

6 February 2018

Dear Committee Members,

I have been a director of studio feature films and network television for over 20 years. I am also an alumna of the USC School of Cinematic Arts, and a full time professor at the school. I have worked closely with Elizabeth Jaeleigh Davis for over five years and can think of no candidate better suited for the HBOAccess Directing Fellowship.

I have watched Elizabeth cultivate her talents over the years and grow into the filmmaker she is now. Starting as my Cornell University intern in 2012, I handpicked Elizabeth from an overwhelming pool of 80 candidates. She was a standout—her talents are multifaceted and were evident from the very beginning. Her professionalism and enthusiasm combined with her keen aesthetic sensibility impressed me, and it was a no-brainer to hire her to assist me, both on set and off, on numerous TV and feature projects over the years. Most recently, I hired Elizabeth to assist me in putting together a pitch for a Freeform pilot, and I booked the job a few days later. Elizabeth has handily demonstrated her ability to capture the essence of a script and infuse it with fresh ideas and sensibilities that bring it new life.

I also had the pleasure of teaching Elizabeth in my summer workshop, “Directing Actors”, in 2012 through the volunteer based “Cornell in Hollywood” program. Her short film was far above the typical skill level of the intro students I teach at USC; the technical sophistication of the piece allowed her actors to truly shine. Her direction speaks from the heart and she infuses real passion into her storytelling. In 2016, she stepped in as my TA to the new crop of students, sharing her wisdom and skills she’s learned over the years as a filmmaker herself. Elizabeth’s maturity, work ethic, and natural talent make her a wonderful teacher (and student), and is a kind person and very inclusive collaborator. She is a true asset to the Cornell network, and has developed active and lasting connections with her peers and members of the industry.

And that brings me to now — Elizabeth is fresh off an international festival tour of her beautiful short film, LA PETITE MORT. Set to excerpts from Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde*, the film has a gleeful melodramatic quality that is simultaneously sexy, funny, and terrifying. Elizabeth pitched the film to me as an allegorical journey about the messiness of first times. It demonstrates her courage as an artist to make such a personal, unconventional work. It’s also gorgeous to look at, technically impressive, and features excellent performances. Elizabeth is a self-starter, gracefully leading the charge on her projects from from inception to completion, with unwavering excellence and determination.

Elizabeth’s drive to create and keen interest in human nature are tremendous assets to her future as a director. I’ve seen Elizabeth grow so much into the strong artist she is now, and know that she can handle anything thrown her way. Her artistic eye, drive for excellence, and passion for the craft will allow her to continue to grow and create

fantastic work. For these reasons, I believe she is the perfect candidate for the HBOAccess Directing Fellowship.

Women are tremendously underrepresented in film and television directing, so I feel that when I come across a stellar young woman with a strong world view and great potential to represent us, we have to emphatically support her!

Please do not hesitate to call me if I can be of any other help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Rosenbaum', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Elizabeth Allen Rosenbaum
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