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POV online pressroom: [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom)

**POV's "Patti Smith: Dream of Life" Presents Evocative Portrait of the Legendary Rocker and Artist, Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2009, at 9 p.m. in Special Presentation On PBS**

*"Created over a heroic 11 years ... a lovely ... first feature. ... Mr. Sebring creates a structure for the film in which past and present seem to flow effortlessly and ceaselessly into each other." — Manohla Dargis, The New York Times*

**MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET**

National Air

Date:

**Patti Smith: Dream of Life** concludes the 22nd season of **POV (Point of View)** on **Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2009** (Smith's birthday) at 9 p.m., in a special presentation on **PBS**. (Check local listings.) American television's longest-running independent documentary series, POV is the winner of a Special Emmy for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking and the International Documentary Association's IDA Award for Best Continuing Series

The Film:

Shot over 11 years by renowned fashion photographer Steven Sebring, **Patti Smith: Dream of Life** is an intimate portrait of the legendary rocker, poet and artist. Following Smith's personal reflections over a decade, the film explores her many art forms and the friends and poets who inspired her — William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Bob Dylan, Robert Mapplethorpe and Michael Stipe. She emerges as a crucial, contemporary link between the Beats, punks and today's music. Shot in lush, dark tones, featuring rare performance clips and narrated by the artist herself, **Patti Smith: Dream of Life** is an impressionistic journal of a multi-faceted artist that underscores her unique place in American culture. *Winner of the 2008 Sundance Film Festival Excellence in Cinematography Award: Documentary. A production of Clean Socks and THIRTEEN. Produced by Steven Sebring, Margaret Smilow and Scott Vogel.*

Watch the trailer and learn more at [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom).

Filmmaker's

Statement:

"A few weeks after I met Patti in 1995, she invited me to see her perform at Irving Plaza in New York City," says director Sebring. "I was completely blown away; she wasn't the person I had met at her home in Detroit. She had been this really sweet, almost innocent woman. And then at Irving Plaza, she was raging, spitting music and spewing poetry. It was fantastic. After the show, I asked her, 'Has anybody ever filmed you?' I didn't know at the time that there was so little documentation of her aside from concert footage.

"I kept shooting as Patti's life kept changing; over the years, we've become like brother and sister," Sebring says. "They call her the punk poet prophet. Well, I'm one of her soldiers, or one of her messengers. I want to turn people on to Patti Smith."

The book:

In 2008, Rizzoli New York published **Patti Smith: Dream of Life** by Steven Sebring. This companion book, featuring photographs by Sebring and Smith, is available for sale on the POV website for a limited time. Visit [www.pbs.org/pov/pattismith/](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pattismith/), where the DVD of the film is available as well.

The exhibit: “Objects of Life,” an exhibition in conjunction with **Patti Smith: Dream of Life**, will open at the Robert Miller Gallery in New York from Jan. 6 – Feb. 6, 2010. Inspired by the process of discovery during 11 years of filming, this installation features a selection of photographs, video, and a rare unseen painting by Smith, as well as personal belongings from both Sebring and Smith. [www.robertmillergallery.com](http://www.robertmillergallery.com)

Events: Smith and her band will perform three sold-out shows (with special guest) at the Bowery Ballroom in New York, Dec. 29 – 31, 2009. [www.boweryballroom.com](http://www.boweryballroom.com)

HarperCollins has announced the release of Smith’s new book, *Just Kids*. In her first book of prose, she offers a never-before-seen glimpse of her remarkable relationship with photographer Robert Mapplethorpe in the epochal days of New York City and the Chelsea Hotel in the late ‘60s and early 70s. Smith brings the same unique, lyrical quality to this story of youth and friendship as she has to the rest of her formidable body of work. [http://www.harpercollins.com/authors/20903/Patti\\_Smith/index.aspx](http://www.harpercollins.com/authors/20903/Patti_Smith/index.aspx). *Just Kids* (hardcover, \$27.00) will be available for sale on Jan. 19, 2010, at which time Smith will sign copies at Barnes & Noble in Union Square, New York. <http://harpercollins.com/Author/Tour.aspx?authorID=20903>

On Jan. 21, 2010, Smith will join Sam Shepard for a poetry reading at the 92nd Street Y in New York. Shepard and Smith have been close friends since the early ‘70s, when they co-wrote and co-starred in the play “Cowboy Mouth.” Upon the publication of their new books — Shepard’s *Day Out of Days*, a collection of stories, and Smith’s *Just Kids* — they read together at the Poetry Center for the first time. Tickets are available at [www.92y.org](http://www.92y.org) or 212.415.5440.

Sebring bio: **Patti Smith: Dream of Life** marks the feature directorial debut of artist and photographer Steven Sebring. Born in South Dakota and raised in Arizona, Sebring taught himself photography as a teenager. He later moved to Europe, establishing himself as a photographer known for merging raw realism with the fantasy of high fashion. He has worked for many magazines and has shot advertising and fashion campaigns for companies such as Ralph Lauren, Lanvin, Maybelline and Coach.

He has also shot and directed several short films, including *New York Stories* (2003) and *Road Stories* (2004), both for DKNY and released to critical acclaim.

Sebring designed the award-winning photography book *Bygone Days* (2005), which depicts the history of a rural American family in Bison, S.D., from 1910 to 1950 through photos by Sebring’s great-great uncle John Penor, who, at 97, passed away in the same sod house where he was born.

In 2005 and 2006, Sebring photographed the art of renowned French sculptors Claude and Françoise Lalanne for the book *Lalanne*, published in 2006. His photographs have been included in *Patti Smith Complete: Lyrics, Reflections and Notes for the Future* and on her albums *Gung Ho*, *Land* and *Twelve*. He continues collaborating with Smith, photographing and producing the art exhibit “Objects of Life,” which premiered in 2008 in Park City, Utah, in conjunction with Sundance, and creating the book *Patti Smith: Dream of Life* (Rizzoli, 2008).

Smith bio: One of the early pioneers of New York City’s dynamic punk scene, Patti Smith has been creating her unique blend of poetic rock and roll for more than 35 years. She was born in Chicago in 1946 and was raised in southern New Jersey before migrating to New York City in 1967 and teaming up with art student Robert Mapplethorpe, who pursued painting and drawing while Smith focused on poetry.

In February 1971, Smith had her first public reading at St. Mark’s Church on the Lower East Side, accompanied by Lenny Kaye on guitar. That same year, she co-wrote and

performed the play *Cowboy Mouth* with Sam Shepard. Smith formed a band and performed at the legendary CBGB in 1975. She and the group subsequently recorded four albums: *Horses*, *Radio Ethiopia*, *Easter* (which included her Top 20 song "Because the Night," co-written with Bruce Springsteen) and *Wave*.

Smith retired from the public eye and moved to Detroit with Fred "Sonic" Smith in 1979. They married in 1980, had two children and wrote songs together with no regret for their self-imposed exile from show business. In 1988, they recorded *Dream of Life*, which included the classic anthem "People Have the Power." It was Smith's final collaboration with three of her closest companions, who all met with untimely deaths: Mapplethorpe, who photographed her for the cover; Richard Sohl, who played keyboards; and her husband, who composed the music.

She released *Gone Again*, a highly acclaimed meditation on passage and mortality, in 1995. The album and the related tour, in which Smith opened for Bob Dylan, marked her re-emergence as a performer and the beginning of her collaboration with Sebring on **Patti Smith: Dream of Life**.

Smith has worked with museums all over the world. In 1999, she read at the Whitney and Guggenheim Museums. In 2000, she participated in the launching of the William Blake exhibit at London's Tate Gallery. She worked with the Metropolitan Museum of Art in conjunction with its Blake program in 2001 and its Diane Arbus exhibit in 2005.

She is the author of *Witt*, *Babel*, *Wool Gathering*, *The Coral Sea*, *Complete* and *Auguries of Innocence*. Her photographs have been exhibited internationally, as have her drawings, which have been shown at MoMA in New York. In 2002, "Strange Messenger," an exhibition of her drawings, silkscreens of images depicting the remains of the World Trade Center after 9/11 and Polaroid photos opened at the Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. The exhibit was then featured at the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston and the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia and continues to be viewed in museums throughout the United States, Europe and Japan.

In 2003, Smith received the Torino Poetry Award and the Premio Tenco, both in Italy. She received the Women of Valor Award at the ROCKRGRRL Music Conference on November 10, 2005, exactly 30 years to the day after the release of *Horses*. That year, she was awarded Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres, the highest grade awarded to artists who have contributed to furthering the arts throughout the world, by France's minister of culture.

Smith's recent albums include 2005's *Trampin* and *Horses/Horses*, the 30th anniversary re-issue of *Horses*. She was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2007. Her latest volume of poetry is *Auguries of Innocence*. She is currently preparing for an exhibit of her visual works at the Cartier Foundation in France.

POV Website: The **Patti Smith: Dream of Life** companion website, <http://www.pbs.org/pov/pattismith>, offers a streaming video trailer of the film, an extended interview with filmmaker Steven Sebring; a list of related websites, partner organizations and books, downloadable discussion and facilitator guides, classroom activities, a full update on all the people in the film and the following special features:

- [Photo and Inspiration Gallery](#): Images from the book *Patti Smith: Dream of Life* and examples of the poetry, art, music and objects that inspire her;
- [Music and Lyrics](#): Patti Smith Radio featuring songs and lyrics;
- [Additional Video](#): Extended Interviews with Smith and Sebring;
- [Timeline of Patti's career](#).

Outreach: POV works with public television stations and national and community-based groups across the country to foster community dialogue around the issues presented in the film.

For a list of upcoming screening and discussion events for **Patti Smith: Dream of Life**, go to: [http://www.amdoc.org/outreach\\_news.php](http://www.amdoc.org/outreach_news.php)

POV also works with nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow to develop a discussion guide with background information to help event organizers carry out discussions around the film's content. Cari Ladd has created the lesson plan. These materials along with a multimedia resource list of related books and videos are available free of charge at [www.pbs.org/pov/pattismith/](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pattismith/).

Credits: Director: Steven Sebring  
Co-producers: Steven Sebring, Margaret Smilow, Scott Vogel  
Cinematographers: Phillip Hunt, Steven Sebring  
Editors: Angelo Corrao, Lin Polito  
Executive Producers: Steven Sebring, Margaret Smilow  
Sound Design: Margaret Crimmins, Greg Smith, Dog Bark Sound

Running Time: 116:46

Awards/Fests: Official Selection, Sundance Film Festival, 2008, *Excellence in Cinematography Award*  
Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, 2008  
Philadelphia Film Festival, 2008      Seattle Film Festival, 2008  
Washington, D.C. Film Festival, 2008  
Provincetown Film Festival, 2008  
Milan International Film Festival, 2008  
Berlin International Film Festival, 2008  
Jerusalem Film Festival, 2008

(For a complete list, visit [www.dreamoflifethemovie.com](http://www.dreamoflifethemovie.com).)

Pressroom: Visit POV's pressroom, [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom), for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

POV: Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 22nd season on PBS, the award-winning POV series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September with primetime specials during the year, POV has brought more than 275 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide, and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *POV's Borders*. Since 1988, POV has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

Major funding for POV is provided by PBS, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, The Educational Foundation of America, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, The September 11th Fund and public television viewers. Funding for POV's *Diverse Voices Project* is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Special support provided by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. POV is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KCET Los Angeles, WGBH Boston and THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG.

**DVD REQUESTS: Please note that a broadcast version of this film is available upon request, as the film may be edited to comply with new FCC regulations.**



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