



KEITA OMAWALE ERSKINE AND CAMILLE BILLOPS, TAKE YOUR BAGS film still

TAKE YOUR BAGS

A short film directed by Camille Billlops
1998, 11 minutes, United States, English, English closed captions available
Original Shooting Format: 16mm
Screening Formats Available: DCP

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SYNOPSIS

Camille Billops explores the legacy of slavery and the theft of cultural memory.

"My take on slavery: when the Africans boarded the ships bound for America, they carried in their bags all their memories of home. When they arrived in the New World, their bags had been switched... Many generations later, the children of these Africans toured the Museum of Modern Art to see the sculptures and art of Picasso, Braque and Matisse. Lo! There were the beautiful icons of their ancestors, the images that had been stolen from their bags."

—Camille Billops

SCREENINGS & FESTIVALS

International Film Festival Rotterdam (2023)

International Film Festival Rotterdam (1999)

Toronto International Film Festival (1999)

Sundance Film Festival (1999)

London International Short Film Festival (1999)



Camille Billops (1933-2019) was a fearless filmmaker, artist, sculptor, historian, archivist, and staunch supporter of Black art and artists. Billops came into her own within the converging contexts of the 1960s civil and human rights struggles, New York's emerging Black artists movement, and her personal struggles for affirmation. Her work is autobiographical, interpretive, and challenging. Without apology, she successfully drew from her life's experiences, her education, and her observations of the world around her to carve out a space for her voice to be heard. She and her husband James made their loft in SoHo a hub for artistic collaborations, collecting thousands of books, documents, photographs, and ephemera related to Black culture. They held salons with Black artists, performers, and musicians, and recorded more than 1,200 oral histories, which were published in an annual journal called *Artist and Influence*.

TAKE YOUR BAGS, a short film by Camille Billops

PRODUCTION CREDITS

TAKE YOUR BAGS

A FILM BY CAMILLE BILLOPS

CHILD

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BY THE NATIONAL BLACK ARTS FESTIVAL, INC.

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