

**Winner of the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature**

**Directors Ross Kauffman and/or Zana Briski**

The most stigmatized people in Calcutta's red light district are not the prostitutes, but their children. In the face of abject poverty, abuse, and despair, these kids have little possibility of escaping their mother's fate or of creating another type of life. Ross Kauffman and/or Zana Briski are available to speak about the creation of the film *Born into Brothels* depicting Zana's work with the children of Calcutta's red light district and their transformation through the art of photography. The program includes images of the children's work. A screening of the film and/or a photograph exhibit can be arranged to coincide with their appearance.

## **About the Film**

A tribute to the resiliency of childhood and the restorative power of art, *Born into Brothels* is a portrait of several unforgettable children who live in the red light district of Calcutta, where their mothers work as prostitutes. Zana Briski, a New York-based photographer, gives each of the children a camera and teaches them to look at the world with new eyes.

In *Born into Brothels*, directors Ross Kauffman and Zana Briski chronicle the amazing transformation of the children they come to know in the red light district. Briski, a professional photographer, gives them lessons and cameras, igniting latent sparks of artistic genius that reside in these children who live in the most sordid and seemingly hopeless world.

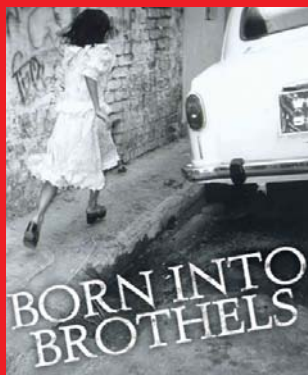
The photographs taken by the children are not merely examples of remarkable observation and talent; they reflect something much larger, morally encouraging, and even politically volatile: art as an immensely liberating and empowering force.

Devoid of sentimentality, *Born into Brothels* defies the typical tear-stained tourist snapshot of the global underbelly. Briski spends years with these kids and becomes part of their lives. Their photographs are prisms into their souls, rather than anthropological curiosities or primitive imagery, and a true testimony of the power of the indelible creative spirit.

**FOR SCHEDULING,  
CALL TOLL-FREE:  
800.743.9182**

email: [info@creativewell.com](mailto:info@creativewell.com)  
website: [www@creativewell.com](http://www@creativewell.com)

**CREATIVWELL, INC.  
P.O. BOX 3130  
MEMORIAL SATION  
UPPER MONTCLAIR, NJ 07043**



**Directors' Bios**



**Zana Briski**

Zana Briski was born in London, England and lives in New York City. After earning a master's degree in theology and religious studies at the University of Cambridge, she studied documentary photography at International Center of Photography in New York in 1990-91. In 1992 she won first prize, an Eastman Kodak Grant, at the Eddie Adams Workshop. In 1995 she made her first trip to India, producing a story on female infanticide. Her work earned a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in 1997 and a National Press Photographers Association Picture of the Year Award. It also gained her admittance to the World Press Photo Foundation Master Class in Amsterdam, The Netherlands in 1996. In 1997 she returned to India and began her project on the prostitutes of Calcutta's red light district. In 1998 she became a Light Work Artist-in Residence. She was twice a finalist for the prestigious W. Eugene Smith annual Grant in Humanistic Photography in 1999 and 2000, and has received two fellowships: George Soros' Open Society Institute Fellowship in 1999, and an Alicia Patterson Foundation Fellowship in 2000. In 2000 she was also awarded a first prize at the World Press Photo Foundation, and a Dorothea Lange-Paul Taylor Prize from the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. In 2000 she was awarded a Special Editions Fellowship by the Lower East Side Print Shop to make a series of photogravures of her work from India. In 2001 she received the Howard Chapnick Grant for the Advancement of Photojournalism.

Since 2000 she has conducted a series of photographic workshops with children of prostitutes in Calcutta. The photographs produced by the children were auctioned at Sotheby's in New York in 2001 and presented in Amnesty International's 2003 calendar.

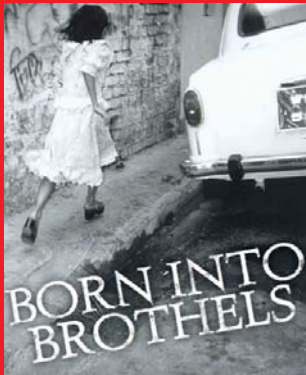
In 2002 Zana and co-director Ross Kauffman were awarded grants from the Sundance Institute, the Jerome Foundation and the New York State Council on the Arts for their film, Born into Brothels, a feature documentary about the children of Calcutta's prostitutes. In 2002 Zana created Kids with Cameras, a non-profit organization to empower marginalized children in communities around the world through learning the art of photography.

Kids with Cameras uses photography to capture the imaginations of children, to empower them, building confidence, self-esteem and hope. The organization shares their vision and voices with the world through exhibitions, books, websites and film. They are committed to furthering their general education beyond photography either by linking with local organizations to provide scholarships or by developing their own schools with a focus on leadership and the arts.

**FOR SCHEDULING,  
CALL TOLL-FREE:  
800.743.9182**

email: [info@creativewell.com](mailto:info@creativewell.com)  
website: [www@creativewell.com](http://www@creativewell.com)

**CREATIVWELL, INC.  
P.O. BOX 3130  
MEMORIAL SATION  
UPPER MONTCLAIR, NJ 07043**



**Ross Kauffman**

Ross Kauffman worked as a documentary film editor from 1992 - 2000. He spent three years at Valkhn Film and Video Inc., a post-production company where he worked on a wide variety of films for producers such as Jim Lipscomb, Kevin Bachar and Melvin Van Peebles. In 1994 he began a longstanding working relationship with Emmy Award winning producer and editor Sam Pollard, editing diverse projects such as *Hookers of the Point*, one of the highest rated America Undercover documentaries in HBO's history; *Going Places* with Al Roker for WNET/THIRTEEN; as well as the award winning series *City Arts/City Life* for PBS. He has also edited documentaries for National Geographic and The Discovery Channel.

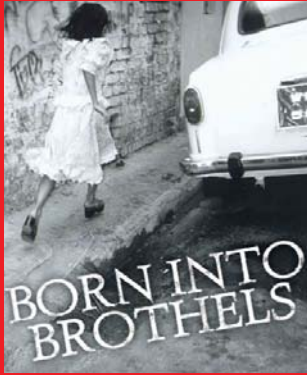
Since 2000, he has been reaching out to different aspects of documentary production, working as a director of photography on *Family Stories*, a film about an extended African American family separated by geographic, social and economic lines. Recently, he has begun producing and directing independent documentaries. *A Weekend with Mr. Frank* is a one-hour documentary portraying the relationship of photographer Robert Frank and his longtime Japanese publisher, Kazahiko Motomura. *Superintendent* chronicles a day in the life on Monilal Manie, superintendent and resident Hindu priest of a downtown New York City loft building.

In 2001, Kauffman teamed up with award winning photojournalist Zana Briski to produce *Born into Brothels*, a feature documentary about the children of Calcutta's prostitutes. In 2002, Kauffman formed Red Light Films and along with Briski was awarded grants from the Sundance Institute, the Jerome Foundation and the New York State Council on the Arts to complete the film.

**FOR SCHEDULING,  
CALL TOLL-FREE:  
800.743.9182**

email: [info@creativewell.com](mailto:info@creativewell.com)  
website: [www@creativewell.com](http://www@creativewell.com)

CREATIVWELL, INC.  
P.O. BOX 3130  
MEMORIAL SATION  
UPPER MONTCLAIR, NJ 07043



**FOR SCHEDULING,  
CALL TOLL-FREE:  
800.743.9182**

email: [info@creativewell.com](mailto:info@creativewell.com)  
website: [www@creativewell.com](http://www@creativewell.com)

**CREATIVWELL, INC.  
P.O. BOX 3130  
MEMORIAL SATION  
UPPER MONTCLAIR, NJ 07043**

## Awards

### **77th Academy Awards®**

Best Documentary Feature

### **2005 IFP Independent Spirit Awards**

DIRECTV/IFC Truer Than Fiction Award

### **2004 L.A. Film Critics**

Winner, Best Documentary of the Year

### **2004 International Documentary Association**

Distinguished Documentary Achievement Award

### **2004 National Board of Review**

Winner, Best Documentary of the Year

### **2004 Sundance Film Festival**

Audience Award

### **2004 Human Rights Watch**

Nestor Almendros Prize for Courage in Filmmaking

### **2004 Seattle International Film Festival**

Best Documentary Award

### **2004 Silverdocs Film Festival**

Audience Award

### **2004 Full Frame Documentary Film Festival**

Audience Award

### **2004 Atlanta Film Festival**

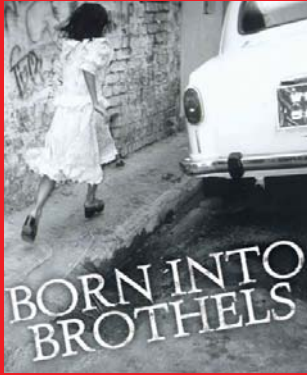
Turner Broadcasting Audience Award

### **2004 Nashville Film Festival**

Best Documentary and Audience Awards

### **2004 Cleveland Film Festival**

Audience Award



**FOR SCHEDULING,  
CALL TOLL-FREE:  
800.743.9182**

email: [info@creativewell.com](mailto:info@creativewell.com)  
website: [www@creativewell.com](http://www@creativewell.com)

**CREATIVWELL, INC.  
P.O. BOX 3130  
MEMORIAL SATION  
UPPER MONTCLAIR, NJ 07043**

# Born Into Brothels

**2004 Amnesty International Film Festival**

Audience Award

**2004 Bermuda Film Festival**

Best Documentary and Audience Awards

**2004 Durango Film Festival**

Best Documentary, Filmmaker's and Audience Awards

**2004 Newport Beach Film Festival**

Special Merit Award

**2004 Artivist Film Festival**

Children's Day Award

**2004 Sydney Int'l Film Festival**

Audience Award

**2004 BendFilm**

Audience Award

**2004 BendFilm**

Best Score

**2004 Chicago Int'l Film Festival**

The Gold Hugo for Best Documentary Feature

**2004 Chicago Int'l Film Festival**

The "Level Above the Rest" prize

**2004 High Falls Film Festival**

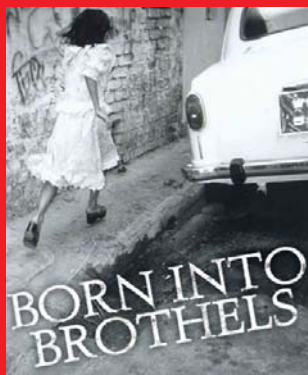
Audience Award for Best Documentary

**2005 Portland Film Festival**

Best Documentary

**Ashland International Film Festival 2005**

Best Documentary



## Press Clippings

"Anyone who has ever thought that documentaries lack the emotional impact, drama or sheer movie-going pleasure of fiction films will likely change their mind after seeing *Born into Brothels*... this is a work of art so deep and resonant that it puts most narrative films to shame."

**James Greenberg, Hollywood Reporter**

"An emotionally exquisite, irresistibly moving and visually elegant movie."

**John Anderson, Newsday**

"Born into Brothels, a documentary that looks at the lives of the children of Calcutta prostitutes, made a big impression. In a word, it was 'amazing'..."

**Frank Herron, The Post-Standard**

"You could turn the sound off and *Born into Brothels* would still bring down the house; its images are that revealing and moving ..."

**Janice Page, The Boston Globe**

"A documentary about the children of Sonagachi red light district in Kolkata city of India that has garnered award after award at film festivals is set for theatrical release in the US. ...Rather than a grim portrait of their hardscrabble lives, *"Born into Brothels"* is a look at the power of art to bring light into blighted lives."

**Staff Writer, Indo-Asian News Service**

"This film won the Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival 2004, and I can confirm that it deserves every gong there is. In this case, the children born into the red light district of Calcutta make captivating subjects, and the result is something as beautiful as it is desperate."

**Peta Miller, ActionAid.org**

"It is not an experience that will allow you to just switch the channel. And as time passes, I'm sure you will see more from both of these filmmakers, each improving the world in their own way."

**David Poland, Sundance 2004 Reviews**

"...the story of the children is resonating with filmgoers. *"Born into Brothels"* won the Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival (despite having been completed the day before its screening) and has won awards at festivals in Seattle, Bermuda and North Carolina."

**Stewart Oksenhorn, The Aspen Times**

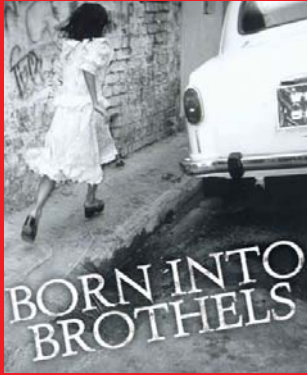
"...(Zana Briski) has a compelling story and beautiful elements to work with. She makes the most of India's stunning colors and the watchful, beautiful eyes of the women 'on the line.'...It's hard to see how this film can miss being an Oscar contender."

**Patricia Miller, The Durango Herald**

**FOR SCHEDULING,  
CALL TOLL-FREE:  
800.743.9182**

email: [info@creativewell.com](mailto:info@creativewell.com)  
website: [www@creativewell.com](http://www@creativewell.com)

**CREATIVWELL, INC.  
P.O. BOX 3130  
MEMORIAL SATION  
UPPER MONTCLAIR, NJ 07043**



"*Born into Brothels* filmmakers turn a difficult subject into a stunning film."

**Nan Chalat-Noaker, The Park Record, Park City**

"Juror Mark Salisbury summed it up well in a statement: "Seeing the film is a life-changing experience. It has re-set my life's barometer. The things I moan about now pale into insignificance."

**Wendy Mitchell, indieWIRE.com**

"The most popular documentary at the State Theatre (Sydney Film Festival) was *Born into Brothels*, which looked at how photography classes were helping children escape prostitution in Calcutta."

Garry Maddox, Film reporter, The Sydney Mercury Herald

"The other items on the program are just as interesting, though." "... Zana Briski and Ross Kaufman's *Born into Brothels* was intended to simply chronicle the lives of children of Calcutta prostitutes, but turned into a tribute ..."

**Staff Reporter, Fort Worth Weekly**

"Ultimately, *Born into Brothels* is both beautifully crafted and powerfully shot, but even more than this, it's a stunning document on the brutality of poverty and the miraculous endurance of the creative spirit."

**Jessica Hundley, GrapevineCulture.com**

"Going beyond the maudlin infomercials that prey upon audience sympathies, the film educates as well as inspires, and sincerely represents social activism in the best ways. Just as *Ikiru's* Kanji desires to do one notable deed to make his life meaningful, filmmakers Briski and Kauffman have crafted a generous portrait of humanity that also responsibly makes a positive difference."

**John Nesbit, CultureDose.Net**

"*Born into Brothels* is the rare Sundance film attracting unanimous praise from press and audiences in the festival's opening days."

**Steve Ramos, CityBeat**

"When (the children) begin to see what they are able to produce these children become transformed. Interviews with each of them shows that there is some deep wisdom harbored in their young souls, and all profess to wanting a better life apart from the brothel neighborhoods."

**Brad Slager, FilmThreat.com**

"This is the harsh reality that London-born, New York-based photographer Zana Briski captures in her documentary *Born into Brothels*. Yet what lingers is not the difficulty of the children's lives, but their resilience, wisdom, humour and talent."

**Gabriella Coslovich, The Age**

**FOR SCHEDULING,  
CALL TOLL-FREE:  
800.743.9182**

email: [info@creativewell.com](mailto:info@creativewell.com)  
website: [www@creativewell.com](http://www@creativewell.com)

CREATIVWELL, INC.  
P.O. BOX 3130  
MEMORIAL SATION  
UPPER MONTCLAIR, NJ 07043