

# PLANET in FOCUS

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL

## 2020 Eco-Film Lab: Pre-Production

Instructor: Kathy Schultz

Kathy is a filmmaker interested in non fiction storytelling-doc, vr and animation- whatever lends itself to the story. In this workshop we will be covering documentary filmmaking and exploring stop motion animation as a style or tool for your film.

**Step 1:** Watch a Sea Turtle Story by Kathy Schultz [https://www.nfb.ca/film/sea\\_turtle\\_story/](https://www.nfb.ca/film/sea_turtle_story/)

### **Step 2:** OVERVIEW OF FILMMAKING PROCESS

- Development (Writing Script/Outline)
- Pre-Production (Prep)
- Production (Shoot)
- Post-Production (Picture & Sound Edit)

### **Step 3:** References

“Before we dive into that why don’t we start with some examples of student work?”

Save Water (paper cutout) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00UIhqWoL1M>

### PAST ECO-FILM LAB STUDENT FILMS

“Hear The Gears” (doc with interview)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfRAnxqXHbA&list=PLX6TBV-Ob\\_ZF8yDsKsGCiHpglCmei8h0B&index=13](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfRAnxqXHbA&list=PLX6TBV-Ob_ZF8yDsKsGCiHpglCmei8h0B&index=13)

“Laptop’s Life”- (Stop motion)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RqJs-gF4Ho&list=PLX6TBV-Ob\\_ZGc0JYv9xi7qMi\\_Ptb9H9ik&index=14](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RqJs-gF4Ho&list=PLX6TBV-Ob_ZGc0JYv9xi7qMi_Ptb9H9ik&index=14)

“Overfishing” (stop motion)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqwVv0vqWf4&list=PLX6TBV-Ob\\_ZF8yDsKsGCiHpglCmei8h0B&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqwVv0vqWf4&list=PLX6TBV-Ob_ZF8yDsKsGCiHpglCmei8h0B&index=3)

“Upcycle Song” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4FcEp3B5Zc&list=PLX6TBV-Ob\\_ZGc0JYv9xi7qMi\\_Ptb9H9ik&index=15](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4FcEp3B5Zc&list=PLX6TBV-Ob_ZGc0JYv9xi7qMi_Ptb9H9ik&index=15) “I Wonder” (poem)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIKAdlfiI6E&list=PLX6TBV-Ob\\_ZGc0JYv9xi7qMi\\_Ptb9H9ik&index=5](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIKAdlfiI6E&list=PLX6TBV-Ob_ZGc0JYv9xi7qMi_Ptb9H9ik&index=5)

#### **Step 4: PRE-PRODUCTION ELEMENTS**

- Planning/Scheduling and Storyboarding
- Brainstorming / developing the story ideas
- Deciding genre
- Preliminary Research
- Mapping out the story / writing a script
- Interview techniques

#### **1. DECIDE STORY, SUBJECT MATTER AND GENRE**

Do you have curriculum you need to incorporate? A theme?

#### **2. RESEARCH**

Create a List. Based on your research, start creating a list of potential characters/interviews, basic storylines, areas of potential conflict and emotion. Ask yourself, “what’s at the heart of this story and how do I “show” that visually?”

#### **3. MAP OUT THE STORY OUTLINE AND SCRIPT**

Write a “shooting script” (pre-script/outline). Often with documentaries, the script can’t really be written until after the footage has been shot and you start piecing the story together based on what you “discovered” with your camera. However, writing an outline at the beginning can be an invaluable guide to point you in the right direction, especially to be able to look back as a reference when the chaos of shooting can get you off track. There WILL come that moment in the process when you say, “What was I thinking!?” Get Creative. Think about some unique and creative ways you can spice up your movie and give it that “Wow” factor. “How to write a script” creatively involves adding special elements such as stop motion, time-lapse, animation/cartoons, recreations, etc. If your film is stop motion, this actually has to be planned very well. You will need to stick to a script, a storyboard and plan timing.

#### **4. PLAN YOUR INTERVIEWS**

How Do You Prepare for a Documentary Interview?

<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-conduct-a-documentary-interview-top-interview-techniques-and-tips-for-documentary-films-and-tv>

- Conduct a pre-interview with your subject (Phone or in person), you will become more familiar with their story and they will become more comfortable with you.
- Be aware of your interview setting. Will it be natural light or lighting set up? What kind of background?
- Determine your camera placement. Traditionally, documentary subjects in a sit-down interview look at the interviewer and not the camera, so that their eye lines are slightly to the side of the lens. Sometimes there will be two different camera angles—a close up and a medium or wide shot—so that your editor will have options in the editing room.

## 5. THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Don't start with the cameras rolling, start by getting the basics
- Ask permission based questions
- Don't always fill in their pauses
- Put your subjects in touch with pain or their hopes and dreams
- Use other peoples labels
- Ask open ended questions rather than leading questions
- Repeat their words if you want more information
- Remain flexible as the conversation develops. It's ok to go off script even if you have a check list. If they can't answer a question, circle back later.
- Don't interrupt even if they're running on. Look down or give body language signals so they might wrap up their story.
- Have the subject repeat your question to help provide context to their answer. ie: "when was the first time you went to a film festival" have your subject begin their answer by saying "The first time I went to a film festival..."
- Take breaks if necessary.

**Eco-Film Lab #2: Production will take place on Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at  
Trinity Square Video, 401 Richmond St. W., Suite 121, Toronto**

In advance, please look through and brainstorm on Step 5:

### **Step 5: FILMMAKING IN THE CLASSROOM**

- Divide roles and responsibilities (actor, interviewer, interviewee, sound recording, videographer, props, setting, continuity, directing, production managing)
- Curriculum connections - Find subject matter to include in your script or storyline within English, Geography, History, Social Studies, Drama, etc
- Classroom scheduling- How much time will you have for the project? Can preparation be divided up as homework?
- Testing & learning the equipment - What kind of equipment do you have in the school?