, Monk's evocative film summons the spirits of the almost 16 million people who arrived at the entry way to America, hoping to gain admittance. Neither documentary nor fiction, Monk describes the film as "a mosaic of sounds and images woven together into a formal musical design."

On view in the Frieda and Roy Furman Gallery, Walter Reade Theater, Skater, Shigeko Kubota, 1992, a video installation in tribute to Japanese figure skating champion Midori Ito.
They Are Their Own Gifts: Alice Neel, Painter
1978, 19 min.
This film chronicles the career of Alice Neel, who worked in relative obscurity until the Whitney Museum of American Art organized a major retrospective of her work in 1974. Neel has called herself a "collector of souls," and is known for an uncanny ability to paint disarmingly honest portraits. Rhodes and Murphy examine Neel's life, from her early marriage to a Cuban painter, through her work with the WPA, to her long residence in East Harlem.

Karen Thorsen
James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket
1990, 87 min.
James Baldwin (1924–1987) was at once a major twentieth-century author and a Civil Rights activist. This film captures the passionate intellect and courageous writings of a man who was born black, gay and gifted. Writers Maya Angelou, Amin Baraka, Ishmael Reed, William Styrone, Baldwin's brother David and biographer David Leeming speak of Baldwin's life and writings.

Amy Harrison
Guerrillas in Our Midst
1992, 35 min.
A savvy critique of the art world during its boom in the 1980s, this film brings the "conscience of the art world," the Guerrilla Girls, to the screen. Using wit and creative tactics, this anonymous group of artists has kept sexism and racism on the agenda of the art world since 1985.

Charlie Ahearn
Wild Style
1982, 85 min.
Viewed alternately by New Yorkers as a menace to urban spaces or youthful artists using the city as their canvas, graffiti and Hip-Hop artists are brought to the screen. By day, Raymond is a heart-broken teenager trying to find himself in the rough world of the South Bronx. By night, Raymond assumes his secret guise as the graffiti artist, "Zoro," whose identity has remained a mystery even to his friends. Deftly played by many non-professional actors, the classic tale of the striving young artist is given a fresh treatment. Wild Style features Frederick Brathwaite, "Lee" Georges Quinones, Sandra "Pink" Fabara, Patti Astor, Andrew "Zephyr" Witten, Grand Master Flash, Chief Rocker Busy Bee, the Cold Crush Four, The Fantastic Five, Double Trouble and Rock Steady Crew.

Joan Logue
30 Second Spots
1982, 2.5 min excerpt.
Termed by Logue as "commercials for artists," these brief but elegant video portraits capture some of the key figures of New York's avant-garde.

Shirley Clarke
Tongues
1982, 20 min.
A collaboration of Shirley Clarke, Joe Chaikin and Sam Shepard. To encourage the innovative use of film and video for television in the early 1980s, NYSCA funded a number of video- and filmmakers to work collaboratively with other artists. Tongues was written by Chaikin and Shepard after Chaikin suffered a stroke. This audacious and moving monologue explores multiple facets of life, illness and recovery, amplified by Clarke's virtuoso use of video techniques.
Roy Campanella Jr.  

Pass/Fail  
1976, 36 min.  
Post-produced at the TV Lab at WNET/13. Independent filmmaker Brian Wells’s life is a balancing act between family, art and ego, and all are at stake as he sweats out a crucial foundation grant. Campanella, one of a group of talented young Black filmmakers who emerged in the 1970s, presents a deft and knowing portrait of the life of an artist who juggles issues raised by funders’ agendas, the consequences of personal sacrifice and the constant exposure to judgment. Featuring Ilunga Aced as Wells, and Christine Campbell as his wife Kim.

Alan and Susan Raymond  

The Police Tapes  
1976, 60 min.  
Produced at the TV Lab at WNET/13. The Police Tapes is a ground-breaking video-verité portrait of the 44th precinct in the Bronx. The tape was shot during three months on patrol with the police. A forerunner of “true crime” TV in texture but not in substance, the desperation and violence captured by the Raymonds is framed by insightful comments on the connection between social neglect and crime by Borough Commander Anthony Bouza. Bouza lost his job when an expurgated version of the tape was aired.

TVTV  

with Russell Connor  
VTR: TVTV  
1975, 28 min.  
This documentary about the TVTV collective, produced as the first segment of Channel 13’s pioneering “VTR” series, provided an introduction to the tools and the spirit of the alternative TV movement.

Gerald Ford’s America:  
Chic to Sheik  
1975, 28 min.  
Produced at the TV Lab at WNET/13. TVTV (Wendy Appel, Skip Blumberg, Bill Bradbury, Nancy Cain, Frank Cavestany, Wilson Chao, Steve Christiansen, Steve Conant, Michael Couzens, Mary DeOreo, Bart Friedman, Paul Goldsmith, Anda Korsts, Andy Mann, Hudson Marquez, Allen Rucker, Paul Ryan, Michael Shamberg, Jodi Sibert, Elon Soltes and Megan Williams) goes to Washington to cast its irreverent eye on a crucial facet of the political system—the social scene. Focusing on the high cost of political dealmaking—$10,000 for one diplomatic function alone—the group examines the wretched excesses of the Washington Establishment, ironically concluding with a birthday party for the Shah of Iran.

Lynn Corcoran  

In Our Own Backyard  
1982, 59 min.  
A chronicle of the Love Canal disaster by a Buffalo videomaker, In Our Own Backyard tells the story of the transformation of a group of terrified neighbors from victims to activists. The tape is one of the most important documentaries to come out of Buffalo’s vital and diverse media community.

Joel Krantz/Gulf Crisis  
TV Project  
“Gulf Bowl” segment from News World Order  
1991, 3 min.  
Gulf Crisis TV Project was a collaboration between Paper Tiger Television and Deep Dish Television. The group’s work critiqued coverage of the War. “Gulf Bowl” deconstructs broadcast news coverage.

Jon Alpert and Keiko Tsuno  

Healthcare: Your Money or Your Life  
1977, 58 min  
Produced by Downtown Community Television in association with the TV Lab at WNET/13. Considered a wake-up call when it was first aired on public television 17 years ago, this still-timely documentary examines the ways in which social and economic inequities are inscribed within our healthcare system. The tape weaves the stories of patients and healthcare workers into a portrait of two Brooklyn medical institutions—the embattled Kings County Hospital, an aging facility short on staff, beds and supplies; and the prestigious and well-funded Downstate Medical Center.

Martha Rosler and Paper Tiger Television  

Born to Be Sold: The Strange Case of Baby SM  
1988, 35 min.  
Artist and critic Martha Rosler and the Paper Tiger Television collective collaborated on this insightful and scathing deconstruction of the infamous court battle between surrogate mother Mary Beth Whitehead and the couple who hired her to bear a baby. The tape, produced for Paper Tiger’s weekly public access show dedicated to critiquing the media, examines the ways that class and gender differences and institutional forces converged in the courtroom and the press to paint Whitehead as an unstable, manipulative and ignorant person unfit to keep the child she carried to term.
The following short pieces from one of the richest creative periods in video, by some of its foremost artists, incorporate unprecedented techniques that were visually startling in the 1970s. While many of their innovations have since been copied by commercial media, their artistry remains exhilarating.

Bill Viola
**The Reflecting Pool**
1977-79, 7 min.

Kit Fitzgerald and John Sanborn
**Olympic Fragments**
1980, 10 min.

Steina and Woody Vasulka
**Solo for 3**
1974, 4 min.

Skip Blumberg
**GLNGLNG**
1976, 5 min.

MICA-TV
[Carol Ann Klonarides and Michael Owen]
**CASCADE: Vertical Landscapes**
1988, 6 min.
Part of a series of tapes MICA-TV made in collaboration with contemporary artists, CASCADE integrates the work and visions of painter Dike Blair, photographer and sculptor Dan Graham and artist and composer Christian Marclay in its visual investigation of the urban landscape. The tape consists of a continuous series of vertical camera moves, shot with a specially designed cam-remote rig, and incorporates images by Graham and Blair with Marclay’s digitally sampled soundtrack.

Joan Jonas
**Volcano Saga**
1989, 28 min.
This gorgeous experimental narrative is based on the Medieval Icelandic saga of Laxdæla, in which a young woman, played by Tilda Swinton, has vivid dreams which foretell the future. Shot in Iceland and New York, this performance-based tape is a haunting dreamscape. Co-starring Ron Vawter

Barbara Kopple
**Harlan County, U.S.A.**
1976, 103 min.
In each of her two Academy Award-winning documentary films, Kopple has demonstrated vision and fortitude in following stories that give us engaged portraits of American labor. In Harlan County, U.S.A., she courageously portrays the struggles of miners and their families during a strike in eastern Kentucky.

Jill Godmilow
**Far from Poland**
1984, 109 min.
In collaboration with Mark Magill and Andrzej Tymowski, unable to secure a visa to enter Poland to film the Solidarity Movement, Godmilow works in New York City, drawing on letters, television images, film clips brought back by her and dramatic reenactments, to shape a personal meditation on the ability of the filmmaker to portray history. Challenged by her own assumptions about events in Poland and the limitations and possibilities of filmmaking, Godmilow explores and expands the documentary form.
Ralph Arlyck

Current Events
1989, 56 min.
Can one lead a morally engaged and satisfying life in the late twentieth century? How do we respond to the ceaseless stream of media images of suffering, injustice and crisis that beg for intervention? Arlyck's wry humor and quirky style guide us through this rumination on how to live as citizens in our times.

Kathe Sandler

A Question of Color
1993, 58 min.
Almost a decade in development, Kathe Sandler has crafted a personal documentary exploring "colorism"—the relationship between skin color and privilege within the Black community.

Rea Tajiri

History and Memory
1991, 30 min.
With Sokhi Wagner and Noel Shaw. Focusing on the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, Tajiri traces her mother's experience. This powerful work weaves personal memory with collective history. Archival footage is combined with family pictures, recollections and the artist's own video to examine rewriting history through media representations.

Philip Mallory Jones

The Trouble I've Seen
1976, 10 min.
Jones was a founder of the Ithaca Video Project, an active production and exhibition center in the early 1970s. In his own video work, Jones has explored the expressive juxtaposition of image and sound in his keenly observed video portraits. This tape is inspired by an oral history project begun by his mother. Ragtime and spirituals serve as a counterpoint to the images of black rural Georgia.

Veronika Soul

In the Seed
1992, 3 min.
A poem for peace and democracy by poet, Alex Jacobs, an Akwesasne Mohawk.
**Families and Friends**

**Madeline Figueroa**

*Hospital Dream*

1993. 4 min.

The youngest filmmaker represented in this series, Figueroa created this touching autobiographical animation and its soundtrack while she was a patient at Rusk Institute, New York City. Commissioned by Hospital Audiences.

**Ira Wohl**

*Best Boy*

1980. 1 hr. 10 min.

Wohl won an Academy Award for his deeply personal documentary about his cousin Philip—a mentally retarded 52 year-old whom Wohl helps toward a more independent life. The film looks at love, pain, adulthood and family.

**Robert Breer**

*Bang!

1983. 10 min.

A seminal avant-garde animator, Breer creates collages of unique personal images that dart and fly, disappear and materialize in ways that resonate both visually and emotionally. *Bang!* incorporates into its exhilarating choreography pencil sketches made by the artist as a ten-year-old.

**Robert Gardner**

*Clarence and Angel*

1980. 1 hr. 15 min.

Friendship is hope in Gardner's realistic story about the frustrations of growing up—especially growing up poor. The film follows the relationship between two 12-year-old outsiders—Clarence, a bright, but illiterate kid from a migrant family, and Angel, a wildly imaginative "problem child." Together, they discover the best in themselves through one another.

**Indu Krishnan**

*Knowing Her Place*

1990. 40 min.

A haunting, extraordinarily candid documentary portrait of Vasu, an Indian woman living in the U.S., Krishnan explores the intertwined personal and cultural issues that threaten to capsize Vasu's life as a wife, mother and professional. The tape conveys the complex texture of her emotional life through a variety of traditional and experimental documentary techniques.

**Daryl Patterson/WNYC**

*Poetry Spot: Two Black Men and a Baby on the Way*

1992. 2 min.

Visual interpretation of a poem by Paul S. Beatty.

**Julie Gustafson and John Reilly**

*Pursuit of Happiness*

1983. 60 min.

This artful documentary with the narrative and emotional engagement of drama is culled from the stories of a prison warden and his wife, a convict and members of the Ploughshares Eight, whose lives intersect. Professional lives, marriages, political commitments, love and family all come under scrutiny in this engrossing video-verite exploration of that 'inalienable' but elusive concept—"happiness."
Anita Thacher

Sea Travels
1978, 11 min.

A reverie on memories of childhood at the seashore is lyrically portrayed by Thacher through her masterful use of optical printing techniques.

Claudia Weill

Girlfriends
1977, 87 min.

Weill's first feature became the cross-over women's narrative film of the 1970s. This is a warm and wise tale of aspiring photographer, Susan Weinblatt (played by Melanie Mayron), struggling for a Soho gallery exhibition as she supports herself shooting wedding and Bar Mitzvah photos.

Skip Battaglia

Boccioni's Bike
1981, 8 min.

A delightful ode to movement, Battaglia's animation captures the energy and joy of a cyclist and his bike.

Spike Lee

She's Gotta Have It
1986, 84 min.

Lee had planned to direct a film about a bicycle messenger as his first feature, but changed course when production negotiations stalled. She's Gotta Have It demonstrated the talent of a bright young director who was not afraid of controversy. Spurned by many feminist critics for his portrayal of female sexuality and lauded by others, the tale of Nola, a woman unwilling to settle for any one of her lovers, was an overnight success for Spike Lee.

Su Friedrich

Sink or Swim
1990, 48 min.

This resonant autobiographical film is told as a series of 26 short stories about the filmmaker's relationship with her father. Incorporating home movies and found footage, Friedrich creates a complex and emotionally charged film.

Mark Rappaport

Rock Hudson's Home Movies
1992, 63 min.

Using an array of film and video techniques, Rappaport creates a new reading of Rock Hudson's films, carefully selecting his clips. A Hudson look-alike reflects on the actor's screen personae and career which were carefully constructed by the Hollywood studios and the media.
Chris Hill

Reproductive Histories Update
1989, 5 min.

This tape was produced for public-access TV in Buffalo as part of a series designed to stimulate public discussion of reproductive rights. Hill combines a soundtrack of spoken first-person reminiscences by women who detail their pre-Roe v. Wade reproductive histories and on-screen texts telling the stories of decisions and crises in other women's lives, with imagery that unifies them symbolically.

Lewis Klahr

Tales of the Forgotten Future, Part Three, Mood Opulence: Cartoon Far
1990, 5 min.

Inspired by the hand-made approach of animators like Harry Smith, Klahr's low-tech, cut-out animation evokes the subconscious material associated with memory and longing, often through the use of familiar images and music in surprising juxtapositions.

Tony Cokes and Donald Trammel

Fade to Black
1990, 35 min.

Using on-screen texts and verbal commentary to recontextualize clips from Hollywood films that malign or exclude African Americans, Cokes and Trammel "re-read" stereotypical images from the perspective of an artist and Black man who recognizes in them not himself—but the legacy of racism.

Vanalyne Green

A Spy in the House That Ruth Built
1989, 29 min.

Green unpacks and examines her attraction to the all-male preserve of baseball. This witty visual essay explores her perception of the sexual metaphors, familial associations and desires at the heart of the game.

Josh Blum/WNYC Poetry Spot

Rapunzel Was a Sister
1992, 2 min.

Visual interpretation of a clever poem by Pamela Sneed.

Ela Troyano

Carmelita Tropicana: Your Kunst Is Your Waffen
1993, 30 min.

Featuring performance artist, Carmelita Tropicana, Troyano has crafted a bawdy feminist musical, affectionately mocking the universe of "B" film characters and plots.

Jennie Livingston

Paris Is Burning
1990, 78 min.

Long before Madonna discovered vogueing, Jennie Livingston began to document the world of drag balls, where gay men, mostly black, could realize their dreams by creating new personae and posing as models.

Power Boothe

Overture
1990, 10 min.

Boothe's talents as a painter and set designer are evident in this dream-like film. Reminiscent of early avant-garde work such as Leger's Ballet Mécanique, Overture uses superimpositions to create an unreal sense of space. The imagery is choreographed to a piano score by A. Leroy, which was originally performed live at the film's debut at Dance Theatre Workshop.

Yvonne Rainer

Film About a Woman Who...
1974, 105 min.

One of the few artists to make seminal contributions to two different art forms, Rainer began making films in 1972 after a career as a dancer, choreographer and co-founder of the influential Judson Dance Theatre. In Film About a Woman Who..., Rainer disrupts the expected relationship between image and 'voice' in a way that transforms intensely personal material, and challenges traditional ideas about narrative.
Although independent media—that is, media produced outside the commercial industry—has existed in many guises since the invention of motion pictures a century ago, its current preponderance in the United States has many determinants. For independent producers, the issue has been access—access to the means of production, and access to audiences through distribution mechanisms. Since the commercial media industry is one of the most concentrated of capitalistic enterprises, the economic determinants of media production make access a graphic demonstration of the enforcement of social stratification.

Independent media production in the U.S. illustrates most vividly the clash between commerce and art. As last winter's stalled GATT negotiations over Hollywood's dominance of European film markets illustrates, the European model of filmmaking has always viewed films more as cultural than commercial products. From the very beginning, there were “films d'art,” which often documented great performers such as Bernhardt, Loie Fuller and Pavlova. Private patronage allowed many artists, including Man Ray, Picabia and Duchamp to create films. State-subsidized filmmaking provided the impetus for the careers of many European filmmakers, among them Ingmar Bergman, François Truffaut and the Taviani Brothers.

In the United States, the initiatives to create a base for noncommercial filmmaking came to fruition in the 1960s, when government arts funding agencies were established. One result was a shift from reliance on private funding to an acknowledgment of public funding. Many of the major cultural institutions in New York City had been created privately in the 1930s, including most of the major museums, such as The Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. When American arts funding began to coalesce in the 1960s, comparisons were made to European funding, yet the capitalist base for media production in the U.S. was so strong that independent initiatives often seemed hopelessly outmaneuvered.

Since then, government arts funding has enabled media organizations to provide access to workshop instruction and equipment for many groups previously disenfranchised from both the art world and the media industry. The result has been an increase in independent media production that is truly
reflective of cultural diversity. I would like to suggest some of the ways in which independent media has evolved, and how NYSCA has played a crucial role in these developments.

The current media landscape is marked by a great fluidity. Inexpensive media, resulting from recent advances in video technology, have produced a greater ease and immediacy in media production. Cable access shows, which often have lower production values, and reality television programs—which often intentionally adopt a low-tech look—have engendered different attitudes in relation to technical requirements for mainstream media. And the media environment continues to evolve. Movies are packaged in different formats, from videocassette to laser disc to CD-ROM, in addition to the traditional celluloid formats of 35-millimeter and 16-millimeter. Video has advanced from single monitors to large-scale projection, while high-definition and interactive technologies continue to improve. The possibilities seem infinite, the permutations and variations on media practices, media distribution and media consumption seem endless. To paraphrase a song by Timbuk 3, the future's so bright, we're gonna need shades.

By asserting the potential for technical ingenuity, artists have created new low-budget forms of media creation involving intensive cross-fertilization. This mixing of forms would have been considered heretical in the late 1960s, when video emerged as a fully defined art medium. At that time, the distinctions between video and film were extreme. There were many historical and technological reasons for this separation. But a major factor was an essentialist aesthetic regarding materiality which characterized all the arts at the time, from painting (Frank Stella, Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski), sculpture (Tony Smith, Donald Judd, Carl Andre), dance (Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer, Deborah Hay), as well as the media arts. In avant-garde film, many filmmakers defined materiality by emphasizing cinema's "pure" elements—light, film grain and the dimensionality of the filmic image. Films such as Tony Conrad's The Flicker (1966), Ken Jacobs's Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son (1969) and Ernie Gehr's Serene Velocity (1970) were insistent in their medium specificity.

But during the past decade, the intermix of media has intensified due to the expressive needs of artists seeking ways to create moving image work with budgetary flexibility. The mixing of film and video technologies has opened up new aesthetic options and enabled numerous ingenious
redefinitions—for example, having Super-8 film footage transferred to video; or shooting and editing on video and then transferring it to 16-millimeter film. In these ways, the integrity of medium boundaries does not seem as important as it once was. In a sense, the message now defines the medium. In this regard, Kathe Sandler’s recent documentary *A Question of Color* (1993) can be seen as exemplary.

Released theatrically in 16 millimeter, this “film” is actually a mix of 16mm film and video footage transferred to film. It addresses the issue of color-consciousness among African-Americans, and poses these questions: Are light-skinned blacks favored over dark-skinned blacks? Are standards of beauty among African-Americans defined by white society? Sandler combines interviews, footage of various people interacting with friends and family, archival film footage and television clips. This mixture of material is reflected in the mixture of formats. Because the urgency of her subject is most important to Sandler, she uses everything she can to explore it.

The media hybridity of *A Question of Color* has become a norm for independent mediamakers, for whom the issues of funding and access have been crucial. The democratization implicit in the funding directives of the New York State Council on the Arts has thus been of immense benefit. Though terms such as “cultural diversity” may now appear to be merely tokens of fashion, there really has been a marked increase in diversified media. Organizations funded by the New York State Council on the Arts, such as Third World Newsreel, Women Make Movies and Electronic Arts Intermix, now distribute film and video works by what has been dubbed “underrepresented populations”: African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Native Americans and women. The fact that these works and these organizations exist is a tribute to the initiatives of arts funding since the 1960s. Hence, the idea of diversity, once established, has been central to the development of independent media. NYSCA funding has seeded projects that have helped to identify audiences previously ignored by the mainstream media. Movies by Claudia Weill, Spike Lee, Todd Haynes and many others have defined women, African-Americans, and gays as constituencies, as major media consumers.

In trying to reflect the contemporary world, the artist is confronted with the media environment. Television is ubiquitous; home video has made the creation of moving image work as simple as picking up a camcorder. Telecommunications seem to be burgeoning with new technology. There is so much
that our electronic environment encompasses now; the issue of ensuring that there is equal access to this new technology is one of the rationales for government funding of educational facilities. To extend this argument: at this point, a working knowledge of computers is a fundamental necessity. So much depends on computer literacy now, that to lack this knowledge puts an individual at a tremendous disadvantage. But what if you can’t afford a computer? What if you go to a school where there are no computers? The public education system must make an effort, even though strapped for funds, to provide access to computers to all students, so that this important tool can be part of every student’s kit of skills.

In her first review as staff critic for The New Yorker, Pauline Kael wrote: "Movies have been doing so much of the same thing—in slightly different ways—for so long that few of the possibilities of this great hybrid art have yet been explored....When Méliès photographed his magic shows, when D.W. Griffith re-created the Civil War or imagined the Fall of Babylon, when Pabst made a movie with Chaliapin, when Flaherty went to photograph life in the Aran Islands or the South Seas, they were just beginning to tap the infinite possibilities of movies to explore, to record, to dramatize. Shipped in tins, movies could go anywhere in the world, taking a synthesis of almost all the known art forms to rich and poor. In terms of the number of people they could reach, movies were so inexpensive that they could be hailed as the great democratic art form." Though movies would seem to be comparatively inexpensive, the initial investment (camera equipment, film stock, lighting and sound equipment, etc.) remains prohibitively expensive for most people. But, starting in the 1960s, an era which saw a resurgence of interest in the democratic process, with civil rights, feminism, and gay rights among the causes igniting people's passions, media arts centers formalized attempts to disseminate the process of filmmaking to as many interested constituents as possible. Film became an integral part of liberal and fine arts education, with many colleges and universities offering courses in filmmaking, film history, and film theory. Many media centers offered access to equipment, which enabled new artists to develop.

One example is the Millennium Film Workshop in New York City. One of the founders of Millennium was the filmmaker Ken Jacobs, whose *Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son* (1969) remains a
landmark film utilizing techniques of rephotography. The optical printer at Millennium proved to be central to the developing aesthetic of a number of filmmakers who took filmmaking workshops at Millennium, including Marguerite Paris and Barbara Hammer. As emerging filmmakers in the 1970s, they continued to utilize the optical printer as the nexus of the architectonics of their work, often redefining and reclaiming imagery as specifically “female,” radicalizing this imagery further by a direct assertion of lesbianism. Thus, in this way, the tradition of the new in cinematic experimentation can be seen as a continuum, whereby the formalist techniques employed by Jacobs provided inspiration for other artists, who extended the techniques with personal imagery.

Jacobs himself remains a precursor of much that has happened in the independent cinema; starting in the early 1960s, he began to use small-gauge filmmaking (8-millimeter, Super-8) to create extended narratives. In some cases, he has used 8-millimeter footage and blown it up to 16-millimeter to redefine the narrative implications of a previous work, as in the recent manifestations (circa 1990) of The Sky Socialist, begun in 1965.

In 1972, Paul Sharits stated: “Stan Brakhage’s massive work is too expansive in its implications and richness to discuss here except to mention that his use of the camera as a behavioral extension, his forceful modulation of disjunction, ‘distractive’ ‘mistakes’ (blurs, splices, flares, framelines, flash frames, etc.) and his decomposition-reconstitution of ‘subjects’ in editing, because of their cinematically self-referential quality (they reveal the system by which they are made), bring cinema up to date with the other advanced arts.” Brakhage had utilized the subject of childbirth in his films Window Water Baby Moving (1959) and Thigh Line Lyre Triangular (1961); by the early 1970s, feminist theory began to question the deployment of feminine experience as the subject for male spectatorship. Marjorie Keller created a film, Misconception (1976), which reconstituted the techniques pioneered by Brakhage to reclaim the birth imagery from a feminine perspective. She also added sound in order to redefine her cinematic enterprise, allowing the female “voice” to be heard as a counterexample to the silence that defined Brakhage’s aesthetic. Keller worked in Super-8; she also worked in 16-millimeter, and her films often examined the differences in the textures between the different film gauges. This was particularly acute in her film, Daughters of Chaos (1981), a lyrical evocation of the shifting emotions of girlhood.
Keller, along with Leslie Thornton, Peggy Ahwesh, and Su Friedrich, was conversant in the varieties of different types of media production. Mixing their formats, these women created a critical feminist experimentation. One of the tropes providing an impetus for their works has been the use of autobiographical material: Friedrich's *The Ties That Bind* (1984) and *Sink or Swim* (1990) are examples. In defining this approach, Scott MacDonald has written: "By the 1980s, Friedrich was becoming convinced that the rejection of personal filmmaking, structural filmmaking, or other approaches did not 'liberate' cinema in any practical sense; it simply narrowed the options. The issue was not to avoid the personal or the systematic, but to reappropriate and reenergize as many useful dimensions of the previous film-critical practices as possible. Indeed, the consolidation of traditionally distinct arenas of independent film was to become one of Friedrich's signature strategies."

This consolidation is characteristic of a great many recent works in media, and narrative and autobiographical concerns have provoked an intense affectivity in the works. Some notable examples include Alan Berliner's *Intimate Stranger* (1991), his portrait of his grandfather; Rea Tajiri's *History and Memory* (1992), her investigation of the internment experience of her parents; and Roddy Bogawa's *Some Divine Wind* (1991), his narrative about the repercussions of World War II on a young Japanese-American student. These works fracture and continually redefine their stories, allowing breaks to comment on continuity, just as the intermingling of media proposes alternative perspectives.

I have tried to suggest some of the ways that independent media has permuted in the current period, and to suggest the place that organizations such as the New York State Council on the Arts have played in that development. For arts funding, the issue is access; rather obviously, the question of quality never can be addressed without ambiguity. What arts funding can hope to do is provide equal opportunity for those with an interest in pursuing the arts. In his critique of the institutionalization of avant-garde film in 1987, J. Hoberman declared: "It's not my intention to justify those who ignore the achievements of the American avant-garde.... Nor do I wish to discourage those who labor to extend those achievements. Their lot is tough enough: Film is fearfully expensive and hard to get right. The number of labs dwindle as the price of raw stock climbs—and even more than the rest of us, a-g filmmakers are oppressed by the waste and idiocy of most commercial movies.... Films like *Scorpio Rising* and *Flaming Creatures* were neither made for the avant-garde ghetto, nor

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**During the years when I had the honor to serve on the Film Panel,**

**I became more conscious than ever before of the importance**

**of state support of the arts, especially of film and video making.**

**Despite the pleasure and inspiration it can**

**give us, Hollywood has not—and**

**probably cannot—represent the healthy**

**range of insight into our diverse culture we**

**must have if our democratic ideals are**

**to be more than fantasy. A modest**

**investment by state government in film and**

**video alternatives to the industry can**

**play an important role in giving voice and**

**audience to the full, glorious range of**

**our media culture.**

Scott MacDonald
Professor of Film Studies and American Literature, Utica College of Syracuse University
contained by it; now avant-garde films appeared to illustrate particular doctrines or appeal to specific audiences. The rise of the institution subsidized mediocrity no less than genius.‖ Since Hoberman wrote his essay, the situation has actually gotten worse, because the economics have become even more prohibitive. Inexpensive film stocks have been phased out of the market; the grain of the film has been diminished, with a corresponding loss of richness and depth of hue; film stocks have been stabilized by narrowing the tonal range, leaving the exposed film with bland visual harmonics. One of the greatest of American filmmakers, Bruce Baillie, has spoken of the rigidity of the new film stocks, their inability to register subtleties of texture. Yet he has started to experiment in video, trying to discover ways to develop visual textures with simple home video equipment.

The revolution in media envisioned by Nam June Paik when he began to use the first video Portapak in the mid-1960s now encompasses a far broader range of possibilities. In “A Call for a New Generation of Film-makers‖ from 1959, Jonas Mekas exhorted his readers “to bring our film up to date. Hollywood films (and we mean Hollywoods all over the world) reach us beautiful and dead. They are made with money, cameras, and splicers, instead of with enthusiasm, passion, and imagination. If it will help us to free our cinema by throwing out the splicers and the budget-makers and by shooting our films on 16mm as Cassavetes did, let us do so.‖ Now, the same call would include Super-8 and video (Betacam, VHS, High-8), in addition to 16-millimeter. We have seen the implementation of varied modes of production as an enabler of access for a wide diversity of voices and visions. In this, the place of agencies such as the New York State Council on the Arts remains incalculable, for all the difficulties in determining validity. The access to media may not be limitless, but certainly there would not be opportunities for women, African-Americans and other ethnic Americans, without the impetus that institutionalization provided. The contemporary media environment continues to expand; the question is whether this environment will remain open to alternative modes of expression, or whether the encroachment of the commercial system simply is inevitable. In this, the directives provided by arts funding remain one of the major sources of decentralized production.

Daryl Chin is an artist and critic living in New York City.

Notes
In the late ‘50s and early ‘60s, something called the Underground Cinema was quietly taking form in New York. This so-called underground was inhabited by artists like Harry Smith, Shirley Clarke and Bob Breer who are affectionately remembered in this retrospective. I choose the word artists purposefully to describe this small, isolated bunch of 16mm filmmakers because they clearly saw themselves as working in the classic tradition of the painter, choreographer or poet. Only the medium was different. Artists like these were fascinated with the technology and were drawn to its expressive potential. They had few resources, no support system except each other sometimes, scant audience, and they were almost totally misunderstood because their work bore little resemblance to the industry entertainment product. Thirty years ago, there were no publicly funded programs to support artists, let alone filmmakers—no National Endowment for the Arts Media Arts Program, no New York State Council on the Arts Electronic Media and Film, or Individual Artists Programs. Artists had not received government grants since the Depression-era WPA. NYSCA, armed with tax dollars, would forge bold partnerships that would nurture our community. But, thirty years ago, very few people could have imagined this and no one could have foreseen what the words “independent” or “media arts” would mean today.

Looking back now, I can see that we were witnesses to an absolute flowering of the late twentieth-century arts of film and video.

Rodger Larson
Executive Director, Film/Video Arts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Film Project</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>$1,504,477</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>$1,936,968</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>$2,522,770</td>
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- All 50 states have arts councils.
- Film Project established; organizes first government-funded touring film program; cultivates new audiences and promotes critical viewing of media in programs in school districts and community centers in Peekskill, Auburn, Union Springs and rural Southern Cayuga. Films include David and Lisa, The Bicycle Thief and The Ballad of a Soldier. Funds for film rentals and guest speakers' fees also made available; speakers include Judith Crist, Susan Rice and John Simon.
- Film, video and multi-media work prominently featured in NYSCA-funded arts festivals and tours: "Contemporary Voices in the Arts" tours Billy Kliper and Stan VanDerBeek to colleges for workshops and public presentations; Experiments in Art & Technology (EAT) founded, supports creative collaborations between artists and engineers; funded in 1967.
- New York State Award instituted to recognize outstanding New York artists and organizations which have significantly enriched the lives of New Yorkers. Later renamed Governor's Arts Award.
- Film Project is reorganized as Film Program; supports broader range of activities—film tours, production training, equipment access and film appreciation.
- First funding for 16mm film production workshops:
  - The Film Club, workshop for Lower East Side teens, directed by Jaime Barrios.
  - Channel of Soul film workshop, Buffalo, directed by Pamela Dodes Felderman.
- Exhibition sites emerge in rural and urban areas around the state. Film Program arranges a week-long exhibition of international short films at the State Fair in Syracuse.
- Funding for teen production continues:
  - Rodger Larson and Lynne Hofer expand the model of the Film Club's workshops, working with organizations around state through Young Filmmakers' Foundation.
  - Educational Broadcasting Corporation funded for documentary on a street version of "Everyman," performed by teens and produced by actress Geraldine Fitzgerald and Brother Jonathan Ringcamp.
- Experimental media artists funded as part of "Intermedia 68," a theater workshop at the Brooklyn Academy of Music; includes environmental video performances, film projections and videotapes by Aldo Tambellini, Nam June Paik, Les Levine, Carolee Schneemann, Terry Riley, Dick Higgins, Ken Dewey, USCO and others.
- New Sounds, Inc., under the direction of Tony Schwartz, funded for audio art for broadcast over WNYC.
1969

Budget: $2,292,837
Film and Television Program: $46,000

- Film Program becomes Film and Television Program; begins accepting proposals for electronic media; expands support for production through schools and community workshops.
- Funding continues for youth projects:
  - Aldo Tambellini works with students and teachers in Rochester, Syracuse, Buffalo, Schenectady and NYC to experiment with creative potential of TV.
  - Loft Film and Theater Workshop, Bronxville, established.
  - Library workshop in Albany and programs in several other counties.
  - Young Filmmakers initiates distribution service for works produced under its auspices; one film, "The End," by Alfonso Sanchez Jr., screened at Cannes Film Festival.
- Multi-media experimentation supported:
  - Elaine Summers Experimental Intermedia Foundation funded for projects at C.W. Post College.
  - Thais Latham funded to develop a multi-media music center in Brooklyn.
- First American exhibition devoted exclusively to video art: "TV as a Creative Medium," at the Howard Wise Gallery, New York City.

1970

Budget: $20,208,570
Film, Literature and TV/Media Program: $1,575,625

- NYSCA establishes the Creative Artists Public Service (CAPS) program to provide grants to individual artists, administered by the Cultural Council Foundation; Fellowship recipients required to participate in a public service project, under direction of Isabelle Fernandez.
- Equipment access funded:
  - Media Equipment Resource Center (MERC) established, a short-term loan pool for Super-8 and 16mm equipment, administered by Young Filmmakers' Foundation.
  - Millennium Film Workshop, NYC
  - Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester.
- Film production funding:
  - National Black Theatre Workshop, for a film tribute to Malcolm X by Woodie King Jr.
  - Meredith Monk's House Foundation.
- Film exhibition funded:
  - Lincoln Center, to organize film programs in 39 upstate communities. Other exhibition programs are initiated in many communities.
  - Film Art Fund (Anthology Film Archives), under direction of Jonas Mekas, first NYSCA support for screenings at Public Theatre, NYC.
  - The Jewish Museum, in conjunction with the Harlem Cultural Council, for a Black Film Festival, which tours to other sites nationally.
- Film Program awards first grant to Educational Film Library Association (EFLA), an organization under direction of Nadine Covert, whose broad definition of educational film helped raise the profile of independents; and begins funding libraries to purchase 16mm foreign, classic and independent films for lending collections.
- First funding to public television stations in Binghamton, Rochester, Garden City, Schenectady, Buffalo and Syracuse for cultural programming; several stations receive support to make equipment available to artists; Jackie Cassen commissioned to develop Artists' Television Workshop at WNET (Channel 13), which leads to the founding of the TV Lab at WNET/13 in 1972.
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- Film Program awards first grant to Educational Film Library Association (EFLA), an organization under direction of Nadine Covert, whose broad definition of educational film helped raise the profile of independents; and begins funding libraries to purchase 16mm foreign, classic and independent films for lending collections.
- First funding to public television stations in Binghamton, Rochester, Garden City, Schenectady, Buffalo and Syracuse for cultural programming; several stations receive support to make equipment available to artists; Jackie Cassen commissioned to develop Artists' Television Workshop at WNET (Channel 13), which leads to the founding of the TV Lab at WNET/13 in 1972.
- NYSCA establishes the Creative Artists Public Service (CAPS) program to provide grants to individual artists, administered by the Cultural Council Foundation; Fellowship recipients required to participate in a public service project, under direction of Isabelle Fernandez.
- Equipment access funded:
  - Media Equipment Resource Center (MERC) established, a short-term loan pool for Super-8 and 16mm equipment, administered by Young Filmmakers' Foundation.
  - Millennium Film Workshop, NYC
  - Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester.
- Film production funding:
  - National Black Theatre Workshop, for a film tribute to Malcolm X by Woodie King Jr.
  - Meredith Monk's House Foundation.
- Film exhibition funded:
  - Lincoln Center, to organize film programs in 39 upstate communities. Other exhibition programs are initiated in many communities.
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1971

Budget: $14,441,706
Film, TV/Media, Literature: $1,316,950

- Film and video centers emerge throughout the state. First-time funding awarded to:
  - The Collective for Living Cinema, NYC, for screenings and 16mm film workshops.
  - Film Forum, NYC, to exhibit independent films.
  - International Museum of Photography/George Eastman House, Rochester, for film screenings and an International Film Festival.
  - Media Study Buffalo, under direction of Gerald O'Grady, for equipment access, workshops and film/video screenings.
  - Women's Interart Center, NYC, under direction of Margot Lewitin, for a first festival of women's films (organized by Kristin Nordstrom) and to begin a film production workshop.
  - Everson Museum, Syracuse, (film) Guggenheim Museum (film) and Finch College Museum of Art (video).

- TV/Media program works with the seven public TV stations in the New York Network to develop "Carousel," a 13-part series of cultural programs originating in different parts of the state.

- Cable projects funded:
  - Open Channels, under direction of Thea Sklower.
  - NYU Media Co-op, under direction of George Stoney.
  - Experiments in Art & Technology, under direction of Billy Klüver.
  - Media Bus, Lanesville, established by the Videofreex, for mobile media bus workshop program.
  - Space for Innovative Development, under direction of Paul Ryan.

- Electronic Arts Intermix, NYC, funded for the Avant-Garde Festival at the 59th Regiment Armory, organized by Charlotte Moorman.

1972

Budget: $16,452,250
Film, TV/Media, Literature: $1,402,632

- Workshop and equipment centers funded:
  - Electronic Arts Intermix, NYC, for an editing facility.
  - Portable Channel, Rochester, for a video center.
  - Women Make Movies, NYC, under direction of Ariell Doherty, for filmmaking workshops in Chelsea.
  - Downtown Community Television, NYC, founded by Jon Alpert and Keiko Tsuno, for workshops and media arts center in Chinatown.
  - Ithaca Video Project, under direction of Philip Mallory Jones and Fred Mangone, for workshops and video equipment access.
  - Women's Interart Center, NYC, for an equipment pool and workshop program organized by Ronnie Geist.
  - Experimental Television Center, Owego, to develop Paik-Abe video synthesizer.
  - Workshops for children and teens in many communities.

- Film and video exhibition programs funded:
  - The Electronic Kitchen, NYC, Steina and Woody Vasulka, founding directors, for video and multi-media events.
  - Upstate Films, Rhinebeck, for international film screenings; under direction of Steve and DeDe Leiber.
  - The Eyevision Museum, Syracuse, for video exhibition program, including an installation of work by Frank Gillette; David Ross, video curator.

- Cable projects funded:
  - Henry Street Settlement, NYC, for "Pete's House Video Productions."
  - Woodstock Community Television.
  - Genesee Region Video Journal, through NYSCA's Isolated Communities Program.
  - Art Works on TV, NYC, for a facility at Automation House.

The contribution that NYSCA has made to my artistic work as well as that of many others goes beyond the funding of any individual piece. It has been important in establishing and maintaining the support structures for the creation and exhibition of the artwork, since without them getting funded is almost pointless.

Edin Velez
Video Artist
1973
Budget: $16,601,000
Film, TV/Media, Literature: $1,419,525

- NYSCA publishes reference guide, *Video Resources in New York State.*
- Film exhibition funded:
  - Cornell Cinema, Ithaca, for its year-round film screenings.
  - Filmmaker’s Co-op, founded in 1962, receives first-time funding.
- First-time support to White Ox, Rochester, for film production equipment access and workshops.

1974
Budget: $35,957,900
Film Program: $1,077,172
TV/Media: $1,233,770

- Increased support directed to film and video production.
- Women/Artist/Filmmakers, NYC, is funded to present and produce films and tapes.
- Independent film and video distributors funded:
  - Electronic Arts Intermix, NYC, video.
  - American Federation of Arts, NYC, film tours.
- “Open Circuits: An International Conference on the Future of Television,” held at the Museum of Modern Art with NYSCA support; curators, artists and critics share ideas and models of production, distribution and exhibition of video art.
- ZBS Foundation, Fort Edward, receives funding for sound/audio art experiments.

1975
Budget: $35,947,000
Film, TV/Media, Literature: $2,785,400

- NYSCA receives NEA matching funds for the “Bicentennial Film Project,” providing production funds for films on the arts and cultural life of New York State. Projects included Ken Burns’s *Brooklyn Bridge,* Barbara Kopple’s *Harlan County, U.S.A.,* and Claudia Weill’s *Girlfriends.*
- Film and video exhibition funded:
  - Museum of Modern Art, for “Cineprobe” series, for filmmakers to screen and discuss their work.
  - Whitney Museum of American Art, for “Projected Video” exhibition; video becomes regular part of museum’s exhibition programs under direction of John Hanhardt.
  - New Community Cinema, Huntington, for year-round international film screenings, under direction of Charlotte Sky and Victor Skolnick.
  - First International Festival of Women’s Films, NYC.
  - Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), NYC, for screenings, workshops and publication of a newsletter; Ed Lynch, first director.
- Intermedia Art Center (IMAC), Bayville, under direction of Michael Rothbard, for a media equipment center.
- *Camera News,* NYC, for independent film productions and a Third World film series.
- WNET/13 funded for a new independent video series, “Video/Television Review” (VTR); becomes “Video/Film Review” in 1979.
- Pacifica Radio/WBAI, NYC, funded for experimental audio programming.

1976
Budget: $29,015,900
Film, TV/Media, Literature: $2,564,560

- Direct support of film production continues to grow despite NYSCA’s reduced budget.
- Independent Creative Artists Project (ICAP), under direction of Kitty Morgan, funded to help independents market work on cable.
1977
Budget: $29,431,656
Film Program: $1,455,000
TV/Media: $992,000

- Film, Literature and Media are grouped in new Administrative Division of Communications Arts. Film Program expands and formalizes film production funding.
- The MERC Directory of Independently Produced Media Work by NYS artists is published by Young Filmmakers with NYSCA support.
- Astoria Motion Picture Foundation funded to study development of programs for independent video and filmmakers and the general public using former motion picture studio in Queens.
- Hallwalls, Buffalo, receives first funds for video exhibition and documentation of arts events.
- Media Center for Children, under direction of Maureen Gaffney, is funded to research and train teachers, librarians and museum staff in ways to use independent films with young audiences.
- Barbara Kopple's Harlan County, U.S.A., wins an Academy Award for Best Documentary.

1978
Budget: $32,829,945
Film: $1,447,000
Media: $1,078,000

- Jerome Foundation begins awarding fellowships for film- and videomakers in New York State.
- Black Filmmaker Foundation is founded by Warrington Hudlin and George Cunningham, with NYSCA funding, begins "Dialogues with Black Filmmakers," screening Black independent films in community centers throughout NYC.
- Writer's Guild establishes a fellowship/mentor program with NYSCA funding.
- The Frederick Douglass Creative Arts Center offers screenwriting workshops; under direction of Fred Hudson.
- Video exhibition and television programs funded:
  - WNET/13, for premiere season of "Independent Focus" series.
  - Museum of Modern Art, for "Video Viewpoints" series, for video makers to screen and discuss their work.
  - The Educational Film Library Association, NYC, to screen video in the American Film Festival.
  - Artists Television Network, founded in 1976 by Jaime Davidovich, for production and cablercasting of artists' work.

1979
Budget: $34,514,384
Film: $1,477,598
Media: $1,127,000

- The New York Council for the Humanities begins supporting film and video.
- Asian Cine-Vision receives first-time funding for a cable series and video workshops. The first Asian-American Film Festival receives support under the sponsorship of the Asian-American Film Institute.
- American Independents Festival is held as a sidebar to the New York Film Festival, with NYSCA support, later becomes Independent Feature Project.
- NYSCA funds Entermedia's "American Mavericks Film Festival," NYC, and statewide tour.
- The Governor's Office for Motion Pictures and Television established.

1980
Budget: $34,456,068
Film: $1,550,315
Media: $1,170,000

- Film and Media Programs award first funds for Arts Programming for Television, a three-year funding initiative supporting collaborative works by video and filmmakers and other artists.
- Film Program establishes a separate category for film preservation; Anthology Film Archives receives funds to preserve 16mm independent films.
- The Film Fund receives NYSCA funds to administer grants program for independent film and video production, using money from individual donors and small foundations; under direction of Jennifer Lawson.
- The National Alliance of Media Arts Centers (NAMAC) is established; later renamed National Alliance of Media Art and Culture.
- Media Alliance, formed in 1979, receives funding to organize a professional network of video artists and media arts organizations.
- Art at the Olympics is funded to commission independent video projects for the 1980 Winter Olympic Games, Lake Placid; artists include Skip Blumberg, Kit Fitzgerald/John Sanborn and Nam June Paik.
- Wendy Clarke's Love Tapes, an interactive video installation, is exhibited at the World Trade Center.
- Harvestworks, NYC, under direction of Gerald Lindahl, is funded to provide audio equipment services.
- Ira Wohl's NYSCA-funded film, Best Boy (1980), wins Academy Award for Best Documentary.

Wendy Clarke, Love Tapes, 1980
1981

Women's International Independent Film Festival at the Bleecker Street Cinema, NYC, organized by Women Make Movies.

Film Forum, under direction of Karen Cooper, reopens as a multi-plex theater with the first full-time independent feature screen.

The first National Latino Film and Video Festival, organized by Lillian Jimenez at El Museo del Barrio, NYC.

Paper Tiger Television, NYC, is established, with NYSCA funding for its first season.

1982

Media Program gives first grants for video preservation and video criticism.

Crandall Library, Glens Falls, receives funding for its independent filmmaker series.


1983

Film Program begins pilot program to support distribution of NYSCA-funded films.

Two new cooperative programs with industry funded; allow artists to use commercial facilities at reduced rates:

- Standby, founded by Rick Feist and Alex Roshuk.
- Online, established by Media Alliance.

1984

NYSCA creates Individual Artists Program to oversee support to filmmakers, media artists and other artists.

Library projects funded:
- Mid-Hudson Library System, Poughkeepsie, to create an ongoing electronic Union of Catalogue listing all film and video holdings in public library systems in New York State.
- Sidney Lumet receives Governor’s Arts Award.

NYSCA funding within a highly competitive and media-saturated region has been a virtual seal of approval that has leveraged other sources of financial support.

Through skillful cross-fertilization on their panels, the staff has galvanized the field to take up the issue of diversity in a serious and principled manner.

The quality, diversity and sheer magnitude of media supported by NYSCA speaks volumes for the agency.

Lillian Jimenez
Arts Consultant

Richard Schmelchen
and Robert Epstein: The Times of Harvey Milk, 1984
1985
Budget: $45,099,350
Film: $1,495,800
Media: $1,020,000
Individual Artists: $759,200

- Checkerboard Foundation receives matching funds from NYSCA for video artists’ fellowships.
- New York Foundation for the Arts begins to administer NYSCA-funded film, video and screenwriting fellowships.
- Akwesasne Cultural Center, Hogansburg, funded for video workshops and to tour Native American films to community centers in northern New York.
- “New Television” series of artists’ videotapes inaugurated at WNET; WGBH-Boston becomes co-producer the following year.
- Richard Schmeichen and Robert Epstein’s NYSCA-funded The Times of Harvey Milk (1985), wins Academy Award for Best Documentary.
- Nam June Paik receives Governor’s Arts Award.

1986
Budget: $49,433,632
Film: $1,569,930
Media: $1,127,000
Individual Artists: $845,699

- “Premiere: First Conference on Film Exhibition,” co-organized by Film Program and the Crandall Library, Glens Falls.
- Start-up season of Deep Dish Television, providing satellite transmission of community video to cable stations and public television nationally.
- Start-up funds to Squeaky Wheel media center, Buffalo; Julie Zando first director.
- Sara Driver’s NYSCA-funded Sleepwalk (1986) opens the Semaine des Critiques at the Cannes Film Festival.

1987
Budget: $54,104,906
Film: $1,608,266
Media: $1,169,603
Individual Artists: $905,531

- PARTICIPATE’s Directory of Public Access Cable Channels and Related Video Resources in New York State published with NYSCA funding.
- New York Foundation for the Arts organizes the first “American Independents in Berlin,” a marketing initiative at the Berlin Film Festival designed to secure European co-production and distribution contracts for independent American film.
- Albany’s WAMC-FM hosts a conference on “Public Radio and Its Place in the Arts,” co-sponsored with the State Office of Education and NYSCA.
- Spike Lee’s NYSCA-supported She’s Gotta Have It (1986) becomes a blockbuster crossover hit.

1988
Budget: $56,910,795
Film: $1,726,000
Media: $1,309,655
Individual Artists: $884,000

- The American Museum of the Moving Image opens in Astoria, providing permanent exhibitions, screenings, seminars and other public programs on film, television and video.
- Anthology Film Archives inaugurates its new facilities at Second Street and Second Avenue.
- International Museum of Photography/George Eastman House, Rochester, inaugurates new building which includes a study center, a second screening room and new archival facilities. Film Department Curator, Jan-Christopher Horak, extends invitation to independent filmmakers to store their films at this facility.
- Central New York Programmer’s Group is established to help upstate exhibitors and educators develop touring circuits for independent film and video.
- Start-up funds to Latino Collaborative, NYC, to provide production support services and to increase the visibility of Latino video- and filmmakers.
- Olean Public Library and Film Program co-sponsor a workshop on rural film exhibition for NYS exhibitors during the library’s annual “Rural Images Film and Video Festival”, under the direction of Jean Haynes.
- Exit Art organizes New York’s first International Festival of Super-8 Film; curated by Jordi Torrent.
- Ghassan Ebrahimian’s NYSCA-funded The Suitors is only U.S. film included in Director’s Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival.
- Irwin Young and DuArt Film Lab receive Governor’s Arts Award.
1989
Budget: $60,169,500
Film: $1,855,000
Media: $1,363,000
Individual Artists: $1,030,000

- Council implements multi-year support for Film and Media Production using NEA Challenge III money.
- "Show the Right Thing, National Conference on Multi-Cultural Exhibition," co-sponsored by Film News Now, NYSCA and the Rockefeller Foundation, held in New York City; brings together artists, curators, critics, educators, funders and distributors to build networks and showcase independent film and video.
- Apparatus Productions, established in 1988 by Barry Ellsworth, Todd Haynes and Christine Vachon, funded to initiate a regrant program for emerging experimental narrative filmmakers.

1990
Budget: $55,692,100
Electronic Media and Film: $2,764,000
Individual Artists: $1,050,000

- Council merges Media and Film Programs into Electronic Media and Film Program.
- Barbara Kopple's American Dream (1990), wins an Academy Award for Best Documentary.
- Stephanie Black's H-2 Worker (1990) is selected Best Documentary at Sundance Institute's U.S. Film Festival.

1991
Budget: $33,262,500
Electronic Media and Film: $1,623,197
Individual Artists: $596,000

- American Museum of the Moving Image, Astoria, presents "Shigeko Kubota" retrospective; curated by Joanne Hanley.
- Media Alliance organizes a symposium on video preservation hosted by the Museum of Modern Art.
- The Independent Television Service (ITVS), a national production fund, is established with Federal funding.

1992
Budget: $27,315,100
Electronic Media and Film: $1,270,000
Individual Artists: $300,000

- Due to budget reductions, the Individual Artists Program begins alternate-year funding for film and media production grants.
- The Film Society at Lincoln Center establishes the International Video Arts Festival as annual program of the New York Film Festival.
- Leslie Harris's film Just Another Girl on the IRT (1992) is a cross-over success in commercial theaters.
- Camille Billops and James Hatch's Finding Christa (1991) is selected Best Documentary at Sundance Institute's U.S. Film Festival.
1993

Budget: $26,129,900
Electronic Media and Film: $1,455,000
Individual Artists: $400,000

- "Montage '93," Rochester, an international, city-wide conference and festival of exhibitions, screenings and commissioned video installations, conceived by Nathan Lyons, Director, Visual Studies Workshop.
- New Community Cinema, Huntington, reopens as a twin-screen cinema with new workshop facilities.
- David Blair's Wax, or the Discovery of Television Among the Bees is the first feature-length work transmitted over the Internet.

1994

- Steve Martin's Theremin is selected Best Documentary at Sundance Institute's U.S. Film Festival.
- "Set in Motion" opens at the Walter Reade Theater, the Film Society of Lincoln Center.

BY LEANNE MELLA

On TELEVISION

On a late October afternoon in 1976, just before the evening rush hour, a man joined the flow of pedestrian traffic on the northeast corner of 23rd Street and Park Avenue in Manhattan. Dressed in a fatigue-style jacket and jeans, he began to slowly walk east toward Lexington Avenue. To the casual observer, the man seemed slightly disoriented; from time to time he appeared to be speaking into the collar of his jacket. However, this was not the behavior of an eccentric New Yorker, but a street performance by artist Bill Beirne. The piece, entitled Cross Reference, was a week-long exploration of public image. Sponsored by The Kitchen Center for Video and Music, it was simultaneously cablecast live on two public access channels of Manhattan Cable Television.

As Beirne continued walking, two camera operators leaned out of the windows of an eighth-floor studio in a building across the street. From that vantage point, using walkie-talkies, they chose the pedestrians who would become the momentary subjects of the artist's investigation of persona. These individuals, caught on camera, occupied their own channel space opposite Beirne's. One of a series of performances from the early seventies dealing with constructions of the self, Cross Reference was innovative for its radical break with the conventional form of television. Because Manhattan Cable was willing to transmit the program with no further contextualization over two channels simultaneously, Beirne was able to create a single performance event that required the audience to continually switch between channels to view the piece in its entirety.

Earlier the same month, Douglas Davis had presented a live, two-way cablecast between Anthology Film Archives and Manhattan Cable TV. The piece, Reading Brecht in 3/4 Time, also
The Council has weathered many a storm. Something has been right. The panels were "diverse" before that was a style, the administrators properly humble, the money given out cautiously, the contracts presented without condescension and always with apologies that the grants were not larger. Like those of us who have saved and promoted community gardens, the media arts administrators were there for us. There were regulations to buck, codes to develop, deals to be made in the dull halls of compromise and negotiation. There were pests to dodge and heavy boots to fend off. A salute to those gardeners with sharp hoes and green thumbs!

DeeDee Halleck
Independent Producer

employed Citizens-Band radio, the computer BBS of its day. In April 1976, Davis's performance of Three Silent and Secret Acts live from The Kitchen and Manhattan Cable TV, had been facilitated by Manhattan Cable's installation of a direct link to their transmission facility from The Kitchen's exhibition space at 484 Broome Street. Davis followed these projects with a live, multi-point cablecast from the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1977. Four Places Two Figures One Ghost was the first live performance telecast from a New York City museum.

Each of Davis's projects attempted to use TV as a private medium, one usually viewed in personal space, and all shared a belief in the potential of television as an interactive medium. Thus, the live performance of Reading Brecht, in which Davis read "The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication," Bertolt Brecht's 1932 treatise on radio as a genuine two-way communications medium, became the inaugural event of Cable Soho. This consortium of artists and arts organizations in lower Manhattan was formed to find interactive uses for the public access channels then available in New York City.

Throughout the 1970s, numerous individuals and groups combined and recombined to produce innovative and challenging programs and performances using communications technology. Some of those with the most long-lasting effects may only be perceived as a blip in time: as early as 1971, the Everson Museum's video curator, David Ross, produced live call-in shows with artists on WCNY in Syracuse; in 1976, Liza Bear and Keith Sonnier's Send/Receive Satellite Network, a project of the Center for New Art Activities, linked artists in southern California and New York at a temporary outdoor performance space on the Hudson River landfill, now the site of Battery Park City; and in 1981, Douglas Davis used a live satellite link between the Whitney Museum and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris to perform his Double Entendre.

All these projects reflect a particularly fertile period for artists working in television. During this time conceptual and visual artists, independent producers and the organizations exhibiting their work, used both direct and institutional support from the New York State Council on the Arts to commission and present diverse cable and broadcast projects in New York State, on national television, and in closed-circuit, low-power and satellite transmitted experimental works. In funding a broad array of projects exploring the creative uses of television beginning in the early 1970s, NYSCA had seeded the bed on several fronts. It supported groups that were using small-format video as a means of democratizing
the media; funded public television stations across the state in an effort both to make broadcast-quality facilities accessible to artists, and put their work on TV; and awarded grants for artists working with museums and adventurous cable operators.

Low-cost production facilities and sidelong glances at power politics have been a staple of alternative TV since its inception. In the summer of 1976, the Democratic National Convention was held in New York City at Madison Square Garden. The convention that nominated Jimmy Carter provided grist for the alternative TV mill, and a loose consortium of independent producers from New York State and around the country converged to produce five nights of live and taped coverage. Calling themselves Image Union, the group included members of Media Bus/Lanesville TV, Video Repertorie, TVTV and others. The Five-Day Bicycle Race, as the show was called, was cablecast live for three hours each night on Manhattan Cable Public Access Channel D. Using coveted sets of press credentials, several crews visited the convention floor to shoot interviews with delegates, politicians and, of course, the ubiquitous members of the mainstream media. Other crews spread out across the city to shoot the short stories and engaging sidebars for which so many of these producers are justifiably so well known.

The group would then return to the same funky East 23rd Street studio used for Bill Beirne's street performance, and which, in 1980 became home to the weekly cable program produced by the fledgling Paper Tiger Television collective. There, they would edit half-inch, black-and-white, open-reel Portapak footage or simply roll raw tape into the often humorous, and occasionally provocative alternative convention coverage. Image Union completed its coverage on election night with Mock Turtle Soup, a program presented live, in color, from Automation House. Despite their move to a high-end production facility in a chic, uptown location, the group's off-beat look at political power in America remained undiluted.

The desire for access to more sophisticated production tools led to the creation of the TV Lab at WNET/13 in 1972. Starting with an annual budget of $375,000, in a $400-per-month studio, the TV Lab was funded by NYSCA and the Rockefeller Foundation. Until it closed in 1984, it provided production grants and residencies for hundreds of film- and videomakers. While the lab's budget was small by commercial TV standards, for many artists it represented an opportunity to work in a "high-end" facility. Nam June Paik's Global Groove and other early tapes appropriating commercial TV, Bill
Viola’s elegant meditative works from the late seventies, and *Art Herstory*, Hermine Freed’s humorous 1972 re-reading of the history of art, were produced at the Lab and aired on Thirteen.

It was to the Lab’s director, the late David Loxton, that Michael Shamberg of Top Value Television (TVTV) brought his proposal for *The Lord of the Universe*, an hour-long documentary on the activities of the Guru Maharaj Ji. At a time when television news organizations had yet to make the leap from 16mm film, TVTV linked the styles and techniques of the New Journalism then in vogue to emerging video technologies, thus pioneering a new means of imagemaking for television.

Having produced two shows on the 1972 political conventions, *Four More Years* and *The World’s Largest TV Studio*, for cable and broadcast, the collective now turned its irreverent (camera) eye on the teen-age cult leader and his followers. In order to expose the intimidation and hints of violence lurking just below the surface of the smiling guru’s multi-million-dollar enterprise, the group traveled to Houston to cover Millennia ’73, to which thousands of the guru’s “preemies” had flocked in order to levitate the Astrodomethrough meditation.

Like other TVTV projects, *The Lord of the Universe* was produced for about $30,000. WNET’s President, John Jay Iselin, was so impressed with the group’s work, that he raised additional private funds to allow the Lab to commission five more TVTV programs, among them the series *Gerald Ford’s America*. Shamberg, a founding member of Raindance, the seminal alternative media group; publisher of *Radical Software* with Beryl Korot and Ira Schneider; and latter-day Hollywood producer, had coined the term “guerrilla television” to describe the activities of new media makers, particularly those oriented toward exploiting the potential of cable access and small-format video. While the spirit of guerrilla television may have reached its apogee in the overlapping collectives and collaborative projects of the seventies, there has been no more consistent effort than that manifest by two alternative media groups founded a decade apart.

One rural, the other urban; each reflecting the sensibilities of their age, Lanesville TV and Paper Tiger Television represent committed alternative media. Now in its 14th year, Paper Tiger TV is comprised of media activists and artists “challenging and changing the communications industries” through their relentless critique of news and popular media delivered in a weekly series of lively half-hour public access programs. If Paper Tiger’s efforts were prefigured by the alternative projects of the

If Sony was midwife to the video movement, NYSCA was nursemaid. The Council made it possible for the group I worked with, the Videofreex, to flee the city in 1971, for a mountainside in Lanesville. I appreciated the legislature’s sensitivity about a place called Upstate and how people there were as ready as the denizens of the metropolis to experience video. The Council nurtured the movement not just because it dispensed more money for video than any organization before or since, but because of the way it spent what it had by its determination to resist defining precisely what constituted the medium or its messengers.

Parry D. Teasdale
Managing Editor, Woodstock Times
Leanne Mellaparticipatedinnumerous artists’ television projects beginning in the 1970s, and is currently organizing exhibitions in the U.S. and the Baltic.'

Notes

1 Manhattan Cable Television, now Time Warner Cable, deserves some credit for this and many of the projects discussed in this essay. An engaged Public Access Department, first under the direction of Robert Mariano, then Steve Lawrence, and Fred Ciccone, was open and receptive to the work of individual artists and arts organizations, large and small.

2 Cable Soho, renamed Soho TV and directed by Jaime Davidson, remained active through the early 1980s, producing numerous videotapes and live projects with artists and independent producers.

3 A complete list is difficult to reconstruct, but would certainly include Jane Aaron, Andy Aaron, Eddie Becker, Skip Blumberg, Nancy Cain, Max Cohen, Bart Friedman, Joel Gold, DeeDee Halleck, Scott Jacobs, Chuck Kennedy, Paul MacIsaac, Bill Marpet, Ritt Marpet, Fern McBride, Jack Milton, Joanna Milton, Caryn Rogoff, Elion Soites, Parry Teasdale, Carol von Tobel and Tom Weinberg.


5 Core members of Media Bus were Jane Aaron, Skip Blumberg, Nancy Cain, David Cort, Bart Friedman, Davidson Gigliotti, Chuck Kennedy, Parry Teasdale, Carol von Tobel and Ann Woodward.

From Spike Lee's She's Gotta Have It to Leslie Harris's Just Another Girl on the IRT, from Todd Haynes's Poison to Jennie Livingston's Paris Is Burning, from Bette Gordon's Variety to Mark Rappaport's Rack, Hudson's Home Movies, NYSCA has been a catalyst for a new New York wave of independent filmmaking. NYSCA provided early funds for films that might otherwise have been thought difficult or marginal, thus encouraging more cautious and commercially-minded investors to come aboard. It threw its support behind "other" points of view: feminist, gay, African-American, Asian, Hispanic. Without NYSCA funding for production and exhibition, creative filmmaking in New York would have withered away years ago.

Amy Taubin
Critic, The Village Voice
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Film and video are the most dynamic creative media today. The filmmaking community has an endless supply of artistic and intellectual energy, but few sources of funding support. By enabling worthy film and video projects to come to fruition, and helping them find larger audiences, NYSCA shows how public arts funding serves both artists and the film-watching public. It is impossible to measure NYSCA's contributions over three decades in nurturing the creative passion that makes our independent filmmaking community the best in the world.

Jennifer Lawson
Executive Vice President, National Programming and Promotion Services, PBS; former Executive Director, The Film Fund
Bullets for Breakfast
1992, 72 min., Film

Interpolation
1979, 26 min., Videotape

Resolution of the Eye
1980, 40 min., Videotape

Olympic Fragments
1980, 11 min., Videotape

How to Be Louise
1989, 52 min., Film

Strong Medicine
1979, 84 min., Film

Total Rain
1990, 30 min., Videotape

The Beat Generation: An American Dream
1981, 50 min., Film

The Phans of New Jersey
1980, 35 min., Videotape

Variety
1984, 97 min., Film

A Day at a Time
1992, 57 min., Film

Clarence and Angel
1980, 75 min., Film

La Operation
1982, 40 min., Film

Cocolas and Roqueros
1992, 45 min., Film

A Day at a Time
1992, 57 min., Film

The House of the Hammer, Barbara
1990, 94 min., Film

The Gulf Crisis TV Project
1991, 28 min., Videotape

Casting the First Stone
1993, 54 min., Videotape

Don't Clap, 1998

Kaveri Dutta, One Hand

From 1971 to my current project, NYSCA support has been critical in my development as a video artist. NYSCA's pioneering vision of the video art field has been the cornerstone in its evolution and the mode for support across the country.

Todd Haynes, Poison, 1991
Henson, Robbie

Trouble Behind
1990, 56 min., Film

High, Kathy

I Need Your Full Cooperation
1989, 28 min., Videotape

Hill, Chris

Reproductive Histories Update
1989, 5 min., Videotape

Hill, Gary

Soundings
1979, 15 min., Videotape

Hill, Gary

Happenstance
1983, 6 min., Videotape

Hill, Gary

Why Do Things Get in a Muddle?
(Come on Petunia)
1984, 33 min., Videotape

Hills, Henry

Money
1985, 15 min., Film

Holt, Nancy

Underscan
1974, 6 min., Videotape

Holt, Nancy

Revolvée
1977, 75 min., Videotape

Hsia, Lisa

Made in China: A Search for Roots
1984, 30 min., Film

Hudlin, Warrington

Street Corner Stories
1977, 80 min., Film

Hudlin, Warrington

Colour
1982, 30 min., Film

Hunt, Marjorie, Paul Wagner and Dr. Steven Zeitlin

The Grand Generation
1993, 28 min., Film

Hurwitz, Leo

Dialogue with a Woman
Departed
1980, 240 min., Film

Hutton, Peter

In Titan’s Goblet
1991, 10 min., Film

Jonas, Joan

Volcano Saga
1969, 28 min., Videotape

Jonas, Joan and Richard Serra

Anxious Automation
1971, 6 min., Videotape

Jones, Philip Mallory

The Trouble I’ve Seen
1976, 10 min., Videotape

Jones, Philip Mallory and Gunilla Mallory Jones

Black, White and Married
1979, 58 min., Videotape

Jost, Jon

Sure Fire
1990, 86 min., Film

Kalin, Tom

Swoon
1992, 85 min., Film

Kats, Leandro

Mirror on the Moon
1991, 100 min., Film

Kayo, Pooh

The Mean Princess
1992, 17 min., Film

Keefer, John and Ruth Rotko

The Last Space Voyage of Wallace Ramsel
1977, 40 min., Videotape

King, Marjorie

Herein
1992, 27 min., Film

Kobland, Ken

Foto-Roman
1990, 28 min., Videotape

Koontz, Ken

The Communists Are Comfortable and 3 Other Stories
1984, 60 min., Film

Kramer, Karen

Celebration!
1988, 30 min., Film

Kramer, Karen

Moko Jumbo
1990, 15 min., Film

Kramer, Karen

The Last of the New York Cigar Rollers
1990, 12 min., Film

Kramer, Karen

Rice and Peas
1990, 13 min., Film

Krieger, Mitchell

Always Late
1979, 10 min., Videotape

Krishnan, Indu

Knowing Her Place
1990, 40 min., Videotape

Kurihara, Nanako

From Woman to Woman
1993, 57 min., Videotape

Kyi, Darsha

Land Where My Fathers Died
1991, 23 min., Film

Katz, Leandro

Mirror on the Moon
1991, 100 min., Film

Kaye, Pooh

The Mean Princess
1992, 17 min., Film

Keeler, John and Ruth Rotko

The Last Space Voyage of Wallace Ramsel
1977, 40 min., Videotape

Keppel, Deans

Soap
1982, 13 min., Videotape

Kopple, Barbara

Harlan County, U.S.A.
1976, 103 min., Film

Kopple, Barbara

American Dream
1990, 90 min., Film

Koontz, Ken

The Communists Are Comfortable and 3 Other Stories
1984, 60 min., Film

Kobland, Ken

Vestibule
1978, 24 min., Film

Kobland, Ken

The Communists Are Comfortable and 3 Other Stories
1984, 60 min., Film

Koplan, Ken

The Last of the New York Cigar Rollers
1990, 12 min., Film

Kramer, Karen

Moko Jumbo
1990, 15 min., Film

Kramer, Karen

The Last of the New York Cigar Rollers
1990, 12 min., Film

Kramer, Karen

Rice and Peas
1990, 13 min., Film

Krieger, Mitchell

Always Late
1979, 10 min., Videotape

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1990, 40 min., Videotape

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From Woman to Woman
1993, 57 min., Videotape

Kyi, Darsha

Land Where My Fathers Died
1991, 23 min., Film

Roland Leguici-Laura, Abu, 1986
For a society to be healthy, free expression must exist not just in theory but in practice. NYSCA grant programs have been very helpful in giving artists and resources to create works that provide different visions reflecting the multicultural world in which we live. As the country moves to the right, we must not let those who limit these visions succeed in moving us backward in time. The impact made by artistic expression is not always comfortable, but ultimately everyone benefits from the exposure to new ideas.

St. Claire Bourne
Filmmaker
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>Earthstore Sketch</td>
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<td>1993</td>
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Homes Apart, Korea
1991, 55 min., Film

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Belchite/South Bronx: A Trans-Cultural and Trans-Historical Landscape
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Troyano, Elia
Carmelita Tropicana: Your Kunst Is Your Waffen
1993, 30 min., Film

Tsuno, Keiko
The Story of Vinh
1990, 50 min., Videotape

TVTV (Top Value Television)
Gerald Ford’s America: Chic to Sheik
1979, 26 min., Videotape

TVTV
VTR; TVTV
1975, 26 min., Videotape

Vasulka, Woody and Steina Vasulka
Solo for Three
1974, 4 min., Videotape

Velez, Edin
A Weak Strategy
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Oblique Strategist Too
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Viola, Bill
The Reflecting Pool
1979, 7 min. Videotape

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Chott El—Djerid
(A Portrait in Light and Heat)
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(First Dream)
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Walworth, Dan
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and Roberta Friedman
The Eri King
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Weissman, Dan
Terezin Diary
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and Laurie Williams
Yours to Keep
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In Search of Our Fathers
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Wilson, Robert
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Winer, Lucy
Rate It X
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Winer, Lucy
Tales of an Exhausted Woman
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Zrnic, Maja
The Rythmn of Life
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Zrnic, Maja
The Mission Places
1994, 30 min., Videotape

Zwickler, Phil
Rights and Reactions: Lesbian and Gay Rights on Trial
1988, 56 min., Videotape

Zdun, Julie
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1990, 27 min., Videotape

Zrnic, Maja
Kunst Is Your Waffen
1993, 120 min., Videotape

Zrnic, Maja
Tango of Slaves
1993, 120 min., Videotape

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The Moving Image in Space: Public Funding and
THE INSTALLATION FORM

Over the last 25 years, installations by independent film- and videomakers have created innovative kinds of viewing experiences by dramatically reworking the forms of film, video/television and sculpture. Media arts installations offer a radical integration of moving and stationary elements, of camera images and spatial relations, of time and space. These works often ask the viewer to negotiate a complex arrangement of elements, and to become actively engaged with the work and its setting.

Because the installation form is designed specifically to situate viewers in relationship to the image, and then ask them to reflect precisely on their location, the viewer's presence is often an installation's central focus. Thus, as Margaret Morse has written, it is the visitor rather than the artist who performs the piece in an installation. Consequently, the exhibition context of installations is paramount. Unlike independent films and videotapes, which are usually screened in theatrical contexts or on public television, installations are experienced both spatially and temporally.

Film and video installations originated in the upheaval of the art world during the 1960s, when, in the charged atmosphere of the civil rights, anti-war, and feminist movements, artists began to question their relationship with audiences, and started producing works that attempted to circumvent the commodity-based gallery system. Many early installations grew out of happenings, performances and other ephemeral, multi-media art events typified by the “Avant-Garde Festival,” organized by Charlotte Moorman, in New York. They were often one-time pieces that defied exhibition conventions and pushed at the categories separating art media.

At the same time, in the nascent world of independent video that emerged in the early 1970s, artists began to show videotapes in informal gatherings at alternative spaces such as The Kitchen, the People’s Video Theater and Global Village in New York. Although these artists didn’t conceive these
works as “installations,” they were usually exhibited on large banks of TV monitors, reflecting a fascination at the time with the capacities of closed-circuit video for both intimate viewing and spectacular multi-monitor arrays. In fact, it is because of the closed-circuit capacities of the video camera that most installation work in the media arts has been in video.

While its origins can be traced to these avant-garde viewing spaces, the history of video and film installations in New York State reveals, paradoxically, that the installation form has been crucial to the integration of the media arts into the art world mainstream. When people go to museums, they usually spend at most a few minutes with an individual work. As time-based media, film and video have often been awkwardly exhibited in museums and galleries. Many museums have successfully shown films in theaters. But viewing a videotape has, until recent improvements in video projection, often involved sitting in a gallery and changing viewing modes. Unlike films and videotapes, installations, which are as much sculpture as moving image, engage the viewer spatially as well as temporally. For this reason, installations have been easier to incorporate into the exhibition context of museums.

While some museum collections include film and video installations, for the most part these works have no forms of distribution. Public funding from agencies such as the New York State Council on the Arts has thus been essential to the development and scope of the installation as a unique form. In fact, in many respects, public funding helped to create this art form. The burst of activity in video art and activism in the early 1970s in New York was, in large part, fueled by state monies, which increased significantly at the time. Installations were an integral part of that creative surge.

NYSCA provided much of the production funds for artists to make installations, but more importantly, it was instrumental in establishing the video installation as a medium by funding exhibition spaces. NYSCA money thus facilitated the movement of media art installations from alternative spaces to the mainstream art museums. This integration began with the inclusion of video installations within larger exhibitions and led to the establishment of media departments in some institutions. The Everson Museum in Syracuse was one of the first museums to hire a video curator and to exhibit video installations in the early 1970s, with major exhibitions of work by Nam June Paik, Frank Gillette, Peter Campus and others. In New York City, the Whitney Museum

By the 1980s, NYSCA was supporting a broad field of media arts that included the exhibition of installations in alternative spaces and museums, and the funding of critical, curatorial and educational writing about the media arts. Hence, this funding succeeded not only in making New York State the primary site in the country for the production and exhibition of the media arts, but also fostered the critical discourse that defined the field. A wide range of organizations exhibited video installations with NYSCA funds throughout 1980s and into the 1990s, including the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers, Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, Hallwalls in Buffalo, the Islip Art Museum, and the East End Arts Council on Long Island, the P.S. 1 Museum and the American Museum of the Moving Image in Queens, and also in New York City, The Kitchen, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, the Alternative Museum, El Museo del Barrio and the New Museum of Contemporary Art.

Two exhibitions signalled video’s “arrival,” so to speak, in the museum world. In 1982, the Whitney Museum of American Art organized a Nam June Paik retrospective, the first American museum exhibition of a video artist. With Paik’s sculptural video works such as TV Chair (1974), TV Clock (1963–81) and TV Garden (1974–78), the show demonstrated the ways in which video in installation form creates a dialogue with other art media in the museum exhibition context. With his installations, Paik’s strategy involves humorously reiterating the absurdity of the television box as a piece of furniture that undercuts TV’s powerful cultural role. In 1987, the Bill Viola retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art was the first recognition by that institution of a video artist with a large-scale exhibition. The show consisted of five installations concerned with rites of passage and video as a means to examine human consciousness.

Both the Paik and Viola exhibitions were notable precisely because their focus on installations allowed for their integration into the museum viewing context. This was an important
milestone since one of the consequences of the public funding of installations and video/film work in the art world has been its segregation from other media. Separate funding of film and video allowed museums to create distinct programs and departments for the media arts in order to encourage their growth and visibility. But it also meant that this work was often not exhibited with other media. The Paik and Violat retrospectives pushed at this segregation, and in recent years, the renewed popularity of the installation form in general and the increasing use of various technologies by artists has allowed for some of those boundaries to be transgressed.

At the same time that the field diversified in its exhibition context, it also expanded aesthetically and technologically. Early video installations were, like many videotapes produced in the early 1970s, works that examined the specific properties of video and the viewer’s experience of them. Installations by, among others, Peter Campus, Gary Hill, Frank Gillette and Steina and Woody Vasulka, were insistent in examining the immediacy that came from the closed-circuit properties of video, often using on-site cameras to integrate live images of viewers into the work. By the 1980s, however, generalizations about artistic strategies in the media arts were no longer possible, as video became a medium increasingly integrated into diverse work dealing with formal issues, political issues, and a variety of trends in the art world.

Video installations in the late 1980s and 1990s in New York State show how profoundly the field has diversified. While artists such as Mary Lucier and Rita Myers, who have consistently produced installation works since the late 1970s, can be seen as having contributed to the creation of the installation form, there is also what could now be termed a second generation of media arts installation artists. More recently, artists such as Shu Lea Cheang have used the installation form as a means of addressing multicultural issues in a museum context. She has described her work, Color Schemes (1990), for instance, as a means of presenting ideas that a decade ago, would have likely been produced in documentary form. By creating a framework in which video images dealing with race are integrated with sculptural elements, Cheang catered her message specifically to the museum context. In addition, some artists have been instrumental in redefining the parameters of the media arts installation. Grahame Weinbren and Roberta Friedman’s The Erl King (1986), is an interactive installation in which the viewer creates a particular narrative sequence by touching
elements of a story on a video screen. In this work, the meaning lies in the viewer's active collaboration with the story's outcome. Thus, new forms of technology continue to extend the installation form.

Perhaps the most revealing testimony of NYSCA's influence in the field of media arts installation is the increased blurring of the boundaries of the field. An array of venues are exhibiting media arts installations by a second generation of video artists, and artists who are not self-identified as video artists are producing media arts installations. This reveals the establishment of a kind of legitimacy to the field, one fostered by NYSCA and pursued by a range of institutions. Hence, as media arts installations and video art in general are integrated into the art world, their "mediumness" becomes less important than what they say. That is perhaps the real legacy of NYSCA's funding in the nascent field of the media arts—it helped to render the boundaries between media obsolete.

Marita Sturken teaches in the Communication Department at the University of California at San Diego.

Notes

Without the support and encouragement of the New York State Council on the Arts, my film, Who Killed Vincent Chin? would not have been completed. Just like the hero in a Hollywood movie, NYSCA arrived atop a white stallion to ensure that my film, too, would have a happy ending; the film went on to win numerous awards, and an Academy Award nomination. Indeed, America is an imperfect land for immigrant filmmakers like myself—the sky is always blue, the East is always Red, and NYSCA, thankfully, is the shining star.

Christine Choy
Filmmaker
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Ewing, John
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Fagan, Pat
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Fanaka, Jamaa
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Field, Crystal
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Fisher, Cary
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Frampton, Hollis
Francovitch, Alan
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Frank, Robert
Frazier, Larry
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Friedman, Bart
Friedman, Bonnie
Friedman, Peter
Friedman, Roberta
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Friedrich, Su
Froese, Dieter
Frontera, Glenn
Fusco, Coco
Garcia, Ana Maria
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Garcia, William
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Gartel, Laurence
Gatewood, William
Gazi, Chairs
Gehr, Ernie
Geiger, Carl
Geist, Veronica
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Gibbons, Joe
Gibson, Linda
Gigliotti, Davidson
Gillette, Frank
Gilliland, Mark
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Gordon, Vinnie
Griserstein, Susan
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Gold, Joel
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Goldfarb, Alan
Goldfarb, Brian
Goldsmith, Eleanor
Goldson, Annie
Goldstein, Amy
Gonzalez, Anita
Gonzalez, Marina
Goddard, Sander
Goodman, Karen
Goodsmith, Lauren
Gordon, Bette
Gordon, Peter
Getrein, Shalom
Gottheim, Larry
Graves, Susan
Graham, Dan
Grant, Jeanne
Gray, Nancy
Gray, Ronald
Green, Vanalynne

Grenier, Louise
Grenier, Vincent
Grey, Cynthia
Grey, John
Greyfak, Sharon
Griffin, Ada Gay
Griffin, George
Grigson, Johan
Grooms, Red
Gruber, David
Grunberg, Slawomir
Gunning, Robin
Guido, Lisa
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Guenther, Ingo
Gussella, Ernest
Gustafson, Julie
Gwinn, William
Gwinn, John
Gyllenhall, Stephen
Hahn, Alexander
Hamley, Bruce
Hatamani, Mary
Haleck, DeeDee
Hamada, Sachiko
Hammer, Barbara
Hammer, Peter
Hammons, David
Hend, Jon
Harris, Doug
Harris, Hilary
Harris, Leslie
Harris, Rachel
Harris, Robert
Harris, Stirin
Harris, Thomas Allen
Harrison, Amy
Harrison, Julie
Hartel, Jim
Hartland, William
Haslanger, Martha

Merce Cunningham with dancers, 1975.
Far from Poland, a feature-length meta-documentary about the Solidarity Movement in Poland and how the western media (including independent filmmakers) projected their own needs and desires on the events in Poland, is a film that literally couldn’t and wouldn’t have been made without state and federal funding. Since the mid-1970s, every project of mine has enjoyed either production or distribution support from either or both NYSCA and the NEA. Put simply, I would not have had a 20-year career as an independent without them.

Jill Godmilow
Filmmaker
I have always made films that are roughly the same length as the danceconcerts I used to produce. In the film business, or "industry," these are called "features," a term that conjures up budgets of millions of dollars. My costs are, by contrast, stupifyingly modest, and yet, even as they continue to rise—for all kind of reasons, including inflation and ambition—they are still untouchable by the system that relies on profit margins to gauge viability and worth. NYSCA has always filled that breach between commerce and the unprofitable. In a time when private corporations are proving to be increasingly unreliable as private sector supporters of unprofitable art, NYSCA's role looms especially significant.

Yvonne Rainer
Filmmaker
Ponce, Jose
Pevall, Richard
Powell, Alan
Praeger, Jane
Price, Jonathan
Printup, Sarina
Protovin, Richard
Quinn, Gordon
Rafferty, Kevin
Ragus, Kym

Rainer, Yvonne
Ramos, Anthony
Ramsey, Kevin
Ranucci, Karen
Rapp, Ray
Rapaport, Paolo
Rappaport, Mark
Ray, Nicholas
Rayess, El Fadya
Raymond, Alan
Raymond, Susan
Raynal, Jackie
Reaven, Marc
Redford, Randy
Reed, Ishmael
Reese, Marshall
Reeves, Daniel
Reichman, Rachel
Relly, John
Remes, Patricia
Ren-Lay, Judith
Retticker, Gini
Reznick, Francine
Rhodes, Lucille
Rice, Grai St. Clair
Rice, Susan
Richer, Robert
Ridgeway, James
Rosenfeld, Daniel
Ripling, Earl
Rochin, Marilyn
Rivera, Pedro
Robbins, Allan
Roberts, Megan

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Roberts, Wahl, Leslie
Robeson, Susan
Robinson, Debra
Rock, Marcia
Rokan, Marilyn
Rudman, Mindy
Roemer, Michael
Rogers, Richard
Rogoff, Caryn
Rom, Zehar
Romero, Aldo
Rose, David
Rose, Cathy
Rose, Peter
Rosin, Bob
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Ross, Trish
Rosenberg, Robert
Rosenblum, Nina
Rosenthal, Barbara
Roshok, Alex
Rose, Martha
Ross, Gaylen
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Rotko, Ruth
Rowden, Stephanie
Rowe, Ken
Royals, Demetria
Rubin, Jonathan
Rudavsky, Oren
Rudolph, Hank
Ruz, Jose Luis
Ruz, Kathleen
Russell, David
Ryan, Paul
Ryan, Terri
Sachs, Ira
Sacker, Andrea
Salt, Carol
Sakamoto, Kerri
Salour, Jayce
Salzer, Nancy
Samatowicz, D.
Sampson, Darren
Sanborn, John
Sanborn, Keith
Sanchez, Luisa
Sandler, Kathe
Sandlin, Martha
Santana, Alfred
Santimi, Nelson
Sasaki, Tomio
Sassar, David
Satrina, Carole
Saunders, Pat

Schaal, Margot
Scheffler, Eric
Schell, Michael
Schicker, Eva
Schiller, Craig
Schiller, Greta
Schlanger, Matthew
Schloss, Arleen
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Schneeman, Carolee
Schneider, Bob
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Schneider, Ken
Schneider, Rosiland
Schreiber, Nancy
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Schultz, John
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Schwartz, Lillian
Scott, Melissa
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Semmens, Frank

Serra, Richard
Shaffer, Deborah
Shapiro, Celia
Shapiro, Lisa
Sharpe, Paul
Sharman, Brent
Shatzavsky, Esther
Shaw, Angel
Shaw, Karen
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Shea, Robert
Shearer, Jacqueline
Shears, Suzanne
Sherman, Stuart
Shulman, David
Siegel, Allan
Siegel, Steven
Sigal, Isabelle
Silver, Claudia
Silver, David
Silver, Shelly
Silverman, Mary
Simko, Jonathan
Sinkler, Scott
Slavin, Aviva
Smith, Harry
Smith, Jack
Smith, Michael
Smith, Vegan
Snyder, Patricia
Soares, Ana Maria
Sobel, Nina
Solomon, Barry
Sonbert, Warren  
Sonheim, Alan  
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Sonfist, Alan  
Sopher, Sharon  
Sorenson, Vibeke  
Sosa, Irene  
Soto, Merian  
Soul, Veronica  
Speight, Alonzo  
Spiegel, Laurie  
Spiro, Ellen  
Spodarek, Diane  
Spotted Eagle, Chris  
Springer, Brian  
St. Denis, Ray  
Staven, Karl  
Stein, Carol  
Stein, Sarah  
Steinmetz, Joseph  
Stephens, Bill  
Stern, Peggy  
Stern, Rudy  
Stewart, Allyn  
Stewart, David  
Stiles, Robert  
Steinher, Wolfgang  
Stoller, Robert  
Storey, George  
Stromayer, Charles  
Strom, Mary Ellen  
Stubbs, Jane  
Sturgeon, John  
Sublette, Ned  
Sucher, Joel  
Sudano, Thom  
Suggs, Dawn  
Suleiman, Elia  
Sullivan, Mary  
Sullivan, Nancy  
Summers, Elaine  
Supanick, Jim  
Supplies, Kevin  
Swados, Elizabeth  
Sweeney, Skip  
Tajma, Renee  
Tajur, Rea  
Takagi, J. T.  
Tambellini, Aldo  
Tath, Benedict  
Taubin, Amy  
Tavener, Jo  
Taylor, Arthur  
Teitelbaum, Richard  
Thacher, Anita  
Tharp, Twyla  
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Thomas, Gregory  
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Thorington, Helen  
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Thurber, Robert  
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Tirado, Amiur  
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Tobias, Allen  
Tom, Pamela  
Toman, Mary Anne  
Tong, Nancy  
Toro, George  
Torres, Francesc  
Tourtos, Christos  
Trainer, William  
Trainor, James  
Trevis, Jesus  
Triepel, Joe  
Troiano, Elia  
Tsengay, Gossa  
Tsuchiya, Arthur  
Tsuno, Keiko  
Tuft, Sarah  
Twomey, Christine  
Tyndall, Andrew  
Ukeles, Mierle  
Vafai, Jan  
Valadez, John  
Vanclay, Jean Claude  
VanDerBeek, Stan  
VanTaylor, David  
VanWagner, Mary Anne  
Vargas, Larry  
Vasquez, Blanca  
Vasulkas, Steina  
Vasulkas, Woody  
Veltz, Edin  
Venuto, Maria  
Ventry, Kenneth  
Villa, Franz  
Villaverde, Herminia  
Village, Edward  
Viola, Bill  
Volkart, Peter  
Volkos, Ann  
VonHelfin, Kirk  
Wagner, Paul  
Wagner, Sokhi  
Waletzsky, Josh  
Wal, Marsha  
Walker, Nancy  
Walworth, Dan  
Wanner, Debra  
Chair, Jane  
Ward, Penny  
Warrenbrand, Jane  
Watkins, Gordon  
Watkins, Peter  
Weigman, William  
Weideman, Carl  
Weidenra, Reynolds  
Weil, Claudia  
Weiss, Andrea  
Weinbren, Graham  
Wiener, Elizabeth  
Wengarten, Meri  
Wittke, Ray  
Wittenberg, Susan  
Wolf, Ira  
Wojnarowicz, David  
Wolf, Melissa  
Wolf, Michael  
Wolf, Susan  
Wong, Calvin  
Wong, Willie  
Woodman, Charles  
Early video combined an agenda for social change with an agenda for establishing video as a new art form. The New York State Council on the Arts was the only funding agency with the courage to ride both these horses at once. From 1971–76, NYSCA funded my effort to start a video utopian community dedicated to using video to interpret ecological systems. While the utopia failed, the effort was seminal to my work.

Paul Ryan  
Video Artist
Twenty-five years ago, I accepted a job offer from independent producer Charles Hobson to coordinate a team researching a phenomenon known as “race movies,” a relatively unknown area of American film history. Race pictures were films by and about African-Americans, produced as early as 1910, and made almost exclusively for black audiences. Documents and memorabilia on race movie companies appeared to be randomly strewn about the country between New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. It was nearly a year before we got any leads on existing films and the staff had been reduced to two.

I can still remember the day we screened a number of early black films that had recently been acquired by the American Film Institute. A rush of excitement and pride came over me as I watched the remarkably well-preserved 35mm print of The Scar of Shame (1927), a relic released at the close of the silent era. Images of the stars of these films, Harry Henderson and Lucia Lynn Moses, Bessie Smith, Paul Robeson, Julia Theresa Russell, Fredi Washington and Frank Wilson, dominated the screen with an air of familiarity and naturalness that was at first unsettling. I felt a mix of anxiety and kinship, not unlike the experience of watching a friend or relative perform for the first time.

Leaving the theater that day, I did not know how much this project would reshape my professional life or that I would become immersed in the subject of race movies for the next two decades. Most, if not all, of the film and video activity that I became part of in New York happened with NYSCA funding. Through its support for the distribution of rarely seen work, NYSCA helped bring neglected parts of African-American film history to new audiences by funding projects that made available films previously accessible only to scholars.

On March 24, 1970, the race movie project opened at the Jewish Museum as the nation’s first black historical film series. With support from the NYSCA-funded Harlem Cultural Council, the eight-week festival, simply titled “The Black Film,” resurrected movies that had not been seen in nearly half a century. The press screening for The Scar of Shame was a catered affair attended by writers and film
critics, and a mix of enthusiastic Harlemites and independent filmmakers, including Melvin Van Peebles, whose first film, *The Story of a Three Day Pass* (1968), was among those screened in the series. The evening's event also attracted actors and performers from a generation of African Americans that had worked in race movies, including Carl Mahone, who played the romantic leads in several films of the sound era, and 80-year-old Anita Bush, founder of the famous Lafayette Players, who arrived on the arm of silent screen actor Lorenzo Tucker. An aggressive publicity campaign resulted in articles in the trade newspapers and dailies, including *Variety* and *Women's Wear Daily*, interviews in *The New Yorker*, and an appearance on "Free Time," Julius Lester's show on Channel 13.

Eight weeks later, as the series began a two-week run at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, I returned to the office of independent producer St. Clair Bourne's Chamba Productions, to help set up Chamba Educational Film Services (CEFS). As director of CEFS, my aim was to build audiences for black films by packaging and touring them in series with historical and contemporary themes. Mail and telephone requests came in almost daily from university campuses, libraries, museums and community centers. I could never have predicted in 1970 the intense demand for the films as they traveled over the next six years to dozens of cities including Atlanta, Durham, North Carolina, San Francisco, Oakland, Boston, Philadelphia and Washington D.C. In the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, the publicity surrounding our collection of historical black films, and simple word-of-mouth communication, set in motion seminars and course offerings at numerous campuses where black studies programs were taking off.

The old films—particularly those of Oscar Micheaux—had taken on a new life. *The Scar of Shame* (1927), *Body and Soul* (1925), *11 PM* (1924), *Ten Nights in a Barroom* (1926), even *Spying the Spy*, a 1917 comic short—these survivors from a forgotten segment of American film history probably enjoyed more exposure and wider audiences in this half of the century than at anytime before. At the same time, audiences for contemporary independent black films were growing.

In the absence of distributors and money to promote individual films, festival and touring packages offered free exposure in the growing institutional, non-profit market of colleges, museums and libraries. By programming the early films with films by contemporary black independent producers, who often appeared at screenings to discuss their work, we had found the hook to attract and build...
larger audiences. Indeed, the audience for this work had always been there. The history theme not only provided a link joining contemporary black films with race movie history, but suggested longevity and lent value and stature to work historically marginalized.


Beginning in 1980, some of these programs were shown at international festivals in France, England, Germany, Italy, Holland, parts of West Africa, Zurich and India. When *Black American Cinema 1920–1980* was presented in Paris in 1980, it was the largest collection of black films to travel to Europe. Entitled *Le Cinema Independent Noir Americain 1920–1980* it featured ten filmmakers (five women and five men) with 40 films, and included video for the first time. The festival paid tribute to William Greaves, whose career as an actor and filmmaker bridges race movie history and contemporary African-American cinema. His experimental work, *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm...Take One* (1968), a film about a film-in-progress, received critical acclaim in the French press. Now, in the 1990s, it has taken on a new life with screenings in the prestigious Sundance Film Festival (Utah), and, once again, in international festivals. A similar history can be traced for another film in the Paris festival, Charles Burnett’s classic, *Killer of Sheep* (1977). Today, Burnett’s film, which stands alone for its merging of black music and cinema creating a Blues Aesthetic, is listed in the National Film Registry for Classic Films. Also in Paris, Bill Gunn premiered his black soap opera, *Personal Problems*, and Michele Parkerson had the first public screening of *But Then, She’s Betty Carter*. These two videotapes were not included in the national tour because, in 1980, sites that showed film didn’t have video projectors.

Following the successful Paris screenings, the program returned to New York City and
played at the Public Theater, Symphony Space, and at the New Community Cinema in Huntington, L.I., and in Buffalo, at a movie house briefly known as the Oscar Micheaux Theater. Audiences for independent African-American films grew along with an increased awareness of the African-American film history. There was a hunger for new images left over from the Civil Rights Movement and nearly a decade of industry blaxploitation films that needed to be challenged.

In addition, a growing number of black women filmmakers brought new voices to the screen. While the first Black film series sponsored by the Jewish Museum and the Harlem Cultural Council failed to address women filmmakers in our history, subsequent festivals were more inclusive. In Paris, for example, 14 of the 40 films screened were by women, including Jackie Shearer, Kathleen Collins and Julie Dash.

In 1982, as the festival director at Third World Newsreel, I organized a women’s festival, In Color: 60 Years of Minority Women in Film, 1921–1981, a historical overview of issues of representation and gender in films by and about women of color. The Plaza Theater, a neighborhood movie house in Brooklyn serving a diverse ethnic and racial community, was selected as the site. A photographic exhibition in the theater’s lobby presented a history of representation of women of color in mainstream cinema. The festival featured films by women from Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, Senegal, India and the United States, and included Kathleen Collins’s Losing Ground (1982), Mira Nair’s So Far from India (1982), To Love, Honor and Obey (1980) by Christine Choy and Marlene Dunn and Camille Billops’s Suzanne, Suzanne (1982).

Sharing ideas and information with other programmers around the state opened new venues for African-American films and created bookings for festivals we initiated in New York City. New York offered a variety of venues in addition to colleges, museums and libraries. Access to public spaces such as the Collective for Living Cinema, several YMCAs, the original uptown location of Film Forum, retrospective houses such as the Bleecker Street Cinema, the Thalia and, on occasion, the city parks, offered possibilities for new audiences. One summer, we were part of an outdoor series in Brooklyn’s Prospect Park. Over 1000 people attended “Free Movies in the Park,” a bold experiment sponsored by NYSCA. The event drew the largest audience ever to attend a screening of the obscure silent features we programmed. Somewhere among the hushed throng of people in the park that night was one of the films’ stars, Lucia Lynn Moses, a former chorus girl who played her first
It was 1996 and I was brazen enough to submit my first grant proposal to NYSCA’s Individual Artists program. I received my first funding and brought back three defunct Wascomats from the washing machine graveyard in Queens. I was officially certified as a “developing artist.” As I “developed,” I benefited tremendously from the NYSCA-supported artist-in-residency programs. With a suitcase loaded with videotapes, I went to the houses of Film/Video Arts, the Experimental Television Center, Harvestworks and the Standby Program and was able to play with electronic toys. In 1990, the three washing machines were moved into the Whitney Museum’s Film and Video Gallery as an installation piece, Color Schemes, again, with support from NYSCA. In 1989, I was daring enough to launch a feature film project but not without NYSCA’s support, which provided me with funding for script development. Four years later, Fresh Kills is out and I remain a NYSCA-bred artist.

Shu Lea Cheang
Video Artist/Filmmaker

and only film role in the 1927 silent classic, The Scar of Shame. Out of modesty, perhaps, this former leading lady chose not to be acknowledged.

As a programmer and a New Yorker, diversifying audiences for independent work has always been a challenge, but clearly there was also a need to build audience within communities. Growing up in Harlem in the 1940s, my community was predominantly African-American, but there were also peoples of Caribbean, African, Hispanic, and Asian descent among my neighbors and in the schools I attended. In addition, former inhabitants or groups with ties in the community made themselves visible on special occasions. I remember being fascinated as a child by one church on Madison Avenue facing Mount Morris Park East. At least once a week, cars would arrive filled with white people appropriately dressed for services. We watched, with the idle curiosity of children, while they quietly filed into the church, and some time later as they quietly drove away. It was a Russian Orthodox Church, still in use, even though none of the congregation lived in Harlem anymore.

In 1973, again working with CEFS, I chose my old neighborhood to be one of three sites for a Third World Film Festival. Working closely with our community hosts, The South Bronx Community Action Theater, and the Bedstuy Theater, Inc., we tailored after-school and evening programs for working parents and their children. These audiences were made up of different cultural and language backgrounds, including Puerto Ricans, Cubans and Dominicans in the predominantly Hispanic community, and African-Americans, Africans and Caribbean peoples—mainly West Indians and Haitians—in Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant. Mindful of my own experience growing up in Harlem, I understood that the communities were comprised of a number of different groups—that color alone only gave the appearance of homogeneity.

Programming for such an audience was challenging; rather than limiting the films to specific languages or cultures, we wanted the audiences not only to see themselves, but to experience as much as possible the cultural particularities of other members of the community. Consequently, we decided to anchor the festival with themes of shared experiences in our histories—the struggles against colonialism, the legacy of slavery, stories about the Jamaican Maroons and the Quilombos of Brazil—and pair these films with contemporary African-American films on similar subjects. African and Brazilian films, including works by Ousmane Sembene and Carlos Diegues, were
shown at all three sites—The Alexander Burger School in the Bronx, Public School No. 3 in Brooklyn and the Mount Morris Park Amphitheater in Harlem. Reflecting the effort to encourage community participation, Brooklyn artists Leo and Diane Dillon, who had won awards for their children’s book illustrations and designed Broadway posters, created a poster image for the festival in which each community could see itself, and by extension, “see” each other.

I had been told that audiences, especially young viewers, would not be responsive to subtitled films, viewing them as “foreign.” But festival goers seemed drawn to the films’ images of different cultures and universal themes of human struggle. Ousmane Sembene’s highly visual narrative, Mandabi (1968), in particular, elicited similar audience responses in all three locations: talking back to the screen, laughter and siding with one character or another. The screenings were followed by lively discussions and we had no difficulty attracting audiences.

Programming for organizations like the Harlem Cultural Council, the Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center and Third World Newsreel over the years has been a rich and rewarding experience—rich in the cumulative images from so many films and videos implanted in my memory, and rewarding in the countless opportunities to nurture the excitement of those first moments 25 years ago watching my first black silent film.

It was NYSCA support that made most of this possible—that helped many of us to dream, to imagine we could make the world a better place. I still remember one teenager living in a half-way house in Brooklyn, where I was presenting a series of film workshops. She asked: “How can I get to do what you do?” I honestly couldn’t answer the “how to” part of her question. Instead, I shared with her the first reactions I had had seeing characters on the screen—feelings of kinship and pride. The same sparks of interest and excitement she was experiencing had nudged me into film.