

THE SHEER AMOUNT OF TIME IT TAKES TO GET GOOD FOOTAGE HAS NEVER BEEN GIVEN TO GIRLS BEFORE. WHAT YOU SEE IS USUALLY FILMED AT THE LAST MINUTE. —LESLEY MCKENNA

# The Making of DropStitch

TERRY GILLIAM, EAT YOUR HEART OUT

by Brooke Geery  
photos by Josie Clyde

*The DropStitch girls have been trying to film for three days, but so far nothing has worked out. The jumps suck, the snow is almost gone, and it's cold and cloudy.*

*It's six in the morning and they're loading camera equipment, snowboards, and groggy riders into the back of their rented SUV—preparing to make a three-hour trek to another mountain, where, rumor has it, the jumps are actually worth filming.*

*Just in case, some of the riders decide to stay behind for the morning to film a funbox trick session from a chairlift.*

*Three hours pass and the crew arrives at the new mountain, only to find Mother Nature is spitting ice pellets from the sky. Meanwhile, back at the first resort, the chairlift the other riders wanted to film from has been closed due to high winds...*



Emily Akerblom.  
Redjice, Czech Republic.



When photographer Josie Clyde quit her job in order to make an all-girls snowboard film with Lesley McKenna, her childhood friend from Scotland, she certainly didn't envision days like this one. But a year-and-a-half and four international trips later, the pair has come to accept bad days as part of the filmmaking process.

"We know from this experience that epic riding doesn't happen every day," says McKenna. "But the sheer amount of time it takes to get good footage has never been given to girls before. What you see is usually filmed at the last minute. Most of our footage of one person is filmed over two to three weeks. This is the first time girls have been given that much time to put together a part."

Getting enough shots of female riders for a decent video part is a challenge faced by all video makers. According to Justin Hostynek of Absinthe Films, they filmed with both Tara Dakides and Hana Beaman last winter, but neither woman was able to pull off a section in the video *Pop*. "Tara was being pulled in a lot of directions. Contests mostly, and coming back from an injury," he explained.

Ah yes, contests. While they have recently started to factor pretty heavily in the overall pro snowboarding game, the fact remains that the dudes who get the most respect are still those who have the best video parts. For women, however, it's a bit different. Between contests, soup ads, contests, catalog photo shoots—and did I mention contests?—girls who set out to be professional snowboarders in today's world don't have a lot of time left over in their schedules to film. (See sidebar.)

"The logistics are hard," says McKenna of trying to coordinate rid-

ers for *DropStitch*. "The girls have other obligations, and the budget is tight. We're just scraping the tip of the iceberg."

Rather than limiting their video to a handful of riders and hoping for the best, they decided to work with as many riders as possible, in order to represent the current international scene of girls' snowboarding. "We didn't do it the normal way; we didn't just want riders who were sponsored by our sponsors," says McKenna. "[This is] a friendly and close-knit scene, and we wanted to make sure that was covered."

They also looked for local rippers to film with at each location. "If I was a good local rider, I'd be so stoked to be asked to film," says Clyde. "It's the whole community thing—to be welcome and to make others feel welcome."

"What we didn't account for is how many injuries we were going to get during filming—myself included," continues McKenna. "We've got a rocking slam section, mostly starring me." During the process, McKenna suffered a broken jaw and split lip and had to undergo plastic surgery. Lisa Filzmoser broke her pelvis, and Tina Birbaum knocked out a few teeth.



Emily Akerblom. Rock to fakie, Redjice, Czech Republic.



Tina Birbaum. Snaefell, Iceland.



(L to R) Hannah Lundmark, Sara Phillips, and Emily Akerblom.





Silvia Mittermuller.  
Breckenridge, Colorado.



"Injuries are something I'd never considered—that I'd be in so many hospitals," says Clyde. "It's especially hard dealing with the mental aspects of someone who's out for the rest of the season because she needed to film for us."

"It's not just the weather or injury," adds McKenna. "There are so many factors that have to come together to get good filming. Sometimes everything would be perfect and the girls just wouldn't be feeling it."

Despite setback after setback, Clyde and McKenna learned not to let anything get them down. The filming process was a learning experience, but a lot of times it was also fun.

All the highs and lows are presented in a documentary format, featuring the riding talents of more than 25 girls from around the world—including Stine Brun Kjeldaas, Torah Bright, Natasza Zurek, Victoria Jealouse, and Doriane Vidal—and montage sections that follow their road trips throughout Iceland, Czech Republic, New Zealand, Austria, and the United States.

"The whole point of the film is to be entertaining and motivational," says Clyde. "We didn't set out to show girls doing crazy things that aren't possible. We set out to motivate and inspire girls...and maybe guys, too."

"It's important we didn't make a copy of a guy's film," adds McKenna, "because it would just end up being a bad copy of a guy's film. There's a lot more than just snowboarding in [the world of snowboarding]. We wanted to show that." **SG**

Silvia Mittermuller.  
Mammoth, California.



Jaime Anderson at The Block.

## filling the void

### TWO MORE CREWS GET IN ON THE ALL-WOMEN'S VIDEO GAME

While following the contest circuit may be today's pro reality, the women behind Misschief Films (Amber Stackhouse, Fabia Grueebler, and Danielle Piche) have decided that needs to change. They figure that if women can show their sponsors that filming is as valuable as doing a halfpipe contest, it could potentially create a new niche for women in snowboarding.

While it might be a lofty goal for a group of riders to accomplish, Misschief has already put the wheels into motion. They went on a "footage rescue mission," collecting everything that was shot of women over this past season and left on cutting-room floors and using it to create a teaser.

So far the response has been positive, even from the guys in the industry—many of whom, Stackhouse says, are impressed by both the quality of riding and editing: "It was just something we were doing for the girls, but a lot of guys are stoked."

With the teaser done, Misschief hopes to get the monetary support from the industry to make a legitimately good video to be released in October 2005. The lineup for the video includes the biggest names in women's snowboarding: Leanne Pelosi, Alexis Waite, Natasza Zurek, Laura Hadar, Kelly Clark, and Jessica Dalpiaz, among others.

The teaser is available online at [www.projectmisschief.com](http://www.projectmisschief.com), and as an extra on Robot Food's *AfterLame* DVD.

*Conformed* is another all-women's video, by Canadian filmer Lauren Graham. It features Colleen Quigley, Roberta Rodger, Susi Davis, Pilar Peterson, Molly Milligan, Mari Mazumaki, Kendra Starr, Laura Hadar, Chanelle Sladics, and Dominique Valle, and can be found at [www.snowboard.com](http://www.snowboard.com). Graham is the maker of last season's women's video, *Shot in the Dark*, which was featured as an extra on Treetop Film's *The Main Event* DVD.