



**Precarious Living:
Rediscoveries
in American
Independent Film**



**Rubenstein
Arts Center**
at Duke University

PERSONAL PROBLEMS

**New 4K
Restoration**



(Bill Gunn, 1980, 165 min, in English, Color, DCP)

In 1980, Bill Gunn (director of *Ganja and Hess*) teamed up with writer Ishmael Reed to produce what Reed has called “an experimental soap opera,” an intimate epic focused on the everyday struggles of a black working-class couple and their friends and family. The central character is Johnnie Mae Brown (Vertamae Smart-Grosvenor, a member of Sun Ra’s ensemble, among many other pursuits), playing a nurse who is having an affair with a musician (Nina Simone’s brother Sam Waymon). Her husband (Walter Cotton) is carrying on his own affair, and the cast of illustrious performers and spiraling storylines only extends from there.

Originally produced as a pilot for PBS in 1980 but never given a proper release until now, this landmark restoration of *Personal Problems* provides a first opportunity to see one of the most fascinatingly experimental works of 80’s cinema.

"*Personal Problems* is among those rare, quietly unassuming avant-garde works that takes the trouble to be genuinely entertaining while pushing formal and textual boundaries." — *Film Comment*

Sponsored by the Program in the Arts of the Moving Image (AMI).

THURSDAY

NOV 8TH

7:00 PM

**Rubenstein
Arts Center
Film Theater**

Free Screening!



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