

Writing At The Centre

By Katherine Wasiel



Undertaking the Fishbowl Residency at QWC was an interesting and insightful experience. After ten weeks of visualising and writing a screenplay, I found completing 120 pages challenging yet highly rewarding.

Previously, I had only written small scenes and a short film as an actor in Sydney. Before starting the residency, I developed a clear plot outline for my screenplay, *Discovery of Her*. Taking a screenwriting course with AFTRS in Sydney gave me the skills I needed to develop this.

Discovery of Her is an adventure story about a palaeontologist named Mona. She discovers a new species of dinosaur fossils in Winton, Queensland. However, her professor plans to steal the fossils and sell them to a private collector in Brisbane. During the reclamation of her discovery, Mona falls in love with a town planner, Bill. Together, they overcome a dark past and are enlightened to a brighter future with the help of an ancient spirit.

By using resources from the State Library of Queensland, I collated visual references that refined my vision of potential scenes—photographs from the outback town of Winton and the city of Brisbane. With further research into researching academic papers and books from QWC and the

State Library resources, I chose to set the story in 1970s Queensland as it was a time of political and economic turmoil. My FishBowl mentor, Sandra Makaresz, was especially accommodating in helping me to authenticate this time and place.

Receiving feedback in general was valuable throughout the residency. I had a large notebook to handwrite all of Sandra's invaluable feedback. This process steadied my thoughts, so her feedback stuck with me more when I wrote. A particularly practical piece of feedback was that while my dialogue was good, the characters had room to grow in complexity. So, to play to my strengths, I wrote out conversations between the characters and let organic lines of dialogue come into play. Many of these lines were then implemented into the script.

The FishBowl residency also pushed me to adapt. Usually, I like to take inspiration from everyday moments of people interacting with their surroundings. However, COVID limited the number of patrons coming through the library, so I had to focus internally instead and think deeply about memories of people and places. One particular memory I connected with that helped me relate to the palaeontology aspect of the screenplay, was my own personal experience in the science

field. Having completed a Bachelor of Science majoring in Geology at UQ early in my career, I worked out in the field on Groote Eylandt, NT and Moranbah, Qld. This interesting and often lonely experience made me realise just how few women work in that kind of industry, and how their voices often go unheard. I hope to give a voice to those women through my main character, Mona.

Finally, I'd like to thank everyone at QWC, especially to Sandra Makaresz who edited the screenplay. Without her, it wouldn't be completed to the best of my ability. She taught me that specificity and authenticity was key to an excellent screenplay. I hope to take this advice with me into the future as a screenwriter.

Kat Wasiel is an emerging visual writer, with a focus on unique storytelling. She grew up in Brisbane and has lived in both Sydney and New York City. With a film and theatre background, she enjoys developing three dimensional characters that deliver crackling dialogue. Spending time in nature recharges her mind, body, and spirit, to develop new creative ideas for visual storytelling. Kat is currently completing a Masters Degree at UQ, which involves both writing and business disciplines. She aspires to be a unique visual storyteller across the Film, TV, and digital media industries.

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