

# Producer: Women changing filmmaking

ZIMMERMAN from Page 6

I'm not somebody that has a real strict definition. The truth is that women are the subject of her films, and that is something very new. I mean, the 1960s were all 'bunny' movies."

Zimmerman said experimental film has also started to make an impact on major films. As an example she cited David Lynch's film "Blue Velvet."

"That was, maybe not a mainstream film, but it was distributed by

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Hollywood. . . Filmmakers like David Lynch, who come out of an experimental tradition — "Eraserhead" was his first film, he went on to make "The Elephant Man" and "Dune."

Zimmerman seemed optimistic about the future of independent filmmaking in general, too.

"As more students graduate with film degrees, and more use them, the more film programs there are, the more services for filmmakers there are, the more people that are experienced, interested. I mean we're really the first generations of media babies. Foundation people, who give grants, are people who are raised on books and not on television. They're

not very comfortable with the moving image. So this is really the first generation to grow up with the moving image, and I think that's really going to change things."

She said the rise of the home video market also has helped, and the success of some recent independent films has made private investors more willing to put money into more independent films.

But for the situation to get even better, Zimmerman said, more things will have to change. One is IRS regulations that don't allow any film costs to be written off until the film is finished and released, and then only in proportion to the amount the film grosses. Also, she said she thinks another Republican president would be bad for independent filmmaking.

For those interested in getting into independent films, Zimmerman recommended attending film school.

"The film school will give you the opportunity to have the equipment, maybe some money, you'll have other students that will work as your crew members. But the important thing is that if you go to film school you come out with a film.

"If you don't want to do that, then there are lots of community-based media arts centers that offer film classes. They're very low-cost; they're designed for access to the community. They'll teach you video, they'll teach you film. In New York we have more than a few. There are some in the Midwest.

"I'm not exactly sure where, but I know there's one in Montana."

Zimmerman said producing a film and having it shown at film festivals which will give grants for another film are the highest priorities for a beginning filmmaker.

Zimmerman also said a beginner should get a job as a production assistant to see all aspects of making films.

However, Zimmerman said, there are difficulties in producing films in the Midwest.

"There's no lab here; there's no film equipment houses here. You really need that support if you're going to be making films," Zimmerman said.

Zimmerman listed New York, San Francisco, Boston and Philadelphia and New York as centers for independent filmmaking. Also, she said, several are scattered throughout the South, such as in Atlanta and Houston. Chicago and Ann Arbor, Mich., both have good experimental film festivals, she said.

Zimmerman said women have been making movies since the early 1900s, and the very first narrative film was made by a French woman named Alice Guy Blache.

But she said her comment refers to the two "waves" of women filmmakers since the women's movement of the early 1970s. The first wave, she said, focused on po-

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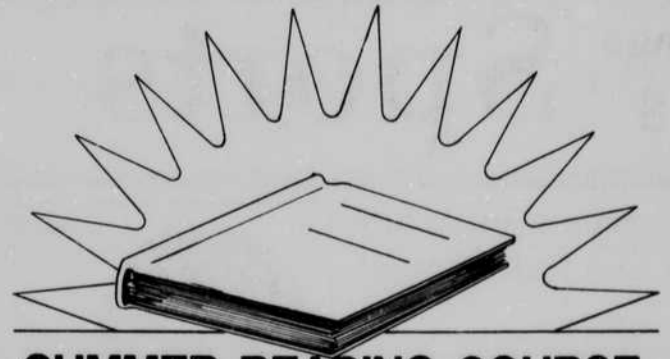
litical and social documentaries that reflected the realities of women's lives. The present wave, Zimmerman said, is a more experimental approach to telling those stories.

"It's more centered on form, rather than just on the experience," she said.

Zimmerman said she predicts the next wave will be the incorporation of those experimental techniques into more traditional narrative forms.

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