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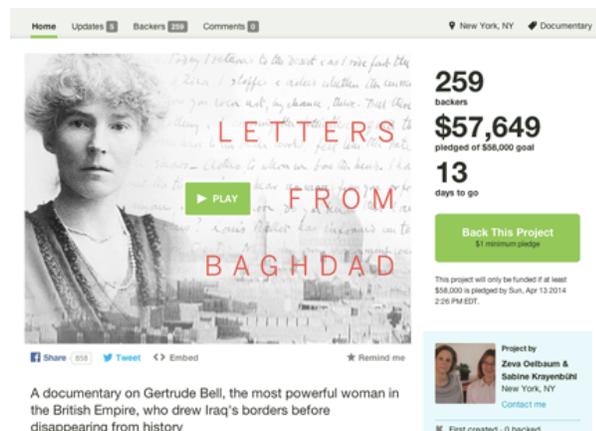
Dear Zeva,

As you are aware, raising money for creative projects is especially challenging for artists. But there are artists out there doing a fantastic job and having their needs met. Two such artists are Zeva Oelbaum and Sabine Kraysenbühl whose **Kickstarter campaign** for their documentary film, **Letters From**

Bagdad, was 97% funded in 15 days. Because their campaign has resonated with so many donors and their original minimum goal of \$58,000 is more than likely to be met, they have started on their reach goal of \$75,000!

I talked with Zeva and Sabine via email about the success they've had with their crowdfunding campaign. I wanted to share this information and inspiration with the Zip Creative community, which is made up of artists like Zeva and Sabine who are taking their careers into their own hands. Hopefully, you'll walk away with some great tips on how to enhance your own crowdfunding campaigns!

Letters from Baghdad tells the dramatic and thought-provoking story of British-born Gertrude Bell, sometimes referred to as the female Lawrence of Arabia. An adventurer, spy, archaeologist and powerful political force, she travelled into the uncharted Arabian desert and was recruited by British Military Intelligence to help reshape the Middle East after World War I. She drew the borders of Iraq, helped



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installs first king and established the Baghdad Museum of Antiquities which was infamously looted during the 2003 American invasion. She advocated for Iraqi self-rule and openly criticized colonial policy.

I hope you find this discussion useful and inspiring!

With love and all good wishes,
Joanne

Joanne: Your campaign is beautifully designed and the subject matter is compellingly presented. What are three key elements that were required to put together a campaign of this scale and who did you get to help with it?

Zeva and Sabine: At this moment, there are more than 9,000 Film and Video documentary film projects on Kickstarter, so it takes a lot of preparation to stand out and do an effective campaign. For us, the three key elements are:

- **Be far enough along in your project so that you can communicate your goals and needs effectively.** You also need enough content to show that you've done your homework about your project. It was suggested to us to do a Kickstarter last year, but we weren't ready. We've been working on our project for 2 years, full-time. Funders want to be fairly sure that the project will actually get done.
- **Study other successful campaigns and get feedback/input from people who have done it before.** We looked at other campaigns, compared their strategies, looked at how they designed their page, etc. At least for visual projects—everything you put on your page will be viewed by a potential funder as an indication of your taste level, and that matters. We noticed that the successful pages had beautiful graphics and sophisticated logos, etc. Find a designer or a design student who might be willing to help you put the elements together.
- **Think carefully about what you would like the funding for and determine a realistic goal.** Your reason for doing the Kickstarter campaign should be well-thought out and fill a concrete, authentic need. You should be as specific as possible about why you need the money.

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Joanne: You've impressively reached 97% of your \$58,000 goal in 15 days. How have you built your community of donors?

Zeva and Sabine: We started preparing in early January for the Kickstarter, because we knew that we wanted to launch in March in order to coincide with Women's History month. The first thing is to know who your demographic is. Who is going to care about your project? In our case, our main demographic is women, particularly women involved in archaeology or history. One of our executive producers took the lead in our social media campaign, tweeting and posting on facebook and creating a list of blogs, press, and organizations that might be interested in our project. It is key to make sure you can cast a wide net, and you need time to build relationships with individuals/organizations, if you want them to help you during your campaign.

It's been a fantastic team effort and we have also been able to work with two fabulous assistants who have each run a Kickstarter campaign before.

We also tried to think about what the most interesting reward might be for a donor and we felt that allowing people to honor a woman in their own life, either on our website or in the credits of the film, would be something that potential funders would respond to. It ignited real interest and we feel very good about that—many people will have the chance to honor a special woman through our film project.

Joanne: What was your biggest challenge of the launch, and how did you deal with

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Zeva and Sabine: Our biggest challenge is the amount of work that a Kickstarter requires! We had so much support from our wonderful team, but we are very hands-on. Our aesthetic and writing style has to be reflected in everything that goes out, so we have a hand in everything.

It's always a challenge to balance fundraising with actually making the film. But we couldn't be happier about the results so far and it ended up being great timing.



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