

KATE BOSWORTH:

PIONEER WOMAN

By Hayden Seder

Being a woman today, particularly in Hollywood, can often be polarizing, resulting in the cognitive dissonance of trying to be beautiful without being overly sexual, smart without being a know-it-all, powerful without being perceived as bossy or difficult. Kate Bosworth—actress, producer, and activist—manages to be completely badass, honest, and outspoken while also still being beautiful, fashionable, and nice to boot, all with the elan and grace of someone beyond her 35 years. It is her trailblazing in the film industry as both an actress and producer and the roles/issues she chooses to highlight in her career that make her worthy of Sun Valley Film Festival's Pioneer Award, presented by Nat Geo WILD. Bosworth will be presented with the award at this year's fest and will also participate in Nat Geo WILD's Salon Series at Festival HQ.

Best known for her breakout role in 2002's *Blue Crush*, Bosworth could easily have continued to play blond darlings for the remainder of her career. But rather than be so easily typecast, Bosworth took a variety of roles including Lois Lane in *Superman Returns*, Sandra Dee in *Beyond the Sea*, and parts in a wide range of film genres, such as the dark indie biopic *Wonderland*, action-thriller *Homefront*, comedy *Life Happens*, and many more. Even before delving into the more serious subject matter of her current roles and projects, Bosworth has always been honest and outspoken. She has talked openly in past interviews about the blatant sexism in movie casting and the need to be more than a sound bite.

"I'm a very proactive person—I'm not silent," says Bosworth. "I've probably ruffled feathers and stepped on toes because I will not stand idly by when there is an injustice, whether it's

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an injustice to myself, a project, or to another person.”

Bosworth’s current acting roles echo this sentiment. Nat Geo’s *The Long Road Home* is a series based on Martha Raddatz’s bestseller of the same name that chronicles the events of April 4, 2004, when a U.S. platoon was ambushed in Sadr City, Baghdad, in an attack that became known as “Black Sunday.” Bosworth portrays Gina, the wife of Captain Troy Denomy, in the series. “When picking roles there are a few factors. First there’s the selfish factor of whether I respond to who’s written the script and the director and who’s involved. But then I’m looking for something that will potentially speak to people,” explains Bosworth of her choice to be in the show. “*The Long Road Home* was a definite draw for me to tell the story that Martha Raddatz had written so beautifully in her book and the sacrifice our troops make for us. We live in a desensitized world at the moment, and if we can’t take time to really understand the potential dangers of that, we can lose our empathy as people. That’s a very dangerous place to be.”

Bosworth also recently co-produced and appeared in the film *Nona* with her husband, Michael Polish, through their company, Make Pictures Productions. The joint venture is truly Bosworth’s passion, eliciting nothing

less than pride and utter devotion to both her husband and the company when asked about it. “Michael and I are constantly inspired and thinking about making and creating things 24/7. I liked the idea of making something from concept to delivery between the two of us,” Bosworth says of starting Make Pictures (FYI, “Make” is a combo of their names—Mike and Kate). “We produce very well together. We like to make things together—things that matter and things that have a mission statement to them.”

The couple met in 2011 on the set of *Big Sur*, in which Bosworth starred and Polish directed. “We met on the movie and it was very clear that we were an artistic match made in heaven.” Bosworth and Polish found common ground in sharing stories that needed telling, particularly female and female-forward stories. Thus the idea for *Nona*, a film that sheds light on the sex trafficking industry in Central America. After reading a story on the vast tragedy that is human trafficking, the couple realized that if they—educated, aware, and activist-minded—knew almost nothing about the topic, then most people probably didn’t either. “We felt it would be important to put some humanity into something that has become somewhat of a statistic,” Bosworth says of her choice to shine a light on

Above: Pioneer Award honoree Kate Bosworth.

"It's important to be a champion of an inclusive industry."

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such a complex topic. "I think part of the difficulty is getting one's head around the statistics, which are so high—sex trafficking is one of the biggest trades on the black market. It's a business of over \$64 billion with millions of people being trafficked every year, and those numbers are only based on the information we *do* have since it's hard to know due to the illegal nature of trafficking." *Nona* is short for "no name," but in making this movie Bosworth and Polish sought to give the victims in this trade a name rather than just becoming another statistic. When discussing the topic, Bosworth once again emphasizes the desensitization of our society when it comes to issues such as these. "We live in what I call a 'swipable' generation. You might see a tweet that 64 people were killed in Baghdad and then you swipe and suddenly you're looking at possible restaurants to go to for dinner. Michael and I feel a responsibility as artists to communicate the idea of humanity and compassion through our storytelling."

Finding herself on the other side of the camera is somewhat of a new experience for Bosworth but one that seems to completely suit her ability to wear many hats simultaneously. "When you live with someone so talented, it inspires you to be more curious and grow in your own potential. He [Michael] shoots with a Leica [camera] and told me when I was 28, 'If you can shoot with a Leica, you can shoot with anything. She's a beauty

when you know her, but a real beast to learn.' There's a lot of joy in finding something so complex and being able to manipulate a tool like that." And as a female producer, Bosworth recognizes her importance in an industry that's very male-dominated. "Being a good mentor to women coming up in the industry is always at the forefront of my mind," says Bosworth. "We need to make a more inclusive environment in our industry and across industries."

For the last question of our interview, I ask Kate where she sees herself in 10 years. She seems genuinely surprised by the question, as if her life now is so complete that planning for where she might be in the next decade is a waste of these precious, amazing moments. She answers, "I hope to have balance in my life. I hope to feel fulfilled with my work and to keep producing things that make a difference."

Visit sunvalleyfilmfestival.org for more information.

Kate Bosworth will speak at Nat Geo WILD's Salon Series on Friday, March 16 at Festival HQ at 12pm and be honored at the Pioneer Award Party on Friday, March 16 at the Galleria Building. This event is open to Insider Festival and Party Pass holders.

