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Cat Youell - Filmmaker Shares Her Passion For Directing

The 2010-2011 Francis D. Lyon Award Recipient – Catherine Youell

Catherine "Cat" Youell is the 2010 Lyon Award winner. She is currently a graduate student at the University of Southern California, School of Cinematic Arts.

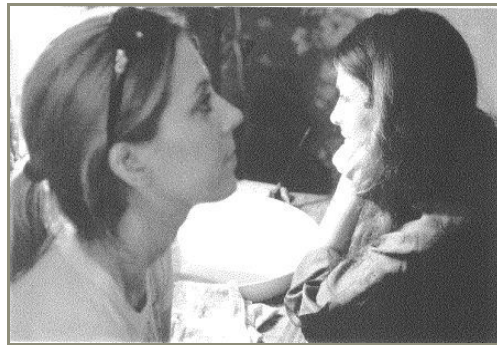


In Her Own Words: When asked about her filmmaking passion and the impact the Lyon Award would have on her educational and creative pursuits, Ms. Youell, left, shared the following personal screenplay:

(Growing up) old movies were all I had. They were my friends, my entertainment, my window into the outside world. Once I learned you could actually study, and better yet make, films I have done nothing else. In my undergrad, I took independent studies so I could make my own films. Immediately after graduation, I came to USC to study at the MFA program. Since being here, I have not had a semester where I was not in production, or

producing films outside of class. It's what I live and breathe and what gives me purpose. Telling stories through film is the only thing I can imagine doing with my life.

At USC I have been sought after to produce films (and I have produced several, including two thesis films). I have also won a "Best Producers" award in the USC run film festival. It is a job I love because I get to see the film through from beginning to end, and because I can pour out all of my creative and problem solving energy. I love the satisfaction that comes from a smooth running set and am honored by the trust my crew members have shown me when they're having problems.



My truest passion however is directing. Because it's more vulnerable than producing, I was afraid to try for many years, but recently have written and directed my thesis, which was a wildly successful film making process. I had a very specific vision, with a touch of Lemony Snicket/Tim Burton, which is difficult to achieve in a student film, but I was able to communicate with all departments and we pulled together to make a beautiful and amazing film. My film succeeds in being different, in being funny, in making a murderess sympathetic, and in making an audience examine the issues of a very restrictive society. What means more than anything

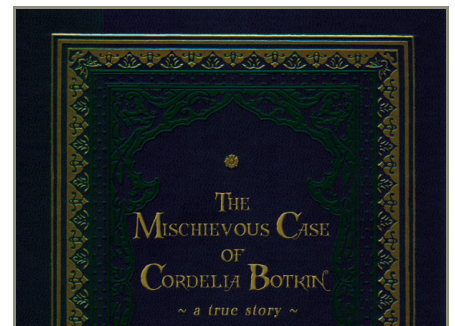
though is that my peers now recognize me as a director first, instead of producer. I felt like I have finally come into myself, and I could not be more proud of the work I did on the film.

My career goals include continuing my directing and producing. I am currently writing a feature version of my thesis short. My short-term goal is to play the festival circuit, following up with my feature script, which I would love to direct myself. I am also currently forming a production company with my creative partner Brad Crowe, which I hope will be a life-long creative relationship. We hope to develop ideas together as well as independently.

Learn More About Cat Youell's Project:

The Mischevious Case of Cordelia Botkin

The scholarship would be a huge help as I finish my thesis and



my schooling at USC. I have been working three jobs for the majority of my time in school, but I'm not for the first time right now so that I can truly focus on my projects, including my thesis. I want to be fully prepared when I leave school, which means a beautiful short, a feature script, and as many other projects in development as I can. The scholarship would put me a huge step towards being able to achieve my goal.



Black & White photo above, Cat Youell, on set of her thesis.

Thank You. Upon Learning of her receipt of the 2010 Lyon Award, Cat Youell sent a wonderful letter of thanks to the Phi Delta Theta Foundation. Here is an excerpt:
I cannot even begin to express my deep gratitude for the award you have bestowed upon me. You literally are enabling my dream to come true. I am going to use the first half of the money to complete the color correction session of my thesis film "The Mischievous Case of Cordelia Botkin." This means the world to me and my crew, and I am so proud to list your name in my credits.

More About the Lyon Scholarship:

The Francis D. Lyon Scholarship is made possible through a generous gift made by Brother "Pete" Lyon, UCLA '28, to the Foundation. Brother Lyon established the scholarships in 1996 to assist students who shared his passion for making films. Individuals who are not members of Phi Delta Theta Fraternity are eligible to receive the Lyon scholarships and are actively encouraged to apply.

More on the Lyon Scholarship Application Process.

To Contact the Foundation, please email foundation@phideltatheta.org or call 513-523-6966

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