



WOMAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA PREVIEW

Girl

Girl

Directed by: Adura Onashile
©: Girl 21 Ltd, British Broadcasting Corporation,
The British Film Institute
Production Company: Barry Crerar
Presented by: BFI, BBC Film and Screen Scotland
In association with: Great Point Media
Developed & made with the support of:
BBC Film, Barry Crerar
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The National Lottery through Screen Scotland
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through Creative Scotland, via BFI Network
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Made with the support of: The BFI's Film Fund
Executive Producers: Kristin Irving, Eva Yates,
Jennifer Armitage, Jim Reeve
Produced by: Ciara Barry, Rosie Crerar
Line Producer: Anna Purkis
Production Manager: Fee Clark
Production Coordinator: Margarita Veberaite
Production Accountant: Victoria Dabbs
Location Manager: David Burt
Post-production Supervisor: Mairi Macdonald
1st Assistant Directors: Ari Rissotti, Ewan Stewart
2nd Assistant Director: Doug Inman
Script Supervisor: Yvonne Carroll
Casting Director: Isabella Odoffin
Casting Assistant: Joanna Sturrock
Written by: Adura Onashile
Director of Photography: Tasha Back
Visual Effects by: Filmgate AB
Editor: Stella Heath Kier
Production Designer: Soraya Gilanni Viljoen
Art Director: Laura Donnelly
Set Decorator: Imogen Toner
Prop Master: David Simons
Costume Designer: Kirsty Halliday
Costume Supervisor: Stuart Truesdale
Hair and Make-up Designer: Kat Morgan
Make-up Artist: Maya Mann
Music by: Ré Olunuga
Music Supervisor: Connie Farr
Orchestrator (London Score Recordings):
Samuel Rowe
Production Sound Mixer: Becky Thomson
Sound Designer: William Aikman
Dialogue Editor: Michele Woods
Re-recording Mixer: Michael MacKinnon
Fight Director: David Goodall
Choreographer: Pauline Joseph
Dialect Coach: Hazel Holder
On-set Dialect Coach: Hilary Jones
Cast:
Déborah Lukumuena (*Grace*)
Danny Sapani (*Samuel*)
Le'Shantey Bonsu (*Ama*)
Liana Turner (*Fiona*)
Ayesha Antoine (*Lisa*)
Caroline Deyga (*Mhairi*)
Lael Tamakloe (*young Grace*)
Jenni Keenan Green (*Ms Seample*)
Owen Whitelaw (*Ian*)
Mark Cox (*Alan*)
Andrew John Tait (*man in arcade*)
Joanne Gallagher (*police officer*)
Firas Ibrahim (*tenant*)
UK 2023
87 mins
Digital

+ Q&A with director Adura Onashile, cinematographer Tasha Back and production designer Soraya Gilanni Viljoen

Mother and daughter Grace and Ama have established a deep bond that's protected them from outsiders, but as they try to settle in Glasgow, things begin to change. Ama's approaching adolescence and growing curiosity set off reminders of a past that Grace has been trying to erase. The comforting fairytale-like story that Grace has been telling Ama for years is shaken by the memories – their sheltered world begins to erode from the inside. To give them both a chance to really start living, Grace has to let Ama grow up.

Director's Statement

Girl is inspired in part by my relationship with my mother. I grew up in Bermondsey in London, a sometimes hostile and unfriendly environment for an immigrant mother and daughter. This meant that our little one bedroom flat was a sanctuary and my relationship with my mother a solace. As an adult, I have always been fascinated by how that relationship shaped the way I saw the world I grew up in. What it gave me, but also the ways it may have made me less equipped for relationships outside of it.

Ama and Grace have an intense poetry to their connection borne out of a claustrophobia and obsession with each other, in turn borne out of an understandable fear of the world brought on by Grace's past trauma.

It is this essence that I want to explore. That beautiful intimacy that is possible from a deep connection between a mother and her daughter. That intimacy that flourishes in spite of trauma and fear and doubt.

Although the film is rooted in Ama's coming of age, a transformation takes place in both Ama and Grace. Charting their respective journeys in a way that feels unique, authentic and beautiful is my ultimate aim with this film.

This requires a careful piecing together of many elements, from the unique presence that the actors playing Grace and Ama have to have, to the ways we have to build a rapport between them that allows us to understand that these are two people that have spent almost every waking hour together for the entirety of Ama's life.

I am excited to develop performances that are complex and that stem from the idea that there can be more than one truth to any situation. I'm always fascinated to explore characters that cannot easily be seen in black and white or right and wrong terms, allowing for uncomfortable truths to sit side by side. These sorts of characters and performances are also more engaging for audiences and exciting for actors to play.

To that end, as well as exploring this within the writing, my knowledge and experience of working as an actor and as a director in theatre allows me to enable nuanced and three dimensional performances. I'd like to achieve this through an intensive rehearsal period before shooting begins, that allows both actors to spend time together, play together, dance together and with the help of a choreographer find the subtle and sublime ways that their physicality with each other can elevate this.

IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

Preview: The Eternal Daughter + Q&A with writer-director Joanna Hogg and actor Tilda Swinton
Fri 10 Nov 19:00

Exhibition: The Red Shoes: Beyond the Mirror

From Fri 10 Nov to Sun 7 Jan

Matthew Bourne's production of The Red Shoes
+ Q&A with Matthew Bourne and Ashley Shaw
Sat 11 Nov 15:00

Preview: Is There Anybody Out There? + Q&A
with director Ella Glendining, hosted by Jack Thorne

Sat 11 Nov 17:45

Preview: The Red Shoes

Sun 12 Nov 15:30

Preview: Typist Artist Pirate King + Q&A with
director Carol Morley, cast Monica Dolan, Gina
McKee and Kieran Bew, producer Cairo Cannon,
composer Carly Paradis and editor Alex Mackie
Mon 13 Nov 17:55

Journey to Italy Viaggio in Italia + extended
introduction by Jeremy Cooper and Ben Rivers
Mon 13 Nov 20:40

Joanna Hogg in Conversation

Wed 15 Nov 18:30

Preview: Rustin + Q&A with director George C.
Wolfe. Hosted by David Olusoga

Tue 21 Nov 18:15

Talk: The Creative Worlds of Powell +
Pressburger

Sat 25 Nov 12:00-17:00

TV Preview: Vigil + Q&A with cast Suranne
Jones, Romola Garai, Dougray Scott and writer
Tom Edge

Mon 27 Nov 18:15

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There is an atmosphere to the film that I would like to develop inspired by the work of Bradford Young, Khalil Joseph, and the photography of Yasuyochi Chiba. There is a visual richness they all bring to their subjects and surroundings that allow for a depth of emotion and tone. This is achieved through deep contrasting colours and the Black skin tone feeling almost three dimensional. This lends a visual poetry that speaks to the feelings, histories and longings of their subjects and yet they manage to do this in a way that doesn't feel laborious or heavy handed.

The world we create for Grace and Ama should feel full of depth, pregnant with possibility and longing, sensual and visceral.

Like in the films, *Dheepan*, *Mogul Mowgli* and *Atlantiques*, the tension and pressure and drama within the film doesn't come solely from plot, but from the characters and how they inhabit and see the world. In *Dheepan*, three strangers pretend to be a family in order to flee a war. To maintain this facade, they are forced to reckon with issues of intimacy, a past they would rather forget and a future that feels daunting. Their distinct personalities are forced to find a closeness that comes from the rituals they enact as a family – eating, sleeping, protecting each other. These rituals slowly come to define who they are, on a personal and familial level.

The aural world of the film should create a rich subtext to the action on screen. This will allow the audience to stay with Ama and Grace's point of view and their preoccupation with each other juxtaposed with the world outside, which Ama longs for and Grace wishes to hide from. The sound can act as a way of not only isolating these separate worlds of the public and private but also create a sense that the outside world is encroaching on Grace and Ama's inner world.

Finally this film is a homage to that unseen Black girl and woman, newly arrived in any city you can imagine in the UK, silent, lost and alienated and perhaps the last people we expect to see at the centre of a dramatic narrative. *Girl* is ultimately a celebration of the transition from being unseen to seen, of being brave and of growing into your place in the world.

Adura Onashile is an award-winning Glasgow based artist. She has just finished playing Medea in the National Theatre of Scotland and Edinburgh International Festival 2022 acclaimed production. She has directed two productions, *HeLa* and *Expensive Shit* for The Edinburgh Fringe Festival, winning a Fringe First, Edinburgh Guide Best Scottish Contribution to Drama and TOTAL and Amnesty nominations. Both shows toured nationally and internationally supported by the British Council.

She has directed productions with The Unicorn Theatre, The Place, Contact Theatre, Fuel Theatre, and The National Theatre of Scotland. In 2020, she wrote and directed her screen debut, *Expensive Shit*, a BAFTA Scotland nominated short produced by Barry Crerar which premiered at BFI London Film Festival 2020. Her debut film *Girl* premieres in Sundance at World Dramatic Competition.