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## Montclair Film Announces 1st Annual Documentary Film Weekend

**Directors George T. Nierenberg, Martha Shane, Eric Slade, and Irene Taylor Brodsky will present their films and participate in Q&As**

**September 23, 2019, Montclair, NJ**— Montclair Film, New Jersey’s leading film non-profit, today announced the launch of its first annual documentary weekend, featuring six films screening over the course of a single weekend, October 18-20, 2019. This program presents a diverse array of stories that speak to a wide range of interests. All screenings take place at Montclair Film’s Cinema505.

The weekend opens on Friday, October 18 with Linda Goldstein Knowlton’s **WE ARE THE RADICAL MONARCHS**, followed by Saturday’s program of **NARROWSBURG**, directed by Martha Shane (in attendance), **MOONLIGHT SONATA: DEAFNESS IN THREE MOVEMENTS**, directed by Irene Taylor Brodsky (in attendance), the new, 4K restoration of the classic gospel music documentary **SAY AMEN, SOMEBODY**, directed by Georg T. Nierenberg (in attendance), and Sunday’s screenings of **J.R. ‘BOB’ DOBBS AND THE CHURCH OF THE SUBGENIUS**, directed by Sandy K. Boone, and the new *American Masters* film **ROTHKO: PICTURES MUST BE MIRACULOUS**, directed by Eric Slade (in attendance) and profiling the great American artist Mark Rothko.

Tickets for Montclair Film Members go on sale at 10:00 AM on Tuesday, September 24, with public tickets available at 10:00 AM Friday, September 27. Tickets can be purchased online at [montclairfilm.org](http://montclairfilm.org) or at the door (if available) 30 minutes prior to any film screening. Stand by tickets will be made available for all screenings and will be made available 10 minutes prior to each screening.

“Every year, we are blown away by the quality and range of the documentary films being made, and we wanted to create a new program that highlights some of our favorites,” said Montclair Film Executive Director Tom Hall. “We’re proud to be able to feature new and classic films that tell a wide range of stories, creating an opportunity for audiences to enjoy thought-provoking, deeply engaging documentaries that will inspire conversation and community.”

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## PRESS NOTE

Approved images for this event can be downloaded for use at:

<http://bit.ly/MFDocWeekend2019>

## THE FILMS

### **WE ARE THE RADICAL MONARCHS**

Directed by Linda Goldstein Knowlton

Friday, October 18 at 7:30 PM

A group of tween girls chant into megaphones, marching in the San Francisco TransMarch. Holding clenched fists high, they wear brown berets and vests showcasing colorful badges like “Black Lives Matter” and “Radical Beauty.” Meet the Radical Monarchs, a group of young girls of color at the front lines of social justice. Set in Oakland, a city with a deep history of social justice movements, **WE ARE THE RADICAL MONARCHS** documents the Radical Monarchs - an alternative to the Scout movement for girls of color, aged 8-13. Its members earn badges for completing units on social justice including being an LGBTQ ally, the environment, and disability justice. The group was started by two, fierce, queer women of color, Anayvette Martinez and Marilyn Hollinquest, as a way to address and center the experiences of young brown girls. Their work is anchored in the belief that adolescent girls of color need dedicated spaces and that the foundation for this innovative work must also be rooted in fierce inter-dependent sisterhood, self-love, and hope.

### **NARROWSBURG**

Directed by Martha Shane

Saturday, October 19 at 1:00 PM

Yes, you've been to the Montclair Film Festival, but not all film festivals are created equal! NARROWSBURG tells the story of a French film producer and a mafioso-turned-actor who attempted to turn the tiny town of Narrowsburg in Sullivan County, NY into the “Sundance of the East.” Persuading townspeople that they could be movie stars, the pair created a fever pitch of excitement, launching a film festival in 1999 and shooting a gangster movie. Twenty years after this stranger-than-fiction tale took place and years in the making, director Martha Shane (AFTER

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TILLER) interviews those personally involved to tell a cautionary, almost unbelievable tale that highlights both magic of the movies and the fine line between dreams and delusions.

**Director Martha Shane in attendance for post-screening Q&A.**

## **MOONLIGHT SONATA: DEAFNESS IN THREE MOVEMENTS**

**Directed by Irene Taylor Brodsky**

**Saturday, October 19 at 4:00 PM**

A visceral and intimate story, **MOONLIGHT SONATA** the film chronicles a deaf boy named Jonas growing up, a deaf man growing old, and perhaps the world's most famous deaf person, Ludwig van Beethoven, a composer who crafted a sonata that would resonate across time and cultures. The story begins with Jonas' first years of life going deaf, undergoing surgery for cochlear implants, and then discovering a newfound world of hearing — and music. Now 11, Jonas has had a cochlear implant and can choose when to be deaf and when not to be. He is struggling to learn the first movement of the "Moonlight Sonata," an anguished composition Beethoven wrote when he began going deaf. Beethoven's story is told by entering an animated nineteenth century, alive with watercolor imagery, haunting soundscapes and original score, and witnessing Beethoven descend, painfully, into the loss of something that gave him so much beauty. Jonas's teacher, Colleen, guides us through Beethoven's state of mind at the time of writing the piece. Meanwhile, Jonas' grandparents, Paul and Sally, who have been deaf for nearly 80 years, watch their grandson learn to play piano and feel the gulf that lies between them. **MOONLIGHT SONATA** is a story about loss and, more importantly, what we discover when we push beyond it.

**Director Irene Taylor Brodsky in attendance for a post-screening Q&A.**

## **SAY AMEN, SOMEBODY**

**Directed by Georg T. Nierenberg**

**Saturday, October 19 at 7:00 PM**

One of the most acclaimed music documentaries of all time, **SAY AMEN, SOMEBODY** is George Nierenberg's masterpiece — a joyous, funny, deeply emotional celebration of African American culture, featuring the father of Gospel, Thomas A. Dorsey ("Precious Lord, Take My Hand"); its matron, Mother Willie Mae Ford Smith; and earth-shaking performances by the Barrett Sisters and the O'Neal Twins. When

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it was first released in the early 1980s, the film received an overwhelming critical response, garnering rave reviews around the world. Presented in a new 4K restoration that has been thrilling audiences across the country.

**Director George T. Nierenberg in attendance for a post-screening Q&A.**

## **J.R. 'BOB' DOBBS AND THE CHURCH OF THE SUBGENIUS**

**Directed by Sandy K. Boone**

**Sunday, October 20 at 2:00 PM**

The Church of the SubGenius has been called “the most aggressively preposterous theology the world has ever known!” But what is the Church? And who is J.R. "Bob" Dobbs? And why is his name always in quotes? And for nonbelievers, why has this strangely compelling parody religion, this long-running postmodern joke, caught the attention of such pop culture icons as **Rachel Maddow, Nick Offerman, Jon Stewart, David Letterman, Pee-wee Herman (Paul Reubens), David Byrne, Robert Crumb, Richard Linklater, Alex Cox, Ken Kesey, Frank Zappa, Jonathan Demme, and Devo's Mark Mothersbaugh?**

What started out as an inside joke amongst two self-proclaimed weirdos in Ft. Worth, Texas soon becomes much more than they bargained for. Frustrated by the rising consumer-driven culture, out of work pals Douglass St. Clair Smith and Steve Wilcox decide to turn their conservative southern ideology on its head and invent a new religion all their own. Spurred on by the overreach of religion and zealous televangelists of the day, the pair concoct religious monikers (Reverend Ivan Stang and Dr. Philo Drummond), a newly minted prophet (J.R. "Bob" Dobbs), and devised a crusade to expose the conspiracy of normalcy by using humor as the ultimate weapon.

## **ROTHKO: PICTURES MUST BE MIRACULOUS**

**Directed by Eric Slade**

**Sunday, October 20 at 5:00 PM**

Mark Rothko (1903–1970) is considered one of the most renowned figures of the Abstract Expressionists, though he refused to adhere to any art movement. Over the course of his decades-long career, Rothko winnowed his artistic focus until he was working exclusively with the iconic set of forms that became synonymous with his name: rectangles against a contrasting background, carefully layered with

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sometimes hundreds of layers of pigment to produce a luminous, living color and inspire deep emotion. For Rothko, both the act of painting and the viewing of his work was considered a spiritual experience; he even famously returned a generous commission to the Four Seasons Hotel in New York City because he discovered that his finished works were intended for the walls of the restaurant. This film profiles the life and work of a man who often wrestled with great sadness even as he transformed the course of American art with his uncompromising vision. This screening is a special sneak preview in advance of the *American Masters* premiere on PBS.

**Director Eric Slade in attendance for a post-screening Q&A**

## ABOUT MONTCLAIR FILM

Montclair Film is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization that engages, entertains, and educates through the power of visual storytelling. The ninth annual Montclair Film Festival will take place from May 1-10, 2020. Montclair Film's year-round and festival programming is made possible through generous support from Investors Bank; Audible; Hackensack Meridian Health, Mountainside Medical Center; the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey; The Bravitas Group; Ashenfelter, Slous, Trembulak, McDonough, Golia & Trevenen, LLP; Chubb; Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage; William H. Connolly & Co.; The Nature Conservancy, and RBC Wealth Management. Our programs are made possible by funds from the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism, as well as the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. For more information about Montclair Film, visit [www.montclairfilm.org](http://www.montclairfilm.org)

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# **MONTCLAIR FILM**

For more information, please contact

FRANK PR:

Phone: 646-861-0843

**Lina Plath**

**Clare Anne Darragh**

[lina@frankpublicity.com](mailto:lina@frankpublicity.com) [clareanne@frankpublicity.com](mailto:clareanne@frankpublicity.com)