

SPRING 2025

# Documentary CITY DREAMERS

Phyllis Lambert  
Denise Scott Brown  
Cornelia Hahn Oberlander  
Blanche Lemco Van Ginkel

Thursday April 10 2025  
6:00 PM

Museum London Lecture Theatre

*City Dreamers is a film about our changing urban environment and four trailblazing women architects who have been working, observing and thinking about the transformations shaping the cities of today and tomorrow for over 70 years.*

*Phyllis Lambert, Blanche Lemco van Ginkel, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander and Denise Scott Brown may not be household names, but architecture and urban planning aficionados likely know that these women have worked with some of the greatest architects of our time, including the likes of Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn and Robert Venturi. In the course of their inspiring careers, they have left an indelible mark on several cities across North America and Europe.*

*These women, who are for the most part still active, hold the titles of architect, urban planner, landscape architect, curator, educator and/or activist and have amassed a long list of illustrious accomplishments, publications, honorary degrees and other distinctions over their respective careers. But while the credentials and achievements of these great women deserve to be more widely known and celebrated, they are not the only focus of this feature documentary. City Dreamers is above all inspired by what has united these four women throughout their careers: the "dream" of a fundamentally human and inclusive city.*

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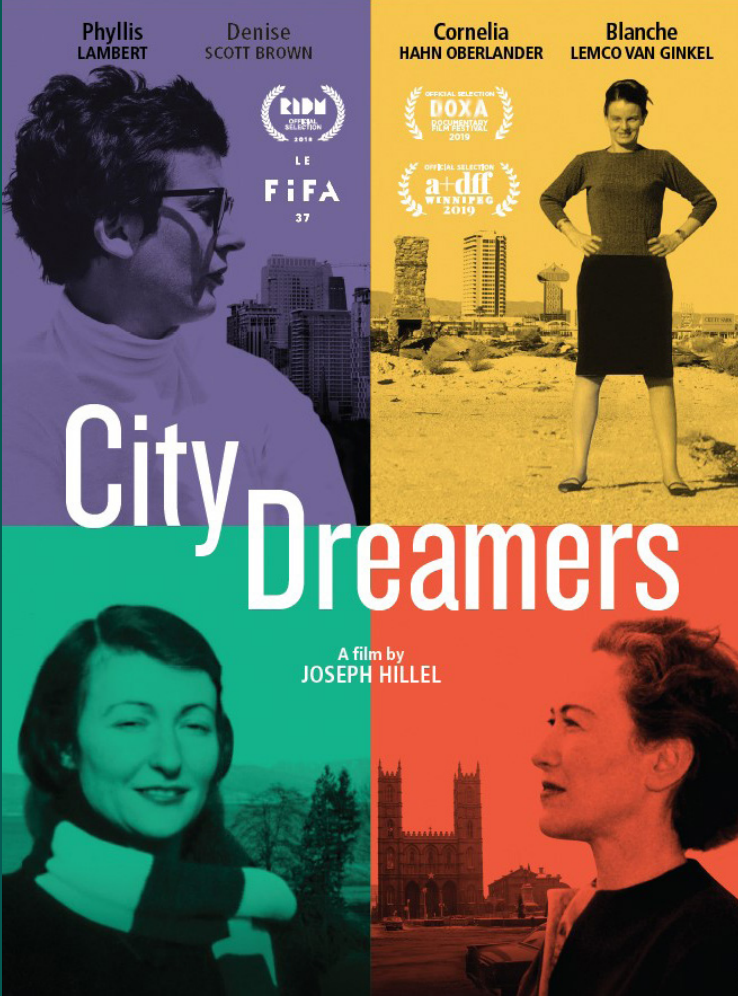


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## Documentary

# CITY DREAMERS

Canada, 2018. 81 minutes

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

After the Second World War, few women had access to the very masculine profession of architect, even though there was no lack of work. Many European centres had been destroyed, while cities in both Europe and America were struggling to cope with their burgeoning populations and automobile traffic.

The city needed to be rethought. Dreaming of a more human urban environment, the four protagonists of our film broke into this boys' club and began creating the city of tomorrow. Their story is that of women in modern society and of a world that was becoming more open and inclusive.

City Dreamers follows four women whose careers intersect, resemble and complement each other. Denise, Phyllis, Blanche and Cornelia, now between the ages of 87 and 97, are the heart and soul of this documentary. Although our four engaged citizens are seen in a historical context, they are resolutely part of the modern world.

The quality of city life depends on a variety of sociological, economic and other factors. While issues such as urban sprawl, traffic, density, heritage preservation, green spaces and ghettoization existed before the Second World War, it was only with the sudden growth of cities after the war that we really began to grasp their scope and complexity.

The experience of these four women exemplifies that growing awareness: they were pioneers seeking understanding and solutions, and their originality may well stem from the fact that they were some of the rare women in what was a male-dominated world.

The challenges facing our cities have not changed much since then. Instead, they are scaling up and becoming increasingly complex as our cities grow at an accelerating pace. What will our cities look like? What will it be like to live in them?

Part of the answer can be found in these women's long experience of the changing city. Another part lies in the hands of citizens who, like them – like us – must strive to determine how we can “live together” in our cities. This concern and active engagement are necessary at a time of growing social inequality, increasing ghettoization of rich and poor, worsening racial and religious tensions, and, most importantly, the looming environmental crisis. They are necessary because today's city, once again, needs to be rethought.

Shot on location in Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Philadelphia, City Dreamers features new interviews with the women and reveals archival materials that shed light on how our cities have grown from the mid-20th century to today.