

CLAMPED DIRECTORS NOTES

Clamped is a character-driven feminist sex comedy where an outgoing young woman's life is turned upside down when her sexual freedom is taken away from her. Diagnosed with a sexual disorder, she must take steps to control her condition in order to climax again.



Synopsis:

Alice, a confident university student is having sex with one of the most popular guys at uni, George. She can't believe how well its going until suddenly she is in agony, her vaginal muscles have contracted and she can't continue having sex. Brushing it off as a weird experience, she is convinced by her jealous housemate, Becky to sleep with George again. But Alice's apprehension leads her to experience the same reaction as before, which sends her into a downward spiral of overwhelming feelings of confusion and loneliness. A trip to the doctors tells Alice that she is suffering from a condition called vaginismus and that she must use a vaginal dilating kit to be able to have sex again, which understandably terrifies her. As if things couldn't get any worse for Alice, she arrives home to find Becky swooning over George as they bond over teasing Alice and exposing her condition. This betrayal forces Alice to focus on herself and discover what she is actually looking for in a man, leading her to start the dilator treatment and to seek out a better suited partner for her.

Themes:

Courage, determination, Sexual Desire, Friendship.

How might your themes be represented visually on the screen?

Each character has been assigned a colour scheme to reveal both their personality and the specific themes they are tackling. For example, Alice's walls are plastered with colourful postcards to reflect her initial confidence at university – the cohesive nature of this dressing will label her as a self-assured young woman who knows what she wants. However, the pastel element to these colours (light yellow, pink, blue) will visually hint at her true self – not this projection of coolness – but how the character of Alice has a gentle, less flashy side to her personality that she should start to embrace.



Meanwhile, the laddish George has a much darker colour scheme – deep greens, blacks and greys – directly representing his lack of colour or substance in personality. By using a Slytherin-esk scheme which clashes with Alice’s pastels, we will give the audience a strong visual hint that going back to George is not the answer.

Similarly, specific visual metaphors will be scattered around Alice’s room to better reflect the film’s overall themes. These will primarily involve vagina-shaped graphics, such as ovals within ovals, as a nod to young people coming to terms with their bodies; together with plant imagery (posters, graphics, props) to represent Alice’s personal growth during her character arc.



What filmic approach (camera, edit, sound) will you take? Which key character is 'carrying' the theme the most?

As Alice is the main character we are following in the film we want to ensure that her journey is the most intimate on screen to the audience. To communicate this we will try and shoot Alice on shorter lenses closer to the camera to get closer to her emotions. The film has quite a stylised colour palette which we want to subtly emphasise between scenes using lighting, mixing in coloured practicals to the intimate scenes/scenes in Alice's bedroom. This will contrast harder and cooler lighting in the doctor's office and George's bedroom that subvert Alice's colourful personality.

We are trying to keep the film quite comedic in nature whilst dealing with the more intense scenes in a delicate but thought provoking way. Our intimate scenes will be rather unconventionally shot due to covid, however

we think this can bring a more sensitive approach using singles and tighter angles. We hope this will reflect Alice's intense sexual journey more.

How will the visual and aural tone of the film echo the theme/s?

For the aural tone of the film we are looking to create a very uncomfortable but realistic sound scape. We want sounds like Bed movement, springs bouncing and the headboard hitting the wall. These will have to be recorded in post because if these sounds are recorded on set we do not want them overpowering the dialogue of the actors.

We want to create a really strong background noise for the doctor's scenes; such as light static, which will allow the scene to feel mellow and awkward when there's silence between characters.

We also need the street scenes to feel loud and heavy making Alice feel like everything is pushing down on her. We will need to record sounds of crowds, car's and ambience of corner shops to really add to this tone.

We really need to show that the aural tone has a very uncomfortable and pressuring tone emphasising on Alice's pressure and uncertainty as to which route she wishes to choose.

The taboo nature of this topic makes for a very unique and intriguing film. We are taking the common coming of age sexual awakening trope and flipping it on its head by portraying a negative sexual discovery.

The use of stylised, fun and current visual and audio elements will be compelling for audience members of a similar age to Alice and therefore hopefully adding an aspect of relatability for anyone else experiencing vaginismus or similar issues.