

Ava DuVernay

When it comes to career changes, the Oscar-nominated director says embrace the small steps.

Ava's next film, *A Wrinkle in Time*, is based off Madeleine L'Engle's beloved novel.

Before I directed my first short film at 32, I worked in publicity and was on a lot of movie sets. That was a privilege a lot of directors don't have—the opportunity to watch other directors direct—and I learned about different kinds of film and styles of directing. When I started to play with directing, I kept my day job until I could figure out if it was something I could support myself doing. The week after I won best director at Sundance with my fourth film, *Middle of Nowhere*, I quit publicity. Most people feel like you have to make a career change in one fell swoop, but my advice is to embrace the progression. If it's something you're creating or producing, there's room for overlap.

OUTTAKES

SHAPESHIFTER

I don't have a preferred genre or form. I like to move between narrative films and documentary films, commercial projects and independent projects. That's part of the creative process for me. It's more about the story than the genre.

CREATIVE MUSINGS

The work of other artists—museum exhibits or films—inspires me. I love to watch foreign films and see what people are thinking around the world.

MUST-SEE

The new Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture is a perspective changer and a mecca of so much I hold dear. Every American should visit—it really brings you into the heart of a people who have been marginalized.