



WIF/Seattle is a professional non-profit organization supporting and advancing the work and opportunities for women in film, video, television and new media.

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*It's really about realizing we can own a piece of each other's successes, and in so doing, learn to become successful ourselves.*

Lois Shelton,  
Foxglove Films

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## Feature Archive

### October Features

## Ann Hedreen and Cheryl Sleam



### WIF/Seattle Professional Member Ann Hedreen

WIF member Ann Hedreen's *The Church on Dauphine Street* kicks off Northwest Film Forum's "Local Sightings" festival on October 4, 2007.

Ann Hedreen and her husband Rustin Thompson are launching their film *The Church on Dauphine Street* this fall with festival screenings in Kansas City (Kansas International Film Festival, September 19) and Seattle. The Northwest Film Forum has selected *The Church on Dauphine Street* for opening night of Local Sightings, NWFF's showcase festival for Northwest filmmakers. *The Church on Dauphine Street*

will also make its TV debut in October on WYES, the PBS station in New Orleans, on October 19th and 24th. Check out the film website and trailer: [www.onekatrinafilm.com](http://www.onekatrinafilm.com).

When *The Church on Dauphine Street* documentary project came to Whitenoise Productions we said yes, immediately. It started with a phone call. Volunteers from Seattle were heading down to New Orleans to help rebuild a church in the upper 9th Ward, a church that happens to be one third deaf and one third Spanish speaking, a church where nearly every member lost nearly everything because of Katrina.

We knew there were plenty of filmmakers already working hard to tell the story of Katrina and its aftermath, but we felt strongly pulled by the idea that we were being given a unique vantage point from which to view the Katrina tragedy. We also felt pulled by the idea that this would be a story not



just of destruction but of rebuilding. We were not disappointed. We made five trips to New Orleans in 2006 and with each trip the story grew deeper and richer.

Our objective in making *The Church on Dauphine Street* was to tell the story using what we call cinematic journalism, documentary filmmaking that combines factual objectivity and personal commentary within a poetic,



impressionistic structure. We want to illuminate and move people, those who've been to New Orleans and those who haven't, those who understand what Katrina did to the people in its path and those who don't. We wanted to tell the story in a way that transcends any one group - Catholics, deaf people, union members, volunteers, survivors—because the crossing of group lines and coming

together through shared tragedy and shared hope is what this story is all about. And so far, it's what surviving Katrina may be all about. If the government lets you down, who do you have but one another?

**A few production notes for fellow WIF-Seattle members**

Northwest Film Forum is our fiscal sponsor for this film and provided the venue for our first, "almost-done" fundraiser screening in April, at which we raised just about enough to cover the cost of closed captioning; now nearly complete (at press time) at Victory Studios where we're very gratefully using our WIF member discount! Closed captioning was essential for *The Church on Dauphine Street* because of the New Orleans deaf community's presence in the film.



**WIF/Seattle Professional Member Cheryl Slean**



After premiering her latest short film **Diggers** at SIFF this year, WIF professional member **Cheryl Slean** went back to her theatrical roots for her next project. She founded SITE (Seattle Indie Theater Experiment) with Seattle University theater professor Ki Gottberg, and together they produced **SITE Specific**, an outdoor festival of new short plays, presented three weekends in September on Seattle University campus.

Seattle Weekly calls **SITE Specific** "an entrancing night of theater." Seattle Times says of Slean's play, "**Sanctuary** cleverly works in the presence of a

nearby chapel, and ruminates on a post-apocalyptic America without pretentiousness."

Harmony Arnold, Cheryl Slean, Kristen Kosmas, Ki Gottberg and Vince Delaney are involved in the production of SITE Specific, a mini-festival of new plays.

The inspiration for a festival of outdoor, site-specific work came from L.A.'s Padua Hills Playwrights Festival, where Cheryl and Ki had met years ago when they studied playwriting from such luminaries as Irene Fornes, David Henry Hwang, Robbie Baitz and John O'Keefe.

In the Padua Hills model, the playwright is the central architect of the work, both writing and directing an original piece. Unlike the usual mainstream theater play development process, there is no dramaturgical or institutional interference, empowering the playwright/director to see her vision through, undiluted to the end. The work at Padua was sometimes brilliant, sometimes confounding, but always fascinating, and in its 30 on-and-off years, the Festival and concurrent Workshop had a significant impact on American theater. For this first edition

of what the Cheryl and Ki hope to be an annual festival in Seattle, support from the Mayor's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs and 4Culture allowed them to commission four Seattle playwrights (Slean, Gottberg, Kristen Kosmas, and Vincent Delaney) to create original works for sites on the Seattle U campus. In an evening of what the Seattle Weekly called "an entrancing night of theater," audiences were guided from one intriguing outdoor site to the next, watching actors dance across busy streets, make their entrances from trees, scramble up boulders to shout poetry, pick flowers, hide under bushes, and yell down from elevated parking garages. The work was fresh, inspired, playful and bold, and the festival as a whole was a financial and critical success, paving the way for another edition next summer.

**Stay tuned!**

[More Info in Times article](#)

[More Info in Times review](#)



**The new outdoor theatrics of SITE Specific and Cheryl Slean play, "Sanctuary."**

*photo by Alexis Wolfe*