

Pink Ribbons, Inc.

A film by
Léa Pool

98 minutes, English, digital, 2011, Documentary



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"Indignant and subversive...resoundingly pops the shiny pink balloon of the breast cancer movement/industry, debunking the 'comfortable lies' and corporate double-talk that permeate the massive and thus-far-ineffectual campaign against a disease that claims nearly 60,000 lives each year in North America alone." – **John Anderson, *Variety***

A PINK MYTH?

"We used to march in the streets: now you're supposed to run for a cure, or walk for a cure, or jump for a cure, or whatever it is . . . the effect of the whole pink ribbon culture was to drain and deflect the kind of militancy we had as women who were appalled to have a disease that is epidemic and yet that we don't even know the cause of." – Barbara Ehrenreich, author of *Welcome to Cancerland*

A Pink Myth—emblemized by the ubiquitous pink ribbons of cause-related marketing and philanthropy—permeates our culture, assuring us that: *We are engaged in a highly-successful battle against breast cancer; We are very close to finding a cure.* But these messages belie the grim reality and facts of breast cancer, with which no company would want to be associated. Women in the US have a 1 in 8 chance of developing breast cancer. Mortality rates have not significantly changed in 60 years. Women diagnosed with breast cancer today face the same treatment options they did 40 years ago when the "War Against Cancer" was declared: surgery, radiation and chemotherapy—an approach Dr. Susan Love refers to as "slash, burn and poison."

Women are the most influential market group, buying 80 per cent of consumer products and making most major household purchasing decisions. As they walk, shop, run, jump and race for the cure, corporations continue to boost their bottom line. Yet the money raised through all these efforts is unevenly allocated—treatment and cure are favoured over primary prevention, to the virtual exclusion of the latter.

Who really benefits from the Pink Ribbon campaigns—the cause or the company? And what if the very products that promise to find a cure are actually contributing to the problem?

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Breast cancer has become the poster child of cause-related marketing campaigns. Countless people walk, run and shop for the cure. Each year, millions of dollars are raised in the name of breast cancer, but where does this money go and what does it actually achieve?

Directed by Léa Pool and produced by Ravidia Din, *Pink Ribbons, Inc.* is a feature documentary from the National Film Board of Canada that shows how the devastating reality of breast cancer, which marketing experts have labeled a "dream cause," has become obfuscated by a shiny, pink story of success.

LONG SYNOPSIS

When writer and social critic Barbara Ehrenreich was diagnosed with breast cancer, she became fascinated by “the breast cancer culture” and wanted to understand the phenomenon of pink ribbons.

Each year, 59,000 women in North America die from breast cancer. And each year, hundreds of thousands of women and men participate in corporate-sponsored fundraising events and campaigns that, while raising millions of dollars towards the cause, also market the brands that promote these events. In fact, breast cancer has become the poster child of “cause-marketing” which, as marketing guru Carol Cone explains, can do what “no promotion or no advertising can ever afford to create.”

Pink Ribbons, Inc., a feature documentary directed by Léa Pool and produced and executive produced by Ravidia Din, looks at how the breast cancer movement has moved from activism to consumerism and challenges viewers to rethink their assumptions about the meaning of breast cancer in our society. Featuring in-depth interviews with an array of experts, authors, activists and medical professionals, *Pink Ribbons, Inc.* also includes the participation of the leading players in breast cancer fundraising and marketing.

The film visits the largest breast cancer fundraising and awareness events, including the Revlon Run/Walk for Women in New York, the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in Washington, D.C., the two-day Avon Walk for Breast Cancer in San Francisco and the Pharmaprix Weekend to End Women’s Cancers in Montreal. But as celebrations of “survivors,” is there room at these events for the women who are dying from the disease? “We’re living. We’re human beings. We’re not just a little pink ribbon,” says Maricela Ochoa, one of the members of The IV League, a group of women living with metastatic breast cancer. The voices of these women are in sharp contrast to those of the women participating in the pink ribbon events, where the atmosphere is often celebratory and festive.

Samantha King, the author of *Pink Ribbons, Inc. – Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy*, notes that many women feel alienated by this approach because “in order to be a survivor, you must maintain this optimistic outlook and participate in what I call the tyranny of cheerfulness.”

With its attendant drugs, chemotherapy, radiation treatments and mammographies, breast cancer is a multi-billion dollar industry in North America. But what happens when a company engages in “pink-washing”—raising money for breast cancer while manufacturing products that are linked to causing the disease?

Pink Ribbons, Inc. suggests viewers consider heeding some simple words of advice from the organization Breast Cancer Action: “Think before you pink.”

ABOUT THE FILM

Internationally acclaimed and award-winning filmmaker Léa Pool brings her unique, signature style to *Pink Ribbons, Inc.*, a feature documentary that looks at the politics of breast cancer philanthropy. As high-profile “pink” marketing campaigns raise millions of dollars in the name of breast cancer, the focus is not on prevention but on “the cure,” and the breast cancer movement has changed from activism to consumerism.

While Ravida Din and Nancy Guerin (Associate Producer, Writer, Researcher) had discussed cancer issues as possible documentary subjects years earlier, it wasn't until Din's sister suggested she read Barbara Ehrenreich's feminist critique *Welcome to Cancerland* that Din had what she calls her “a-ha moment.” Din began thinking about the political ramifications of perspectives on cancer and, specifically, breast cancer in our society. Soon after, she came across a review of Samantha King's *Pink Ribbons, Inc.: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy* and, after reading the book, realized it could provide the framework for a film.

Din was especially fascinated by King's analysis of the history of corporate philanthropy. “It reinforced the importance of looking at an issue like breast cancer,” says Din, “which has become something that you talk about only in a particular context—you've always got to be optimistic and upbeat and hopeful, you certainly can't talk about how horrible and painful the disease is. Here were women writing from another experience that we don't see in popular media.”

Din contacted Samantha King to explore the possibility of using *Pink Ribbons, Inc.: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy* as the framework for a documentary, and the National Film Board subsequently optioned the book.

Selecting Léa Pool to Direct

A high-profile project, *Pink Ribbons, Inc.* required a visionary filmmaker at the helm, and NFB executive producer Ravida Din had her sights set on Léa Pool, a director known for her slate of award-winning features. “I knew Léa's strength would be to bring a cinematic approach and make what might have been a talking-head-kind of film accessible to a large audience: it had to be both emotional and intellectual. Léa was going to be able to find that, not only in terms of a cinematic language, but also in terms of heart.”

The producer and director met to discuss the project and, after reading Ehrenreich's article and King's book, Pool became very interested. She says, “At first, I didn't really know what pink ribbons signified besides raising money and awareness. But after reading the material, I saw there was a profoundly political aspect to something as simple as a pink ribbon that had a lot to say about our society, our value system and health.”

Making Pink Ribbons

When Pool joined the project in October 2009, a wealth of resources had already been compiled by Guerin and writer Patricia Kearns, who had been researching the film for 18 months. Pool took the material in hand, did eight months of additional research (with Guerin) and wrote the shooting script before filming began in May 2010.

During the course of production, Pool attended, and filmed at, some of the biggest breast cancer fundraising events in North America: the Revlon Run/Walk for Women in New York, the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in Washington, DC, the two-day Avon Walk for Breast Cancer in San Francisco, and the Pharmaprix Weekend to End Women's Cancers. The production team also traveled to Ottawa, ON for the lighting of the Parliament Buildings; Windsor, ON for interviews with people at the Ford Motor Company and the plastic focus group; Austin, TX, to meet with the women of the IV League group; Los Angeles, CA to interview Dr. Susan Love and Judy Brady; and West Palm Beach, FL, where Nancy Brinker was interviewed in her home.

Pool then spent seven months in the editing room. “We worked to keep what was essential in the interviews and assemble them in a logical manner. It was very important to me that the film stay on a personal and emotional level. That is why the subjects look directly into the camera, why the interviews run without beauty shots or b-roll, and why there is no narration.”

Attending Walks, Runs and Jumps for “The Cure”

Pool and Din attended a number of fundraising events across North America. How the women at these events were to be portrayed was the subject of many discussions before filming began. “One of the biggest challenges, and what frightened me the most in making this film, was that I really wanted to be respectful,” says Pool. “I wanted to make sure we showed the difference between the participants, and their courage, and will, to do something positive, and the businesses that use these events to promote their products to make money.”

“What was really important was to show that, at heart, each woman sincerely wanted to do something,” says Pool. “They want to feel like they can have some power over their own lives and the lives of those close to them and we didn’t want to attack that. I was more interested in being critical of those who profit from breast cancer.” Pool says that she found the women involved in the events to be formidable and was moved “to see the power of all these women, 40,000-strong, in Washington.”

While in New York, shooting at the Revlon Walk, Pool says, “One of the things that struck me was that I didn’t once see the word ‘cancer.’ They don’t even want to show that it’s cancer—it’s all erased so that everything is set up to give a feeling of hope. It’s a false image.”

Portraying death in the film

“You're the angel of death, you know, you're the elephant in the room. And they're learning to live, and you're learning to die.” – Jeanne Collins, IV League

Pool felt it was important to show women who were living with the reality of breast cancer. The film frequently cuts from scenes of boisterous, costumed young participants at an event, screaming into the camera, to women in the IV League group talking about dying. “I always wanted to keep this image,” says Pool, “because there’s an enormous contrast between the kind of power and invincibility women feel when they are walking together in these events, as opposed to the IV League women. They don’t give a positive message to the disease. They live alone with the fact that they are dying.”

Throughout the film’s development, there were numerous discussions about finding the right balance between an approach that would engage audiences emotionally and an essay-like format that could incorporate the views of various experts. One of Pool’s early ideas was to follow a group of women going through treatment to show the brutal reality of the disease. Even as this possibility was being explored, Barbara Ehrenreich suggested contacting Sandy Kugelman, a woman in the IV League group in Austin, Texas. “These women had a very critical approach but, at the same time, there was a lot of humour, a lot of heart,” says Pool. “They were dealing with this disease at its most terrible stage.”

When she arrived in Austin to interview the group, Pool was pleased to discover a rapport had been established between the women and Nancy Guerin, who had had many phone conversations with them beforehand. “There was already a very positive chemistry and I saw that, if I let them speak, I would probably have very moving testimonials. It was totally the opposite of what we did with the other, more structured interviews. Instead, I threw out topics and left the group in silence until they wanted to speak. We weren’t afraid to wait until something came and I think that was the right approach because these women ultimately shared very emotional and personal stories with us. It was amazing.”

The Voices of *Pink Ribbons, Inc.*

“When you think about the voices in the film,” says Din, “these are really interesting women with distinguished careers. It was important to me that these women be on the screen in a high-profile documentary—it’s about making sure that our stories and our lives are reflected. There are many important stories to be told by women and we want to make sure that these are the women who are telling this story.”

While Barbara Ehrenreich’s article “Welcome to Cancerland” was the all-important spark that set the *Pink Inc.* film wheels in motion, the writer’s participation in the production was not a *fait accompli*. Din says, “Because it started with her, I thought it would be critical to have her in the film. While it was never important or a prerequisite for the interview subjects to have been through treatment for breast cancer, when you can speak from that lived experience you obviously bring another dimension to the issue and to

your work.” But when Din contacted Ehrenreich, the writer basically said “no thanks.” Din says, “She was deferring to the women who are on the ground doing the work of activism.” Ehrenreich suggested speaking with Barbara Brenner of Breast Cancer Action, who ended up being one of the key voices in the film. But Din persisted and called one more time, and Ehrenreich finally agreed. “Which was great,” Din says, “because she sets a tone for the film and it starts with her.”

Din discusses some of the main players in what she calls the breast cancer culture. “I’m loath to call it a movement, even though they refer to themselves as a movement. I don’t think it is. It’s a business, and an industry—there are many corporations involved.”

While there are four major breast cancer fundraising organizations in North America, Susan G. Komen for the Cure is the largest in financial terms, having raised over a billion dollars. It was clear to the production team that, if they were going to look at the major players in the industry, Nancy Brinker of Komen was going to be key. The team was also interested in speaking with Evelyn Lauder and someone from Avon. “We wanted to get their perspectives on why they were involved in cause-marketing and especially breast cancer,” says Din.

Pool notes that because more and more documentaries are denouncing or attacking corporations, there was some initial concern about the likelihood of getting interviews with the more controversial subjects. “We knew we had to be careful because if we didn’t have these people, we wouldn’t have a film. We couldn’t make the film with just activists, so it was important to get the participation of people that are important in the Pink movement.” This was a major factor in her decision to direct the film without the use of narration. “I didn’t want my point of view to pull the direction of the film. Of course, it does, because I edited it, but I wanted everyone to be able to say what they had to say.”

Other Issues

Even after four years of research and development, and a year of interviews and filming, Din says she remains surprised that there are still so many unanswered questions. “I thought it would have been much easier, from all the research we did, to get clearer answers around why there’s been so little progress when so much money has been invested for such a long time. I was always waiting for something that would be revealed where I would go ‘ah, it all makes sense, that’s why they’re doing this.’ Why would there not be something absolutely profoundly life-changing for women? We looked for that and it never emerged. It’s such a complicated issue and disease and the way they’ve set up to do research will take years and years and years. I was surprised that I never saw something that made me think a really positive outcome is happening because of all the work. More and more questions emerged as we did the research.”

Pool was distressed to discover what she calls “the cynicism of certain companies—those that make both medicine and carcinogens. That, for me, is the epitome of cynicism: that you profit from something that makes people sick, and then you profit from treating the

disease.” She was also surprised by what she learned about the marketing campaigns. “I didn’t realize that women were taken advantage of to that extent. Sometimes, I’d ask myself if we were making things look worse than they are, because it is after all a film and we have to show what we’re talking about, but I would always answer, no, this is really what it’s like. It’s just that we don’t really want to believe that this is how it is—you don’t think it’s this evil.”

“Think before you pink:” the objective of *Pink Ribbons*

Director Léa Pool hopes that *Pink Ribbons, Inc.* will encourage people to question their actions. “To use their power as women to mobilize and unite, but use it with more reflection and activism. To be more critical and more politically conscious about our actions and to stop thinking that by buying pink toilet paper we’re doing what needs to be done.”

“*Pink Ribbons, Inc.* asks important questions,” says Ravida Din. “When I think of the importance of documentary film and, specifically, why this is an NFB film, I think about opportunities for dialogue, reflection and, more importantly, tools for social change and social action. If we continue to attach what we think is a movement for change to fundraising, which implies there are corporations involved, I’m not sure we’ll actually see a transformation around health. This film is about trying to find real change in women’s experience around breast cancer and asking whether this is the right way to get there.

“The film calls for accountability,” Din says. “It’s an important through-line. It gives us a glimpse of how we have moved from political activism to being really good consumers.”

Pool adds that, as the filmmaker, she is not suggesting throwing the baby out with the bathwater. “I don’t want to say that we absolutely shouldn’t be raising money. We are just saying what I think Breast Cancer Action says very well: ‘Think before you pink.’ That is to say, let’s think a little more about the actions we are taking and how we can be more effective if we act with a political conscience.”

INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

Judy Brady is a San Francisco-based activist and writer who was diagnosed with breast cancer nearly 30 years ago. For the last 25 years, Brady has worked to build a movement that addresses the politics of breast cancer. With the conviction that environmental factors lie behind the cancer epidemic, she has more recently focused on environmental concerns and is on the board of the environmental justice organization, Greenaction.

Barbara A. Brenner joined the board of Breast Cancer Action in September 1994, a year after her first diagnosis with breast cancer, and a year later she became BCA's first full-time Executive Director, a position she held until 2010. Shortly after becoming Executive Director, she had a local recurrence of breast cancer, resulting in a mastectomy. Her passion is contagious, and her effectiveness as a leader of the breast cancer movement is demonstrated by BCA's growth and achievements during her tenure there. The Barbara Brenner Rapid Response Fund was recently created to honour the brand of activism BCA achieved under her leadership. Since participating in *Pink Ribbons, Inc.*, Brenner has been diagnosed with the neurodegenerative disease ALS and now uses social media to promote discussion of how health issues are presented in mainstream media. She also uses text-to-voice software to communicate audibly.

Nancy G. Brinker is regarded as one of the leaders of the global breast cancer movement. She is the CEO and founder of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, which is now the world's largest fundraising organization for breast cancer. Brinker was named one of *TIME* magazine's "100 Most Influential People" in 2008. She served as US Ambassador to the Republic of Hungary from 2001–2003 and most recently, as US Chief of Protocol from 2007–2009, was responsible for overseeing all protocol matters for visiting heads of state and presidential travel abroad. President Barack Obama awarded her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honour. She recently published the memoir *Promise Me: How a Sister's Love Launched the Global Movement to End Breast Cancer*.

James Brophy, PhD, is a Windsor-based researcher specializing in the link between cancer and occupational carcinogens. He has been at the centre of the uphill battle to force industry and government to recognize that "occupational hazards" are a deadly reality for far too many people on the industrial frontline. Brophy's key areas of focus are occupational and environmental cancers, education, awareness and prevention. He is a lead investigator of the "Lifetime Histories Research Study," a case-control study exploring associations between occupational exposures and female breast cancer. In completed studies, he and co-investigators found evidence of a connection between the development of breast cancer and work in agriculture, health care and automotive-related manufacturing.

Janet Collins was the visionary and key organizer of the first World Conference on Breast Cancer, which was held in Kingston, Ontario, in July 1997 and drew 650 delegates from 50 countries. The WCBC Committee worked with Bella Abzug, a former US congresswoman and head of the Women's Environment and Development Organization, to create a global action plan and put breast cancer on the centre stage.

Carol Cone, Vice-Chairman at Edelman Purpose, is recognized for her work in the cause branding and strategic philanthropy arenas. Known as the "mother of cause marketing," she has embraced a steadfast commitment to building substantive and sustainable partnerships between companies and social issues for more than 25 years. Cone has pioneered new alliances for private/public partnerships to create signature programs for a host of Fortune 500 companies, including the Avon Breast Cancer Crusade, the American Heart Association's Go Red for

Women, Reebok's Human Rights Awards, Rockport's Fitness Walking Program, Gillette Women's Cancer Connection, among others. Overall, Cone's signature cause programs have raised more than \$500 million for various social causes.

Dr. Charlene Elliott is an Associate Professor of Communications Studies at the University of Calgary. Her research focuses on the communicative and policy implications of codifying colour, shape and scent. She authored "Pink!: Community, Contestation and the Colour of Breast Cancer," a paper in which she looks at how the colour pink is strategically used by breast cancer campaigns to soften the harsh realities of the disease. Elliott was recently awarded a new research chair by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to investigate the connections between food marketing and childhood obesity.

Barbara Ehrenreich is a social critic and writer. She is a widely read columnist and essayist and the author of nearly 20 books, including the *New York Times* bestseller *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. She is a frequent contributor to the *New York Times*, *Harper's*, *The Progressive* and a contributing writer to *TIME* magazine.

Charlotte Haley was one of the first people to distribute a ribbon as a means of raising awareness for breast cancer—her daughter, sister and grandmother all had breast cancer. In the 1990s, she began handing out peach-coloured ribbons at local grocery stores with cards that read: "The National Cancer Institute annual budget is \$1.8 billion, only 5 percent goes for cancer prevention. Help us wake up our legislators and America by wearing this ribbon." Soon after, *Self* magazine and Estée Lauder wanted to use Haley's ribbon but she refused, feeling they were too commercial. The magazine went ahead with pink instead and the pink ribbon soon became the worldwide symbol for breast cancer.

Jane Houlihan is the Senior Vice President for Research at the Environmental Working Group and the director of Skin Deep, an online cosmetics safety database. The database provides safety ratings for more than 62,000 products on the market and receives nearly one million hits per month. Houlihan specializes in toxic and health research and serves as a spokesperson on environmental health in the national media and at conferences around the world.

Marc Hurlbert, PhD serves as the executive director of the global breast cancer programs of the Avon Foundation for Women and the Avon Breast Cancer Crusade, which has programs in more than 55 countries and provides more than \$50 million to the breast cancer cause annually. Dr. Hurlbert is responsible for developing the Crusade's overall strategy, setting funding guidelines, implementing programs and monitoring the progress of grant recipients. Dr. Hurlbert also serves as the chairman of the board of the Health Research Alliance and as chairman of the Cancer Committee for Columbia University and New York Presbyterian Hospital's Advisory Council.

Dr. Marion Kavanaugh-Lynch is the Director of the California Breast Cancer Research Program at the University of California. Her work includes setting priorities and developing strategies for the state of California's research efforts designed to coordinate research and bring an end to breast cancer. Currently, she is leading a national panel that is developing research strategies to explore the role of environmental contaminants in breast cancer.

Margaret Keith, PhD, has adjunct faculty positions with the University of Windsor and the University of Stirling in the UK. She has advanced the use of mapping techniques for conducting participatory health research and has co-authored journal articles describing their applications. She has been a co-principal investigator for several epidemiological and qualitative research studies exploring occupational and environmental risk factors for breast cancer. She is currently

involved in a project sponsored by the National Network on Environments and Women's Health at York University, which is exploring the possible breast cancer risks for women employed in plastics manufacturing.

Samantha King is the author of *Pink Ribbons, Inc.: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy*. She is an associate professor in the school of Kinesiology and Health Studies at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Her research and teaching interests focus on the cultural politics of health, sport and the body. She sits on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* and *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* and is a member of the Board of Directors for the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport.

Evelyn H. Lauder is the Senior Corporate Vice President of the Estée Lauder Companies and the Founder and Chairman of the Breast Cancer Research Foundation. Estée Lauder was the first cosmetics company to use the pink ribbon as a symbol for breast cancer awareness and is credited with its popularity. In 2000, the company created its Global Illumination Campaign to put the spotlight on breast cancer awareness by illuminating buildings, monuments and landmarks around the world in pink. This past year they illuminated a total of 38 global historic landmarks, achieving a new Guinness World Record—"Most Landmarks Illuminated for a Cause in 24 Hours."

Ellen Leopold is the author of *A Darker Ribbon: Breast Cancer, Women, and Their Doctors in the Twentieth Century*, the first cultural history of the disease. She is also the author of *Under the Radar: Cancer and the Cold War*, which shows how nearly every aspect of our current response to the disease bears the imprint of its Cold War entanglement. She has worked as an economic policy advisor in both the US and the UK, where she was employed by the Greater London Council until it was abolished by Margaret Thatcher.

Dr. Susan Love is one of the "founding mothers" of the breast cancer advocacy movement and continues this work by serving on the boards of the National Breast Cancer Coalition and Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization. Since it was published in 1990, *Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book* has been considered the bible of breast care. She believes that breast cancer may be a virus. In 2008, in partnership with the Avon Foundation, Love launched the Army of Women initiative, which is recruiting one million women of all ages and ethnicities, with or without breast cancer, to participate in breast cancer research studies. Love is currently the President and Medical Director of the Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation, and founder and board member of Windy Hill Medical, a breast cancer prevention company.

Kim McInerney was the Primary Brand Sponsorship and Experiential Marketing Manager for Ford Motor Company at the time of filming *Pink Ribbons, Inc.* She oversaw Ford's Warriors in Pink, a cause-marketing campaign designed to raise money for breast cancer. It sells a variety of pink products, including a pink Ford Mustang. For 17 years, the Warrior in Pink program has been a National Series Sponsor of Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, committing one million dollars a year to the foundation.

Dr. Olufunmilayo L. Olopade, MD is a Walter L. Palmer Distinguished Service Professor and Associate Dean for Global Health at the University of Chicago Medical Center. Trained broadly in clinical oncology and cancer genetics at the University of Chicago, Dr. Olopade has conducted research focused on understanding familial forms of cancer. Her seminal observations on the genetic basis of breast cancer in young women of African ancestry in the US and West Africa has broadened our understanding of the complex interactions of genes, lifestyle and the environment in breast cancer causation. As a physician and scientist, Dr. Olopade works tirelessly to translate

scientific discoveries at the individual and population level into optimal interventions for women at risk of breast cancer. Dr. Olopade effectively disseminates the benefits of her work, inspires students and colleagues, and is a role model for women scientists worldwide. An international leader in academic medicine, Dr. Olopade has received numerous honours and awards and is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, the National Cancer Advisory Board and the American Philosophical Society, and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

IV League is a breast cancer support group in Austin, Texas, for women with metastatic breast cancer. They meet on a regular basis and help each other cope with the rigours of the disease and the realities of dying. The group considers the marketing of breast cancer to be insensitive and offensive, and does not believe that “strong will” can be used to explain why some individuals survive cancer. They are aware of how many people have succumbed to breast cancer—last year alone they lost 10 members—and they believe it is the disease that kills people and *not* lack of hope or positive thinking.

The Plastics Focus group is comprised of a handful of women who worked in the automotive plastics industry, molding car parts for the Big Three. Sharing grave concerns about the chemicals they were exposed to in the workplace, they agreed to take part in a research project studying the links between occupational hazards and breast cancer. The study used visual data collection techniques to assist the women in recounting their work and health history. They described chemical odours, smoke and vapours throughout their work environment that made them feel light-headed, gave them headaches, sore throats, breathing difficulties and nose bleeds. They spoke of co-workers who had developed cancer or had experienced miscarriages. Many expressed fear that they too would suffer future health consequences as a result of their past occupational exposures to carcinogens and endocrine disrupters.

FILMMAKER BIOS

Léa Pool (Director, Writer) is an acclaimed filmmaker whose work has been honoured by an array of international awards. Originally from Switzerland, Pool emigrated to Quebec in 1975, where her career began soon after. In 1978, she co-directed and edited the short documentary *Laurent Lamerre, portier*, and the following year she wrote, produced, directed and filmed the award-winning short *Strass Café*. Pool went on to direct a series on cultural minorities for Radio-Québec, as well as *Eva en transit*, a program on the French singer, Éva, before turning her hand to features.

Pool made an astonishing feature debut in 1984 with *La Femme de l'hôtel (A Woman in Transit)*, which won several international awards and a Best Actress Genie for Louise Marleau in the title role. In 1986, *Anne Trister*, which Pool wrote and directed, was selected for Official Competition at the Berlin International Film Festival, and the film also took home the highest awards from other major festivals. *À corps perdu (Straight for the Heart)* was presented in Official Competition at the Venice, Montreal World and Chicago International Film Festivals and was honoured with top prizes at Namur and Halifax. *La Demoiselle sauvage (The Savage Woman)* won the Best Canadian Film and Best Artistic Contribution (Photography) awards when it was screened in competition at the Montreal World Film Festival in 1991.

The following year, Pool wrote and directed *Rispondetemi*, one of the shorts in the *Montréal vu par... ensemble*. Pool's fifth feature, *Mouvements du désir (Desire in Motion)*, was presented at the Sundance Festival in 1994 and nominated for eight Genie Awards, including Achievement in Direction and Original Screenplay. In 1999, Pool's *Emporte-moi (Set Me Free)* was awarded the Special Prize of the Ecumenical Jury at the Berlin International Film Festival. Her most recent features include *Lost and Delirious*, starring Piper Perabo, Jessica Paré and Mischa Barton; *The Blue Butterfly*, starring William Hurt and Pascale Bussièrès; *Maman est chez le coiffeur (Mommy Is at the Hairdresser's)*; and *La Dernière fugue (The Last Escape)*.

In 1990, Léa Pool shot her first feature documentary, *Hotel Chronicles*, which won the Gold Medal at the Chicago International Film Festival. Other documentaries include two episodes of the bilingual television series, *Women: A True Story*, based on scenarios by Rina Fraticelli and Léa Pool and hosted by Susan Sarandon, and *Mile End*, for the CBC series *Hidden Lives*. In 1998, the documentary *Gabrielle Roy* won the 1998 Rockie Award in the Best History and Biography category at the Banff Television Festival and a Gémeaux Award for Best Documentary Film.

In 1994, Léa Pool was distinguished with the title "Chevalier" by the French Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, and the Blois Festival in France presented a retrospective of her films. In 2006, she was honoured with three lifetime achievement awards: the Prix Reconnaissance from the Université du Québec à Montréal, the Prix Femmes de mérite from the Women's Y Foundation, and the Prix Albert-Tessier, the Quebec Government's top honour, in recognition of her exceptional talent and contribution to Quebecois cinema.

Ravida Din (Producer, Executive Producer) The uncompromising commitment of Ravida Din to social justice and feminism is integral to her work and a strong guiding principle in her efforts to produce social documentary films that offer insightful, engaging analyses. In her position as Executive Producer of the NFB's Quebec and Atlantic Production Centres, her mandate is to envision and manage a varied program of theatrical and television documentaries, community-based media, interactive digital projects and alternative drama. Her recent credits include *The Socalled Movie*, directed by Garry Beitel, which was selected to screen at Hot Docs and IDFA in 2010; Pablo Alvarez-Mesa's *Jelena's Song*, winner of the Pierre and Yolande Perrault Award at Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois 2011; and *Family Motel*, directed by Helene Klodawsky, an award-winner at the 2008 Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois. Din is currently producing the documentaries *Payback: Debt and the Shadow Side of Wealth*, based on the book by Margaret Atwood and directed by Jennifer Baichwal, and *The Feminist Project*, an exhilarating chronicle of the Canadian women's movement, directed by Karen Cho.

Nancy Guerin (Researcher, Writer, Associate Producer) is a writer, producer, researcher and journalist who has worked on many documentary productions. In addition to *Pink Ribbons, Inc.*, with which she has been involved since 2006, Guerin also line produced *Partly Private*, a feature documentary about male circumcision that won the Best New York Documentary award at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2009. Guerin has been involved with several children's television series, researching *In Real Life*, the Gemini-nominated *Mystery Hunters* and *Active-toi*. She also worked as an archival researcher for *La Quête* and the light-hearted feature documentary *Short & Male*, which examines the obstacles facing short-statured men. Nancy Guerin was born in New York and studied Communications and Journalism at SUNY Albany, earning a master's degree. She went on to work as a reporter and news editor at Metroland Newsweekly in Albany, where she won several awards. She also taught journalism as an adjunct professor at SUNY before relocating to Montreal in 2003.

Patricia Kearns (Writer, Researcher) is an independent filmmaker living in Montreal who brings a strong sense of community and a wide range of interests to her work. Through her company Pack Productions, she has produced and directed such acclaimed experimental documentaries as *If the Family Fits*, a thoughtful deconstruction of the family-values agenda; and *Choir Girls*, a celebratory portrait of a women's choir. *XS STRESS: Teens Take Control*, a youth primer on how to survive adolescence, is the second documentary she has written and directed for the National Film Board, following *Democracy à la Maude*, a profile of Canadian social activist Maude Barlow. Kearns is a founding member of Montreal's image + nation Film Festival and Studio XX, a centre committed to enhancing women's participation in new media technologies. For the National Film Board, she was interim project leader and producer of the CitizenShift website, which is dedicated to media and social change.