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PRESENTS

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SHADOWMAN



***Opens 12/1 at Quad Cinema in New York City
& 12/8 at Laemmle Noho 7 in Los Angeles***

Directed and Produced by: **Oren Jacoby**

Executive Produced by: **Andrew Valmorbida, Julie Goldman, Christopher Clements & Carolyn Hepburn**

Edited by: **Abhay Sofsky**

Cinematography by: **Oren Jacoby, Bob Richman & Tom Hurwitz**

USA / 2017 / Documentary / English / 82 min / 2.40: 1 / 2.0 and 5.1 Surround Sound

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SYNOPSIS

In the 1980s, Richard Hambleton was the SHADOWMAN, a specter in the night who painted hundreds of startling silhouettes on the walls of lower Manhattan and, along with Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat, sparked the street art movement. After drug addiction and homelessness sent him spinning out of the art scene for 20 years, the SHADOWMAN appears to get a second chance...but will he take it?

SHADOWMAN plunges the viewer into the chaotic life of a forgotten artist, from early fame as a painter and denizen of the Lower East Side, through his struggles with heroin, to his surprising comeback as street art exploded to become one of the most popular and lucrative art movements in the world. Before Banksy, there was Hambleton.

Richard Hambleton first made a name for himself with the conceptual shadow paintings that haunted New York's streets. By the mid-'80s, the world had discovered this extraordinary painter and he began selling canvases for high figures instead of painting on walls for nothing. At the height of his first commercial and critical success in the 80's, Hambleton was featured in LIFE magazine and acclaimed at the Venice Biennale. Seemingly uncomfortable with his own success, he alienated those around him, from art dealers to close friends. Critics revered him as a definitive American Pop-Expressionist artist. But Hambleton was never embraced by the elite NY galleries. In the 1990s, succumbing to his addiction, he vanished from the gallery scene. Just as suddenly as he had appeared, Richard Hambleton disappeared, first on a tour in Europe, then in homeless squalor back in the Lower East Side.

In 2009 Hambleton suddenly resurfaced, supported by two young art dealers, Andy Valmorbida and Vladimir Restoin Roitfeld, working with Giorgio Armani. He had been steadily working, his talent still intact after years underground. Hambleton started producing larger, more exciting pictures with the same demonic spirit and speed he'd demonstrated in the 1980s. There were shows, articles, dinners, worldwide fame, and money. But within a few years, he was alienating his new patrons and was catapulted back to his old life. The film captures this upward and downward spiral, always focusing on Hambleton's undaunted will to paint.

SHADOWMAN is a trip down a rabbit hole into the mystifying, agonizing, exhilarating, and sometimes frightening world of a brilliant artist in the thrall of creation *and* addiction. It features rare footage of the 1980s music and art scene, bringing to the screen an indelible portrait of New York City from a lost, transformative time. Its three most admired and groundbreaking artists were friends and rivals: Jean-Michel Basquiat, dead at 27; Keith Haring, dead at 31; and Hambleton, remarkably still alive and working in 2017 after years of self-inflicted abuse. For three decades he has defined himself by living outside the system, outside the studio, even outside the law – but always producing more work.

SHADOWMAN shows one of our most influential living painters – an elusive artist on a heroic journey, in what he calls his “final days.”

SELECT FESTIVALS

Official Selection - Tribeca Film Festival:
Nominated, Audience Award - Hot Docs Film Festival
Official Selection – Vancouver International Film Festival
Official Selection - Nantucket Film Festival
Official Selection - Quebec City Film Festival
Official Selection – Virginia Film Festival

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Like many people who lived in downtown New York in the early 1980's, I was enthralled by the "shadows," scary, life-size silhouettes that started springing up on walls all over the neighborhood. Almost thirty years later, I met Richard Hambleton and learned that he was the artist who had painted those black figures and helped invent "street art."

It was at the beginning of his extraordinary "comeback." After he'd vanished for twenty years and been forgotten by the art world, he was suddenly back in the public eye, preparing for a series of one-man shows sponsored by Giorgio Armani. Once again, his paintings mesmerized me. Even though I didn't have the backing to hire a crew and hadn't shot a film myself in years, I found myself going with my camera, over and over, back to his Orchard Street studio. I fell down a rabbit hole.

As I began shooting, I assumed the film would have to skip over Richard's "lost years." But then we found footage from 1981, of Richard — at night — surreptitiously painting the first of his shadows on the walls of lower Manhattan, and creating his first, celebrated work on canvas. Eventually, we also discovered home movies shot twenty years ago by artist and photographer Clayton Patterson that show Richard in the junkie house where he was living with a prostitute and several other people — and, in the midst of squalor, still painting!

I came to this story in 2009 when Richard was discovered by two young art dealers and given his dramatic second chance. But the question quickly became: Would he take it? Standing in the corner of his studio I realized that this was the conflict playing out in front of the camera. For as long as I could get in there to shoot.

A few months after I began filming, Richard retreated to his studio, locked me out and stopped answering my calls. There were rumors that he was strung out again. For the next three years, I tried to reach him, knocking on his door dozens of times. Then one day, I got a call. Richard said he had been evicted by marshals for not paying his rent, but he had been sneaking back into his abandoned studio through a side alley. I raced down there; and as so often happened, he told us to come back in an hour. This went on all afternoon. Finally, Richard let us in. There he was: at work again, on three, huge, unfinished Rodeo canvases. Today, more than eight years after I started filming, despite frequent scares that Richard was barely alive, he is still holed up somewhere on the Lower East Side and continues to paint.

SHADOWMAN is a film about the creative life of a brilliant painter who is, at heart, a loner, someone who struggles with addiction and pushes people away, but never stops making art. Sometimes the experience of following Richard with a camera gave me a sense of what it must have been like to see Van Gogh in his fateful, final years as he was consumed by madness, addictions and his last burst of artistic passion. Richard is still alive, barely. I'm glad this film is coming out while he can still see it.

This is also a story about New York in the 80's, an unforgettable time and place for anyone, like me, who experienced it, and an alluring vision for those who wish they'd been there. SHADOWMAN celebrates a city that one character calls "a cauldron of fiery energies," a city that has become cleaner and safer, but more commercialized and certainly more boring.

RICHARD HAMBLETON BIOGRAPHY

Canadian artist Richard Hambleton was born in Vancouver, BC in 1952. He relocated to New York City in the late 70s and has lived there ever since. Hambleton is the surviving member of a group that included Keith Haring and Jean Michel Basquiat who emerged from the downtown New York City scene during the booming art market of the 1980s. Hambleton is regarded today as the Godfather of Street Art.

Hambleton was formally trained, receiving an Advanced Diploma from the Vancouver School of Art in 1975. He was Founder and Co-Director of the "Pumps" Center for Alternative Art, a gallery, performance and video space in Vancouver.

Hambleton's early work included the Image Mass Murder series. These were done on the streets of 15 major cities across the US and Canada. From 1976 to 1978 he painted an outline around bodies of volunteer "homicide victims" that simulated police chalk drawings. He splashed red paint on the outline, leaving behind a realistic looking crime scene. Like Hambleton's later "Shadowman" paintings, the Image Mass Murder "crime scenes" would often have the effect of startling or shocking passersby.

In 1979 Hambleton moved permanently to the Lower East Side of New York and gained notoriety for "Shadowman" paintings that continued to appear throughout the early 1980s. Each painting was a life-sized silhouetted of a mysterious person, or "shadow figure." These "shadows" were splashed and brushed with black paint on hundreds of buildings and other structures across NY City. Locations were calculated for maximum impact upon unsuspecting pedestrians. Hambleton later expanded the scope of his project and painted "Shadowmen" in other cities, including Paris, London, Rome, and Venice. In 1983, during Malcolm McLaren's fashion design partnership with Vivienne Westwood, they collaborated with Hambleton to create a "Shadowman" jersey skirt. In 1984, Hambleton painted 17 life-size figures on the East side of the Berlin Wall, returning a year later to paint more figures on the West side of the Wall.

After his public art, Hambleton produced a variation of his "shadows" as a "Rodeo" horse and rider or rugged "Marlboro Man" riding a bucking horse. This series was painted on canvas and other materials, and could be displayed in galleries.

Hambleton then produced a series that he called "Beautiful Paintings." With strong expressionistic use of color, these pieces are very different than his earlier work. Hambleton has stated that this work was a reaction against the abundance of figurative painting being displayed in galleries at the time and that he was intentionally seeking a different effect "with a different sensibility," than his previous work.

During his career, Hambleton's works have been shown internationally, including paintings on canvas and paper of his "shadow" work. He was included in the Venice Biennale in 1984 and 1988. From the late 1980s until 2005 Richard stopped showing in galleries and disappeared from public life. His circumstances in this period have been shrouded in mystery. In 2009-11, a retrospective of works by Hambleton, covering his 40-year career, were displayed in a series of exhibitions entitled "Richard Hambleton - New York" in six shows around the world: in New York (Tribeca), Milan, the Cannes Film Festival, Moscow, London and New York (Park Ave.) They included his "Shadowman" and "Marlboro Man" works on canvas (and other materials), presented side-by-side with his "Beautiful Paintings." Hambleton's work can be found in the permanent collections of the Check Point Charlie Museum and The Zellermeier in Berlin, The Andy Warhol Museum, Austin Museum of Art, Milwaukee Art Museum, New Museum of Contemporary Art, Brooklyn Museum, The Queens Museum, Harvard University, and the private collection of David Rockefeller. Hambleton has been featured in ArtForum, Art in America, The International Herald Tribune, The New York Times, French Vogue, V Magazine, Architectural Digest, LIFE, and recently chronicled in the urban art book from Taschen, Trespass: A History of Un-commissioned Public Art, and Siman Media Works—XCIA's Street Art Project: The First Four Decades by Hank O'Neal.

DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY

OREN JACOBY, an Academy Award nominated filmmaker, has written, directed, and produced award-winning documentaries for over three decades. His most recent film, *My Italian Secret*, premiered at the Hamptons Film Festival and was the opening night presentation of the Rome International Film Festival. His new film *Shadowman* won the Runner-up Audience Award at the 2017 Tribeca Film Festival.

Sister Rose's Passion, (HBO Films) was winner of Best Documentary Short Film at the Tribeca Film Festival and was nominated for an Oscar.

He created and was executive producer for *Risk Takers* (Bloomberg TV), an original documentary series about game-changing innovators including Elon Musk. Other documentary films include: *Constantine's Sword* with James Carroll "*Enthralling*" – *NY Times*, "*Magnificent*" - *Variety*; *Lady 'Ndrangheta* (Sky) on women in the Mafia; *Lafayette: The Lost Hero* (PBS/Arté); *The Shakespeare Sessions* (PBS) with Kevin Kline and Liev Schreiber; *Benny Goodman: Adventures in the Kingdom of Swing* (*American Masters* PBS); *The Beatles Revolution* (ABC special); *Swinging with Duke*, featuring Duke Ellington and Wynton Marsalis; *The Irish in America* (PBS); *MASTER Thief*, on the 'art heist of the century' (ABC); *Topdog Diaries* (PBS); *Sam Shepard: Stalking Himself* (PBS); *Ghosts of the Bayou* (National Geographic); *Idols of the Game* (TBS) with Michael Jordan; and, with Brook/Lapping Productions, *The Second Russian Revolution* (BBC & Discovery) about the collapse of the USSR, winner of the DuPont / Columbia Gold Baton for Best Documentary, and called 'the best BBC series of the decade' by the London *Independent*.

Jacoby also produced and directed *The Last Girl on Earth*, an original comedy commissioned by the Tribeca Film Festival and *The Return Ticket*, adapted from a story by Anton Chekhov for PBS. His play based on Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* premiered in 2012 and won a Jefferson Award for best New Play adaptation. "*A remarkable, must-see dramatic achievement*" - *Chicago Tribune*.

His films have been presented at The Museum of Modern Art, The Council on Foreign Relations, the Museum of Natural History and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. His filmmaking has been recognized by the American Film Institute and the Sundance Institute. Jacoby has produced short commissioned films for Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, the Philadelphia Orchestra, The Silk Road Project, The New School and Brown University.

He has directed plays in New York and regionally, including new works by Quincy Long, Russell Davis and Franz Xavier Kroetz, as well as classics by Moliere, Chekhov and Pirandello. His stage adaptation of *Invisible Man* has been produced at Chicago's *Court Theater*, Washington's *Studio Theatre* and the *Huntington Theater* in Boston.

FILM CREDITS

a **Storyville Films** production
in association with
Motto Pictures and **Film Movement**

an Oren Jacoby film

SHADOWMAN

Director / Producer

Oren Jacoby

Executive Producer

Andrew Valmorbida

Executive Producers

Julie Goldman

Christopher Clements

Carolyn Hepburn

Editor

Abhay Sofsky

Cinematographers

Oren Jacoby

Bob Richman

Tom Hurwitz

Original Music

Joel Goodman

Co-Producers

Hank O'Neal

Eric Forman

Clayton Patterson

Special thanks to Louise Tilzer Rhodes
whose footage of the artist creating the original Shadowmen
made this film possible

Field Producer

Gabriella Pezzo

Coordinating Producer

Sam Jinishian

Associate Producer

Elgin Smith

Sound Recordist

Peter Miller

Additional Cinematography

Buddy Squires

Additional Editing

Ilan Benatar

Melissa Hacker

Kate Taverna

Camera

Zachary Levy

Colin Rogal

Garry Turnbull

Saman Malik

Aitor Medilibar