1994

The Cinema Guild

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HARDWOOD DREAMS
For many black youngsters today, basketball is recognized as one of the most visible means of escape from life in the inner city ghetto. More than a sport, it has become a rite of passage, a way for young men to forge an identity and lift themselves from the despair of poverty to a life of promise. More often, however, it is a source of broken dreams and shattered illusions, since only a fraction of the millions of young people involved in high school athletics will ever play professional sports. Hardwood Dreams chronicles one season in the life of the Morningside High School basketball team, the defending California state champs, whose school is situated in a crime ridden LA neighborhood. The film captures the heart and soul of urban life in America, revealing the crucial role basketball plays in the lives of these inner city youths. Profiling key members of the team—at home, on the streets, in the classroom, and on the basketball court—the documentary offers a compelling portrait of what it's like to be 17 or 18 years old today with nothing less than your entire future at stake.

Directed by Michael Tolle
Narrated by Wesley Snipes
1993, color, 47 mins., video
Purchase: $295 Rental: $75
Curriculum Uses: Adolescent Psychology, Black Studies, Sociology, Urban Studies

THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON
This episode of the "In the Life" Public TV program chronicles the April 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation, one of the largest civil rights rallies in American history, with an estimated one million people marching on the nation's capital. The program, co-hosted by Garrett Glaser (of Entertainment Tonight) and Karen Williams, features highlights from some of the speeches and comedy and musical performances, as well as interviews with politicians and celebrities in attendance, and a brief history of gay rights activism in the U.S.

Produced by John Scagliotti
1993, color, 30 mins., video
Purchase: $195 Rental: $50
Curriculum Uses: Civil Rights, Gay and Lesbian Studies, Political Science, Sociology

MEMORIES OF TATA
Filmmaker Sheldon Schiffer offers an intimate and revealing portrait of his immigrant Central American family woven from his own childhood memories and the reminiscences of his grandparents, father, and aunt. In interviews conducted during the last few months of his life, Schiffer's grandfather, Adam Morales ("Tata"), the family patriarch, discusses his notions of what it was to be a man—including the need to command respect, macho notions of sexuality, emotional outbursts coupled with the threat of physical violence, and sexist notions of childrearing. These 'memories of Tata' are contrasted with the often painful recollections of his estranged wife and two daughters (the filmmaker's mother and aunt) who explain how his behavior eventually alienated their affection for him. In looking closely at the life and character of his grandfather, Schiffer struggles to reconcile his own boyhood memories and feelings of love for his grandfather with the uncomfortable awareness of how Tata's behavior affected his entire family.

Directed by Sheldon Schiffer
1994, color, 52 mins., video
Purchase: $295 Rental: $95
Curriculum Uses: Family Relations, Gender Studies, Psychology, Sociology

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THINGS GONE AND
THINGS STILL HERE
Paul Bowles is one of the last surviving representa­ tives of a generation of artists—including Gertrude Stein, Tennessee Williams, Allen Ginsberg and Aaron Copland—whose work has shaped 20th century literature and music. This documentary traces Bowles’ career, from a young musical protege of Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson to his later work as a novelist, short story writer, translator, North African musicologist, and composer for films and theaters. It also discusses Bowles’ marriage and relationship with Jane Auer (1917–73), herself an author. It features interviews with Bowles (who also reads from his writings), as well as colleagues such as Gavin Lambert, Ned Rorem, David Herbert and Phillip Ramey, among many others. Now that Bowles’ work is receiving greater attention than ever before—his novel, The Sheltering Sky, was filmed in 1992 by director Bernardo Bertolucci, his “Picnic Cantata” was performed at Carnegie Hall the same year, and Angel/EMI Classics has announced the release this year of a new CD recording of Bowles’ solo piano music—this rare documentary portrait will provide viewers with a fascinating introduction to this multitalented artist and his work.

Directed by Clement Barclay
1993, color, 58 mins., video
Purchase: $350 Rental: $95

*Certificate of Merit Award
Chicago International Film Festival

SHAKESPEARE
In this premiere episode of the “Time Quest Historical Interview” series, a “high school teacher and one of his students don Elizabethan garb and travel back in time to London in 1609 to have lunch with William Shakespeare at the Mermaid Tavern. They question him about the writing and performance of his plays—including the use of double meanings, metaphors and puns, his historical sources, contemporary political references, and the design of the Globe Theatre—and come away with a greater appreciation for the Bard’s work. This carefully researched and imaginatively produced short presents Shakespeare with a sense of immediacy and authenticity that is sure to make his work more inviting and accessible to students and theatergoers of all ages.

Directed by Wink Grise
1994, color, 21 mins., video
Purchase: $195 Rental: $50

PUERTO RICO: ART AND IDENTITY
Surveys the work of plastic artists in Puerto Rico during the 20th century, as well as several significant forerunners in the 18th and 19th centuries, focusing on the artists’ expression of national identity. The video combines illustrations of hundreds of art works with interviews with a dozen major contemporary artists and commentary by art critics, revealing the artists’ concern for the people, culture and natural beauty of Puerto Rico as well as the relationship of their work to social and political events.

Directed by Sonia Fritz
1991, color, 66 mins., video
Purchase: $350 Rental: $95

LEGACY
Examines the perpetuation of the romantic myths surrounding Christopher Columbus’ “Discovery of the New World” in 1992. Native American co-producer Chief Roy Crazy Horse visits the Dominican Republic, the site of Columbus’ first encounter with the Taíno Indians. He shows how the museums, monuments and popular history books have romanticized Columbus’ voyage. These Euro­pean myths are then contrasted with the perspective of the indigenous Taíno Indians who were subjected to a genocidal campaign of exploitation, as well as contemporaneous Spanish critics such as the Catholic priest Bartolome de las Casas who denounced the greed and barbarism of Columbus and his men, and American historian Howard Zinn who discusses the ideological function of the Columbus mythology and the importance of replacing it with a truer historical account.

Directed by Chief Roy Crazy Horse and Jeff Baker
1993, color, 22 mins., video
Purchase: $195 Rental: $50

FACING THE FACADE
This provocative documentary examines the experience of black students on predominantly white college campuses and how they cope with feelings of alienation, frustration, and discrimination. Colleges throughout the U.S. today are facing increasing racial unrest among their student populations and an alarming increase in racist incidents. Facing the Facade interviews eight young black men and women enrolled at Indiana University in Bloomington. Although these students come from a wide variety of backgrounds, they all speak frankly—out of a sense of disappointment, sometimes bitterly, but often with a sense of humor—about their “minority” status on campus, the persistence of racist attitudes among fellow students and even some instructors, as well as other controversial issues such as racial separation, integration, black studies programs, sexism, and even prejudices within their own community based on language, behavior, hair and dress styles. The comments of these passionate and articulate young people are sure to stimulate wider discussion among both white and black students that will hopefully lead to a greater level of racial awareness and sensitivity on our campuses.

Directed by Jerald B. Harkness
Narrated by Avery Brooks
1994, color, 55 mins., video
Purchase: $350 Rental: $95

THE FUTURE OF AGING
Examines recent scientific research into the biological and mental mechanisms of human aging and the development of new techniques to reverse its effects. The documentary features interviews with a variety of physicians, scientists, gerontologists and authors—including several septuagenarians and octogenarians—who discuss the potential of new scientific techniques (including hormone replacement therapy, interventionist neurology, and genetic engineering), ways to ensure a more vigorous quality of life in the final third of one’s lifespan, and the social implications of increased human longevity.

Directed by Carlos Ferrand
1994, color, 55 mins., video
Purchase: $350 Rental: $95

MIAMI-HAVANA
Examines the continuing human tragedy of families divided as a result of the thirty year conflict between the U.S. and Cuba. In a series of emotionally moving interviews and airport scenes filmed in both Miami and Havana, the documentary reveals the emotional devastation wrought by the lack of diplomatic relations and the restrictions on travel, telephone and other communications between the countries. The video also examines the successive waves of Cuban emigration (including immediately after the 1959 revolution and the 1980 Mariel boatlift), America’s thirty year economic blockade of Cuba, and the controversial U.S. imprisonment and deportation back to Cuba of the “excludables.”

Directed by Estela Bravo
1992, color, 60 mins., video
Purchase: $295 Rental: $95

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BORDERLINES
Set against a background of farming, saw-milling and moonshining in rural Kentucky during the Depression, this short fiction film dramatizes the roots of violence in this cultural context and its socially accepted role as a form of folk justice. When Larlee Sanders, a young schoolteacher from the county seat, is sent to a small backwoods community, she is shocked by the periodic eruptions of violent behavior—fueled by the combination of moonshine liquor, short tempers and guns—which she considers murder, but which the local residents regard as an acceptable means of settling disputes. Despite her misgivings, Larlee decides to remain at her teaching position and, over a period of time, develops relationships with her students and others in the community. At a social event one evening, Larlee becomes personally embroiled in yet another dispute and finds herself forced either to accept, reject, or try to change deeply embedded forms of social behavior. The broader contemporary implications of this portrayal of a subculture of violence—in which armed violence and aggression are seen as natural responses to threats or insults—makes Borderlines an excellent classroom discussion-starter.
Directed by Ron Schildknecht
1993, color, 48 mins., video
Purchase: $295 Rental: $75

THE BREEDING OF IMPOTENCE
Examines the culture of failure that is endemic among children of poverty and children of color in our society. Its causes, its consequences, and the prognosis for closing the widening rift in our society between the haves and have-nots. The video asks why there is increasing violence, alienation and failure in our schools and communities, and presents a variety of answers. The introduction grounds the discussion in the context of larger social issues of economics, culture and community life. Students, teachers, administrators, parents, community leaders and clergy provide a range of perspectives on the current crisis. One of the central themes of the video is the value of each child and the systemic tendency for some children and groups of children to be held in lesser regard. The effects of this tendency are traced through the educational system, particularly with regard to special education and race issues. The video also includes interviews with authors such as Cornel West (Race Matters), Luis Rodriguez (Always Running), Valerie Polakow (Lives on the Edge) and Thomas Fleming, national teacher of the year.
Directed by John Arthos, Jr.
1993, color, 56 mins., video
Purchase: $360 Rental: $95

"this thought-provoking program will spark discussions in parent/teacher meetings"—Booklist (American Library Association)

"I've seen a lot of videos about race, but this is the first one to capture so many of the elements and bring them all together in the big picture. It is an insightful and prophetic piece that explains disenfranchisement and marginalization."—Gall Parrish, Coordinator, Race Relations, Council of Metropolitan Detroit

ESCAPE FROM CHINA
Filmed on location in the People's Republic of China under clandestine conditions, this documentary re-creates the remarkable experience of student leader Zhang Boli after his flight from Beijing in the repressive aftermath of the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy demonstrations in June 1989. As president of the Tiananmen student group University of Democracy, Zhang was one of twenty-one students on the Communist Party's "most wanted" list. He had evaded arrest for two years, but the only one who had evaded arrest. Filmed by Chinese filmmaker Iris Kung, Escape from China combines Zhang's first-person account of the background to the student demonstrations and the June 4th massacre with footage of these historic events. Featuring interviews with the friends, relatives and strangers who helped Zhang evade arrest for two years and finally escape to the U.S., the documentary reveals the effects of his actions on himself and his family, as well as the attitudes of Chinese citizens to the Tiananmen Square incident.
Directed by Iris Kung
1993, color, 57 mins., video
Chinese dialog with English voice-over
Purchase: $350 Rental: $95

"remarkable, significant, the first truly independent documentary made in China"—The New York Times

FAST TRACK
Examines the hectic lifestyles of "fast track" couples, members of the Baby Boom generation whose desire to succeed—at the office, in social circles and through their children's accomplishments—leads to living in a state of chronic stress. The program interviews several "fast track" couples who discuss the difficulties of dealing with the demands of both career and family, focusing on the impact of such parents' lifestyles on their children. Most "fast track" couples use nannies or other child care services and have little personal time to spend with their growing children, often planning their children's education and extracurricular activities in a mirror image of their own high-pressured lifestyles. The program features interviews with human relations consultants, psychologists, pediatricians, nannies, guidance counselors and older children of such couples to reveal the psychologically damaging consequences on children who pay the price for their parents' high-pressured striving for success.
Produced by Connecticut Public TV by Mary Otile Newman and Margaret Patrieall
1991, color, 60 mins., video
Purchase: $360 Rental: $95

FLYIN' CUT SLEEVES
Examines the recent history of street gangs in New York City, contrasting video interviews with Bronx gang members made twenty years ago with contemporary interviews. The videos were originally made by Rita Fecher, who taught in a South Bronx school in the late Sixties and early Seventies. Concern for her students—whose lives were set against a backdrop of uprooted families, cultural alienation, drugs and violence—led her to document gang activities. Fecher's interviews with leaders of gangs such as the Savage Skulls, the Roman Kings, and the Savage Nomads provide first-hand insight into how the educational system failed to meet the needs of these young people, and the stabilizing social function that gang life played for them vs. the media stereotypes. Many of the gangs, such as the Ghetto Brothers, are shown to have been forces of positive energy in their neighborhoods, while organizations such as the Black Panther Party and the Young...
Lords reflected a growing level of political awareness amongst black and Hispanic youth during the period. In interviews today, the former gang leaders look back on their youth, recount their subsequent education (some in prison programs) and choice of community activities or careers in youth and drug counseling, recreation and self-defense. In a concluding sequence, former leaders of Bronx gangs are shown lecturing to youngsters today who are organized into "posses."

*Produced by Rilla Fecher and Henry Chalfant
1993, color, 60 mins., video
Purchase: $95 Rental: $95

**GOSPEL OF AIDS**
Examines the rapid spread of the AIDS epidemic in Africa, focusing on the small nation of Rwanda. Five years ago, AIDS did not exist there but today, in the capital of Kigali, one adult in three, including 40% of pregnant women, are HIV-positive. Last year, 1500 babies were born with AIDS, even more than were born in the U.S. In addition to looking at the causes of the AIDS epidemic, this documentary views the country's overwhelmed medical practitioners as well as the many priests and nuns who provide health care and find themselves providing education about safer sex practices.

*Directed by Gil Courtemanche
1993, color, 67 mins., video
French dialog with English subtitles
Purchase: $350 Rental: $95

**MYTH AND METAPHOR**
*IN SOCIETY: A CONVERSATION WITH JOSEPH CAMPBELL AND JAMAKE HIGHWATER*
Joseph Campbell (1904-1987), the world's foremost authority on mythology and author of such landmark books as *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and *The Power of Myth*, and Jamake Highwater, a leading contemporary writer (*The Primitive Mind* and *Native Land*) and cultural commentator, were close friends for the last ten years of Campbell's illustrious life. This program, filmed in 1986 at The Native Arts Festival in Houston, was one of Campbell's last two public presentations, both under the auspices of festival director Jamake Highwater, appearances which Campbell often called his "best." In it, stimulated by Highwater's provocative inquiries, Campbell deals with a wide variety of subjects, including many he had not previously spoken about, including the relationship of myth and society, the relationship of myth and the arts, and the ways that myths differ from culture to culture and yet retain a repertory of central human themes.

*Produced by The Native Arts Festival, Rice University
1993, color, 70 mins., video
Purchase: $160 Rental: $95

**SCHOOL'S OUT: LESBIAN AND GAY YOUTH**
Produced by Public Television's "In the Life" series on lesbian and gay issues, this program examines the difficulties facing gay and lesbian teenagers and the emergence of new special educational programs designed for them. It features interviews with administrators at NYC's Hetrick-Martin Institute who discuss the physical assaults and verbal abuse directed at young homosexuals by other students and the new counseling and recreational programs available to them such as the historic Harvey Milk School for gay and lesbian teens. The program also includes interviews with 'peer educators' who work with high school students on issues of homophobia, a gay teacher who speaks of the dilemmas facing gay educators when they see gay and lesbian kids in need of emotional support, sequences addressing the concerns of young gays and lesbians and their parents, plus performances by the gay music duo Romanovsky and Phillips.

*Directed by Ron Spalding
1993, color, 30 mins., video
Purchase: $250 Rental: $50

**SENTENCED TO LEARN**
Examines the problem of illiteracy among America's prison population by portraying a peer-tutoring program in which long-term, literate inmates attempt to educate fellow inmates by filling teaching positions left vacant due to budget cuts. Filmed inside several different Illinois prisons, both men's and women's facilities, the documentary features interviews with teachers and students in the experimental program who discuss their motivations, the social and racial dynamics of prison life, the choice between violence vs self-education to achieve goals, and the untapped educational potential of the penal system.

*Directed by Zadok Dror
1993, color, 44 mins., video
Purchase: $95 Rental: $95

**Best Feature Documentary**
Athens International Film and Video Festival

**Special Merit Award**
Suffolk County Film Festival

"An example of what is best in American documentary film. Its power is in the simplicity and intelligence with which it exposes us to the lives of the inmates. This is one of those films that instantaneously changes the viewers' perceptions."—George Marcus, Chairman, Dept. of Anthropology, Rice University

**YOUNG VIETNAM**
An inside look at the last generation of Vietnamese to remember the horrors of the Vietnam War and the first to hope for an end to the country's isolation by increasing trade and communication with the West. These young adults still embrace the old ways, living with their extended families in houses warmed by firewood and without running water, but they also enjoy American pop music and Western sports like football. The film features interviews with a young nurse caring for women suffering birth complications caused by the defoliant Agent Orange, and also visits with students in Ho Chi Minh city who crave the educational opportunities found only in the West. Although the live explosives hidden in Vietnam's forests and the decaying aircraft that litter its beaches offer painful physical reminders of a devastating conflict, Vietnam's young people are shown, at the end of the Cold War, to be eager to forgive and forget and to reestablish diplomatic relations with the U.S. Their hope is that today, after years of silence and distrust, the youth of both nations can learn from each other.

*Directed by J. Edward Milner
1989, color, 28 mins., video
Purchase: $250 Rental: $50

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