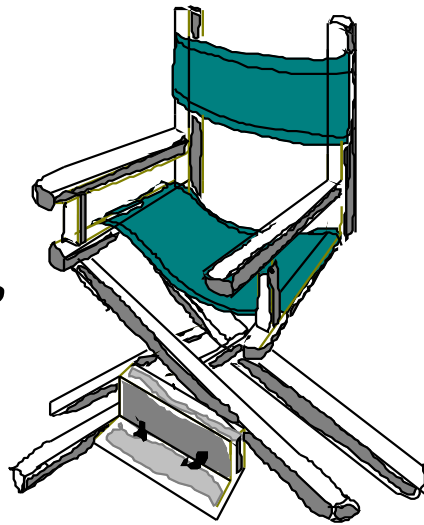


WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR



A Creative Women Workshop

Presented by

The Banff Centre for the Arts

ACTRA Performers Guild

and

WIC Entertainment Ltd.,

1999 Final Report

WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR 1998/99

Project Final Report

March 25, 1999

Prepared by
Carol Whiteman

*A unique offering in Canada, the **Women In the Director's Chair** program is specifically designed for mid-career Canadian women with experience in the directing field and/or a high level of transferable skills from other areas of the arts. **Women In the Director's Chair** addresses a collective desire to support and promote more Canadian women in leadership positions in the film, television and video community, particularly in directing, and more Canadian women's stories in the Canadian and global marketplace. Plans are underway for the fourth session of **Women In the Director's Chair**, slated for January 15 - 29, 2000.*

THE SPONSORS:

Under the umbrella of *Creative Women Workshops*, this year's successful collaborative again teamed *The Banff Centre for the Arts* and the *ACTRA Performers Guild National Women's Committee*, and for the first time, *WIC Entertainment Ltd.*, as presenting partners.

In addition, many film and television, public and private organizations provided financial and in-kind support for the program. These included (in alphabetical order):

ACTRA Calgary, ACTRA Maritimes, ACTRA Toronto Performers Branch, Actra Fraternal Benefit Society, Alberta Foundation for the Arts, British Columbia Film, C-1 Film Productions Corp., Calgary 7, CAW, CBC Newfoundland, CFCN/Baton, Directors Guild of Canada Alberta District Council, Directors Guild of Canada BC District Council, IATSE 669, Independent Production Fund, Manitoba Film and Sound, McMillan Binch, National Film Board, Newfoundland and Labrador Film Corp., Reel West, SASKFilm, Union of BC Performers, WTN Foundation Ltd.,

and supporting partners, *Women In Film and Video Vancouver.*

THE PREPARATION:

Throughout the year, Project Coordinator, *Carol Whiteman*, with assistance from *Bill Bulek*, MVA Workshop Coordinator, *The Banff Centre*, *Brian Gromoff*, President of the APG, and representatives of WIC, coordinated the preparation and fundraising for the 1999 program. Acclaimed director/producer, *Norma Bailey* was selected as the mentor director to lead the workshop. Along with *Sara Diamond*, Artistic Director, MVA and Executive Producer, Television and New Media, *The Banff Centre for the Arts*, individually award winning artists, *Roger Vernon*, director of photography; *Peg Campbell*, director, story editor and instructor of film; and *Veena Sood*, internationally known actor, joined the creative team as support mentors. Brochures and posters, along with invitations to an "official launch" were produced to publicize and recruit at the Banff TV Festival in June 1998. A 10-minute promotional video, which included testimonials from the 1998 participants and clips of their workshop material, was screened at the launch event, June 11, 1998 where contacts were made and renewed with sponsors and potential participants.

During the months following the launch, subsequent notices and articles were mailed, e-mailed and faxed to film and video co-ops, WIF chapters, and industry guild, association and union locals across the country. Ads and announcements were also placed on the Internet, through Culturenet, the Vancouver Cultural Alliance, and The Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television. Fundraising continued throughout the summer and into December with letters, phone calls and information packages (including the promo video) being sent to various groups.

Director applicants submitted their portfolios directly to The Banff Centre's Office of the Registrar. The actors submitted applications via the Union of BC Performers Office to the attention of the project coordinator, and potential crew submitted resumes and letters both to the project coordinator and to *Jed DeCory*, Director, Media Production Training and Services, The Banff Centre for the Arts. The Banff Centre

and the project coordinator fielded inquiries by telephone, fax and e-mail. WIFV/V and ACTRA also fielded and redirected inquiries.

The application deadline for both directors and actors was September 22, 1998 but in both cases was extended to accommodate unforeseen late industry mailings. A jury consisting of *Norma Bailey*, *Sara Diamond*, *Peg Campbell*, *Carol Whiteman*, and Alliance/Atlantis representatives, *Christine Shipton* and *Suzanne Chapman*, selected eight director participants from among the 31 applicants from across Canada.

Over one hundred actors from across the country applied to be part of the acting ensemble. From these applicants, *Ms. Bailey* selected eight actors with eight alternates. Taking into consideration the potential scenes submitted by the directors and with due consideration for actors' relative experience, the ensemble had to be ACTRA members, and have a broad representation, geographically, ethnically and culturally, all of which was acceptably accomplished.

Minimal applications were received from potential crew by the deadline of November 22, 1998. IATSE 669 member volunteers filled key positions such as DOPs and Camera Operators early in January, 1999. Fourth year Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design students volunteered to fill many crew positions. Banff Centre workstudy participants and professional volunteers filled all other crew positions.

December 11, 1998, WIC hosted a breakfast meeting at their offices in Vancouver to meet local participants. Local funders that had offered scholarships were invited. All of our funders were acknowledged at this time in a national media release.

THE KEY PERSONNEL: (see APPENDIX A, page 3 of this report.)

Norma Bailey and the other members of the creative team, *Roger Vernon*, *Peg Campbell* and *Veena Sood*, along with The Banff Centre team, including *Sara Diamond*, *Jed DeCory*, *Tom Montvila*, Media Production, Training and Services Coordinator, and *Bill Bulek*, met with the project coordinator on numerous occasions via e-mail and tele-conference to develop curriculum and discuss the needs of the program and the participants.

Participants gave the mentors, faculty and support staff consistently high marks in the quality of programming they delivered.

THE DIRECTOR PARTICIPANTS: (see APPENDIX B, pages 4 and 5 of this report)

THE WORKSHOP:

Under the tutelage of *Norma Bailey*, the directors were afforded the opportunity to hone their directorial skills in a supportive, hands-on environment by working on pre-set exercises in shot listing, blocking and editing. Working on their own original material, directors went through the casting process, pre-production, production and post-production. Each director had numerous individual mentorship meetings with the various creative team members along the way. *Roger Vernon*, led discussions and demonstrations about lighting, axis, eye line and creating interesting shots. *Veena Sood* led sessions about the actor's language and character analysis. *Peg Campbell* met with directors to discuss story editing for their individual scenes and with *Sara Diamond* met individually with each director to discuss funding possibilities and workshop follow-up. Banff Centre staff provided supervisory support, coordinating The Centre's facilities and services.

After the first few days of reviewing general background and theory, sixteen short (not-for-broadcast) films were successfully produced. The "Guerilla" shoots consisting of pre-selected, pre-cast scenes were designed as a warm-up exercise for each director. The "MAIN" shoots consisting of one of the scenes submitted by the directors in their original applications were the main instructional focus upon which all other exercises were hinged. Participants were debriefed at the end of each day and after each shoot, an improvement based on last year's recommendations. A recommendation for more time in post production is already being

integrated into next year's curriculum schedule. Compilation tapes of the all scenes are available as "works in progress".

To round off the workshop, on DAY 15, the director participants met *Diana Cafazzo*, entertainment lawyer, McMillan Binch, to discuss copyright, ownership and related issues. They also met as a group and individually with Independent Producer, Bradshaw MacLeod and Associates, *Doug MacLeod*, and former Independent Producer; President & CEO, Banff Television Festival, *Patterson Ferns*, to discuss the producer/director relationship and to pitch their individual projects.

Through surveys prior to and consistent consultation during the workshop each director identified and was encouraged to focus on a particular workshop goal. Goals ranged from working more with the actors, to developing an original story, to producing a fundraising tool, to simply flexing directorial muscles in a safe environment. Each director reported to have achieved her individual goals. In addition, over the course of the 15 days, and after dozens of separate mentorship sessions with each of the directors, immediate career or project needs have been identified and are now being followed-up.

ACTORS AND CREW:

Key to the success of the production portion of the workshop was the caliber and dedication of the actors, crew and post production staff. In written and verbal evaluations, actors and crew stated that being part of the workshop and working on fresh, original material had rejuvenated, revitalized and in some cases, restored their faith in their craft. All have expressed a desire to return for subsequent sessions. While the organizers value continuity, a policy to continue building the Canadian talent pool remains paramount. Therefore, for example, new actors will be invited for the ensemble each year. The participation of IATSE 669 members in the camera department not only served to enhance the quality of work achieved, but the quality of learning opportunities shared by all. Overall, director participants were extremely pleased with the production experience. In the area of crew, this is an improved response resulting from action taken on evaluations and recommendations made last year.

CONCLUSION:

As stated at the beginning of this report, plans are already underway for the fourth session of *Women In the Director's Chair*. In order to fully achieve our collective desire to redress

1. the noticeable lack of Canadian women directors in film, television and video productions,
 2. a similar lack of Canadian women's stories in the Canadian and global marketplaces,
- and to further encourage in Canadian women directors
1. increased confidence,
 2. more creative communication between themselves, actors and crewmembers, and
 3. overall, more effectiveness in their role as directors/storytellers,

it is imperative that funding for this program continue. **Your support is vital if Canadian voices are to be truly heard.**

Should you have any questions or if you would like to discuss the program or this report contact me at: 604-913-0747 (phone/fax), cut2whit@addax.bc.ca (e-mail), or 610 Burley Drive, West Vancouver, BC, CANADA V7T 1Z5

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Whiteman,
Project Coordinator & Workshop Producer, Women In the Director's Chair
President & CEO, Creative Women Workshops

APPENDIX A

KEY PERSONNEL**MENTOR DIRECTOR:**

Norma Bailey, is an award winning director / producer with twenty years experience. She has directed and produced feature films (including *Bordertown Café*), television series (*My Life As A Dog*, *The Adventures of Shirley Holmes* and the critically acclaimed, *Daughters of the Country*) and television movies (*For Those Who Hunt the Wounded Down*, and *Nights Below Station Street*). Her work has been acclaimed worldwide.

Ms. Bailey made herself available, in person for the launch at the Banff TV Festival, and via fax and tele-conference to discuss facilities and curriculum, and participate in director, actor, and guest speaker selection. During the workshop she performed her duties as mentor director in an exemplary manner, bringing a sense of ease and comfort to all, leading the director participants through theory and hands-on experiences and providing ongoing individual and group mentorship and debriefing.

SUPPORT MENTORS**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY:**

Roger Vernon, acclaimed Director of Photography, whose body of work also spans award winning documentaries, feature films and series television, (*Unforgiven*, *Legends of the Fall*, *Honey I Shrunk the Kids - The Series*), led intensive group sessions on the technical side of storytelling. Along with providing individual mentoring sessions with the director participants, *Mr. Vernon* served as one of the DOP's for the MAIN Shoots.

TECHNICAL & CREW ADVISOR / STORY EDITOR:

Peg Campbell, award winning independent director and instructor at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, moderated various sessions throughout the workshop, met individually with director participants for debriefing, to discuss story editing, funding and mentorship. *Ms. Campbell* also served as a liaison to the Emily Carr student crewmembers.

ACTING COACH:

Veena Sood, award winning actor and co-founder of the internationally renowned "Theatresports", and CBC's *"In the Company of Women"* led group and individual sessions on the actors' language and character analysis and offered debriefing. *Ms. Sood* also served as a liaison to the acting ensemble.

THE BANFF CENTRE FOR THE ARTS:

Sara Diamond, Artistic Director Media and Visual Arts and Executive Producer TV and New Media, and New Media Research, has personally overseen the development of the program. *Ms. Diamond* led sessions on funding and follow-up mentorship.

Jed DeCory, Director, Media Production, Training and Services oversaw the production portion of the workshop.

Tom Montvila, Media Production, Training and Services Coordinator assumed the duties of Production Manager along with Art Director during the production phase of the workshop.

Bill Bulek, MVA Workshops Coordinator, along with other key personnel and support staff from The Banff Centre's, Media and Visual Arts and related departments coordinated The Centre's facilities and supported participants throughout.

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Diana Cafazzo, entertainment lawyer, McMillan Binch led a session on copyright and the various issues surrounding ownership.

Pat Ferns, President and CEO, the Banff Television Festival and former independent producer joined a panel discussion on the director/producer relationships and the positives and perils of pitching. *Mr. Ferns* also met individually with director participants.

Doug MacLeod, independent producer, Bradshaw MacLeod and Associates Ltd., offered his expertise from many years experience producing film and television productions to the discussion on the producer/director relationship and the positives and perils of pitching. *Mr. MacLeod* also met individually with director participants.

PROJECT COORDINATOR/PRODUCER:

Carol Whiteman is also President and CEO, Creative Women Workshops. This is the third session of Women In the Director's Chair and *Whiteman's* third session as project coordinator and chief fundraiser. She will oversee follow-up with participants over the course of the coming year and is beginning preparations and fundraising for the next session in 2000.

APPENDIX B

THE DIRECTOR PARTICIPANTS**BIO-LIST & MENTORSHIP UPDATE** (In alphabetical order)

Sherry Antonishen is an independent producer, director and writer who has recently completed directing a one-hour documentary "Big Dance". Her short dramatic film, "Road to Rae" won a Golden Sheaf Award and has aired on WTN's Shameless Shorts. She has a feature in development and organizers will be assisting in connecting her with a producer. Antonishen is based in Victoria, British Columbia.

Michele Boniface is a twenty-year veteran of the television and video industry, producing and directing award winning educational series and projects for ACCESS Network and Vicom Multimedia Inc. She and her husband are currently collaborating on a feature film script, and she looks forward to developing her skills in directing drama. Boniface shadowed Norma Bailey for a week on "The Sheldon Kennedy Story" and has been hired to direct an episode of Mentors as series in Edmonton, Alberta where Boniface is based.

Rosemary Dunsmore is an award winning actress and over her twenty-year career has starred on stages across the country, most notably at Stratford, and on screen ("Mom P.I.", "Anne of Green Gables - The Sequel"). She has been directing theatre for several years and is one of Canada's foremost acting teachers. The organizers will support Dunsmore with letters and phone calls towards her pursuit of directing episodes for series television. Dunsmore is based in Toronto, Ontario and is currently directing a play in Halifax.

Fif Fernandes Has produced and directed 40 shows for Arts Alive. "MOSAIC", her first docu-drama won the National CCTA award for best documentary. At age 12, Fernandes was denied the role of Snow White because of the colour of her skin, she pointed out that she was the only one with hair as black as ebony. Recalls Fernandes, "I got the role AND directed the show!" This experience created a theme in Fernandes' work. She is currently in development with a children's series, has recently been hired as a children's acting coach and will mentor with director, Paul Lynch on the set of series, "The Magician's House". Fernandes will also shadow Norma Bailey on an episode of "Shirley Holmes". Fernandes is based in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Sheila Jordan, in addition to raising a family, is an award winning director, producer and writer. Much of her work including documentaries, like the acclaimed, "No Surrender", and "Journey Towards Healing", along with the television series, "Aboriginal Voices", tell the stories surrounding many key Aboriginal issues and personalities. She is currently in development with a feature script set in Canada in the 1940's. Jordan has recently received a British Columbia Film grant to complete her feature film script with the assistance of a mentor story editor. She has been invited to shadow Norma Bailey on her next feature film project. Jordan is based on Pender Island, British Columbia.

Gerry Rogers worked in Montreal as a Program Producer for the Federal Women's Film Program at Studio D of the NFB before moving to directing. Her directorial debut, "After the Montreal Massacre", followed by "The Vienna Tribunal" has won several awards and distinctions internationally. Rogers currently has a half-hour and a feature in development. Organizers are working with Rogers to connect her with an appropriate producer. Rogers is based in St. John's, where she is president of the Newfoundland Independent Filmmakers Co-op.

Veronica Tennant, following her illustrious 25 years as Prima Ballerina with The National Ballet of Canada, has continued as a performer in theatre and film, and as a writer and producer of arts specials most recently, "Karen Kain: Dancing In the Moment", was telecast on CBC Television, February, 1999. Tennant has completed directing a Bravo-Fact and is currently producing an arts special. Organizers will offer support wherever possible in Tennant's pursuit of other drama projects. Tennant is based in Toronto, Ontario.

Cynthia Wells is a self-taught media artist with a background in theatre and dance. She has produced and directed award winning experimental films and videos since 1992. Her shorts, including the most recent, "Black Angels", are about a search for the body and reclaiming of self and are beautifully photographed. She has numerous projects in development, including a feature length drama, working title, "Bull by the Horns". Organizers will endeavor to connect Wells with an appropriate producer. Wells is based in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

Honorable mentions:

Anne Wooten, Toronto, Ontario; Trish Dolman, Vancouver, BC; Tracy Peters, Toronto, Ontario; Michaelin McDermott, Vancouver, BC; Patricia Harris-Seeley, Calgary, Alberta, and Miekko Ouchi, Calgary, Alberta

EXCERPTS FROM PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATIONS:**REGARDING REALIZING WORKSHOP GOALS?**

- ❖ "That goal [to demystify the process of filmmaking, and which evolved to taking ownership joyfully of my learning process as opposed to being intimidated] was achieved by doing and getting to shoot on 3 occasions in 4 hour blocks with mentoring in between each shoot."
- ❖ "The goal was to learn and understand the structure, technique, stepping stones, vocabulary and theory in order to direct for camera; to take risks; do edgy contemporary drama. [These] goals were achieved far beyond expectations because of the superior quality of structure and people."
- ❖ "To effectively communicate to crew, DOP, Camera Operator and Actors my artistic vision I would say yes [was realized] in many ways, yes."
- ❖ "Yes, I'm confident, much more so. Yes, I've learned lots of respect about actors process, discarded lots of baggage and assumptions. Yes, I've made friends for life!"
- ❖ "[Goals were] To gain self-esteem and confidence as a director. Rated excellent for improving career opportunities and enhancing professional aspirations."
- ❖ "This program gave me exactly what I was hoping for and more in an extraordinarily well organized and supportive environment."
- ❖ "Superb mentoring, expertise, support and professionalism. I would love to explore coming back to Banff to develop further and collaborate on projects."
- ❖ "Great organization! Very accomplished mentors! Thank you for building my confidence."

WHAT DID YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT THE WORKSHOP?

- ❖ "Challenge within a supportive environment. Autonomy and leadership being nurtured and encouraged"
- ❖ "Professionalism, layering and structure of aspects of directing. Generosity, tailoring the experience to each of the directors specific needs."
- ❖ "The tremendously intense learning curve."
- ❖ "The fellowship!"
- ❖ "The high quality of instruction and organization."
- ❖ "The generosity of the mentors and coming together of the crew, DOP, etc. to help me realize my potential and vision."
- ❖ "Outstanding mentors and support staff!"
- ❖ "The Banff Centre staff was fabulous! The mentors were excellent!"

OTHER COMMENTS

- ❖ "Thank you for this life transforming experience!"
- ❖ "This transformative work occurred because of the excellent organization of the course. Also, the luxury of being isolated from any obligations other than my work and all my basic needs attended to by The Banff Centre facilities made a clearer evaluation and learning possible."
- ❖ "Very well organized, executed and I would excitedly and wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone."

All eight director participants rated the quality of the faculty / leaders and the program administration / staff excellent.