

In the Spirit of Artists

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Winter is upon us, and for many, the Christmas spirit is already in the air. With it comes the annual frenzied shopping sprees, card-making, the crisp crinkling of wrapping paper, and the twinkling electric lights spilling off rooflines and sprawling across the rich green trees. For some, the cozy sweet smells of gingerbread and peppermint linger in many a house while children write their early letters to Santa, the holiday hits playing happily in the background. The winter holidays are widely associated with material presents, family and loved ones, and celebration. Christmas commemorates the Mass of Christ and remembers Jesus for his birth — the hope and promise for humanity. Most importantly in modern day, no matter one's faith, it is a time for extensive reflection. In the midst of all the seasonal

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busyness, we have the opportunity to acknowledge and give thanks for the gifts others have bestowed. This is the perfect moment to remember the many artists we have lost this year, and all the transcendent work they leave behind. Their various impacts and roles — from those behind the scenes working in technical positions or production, to actors, singers, painters, and beyond — enable them to live on and inspire the world, even though they have left us. These talented individuals, some classic favorites and others potentially previously unknown, leave legacies you should keep in mind this winter and Christmas season.

Shelley Duvall (1949-2024) prominently known for her character Wendy Torrance in the adaptation of Stephen King's *The Shining*, was a woman of many talents, an American Actress and film producer. Duvall has always been loved for her cartoonish, and often delightfully strange, roles. She gained popularity in recent years through a viral TikTok audio in 2023, a remix of her opening lines from the children's series *The Faerie Tale Theatre* in 1982. Since then, she has been more significantly acknowledged as a style icon for her trademark makeup and signature Twiggy-inspired lashes and twee outfits. Fresh out of high school, she worked as a cosmetic salesperson until she was discovered by talent scouts of director Robert Altman during her junior year of college in Houston, Texas. At age twenty, she was cast in his film *Brewster McCloud*, with no prior acting history other than a few high school plays. While the 1970's movie outcome was poorly received by audiences, it launched Duvall into the world of movie-making and put her name on the map. Seven years later, she worked with Altman once again as the main character in his surreal thriller *3 Women*, impressing hit director and producer Stanley Kubrick enough to personally offer her a chance in *The Shining*. Her tearful performance scored her a spot next to a popular Jack Nicholson, who by that time had already been nominated for his first Oscar. Although she was only in her late twenties and still new to acting, Duvall exemplified dedication. Working with Kubrick was both her best and worst experience,

as horror existed beyond the screen. Duvall experienced constant psychological abuse, shooting a violent scene 127 times, setting the world record for most number of takes in any film set according to IMDb, taking a mental toll. Duvall's versatility is astonishing. She acted both in children's shows and dramas, and her humility is refreshing. She occasionally lent her vocal skills to a series of roles, as well, alongside stars like Robin Williams, and is bound to be in a few if not many of your favorite classics. This season, you might even hear Duvall's voice in her *Merry Christmas* album.

Although record producers might not usually be thought of as artists by the general public, composer and arranger Quincy Jones (1933-2024) undeniably debunks any doubts a person could have. A producer's job is that of a creative director, entailing supervision over an entire project. It requires an obvious musical ear, listening skills, and good observation of a culture at large. They mix, refine, record, and master their respective album(s), and ultimately have the power to turn a basic, beginner track into a professional level hit, bringing out the singer's best skills. In addition, they must monitor the label, contracts, crew hiring, and legal concerns. Jones was a self-composer as a younger trumpeter and bandleader in the fifties. During the civil rights era, he was met with immediate success for his first single through Mercury Records, a white majority staffed and owned company, with Lesley Gore's *It's My Party* from her *I'll Cry If I Want To* album, climbing to the number one hit spot two weeks in a row, and maintaining

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its place on the charts for 13 weeks in total in 1963 (CNBC). Jones collaborated and wrote for all the greats in the music industry, including Michael Jackson (producing the eight grammy award winner “Thriller,” “Off the Wall,” and “Bad”), Frank Sinatra (arranging and adapting work such as “Fly Me to the Moon” to become signature songs), Amy Winehouse, Aretha Franklin, Ella Fitzgerald, The Weeknd, Travis Scott, and plenty more. He also co-produced the eleven

2024) American writer-sculptor, and most notably, photography and collages. His frequent use of techniques like photo-weaving — combining two or more photographs together as one would do with yarn or threads in textile production — which he learned through weaving grass

Oscar-nominated film soundtrack from Steven Spielberg's adaptation of *The Color Purple* in 1985. Overall, the ninety-one-year-old EGOT winner and eventual record label executive was crucial to the development of

modern jazz, soul, and American pop music. His daughter accepted an honorary Oscar award for him posthumously, remarking, “When I was a young film composer, you didn't even see faces of color working in the studio commissaries” (New York Times). Vice President Kamala Harris celebrated him as a champion of civil and human rights, who “brought joy to millions of people” (Billboard). Quincy Jones was committed to the advancement of African American voices, instrumentally

and vocally, and will be remembered as one of the greatest producers of all time. Dinh Q. Lê (1968-) was a Vietnamese multimedia artist, who produced

mats with his family, tell his stories of loss and trauma surrounding home and the “fractured [memory of] past and present” (Artnews). At ten years old, the frequent violence stirred by the Vietnam War in Lê's hometown of Hà Tiên forced him and his family to flee by boat to a safer life in the United States in 1978. Living on the edge of the Cambodian border, he grew up seeing many of the same effects, witnessing bombings and living in refugee camps in Thailand in the process of his escape. Khmer Rouge, a Communist political regime, exercised its power over the country after the Cambodian Civil War in 1975, resulting in a four-year bloodbath known as the Cambodian Genocide. When his family emigrated to Los Angeles, he earned degrees from both UC Santa Barbara and SVA in New York. Lê's work plays on the idea of perspective, taking our view of history from an American standpoint, specifically on the Vietnam (or from his perspective, American) War and flipping it. He wittingly calls attention to stereotypes, flawed government systems, and the importance of finding and maintaining one's identity with intricate, big-scale installations. One is reminded of the complexity of life and the human story when looking at his enormous displays. Simultaneously, his allusions to religious figures, pop culture, and his bright colors demonstrate intertwined emotions and shared history between peoples of different social classes and nationalities. Less widely known, Dinh Q. Lê's art is thought-provoking and a visual labor of love.

Broadway star Chita Rivera (1933-2024), born as Dolores Conchita Figueroa del Rivero, was a renowned American actress and singer. She gained huge popularity for her role of Anita in the original production of *West Side Story*, the lead of Velma Kelly in *Chicago*, and her portrayal of Aurora in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*. She was known for her expressive and dramatic dance, and eye-catching and irresistible stage presence. Although she always loved dancing, she officially began her journey as a ballerina at the young age of nine, and soon attended the Jones Haywood Dance School in her home of Washington, DC at eleven. Years later, she was awarded a scholarship to the School of American Ballet in New York City, where she studied three years and found her calling, applying her previous skills from training and natural abilities as a Broadway dancer. However, despite her extensive education, she was entirely independent and self-taught in both acting and singing. With her first big debut role in *Guys and Dolls* in 1950, the rest was history, and Rivera went on to win two Tonys for Best Leading Actress in *A Musical*, ten additional Tony nominations, two

Drama Desk Awards, and a Drama League Award, and is continuously recognized in a long list of diverse dedications and honors. The New York Times described her as “a triple threat” who “never retired.” Rivera, a groundbreaking artist who paved the way as a Puerto Rican woman, is regarded as one of the most iconic and daring faces of Broadway, a performer for over seven decades. Upon her passing at age ninety-one, President Joe Biden issued a statement from The White House, that “work was more than entertainment,” and “her dazzling charm will live on in the soul of our nation.”

The art of Japanese photojournalist Ruiko Yoshida (1938-2024) is at once both unforgiving and ruthless, and also mesmerizing and sincere. She casts dark black and white contrasts, uses bold, gripping reds, and her action-filled busy street scenes make it impossible to look away. After graduating Keio University in Japan and receiving a scholarship in 1961, she left her home in Muroran, Hokkaido, to continue her education in photojournalism in the US. Yoshida pulls the viewer in and represents the beauty of human interaction and life, while also demonstrating how discrimination, general bias, but especially racism, destroys it. Eighty-nine year old Ruiko Yoshida produced one main photography book over the course of seven years, published 1974, and reprinted in January 1, 2010. It focuses on the everyday lives of Black Harlem, New York residents, not far from her own apartment, hence its name titled *Harlem: Black Angels*. A visually appealing time capsule of the late 1960s and early 70s, it depicts marginalized communities and familial bonds during the Civil Rights Movement from a very personal setting. Images of mothers and their children exude innocence and elegant fragility despite harsh and poverty-stricken scenes. The vibrant city atmosphere takes over. Powerful rushes of growing culture surge with timely 70s style, and of course, showers of protesters and activists along with the rising energy of the photos. Although acquiring her physical work is tricky, as new copies range from \$110 to \$700, some of it can be found through close inspection online. In addition, Yoshida was an avid traveler. Journeying to South Africa in 1981, she created and directed her short film “Long Run,” expanding on similar social justice topics and how they affect different countries and regions. Unfortunately, it is a piece of lost media. Her conviction that “we are all the same human beings” defines her career in photojournalism.