

African American Lesbian Produced Films

Compiled Alphabetically by Title by Yvonne Welbon

A-C | D-G | H-I | J-M | N-R | S-W

Please Note: This is a list that I have gathered for my database on black women filmmakers over the years. I have not really been actively adding to the list since 1996. Therefore I am positive that a lot of work is not included here. Please help me to update this list by submitting information about African American lesbian produced media in the same format to ywelbon@sistersincinema.com. Distributors are listed here.

Each entry contains the following information:

Title Director's Name (Year of production and production format)

Running time [Code for distributor(s) - if there is one] Brief description - if available.

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24 Hours a Day Jocelyn Taylor (1993, color, video) 9 mins. Routine activities take on curious sexual overtones.

< A >

Among Good Christian People Jacqueline Woodson and Catherine Saalfield (1990, color & b/w, video) 24 mins. [F, TWN] An autobiographical documentary about Jacqueline Woodson's experiences growing up as a black lesbian Jehovah's Witness.

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Badass Supermama Etang Inyang (1996, color, video) 16 mins. [F]. A playful, yet critical personal exploration of an adolescent fascination with blaxploitation queen Pam Grier. Questions race, gender, and sexuality through the lens of star worshiping.

The Balance Pamela Jennings (1993, Interactive computer media) A HyperCard programmed poem.

Be a Diva Jocelyn Taylor with DIVA TV (1990, color, video) 58 mins. A call for video activism.

A Bird in the Hand Melanie Nelson and Catherine Saalfield (1992, color, video) 25 mins. A video about lovers trying to escape New York and the reality of their friend Ayo's abusive relationship.

Black Nations/Queer Nations Shari Frilot (1995, color, video) 50 mins. [TWN] An experimental documentary chronicling the March 1995 ground breaking conference on lesbian and gay sexualities in the African Diaspora.

Black Women, Sexual Politics and the Revolution Cyrille Phipps and Not Channel Zero (1992, color, video) 30 mins. [TWN] Focuses on sexual equality in the Black community.

Blood Poem Jamika Ajalon (1991, color, video) 9 mins.

Bodily Functions Jocelyn Taylor (1995, color & b/w, video) 20 mins. [TWN]. The theoretical Black lesbian body made flesh. Camera functions as voyeur and observer through interviews about sex, self, and shots of a nude woman as she walks through urban streets.

...But Then, She's Betty Carter Michelle Parkerson (1980, color, 16mm) 53 mins. [WMM] An unforgettable portrait of legendary vocalist Betty Carter, one of the greatest living exponents of jazz.

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Chasing the Moon Dawn Suggs (1990 b/w, 16mm) 4 mins. [TWN] Mediations of a black lesbian grappling with the

memory of an attack that makes her wary about being out on the street.

Cinematic Jazz of Julie Dash Yvonne Welbon (1992-3, color, video) 26 mins. [TWN, WMM] An interview with the filmmaker Julie Dash about her film training, vision and struggle to bring *Daughters of the Dust* to the American movie screen. Includes clips of *Illusions* and *Diary of an African Nun*.

Club Q Aarin Burch (1991, color, video) 8 mins.

Complicated Flesh Cheryl Dunye and Kristina Deutsch (1993, color, video) 14 mins.

A Cosmic Demonstration of Sexuality Shari Frilot (1993, color, video) 15 mins. [TWN] A humorous comparison between female sexuality and cosmic structures.

Creation of Destiny Christina Springer, (1993, color, 16mm) 57 mins.

Cutting the Edge of a Free Bird Anne Marie "Jade" Bryan (1993, color, 16mm) 17 mins. A short narrative which tells the story of an African American family's struggle to decide between a deaf or hearing college for their deaf lesbian daughter.

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< D >

Dreaming Ourselves...Healing Darkness Cyrille Phipps (1995, color, video) 30 mins.

Dreams of Passion Aarin Burch (1989, color, 16mm) 5 mins. [WMM] An eloquent piece about intimacy and desire between two African American women.

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A Family Tradition Jacqueline Woodson and Catherine Saalfeld (1995, color, video) 11 mins.

Father Knows Best Jocelyn Taylor (1990, color, video) 20 mins. A rare portrait of a Black lesbian speaking with her father about his feelings about her sexual orientation.

Firefly Dawn Suggs (1996, video, color) 10 mins. A grandmother recognizes her granddaughter's anguish, and provides her with the key to their family history.

Fly Boy Shari Frilot (1989, video) 7 mins.

Frankie & Jocie Jocelyn Taylor (1994, color, video) 18 mins. [TWN] An autobiographical examination of her complex relationship with her brother.

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Gay Black Female Stephanie Wynne (1997 color, b&w) 30 mins. [GBF] A Gay Black Female searches for love in the personal ads and get more than she bargains for.

Gotta Make This Journey Michelle Parkerson (1980, color, video) 58 mins. A film about the accapella women's group Sweet Honey and the Rock.

Greetings From Africa Cheryl Dunye (1994, color, 16mm) 10 mins. [WMM] A highly entertaining rumination on lesbian dating-90s style.

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Hottentot Venus Gail Lloyd (1994, color, video) 7 mins. Focuses on Saartjie Baartman who became know as the Hottentot Venus as she was toured though Europe. Examines colonialism and the colonized "found object."

Human Touch: Power and Pain Vejan Lee Smith (1993, color, video) 30 mins. [TWN] Documents how survivors of sexual abuse reaffirm their sexuality and physical selves.

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I Never Danced the Way Girls Were Supposed To Dawn Suggs (1992 color, b&w, video) 7 mins. [TWN] A fun and fresh exploration of the question, "What makes Black lesbians so special?"

I Object, Jocelyn Taylor with House of Color (1990, color, video) 5 mins. A commentary on the objectification and invisibility of lesbians and gays of color in dominant media.

I Remember Betty Michelle Parkerson (1987, color, 16 mm) 10 mins.

If She Only Knew Stephanie Wynne (1998 , color, video) 30 mins.[GBF] A woman falls in love with the delivery boy and gets the shock of her life.

Ife H. Len Keller (1992, b/w, 16mm) 5 mins. [F] Chronicles one day in the life of a Black French lesbian.

In My Father's House Aishah Shahidah Simmons (1996, color, video) 10 mins. The filmmaker and her father remember her coming out process.

Introduction to Cultural Skit-zo-frenia, Jamika Ajalon (1993, color, video) 10 mins. [TWN] Explores the raw-edge of being "Black enough" as a lesbian/gay of color.

I've Never, Pamela Jennings (1992, b/w, video) 6 mins. [VDB] Made in conjunction with Those Fluttering Objects of Desire, a coin operated installation conceived and produced by Shu Lea Cheang. The video deals with touch-bringing someone close while simultaneously pushing them away.

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Janine Cheryl Dunye color (1990, video) 9 mins. [TWN] An autobiographical confession of Dunye's friendship with Janine, a white upper-middle class girl she met in high school.

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Like a Prayer Jocelyn Taylor with DIVA TV (1991, color, video) 28 mins. A documentary of the ACT-UP and WHAM demonstration at St. Patrick's Cathedral on December 10, 1989.

Listen to the Hands of Our People Anne Marie "Jade" Bryan (1993, color, video) 57 mins. Focuses on the problems and concerns of deaf people living with AIDS.

A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde Michelle Parkerson and Ada Gay Griffin (1994, color, 16mm) 88 mins. [TWN] An epic portrait of Audre Lorde.

Living With Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100 Yvonne Welbon (1999, color, video) 60 mins. [OFW] Born July 23, 1899, Ruth Ellis is the oldest 'out' African American lesbian know. The film offers a rare opportunity to experience 100 years of our history as lived by one inspiring woman.

Looking for LaBelle Jocelyn Taylor (1991, color & b/w, video) 5 mins. A three-way lesbian tryst, dinner and the music of La Belle.

A Luv Tale Sidra Smith (1998, color, 35mm) 45 min. [SSA]. A tender love packed, modern love story that proves two lives can change in a camera flash. Stars Gina Ravera and MC Lyte.

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Me-Ba...I'm Coming: A Travelogue Kara Lynch (1997, video, color) A marathon bus ride between dusty Burkina Faso and lush Ghana is recreated by "the mulatress lesbian narrator-white black boy girl," an American tourist/outsider who recounts cutting her hair...and coming out in Africa.

Memory Tracks Jamika Ajalon (1996, color, video) 8 mins. [TWN] Staged on the streets of London in the imagination of a Black lesbian protagonist, the video seeks evidence of a sister spirit from the past.

Missing Relations Yvonne Welbon (1994, b/w, 16mm) 13 mins. [TWN] An experimental dramatic documentary which explores loss and denial in an African American family through the filmmaker's story of her kidnapped twin sisters, erased from family history for 24 years.

Monique Yvonne Welbon (1991, color, 16mm) 3 mins. [TWN] An autobiographical film which uses story-telling and experimental techniques to explore the shadows of a childhood memory of the filmmaker's first painful encounter with racism.

Mother's Hands Vejan Lee Smith (1992, color, video) 10 mins. [TWN] A provocative experimental video depicting the trauma of emotional, physical and sexual abuse from a young girl's point of view.

Mumia Abu-Jamal: Facing the Death Penalty Cyrille Phipps with Paper Tiger TV (1995, color, video) 30 mins.

My House Pamela Jennings (1993, Interactive computer media). A HyperCard programmed poem.

My Tribe, Jamika Ajalon (1990, color, video).

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Never Say Never Stephanie Wynne (1995, b&w, video) 10 mins. [GBF] A straight woman swears she could never love another woman but ends up eating her words.

The Nia Project: Images of African American Lesbians Mary Morten and Natalie Hutchinson (1993, color, video) 17 mins. Documents the lives and concerns of a range of Black lesbian women.

Night Trees Pamela Jennings (1993, Interactive computer media). A HyperCard programmed poem.

Now Pretend Leah Gilliam (1991, b/w, 16mm) 10 mins. [TWN] An experimental investigation of the pitfalls of identity politics and the use of race as an arbitrary signifier.

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Odds and Ends: A New Age Lesbian Fable Michelle Parkerson (1993, color, video) 28 mins. [TWN] In the year 2096 black women warriors wage a vigilant battle against racial and gender annihilation.

Our House: Gays and Lesbians in the Hood Cyrille Phipps with Not Channel Zero (1992, color, video) 21 mins. [TWN] Focuses on a range of African American gay and lesbian concerns, from outing to homophobia to alienation and discrimination within the black community.

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Potluck and the Passion Cheryl Dunye (1992, color, video) 22 mins. [TWN]

An anniversary feast is the backdrop for this innovative focus on contemporary lesbian relationships. Politics and humor are dished up by the hostesses and guests alike in a savory narrative-and-documentary gumbo.

Probe Jocelyn Taylor with House of Color (1992, color, video) 20 mins.

A reflection on the identity and culture of lesbians and gays from various ethnic backgrounds.

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Rashida X Stephanie Wynne (1997, color, video) 15 mins.[GBF] Black Lesbian Revolutionary Rashida X, fights for civil rights and ends up in prison. Her spirit helps her survive until she is released.

Remembering Wei Yi-fang, Remembering Myself... Yvonne Welbon (1995, color & b/w, video) 30 mins. [TWN, WMM] An autobiographical experimental documentary about Welbon's experiences as an African American woman living in Taiwan for six years.

Respect is Due Cyrille Phipps (1991, color, video) 10 mins. [TWN] Black youth examine the ways women of African descent are frequently portrayed in rap lyrics and music videos.

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Sapphire and the Slave Girl Leah Gilliam (1995, video) 18 mins. [TWN] In its genre-shifting historical schizophrenia, the video investigates racial passing, cross dressing, taboo sexualities and other transgressions of identity and location.

Sacred Lives, Civil Truths Cyrille Phipps and Catherine Saalfield (1993, color, video) 58 mins.

Shades Jamika Ajalon (1994, color, video) 13 mins. [TWN] Explores the issues of dark and light skin complexion in the African American community.

She Don't Fade Cheryl Dunye (1991, b/w, video) 23 mins. [TWN] A lively lesbian love story which integrates the details of video-making into the story itself. Sharp, funny and intelligent.

She Left the Script Behind Dawn Suggs (1993-4, color, 16mm) 7 mins. A scenario of a modern day plantation moves to city streets as a young Black actress resists the roles constructed for her.

Shock Treatment C.A. Griffith (1994, b/w, video) 35 mins.

Sightings H. Len Keller (1995, color, 16mm) 14 mins. [LAP] Offers a humorous look at single Black lesbians trying to connect romantically.

Silence...Broken Aishah Shahidah Simmons (1993, color, video) 8 mins. An experimental short about an African American lesbian's refusal to be silent about racism, sexism and homophobia.

The Silence that Allows Pamela Jennings (1990, color, video) 38 mins. [WMM] A visual poem comprised of journal writings, performance and images dealing with the influence of race and gender over the pursuit of desire.

Sisters in the Life: First Love Yvonne Welbon (1993, color, video) 23 mins. [TWN] A thirty-something Black lesbian reflects on falling for her best friend in junior high. Set in the 70s and 90s, this is a delightful tale of love and friendship.

Sleep Now Variations Pamela Jennings (1992, color, video) 5 mins. [TWN] A video poem based on Samuel Barber's musical adaptation of a poem by James Joyce; text quoted from Jeanette Winterson's novel, "Sexing the Cherry."

So I Didn't Believe Her C.A. Griffith (1995, b/w, video) 10 mins.

Sojourn Michelle Parkerson (1973, 16mm) 10 mins.

Solitaire, Pamela Jennings (1994, Interactive computer media). A variation on the card game solitaire. The complex narrative of the game develops around three books: Melancholy, Balance and Flight.

Spin Cycle Aarin Burch (1991, color, 16mm) 5 mins. [WMM] An autobiographical search in which a young African American lesbian filmmaker ruminates about her craft and her relationships.

Storme: The Lady of the Jewel Box Michelle Parkerson (1987, color, 16mm) 21 mins. [WMM] An intimate portrait of Storme DeLarverie, male impersonator with the legendary Jewel Box Revue. It offers a fascinating look at gender, race and performance.

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Train Station Ta'Shia Asanti and Stephanie Wynne (1996, color and b&w, video) 18 mins.[GBF] Black Lesbian Love is found in a busy Train Station in the 1950's. But look out for the ex-lover who is still on the prowl.

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Untitled Portrait Cheryl Dunye (1993, b/w, video) 5 mins. Unsentimental musings about Dunye's brother.

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Vanilla Sex Cheryl Dunye (1992, b/w, video) 5 mins. [VDB] Made in conjunction with Those Fluttering Objects of Desire, a coin operated installation conceived and produced by Shu Lea Cheang. Examines Dunye's personal relationship to "Vanilla Sex." Is it who you do, or what you do?

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The Watermelon Woman Cheryl Dunye (1996, color, and b/w, 16mm) 90 mins. [FRF] A breezy, faux-cinema-verite account of a Black lesbian filmmaker researching the life of an obscure actress from the thirties.

What is a Line? Shari Frilot (1994, color, video) 10 mins. [TWN] Weaving the narrative of a jilted lover with footage of a train in motion, this video is a darkly comedic study of the physical, psychological and emotional dramas and convolutions jilted lovers go through.

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