



Two Row Productions LLC, Vision Maker Media

Directed by Katsitsionni Fox

Produced by Katsitsionni Fox and Katja Esson

[www.withoutawhisperfilm.com](http://www.withoutawhisperfilm.com)



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Without a Whisper Konnonkwe

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## Synopsis

**Without a Whisper - Konnón:kwa** tells the untold story of how Indigenous women influenced the early suffragists in their fight for freedom and equality. Mohawk Clan Mother Louise Herne and Professor Sally Roesch Wagner shake the foundation of the established history of the women's rights movement in the United States. They join forces on a journey to shed light on the hidden history of the influence of Haudenosaunee Women on the women's rights movement, possibly changing this historical narrative forever.

## More About the Film

**Without a Whisper - Konnón:kwa** is the journey of two unlikely friends, Professor Sally Roesch Wagner and Mohawk Clan Mother Louise Wakerahkatsteh Herne as they uncover the hidden history of how Indigenous women influenced the suffragettes in their fight for freedom and equality in the early 1800s. During this period in history, Euro-American women were “dead in the law” losing all their rights and property to their husbands once they became married. They did not have a voice in politics, the economy or religion. At a time when non-Native women lacked even the most basic rights, they witnessed their Native counterparts, the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) living in a matrilineal society in their traditional homeland of what is now New York State. Haudenosaunee women had inherent authority in all aspects of their life: politically, economically, socially and spiritually.

Louise Wakerahkatsteh Herne is Mohawk Clan Mother from the Mohawk Nation territory, located in upstate New York. She is fluent in her language, a spiritual practitioner, and political

leader. She is well known for her work empowering Native women and youth. Dr. Sally Roesch Wagner, is one of the most important scholars of Women's Studies in the United States. In her research, Sally made the surprising discovery of the Haudenosaunee women's influence on the early feminists. A fact that was completely unknown. When Sally and Louise met, there was an immediate kinship and connection, echoing the relationship of feminists and Haudenosaunee women in the not so distant past. Since her discovery, Sally has fought many years for the re-writing of history to acknowledge the influence of the Haudenosaunee women on the women's rights movement. Louise has supported her in her quest, as she herself works to reignite the power of Haudenosaunee women in her community.

Haudenosaunee society is based on equality and balance amongst men and women rooted in their culture and worldview. Clan Mothers were responsible for selecting Chiefs and also had the final say if men could go to war. Our protagonists give voice to the women of long ago, guiding us down a different path of women's rights history that is unknown. Suffragettes, including Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Matilda Joselyn Gage were astounded by the freedom and authority Native women possessed. Matilda Joselyn Gage remarked about the Haudenosaunee "Never was justice more perfect, never civilization higher than under the Matriarchate." These women held the first women's convention in the United States in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848 on the ancestral land of the Haudenosaunee. The struggle of these early American Feminists would take more than 70 years to win the right to vote in 1920. However, the influence of Haudenosaunee women on the early suffragists was side-stepped by the western male writers of history.

Ironically, during this time that Non-Native women gained strength and new-found freedoms, the roles and strength of Native Women began to deteriorate. Government enforced assimilation policies, land loss, and the influence of foreign religions caused the traditional Haudenosaunee way of life to unravel and women's power declined.



Sally is approached by a publisher to write an anthology on women's suffrage. She agrees, granted she can write a more inclusive history that includes the influence of the Haudenosaunee. This collaboration is unprecedented and the partnership gives a voice to an untold historic perspective and recollection. Sally Roesch Wagner is joined by Gloria Steinem and Louise Herne in NY City for the launch of this controversial book. In Louise's community, Louise continues to empower Haudenosaunee women to reclaim their power and strength. The realization of a history that includes indigenous women's voices is upon us. The Haudenosaunee contribution to the women's rights movement could be common knowledge for this generation.

### **Featuring**

Louise Wahkehrakats:te Herne  
Sally Roesch Wagner

and

G. Peter Jemison  
Dr Lori Quigley  
Chelsea Taiawentón:ti Sunday

Ionawiienhawi Sargent  
Gloria Steinem  
Jessica Bennett

## **Director's Statement**

This story had it's grips on me since I first learned that my Haudenosaunee ancestors influenced the women's rights movement here in the United States. I thought everyone should know this, especially our youth. In 2020 the United States celebrates the 100'th year anniversary of women's suffrage. The same one-sided history is regurgitated, which is for the most part devoid of people of color. I felt an urgency to share this story at this time and to offer another perspective of this story. As a Haudenosaunee women filmmaker I made this film to honor my Haudenosaunee Grandmothers who were never acknowledged for their contributions. I felt them with me as I created this film. I hope that my granddaughters grow up in a world where this story and the many others that have been hidden become common knowledge.

Without a Whisper - Konnón:kwe trailer  
<https://vimeo.com/424910527/92fe70fb1c>

Without a Whisper - Konnón:kwe Screener:  
<https://vimeo.com/394982223>  
PW:WAW

## **Production Team**

**KATSITSIONNI FOX**

Director and Producer

Katsitsionni has been making films since 2003 in the Mohawk Territory of Akwesasne, where she resides. Her most recent film is "Ohero:kon - Under the Husk" a 26-min documentary following the journey of two Mohawk girls as they take part in their traditional passage rites to becoming Mohawk Women. Katsitsionni received the Jane Glassco Award for Emerging Filmmaker at the imagineNATIVE Film Festival in 2016 as well as the Achievement in Documentary Filmmaking Award at LA Skins Fest in 2016. This film received funding from Vision Maker Media and has been broadcast on many PBS stations in 2017. She is currently producing a short - doc series for REMATRIATION - a Native American women's online, multi-media magazine. It is focused on healing and empowerment of Native women through the sharing of their stories and successes.

## KATJA ESSON

Producer

Katja Esson is an Academy Award-nominated, Emmy award winning filmmaker based in Miami, known for her character-driven documentaries tackling race, class and gender. Her documentary short *Ferry Tales* garnered awards at international film festivals, was nominated for an Oscar and premiered on HBO in 2004. *Hole in the Sky - the scars of 9/11* received the Gold Award at the World Media Festival. *Skydancer* was featured at the Margaret Mead Film Festival, received nominations for best film, director and cinematography at the Shanghai Film Festival and premiered on PBS in 2011. *Poetry of Resilience* was awarded Grand Jury Prizes at numerous festivals, including a Cinema for Peace Award-nomination in 2012. Esson has a longstanding relationship with ARTE and recently created and directed two highly rated five-part documentary series: *Backroads USA* (2014) and *American Rivers* (2016), which aired on ARTE in 2017 and PBS in 2018. She is currently working on *Razing Liberty Square*, a feature documentary on climate gentrification in Miami. She received the Simons Public Humanities Fellowship at Kansas University and her films have screened at the Museum of Modern Art, American Museum of Natural History, and the Smithsonian. Her work has been supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council of the Arts.

## AMINA MEGALLI

Editor

Amina Megalli has over 20 years of experience in television and filmmaking. She recently completed editing a feature-length documentary with Mark Bozek called *The Times of Bill Cunningham* which was released theatrically on Feb. 14th 2020. She also worked on a feature-length documentary with Barbara Kopple about newly arrived refugees from Syria and Iraq to Toronto called *New Homeland*. It premiered at DOCNYC in 2019. She is currently editing a feature length documentary about the Levant and the Levantine identity called *Wild is the Spring*.

Prior to working on *New Homeland* she edited and co-wrote "Speak Your Truth," a feature length documentary about women who tell their stories about being married and coming out later in life and changing their lives. She also worked on a National Geographic special *Hell on*

Earth: The Fall of Syria and the Rise of ISIS directed by Nick Quested and Sebastian Junger. The film won a duPont-Columbia University Award. She also worked on The Trials of Spring, created by Gini Reticker and Abigail Disney, produced by Beth Levison. The film world premiered at the Human Rights Watch Film Festival NY in June 2015.

Megalli edited a series of shorts for Human Rights Watch, including segments on sectarian tensions in Lebanon and the legal prosecution of Chadian dictator Hissen Habré. Additional credits include the 6-hour series Hopkins (ABC News), Houston Medical (ABC Network), World Birthday (The Learning Channel), Finance - Financially Fit (Yahoo!), and The Upbeat (Yahoo!). She speaks fluent English and Arabic and is proficient in French.

## MARIE-CECILE DIETLIN

### Cinematographer

Marie-Cécile Dietlin is a French filmmaker and visual artist currently living in Montreal. Her images have been broadcasted on CBC, APTN, Canal D, Canal Vie, TVA, VOX TV and film festivals (Festival du nouveau Cinéma, illuminate Film festival, ImagineNative Film festival, Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal). She has worked as a director and cinematographer on many projects related to native issues (APTN, CBC, Wapikoni). For four years she worked as a main Cinematographer on the TV program 'Quand Passe La Cigogne' broadcasted on 'Canal Vie'. In 2012 and 2013 Marie worked on feature documentary films overseas, researching & shooting in Cuba, Africa and Spain for independent productions. In the last 2 years Marie has also been directing, filming and editing over 250 music videos. She has worked with emerging classical musicians around Montreal and across Canada for the 'noncerto' classical music channel. Marie is a versatile and trilingual filmmaker with a passion for story telling, and a strong interest in documentary filmmaking. She is passionate about social justice, the arts, the environment, and especially native and women's issues. Her goal is to use the medium of film as a transformational tool for raising global human consciousness.

## MARION KONWENENHON DELARONDE

### Animator

Marion Delaronde is Mohawk animator from the territory of Kahnawake. Marion received a Bachelor in Fine Arts with a Major in Film Animation from Concordia University. She is the Artistic Director at Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitíóhkhwa Language and Cultural Center where she directs and produces "Tóta tánon Ohkwá:ri" a Mohawk puppet series for children. Her talents also include Scriptwriting, directing, working with translators, puppeteering, illustration, set design, production and animation. She directed and co-produced "Skátne

Ronatehiaróntie” (“They Grow Together”) in 2012. This film was nominated for Best Animation at the American Indian Film Festival and was the winner of Best Animated Film at the Brantford Film Festival.

ALEX BOYA

Animation Storytelling Consultant

Alex Boya is Bulgarian-born, Montreal-based Alex Boya is an NFB director and writer, known for Turbine(2018), Focus (2014) and CBC Arts: Exhibitionists(2015). Alex Boya leanings toward animation developed while studying at Concordia University’s Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema, building on his lifelong enthusiasm for drawing.

Credits

Executive Producer for Vision Maker Media

Shirley K. Sneve

Editorial Consultants

Corina Sager

Sabine Hoffman

Consulting Producer

Tracy Rector

Associate Producer

Xochitl Rios

Cultural Consultant



Michael Galban

Additional Footage

Katsitsionni Fox

Victoria Catherine Chan

Audio Recording

Marie-Cecile Dietlin

Adam D Gold

Gaelle Komar

Kevin Lamoureux

Music Coordination and Composition

Robby Baier

Sound Design

Francis Gauthier

Illustrations

John Fadden

Graphic Design

Melanie Printup Hope

Historic Photos

New York State Archives

Library of Congress

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Post Production

Pillar2Post Digital Media

Music by:

“Katsitsionni’s Song”

Jennifer Kreisberg

“Bird Song”

Jennifer Kreisberg

Women's Power Song  
Written by: Bear Fox & Kaweienonni Peters  
Ionawiienhawi Sargent

Iekhenistenha Ohontsia  
Written by: Bear Fox

"Flute music"  
Mignon Geli

Still Photography  
Jessica Sargent  
Tahila Corwin Mintz  
Xochitl Rios  
Katsitsionni Fox  
Janet Flores

Special thanks to:  
Haudenosaunee Women  
Ohero:kon Akwatsíre  
Seneca Art & Culture Center - Ganondagan  
Matilda Joselyn Gage House  
Seneca Nation of Indians  
Onöhsagwë:de' Cultural Center  
Syracuse University  
The New House  
Women's Rights National Park  
Kay & Val Olan