

DISH: WOMEN, WAITRESSING & THE ART OF SERVICE

- Press Kit -



A Film by Maya Gallus

Produced by Justine Pimlott & Maya Gallus

Canada 2010. 68'

www.redqueenproductions.com

LOGLINE (short):

Enter their world. Experience life on the other side. You'll never look at a waitress the same way again.

LOGLINE (long):

DISH delves into North American classic diners, the "sexy restos of Montreal", Paris' haute eateries, and Tokyo's fantasy "maid bars" in an insider's look at gender, power, and the art of service. Experience life on the other side. You'll never look at a waitress the same way again.

SYNOPSIS (short):

Dish delves into North American classic diners, the "sexy restos of Montreal", Paris' haute eateries, and Tokyo's fantasy "maid bars" in an insider's look at gender, power, and the art of service. Former waitress and award-winning director Maya Gallus dines out and dishes the dirt with waitresses, restaurant owners, and maitre d's about the demands of the job. From the hustle of a busy truck stop to the discreet hush of a Parisian house of fine dining, Dish serves up a delicious and illuminating look at the lives of women in the restaurant biz, a subject everyone can relate to.

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SYNOPSIS (long):

Dish delves into North American classic diners, the "sexy restos of Montreal", Paris' haute eateries, and Tokyo's fantasy "maid bars" in an insider's look at gender, power, and the art of service, revealing the fantasies and desires that customers project onto female servers – including *substitute wife...girlfriend...personal servant*.

Former waitress and award-winning director Maya Gallus dines out and dishes the dirt with waitresses, restaurant owners, and maitre d's about the demands of the job. From the hustle of a busy truck stop to the discreet hush of a Parisian house of fine dining, Dish serves up a delicious and illuminating look at the lives of women in the restaurant biz, a subject everyone can relate to.

We'll meet feisty Ash, a modern day Mildred Pierce who waitressed for years before opening her own successful restaurant, *The George Street Diner*, in downtown Toronto. She still works the floor and loves it.

And on a lonely stretch of highway, at the *Ten Acre Truck Stop*, we'll meet Jelena, who sets lonely male travellers' hearts aflutter, and Pam, who's been slinging hash for over thirty years. Down the road at *Murray's Restaurant*, we'll meet Pam's mom, Rosie, who's almost 70 and still going strong!

In Montreal, *Dish* explores the popular "sexy resto" phenomenon, including *Housters*, a Francophone version of *Hooters*, where tough-talking Krystele reveals the tricks of her trade, *Buena Noite*, where female servers such as Marie Pier, a model/waitress, are hired as eye candy and *Les Princesses* – a diner with a difference - where waitresses like Krystel serve morning eggs and coffee in the nude!

In North America, the service industry is female-dominated, but the majority of women are relegated to the lower end - truck stops, diners and bars. The more sophisticated the dining experience, the more respect and money the server commands - and the more likely the server is to be a man.

Dish takes us to Paris, and the exclusive haute cuisine world of *Taillevent*, where tradition dictates that only men need apply. Further down the Champs Elysées, at *Le Boeuf Sur Le Toit*, we'll meet Kathya, one of less than a handful of female maitre d's in the city, and Sonia, a young head waiter working her way up the exclusive ranks. They defy the age old argument that women can't carry heavy trays or work long hours, a point further illustrated at the popular Left Bank restaurant *Le Polidor*, where female servers such as Rokia and Kathy toil from morning till night.

Finally, *Dish* takes us to Tokyo and the animé inspired world of fantasy maid cafes. At *Royal Milk Café*, catering to the "computer geeks" of the Akihabara district, we'll meet Kotton and Natsumi, who role play as young girls in French maid outfits - "forever 19" - and serve their mostly male customers as their "masters". And in nearby *Wonder Parlour Café*, Shirayuki and Tsukasa dress as a Victorian maid and butler respectively, combining formal Japanese tea service with 19th century English traditions, taking the concept of service and servitude to new levels.

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FILMMAKER STATEMENT

My first job was as a banquet waitress and I continued to waitress off and on for many years. Waitressing was a rite of passage for me, as it is for many women, and long after I left the profession, the experience stayed with me. Years later, as a filmmaker, I decided to revisit the experience by interviewing other women who continued to serve tables, and explore why serving is considered a female-dominated profession, but only at the low end of the restaurant industry.

One of my inspirations was Barbara Ehrenreich's book, *Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting By in America*, in which the journalist worked as a waitress in the U.S. and found it almost impossible to make ends meet. In North America, servers are paid well below minimum wage and rely exclusively on their tips for a living wage – a contrast with many European countries where servers are paid a living wage, as well as benefits.

Revisiting the topic as a filmmaker proved to be an interesting exercise for me, and through this process, I gained a profound understanding of the difference between service and servitude, and the true art of service, which entails taking pride and pleasure in serving others well, without having to subjugate one's self.

PRESS QUOTES

I highly recommend this. It's the kind of film I wish I had made!

Robin Brown, CBC Radio

Stylish, well-crafted documentary

Macleans

Director Maya Gallus serves up some tasty tidbits...Dish will change how you view your next restaurant experience

NOW Magazine

Dish is a highlight of the festival. Beautifully shot with a clear line of sight to point and purpose, fast-paced with impressive attention to detail

Xtra Magazine

Gemini award winning director Maya Gallus takes inspiration from her own waitressing gigs....It's life on the other side of the menu. You'll never under tip again.

City Bites Magazine

This is the film that needs to be shown to those jerks that just don't know how to tip, or for someone who assumes that waitressing is a low level job that any schmuck could do. If you can sit through this and not have a better understanding and appreciation for what these people must go through then you shouldn't be allowed in a restaurant again.

The Film Reel

Red Queen Productions

Company Profile

Red Queen Productions is an independent Canadian film and television production company based in Toronto. The key creative partners of the company are acclaimed filmmakers Maya Gallus and Justine Pimlott.

Red Queen Productions makes documentaries for theatrical, broadcast, educational and interactive exhibition. Gallus and Pimlott have an outstanding list of award-winning credits as producers, directors and writers of documentary features, one-offs, and series. Red Queen Productions has a proven track record of producing provocative, cutting edge documentaries about women, social issues, culture and the arts.

Some of our credits include:

Punch Like A Girl

A popular and critically acclaimed six-part series on amateur women's boxing, now also available as an hour-long documentary. ***Punch Like A Girl*** received two Gemini nominations for **Best Direction in a Documentary Series**.

Girl Inside

An award-winning feature length documentary that chronicles three years in the life of Madison as she transitions from male to female, with the support (and sometimes hilarious advice) of her 80-year-old grandmother. ***Girl Inside*** premiered at Hot Docs 2007 and played at numerous festivals around the globe. The film was nominated for the prestigious Gemini **Donald Brittain Award for Best Social Political Documentary** and Maya Gallus won the Gemini for **Best Direction In A Documentary Program**.

Fag Hags: Women Who Love Gay Men,

An award-winning hour long documentary that takes a provocative look at profound friendships between women and gay men. ***Fag Hags*** has screened at numerous festivals around the world and won the Audience Award for **Best Documentary Film** at the Inside Out Film Festival and **Best Canadian Film** at the Reel Out Film Festival.

Dish- Women, Waitressing & the Art of Service

Recently premiered at Hot Docs 2010 and became a 'festival favorite' with three sold out screenings! Dish is a feature length documentary that explores the gender divide and social expectations of women in the service industry – from the truck stop and diner waitress to the haute cuisine of Paris, to the sexy restos of Montreal and the maid cafes of Tokyo.

Red Queen documentaries are seen around the globe at film festivals, theatres, and broadcast on TVO, CBC - The Passionate Eye, Knowledge, SRC Quebec, Showcase, Independent Film Channel, the Life Channel, Global, Bravo, Canal D, SBS Australia, MTV/Logo, YLE Finland and many others.



Maya Gallus Bio- Writer/Director/Producer

Gemini Award winning Director Maya Gallus most recently premiered *Dish -- Women, Waitressing & the Art of Service* at Hot Docs 2010. The film became a 'festival favorite' with three sold out screenings and rush lines around the block.

In 2008 Maya won the Gemini for **Best Direction In A Documentary** for her feature-length documentary, *Girl Inside*. The film premiered at Hot Docs and launched the 2007 season of The View From Here on TVO. *Girl Inside* screened at numerous film festivals including DOXA, the Atlantic Film Festival, New Fest, Frameline, St John's International Women's Festival and Ladyfest, London (UK), Singapore and others.

Gallus's provocative feature-length documentary *Erotica: A Journey Into Female Sexuality* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and screened at international festivals including the Melbourne Film Festival, MostraRIO, Rio de Janeiro, the Feminale Festival in Germany, the Fetisch Film Festival in France, and others. *Erotica* played theatrically in Toronto, San Francisco, San Sebastian and Tokyo and was broadcast in Canada, the U.S. and internationally. *Erotica* was nominated for a Genie for **Best Feature-Length Documentary** and for **Best Arts Documentary** at Hot Docs.

Her first film, *Elizabeth Smart: On The Side of the Angels*, which she produced, directed and wrote, premiered at the Montreal World Film Festival, and screened at the Toronto International Film Festival, the Boston Museum of Fine Art, Canada House, UK, Festival des Films Sur L'Art, and others. *On The Side of the Angels* won **Best Production of the Festival, Best Documentary** and **Best Editing** at the Yorkton Golden Sheaf Awards, as well as **Best Narration** at the Atlantic Film Festival and was nominated for a Gemini for **Best Direction**. *On The Side of the Angels* was broadcast internationally on YLE, SBS, Canal 22, Ovation, US Slovak TV, Optus as well as CBC, Bravo! , SCN and is being rebroadcast on Knowledge and TVO.

Other credits include the critically acclaimed six part series *Punch Like a Girl* - for which she and co-director Justine Pimlott received two Gemini Nominations for Best Direction, co-producer/writer on the award-winning *Fag Hags: Women Who Love Gay Men* and co-producer on *Cat City*.

Currently she is in production with the feature documentary *The Mystery of Mazo de la Roche*, a co-production with The National Film Board, in association with Bravo!, TVO Masterworks and Knowledge Network.



Justine Pimlott Bio

Justine's Producer credits include: *Laugh In The Dark*, *Punch Like A Girl*, *Fag Hags: Women Who Love Gay Men*, *Girl Inside*, *Cat City*, *Dish - Women, Waitressing & the Art of Service* and *The Mystery of Mazo de la Roche*.

Justine made her directorial debut with her film *Laugh In The Dark*, which won the **Best Social Issue Documentary Award** at Hot Docs 2000 and **Best Canadian Film** at the Inside Out Film & Video Festival in Toronto. *Laugh In The Dark* was also nominated for the Ontario Arts Council's prestigious Chalmers Documentary Award and has played at film festivals around the world.

Justine has also directed several episodes of a 13-part reality series, *Fire Station*, for the Discovery Channel, and *Chasing The Dream*, a pre-Olympic one hour special for CBC Sports on international women's hockey.

With Maya Gallus, Justine co-created, co-produced and co-directed the critically acclaimed six part reality series on women's boxing *Punch Like A Girl*, for which she and Maya each received two Gemini nominations for **Best Direction in a Documentary Series**.

She also directed the award-winning *Fag Hags: Women Who Love Gay Men*, which won the **Audience Award for Best Documentary** at the Inside Out Film & Video Festival and the **Audience Award for Best Canadian Film** at the Reel Out Festival. *Fag Hags* was broadcast on CBC: The Passionate Eye, SRC, Showcase, IFC, SBS Australia and numerous others.

In 2007 Justine produced *Girl Inside*, a feature length documentary directed by Maya Gallus. The film premiered at Hot Docs and launched the season of The View From Here on TVO. *Girl Inside* received a Gemini Nomination for the **Donald Brittain Award for Best Social Political Documentary** and director Maya Gallus went on to win the Gemini for **Best Direction In A Documentary Program**.

Most recently Justine directed, wrote and co-produced *Cat City*, an hour-long documentary that takes the viewer into the heart of the issue of cat overpopulation in Canada. *Cat City* premiered at the Royal Cinema and aired nationally on Global TV's Currents'.