



AWAY *in* SILENCE

PRESS KIT

Producer
LINAS SKUJA

Writer-Director
TOMÁS FERREIRA



The University of South Wales presents
Away in Silence
a Film by Tomás Ferreira
Produced by Linas Skuja

Shooting Format Ultra HD Digital
Aspect Ratio 16:9 Widescreen
Audio Format Stereo
Length 10 minutes
Original Language English

CONTACTS

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I. CAST

JULIA
JOYCE KARIM

ANNIE
SALLY RICHARDS

CHARLIE
GRAYSON WELLS

II. CREW

WRITER-DIRECTOR

Tomás Ferreira

PRODUCER

Linás Skuja

FIRST ASST DIRECTOR

Linás Skuja

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Ben Evans

SOUND RECORDIST

Luke Holdstock

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Anna Britton

CAMERA ASSISTANT

Ben Powell

ASST MAKE-UP ARTIST

Scarlet Millward

COSTUME DESIGNER

Amelia Kennedy

COLOURISTS

Monika Bednarczyk

Ben Powell

EDITOR

Tomás Ferreira

SOUND DESIGNERS

Alex Newman

Leonardo Miranda

SCORE COMPOSER

James Jones

UNIT STILL PHOTOGRAPHER

Eva Marloes

PUBLICITY GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Mara Vieira

An impaired elderly woman
struggles physically to save her
grandson from starving.



SYNOPSIS

Julia, an impaired elderly lady left to take care of her grandson as her daughter goes to work, faces a big decision when accidentally dropping her grandson's only edible food: help the starving toddler by giving into her shame of using her new crutches or in her selfish pride, refuse to use them to go find food outside.

TRAILER

https://youtu.be/t_6uaeoJ54I

IV. DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The challenge of expressing the first encounter with old age in a minimalist way intrigued me: What is to accept when we finally become “old”? Considering the crutches, what is to accept an extension of us as part of us so we can go on living?



I desired to explore these questions in a new way: through the relationship with this inanimate object embodied by Julia's crutches, I wanted to inspect this very angry silent rejection born against it, but also the sense of shame to even disclose this feeling with another person, even if dear to us. To give an object, the crutches, such a human and terrible presence in someone's life, felt then complex and transversal to human experience in its simplicity.

V. PRODUCTION STILLS



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT MADE YOU TELL THIS STORY?

I once observed this elderly lady going down my street in a hot summer day. She stopped, breathless, keeping herself from falling with her crutches. I could only wonder what made her leave home and keep going with such determination and indeed she continued. This image of urgency amidst a silent battle with her body stayed with me and made me want to explore it.

HOW DID YOU CHALLENGE STEREOTYPES WHEN WRITTING THE CHARACTER?

When writing the character's biography, I was very much interested in knowing how her childhood in the coal mining valley and family tragedies that there occurred shaped her coldness and distance as a mother and grandmother. Though it was important to keep her empathetic, I wanted to break the expectations regarding the wise and kind figure of the grandmother and bring some of her own flaws and fears to her personal battle: her own pride, her frustration with her impairment, her selfishness end up overbearing saving the child that she cares for.

WHAT FILMS SERVED AS INSPIRATION FOR THE LIGHTING AND COMPOSITION?

The cold natural winter light and composition balanced between distant wide shots and body detail inserts that inspired

the film's tense and drama suspenseful atmosphere mainly follow the works of the danish painter Vilhelm Hammershoi, but also films such as Terrence Malick's "The Tree of Life" (2011), John Cassavetes's "A Woman under the Influence" (1975), Lynn Ramsay's "Gasman" (1998) and Chantal Akerman's "Jeanne Dielman, 23 Commerce Quay, 1080 Brussels" (1975).

WHERE DID THE TITLE COME FROM?

The title "Away in Silence" hints at Julia's journey and finale as she makes the effort to go into her room and use the crutches to save her grandson, but ultimately her bedroom is where she retracts herself from the world, hidden away from everyone's eyes, surrendering to her shame of going out and be seen in such a state.

IN WHAT WAY DID YOU RELATE TO CHARACTER WITH SUCH AN AGE GAP FROM YOU?

I believe the best stories come from worlds we don't know about and yet something in us connects with them deeply, as if we had already lived them. To me, that's the grey area where the most passionate films are born from. The films I want to make. This being the case, it becomes a challenge that pushes me forward in my filmmaking and learn more through the process. I personally find the simplest connections, the

VI. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

strongest and my first time wearing glasses was part of my understanding of Julia's struggle. I remember a silent consuming rage against this object turned into an overbearing weight to me and also the shame to even disclose this feeling with anyone - that's where the originality of this story lied, what I needed to flesh about the character's situation.

WHY IS THE FILM MOSTLY SILENT?

As the editing progressed, it unveiled that the best way to grow a suspenseful atmosphere as well as an emotional connection with the character's pain was to keep the protagonist silent and let her body be the expression for her anxiety and doubts against the backdrop of her physical struggle.

WHY THE PREDOMINANCE OF WIDE DISTANT SHOTS?

The camera attitude towards the character was always meant to be one of cold distance so to emphasize the hostility of the space in relation to Julia's own impairment. By this definition, the wide shots that punctuate the scenes, render a sense of indifference to the house where everything is far removed and rough edges and angles lend it a spirit of an uncomfortable home.

HOW DOES THE SOUNDSCAPE CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER'S STRUGGLE?

Much like the intent in the visual composition, often the soundscape surrounding Julia and Annie, her daughter, is composed of off screen diegetic sounds that heighten a sense of distance, so cruel to her: the baby's cry in hunger echoing throughout the house, the sudden telephone ring from her daughter's calling which she

rejects to answer, the crack of the picture frame which Julia accidentally breaks.

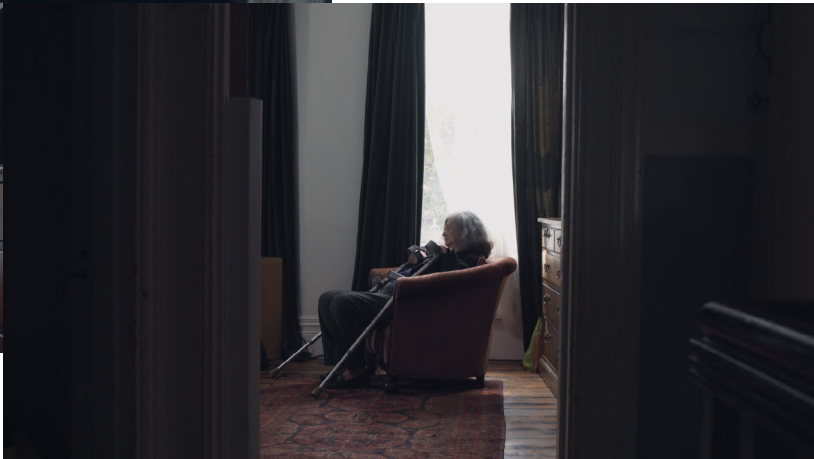
HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO DIRECT AN INFANT CHILD ACTOR?

It was an interesting challenge to work with an infant on a film set, but thanks to previous training on managing children on set, I was aware of key essentials that were implemented to help the production: asking the mother/chaperone for guidance, bringing toys and food that would navigate his attention and behavior for instance, scheduling scenes in accordance with what his energy for the time would be.

WHAT DID YOU WANT TO CONVEY WITH THE MUSIC?

Early on in the process, it was clear to me that the walling cry and old age theme in the film requested a classical approach as well a melancholic weep that I could only sense in the nuance play between a cello and the violin, two chord instruments, halves of the same coin, battling each other much like Julia's feelings to save her baby or herself. The works by minimalist composer Keaton Henson and Johnny Greenwood's "Never Cursed" score for Paul Thomas Anderson's "Phantom Thread" inspired the film.

VII. PRODUCTION STILLS



THE DIRECTOR
TOMÁS FERREIRA

Graduate from Lisbon Theater and Film School (Screenwriting & Editing) and with a complete MA in Film Directing from the University of South Wales, Tomás is a Portuguese filmmaker who has been developing his writing skills and reflective process over different projects in order to best understand his storytelling voice before directing his own work, inclined to minimalist filmmaking and thought provoking stories.

Recently, he has directed four shorts films. Among them, a 2020 documentary

promoted by a renowned Portuguese film critic, his final major project, “In a House, At Night” (2021) and the fiction drama, “Away in Silence” (2021), screened publicly at Cardiff Chapter Arts Center. He was also involved in aiding the writing development of a short film accepted for a creative supporting programme at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival.



**SOUND RECORDIST
LUKE HOLDSTOCK**

With a completed BA (Hons) in Game Development Audio at Falmouth University before progressing to the University of South Wales to study an MSc in Music Engineering and Production, Luke is a sound designer, music composer and location sound recordist who has worked for both the film and videogame industry.

Recently, he has become a Music Technology lecturer at Liverpool College. Having worked on several independent films, Luke finds he was fortunate enough to work as part of the crew of “Away in Silence” as their location sound recordist.

“Throughout the projects I have worked on, there have been many examples of strong storytelling and Away in Silence is no different, strongly expressing the complications of a specific stage in life.”



CAST

SALLY RICHARDS

Trained at the University of Glamorgan in association with the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Sally has appeared in a number of shorts; she's particularly proud to have played the protagonist in "The Embalmer's Daughter", a dark short chosen to show as a double bill with The Exorcist re-release in cinemas, and an experimental short entitled "Venn".



Sally's varied theatre credits include, amongst others; Fabian in an open air production of "Twelfth Night",

Grandmother in Hovarth's "Don Juan Comes Back from the War" and The Producer in Berkoff's "Dahling You Were Marvellous" with On In 5 Productions.

Sally very much enjoyed working on Away In Silence, in particular, the character study sessions with the director which helped her connect to Annie and effectively portray a woman struggling to balance her responsibilities and maintain familial ties.

X. BEHIND THE SCENES

