

FILM



from the May 2006 issue of
Strut Magazine - www.strutmag.com

Name a film shot in Detroit, and chances are that Alisa Lomax and/or Nicole Sylvester has worked on it. Lomax served as wardrobe production assistant and as Gabriel Byrne's driver during the shooting of *Polish Wedding*. Sylvester was the art department coordinator on *8 Mile* and assistant production office coordinator on *61*.

Both Detroit residents, the independent filmmakers Lomax, 40 and Sylvester, 36, share an office in Detroit to house their respective production firms. Lomax's company is Bourgeois Bohemian Productions. Sylvester's company is Autumn Rain Features. Both got started on the film path after first working on local radio and television shows. Despite working on bigger budget Hollywood features, both are part of an active local film movement and are members of the Detroit Film Center board of directors.

Budgets are smaller for local productions and the actors aren't household names, but that doesn't stop the determined filmmakers. Sylvester directed and Lomax produced *Layla's Girl*, a full-length drama for which they're currently arranging funding to underwrite distribution.

"On one level, it can be hard," Lomax says. "On the other hand, we're not in L.A., where everyone wants to be a filmmaker. You're in a unique position; you don't have the L.A. competition."

Sylvester says financing is the biggest challenge independent filmmakers face. "In the Detroit area, financing a film for some people is like financing a fantasy," she says.

Their creative influences:

Lomax: "I have so many favorite films and directors. I hope to blend their ideas with my own."

Sylvester: "Spike Lee, Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola all have such independent voices."