James Byrne Interview

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James Byrne is a screenwriting and cinema professor at Metro State. He also is a local filmmaker. He enjoys his dual career lifestyle.

**How long have you taught at Metropolitan State University?**

20 years this year.

**What got you intrigued about cinema and movie production?**

It evolved when […] I started college. I had always loved still photography since grade school, which lead to me eventually diving into movie making in college. The real thing that made me passionate about this field is the ability to combine images and words to create a cinematic experience. In my opinion, film is a medium that suits my overall outlook on life and interests

**What did you go to school for?**

For my undergraduate studies, I attended the University of Minnesota with a degree in Studio Arts and an emphasis in photography. For my grad school, I attended the School of Arts Institute of Chicago, with a Masters of Fine Arts in video art.

**Do you believe the Twin Cities has a strong independent movie scene?**

Yes, I believe there are loads of talented folks here. The film community is very supportive of each other. The also positive of our Twin Cities community is there are many grants and fellowships readily available to local filmmakers.

**What is your favorite movie genre and why?**

The movie genre I enjoy the most is drama. I like it a lot because it contains the full spectrum of human emotion, which fits my personality the best. Now if we were talking favorite movies as well, those would have to be ‘The Sacrifice,” “Paris, Texas,” “The Unbelievable Truth” and “Youth.”

**Is there anything you wished either Metro or the Twin Cities as a whole, could improve on in terms of movie production?**

Contrary to popular belief, I think everything is pretty much solid. Actors are present. Equipment is there. Money is available. We pretty much have a strong unit of cohort filmmakers in the cities.

**What have Metro students done in film production that has been developed into a short film?**

Actually, we had a couple Metro students go down to the Frozen Film Festival to showcase their work. 13 students in all. They will have a special screening at the Landmark Center in Minneapolis. My film students distinguished them from the pack by having their own category at the Film Festival, separating from other fellow student filmmakers at other schools.

**Where do you believe movies are headed i.e., do you believe the notion they just don’t produce good films like they used to anymore?**

Most of the talent is being scripted for television shows like HBO, cable and Netflix. Good movies are still being made, but the shift is now being made to cable TV, which takes precedence over the film industry nowadays.