

LUCID DREAMING INC.  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE (ITVS)  
AND THE CENTER FOR ASIAN AMERICAN MEDIA (CAAM)  
PRESENT:

# **THE CATS OF MIRIKITANI**

WINNER  
AUDIENCE AWARD  
TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL

WINNER  
BEST PICTURE - "JAPANESE EYES"  
TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

WINNER  
BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE  
BIG SKY DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL

RUNNER UP  
PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD  
VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

RUNNER UP  
AUDIENCE AWARD  
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM

74 MINUTES  
IN ENGLISH AND JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

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THE FILMMAKERS

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PRODUCERS MASA YOSHIKAWA  
LINDA HATTENDORF

EDITORS KEIKO DEGUCHI  
LINDA HATTENDORF

CINEMATOGRAPHY LINDA HATTENDORF  
MASA YOSHIKAWA

MUSIC JOEL GOODMAN

FEATURING

JIMMY TSUTOMU MIRIKITANI

LINDA HATTENDORF  
ROGER SHIMOMURA  
JANICE MIRIKITANI  
VILLAGE CARE OF NEW YORK

PRODUCED BY

LUCID DREAMING INC. IN ASSOCIATION WITH INDEPENDENT TELEVISION  
SERVICE (ITVS) & THE CENTER FOR ASIAN AMERICAN MEDIA (CAAM).

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## SYNOPSIS

"Make art not war" is Jimmy Mirikitani's motto. This 85-year-old Japanese American artist was born in Sacramento and raised in Hiroshima, but by 2001 he is living on the streets of New York with the twin towers of the World Trade Center still ominously anchoring the horizon behind him. What begins as a simple verite portrait of one homeless man will become a rare document of daily life in New York in the months leading up to 9/11. How deeply these two stories will be intertwined cannot yet be imagined. This is the story of losing "home" on many levels.

How did Mirikitani end up on the streets? The answer is in his art. As tourists and shoppers hurry past, he sits alone on a windy corner in Soho drawing whimsical cats, bleak internment camps, and the angry red flames of the atomic bomb. When a neighboring filmmaker stops to ask about Mirikitani's art, a friendship begins that will change both their lives. In sunshine, rain, and snow, she returns again and again to document his drawings, trying to decipher the stories behind them. The tales spill out in a jumble -- childhood picnics in Hiroshima, ancient samurai ancestors, lost citizenship, Jackson Pollock, Pearl Harbor, thousands of Americans imprisoned in WWII desert camps, a boy who loved cats... As winter warms to spring and summer, she begins to piece together the puzzle of Mirikitani's past. One thing is clear from his prolific sidewalk displays: he has survived terrible traumas and is determined to make his history visible through his art.

September 11 thrusts Mirikitani once again into a world at war and challenges the filmmaker to move from witness to advocate. In the chaos following the collapse of the World Trade Center, she finds herself unable to passively photograph this elderly man coughing in the toxic smoke, and invites him into her small apartment. In this uncharted landscape, the two navigate the maze of social welfare, seek out family and friends, and research Jimmy's painful past -- finding eerie parallels to events unfolding around them in the present.

Discovering that Jimmy is related to Janice Mirikitani, Poet Laureate of San Francisco, is the first in a series of small miracles along the road to recovery. Jimmy's story comes full circle when he travels back to the West Coast to reconnect with a community of former internees at a healing pilgrimage to the site of his internment camp Tule Lake, and to see the sister he was separated from half a century ago.

Blending beauty and humor with tragedy and loss, *THE CATS OF MIRIKITANI* is an intimate exploration of the lingering wounds of war and the healing power of art. A heart-warming affirmation of humanity that will appeal to all lovers of peace, art, and cats.

## THE FILMMAKERS

### **LINDA HATTENDORF**

Producer/Director Linda Hattendorf has been working in the New York documentary community for more than a decade. Her editing work has aired on PBS, A&E, and The Sundance Channel as well as in theatrical venues and many festivals. She edited the award-winning documentary *7th Street*, Christina Lundberg's *On the Road Home: A Spiritual Journey Guided by Remarkable Women*, Julia Pimsleur's *Brother Born Again*, Nancy Recant's *Jin Shin Jyutu*, and Danny Schechter's *In Debt We Trust*. She was Associate Editor on Frontline's Emmy-winning season premiere *The Choice '96* and Barbara Kopple's *Bearing Witness*, Contributing Editor on POV's *American Aloha: Hula Beyond Hawaii*, a cameraperson on William Greaves' *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm Take 2 1/2*, and a researcher for the Ken Burns series *The West*. She was born in Cincinnati, Ohio and holds degrees in Literature, Art History, and Media Studies. This is her directorial debut.

### **MASA YOSHIKAWA**

Producer Masa Yoshikawa is a New York based producer, writer, and producer's representative with extensive film and television experience in the US and Japan. He has worked for many productions for Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS) and NHK as well as for several American and Japanese feature films in various capacities such as Production Supervisor and Production Coordinator.

### **KEIKO DEGUCHI**

Editor Keiko Deguchi came to New York from Japan in 1985 to study cinema at NYU. She has been working in film editing since 1987. Her documentary film credits include Gayle Ferraro's *Anonymously Yours*, *Ganges: River to Heaven*, and a PBS special *Beyond Brown: Pursuing the Promise* (Executive Producer Stanley Nelson.) Her narrative film credits include Patrick Stettner's *The Business of Strangers* Tom DiCillo's *The Real Blonde*, Susan Seidelman's *Boynon Beach Club*, and Bette Gordon's *Luminous Motion*. Most recently she was an editor on Steven Shainberg's narrative feature *Fur*.

### **JOEL GOODMAN**

Acclaimed by the Hollywood Reporter as an "Indie Composer to Watch," Composer Joel Goodman's original composition credits include work on Oscar and Emmy Award winning films including *To Be Alive!* (Academy Award Winner); *Sister Rose's Passion* (2005 Academy Award Nomination); *The Collector of Bedford Street* (2004 Academy Award Nomination) and *Children Underground* (2002 Academy Award Nominination) for such producers as Disney, HBO, Good Machine, PBS, Maysles Films, Hybrid Films and Working Pictures. He has worked with Wong Kar-wei, Albert Maysles, Andrew Jarecki, Barbara Kopple, Susan Froemke, Stephen Ives, and Kevin Spacey.

## FEATURING

### **JIMMY TSUTOMU MIRIKITANI**

Jimmy Tsutomu Mirikitani is an 85-year-old artist who was born in Sacramento California in 1920 and raised in Hiroshima Japan. At age 18, he returned to the United States to pursue a career in art and escape the growing militarism in Japan. He was living with his sister Kazuko and her family in Seattle when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941. Executive Order 9066 forced Jimmy and his sister to leave their home and move to separate internment camps hundreds of miles apart. Kazuko was sent to the Minidoka camp in Idaho while Jimmy was sent to Tule Lake, in northern California.

When the government required internees to take a loyalty test, Tule Lake became a segregation center where those deemed "disloyal" were congregated. Thousands there renounced their US citizenship in protest. Jimmy was one of these renunciants. After the war ended, Jimmy and hundreds of others continued to be held without charge, first in Tule Lake, then in a Department of Justice INS camp in Crystal City, Texas. A single lawyer, Wayne Collins, worked for decades to help Jimmy and 5,000 other renunciants reclaim the citizenship they had given up under duress.

In 1946, Jimmy was transferred to Seabrook Farms, a frozen food manufacturing plant near Bridgeton New Jersey. Here he and other renunciants on "relaxed internment" worked the 12 hour night shift, 6 days a week, sorting vegetables on an assembly line. By August 1947, Collins won their release, but fully restoring their citizenship took another decade.

Jimmy finally arrived in New York City in the early 1950's to attempt to resume his art career. When an art professor found him sleeping in Columbia University's library, Jimmy was referred to the New York Buddhist Church where he was provided with room, board, and training as a cook. For years he traveled the East Coast to do seasonal work in resorts, summer camps, and country clubs. While cooking at a restaurant on Long Island, he met Jackson Pollock.

Jimmy's US citizenship was finally restored in 1959, but by then he had moved so often that the government's letter never reached him. Eventually Jimmy became a live-in cook on Park Avenue. But when his employer died in the late 1980's, Jimmy was suddenly without a home or a job. Within a year, he was living in Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village, selling his artwork to survive. He met Linda Hattendorf in Soho in 2001. She helped him apply for Social Security, SSI, and housing benefits, and in 2002 he moved into an assisted-living retirement center run by Village Care of New York. Later that year, he was reunited with his sister Kazuko for the first time in 60 years.

## **JANICE MIRIKITANI**

Multicultural visionary. Poet. Executive Director of Glide's 52 programs. Janice Mirikitani, also the President of the Glide Foundation, has been a powerful force at Glide Memorial Church since 1965. Glide programs, recognized for their relevance, inclusiveness, and effective outreach to the most marginalized populations of the city, are comprehensive and designed to help break the cycle of dependency. These essential services include a free meals program, a health clinic, recovery programs, educational, tutorial, recreational programs for children and youth, counseling and job training services. As an author, Mirikitani has written and edited dozens of landmark books, journals, and anthologies, and her own three books of poetry. In 2000, her achievements as an author were recognized with the prestigious appointment as San Francisco's Poet Laureate. Janice Mirikitani is married to Reverend Cecil Williams. She has one daughter. (For more info: [www.glide.org](http://www.glide.org))

## **ROGER SHIMOMURA**

Roger Shimomura's paintings, prints and theatre pieces address socio-political issues of Asian America and have often been inspired by 56 years of diaries kept by his late immigrant grandmother. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Washington in Seattle and his graduate degree from Syracuse University, New York. He has had over 100 solo exhibitions of his paintings and prints, as well as presented his experimental theater pieces at such venues as the Franklin Furnace, New York City, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and The Smithsonian Institution. At the University of Kansas where he taught since 1969 he was designated a University Distinguished Professor in 1994. In 2004 he retired from teaching and started the Shimomura Faculty Research Support Fund, an endowment to support faculty research in the Department of Art. Shimomura's personal papers are being collected by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. (For more info: [www.rshim.com](http://www.rshim.com) and [www.densho.org](http://www.densho.org))

## **VILLAGE CARE OF NEW YORK**

Village Care of New York is a community-based, not for profit service organization serving the elderly, persons living with AIDS, and individuals in need of medical and rehabilitation services. Their Village Adult Day Health Center provides nursing, nutrition, case management and rehabilitation services in addition to numerous social activities, enabling individuals to remain at home and continue their involvement with their communities. Their assisted-living community, The Village at 46th & Ten, provides apartments, meals, housekeeping, daily recreation, and social services to New Yorkers who love the culture of New York, value diversity, and cherish their own independence. (For more info: [www.vcnny.org](http://www.vcnny.org))

ADVISORS:

**DEIRDRE BOYLE** is a professor, media historian, critic, programmer, and consultant. She is also a clinical social worker with a private practice as a psychotherapist in New York City.

**MING CHEUNG** is an artist, professor, and art therapist. She conducts weekly art workshops for homeless adults at the Salvation Army Bond Street Drop In Center.

**HOLLY FISHER** has been active since the mid-sixties as an independent filmmaker, teacher, and editor of feature documentaries including 1989 Academy Award nominee *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* Her most recent documentary is *Kalama Sutta: Seeing is Believing*.

**LISETTE MARIE FLANARY** is a writer and independent film producer. Most recently she produced *American Aloha: Hula Beyond Hawaii* which aired on the PBS series POV.

**WILLIAM GREAVES** is a director, producer, writer and actor who was inducted into the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame in 1980. His latest documentary, *Ralph Bunche*, aired nationally on PBS and his most recent feature, *Symbiopsychotaxiplasm Take 2 1/2*, screened at Sundance and Tribeca.

**TOM IKEDA** is the Director of Densho, an oral history project whose mission is to preserve the testimonies of Japanese Americans who were unjustly incarcerated dURING WWII. Densho's archive offers firsthand accounts, coupled with historical images and teacher resources, to explore principles of democracy and promote equal justice for all.

**ROGER SHIMOMURA** is an artist and educator whose paintings, prints, and theatre pieces address socio-political issues of Japanese America and have often been inspired by 56 years of diaries kept by his late immigrant grandmother. His personal papers are being collected by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

**CHARLES YUEN** is a painter and art director for educational publications. He received his BFA from the University of Hawaii in 1975 and his MFA from Rutgers in 1981, where he studied with Leon Golub.