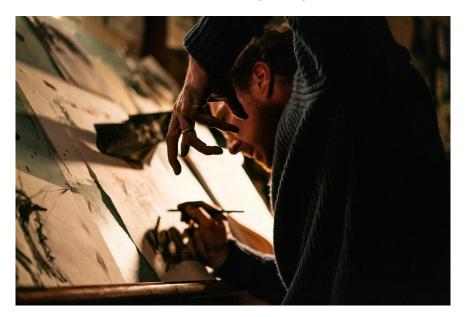
THE THING WITH FEATHERS

Berlinale Film Festival 2025 | European Premiere



DIRECTED & WRITTEN BY

Dylan Southern

PRODUCED BY

Andrea Cornwell, Leah Clarke, Adam Ackland

STARRING

Benedict Cumberbatch, Richard Boxall, Henry Boxall, Eric Lampaert, Vinette Robinson, Sam Spruell

Film4 and the BFI (awarding National Lottery funding), in association with Align, Uncommon Creative Studio, MK2 and Rank and File, in co-production with Film I Vast and Filmgate Films. A Lobo Films & SunnyMarch Production.

FESTIVAL OFFICIAL ACTIVITY

Photocall: Tuesday 18 February | 15:45 | Grand Hyatt Hotel
Press Conference: Tuesday 18 February | 15:55 | Grand Hyatt Hotel
Premiere Public Screening: Tuesday 18 February | 21:00 | Uber Eats Music Hall

FESTIVAL SCREENINGS

Press Screening: Monday 17 February | 19:00 | CinemaxX 5-6
Press Screening: Monday 17 February | 21:00 | CinemaxX 5-6
Additional Screening: Wednesday 19 February | 15:45 | Uber Eats Music Hall
Additional Screening: Thursday 20 February | 21:30 | Zoo Palast 1
Additional Screening: Friday 21 February | 12:30 | Berlinale Palast
Additional Screening: Saturday 22 February | 10:00 | Urania

RUN TIME

98 minutes

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SYNOPSIS

Left to raise two young sons after the unexpected death of his wife, DAD's life begins to unravel. Grief is messy and chaotic enough as it is, but when it takes the form of an unhinged and unwanted houseguest — CROW — taunting him from the shadows, things start to spiral out of control...but maybe that's exactly what Dad needs.

ABOUT THE FILM

The Thing with Feathers is writer/director Dylan Southern's fiction debut.

Dylan's previous work includes three acclaimed documentary features, and he has been celebrated for his ability to craft authentic, human-centred narratives. He is also a multi award-winning director of commercials and music videos.

The genesis of **The Thing With Feathers** began when Dylan was gifted a book; "Grief is the Thing With Feathers" by Max Porter. His deeply felt emotional connection to the novel meant he knew straight away he wanted to adapt it – and set about convincing Max that he was the right person to make the film. Max Porter's poetic novella is a profoundly moving story told in three points of view: of a recently widowed father simply called "DAD"; and of his two young BOYS, and of a giant, shamanistic and unruly CROW, which seemingly comes to life out of the pages of Dad's work as a writer. The book has been celebrated as one of the most imaginative and distinct British novels of the last decade.

The book was adapted by Southern, in development with Film4. In adapting the book, the filmmakers wanted to honour the spirit, extraordinary playfulness and non-linear form of Porter's work — which creates a deep, intimate portrait of a family in extraordinary transition. The book is now regarded as a modern classic, and was included as one of the top 100 novels of the 21st century by *The Sunday Times*. It won the 2016 International Dylan Thomas Prize and shortlisted for *The Guardian's* First Book Award. It has been sold in 31 territories and adapted to stage in multiple countries.

The project required three extraordinary actors to carry the story, which Dylan found in two-time Academy award nominated Benedict Cumberbatch, working alongside the screen debut of twins Richard and Henry Boxall as Dad's two young sons, both seven years old at the time of shooting. The film also stars Eric Lampaert, Vinette Robinson, Sam Spruell and the voice of David Thewlis as 'Crow'. The film is produced by Andrea Cornwell of Lobo Films and Adam Ackland and Leah Clarke of SunnyMarch Productions.

STATEMENT BY DYLAN SOUTHERN - Writer & Director

The Thing with Feathers started when I read a book that profoundly moved me.

As a teenager I lost my best friend unexpectedly, then a year later another of my friends died. These deaths left me bewildered. I'm sure things have gotten better now, but at that point, as a young man, I had never been provided with the tools to deal with the overwhelming enormity of that kind of loss. I tucked it away. I carried it with me. I unknowingly allowed it to grow.

Reading Max Porter's novella "Grief is the thing with Feathers" years later was one of the most cathartic experiences of my life. It gave me an insight into feelings that men (and perhaps particularly British men of a certain age!) don't get taught to deal with. It gave me the language to discuss how unsubtle, messy, chaotic and persistent grief can be. Importantly, it did so in a way that was masterfully laced with the same brand of absurdism, gallows humour and honesty, the same avoidance of sentimentality with which I approached my own experience of loss.

The book is unapologetically unsentimental about death and loss, it's abrasive, tender, violent, soft... it's genuinely funny, kind, not to mention ridiculous in places. I was astounded by the way those disparate tones combined to allow access to genuine human truths in a way I hadn't experienced before.

We're so used to being shown grief as a "process". We're told in the language of self-help that it's something we must move through in five distinct stages, finally emerging on the other side, healed and whole. Here was a book that called bullshit on that kind of trite over-simplification. A story that didn't try to hide from messy reality, yet still managed to be hopeful, funny and hugely entertaining.

With this adaptation, my ambition and priority were to create a cinematic language that would honour the DNA of Max's book, whilst being its own thing - just as unconventional but accessible to audiences who might not be aware of its literary origins.

The film has moments inflected by genre; the opening act is full of deliciously and deliberately dislocating shards of horror that unsettle the nervous system and act as a tonal counterpoint to domestic reality (where the true horror of the family's situation lies).

I couldn't use structure in the exact same way Max's book does, but I knew I wanted to play with structure in a way that was analogous, and which reflected the temporal qualities of grief. I wanted to explore the way time can dilate, examine the inflection points loss creates between memory and the present, I wanted to span grief-time, rather than real-time.

And then there was the question of Crow, the possibly real, possibly imaginary but always compelling creature who guides the family through this tumultuous period in their lives.

Part demented Mary Poppins, part Tyler Durden, with shades of The Fall's spiky frontman Mark E Smith, the barely concealed volcanic violence of Sexy Beast's Don Logan, the gauche entitlement of Withnail - Crow is also a character unlike any we've seen before.

Crow's function in the story - forcing Dad, in increasingly inventive, sometimes cruel ways, to face up to the fact his wife is gone - felt to me like the remit of a character from a fairy tale or a Studio Ghibli movie. In fact, for a long time when anyone asked me what I was working on I'd describe it in those terms - a

sort of live action adult Studio Ghibli film. Mixing the domestic and every day with moments of fantasy and visual invention.

I'm an eighties kid; I'm a huge fan of monster movies and in camera effects. Budgetary limitations aside, my personal taste meant Crow was never going to be a CGI creation. He had to be tactile, organic, handmade. He had to have a touch of the Jim Henson about him. He had to be a real presence.

The trick was always going to be to embrace the bizarreness of the conceit with utter conviction. The audience has to believe in Crow as a character. For that to happen the actors had to believe in Crow on set and he had to be tangible to me as a filmmaker. We could have had the slickest CGI in the world, but I don't think the performances of the kids and Dad would have been as connected to Crow's presence.

As far as I was concerned the only person who could design Crow was sculptor Nicola Hicks whose work as a fine artist and sculptor I had long admired. And the only person who could voice him was David Thewlis (whose vitriolic diatribes from Mike Leigh's 'Naked' rang in my head as I read and wrote the character). He begins on the page in Dad's fevered drawings, for which we enlisted the services of the phenomenal graphic novelist Lucy Sullivan and is brought to life on screen by the brilliant physical performance of Eric Lampaert.

Benedict Cumberbatch embraced the role of Dad with a conviction and wild abandon that was mesmerising and transcendent to witness. First time actors Richard and Henry Boxall embodied the roles of his sons in a way that is impossible not to fall in love with. Max Porter came along for the ride as the most supportive ambassador and advocate for the film and even made it to the screen in a somewhat meta cameo!

I wanted the film to be a visceral document of a human experience; cathartic for those that have experienced the thing it depicts, illuminating for those that haven't. Wild. Chaotic. Messy. Funny.

This wasn't an obvious (or easy) book to adapt so I'm incredibly proud of the film we made together with a commitment to kindness, handmade craft and love.

I'm thankful for the time I spent with Crow and ultimately, I hope audiences are too. Because of him, this is a film that traverses tones; it's scary, it's violent, it's tender, it's silly, it can be heartbreaking; but ultimately, it's hopeful.

I want this to be a film that people leave feeling things they may not have expected to when they entered.

Just as I did when I first read Max's book.

STATEMENT BY MAX PORTER - Author

With collaborations I believe in a kind of instinctual trust economy. I don't seek control or ownership over the way my work is adapted or translated into other mediums and languages, but I do love being involved. I like being in the room. I like answering questions. From the first meeting with Dylan Southern I knew he cared, got it, and he wanted to protect my book's weird heart. It was clear that he would keep it bird-like. Dylan understands Crow. He needs him and likes him.

We've talked a lot over the years as he's been patiently building this special film. He shares his ideas. We talk about music, poetry, graphic novels, esoteric instruments, videos of birds, rants about parenting woes and sickly sweet hallmark cards mourning-industry bullshit. He asked me about important decisions and in almost every instance I really liked his hunch. He didn't want to slavishly illustrate the book, he wanted to let the book free into cinematic space. He's created a film that feels handmade and lived-in. There was a sincerity with everyone involved, an attention to detail because Dylan allowed everyone to bring a bespoke feeling to their corner of it. Literally every mark, every feather, every dropped sock, smashed cup, every built or lit or graded element represents a person's lived experience, their loss, their love. I cried after a set visit because the warmth and care in the room was so potent, so overwhelming, and it was amazing that it had sprung from my little book about the death of my dad, and it was amazing that it had nothing to do with that at all anymore. It had flown off to become everyone's.

I think he's made a film which will mean different things to different people. Crow is unfixed, unruly, he's yours to decide, wildly silly and deadly serious in the same breath. The boys are devastatingly real, he directs them with extraordinary tenderness and compassion and they repay him with some of the best child acting I've ever seen. Benedict's performance as Dad is a kind of wild analysis being done on the viewer, you're part of it, you're with him, you are him, there's none of the safe distance we're used to when watching acting. It's beyond virtuoso, it's miraculous.

The film is heart-breaking because it's about losing the person you love, but crucially it's also very funny, and very strange. In that respect, despite the 8 foot bird and the murderous demon, it feels profoundly real; it feels true to life.

- Max Porter, Author of Adapted Novel, "Grief is the Thing with Feathers"

STATEMENT BY BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH - Actor & Producer

Max's novel is an exceptional piece of prose. It's lyrical, damaged, salvational, majestical, mundane, domestic, real and surreal. It is an extraordinary prism through which to reflect grief – the structure and intimacy of it. When reading it, I had the most amazing film playing in my head. The nature of the source material challenges you into imagining it, how it touches on something deeply personal. It's difficult to adapt a book that is so complete in so many ways. You want to do something different with it, but you don't want to completely deconstruct the DNA of it. I wanted to keep Dad's humanity. I wanted, as an actor, to be able to bring across somebody who is very human in his failings – someone who is working through things moment by moment. I think everyone in the film, from Max through to us, knows that grief is a universal experience. It's also a very rare thing in culture to explore that through a male experience.

Dylan's passion for the project really drove me to wanting to make it. He is one of the most affable people that I have ever met as well as being super talented. He is driven by a very personal motive to make this film, how the book connected with him at the time of his life when he read it. I felt held by him. I felt heard by him. I felt able to go to places for him and be very honest. It's very exciting, as a producer, to find someone with such motivation to tell this story. He has a love of art – he doesn't stop being inspired by it and wanting to talk about it. He constantly surrounds himself with culture but he's not self-obsessed in any way.

Crow is everything to Dad. He's a provocateur. He's an angry harbinger of grief and inadequacy. He's the worst internal critic. He's a guardian angel. He's a protector. He's a mess of grief and it takes the form of this Crow. The relationship between Dad and Crow is wonderful – the suspicion, the discovery, the horror, the craziness, the embarrassment, the confrontation, the anger.

This film is important for any time, but I think it is particularly important now, because it is about the idea of male vulnerability and what it is to deal with grief and loss. It examines how we are these multifactorial strands of being, and what happens when we are blown apart by something as devastating as the loss of a significant other. The undoing that happens and how, from the ashes of that, something beautiful and honest can be rebuilt and reborn. We still live in a culture where dying, death and grief isn't talked about all that much. It's packed away. But, as we know, reality lives on, and it becomes a part of us. Love inevitably means loss because you can't love something without loss. Nothing lasts forever. This is the extraordinary, haunting, beautiful and profound way to explore loss.

ABOUT THE CAST

BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH | "Dad"

Academy Award nominee Benedict Cumberbatch has established himself as one of the most versatile actors of his generation with an array of emotionally searing and complex roles defining his body of work.

Cumberbatch was nominated for an Academy Award, BAFTA, SAG, Critics Choice and Golden Globe for his work in Jane Campion's Academy Award winning film THE POWER OF THE DOG. Cumberbatch also received Academy Award, Golden Globe, BAFTA and SAG Award nominations for his portrayal of 'Alan Turing' in Morten Tyldum's THE IMITATION GAME.

Upcoming projects include Jay Roach's THE ROSES opposite Olivia Colman; Guy Ritchie's WIFE & DOG alongside Rosamund Pike; Wes Anderson's THE PHOENICIAN SCHEME opposite Tom Hanks and Scarlett Johansson; and DC Moore's adaptation of Matt Haig's HOW TO STOP TIME for television.

Recently, Cumberbatch starred in Abi Morgan's mini-series ERIC for Netflix; Wes Anderson's Academy Award winning film THE WONDERFUL STORY OF HENRY SUGAR; and Marvel's DOCTOR STRANGE IN THE MULTIVERSE OF MADNESS.

Additional film credits include Will Sharpe's THE ELECTRICAL LIFE OF LOUIS WAIN; Jon Watts' SPIDER-MAN: NO WAY HOME; Sam Mendes' BAFTA Award-winning 1917; Steve McQueen's 12 YEARS A SLAVE; Steven Spielberg's WAR HORSE; Joe Wright's ATONEMENT; Alfonso Gomez-Rejon's THE CURRENT WAR; Peter Jackson's THE HOBBIT Trilogy; JJ Abrams' blockbuster STAR TREK: INTO DARKNESS; Scott Cooper's BLACK MASS; John Wells' AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY; Thomas Alfredson's TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER SPY; and Justin Chadwick's THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL.

On television, Cumberbatch has starred in the Emmy and BAFTA TV Award-nominated BREXIT: THE UNCIVIL WAR; David Nicholls' PATRICK MELROSE for Showtime and SKY TV, for which he won a BAFTA TV Award and received Golden Globe and Emmy nominations; the critically acclaimed BBC series SHERLOCK, for which he won a Primetime Emmy Award in 2014 and received three Emmy nominations, three BAFTA TV Award nominations, two SAG Award nominations and three Critics Choice nominations; BBC's THE HOLLOW CROWN, which garnered him a BAFTA TV Award nomination in the category of 'Best Leading Actor'; BBC's highly acclaimed drama HAWKING; BBC's SMALL ISLAND; and BBC/HBO drama PARADE'S END.

In theatre, Cumberbatch starred in HEDDA GABLER, playing the role of 'George Tesman' at the Almeida Theatre. He reprised his role at the Duke of York's Theatre, marking his West End debut, receiving a Laurence Olivier Award nomination and winning the Ian Charleson Award. Cumberbatch also starred as 'Victor Frankenstein' in the Olivier National Theatre's FRANKENSTEIN, for which he received the Laurence

Olivier Award, the Evening Standard Award, and the Critics' Circle Theatre Award. Cumberbatch also led Shakespeare's HAMLET at the Barbican Theatre. For his portrayal of the titular character, he earned his third Laurence Olivier Award nomination.

In 2013, Cumberbatch established his production company SunnyMarch alongside producing partner Adam Ackland. Their recent and upcoming slate covers a variety of projects for television and film including WE LIVE IN TIME; THE ROSES; THE END WE START FROM; HOW TO STOP TIME; THE ELECTRICAL LIFE OF LOUIS WAIN; LONDONGRAD; WAR MAGICIAN; and THE 39 STEPS.

HENRY & RICHARD BOXALL | "Boys"

The Thing with Feathers is twins Richard and Henry Boxall's first experience acting professionally. They were seven at time of filming. Interests include Lego, monsters, Star Wars and playing pranks on giant crows.

ERIC LAMPAERT | "Crow"

Eric trained at Jacques Lecoq (Paris), Middlesex University Theatre Arts (London), UCB Improv School (Los Angeles). TV credits include: THIS WAY UP (Merman), THE LAST DRAGON SLAYER (Sky One), BOOMERS (BBC1), THE MIDNIGHT BEAST (E4), CARDINAL BURNS (Channel 4) and LIFE'S TOO SHORT (BBC2).

Feature Film credits include: THE SHOW (Lex Film), ANNA AND VALERIAN and THE CITY OF A THOUSAND PLANETS both directed by Lucy Besson (EuropaCorp/Lionsgate), LES PROFS EN VACANCES (Les Film Du 24), MOONWALKERS (Partizan Films), STONER EXPRESS (Propeller Artists), BURKE AND HARE (Ealing Studios)

Stage credits include: WHITE RABBIT RED RABBIT (Aurora Nova), KIM NOBLE WILL DIE (Brown Eyed Boy).

VINETTE ROBINSON | "Amanda"

Award winning actress, Vinette Robinson, is perhaps best known for her role as the lead in BOILING POINT for the BBC, a continuation of Philip Barantini's award winning feature film of the same name. Set six months after the events of the film, Vinette reprised her role as 'Carly' - now head chef at an upmarket London restaurant. Her performance in the film won Vinette 'Best Supporting Actress' at BIFA, and she returned to the project alongside Stephen Graham and Hannah Walters.

Vinette recently starred in THE GATHERING for Channel 4 and in SUSPECT S2, as well as INSIDE NO 9. Further onscreen roles include Sky's THE LAZARUS PROJECT, a sci-fi action drama series centred around a secret government agency that prevents mass extinction events with the technology to turn back time. With TV credits that include THE A WORD, SHERLOCK, CLOSE TO THE ENEMY, SIX FOUR and BLACK MIRROR - Vinette also has an established career onstage. Her previous theatre credits include EMILIA (THE GLOBE), ALBION (ALMEIDA THEATRE), HAMLET (YOUNG VIC), TENDER NAPALM (SOUTHWARK PLAYHOUSE) and WELCOME TO THEBES (NATIONAL THEATRE).

SAM SPURELL | "Paul"

British actor Sam Spruell has established himself as one of the most dynamic actors through his tremendous breath of work across film, television and stages.

Sam just wrapped on the film adaptation of H IS FOR HAWK playing opposite Claire Foy. The film is directed by Philippa Lowthorpe and is produced by Plan B. That followed filming the first season of HBO's drama series A KNIGHT OF THE SEVEN KINGDOMS, a preguel to Game of Thrones. Based

George R. R. Martin's novella The Hedge Knight, the series is set a century prior to the events of Game of Thrones following two unlikely heroes Ser Duncan the Tall and his squire Egg, the future King Aegon V Targaryen. Sam will portray Prince Maekar Targaryen, Egg's father. The series is written by Martin and Ira Parker (House of the Dragon) and set to premiere in late 2025.

Spruell recently wrapped production on the second season of BBC's drama series THE GOLD where he stars opposite Hugh Bonneville and Tom Cullen. The series is based on the true story of 1983 Brink's-Mat robbery, and the remarkable story that followed. Sam plays 'Charlie Miller' the accomplice to never-convicted goldsmith John Palmer (Cullen).

Most recently on television, Sam can be seen starring in the fifth season of FX's anthology series FARGO opposite Jon Hamm, Juno Temple and Jennifer Jason Leigh. Sam portrays 'Ole Munch', a mysterious assassin hired to abduct Dot (Temple). The series was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award in the category of 'Outstanding Limited or Anthology Series'.

Spruell's previous film credits include THE SETTLERS, which won the FEPRESCI prize in Un Certain Regard at Cannes. Sam was also in Francesco Carrozzini's THE HANGING SUN opposite Alessandro Borghi and Jessica Brown Findlay which premiered at the Venice International Film Festival; Andrea Di Stefano's THE INFORMER opposite Joel Kinnaman, Ana de Armas and Rosamund Pike; David Mackenzie's OUTLAW KING opposite Chris Pine, Aaron Taylor-Johnson and Florence Pugh for Netflix; Nicholas Hytner's THE LADY IN THE VAN opposite Maggie Smith; Brian Helgeland's LEGEND opposite Tom Hardy; Olivier Megaton's TAKEN 3, the third installment of the TAKEN franchise; Henrik Ruben Genz's GOOD PEOPLE; Rupert Sanders' SNOW WHITE & THE HUNTSMAN opposite Charlize Theron, Kristen Stewart and Chris Hemsworth; Edward Zwick's DEFIANCE opposite Daniel Craig, Jamie Bell and Liev Schreiber; Kathryn Bigelow's Academy Award-winning feature THE HURTLOCKER and Kathryn Bigelow's K-19: THE WIDOWMAKER.

Previous television credits include: BBC's miniseries THE NORTH WATER opposite Colin Farrell and Jack O'Connell; Steve McQueen's BAFTA nominated series SMALL AXE; BBC drama series DOCTOR WHO; ITV series LIAR; I AM NICOLA for Channel 4; Kurt Sutter's mini-series THE BASTARD EXECUTIONER opposite Matthew Rhys for FX and BBC drama series LUTHER opposite Idris Elba and Steven Mackintosh.

On stage, Spruell has starred in John Shanley's Doubt opposite Monica Dolan. In Ellen McDougall's production of OTHELLO at Shakespeare's Globe; SHOPPING & F**KING, Sean Holmes' 20th anniversary revival of Mark Ravenhill's dark comedy lead by Spruell; Dominic Cooke's CLYBOURNE PARK at The Royal Court; Trafalgar Studios production of Harold Pinter's play THE CARETAKER; Sean Holmes' PORNOGRAPHY at the Tricycle Theatre; Gbolahan Obisesan's SUS at The Young Vic; Nicholas Hytner's THE ALCHEMIST at The National Theatre; Howard Davies' LIFE OF GALILEO at The National Theatre; Jonathan Kent's EDWARD BOND'S LEAR at The Sheffield Crucible and Braham Murray's OTHELLO at The Royal Exchange Manchester.

Spruell previously directed and produced short film SPINNING and executive produced and starred in Colin O'Toole's COWBOY DAVE which won a BAFTA Award for Best Short Film in 2017.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

DYLAN SOUTHERN | DIRECTOR, WRITER

Dylan Southern is an acclaimed British filmmaker, celebrated for his ability to craft authentic, human-centered narratives.

Southern's work in documentary filmmaking has received significant acclaim. His Grammy- and Grierson-nominated NO DISTANCE LEFT TO RUN (2010) follows the band Blur; and SHUT UP AND PLAY THE HITS (2012), a chronicle of LCD Soundsystem's "last ever show," premiered at Sundance and is widely recognized as one of the defining music documentaries of its era. Most recently, his film MEET ME IN THE BATHROOM (2022), based on Lizzy Goodman's book chronicling the early 2000s New York music scene, premiered at Sundance and was released in theatres to critical acclaim.

ANDREA CORNWELL | PRODUCER

Andrea Cornwell runs London-based Lobo Films, producing both films and television. Her most recent film LOVE LIES BLEEDING received its world premiere at the 2024 Sundance Film Festival. Her second collaboration with director Rose Glass, the film stars Kristen Stewart, Ed Harris, Katy O'Brien, Dave Franco and Jena Malone and was released by A24 and Lionsgate in Spring.

She is currently in post-production on WICKER, starring Olivia Colman.

Recent productions include the limited series THE ESSEX SERPENT for AppleTV+, directed by Clio Barnard, starring Claire Danes and Tom Hiddleston, and films include the horror hit SAINT MAUD, directed by Rose Glass (also for A24 and Film4); APOSTASY directed by Daniel Kokotajlo; SUITE FRANÇAISE, starring Michelle Williams, Kristin Scott Thomas, Margot Robbie; and the sci-fi horror THE LAST DAYS ON MARS which premiered at Cannes Directors' Fortnight, starring Liev Schreiber. Feature documentaries include SEAHORSE directed by Jeanie Finlay and the multi award-winning BRUCE LEE & THE OUTLAW directed by Joost Vandebrug.

LEAH CLARKE | PRODUCER

Leah runs the Film and TV departments alongside both Adam Ackland and Benedict Cumberbatch at SunnyMarch, who founded the company in 2013. Together they have produced forthcoming THE THING WITH FEATHERS; forthcoming THE ROSES written by Tony McNamara, directed by Jay Roach, starring Olivia Colman and Benedict Cumberbatch; recently released WE LIVE IN TIME, John Crowley's contemporary romance written by Nick Payne, starring Andrew Garfield and Florence Pugh; Mahalia Belo's debut feature, THE END WE START FROM, starring Jodie Comer, Katherine Waterstone, Mark Strong and Joel Fry; the Golden Globe winning, BAFTA nominated Kevin Macdonald film THE MAURITANIAN, starring Jodie Foster, Tahar Rahim, Benedict Cumberbatch and Shailene Woodley; Will Sharpe's period piece THE ELECTRICAL LIFE OF LOUIS WAIN, starring Cumberbatch, Claire Foy, Toby Jones and Andrea Riseborough; and Executive Produced THE COURIER, a cold-war espionage drama directed by Dominic Cooke, starring Cumberbatch, Rachel Brosnahan, Merab Ninidze and Jessie Buckley.

On the TV side, SunnyMarch is developing HOW TO STOP TIME, DC Moore's adaptation of Matt Haig's bestseller with Sky and StudioCanal. They have also co-produced the Golden Globe, Emmy nominated and BAFTA winning limited series PATRICK MELROSE for Showtime and Sky, and an adaptation of Ian McEwan's CHILD IN TIME for BBC One.

Prior to SunnyMarch, Leah was at DNA and worked on a range of high-profile feature films including ANNIHILATION, T2: TRAINSPOTTING, FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD and EX MACHINA, DREDD and 28 WEEKS LATER.

ADAM ACKLAND | PRODUCER

Producer Adam Ackland is the Managing Director of SunnyMarch, the independent Film & TV production company he founded with Benedict Cumberbatch in 2013. Since launching the banner, SunnyMarch have produced forthcoming THE THING WITH FEATHERS; forthcoming THE ROSES written by Tony McNamara, directed by Jay Roach, starring Olivia Colman and Benedict Cumberbatch; recently released WE LIVE IN TIME, John Crowley's contemporary romance written by Nick Payne, starring Andrew Garfield and Florence Pugh; Mahalia Belo's debut feature, THE END WE START FROM, starring Jodie Comer, Katherine Waterstone, Mark Strong and Joel Fry; the Golden Globe winning, BAFTA nominated Kevin Macdonald film THE MAURITANIAN, starring Jodie Foster, Tahar Rahim, Benedict Cumberbatch and Shailene Woodley; Will Sharpe's period piece THE ELECTRICAL LIFE OF LOUIS WAIN, starring Cumberbatch, Claire Foy, Toby Jones and Andrea Riseborough; and Executive Produced THE COURIER, a cold-war espionage drama directed by Dominic Cooke, starring Cumberbatch, Rachel Brosnahan, Merab Ninidze and Jessie Buckley.

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BEN FORDESMAN | DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Ben Fordesman is a London based Cinematographer working internationally on a wide variety of feature films, TV Dramas and commercial projects.

His debut feature film SAINT MAUD premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival earning him a BIFA award for Best Cinematography. Ben also shot four episodes of the BAFTA nominated Netflix show, THE END OF THE F***KING WORLD. His A24 feature LOVE LIES BLEEDING starring Ed Harris and Kristen Stewart has just been released, earning him an award for BIFA award for Best Cinematography, and most recently Ben wrapped on the feature ANEMONE starring Daniel Day Lewis.

Ben entered the industry first as an electrician, working in the lighting department on feature films such as HUGO, THE DARK KNIGHT RISES and PROMETHEUS. Later, drawing on these experiences, he transitioned into cinematography, shooting music videos and commercials, earning him awards at the British Arrows, Creative Circle and Cannes Lions.

SUSIE DAVIES | PRODUCTION DESIGNER

OSCAR and Bafta nominated Suzie has an enthusiastic passion for design. She works with a huge energy and thoroughly enjoys the process of film making. Her designs compliment the storytelling process and with her clever use of the budget she produces interesting and versatile sets and spaces.

Suzie's latest features have included Emerald Fennell's SALTBURN (winning the Critic's Choice Award for Best Production Design) and the recently released CONCLAVE, directed by Edward Berger. CONCLAVE was a project wherein Davies takes us behind the veil into one of the most clandestine events in the world with her studio build replicas of the historic Vatican. Suzie has a collection of exciting projects coming down the line. She will also be returning to work with Emerald Fennell and LuckyChap for their much-anticipated film, WUTHERING HEIGHTS.

Suzie has worked closely with director Mike Leigh on several projects such as PETERLOO, HARD TRUTHS, and MR. TURNER, for which she received both a BAFTA and Oscar nomination for Best Production Design. In the realm of television, Suzie has worked on LIFE AFTER LIFE for BBC, directed by John Crowley. Prior, she designed the 3rd season of MAD DOGS, produced by Left Bank Picture

Starting off as a model maker and sculptor in the 90's, and then as an Art Director on and off camera, her route through the art department has given her fantastic opportunities and experience which enhance her vision as a Production Designer. Working in varied genres - drama to comedy and horror to dance, and for varying budgets any project is taken on with relish. At home or abroad Suzie enjoys working with crews from all over the world.

She has given talks and masterclasses at various Film Schools, has lectured at the National Gallery on the Depiction of Colour in Film and is a mentor for Production Design winners of the Watersprite Film Festival.

JESSICA LAWS | 1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Jessica Laws is a freelance filmmaker from London, who has worked on a wide variety of projects for both film and TV. A 1st AD for over 15 years, Laws' credits include Mike Leigh's latest film HARD TRUTHS (2024), Stephen Daldry's BAFTA Award winning lockdown film TOGETHER (2021), and Netflix's acclaimed sci-fi series BLACK MIRROR (2023). Her most recent work includes THE ROSES (2025) by renowned director Jay Roach for Searchlight Pictures, and she maintains a long standing relationship with anthology director Dominic Savage, with who she has completed seven projects, including six of the BAFTA Award winning I AM... films I AM NICOLA (2019), ...KIRSTY (2019), ...HANNAH (2019),...VICTORIA (2021), ...MARIA(2021) and ...RUTH (2022). Laws is known for working tirelessly with directors, producers, cast and crew to bring a vision to life, and is committed to her role in fulfilling its potential. She is well versed in multiple genres, and in embracing both traditional and unconventional methods to produce work of the highest quality. Her passion lies in drama, especially grounded in social impact, injustice or telling stories from less heard voices. Laws is also engaged in community outreach, delivering careers talks and workshops for young people and special needs communities.

SOPHIE O'NEILL | COSTUME DESIGNER

Costume Designer Sophie O'Neill grew up in London, graduating from the London College of Fashion in 2012 with a 1st Class Honours degree in Costume Design for Performance.

Sophie first established herself as a Costume Buyer, Assistant Costume Designer and Costume Supervisor, working on several internationally acclaimed and award-winning feature films such as JAWBONE for Thomas Napper, STAN AND OLLIE for Jon S. Baird and THE SELFISH GIANT, which marked her first collaboration with Clio Barnard.

After working as Assistant Costume Designer to Michele Clapton on THE KING'S MAN for Matthew Vaughn, THE SECRET GARDEN for Marc Munden and MAMMA MIA! HERE WE GO AGAIN for OI Parker, Sophie designed her first feature ALI & AVA, collaborating once again with director Clio Barnard. Sophie has since designed THE OUTFIT for Graham Moore, starring Mark Rylance, Zoey Deutch, Dylan O'Brien and Johnny Flynn. This project gave Sophie the opportunity to work with Campbell Carey, head cutter and creative director of Huntsman Savile Row, to produce bespoke suits for Mark Rylance and Dylan O'Brien.

Sophie's passion for storytelling in independent film has led her to work with several outstanding directors. Most recently she has designed Moin Hussain's debut feature SKY PEALS and Rebecca Lenkiewicz's HOT MILK, starring Emma Mackey, Vicky Krieps and Fiona Shaw.

WAKANA YOSHIRO | HAIR AND MAKEUP DESIGNER

Wakana Yoshihara is a renowned Hair & Makeup and Prosthetic Designer based in London. Her impressive portfolio includes work on Kenneth Branagh's films A HAUNTING IN VENICE, DEATH ON THE NILE, as well as the BAFTA and Academy Award- winning film BELFAST. She also served as the Hair & Makeup Designer in Pablo Larraín's critically acclaimed SPENCER and THE ROSES for Jay Roach. Throughout her career, she has collaborated with exceptional talents, most recently including Olivia Colman, Benedict Cumberbatch, Wyatt Russell, Kristen Stewart, and recently with Jodie Comer in THE LAST DISTURBANCE OF MADELINE HYNDE.

GEORGE CRAGG | EDITOR

George Cragg is an award winning editor of both drama and documentary.

George has worked extensively in Europe and the UK on a wide range of productions from Savanah Leaf's BAFTA winning EARTH MAMA, to Alexander Nanau's double Oscar nominated COLLECTIVE. Recent projects include Chris Andrew's BIFA winning BRING THEM DOWN starring Barry Keoghan and Christopher Abbott for Mubi; and Janicza Bravo's THE LISTENERS for the BBC.

Other television credits include Clio Barnard's THE ESSEX SERPENT for Apple TV, starring Clare Danes and Tom Hiddleston and Måns Månsson's eight part series ESTONIA.

JOAKIM SUNDSTRÖM | SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR

Joakim Sundström is a Swedish supervising sound editor, sound designer and musician. His credits include a number of Oscar, BIFA and BAFTA-winning films including Martin McDonagh's THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN (2022), THREE BILLBOARDS OUTSIDE EBBING, MISSOURI (2017) and SEVEN PSYCHOPATHS (2012). Other notable projects include FISH TANK (2009), THE CONSTANT GARDENER (2006), TOUCHING THE VOID (2003) and THE BERBERIAN SOUND STUDIO (2012). He is a long-time collaborator of British director Michael Winterbottom's with credits on IN THIS WORLD (2002), A MIGHTY HEART (2007), THE ROAD TO GUANTANAMO (2006), 24 HOUR PARTY PEOPLE (2002), THE KILLER INSIDE ME (2010) and GREED (2019) among many others.

He also works regularly with Andrew Haigh with credits on 45 YEARS (2015), LEAN ON PETE (2017) and ALL OF US STRANGERS (2023). He has received two BIFA Awards for his work on Peter Strickland's THE BERBERIAN SOUND STUDIO (2012) and Brian Welsh's BEATS (2019). In 2014 he won the prestigious EFA Europe Sound Designer of the Year Award for his work on David Mackenzie's prison drama STARRED UP (2014). He has received a further three British Independent Film Award nominations for IN THIS WORLD (2002), NOTES ON BLINDNESS (2016) and THREE BILLBOARDS OUTSIDE EBBING, MISSOURI (2017) as well as a BAFTA nomination for THE CONSTANT GARDENER (2006), three MPSA Golden Reel nominations for TOUCHING THE VOID (2003), THE CONSTANT GARDENER (2006) and THREE BILLBOARDS OUTSIDE EBBING, MISSOURI (2017) and nominations for the International Press Academy Golden Satellite Award

ZEBEDEE C. BUDWORTH | COMPOSER

Zebedee C. Budworth is a composer, producer, and multi-instrumentalist with a distinct focus on creating compelling compositions for film and advertising.

In 2022, Zebedee scored the critically acclaimed feature-length music documentary MEET ME IN THE BATHROOM, an immersive archival exploration of early 2000s New York City's explosive music scene. The film delves into the cultural, technological, and political shifts of the era through the lens of iconic bands like The Strokes, Yeah Yeahs, Interpol, and LCD Soundsystem. MEET ME IN THE BATHROOM was selected for prestigious screenings at both the Sundance and BFI Film Festival.

Zebedee is also a founding director of the Emergence Collective, a dynamic ensemble of over 30 members operating at the intersection of folk, improvisation, and minimalism. The collective has garnered critical acclaim from outlets such as The Quietus, Loud & Quiet, and Brooklyn Vegan.

Beyond his work with Emergence Collective, Zebedee is an active performer in the improvised folk duo Resonant Bodies, known for blending medieval music with minimalism, and in Slug Milk, a project that fuses processional drone with elements of folk horror and the occult. These innovative projects have released music on labels such as Folklore Tapes and Betwixt and Between. Zebedee's music has been featured on BBC Radio 6 Music, BBC Radio 1, and NTS, and has appeared on television shows like SEX EDUCATION, MADE IN CHELSEA, and BT SPORT. His work has also been highlighted in Pitchfork and NME. He has performed at many major UK festivals such as End Of The Road and Kendal Calling, and has toured extensively across Europe and Japan.

END CREDITS

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY
DYLAN SOUTHERN

THE THING WITH FEATHERS

BASED ON THE NOVEL

"GRIEF IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS"

BY

MAX PORTER

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

OLLIE MADDEN
BEN COREN
BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH

MORWIN SCHMOOKLER
PATRICIA LAWLEY
LEE BRODA
THOMAS R. BURKE

MIA BAYS
CHARLIE GATSKY SINCLAIR
NILS LEONARD
NATHANAËL & ELISHA KARMITZ
FIONNUALA JAMISON

ADRIAN POLITOWSKI

SIERRA GARCIA NADIA KHAMLICHI NESSA MCGILL

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER FILMGATE FILMS

SEAN WHEELAN

CO-PRODUCER FILM I VÄST

KRISTINA BÖRJESON

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

BEN FORDESMAN BSC

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

SUZIE DAVIES

EDITOR

GEORGE CRAGG

COSTUME DESIGNER

SOPHIE O'NEILL

HAIR & MAKE-UP DESIGNER

WAKANA YOSHIHARA

MUSIC BY

ZEBEDEE C. BUDWORTH

SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR

JOAKIM SUNDSTRÖM

CREATURE & MAKE-UP EFFECTS DESIGNER

CONOR O'SULLIVAN

DRAWINGS BY

LUCY SULLIVAN

CROW DESIGNED BY

NICOLA HICKS

CASTING DIRECTOR

SHAHEEN BAIG

Line Producer EIMHEAR MCMAHON

Associate Producers ELLEN SPENCE

NAT BARING

First Assistant Director JESSICA LAWS

Post Production Supervisor MARIE FERNANDES

Music Supervisor CONNIE FARR

CAST In order of appearance

Boy 2 HENRY BOXALL

Dad BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH

Boy 1 RICHARD BOXALL

Teacher / Mrs. A NANDI BHEBHE

Paul SAM SPRUELL

School Mum JESSIE CAVE

Unwelcoming Child 1 ANNIE HALL SOUTHERN

Unwelcoming Child 2 LOU HALL SOUTHERN

Voice of Crow DAVID THEWLIS

Crow ERIC LAMPAERT

Andy TIM PLESTER

Dr. Bowden LEO BILL

Mum CLAIRE CARTWRIGHT

Younger Boy 1 CHARLIE HARMAN

Younger Boy 2 FREDDIE KIRBY

Amanda VINETTE ROBINSON

Teacher / Mr. Mark DWANE WALCOTT

Margaret LESLEY MOLONY

Keith GARRY COOPER

Simon Coleridge & Dan Graves MATTHEW JOHN WRIGHT

Police Officer STEVE PAGET

The Demon ADAM BASIL

Demon Voice KEVIN HOWARTH

Female Guest RIMCA KARMAKAR

Handsome Man at Book Launch MAX PORTER

Stunt Coordinator PAUL HEASMAN

Dad Stunt Double MATT DA SILVA

Crow Stunt Double LIAM CAREY

Additional Line Producer NELL GREEN

Production Manager ELENA SANTAMARIA

Production Coordinator LEA DETTLI

Assistant Production Coordinator LAETITIA LEVEN

Production Assistant PRATISH GURUNG

Green Production Assistant MIQUEL SIERRA ALTARRIBA

Second Assistant Director JOE PAYNE

Third Assistant Director SOPHIE GRAHAM

Floor Runner SASKIA GREENHALGH

Runner / Stand In DARIO FEDDERSEN-DOYLE

Art Director ELENA REAL-DAVIES

Assistant Art Director EMILY BESWARICK

Standby Art Director ZOE BETTS

Set Decorator CHARLOTTE DIRICKX

Assistant Set Decorator FABIANA RIZZI

Production Buyer MICK PIRIE

Assistant Buyer NATASHA SADIER

Graphic Designer LAUREN DIX

Assistant Graphic Designer FRANCES BENT

Trusty Buyer IMOGEN BRADY

Property Master DAVE 'SPRINGER' HORRILL

Prophands STEVE PARNELL

GILES 'J' BROWN

Standby Props BEAU VANCE

MONIKA SALEH

Propmen ANTONY PARNELL

PAUL ROE

First Assistant Camera PHILIP HERON

Second Assistant CameraJACK FERRARI-PLUMRIDGEDigital Imaging TechnicianMICHAEL MCDUFFIE-FINLAY

Steadicam Operators DOUG WALSHE ACO

JAKE WHITEHOUSE

Drone Operator BEN PLATTS

Drone Technician LEO WHITFIELD
Camera Trainee SHARAD PATEL

ScreenSkills Camera Trainee LOUISA BABLIN

Script Supervisor ALANA MARMION-WARR

Production Sound MixerRON BAILEY, AMPS, CASFirst Assistant SoundSTANLEY WHITE-STARKE

Second Assistant Sound BEN CHRISTIAN

Gaffer JONATHAN YATES

Best Boy MICHAEL SMIT

Electricians ALEX GIBBONS

DEXTER LOVELY

ELLIS GRIFFITHS PHIPPS

TONY IARIA

JIMMY BOLLINGER

Desk Operator KARYN WILSON
Rigging Electricians CALLUM CRISELL

PETER TAYLOR

HOD Rigger GRAHAM BAKER

Standby Rigger LIAM DAY
Rigging Gaffer DAVID NYE

Key Grip LEE NAYLOR-VANE

Grip NEIL BLAKESLEY

Grip Trainee OLIVER FORRESTER

Assistant Costume Designer FFION BOYESEN

Principal Costume Standby SIMONE CARLO TONIATO TOSO

Additional Costume Standby SERGIO PEDRO
ScreenSkills Costume Trainee ELLIE WEST

Costume Dailies MARIANNA BOURMPOULA

JOSEPH HURST

ANYA JANE MAGEE

Hair & Make-up Supervisor SHREYA PATEL

Hair & Make-up Artist NATASHA MUTTI

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Animatronic Designer ADAM WRIGHT

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HANNAH MARSHALL

ROB TRENTON

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EL PICENA

Animatronics GUY STEVENS

Puppeteer ADAM WRIGHT

Creature Technicians AMY DUDLEY

REZA KAREM

JAMES KERNOT

ANDY HUNT

GRACE MARIA

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Tutor / Chaperone GERARD BAILEY

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Construction Coordinator LUCY MOLES

Supervisor Carpenter JO WATTS

Carpenters EAMONN CONAGHAN

THIBAULT MARTINEAU

Supervisor Painter NIGEL KIRK

Painters MIRCEA DRAGOMIRESCU

LIZZIE WILKINSON

ADRIAN MAGRYS

Stagehand CASEY CONCANNON

Standby Carpenter CHRISTOPHE ROQUAIS

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Special Effects Supervisor HAYLEY WILLIAMS

Special Effects Floor Supervisor RUPERT MORENCY

Special Effects Senior Technician ANDY RYAN

Special Effects Technicians DAMIEN KIVLEHAN

RICHARD SHARPLES

Special Effects Assistant Technician MAX READER

Special Effects Trainee SHANNON PHILLIPS

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Animal Handler ANTHONY BLOOM

Action Vehicles KYLE HALL

STEVEN WASH

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First Aid & Ambulance MARCEL RAMLAL

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ABIDE WITH ME (EVENTIDE)

Performed by the Choir of Cockpen & Carrington Parish Church, Midlothian Written by Henry Francis Lyte and William Henry Monk Courtesy of the Choir of Cockpen & Carrington Parish Church, Midlothian

INBETWEEN DAYS

Performed by The Cure
Written by Robert Smith
Published by Fiction Songs Limited
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STRAND (GATHERING) FROM SONGS OF ASCENSION

Music by Meredith Monk
Performed by Allison Sniffin, Bruce Rameker, Ching Gonzalez, Ellen Fisher, Katie
Geissinger, and Meredith Monk, voices
Recorded on ECM 2154
Published by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Limited
Courtesy of Deutsche Grammophon ECM
Under licence from Universal Music Operations Limited

SUMMER VARIATION FROM SONGS OF ASCENSION

Music by Meredith Monk

Performed by Bohdan Hilash, bass clarinet; John Hollenbeck, percussion; Courtney Orlando and Todd Reynolds, violin; Nadia Sirota, viola; Ha-Yang Kim, cello; Bruce Rameker and Katie Geissinger, voices

Recorded on ECM 2154

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I CALLED YOU BACK

Performed by Bonnie "Prince" Billy
Written by Will Oldham
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FEAST OF THE MAU MAU

Performed by Screamin' Jay Hawkins Written by Jay Hawkins Published by Unichappell Music Inc. (BMI) All rights administered by Warner Chappell North America Limited.
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Performed by Damon Albarn
Written by Damon Albarn, Andre De Ridder and Simon Tong
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Performed by Raymond Johnston, Robert Stringer and the Worcester Cathedral Choir,
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FLIRTED WITH YOU ALL MY LIFE

Performed by Vic Chesnutt
Written by Vic Chesnutt
Published by BMG Rights Management (UK) Limited,
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Courtesy of Constellation MOSTLY CHIMES
Performed by Adrianne Lenker
Written by Adrianne Lenker
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WHO KNOWS WHERE THE TIME GOES?

Performed by Fairport Convention
Written by Sandy Denny
Published by Fairwood Music (UK) Limited
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Country of Origin
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