

NEWS FROM

*The Kitchen Center for Video · Music · Dance
Performance · Film and Literature*
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THE KITCHEN

For immediate release: September 28, 1993

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"ROY COHN/JACK SMITH"

Roy Cohn Written by Gary Indiana / *Jack Smith* Written by Jack Smith

JILL GODMILLOW FILMS A JONATHAN DEMME PRESENTATION
OF THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED THEATER WORK
PERFORMED BY RON VAWTER

*Three Month Artists' Residency Continues at The Kitchen;
Events Include Rare Public Performances in Addition to Film Shoot, and
"On the Set with Ron Vawter" — a Special Halloween Night Performance and Reception
of "Roy Cohn / Jack Smith" to Benefit The Kitchen*

3 Public Performances (additional date to be announced)

Sunday, October 24, 1993, 7pm

Saturday, October 30, 1993, 11pm

Tickets: \$30

"On the Set with Ron Vawter" Benefit Reception and Performance

Sunday, October 31, 1993, Reception at 6pm, Performance at 7pm

Tickets: \$100

Performance tickets available through TicketMaster, (212) 307-7171,

or at The Kitchen, Monday - Friday, 10am - 5pm

For benefit tickets and information, call The Kitchen, (212) 255-5793

The three month artists' residency by members of the Pomodori Foundation (Ron Vawter, Marianne Weems, Gregory Mehrten and Rosemary Quinn) continues at The Kitchen with a series of unique events in late October centering around director Jill Godmillow's filming of a Jonathan Demme presentation of *Roy Cohn/Jack Smith*. The critically acclaimed theater work, conceived and performed by Ron Vawter, and directed by Gregory Mehrten, received its premiere at The Performing Garage in 1992 and recently completed a sold out European tour. *Roy Cohn* is written by Gary Indiana; *Jack Smith* is written by Jack Smith. The original production was created and designed by Gregory Mehrten, Clay Shirky, Ron Vawter, and Marianne Weems, with lighting design by Jennifer Tipton, costumes by Ellen McCartney, and original set pieces for *Jack Smith* by Elizabeth Murray. Kevin Cunningham is the technical director for the current performances.

The OBIE-Award winning *Roy Cohn/Jack Smith* is a double portrait of two complex minds, and two completely opposing approaches to gay sexuality: Roy Cohn was a lawyer in New York who first gained national recognition as chief counsel to Joseph McCarthy. He continued a successful legal career, often speaking publicly and working behind the scenes for issues and people who interested him until his death from AIDS in 1986. " 'I can remember in 1978,' said one of the people who worked for Roy, 'driving him to some outfit, oh, along the lines of The American Society for the Preservation of the Family, quote and unquote, and I drove Roy and his male date to the affair and Roy delivered his address attacking gay rights and then they came out and I drove them off to dinner...'" —Nicholas von Hoffman, *Citizen Cohn*. Jack Smith is best known for his film *Flaming Creatures* (1961). He was a filmmaker and performance artist, who was an influential force in the development of the "experimental" aesthetic of the 60's and 70's. He died of AIDS-related illnesses in 1989. Ron Vawter works from an audiotape of Jack Smith's October 10, 1981, performance of *What's Underground About Marshmallows?* at Theater for the New City, courtesy of The Jack Smith Archives.

The film of *Roy Cohn/Jack Smith* is a Jonathan Demme presentation, produced by Ted Hope and

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James Schamus' Good Machine, Inc., with Marianne Weems. *Roy Cohn/Jack Smith* is directed by Jill Godmillow, with an introduction by Jonathan Demme. Ellen Kuras is the director of photography.

On Halloween night, in addition to the film shoot and the public performances, Lauren Amazeen, Executive Director of The Kitchen, along with its Board of Directors, will host "On the Set with Ron Vawter." The evening will consist of a cocktail reception at 6pm with opening remarks by Ron Vawter, and a special performance of *Roy Cohn/Jack Smith* on the film set at 7pm. Tickets are \$100; the evening will benefit The Kitchen.

These performances of *Roy Cohn/Jack Smith* will be presented in repertory with *Queer & Alone*, Ron Vawter and Marianne Weems' stage production of James Strah's 1987 novel featuring Gregory Mehrten. Upon the completion of the scheduled performances, Susan Sontag will enter The Kitchen to develop and direct a new theatrical work, featuring Mr. Mehrten and Mr. Vawter. Ms. Weems will assist Ms. Sontag with the direction of this production which will open next year at a venue to be announced. This project will mark the culmination of The Pomodori Foundation's residency at The Kitchen.

Ron Vawter (performer) is a founding member of The Wooster Group. He has created roles in many off-Broadway theater productions. He also works in feature films, network television, and independent film and video projects. His most recent film appearances include Jonathan Demme's upcoming *Philadelphia*, *Silence of the Lambs*, *sex, lies and videotape*, and *Internal Affairs*. Mr. Vawter has just returned from a four month European tour of the Obie Award winning play *Roy Cohn/Jack Smith*. Mr. Vawter also received a 1985 Obie for Sustained Excellence and a 1988 "Bessie" Award.

Gary Indiana (writer) moved to New York in 1978 where he began publishing film essays in small magazines and started his own theater company. Among the company's productions were *Alligator Girls Go To College*, *The Roman Polanski Story*, *Phantoms of Louisiana*, and *Curse of the Dog People*, performed at La Mama and The Performing Garage. Throughout that period, he published a number of short fiction pieces, mostly in *BOMB Magazine* and later collected in *Scar Tissue* (1987, Calamus Books) and *White Trash Boulevard* (1988, Hanuman Press) plus essays on films, architecture and art in *Artforum* and *Art In America*. In 1989, he published *Horse Crazy* (Grove Press). This year, he has published *Gone Tomorrow* (Pantheon). *Rent Boy* will appear from Serpent's Tail Press in 1994. He is currently developing a film script for Daniel Schmid and working on a fourth novel.

Jill Godmillow's (director) first feature film, *Waiting for the Moon* (starring Academy Award winner Linda Hunt), won the Grand Prize at the 1987 U.S. Film Festival. Produced by Sandra Schulberg, *Waiting for the Moon* was co-financed by American Playhouse, Channel 4 in England, ARD in Germany, and SFP in France. It was released domestically by Skouras Pictures. Ms. Godmillow's career began in documentary. Her *Antonia: Portrait of the Woman* (co-directed with Judy Collins), about a pioneering symphony conductor, received an Academy Award nomination, and won the Independent New York Film Critics Award for Best Documentary in 1975. Her 1984 non-fiction feature, *Far From Poland*, opened at the AFI Video Festival and was exhibited at Edinburgh, Creteil, London, and Mannheim festivals, among others.

Good Machine, Inc., the New York City based film production company, was founded three years ago by Ted Hope and James Schamus. Together, they have produced *The Wedding Banquet*, a feature film by Ang Lee which won the Golden Bear in this year's Berlin Film Festival; Ang Lee's feature film debut, *Pushing Hands*, winner of three Taiwanese Academy Awards and the Grand Prize for Best Picture at the 1992 Asian Pacific Film Festival; and Dani Levy's *I Was On Mars*, prize winner at the 1991 San Sebastian Film Festival and France's Max Ophuls Award. They have produced numerous short films with a variety of director's, including Claire Denis, Hal Hartley, Nicole Holofcener, and the 1992 season premiere of the PBS television series "Alive TV," *Punch and Judy Get Divorced*, directed by Mark Pellington and David Gordon. In 1992, Good Machine entered the world of theatrical distribution with Christopher Munch's *The Hours and Times*, which has played in over sixty cities across the US. Separately, Ted Hope has produced all of Hal Hartley's films, including his debut, *The Unbelievable Truth*, and *Trust*, *Surviving Desire*, *Simple Men*, and *Amateur* (currently in post production). James Schamus executive produced *Swoon* and *Poison*, co-produced Jan Oxenburg's *Thank You and Goodnight*, and associate produced the 1992 Sundance Grand Prize winner, *In the Soup*.

Roy Cohn/Jack Smith was co-commissioned by Creative Time, Inc. The Fan Fox and Leslie Samuels Foundation, The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, San Francisco Artspace, the University Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive at the University of California at Berkeley, the Walker Art Center, the Wexner Center for the Arts, and administrative support provided by The Wooster Group.