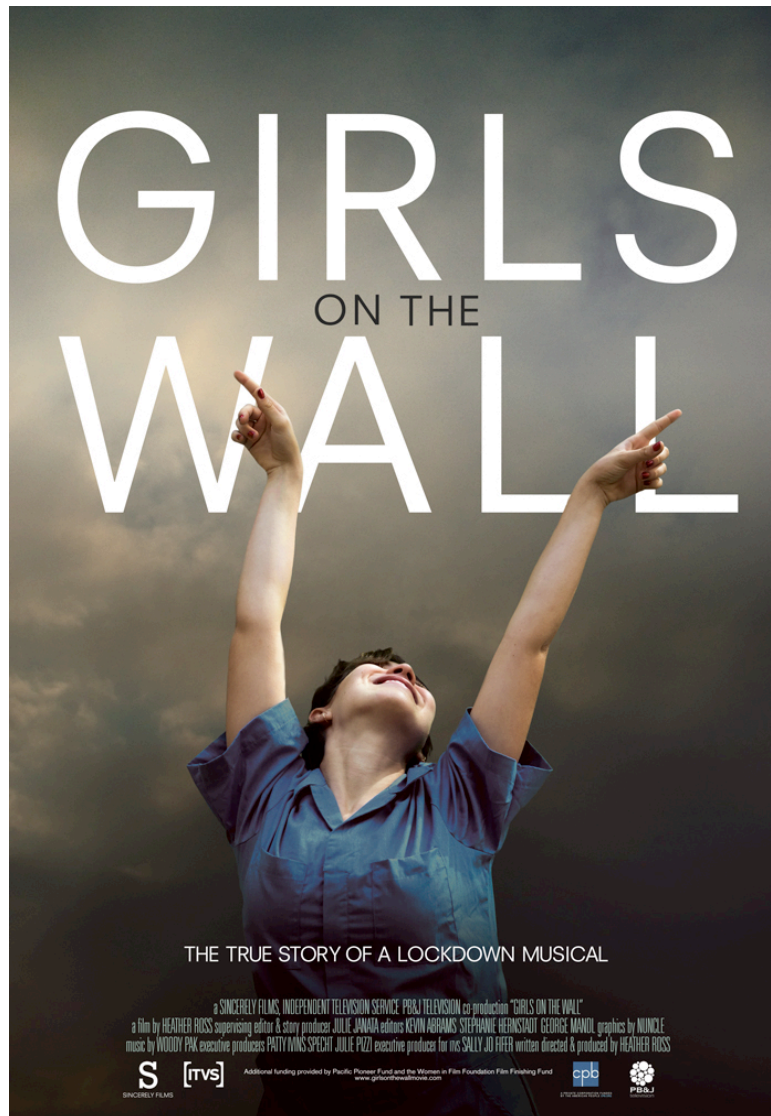


*Sincerely Films and ITVS Present*



*a new feature documentary*

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www.girlsonthewallmovie.com

# GIRLS ON THE WALL

## Filmmakers & Crew

Director & Producer	Heather Ross
Supervising Editor	Julie Janata (Bigger, Faster, Stronger, Mayor of Sunset Strip)
Consulting Editor	Yana Gorskaya (Spellbound, Smart People)
Executive Producers	Sally Jo Fifer (My Country, My Country, A Lion In The House, In The Realms of the Unreal) Patty Ivins Specht (Reversal of Fortune) Julie Pizzi (Reversal of Fortune)
Consulting Producer	Sarah Jo Marks (Can Mr. Smith Get To Washington Anymore?, 39 Pounds of Love)
Camera	Heather Ross Dana Kupper (Election Day, Out of Faith, Stevie)
Sound Recording	Gwendolyn Zabicki
Graphics and Titles	Nuncle (The Informant, Manda Bala, Che, The Wackness)
Composer	Woody Pak (Planet B-Boy, American Zombie)
Production Advisors	Gail Silva (Prodigal Sons, Girl Trouble) Helen Hood Scheer (Jump!, Two Days In October)

# GIRLS ON THE WALL

## Selected Festivals, Awards, and Notices

2010 Emmy Award, Best Documentary  
*NATAS Chicago-Midwest*

Winner, Chicago International Film Festival 2009  
*Silver Chicago Award*

Winner, Bermuda International Film Festival 2010  
*Best Documentary*

Theatrical Dates, Los Angeles Downtown Independent Theater 2010

Official Selection, American Cinematheque, Los Angeles 2010

Official Selection, Denver Starz Film Forum 2010

Official Selection, Martha's Vineyard Film Festival 2010

Official Selection, Big Sky Documentary Film Festival 2010

Official Selection, Women's Film Festival 2010

Official Selection, Philadelphia First Person Arts Festival 2010

Official Selection, Wisconsin Film Festival 2010

Official Selection, Sheffield Doc/Fest Videotheque, 2009

Official Selection, Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival 2009

Official Selection, CMJ Music Marathon & Film Festival NYC 2009

Official Selection, Santa Fe International Film Festival 2009

Official Selection, Anchorage International Film Festival 2009

ITVS (Independent Television Service) &  
the Corporation for Public Broadcasting  
*Awarded major funding & public television broadcast  
Will air on PBS stations in the US in 2010*

Women in Film Foundation  
2008 Grant Recipient

Pacific Pioneer Emerging Artist Grant, 2008

# GIRLS ON THE WALL

## Selected Press Quotes

Pick of the Fest

*Roger Ebert • Time Out Chicago • Santa Fe New Mexican • Anchorage Press*

"Ross manages to capture and present wrenching sorrow juttet up against the playfulness of youth."

*LA Times*

"An amazing documentary"

*Time Out Chicago*

"This is the most remarkable part of the film: you become a witness to inner change, and that change is initiated by the act of storytelling. An excellent film."

*Huffington Post*

"Paints an unforgettable portrait detailing the empowerment to be found in self-expression... easily the best of the films I got to preview for AIFF and one of the more stirring works you will see all year."

*Anchorage Press*

"Pick of the Week... Can these badass chicks really be redeemed through musical theater? Director Heather Ross aims to find out."

*LA Weekly*

" A visual masterpiece... let's hope the buzz gets out."

*LA Times Blog*

"How can you not be inspired?"

*Philadelphia City Paper*

"This moving doc about girls at a juvenile detention center... demonstrates the healing power of expressing their pent-up emotions and exposing their vulnerability."

*Time Out Magazine*

"Outstanding"

*WBEZ Chicago Public Radio*

"Truly inspiring"

*ABC Evening News, Chicago*

"I loved this film"

*Santa Fe Public Radio*

# GIRLS ON THE WALL

## Synopsis

The teenage girls of Warrenville Prison get a shot at redemption in a most unlikely form: a musical based on their lives. As three fascinating girls write and stage their play, they're compelled to re-live their crimes, reclaim their humanity and take a first step toward breaking free of the prison system.

Meet WHITNEY (17)—the eyes and ears of Warrenville, and our unexpected heroine. Intimidating, self-isolating, and one of Warrenville's longest-term inmates, Whitney is infamous for a crime she won't talk about. Despite herself, she soon emerges as one of the most powerful storytellers in the group. Her writing introduces us to her charming, drug-addled father, a man whose mistakes paved the way to his daughter's heinous crime. As the performance approaches, Whitney's growing voice may lead both of them to confront the past and try to move forward.

ROSA (17) is a hot-tempered girl who taunts guards and inmates alike. Released from Warrenville, she returns weeks later after getting nearly killed in a knife fight. With a constant reminder of her temper carved into her throat, she is forced to grapple with the sexual abuse that is the source of her anger.

CHRISTINA (18) is a friendly, popular girl whose only crime is running away. Drawn into street life by her mother's crack habit, she's spent most of her life in jails and foster placements. When she gets a chance for adoption by a wealthy Christian family, she jumps at it-- but can't reconcile her new upper-middle class life with her loyalty to her mother's world.

When the girls hit the stage in front of their families, prison staff and utter strangers, hitting the notes isn't important: it's their chance to seize their stories and tell them to the world. For some, the musical will be a first step in a back-and-forth struggle to stay out of the system. For Whitney, it may be a lifesaver.

Given unprecedented access to this juvenile correctional facility by the State of Illinois, the powerful characters of GIRLS ON THE WALL will surprise you with their candor, intimacy, and unexpected sense of humor. Together, they illustrate the power of storytelling to illuminate the darkest secrets, and to understand the most tangled lives.

# GIRLS ON THE WALL

## Production Notes

When filmmaker Heather Ross set out to make *GIRLS ON THE WALL*, she knew that her subjects—young inmates, some of whom had been in and out of jail for many of their young years—would demand more from her than an occasional drop-in interview. The trust and intimacy she would need to tell the girls’ stories would require time and effort. With this in mind, Heather relocated to Chicago for the nine months it took to shoot the film. It was time well spent. As she became a fixture in the correctional facility, girls sought her out to tell their stories, stories they couldn’t even tell their families or their prison-appointed therapists. There was also a fair amount of incredulity about her ubiquitous presence— “You know YOU’RE not locked up here, right?!”

Getting clearance to come visit the prison was an effort, let alone convincing the State of Illinois to suspend their rules regarding revealing the names and faces of underage perpetrators. In the end, the warden and staff of Warrenville knew the Fabulous Females program was doing the facility and its wards a great deal of good, and they went to bat for the film. The result is unprecedented access to juvenile offenders and this particular unique correctional facility.

Heather originally followed six girls who were slated to be locked up for the duration of the shoot. However, she quickly grew intrigued by some of the shorter-term girls, and two of them, Rosa and Christina, ended up becoming main characters in the film. To find her three key subjects, Heather interviewed and worked with over a dozen girls and shot almost 300 hours of footage.

During the long and intense shoot, bonds developed between the small crew and the girls of Warrenville, and Heather is still in touch with some of the girls who she met during her time there. She and Whitney, the heroine of *GIRLS ON THE WALL*, speak regularly, and Whitney recently boarded a plane for the first time to visit the filmmaker in Los Angeles.

# GIRLS ON THE WALL

## Filmmakers Bios

### Heather Ross- Producer & Director

Emmy-award winning producer & director Heather Ross spent much of her childhood tagging along to film classes with her graduate student mother. After obtaining bachelor's degrees in Film/Video and Psychology at UC Santa Cruz, she produced segments on all 7 continents as associate producer of the feature documentary, *Naked World* (HBO). On *Mean Girls*, (Discovery Health), she worked with a diverse group of girls, from cheerleaders to cholas, whose stories illustrate a hidden culture of girls' aggression. She has gone on to direct and produce programs for Discovery Channel, A & E, MTV, FX and Fox. Her first feature documentary GIRLS ON THE WALL was broadcast on PBS stations around the country, winning the 2010 Emmy for Best Documentary in the Chicago/Midwest region. She is currently developing a new doc-fiction hybrid project.

### Julie Janata- Supervising Editor

Julie Janata is an award-winning editor and producer. Her editing credits include the award-winning documentaries MAYOR OF SUNSET STRIP and BIGGER, STRONGER, FASTER, as well as narrative work such as the Emmy-nominated SOLDIER'S SWEETHEART. Julie executive produced the documentary FLOCK OF DODOS, which was invited to screen for the U.S. House of Representatives. She is currently in pre-production on a project which will mark her directorial debut.

### Sarah Jo Marks- Consulting Producer

Sarah Jo Marks is a Southern California native who works as a producer's rep and is presently representing several documentary films. In addition she freelances as a producer, film festival programmer and film distribution consultant. Previously she worked at the International Documentary Association where she programmed the worldwide organizations largest events including the DOCTober Film Festival (now DocuWeek) and the IDA Awards. She has also worked as Senior VP of Acquisitions and Development for Seventh Art Releasing where she was instrumental in the acquisition of several documentaries. Ms. Marks is the founder of At Risk Films, a film sales company that blends distribution with representation to find documentaries the biggest possible audience.

# GIRLS ON THE WALL

## Filmmakers Bios Cont'd

Yana Gorskaya- Editorial Consultant

Born in Russia and raised in Oregon, Yana is a seasoned editor of both documentary and narrative features. Her first feature documentary, SPELLBOUND, was nominated for an Academy Award. Since then she has gone on to edit such films as ROCKET SCIENCE and SMART PEOPLE. She is currently editing Spellbound filmmaker Jeff Blitz's new film.

Patty Ivins-Specht and Julie Pizzi  
Executive Producers

Patty Ivins and Julie Pizzi have been working in nonfiction television for over ten years and together have produced over one hundred hours of television. Under the PB&J banner, Ivins and Pizzi have executive produced the Showtime documentary *Reversal of Fortune*, NBC's "Sports Illustrated: Swimsuit Model Search," and "L.A. Riding Club" for TLC. Prior to founding PB&J, Ms. Ivins produced and/or directed numerous documentaries including *Mean Girls*, *The Mother Road*, and episodes of A&E's *Biography*. She won an Emmy in 2003 for AMC's *Hollywood Rocks The Movies: The 1970s* with David Bowie.