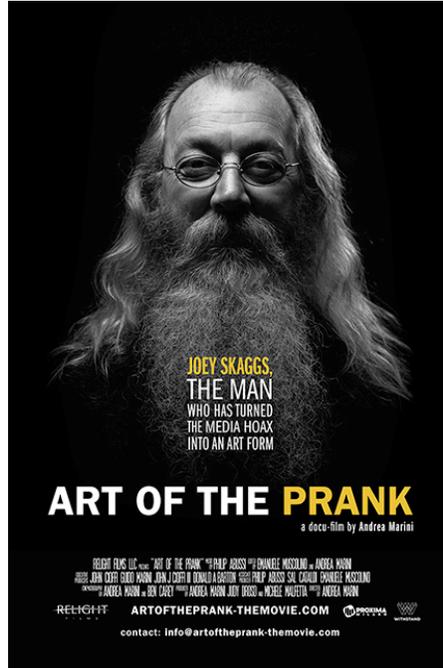


RELIGHT FILMS LLC
PRESENTS

ART OF THE PRANK

A Film by Andrea Marini



U.S. / 2017 / 85 minutes / HD / Color

<http://artoftheprank-themovie.com>

<http://facebook.com/artoftheprankthemovie>

http://twitter.com/aotp_themovie

<http://instagram.com/artoftheprankmovie>

Skaggs' art is designed to dramatize the inherent dangers in a media that accepts photo ops and buzzwords as meaningful discourse.

-Mark Dery, The New York Times

Meet the ultimate media critic.

-Rob Walker, Boston Phoenix

Joey has been campaigning for media literacy and the necessity for a permanently skeptical attitude.

-V.Vale, ReSearch Pranks 2

For information, contact Judy Drosd, Producer, 270-498-8966, judy@relightfilms.com

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Told with a mischievous glee, the artfulness of this film mirrors its content.

-Deadline

Really fascinating...incredible.

-Film Colossus

Highlight of Slamdance

-Roger Ebert

The hoax with the most. Joey Skaggs, prank artist par excellence and professional ball-buster, is the subject of this voyeuristic film.

-Indiewire

*If you don't know who Joey Skaggs is, know this: he is a f*cking national treasure! One of the best pranksters in history, Skaggs has consistently exposed the chronic gullibility of the American news media. We see him provide comical and sometimes biting commentary on our society in Art of the Prank, all carried out with deadpan precision.*

-Fandor

Director Andrea Marini profiles Skaggs in his fascinating new documentary, Art of the Prank. Marini crosscuts to the greatest hits of Skaggs' past and back to the present as plans for his latest prank unfold.

-Hammer To Nail

...what Skaggs aims for is to get people to not only laugh, but to think critically. What defines our reality is so often what we want it to be defined as, and we become so complacent in that skewed worldview that we'll believe anything that matches up. Skaggs wants you to push that limit, and he'll get right in your face through any angle he can to get you to do so.

-SLUG

The story of Joey Skaggs's artistic career is captivating enough on its own, but is enhanced by Andrea's propulsive and thoughtful direction. I highly recommend this film not only for its entertainment value, but for its underlying message as well.

-Jon of All Trades

AWARDS

Jury Honorary Mention for Documentary Feature, Slamdance
Best Documentary, Alhambra Theatre Film Festival
Best of Fest, Prix d'Or, Lower East Side Film Festival
Jury Prize for Best Film, San Francisco DocFest
Winner Feature Documentary, Bonita Springs International Film Festival
Best Documentary Film, New Jersey Film Festival

LOG LINE

New York media artist Joey Skaggs, the godfather of the media hoax and one of America's most notorious socio-political satirists, decides to pull off the most demanding hoax of his career, taking the audience on a wild ride as he sets his sights on human genetic engineering to do it.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Art of the Prank is an emotional and humorous journey following the evolution of artist Joey Skaggs, a fierce proponent of independent thinking and the man who has turned the media hoax into an art form. Famed for such media fictions as the Celebrity Sperm Bank, the Cathouse for Dogs, the Fat Squad, and Portofess (a mobile Catholic confessional booth), he's one of America's most notorious socio-political satirists and media activists. Filmmaker Andrea Marini interweaves fascinating archival footage with a singular and unforgettable moment, when Skaggs decides to pull off the most demanding hoax of his career—setting his sights on human genetic engineering to do it.

LONG SYNOPSIS

When Joey Skaggs, godfather of the media hoax, famed for such media fictions as Celebrity Sperm Bank, Cathouse for Dogs, Fat Squad, and Portofess, decides to pull off the most demanding hoax of his career, filmmaker Andrea Marini gets a unique view into the mind of this most unconventional man. The result is an emotional and humorous journey, interweaving the present with a journey through his classic work.

The film starts with a series of outlandish news clips spanning decades presented by respected TV newscasters. All of them are hoaxes perpetrated by notorious New York artist Joey Skaggs. Joey is currently in rural Kentucky taking care of his elderly mother. Although completely out of his element, he's grappling with a new performance piece involving a tricycle, a 9' rocket, and a giant sling shot. Unfortunately, one night he sees a new movie with something similar. He needs to re-think the piece.

Looking back to the 60s, we see a young passionate artist, outraged by social injustice, who expresses his anger by creating provocative street theater. A revelation occurs when *The New York Times* headline dramatically misrepresents the message of his anti-Vietnam war performance. Joey realizes the power of the media to mold public opinion. He decides to confront journalistic irresponsibility by using the media as an element in his work rather than simply as a vehicle for attention. His first media hoax, the Cathouse for Dogs, receives tremendous coverage, and he's subpoenaed by the NY State Attorney General for illegally running a house of prostitution—for dogs.

When the media decline to admit they were fooled, Joey recognizes how crucial it is for him to reveal the truth to demonstrate how easily we are all manipulated. He also sees how effective satire and humor can be in delivering his message.

Back to the present, despite the challenge of his current living situation, Joey decides to produce a short hoax film in Hawaii about the ethics of transgenics and genetically modified organisms. He'll play a key role: a scientifically absurd transgenic stem cell recipient. But he desperately needs to find the main character, a plausible newscaster. After exhausting his options in Hawaii, he calls a New York actress who had recently worked with him on his mobile rocket launcher performance. She agrees. Cutting back and forth between the present and his classic hoaxes, we gain insight into his methods and tactics. Meanwhile, chaos ensues with his current production. The piece morphs from a fake news report into a fake short documentary. Looking for a way to get it into the public eye, and not knowing the uphill challenge he faces, he decides to submit it to film festivals as if it were real.

The resulting twists and turns, intercut with amazing archive footage of his earlier escapades, provide unprecedented insight into Joey's evolution as an artist, activist and social satirist while challenging the audience to more actively question the sources of their information and their beliefs.

PRINCIPAL FILMMAKERS & CAST

Directed & Produced by Andrea Marini
Produced by Judy Drosd, Michele Malfetta
Executive Producers John Cioffi, Guido Marini, John J. Cioffi III, Donald A. Barton
Associate Producers Philip Abussi, Sal Cataldi, Emanuele Muscolino
Cinematography by Andrea Marini & Ben Carey
Music by Philip Abussi
Edited by Emanuele Muscolino & Andrea Marini
A Relight Films production

Cast:

Joey Skaggs, Subject
Robert Forster – Actor
Peter Maloney – Actor, Co-conspirator
Sarah Kit Farrell – Actress, Co-Conspirator
Jeff Cohen – Media Critic, Founder of FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting)
Mark Borkowski – Publicist, Author
Richard Johnson – Journalist, New York Post
Jennifer “Jen” Miller – Performance Artist, Co-conspirator
Buck Wolf – Executive Editor, Huffington Post
Charlie Todd – Founder of Improv Everywhere
Larry Croft – Scientist, Co-Conspirator
Kate McCamy – Filmmaker, Actor, Co-Conspirator
Richard Wilde – Educator, Designer
Sara Jones – Artist, Co-conspirator

FILMMAKER STATEMENT

When I first encountered Joey’s work, I was completely blown away. I knew that this was going to be a wild ride.

Getting to know Joey personally has been enormously enriching. And, making ART OF THE PRANK, the first and only feature documentary about him, has been a big responsibility and a great honor. Right from the start, we established a very trusting relationship, which has allowed me to get to know both the mastermind prankster and the man behind the artistry. As we peeled the layers off, a complicated and sensitive personality emerged first off-screen and then on-camera, portraying an emotional journey that is not only informative and fun to watch, but also extremely unique and inspiring.

The film embraces many subjects, from media responsibility to pressing social issues to the role of art in activism. But at its core, it’s a film about a man who, against great odds, is driven to make broad social commentary with his art. It’s truly a story of will, determination and unbridled creativity. I’m proud to say that this drive and passion is reflected in the work of all of the people who spent several years making this movie happen.

As a director, I relate closely to Joey’s work. It is a lot about creating a story, a very interesting and outrageous one that catches your eye and your mind, and then adding contrast, juxtaposing reality, to make it taste sweet and bitter at the same time.

With this movie I've tried to create something that will inspire people as much as I have been inspired. And like Joey always says, make them laugh and then make them think.

The film consists of three main visual components. Static interviews, handheld vérité footage and archival footage in different formats from various time periods. The archival footage is a key element in the film, comprising 30%-35% of the material and presenting the artist's work over the past fifty-plus years. Despite the visual contrast, the thematic unity between the contemporary and archival material is meant to give the audience a wide perspective of the art behind the prank, allowing people to see Joey's evolution throughout the decades, and also to see how his techniques are reflected in his latest hoax, which is woven through the story.

The art of pranking for Joey is not just making a joke that can be very entertaining and funny. It's way more than that. It's about causing people to question their sources of information. At the core of Joey's often hilarious work are questions he hopes people will think seriously about: What do you believe? How did you come to those beliefs? Do you ever question the source of your beliefs? If not, why not?

- **Andrea Marini, Director**

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Andrea Marini – Director / Editor / Producer

Andrea Marini was born in southern Tuscany in 1984. From a young age he has been passionate about movies, and began shooting amateur shorts. During High School he studied photography, cinema, advertising and graphic design, building his foundation in the visual arts and storytelling. In 2004 he moved to Rome to study Film and Television at Cinecittà, determined to achieve the goal of being a film director. His professional directing career began in 2007 working mainly in advertising and music videos. In 2011 he completed the short film "the Noise of Snow" which won multiple awards in several international Film Festivals. He continues to work in advertising, directing a wide range of ads, not only in terms of his clientele, but also concerning his visual and narrative approach. At the other end of the spectrum, he is passionate about still photography, shooting mostly on film, and mostly in the streets, as this is his way of exploring the world. From 2012 to 2015 he directed his first feature documentary film "Art of the Prank" about the life of one of the greatest media pranksters of all times.

Judy Drosd - Producer

Judy Drosd is an independent film producer who has also worked as a production executive in cable television in New York and as a business specialist in economic development for film, arts and entertainment in Hawaii. She held the position of Chief Officer, Arts, Film & Entertainment for the Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, where she was responsible for creative industry strategic planning and supervision of the Hawaii Film Office. Prior to that, she was film commissioner for the island of Kauai in Hawaii, where she attracted and facilitated production of over 700 feature films, television shows and still photo shoots. Ms. Drosd founded the Kauai Institute for Communications Media, which partnered with the American Film Institute (AFI) and hosted international conferences on the intersection of filmmaking and new technologies. Prior to moving from New York to Hawaii in 1988, Drosd served as vice president of production at HBO in New York, where she supervised production executives responsible for the production of feature films, television series, documentaries, live entertainment specials, and sports programs.

Michele Malfetta – Producer

Michele Malfetta is a creative and executive producer specializing in branded entertainment production for top brands like Fox, Sky, Bulgari, Finmeccanica, Vodafone and Mediaset. He has produced several TV series, short films, interactive content and animations.

Emanuele Muscolino - Editor

Emanuele Muscolino graduated in Cinema and New Media at "La Sapienza, university of Rome", publishing the essay Paradoxes of the first person shot, where he researched the status of the image in films. Since then he has directed and produced several award-winning short films while beginning a career as an assistant editor and eventually an editor for television (Magnolia, LDM, Sanmarco, Aurora TV), independent cinema (Kasander film, Pablo Bunker Lab, Dania) and commercials.

Philip Abussi - Music Composer

Philip Abussi is an emerging composer working in advertising and film. Born in France, he has spent most of his life in Rome, where he began composing music. In 2012 he moved to Milan at which point his music “La Lumière du Vent” was chosen for the world campaign of the new BMW 3 series. He has always been fascinated with films and the importance of music in storytelling. For the documentary feature “Art of the Prank” he was both the music composer and the music supervisor, a project he defines as a “very exciting and experimental project”. Philip believes that music should be free from any restrictive or rigid structure that prevents it from expressing its full creativity. Music and images are born to embrace each other. In his opinion, if in balance, the union between them is more powerful and communicative than any other art form.

JOEY SKAGGS BIOGRAPHY

Joey Skaggs is a painter, sculptor and social activist.

Beginning in the Sixties, with his iconoclastic and controversial performance art protests, Skaggs realized he could use art to challenge the status quo. Appalled at the cultural hypocrisy he saw around him, especially how it was blindly supported and propagated by the media, he began to satirize social issues with public performances that were elaborately contrived media hoaxes. For each one, he portrayed a fabricated character frequently adopting a pseudonym. He incorporated guerrilla tactics, traditional advertising, public relations techniques and social media to promote the staged performances. The mass media, not recognizing the many clues to his identity, became an unwitting collaborator, reporting his satires as news. Few media outlets over the last five decades have not fallen for one or another of his hoaxes. He has been covered in newspapers, magazines, and on radio and television around the world, in some cases many times as different people.

He is a graduate of New York’s High School of Art & Design and the School of Visual Arts where he also taught Media Communications for many years. He currently lectures on divergent approaches to addressing social issues through art. His paintings and sculptures have been exhibited internationally. He also designs satirical products and publishes the “Art of the Prank” blog.

ADDITIONAL CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Robert Forster – Actor

Robert Forster is an American actor best known for his roles as John Cassellis in Haskell Wexler's *Medium Cool* and Max Cherry in Quentin Tarantino's *Jackie Brown*, the latter gaining him an Academy Award nomination for Best Supporting Actor. He and Joey Skaggs have been friends for decades.

Peter Maloney – Actor, Co-Conspirator

Peter Maloney is an actor in film and on stage, a director, a playwright, a magician and a co-conspirator with Joey Skaggs. Known for his roles in *The Thing* and *Requiem for a Dream*, he also played the part of an attorney for an artificially inseminated child in Skaggs' Celebrity Sperm Bank hoax in 1976.

Sarah Kit Farrell – Actress, Co-Conspirator

Sarah Kit Farrell is an actress, singer and a health and wellness warrior dedicated to promoting positive body image, clean cooking, healthy coping skills, and eating disorder recovery. A new Joey Skaggs co-conspirator, she played an elf in Skaggs' Santa's Missile Tow protest performance.

Jeff Cohen – Media Critic, Founder of FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting)

Jeff Cohen is the founding Director of the Park Center for Independent Media and Endowed Chair, Associate Professor at Ithaca College. Before Ithaca, Jeff was a media critic, columnist and founder of Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR), the national media watch group. Previous to that he was a lawyer for the ACLU and authored or co-authored five books that criticize media bias. He was also a regular commentator for Fox News Channel's Fox News Watch, for MSNBC and CNN, and appears in *Outfoxed*, a documentary critical of Fox News.

Mark Borkowski – Publicist, Author

Mark Borkowski is a UK PR agent and author with an interest in the history of public relations and the art of the publicity stunt. As founder and head of Borkowski.do, he is a respected commentator on communications issues in the national print and broadcast media. Borkowski has a column in *The Guardian*, has written two books on publicity stunts related to public relations and has won several awards for his work.

Richard Johnson – Journalist, New York Post

Editor of Page Six of the *New York Post* for nearly 25 years, Richard Johnson, hailed by the *Post* as "The man who knows New York" now writes the Richard Johnson column, a mix of gossip from both coasts, society news, business and politics. He has covered numerous Joey Skaggs hoaxes.

Jennifer "Jen" Miller – Performance Artist, Co-conspirator

Jennifer "Jen" Miller—also known as Saint Reverend Jen and Reverend Jen—is an American performer, underground movie star, writer, painter, director, preacher, and poet in New York City. She's also the curator of the New York City Troll Museum and a long-time Joey Skaggs co-conspirator.

Buck Wolf – Executive Editor, Huffington Post

Buck Wolf is an executive editor at *Huffington Post*. He writes on film, music and TV, but specializes in offbeat features. He also writes the weird news guide at About.com, and is a member of the Us Weekly Fashion Police. His writing has appeared in the *Village Voice*, the *Miami Herald*, and *Newsday*. He has not only written about Joey Skaggs' work, but has been hoaxed by him.

Charlie Todd – Founder of Improv Everywhere

Charlie Todd is the founder of Improv Everywhere, a comedic performance art group based in New York City that carries out pranks, which they call “missions”, in public places. He’s been producing, directing, performing, and documenting the group’s work for over fourteen years. He is also a performer at the Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre in New York City.

Sara Jones – Artist, Co-conspirator

Sara Jones is a New York artist, writer, actress, florist and Joey Skaggs co-conspirator. She first appeared in his Celebrity Sperm Bank in 1976 where, dressed as Bob Dylan, she sought Dylan’s sperm at the ill-fated Celebrity Sperm Bank auction. Among other pranks, she was a key performer in Joey’s Bad Guys Talent Management Agency hoax in 1986 and appeared in his Mobile Homeless Homes protest performance in 2012.

FILM INFORMATION

ART OF THE PRANK

A Film By Andrea Marini

Country: U.S.A.
Screenings: SVA Theatre, New York, NY, 2015 (*Cast & Crew Screening*)
Denver Film Festival, Denver, CO, 2015
Slamdance Film Festival, Park City, UT, 2016 (*Jury Honorable Mention for Documentary Feature*)
Atlanta Film Festival, Atlanta, GA, 2016
Sarasota Film Festival, Sarasota, FL, 2016
Alhambra Theatre Film Fest, Evansville, IN, 2016 (*Best Documentary*)
Arclight Presents Slamdance Cinema Club, Los Angeles, CA 2016
Calgary Underground Film Festival, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 2016
Arclight Presents... Slamdance Cinema Club, Chicago, IL, 2016
Arizona International Film Festival, TUScon, AZ, 2016
Drugo more, Rijeka, Croatia, 2016
Aksioma Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2016
FH Joanneum, Graz, Austria, 2016
NorthwestFest, Edmonton, Canada 2016
SF DocFest, San Francisco, CA 2016 (*Jury Prize for Best Film*)
Jerome Film & Music Festival, Cottonwood, AZ 2016
Lower East Side Film Festival, NY, NY 2016 (*“Best of Fest “Prix d’Or”*)
Revelations International Film Festival, Perth Australia, 2016
Southern Circuit Tour for Filmmakers, 7 Southern cities, 2016
Sydney Underground Film Festival, 2016
The Influencers, Barcelona, Spain, 2016
Comedy Cluj Int’l Film Festival, Cluj Napoca, Romania, 2016
CinemaWanted, Milan, Italy, 2016
St. Louis International Film Festival, St. Louis, MO, 2016
Rag Tag Cinema, Columbia, MO, 2016
Santa Fe Film Festival, Santa Fe, NM, 2016
Bonita Springs Int’l Film Festival, Bonita Springs, FL, 2017 (*Best Documentary Film*)
New Jersey Film Fest, New Brunswick, NJ, 2017 (*Best Documentary*)
SF Indie Events, Sioux Falls, SD, 2017
After School Special: 2017 SVA Alumni Film & Animation Festival

Language: English
Running Time: 85 minutes
Shooting Locations: New York, Connecticut, London, Hawaii, Los Angeles, and Kentucky
Format: HD, Aspect Ratio 16/9
Production Co: Relight Films LLC

Publicity Contact

Judy Drosd, Producer
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Film Info

Website: <http://artoftheprank-themovie.com>
Facebook: [/artoftheprankthemovie](https://www.facebook.com/artoftheprankthemovie)
Twitter: #AotP-themovie
Instagram: [/artoftheprankmovie](https://www.instagram.com/artoftheprankmovie)

Joey Skaggs

Website: <http://www.joeyskaggs.com>

KEY PRODUCTION CREDITS

Art of the Prank
A Relight Films production
A film by Andrea Marini

producers Andrea Marini, Judy Drosd, Michele Malfetta
executive producers John Cioffi, Guido Marini, John Cioffi, III, Donald A. Barton
cinematography by Andrea Marini, Ben Carey
music by Philip Abussi
edited by Emanuele Muscolino, Andrea Marini
associate producers Philip Abussi, Sal Cataldi, Emanuele Muscolino

a Relight Films production

The producers thank Joey Skaggs for his cooperation and contribution to this film

Interviewees (in order of appearance)

Joey Skaggs
Charlie Todd
Buck Wolf
Jeff Cohen
Kate McCamy
Dorothy Skaggs
Robert Forster
Jennifer "Rev Jen" Miller
Norman Savage
Peter Maloney
Richard Wilde
Judy Drosd
Sara Jones
Mark Borkowski
Richard Johnson
Steve "ESPO" Powers
Jim Edmonds
Sarah "Kit" Farrell
Larry Croft, Ph.D.
Larry LaSota
Elaine LaSota
Warren L. Dastrup

Featuring (in order of appearance)

Bennie Joiner, Boris Cibej, Wesley Porter, DDS, Colby Johnson, Jeff Johnson, Linda Horwatt, Rachel Trachtenburg, Tina Trachtenburg, Francis "Faceboy" Hall, George Courtney, Jean S. Camp, Michaela Boudreaux, Paul Massey, Jeri DiPietro, Harvest Edmonds, Bridget "Manulele" Clarke, Richard Ruiz, Dustin Barca, Edward Coll, Wayne Zebzda, Andrea Marini, Dennis J. Duarte, Richard D. Beach, Alan J. Ing, DDS, Wendy Hustad, Dave T. Camp, Gerald J. Smith, Donald H. Wilson, Jon Bernard, Wil Welsh, Andrew Carr, James Sherry, Erin Clermont, Tom Tenney

CAMERA

Andrea Marini
Ben Carey
Judy Drosd

ADDITIONAL CAMERAS

Carol Bain
Clint Byrne
Edward Coll
Larry LaSota, Profile Productions
Ursula Mann
Wayne Zebzda, LookLook TV

SOUND

Jon Bozeman
Dan Bricker

ORIGINAL SCORE & MUSIC SUPERVISOR

Philip Abussi

COLOR GRADING ARTIST

Massimo Loiacono

END CREDITS ARTIST

Darko Prolic (Proxima Milano)

RE-RECORDING

Sandro Rossi

MUSIC MASTERING

Salvatore Forgione

5.1 AND STEREO MASTERING

Operà Music Studio "the City"

EXTRA RECORDINGS (trailer)

Voice Trax West Audio

TEASER TRAILER VOICE-OVER

Robert Forster

PANDORA'S HOPE MOVIE TRAILER EDITOR

Michael Carter

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Adorama Rental Co

Canon Camera Service - Rome

4K LONDON

DB Video LLC

William G. Atherton

Christopher Kinch

Jonah Einstein

POST PRODUCTION PARTNER

Proxima Milano

PRODUCTION MANAGER (NY)

David Kornfield

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (NY)

Sean Mannion

PRODUCTION CONSULTANT

Pelin Uzay

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Marc Simon, Attorney, Cowan, DeBaets, Abrahams & Sheppard

DISTRIBUTION LEGAL SERVICES

Steven C. Beer, Attorney, Franklin, Weinrib, Rudell & Vassallo, P.C.