

# REELVERSE MAGAZINE



**ARTIST  
OF THE SEASON  
INTERVIEW WITH  
JAI BLOSSOMS**

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**BEHIND THE SCENES WITH**

**FOOTLIGHT  
STUDIOS**

**FEATURING INTERVIEWS WITH**

**REGINA PIMENTEL**

**PORKBOII**

**RYN ESLA**

**TWO HEADED GIRL**

**AND**

**DOLL RIOT**



## WHAT WAS YOUR INTRODUCTION TO FILMMAKING?

**Gray:** Well, I was a part of musical theater in high school and loved it. Shortly after, I joined a studio in Temecula and met Vanessa, and our group, and we started filmmaking together. I never had any on-camera experience or production experience so that was my first introduction and I have never looked back since.

**Silva:** My parents gave me a Pixel Vision when I was eight. It filmed in black and white, and had the noisiest picture you ever did see but I was hooked immediately. My high school was also very arts-based, so there was a TV Studio which I worked in at 15 learning television cameras and editing.

**Silva (continued):** By the time I turned 18, I was interning for Sunset Productions in New York City while going to college for Film Honors.

**Hentila:** I've always been a lover of film in general and how you can portray them in a way that everyone feels touched or can identify with the story being told. But initially I was on the other end as a spectator, until I met my fellow Footlights and it was all go from there.

## HOW DID THE FOOTLIGHTS STUDIOS TEAM GET STARTED?

**Silva:** I was at a regional performance academy in May 2014 for acting, and shortly after Ainsley [Strachan], Chelsea and Heather had joined as well. We all started hanging out and really enjoyed

**Silva (continued):** each other's company and just had mutual respect for one another. We soon realized we all had similar goals and aspirations, and by November 2014, the Footlights began with the vision of creating content by us for us, with one rule we've stuck to - if you want to be in front of the camera, you need to train behind the camera. And that's what we all did. We've all had specialized training and cross-training as filmmakers and have continued that ever since.

## FOOTLIGHT STUDIOS WON THE 2022 48 HOUR FILM CHALLENGE WITH "THE SPACES BETWEEN", WHAT WAS THAT PROCESS LIKE?

**Gray:** It was super fun! Also exhausting. We hadn't filmed anything for two years because of the pandemic and life in general

**Gray (continued):** so we just decided to jump right back into it with a challenge. And that was the 48 Hour Film Project. We had decided early on to have an all-female team, so we reached out to our incredible crew and it came together pretty quickly. When the day came, we got our assignment and just hit the ground running.

**Hentila:** Literally. We had to drive to San Bernardino and back.

**Silva:** Yeah, to pick up [the assignment]. So we were calling the rest of the team on the way back like “We’re heading in hot! This is what we’ve got...” Luckily, we had our crew already set up with

**Silva (continued):** equipment ready to shoot. So while we were picking up the assignment, the rest of the team was already on set. We were coming up with stories in the car and they were coming up with stories there.

**Gray:** Which was good because I think writing is what took the longest. There were so many great ideas and it was initially hard to pick one. We ended up writing until after midnight, because we wanted to do something that was going to be emotional and resonate with the audience.

**Silva:** The writers room got very personal too, because it is an incredibly intimate film in terms of emotion and experience.

**Silva (continued):** Eventually, the ideas started funneling and we able to rehearse at 1:30am and started shooting at two in the morning.

**THE FILM “THE VEIL” WENT THROUGH TWO AND A HALF YEARS ON THE FILM FESTIVAL CIRCUIT, AND WON MULTIPLE AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS. WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE TO INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS ON NAVIGATING FILM FESTIVALS?**

**Hentila:** Just do it. I think that’s the biggest thing. Get out of your own way and just do it. For a long time we wanted things to be so perfect. And that really becomes an enormous roadblock. “The Veil” is our most intricate production so far in terms of work and story. But just like any production we ran into roadblocks. One of which being the pandemic. The very night our WIP was screened in front of cast and

crew, the shutdowns were announced. That meant no pick up shots, no ADR. So the decision to release as is, especially into festivals, was a difficult one. But with any project, fully complete or not, there is and always will be that nervousness because you just want it to be this beautiful thing that you’ve envisioned. So in terms of navigating the festival circuit, I think you just have to film. If you’re thinking about film festivals first, you’re doing it backwards. You’ve got to come up with something that you love, and despite it all, get it out there. After that, then you worry about the film festival circuit.

**Silva:** And once that happens, then think about the technical side of festivals. Write a solid cover letter. And you have to be passionate and personable. Write what the project means to you and why you’re submitting to this particular festival. You should have an honest, realistic answer to that. And if you’re lucky and they



**Silva (continued):** understand your film's vision and you're accepted, you're going to need marketing. Trailers, subtitles, different exports of your film, EPKs, and whole bunch of other items that are usually different per festival. So just be prepared to have an arsenal of marketing and technical aspects. Also, to speak on what Heather was saying, "Just do it" applies to speaking to people at events and festivals too. Other filmmakers, collaborators, industry personnel, and potential audience members. As actors and filmmakers we should be confident talking to people but sometimes that's not the case. You get nervous for various reasons and we're no exception. But once we became comfortable mingling and networking, it ended up being great for connections and possibly open up the opportunity for collaboration. Oh and I do have one tip for festivals! If you have a project that is ten minutes or under, and a good fit, a festival is more likely to include it in their lineup. More often than not they need quality shorts to fit between their "long shorts" or feature films.

**ARE THERE ANY FILM GENRES THAT YOU HAVEN'T YET EXPLORED THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO IN THE NEAR FUTURE? STUDIOS?**

**Silva:** Yeah! So, even though we didn't film during the pandemic, we took a lot of that time writing and really honing our collective voices. We actually have a feature rom-com on the books, which is super exciting, plus "The Gray" which is a dramedy series that's very heavily on the comedy side. So we are leaning more comedic this year.

**Hentila:** Starting with a dark comedy web-series we're currently working on, as well as a thriller anthology web-series coming up soon.



**HOW DO YOU HOPE TO INSPIRE FEMALE FILMMAKERS WITH FOOTLIGHT STUDIOS?**

**Silva:** We've made incredible connections within the filmmaker space, especially with female filmmakers, and I don't think we realized how many eyes were actually on us. When we were leaving the theater for "The Spaces Between," female filmmakers were coming up to us wanting to be apart of what we do. And that prompted us to start Female Filmmaker Meetups, which is something we've wanted to do for a while. It's an amazing opportunity for female filmmakers - women-identifying and gender non-binary - to meet, collaborate, share and support. And while we can't give too much away, we're also working on a podcast called "Footlights, Camera, Action." The premise is we reach out to female industry mentors that have done well in their respective profession within the industry, and they mentor us on an episode. We'll talk about their expertise, tips, and what it's like navigating the industry, and take everything we've learned, apply it to a short film, and put it out into the universe. The idea is to then monetize the short film and donate proceeds to organizations like Black Girl Film School or Alliance of Women Directors. So it becomes this constant evolving process where we're learning, implementing it, putting it out there for people to learn and enjoy themselves, and give back to these organizations that are doing so much good for other female creatives.

