

Others

Creative Aging and Community Through the Making of *Silver Screammers* S. Cisterna.
Gerontechnology 25(s)

Purpose The purpose of this presentation is to explore the creative, social, and emotional impacts of producing the feature documentary *Silver Screammers*[1], which follows a group of eight “main character” older adults (ages 72–96) as they collectively undertake the challenge of creating a low-budget horror film. The project examines how creative risk-taking, collaborative storytelling, and participation in an unfamiliar art form can influence confidence, identity, and community connection in later life, while also challenging cultural assumptions about aging and creative capacity. **Method** The documentary was produced over several months and documents participants from diverse personal and professional backgrounds as they collaborated on the development and production of an original short horror film entitled “The Rug”. The process was structured around guided filmmaking phases, including story development, rehearsals, production, and post-production, with participants actively engaging in roles such as writing, acting, production design, and directing. A small professional film crew provided technical guidance while prioritizing participant agency and creative decision-making. Data were collected through observational cinematography, semi-structured interviews, and behind-the-scenes documentation, capturing moments of learning, intergenerational collaboration, creative problem-solving, and evolving group dynamics. To support the method, a trailer for the film will be screened - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpT0fO2svr8> **Results and Discussion** Analysis reveals that the filmmaking process functioned as a catalyst for increased confidence, emotional expression, and social connectedness. Participants frequently described renewed curiosity, improved mood, and a heightened sense of purpose resulting from their involvement. Stepping outside familiar comfort zones—particularly through performance and leadership roles—enabled participants to renegotiate personal narratives about aging and capability. The documentary illustrates how humour, vulnerability, and collective effort fostered meaningful engagement and peer support. These findings contribute to broader discussions on active aging, arts-based engagement, and the potential of collaborative filmmaking as an empowering model for later-life creativity and community building. In addition, “The Rug” gained notoriety when it was screened nationally on CBC television this past September, and “Silver Screammers” has won numerous audience-choice awards at various international film festivals, proving that audiences are keen to see older adults in a positive and inspiring light.

References

1. S. Cisterna (2025). “*Silver Screammers*” produced by Mythic Productions Inc., Distributed in Canada by Blue Ice Docs.

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