

Nikki Appino

Writer/Director/Producer

Nikki Appino is an award-winning media and theater artist. As a director, writer, and producer, Appino has taken on subjects ranging from religion and sports to American history and pop culture. She has received numerous awards including the National Endowment for the Arts directing fellowship. As a freelance documentary producer, Appino specializes in all forms of nonfiction entertainment. As a theatre-maker, each of her original works has their own singular style but running through them are contemporary currents and a human-scale approach to epic subjects.

Appino began her training as a writer and director at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts' Experimental Theater Program. Her teachers included Anne Bogart, Richard Schechter, and Mary Overlie. She later moved to Seattle, where she began her directing career at such west coast venues as The Empty Space, Portland Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Rep, New City Theatre, On the Boards and the Northwest New Works Festival.

In 1991, Appino was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts directing fellowship. She returned to New York City to work on Joanne Akalatis's production of *Henry IV Part One & Two* at the Public Theater.

Appino returned to Seattle in 1992 and founded the company House of Dames to develop and produce original theater works. She wrote and directed the play *Subrosa* with Kristen Newbom, and adapted and directed *Dark Night of Souls* and her own original work, *Lazarus*. In 1995, Nikki produced her first two films, the short works *Threshold* and *Thibadeaux Sally*, which played to festival audiences in Seattle, San Francisco, and New York City.

From 1998 to 2004, House of Dames produced one original work each year, among them *Invisible Ink*, *Before the Comet Comes*, and the acclaimed *Djinn*, described as having "a power far beyond words" by *American Theater Magazine*. In 2000, House of Dames took over a decommissioned naval base and built a roller derby track from the ground up for *Rain City Rollers*, a musical set in the 1930s and based on the myth of Orpheus. Performed on roller skates, this highly acclaimed extravaganza had an extended run and played to sold-out crowds.

In 2003, acclaimed composer and singer-songwriter Robin Holcomb selected Appino to direct *O, Say a Sunset*, a multimedia stage show based on the life and letters of environmentalist Rachel Carson. The show traveled to five major US cities.

In 2004, Appino returned New York City and began working as a freelance producer and production manager for major media outlets on projects ranging from educational films to weekly television series. She worked with Triple Threat Television as a supervising producer on *dLifeTV* for LifeMed Media and CNBC and, working under the noted executive producer Thom Beers, co-produced *Dead Tenants* for Discovery/TLC. In addition to her commercial work, Nikki independently produced and directed *White Tara*, a one-hour film piece documenting a lecture by a Tibetan Buddhist lama, Gelek Rimpoche.

Under the Appino Productions banner, Nikki is currently touring two documentaries — *The American Rimpoche: A Tibetan Lama in the Twenty-first Century*, about the coming of Tibetan Buddhism to the West, and *A Girl's Gotta Ride* about women in the rodeo circuit. She is also developing a new performance piece, *Club Diamond* with Choreographer/Performer Saori Tsukada, a transmedia project about the dark side titled, *Hell's A Fable*, and a feature-length documentary about Willow Grove Amusement Park titled *Tilt-A-Whirl*.