

Arts & Entertainment

Valentine's Day Documentary Film Festival

An Interview with Meredith Alumna, Filmmaker Camden Watts

Rachel Pratl, Editor-in-Chief



Photo credits camdenwatts.com

The MC Film Festival, rescheduled due to the winter storm that shut down the Triangle a few weeks ago, will be held this Sunday from 2 - 4 p.m. in Carswell Auditorium. Camden Watts, a Meredith alumna, whose film *Brewconomy* is headlining the festival, answered some of my questions about her experience at Meredith and her most recent project

Was being a filmmaker what you always wanted to do, or is it something that you figured out as you went through college?

My parents encouraged me to go to

college to prepare for a career much more likely to sustain a comfortable life. (The entertainment industry is really competitive, and it's not as reliable as a 9-5 job.) As soon as I stepped onto the Meredith College campus, I knew it was home. Every day I'm thankful that I studied graphic design, photography, and communications there. After college, I felt lost for a long time. I wanted to get into film so badly but couldn't figure out how to make it happen. I decided to move to New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles to continue studying film and improv comedy. At one point I had my bags packed and was ready to go; yet something kept me here in North Carolina. Shortly afterwards, I started making my own movies here at home.

Did you develop your film-making style at Meredith? Before or after?

Finding your voice as an artist is an ever-evolving thing. It changes and grows as you do. Everything in my life has led me to this point, shaped me

in some way, and created my unique point of view. (That's true for all of us.) It's really cool that no two filmmakers will tell the story the same way. Now that I'm starting my fifth and sixth films, I feel that I'm finally finding my voice as a storyteller. I'm stepping up my game again with these new movies. It's thrilling and terrifying at the same time.

What was the most eye-opening thing you learned as you gathered information for *Brewconomy*?

One of the loveliest things is that we haven't reached a tipping point for craft beer in North Carolina. It seems there's plenty of room for growth, especially as people make the connection between supporting local businesses and the local economy. Plus, craft beer is only about 11% of total U.S. beer sales, so we have a long way to go. Making *Brewconomy* solidified a lot of theories I'd developed about the future of filmmaking. Over the past 10 years, there's been a "democratization" of film

because technology has changed. The barriers to entry aren't what they once were. We can literally shoot, edit, and distribute a film using a smartphone. (I know because I've done it.) We can build passionate audiences for niche content that wouldn't get made in the traditional film business model. It's incredible.

What do you want Meredith students to take away from the movie / your role in creating it?

If you're dreaming about the life you want to lead, find a way to start making it a reality right now. Take the tiniest step in the direction of your dreams. You'll lead a happier, healthier, and more fulfilling life – and in doing so, you simultaneously make the world a better place. If you're interested in following Camden's filmmaking journey, sign up for free emails at camdenwatts.com. You can also follow her on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Things You Might Not Know About Alice in Wonderland

By Sarah Kiser, Staff Writer

Part of the excitement of Alice in Wonderland is that it is a complete secret from students, and only occurs every four years. Alas, that gives us so little time to enjoy it, so for one last hurrah for Alice and Co. we contacted many faculty and staff involved with the tradition to ask what interesting facts or secrets they could share. In keeping with the Alice tradition they will remain anonymous with only their stories to be known.

-Some cast members keep their roles for life. Dr. Jack Huber, retired head of the Psychology department, played the White Rabbit from 1976 until 2012. "This past Alice was the first one in almost forty years that didn't have him

in it!"

-Roles in Alice must be handed down from the previous performer to the next generation.

-Most of the leading Alice roles begin rehearsing a couple of weeks prior to the first show. Everyone begins in earnest the week before and comes together every night the week of the run.

-The cast members of Alice put a great deal of effort towards changing the original script to suit the times. Some prefer to adlib, and others plan thoughtfully. During the week many changes were made because something they found, funny (i.e. the

Cat "photobombed" a "selfie" with the Duchess and Alice) didn't work out timing wise and had to be cut. The Duchess said "Some characters, like Donald Trump, were perfect given the current political climate!"

-Characters like the cards and fairies, with many dances to choreograph, have complicated rehearsals, which are more challenging to keep secret.

-Some actors switch roles over the years. A main character from this year's Alice used to play the Gardener with her two children.

-Now, with social media it is increasingly more challenging to keep

the secret. The White Knight said "I understand there were pics and stories everywhere on social media once the first performances happened this past week. And I don't see any way to prevent that development."

Alice herself said "keeping the performance a secret from students is part of the fun. I think students enjoy making guesses about the performers and seeing if they are right. Of course, as the performance gets closer, sometimes people slip up in hallway conversations and call each other by their characters' names, but on the whole I think we do a pretty good job of saying "Shhh!" and keeping our secrets."

