

Teacher's Guide:

SHOOTING WOMEN

How to Use the Film in the Curriculum:

- Women's Studies
- Labor History
- Film Production
- Film Studies
- Mass Communication Studies

Before the Screening:

We recommend a brief discussion *before* showing *SHOOTING WOMEN* in class, followed by a longer discussion afterwards. Our *Teacher's Guide* takes an interdisciplinary approach to the pre-screening discussion questions, with our suggestions for post-screening discussions broken down into three categories that best fit the curricula for Women's Studies/Labor History, Film Production/Film Studies and Mass Communications courses.

1. What do the words "cinematographer," "cameraman" and "camerawoman" call to mind?
2. In what ways have people you know been blocked by prejudice?
3. In what ways have you been blocked by what you imagine to be another's opinion of you?
4. (Overt vs. covert discrimination:)
Have you ever felt discriminated against when looking for work, for a class, for assistance in a store, or when getting to know people? What did it take to convince you that it was not your imagination?
5. (For production students:) Have you ever chosen a female Director of Photography to work on your film?
Would you ever hire a female Director of Photography? Why? Why not?

Women's Studies/Women's Labor History

Shooting Women provides an ideal classroom opportunity to explore the dynamics of women and work. Through the eyes of the women who shoot movies in Hollywood, Bollywood, and diverse locations around the world, students can examine women's experience behind the camera through both historical and contemporary lenses—and look at the ways that gender intersects with race, class, nationality, and activism to reinforce and/or challenge inequalities for women. This is a chance for students to learn about women's experiences with glass ceilings, double days, double standards, sexual harassment, and labor history as they develop a critical eye for "women's voice" in film.

1. Personal responses to the film:
 - a. What did you feel as you were watching the movie?
 - b. What do you think this film is trying to say about gender and work? Does that make sense to you? Why?
 - c. Does this documentary reflect your own experience? What have you seen or been through that leads you to respond to the film in the way you do?
 - d. In what ways does this film challenge or support your own beliefs and values?
 - e. Does the film challenge any of your or your culture's dominant beliefs or values?
2. Akiko Ashizawa says, "I don't have any pretensions about shooting as a woman. But many people think of my cinematography as having a female sensibility." What might viewers mean when they say her work reflects a feminine sensibility?
3. Most people would argue that work opportunities and conditions for camerawomen have greatly improved over the past 20 years. After watching this film, do you agree with this

- idea? What progress have camerawomen made in recent decades? Does that mean the situation cannot be improved? What issues do you think are most pressing? What are the obstacles to further progress?
4. Many types of work are considered the domain of men. What are the various ways that women have been able to enter male-dominated movie work as camerawomen? What social policies have supported women entering non-traditional jobs?
 5. What differences did you notice in how camerawomen were treated in their workplaces (or while at work) in various parts of the world (China, Austria, Afghanistan, India, the U.S., etc.)? How do these differences reflect specific social contexts?
 6. How have the women in the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) taken concepts of American media and used them to serve women's goals in rural India? Compare SEWA camerawoman Leelaben Paben's motivation to make films with that of Emiko Omori and "Newsroom" in 1960's San Francisco.
 7. Given that roughly twice as many mothers are working now than there were in 1970, discuss the difficult choices that camerawomen in particular confront as they work and raise children. If you were a camerawoman and wanted to have a child, what options might you explore?
 8. What different strategies have camerawomen featured in the film used in dealing with sexual harassment? How might sexual harassment affect a woman DP's attitude, job performance, and feelings about her job and the people she works with? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using the court system to resolve workplace conflicts?
 9. What different strategies have camerawomen used to address gender inequalities and make their work situation better? Do you think their efforts have produced a positive outcome? What other options might they consider?
 10. Imagine you were a woman DP. Would you be willing to participate in collective action? Why or why not?
 11. What stance do you think the American labor movement should take towards sexual harassment and discrimination on the job? How can women's issues be placed in the forefront of the labor movement?

Film Production/Film Studies

1. What are some of the logistical problems presented by filming over many years, in a wide variety of locations?
2. (Genre and style:) Describe the various types of film styles in the film.
3. (Documentary approaches to filmmaking:) What decisions do you think helped to create the continuity of the film?
 - a. Discuss in the context of the film's editing.
 - b. Discuss in the context of how the film was shot.

4. What are several techniques for bringing a resistant audience to a difficult subject? What in this film does that?
5. Which of the professional women interviewed make the most important points?
6. In what ways does the movie show both the best and the worst of modern society?
7. Could Assertiveness Training be as important for some girls and women as technical training to prepare them for careers in the field today?
8. What other training would assist women entering this field? (mechanics, art history, martial arts, gymnastics, strength training, etc.)
9. What does it take to move up from being a Camera Assistant to Director of Photography? What qualities are required in addition to technical skill with the equipment?
10. (Film Studies:)
Do women see differently than men? Is there a women's way of seeing?

Mass Communications Curriculum

These discussion questions are for an introductory mass communications class at a four-year university. The focus of the questions is on video journalism and the impact that gender makes on this form of media.

1. How do camerawomen's female perspectives contribute to news reports and documentaries?
2. What is the difference between a Director of Photography or videographer on a documentary versus a video journalist?
3. Which form of media receives the greatest impact from a female perspective, and why?
4. Compare and contrast the careers of photojournalists such as Dorothea Lange or Margaret Bourke-White with that of Marie Ayubi, one of Afghanistan's first female video journalists. What contributed to Lange and Bourke-White's success? Why didn't their gender hold back their careers?

Suggested Reading/Viewing:

Books:

Burum, Stephen. *American Cinematographer Manual*, 9th ed. ASC Press: Hollywood, 2004. A technical manual for those interested in becoming professional cinematographers.

Goldovskaya, Marina. *Woman with a Movie Camera: My Life as a Russian Filmmaker*. trans. Antonina W. Bouis. U. Texas Press: Austin, 2006. Autobiography of one of Russia's most important documentary filmmakers and camerawomen.

Gregory, Mollie. *Women Who Run the Show: How a Brilliant and Creative New Generation of Women Stormed Hollywood*. St. Martin's Press: New York, 2002. An account of women filmmakers (primarily directors and producers working in Hollywood film and television) in the 1970's, 80's and 90's.

Krasilovsky, Alexis. *Women Behind the Camera: Conversations with Camerawomen*. Praeger: Westport, 1997. The first in-depth book on the lives of camerawomen. Most of the 23 interviews are pioneers in Hollywood. (A second volume with an international focus is currently in preparation.)

Lei, Zhen Ling. *Between and Beyond: Memories of Three Generations of Chinese Camerawomen*. Hua Lin Company: Beijing, 2006. Available in Chinese only.

Maple, Jessie. *How to become a union camerawoman*. LJ Film Productions: New York, 1977. Of historical significance: a personal account of discrimination against minorities in the 1970's New York film industry, written by one of the most important pioneer camerawomen in the U.S.

McKay, Susan, R.N., Ph.D. and Dyan Mazurana, Ph.D. *Raising Women's Voices for Peacebuilding: Vision, Impact, and Limitations of Media Technologies*. International Alert: London, 2001. A research study of a peacebuilding campaign developed in collaboration with over 300 women's organizations, which includes examples of how media technologies can be used by women to achieve peace.

Rich, B. Ruby. *Chick Flicks: Theories and Memories of the Feminist Film Movement*. Duke U. Press: Durham, 1998. An historical, critical and personal study of independent feminist filmmaking in the 1960's, 70's and 80's.

Seger, Linda. *When Women Call the Shots: The Developing Power and Influence of Women in Television and Film*. Henry Holt: New York, 1996.

Unterberger, Amy L., ed. *The St. James Women Filmmakers Encyclopedia: Women on the Other Side of the Camera*. Visible Ink Press: Detroit, 1999. An excellent survey of women filmmakers (especially directors).

Films:

Afghanistan Unveiled (2003), a documentary by Brigitte Brault and AİNA Women Filming Group, the first camerawomen in Afghanistan. Women Make Movies: www.wmm.com

North Country (2005), dir. Niki Caro, Warner Bros. This feature tells the story of how one woman miner pioneered and won the first sexual harassment class action suit in the U.S., a legal milestone that immeasurably improved working conditions for American women.

Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography (1992), an inspiring documentary by Arnold Glassman and Todd McCarthy about (mostly male) cinematographers, shot by Nancy Schreiber, ASC. Produced by the American Film Institute for PBS.

Websites:

Women Filmmakers:

www.wif.org (Women in Film)

www.moviesbywomen.com

www.wimnonline.org (Women in Media & News)

www.AllianceofWomenDirectors.com

www.cinewomen.org

www.wmm.com (blogs and distribution)

www.sistersincinema.com

Filmmakers' Organizations:

www.documentary.org (International Documentary Association)

www.ifp.org (Independent Feature Project)

www.ufva.org (University Film & Video Association)

www.filmindependent.org (Film Independent, Los Angeles)

www.filmarts.org (Film Arts Foundation, San Francisco)

www.cameraguild.com (International Cinematographers Guild)

www.soc.org (Society of Camera Operators)

www.theasc.com (The American Society of Cinematographers)

Women and the Media:

www.womensmediacenter.com

www.ms.magazine.com

www.un.org/womenwatch

www.nwsa.org (National Women's Studies Association)

www.feminist.com

www.feminist.org

www.guerrillagirls.com

www.wmm.com

www.womenbehindthecamera.com