

Ruth Cullen producer, director & writer

Biography

Ruth's credits include director, series director, producer, executive producer, and writer. She is especially known for her fearless and empathetic character portrayals along with her willingness to venture into new worlds. Attracted to the strange and wonderful aspects of real life story telling, she continues to find beauty in the unexpected.

She has just completed ***The Scribe*** – an award winning feature documentary on political speech writer Graham Freudenberg – also known as the ghost of Whitlam. Other credits include the ground breaking 6 part series ***The Dreamhouse*** (Series Director & Writer) which screened to wide acclaim on the ABC in 2014, the 5 part television series ***Heat In the Kitchen*** (Series Director & DOP) which launched the television careers of chefs Luke Nguyen and Matt Moran and gourmet farmer and former food critic Matthew Evans. She is also the director of the TV series – About Men (3 x 1 hour SBS) & High Steaks (3 x 30 mins SBS).

Other films include the acclaimed documentaries: [Painted Lady](#) (Producer/Director) and [The Tightrope Dancer](#) (Producer/Director) which explore the world of the artist and adventurer Vali Myers.

[Becoming Julia – fast cars and a sex change](#) (Producer/Director) follows a macho Aussie farmer through his sex change into Julia. [Becoming Julia](#) premiered to a standing ovation at the Sydney International Film Festival.

In 2010 Ruth won the AFI/AACTA Award for Best Documentary for [You Only Live Twice – the incredibly true story of the Hughes Family](#) (Producer) which aired on the ABC.

Her films have screened all over the world, including the prestigious IDFA (Amsterdam), as well as Montreal, Los Angeles, Sydney and Melbourne film festivals.

Ruth has worked as an industry consultant to Screen Australia, and as an Executive Producer in Arts for the ABC. She is the former Head of Documentary at Australia's national film school AFTRS and is has served on the Antenna Documentary Film Festival (chair) and The Australian Directors' Guild.

Selected credits

***The Scribe* – Producer/director/writer**

Feature doc. about political speechwriter Graham Freudenberg and how his love of language changed the country. 71 mins. **WINNER: “Best Australian Feature Documentary” Antenna Documentary Film Festival 2018**

***Don’t Stop The Music* – Post production director & co-writer**

Why every child needs music in their education. Artemis Productions, 3x1, ABC, 2018

***Stop Laughing This Is Serious* - Post production Producer (series 1&2)**

The history of Australian comedy. Screentime
Series 1- EP 2 2015. Series 2 - EP3 2016

***The Dreamhouse* – Series Director & Writer**

3 irreverent 20 somethings with intellectual disabilities - flying the nest and living the dream. 6 x 30 mins, ABC TV, Artemis Productions, 2014 Nominated: “Best Direction in a TV series” (ADG Awards), “Best Documentary” UN Media Awards

***You Only Live Twice—the incredibly true story of the Hughes family* - Producer**

A bohemian cultural history through the eyes of this maverick Australian dynasty. 55 mins, ABC, 2010 **WINNER - Best Documentary 2010 AFI/AACTA**

***About Men* – Series Director & co-writer**

The title says it - men from babies to old age. 3 x 60, Iris Pictures, SBS TX 2009

***The 2 of Us, Libby & Elizabeth* – Director**

A warm ab fab tale featuring an aging stripper and her observant daughter
Series based on the popular SMH column. 30 mins, SBS, 2005

***The 2 of Us, Suzanne & Moshem* – Director**

Explores the relationship between a refugee advocate and the man she rescued.
A scathing look at our treatment of refugees. 30 mins, SBS, 2005

***Heat in The Kitchen* – Series Director / co-writer**

This series introduced Matt Moran, Luke Nguyen & Matthew Evans (Gourmet Farmer) to Australian audiences. 5 x 30mins, SBS & Lifestyle UK, Essential Media, 2005.

***Becoming Julia* – Producer / Director / Writer / Camera**

Fast cars and a sex change as Paul becomes Julia. 52 mins, SBSi 2003
WINNER: Sydney Film Festival (Finalist - audience favourite)

***The Tightrope Dancer* - Producer / Writer / Director**

A feature doc about artist & adventurer Vali Myers.
National theatrical release (Ronin Films) & ABC 58 mins 1990. Festivals: (IDFA), Montreal World Film Festival, **NOMINATED: “Best Documentary” 1990 AFI Awards**

Awards & Nominations

- **The Scribe** – producer/director & writer
WINNER - BEST AUSTRALIAN FEATURE DOCUMENTARY
Antenna Documentary Film Festival, 2018
- **The Dream House** – series director and writer
NOMINATION - BEST DOCUMENTARY, UN Media Awards, 2014
NOMINATION - BEST DIRECTING IN A DOCUMENTARY SERIES,
ADG Awards 2015
- **You Only Live Twice** – producer
WINNER: BEST DOCUMENTARY, 2010 AFI/AACTA Awards
- **Landmines A Love Story** – editor
WINNER BEST DOCUMENTARY, AFI AWARDS, 2005
- **Becoming Julia** – producer/ director
FINALIST audience favourite Sydney International Film festival, 2003
- **Helen's War** – editor
WINNER 2004 Dendy Awards & winner AFI "Best Direction in a Documentary"
- **The Tightrope Dancer** - producer/director
NOMINATION: Best Documentary 1990 AFI Awards
- **Guerrilla's In Our Midst** - editor
WINNER of many international awards including **BEST SHORT** Athens Film Festival 1992, **Best Documentary** Utah Short Film Competition 1992
- **Australia Daze** - contributing director - **WINNER: Best Editing** 1988 AFI Awards
- **Philippines My Philippines** - editor - **NOMINATED: Best Film** 1989 AFI Awards
- **Half Life** - sound editor (Dir. Dennis O'Rourke) **WINNER** of many international awards Including **Jury Prize (Best Film) & Berlinale Peace Prize** Berlin Film Festival 1988
- **Couldn't Be Fairer** - editor (Dir. Dennis O'Rourke) **WINNER** 1988 ATOM for **Best Doc.**

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Publications

- **Vali Myers by Ruth Cullen**, *The Art of The Big O*, Fischel Michael, USA 2014
- **Directing and the Real World** – *Screen Director*, Issue 01, Spring 2013, Australian Director's Guild
- **My Wild Bird of Paradise – Night Flower: The life and the Art of Vali Myers**; edited by Gemma Jones and Martin McIntosh, Outre Gallery, Australia 2012
- **Making the Character-driven Documentary** – *Lumina: Australian Journal of Screen Arts and Business*, Issue 8, AFTRS July 2011
- **Genre in Documentary** – *Lumina : Australian Journal of Screen Arts and Business*, Issue 4, AFTRS 2010
- **Why A Tampon is Not Just A Tampon** Opinion Page, The Sydney Morning Herald & The Age, 15/02/2000
- **Dennis O'Rourke Interviewed by Ruth Cullen** – *POV Magazine*, Canada April 2010
- **Black & White Issues** - Web Diary, Sydney Morning Herald, 16/11/2000
- **Seeing The Light** - The Relations Column, The Sydney Morning Herald 23/8/99
- **Shadows** - The Relations Column, The Sydney Morning Herald, 22/6/98
- **Rent Day** - (fiction) *VOICES* Quarterly Journal, Autumn, the National Library of Australia, 1991
- **It Was Simply Divine** - (fiction) *Detour Magazine*, March 1990, USA