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Illinois Wesleyan Alumnus to Host Film Screening in Chicago

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Amanda “Gwydhar” Bratton, a 2004 Illinois Wesleyan University graduate, will host a pre-screening of her most recent short film, *The Persephone Project*, by Blue Damen Pictures. The presentation will take place in the Garland Room at the Chicago Cultural Center (78 E. Washington St., Chicago) on Friday, Feb. 1 from 7 to 9 p.m.

This event is open to the public by reservation through the Illinois Wesleyan Alumni Office at (888) 498-2586 or by e-mail at iwuevent@titan.iwu.edu. Reservations need to be made no later than January 29.

The Persephone Project focuses the Greek myth of Persephone, which explains the season of winter. Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, the goddess of earth and fertility, was captured by Hades and made the goddess of the underworld. She was rescued, but each year must return to Hades’ lair for four months. In this time her mother mourns for her lost daughter and spreads winter across the land.

Bratton recreates the myth in an experimental interpretation, focusing on a visual representation of the story. The concepts within the myth have been significant to her for some time, “I kind of have a recurring theme of underworld in several of my projects,” said Bratton. “I think it comes from an interest in our fear of things and approaching that fear, and using it to grow.”

Each character wears a mask specially designed and handmade for the film by veteran mask maker Jeff Semmerling of Semmerling & Schaefer Mask Studio. Two other Illinois Wesleyan alumni involved in production are Liz Schroeder, a 2006 Illinois Wesleyan graduate, as costume designer, and Daniel Vendt, a 2005 Illinois Wesleyan graduate, who composed the original score.

Blue Damen Pictures, the production company founded by Bratton, is a Chicago-based ensemble of individuals dedicated to promoting and nurturing up-and-coming talent within the film community. *The Persephone Project* is the first major short film it has produced, with several smaller shorts already under its belt such as *Man Jam*, *Big Brother* and *Single's Awareness Day*.

For more information visit the Blue Damen Pictures Web site at www.bluedamen.com.