

STEFANIE SCHUMACHER

Director

Stefanie Schumacher was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. At age six she was recruited by the national swim team, the Cincinnati Pepsi Marlins. She began traveling the country extensively at age nine to attend national swim meets. Throughout her teens, Stefanie trained on an Olympic level.

Long hours of solitary swimming cultivated an introspective nature in Stefanie. She was deeply influenced by her mother, an avid film enthusiast and fiction reader. Hours of daily swim practice instilled in Stefanie the habit of discipline.



Combined with an active, consistently nurtured imagination, the skill of discipline enabled Stefanie to develop and strengthen the conceptual and associative skills necessary for realizing artistic goals.

Stefanie made her first solo international trip when she was seventeen. She traveled to Jamaica and lived for three months with the family of a co-worker. The world opened up new sounds, language, music and stunning landscape defined the summer. Stefanie lived with a Jamaican family and immersed herself in the diverse island culture. This was the first of many trips to foreign countries and new cultures.

Stefanie received a Bachelor's of Fine Arts in English Literature from the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio. After graduating Stefanie bought a VCR and watched hundreds of randomly selected films from the Cincinnati Public Library's excellent film collection. She taught herself how to write screenplays and analyze shooting and editing techniques. Stefanie landed a job as a camera operator for the nightly news at Channel 12 in Cincinnati, Ohio. For several years she worked as a camera technician on independent films in New York City. *The Forgotten Half*, the first documentary Stefanie directed and shot, told the story of her mother's life. It aired on local cable television in Cincinnati, Ohio. She then wrote, produced, directed and acted in a short black and white 16mm film, *The Assignment*.

During an especially difficult time in her life, Stefanie moved to Harlem, New York City. While producing a feature script she had written, Stefanie met three teenage boys who lived down the block. The boys' knowledge of the underworld of illegal dog fighting sparked Stefanie's interest. She began interviewing the boys and tracked key storylines over the course of one year. The documentary, *Harlem 16*, is the result of Stefanie's time spent living in Harlem.