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## 'Wonder Woman' Production Had 'Special Moments' for Actress Samantha Jo

by TIFFANY HU



Samantha Jo as Euboea in Warner Bros. Pictures' action adventure "Wonder Woman," a Warner Bros. Pictures release. 📷 Photo Courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures

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This year has been a big one for actress Samantha Jo.

She can currently be seen in "Wonder Woman," where she plays Amazonian warrior and Diana Prince's (Gal Gadot) close friend Euboea. She has also been announced to appear in "Justice League," which is scheduled to be released this November.

The casting for the role had a sense of female empowerment and support from the start, Jo said. In her audition for “Wonder Woman,” she was asked to read dialogue from another film featuring strong warriors. But while the lines were originally written for men, they were all women reading the dialogue in the room instead.

“I thought it was really clever,” Jo told NBC News. “Because it doesn’t really matter in that film whether it was a man or a woman — it’s the strength behind the words.”

**“Since I’ve been diving more into my acting work and my classes, there’s just a wide variety and whole world of characters I want to explore.”**

Growing up with older brothers and working with stuntmen all the time, Jo said that she has always been around a lot of “protein shakes and jokes about bodily functions.” That experience made the production of “Wonder Woman” more meaningful, she noted.

“You just have those special moments with other women,” she said. “The training really was tough, so to have people that you trust and care about you and are emotional just like you are really made the journey so much more worth it.”

Jo also said that playing Euboea felt like playing an “amplified version of her childhood self.”

“You know, when you’re a kid running around, pretending you’re cool and slaying dragons — whatever we imagine — that’s how I felt in that moment,” she said. “I was wearing the armor, I had the weapon in my hand, and I felt almost more like myself than in the everyday world.”



Actress Samantha Jo arrives at the Premiere Of Warner Bros. Pictures' "Wonder Woman" at the Pantages Theatre on May 25, 2017 in Hollywood, California. 📷 Frazer Harrison / Getty Images

It was easy for Jo to connect with the world of the Amazonian women, who relied on the discipline and training in their art to survive, she said. She began practicing martial arts at a young age, starting with jiu-jitsu — which her mother taught her — and then wushu. She represented Canada in international competitions, she said, including at a 2008 event in Beijing held during the Olympics.

Her martial arts background eventually led to her introduction into the stunt industry. Prior to "Wonder Woman," Jo was already an accomplished stunt performer with credits including "Scott Pilgrim vs. The World" and "Sucker Punch" under her belt. Eventually, Jo decided to move to Los Angeles to pursue her career, where she landed a breakout role as Kitana in "Mortal Kombat: Legacy" followed by a role as Car-Vex in "Man of Steel."

"I knew that I needed to move to LA and give this career every bit of my unreserved soul," Jo said. "Then no matter the outcome, I'll know it was all I could give."

While Jo finds herself in a ninja outfit often, she noted that not playing into certain stereotypes is a balance she has to navigate.

“It’s hard because I am Asian and I did grow up doing martial arts,” Jo said. “On one hand, I want to be able to use that skill, because I have trained my whole life and it would seem wasteful not to use it. On the other hand, I don’t only want to do martial arts just because I’m Asian.”

Ultimately, she said, people want depth in their work and want to feel that what they’re doing is important — “not just swinging around a sword and putting on an accent.”

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Jo said that while she’ll always be excited doing action films, she has her eyes set on more varied roles. In the future, she hopes to work on a project bringing attention to human trafficking.

“I’ve always felt really passionate about human trafficking survivors and victims, especially sex trafficking or trafficking of children, and I feel that it’s not as known as it should be,” she said. “If there’s some sort of story that I could help tell the tragedy of what happened to these people and the amazing things they’ve overcome in their lives, that’s a story I want to tell sometime soon.”

In the meantime, Jo is continuing to practice her craft.

“Since I’ve been diving more into my acting work and my classes, there’s just a wide variety and whole world of characters I want to explore,” she said.

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