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MIRANDA JULY DONATES ARCHIVE OF "JOANIE 4 JACKIE" TO THE GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Feminist movie distribution service created by Miranda July beginning in 1995 includes over 200 titles

LOS ANGELES – The Getty Research Institute announced today the acquisition of *Joanie 4 Jackie*, a large, feminist collection of short movies and video art distributed as "Chainletter Tape" compilations by American artist and filmmaker **Miranda July** (American, b. 1974) in the '90s and 2000s. The archive, which includes videos, documentation and print materials, is a generous donation by the artist.

"Miranda July is one of the most important voices of her generation, with an expansive practice that incorporates fine art, filmmaking, performance, literature, and technology," said **Thomas W. Gaehtgens**, director of the Getty Research Institute. "This major archive from early in her career is an esteemed addition to our Special Collections that connects to work by many important 20th-century artists who are also represented in our archives, such as Eleanor Antin, Yvonne Rainer and Carolee Schneemann. Anyone studying the interdisciplinary practices of contemporary feminist artists and scholars will no doubt find the Joanie 4 Jackie archive incredibly valuable."

Joanie for Jackie (originally called Big Miss Moviola) was a feminist video chain letter series begun by Miranda July in 1995 in the midst of a thriving Riot Grrrl scene in Portland, as a way of instigating and distributing video work, especially for younger or underrepresented female artists. Frustrated with the irrelevance of mainstream and even independent movies to



Big Miss Moviola poster. Cut and paste flier original, 1995. 11" x 17". Designed by Miranda July. © Miranda July
The Joanie 4 Jackie records, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

the lives of women, July wondered if moviemaking could be reconceived as something intimate and easy – a medium for dialogue between women, like music and fanzines had recently become. She began distributing a photocopied pamphlet at punk shows and schools, describing her chainletter concept as follows:

A Challenge and A Promise: Lady, u send me yr movie + \$5.00 & I'll send you the latest Big Miss Moviola compilation (that's 10 lady-made movies including yrs.)

Each compilation was created once July had received 10 videos. Initially working with two VHS machines at her home, July would edit the videos onto one tape, producing intro and outro sequences and sometimes including her own work. July also designed the covers for each tape and gave them names such as "The Velvet Chainletter" or "The Ball and Chainletter." Each tape was shipped along with a photocopied booklet comprised of ten letters -- written by each participant to the group. The majority of the artists inspired by July's call to action were girls or young women, many of whom were contributing their first movies, sometimes made expressly in response to the challenge of the project.

As the project grew, July launched a spin-off series called the Co-Star Tapes. Whereas Joanie 4 Jackie was intentionally uncurated and all submissions were accepted, the Co-Star tapes were produced by invited guest curators such as **Astria Suparak** and **Rita Gonzalez**.

Joanie 4 Jackie quietly thrived, filling a void for female artists and capturing their imaginations. Magazines such as *Sassy* and *Seventeen* wrote about the project and July soon heard from girls all over the country who wanted to see movies made by other girls. July traveled around the US, performing her own work alongside screenings of the Joanie 4 Jackie movies at colleges, high schools and punk clubs. At each event July worked with the audience to create a movie during the intermission – an attempt to demonstrate how accessible the medium was and how spontaneously it could be used. Many of these events were hosted by women who had contributed to a Chainletter tape and each summer one of these women would come to Portland to help organize a new compilation. In this way, Joanie 4 Jackie became self-sustaining.

The Joanie 4 Jackie archive is an important sampling of the interests prevalent among young women videomakers in the 1990s and early 2000s. Collectively the project is significant both as a product of a renewed interest in the sociopolitical history and cultural production of the 1990s, a closer examination of the lack of gender equity within film/culture today, and as a do-it-yourself model of video distribution that preceded today's YouTube culture. The Joanie 4 Jackie archive consists of around 300 tapes in various formats (mostly VHS), including over 200 titles that were circulated as part of Joanie 4 Jackie, The Co-Star Tapes, audience-made movies, various editing masters used for screening and video documentation of Joanie 4 Jackie events. The archive also includes a rich collection of the associated booklets, posters, programs, hand-written letters, grant applications to-do lists, and diary entries.

"July's practice is defiantly multidisciplinary, ignoring the dominant genres of art in favor of a territory that is staunchly political, personal, and often lyrical—a practice that has undergone unexpected shifts in format, direction, and scope over her exceptional career," said **Glenn Phillips**, curator and head of modern & contemporary collections at the Getty Research Institute. "The Joanie 4 Jackie Archive represents a tremendously significant early project in



Big Miss Moviola poster. Cut and paste flier original, 1995. 11" x 17". Designed by Miranda July. © Miranda July The Joanie 4 Jackie records, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

the work of a distinguished artist, but also an important moment at the start of third-wave feminism."

Writer Julia Bryan Wilson assisted July in the organization of the project in the late 1990s, and by the early 2000s July mentored interns who worked with her to keep the project going. Many of these interns were students at Bard College, where July deposited the archive on loan in 2003, under the care of professor Jacqueline Goss and her students. In 2009 Bard student Vanessa Haroutunian made a documentary about the project for her senior thesis, and formed The Joanie 4 Jackie Tutorial with a group of students to organize and share the materials.

The Joanie 4 Jackie website

In 2010 July began making a website documenting Joanie 4 Jackie, with the help of The Joanie 4 Jackie Tutorial students at Bard and web designer Yuri Ono (with whom July had previously collaborated on learningtoloveyoumore.com). In 2014 many of the materials began circulating as part of the *Alien She* traveling exhibition, curated by Astria Suparak and Ceci Moss, which presented an exploration of the Riot Grrrl movement and its impact on artists today. Eventually Suparak oversaw the completion of joanie4jackie.com. Seven years in the making, the website includes videos, business and personal correspondence with July, event documentation, press coverage, posters, a bibliography and surveys with the original participants about their memories of Joanie 4 Jackie and what they are doing now.

"Through Joanie 4 Jackie I learned how to conceive of myself as a filmmaker – how to create a sustaining community hidden inside a larger culture that didn't even know we existed," said July. "That has served me well in every facet of my life and it is my greatest hope that the archives will provide fodder for new ideas about networks, survival, and the use of technology."

The site, joanie4jackie.com, has just launched and will continue to grow. Past participants are encouraged to add their memories and more videos will be added as the Getty Research Institute digitizes the videos in the archive.



Miranda July in 1996, in her Portland apartment, photo by Heide Foley

About Miranda July

Miranda July is a filmmaker, artist, and writer. Her most recent work is "The First Bad Man," a novel. July's collection of stories, "No One Belongs Here More Than You," won the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award and has been published in twenty-three countries. Her writing has appeared in *The Paris Review*, *Harper's*, and *The New Yorker*; "It Chooses You" was her first book of non-fiction. She wrote, directed and starred in "The Future" and "Me and You and Everyone We Know," winner of the Camera d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and a Special Jury Prize at Sundance. July's participatory art works include the website *Learning to Love You More* (with artist Harrell Fletcher), *Eleven Heavy Things* (a sculpture garden created for the 2009 Venice Biennale), *New Society* (a performance), and *Somebody* (a messaging app). She is the recipient of a 2016 USA Artist fellowship award, is on the advisory board of the Simons Foundation, and is a member of the The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. Raised in Berkeley, California, July lives in Los Angeles.

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