

P R E S S K I T



**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

Level 1, 179 Johnston Street FITZROY

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<http://www.vansowerwine.com/clara>

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Clara

PRODUCTION NOTES

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| Writer & Director | Van Sowerwine |
| Animator | Isobel Knowles |
| Producer | Philippa Campey |
| Production Company | Film Camp Pty Ltd |
| 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

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

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
Espinho, 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

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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

Jennifer Sochackyj works across Soundtrack, Sound Installation and live performance. Jennifer completed a Master of Arts Degree at Media Arts RMIT in 2001.

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.

Clara

CREDITS

Written and Directed by Van Sowerwine
Animated by Isobel Knowles
Produced by Philippa Campey
Director of Photography Jon Bilington
Additional D.O.P. Isobel Knowles
Sound Designer Jennifer Sochacky
Model & Armature Maker Scott Ebdon
Editor Cassandra Tytler
Character Creation & Wardrobe Fiona Edwards
Original Character Drawings George Stasjic
Character Design & Sculpt Van Sowerwine
Additional Model Makers* Glen Hunwick & Rob Gudan
Stills Photographer Cameron Bird
Post Production Animation Isobel Knowles
Visual Effects John Brawley
v:media
Titles and Additional Effects Van Sowerwine
Colourist Justin Heitman
FCP Post Production Chris Dea
Post Production Supervisor Penelope Teal
Digital Pictures Melbourne
Sound Mixer Robert Mackenzie
Sound Mix Facility Soundfirm Pty Ltd
Facility Liaison Clare Carmody
Foley Artist Isobel Knowles
Studio 179 Film Offices
Super 16 Camera Hire Blue Crow Productions
Laboratory Cinevex Film Laboratories
Production Accountant Monika Gehrt
Legals Shaun Miller
Marshalls & Dent Lawyers
Thanks to
Everyone at 179 Film Offices Philip Brophy
Anthea Caddy Melanie Coombs
Martine Corompt Jeremy Dower
Adam Elliot Madeleine Griffith
Camilla Hannan Nick Hilligoss
John Hughes Liz Hughes
Sam Jinks Haima Marriot
Carmel McAloon Kris Mrksa
Briony Ridley RMIT Media Arts
Alistair Robbie Charlotte Seymour
Rodney Shar Sam Sowerwine
Dennis Tupicoff Chris Zwar

Special thanks to Glen Art Productions

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Motion Picture Film

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