

Interview: Shortcut 100 Film Festival Producer Rujanee Mahakanjana

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 29, 2014 - 9:59am

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CHICAGO – The short film gets its due this upcoming weekend, as the 2014 “Shortcut 100 Film Festival,” produced by Nebula Creatives, unreels on August 31st at the Chicago Filmmakers Loft, on Clark Street in the Andersonville neighborhood. Rujanee Mahakanjana is one of the producers of the festival, and the founder of Nebula Creatives.

Rujanee Mahakanjana is originally from Bangkok, Thailand, and moved to the U.S. to study as a teenager. After receiving her Masters in Studio Art in 2005 from Northern Illinois University, she moved to Chicago to pursue a career in installation art and interior design. At the same time, she became interested in filmmaking as an expression, and after doing some short films she released her mock documentary feature, “Man and His Erections” in 2009. One year later, she premiered her narrative feature “Parallel Universe,” and [she spoke to](#) [16] HollywoodChicago.com about it in 2010.



The Syrian Documentary ‘Not Anymore’ is Part of the Shortcut 100 Film Festival
Photo credit: [SyrianRevolutionFilm.com](#)

She recently morphed her production company, “Rujanee in Space,” into “Nebula Creatives,” and is producing the Shortcut 100 Film Festival for the second time. The eleven films in the fest represent U.S. and international filmmakers, with a variety of topics and genres. The festival begins at 3:30pm on Sunday, August 31st. For location details and to purchase tickets, [click here](#). [17]

Rujanee Mahakanjana sat down for a second time with HollywoodChicago.com, and talked about the Shortcut 100 Film Festival philosophy, and her own career plans.

HollywoodChicago.com: This is the second annual Shortcut 100 Film Festival. What is the origin of the name and festival, and what is your goal for producing it?

Rujanee Mahakanjana: The Shortcut 100 Film Festival came from an idea from my original production company, 'Rujanee in Space.' I wanted to collaborate with other filmmakers, artists and designers, to bring people together to network and have their work shown. On our side we wanted also to give back to the filmmakers by providing a prize, and give back to the community by donating a portion of our ticket sales.

HollywoodChicago.com: Eleven films make up the festival, with eight different countries represented. Which films do you feel will surprise or move the audience the most, and why?

Mahakanjana: All of them are moving and impressive. We started with a local and U.S. policy at first, but once we opened it up internationally we began to see films that haven't been heard of or known. For documentaries, I'd say the Syrian war film 'Not Anymore' is a highlight, very touching and meaningful. In the narrative film category, 'Indigo' is visually attractive, and has a meaningful concept behind it. For animation, there is a piece called 'Haiku 4: STILL,' a reviewer said that it's a black hole combination of Tim Burton, David Lynch and William S. Burroughs.

HollywoodChicago.com: This is truly an international festival, with submissions from all over the world. How, in your opinion, does the short film bridge a cultural gap between countries better than a feature length film can?

Mahakanjana: I think really it's because that people have shorter attention spans. The internet era has shortened films to three minutes or less, filmmakers need to make their statements fast, and that becomes more engaging and memorable. It's challenging for filmmakers to do the short form and make it have a strong message at the same time. If it works, I think the audience gets a bigger impact, and they think about it longer. That's a very powerful gesture.

HollywoodChicago.com: Which type or genre of short film do you think works best, or is it just a question of what the individual filmmaker can accomplish within that format?

Mahakanjana: The point is that everyone who makes movies, with few exceptions, has come from the short film. Feature films get distribution, short films do not. In the Shortcut 100 Film Festival, we want to bring value back to what a filmmaker accomplishes in that shorter timeframe, and give that artist the feedback they wouldn't get elsewhere. It's all about recognition, and giving back to the filmmaker community.



An Image from 'Indigo,' Featured in the Shortcut 100 Film Festival

Photo credit: Indigo-film.com

HollywoodChicago.com: We first met you on this forum in 2010, when you premiered your feature film, 'Parallel Universe.' What projects have you completed since then?

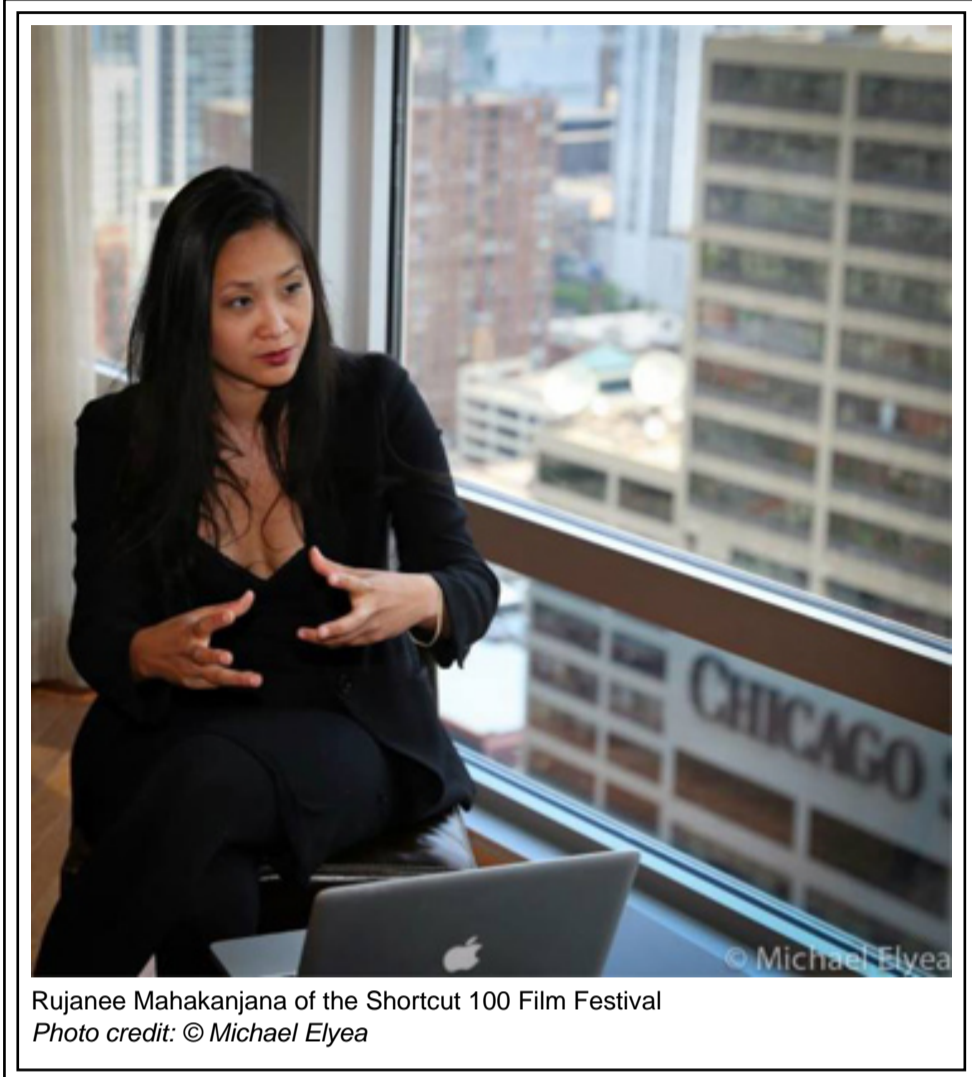
Mahakanjana: Since then, I have restructured my production company, and renamed it Nebula Creatives. Nebula is based on my old company 'Rujanee in Space,' because I still want to remain there, but it has come to represent a bigger universe. [laughs] The goal is to bring together artists, designers and filmmakers in a collaborative space, to make something great together. We want to make it a support based community.

HollywoodChicago.com: You began Nebula Creatives in 2013. What projects are pending through this film and artist cooperative, and what do you want to finish soon?

Mahakanjana: The first thing coming up is a short film called 'Out of Sight,' about a female photographer who starts having vision problems,

and begins to go blind. The story is about her relationship with her eye doctor, and how strange it becomes. She has a vision of traveling through the universe. It features Emily Bennett, who did some work here on 'Chicago Fire.'

HollywoodChicago.com: As both a design artist and filmmaker, what medium do you feel you have expressed yourself more fully in, and what does that expression mean to you?



Rujanee Mahakanjana of the Shortcut 100 Film Festival
Photo credit: © Michael Elyea

Mahakanjana: My background is in design, and I've used many mediums in that pursuit. It is filmmaking that seems to be the art, for me, that has been least difficult to produce. In the past, I would have a problem with space and material issues with other media, but with filmmaking – because of the cooperation with other people to accomplish the finished product – it becomes something that becomes more meaningful.

HollywoodChicago.com: What mood or circumstance keeps re-emerging in you in regards to your roots in Thailand? Since you've been in this country nearly as long as you were in your country of birth, what feels most American about you?

Mahakanjana: What keeps coming back from Thailand is a sense of gratitude. I always appreciate what people do and their accomplishments – and that comes directly from my roots – because it's in the culture. In America, I've felt open about everything, and that freedom was tied into leaving Thailand, with the willingness to learn more than what I already knew. I live to jump into new things, it makes me happy, and that motivates me to jump again – mostly into subjects or work that I have no clue about. [laughs]

HollywoodChicago.com: What do you think distinguishes the Shortcut 100 Film Festival from similar fests like it?

Mahakanjana: It's a great festival, it has good intentions, and positive ideas behind it. We all are a group of filmmakers who collaborate with other filmmakers, for filmmakers. We understand how much it took to get the films here, and relate that energy back to the shorts in the festival, and see it through. It's about something more, the meaning that you can take home with you from those films. And afterward, we have free beer and a networking gathering at nearby Hopleaf Tavern in Andersonville.

The 2014 "Shortcut 100 Film Festival" is Sunday, August 31st, beginning at 3:30pm at Chicago Filmmakers, 5343 North Clark Street, Chicago. For more information and to purchase tickets, [click here](#). [17]



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