

CINEMALAD PRODUCTIONS

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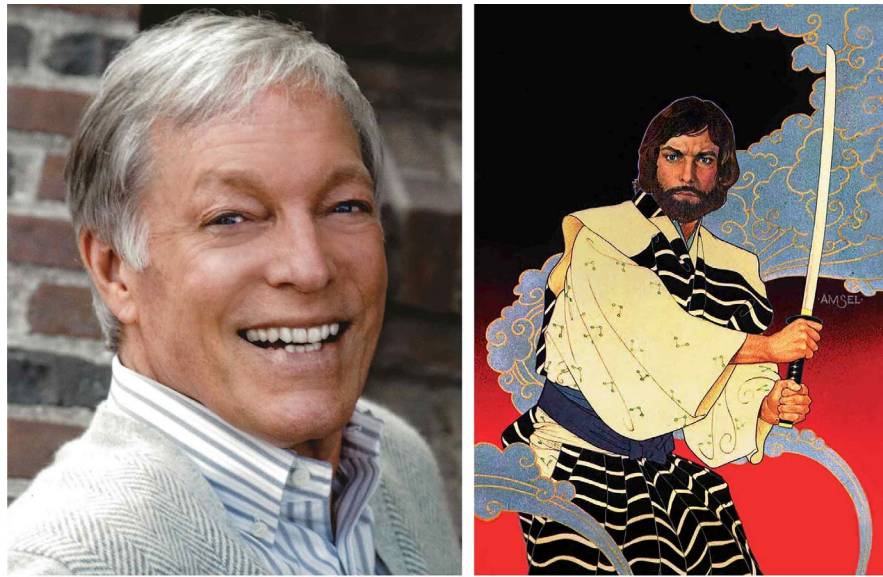
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For Immediate Release

Richard Chamberlain estate to allow late actor's voice to narrate upcoming documentary on celebrated *TV Guide* and movie poster artist Richard Amsel



Left: Photo of actor Richard Chamberlain courtesy of Martin Rabbett.

*Right: Portrait of Chamberlain in the series *Shōgun*, by artist Richard Amsel for *TV Guide*.*

(LOS ANGELES – AUGUST 15, 2026) The estate of Richard Chamberlain, the legendary stage and screen star who passed away in March 2025, has allowed use of the late actor's voice to narrate the upcoming documentary *Amsel: Illustrator of the Lost Art*.

The project chronicles the life and work of Richard Amsel, one of the most popular entertainment illustrators of the 20th century. Amsel died from AIDS complications in late 1985, at the age of 37.

In addition to his iconic movie posters for *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *The Sting*, *The Dark Crystal*, and *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*, Amsel was renowned for his celebrity portraits of such luminaries as Barbra Streisand, Lily Tomlin, and Bette Midler.

His illustrated covers for *TV Guide* – 37 in all – helped the American magazine soar in popularity throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and have since become prized collector's items. Among them was Amsel's portrait of Richard

Chamberlain, for his cover story on the classic 1980 miniseries, *Shōgun*.

The documentary has been a passion project for filmmaker Adam McDaniel, who, over the last decade, has conducted over 60 interviews throughout the United States. Participants include actress Brooke Shields, former Motion Picture Academy president and Lucasfilm SVP Sid Ganis, writer Bruce Vilanch, former *TV Guide* art director Jerry Alten, Jim Henson Foundation president Cheryl Henson, artists David Edward Byrd, Howard Chaykin, Greg Hildebrandt, *Formerly of the Harlettes* singer Charlo Crossley, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* actor Paul Freeman, and *Flash Gordon* star Sam J. Jones, among many others.

Yet when considering who should narrate the documentary, McDaniel's first and only choice was Richard Chamberlain. The filmmaker originally reached out to Mr. Chamberlain's representatives before the actor's death, but unfortunately, Chamberlain was unable to participate at the time.

"There is nothing I would have loved more than the opportunity to have met and worked with a legend like Richard Chamberlain," McDaniel said. "I was heartbroken by the news of his passing. He was more than just an award-winning actor, and the dashing 'king of the miniseries,' but a brave and important figure to the LGBTQ community. He defied the constraints of Hollywood homophobia, forging a hugely successful career as a leading man, while choosing to remain true to himself and those he loved, long before today's more accepting climate.

"Not to mention," McDaniel observed, "he had the most beautiful, melodious baritone voice."

McDaniel believes having Chamberlain associated with the project, albeit posthumously, is all the more fitting, as his affiliation with Richard Amsel goes beyond his being the subject of one of Amsel's celebrity portraits. "Many people don't know that Richard Chamberlain was himself a very accomplished artist and painter," McDaniel said. "My hope is that the documentary can honor the creative legacies of both these remarkably talented men, even though they are no longer with us."

The documentary is made through a special agreement between McDaniel's Cinemalad Productions and the Richard Amsel estate. Martin Rabbett, representing Richard Chamberlain's estate, granted the project permission to use the late actor's voice.

McDaniel is well aware of the controversies involved in using AI, especially when it concerns replicating a late artist's voice or likeness. "AI is an undeniably useful technical tool – but a tool that must be used responsibly, with complete transparency and oversight. And it should never be done against an artist's wishes, or the wishes of their estates.

"One of the very topics addressed in my film concerns how the handcrafted, traditional illustration techniques used by artists like Richard Amsel, Bob Peak, and Drew Struzan were eventually replaced by the digital era of pixels over pencils, and cookie-cutter Photoshop templates. Yet even that creative loss was only a prelude to a much greater loss going on today. Artists now face the existential threat of being *entirely* replaced by algorithms, text prompts, and outright digital plagiarism through AI."

McDaniel added, "That's precisely why I believe any arguments or debates about using AI in any capacity – even with the best of intentions – are absolutely valid. We're jumping headfirst into a new frontier, and we need to pause and reflect and talk about it. And you can't talk about the arts without celebrating and respecting the artists – the *human* artists."

The documentary will also feature an AI-produced replica of Richard Amsel's voice, but McDaniel clarifies it will only be used for reading verified statements Amsel made through published interviews and written letters. (AI disclaimers will be included for such instances.)

McDaniel states the project is going through an extensive post-production phase, and he has been trying to raise additional completion funds. Work includes elaborate motion graphics of Richard Amsel's artwork, a few of which were featured within the film's early teaser trailer. ("All made *without* the use of AI," McDaniel emphasized. "Doing it any other way would have felt blasphemous to Amsel's work.") The project will also feature cartoons illustrating some of the more whimsical moments from Amsel's life, combining hand-drawn and computer animation.

Amsel: Illustrator of the Lost Art has fiscal sponsorship for 501(c)(3) non-profit status through Fractured Atlas, a New York-based arts service organization legally registered as a charity to fundraise throughout the United States. Donations to the documentary are fully tax-deductible where applicable by law.

Preliminary and investigative work on the project thus far, and its online social media campaign, have received a Gold Davey Award, a Silver Telly Award, and a Communicator Award for Excellence.

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For More Information:

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