

# VARIETY

## Review: 'Casting About'

MAY 10, 2007 | 12:44PM PT

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*Richard Kuipers*

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Docu came about more by accident than design. Sifting through 350 interviews taped during auditions for the as-yet-unproduced feature, "Moving Still," helmer Barry J. Hershey and editor Marc Grossman selected snippets of no fewer than 184 female hopefuls vying for three key roles. They came from as far afield as Berlin, Boston, New York, London and Los Angeles.

Minus narration and text information — and all the better for it — docu leaps out of the gate with a montage of publicity photos cut to the rapidly accelerating tempo of a classical piano track. From there, the camera simply observes from a mostly fixed position as applicants take turns in the hot seat. Hershey and his crew are occasionally heard but rarely seen as the audition and performance processes are examined from multiple angles.

Personal stories are told, monologues are read and selected scenes from Hershey's script are performed. Part of the pleasure here is figuring out just what Hershey's planned movie is all about: It seems to be the tale of a wounded combat photographer who's involved with a nun, a dancer and an artist's model. Requirement of latter character to perform nude scenes elicits responses ranging from poignant to amusing.

The same can be said for every facet of a docu that pays uplifting tribute to acting traditions and female spirit in equal measure. One applicant reveals she's come directly from seeing her rapist sentenced to a lengthy prison term.

As monologues commence, the question of where performance ends and real life begins is intriguingly posed.

In elegantly constructed sequences, different performers recite the same text in split screen, while careful framing and editing give the impression of individually taped performers acting together. Assisted by Allie Humenuk's intuitive camera, Grossman's master class editing turns the constricted shooting space into an emotionally resonant theater of intimacy.

Tech package is as pro as expected under such controlled conditions. Transfer from DV to 35mm is immaculate.

## **Casting About**

### **Production**

A Kino Intl. release of a Moving Still Prods. production. (International sales: Moving Still, Concord, Mass.) Produced by Lewis D. Wheeler. Directed by Barry J. Hershey.

### **Crew**

Camera (color, DV-to-35mm), Allie Humenuk; editor, Marc Grossman; sound (Dolby Digital), Richard Bock. Reviewed at Sydney Film Festival, June 22, 2005. Running time: 86 MIN.