



Students in Appalshop's advanced Appalachian Media Institute program.

Courtesy of Appalshop

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feature film project. The 11-day fellowship and mentorship program for producers and directors especially targets individuals with the potential to play a leadership role in the Latino media field, and helps provide the support, skills, and relationships necessary to get their films done.

"There is no other place where Latino and Native American directors and producers receive intensive residential fellowships like this," says NALIP executive director Kathryn Galan. "We train great producers and introduce them to the people and resources to create their business plans and show reels, and we give the Director Fellows professional crews, SAG actors, and top industry mentors to rehearse, shoot, edit, revise and score scenes – so that when they get out there on their features, they're ready to command a crew and realize their visions."

An Academy grant also supports the American Film Institute's **Directing Workshop for Women (DWW)**, a major force in training women in narrative filmmaking since 1974. Participants come to the DWW with a short screenplay, which they develop while they're in the program. They receive three weeks of tuition-free intensive training in areas such as breaking down the script, shot blocking and design, and working with production designers, cinematographers and actors. After pre-production work, ultimately each of the eight

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– Anthony Riddle

participants directs a short narrative film. Their work debuts at an industry showcase at the Directors Guild, and they receive ongoing support for licensing and distribution.



Lisa Robertson, 2010 alumna of the American Film Institute's Directing Workshop for Women, with actor Joel Gretsch during production of "Commerce." She says of the DWW, "I'm learning now that the unique and collaborative environment of the DWW doesn't end with graduation and the completion of my film. I'm now part of an incredible network of women storytellers, and we rely on each other for a fresh eye, industry advice, problem solving and fellowship."

Katrina Marciniowski

The 2010 DWW class reflects the diverse backgrounds of the women who participate. The group of eight included two 1st assistant directors, a biology professor, an actress, and acting coach Lisa Robertson. A month after Robertson's directorial debut, "Commerce," screened at the May 2011 DGA Showcase, the film had been accepted into several film festivals and had already won an audience award at the Breckenridge Film Festival. The Adrienne Shelly Foundation is now supporting its development

into a feature film with a production grant. Three DWW alumni have earned Oscar nominations for their DWW project – Dyan Cannon, Lesli Linka Glatter and Matia Karrell.

Christine Leahey, AFI's associate director of strategic partnerships, says, "I think a testament to the DWW's success is that each short film is very different – the artistic sensibility, the storyline, and the style of direction are unique – challenging the stereotype that there are certain types of films and stories that women are limited to telling." Leahey points out that the

workshop's impact extends well beyond the women who participate. For some of the crew members working on these films, the DWW gives them their first experience working on a project led by a woman.

New documentary filmmakers are receiving training at the Maysles Institute in Harlem, founded in 2005 by renowned documentarian/cinematographer Albert Maysles. The Institute is housed in an adapted storefront with a 60-seat theater devoted to screening documentaries, and

mainly people interested in making a film "from scratch." Last year, the focus shifted to adults who had already been shooting footage. In three years, 1,000 people have applied for 45 slots.

The program is writing-intensive, and students learn that "the story is king," as Bravo puts it. Enrollees are partnered in groups of three to constantly review and discuss each others' writing, helping to flesh out characters and fine-tune treatments. The students also learn about areas



2010 participants in the Filmmaker's Collaborative, the Maysles Institute's documentary filmmaking program for adults.

Courtesy of Maysles Institute

runs a full slate of year-round educational programming for all ages. An Academy grant supports the Institute's **Filmmaker's Collaborative for Adults**.

Students attend 16 rigorous all-day weekend sessions to learn about all types of documentary filmmaking, including the *cinéma vérité* style that Albert and his brother (the late David Maysles) employed in films like "Salesman," "Gimme Shelter" and "Grey Gardens." Two of Maysles's children help run the Institute, and Albert himself runs a master class and meets with program participants.

The Collaborative was born in 2009 when parents bringing their kids to the Institute told Education Programs Director Vee Bravo that they, too, were interested in learning to make films. Some of them already had experience, but struggled to get their projects off the ground. The first year there were over 300 applicants,

like post-production so that they can develop budgets and funding proposals.

"There are, obviously, a number of organizations around NYC that train people to use film and video to tell stories," says Maysles Institute Managing Director Anthony Riddle. "For us, the aim is not just to learn how to use the camera, but to give our trainees a particular language and method and move them to higher levels, trying to put them into the industry." One of this year's participants is an established illustrator whose artwork focuses on the struggles of Puerto Ricans in New York. She came to the Filmmaker's Collaborative to make the leap to documentary filmmaking, with plans to make a film about the people she's met through her art.

Riddle says the Academy's \$7,500 grant has been an enormous help, largely because of what it represents. "When we

got word that we'd been awarded a grant from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, that was huge. The money itself is helpful, of course, but more important is the legitimacy being recognized by the Academy brings. Affiliation with the Academy is tremendously valuable in getting other potential donors interested in supporting us."

In stark contrast to the Maysles Institute's bustling urban setting, another group of future documentarians are honing their filmmaking skills at Appalshop, a 40-year-old nonprofit arts and education center in Whitesburg, Kentucky, where the countywide population is under 25,000 and the per capita income is only \$16,700. The grant Appalshop receives from the Academy supports the **Appalachian Media Institute (AMI) Advanced Lab Program** for 18- to 25-year-olds from rural Kentucky and Mississippi, and rural Native American students from other parts of the country. Enrollees must have already completed Appalshop's lower-level program which serves many at-risk teens.

One of Appalshop's goals is to highlight rural voices and inform national audiences of the unique challenges facing Appalachian communities. The program builds confidence and creativity as well as practical skills, and the students' works are mainly focused on social issues.

In addition to instruction in making documentary or narrative films, students in the AMI Advanced Lab Program also learn mentoring and teaching skills by working closely with Appalshop beginners' classes. AMI Director Natasha Watts speaks proudly of a recent student, a 21-year-old with a learning disability, who made a short film about drug use. The film has been accepted into several festivals and widely shown at local schools and colleges. "He had been kicked out of school, and he's been with us since he was 15. Now he's graduating from community college as a first-generation college student. To see him at universities showing his film and getting good feedback from professors and students, it's really wonderful."

For more information on the Institutional Grants program and a full list of recipients, visit [Oscars.org/grants](http://Oscars.org/grants).