



SANCTUARY STUDIOS



Photo: Laurie Goodman Photography

## Michelle Emson

Michelle Emson, founder of Sanctuary Studios, is an accomplished public speaker, devout technologist, committed human rights activist, documentary filmmaker, LGBTI advocate and educator.

She has created innovative, leading edge, solutions in mobile computing (Psion), parallel computing (Coulter), automotive electronics (Aston Martin, Jaguar), cloud computing (PV Labs), server virtualization, and web Content Management Systems (Psion Teklogix).

An 'openly-out' transgender woman living in Southern Ontario, Canada, Michelle speaks on a variety of LGBT, Human Rights, transgender, and mental health related issues to audiences of all ages, genders, occupations, and beliefs.

In addition, Michelle is an accomplished documentary filmmaker having completed "Pride of Ukraine" for KyivPride Canada, which premiered at the Embassy of Canada, Ukraine in March of 2015, and "Transgender Life in Slovenia", which premiered in Ljubljana, June 2016.

Michelle is a qualified Electronics Engineer, I.T. Executive, Web Developer, Professional Photographer, Video Producer, and award winning Sound Engineer.

She brings this breadth of experience to bear when working with her clients

Michelle is committed to the concept that, each and every one of us can live a fulfilling and meaningful life if we only come to accept our own uniqueness and hence, the uniqueness of others. She firmly believes that "When Passion meets Purpose, amazing things can happen". She has found both her passion and her purpose.



## SANTUARY STUDIOS - WEB DESIGN

Our worry-free, full-service, digital agency is all about relationships. We become a part of your team; truly understanding your business, the challenges you face, and the lofty goals you have set. We leverage our breadth, and depth, of skills and experience to apply the appropriate web solution for you. Specializing in serving female entrepreneurs, who are at once passionate, ambitious, yet compassionate, we know what it takes to balance family and business.

Technically, we ensure that your site works seamlessly across all platforms, creating fully responsive designs for mobile and tablet. We take care of all the technical mumbo-jumbo (we're geeks and love that stuff!) starting with branding, domain name registration or transfer, web and email hosting, website design, social media integration, Search Engine Optimization, site management with updates, security monitoring, and of course, technical support.

At Sanctuary Studios we create a truly worry-free web environment and digital presence for your business.

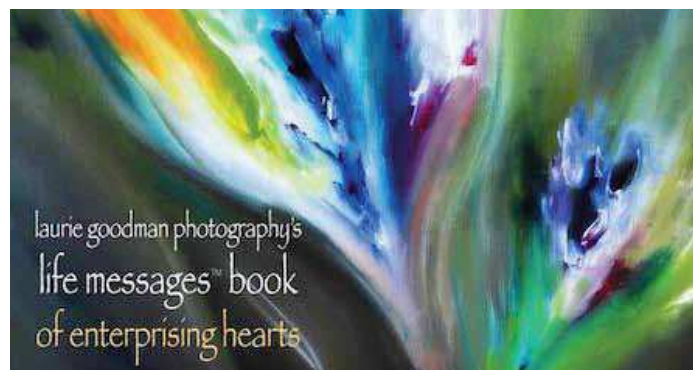




Photo: Julie Rock Photography

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO PRODUCTION

With over 30 years experience, our photography reflects your brand value. Professional photography is key to a successful marketing strategy. Creating a strong, professional brand impression for your clients and potential market. We ensure that your photography ties into your bigger brand image. Offering various packages from personal headshots to product shots to event photography, we can help ensure your brand message stands out.

Video is one of the strongest components of any marketing campaign today. With more people viewing and engaging with video than any other media, it is important to not just include it as part of your marketing strategy, but to ensure it is done well. It is the most critical digital asset today. It is often the first opportunity you will get to really connect with potential clients and share your brand message. We have the experience behind us to create a compelling video that will make a real impact on your target market and support you campaign.



Photo: Stacey Newman Photography

## PUBLIC SPEAKING, ADVOCACY, INTERNATIONAL WORK

Following her transition in 2011, Michelle has become a prominent advocate for LGBTI rights and equality particularly as they relate to gender identity and expression. She has worked with a cross-section of community facing organizations, such as school boards, presenting workshops, training sessions, and consultancy.

The World Pride Human Rights Conference, a part of World Pride in Toronto in 2014, was life-changing for her. She learned of the plight of the LGBTI movement in Ukraine and became increasingly involved in human rights activism. Collaborating with Ukrainian activist Olena Semenova the pair produced two films "Pride of Ukraine" and "Transgender Life in Slovenia" with more projects in development.

Michelle recently presented to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bi, and Transgender Association, ILGA World Conference in Bangkok whilst Olena presented a workshop to ILGA Europe in Cyprus. In recent years,



Photo: Julie Rock Photography

the pair have presented at Pride events across Europe including Euro Pride in Amsterdam, Munich Pride, Kyiv Pride, and Ljubljana Pride, and many more. At Toronto Pride 2015, the couple brought together the Ukrainian and Russian LGBTI communities who then marched, side-by-side, in solidarity for universal human rights.

Today, universal human rights are a core part of Sanctuary Studio's mission and business model.





# PRIDE of UKRAINE

a documentary of hope and inspiration

Прайд по-українськи  
Фільм про надію та натхнення

## PRIDE OF UKRAINE

This film tells the story of KyivPride, the first attempt of the Ukrainian LGBT community to rise up and make their voice be heard by the government. The documentary also includes interviews with activists and allies from Ukraine, Canada and Germany, as well as footage from KyivPride events in 2012, the successful march in 2013, and to the cancellation of the 2014 march.

During Toronto's Pride Week, four representatives of Ukraine's KyivPride visited World Pride and the World Pride Human Rights Conference in Toronto to share the strength of their commitment for securing fundamental human rights of LGBT people. The story of KyivPride inspired Canadian documentary filmmaker, photographer, and trans\* activist, Michelle Emson to collaborate with Ukrainian activist Olena Semenova and create the original film "The Pride of Ukraine - Inspire a World of Change". "The goal of the documentary is to give hope," - says the film's director, Michelle Emson. "Hope to motivate people all over the world to see the possibilities and to "Inspire a World of Change" so that LGBT people are safe from persecution and free to simply exist for who they are and love who they chose, wherever they might live in the world".

In spite of the troubles in Ukraine, the subject of LGBT rights must be maintained. It is not unusual for such rights to be compromised following changes of government and leadership. The new documentary is going to raise awareness about the LGBT rights question in Ukraine in Canada, the US and in Europe. The film premiered at the Embassy of Canada in Kyiv, Ukraine.

"We are very excited about the documentary since it is going to be the first ever high quality, full story about our fight for LGBT Pride in Ukraine" – says Olena Semenova, the Ukrainian activist, "this story remains untold at this point and represents an important asset in our movement's history."



# Transspolna življenja v Sloveniji

## TRANSGENDER LIFE IN SLOVENIA

(Transspolna življenja v Sloveniji)

Slovenia is a central European country of just 2.06 million inhabitants. International estimates suggest that 0.3% of any given population will identify as transgender, hence, Slovenia has an estimated transgender population of over 6,000 people. The vast majority of this population remains closeted, hidden from a society where they feel incredible pressure to conform with conservative standards of gender and live in fear of abandonment. However, a significant proportion are able to be their true authentic selves, identify and express their gender freely, and live productive and integrated lives within their communities. This film compassionately raises awareness of transgender lives in Slovenia, increase visibility of transgender people throughout the country, and inspire others to live their lives freely.

Michelle was approached to develop, shoot, and produce the project by Zavod TransAkcija, Slovenia's only transgender organization. The film shares the lived experiences of 10 transgender and gender non-binary people living in Slovenia and was voted Best Film at the 2016 Ljubljana International LGBT Film Festival.



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