

PLAYBACK

Bowen shoots the low-budget Amazon Falls

by: [Matthew Hays](#)

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Filmmaker Katrin Bowen says her first dramatic feature, *Amazon Falls*, is proof that inspiration can come from the strangest places.

In fact, Bowen says she was compelled to make the film, which just wrapped its 12-day shoot last month in Vancouver, because previous plans for a film fell through.

"We had all our funding lined up to make *Love Bites*," Bowen says. "We were set to go and then our broadcaster, Super Channel, went into [creditor protection in June]. My producer said it was too risky, so we didn't go ahead with it."

At that point, Bowen said there was a choice to be made. "I could have given in to despair, because I was so ready to make the film. But then I decided to forge ahead with another feature."

Bowen had long wanted to make a film based on her experiences as a B-movie actress in Los Angeles. In the '80s, Bowen, then 17, fled her Calgary home and went to the City of Angels to make it big. She worked on ultra-low-budget fare like *Battling Amazons* and *B-Movie Zombie Squad*, and befriended Troma Studios co-founder Lloyd Kaufman.

One of the actresses who Bowen befriended at the time was Lana Clarkson. In 2003, Bowen was horrified to read the news that Clarkson had been shot by legendary record producer Phil Spector. "I remembered how tough that scene was for aspiring actresses," Bowen recalls.

Bowen says she was reluctant to write the screenplay herself, as she worried it would become "too sentimental" in her hands. So she discussed her ideas with a student she had taught in a class at the Vancouver Film School, Curry Hitchborn. "He's really a brilliant guy, and I loved what he did with the script."

The story involves different generations of actresses working on sleazy B-movies, and how they deal with imperfect conditions of their jobs. April Telek plays a B-movie actress whose star is fading. Telek takes a younger actress (played by Anna Mae Routledge) under her wing on the B-movie sets.

Bowen says the experience of making *Amazon Falls* taught her that almost anything is possible. "People worked for points. We made this on a shoestring of about \$50,000. We couldn't have done this without our producer, Darren Reiter, who put up his own money because he believed in the script so strongly.

"Even if I didn't get a chance to make *Love Bites* at a much bigger budget, this showed me that I could make a feature," says Bowen, who hopes to have a final cut of *Amazon Falls* ready to submit to Sundance. "You can spend a whole life waiting and never make a film."

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