

Claudia Rowe's long, rambling bio

I was a rural kiwi kid – throwing balls, exploring riverbeds, watching a shitload of television. I once spent eight hours on a trampoline then foolishly entered a hedge maze while my eyeballs were still bouncing.

My first job, at age 12, was mowing the vast, sloping lawns of a 96-year-old widow. It would take me two afternoons, she paid me \$6.00 (fairly) and I would sit nervously in her kitchen, sipping my tea, looking at the rat poison next to the teapot and wondering what had happened to all the kittens that had been scampering about the day before.

When I was 14 my family immigrated to Australia. I kept exploring, riding the buses for hours with my 45-cent ticket. Exceptional value, I thought, to enjoy the sights and sounds of cosmopolitan Melbourne.

School on the other hand was unexceptional and uninspiring but you do what you gotta do. At uni I learnt the ancient craft of how caveman made films; using a bolex, steenbecks and a sound mixing contraption which took up a whole room and would have benefitted from a more regular tune up and oil change.

Along the way I worked long hours as a waitress, shop assistant and had the dubious title of “cook” at a Denny’s restaurant. I continued to cook dubiously at a pub in London – one of a series of odd jobs I’ve picked up on my travels. Others included picking grapes in Western Australia, pulling beers in Cairns, signwriting in Santorini, washing cars in Rushcutters Bay. There were plenty of shitty jobs; sweeping up pigeon poo in a factory (TV art department), pulling blood clots out of a horse’s heart in a hand-basin in the Ladies loos at Caulfield Racecourse (TV art department), scrubbing urinals in a London pub (no glamorous TV association there and yes, sorry, that was the same pub where I was also the cook).

My lucky break came when, at 24, I was selected for the first series of Race Around The World on ABC TV. Ten countries, ten films, one hundred days, solo. Yay! It was the happiest collision of my favourite things; travel and filmmaking. Into the mix I threw No-Doz to keep awake in new time zones - the caffeine gave me the jitters – you could almost touch the panic in my documentaries - but overall it was an excellent adventure! The show forced me to do stuff I wouldn’t have done as a backpacker; meeting Mongolian MPs at two in the morning, hanging out with a Senegalese soccer team, interviewing former POWs in Zagreb, filming models backstage at a Havana fashion show, hiring three cars (consecutively) from Kaloo’s Car Hire and Wreckers in Trinidad to get down to a southern village where a Reverend’s wife tried to sell me Amway at her dining table before I headed back on the perilous, pot-holed road, stopping in torrential rain to pick up two hitch-hiking nuns. The ‘race’ was encapsulated for me by an elderly American woman – the two of us were the last travellers on a bumpy 8-hour bus trip into Costa Rica’s Cloud Mountains. Night had fallen and the bus just kinda clattered to a halt outside a cheese factory. We got off and were dragging our bags up a steep, dirt track, my acme torch flickering intermittently, unfamiliar sounds of the rainforest all about,

not really knowing where we were going, when her optimistic voice rings out “this sure is something innit?”.

When the wonderful something settled, I fell back into bar work, occasional documentary work (including a failed Channel Nine series in South America, a kind of recreation of Race Around The World but with a tighter budget and asphyxiated imaginations) and lots of TV art department jobs, minus the horsey bits.

Then in 1998 I landed a position as a BRACS trainer in a remote Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory. After extensive globetrotting, this was an altogether new world to me. I knew almost nothing about Aboriginal culture and was bumbling around, faux pas-ing at every step. I learnt so very slowly. The job and the conditions were challenging, the land was scorched and unspectacular. But something got its hook into me – I could feel it happening. I yo-yoed between Central Australia and Melbourne for several years and I slowly learnt a little language, I learnt a bit more about Warlpiri culture, I saw the beauty in the land and little pennies started to drop explaining the way things were and showing me that I would never be privy to enough cultural information to be able to anticipate the consequences of things – projects, policies, programmes. You could see that what worked were community initiatives and what didn’t were policies conceived elsewhere. I think about those communities, and the people I got to know, everyday.

I met my partner in one of those remote communities.

So that sort of brings me to now – living with my little family in regional Victoria, making kids’ books. About bums.

Thanks for visiting my website!

For a more concise, select, professional history, please see below.

Claudia Rowe – work history (film & TV)

Director, camera operator, sound recordist, editor:

TextaQueen – Sunday Arts, ABC TV 2008
Halal Mate – SBS/Rebel Films 2007 (nominated for an ATOM Award and an United Nations Media Peace Award)
Yuendumu – Living Black, SBS 2007
Uranium – Central Land Council 2005
Keeping Heart – Centacare 2005
Mina Mina & Fire Dreaming – Warlukurlangu Artists 2007, 2004
Mangarri Panu – PAW Media 2003
Mampu Maninja Kurlangu – PAW Media 2003
Arrkantele – PAW Media 2000
Race Around The World – ABC TV 1997

Editor:

Sunday Arts (ABC) 2009
Not Quite Art2 (series for ABC) 2008

Field worker, BRACS trainer, Archive Project Officer:

Summer holiday programmes - Tangentjere Council 2005
Radio and video training in Nturiya, Pmara Jutunta and Yuendumu - Warlpiri Media Association 1998 / 1999 / 2001
Warlpiri Media Archive Project 2002

Additional camera:

Russell Coight's All Aussie Adventures "Celebrity Challenge" (Ten)
Tall Ships (ABC)
Veiled Ambition (SBS)

Art Department (variously set dressing, buying and standby props):

The Magic Bullet (SBS)
The Murray Whelan Series – "Stiff" and "The Brush Off" (Seven)
Wicked Science 2 (Ten)
Stingers (Nine)
Hotel de Love (Village Roadshow)
Creeping Jesus (VCA)
The Needy and the Greedy
Rose and the Hiatus (VCA)

Continued...

Production Assistance and work experience:

Saatchi and Saatchi Compton

Mike Reed's Post Production

Mediatrain

Various music videos

Paradise Road (feature film)

The Flutemaker (VCA)

Qualifications:

Bachelor of Arts - Media Studies Deakin University

- 20th Century Fix 16mm student film – comedy drama

- The Winter Classic 16mm student film - doco