

# VIDEO REMAINS

by Alexandra Juhasz



James Lamb in still from VIDEO REMAINS

VIDEO REMAINS, by Alexandra Juhasz  
Experimental Documentary  
Mini-dv; 54 mins, 2005  
On-line Press Kit at: <http://pzacad.pitzer.edu/ajuhasz/>

In 1993, Alex shoots an interview with her best friend Jim as he tries to recount his life as he is dying. In 2004, she re-works this haunted video, playing it in real-time but letting bleed in a host of present day interviewees who also reflect upon AIDS, death, activism, and video. What remains is this woman's contemplative, loving memorial to one gay man lost to AIDS that also marks what changes and lasts after death, across time, and because of videotape.

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## SYNOPSIS

In 1992, James Lamb, an off-Broadway actor, requests that his best friend, Alex Juhasz, videotape him. He was dying and wanted to explain his life; he wanted to be remembered. He was also probably suffering from AIDS dementia, so the interview is part rant, part performance piece, part eulogy. After he died in 1993, the 55-minute tape sat on her shelf. What was do be done with this video legacy?

In 2004, Alex resurrected the tape to make the experimental documentary, "Video Remains." Jim's interview plays in real-time, to be periodically interrupted by a host of present-day voices and images, interviewees who, like Jim, reflect upon AIDS, death, activism, and video. Alex tapes four fellow female AIDS video activists; her hair stylist; and a group of gay youth of color: do the massive AIDS deaths and activism of the 1980s affect us today? What remains from that remarkable and gruesome period? Do we learn from the dead, from the past, and does video help?

AIDS activism has been said to be the first truly postmodern social justice movement because of its radically successful use of the media. Juhasz, one of the movement's principal video activists, borrows into her archive of haunted images to find *video remains* that create a contemplative, loving memorial to one gay man lost to AIDS, and a formal and existential inquiry into what might possibly remain in the face of loss. "Video Remains" marks what changes and lasts after death, across time, and because of videotape.



Still from VIDEO REMAINS, dir. Alexandra Juhasz, mini-dv, 55 mins, 2005

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Michael Anthony in still from VIDEO REMAINS, by Alexandra Juhasz, 2005

DIRECTOR/PRODUCER: ALEXANDRA JUHASZ has made over 15 documentaries on feminist and lesbian issues from AIDS, to women's films, to teen pregnancy, including the features *Video Remains* (2005), *Dear Gabe* (2002) and *Women of Vision* (1998), as well as producing the acclaimed narrative feature, *The Watermelon Woman* (1996). Her work has screened at the Sundance and Toronto Intl Film Festivals, and women's, and gay and lesbian film festivals around the world. She is a Professor of Media Studies at Pitzer College and the author of critical writing about alternative media. Her work includes:

- DEAR GABE. 2002. 50 mins. Mini-dv. Producer and Director. Gay and Lesbian Fests: NY, LA, SF. Souel Women's Film Festival. Distributed by the Cinema Guild.
- NAMING PRAIRIE. 2001. 6:41 mins. Digi-Beta. Producer and Director. Sundance, Cleveland, S.F. Jewish; Gay and Lesbian Fests: NY, LA, SF, Toronto. Distributed by 7<sup>th</sup> Art Releasing.
- RELEASED: 5 SHORT VIDEOS ABOUT WOMEN AND PRISON: 2000. 26 mins. Mini-dv. Producer. Women in the Director's Chair, Gay and Lesbian Fests: NY, LA, SF, Toronto.
- WOMEN OF VISION: 1998. Producer/Director/Editor. 82:40. Beta-SP. Creteil Int. Women's Fest, Gay & Lesbian Fests: NY, LA, SF, Toronto. Distributed by Cinema Guild.
- BAD BOSSES GO TO HELL: 1997. 7 mins. 16mm Narrative Short. Producer for Killer Films. Palm Springs & Hamptons Short Fests, IFFM. Airs on: PBS, IFC, atomfilms.com.
- THE WATERMELON WOMAN: 1996. 16mm Feature Narrative. Producer. Toronto Intl. Awards: Teddy Bear, Berlin; Audience Awards at Creteil, Torino, LA Gay & Lesbian Fests, Hong Kong. 1997 Whitney Biennial. Theatrically released, airs on Sundance and BET.

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## CREW AND CAST BIOS

EDITOR: ENID BAXTER BLADER makes paintings, experimental films, and plays music. Her work has been presented at the Smithsonian, Orange County Museum of Art, Sundance Film Festival, Location One, Aurora Picture Show, the Director's Guild of America and festivals internationally. Her films have been written about in the *New York Times*, *ArtForum*, *ArtReviews* and others. She received her BFA from The Cooper Union in 1996 and her MFA from Claremont Graduate University in 2000. She completed a fellowship at Yale University in 1995 and was a recent recipient of a Durfee Foundation ARC grant and a Kodak Filmmaking Grant.

STARRING: JAMES LAMB was a member of Charles Ludlam's Ridiculous Theatrical Company in the late 80s and early 90s where he performed in *Big Hotel*, *Der Ring Gott Flerblongett*, *Brother Trucker* and *Camille*. He received a BA from Amherst College.

FEATURING: ALISA LEBOW worked making videos about AIDS discrimination for the NYC Commission on Human Rights from 1989-1993. She then worked on the *Living With AIDS* show at GMHC, and made the experimental video, *Internal Combustion*, with Cynthia Madansky about HIV and lesbians (Distributed by Video Data Bank).

FEATURING: JUANITA MOHAMMED IMRAN has produced activist video for the past 12 years. Her primary goal has been making videos that bring awareness that HIV/AIDS affects us all. She is proud to work on videos with her son Shah and daughter Jahanara. Currently she works as a caseworker for the City of New York in honor of her late friend Tyrone. Although she has not produced videos for the past two years, she is currently producing a grandmothers/granddaughters dealing with revolution. She also plans to produce a video on the continuing misconceptions surrounding HIV/AIDS

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## BIOS

Mpowerment at APLA, AIDS Project Los Angeles's Mpowerment Program is dedicated to reducing the risk of HIV infection among young MSM and MSM/W by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate risk-reduction education, support and activities. Mpowerment provides individual, group and community level interventions through one on one counseling, roundtable discussions, community organizing efforts, information sharing, negotiation and life skills development, and the creation of resilient representations. The program serves Los Angeles youth ages 15-22.

FEATURING: SARAH SCHULMAN is the author of twelve books including *People in Trouble*, *Rat Bohemia*, *The Child* (forthcoming) and the nonfiction books *My American History: Gay and Lesbian Life During The Reagan/Bush Years*, and *Stagestruck: Theater, AIDS, and the Marketing of Gay America*. Her AIDS journalism appeared in *The Village Voice*, *The Nation*, *The Guardian* of London and many gay and feminist publications. A seven-year veteran of ACT-UP, Sarah is co-director of the ACT UP Oral History Project ([www.actuporalhistory.org](http://www.actuporalhistory.org)).

FEATURING: ELLEN SPIRO is known as a pioneer in small format video technology. Dubbed "the little video that could," *DIANA'S HAIR EGO (1988)* was the first documentary shot on 8mm consumer video equipment to be shown on television in the U.S. The NY Times says it "addresses AIDS and sexuality with refreshing humor without losing touch with its serious subject matter." Spiro made a series of AIDS activist videos including *(IN)VISIBLE WOMEN* as part of the *FEAR OF DISCLOSURE* project. In 1990 she co-founded DIVA TV (Damned Interfering Video Activist Television) in NYC.

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## CAST AND CREW



Jim and Alex in still from VIDEO REMAINS, 2005

### PRINCIPAL CAST

Starring:

James Lamb

Michael Anthony

MPowerment Participants

Featuring:

Alisa Lebow

Juanita Mohammed

Sarah Schulman

Ellen Spiro

CREW

Director/Producer/Camera:

Alexandra Juhasz

Picture Editor:

Enid Baxter Blader

Sound Editor:

Enid Baxter Blader

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Jim in still from VIDEO REMAINS, Alexandra Juhasz, mini-dv, 55 mins, 2005

Stills and Press Kit Online at:  
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## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

The interview I videotaped of my best friend, Jim, in 1992, less than a year before he died, was for me a haunted, and hated object. This tape did not represent him at his best, nor in his complexity. A 55-minute interview cannot adequately represent a marvelous, mischievous life. And yet, I did have this video. Something of him, and that time, remained within its pixels.

When I decided to use the video to revisit his life and death, as well as that of AIDS activism, and AIDS video activism, my process was more intuitive than for my previous work which tends to be analytical or polemical. I found myself following my dreams (often being visited by Jim at night), looking at his old pictures and letters, and letting myself be led by life's freak circumstances. When a hair stylist that I had never met initiated a conversation about AIDS in NY in the 80s, this only an hour after a lunch where I had agreed to videotape young gay men in an AIDS support group, I knew they all needed to be in the documentary. Michael and I had both lived through the dying, but he tells the stories of the dead with a grace and vividness that I can not; the gay youth at Mpowerment are making their lives without the voices of a generation, or its AIDS activism, to guide them, and yet live and love they do.

And, I also spoke to women who had loved and supported gay men during the worst of America's AIDS crisis. This piece is, for me, is also about the beauty and complexity of this queer form of love and militancy.

While many of us have almost stopped talking about AIDS, while its representations and activism are heard to find, AIDS endures and changes. In my video, I attempt to use mourning to produce something new: a return to the past of AIDS and a look at how what we did then and what we lost from that time might still affect AIDS today. Having spent my adult life making, theorizing, and teaching about video, the piece also begs the worth of such work, the merit of video relics, they value of this archive. I no longer hate this videotape interview of Jim, although I do still think it is haunted. There is little to nothing of his amazing, vital presence in those pixels and yet, there he speaks, and smiles, and suffers, more tangible although somehow less flexible than a memory.