



Theo and John Talk Nonsense

Theodore and John discuss the arts, a life in the arts, and nothing and everything in particular. Over the course of two films, author and director John Reed chats with performer and writer Theodore Bouloukos. The two artists, longtime acquaintances, have plenty to remember, gossip about, and contemplate. This collection of outtakes is a funny, touching, and revelatory look at the creative life.

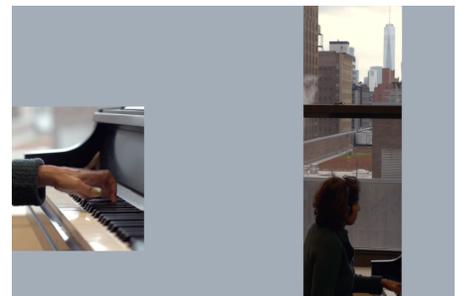
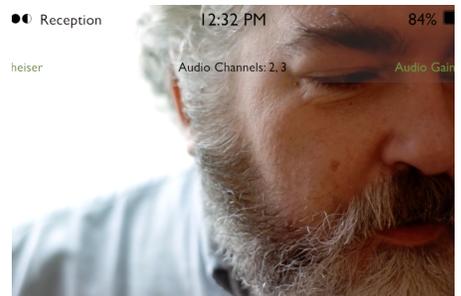
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The documentary assembles b-roll from two shoots, an audio session, and a scoring session. The NYC locations: a midtown hotel, an experimental theater, an office at The New School University, and Opera America in Chelsea. The structure is a classic three-act formation, with a middle section that's about twice as long as the other two acts. The chronological telling tracks the evolution of a conversation, and has a natural beginning, middle and end. Scene by scene—while not overstated—the story makes for a journey of the creative experience.

The arc is in the conversation itself. Theo and John are the classic comedy duo; the rapport is quick and easy, and the constant activity on the sets keeps the energy high. The progression of the shoots and the ever-present pressure of production provides an intrinsic sense of suspense. The ticking clock—the cost of every moment—pulses through the set. The activities and coming and going of the film crew is as if representative of the creative experience, abuzz with collaboration.

Theo and John talk about the struggle of being an artist, the lives of the artists they've known, and the place of the artist in culture, politics and New York City. Throughout, Theo is flirty and charming with, hmm, just about everyone. The camera is as if his confidant; we are the winked at, whispered to friend. *Theo and John Talk Nonsense* is a "behind the scenes" look at the arts, shot truly behind the scenes.



"Theo and John isn't a post-truth documentary, and it isn't an exposé. The project is about creative people working together, how they share their dreams and lives despite insurmountable obstacles. Theo and John seeks to illustrate how creative people, in their collective endeavors—whatever those might be—bring a freeness to themselves, each other, their communities, and the world." —John Reed

The look of the film is documentary realism. The color grade is cinematic/indie—definitely worked on with light, foreground and background—but the grade isn't pronounced, and to most people it will just look "right." The treatment of the cuts and footage employs false damage: pixelation, chromatic aberrations, and device off, for example. It is as if the on-set, in-progress character of the shoot has somehow carried over to the footage. The impression is that the project, which was genuinely candid and unplanned, is also unfinished and therefore more real. As the project moves forward, additional elements, such as the animation of audio tracks, further complicate the artifice. The third act employs layers to include a New York City panorama with a view of Freedom Tower; the footage is from the live recording of the piano score.

The soundscape, as well, has a "reality" post production treatment; there's added background to the on-set portions, for fullness and activity, as well as a few extra voices and conversations, and a peppering of digital ticks and beeps and on-off alerts.

The score, an original piano composition by Sandy Asirvatham, summons a kind of modern ragtime, and fluidly transitions from comedic to deeply emotive.



Performer: Theodore Bouloukos is a New York based actor whose international performance work inhabits cinema, stage and the art world, and extends to commercial and voice-over projects as well. His film work has premiered at Sundance, Venice, SXSW, Rotterdam, Berlin, Tribeca, Strasbourg, Rio de Janeiro, Copenhagen, Vienna, Sarasota, Moscow, BAMcinemaFest, Lincoln Center and the Museum of Modern Art, among numerous festivals and venues. His performance and portrait collaborations with myriad established and emerging visual artists include work in video, film, voice, painting, sculpture, photography, live performance and tableaux vivants that have been exhibited globally at museums, galleries and art fairs, including the Venice Biennale, Art Basel, MASS MoCA, Sundance New Frontier, Documenta, Art Basel Miami, Biennale de Lyon, La Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, Busan Biennale (Korea), and Performa. Educated at The Albany Academy and Columbia University, he is a member of both Actors' Equity and the Screen Actors Guild; and a member of the New Stage Theatre Company in New York.



Composer: Sandy Asirvatham is a writer, musician, and video producer living in Baltimore, although forever a New Yorker at heart. She earned a BA and MFA from Columbia University, and worked prolifically for several years as a freelance journalist and young adult nonfiction author. As an alt-weekly columnist for *Baltimore CityPaper*, 1997-2002, Asirvatham was twice awarded by the Maryland Association of Professional Journalists with their Best Columnist honor. In her mid-thirties Asirvatham took a major professional detour to become a working jazz pianist and singer, gigging throughout the mid-Atlantic with a few choice hits in NYC. In 2007 she produced a band album of her earliest original songs, *Memoir*. In 2013 with co-producer Ellen Cherry, Asirvatham brought a quirky personal dream to fruition: *Mobtown Moon*, an idiosyncratic, fully re-orchestrated homage to Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon* involving 50 local musicians and a crazy blend of genres/styles.



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Producer: Jennifer Parker is an associate producer, writer, editor and photographer based in New York. Her love of film and music takes her on the festival circuit where she writes about documentary films and music and photographs musicians. Jennifer came on to John Reed's feature film, *The Sky Is Blue with Lies* during post production as an associate producer where she identified potential festivals to enter for a first time filmmaker. Jennifer said "unlike so many filmmakers, Director, New York Native and writer John Reed is etched in his lived experience, nudging and blurring the lines between narrative and documentary film. Through his highly structured yet improvised practice of filmmaking, Reed has created a bridge for performers and crew to collaborate as a unit. He explores the expressive and reflective tensions between what it means to be an artist and the act of creating art. To work within this milieu, Reed allows the viewer to be part of the editing process. We see multiple takes, what happens when there is a child on the set whose socks are thumping together or when cast and crew get sidetracked." Jennifer is the online editor of At Large Magazine and the editor-in-chief of *Statorec*, an online literary magazine.



Director: John Reed is author of *A Still Small Voice* (Delacorte), *The Whole* (Simon & Schuster), the SPD bestseller, *Snowball's Chance* (Roof / Melville House); *All The World's A Grave: A New Play By William Shakespeare* (Penguin); *Tales of Woe* (MTV Press); and *Free Boat: Collected Lies and Love Poems* (C&R Press); MFA in Creative Writing, Columbia University; published in (selected) *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *the Los Angeles Times*, *the Believer*, *the PEN Poetry Series*, *the Daily Beast*, *Slate*, *the Paris Review*, *the Times Literary Supplement*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *Vice*, *The New York Times*, *Harpers*; anthologized in *Best American Essays* (Houghton Mifflin), *Devouring the Green* (Jaded Ibis), *StoryScape Anthology V2*, *American Wasteland* (CLMP), *The Brooklyn Rail Fiction Anthology* (Hanging Loose), *Vitamin PH* (Phaidon), *100 Greatest Albums* (VHI); works translated into German, French, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Korean, Latvian and others; performances, workshops and readings of plays in New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine, Texas, including at the Public Theater in NYC and the Brooklyn Books Festival; films in Arts is Alive Film Festival, Greenpoint Film Festival, Anthology Film Archives New Filmmakers; two-terms board of directors of the National Book Critics Circle; current faculty at The New School University.



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