



In addition to being an excellent film critic, Jan is a powerful advocate for women in the film industry. She is truly a pioneer, and her refreshing feminist perspective on Hollywood is appreciated by WomenArts readers around the world.

Martha Richards, Executive Director, WomenArts

PENNY'S PICKS: 50 MOVIES BY WOMEN FILMMAKERS 2002-2011

My mission is to persuade women – and men – to become smart movie consumers. When we choose films by women filmmakers, we put our money where our mouths are – and in Hollywood, those people in the backrooms who tabulate the dollars, they will notice!

Jan Lisa Huttner

For immediate release

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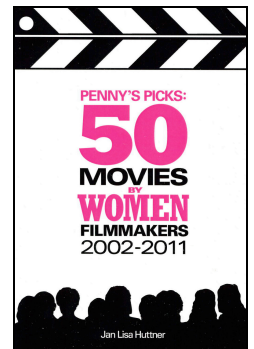
CHICAGO—Writing under the Blog name “Penny,” Chicago film critic Jan Lisa Huttner has reviewed hundreds of movies by women filmmakers. In *Penny's Picks: 50 Movies by Women Filmmakers 2002-2011*, she puts the spotlight on 50 movies released during the past decade that show a wide range of contributions of women filmmakers.

Jan’s concern is that because most movie critics are men, moviegoers – women and men – are not getting the full story about what is available. The result is that when a movie made by a woman is reviewed, moviegoers only get the male critic’s side of the story.

“We are all just people” Jan says. “Movies have a lot to teach us about each other, and I want people to understand what they are missing when they bypass a movie made by a woman filmmaker based solely on reviews written by men. In *Penny's Picks...* I included many of my published reviews of movies that underperformed at the box office – at least in part – because they were poorly reviewed by critics who are disproportionately male.... There are many women filmmakers who are doing great work – movies that speak to women, and to men. You can find their films in theaters as well as on DVD and on cable. You just need to know to go look for them.”

The myth is that films made by women won’t appeal to men – that all films made by women are “Chick Flicks,” and guys won’t like them. “Well, that just isn’t true,” Jan says. “It’s important for men to see films by women, just as it’s important for women to see films by men. We can all be *Cinematic Tourists* – walking in the shoes of other people to see what life looks like from other points of view in different times and different places. That’s one of the great joys of going to the movies.”

“Penny” is Jan’s pen name for her blog, *The Hot Pink Pen*. A “Pen” is a female swan. (The female is a pen; the male is a cob.) Jan realized that if she used the term “pen” for herself, then her blog could carry the tag line “Because the Pen is Mightier than the Sword.” That tickled her funny bone, so she created *The Hot Pink Pen*, an adjunct to *Films for Two: The Online Guide for Busy Couples (FF2)*, the website she owns with Rich Miller.



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One of the reasons she published *Penny's Picks...* is to let more women know they have a voice. Jan believes that women can encourage the men in their lives to appreciate the stories told in films made by women. Jan's goal is to persuade women to use their tremendous box office power – not only for themselves, but also for their children – for their sons as well as their daughters.

Jan is an award-winning writer and feminist activist who also writes regular columns for the *JUF News*

(published monthly in Chicago). Her film-related articles have been published in the *Forward*, *Jewish Film World*, and the *World Jewish Digest*, and posted on various websites including *Critic Doctor*, *Digital Filmmaker*, *DVDWolf*, *Picklebird*, *Really Good Films*, *Reel Chicago*, *WomenArts*, and *Women's eNews*.

Jan is a journalistic force of nature. She has proven time and time again to be a tireless advocate for women in the arts, and the impressive awards she has received attest to her never-say-die approach to writing.

Dann Gire, President, Chicago Film Critics Association

Jan is also the author of interviews with female filmmakers such as directors Jane Campion (*The Piano*), Gurinder Chadha (*Bend It Like Beckham*), Valerie Faris (*Little Miss Sunshine*), Lisa France (*Anne B. Real*), Larysa Kondracki (*The Whistleblower*), Ivy Meeropol (*Heir to an Execution*), Mira Nair (*Monsoon Wedding*), Sally Potter (*The Tango Lesson*), and Alice Wu (*Saving Face*). She also has interviewed screenwriters, including Pamela Gray (*Conviction*), Pamela Katz (*Rosenstrasse*), Aline Brosh McKenna (*The Devil Wears Prada*), Barbara Turner (*Pollock*), and Lizzy Weiss (*Blue Crush*).

She is a member of the Women Film Critics Circle and the Chicago Film Critics Association, as well as the Illinois Woman's Press Association, the Association for Women Journalists – Chicago, the American Association of University Women (AAUW Chicago, Inc.), and International Women Associates (IWA).

Jan reminds us all, men and women alike, that “Women hold up half the sky! But very early on, boys are told that they are not supposed to be interested in ‘girl stuff.’ Girls are supposed to go to films about boys (like *Harry Potter*), but boys shouldn't go to films about girls (like *Kit Kittredge*). And that attitude persists as we grow into young men and women, and crystallizes when we are adults.

Jan wants to change all that, and *Penny's Picks...* is one way to do it! “*Kit Kittredge* is a wonderful film,” she says. “It's a film for everyone! And so are all of the films by women that I review in *Penny's Picks!*”

The great thing about being interviewed by Jan is her ability to ask unique and varied questions that really delve into the soul of where your art originated from and why it's poignant to you.

Independent Spirit Award nominee Lisa France

**For more information and to interview Jan, contact:
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