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*- David Lynch, Academy Award®-nominated writer/director*

**“A heartfelt and riveting personal documentary.”**

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**A FILM BY RACHEL FLEISCHER**

# WITHOUT A HOME

**She wanted to understand their lives. They changed her life forever.**



breaking  
glass  
pictures

Ivy Hill Productions presents:

# WITHOUT A HOME

Directed by Rachel Fleischer

Produced by Joanna Adler and Rachel Fleischer

Running Time: 74 minutes  
www.withoutahomefilm.com

## PRESS NOTES



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## ENDORSEMENTS

“Rachel Fleischer paints the story of the homeless with her giant heart and mind” -**David Lynch, Academy Award-nominated writer/director** (*Mulholland Drive, Twin Peaks*)

"WITHOUT A HOME is a poignant and unflinchingly honest film that finds hope in the most unlikely of places." –**Kate Walsh, award-winning actress** (*Private Practice, Grey’s Anatomy*)

“Rachel Fleischer has a focused heart and fearless compassion, and to experience these stories through her eyes is not only riveting, but it also awakens your own sense of compassion, and I can't think of anything more important that art can do.” -**Fiona Apple, Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter**

"WITHOUT A HOME is profoundly moving and deeply humane. Using her ample skills as a filmmaker and her generous and fearless heart, Rachel Fleischer tells a story where there are no easy answers or quick judgments. The viewer will see parts of herself in the most unlikely of people. With this film, Rachel builds bridges between communities that may be geographically close, but never have touched before." - **Amy Brenneman, multiple Golden Globe and Emmy Award-nominated actress** (*Private Practice, Judging Amy*)

“A heartfelt and riveting personal documentary.” -**Alexander Payne, Academy Award-winning writer/director** (*Sideways, About Schmidt*)

“The young filmmaker Rachel Fleischer is our Jacob Riis, the photographer who in 1890 spurred the conscience of a nation into social action when he documented the rank poverty of immigrants in New York tenements. In WITHOUT A HOME, Fleischer has made a compassionate and urgent film that forces us awake to the on-going human drama of homelessness, addiction and mental illness, here played out in the desperate urban margins of L.A. As we watch young Fleischer abandon journalism and become a passionate activist, we at last meet the gaze of the damaged human beings most of us walk past without a glance.” -**Robin Swicord, Academy Award-nominated writer/director** (*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, Memoirs of a Geisha*)

“A thrilling, moving, deeply affecting work where the filmmaker's heart and compassion are as great as the subjects she shines her light on. WITHOUT A HOME is a thrilling act of humanism, and must be seen.” –**Brad Silberling writer/director** (*Lemony Snicket’s A Series of Unfortunate Events, Moonlight Mile*)

“I walked out of that film thinking everyone I know needs to see this.” - **Derrick Ashong, Host of “The Derrick Ashong Experience”, on SIRIUS XM's Oprah Radio**

“Homeless” is such a cheap and easy word to throw around, but it takes a film like this to crack its conceptual armor and confront you nakedly as a slap. There’s something indomitable about these souls, whether they win or ultimately fail in their quest to be healthy. They grab your heart if you’ve still got one and make you admit that they are fully human and could, with tweaks of circumstance, be you. The fact that the filmmaker crosses the line of observer and becomes a participant in their lives is a testimonial both to her powers of compassion and intimacy, and the mute integrity of their need. If you fear that you might be taking your life for granted, see this film and then reevaluate.”

**-Peter Coyote, Emmy Award-winning actor, author, narrator and former Chairman of the California Arts Council**

## **Breaking Glass Pictures to Release Documentary on Life in Los Angeles for those ‘Without A Home’**

August 3, 2011 – Philadelphia, PA — Breaking Glass Pictures will release director Rachel Fleischer’s documentary “Without A Home” on DVD November 1 (SRP \$24.99). The award-winning, deeply personal film captures the lives of people on the streets of the City of Angels.

Synopsis: Filmmaker Rachel Fleischer spent four years creating this extraordinary documentary that enters the lives of six homeless individuals in her hometown of Los Angeles. The film’s subjects include families in temporary housing, a street performer who depends on his banjo-playing for income, and a heroin-addicted man living on Skid Row – an area of the city that contains one of the largest homeless populations in the U.S. Intertwined with each tale is the story of Fleischer herself, as she attempts to walk the fine line between telling the stories of her subjects and helping those in need.

As the film's intimate and powerful stories confront our preconceived notions regarding homelessness, Fleischer's journey unflinchingly reveals the challenges and triumphs that arise when we choose to help those without a home.

“Rachel Fleischer paints the story of the homeless with her giant heart and mind” -**David Lynch, Academy Award-nominated writer/director (*Mulholland Drive, Twin Peaks*)**

"WITHOUT A HOME is a poignant and unflinchingly honest film that finds hope in the most unlikely of places." –**Kate Walsh, award-winning actress (*Private Practice, Grey’s Anatomy*)**

DVD extras will include a recording of the song “Without A Home,” expert interviews, three featurettes on the making of the film, and deleted scenes.

For more information on “Without A Home,” including requests for screeners, final DVDs, or interviews with the director, please contact: [Justin@bgpics.com](mailto:Justin@bgpics.com).

[www.BreakingGlassPictures.com](http://www.BreakingGlassPictures.com)  
[www.Facebook.com/BreakingGlassPictures](http://www.Facebook.com/BreakingGlassPictures)  
[www.Twitter.com/BreakingGlassPx](http://www.Twitter.com/BreakingGlassPx)

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## Company Bio

Founded in 2009 by Richard Wolff and Richard Ross – two entertainment industry veterans - Breaking Glass Pictures is a cutting edge, globally connected media company based in Philadelphia, PA. It focuses on the distribution of films and T.V. programs that push the envelope.

With its three film labels: Breaking Glass Pictures, Vicious Circle Films, and QC Cinema, the company takes a targeted approach to the mainstream, Horror and LGBT genres. Including DVD and VOD releases, Breaking Glass also takes many of their titles overseas, acting as international sales agent at film markets and negotiations, with strong ties in Australia, the UK, France, Germany, and Asia. Thirty of the Breaking Glass titles will be represented at the Cannes Film Festival this month.

Highlights from the Breaking Glass film roster include the critically acclaimed *Easier with Practice* (starring *The Hurt Locker*'s Brian Geraghty), the Oscar-shortlisted documentary *The Lottery*, the cult horror film *Someone's Knocking at the Door*, a re-release of the shocking *Taxi zum Klo*, and gay festival hit *The Big Gay Musical*. Recent titles include the Mindy Cohn gay hit *Violet Tendencies*, the dark horror documentary *Cropsey*, and the latest Henry Jaglom masterpiece *Queen of the Lot*.

Since opening their doors, Breaking Glass Pictures has released more titles (averaging four a month) than any other Philadelphia-based distributor. With a packed release schedule through the rest of 2011, the company is poised to expand and gain notoriety as it moves towards its second anniversary. Fans of movies that push the envelope have a new, dependable source for quality cinema, and thanks to the company's commitment to Philadelphia, the film industry may have to put the city on the map as fertile ground for a new film market.

## SYNOPSIS

### 3 LINE SYNOPSIS:

A young woman's desire to understand her connection to the homeless takes her on an extraordinary and unexpected four year journey into the lives of several homeless individuals and reveals the challenges and triumphs that arise when we choose to help those WITHOUT A HOME.

### MEDIUM SYNOPSIS (120 word):

Growing up in Los Angeles, a city whose homeless population exceeds 90,000, filmmaker Rachel Fleischer always felt a deep connection to the homeless. Her desire to understand that connection takes twenty-three year old Fleischer on an extraordinary four-year journey into the lives of six homeless individuals and families as they struggle to find homes, get clean, and survive. Intertwined with each tale is the story of Fleischer herself, as she attempts to walk the fine line between telling the stories of her subjects and helping those in need.

As the film's intimate and powerful stories confront our preconceived notions regarding homelessness, Fleischer's journey unflinchingly reveals the challenges and triumphs that arise when we choose to help those WITHOUT A HOME.

### LONG SYNOPSIS (275 word):

Growing up in Los Angeles, a city whose homeless population is well over 90,000, filmmaker Rachel Fleischer was surrounded by homelessness her entire life. At the age of 23, Fleischer felt compelled to explore her deep childhood connection to the homeless; a group of people who were so close in proximity yet felt a world away. What followed was a life-changing journey.

Not knowing where to begin and without any real plan in place, Fleischer simply got in her car and began driving. Stopping to talk to any homeless person who would participate, she began collecting dozens of personal stories from across Los Angeles.

Over time, Fleischer's various interviews crystallized into meaningful relationships with a handful of people: Aric, a bluegrass banjo player trying to make it in Hollywood; Tina, a schizophrenic woman living outside a supermarket; Mike, a recovering heroin addict working passionately to help other addicts; Tracy, Flor and their two kids moving from one motel to the next; and Gilbert, a heroin addict living on skid row trying to get clean in order to regain custody of his two young daughters.

Fleischer quickly found herself getting involved in the lives of her subjects in ways she never would have imagined, as they began asking her for help, money and support. Wanting to help, yet struggling to maintain her personal boundaries, Fleischer comes to understand the complexity of these people's lives, but also the power she has to make a difference.

As the film's intimate and powerful stories confront our preconceived notions regarding homelessness, Fleischer's journey unflinchingly reveals the challenges and triumphs that arise when we choose to help those WITHOUT A HOME.

## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

It started for me many years ago, when I was a little girl. Growing up in Los Angeles, riding around in the back of my parents' car, I always noticed homeless people living on the streets. I didn't know why they were out there – cold, hungry and alone -- and I was on the other side: with food to eat, a bed to sleep in, protected by the love of my parents. Despite our immediate differences I felt a strong connection to these people whom I had never met.

As I got older the connection I had felt since childhood intensified. When I was 23 years old I took out a loan and bought a video camera. I spent every weekend on the streets, doing interviews with any homeless person that would talk to me.

As a young woman setting out on this journey alone I had to set some ground rules: my interviews would take place on or close to a major street, and I would approach each individual without my camera first—just to make sure I was comfortable with them and they were comfortable with me. Most of the time I was relying on pure instinct, knowing that I would never get what I wanted unless I abandoned common sense and stopped listening to the neurotic voice of my mother in my head.

I explained to these people that I was here to help them tell their stories, to give them a chance to communicate with the rest of society in a way I felt they had not been afforded. But I too was curious and came with my own questions as I tried to understand how these people got into such desperate and heartbreaking situations.

As I did more interviews, my instincts got better—but my desire to explore the darker and more dangerous areas of homelessness also grew.

Skid Row was a part of Los Angeles I had only heard of. I knew it was unsafe and that I would be pushing my luck venturing there alone. A 50-block radius located in the heart of downtown with the highest concentration of homeless people in Los Angeles was probably not a place I should visit alone.

I was fortunate enough to meet the Los Angeles Times Journalist Steve Lopez, who had been writing extraordinary articles about the homeless living on Skid Row. I asked him for some advice about how I could safely go about filming people in the area. He put me in touch with Orlando Ward at the Midnight Mission located on Skid Row, and so began the next chapter of my extraordinary journey.

Skid Row was unlike anything I had ever seen. Driving down there for the first time felt as if I had descended into hell. The streets of my native city resembled a third world country. There were no civilians. The sidewalks were overrun with the homeless. People slept in tents, on the streets, in the sewer. They were smoking crack and shooting heroin in broad daylight.

There were mentally ill people wandering around helplessly lost in the haze of their disease, without friends or family to guide them. Despite the apocalyptic landscape, I found myself completely captivated and enthralled and something inside of me changed that day.

I began meeting incredible people on Skid Row who showed me the way and the lay of the land. I encountered people in such extreme situations that I had only read about, but never imagined to be living in my city. There were people suffering from mental illness, addiction, extreme physical handicaps, various forms of abuse, people who had been dealt unimaginable circumstances; they had all ended up here on Skid Row.

Despite the wide spectrum of problems that brought all of them to the streets it was their similarities I found myself consumed with.

They were all suffering deeply in ways I had never known, each of them in a place where they could no longer help themselves. It dawned on me that we live in a society, and a country, where we tend to look down on those who are helpless, those who are in need. We say that if people want help badly enough they can get it. As I began to learn more about these people's lives and hear their stories, I saw that so many of them were battling deep psychological wounds and physical limitations that prevented them from getting out of their respective situations on their own. This idea that everyone can help themselves if they want it badly enough was quickly shattered for me.

Over time I found that the plethora of interviews I had initially been doing had crystallized into meaningful relationships with a handful of homeless people throughout my city. I went back to Skid Row every weekend and continued following other people I had met throughout the greater Los Angeles area.

As I got to know these people more intimately they began asking me for help and I did whatever I could to help them. Sometimes it was easy. Sometimes it was physically taxing or emotionally excruciating. I was in over my head but it felt like the only thing I was supposed to be doing.

Without even realizing it I had developed meaningful relationships with the people whose lives I was documenting. I had unknowingly presented myself with an extraordinary opportunity to allow my own story to become intertwined with theirs. The experience has touched me and changed my life in ways for which I am eternally humbled and grateful.

## **PRODUCTION TEAM**

### **RACHEL FLEISCHER- DIRECTOR/PRODUCER**

Rachel Fleischer is a Los Angeles based director, writer, actress & photographer. Fleischer earned her Bachelor's Degree in Film at The USC School of Cinematic Arts. After graduation, she began work on her first feature film, the award-winning documentary WITHOUT A HOME. The film chronicles her personal experiences documenting the lives of the homeless in her native city.

The daughter of actor/comedian Charles Fleischer, best known as the voice of Roger Rabbit, Rachel was constantly surrounded by artists growing up and found herself, performing, playing music and directing since she was a young girl.

She recently forayed into directing music videos, helming Ariana Delawari's newest music video "We Came Home". Delawari is an Afghan-American musician on David Lynch's music label. A multidisciplinary artist herself, Fleischer is also a musician, poet, actress and photographer.

In keeping true to her activist roots, Fleischer, has recently launched a campaign called "*What Can I Do?*," to raise awareness and compassion about homelessness through art and social action.

Fleischer's Huffington Post Blog features articles and videos which also discuss homelessness and offer information and tools to help others become more informed and compassionate about the issue.

Today, Fleischer is actively writing and developing a slate of Film and Television projects for herself to direct and act in. Most recently Fleischer finished "They're With Me" a short film she wrote, directed and stars in alongside Jason Ritter, Jerry Lacy & Michael Laskin.

### **JOANNA ADLER- PRODUCER**

Joanna Adler is a LA-based independent film/television/theater producer.

Prior to going out on her own, Adler spent three years as the Vice President of Intuition Productions, an independent film and television production company. While there, she was responsible for evaluating new film and television projects as well as developing and packaging existing projects. Before joining Intuition Productions, Adler worked on the Sony Classics and John Calley film, THE JANE AUSTEN BOOK CLUB assisting the producers during filming and serving as the post-production coordinator after filming. Adler's first job in the industry was at Revelations Entertainment, Morgan Freeman's production company as the assistant to the co-founder/CEO.

While simultaneously pursuing her full time career, Adler produced both an award-winning documentary about homelessness in Los Angeles called WITHOUT A HOME and a theater show. The theater show starred a handful of young film/TV actors including Justin Chatwin (*Shameless*), Shannon Woodward (*The Riches*) and Zach Shields who was nominated for an Ovation Award for his performance. The play was directed by Jamie Wollrab and the legendary acting coach and founding member of the Actor's Studio, Sandra Seacat.

Before moving to LA, Adler worked at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center where she quickly rose through the ranks to become manager of the outpatient Thoracic Service.

Adler is actively involved in many philanthropic endeavors including serving as chairman of the board of directors for the organization, Children Mending Hearts, serving on the development committee for The Downtown Women's Center, serving as a Donate Life Ambassador for the organization One Legacy, among many others. She attended Georgetown University, Yale University and then graduated from NYU.

#### **SALLY RUBIN- EDITOR/CO-PRODUCER**

Sally Rubin, the show's Co-Producer and Editor, is a documentary filmmaker and editor based in Los Angeles. A graduate of Stanford's MA program in Documentary Film and Video, she has worked in documentary film for almost 15 years. Rubin is currently at work on "Mine: a story of friendship divided by mountains", a feature-length documentary about mountaintop removal mining and America's increasing energy consumption. Her last film, "The Last Mountain," has garnered international critical acclaim and is distributed in universities across the country. Most recently she edited "The Freedom Files," a 9-part series for the ACLU produced by Robert Greenwald and Brave New Films. Her latest editing credits include a short piece that screened at the 2007 SAG Awards in Los Angeles and Greenwald's "Iraq For Sale: The War Profiteers." Before that, she associate produced David Sutherland's 6-hour Frontline special "Country Boys" (2006).

#### **MAX GOLDBLATT- ASSOCIATE EDITOR/ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**

Max Goldblatt is a second-generation filmmaker, the son of Oscar-nominated editor and director Mark Goldblatt. Max's short film Kinetoscope was awarded High Honors at Wesleyan University and went on to play in a number of festivals including the Santa Barbara International Film Festival and the Northampton Independent Film Festival. He has directed music videos and created web content for a variety of recording artists including MGMT, Pete Yorn, Robert Francis, Sunny Levine and Hello Stranger.

## **JACQUES BRAUTBAR- COMPOSER**

You may not recognize his name, but you've heard and seen Jacques Brautbar's work on television, in magazines, on the radio and on the big screen. Born and raised in Los Angeles, Jacques began his music career at the age of 15. As a founder, guitar player, arranger and songwriter for Sony Recording artist Phantom Planet, Jacques collaborated on the band's three singles, "California", "Lonely Day" and "Big Brat." These songs soon found an audience on MTV, international radio and movies. "California" became the theme song to the hit show The O.C. Jacques left Phantom Planet in 2004 and has been working as a photographer, songwriter and composer. Jacques' first professional experience as a photographer was at the 2004 Coachella festival where he was able to shoot bands such as Radiohead, The Pixies and The Flaming Lips. Jacques hit the ground running shooting for Spin, Nylon and High Times magazines soon after. Jacques has also performed with Beck, OK Go, The Pharcyde and Jack's Mannequin. As a songwriter, Jacques has collaborated with Joe Brooks, whose song "Getting Away" was featured on radio Disney, and with Brie Larson, whose song "Coming Around" was featured in the film Hoot. The song was the lead single off of the film's soundtrack. Jacques has also written scores to several student shorts and the Who is Bill Beall, an official selection at the Philadelphia film festival in 2007. As a writer for HUM, Serpent and Spank music houses, Jacques has the opportunity to compose for the biggest names on the market: McDonald's, Sears, Lexus and the NHL just to name a few.

## **JOSHUA HOMNICK- CO-PRODUCER/STORY CONSULTANT/ART DIRECTOR**

Success as a break-dancer and teenage actor on Chilean TV in the 80's, and a hopeless addiction to photographic experimentation, sent Joshua Homnick packing for film school in New York City. Homnick hadn't studied film long before MTV scooped him up and gave poetic license to his playful visual sense and knack for break-beat editing. While at MTV he directed segments for numerous pilots and shows like House of Style (with Cindy Crawford) and MTV news. In addition, he created and directed on-air promo content for the launch of MTV Latino.

Homnick's first exposure to the world of advertising came via Wieden+Kennedy, one of the top ad agencies in the world. W+K tapped Homnick to work his laser honed musical and editorial sensibility for TokyoLab, their newly launched record label... and then immediately put him to work on an experimental Nike ad campaign for the Japanese market.

Since then, Homnick has directed spots in the global market with Ogilvy & Mather, JWT, Lowe, Satchi & Satchi and Story WorldWide for mega-clients like eBay, Samsung, American Apparel, Lexus, Mars.

Just a few years ago Homnick was commissioned by ResFest to shoot a series of short films for Panasonic cell-phones. He returned to his childhood home of Peru to shoot the series. He fell in love, got married and re-established himself there with the mission to

bridge Peruvian myth and lore with Hollywood. Just last year he shot six commercials in Peru for such clients as Nestlé and DirecTV, gaining valuable contacts and experience in that country's burgeoning entertainment industry.

Currently, Homnick is getting ready to shoot his first feature film. A horror film set in Lima, Peru. He is also developing a TV series with Breck Eisner. And he is getting ready to launch an online entertainment site with Rainn Wilson focused on spirituality and creativity, called Soul Pancake.

## THE CHARACTERS



Mike

A recovering heroin addict who succeeds at helping others while failing to help himself



Aric

A compulsive collector and brilliant bluegrass musician



Gilbert

A homeless heroin addict determined to overcome his addiction and regain custody of his two children



Tina

A schizophrenic survivor of domestic abuse, she struggles to take care of her cat and herself



The Tracy Family

A family who is among the “hidden homeless” living in motel rooms, they are desperate to find permanent housing for their two young children



Eduardo

A Guatemalan ex-addict driven by compassion helps other addicts while maintaining his own sobriety

## PRESS



SEPTEMBER 2010

<http://www.la-confidential-magazine.com/galleries/without-a-home-screening-and-st-joseph-center-event>

**ANN TAYLOR'S  
FALL 2010  
COLLECTION PREVIEW**  
SOHO HOUSE  
WEST HOLLYWOOD  
MAY 13, 2010

PHOTOS BY  
DONATELLO SARDELLA/  
WIREIMAGE/  
GETTY IMAGES



Susie Castillo



Anna Kendrick



Eve and  
Christine Beauchamp



Julia Jones and Sophia Bush

**WITHOUT A HOME  
SCREENING AND  
ST. JOSEPH  
CENTER EVENT**  
SMOGSHOPPE  
CULVER CITY  
MAY 24, 2010

PHOTOS BY  
ANGELA WEISS



Addison Timlin, Justin Chatwin  
and Joanna Adler



Jeff Lynne and  
Rachel Fleischer



Heather Taylor, Jasmin Shokrian  
and Clare Vivier

**HOLLYWOOD  
BOWL OPENING  
NIGHT GALA**  
HOLLYWOOD BOWL  
HOLLYWOOD  
JUNE 18, 2010

PHOTOS BY  
MATTHEW IMAGING/  
WIREIMAGE/  
GETTY IMAGES



Deborah Borda and  
Jean-Yves Thibaudet



Victoria Tennant



Raymundo Baltazar, Ann Rutherford, Anne Jeffreys  
and Jonathan Weedman



Adam Shankman and  
Nigel Lythgoe



# GIMME SHELTER

USING THEIR ARTISTIC TALENTS, TWO LA WOMEN HELP FOSTER AWARENESS AND INITIATE ADVOCACY

It's easy to be immune to them — clutching their cardboard signs on an interstate off-ramp, their paper cups of change rattling for your attention outside Starbucks — it's much easier to avert one's eyes and hurry past, going on with the day, relying on projected disregard so as not to become overwhelmed by them. For the nearly 25,000 people who are homeless in the city of Los Angeles, there has to be another option. Doing something positive to help them can manifest itself in many different ways. Two Los Angeles women have actualized this other option — proving that helping the homeless is applicable and necessary for all of us.



**Rachel Fleischer** has always felt a connection to the homeless. She remembers when she was just a child, riding in the car with her mom and driving past a homeless family. Seeing the suffering haunted her so much she asked her mom to drive back home to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the vagrant family. This first altruistic act foreshadowed her post-college work.

Following the completion of her film studies degree at USC, Fleischer embarked on a rather ambitious project. With no money and little help, she took to the streets with a simple, albeit slightly dangerous, objective: to interview homeless people. Working full-time, Fleischer began dedicating most of her free time to the project. When the weekend rolled around, she'd hop in her car, equipped only with a camera and an idea, and drive all over Los Angeles searching for people

willing to talk. "It was important for me to profile homelessness all over Los Angeles," says Fleischer, "not just in skid row, where people commonly think of homelessness."

The filmmaker didn't know what form the final project would take, but knew she wanted to shed light on a world so often coiled in the shadows of a city. After editing more than 185 minutes of footage into a 74-minute feature film, Fleischer completed her narrative-driven documentary in the fall of 2009.

*Without A Home* exposes a spectrum of reasons why and how people end up homeless, focusing on a handful of those who are unique in their struggles and stories. "I definitely think that drug abuse/addiction, mental illness, unemployment are reasons that people are without homes, but I wouldn't say that those are the only

cont'd

944 PICKS / **ARTFORM**

reasons. Says Fleischer, "Physical, mental and sexual abuse, lack of education, support, love and guidance lead many people down roads that make them more susceptible to job loss, mental illness, addiction, etc., and therefore less resilient."

Speaking directly into a camera propped against a car seat or held at an arm's length while in motion, Fleischer serves as narrator and tour guide as she escorts us through the outskirts of LA and into the lives of these uncommon protagonists. They genuinely trust Fleischer and, because of this trust, there is an intimacy garnished that makes it impossible for these people to become the other on whom we can pass judgement.

In a culture capitalizing on poverty porn — movies such as *Slumdog Millionaire* and *Precious* becoming successful as they subversively patronize their subjects — *Without A Home* is an accurate account of a detrimental problem plaguing our society. Fleischer not only immerses herself into the underbelly of extreme poverty, she does so without a pejorative subtext. This is the documentary's largest strength and, for that, Fleischer deserves the accolades she has received.



**Vanessa De Vargas** is an accomplished interior designer who had decided — toward the end of last year — it was time to give back to her community in the form of volunteer work. She didn't know in what form the service would shape itself, but through mutual friends and connections from her past, De Vargas became acquainted with Upward Bound House, an organization whose mission is to "eliminate homelessness among families with children in Los Angeles by providing housing, supportive services and advocacy." Since 1997, the organization has successfully placed more than 1,100 individuals, including more than 650 children.

With less than two months to prepare for its grand opening, De Vargas spearheaded a project in which 18 interior designers would decorate a former budget motel on Washington Boulevard

in Culver City. Not only did De Vargas recruit her fellow designers into the community effort, she also obtained a plethora of corporate sponsorship, such as Kohl's and Benjamin Moore, which generously supplied all the paint. De Vargas described the collaborative process as a "revolving flea market of goods," where the designers traded and re-imagined many items, which could have easily been disposed.

From the durability of the furniture to the spatial arrangement, De Vargas and the other participating designers worked within specific constraints. Each room showcases the particular decorator's aesthetic sensibility, juxtaposing cutting-edge design with monetary and architectural limitations. The resulting rooms look more hotel-chic than shelter-shab, proving that intention is far more beneficial than any obstacle.

[www.upwardboundhouse.org](http://www.upwardboundhouse.org)

## GET INVOLVED!

Regardless of how the specifics are manifested, everyone can play some part in promoting awareness and demanding change to the status quo. Compassion only goes so far. Determination does the rest of work. There are many ways people can get involved in their communities and make a difference. Check out some of these noteworthy causes.

### VANESSA'S PICKS

Habitat for Humanity  
[www.habitat.org/cd/local](http://www.habitat.org/cd/local)

Downtown Women's Shelter  
[www.dwcweb.org](http://www.dwcweb.org)

### RACHEL'S PICKS

Saint Joseph's Center  
[www.stjosephctr.org](http://www.stjosephctr.org)

PATH  
[www.path.org](http://www.path.org)

Children Mending Hearts  
[www.childrenmendinghearts.org](http://www.childrenmendinghearts.org)

The David Lynch Foundation  
[www.davidlynchfoundation.org](http://www.davidlynchfoundation.org)

Tarzana Treatment Center  
[www.tarzanatc.org](http://www.tarzanatc.org)

<http://www.wboc.com/Global/story.asp?S=10203547&clienttype=printable>



## WBOC-TV 16, Delmarvas News Leader, FOX 21 - Movie MOVIE REVIEW: WITHOUT A HOME

*Posted: Apr 17, 2009 12:49 PM Friday, April 17, 2009 3:49 PM EST*

On its surface, this 74-minute documentary could be summed up as stories from Los Angeles' infamous Skid Row. But, filmmaker Rachel Fleischer doesn't just make this an objective look at the homeless men and women struggling to survive. Fleischer involves herself and more than befriends the various homeless people she encounters.

From helping one homeless woman to get her medicine to taking another homeless man to rehab, Fleischer is not merely an observer. She's a participant. Understandably, it's difficult to watch people suffer and not lend a hand, but that's the dilemma she faces.

The dilemma not only lies with a filmmaker trying to remain objective and unobtrusive in the quest to tell her subject's story honestly and with no bias. It also lies with a human trying not to be so compassionate as to coddle and prevent these homeless people, some of whom are drug-addicted, from standing on their own two feet.

Fleischer delicately navigates that dilemma and those waters for four years. One homeless man in particular is Mike Rodriguez whose ups and downs, recoveries and relapses, overwhelm Fleischer, as she attempts to help him while at the same time not get sucked into his spiral.

<http://www.wboc.com/Global/story.asp?S=10203435>



## WBOC-TV 16, Delmarvas News Leader, FOX 21 - Hearts and Minds: Best of the Festival

### HEARTS AND MINDS: BEST OF THE FESTIVAL

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The 4th Annual Hearts and Minds Film Festival was held this April. The one day event featured 23 movies from all across the country and globe. The movies ran nearly non-stop from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., and I was there for the whole 12 hours of movie-watching.

Overall, every selection was special and very good in its own way. Each had its own merits. I was able to talk to some of the filmmakers, and I'm very envious. They all did very good jobs. There were a few selections, however, that I felt were particularly outstanding and that I wanted to single out.

In fact, if I had to rank the top five films of the Hearts and Minds Film Festival, the best of the fest would be as follows:

1. *Prom Night in Mississippi*, Directed by Paul Saltzman, 90 minutes.
2. *Hearing Everett: The Rancho Sordo Mudo Story*, Directed by Thomas Johnstone, 68 minutes.
3. *Without A Home*, Directed by Rachel Fleischer, 74 minutes.
4. *Shooting Beauty*, Directed by George Kachadorian, 63 minutes.
5. *Against the Wind*, Directed by Dan Masucci, 10 minutes.

### **Links to additional stories:**

<http://www.iamthatgirl.com/women-today/young-director-makes-reel-connection-with-homeless-by-morgan-c-schimminger/>

<http://www.plumtv.com/videos/docstock-without-a-home/index.html> - Plum TV Link

<http://culturecatch.com/film/2009-woodstock-film-festival>

<http://www.chronogram.com/issue/2009/9/Woodstock+Film+Festival/Woodstock-Film-Festival?page=6>

<http://nytola-emilysgreatadventure.blogspot.com/2009/10/film-festival-festivities-and-aftermath.html>