**WHAT I WANT OUT OF THIS PROGRAM**

**anne marie cummings, 3-6-2015**

I have spent most of my life in the theatre, either as an actress, director, a playwright, producer, artistic director, and even behind the scenes as an art producer, designer, photographer, and publicist (although, I was a publicist for a beauty/fashion firm). I was also a news journalist for eight years and during that time I became good at telling the stories around me, with my own spin to them.

And, in the course of finding and running my own theatre company in Upstate New York ([www.thereaderstheatre.com](http://www.thereaderstheatre.com)), I noticed that I began to have an interest in seeing some of the work that I was directing (even though I was directing plays, live) on-screen. I wrote (with two other writers) shot, and directed a short film last summer about a bully and how his violent behavior and suicide affected those around him. The experience, and all the experiences before this, brought me here.

For me to say that I want to direct and only direct, or that I want to write and only write, or that I want to produce and only produce, or that I want to act and only act would be a lie. The way I look at my life as an artist is that it’s a journey and I do not need or want to label myself as one thing and one thing only. I am following a certain trajectory as an artist and that trajectory is about exploring and trying new things and in the ways that I want to explore and try those things.

I know and understand that there’s a status quo about how things are done in the film industry, but I like to approach every artistic situation I’m in by asking myself ‘how would you do this?’ and ‘what feels right to you?’ If it can be done, then I am often inclined to take that path.

I have met writers who write one play or one screenplay after another. Sometimes those writers are even writing two or three or even five plays or screenplays at a time. So far this has not been me. I move artistically in the world at my own pace which is…when I’m inspired to do so because without passion behind what I’m doing I might as well be doing nothing. And fortunately, I’ve been lucky to be passionate about the projects I’ve chosen to be a part of. When I commit to doing something, I do it and with passion. If I don’t do something, that’s because there’s no passion there.

I started out as an actor and have had superb training at Carnegie Mellon University, the British American Drama Academy and a summer program at Northwestern. While acting I started a theatre company in WA. I took time off from that to be a publicist in NYC at a beauty and fashion pr firm getting experience writing and selling ideas. Then I worked as an art producer, also in NYC, putting together advertising campaigns for Broadway and Off-Broadway plays. I wrote plays on the side during that time and saw one of my plays produced Off-Broadway. Not tired of the theatre, I founded and ran as artistic director my own theatre company in Upstate New York. All of these experiences have been valuable and have defined me as an artist to this day.

I’m taking this course because I have never been a part of anything to do with film – in Hollywood. Directing plays exceptionally well and starting to work with my own camera and an editor and directing actors on screen is why I’m here. I’m good and I know the when an idea is working and when it’s not. I know this in art and design, I know this when directing actors, I know this when acting, I know this when reading someone else’s script and analyzing it, and I know this when writing my own material. My intuition regarding what works and what doesn’t is very strong and I follow it daily.

So what do I hope to get out of this program? More experiences in order to build my confidence and knowledge. And yes, some added wisdom on top of all that would be nice too! Where this takes me? If I had a crystal ball I would tell you, but the only thing I can guarantee is that with increased confidence I take more risks and so far my life has been about one risk after another.