



For Immediate Release

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WILD COMBINATION: A PORTRAIT OF ARTHUR RUSSELL WILL OPEN IN NEW YORK, LONDON AND OTHER MAJOR CITIES, AND WILL BE RELEASED ON DVD, THIS FALL

**Film Will Open in New York at IFC Center and in
London at ICA (Institute of Contemporary Arts) on September 26;
DVD in November Will Include 65 Minutes of Rare Bonus Material**

**Plexifilm Picks up Matt Wolf's Visually Absorbing Documentary for
Worldwide Distribution, Following Celebrated World Premiere at
Berlin International Film Festival And Screenings at Numerous Prestigious Festivals
Film about the pop singer-songwriter, composer-cellist and disco producer
features commentary from Allen Ginsberg, Philip Glass,
other Russell collaborators and loved ones**

"This story begins, as many good ones do, with a gay man from Oskaloosa playing cello in a closet in a Buddhist seminary. It ends with a gentle and brilliant musician dying in New York long before his time. In between, the cellist, Arthur Russell, wrote orchestral music, produced disco hits, and recorded a body of solo cello-and-voice songs that fit somewhere between lullabies and art songs.

—Sasha Frere-Jones, *The New Yorker*

Before his untimely death from AIDS in 1992, **Arthur Russell** prolifically created music that spanned an extraordinary diversity of styles and won the love of artistic communities that would seem utterly disparate. His collaborators and most ardent supporters ranged from Philip Glass and Allen Ginsberg to rock bands like The Talking Heads and The Modern Lovers; the pre-Studio 54 disco-party scene of Nicky Siano's Gallery and David Mancuso's Loft; and DJ-producers like Francois Kevorkian and Larry Levan, among others.

Just as Russell's music had a relevance much broader than the avant-garde, **Matt Wolf's film** about him, ***Wild Combination***, appeals much more universally than just to fans of Russell's music. It is a universally resonant love story, a film about the experience of being gay and confronting AIDS, a document of the compelling cultural history of New York in the 1970s and '80s, and a testament to the cathartic process of making art and pursuing popular success at a time when those goals were mutually attainable.

Building upon the growing international critical and popular embrace of *Wild Combination*, **Plexifilm** is releasing the film theatrically and on DVD this fall. The film will have its **New York premiere** at the **IFC Center**, where it will open **September 26**, the same day it opens in **London** at the **ICA (Institute of Contemporary Arts)**. Openings in other cities will be announced soon. The **DVD**, scheduled for a November release, will include over an hour of bonus material: 25 minutes of archival performance footage, footage of Allen Ginsberg chanting a mantra at Russell's funeral, an

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audiocassette letter from Russell to his parents, and covers of Arthur Russell songs by Jens Lekman, Verity of Electrelane, Joel Gibb of Hidden Cameras, and Arthur's Landing.

Since its world premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival—in festivals including the Edinburgh Film Festival, among many others around the world—*Wild Combination* has garnered considerable critical praise. *Filmmaker* just named Wolf one of 25 New Faces of Independent Film. Amy Taubin of *Film Comment* called *Wild Combination* a “finely tuned, remarkably affecting and informative portrait.” *The Los Angeles Times* called it “resourceful and refreshingly open-minded... a rich, complicated picture.”

As Philip Glass recounts in the film, Russell “felt in his bones that he was destined to have a larger audience than he had at the moment. He was really looking for that. He felt that his music had the possibility of being popular in the sense that popular music is.”

Now, a decade and a half after his passing, Russell's music is finally finding a broader audience. The last few years have seen the reissue of some of his thousands of recordings; the release of a tribute album to him on the Rough Trade label, featuring some of the younger artists he has influenced; and celebratory profiles in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, music and art magazines and blogs worldwide.

Culminating this renaissance, *Wild Combination* offers a deft and fitting exploration—to be sure, an echo (a central theme in Russell's work)—of Russell's artistry and life. Wolf manages at once to get out of the way, making room for the music and the accounts of those who knew him most intimately, and to render Russell's important and poignant story in a visual language that is expressionistic and experimental, making *Wild Combination* an artistic achievement of its own. Aside from insightful commentary from (in order of appearance) the musician and writer David Toop (who did the last print interview with Russell), parents Chuck and Emily Russell, Allen Ginsberg, Ernie Brooks (*The Modern Lovers*, *The Necessaries*), Philip Glass, Russell's partner Tom Lee, Steve Knutson of Audika Records (responsible for reissuing Russell's work in recent years), the singer-songwriter Jens Lekman and others, Wolf includes footage he shot amidst the bucolic landscape of Russell's Iowa hometown, on the Staten Island Ferry where Russell used to reflect and listen back to his recordings, of a turntable arm rising and falling with each rotation of a Russell record.

Directed by Wolf, *Wild Combination* is produced by him, Ben Howe and Kyle Martin and executive produced by Philip Aarons, Shelley Fox Aarons and Mark Lewin. The film's director of photography is Jody Lee Lipes, and its editor is Lance Edmands.

Arthur Russell's recordings are available on **Audika Records (www.audikarecords.com)**. A number of the previously unheard songs featured in *Wild Combination* are on the forthcoming Audika release ***Love Is Overtaking Me (October 28, 2008)***, which culls folk, pop and country songs from Russell's vast archive.

**For more information, see www.arthurrussellmovie.com, and/or
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