Interview with Movie Producer and Director Andrée Rossi Maroso on the Use of the Internet to Support Her Artistic and Political Work

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Andrée Rossi Maroso is the chairperson of Lilithwork, a third sector organization which was established “to increase the value of cultural heritage through the cinema and documentary films”. Lilithwork was set up in 1999 and Ms. Rossi Maroso has been working for this company as Film Producer and Film Director since its inception. Following her graduation from the School of the Cinema in Milan, Italy, Ms. Rossi Maroso produced a number of documentaries, including Destination Auschwitz in Italy, Bonjour les Enfants in Israel, Sangatte in France, and others. Her documentaries focused on a range of topics, including finance, history, architecture, social, cultural, and anthropological issues. Ms. Rossi Maroso is passionate about social and political issues and active in raising funds for her projects from relevant funding organizations. To support the efforts of planning, organizing and promoting her projects, Ms. Rossi Maroso makes extensive use of the Internet.

1. I have a number of questions about Lilithwork that I would like to ask before we embark on the formal interview. In particular, why did you name your company Lilithwork? Does the name have any particular meaning for you? Does it have any personal, political, or historical significance?

In the unwritten lore of the Jewish culture it is said that Lilith was Adam’s first wife. According to the story, Lilith was an independent and free person. She was not obedient or committed to wedded life like Eve eventually was. It is said that Adam complained about this. As a result, Lilith left him and went away to live her own life. This story inspired me. Thinking about a woman from the origins of the world who was independent and open-minded gave me so much strength that I chose her name for my production company.
Also, According to other versions of the story, Lilith became a dark angel, or a dark moon. As a woman, I like to think about Lilith as a thought provoking person. I grew up admiring Simone De Beauvoir's book, Deuxième Sèxe (The Second Sex). The lack of independence we, women, grew up with in modern cultures which claim to be oriented towards women's rights is a problem that I have always lived with.

Embarking on an avant-garde project such as a film production company represents for me emancipation, liberation, freedom. Not only did this epitomised for me the end of sufferance for women in general, but also it meant my independence from someone in my family who was cruel towards me. This name symbolizes my own personal liberation.

Finally, Lilith, or Lilithwork means resurrection or re-birth. At the time that I selected it, I felt hopeful about the future. My goal, through the company that I established, was to trigger serious discussion on issues of social and political significance. Believing in academia, I used to dream that a good film documentary should be like an academic research publication in that it should be based on sound research sources and trigger deep debate. This insistence of mine meant that I had to move away from my home country of Italy in search of environments more nurturing to the type of projects that I wanted to undertake. In Italy, at the time that I left, the people in power owned the television channels. Programs useful to thinking or learning were being cancelled. It was definitely not a place for me. I remember a moment in Milan, sitting in front of Teatro Strelher (the Strelher theatre) and crying for the political situation in Italy, but, nevertheless, feeling hopeful for my work perhaps in another setting. The name Lilith captures this feeling for me.

2. You mentioned in your bio that much of your work takes place on the Internet. Can you describe how the Internet has been of help to you in the area of formulating ideas for new projects?

When I was attending University 15 years ago, the Internet first entered our lives. Fed up of living in a stagnant environment, I couldn’t accept what was happening around me. Italy is a conservative place. The Leopard’s writer Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, describing Italy, says, “You have to change everything so as not to change anything”. As a consequence of that sensation of stagnation, I had been waiting for a world revolution. I believe that the arrival of the Internet made this revolution possible. It changed the stagnation and destabilised the old ways of thinking and, of course, the Internet “globalized” the world more than it ever was possible before and helped me enter the international arena.

Thanks to the web, I was able to conduct research for my documentaries in new ways that were never possible before the Internet. As a tool of study, the Internet is the most exciting breakthrough human kind has ever created. I usually read three International newspapers a day, including, The Guardian, The New York Times, and Le Monde – I read them all on the Internet. This is inspiring and it helps me devise new projects.

Community life on the Internet is extremely generous. It is possible to find a massive number of contributions to go into a topic and I feel grateful to people who share the results of their efforts on the Internet. As a person who loves studying, I can listen to the most specialized radio channel for this or that topic, I can visit an impressive number of websites, I have the option of participating in forums which focus on topics that I am exploring.

I can also plan a shooting session with people who live in other parts of the world. We usually have meetings on Skype and we only meet each other the day of the shooting session on the
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