

Zanah Thirus Says, ‘Make Your Movie’

By Margrira, Contributing Writer, Los Angeles Sentinel

L.A. Sentinel: I am not sympathetic to people who talk about it, but are not about it. Facts. What attracted me to your Podcast is that you are laying out the steps for storytellers to make it happen. Why did you make this podcast?

Zanah Thirus: There’s a ton of resources out there for filmmakers that are centered around the creative aspects of filmmaking, not the logistical aspects. I also attended far too many workshops that were really high-level and barely gave actionable advice. Filmmakers constantly ask the question- “where do I start?” and they are met with vague responses. “Work hard” is not actionable advice. “Believe in yourself” is not helpful. I created The Microbudget Indie Filmmakers Podcast to combat gatekeeping and give filmmakers a resource that can actually lead to them growing their portfolio. It’s a limited series, lecture-based

podcast that takes filmmakers through the entire production process from preproduction to distribution. Each season has a corresponding workbook with templates that I created and use for my productions.

LAS: So, creating this podcast was necessary?

ZT: I also created this podcast and platform simply because there are other ways of being a successful filmmaker besides writing a 3 million dollar feature and begging investors to fund it. You can have a full-time job and be an independent filmmaker. You can make a successful internationally awarded and distributed film for \$5,000. I’ve done both. And I didn’t want to gatekeep how I did it...so that’s why I created the podcast.

LAS: What’s the most common mistake first-time indie film producers make, in your opinion and why do they make that mistake?

ZT: First-time filmmakers.....stop writing what



Zanah Thirus (Courtesy Photo)

you can’t shoot. As a microbudget independent filmmaker, your very FIRST thought should be “what resources do I have immediate access to?” You probably don’t have a mansion, arri alexa mini camera, and a helicopter readily available so....you should stop writing scripts like that.

LAS: What are some of the challenges?

ZT: What is the most incredible thing you can make in one room with two characters? What are high-stakes situations that can take place in a car, or at a dinner

table? How about a silent film? What can you shoot on your iPhone? Take a Saturday to binge tutorials on Youtube for iPhone shoots, editing, and color grading. Ultimately, you can really start to stack your portfolio with films if you approach filmmaking from a practical and resource-based standpoint.

LAS: What are your thoughts on distribution circa 2022?

ZT: As an independent filmmaker, marketing and distribution is my favorite part of filmmaking. I LOVE where distri-

bution is headed because slowly but surely, indie filmmakers are starting to have the power. I always select film festivals that cater to the audience that I am trying to reach with my film. For my documentaries, I have tapped into university library distribution. Educational documentaries are excellent for classroom use. There are also plenty of streaming platforms that showcase the work of indie filmmakers. My films are on IndieFlix, Kwel-iTV, and Docuseek. Museums, events, churches, and conferences are also different avenues for film

distribution. One of the highlights of my career was screening my documentary at the American Public Health Association’s National Conference.

LAS: And what is next?

ZT: I’m slowly getting into Web3 and NFTs as well, as that can be an incredible revenue stream and distribution outlet for filmmakers. Ultimately, I love being an indie filmmaker who has the final say in where my film “lives” and how it reaches its audience. It’s quite an exciting time to be a filmmaker.

Portland Art Museum Awards Major Grants for Black Artists of Oregon Exhibition

The Skanner News

The Portland Art Museum was recently awarded two major grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the Meyer Memorial Trust’s Justice Oregon for Black Lives initiative in support of Black Artists of Oregon, opening June 10, 2023.

Black Artists of Oregon, highlighting and celebrating the work of Black artists in and outside of the museum’s collection, will serve to deepen awareness of the talented artists that have shaped and inspired artists regionally and nationally. The exhibition will be the first of its kind to consider the work of Black artists collectively in Oregon, who have historically been under-represented and unacknowledged.

Beginning in the 1920s through today, the exhibition captures the African American experience particular to the Pacific Northwest. Among those included in the exhibition are Al Goldsby, Thelma Johnson Streat, Isaka Shamsud-Din, Ralph Chessé, Arvie Smith, Shedrich Williames, Harrison Branch, Adriene

Cruz, Charlotte Lewis, and Carrie Mae Weems. This exhibition is guest curated by artist Intisar Abioto. In Abioto’s own artistic practice, she has been documenting Black figures in Portland since 2013, through interviews, photography, research, and performance, filling the region’s own historical gaps.

The exhibition and programming will also include the works of emerging and mid-career artists including sidony o’neal, damali ayo archive, Sadé DuBoise, Willie Little, and Otis Quaicoe among others.

The IMLS grant is part of its Museums for America program that supports museums of all sizes and disciplines to undertake projects that strengthen their ability to serve their public.

Regional support for the exhibition comes from the Meyer Memorial Trust, whose mission is to accelerate racial, social, and economic justice for the collective well-being of Oregon’s lands and peoples. The museum’s grant for Black Artists of Oregon was through Meyer’s Justice Oregon for Black Lives initiative, the largest initiative in its history.

“I have long admired Intisar Abioto’s thoughtful and interdisciplinary practice. Black Artists of Oregon is truly an extension of this devoted

work to the region,” said Grace Kook-Ander-son, Portland Art Museum’s Arlene and Harold Schnitzer Curator of Northwest Art. “Not

only will this exhibition highlight some of the important works in the museum’s collection, but it is an exhibition that looks through a lens of

critical care, revealing also the gaps and oversights of artists who have long held practices and contributed their artistic voices to shape this place.



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