



(1) (2) (3) My name is Dennis Doros and I'm the co-founder of Milestone Film & Video along with my wife Amy Heller. We started the company solely to bring out the films we love. If you wonder how we fund all our work, so do we. But next year is the 25th anniversary of our marriage and Milestone and we are almost entirely self-funded. Miracles can happen. We have focused our efforts on the acquisition, preservation and restoration of great films that have been lost to history. We are also a research company. For every film we distribute, we acquire dozens of books, original marketing and publicity ephemera, and we collect all the first-person documentation on the making of the film as we can. How this all works together in the digital world is tonight's topic.



Shirley Brimberg was born in New York City in 1919 to great wealth.

All projects start with a birth. **(1)** Shirley Brimberg was born in New York City in 1919 to a wealthy Jewish family. Her maternal grandfather invented **(2)** the self-tapping metal screw. They

. The invention made him a fortune. Shirley Brimberg conquered her childhood learning disabilities **(3)** when she discovered dance in high school. After attending seven different colleges taking all the dance classes they offered, Shirley married Bert Clarke in 1943 and their daughter Wendy was born the following year. Throughout this time, she studied under some of the great choreographers of the 20th century. But by 1952, she found herself married, a parent of a young girl, and with a stalled career. Taking out the 16mm Bolex camera **(4)** she received as a wedding present, she decided to enter the film world. Over the rest of the decade, her short films quickly gained her acclaim and she became one of the pre-eminent independent filmmakers of the post-war era.





Shirley entered the 1960s directing her first feature film, THE CONNECTION based on Jack Gelber's Living Theater play. This is from her home movie shot on the last day of the shoot. Based on an off-Broadway play about a group of drug addicts waiting for their fix, their connection, it was acclaimed at its premiere in Cannes, but caused great controversy when it opened in New York.




She was **THE** female American director of the 1960s, but you can't really understand the true extent of her courage until you look closely at this photo of the cast and crew. For those counting, there are 26 men ... and Shirley.



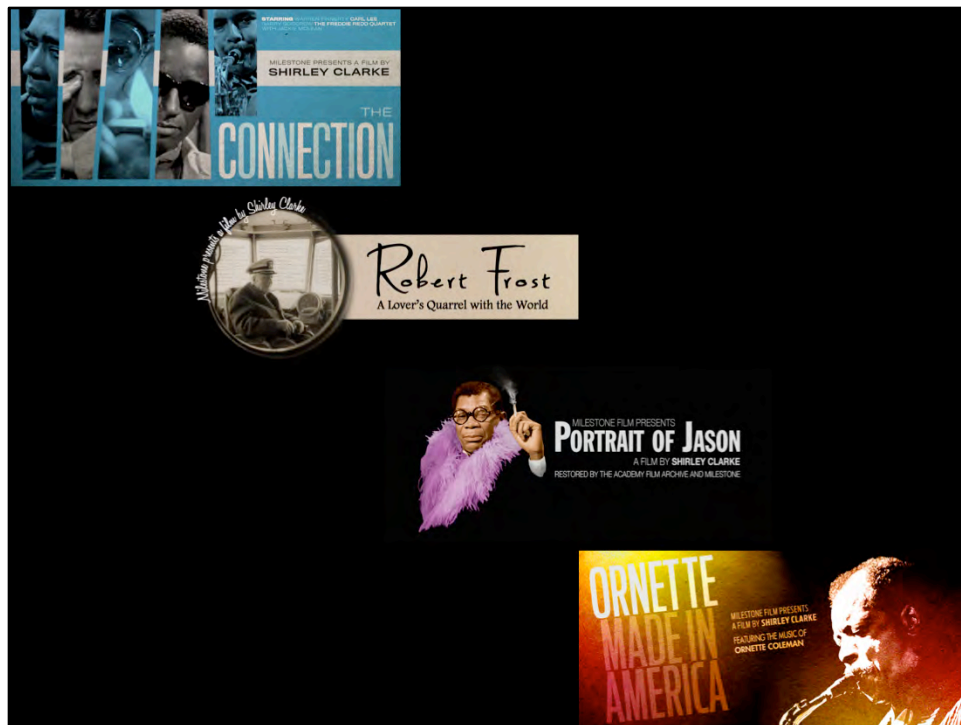
Shirley's following features also broke new ground thematically and technically. Her one straight documentary, *ROBERT FROST: A LOVER'S QUARREL WITH THE WORLD* won an Academy Award. Her later work as the founder and main instigator of the TeePee Video Space Troupe was extremely important during the early years of the art video movement, inspiring hundreds of fellow artists. Her roof garden on top of the Hotel Chelsea, seen here, was their studio.

Number of books + monographs devoted solely to John Cassavetes.....	100+
Number of books + monographs devoted solely to Stan Brakhage.....	100+
Number of books + monographs devoted solely to Shirley Clarke.....	1

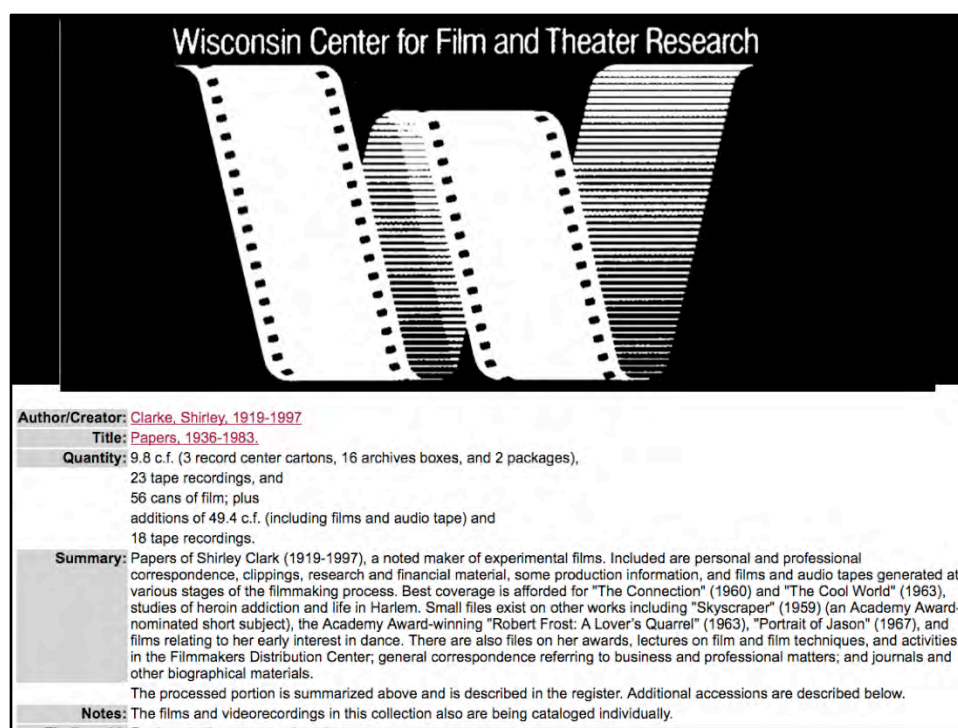
...and the one monograph is 33 pages long.



READ THE TEXT AS I PUSH BUTTONS But after her death in 1997, her films scattered to the wind and her reputation quickly faded. Compare her to her contemporary filmmakers and friends. (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) As a company dedicated to what we call outsider films featuring work by and about people not always represented by Hollywood, Milestone launched PROJECT SHIRLEY in 2008 to acquire her films and distribute them.



The original intent of Project Shirley was to acquire, preserve, digitize and distribute her feature films and her eight major short films. We started by working with Shirley Clarke's daughter, video and visual artist Wendy Clarke as well as Shirley's producers, we acquired all but one of her feature films. We then worked with the archives to start to preserve and restore her work. When we started in 2008, almost everything was focused on the presentation of 35mm prints. The advent of DCPs has altered these plans. With our first release, *THE CONNECTION*, we had five 35mm prints showing in theaters. We now have 1 35mm print and five DCPs. The rapid decline in the cost to digitize films and the power of the new home computers has created an even more dramatic change in how we work.



But something more wonderful happened. The Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research offered us complete access to the Shirley Clarke collection. They have catalogued everything and a list of their holdings is online, but even they didn't realize what was to unfold. There has been such a huge discovery of riches – unfinished films, outtakes, home movies, and thousands of pages of documents – even original session recordings! -- that the project that started in 2008 and meant to take a year or two, has become an ongoing project that will take years to reveal all its treasures.

The features and the short finished films were done with 2K scans at six different labs and three different archives – UCLA, the Academy Film Archive and the Museum of Modern Art. We also brought original 35mm negatives to the archives on permanent loan. Most of what you'll see tonight has never been seen in public before. Digitizing the Shirley Clarke archive – including film, video **AND** paper -- has become the essential tool to understand and disseminate her work. Milestone has spent well over \$172,464 on Project Shirley. This does not include the archives' costs to restore the four films with us. It was essential that paper and audio and visual materials were considered as a whole to understand her life and her career. Tonight, I will premiere just a slice of the revelations – focusing on her work with the legendary choreographer Anna Sokolow.



Born in Hartford, Connecticut, Anna Sokolow was the daughter of Russian Jewish immigrants who began her career dancing for Martha Graham in the 1930s.

Sokolow went off on her own to become one of the renowned choreographers of the 20th century as well as the recognized founder of modern dance in both Mexico and Israel.

Known as the Prophet of Doom for her dances of social protest and human tragedy, Sokolow's work and life were intensely fierce, confrontational, and passionate. When the young Shirley Clarke started dancing for Sokolow, they found in each other kindred spirits and became lifelong friends. To recorded history, Sokolow choreographed and performed in Clarke's film *BULLFIGHT* seen here in 1955 and then choreographed Clarke's next dance film as well, *A MOMENT IN LOVE*.

BULLFIGHT is famous as the only filmed record of Anna Sokolow dancing. In it, she dances and performs the roles of Spectator, Bullfighter *and* the bull cut with scenes of bullfighting shot in Spain. Both *BULLFIGHT* and *A MOMENT IN LOVE* stress Sokolow's view of life and love as intense passion and struggle. All of the 16mm prints have faded along with the original negative. We are working to restore the film now at Metropolis Labs in New York. This is from the raw 2K digital scans.

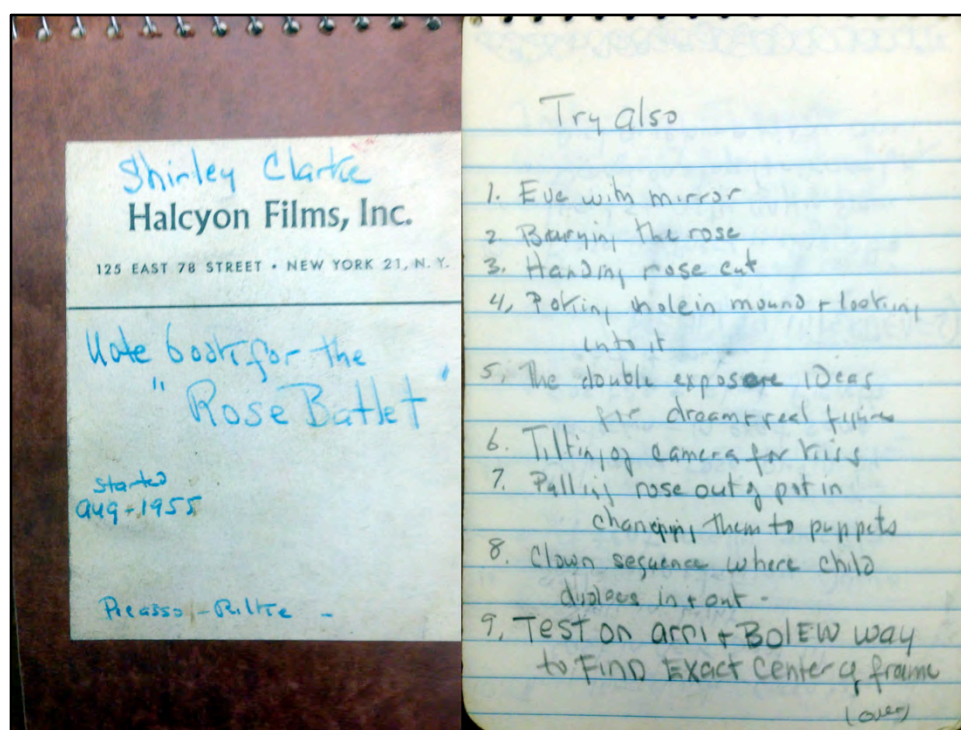


When Shirley first began to make films, she naturally turned to dance. Years later she said in an interview: "Dance as it existed on the stage had to be destroyed in order to have a good film and not just a rather poor document."

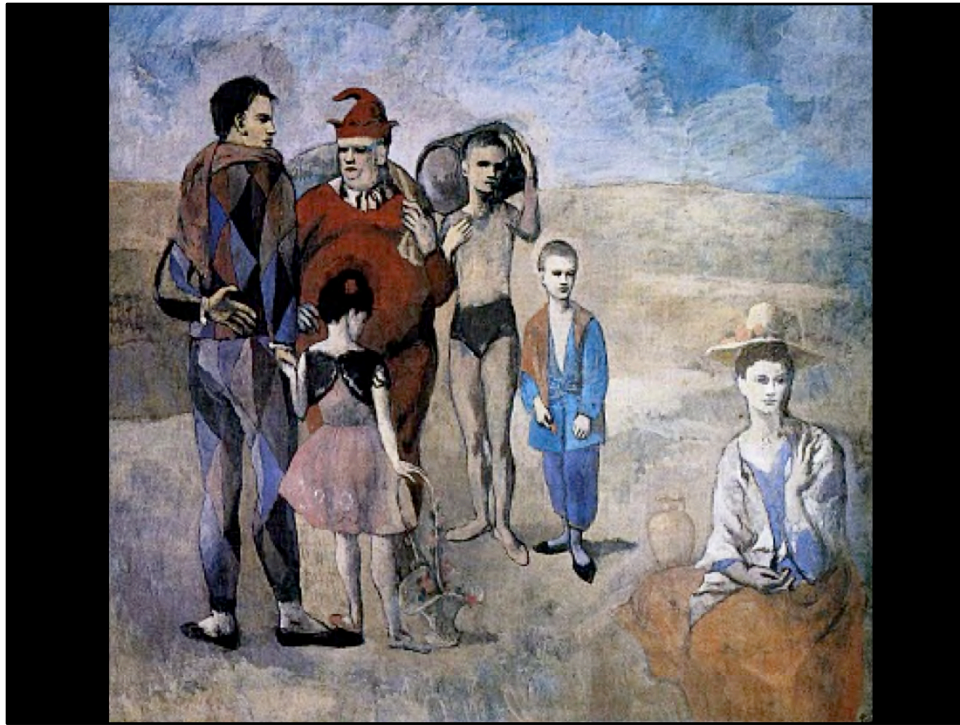
One of the first discoveries in the Clarke collection was a edited 16mm labeled **"work print: FEAR FLIGHT: first attempt at making a film"** About 11 minutes long, it is an unfinished film performed by a Sokolow company dancer, Beatrice Seckler. It is very possible that Sokolow choreographed the film. There is a reel of outtakes as well. All in all, there was a lot of material there to create a very good performance, but you can see later why she didn't continue. It's only with her next attempt at filmmaking, the next year's *Dance in the Sun* where Shirley takes dance away from the stage.

The next clip is very short, and I have added titles to make it self-explanatory for the DVD release, so I'll step back here to let you watch...





Most astonishing were two reels of tests for a film originally titled THE ROSE BALLET that began with many notes and scripts in 1955, and then became THE ROSE AND THE PLAYERS to be choreographed again by Sokolow. It was only by going through her paper and talking to Clarke's daughter to realize that it was a much more ambitious feature project based on a 1905 painting by Picasso,



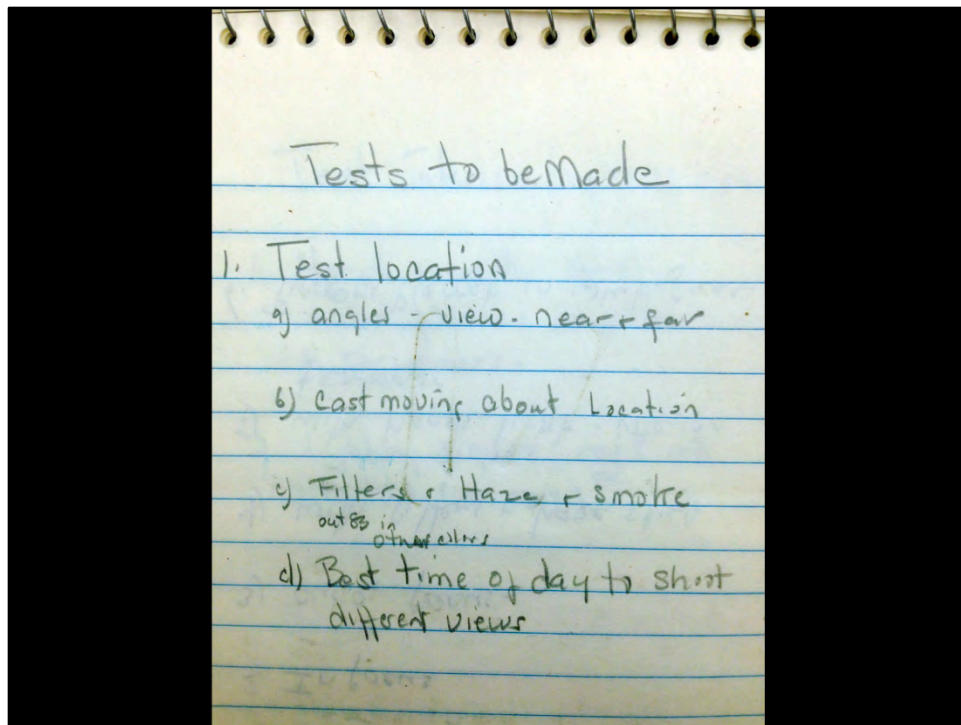
The Family of Saltimbanques. This was created during Picasso's rose period, a time when he was interested in the saltimbanques, or itinerant circus performers. It was to be a film that followed them and a single flower – a red rose. However, like the earlier Jelly Roll Morton piece, this was to be a work that was far more romantic and playful than Sokolow's usual protest work that had earned her that Prophet of Doom nickname.

In the end, it was only one section that was kept and became Clarke's greatest short film, *A MOMENT IN LOVE*. Combining the test footage with Shirley Clarke's voluminous notes makes for a time machine, showing the creative process of both filmmaker and choreographer.



Here is a short clip of a much longer reel of film from the choreography rehearsals in the studio. The film is originally silent. It's wonderful that through most of the reel, you see Anna Sokolow in the bottom left of the screen coaching the dancers. Shirley's daughter Wendy, then 11, appears in these tests – she's the young girl in the white dress. In the script, this is the death of Pierrette appearing at first to be a tragedy.

But in the script, the camera would pull back to show the audience watching a play-within-a-play. As the group begs Pierrette to rise she does, to reveal a light-hearted comedic ending as props start flying across the stage, they pack everything into trunks including the roses and they take their bows.



Going back to Shirley Clarke's notes, here she is considering taking the dance troupe out to a location for tests. She describes a location by the river with a train. And wonderful enough, there is a full 16mm reel of color silent film that were shot next to New York Central Railroad Pier 7 in Weehawken, New Jersey. Pier 7 was a gigantic grain warehouse that was built in 1884 and was demolished in 1962. Here are clips from the reel...



In these silent tests – the music has been added for this presentation – the dancers in the studio are seen here again. One notable addition is Beatrice Seckler, the dancer seen before in Fear Flight.

The script calls for Jeff, the Harlequin to take the rose and hand it, with a flourish, to Columbine who puts it behind her ear. Then the rose is handed around to the rest of the company.

Here, as Shirley notes has scripted: Eve Runs into scene and up to a long, deserted train car. The children follow. The camera swishes back and picks up Paul, Jeff and Carmela...

In this brief section, you can see now the choreography that became A Moment In Love. Trying out her idea (1) about a mirror.



A MOMENT IN LOVE, an 11-minute short film that debuted in 1956, was a great advance in Clarke's career. Her brilliant use of double exposures through optical printing, her daring use of color, and the incredible choreography by Sokolow has made this a classic dance film. Here is a short clip giving you some flavor of the finished film.





Project Shirley will culminate in a series of DVDs and BluRay of her films as well putting her video work online for further research. There is also a feature documentary and biography in the works.

The archives have done an incredible job of preserving Shirley Clarke's films, videos and papers, With their help and participation in Milestone's Project Shirley, now her life and work – through this collection -- will come to life.