

Member Spotlight: James Byrne



How did you get your start in the industry? I took a video art workshop one summer at MCAD and that got my imagination rolling.

What influenced you to enter into the Entertainment world? I was always interested in art and photography and filmmaking.

What is your educational background? I have a Bachelor of Elected Studies from the University of Minnesota. Later I got a Master of Fine Arts in video art from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. I did additional graduate study at the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. I also studied acting and directing at Playwrights Horizons Theater School in New York.

What are you currently working on? I'm on a personal challenge exercise binge to write a complete three-page screenplay every day for as long as I can or at least until the end of January – not counting weekends, holidays, and days I just don't feel like it. I'll select the best ten and make them into a series of three-minute shorts this summer.

What is your most memorable/favorite project? I made an underwater dance video in the Florida Keys with Wendy Morris and several dolphins. It was hours of underwater bliss.

What inspires you? Light.

What are some of your hobbies and interests? I have always looked at screenwriting and filmmaking like a hobby because I love it so much - but that is so totally redundant. I like sports, feeding birds and animals in my back yard, and I'm often found staring into space thinking about stuff.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years? Enjoying life with my beautiful wife.

What advice would you offer to a young female looking to get into this industry? Follow your passion. Commit to what you are doing. Don't have a backup plan. The backup plan mentality gets in the way of success. Dream big and follow your dreams.

If you could work with anyone (dead or alive) who would it be and why? I would like to be a screenwriter for one of Nicole Holofcener's movies because I like her dialog driven approach. I would also like to be a cinematographer for one of Alfred Hitchcock's movies because I like the bold visual impact of his movies.

James Byrne's recent short films can be seen online at www.byrnefilms.com.

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