

Acclaim for REGARDING SUSAN SONTAG

Produced and directed by Nancy Kates

Edited by John Haptas

Music by Nora Kroll-Rosenbaum and Laura Karpman

Motion Graphics by Dave Tecson

Voice of Susan Sontag: Patricia Clarkson



REGARDING SUSAN SONTAG is an intimate and nuanced investigation into the life of one of the most influential and provocative thinkers of the 20th century. Passionate and gracefully outspoken throughout her career, Susan Sontag became one of the most important literary and political icons of her generation. The documentary explores Sontag's life through evocative experimental images, archival materials, accounts from friends, family, colleagues, and lovers, as well as her own words, read by actress Patricia Clarkson. The feature-length documentary REGARDING SUSAN SONTAG is a fascinating look at a towering cultural critic and writer whose works on photography, war, illness, and terrorism still resonate today.

REGARDING SUSAN SONTAG has been described as “compelling,” “perceptive” (*New York Times*), “striking” (documentary.org), “enthraling” (Yahoo!), and a “must-see” (Shutterstock.com).

REGARDING SUSAN SONTAG has been made in partnership with HBO Documentary Films, and will be broadcast in December 2014. It premiered at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival and won the Special Jury Prize.

“The most compelling of several [Tribeca] biographies is Nancy Kates’s perceptive film ‘Regarding Susan Sontag,’ about that cultural critic and writer, who died in 2004 and belonged to a vanishing breed of literary celebrity.”

- Stephen Holden, *The New York Times*

REGARDING SUSAN SONTAG
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“Serious-minded and aesthetically ambitious, it should please fest-circuit auds on its way to wider small-screen exposure.”

- John DeFore, *The Hollywood Reporter*

“Using interviews from people who were close to her, as well as archival footage and interviews, the film brings Sontag to life on the screen.”

- Patricia Garcia, *Vogue.com*

“Nancy D. Kates’s profile does well by the early years, critical texts and novels, but gets even further into the writer’s evolving private persona: unsatisfied, unbowed, unapologetic.”

- Joshua Rothkopf, *TimeOut.com*

“That director Nancy Kates manages to hit so many important pivot points in Sontag’s life and career in a cinematically engaging way feels like a small miracle.”

- Bilge Ebiri, *Vulture.com*

“John Haptas' editing was striking for its nuance, its communication of overlapping meanings, and its return to the theme of Sontag's technique of hiding in plain sight.”

- Pat Aufderheide, *documentary.org*

“‘Regarding Susan Sontag’ gives a vast look at the life of the cultural critic, from her personal love life to her bold, brilliant writings on art and politics.”

- Erin Whitney, *The Huffington Post*

“...this must-see composition examines the life of an icon for free thinkers and activists everywhere.”

- Shutterstock.com

“...a vibrant examination of a woman whose life helped define late 20th century American intellectual culture.”

- Gary M. Kramer, *Gay City News*

“This enthralling documentary about the life and works of writer and intellectual Susan Sontag is surprisingly entertaining.”

- Zack Mandell, *Yahoo!*

“What a great opportunity this is to have an intimate look at her life written in her own words and narrated by actress Patricia Clarkson.”

- Mossy, *Gayletter*

“It’s a brutally honest portrait of one of the most important intellectual icons of the last century. In her film, Kates recounts the most important moments in the life of Sontag; her early fascination with literature and books, her first experience in a gay bar, marriage, premature and immature maternity, illness, the last mistress, the last moments ... The film is full of Sontag’s quotations, fragments of interviews, archive material. The story is told with Patricia Clarkson’s voice. The narration in the film runs chronologically and according to Sontag’s biography: from birth to death.”

- Emilia Bilińska, Looped Magazine

“Nancy D. Kates’ film about the American essayist, critic, novelist, filmmaker, outspoken feminist, and public intellectual Susan Sontag is an extensive, accessible, and profoundly intimate survey of her life and work. ... By showing both sides—that is, Sontag as the writer and thinker, and Sontag the complicated, troubled human being—the film triumphs and entertains, often at the same time.”

- Hugh Lilly, 4:3, New Zealand International Film Festival Reviews

“The Sontag documentary, by Nancy Kates, is in some ways more satisfying than [Martin Scorsese’s] *The 50 Year Argument*, with its deep mining of Sontag’s essays *Notes on ‘Camp’*, *On Photography* and *Illness As Metaphor*, and a fascinating investigation of her bisexual relationships.”

- Kate Muir, The Times UK

“Kates’ incisive and textured documentary, *Regarding Susan Sontag*, commemorates its subject’s once-central place in American discourse while grappling with her complicated and contradictory nature. ... *Regarding Susan Sontag* is an unusually layered documentary that openly acknowledges that its subject was a moving target. At the same time, the film is unambiguous in asserting the importance of critical thought, intelligent debate, public positions, and self-reflection.”

- Michael Fox, Oakland Magazine

“*Regarding Susan Sontag*, directed by Nancy Kates, is an even more fascinating tale as it chronicles the life and work of the social commentator, novelist and filmmaker. ... *Regarding Susan Sontag* is not fixated on Sontag’s orientation. Instead, it aims to provide a full portrait of the woman from her prodigious youth through dramatic success as a writer to a late-in-life stateliness that some took as grandiosity. It also reveals an intense ambition (which Rieff also said she did not acknowledge publicly). It does so with Sontag’s own words, from her writing and interviews (including some very useful videos), as well as talks with people close to her. Yes, she also happened to love women. But that is just one of the elements that Sontag brought to her fierce consideration of a dominant culture — and to a life where, as one observer notes, ‘she just wanted to do what she wanted to do.’ ”

- Rich Heldenfels, Beacon Journal

“*Regarding Susan Sontag*’ is an intimate study of one of the most influential and provocative thinkers of the 20th century. ... Nancy Kates’ in-depth documentary tracks Sontag’s seminal, life-changing moments through archival materials, accounts from friends, family, colleagues, and lovers, as well as her own words, as read by Patricia Clarkson. ... ‘*Regarding Susan Sontag*’ is a nuanced investigation into the life of a towering cultural critic and writer whose works on photography, war, and terrorism still resonate today.”

- Indie NYC

“*Regarding Susan Sontag*, an HBO film by Nancy Kates, stood out for the complexity of its portrayal of a difficult character. John Haptas’ editing was striking for its nuance, its communication of overlapping meanings, and its return to the theme of Sontag’s technique of hiding in plain sight. It won a Special Jury Mention.”

- Patricia Aufderheide, International Documentary Association

“*Regarding Susan Sontag*, a thoroughly engaging documentary from director Nancy Kates... *Regarding Susan Sontag* is a thoughtful, funny, warts-and-all primer for newcomers and a fitting eulogy for long time admirers.

- Romeo San Vicente, The Rainbow Times

“... this poignant, intimate, surprisingly entertaining documentary.”

- Christopher Frizzelle, The Stranger

“I won’t beat around the bush about Nancy Kates’ new documentary *Regarding Susan Sontag* because I loved every minute of it. ... this is a very fine film, made with great flair, economy, and emotion. There’s not a single wasted frame. It’s the Susan Sontag movie that needed to be made.”

- Richard Metzger, dangerousminds.net

“A stunning portrait.”

– Ally Derks, Director of IDFA

“What sets ‘*Regarding*’ apart is its dazzling use of photographs, collage and graphic artistry that blends image and text. ... ‘*Regarding Susan Sontag*’ is a mesmerizing 100 minutes: thoughtful, provocative, juicy and, at times, downright beautiful.”

– Times Herald Record