

Yujean Park  
Winter Term 2009

My Winter Term project this year was a full-credit internship at an organization called Women Make Movies (WMM). Based in Manhattan, it's a feminist nonprofit whose primary function is to distribute films. They also have a production assistance program, which supports independent women filmmakers in producing their films. The majority of Women Make Movies's films are documentaries, and the common denominator for all of its film stock is that the directors or co-directors are women. In addition, most of the films are socially progressive with political undertones; they deal with women's issues, in the broadest sense of the word. It's been quite successful; WMM-distributed movies have been awarded the World Cinema Documentary Jury prize at the Sundance Film Festival three years in a row. (*Rough Aunties* received this award just last weekend!) This placement seemed like a good site considering my double major in Comparative American Studies and Visual Arts.

This was my first internship, and it turned out to be one of the most rewarding and fun experiences I've ever had. (So much that I chose to contribute six office hours a week in addition to the 26 hours agreed in my contract.) One of the best perks of being an intern is that I had access to the entire library collection. I would take films home every night and watch them. I was extremely fortunate in that I managed to avoid the mundane duties I was warned about in my internship search. To my satisfaction, not once did I have to fetch coffee! Instead, I was treated very much like a team member from the very first day. I was asked early on what I hoped to get out of my time at WMM, and what kind of work I'd be interested in doing. After I told them my preferences, they quickly

moved me to the department that was suited to my interests. To my delight, I also got to work with photography a good amount.

Women Make Movies is a small organization with twelve full-time staff, so they're all extremely busy and have merging responsibilities. My official position title was the Publicity and Promotions intern, so I had two supervisors – one was the Online Marketing and Outreach Coordinator, and the other was the Publicity and Publications Manager. Much of my time there was working on a DVD Update Project. WMM is re-releasing some of their classic films. Each film that they distribute has its own comprehensive webpage on the Women Make Movies website that includes film specifications, a summary, a list of awards and film festival screenings, reviews, and other information.

My responsibilities therefore included directly contacting filmmakers whose films were being re-released and ask them for updated information, as well as perform thorough research of each of these films to gather new content and articles. The result of this is that in researching these films, I gained a lot of education and awareness about their subject matter. I learned a great deal about everything from postmodern feminism to women's divorce rights in Iran and women serving mandatory military duty in Israel – and so much more. In addition, I also updated the website, sent out notices to online contacts, used digital photography and graphic design to create logos and banners that are now on the WMM website, and updated their film catalog and database.

My experience was better than I could have imagined, and my supervisors could not have been any more supportive – they provided a balance of checking in with me and encouraging questions, while also letting me work independently. They even took me

out to a send-off lunch on my last day, and the entire office took me and the two other interns to dinner on the last night. I am incredibly thankful for the wonderful experience I had there, and wish I could have stayed for longer.