

Nicole Wensel

Katy's own actor, director, producer, and writer seeks to change the film industry from the inside out

Written by Kennan Buckner | Photography courtesy of Nicole Wensel

Nicole Wensel, a 2006 Taylor High School graduate, knows the power and influence of entertainment. As the founder of Lovevolve (pronounced “love evolve”) Cinema, she hopes to take a conscious approach to film. “Cinema is such a powerful medium for creating influence,” she says. “I believe it can be harnessed to help elevate the global consciousness and bring awareness and action to important issues in the world.”

Though Wensel now lives in Los Angeles, she still calls Katy home. “Nothing beats the people. Everyone I grew up with holds such a special place in my memory. Growing up in Katy provided me with a strong foundational value system, which has supported the strides forward I’ve made in creating positive change in the entertainment industry. For that and much more, I am endlessly grateful to the beautiful town and people of Katy, Texas.”

A Young Movie Buff

A self-described big movie-watcher, Wensel was a regular Blockbuster customer. “As a kid, Blockbuster was my happy place,” says Wensel. When she would run out of new releases to watch, she found herself renting older movies. Soon, she fell in love with French New Wave cinema. “I think Jean-Luc Godard is a genius.” She was also influenced by filmmakers like Richard Linklater. “He’s inspired me so much through his work to think outside the box about what movies can be and mean and to explore.”

From Employee to Entrepreneur

Wensel went to film school at the University of Southern California to pursue her movie-sized dreams, and afterward worked in development at major film studios and production companies. She quickly saw the industry culture of overworking, over-the-top egos, and being mistreated, and it finally took its toll. “While I was receiving a lot of high-level opportunities, I found myself deeply dissatisfied with the industry, both in the way that

people treated each other, as well as the types of films getting made,” she says. So she began a new adventure on her own. “I started my production company, Lovevolve Cinema, not only as an entity through which I could produce films that I had written and planned to direct, but also with an intention to change the industry for the better from the inside out.”

Her biggest challenge is not unlike many entrepreneurs like her, getting financial support. Wensel says, “To make my first feature, *Quarter Life Coach*, I ran a small crowdfunding campaign and bootstrapped the rest of the production costs. So far, I’ve self-funded all of my short film projects as well.”

Staying Inspired

While endlessly busy with all the facets of producing quality films and fundraising, Wensel makes sure to take advantage of the times when creative juices start flowing. “It’s really organic for me,” she says. “I don’t usually set out to write something, it kind of pours out of me. I feel something really strong and have a need to get it out.”

She finds writing the most comfortable and natural part of the process, but also enjoys the collaboration of directing and producing. “It’s exciting to build a village with a team of people who are all working together to bring a unique vision to life,” she says.

Acting allows Wensel the thrill of spontaneity that she enjoys most. “You never know what’s going to happen in a scene. Even though you technically have lines and a basic story arc, I’m always surprised by what comes out emotionally and how the chemistry between actors plays out in a scene,” says Wensel. “I always end up learning something new about myself and the other actors I work with.” **KM**

KENNAN BUCKNER is a wife, mom, and a fan of The Princess Bride.

Nicole Wensel poses with the camera she uses to shoot her films

“Growing up in Katy provided me with a strong foundational value system, which has supported the strides forward I’ve made in creating positive change in the entertainment industry.”

- Nicole Wensel

Wensel enjoyed playing soccer in Katy as a little girl

Wensel with actor Sean Liang who co-starred in *Quarter Life Coach*

AWARDS

Winner of the 2015 Merit Award of Awareness at the Awareness Festival

Winner of the Gold Award at the International Film Festival - Women, Zero Discrimination, Social Issues

Wensel's prom picture from her time at Taylor High School

Wensel plans on making more films with a positive impact

Wensel is not only a filmmaker, but an actress