

INT. WOMEN'S CENTRE OF CALGARY. DAY.

Five young women sit around a table at the Women's Centre of Calgary. The interviewer and Women's Centre volunteer, DEBORAH, is thrilled that the members of Prairie Kitten Productions are going to be Artists in Residence at the Centre!

VANESSA WENZEL, ELAINE YANG, CAYLEY WREGGIT, DANELLE WHITE, and SIOBHAN COONEY founded Prairie Kitten Productions, or PKP, when they finished their degrees at the University of Calgary in 2017. They've completed three short films, are working with Herland to develop further film projects, and are producing for theatre.

Cayley, Danelle, Elaine, and Vanessa will be in residence at the Women's Centre, a role that fits their mandate of inspiring themselves and the local community, celebrating art by women, and acknowledging and embracing the growing diversity in our community.

DEBORAH

It must have taken courage to start your own film production company when you're still in your early 20s. What prompted this big move?

ELAINE

(laughing)

Vanessa was faced with a ton of rejections.

VANESSA

From Bell Media, from SAIT, from Storyhive.

CAYLEY

Circumstances weren't shining brightly on us, so we decided to make our own circumstances.

VANESSA

There were always guys getting together on weekends, making stupid movies. When you start you're just terrible and you have to accept that.

CAYLEY

There's something really beautiful about being terrible.

VANESSA

There's something about men, they forgive themselves easily. Women think, 'why did I even try?' Men say, 'who cares, I had fun and I learned a lot of stuff.'

ELAINE

We had no idea what we were doing. We had to Google every step of the way.

VANESSA

(laughing)

When we started to raise funds, we wondered, 'how do we make other people believe that we know what we're doing?'

CAYLEY

That was a big moment. That made it real.

VANESSA

Accepting support is scary. We had to think, 'thank you for helping us. I'm not going to burst into tears and feel like I owe you for the rest of my life; I'm just going to accept.'

DEBORAH

You've had remarkable success and have been so productive for people who had "no idea" what you were doing. Why do you think that is?

DANELLE

We collaborate well and we all have different skills.

VANESSA

I'm very introverted and don't like talking to people. So I just get Cayley to talk to people!

DANELLE

We trusted each other. We have an appreciation for everybody's ideas.

DEBORAH

What has it been like to be young artists in Calgary?

VANESSA

We think, to an extent, that Calgary might be better than Toronto or Vancouver because it's smaller and there's more access to mentors.

VANESSA

And there's that entrepreneurial spirit.

CAYLEY

All those independent projects in bigger cities are like white noise. Here, you get attention.

ELAINE

As a woman, you get more recognition and support than in a bigger city.

DEBORAH

How could the city and our culture in general help women artists?

VANESSA

Provide grants to women-centered initiatives. Right now we're working with the Herland Initiative, and they have support from Telus Storyhive and CSIF but not from the city.

CAYLEY

Yeah, give us money! That's a good answer.

DANELLE

Start to fund projects that support female ideals.

CAYLEY

It's also a good idea to get everyone you're working with in a room and see, who are we working with?

DANELLE

In terms of gender and diversity.

DEBORAH

What are your goals for the Women's Centre residency?

VANESSA

To inspire people and share our skills.

DANELLE

Getting that opportunity to exchange your knowledge lets you understand what you know, and learn--see more colours in the rainbow of knowledge.

GROUP

Ooh, rainbow of knowledge./Good one!

DEBORAH

Can you tell me about some women who inspire you as people and as artists?

VANESSA

We all said our moms! We're all very strong women and I think that comes from having a strong background and a role model like our mothers.

CAYLEY

Can I say you guys?

ELAINE

I was thinking the same thing!

VANESSA

Also Zoe Kazan, Melissa McCarthy, Elizabeth 1 because she refused to marry that guy--she was

independent. We admire people who aren't afraid to climb the tower of testosterone.

GROUP

Val Planche/ Val Campbell/ Valmai Goggin/ Jay McFarlane/ Dawn McCaugherty/ Sandi Somers/ Rhonda Fiselki.

DEBORAH

I think those are all my questions. Do you have any questions you've always wanted to be asked?

VANESSA

(laughing)

If we were in an 80s high-school movie, what archetypes would we be?

ELAINE

I'd be the Asian one.

CAYLEY

I'd be the sweet one.

DANELLE

Vanessa is the outdoorsy one.

VANESSA

Because I dress like a tree?

DANELLE

Vanessa is the speak-your-mind one.

DEBORAH

One last question. What does feminism mean to you?

VANESSA

We talked about this and we think: equality, peace, equal opportunity. Not having to fight for every step. Knowing that being ourselves is enough. And a million other things!