

Case study

Maxine Mellor

Details

What:

Maxine participated in Inscription's invitation-only USA Tour in Screenwriting and Playwriting alongside three other Australian playwrights. Each day was spent in meetings or workshops with professional artists (writers, actors, directors, artistic staff, agents, etc).

Maxine presented readings at South Coast Repertory Theatre and Manhattan Theatre Club and led the professional actors in rehearsals. Maxine and the other playwrights were also part of a panel discussion on Australian Theatre hosted by Timeline Theatre in Chicago.

Maxine was able to gain knowledge of how TV networks develop and produce work – her previous experience was largely in theatre. She was also able to hone her skills in writing and delivering pitches to producers in film and television, a skill she can translate into the theatre world to help negotiate commissions and opportunities.

The tour has given Maxine the confidence to seek out opportunities rather than waiting for opportunities to find her.

When:

February to March 2014

Where:

Los Angeles, San Diego, Chicago, New York City



Playwrights at the New York City reading – Maxine is second from the right

Arts Queensland contribution:

\$5,500 Individuals

Contact for further information:

Website: www.maxinemellor.com

Links:

A blog of some of the activities can be found at Inscription's website:

www.inscription.com.au/category/us-tour-2014/

Personal website with information on Maxine's work:

www.maxinemellor.com

Outcomes

- Maxine found the introduction into the world of writing for film and television (scripted and unscripted) inspiring, and looks forward to developing concepts in those fields.
- The tour helped to boost Maxine's confidence about her own abilities, and has encouraged her to proactively seek out opportunities domestically and internationally, across genres, rather than waiting for opportunity to find her.
- Since returning to Australia, Maxine has been in contact with several of the theatre companies she met while on tour, and sent out copies of her plays for reading. She hopes to maintain these new contacts into the future with a view to securing an international production or commission opportunity.



New York City play reading

Learnings and reflections

Some of the most valuable lessons that Maxine learned during the tour were how to profile and promote herself:

I learned that when you arrive to a place with no reputation preceding you, you have to find your unique selling point to make you stand out and get your work actually read. Often it is your personality and personal story that will compel someone to read your script – that is often the first hurdle – so preparing your own story really helps.

Having a website with work listed, and business cards really helped in meetings—giving an easy point of reference for interested parties to follow up on. I have had increased traffic to my website from the USA, and people who attended readings have contacted me through my website.

To be seriously considered for screenwriting positions where you work with a team of writers (most popular series are created this way), you have to be prepared to spend a period of time in the one location overseas. Theatre remains an industry where you can send work out without having to be present, but TV requires more contact hours with the other team members.