



# WARRIOR woman

Acclaimed producer Robin Scholes is the spark that sets magic in motion

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**IF FILM AND TELEVISION PRODUCER** Robin Scholes believes in something, she believes there's a way to make it happen. The industry veteran has a talent for getting projects off the ground, and has been a driving force behind a host of acclaimed Kiwi TV shows, documentaries and movies, including *Once Were Warriors*, *Broken English* and *Rain*.

A lecturer in art history and film studies at universities here and in the UK, it was a natural progression for Robin to start making her own films in 1971. She learned on the job and, in her trademark gutsy style, by approaching professionals for advice. The industry was male-dominated at the time, but Robin wasn't about to let preconceptions stop her learning the ropes. "I was a feminist you know? I felt very gung ho about women's rights; our right to take over and do whatever job we liked."

Word of her talent got around and she was asked to shoot a documentary, *Some Of My Best Friends Are Women*, for the international Year of the Woman in 1975, which led to TVNZ commissioning a series. And so it was that in 1976 Robin joined the team at TVNZ full time, shooting, researching and directing; and in 1980 won a Fulbright scholarship to attend film school in New York.

Returning home, she decided "in order to have power over and create my own work I had to learn about producing". So she did, and in 1983 co-founded TV production company Communicado (now Screentime), still an industry leader.

Robin, 63, joined production company Eyeworks in 2004, and today has multiple projects on the go, including new comedy/drama *Burying Brian*, about a woman who accidentally kills her husband then calls on her three best friends to help cover it up. Robin's immensely proud of the show. "It's got a wonderful energy and vibrancy about it. There are moments when there's real emotional truth, but there's a lot of laughter to be had out of that, too."

Robin was awarded an OBE for her services to film in 1997 and more than 30 years after she began is as driven as ever. "I can't think of anything I'd like to do more. On my horizon there are cool television series ideas that I'm really excited about and some films I want to get made. There are these jewels in the cupboard and I can't wait to show them to everyone else." □

*Burying Brian* screens Wednesdays, 8:30pm, TV One.