

## DAVID WOJNAROWICZ (2020)

David Wojnarowicz (1954-1992) was an American painter, photographer, writer, filmmaker, performance artist, songwriter/recording artist, and AID activist prominent in New York's East Village art scene. Largely self-taught, he incorporated personal narratives influenced by his struggle with AIDS as well as his political activism in his art until his death from the disease in 1992.

Wojnarowicz's start in life was traumatic. Having been physically and emotionally abused and neglected by his parents during his upbringing in New Jersey, he carried a burdensome rage throughout his life. Escaping that world as a teenager, he began a precarious life in New York City. Sometimes hustling, sometimes living on the streets, Wojnarowicz created a body of work that spanned photography, painting, music, film, sculpture, writing, and activism. Largely self-taught, he came to prominence in New York in the 1980s, a period marked by creative energy, financial precariousness, and profound cultural changes. Intersecting movements—graffiti, new and no wave music, conceptual photography, performance, and neo-expressionist painting—made New York a laboratory for innovation. Wojnarowicz refused a signature style, adopting a wide variety of techniques with an attitude of radical possibility. Distrustful of inherited structures—a feeling amplified by the resurgence of conservative politics—he varied his repertoire to better infiltrate the prevailing culture.

Wojnarowicz's work documents and illuminates a desperate period of American history: that of the AIDS crisis and culture wars of the late 1980s and early 1990s. But his rightful place is also among the raging and haunting iconoclastic voices, from Walt Whitman to William S. Burroughs, who explore American myths, their perpetuation, their repercussions, and their violence. Like theirs, his work deals directly with the timeless subjects of sex, spirituality, love, and loss. Wojnarowicz, who was thirty-seven when he died from AIDS-related complications, wrote: "To make the private into something public is an action that has terrific ramifications."

DIRECTOR: Chris McKim

[1 hour, 48 minutes]

TRAILER: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt11701838/>

