The Combative Phase takes its title from an essay by Teshome Gabriel titled "Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films."[19] This text draws on the writing of Frantz Fanon on decolonization, and proposes a "genealogy of Third World film culture" on a path from "domination to liberation." Gabriel identifies three phases in this genealogy: firstly, a phase of "unqualified assimilation" in which "foreign images are impressed in an alienating fashion on the audience"; to the second "remembrance phase" in which filmmakers return to "the Third World's source of strength: culture and history"; and the third, "combative phase," where filmmaking serves as "public service institution…managed, operated and run by and for the people." In this phase, film is focused on the "lives and struggles of Third World peoples," operating as an ideological tool in contestation of and distinction from character driven Western cinema.

[19] Teshome Gabriel, "Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films," *Questions of Third Cinema*, ed. Jim Pines and Paul Willemen (London: BFI, 1989), 298–316.

The Combative Phase presents films produced by those who studied in, or were associated with, the Media Urban Crisis and Ethno-communications programs, as well as students on the "mainstream" undergraduate and graduate programs who engaged directly with the teaching of Taylor and Gabriel between 1969 and 1979. The exhibition also foregrounds the figure of the university itself, as constituting a particular set of social, racial, and economic relations. In presenting administrative and academic documents from the period when the programs were established, the imperatives behind individual and collective decisions, and interactions between material conditions and social and institutional practices, are made partially legible. As Cheryl Harris asserts "Formal equality overlooks structural disadvantage and requires mere nondiscrimination or 'equal treatment'; by contrast, affirmative action calls for equalizing treatment by redistributing power and resources in order to rectify inequities and to achieve real equality."[20] The affirmative action mandate, as a potential mode of "distributive justice,"[21] is apparent as a contested and imminently foreclosed site within the educational and juridical spheres. As scholar and activist Ruth Wilson Gilmore has noted, "…if agency is the human ability to craft opportunity from the wherewithal of everyday life, then agency and structure are products of each other. Without their mutual interaction, there would be no drama, no dynamic, no story to tell…In a crisis, the old order does not simply blow away, and every struggle is carried out within, and against, already existing institutions: electoral politics, the international capitalist system, families, uneven development, racism."[22] In distinctive yet interconnected ways, the films and documents reflect the intersection of a politics of visibility exercised through institutional reform, and the demand for revolutionary change in the face of the durable political and material stratifications of racial capitalism. In the relations between these materials, we are called to consider the shifting distinctions between what is highlighted by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak as the "two senses of representation… representation as 'speaking for,' as in politics, and representation as 'representation,' as in art or philosophy."[23]

[20] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 106, No. 8, June 1993, 1788.

[21] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 1781.

[22] Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 28.

[23] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 70.

The temporal, spatial, and socio-political frame of the university—and particularly, its attendant conditions of access to education and means of production—unifies the films exhibited. More significantly, however, the filmmakers engaged in decentering the disciplining grounds of knowledge and representation embodied by the university, and by Hollywood cinema and the mass media. Describing her experience of the Ethno-communications program, Sylvia Morales has stated that: "for us there was a sense of urgency, so we set aside our desire to make personal films in order to make ones which reflected our communities."[24] Echoing this sentiment, Haile Gerima has written of a "triangular cinema" formed of progressive relationships between a community of audiences, filmmakers, and activist critics, producing a "rational, pedagogical alternative that seeks to meet the particular needs of the community."[25] This imperative towards a counter, combative cinema formed by and at the service of the filmmakers' communities—ingrained in the foundational vision of Taylor and his student colleagues on the Media Urban Crisis Committee—is distinctively apparent in the varied films produced.

[24] In Renee Tajima, "Lights, Camera, Affirmative Action," *The Independent: Film and Video Monthly*, March 1984, 16.

[25] Haile Gerima, "Triangular Cinema, Breaking Toys, and Dinknesh vs Lucy," *Questions of Third Cinema*, ed. Jim Pines and Paul Willemen (London: BFI, 1989), 88.

The films exhibited move between forms of documentary reportage and its transmission of history, the scripted construction of vignettes of social realism, and poetic imaginaries. In many cases they were located in direct discussion with and advocacy for particular seams of political, cultural, and social activism, with both radical and reformist goals, bearing the distinct dynamics of post-Civil Rights era African American, Mexican American, Asian American, and Native American struggles. What is also clear however, is the complexity and mutability of the representational relationship to "community," and the movement between the address of localized issues and the international struggle against systemic neo-colonial and capitalist oppression at the heart of the ideological character of Third Cinema. The films speak to complex transitions between social spaces of protest, the mobilization of cultural identities in tandem with revolutionary Marxist politics, and the ahistorical logic of cultural nationalisms. In this regard they mirror the emergent nature of vital ideological debates around the structuring of identity-based counterhegemonic struggles, which in the U.S. in the late '60s into the '70s spanned heterogeneous efforts toward rights-based equality, the identification of cultural narratives that elided difference in order to "imagine" a unified polity, and nationalist and separatist movements that in some cases promoted armed struggle. The desire for autonomy of production, communication, and representation, as well as independence from an oppressive socio-economic system, interweaves with a demand for broad political and cultural visibility, and social change.

May 6–June 25, 2017

YALE UNION

THE COMBATIVE PHASE

Check YU website for information on screenings and talks.

Yale Union would like to thank Tom Ackers, Don Amis, Thom Anderson, Ben Caldwell, Meghan Conlon, Sarah Diab, Mia Ferm, Abraham Ferrer, Keenan Jay, Jesse Lerner, Rose Mackey, Barbara McCullough, Sandra Osawa, Brandon Phuong, Cinema Project, Lucas Quigley, Kent Richardson, Holly Richwine, Gary Robbins, Cameron Rowland, Morgen Ruff, Renate Taylor, Francia Krupa Vahdani, and Sam Wildman.

This program is funded in part by The Andy Warhol Foundation, RACC Works for Art, and our members.

The Combative Phase would not be possible without the support of the filmmakers; the scholarship of Teshome Gabriel, Chon Noriega, David E. James, Ntongela Masilela, Renee Tajima-Peña, Kara Keeling, Allyson Nadia Field, Jacqueline Najuma Stewart, and Jan-Christopher Horak; loans from UCLA Film & Television Archive, Visual Communications, Sankofa Video Books & Café, Women Make Movies, and Milestone Films; and the research and film preservation undertaken as part of *L.A. Rebellion: Creating a New Black Cinema*, a project by UCLA Film & Television Archive developed as part of *Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945–1980*, and curated by Allyson Nadia Field, Jan-Christopher Horak, Shannon Kelley, and Jacqueline Stewart.

The university and the cinema are not dissimilar institutions. They make comparable claims to be spaces of revelation and of enlightenment. In 1969, a pivotal year for this exhibition, Noël Burch coined the unwieldy term "institutional mode of representation (IMR)" to characterize the dominant standard of totalizing illusionistic representation in cinema.[1] IMR might equally be applied to the figure of the modern university. Both institutions are machines of sorts, producing and reproducing "social reality" through perceptual and cognitive processes, underpinned by cultural, economic, and political structures. They are simultaneously machines of enregistration and of disenfranchisement. They harbor auto-critique, but in the wake of this distancing comes privatization, not collectivity. In borrowing (and adapting) the thought of Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, we might state that: "it cannot be denied that the university [cinema] is a place of refuge, and it cannot be accepted that the university [cinema] is a place of enlightenment. In the face of these conditions one can only sneak into the university [cinema] and steal what one can."[2]

[1] Noël Burch, *Praxis du Cinéma*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

[2] Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*, (Wivenhoe/New York/Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013), 26.

The Combative Phase presents the work of a group of filmmakers with connections to the Media Urban Crisis and Ethno-communications programs, which ran between 1969 and 1973 at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). Included are films by Don Amis, Charles Burnett, Ben Caldwell, Larry Clark, Julie Dash, David García and Moctesuma Esparza, Haile Gerima, Alan Kondo, Alile Sharon Larkin, Barbara McCullough, Sylvia Morales, Robert Nakamura, Sandra Osawa, Elyseo J. Taylor, Jesús Salvador Treviño, Luis Valdez, and Eddie Wong.

The Combative Phase attends to a history, but with the understanding that the discursive and material operations active in this history are not finite or detached from present day experience. *The Combative Phase* proceeds in two parts, beginning with an exhibition of short films and documents running from May 6 to June 25, 2017, and continuing with a protracted and evolving series of screenings and talks running from May 2017 into 2018.

In the wake of the Watts Rebellion of 1965 and other uprisings against institutional racism, discrimination, and police brutality in inner cities across the U.S., UCLA saw a series of structural shifts in response to what became defined within academic and political discourse as "the urban crisis."[3] These shifts took shape through intersecting but distinct forces, most notably: the committed dissent by members of the student body against discriminatory admissions policies; educational "remedies" extrapolated from the recommendations of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (NACCD) established in 1967;[4] and the mandate towards affirmative action within education, written into the Civil Rights Act of 1964.[5] In 1968, the university established the High Potential Program (HPP), a "special entry program to modify the [composition of the] student population at the University"[6] conceived by a joint student-faculty committee, based on recommendations from the Black Students Union (BSU) and United Mexican American Students (UMAS). Simultaneously, proposals were made towards the founding of an Institute of American Cultures when inaugurated in 1969, the Institute comprised autonomous centers for Afro-American, Asian American, Chicano, and American Indian studies.[7]

[3] In May 1968, newly appointed President Charles Hitch presented a paper to the UCLA Board of Regents titled "What Must We Do: The University and the Urban Crisis." The UCLA staff bulletin at the time reported Hitch as saying: "we need to be blunt and direct. Our nation, our state and our cities are in the grip of a crisis. It is a moral, economic and racial crisis. It is also an educational crisis."

[4] The NACCD recommended: "Expanded opportunities for higher education through increased federal assistance to disadvantaged students." http://www.blackpast.org/primary/national-advisory-commission-civil-disorders-kerner-report-1967#sthash.b4ljd8WJ.dpuf

[5] In "The Racial Limits of Social Justice: The Ruse of Equality of Opportunity and the Global Affirmative Action Mandate," Denise Ferreira da Silva states: "Framing the mandate to bring about equal opportunity, to meet the call for 'abundance and liberty for all' and to the 'end of poverty and racial injustice,' the document [Civil Rights Act] includes a phrase 'order such affirmative action' that animated substantive measures for addressing racial discrimination in all areas, but in particular in employment and education."

[6] Barbara A. Rhodes, "UCLA High Potential Program 1968–1969," (Los Angeles: UCLA, 1970), 8.

[7] The establishment of these centers did not lead to the immediate provision of distinct programs of study. Undergraduate and graduate inter-departmental programs were established later in the 70s and 80s. Dedicated departments of study at UCLA were not established until the 2000s..

Through the historical insights provided by individual testimonies and university reports, the HPP and the four nascent centers within the Institute of American Cultures appear as instances of liberal institutional reform, in which dominant structures of knowledge, language, and representation were inflected by the demands of radical politics that actively resisted prevailing forms of governance.[8] The university hierarchy's adoption of the term "urban crisis" points to its conception of a highly racialized and pathologized object of study, building on the NACCD definition of "a system of failure and frustration that dominates the ghetto." The BSU and UMAS recommended that the HPP address the systematic elimination from higher education of Chicanos and African Americans, a situation they stated as grounded in the failure of primary and secondary schools to "provide a context for their academic success." Yet rather than being centered on any inquiry into the socio-economic conditions incumbent to these systemic failings, as they pertained to all levels of education, the development of the HPP instead focused on a curriculum that identified "negative self-concept" as the cause of "the serious educational lag of both the Afro-American and Chicano child."[9] Within this particular application of the overarching principle of affirmative action lay a struggle between such implicit casting of psychological deficiency in both individuals and communities (and hence the perceived need to rectify this deficiency by "preparing [students] for successful matriculation"), and the challenging of the very politicized and racialized grounds under which "standards" of merit were established—in Angela Davis's words, attacking "the conspiracy against education."

[8] A large number of students recruited through the HPP were politically active. The question of who should be appointed director of the Afro-American studies center, and the direction it should take, became a focal point for conflict between two Black Power organizations, the Black Panthers and the US Organization. In January 1969, two Panthers were shot and killed at UCLA's Campbell Hall, reportedly by a member of the US Organization.

[9] Barbara A. Rhodes, "UCLA High Potential Program 1968–1969," 14–21.

In parallel with the development of the HPP and the Institute of American Cultures, a number of UCLA faculty involved with communications on campus formed a committee to "consider the role of UCLA in translating its interest, knowledge, and activities relating to the urban crisis and the special needs of ethnic minorities into radio and television programming, particularly for educational purposes on a mass basis."[10] The Media Urban Crisis Committee (MUCC) included faculty from the departments of Journalism, English, Political Science, Communications, and Theater Arts, and initially focused its attention on "transmitting the results of University research and teaching to a larger community outside the University." The committee judged that:

[10] Letter from UCLA Vice Chancellor Paul O. Proehl to members of MUCC, April 23, 1969.

> Left to themselves, large communities do a dreadful job of communicating internally. Ghettoes, whether in Bel Air or Maravilla, are spontaneous but inevitable microcosms of economic and ethnic nationalism. Since we all know this is explosive, it is extraordinary that community governments do so little about it. Since the University is of the community but also somewhat outside of it, we can perhaps operate successfully in this research and project field without entering politics.[11]

[11] Colin Young, "UCLA Media Programs in the Urban Crisis," internal UCLA document, May 13, 1969.

In contrast to the committee's position articulated in this statement, the MUCC also included Elyseo J. Taylor, an assistant professor in the Theater Arts department who had joined UCLA in 1968 after working as a film and media educator in two community-run cultural organizations in Watts: the Watts Happening Café and the Mafundi Institute. Equally, a number of students who joined the committee had backgrounds in political and cultural organizing, most notably Moctesuma Esparza, who was a founding member of the Young Chicanos For Community Action, later known as the Brown Berets. Taylor, Esparza, and the students became the dominant voices in the MUCC, and the direction of the committee drew directly on both their work outside the university, and internal sit-ins and protests that contested the white dominance of the university population. With the support of Colin Young, the director of the Theater Arts department, Taylor had already begun work towards a film-training program for "minority" students, and accordingly the MUCC's focus shifted to the development of "a curriculum of instruction in film-making for students from the ethnic minorities which would enable and encourage them to use film-making as a tool in community development."[12] With funding from the Ford Foundation that enabled the purchase of 8mm and 16mm cameras, tape recorders and other equipment, and from UCLA towards the cost of raw film stock and processing, and the salaries of instructors and teaching assistants, in January 1970 twenty students began the Media Urban Crisis Program. These students were recruited from the High Potential Program and communities in Los Angeles, with five individuals admitted from each of the "ethnic" groups defined by the four centers within the Institute of American Cultures.

[12] Elyseo J. Taylor, "Mass Media and the Social Dialogue," unpublished paper delivered on September 20, 1976 at the conference "The Role of the Mass Media in Enlisting Public Support for Marginal Groups," The European Centre for Social Welfare Training and Research, Bellagio, Italy.

While operating with the financial support of UCLA and as an acknowledged "experimental program" within the university, Elyseo Taylor viewed the Media Urban Crisis Program as autonomous, its agenda defined by the larger enterprise of establishing "Community Communication Centers" in South and East Los Angeles that would ultimately handle the production, programming, distribution, and screening of films. For Taylor, "the students at UCLA were to be only the cadre, co-ordinating and further advancing the work of the other filmmaking groups that were getting started in all the communities."[13] The space for "social dialogue" he looked to develop drew significantly on the liberationist positions of filmmakers from Latin America, Cuba, and Africa, where the relationship between "film and national culture" was asserted as vital to the decolonization movement. Coining the term Third Cinema in Argentina in 1969, Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas wrote that: "Culture and Cinema are national… when they respond to the particular needs of development and liberation of each people."[14] In Taylor's words: "my idea was that art, including film, was a means by which a people could engage in a dialogue with itself… [rather than] eaves-dropping in on the dialogue of the white community."[15] The connections with filmmakers from Latin America and Africa, who directly contested Euro-American neo-colonialism and imperialism in their films and writings, were made concrete through events organized at UCLA and elsewhere in LA, by Taylor, and students and faculty of the Theater Arts Department. In October 1970, the UCLA African Studies Center hosted the first African Film Festival in North America, including the notable participation of Ousmane Sembene and Stephane Allisante. Later visits from filmmakers included longer teaching periods from Sembene and Cuban filmmaker Santiago Álvarez, and the Brazilian director Glauber Rocha.

[13] Taylor, "Mass Media and the Social Dialogue"

[14] Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas, "Toward a Third Cinema," *Tricontinental*, No. 14, October 1969

[15] Taylor, "Mass Media and the Social Dialogue"

In Fall 1970, the Media Urban Crisis program was renamed Ethno-communications, formally existing under the umbrella of the TV and Motion Pictures Division of the Theater Arts Department at UCLA. Remaining open only to students of color, the program included technical and writing classes, a film history course focused on films from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and a production component that adopted the "Project One" format from the film school, with each student directing a short film with support from their peers. In this intended form, the Ethno-communications program lasted no more than three years. Even at its inception, the program was criticized by the university administration for its exclusion of white students, a stance deemed to endanger the provision of funding on the basis it privileged "ethnic structure" above "disadvantaged economic condition,"[16] although these criticisms seemingly ignored the existing privileges retained and reproduced by white people.[17] In 1974 Taylor was denied tenure (an act that students at the time have attributed to racist motives), yet the influence and ethos of the Ethno-communications program, and his teaching, exceeded their short lifespans at UCLA. Alongside Ethno-communications, Taylor established the upper-division undergraduate course "Film and Social Change" which remains part of the core film school curriculum today. On Taylor's departure from UCLA, PhD student Teshome Gabriel took over the teaching of the course, and as with his predecessor, his teaching and scholarship built significantly on the influence of and critical theory around Third Cinema. Between 1974 and 1976 he and other students organized the Third World Film Club, a screening program funded by the university that focused on accessing and presenting works from Latin America and Cuba, in some cases requiring the breaking of U.S. embargos on cultural exchange. Unlike other film schools, students at UCLA retained the distribution rights to films produced at the university, and in addition to events organized on campus their films were shown at community-based screenings in Los Angeles and elsewhere. As the "cadre" for the development of community-based filmmaking in the city, organizational and circulatory structures developed around the students' work and distinct community relationships, to varying degrees autonomous from or dependent on the existing institutional or film and media industry infrastructure. In the '70s alone, students formed influential community and national media organizations such as Visual Communications and the Chicano Cinema Coalition, and took on key roles in public broadcasting including the formation of the PBS Latino Consortium, and screened their work in national and international film festival circuits.[18]

[16] Letter from Frank Work to Colin Young and William Menger, "Funding and Admission of EOP Students in Theater Arts," June 25, 1970

[17] In 1978, the Supreme Court heard its first case in contestation of affirmative action policies, brought by a white applicant refused entry to the University of California Medical School. The court invalidated the University's special admissions plan by citing the Equal Protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, and ruling that the student had been the victim of "reverse discrimination," and that the plan denied future white applicants the opportunity to compete for all one hundred seats in the class.

[18] The community production and media training organization Visual Communications was founded in 1970 by a group of Asian American students, and is still running today. From the early '70s onwards, a number of Chicano students and alumni produced films and series for network and public television, including the Latino Consortium that spanned ten national public channels. During the '70s feature length films by African American filmmakers Charles Burnett, Larry Clark and Haile Gerima won awards at film festivals in Locarno and Berlin.

Joining UCLA in 1973, Caldwell has spoken of how the ethos and discourse around the Ethno-communications program extended into the late '70s, despite what he has decried as the racist decision to deny Elyseo J. Taylor tenure in 1974. Taylor's emphasis on community media and social dialogue influenced Caldwell greatly, and in the mid '80s he founded KAOS Network, an art space in Leimert Park, Los Angeles that offers production training in film, sound, and media. In the late '60s, Caldwell was drafted to Vietnam, and his films produced at UCLA are indicative of his discomfort with the armed revolutionary struggle espoused by some of his colleagues, instead mobilizing a spiritual Afrocentricity within overlapping modes of fictional drama, documentary, formal abstraction and performance.

I & I: An African Allegory is an epic rumination on the Rastafari concept of "I & I," a belief in the oneness of every human. In contrast to this notion of undifferentiated commonality, Caldwell articulates modernity's oppositional insistence on "You and I" as a source of division and conflict. *I & I* draws on historical and literary reference points—including the novel *Two Thousand Seasons* by Ayi Kwei Armah that frames African cultures as defined by reciprocity—alongside trance-like choreographies in natural and urban spaces, sequences of improvised drama, and footage of a girl interviewing an elderly woman about her ancestors' experiences of slavery. This latter section serves as a pivot point, the directness of the testimony to violence underscoring the film's complex mediations between a counter-separatist "oneness," and the imperatives within black nationalist liberation.

13

WATER RITUAL #1: AN URBAN RITE OF PURIFICATION
Dir: Barbara McCullough, 1979, 16mm transferred to video, 5 min.

McCullough joined UCLA in 1971 through the Academic Advancement Program, the successor to the High Potential Program, to pursue an undergraduate in Communication Studies before moving on to an MFA in the Theater Arts, Film and Television Production. *Water Ritual #1*, made in collaboration with performer Yolanda Vidato, evidences McCullough's engagement with artistic and performative practices, as well as experimental cinema—she has spoken of the influence of Maya Deren and Jonas Mekas's films, and was taught by Shirley Clarke at UCLA.

The film was made in an area of Watts that had been cleared for the construction of the I-105 freeway, and then abandoned after community opposition to the route. The use of urban spaces for the production of art, particularly liminal areas such as abandoned lots or under freeway overpasses, is something McCullough shared with her artist peers. Her documentary *Shopping Bag Spirits and Freeway Fetishes: Reflections on Ritual Space* made two years later, features footage of artists David Hammons and Senga Nengudi producing object-based works in spaces similar to that of *Water Ritual #1*. Notions of ritual are pivotal within both films, with the base materiality of the ruinous city becoming reanimated within performative actions and arrangements. The temporal and spatial ambiguities of *Water Ritual #1* suggest a figure outside of time. McCullough has described her work as embodying "real world experience with the other world," and *Water Ritual #1* positions the black female body, and the materiality of bodily fluid, as a purifying spiritual force in defiance of the prescriptive rhetorics of "urban blight."

i

"Minutes of the Standing Committee on Ethno-communications," May 26, 1970

j

Letter from Vice Chancellor Charles Z. Wilson to Vice Chancellor David S. Saxon, June 10, 1970

k

Letter from Frank Work (Chancellor's Office) to Colin Young (Theater Arts) and William Menger (Theater Arts), "Funding and Admission of EOP Students in Theater Arts," June 25, 1970

14

DIARY OF AN AFRICAN NUN
Dir: Julie Dash, 1977, 16mm transferred to video, 13 min.

Dash joined the MFA program at UCLA the same year as Alile Sharon Larkin, drawn to the university after having seen a flyer at the Studio Museum in Harlem about Haile Gerima, Larry Clark, and Charles Burnett. The women filmmakers of color who joined the university in the mid-'70s experienced the dynamic political discourse that existed around Taylor and Gabriel's Film and Social Change class and the Third World Film Club, while also bringing to bear a feminist perspective as, in Barbara McCullough's words, a "double minority." In 1969, Francis Beal's pamphlet *Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female* had taken issue with both the Black Power movement's male dominance, and the predominance of white feminist groups that "do not realize that they are in fact, fighting capitalism and racism."

Diary of an African Nun is adapted from a short story by Alice Walker published in her 1973 collection *In Love and Trouble*. Its appearance in a book otherwise focused on the experience of black women in the U.S. creates an inversion that emphasizes the doubling of W.E.B Du Bois's notion of African-American "double-consciousness," the "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others." Filmed in stark black and white, Dash finds striking visual analogues for Walker's Ugandan nun's inner turmoil between the rigidity of her religious order, and an intersecting sense of cultural belonging and womanhood rooted in deeper rhythms and desires, experienced in the knowledge that she is bringing "death to an imaginative people."

15

I TOLD YOU SO
Dir: Alan Kondo, 1974, 16mm transferred to video, 18 min.

Paralleling the three-year span of the Ethno-communications program at UCLA, Visual Communications went through a period of growth after gaining non-profit status in 1971. The initial reliance on UCLA for film production support was exchanged for other funding sources, principally from publicly legislated programs such as the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act that enabled additional members to be recruited, including Alan Kondo in 1972. The organization transitioned to a film distribution and production collective, alongside the training of filmmakers in the Asian American community. Between 1972 and 1977 VC produced ten films, several of which were funded by the U.S. Office of Education under the Emergency School Aid Act.

I Told You So is a documentary about the influential Japanese American poet Lawson Fusao Inada. In 1971, Inada's book of poems *Before the War: Poems as They Happened* became the first authored by an Asian American to be published by a mainstream publisher. He was also an editor of *Aiiieeeee!*, a groundbreaking anthology of Asian American writers published in 1974. Inada speaks to his experience of being interned as a child, to growing up in the multicultural context of Fresno, and his feelings of disassociation from Japanese culture. The film features an editorial meeting for *Aiiieeeee!*, in the preface of which the editors wrote:

> Neither Asian culture nor American culture was equipped to define us except in the most superficial terms. However, American culture, equipped to deny us the legitimacy of our uniqueness as American minorities, did so.

Audio

Angela Davis, speech at UCLA, October 8, 1969

a

Barbara A. Rhodes (Assistant Professor, San Fernando Valley State College), "UCLA High Potential Program 1968–1969," (Los Angeles: UCLA, 1970

1

REQUIEM 29
Dir: David García and Moctesuma Esparza, 1970, 16mm transferred to video, 31 min.

Produced by Media Urban Crisis student Esparza with teaching assistant García, and contributions from other students, *Requiem 29* documents the violent police actions at the Chicano Moratorium march against the Vietnam War on August 29, 1970, and the subsequent inquest into the killing of *Los Angeles Times* journalist Ruben Salazar. Struck by a tear gas canister fired by a sheriff's deputy directly into the café where he was sheltering, the death of Salazar—who was renowned for covering police abuse in the Chicano community—was found to be accidental. The film mixes footage shot by the students at the demonstration and material from television broadcasts of the inquest, provided to the students by Chicano filmmaker Jesús Salvador Treviño, who was working for PBS affiliate KCET. The inquest's questioning of Raul Ruiz, photographer and editor of the Chicano newspaper *La Raza*, is cynically diverted in service to the police's production of visual narrative, with the deputy sheriff performing a grotesquely prolonged inspection of the weapon he used to kill Salazar. As scholar and current Director of the Chicano Studies Research Center at UCLA Chon Noriega has noted:

> Salazar had represented the possibility of an "objective" and professional journalism incorporating Chicanos into the body politic. Given his brutal death, however, the "journalists of the time" necessarily step outside the body politic, and it is from this position that Ruiz—as the film's implied narrator—calls for Chicanos to go it alone in the search for justice. As such the film is an example of a direct cinema about the impossibility of objectivity—direct or otherwise—for Chicanos as U.S. citizens.
> [*Shot in America: Television, the State, and the Rise of Chicano Cinema*, 1990]

2

YA BASTA!
Dir: Jesús Salvador Treviño, 1969, 16mm transferred to video, 24 min.

In 1968, more than 1,000 Chicano students walked out of high schools in East Los Angeles, protesting unequal conditions in education. Among key organizers of the protests were Moctesuma Esparza—at that time a history major at UCLA, and a co-founder of United Mexican American Students—and Sal Castro, a teacher subsequently fired for his role in the walkouts. *Ya Basta! [Enough Already!]* features documentary footage of the Board of Education hearings on Castro's appeal, and subsequent sit-ins and arrests of members of the Educational Issues Coordinating Committee, formed by Chicano students and community members (including filmmaker Treviño) after the walkouts. The film also introduces scripted dramatic sequences of a teenage boy's troubles at home and school, with the implication that the Board of Education's decisions lead to his eventual death. Noriega writes:

> As Treviño himself argues, the free-form style of *Ya Basta!* relied upon the fact that "so much of this was self-evident to the audience." Thus, the film … served the needs of an audience whose main concern was the organization of a "community" and not the craft of an autonomous, objective, or artistic statement.

While Treviño did not study at UCLA, in 1968 he undertook a film-training program called New Communicators, a partial precursor to the UCLA programs. *Ya Basta!* demonstrates the many levels on which Chicano filmmakers were working, simultaneously agitating for changes to concrete social conditions while seeking to gain access to means of communication and education. Treviño would later work with many of the UCLA filmmakers in public broadcasting.

3

CHILD OF RESISTANCE
Dir: Haile Gerima, 1972, 16mm transferred to video, 36 min

After moving to the U.S. from Ethiopia in 1967, Gerima first studied drama before transferring to study film at UCLA, influenced by interactions with Elyseo J. Taylor, Teshome Gabriel, and Ethno-communications student Larry Clark. *Child of Resistance* was made following a dream sparked by an image of Angela Davis in handcuffs. As a radical feminist, member of the Communist Party, and associate of the Black Panthers, Davis was a powerful presence at UCLA after her recruitment in 1969 to the philosophy department. She was fired in the same year, a decision that was at first overturned, before being fired again in 1970 following speeches critical of the university authorities and the police force. In 1971, Davis was held in detention for sixteen months, awaiting trial accused of involvement in the death of a court judge after an attempted kidnapping by her occasional bodyguard Jonathan Jackson. Jackson had sought to negotiate the release of prisoners from Soledad Prison, including his brother, author and revolutionary prison abolitionist George Jackson.

Child of Resistance takes an experimental and dreamlike form, channeling both the examples of Davis and George Jackson, and the specter of the "new slavery" of the prison industrial complex. The path to liberation, represented by the figure of the black woman as revolutionary, is seen to be impeded by bourgeois complacency and a cultural impoverishment inherent within capitalism. Influenced by the Marxism of Amílcar Cabral, Gerima's films were rooted in the alignment of black liberation with anti-imperialist struggles in Africa, and the need to erase the "colonial models occupying our optic nerve."

b

NOMMO, newspaper of UCLA Black Students Union, March 12, 1969

4

BLACK ART, BLACK ARTISTS
Dir: Elyseo J. Taylor, 1971, 16mm transferred to video, 15 min.

While predominantly recognized as an educator, Taylor produced two documentaries while at UCLA: a film on welfare, which sought to "explain the policies and the practices of the social services to the tax-payer and the poor"; and *Black Art, Black Artists*. The latter was finished in 1971, yet was shot in 1966 before Taylor joined UCLA as an assistant professor. The film intercuts shots of the exhibition *Negro Art in America: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Afro-American Art* held that year at UCLA's Dickson Center, with artist Van Slater working in his studio, overlaid with a conversation between Slater and Taylor about the history of black art.

In 1968, within the five-year gap between Taylor's shooting of the film and its completion, playwright Larry Neal published his acclaimed text "The Black Arts Movement," proclaiming a cultural movement in tandem with Black Power:

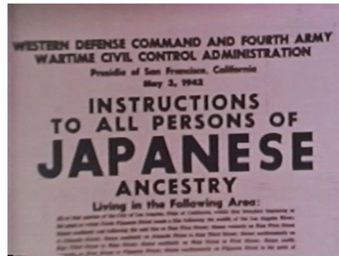
> The Black Arts Movement is radically opposed to any concept of the artist that alienates him from his community. Black Art is the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept … the Black Arts Movement proposes a radical reordering of the western cultural aesthetic. It proposes a separate symbolism, mythology, critique, and iconology.

The questions at the heart of the Black Arts Movement addressed the responsibility of the artist to their community and the political role of culture, alongside a nationalist call for self-determination. Taylor's conversation with Slater emphasizes the shifting formations of this thinking, moving from a critique of the Harlem Renaissance's engagement with a white audience, to their differing positions on art as a political statement.

5

MANZANAR

Dir: Robert Nakamura, 1971, 8mm transferred to video, 16 min.



In 1970, while studying in the Ethno-communications program, Nakamura, Duane Kubo, Alan Ohashi, and Eddie Wong constructed a traveling educational exhibit that assembled photos and text on the internment camps that held Japanese Americans during the Second World War. The project made use of materials collated by the Japanese American Relocation Project, held at UCLA, as well as government archives and family collections. Encouraged by the Japanese American Citizens League to extend this work further, they established Visual Communications (VC), an organization with the mission to depict and distribute the history and culture of Asian and Pacific people in America.

Nakamura's *Manzanar* is a personal and historical account of Japanese American internment, centered on the concentration camp in the eponymous town in Owen's Valley, California, where the filmmaker had been interned with his family. Filming the Manzanar site, where in 1971 little remained of the camp, Nakamura seeks to reconstruct the history of internment through intercut archival images and fragmented personal recollections. *Manzanar* evokes the gaps between these evidentiary sites and the psychic trauma held within the Japanese American community. In 1981, VC released comprehensive video recordings of testimonies provided by internees at the hearings of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), a congressional panel tasked with reviewing the circumstances around the authorization of Japanese American internment.

c

Letter from UCLA Vice Chancellor Paul O. Proehl to Professor Colin Young (Theater Arts), Joaquin Acosta (University Relations), Dr. Leonard Freedman (Political Science), Mrs. Mary Jane Hewitt (Educational Opportunities Program), Mr. Frank Hobden (Academic Communications Facility), Professor Jack Lyle (Journalism), Professor Waldo Phelps (English), Professor Elyseo Taylor (Theater Arts), April 23, 1969

d

Letter and attached summary by Colin Young, Head of UCLA Theater Arts Department, "UCLA Media Programs in the Urban Crisis," May 13, 1969

6

SEVERAL FRIENDS

Dir: Charles Burnett, 1969, 16mm transferred to video, 22 min.

A notable precursor to his acclaimed 1977 feature *Killer of Sheep*, *Several Friends* was produced at UCLA the year before Burnett took up the role of teaching assistant on the Media Urban Crisis program. Its casual mode of documentary fiction, focused on a series of quotidian social interactions, shows the influence of Italian neorealist cinema and the family dramas of Oscar Micheaux, shifted from a middle-class to a working-class milieu. Burnett eschewed the overtly ideological approach of his contemporaries. Yet underpinning *Several Friends* is consciousness of how the high unemployment and economic stasis of South Central Los Angeles was exerting itself into black people's lives—in their relationships with friends, between men and women, and with the material stuff of life, such as washing machines and cars.

In the post-Second World War period, California wagered its economic future on the military industries, with substantial investment in aerospace, and research and production facilities. However, African American workers who had moved to California to take up work in the wartime industries were subsequently pushed out of these jobs, and were poorer in real terms in 1969 than they were in 1945. The opening sequence of *Several Friends*, a matter-of-fact encounter between a young girl and a drunk soldier on a backstreet, is perhaps a metaphor for this dispossession, and the specter of the Vietnam War. In Huey P. Newton's words in 1967:

> The slavery of blacks in this country provides the oil for the machinery of war that America uses to enslave the peoples of the world … Penned up in the ghettos of America, surrounded by his factories and all the physical components of his economic system, we have been made into 'the wretched of the earth.'
> ["In Defense of Self Defense," 1967]

7

YOUR CHILDREN COME BACK TO YOU

Dir: Alile Sharon Larkin, 1979, 16mm transferred to video, 27 min.

The sustained protests of students involved with the Media Urban Crisis and Ethno-communications programs led to significant commitments from the Theater Arts department to increase the proportion of students of color admitted to their programs, with some testimonies citing the existence of a quota of 25% in the early 1970s. While at this time the majority of positions in the TV and Motion Pictures division went to men, in the mid '70s there was a noticeable shift when a number of African American women joined the graduate program, including Alile Sharon Larkin.

Your Children Come Back To You is a layered, fictional narrative centering on a young girl, Tovi, and the struggles between her mother and aunt over her care. Tovi's father has left home to join the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, and her mother is chastised by her middle-class sister-in-law for raising Tovi on welfare payments. At the core of the film is a Pan-African origin story told by Tovi, and through the child's growing cultural and political consciousness Larkin positions her as a medium for a discourse around systemic dispossession, the movement towards black self-determination rooted in Afrocentrism, and anti-imperialist struggles in Africa. The film can also be seen as an intervention into the insidious narrative of the "welfare queen," (weaponized by Ronald Reagan in his 1976 bid for Republican nomination), which itself built on the 1965 Moynihan Report's portrayal of black women as primarily responsible for the "tangle of pathology" that leads to the "matriarchal structure" of the black community.

e

Memorandum from Frank E. Hobden to Colin Young, "Available resources in A.C.F. for assistance in the 'Urban Crisis,'" September 9, 1969

f

Elyseo J. Taylor, "Media Urban Crisis Staff Report," December 2, 1969

8

I AM JOAQUIN

Dir: Luis Valdez, 1969, 16mm transferred to video, 19 min.

In 1965, playwright Luis Valdez founded El Teatro Campesino (ETC), a theater group that performed collaborative agitprop plays to striking farmworkers around California, with Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huertas's United Farm Workers (UFW) movement. While Valdez had no direct presence at UCLA, ETC's move from grassroots politics into film and media in the late '60s coincided with the founding of the UCLA programs, and combined to significantly shape future structures for Chicano filmmaking and mass communication.

Chon Noriega has highlighted the role played by poetry in the Chicano Movement, with the publishing of poems in newspapers, circulated by hand, and read at political rallies, having a "profound influence on the emerging political rhetoric and cultural politics of the late 1960s and early 1970s." Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales's 1967 poem *I am Joaquin* stands as the most influential of these poems, and was cited within the UCLA High Potential Program as the ground for its Chicano curriculum. Gonzales's poem is a rousing call to a nationalism built on a "mestizo historical genealogy" that "transcends all religious, political, class, and economic factions" within the Chicano community, fusing into the single imaginary polity of "La Raza" (The Race).

A manifesto written in 1966 by Valdez as part of the grape workers' strike influenced the rhetorical style of Gonzales's *I am Joaquin*, and in return ETC toured a dramatic reading of the poem accompanied by a slide show of photographs by George Ballis, who had documented the work of UFW. In 1969, Valdez translated the show into a film that was widely circulated. The cultural nationalism of *I am Joaquin* marks a distinctive political transformation within the arena in which the UCLA filmmakers worked—what Noriega describes as a "shift from an emphasis on social space to one on cultural identity occur[ring] simultaneously with the shift from student activists to media professionals."

9

CHICANA

Dir: Sylvia Morales, 1979, 16mm transferred to video, 23 min.

Morales entered UCLA in the late 1960s, before joining the TV and Motion Pictures Division of the Theater Arts Department through Ethno-communications. She has spoken of the contradictions between the radical politics espoused by the majority of students, and the sexism she experienced within the program. For Morales, the role of women within the movements that intersected at UCLA was largely repressed by a masculine orientation to student debates. In the early 1970s, Chicana feminist literature asserted the need for the Chicano movement to re-center on the intersection of race and gender. Morales's 1979 film *Chicana* is a vital work within this discourse, directly critiquing Valdez's *I Am Joaquin*, and the locating of a male figure of nationalist identification for the Chicano movement.

Replicating the roots of *I Am Joaquin* in a textual practice, Chicana is based around a slide show and talk on the history of Chicanas given by activist and writer Anna Nieto-Gomez in 1977. The film is dedicated to the "courageous and freedom loving women … of the Mexican Chicano people," and while echoing the use of archival and museological images in *I Am Joaquin*, emphasizes the matriarchal roots of La Raza: Where Gonzales and Valdez evoked Cuauhtémoc, Chicana cites Coatlicue, the mother of the Aztec gods, as the source of all life. But *Chicana* does not simply replace the figure of identification for Chicano nationalism while upholding the mytho-poetics of *I Am Joaquin*, instead offering a detailed address of the role of revolutionary women in key struggles such as the right to education, the rights of migrant workers, and social welfare. As David E. James has highlighted:

> In Morales's socialist-feminist historical analysis, women are leaders of struggle against sexual and class oppression, and rather than being rhetorically transcended in the forging of a noncontradictory commonality, divisions in it are recognized.
> [*The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles*, 2005]

10

CURIOS

Dir: Sandra Osawa, 1970, 8mm transferred to video, 1 min.

IN THE HEART OF BIG MOUNTAIN

Dir: Sandra Osawa, 1988, video, 28 min.

Long-term support for the work of the Native American students who joined the Media Urban Crisis program was seemingly limited, a lack reflected in the sustained visibility as a filmmaker of only one member of the program. Sandra Osawa (née Johnson), a member of the Makah tribe, had worked as a Community Action Director for the poverty program on her reservation in Neah Bay, Washington, before joining UCLA's High Potential Program and teaching English in the American Indian Studies Program. She moved into the Media Urban Crisis program in January 1970, meeting her future husband Yasu Osawa, in the first group of Asian American students. They both left the program in the summer of the same year, after becoming frustrated by the limitations on resources. In 1974, Osawa produced a public information series on Native Americans for NBC, and has subsequently collaborated with Yasu on numerous notable documentaries.

Curios was Osawa's Project One film and, despite its succinctness, it has formed a foundation for the themes she has pursued since, and conveys the ongoing expropriation of indigenous culture and life by settler-colonialism, through its museological deadening. Made in the late 1980s, but with roots in the summer of 1970 when Sandra and Yasu visited New Mexico and Arizona, *In the Heart of Big Mountain* is a documentary centered on Katherine Smith, a Navajo woman renowned for her resistance of an act passed by Congress in 1974 that forced the relocation of traditional Navajo people from their sacred homeland on Big Mountain, Arizona. Osawa has spoken of her desire for her films to convey the experience of being between worlds, on and off the reservation. The ongoing violence of forced relocation is tangible in *Big Mountain*. Smith died in March 2017 at her homestead on Big Mountain.

11

WONG SINSAANG

Dir: Eddie Wong, 1971, 8mm transferred to video, 12 min.

In the late 1960s, the identification "Asian American" formed around a civil rights movement that sought to counter the marginalization of people of Asian ancestry in the U.S. While grouping together distinct national origins and generational experiences of immigration and disenfranchisement, the movement emphasized a common struggle, finding cause also with the black and Chicano movements. As David E. James notes, "the common experience of racism, working-class privation, and history of mutual aid and dependency allowed the idea of an Asian American commonality to be relatively unproblematic."

Wong Sinsaang is one of the first films produced and distributed by Visual Communications, and serves as a portrait of Wong's father. The film functions as a formal expression of the bifurcations experienced by father and son: within the elder Wong's biography as an immigrant from China; between work life and the private pursuit of cultural heritage; and across a generational divide. The second half of the film concentrates on aspects of Wong's father's life distinct from his job, and expresses a common movement towards "transcending and resisting" the alienation formed through cultural dislocation, and the racialized ground of labor.

g

Letter from Henry W. McGee Jr. (director of Afro-American Center), Emmett S. Oliver (director of American Indian Project), Yuji Ichioka (director of Asian-American Center), Gilbert P. Garcia (director of Mexican-American Cultural Center) to Vice Chancellor Paul O. Proehl, March 16, 1970

h

Letter from Vice Chancellor Paul O. Proehl to Henry W. McGee Jr., Emmett S. Oliver, Yuji Ichioka, and Gilbert P. Garcia, March 18, 1970

12

I & I: AN AFRICAN ALLEGORY

Dir: Ben Caldwell, 1979, 16mm transferred to video, 33 min.