

Spotlight On Passion - Emily Skopov

Writer, Director and Producer of *Novel Romance*

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300 Packs a Surprising One, Two Punch

Stills from *Novel Romance*.



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Emily Skopov was too shy to go into the entertainment industry. Sure she was performing and writing at a very young age. Sure she lived in books, movies and television. Sure she dreamed of making movies. But with no family, friends or contacts in the entertainment business, it seemed like filmmaking was destined to remain just that – a dream.

However, through the encouragement of a few professors, Skopov's talent and passion for writing was poked, prodded and pushed from a small "on-the-side" inking into a possible full-time profession. Write to pay the bills? Can you really do that? Yes, yes you can.

Becoming a television writer was a fortuitous occurrence for Skopov. Filmmaking was her real dream, her ultimate passion and goal. But in the hellish world of Hollywood, when financial security comes a knocking, it is very hard to say no. While making her way through seasons of *Farscape*, *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *Andromeda*, Skopov enjoyed the speed, turnover and financial stability of television . . . but knew she needed to quit, needed to break out, needed to pursue filmmaking. If she didn't, it would only be a matter of time before she was fully drawn into the realm of TV and her filmmaking dreams faded into mere memory.

Thus, during a hiatus from *Andromeda*, Emily wrote the script *Novel Romance* with writing pal Eddie Richey. Written primarily to entertain themselves, Skopov and Richey centered *Novel Romance* around pregnancy, around the baby fever that seems to currently possess nearly every Hollywood power couple. Skopov and Richey sought to create a female driven film focused on smart, funny, genuine women who were working on finding happiness, love and themselves. At the end of hiatus, the duo put the finished script away, moving it to the back burner as the crush of the TV world descended once more.

When Skopov finished her work on *Andromeda* and decided it was at last time to make a movie, *Novel Romance* was ready and waiting. Creativity was forced to take a back seat to business savvy as the expected difficulty of financing this labor of love took center stage. Skopov made phone calls, pestered family, friends and business associates, exploited all possible connections, begged, pleaded. She created an investor package and sent it out to every connection she had. Refusing to take no for an answer, Skopov covered her bases again and again and again, determined to emerge from financial hell into production heaven.

Her persistence paid off – With a good script and solid, meaty characters, great actors were drawn to the script. And with actors attached, finances began flowing a bit more freely. As the project beginning to lift off the ground, validation, confidence and passion flourished. Skopov was blessed with a skilled and passionate crew beyond her wildest imaginations. Inspired by this handful of people who would work so hard and so long for so little, Skopov was able to remain energized and enthusiastic on set - despite a growing pregnancy. Surprisingly enough, the pregnancy turned out to be an excellent motivational tool, bringing a contagious sense of camaraderie, inspiration and energy when fatigue and stress threatened to overwhelm the production. Creating a tight knit community, the cast and crew bonded together to make the production a rousing success.

Now, with *Novel Romance* finished and making its rounds on the festival circuit, Skopov has made her filmmaking dreams a reality. The experience has taught her plenty and she advises all aspiring filmmakers to be prepared for difficulty. No one will simply hand out favors. You have to try. You have to struggle. You have to make it happen. There are only a certain number of jobs and if you are good, you just have to stick around long enough for your number to be called. You must make peace with yourself and your struggle. It's a hellish lifestyle but if it's your dream, you can't give up.

Novel Romance

Novel Romance photos courtesy of www.novelromancethemovie.com.

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