A stop motion animation about a twelve year old girl whose world has just changed forever.

A Film Victoria Short Film Fund Production

Written & Directed by Van Sowerwine
Animated by Isobel Knowles
Produced by Philippa Campey

Production Company & International Sales:
Film Camp Pty Ltd
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PRODUCTION NOTES

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Animator: Isobel Knowles
Producer: Philippa Campey
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Gauge: Super 16mm
Format: 35mm, Digital Betacam, SP Betacam, and DVD
Ratio: 16:9 Letterbox (4:3 Safe area)
Picture: Colour
Sound: Dolby Digital
Duration: 7 minutes (exactly 6 mins, 53 seconds)

LOG LINE

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SYNOPSIS

Struggling with a massive change in her life, 12-year-old Clara is disoriented and confused. Her efforts to remedy the situation and make sense of her new world are thwarted when flowers attack her and ants invade her home. Her enchanted childhood has changed forever and now things will never be the same.
SCREENINGS AND AWARDS

- 8th Cannes Film Festival
  Cannes, France. May 2005 (World Premiere)
  **Special Mention, Palm d'Or Jury**

- 52nd Sydney International Film Festival
  Sydney, Australia. June 2005
  **Dendy Awards Finalist, Yoram Gross Animation Award**

- Anima Mundi 2005 13th International Animation Festival of Brazil.
  Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Brazil. July 2005

- 2005 Melbourne International Film Festival
  Melbourne, Australia. August 2005

- 2005 Brisbane International Film Festival
  Brisbane, Australia. August 2005

- 12th KROK International Animated Film Festival
  Dnieper River and the Black Sea, in Russia and the Ukraine. September 2005

- Milan Film Festival
  Milan, Italy. September 2005

- 12th Women Make Waves Film and Video Festival
  Taipei and Kaohsiung, Taiwan. October 2005

- 41st Chicago International Film Festival
  Chicago, USA. October 2005
  **Gold Hugo, Best Animated Film Award**

- Cinanima 2005
  Esphino, Portugal. November 2005

- AFI Fest 2005
  Los Angeles, USA. November 2005

- 16th Stockholm International Film Festival
  Stockholm, Sweden. November 2005

- RESFEST 2005
  Melbourne and Sydney, Australia. November - December 2005

- Melbourne International Film Festival, Traveling Film Festival
  Frankston, Australia. January 2006

- 2006 Sundance Film Festival
  Park City, USA. January 2006
DIRECTOR'S NOTES

CLARA slips under the veneer of suburban normality of Clara's life into the depths of her feelings of loss, grief and anger.

There is a point in most of our lives when we begin to realise that terrible things can happen, and that nothing is permanent. This is particularly evident when we are confronted with death at an early age.

CLARA is a very personal story for me, a story that resonates many of my own experiences as I made the transition from childhood to adolescence. It is also a story about the terrible pain that we all can experience at any time in our lives. Ultimately, it is a story about both the resilience in all of us when confronted with terrible pain, and the beauty and terrible sadness that surrounds us at all times.

I have always been fascinated with stop motion animation. I feel it has a certain magical quality to it. I first became interested in using stop motion animation to animate plastic dolls I collected – I found myself drawn to particular dolls, around which I would develop a narrative that I would then animate. I then began sculpting my own animated characters as I became more interested in creating worlds that are a blend of the real and the magical.

This has culminated for me in the creation of CLARA, the first fully funded animation production I have written and directed. CLARA is set in Melbourne in the present day, and the sets are very realistic copies of parks and houses near where I live. Clara herself is made of silicon, a material that looks flesh-like, adding to the sense of realism in the film.

The realism in the film is juxtaposed with the strange and terrible things that happen to Clara. For me, this juxtaposition mirrors the precariousness of our existence – while we may exist in a happy, ‘normal’ world, terrible and strange things can happen to any of us at any time. At all times we are surrounded by and cannot escape death; this does not prevent us from also finding beauty and happiness in life.
**DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY - VAN SOWERWINE**

Van Sowerwine is an animator and new media artist who works across the areas of stop motion animation, interactives, photography and painting. Her work explores ideas of childhood and its darker underpinnings, and Van has exhibited widely both nationally and internationally.

Her previous animation, *Gillian*, was highly commended in the 2001 Dendy Awards as part of the Sydney Film Festival, and won Best Animation at the National Student Film and Video festival. It was screened at NewFest 2003: the 15th Anniversary New York Lesbian & Gay Film Festival.

Van also incorporates stop motion animation into her installation practice. Her most recent animated installation (with CLARA animator Isobel Knowles) *Expecting* is toured around Australia in 2004/2005 as part of the *Experimenta: House of Tomorrow* exhibition. Her previous interactive *Play With Me* (2002) was selected for the inaugural Anne Landa Award (2004/2005) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales - the first award-exhibition for the moving image and new media in Australia. Both *Expecting* and *Play With Me* have also been shown as part of Media City Seoul 2004-2005, the Korean biennale of new media art.

www.vansowerwine.com

**PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY - PHILIPPA CAMPEY**

Philippa Campey is a Melbourne based producer, whose company Film Camp has produced Van Sowerwine's *Clara* (2004, a 7 minute stop motion animation awarded a Special Mention by the Palm d'Or Jury at Cannes 2005, and the Gold Hugo for Best Animated Film at Chicago Film Festival 2005); *Iraq, My Country* (2004, a one-hour documentary for SBS TV, nominated for an AFI Award); *Satellite* (2005, an experimental feature film by Ben Speth); and *Open Cut* (2003, a documentary by Phil Burke).

She has also worked with the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Production Managing *ARTV* (2004, 16 x 30 second video interstitials for ACMI and SBS made by 16 of Australia's best contemporary artists). Most recently Philippa has produced *The Archive Project* (2005, John Hughes' feature length documentary) and has Line Produced John Hughes' and Betty Churcher's *The Art of War* (2004, a 4-part art history series for SBS TV).

In 2005 Philippa was also the Short Film and Accelerator Coordinator at the Melbourne International Film Festival, and is currently in production of a feature documentary *Words From The City* about Australian hip hop with Rhys Graham and Natasha Gadd and *Running With Scissors* about musician Ben Lee, with Amiel Courtin-Wilson. Film Camp also has a number of films in development, for production in 2006/7.
KEY CREATIVES' BIOGRAPHIES

ISOBEL KNOWLES - ANIMATOR

Isobel Knowles is an animator who lives and works in Melbourne. Isobel completed a Bachelor of Media Arts at RMIT in 2001. Inspiration for her work comes from arcade games, children’s book illustrations and film noir, and her animations explore a range of techniques including cut-outs, drawing and stop motion animation.

Isobel’s recent works include Expecting, an interactive installation made in collaboration with Van Sowerwine for Experimenta: House of Tomorrow, September 2003, and Like a Call, an animated music clip for Architecture in Helsinki, April 2003. Isobel has also exhibited at West Space Gallery as part of the 2004 Next Wave Festival. (See ik.rocks.it)

JENNIFER SOCHACKYJ - SOUND DESIGNER


CASSANDRA TYTLER - EDITOR

Cassandra Tytler has been producing and directing films and videos since 1994. Her work explores contemporary cultural iconography, idealised reality and realised fantasy. She completed her Masters degree in Media Arts in 2003. Her work has been screened in numerous festivals including Microcinema all over the U.S.A., Raindance in London and Kurtzfilm in Vienna, and she has exhibited work in Melbourne galleries such as Gertrude Contemporary Art spaces and Westspace Gallery. (See ctytler.customer.netspace.net.au)

SCOTT EBDON - MODEL MAKER

Scott Ebdon works as a model maker and armature maker specialising in stop motion animation. He originally trained as a jeweller, and now specialises in building ball and socket armatures. He works in a wide variety of materials and mediums including wood, metal, plastics, polyester/epoxy resins and polyurethanes.

He has worked on many animated films and television series including Plasmo, Slim Pickings, Bad Baby Amy and Dad's Clock as well as television commercials for Maltesers, Kraft Peanut Butter, Yogo and Cadbury.