

Wexner Center for the Arts announces career retrospective of award-winning, Ohio-based filmmaker Julia Reichert

April 1, 2019—Columbus, OH—The Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University is proud to announce the retrospective ***Julia Reichert: 50 Years in Film***. The series celebrates one of the most distinguished bodies of work in American independent film and one of our most decorated documentarians. The retrospective is organized by the Wexner Center with The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

The Wexner Center will present the program in October, launching a national tour that will run through mid-2020. Organizer David Filipi, director of Film/Video at the Wex, will join MoMA for the upcoming premiere of the series on May 30. Film program information and a tour schedule are below.

“Julia has a rare gift for taking historical moments and universal experiences and making them personal,” says Filipi. “As a filmmaker, she has demonstrated a career-long commitment to telling the stories of everyday people wrestling with forces often beyond their control. She is sensitive, compassionate, and driven, and her curiosity about her subjects seems boundless. It’s time that her body of work receives the attention that it deserves.”

Based in Yellow Springs, Ohio, Reichert is a pioneering filmmaker who’s a three-time Academy Award nominee and a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Her debut, *Growing Up Female* (1971), made with Jim Klein, was the first feature documentary of the modern women’s movement and was recently selected for the National Film Registry. *Union Maids* (1976) and *Seeing Red: Stories of American Communists* (1983), also made with Klein, were nominated for Oscars for Best Feature Documentary. *The Last Truck: Closing of a GM Plant* (2009), made with Steven Bognar, was nominated for Best Documentary Short Subject.

Reichert’s a cofounder of the indie distribution co-op New Day Films and the author of *Doing It Yourself*, the first book on self-distribution in independent film. She’s also mentored countless younger filmmakers and students.

A Lion in the House (2006), Reichert’s landmark, four-hour documentary made with Bognar about families, doctors, and nurses fighting childhood cancer, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, screened nationally on PBS, and won the Primetime Emmy for Exceptional Merit in Nonfiction Filmmaking.

The pair’s latest release, *American Factory* (2019) from Participant Media, received the Directing Award, US Documentary, at Sundance. Reichert and Bognar were named 2019 USA Fellows by United States Artists, and Reichert was honored with a 2018 Career Achievement Award from the International Documentary Association. Reichert also received a 2016 Chicken & Egg Pictures Breakthrough Filmmaker Award, which helped make this retrospective possible.

"I am beyond honored that the Wexner Center decided to present a retrospective of my work, and that the Museum of Modern Art is co-presenting," Reichert says. "Both the Wexner Center and MoMA, in different eras of my life, have been central to my growth as a filmmaker and as a person. It's something a small town kid could never have imagined, when she was dreaming about her future, well before there was a women's movement to help shape it."

A booklet including essays by author Barbara Ehrenreich and critic and filmmaker Fariyah Zaman will accompany the series.

Co-organizers for *Julia Reichert: 50 Years of Film* are MoMA's Rajendra Roy, The Celeste Bartos Chief Curator of Film; Olivia Predite, Assistant; and Carson Parish, Theater Manager, Department of Film.

Film/Video Support

Support for the Wexner Center's Film/Video season is provided by the **Rohauer Collection Foundation**.

Support for the Film/Video Studio Program is provided by the **Institute of Museum and Library Services** and the **National Endowment for the Arts**.

Support for arts access at the Wexner Center is provided by **Cardinal Health Foundation** and **Huntington Bank**.

The Wexner Center receives general operating support from the **Greater Columbus Arts Council**, the **Ohio Arts Council**, **The Columbus Foundation**, and **Nationwide Foundation**.

Generous support is also provided by the **Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation** and **Wexner Center members**.

About the Wexner Center

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement for contemporary art.

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Tour information, *Julia Reichert: 50 Years in Film* Organized by the Wexner Center for the Arts

MoMA, May–June 2019
Wexner Center for the Arts, October 2019

UCLA Film & Television Archive, Los Angeles, November 2019
Cinematheque at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, November–December 2019
Cinematheque at the Cleveland Institute of Art, November–December 2019
Northwest Film Center, Portland, Oregon, January 2020
Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, February 2020
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, February 2020
Museum of Fine Art, Houston, March 2020
AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center, Silver Spring, Maryland, May 2020
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, May–June 2020

Titles

- *Growing Up Female* (1971, 52 mins., DCP)
- *Methadone: An American Way of Dealing* (1974, 60 mins., DCP)
- *Union Maids* (1976, 48 mins., DCP)
- *Seeing Red: Stories of American Communists* (1983, 100 mins., DCP)
- *A Lion in the House* (2006, 225 mins., DCP)
- *The Last Truck: Closing of a GM Plant* (2009, 40 mins., DCP)
- *Sparkle* (2012, 18 mins., DCP)
- *Making Morning Star* (2016, 37 mins., DCP)
- *American Factory* (2019, 115 mins., DCP)
- *9to5: The Story of a Movement* (2019, approx. 85 mins., DCP)

Synopses

Growing Up Female

Considered controversial and exhilarating on its release, *Growing Up Female* examines female socialization through a personal look into the lives of six women, ages four to 35, and the forces that shape them—teachers, counselors, advertisements, music, and the institution of marriage. The film was widely used by consciousness-raising groups to generate interest and help explain feminism to a skeptical society. It offers us a chance to see how much has changed as well as how much remains the same. Selected for the National Film Registry in 2011. (With Jim Klein, 1971, 52 mins., DCP)

Methadone: An American Way of Dealing

Methadone: An American Way of Dealing is, unfortunately, a still-relevant film about how the rise in heroin addiction was typically addressed in the early 1970s. Set in Dayton, Ohio, *Methadone* captures how social services, designed to help, in fact often neutralize those they intend to serve. It is a sobering testament about what can happen to those unable to buy into the American Dream. (With Jim Klein, 1974, 60 mins., DCP)

Union Maids

Told through the eyes of three remarkable women, *Union Maids* opens up one of the great untold stories in our history: the fight to form industrial unions in the first half of the 20th century. The film follows Stella, Sylvia, and Kate—all humorous storytellers—as they leave their small farms for promise of greater job opportunities in Chicago and eventually join the battle for better conditions for factory workers. Nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. (With Jim Klein & Miles Mogulescu, 1976, 48 mins., DCP)

Seeing Red: Stories of American Communists

Seeing Red tells the forgotten history and adventures of ordinary Americans who joined the Communist Party and the high price many of them paid during the Red Scare in the 1950s. Compiling more than 400 interviews with former and current party members, the filmmakers deliver an engaging, funny, and human portrait of 50 years of Red activism and attack. Among the stories are personal accounts from iconic folk singer Pete Seeger and a dozen other rank-and-file members that have special resonance in today's political climate. Nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. (With Jim Klein, 1983, new 4K restoration by IndieCollect, 100 mins., DCP)

A Lion in the House

A Lion in the House follows the unique stories of five children and their families at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center as they battle pediatric cancer. From the trauma of diagnosis to the physical toll of treatment, the film documents the stresses that can tear a family apart, as well as the courage of children facing the possibility of death with honesty, dignity, and humor. As the film compresses six years into one narrative, it puts

viewers in the shoes of parents, physicians, nurses, siblings, grandparents, and social workers who struggle to defeat an indiscriminate and predatory disease. A coproduction with ITVS. Winner of a Primetime Emmy for Exceptional Merit in Nonfiction Filmmaking. (With Steven Bognar, 2006, 225 mins., DCP)

The Last Truck: Closing of a GM Plant

Two days before Christmas in 2008, the General Motors assembly plant in Moraine, Ohio, shut its doors. Two thousand workers and 200 management staff were let go and related businesses shuttered, resulting in thousands more displaced workers. But the GM staff lost much more than a job, including the pride shared in their work and camaraderie built over years. Events captured in the film serve as an interesting harbinger of the cultural forces that some believe had a hand in carrying Donald Trump to the White House. Nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Short Subject. (With Steven Bognar, 2009, produced by HBO Films, 40 mins., DCP)

Sparkle

Sheri “Sparkle” Williams has been a star dancer with the legendary Dayton Contemporary Dance Company for nearly 40 years—a record unheard of in the professional dance community—and she is one of the few dancers outside of New York City to have been honored with the prestigious Bessie Award for Individual Performance. When this powerhouse dancer suffers her first serious injury, she’s forced to consider whether she has the will to return to the stage as her 50th birthday approaches. (With Steven Bognar, 2012, 18 mins., DCP)

Making Morning Star

Shot in Cincinnati, *Making Morning Star* presents a behind-the-scenes look at the joys and challenges of developing a new American opera. Featuring interviews with composer Ricky Ian Gordon, librettist William M. Hoffman, and director Ron Daniels, the film captures the delicate balance of personalities during an intense collaboration, unfolding in a workshop hosted by the Cincinnati Opera and the University of Cincinnati’s Conservatory of Music. Will the opera be ready on time? (With Steven Bognar, 2016, 37 mins., DCP)

American Factory

Rust Belt, Ohio. In the husk of a huge, abandoned General Motors plant, a Chinese billionaire opens a new factory, hiring 2000 blue-collar Americans and hundreds of native Chinese. Early days of hope and optimism are truly tested by the enormity of the project and by the cultural differences between high-tech China and postindustrial Midwest America. The filmmakers take us deep inside the story, and the plant itself, examining this collision of cultures and the future of both American labor and Chinese economic dominance. (With Steven Bognar, 2019, 115 mins., DCP)

Raises not Roses – the Story of the 9to5 Movement

Most have heard the song “Nine to Five” by the great Dolly Parton or seen the 1980s blockbuster of the same name starring Parton, Lily Tomlin, and Jane Fonda. Yet few realize that these two icons of popular culture grew

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out of a social movement that spanned over 25 years and sought to have a profound impact on work for women, and the American workforce as a whole. *Raises not Roses* tells this little-known story, starting with a group of female office workers in Boston in the early 1970s and touching on still-relevant issues such as sexual harassment, pay equity, and the “glass ceiling.” (With Steven Bognar, 2019, approx. 85 mins., DCP)