

# Kristen Mico:

## The storyteller

This Portland filmmaker recently spent time as an artist-in-residence at the Sou'Wester Lodge

“I walked on the beach until two o'clock last night,” Kristen Mico says. “The stars were so beautiful reflecting off the saturated sand exposed by low tide.” An artist inspired by her time on the coast, Mico had just completed a distraction-free week as an artist-in-residence at the Sou'Wester Lodge in Seaview, Washington. “I met several people who had wonderful things to say about the residency,” she says. “I was intrigued, and I wanted to get out of the city.”

A Portland screenwriter and filmmaker, Mico spent her time at the Sou'Wester writing vignettes that will become part of her next film. “Small vignettes say a lot in a short period of time,” Mico says. “This gives the viewer something to think about, and to fill in the blanks with their own imaginations. Through a collection of candid moments, I want to evoke a sense of the shared human experience happening all around us.”

It may seem odd to some, but Mico's path as an artist began with a movement practice. She began studying yoga when she was 13 and eventually taught the discipline for several years. In college she became involved in providing somatic therapy for people suffering from PTSD and began to understand the extent to which,



Photo by Dwight Caswell

While at the Sou'Wester Lodge, Kristen Mico wrote vignettes that will become part of her next film.

she says, “habits and behaviors limit the way we move through the world.”

Mico's art evolved from her yoga practice. Her creativity, stifled by academia, was unbound. “I began to see art, for me personally, as a powerful tool instead of a self-interested hobby, and I began looking for other ways to express myself and to move through the world,” she says.

She looks to the evolving world of digital media as a way to affect more people, doing work of quality that will, “draw people to significant issues, to give voice to those often unheard, and help people find community.”

Although working in new media, Mico pays attention to those who have gone

before. “I'm young, 29,” she says, “and there's a chorus behind me saying ‘live your dream’ and ‘follow your bliss,’ but this would be in vain if I didn't listen to my elders.”

To learn her new trade, Mico worked for other producers, learning production skills like location scouting, casting, set design, screenwriting, and wardrobe before deciding to launch her own company, Brave Alice Productions, this year. She resolved to work in collaboration with others; that would make it unique.

Mico says that she is, “trying different approaches, looking for new directions. I'm feeling out where I want to stand.” Her goal is to, “amplify people with powerful voices who need to move to the next level in communication.”

She worked on a short documentary and Kickstarter campaign for Portland's Flying Fish Company, which provides sustainable food from local suppliers. Another short documentary, “Pudge,” introduces a group of plus-size women and their body empowerment projects. As part of a storytelling competition, which won Best Story, the short film documents women speaking about the reactions of others to their bodies and of their own journeys toward loving themselves. Mico says, “I'm not afraid to let people express their feelings, so they



Photo by Dwight Caswell

Portland filmmaker Kristen Mico was a recent artist-in-residence at the Sou'Wester Lodge in Seaview, Washington.

can be heard and feel heard. It is a powerful modality and everyone's voice matters.”

Mico's most ambitious piece is a 30-minute project she cowrote with filmmaker Lisa Bolden. “‘The Photographers’ is an exploration of creative narrative, a comedy, which is new to me, with serious undertones, about a woman who follows the status quo, finds herself in a life she didn't choose, and then wakes up.”

When speaking with Kristen Mico, one senses both a frisson of ideas and a sense of practical reality. “I would like to earn a reputation as someone who works with activists and healers,” she says, “people who see a better world and need a platform to share ideas and solutions.”

Mico grew up in the small town of Sandpoint, Idaho. “I value community,” she says. “I see people doing great things. I want to be a storyteller for those people.”

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Story by DWIGHT CASWELL

For more information about Kristen Mico, and to see examples of her work, go to [www.bravealice-productions.com](http://www.bravealice-productions.com)