

# PROJECT DESCRIPTION

## INTRODUCTION

*Come Fly With Me Nude (CFWMN)* is the story of mutual muses Dom Casual & Bella Hagen, two San Francisco artists struggling to find their audience in a world grown increasingly homogenized. They are also struggling with some personal issues that – whether they realize it or not – fuel their art. Bella never quite confronted the heartache of having to abandon her dream of following in the high-heeled footsteps of her showgirl mother, Sparkle (“the poor thing just didn’t get my height!”); Dom has yet to confront his homosexuality. In their mind’s eye San Francisco looks as it did in the late 50s, complete with “music in the cafes at night and revolution in the air”. The Beat Movement is still alive and well; Dom & Bella intend to see to it.

Before their meeting, their individual artistic endeavors produced a steady stream of failed gallery exhibits (for Bella) and stage shows (for Dom). But they persist and realize that *together* they can write and deliver poetry, the likes of which the world has never known. Even their solo artistic endeavors soar as a result of their having found in each other a muse. When a television executive offers them a shot at commercial success, Dom & Bella have wildly different reactions – threatening to destroy their artistic partnership.

We follow the characters’ struggle to gain recognition and redemption -- interspersed with powerful performances of their scat-style prose -- we witness them persevering as they head towards crisis and eventual triumph over adversity.

## BACKGROUND

CFWMN first emerged in 1993, as a response to the proliferation of San Francisco’s contemporary poetry ‘zines; most of which were filled with rantings that would be better left in a diary, or a therapist’s office.

Diane Karagienakos and Todd Pickering wrote “Beat” poetry on bar-naps over drinks after their waiting jobs in North Beach, and would then “interpret” them, subjecting coworkers (and fellow after-hour drinkers) to their “art” - often to bribes of free drinks if they’d stop - and a great deal of laughter. They knew they were on to something. These poems were compiled into the book, “Come Fly With Me Nude”. Over 40 copies were sold both at the North Beach Festival, and at City Lights Bookstore, not coincidentally owned by Beat icon Lawrence Ferlinghetti.

During 1998-2000, while Diane was living in Australia, she and Todd wrote a series of letters in the voices of mutual muses Dom & Bella. Thus was born the stage show, “Come Fly With Me Nude”. First performed in January 2003, the monthly show was a fundraiser for the film project. Their willingness to push the envelope with each successive performance lead to awards, such as Best of the 2004 San Francisco Fringe Festival, and “Best Musical Comedy”.

CFWMN is an assault on the experimental theatre we’ve all had to sit through and not laugh at, because it wasn’t meant to be funny. It’s a love letter to SF; to the artists intellectuals, and Beats whose spirit and influence can still be felt in the streets, alleys, bars, and coffeehouses of North Beach; to people who wear black and berets and smoke and discuss philosophy over coffee at 8 am; to the people of the world who have the courage to follow their dream, and who make the

world a more interesting place. Okay, and we're also having a poke at artists who lack an inner critic, who take themselves (and their art) entirely too seriously.

Let it not be lost that Dom & Bella are, even more than artists, humans. They hurt when they are rejected. They rejoice at the inspiration they get from life's everyday banality that the rest of us overlook. It is first and foremost a story of perseverance, of overcoming adversity, a story of the human spirit, and the power of friendship.

### THE AESTHETIC

CFWMN opens and closes with Dom & Bella being interviewed on the talk show "The Art of Conversation". Clearly successful artists now, we explore their personal journeys: How did they meet? How did they become the world-renowned artists sitting before us? This segues into the core narrative. As we all tend to romanticize our memories, so do Dom & Bella. Being artists, they *really know how to romanticize* their memories – naturally making their telling of this story black and white, in the cinematography style of the French New Wave films such as *The 400 Blows*, *Breathless* and *Sundays and Cybele*.

This feature length film is shot on mini DV at 24p to give a more film-like feel. This also makes viable the option of transfer to 35mm film, ensuring faithful frame by frame accuracy, color saturation, aspect ration, and sync-sound.

*This film is fiscally sponsored by Film Arts Foundation in San Francisco. For more information, please visit their site: <http://www.filmarts.org>*