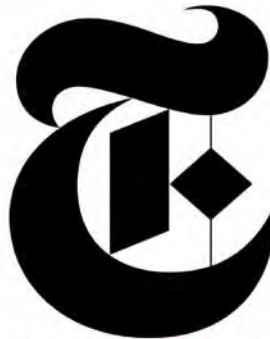


Selected Press
CHIARA CLEMENTE

1. New York Times Magazine: “*Fresh Direct*”
2. Elle Magazine: The Insider, “*The Brave One*”
3. V Magazine: “*Girls on Film*”
4. Vogue Magazine: People Are Talking About, “*Street Scenes*”
5. WWD: “*Chiara Clemente’s Beginnings Returns to the Sundance Channel*”
6. City Life: “*Chiara Clemente Dreams Big*”
7. The New Yorker: Goings On About Town, “*Making It*”
8. Variety: Film Review, “*Our City Dreams*”
9. The New York Times: Review, “*Our City Dreams*”
10. Daily News: “*New York City Their Muse*”
11. Paper Magazine: Eye Spy, “*Made Here*”
12. New York Times Magazine, Culture “*Yoko Before ‘Oh Yoko’*”



The New York Times **Style** Magazine

2.18.07 | **Style**

Fresh Direct
 Don't be fooled by the leading-lady looks. These indie darlings are calling all the shots.

Photographs by Maciek Kobielski Fashion editor: Anne Christensen Text by Christina Muhle

The cover: While living in Rome after film school, Chiara Clemente, the 29-year-old daughter of the painter Francesco Clemente, was commissioned to make a documentary about her father. "I realized after editing it that it was something that came naturally," she says. "It made the sense to let more direct and basic ways from traditional documentaries on artists, which are taking head plus work." To that end, this year she will complete "Our City Dreams," intimate portraits of five decades of female artists in New York, including Nancy Spero, Kiki Smith, Marina Abramovic, Ghada Amer and Sworn. "Each artist says a word for the cover," she says. **Director:** When Jehane Noujaim, a 32-year-old documentary filmmaker, is working, she dresses like a girl. It might seem surprising the way she dresses in the cover. "I'm a startup.com" (2001) that meant business suits, for "Control Room," shot in Qatar in 2003, the Arab Spring. **Director:** In 2004, she shot the "world-changing wish" prize to unite the globe for a day through film. "They provide the framework for how to get around."

New York Times Magazine "Fresh Direct"
Directors portfolio with Jehane Noujaim, Va
Sarah Polley, Miranda July & Ma



ELLE



Clemente on set (left) and stills from her new documentary series, *Beginnings*

For breakthrough documentary filmmaker Chiara Clemente, art imitates her own glamorous life

Chiara Clemente is possibly the most fashionable documentarian of her generation. The 33-year-old sits front-row at fashion shows; hosts exclusive happenings at Manhattan's of-the-moment spots, such as the Jane Hotel; and is regularly photographed on the red carpet wearing the work of one or another of her designer friends, such as Phillip Lim and Zac Posen, with her long hair flowing wildly in that chic way that only Italians seem able to pull off. But unlike most well-connected New York offspring (her dad is neo-Expressionist painter Francesco Clemente), who'd rather party than pay their dues, Clemente likes to mix work with pleasure. This October, the Sundance Channel premieres *Beginnings*, her new series on seven blue-chip New Yorkers, including fashion designer Carolina

Herrera, photographer Mario Sorrenti, and Yoko Ono. "I wanted each person to talk about the really early moments of their career, when, almost subconsciously, everything clicked," says Clemente, whose idea for the project was born out of today's vacuous celebrity culture. Depending on *Beginnings'* success, she hopes to take the show on the road, filming in Paris and Tokyo, as well as L.A., where she studied filmmaking at the Art Center College of Design before shooting her first critically acclaimed art-world documentary, *Our City Dreams*. "I'll always be a little bit edgy New York and a little bit romantic, old-world Rome," says Clemente, who misses the artistic freedom fostered by L.A.'s slower rhythm. We'd also argue that she's a little bit Old Hollywood.—WHITNEY VARGAS

CLEMENTE'S L.A.



1 *The Huntington Botanical Gardens*
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in the Rose Garden
1131 Oxford Rd., 626-365-2100



2 *Scout*
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that no one else will have
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3 *Chateau Marmont*
For ping-pong by the pool
8221 Sunset Blvd., 323-656-1010

V MAGAZINE



GIRLS ON FILM

FILMMAKER CHIARA CLEMENTE KNOWS ABOUT GROWING UP IN ARTLAND. HER LATEST DOCUMENTARY, *OUR CITY DREAMS*, FOLLOWS FIVE WOMEN ARTISTS IN THEIR OWN PURSUITS AT WORKING THE DREAM IN NEW YORK

When most 13-year-old girls in 1990 were pining for Guess jeans or Discmans for Christmas, Chiara Clemente had her heart set on a video camera. "I've wanted to make films ever since I was little," says the oldest daughter of Italian painter Francesco Clemente. Her parents obliged. They gave her a Sony Hi8, and she quickly convinced her high-school teachers that she could complete assignments cinematically instead of writing papers. For her thesis project, she made her official directorial debut with *BOYZ: You'll Want To Take Them Home With You*, a thirty-minute study of the opposite sex. Clemente interviewed a slew of young dudes she met in New York and Analfi, where her family decamped every summer. "You start with what's familiar. My interest then was boys," she says coyly.

Fast-forward to the present. Clemente, now 30, has been holed up in the editing room, racing to meet submission deadlines for the Sundance and Berlin film festivals. Publicly, the petite, raven-haired beauty is regularly spotted in fashion magazines dressed to the nines and on society pages alongside her turban-wearing beau, the jewelry designer and actor Waris Ahluwalia. But privately she has spent the past three years realizing her childhood fantasy: to direct a feature-length film. *Our City Dreams* is a behind-the-scenes meditation on five notable visual artists living and working

in New York—all women, all transplants, all about a decade apart in age, and all at very different points in their careers. "I wanted to know, 'Why are you still here?'" says the fledgling auteur.

To a degree, the documentary is autobiographical. "Making a film about artists is about the creative process, which is my own process. So it becomes personal in that way," Clemente says. But she is quick to emphasize that her subjects speak for themselves—no omniscient narrator, no secondary interviews, just these five women in their hoods telling their own New York stories. *Our City Dreams* is also a bit of a homecoming. After graduating from Pasadena Art Center in 2000, Clemente moved to Rome, where she directed a series of shorts about artists for the television channel RaiSat Art. She says she's always been plagued by a schizoid cultural identity. She returned to New York in 2004 because she felt it would be more conducive to filmmaking, but she knew it would be tough to assimilate: "It sounds cliché, but coming back on the plane, I started thinking the easiest way for me to rediscover New York was through a camera. I'm looking at New York through these artists' eyes."

More precisely, she's looking at it through the lens of her Sony HDV Camcorder as she pounds the pavement with 30-year-old street-art sensation Swoon, wanders Spanish Harlem with Egyptian-born embroidery "painter" Ghada Amer, accompanies legendary sculptor Kiki Smith on a bike ride through Tompkins Square Park, hangs out backstage at the Guggenheim with performance artist Marina Abramovic, and celebrates the 60th birthday of multimedia activist Nancy Spero in her studio apartment kitchen. The city is the sixth subject, with panoramic shots of bridges and buildings, subways and studios, set to an original soundtrack by Thomas Lauderdale of the band Pink Martini.

Clemente's psychological X-rays are frequently heady and poignant, as when a very frail Spero says, "At this stage, one thing that's gratifying is people ask me what I'm working on. In the old days, I was dying for people to ask what I'm working on." But there's also the occasional comic relief. In her dressing room at the Guggenheim, wearing a red robe and her long brown hair in curls, Abramovic introduces herself to a passerby, saying, "Meet Sophia Loren."

Conceptually speaking, the five unique tales make a composite

portrait of an artist—something not so unlike Todd Haynes's splintered approach to Bob Dylan in his recent fictional biopic, *I'm Not There*. "I wanted to observe the different phases, from the beginning to the end of a career, to get the spectrum of a life of an artist," Clemente explains. Which is something she knows intimately, having spent her formative years living in her father's downtown studio. "There were always artists there—we just walked around them," she says. She even braved making a film about her father in 2005, *Three Worlds*, tracing his journey from New York to his hometown of Naples to Madras while preparing for an exhibit. The experience was, as might be expected, emotionally fraught. "Parents want to keep you at 12 years old," she muses. "He finally called at three a.m. one morning after watching it for the fifth time and was like, 'I got it!'"

It's tempting to view Clemente's pursuit of the creative mind as a reckoning with her youth and to connect the dots between her cinematic portraits and the larger-than-life portraiture by her father. "I've never thought of that before, but I guess there is that," she says. "Documentaries are usually not about the images—they're about your characters, not turning off your camera for fear of missing anything. For me, it is like painting a portrait. Every brush stroke is important. There's a visual composition I stick with."

It's no surprise that her icons are all highly aesthetic narrative filmmakers: Fellini, Antonioni, Almodóvar. "I'm very color oriented," Clemente continues. "I think that comes from spending time in India with my family and with Waris. Although after I moved back to New York, within three months, I had all this black in my closet!" If she has rediscovered her way into the New York groove, the city seems to have responded in kind. "I don't know what it is, but I swear, everyone always asks me for directions," she laughs. "It's going to be a scene in one of my movies someday." **Zoë Wolff**

Chiara Clemente in NYC, November 2007

Photography Matthu Placsek Styling Gabriel Feliciano
Makeup James Kalirados for L'Oréal Paris Hair Lisa-Raquel for Redken Photo assistant Shinobu Mochizuki Stylist assistant Angela Hau Dress **Anne Klein Jewelry House of Waris** Location Paul O. Collision Studio, Inc.

For information: www.ourcitydreams.com

VOGUE

PEOPLE
ARE
TALKING
ABOUT

ART

Chiara Clemente was never a big fan of New York. "Growing up there, you either can't imagine ever

living anywhere else, or you can't wait to get out," the 31-year-old director explains over lunch in SoHo, near the artist's loft where she spent much of her childhood. "I definitely fell into the latter category."

How is it, then, that her first feature-length documentary, the forthcoming **Our City Dreams**—an intimate portrait of five women artists who live in New York—celebrates the metropolis as a cauldron of creativity? In response, Clemente quotes sculptor Kiki Smith: "In the film, Kiki says, 'I'd love to go somewhere else. But where else am I going to have it so good?'"

The film follows each woman through a year of invention and acclaim. We watch the young graffiti artist Swoon go



CAMERA READY
CHIARA CLEMENTE
PHOTOGRAPHED
AT NANCY SPERO'S
STUDIO, IN A KATI
RODRIGUEZ DRESS

street
scenes

*Chiara Clemente
chronicles the lives
of five women
artists—and the
city they love.*



PIECES OF YOU
A DETAIL FROM
SWOON'S
INSTALLATION
SWIMMING CITIES
OF SWITCHBACK
SEA, 2008.

from pasting up her prints on the streets of Red Hook to being feted at her first opening in SoHo. We see Egyptian-born provocateur Ghada Amer visiting her parents in Cairo and enjoying the fruits of success: her very own Harlem brownstone. There are public triumphs, like Marina Abramovic's performances at the Guggenheim, and private moments, such as painter Nancy Spero's eightieth-birthday

celebration in Paris. Through it all runs the women's endless energy of creation. "I had six lives for the three years I worked on this film," says the director, tiny but seemingly iron-willed in her uniform of Earnest Sewn jeans and a handmade shirt from India. (The delicate enamel skull earrings are by her boyfriend, actor and jewelry designer Waris Ahluwalia.) "I was like a doctor on call, checking in with them," she recalls. "And then, New York is connected

to so many different parts of the world. So the film became very international, as well."

Clemente is no stranger to the artist's life. Eldest daughter of the painter Francesco Clemente ("La Vie en Pose," page 324), she moved between Italy, where she was born, and India until age five, when her family arrived in downtown Manhattan. (The smell of oil paint always reminds her of home, she says.) Summers were spent at the childhood home of her mother, Alba, on the Amalfi Coast. "In my heart, I always felt Italy was where I belonged," recalled the director, who moved to Rome after studying film at Pasadena Art Center. "It took me four years to realize that I was much more of a New Yorker than I thought."

Making the movie was also a way of coming home. "There were things that I wanted to understand, having grown up with an artist father," she explains. "And then, the fact that they were women made it more personal to me. It wasn't just an academic need to have some questions answered. It was a real curiosity."

—LESLIE CAMBI pata >257

March 12, 2012

Chiara Clemente's 'Beginnings' Returns to Sundance Channel

By SHARON EDELSON

FROM:

WWD Issue 03/13/2012

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Chiara Clemente's curiosity about the early lives of creative talents began in her own youth as she tiptoed around the paintings in the studio of her father, the artist Francesco Clemente. But instead of paints and canvas, the director and New York social fixture decided that she is "a storyteller whose medium is film. I do documentaries, but I say I do portraits."

THIS ARTICLE IS FREE
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EXCLUSIVE CONTENT AND MORE FREE PREVIEW

Clemente's latest series of short documentaries airs today on the Sundance Channel, and focuses on the beginning of a creative career when everything seems hopeful and possible. The aptly named "Beginnings: Paris," delves into the creative process and inspirations of five Parisians, including actress-musician Charlotte Gainsbourg, shoe designer Christian Louboutin, perfumer Frédéric Malle, film director and cartoonist Marjane Satrapi, and bookseller of Shakespeare & Co., Sylvia Whitman.

Clemente, 34, had her own creative beginnings when she was 12 and decided she wanted to make movies. She attended film school and focused her attention on artists.

"My parents were very encouraging," she says. "Growing up in such a visual atmosphere helped. This piece is so personal. I started with a wish list. I set a date and shot five people in five days."

This is the second season for "Beginnings," the first of which in 2010 focused on New York and featured Carolina Herrera, Yoko Ono, Mario Sorrenti and Massimo Vignelli, among others.

One common sentiment among the disparate cast of "Beginnings: Paris," was people expressing the need to create. Satrapi was "the most explosive character," Clemente says. "I heard Gainsbourg was shy, but she was great. Louboutin was very open. I got to see his whole creative process."

Clemente wants to continue working on the series. "I want to inspire people and motivate and inspire myself," she says. "I'm working on a narrative feature. It's mostly original, but based on a true story."



Chiara Clemente
Photo By George Chinsee

MOST RECENT ARTICLES ON PEOPLE

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- On the Road With Danh Vo
- Stephen Burrows Looks Back as Retrospective Bows

MORE ARTICLES BY

- Sharon Edelson

Chiara Clemente Dreams Big

Child of New York royalty, this first-time feature director focuses her art film on five female voices in *Our City Dreams*

By Bill Powers



Like charms on a bracelet, director Chiara Clemente strings together vignettes of five female artists (Swoon, Ghada Amer, Kiki Smith, Marina Abramovich, Nancy Spero) so seamlessly that you almost forget they are different people. One from Egypt, another from Serbia, the youngest a Floridian, all women, all now New Yorkers: this delicate fluidity is such a coup because going strictly by her subjects' backgrounds you might think you're reading an Ellis Island directory. However, the real success of *Our City Dreams* is Chiara's ability to discard the bell curve of traditional nonfiction storytelling and instead embrace the verse/chorus/verse structure of a rock 'n roll anthem (although the soundtrack is decidedly more Chet Baker).

Growing up the daughter of painter Francesco Clemente, Chiara could have taken the easy way with her feature debut, turning the camera on her own clan as we've seen in *My Father The Architect* or

that Alice Neel doc made by her grandson, Andrew, a few years ago. *Our City Dreams* does not succumb to this category of ancestral self-discovery and even manages to sidestep the pitfall of becoming a feminist propaganda tool by concentrating as much on the struggle of aging gracefully as she does on gender bias. About halfway through the film, Kiki Smith comments on the problem of retrospectives and how they are an inherently reductive showcase, given the limits of space and time in condensing a person's lifework. The same critique could, no doubt, be leveled against biopics and here is where Chiara's fluency with the familiar shines.

By taking slices of these women's lives — pre-opening jitters, the relationship to their families, their life beyond the gallery walls — and highlighting the universal elements of an artist's existence, she allows the viewer a greater understanding of how each woman subverts these challenges, whether it's riding a freight train cross-country or

telling dirty jokes. Another great painter, Marlene Dumas, once told me that to draw something is to show its resistance — skin against flesh, an individual against the system — and here again the same art world insight is applicable to filmmaking.

Our City Dreams opens with twenty-something Swoon wheat pasting her cutouts on construction site scaffolding, while riding her bicycle into a stiff wind, and ends with a physically fragile Nancy Spero blowing out the candles on her 80th birthday cake. What Charlie Kaufman has achieved with *Synecdoche, New York*, Chiara Clemente has done for contemporary art, transcending the vanity of navel-gazing to the higher ground of lives examined both thoughtfully and poetically. When asked about her childhood, Chiara has said before that she grew up tiptoeing around her father's paintings. With the release of *Our City Dreams*, she needn't tiptoe any longer.

Our City Dreams opens Feb. 4 at *The Film Forum* in New York. ▀



THE NEW YORKER

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK MAKING IT

"Made Here" is an online documentary series now in its third season. (The entire series can be viewed at madehereproject.org.) In it, we meet a variety of performing artists living and working in New York City, ranging from Lisa Kron to



Elizabeth Streb to Cherry Jones, who talk about the tough but ultimately fulfilling work we don't see them do as they struggle to make believe in front of a live audience. Produced by the writer and activist Tanya Selvaratnam and directed by Chiara Clemente, the series has an unexpected lightness, as the stars contemplate questions about performing in New York as opposed to not, dealing with critics, health care, and so on. The love in Clemente's lens is for all those overworked, usually underpaid theatre souls who would never consider living any other way, or doing anything else. Her direction is clear and gentle; she doesn't overwhelm her subjects with cinema. She knows that faces make cinema—particularly the faces that she and Selvaratnam are drawn to, the very faces that get us to the theatre in the first place.

—Hilton Als

| Film Review |



Performance artist Marina Abramovic takes her art to the ocean off Thailand in Chiara Clemente's docu "Our City Dreams."

Our City Dreams

(Docu)

A First Run Features release of a Di San Luca Films production. (International sales: Di San Luca Films, New York.) Produced by Chiara Clemente, Tanya Selvaratnam, Bettina Sulser.

Directed by Chiara Clemente. Camera (color/B&W, Super 8, 16mm, DV, HD), Theo Stanley; editor, Martin Levenstein; music, Thomas M. Lauderdale; music supervisor, Lauderdale, Susan Jacobs, Jonathan Friedman; art director, Nathan Kilcer; sound (Dolby Digital), Lauderdale; supervising sound editor, Nicholas Renbeck; associate producer, Eva Lindemann. **Reviewed at Hamptons Film Festival (World Cinema), Oct. 16, 2008. Running time: 87 MIN.**

With: Swoon, Ghada Amer, Kiki Smith, Marina Abramovic, Nancy Spero.
(English, French, Arabic dialogue)

By **RONNIE SCHEIB**

The city in "Our City Dreams" is New York, serving as home base for the five powerhouse femme artists profiled in Chiara Clemente's exquisitely crafted docu. While Pamela Boll's recent "Who Does She Think She Is?" imposes a rigid feminist agenda on randomly selected artists, Clemente chooses renowned, wildly eclectic creators who span the spectrum in age, provenance and medium, connected to the city through a complex, ever-changing dialectic. Combining formats and textures with a hypnotic, shape-shifting score, pic itself quite simply ranks as a work of art. Docu is skedded to bow at Gotham's Film Forum in February.

Despite establishing shots of the artists navigating the city on foot, bicycle, bus and subway, Clemente never posits her subjects as static indwellers. Instead, they are shown constantly on the move, redefining their work while shuttling between more far-flung terrains.

Swoon, barely out of her 20s, met with phenomenal success since hitting Gotham in the late '90s. Her life-size "street people" cutouts, carved in plywood, inked, transferred onto paper and clandestinely pasted on the sides of buildings, represent a quintessentially urban art form. The effervescent redhead, worried about keeping her edge in the face of gallery shows and

MoMA exhibitions, leaves town to recharge, riding the rails with an 8mm camera.

Ghada Amer, disturbed by repressive changes she finds on a visit to her hometown, Cairo, produces hand-embroidered paintings that subvert the "feminine" art of sewing with highly sexual subject matter, with texts that question the nature of love, angst and terrorism.

The women's art reinvents itself within the constraints and discoveries of age. Kiki Smith's vast retrospective, landing at New York's Whitney Museum, grants the quirky quinquagenarian ample opportunity to reflect on her many-sided oeuvre, freeing her up to go further afield — to the Venice Biennale with her "Home-spun Tales," and to the Olympics in Turin with illuminated ice sculptures.

Clemente's subjects are constantly on the move, redefining their work while shuttling between far-flung terrains.

Serbian performance artist Marina Abramovic utterly belies her 60 years with grueling seven-hour performances at the Guggenheim (the museum's spiral structure makes an ideal theater space). Her "Seven Easy Pieces" features self-mutilation; "God Punishing" finds her ferociously bullwhipping the ocean off Thailand in retaliation for the tsunami.

In contrast, frail, bird-like activist artist Nancy Spero, though still working, seems diminished by both her fragile body and the recent death of her husband and fellow artist, Leo Golub, as she reminisces about Paris and New York in the '60s.

Clemente's compelling group portraiture (with each artist allotted her own space, uninterrupted by cross-cutting) paints a vibrantly diverse Gotham art scene, mimed by Thomas Lauderdale's motif-driven score and lenser Theo Stanley's interwoven swatches of black-and-white, color, Super 8, 16mm, DV and HD camerawork.

The New York Times

MOVIE REVIEW | 'OUR CITY DREAMS'

Our City Dreams (2008)



Marina Abramovic's performance piece "God Punishing."

First Run Pictures

5 Artists Inspired and Shaped by a Place

By JEANNETTE CATSOULIS

Published: February 3, 2009

New York City offers inspiration and haven to five female artists in "Our City Dreams," a lyrical documentary about the intersection of location and imagination.

More About This Movie

Overview

New York Times Review

Cast, Credits & Awards

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Watch This Movie

"I did art because I didn't want to die," says the restless painter Ghada Amer, who responds to the repressive culture of her native Egypt with vast embroidered canvases celebrating nakedly intertwined female figures. Less erotic but equally confrontational are the arresting woodcuts of Swoon, whose expressive, full-size portraits of street people are cut laboriously from plywood on the floor of her tiny apartment.

Allotting scrupulously equal time to each of her subjects, the director, Chiara Clemente, makes smooth transitions among styles, mediums and personalities. Beatific sculptures by Kiki Smith give way to painted bloody phalluses by Nancy Spero.

Throughout, the women are encouraged to explore the pull of their adopted city, and watching the Belgrade-born artist Marina Abramovic perform selections from her grueling, gargantuan work "Seven Easy Pieces," it's difficult to imagine any space but the Guggenheim as hospitable.

Nevertheless, one of the movie's liveliest sections follows the limber Ms. Abramovic (possibly the youngest-looking sexagenarian to exist outside of Hollywood) to Phuket, Thailand, to prepare for her post-tsunami piece, "God Punishing." If I can wield a bullwhip with that degree of enthusiasm when I'm 60, I'll be a happy woman indeed.

OUR CITY DREAMS

Opens on Wednesday in Manhattan.

Directed by Chiara Clemente; director of photography, Theo Stanley; edited by Martin Levenstein; music by Thomas M. Lauderdale; produced by Ms. Clemente, Tanya Selvaratnam and Bettina Sulser; released by First Run Features. At Film Forum, 209 West Houston Street, South Village. Running time: 1 hour 27 minutes. This film is not rated.

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NYC THEIR MUSE

Filmmaker zooms in on artists' lives in the city

BY ROBERT DOMINGUEZ

Documentary maker Chiara Clemente had to leave New York City to finally appreciate it — as her muse. Born in Rome and raised in Manhattan since she was a little girl, Clemente is known for chronicling the artist's life on film. Her father, surrealist painter Francesco Clemente, was the subject of one of her early movies. But it wasn't until Clemente moved back to the city, after spending nearly a decade in Los Angeles, that she realized just how much New York had both inspired and molded her as a visual artist.

"It was my city, but I never loved growing up here," says Clemente, 31. "Once you're back, though, you never want to leave it again. In coming back, I rediscovered New York through my camera."

And in doing so, she also discovered the theme of her next documentary. In "Our City Dreams," opening at Film Forum on Feb. 4, Clemente traces the lives and careers of five like-minded artists — women who came from other cities or countries to live and work in New York, feeding off the city's unique energy to forge successful careers here.

"New York was the inspiration for the film even before I knew which artists I would include," says Clemente. "What better way to tell a story about art and the city than having artists of different ages connecting in the sense of coming to New York and making their dreams come true?"

Shot on film and video, "Our City Dreams" showcases each artist, ranging in age from 31 to 82, as they tell their unique stories, with the streets of the city serving as a common backdrop.



Chiara Clemente chronicling artists who came from other lands in "Our City Dreams."



Performance art (left and above) is Marina Abramovic's forte.

Marina Abramovic, 42

Born Belgrade, Serbia. Abramovic came to New York from Amsterdam after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, hoping to establish the same level of success here with her avant-garde performance art. She quickly made a name for herself.

with "Seven Easy Pieces," during which she spent seven straight nights performing a series of outlandish works in the rotunda of the Guggenheim Museum.

HOW NEW YORK SHAPED HER ARTISTIC VISION
"What is so great about New York is that you can feel the intense energy of this place every day. It is different here. Every-

every day, it is different here. Every-

every day, it is different here. Every-

every day, it is different here. Every-

every day, it is different here. Every-

every day, it is different here. Every-



Kiki Smith, 33

Born Nuremberg, Germany, raised in South Orange, N.J. Best known as a painter and sculptor, Smith works in several mediums, including prints, drawings and installations. Her provocative works often address social and political issues from a feminist point of view. She has been living in the city for more than 30 years.

something like a Buddhist temple surrounded in moon inspired art."

HOW NEW YORK SHAPED HER ARTISTIC VISION
"I came here as a youngster before I was an artist and seeing the works of art here was influential to me as a teenager. Just walking down the street and seeing



Ghada Amer, 45

Born Cairo. Mixing embroidery with eroticized paintings, Amer's work explores the woman's role in both Western and Islamic culture. She lived most of her life in France and moved to New York in 1996.

HOW NEW YORK SHAPED HER ARTISTIC VISION
"It's a much more of a place where I can create. It's not so much about being inspired by the landscape or anything like that. It's more about New York giving me the freedom to express myself."



ADVICE TO STRUGGLING ARTISTS
"In New York, you need to keep doing what you are doing and it will turn out to be fine, because [success] is part of the American experience."



Swoon, 31

Born Daytona Beach, Fla. A street artist whose specialty is paper cutouts of real people that she pastes on public walls, Swoon never gives her real name, and doesn't like to reveal her face in pictures, so avoid pronunciation for vandalism. She came to the city a dozen years ago to study art at Pratt Institute.

HOW NEW YORK SHAPED HER ARTISTIC VISION
"I've been in the city 12 years now, but when I first moved here, I remember everything about the city im-

printing my senses, and showing the way that I worked — from the art and culture that I was being exposed to, to the ethos of the city itself. I loved to observe the city in the way that it felt like an organism growing up from the banks of the rivers and the harbor, or like an ecosystem teeming with so much life, even while being this sort of hard place."

ADVICE TO STRUGGLING ARTISTS
"Do not be afraid of this city. There is such a waterfall of energy in this place, and it can be a hard place to live. But it is very valuable for an artist to be in a place that is difficult to live in. It should never be too easy."



Nancy Spero, 42

Born Cleveland. Known as much for her activism as for her art, Spero moved to New York in 1964 from Chicago and quickly made a name for herself with a series of drawings and paintings protesting the Vietnam War. The widow of painter Leon Golub, Spero's work has been celebrated around the world.

HOW NEW YORK SHAPED HER ARTISTIC VISION
"If you're an artist, the suburbs of Chicago are perfect for putting you down. You end up kicking and screaming, trying to escape a rather closed environment. Like myself and millions of others that come from somewhere else, you see there's a closeness of everything here, but it's set up in such a way that there's a enough breathing space to be creative."

ADVICE TO STRUGGLING ARTISTS
"New York seems to be the place from which to launch a really big career. If that's what one wants, I used to think it was so wonderful in the old days to have that opportunity for somebody to see what my art was all about."





on the front lines of cultural chaos since 1984.

eye spy

TANYA SEVARATNAM AND CHIARA CLEMENTE CONTINUE EXPLORING THE CREATIVE PROCESS WITH "MADE HERE"

David HersHKovits



The formidable filmmaking team of producer **Tanya Selvaratnam** and director **Chiara Clemente** have struck again with their second season of *Made Here: Performing Artists on Work and Life in New York City*. Their documentary series and interactive website focuses on the issues of identity, creative practice, money, and home as described in interwoven interviews with 28 artists like Kate Valk and Elizabeth LeCompte of The Wooster Group, Reggie Watts, Basil Twist, Thomas Bradshaw, John Collins of Elevator Repair Service, Joan Jonas, Miguel Gutierrez and Abby Marcus and Qui Nguyen of Vampire Cowboys. The series was made in conjunction with HERE, the performing arts space.

Selvaratnam and Clemente have made it a specialty of exploring the contemporary creative process. Their previous collaborations include *Our City Dreams* (a documentary feature about NYC-based women artists, which played at Film Forum in 2009 and screened in 30 cities around the world) and *Beginnings* (a short film series for the Sundance Channel on subjects including Yoko Ono, photographer Mario Sorrenti, and chef Dan Barber).

You are welcome to help them celebrate the new season, on Monday, March 28 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at The Vaults (14 Wall St.) with a performance by Reggie Watts. You can RSVP [here](#).



Yoko, Before 'Oh Yoko!' (and Other Origin Stories)

CULTURE | By STEPHEN HEYMAN | OCTOBER 18, 2010, 4:35 PM | 3 Comments



The art-world documentarian Chiara Clemente set her sights on seven creative personalities, whom she has profiled in miniature for “Beginnings,” a new film series debuting Tuesday at sundancechannel.com. All of the subjects — from **Yoko Ono** (the profile of her is embedded above) to the **Blue Hill** chef Dan Barber — hit the big time in New York, and in going back to their beginnings, Clemente reminds us that none of us — O.K., very few of us — fall off of the truck an instant star. Carmen de Lavallade returns to the 92nd Street Y, site of the 79-year-old dancer’s first performance in the city. The photographer Mario Sorrenti shows off his mother’s art studio, where, as a young vandal, he’d crash after long nights spent spraying graffiti. And the designer Carolina Herrera recalls her first meeting with Diana Vreeland, in which she explained her desire to go into fabric design. “But how *boring* that is!” Vreeland told her. “Why don’t you just do a little collection?”