

## Women in front and behind the camera

by Tricia Morosin

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I could begin this blog with some fairly alarming stats...

Like how women account for only 30% of all Producers, 21% of Writers and a measly 16% of Directors\* in the Aussie film industry.

Or maybe how male leads out-number female leads two to one\*\*.

But the truth is we know this already. We know women are under-represented in front of and behind the camera. It's something we're so accustomed to that, for the most part, it doesn't even jump out at us when we switch on the telly or go to the flicks.

For me, this understanding came three years ago. I was juggling a full-time acting course with a toddler, my freelance communications biz and, of course, an impending nervous breakdown.

My screen acting teacher had asked us to cast ourselves in existing scripts. It sounded straight-forward but I soon realised he'd asked for the impossible. By the time I filtered my search results to scripts that included a meaty female part, then added over 30, then ethnically diverse (Lebanese) and plus sized – my god, there was nothing left!

I began to realise how lacking Aussie screens are when it comes to representing women, and particularly women of diverse ages, sizes, ethnicities and sexualities. I thought, bummer that – I'll start writing my own scripts – without realising I was planting the seeds of what would become my web series 'Thirty'.

From there, more women joined #teamthirty – including fellow Producers, Madeline MacRae and Sarah de Possesse (pictured), as well as our Director, Leah Pellinkof. Before we knew it, we had a cast and crew of talented people (the vast majority, women).

Making Season 1 was a rollercoaster. Not just because I had no idea what a Producer was or how I'd accidentally become one – but also because I had no idea how much making a (good quality) web series cost (a lot) or how I'd fund it. I hate to admit it, but up until that point I was terrible with money and budgeting – my husband completely managed our finances (yes, the feminist within me was ashamed.... VERY ashamed).

Suddenly, my job was all about finances. I was terrified, but I bit the bullet and did it. We filmed while simultaneously raising a third of our budget through crowdfunding. My Dad and I scraped together the rest and I also wrangled as many unpaid volunteers as possible. It was a messy foray into Producing but, somehow, we managed to make something great!

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Season 1 won 'Best Dramedy' at New York Webfest and was nominated for 'Best Australian Drama' at Melbourne Webfest. Most importantly, our fans told us they loved how real the show was – how these women were their mates. From the weird conversations about haemorrhoids, to the awkward sex scenes – it felt way more realistic than mainstream Aussie TV shows.

Despite all this, we weren't sure we'd make a second season. We weren't prepared to not pay key actors and crew. And the increased budget would take it to a whole new level of Producing.

We tried but couldn't secure a government grant. A production like Thirty costs around \$200K to make if we pay everyone award wages – what we'd need to do if we went through a government funding model. But once you're asking for \$200K – they want someone with serious credits, to know you're gonna make money and get millions of views and they want a more experienced cast and crew.

And we hadn't been picked up by a network. (Maybe now's the time to mention how under-represented women are at the helm of our networks?).

On top of all that, we're a tricky project to pitch, because... we're too diverse. We're not just a show about mums, we're not just a show about Lebs, we're not just a show about queer women. We're about all of this and more.

We'd almost given up hope when Creative Partnerships Australia (CPA) selected us for their MATCH Lab Funding program. I put in that application thinking – this is it. If this doesn't come through, I GIVE UP!

.....BOOYA! We got it! CPA flew me to Melbourne, where I was trained on the art of #showmethemoney. And I'm proud to say we're now on our way to making Season 2, even though we still need to hit \$20,000 via crowdfunding (currently at \$16.5K). If we can do that, CPA will give us \$10,000 and we'll be able to complete Season 2!

This means so much – not just to me and our fans, but also to the countless women we're employing through Thirty. So, we're hustling baby!

Check out our [Pozible page](#) to see what we're all about and how you could help us create more opportunities for women in the screen industry.

[Thirty is a web series about four women, who've hit the dirty 30 and are trying to get it together. It showcases women of all different shapes, sizes, ages, ethnicities and sexualities – all in a gritty, funny, relatable way.

Thirty is written, produced and directed by women and stars a bunch of fabulous female characters. Tricia Morosin is one of those people.]

\*Gender Matters - Women in the Australian Screen Industry (Screen Australia Report)

<https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/getmedia/f20beab8-81cc-4499-92e9-02afba18c438/Gender-Matters-Women-in-the-Australian-Screen-Industry.pdf>

\*\*Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media <https://seejane.org/about-us/>

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