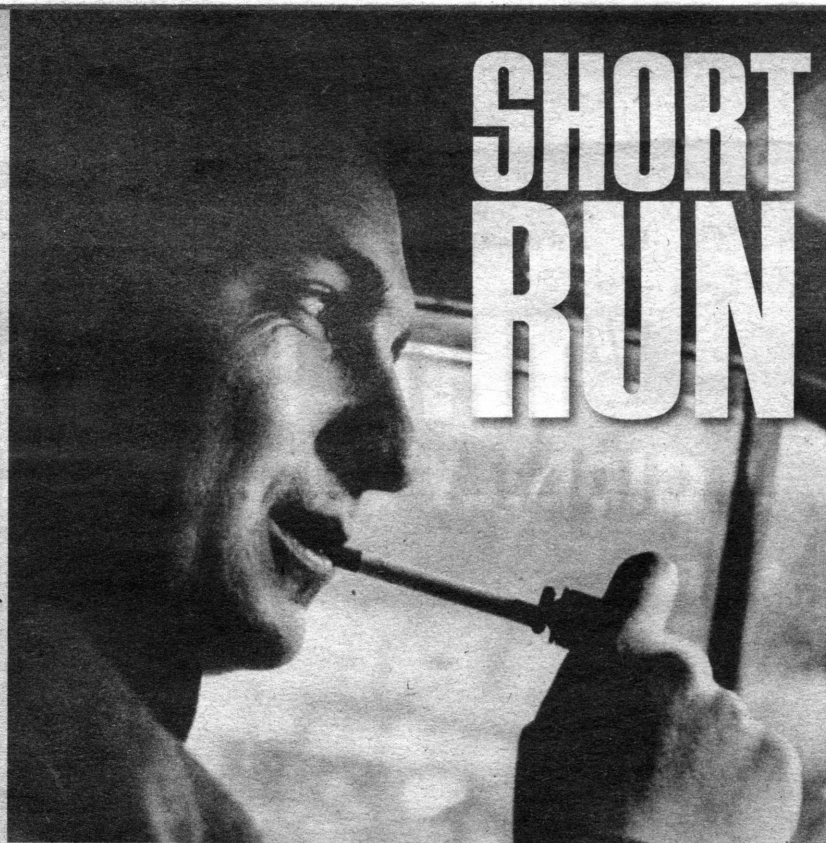


## MINI MOGUL

In *Driving Men*, a vanguard Los Angeles video artist maps out her love life

An iconic image in *Driving Men* (2007), the newest work by L.A.-based videomaker Susan Mogul, shows Mogul's own shadow on the ground, a darkened shape with elbows bent and the boxy outline of a video camera hovering at eye level. For several decades, Mogul has been chronicling her life and the people around her, filling in the shadow areas with detail. Her videos include the feminist classic *Take Off* (1974), with its celebrated assessment of the acute effects of a vibrator; and *Everyday Echo Street: A Summer Diary* (1993), a self-portrait built through the specifics of Mogul's L.A. neighborhood. In *Driving Men*, a captivating 68-minute saga, Mogul looks at the men in her life, starting with her tragic first love and ending with a road trip with a new boyfriend more than 40 years later. The often funny video tackles sex, desire, loss, family and the twisted threads of identity, as Mogul ponders being single and 50. As with all of her work, though, *Driving Men* is very much about a woman with a video camera. At one point, a friend speculates about the camera's constant presence, telling Mogul, "It increases the possibilities for your connections in your world," which is true — and Mogul is nothing if not interested in connecting. But this compelling portrait is also very much about editing — sifting through the past and piecing it together with the present. Mogul does this with insight, humor and a willingness to stand naked — literally and metaphorically — so that rather than merely being a diary, *Driving Men* is finally about the challenge of crafting a life. (*Filmforum at the American Film Institute, Mark Goodson Screening Room; Sun., Aug. 17, 7 p.m. lafilmforum.wordpress.com.*)

RHODA BLATE MOGUL, COURTESY SUSAN MOGUL



—Holly Willis