

ROSE PLAYS JULIE

A film by
Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor



100 mins/Ireland 2019/Cert. TBC
World Premiere – Official Competition – BFI London Film Festival 2019

Release May date tbc

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SYNOPSIS:

Rose (Ann Skelly) is at university studying veterinary science. An only child, she has enjoyed a loving relationship with her adoptive parents. However, for as long as Rose can remember, she has wanted to know who her biological parents are and the facts of her true identity. After years trying to trace her birth mother, Rose now has a name and a number. All she has to do is pick up the phone and call. When she does, it quickly becomes clear that her birth mother has no wish to have any contact. Rose is shattered. A renewed and deepened sense of rejection compels her to keep going. Rose travels from Dublin to London in an effort to confront her birth mother, Ellen (Orla Brady).

Ellen is deeply disturbed when Rose turns up unannounced. The very existence of this young woman threatens the stability of the new life Ellen has painstakingly put together. But Rose proves very tenacious and Ellen is forced to reveal a secret she has kept hidden for over 20 years. This shocking revelation forces Rose to accept the violent nature of how she came into existence.

Rose believes she has little to lose but much to gain when she sets out to confront her biological father, Peter (Aidan Gillen). What Rose cannot possibly foresee is that she is on a collision course that will prove both violent and unsettling – dark forces gather and threaten to destroy her already fragile sense of her own identity.

Further information and downloads [here](#)

Photo set can be downloaded [here](#)



CAST

Rose	Ann Skelly
Ellen	Orla Brady
Peter	Aidan Gillen
Molly	Annabell Rickerby
Teresa	Catherine Walker
Valerie	Joanne Crawford
Dr Langan	Alan Howley
Eva	Sadie Soverall
Young Man	Jack McEvoy
Young Woman	Hannah Behan
Archaeologist	Esosa Ighodaro
Oldest Child	Molly Rose Lawlor
Farm Hand	Lochlann Ó Mearáin
Vampire Girl	Lily Brand

CREW

Directors	Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor
Writers	Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor
Producers	David Collins And Joe Lawlor
Co-Producer	Eoin O'Faolain
Executive Producer	Celine Haddad
Director of Photography	Tom Comerford
Production Designer	Emma Lowney
Editor	Christine Molloy
Composer	Stephen Mckeen
Line Producer	Cathleen Dore
Costume Designer	Joan O'Clery
Casting Director	Emma Gunnery
Production Executive	Claire McCabe
Production Co-ordinator	Dawn MacAllister
Production Companies	Samson Films, Desperate Optimists Productions
Funding	Developed with the assistance of Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland and with the participation of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland and RTÉ

100 mins/Ireland 2019/1:2.35/5.1/2K

CHRISTINE MOLLOY and JOE LAWLOR

Both born in Dublin, Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor studied theatre in the late '80s at Dartington College of Arts in the UK. From 1992 to 1999 they devised, directed and performed in several internationally acclaimed theatre shows before shifting their attention towards moving image based work. Between 2000 and 2003 they directed a number of episodic, interactive works for the internet, and large-scale community video projects for galleries.

Between 2003 and 2010, Molloy and Lawlor produced, wrote and directed 10 acclaimed short films including the award winning *WHO KILLED BROWN OWL* and *JOY*. All shot on 35mm, the *CIVIC LIFE* films have screened extensively around the world including screenings at the 33rd Telluride Film Festival, the 36th International Film Festival Rotterdam, the 49th Thessaloniki International Film Festival and IndieLisboa'09.

HELEN, their award-winning debut feature film, premiered at the Edinburgh International Film Festival in June 2008 before screening at over 50 film festivals worldwide. It was released in the UK and Ireland by New Wave Films in May 2009, as well as being released in several other countries. In 2009, *HELEN* was nominated for an Evening Standard Film award and a Guardian First Film award. Their second feature film, *MISTER JOHN*, also premiered at the Edinburgh International Film Festival in June 2013 and was released in the UK and Ireland in September 2013.

In 2016, Molloy and Lawlor released their debut documentary, *FURTHER BEYOND*, to critical acclaim and they are currently working on a follow up documentary, *THE FUTURE TENSE*.

Molloy and Lawlor live in London with their daughter.



FILMOGRAPHY

ROSE PLAYS JULIE

Ireland | 2019 | Colour | 2K | 1:2.35 | 100 mins

FURTHER BEYOND

Ireland | 2016 | Colour | HD | 16:9 | 89mins

MISTER JOHN

UK/Ireland/Singapore | 2013 | Colour | 35mm | 1:2.35 | 95mins

HELEN

UK/Ireland | 2008 | Colour | 35mm | 1:2.35 | 79mins

SHORTS

TIONG BAHRU

Singapore | 2010 | Colour | 35mm | 1:2.35 | 19mins

JOY

UK | 2007 | Colour | 35mm | 1:2.35 | 9mins

DAYDREAM

UK | 2007 | Colour | 35mm | 1:2.35 | 29mins

NOW WE ARE GROWN UP | 11mins 40secs

UK | 2005 | Colour | 35mm | 1:2.35

LEISURE CENTRE

UK/IRL | 2005 | Colour | 35mm | 1:2.35 | 17mins 40secs

TOWN HALL

UK | 2005 | Colour | 35mm | 1:2.35 | 10mins 35secs

TWILIGHT

UK | 2005 | Colour | 35mm | 1:2.35 | 5mins 20secs

REVOLUTION

UK | 2004 | Colour | 35mm | 1:2.35 | 9mins 53secs

MOORE STREET

IRL | 2004 | Swahili/English | Colour | 35mm | 1:2.35 | 5mins 45secs

WHO KILLED BROWN OWL

UK | 2004 | Colour | 35mm | 1:2.35 | 9mins 23secs

PRODUCER BIOGRAPHY - DAVID COLLINS

David Collins runs Samson Films. In addition to developing its own film and TV drama material, Samson also acts as a co-producer and executive producer on a wide range of Irish, European and International feature film projects. The company was awarded Slate Funding by Creative Europe in 2019. Managing Director, David Collins, is on the executive board of Screen Producers Ireland and is a member of the European Film Academy. He is also a board member of ACE Producers and an active member of the European Producers Club.

Notable past feature film credits include the Oscar-winning low budget musical *ONCE* (2006) and *EDEN* (2007), which won Eileen Walsh the Best Actress Award at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2007. Recent feature film productions include *GRABBERS* (2012, Sundance), *TIGER RAID* (2014, Tribeca) and *A DARK SONG* (2016, Fantastic Fest/San Sebastián/BFI London Film Festival). Through his television company, Accomplice TV, David has produced the multiple award-winning TV drama series *BACHELORS WALK* and *PURE MULE*, both for RTÉ Television. David's most recent TV work includes *THE TRUTH COMMISSIONER* (2016), a political thriller made for BBC.

David's most recently produced films include Carmel Winter's *FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY* (2018), which received the FIPRESCI Discovery Prize at the Toronto International Film Festival, Viko Nikci's *CELLAR DOOR* (2018), which won Best Irish First Feature at the Galway Film Fleadh and Elfar Adelstein's *END OF SENTENCE* (2019), which had its World Premiere at the Edinburgh Film Festival, as well as *ROSE PLAYS JULIE* (2019), the latest film by writer/directors Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor, which World Premiered in competition at the BFI London Film Festival.

Projects currently in post-production include *THE CASTLE*, an Irish-Lithuanian co-production with Artbox, written and directed by Lina Luzyte and *WILDFIRE*, which has been developed and supported by Screen Ireland, NI Screen and the BFI. *WILDFIRE* marks the feature film debut of writer/director Cathy Brady.

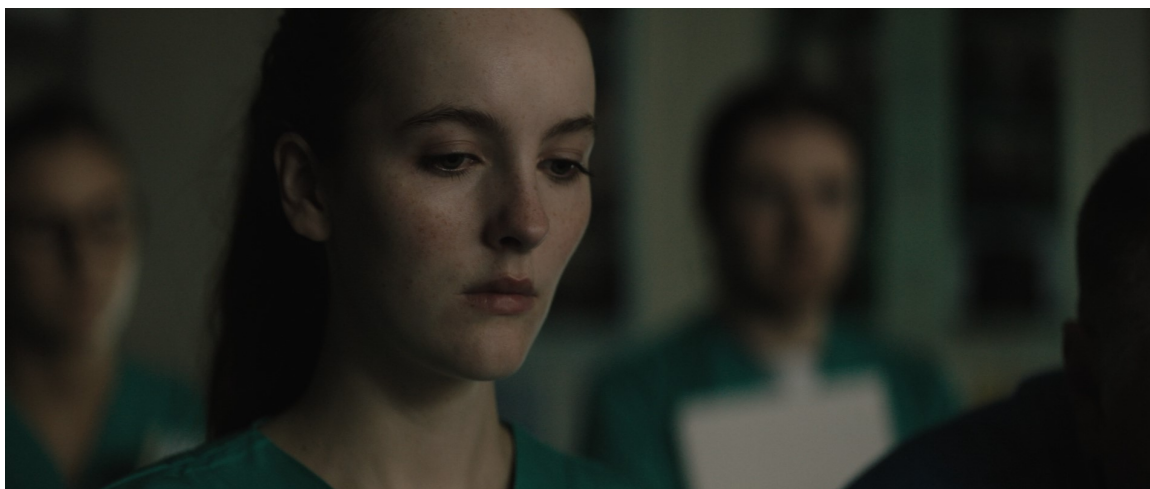
CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Rose - ANN SKELLY

Ann was most recently seen as the female lead, Beth Winters, opposite Jamie Dornan in the BBC drama *DEATH AND NIGHTINGALES*, an adaptation of the novel written and directed by Allan Cubitt. Ann also appeared as Annie Moffat in the BBC mini series *LITTLE WOMEN*, Biddy Lambert in the drama series *REBELLION* for RTÉ and Hannah Baylor in the Blackpill series *PLAYGROUND* created by Luc Besson for Apple TV France. As a teenager, Ann created the recurring role of Rachel Reid in the IFTA award winning serialised Irish drama, *RED ROCK* for TV3/BBC/Amazon Prime, produced by Element Pictures and Angel Station.

Recent films include *KISSING CANDICE* (2017), directed by Aoife McArdle, for which she was nominated for both a Rising Star Award and a Best Actress In A Lead Role Award at the 2018 IFTA's.

Ann has joined the cast of Joss Whedon's upcoming HBO Drama series *THE NEVERS*, which is expected to premiere in 2020.



Ellen - ORLA BRADY

Irish-born Orla Brady studied acting at the Ecole Phillippe Gaulier in Paris. Upon returning to Dublin, she won the role of Adela in *THE HOUSE OF BERNARDA ALBA* at the Gate Theatre. Since then, she has been working on both sides of the Atlantic with a career mix of television, film and stage to her credit.

Recent credits include *A GIRL FROM MOGADISHU* (2019), *THE FOREIGNER* (2017), *INTO THE BADLANDS* (2015-2019) and *COLLATERAL* (2018).

She is currently to be seen in the series *STAR TREK: PICARD* as Jean-Luc Picard's Romulan housekeeper, Laris.

Orla has also been cast as the lead in the upcoming comedy-drama series *THE SOUTH WESTERLIES* (2020).



PETER – AIDAN GILLEN

Aidan Gillen is an Irish actor. He is best known for portraying Petyr "Littlefinger" Baelish in the HBO series *GAME OF THRONES* (2011-17), Aberama Gold in *PEAKY BLINDERS* (2019), CIA operative Bill Wilson in *THE DARK KNIGHT RISES* (2012), Stuart Jones in the Channel 4 series *QUEER AS FOLK* (1999), John Boy in the RTÉ Television series *LOVE/HATE* (2010) and Tommy Carcetti in the HBO series *THE WIRE* (2002).

Recent films include *BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY* (2018), *DAVE ALLEN AT PEACE* (2018), *WE OURSELVES* (2018) and *MAZE RUNNER: THE DEATH CURE* (2018).

He also took the lead role in *MISTER JOHN* (2013) and appeared in *FURTHER BEYOND* (2016), both by Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor.

Gillen has won three Irish Film and Television Awards and has been nominated for a British Academy Television Award, a British Independent Film Award and four Screen Actors Guild Awards.



DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

In the early stages of developing a new script we always begin by walking. Walking and talking has been pivotal to how we write together. The walk to the river Thames from our home in East London takes about 90 minutes there and back. Over the course of 2014 we began most days with this walk and slowly but surely a story about a young adopted woman took hold, and as the months went by we began to tease out the details of the story as well as how we wanted to express it. This encapsulates the two most important things for us in filmmaking: the story but equally the storytelling.

IDENTITY

One day we will subject ourselves to psychoanalysis to find out why it is exactly we are so drawn to narratives and characters where the central focus is identity under duress. We're particularly interested in the loss of identity or the moment of transformation when someone's sense of their own identity is altered. Having made two previous films in which our main characters quite literally step into someone else's shoes and assimilate themselves into someone else's life, and in so doing find a way to move forward with their own life, with *ROSE PLAYS JULIE* we were intrigued by the idea that our central character, Rose, could become a different version of herself, Julie, the person she would have been if she hadn't been put up for adoption. At the heart of the film is Rose's desire to reconcile these two different versions of herself as, not knowing her past and where she came from, she is struggling to imagine her future.



The theme of acting, or playing a role, is also a recurring idea in our previous films. In *ROSE PLAYS JULIE*, Rose isn't the only one to employ the skills of role-playing. By its very nature, adoption - in particular closed adoptions where identifying information is withheld - creates alternative stories and narratives and is often shrouded in secrecy, mystery and even lies and untruths. Names get changed. Alternative certificates are issued. Histories get erased. Relationships are severed. How people experience adoption is different for everyone. Whether an adopted person wants to find their birth

parents or not, whether a birth parent wants contact with the child they gave up or not, is a very personal decision. In our story our character Rose is caught up in the reality of adoption as it exists in Ireland. In Ireland the power has always resided with the birth parent - in specific, the birth mother. If the birth mother doesn't want to be traced, it is her legal right to deny her child contact. Rose's birth mother, Ellen, has good reason to not want contact of any kind with the daughter she gave up and has done everything she can to evade such contact, but Rose is tenacious and inevitably finds her way into Ellen's carefully constructed world. This is when the central idea in *ROSE PLAYS JULIE* merges with the other main idea that preoccupied our thoughts on our many walks along the Regent's Canal - the exploration of the impact of sexual violence and the need for justice in whatever form it takes.

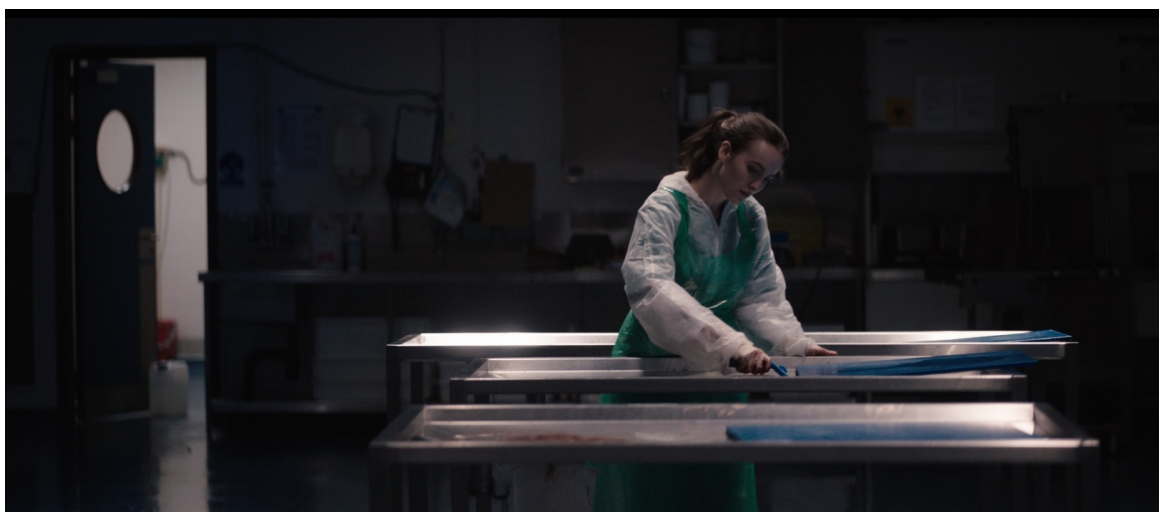
VIOLENCE AND IMPACT

When we were nearing the end of the development of *ROSE PLAYS JULIE*, the #MeToo movement took off and a spotlight was shone on the pervasiveness of sexual assault and violence in our society and the widespread abuses of power that allow it to happen unchecked and unpunished. It seemed that the themes at the heart of our story were suddenly centre stage. From the first walk and talk we undertook to the Thames, we always knew we also wanted to focus on the impact of rape. Not the act itself, but the aftermath. It seems so obvious to say, but it's not something we think of often in relation to rape, but it is the only crime that can be committed that can lead to the creation of a new life. The impact of the violation, when it leads to rape conception, is shocking and challenging - particularly when we think of current regressive attitudes towards abortion - but we knew we wanted to explore this reality through Rose and Ellen's story. We wanted to enter into this dark, painful world by creating three characters - the Mother, the Father and the Daughter - who are irrevocably bound together by an act of violence. In this way, the story has an archetypal quality to it and, one could say, plays out like a Greek drama.



LOCATION

With all of the above in mind, and a story that was falling into place, we stopped our walks to the Thames, and replaced those walks with trips back and forth to Dublin as we began to think about the storytelling - how we wanted this Greek drama to be told cinematically. Locations are central to our thinking and central to our process. *ROSE PLAYS JULIE* is our third narrative feature, but the first we have shot entirely in Ireland, with an Irish cast and crew. As the elements of our story began to crystallise, defining the worlds for our three main characters became as important as finessing the dialogue. Characters for us always exist within worlds - worlds that have been specifically imagined for each character. They are not naturalistic worlds bound by the rules of realism. They are constructed worlds that express what we wish to say about our characters. So the worlds are very much 'made up'. For Rose, Ellen and Peter (Rose's birth father) we wanted to find the location they each lived in - their private space where they could reveal things about themselves that otherwise would remain hidden - and the locations they each worked in: the public spaces they moved through where they presented the more carefully controlled/performed version of themselves. We also needed to find two symbolic, resonating locations - the place of the rape and the place where Rose/Julie resided. These locations ultimately become the arenas in which the cast and crew, who will realise the film with you, get to 'play'. However, the reality of low budget filmmaking is that you don't always get exactly what you want. Lots of practical considerations bear down on proceedings, compromises need to be made, and mental adjustments are needed to clear the obstacle course that is pre-production. But if the thinking has been laid down properly and you are surrounded by creative, talented people, all becomes possible. Filmmaking is a social undertaking. Collaboration is at its heart. We value this aspect of filmmaking more than anything. Our heads of department - Cathleen Dore (Line Producer), Tom Comerford (DoP), Emma Lowney (Production Designer), Joan O'Clery (Costume Designer) - and their teams were all people we were working with for the first time and so it was like stepping into the unknown. But thankfully, with *ROSE PLAYS JULIE* we got lucky.



SOUND DESIGN AND MUSIC

From the outset we knew that sound design would play an important role in how *ROSE PLAYS JULIE* would develop during post-production. When we're editing we like to divide the roles. And so, Christine edits picture and dialogue while Joe begins to lay down a temp soundscape. This is not just a guide for the sound design team but it also helps to direct and navigate the edit, allowing it to take shape. Normally a temp music track would be part of Joe's work. But *ROSE PLAYS JULIE* proved curiously resistant to temp music. We just couldn't find the music to sit with the edit. And yet we always imagined music being an essential part of the world of the film. Deep into the edit we invited Stephen McKeon to respond with a score. We had worked with Stephen on our previous narrative feature, *MISTER JOHN*. In the end it was clear why temp music for the film was so difficult to find. It never existed in the first place. The film was waiting for Stephen's singular response all along.



Of course a psychoanalyst might want to know why we're drawn to the darker, more unsettling sides of the themes at the heart of *ROSE PLAYS JULIE*. There's no doubt that what drives the film forward is unsettling, but what also underpins it is our central characters - Rose and Ellen/the Mother and the Daughter - moving beyond the pain to a place where they love and can be loved. Perhaps by having both qualities held in balance the ideas move beyond the genre of a psychological thriller and hopefully engage with important societal concerns regarding the complex relationships between men and women.