

May 15 - June 19, 2025

Imaging Improvisation: Dance Film Screening + Q&A

Company: Rada Collaborative
Venue: Anthology Film Archives
Location: New York, NY

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IMAGING IMPROVISATION

"Imaging Improvisation" considers the poetics of improvisation within the history of Black aesthetic expression. The series engages with Robert G. O'Meally's theory of "antagonistic cooperation" – a lens that draws upon the ad-lib structure of a sonic jam session to explore its influence across Black art forms, from Jazz to collage. "Imaging Improvisation" reveals how these reactive and collaborative practices show up on screen. It recognizes the camera as a spectator and a collaborator, surreptitiously informing real-time decision making as an active participant in improvisational Black dance and music cultures. The series features archival performance recordings from the late 20th century that document these legacies within Hip-Hop and post-modern dance. Call-and-response is an embodied ritual depicted at the core of "Imaging Improvisation": the series situates the participatory practice, teeming with riffs and ruptures, as a never-ending continuum within Afro-diasporic artistic lineages on screen and on stage. It's here, cast in the limelight, that Black artists inflect the bounds of disciplinary imagination, igniting new languages that are porous, mutable, and resoundingly dialogic. "Imaging Improvisation" will unfold throughout the summer, with monthly screenings at Anthology, as well as offsite performances. The July and August screenings will be announced in late May.

Guest-programmed by Daniella Brito, Curatorial Fellow at RADA Collaborative, a self-sustaining network of BIPOC artists, founded by filmmakers Michèle Stephenson and Joe Brewster, that uses cinema, visual art, and compelling visual storytelling to build narrative agency for creators of color. For more info about RADA Collaborative visit: <https://radastudio.org/rada-collaborative/>

PROGRAM 1: IMPROVISATION IN HIP-HOP
EXCERPT FROM DUBBED IN GLAMOUR, FUNKY 4 PLUS 1, 1980 JUNE 11
1980, 25 min, video. Courtesy of The Kitchen and The Kitchen Archive, c. 1971-1999, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2014.M.6).

BREAKERS LIVE, 1981 OCTOBER 2
1981, 40 min, video. Courtesy of The Kitchen and The Kitchen Archive, c. 1971-1999, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2014.M.6).

Total running time: ca. 70 min.
• **Thurs, May 15 at 7:30. Followed by a Q&A with Lil Rodney C, an original member of Funky 4 + 1, and OOMAN, Bronx-born MC and DJ.**

PROGRAM 2: DANCING FOR THE SCREEN: BLONDELL CUMMINGS'S "MOVING PICTURES"
Blondell Cummings
FIRST TAPE 1975, 24 min, video
THE LADIES AND ME 1980, 31 min, video
Total running time: ca. 60 min.
• **Thurs, June 19 at 7:30.**



IMAGING IMPROVISATION

Rada Collaborative in partnership with Anthology Film Archives is pleased to formally invite you to an evening of dance, film, and celebration of Black music culture with the premiere of our must-see film screening series "Imaging Improvisation" - exploring the poetics of improvisation within Black aesthetic expression.

A small number of free tickets will be set aside for New York City youth (18 and under) interested in attending. Please let us know if you'll be requesting one of these tickets.

PROGRAM 1: Improvisation in Hip-Hop

Thursday, May 15 @ 7:30 PM EST

Screening: *Dubbed in Glamour + Breakers Live*

The Bronx's own MC Sha-Rock takes the stage in this electric 1980 performance that rewrites freestyle history. Followed by a live Q&A with Lil Rodney C of the Funky 4 + 1!

[?] Anthology Film Archives – 32 2nd Ave, NYC

PROGRAM 2: Dancing For the Screen: Blondell Cummings' "Moving Pictures"

Wednesday, June 19 @ 7:30 PM EST

Screening: *The Ladies and Me + First Tape*

Witness Blondell Cummings's groundbreaking choreography for the screen, where gesture meets cinema in a bold portrait of Black domestic life and longing.

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https://www.anthologyfilmarchives.org/film_screenings/calendar?view=list&month=05&year=2025#showing-59377

Schedule

May 15, 2025: 7:30pm

June 19, 2025: 7:30pm

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