

SAFE PASSAGE

P I C T U R E S

MIXING FILM AND PHILANTHROPY

One production company explores a creative and charitable way to make movies

"Relativity", one of the current film projects from production company Safe Passage Pictures, is about the torrid and turbulent marriage of Albert Einstein and Mileva Maric. It's a promising project, but it's not just the surprise factor (cuddly Einstein, a cad and a wife abuser?) or the tightly written screenplay that makes this film a potential winner -- it's the philanthropic angle.

Mileva Maric, Einstein's first wife and mother of his two sons, was a genius in her own right. But like many women in the fields of science and math, she faced steep obstacles. These are areas that were -- and still are -- dominated by men. So her plight is something that resonates with women of science today. And her story is one that could help strengthen their voice and promote their cause.

Safe Passage is one production company that is taking a creative approach to getting a film from paper to the screen. They are working with funders that are not only interested in financial returns, but in good works. The group of interested investors include members of some of America's wealthiest families, storied entrepreneurs, and young mavericks looking to put their smarts, connections and energy towards good works -- with some Hollywood glitz.

The goal is to fund the film in a way that will bring returns to specific charitable causes. In the case of "Relativity", written by Adrienne Lusby & Emiliana Monahan Dore, the plan is to use a portion of the film's profits for promoting education, awareness and support of women in the fields of science and math. In addition, the film itself will serve as a teaching tool and an object lesson - not only during its theatrical run, but in classrooms and training facilities for years to come.

The cause is one that has not gone unnoticed. In an October 2011 article entitled, "Women Making Slow, Sure Strides In Science, Math," the Huffington Post reported that "When it comes to the STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) fields, women have been most successful in medicine and biology -- and least successful in engineering, math and computer science."

"This is a fascinating and very entertaining story that will appeal to a wide audience," says Sandi Castro-Migliaccio, a partner and producer at Safe Passage Pictures. "And wrapped in that is a useful and enduring lesson for those who are in the STEM fields, and those who would like to get into it. This story will help support the effort to bring more women into science and math."

Safe Passage Pictures, based in New York and Los Angeles, is looking to work in a similar way with other quality screenplays under its umbrella. These include the biopic "Hemingway: The End of Something", which follows the famed author through his many failed loves to his suicide, and "Those Lips, Those Lies", an tense and intelligent action-thriller.

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