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# LANDI MADURO

## INTENSIVE INDIE FILM DIRECTOR WORKSHOP

Hello filmmakers and welcome to the Virtual Intensive Indie Film Director's Workshop. I am so excited to work with all of you and share the things I have learned through trial and error and working as a consultant for first time directors in the indie world. I have been hired on many occasions to direct the projects of others so I understand the delicate balance of staying true to the writer's vision while still providing my interpretation. I have also been a judge for several indie filmmaker competitions and I have often seen the same problems with many projects. Poor pre-production lead to mishaps and pitfalls on shoot days and left the director feeling lost or ill prepared to handle the issues. Beautifully written scripts lost their luster when converted to the screen because the filmmaker didn't know enough to visually tell the story well. This is the reason I wanted to do this workshop to help keep you from making some of the mistakes I have seen by indie filmmakers time and time again and some of the mistakes I have made myself. The goal of this workshop is to:

- *Enhance your perspective on visual storytelling*
- *Help you extensively prepare during the pre-production process*
- *Provide you with tips for shooting with minimal gear on a limited budget*

**The Job of Director:** Despite what most may think the job of the Director is not to boss everyone around and fight off the pushy Executive Producers who pops up on set and create crazy demands putting everyone on edge. Okay, well maybe the later part of that is true but the point is, although the director is essentially the boss on the set of a film their job is not to be bossy. They are the leader who has the ultimate vision for the film and needs a good team to help them achieve the end goal. I like to think of the Director as a conductor of an orchestra. They don't have to know how to play each instrument but they do need have a general understanding of the sound each instrument makes so they can lead the group of musicians to make a beautiful symphony. Directing a film is no different. You don't need to know the intricate details of how a camera works, or how

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much power a tungsten versus a LED light needs to evenly light a scene but you do need to understand how lighting and camera positioning can help you tell a compelling story. How the look and feel of 24mm lens to a 85mm lens can emphasize vast space or uncomfortable closeness. The director has to be willing to *slow down* and find compelling ways to visually tell the story (*beyond what is written on the page*) before production starts. The world needs to know your stories, told through your eyes and how you see the world.

*"If there's specific resistance to women making movies, I just choose to ignore that as an obstacle for two reasons: I can't change my gender, and I refuse to stop making movies.*  
Kathryn Bieglow

*"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you."*  
Maya Angelou

### **In This Workshop We Will Cover:**

1. Camera Blocking (How camera movement helps tell your story)
2. Camera Perspective (The importance of what is in frame and out of frame)
3. Camera Angles (How they help tell your story and intensify your actor's performance)
4. Lighting (How lighting can reveal things about your character)
5. Film Tone (Light, exposure and how to plan your tonal range)
6. Script breakdown/Analysis

### **VOCABULARY WORDS:**

**High Contrast:** Bright highlights and dark shadows.

**Low Contrast** Narrow range of tone and might feel flat or dull.

**Exposure:** The amount of light you are letting into your camera.

**Aperture:** Controls the amount of light you are letting into the camera.

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**Shutter Speed:** Is the unit of measurement that determines how long the shutter remains open to let light in. The slower the shutter speed the longer the exposure. Together the *Shutter Speed* and the *Aperture* control the total amount of light reaching the film or image sensor if you are shooting digitally.

**Mise en Scene:** The arrangement of everything that appears in the frame.

**Depth of Field:** Depth of field is the distance between the nearest and the farthest objects that are in acceptably sharp focus in an image.

**Deep Focus:** Great depth of field, using relatively wide-angle lenses and small lens apertures to render in sharp focus near and distant planes simultaneously. A deep-focus shot includes foreground, middle ground, and extreme-background objects, all in focus.

**Rack Focus:** Changing the focus of the lens during a continuous shot. The term can refer to small or large changes of focus. If the focus is shallow, then the technique becomes more noticeable.

**MOS:** It stands for "Mit Out Sound" and is used when you want to shoot a scene without audio.

**Check In the Gate:** This term is not really necessary in digital filmmaking as the term refers to checking the part of the camera that sits between the lens and the exposed film for dust particles or strips of film emulsion that may have come off before moving to the next shot.

**Exposure:** How much light you are letting into the camera. It is what determines how light or how dark your image will be.

**Art Direction:** Is the tonal difference between your set dressing, props and wardrobe. This is what gives the film its unique visual identity.

**Rule of Thirds:** An image is divided evenly into thirds, both horizontally and vertically. A subject in the image is placed at the intersection of those dividing lines, or along one of the lines itself.

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**Aspect Ratio:** Refers to how the image appears on the screen based on how it was shot—the **ratio** of width (horizontal or top) to height (vertical or side) of a **film** frame, image, or screen.

**Motifs:** A recurring element that has symbolic significance in a story. Through its repetition a motif can help produce other narrative aspects such as theme or mood.