

arte DISTRIBUTION

presents

LOU REED

AN ELECTRIC LIFE

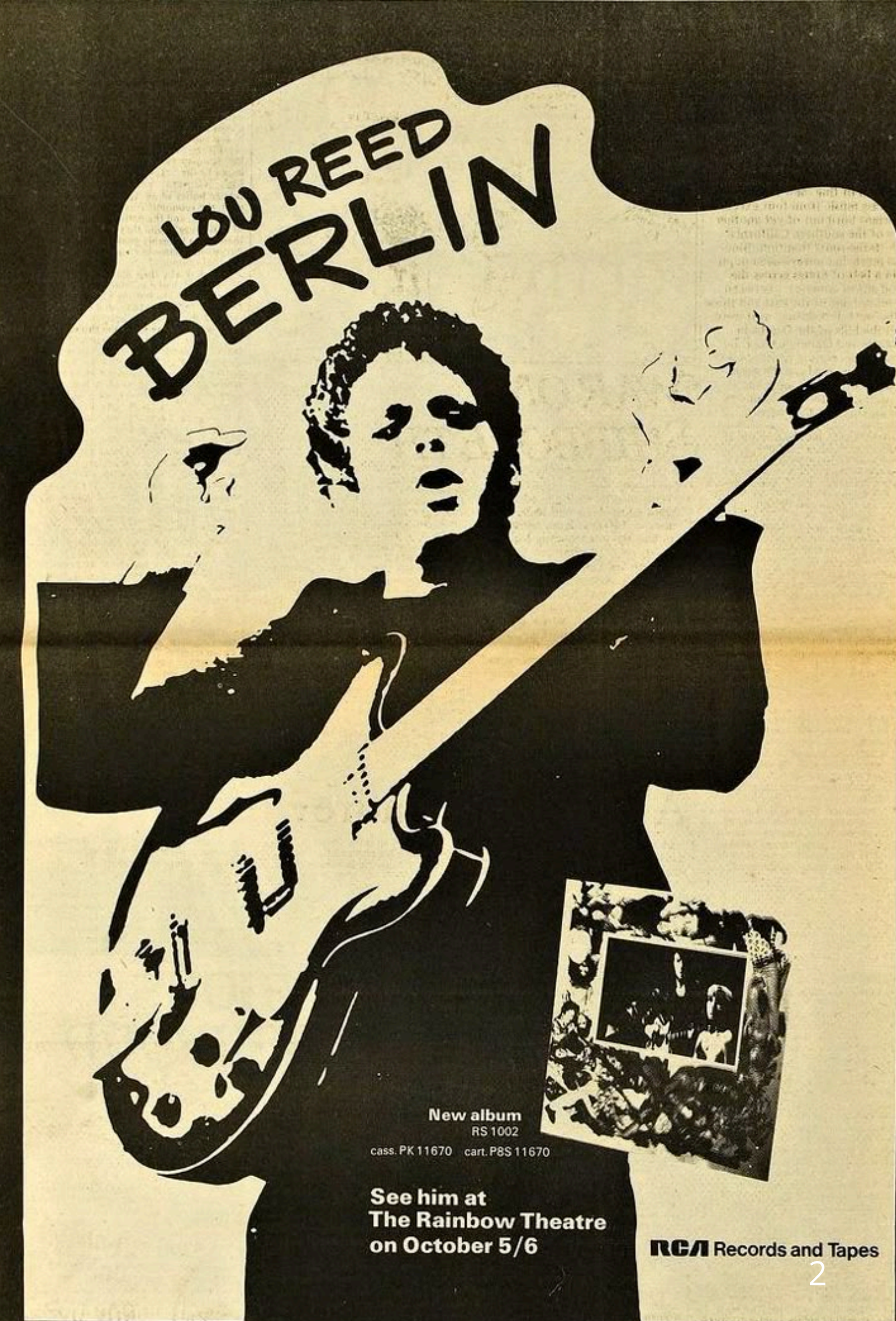
Written & directed by Christophe Conte
Produced by THE JOKERS LAB

52'
60'

LOGLINE

An avant-garde artist, Lou Reed redefined rock as a contemporary art form, exploring the darkness of addiction and marginalization. His controversial performances and his uncompromising stance toward the press shaped his image as a rebel. Although the fiery figure of the 1960s and 1970s evolved into a more introspective artist, his career was marked by raw authenticity.

Lou Reed died in 2013, leaving an everlasting artistic legacy behind.



SYNOPSIS

Born in New York City, Lou Reed placed the city he grew up in at the heart of his work. A writer before he became a rock star, he turned his songs into pieces of literature, capturing urban reality in its rawest, most fragile, and most humane form. His songs offer an insider's perspective on New York: its streets, its fringes, its bodies and people, its loneliness, its excesses as well as its desires.

The heir to the Beat Generation, drawing inspiration from poetry as much as from underground culture, Lou Reed looked at the city without sugarcoating it. Manhattan, the Lower East Side, the underbelly of the city, and creative hubs all became narrative locations where an invisible America emerged. New York City is not merely a backdrop but a character, a language, and synonymous with a constant tension running through his songs.



The film draws on the voices of those close to him to shed light on this intimate relationship between writing and the city. Laurie Anderson discusses Lou Reed's literary and artistic standards. Patti Smith speaks of a poetic friend.

Gerard Malanga looks back at the early days of New York's underground culture.

His sister, Merrill Reed, offers an intimate perspective.

Jim Jarmusch and him shared a deep love for New York. The director portrays the city as a destiny.

Through archival footage, readings of his works, and personal accounts, this documentary paints the picture of an author who turned New York City into a living text and writing into a form of resistance.



NOTE OF INTENT

Lou Reed occupies a unique place in the musical pantheon: he is the one who took the idea that rock could be a total contemporary art form the furthest. A deeply unsettling figure—and one who remains deeply relevant today—he spanned fifty years of creativity while remaining simultaneously central and marginal, both revered and rejected, popular and reviled. He turned rock into a space for radical experimentation, a place where addiction, sexuality, social violence, and urban loneliness could be expressed without filters or moral judgment. The city of New York he sang about—gritty, nocturnal, dangerous—is also a mirror held up to our present. At a time when the cultural industry values consensus and accessibility, Lou Reed remains a blazing counter-model.

The film will revolve around a central theme: the voice of Lou Reed—his singing voice, his spoken voice, his written voice, and at times, his voice as read by others. This voice will serve as the narrative's guiding thread, the means of approaching a figure whose true nature is never revealed outright. The aim will be to capture the ambiguity and complexity of an artist whose innermost personality remains to be discovered.



As such, the accounts of those close to him—those who were part of his life and work—will round out this portrait, without attempting to sugarcoat reality, given how controversial and problematic he sometimes was.

We will use motion design and a graphic aesthetic inspired by 1960s and 1970s New York art, blending typography, song lyrics, and processed archival images. This psychedelic and sensory dimension is not merely a visual embellishment: it is inseparable from Lou Reed's work, his radicalism, and his approach to performance.

***Lou Reed: An Electric Life* is intended as a sensitive, demanding, and nuanced portrait. It is a film that sees Lou Reed for who he really was and looks at him without complacency, but with respect. It is a film that appeals as much to longtime fans as it does to a new generation discovering his influence through contemporary artists.**



THE INTERVIEWEES



Lou Reed's little sister, she is the only one who knows the truth about his childhood, which has at times been romanticized.



A writer, he was a publisher and a close friend of Lou Reed, and is the foremost authority on Reed's literary work and its place in the context of other figures and movements in American literature.



A singer and friend of Lou Reed, whom he spent time with in New York City throughout the 1970s and more sporadically thereafter.

They made music together, and he is one of the few artists whose work Lou Reed wanted to produce.



The friend of both Lou Reed and Andy Warhol. He wrote both their biographies.



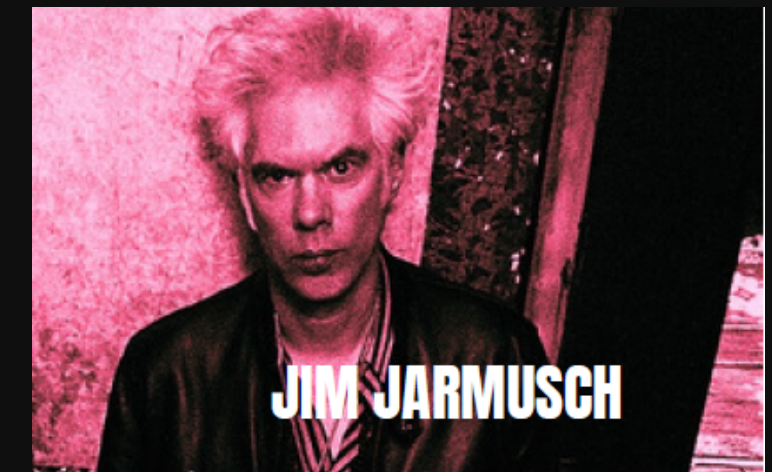
Both a poet and a photographer, he was a key figure of The Factory during the time when Reed and Warhol were working together.



Guitarist for the Patti Smith Group and a leading “insider” in the New York rock community since the 1970s.



Literary critic and publisher born in Belgium but living in New York, an expert on New York’s underground culture.



A filmmaker deeply inspired by urban literature and the Velvet Underground’s New York and Lou Reed, with whom he starred in *Brooklyn Boogie* by Wayne Wang and Paul Auster.



Transgender artist, singer, she wrote a very personal book about Lou Reed’s album *Transformer*.



Actor, best known for his role in the series *The Sopranos*. He wrote a novel, *Wild Side*, which tells the story of Lou Reed's encounter with a teenager. A big fan of the singer, he believes that Reed's lyrics reflect his own life story.

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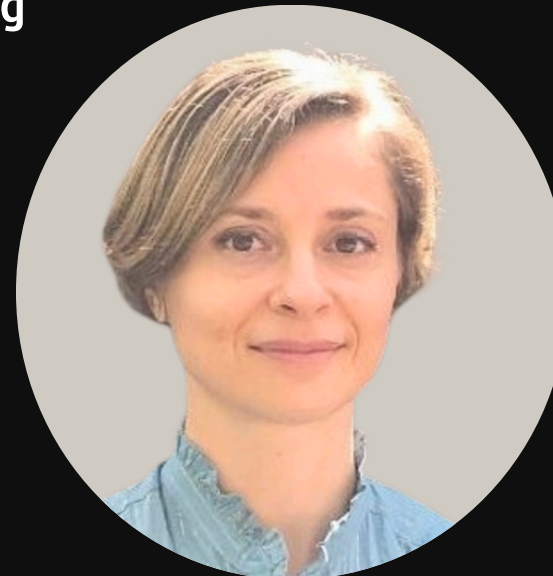


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