OFFICIAL SELECTION ANNECY 2024 COMPETITION

Official Selection Opening Night MIFF Melbourne International Film Festival 2024

Memoir of a Snail

Written and Directed by Adam Elliot

Press Notes

CHANNEL 4 · BFI · MADMAN · arenamedia · Screen Australia · VICTORIA State Government · VICSCREEN · SOUNDFIRM MELBOURNE - SYDNEY - BEIJING · MIFF · Melbourne International Film Festival · Premiere Fund · MIND THE GAP FILM FINANCE


FAIRY FLOSS

Synopsis

***Memoir of a Snail*, is the bittersweet remembrance of a lonely woman called Grace Pudel, who retells her life story to a humble garden snail named, Sylvia.**

Grace Pudel is a lonely misfit with an affinity for collecting ornamental snails and an intense love for books. At a young age, when Grace is separated from her fire-breathing twin brother Gilbert, she falls into a spiral of anxiety and angst. Despite a continued series of hardships, inspiration and hope emerge when she strikes up an enduring friendship with an elderly eccentric woman named Pinky, who is full of grit and lust for life. From Academy Award-winning® animation writer and director Adam Elliot, ***Memoir of a Snail*** is a poignant, heartfelt, hilarious chronicle of the life of an outsider finding her confidence and silver linings amongst the clutter of everyday life.

SPECS

94 Minutes
1:1.85 DCP
Shooting Format : Canon Eos Digital Cameras

Annecy Screenings

Monday, June 10th, 13:00	**World Premiere** at Bonlieu - Grande Salle
Monday, June 10th, 20:45	Le Mikado
Tuesday, June 11th, 11:30	Pathé 1
Wednesday, June 12th, 10:00	Pathé 2
Thursday, June 13th, 12:30	Pathé 2
Thursday, June 13th, 20:45	Auditorium Seynod
Friday, June 14th, 22:30	Pathé 3
Saturday, June 15th, 18:30	La Turbine

Screen Australia Presents
In Association With Vicscreen
Melbourne International Film Festival Premiere Fund
Soundfirm
Anton And Charades
An Arenamedia Production
A Film By Adam Elliot

Memoir of a Snail

'Life can only be understood backwards, but we have to live it forwards'

(Søren Kierkegaard)

'Memoir Of A Snail' is Academy Award® winning animation auteur, Adam Elliot's, second feature length clayography film, and part seven of his ***Trilogy of Trilogies***, (three short shorts, three long shorts, three features). Produced by Liz Kearney, this new adult animated stopmotion feature is the bittersweet remembrance of a lonely woman, Grace Pudel, who retells her life story to a humble garden snail called Sylvia.

Shot in the traditional and time consuming artform of stopmotion animation, every single prop, set, and character is a unique handmade tangible object made by a team of artists who spent almost a year making the 7000 objects needed to tell Grace's tale. Hundreds of arms, eyeballs and mouths were handcrafted and then brought to life by Australia's top stopmotion animators who spent thousands of hours in the dark moving each character a frame at a time. There is not a single frame of CGI and over a 33 week shoot, master cinematographer Gerald Thompson and his skilled camera team lit over 200 sets and assisted the animators in capturing the 135,000 photographs needed to create the film.

Like Adam's previous adult works, the film is based on his family and friends and explores challenging subject matter that is often dark but tempered with moments of hilarity and warmth. Another rich story from one of the world's most admired animation auteurs, this highly anticipated follow up to the acclaimed, ***Mary and Max***, (voiced by Phillip Seymour Hoffman), is again voiced by some of the world's leading actors including, Sarah Snook, Kodi Smit-McPhee,Eric Bana, Dominique Pinon and Jacki Weaver.

Writer and Director Notes

Memoir of a Snail, is my seventh clayography and is the bittersweet remembrance of a lonely woman called Grace Pudel, who retells her life-story to a humble garden snail called, Sylvia. The protagonists in all my films are outsiders and my themes and narratives explore difference. I love telling stories that are infused with humour and pathos; reflections of our own everyday lives that celebrate the moments of joy with the darkness that comes with life's challenges. For over thirty years my objective has been simple; make my audiences laugh ...
and make them cry.

WRITING PROCESS

My screenplays are not heavily planned and my writing process is somewhat unconventional and back to front. I start with all the varied ingredients and details I'd like in my film and then somehow find a way to string them together. I write and rewrite until some sort of structure eventually appears. I love adding quirks and idiosyncrasies to my character's psyches and try and give them incongruities and dimension; make them as empathetic, universal and real as possible. My stories are reflections of everyday life; biographies of people we can relate to; friends, eccentric relatives, and the colourful people we encounter in the street. I try to get a balance between humour and pathos, light and shade, comedy and tragedy. I invented a word to describe my films, ***clayographies***, a portmanteau term combining clay and biographies. I've been lucky to turn every script I've written into a film, and when I was studying cinema at the Victorian College of the Arts in 1996, I formulated a strategy to make just nine films over my career and call them a, ***Trilogy of Trilogies***; three short-shorts, (under ten mins), three long shorts, (around twenty mins), and three features, (over 90 mins). I'm fortunate to have made seven of the nine ... just two to go!

MUSES

Why do we collect unnecessary things and when does that become a problem? We all have emotional connections to the objects we collect and the psychology behind why we decide to carry these items throughout our lives is something I'm curious of. My elderly mother was a 'semi' hoarder and a few years ago I began the arduous task of downsizing her possessions. I began to wonder; was it a hoard or just a massive collection? Was she just a bowerbird, or did she have a problem? Was I judging her, or was I just as bad? These questions evolved into this film's narrative, which I see as both an analysis of my mum but also myself. I read many books on the psychology of hoarding, as well as documentaries and exploitative reality shows. I discovered hoarding is *not* rare, if anything it is somewhat of an epidemic and the result of rampant consumerism. I learnt how extreme hoarders have often had a traumatic loss in their lives; the sudden death of a family member and more often, a child.

As the drafts of this film evolved, I concurrently became fascinated with a friend who was also a keen 'collector' and was born with a cleft palette. She has lead a colourful life and has been a prostitute, drug addict, fantasist, public nudist, and fashion designer, (not in that order). She collects taxidermy, quirky antiques, and friends. She tells enthralling anecdotes at her famous dinner parties and is a true raconteur and unknowing eccentric. Her childhood, however, was traumatic; eleven operations on her lip had left her disfigured and mentally scarred. Teased at school, she learnt to cope and as she grew learnt how to turn lemons into lemonade. This film is infused with aspects of her life as well as my mothers ... and my own.

CAST

In animation, marrying the correct voice to a character can be very tricky. Age, gender or experience often has no bearing on whether a voice will work. I use actors and non-actors, and have a stable of favourites. I'm always on the hunt for a voice that has something intangible and unique. One day I overheard ***Sarah Snook*** being interviewed and something clicked. She had everything I was after; authenticity, humility, frailty, warmth and humour. Her natural voice is unpretentious and likeable. She didn't even need to put on an accent; just be herself and inhabit the melancholic life of a lonely hoarder.

When it came to voicing Pinky the person I wanted was clear; Jacki Weaver. Funny, eccentric, risqué and self deprecating, she seemed the perfect choice from the start. Similarly for Grace's twin, Gilbert, Kodi Smit-McPhee, seemed the perfect fit. I had just rewatched Jane Campion's ***The Power of the Dog*** and admired how Kodi infused so much melancholy, beauty and empathy into his character.

With our supporting cast it was important for us to work with true Melbournians and be faithful to the story. Eric Bana, Magda Szubanski and Tony Armstrong loaned us their voices and brought so much humour and pathos to their roles. Paul Capsis plays the dual roles of foster parents, Ian and Narelle, with much hilarity and quirkiness.

The one actor who isn't Australian is Dominique Pinon. He plays Grace and Gilbert's alcoholic, paraplegic, mouth-juggling father, Percy Pudel. I was so excited to get Dominique as I am an admirer of Jean Pierre-Jeunet's classic films, Amelie and Delicatessen, in which Dominique plays memorable and eccentric roles. In my films I often have a cameo voice by a non-actor, celebrity or musician. We were able to secure Nick Cave who is not only an Australian icon, but also a ceramist who also uses clay as an artistic medium. Finally, we have two up and coming young actors who voice young Gilbert and Grace. After auditioning dozens of children, Charlotte Belsey and Mason Litsos rose to the surface for their unique voices full of humour and frailty.

MUSIC

Being independent filmmakers, we often have to compromise and in the past I have had to make do with pre-existing music. On my first feature, ***Mary and Max,*** we licensed a piece by Australia's most famous classical composer, Elena Kats-Chernin. I fell in love with her work and was so thrilled she accepted my offer to do the entire score for ***Memoir of a Snail***. I felt the nourishing tone and whimsy of her work would have a simpatico with Grace's unfortunate tale. Elena had an affinity with Grace and wanted to compose the score in our chaotic and messy art studio. I was sceptical it would be conducive to her creative process, but she immersed herself in our noisy space and over a week created the bones for the entire film. The Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Cantillation choir agreed to be our musicians and my dream scenario became a reality. The icing on the cake was when we secured the incredible soprano, Jane Sheldon, to sing Grace's haunting theme. The music has elevated my story and emphasised the character's emotions. I cannot imagine the film without Elena's fecund and nourishing compositions and cannot wait to work with her again.

PRODUCTION DESIGN

As an auteur, I have to wear many hats. One of my favourite roles is the Production Designer. Melbourne had one of the longest covid lockdowns but luckily I was able to spend my confinement prepping for the film. Over five months I hand drew the 1600 storyboard panels on pieces of paper then moved on to drawing the 200 characters, 200 sets and the thousands of props needed to be handmade. For this film, I wanted to keep the materials and aesthetic simple, and use four basic materials; clay, wire, paper and paint. Too much stopmotion has become slick and reliant on 3D printers. I wanted to celebrate the clay, its lumps, bumps and imperfections. I was born with a hereditary shake which I have incorporated into my aesthetic. We had signs throughout the studio that read, ***Chunky Wonky***. Every asset had to look flawed, asymmetrical; as if made in a hurry or by someone who was drunk. My character's psyches are imperfect and so I wanted their appearance to match my drawings which are loose, gestural and naive. I have a holistic approach to my work and strive for originality. Art imitates life and vice versa; for me they are inseparable and both art and filmmaking have become my yoga.

CONCLUSION

Like most artists I strive for perfection but know this is a hopeless ambition. There is always a shot I'd like to redo, a line to rewrite; the day the film gets locked is bittersweet. ***Memoir of a Snail,*** has taken eight years to form and now the film is complete I feel sad the journey is over. We've tried our hardest with the budget we had and made many sacrifices to ensure Grace's story got told with dignity and respect. They may be just little blobs of clay, but to my team and I, they are real people. Through the magic of stopmotion we truly hope their little lives give meaning, joy, and comfort to those who watch.

Adam Elliot
June 2024



Filmography and Accolades

Ernie Biscuit - short (2015, 21') Stopmotion Black and White
Mary and Max - feature (2009, 1h32') Stopmotion Colour
Harvie Krumpet - short (2003, 23') Stopmotion Colour (Academy Award for Best Animated Short)
Brother - short (2000, 8') Stopmotion Black and White
Cousin - short (1999, 4') Stopmotion Black and White
Uncle - short (1996, 6') Stopmotion Black and White

Over 100 awards including the 2003 **Academy Award**® for **Harvie Krumpet**
Prix FIPRESCI Prize Annecy Animation Festival **Harvie Krumpet** 2003
Prix du Public Audience Award Annecy Animation Festival **Harvie Krumpet** 2003
Prix Special du Jury (Special Jury Award) Annecy Animation Festival **Harvie Krumpet** 2003
Official Selection and Opening Night Film Sundance Film Festival USA **Mary and Max** 2009
Grand Crystal Best Feature Animation Annecy Animation Festival **Mary and Max** 2009
Best Feature Animation Ottawa Animation Festival Canada **Mary and Max** 2009
Best Feature Animation Stuttgart Animation Festival Germany **Mary and Max** 2009
Crystal Bear Special Mention Berlin Film Festival Germany **Mary and Max** 2009
Audience Award and Special Mention Zagreb Animation Festival Croatia **Mary and Max** 2009
Best Direction in a Feature Film Australian Directors Guild Awards **Mary and Max** 2009
Special Distinction for humour and sensitivity Annecy Int Animation Festival **Brother** 2000
6 Australian Film Institute Awards for Best Film (AACTAS) :
Harvie Krumpet, Ernie Biscuit, Uncle, Cousin, Brother (2)
Young Victorian Achiever of the Year 1999

Cast Biographies

SARAH SNOOK as Grace Pudel

A natural talent with a striking presence on screen and on-stage, award-winning actress Sarah Snook continues to establish herself as one of Hollywood's most dynamic performers. Sarah was most recently seen on-stage at London's Theatre Royal Haymarket on The West End in award-winning play ***The Picture Of Dorian Gray***. For her enthralling performance, Snook garnered an Olivier Award for Best Actress in a Play.Notably, Snook was seen in the final season of the HBO award-winning series ***Succession***. For her portrayal of 'Shiv Roy' over the past four seasons she has received an Emmy, two Golden Globe Awards and two Critics Choice Awards. The series has also received critical acclaim, including three Golden Globe Awards, two Critics Choice Awards and two Primetime Emmy Awards. Last year, Sarah starred in the Sundance thriller ***Run Rabbit Run*** which was acquired and distributed by Netflix. She also co-starred in the Apple Original Films THE ***Beanie Bubble*** alongside Elizabeth Banks and Zach Galifianakis. On the big screen, Sarah co-starred in Danny Boyle's ***Steve Jobs*** alongside Michael Fassbender and Kate Winslet. Written by Aaron Sorkin, the biographical drama premiered to critical acclaim at the 2015 Telluride Film Festival and later went on to receive two Oscar nominations. Sarah delivered her most notable film performance as the complex lead "Jane/John" alongside Ethan Hawke in the science-fiction thriller ***Predestination***, for which she received the AACTA Award and the Film Critics Circle of Australia award for Best Actress. In 2021, Sarah had a supporting role in Kornél Mundruczó's ***Pieces Of A Woman*** alongside Vanessa Kirby. The Academy Award nominated film first premiered at the 2020 Venice Film Festival in competition and also screened at the 2020 Toronto International Film Festival. Other film credits include ***An American Pickle*** with Seth Rogen, the supernatural horror film ***Winchester*** with Helen Mirren and Jason Clarke; ***The Glass Castle*** alongside Brie Larson; ***Holding The Man*** opposite Guy Pearce; ***The Dressmaker*** with Kate Winslet; ***Brother's Nest; Odd Ball; Jessabelle; These Final Hours; Not Suitable For Children;*** and ***Sleeping Beauty***. Previously on TV, Sarah starred as the lead of the 2015 Australian drama series ***The Beautiful Lie***, which earned her a Logie Award nomination for Outstanding Actress as well as the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts nomination for Best Lead Actress in a Television Drama. Previously, Sarah earned a 2012 AACTA for the television movie ***Sisters Of Wa***R. Her additional television credits include AMC's anthology drama series ***SOULMATES*** from Emmy-winning writer Will Bridges and Brett Goldstein, an episode of ***Black Mirror, The Secret River, The Moodys, Redfern Now, Spirited, Blood Brothers, Packed To The Rafters, My Place,*** and ***All Saints***. A trained actress, Sarah established herself in the world of theatre through her performances in King Lear with the State Theatre Company of South Australia; three productions for the Griffin Theatre Company including Lovely/Ugly: Transformer, Crestfall, and S27; alongside Ralph Fiennes in The Master Builder at London's iconic Old Vic Theatre; and, in Saint Joan for the Sydney Theatre Company, for which she won Best Female Actor in a Play at Australia's 2019 Helpmann Awards. This is her first time working with Adam Elliot on his second feature stopmotion film, ***Memoir of a Snail.***

KODI SMIT-MCPHEE as Gilbert Pudel

KODI is best known for his for his performance opposite Benedict Cumberbatch and Kirsten Dunst in Jane Campion's film, ***The Power Of The Dog***, for which he received an Academy Award nomination for best supporting actor, the New York Film Critics Circle Award, a Golden Globe Award and a BAFTA nomination. Kodi initially rose to prominence starring opposite Eric Bana in ***Romulus, My Father***, and in the film, ***The Road***, (opposite Viggo Mortensen). Kodi transitioned to Hollywood blockbusters by joining the casts of ***Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes*** and the ***X-Men*** franchise (where he played 'Nightcrawler.'). Additional films include ***Dolemite Is My Name***, (opposite Eddie Murphy), ***Alpha***, and Baz Luhrmann's ***Elvis,*** (alongside Tom Hanks). Kodi can next be seen in Alfonso Cuaron's limited series ***Disclaimer***, (alongside Kevin Kline, Sacha Baron Cohen, and Cate Blanchett). He most recently wrapped filming Pablo Larraín's next film, ***Maria***, (opposite Angelina Jolie). This is his first film with Adam in which he plays, Gilbert Pudel, a leading role alongside Sarah Snook and Jacki Weaver.

JACKI WEAVER as Pinky

Jacki Weaver is one of Australia's best loved and most respected performers. Her career spans more than forty years of theatre, film, TV and music, and includes two AFI Awards for the films ***Caddie*** and ***Stork***, a Logie for ***Do I Have to Kill My Child***?, a Mo for the play ***Old Masters***, and two Variety Club Awards for ***Shadowlands*** and ***They're Playing Our Song***, for which she also received a Gold Record. Her film credits include ***Picnic at Hanging Rock, The Removalists, The Perfectionist, Squizzy Taylor*** and ***Cosi.*** Jacki's most recent performance in the feature film ***Animal Kingdom*** was nominated for a Golden Globe Award and an Academy Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role . She won the Best Supporting Actress award in the Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards as well as in the National Board of Review Awards.

MAGDA SZUBANSKI as Ruth

Magda Szubanski is one of Australia's most loved and respected actors, writers and activists. In 2017 she was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for her distinguished service to the performing arts and as a campaigner for marriage equality. She has written and performed in some of Australia's most iconic films and TV shows including ***Babe, Kath and Kim, Fast Forward, D-Generation, Full Frontal, Something Stupid*** and ***Big Girl's Blouse***, winning her the Fred Parsons Award for Outstanding Contribution to Australian Comedy at the 2019 AWGIES.In addition to her acting work, in October 2015 Magda released her hugely successful first book, ***Reckoning***, which has won several major awards including the 2016 ABIA Book of the Year.In 2017 Magda became the unofficial public face of the Marriage Equality debate. She campaigned fiercely on this issue on TV, radio and in newspapers and magazines as well as appearing at rallies across the country. Her contribution was deemed "crucial" and she was named the most talked about person of 2017. She was awarded the Liberty Victoria "Voltaire Award" for Free Speech. She is a regular contributor to several television shows including ***The Project, The Today Show, Sunrise, ABC Breakfast, A Current Affair, The Morning Show, Mornings*** and ***Studio10*** among others. In 2019 she was made a member for the Advisory Board of the Australian Institute of Human Rights at UNSW.

DOMINIQUE PINON as Percy Pudel

Dominique Pinon studied literature at the Faculty of Arts in Poitiers after which he moved to Paris and attended the Cours Simon School of Dramatic Arts. He made his first cinematic appearance in Arthur Joffé's 1980 short film ***La Découverte***. A versatile and gifted actor, he has produced an impressive body of work in film, television and on stage. He is also an accomplished voice-over actor. With over 100 film and short credits, multiple roles in television and over 40 performances in stage theatre (garnering him the Molière Award for Best Actor in 2004), he has acted alongside notables Maggie Smith, Sigourney Weaver, Winona Ryder, Audrey Tatou, Gaspard Ulliel and many others. Pinon's first feature film appearance was in Jean-Jacques Beineix's 1981 classic thriller ***Diva***. He went on to work closely with director Jean-Pierre Jeunet, appearing in many of his films including ***Delicatessen*** (1991), ***Alien: Resurrection*** (1997) and ***Amélie***, (2001). He has worked with many world-renowned directors. Pinon has played numerous roles on television in France and Europe. He appeared as the fan favourite, ***Master Raymond***, in the internationally popular, ***Outlander***, series (2016). In 2014 he was made an Officer in the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, a title given to those who have made a significant contribution to the enrichment of the French cultural inheritance.

ERIC BANA as James The Magistrate

In 1997 Bana made his film debut in the Australian comedy classic, ***The Castle***. That same year, Bana was cast as Mark 'Chopper' Read in the crime drama film ***Chopper***. Bana went on to star in his first U.S. film, Ridley Scott's, ***Black Hawk Down***, then the Trojan Prince, Hector, in ***Troy***, (starring alongside Brad Pitt and Orlando Bloom). Other major Hollywood films followed, including Steven Spielberg's critically acclaimed, ***Munich***, (with Daniel Craig and Geoffrey Rush), J.J. Abrams blockbuster hit, ***Star Trek***, (as the villain Nero), Judd Apatow's, ***Funny People***, the drama, ***The Time Traveler's Wife***, the action-thriller, ***Hanna*** (with Saoirse Ronan and Cate Blanchett), Peter Berg's, ***Lone Survivor*** (alongside Mark Wahlberg), and alongside Ricky Gervais in, ***Special Correspondents***. In 2018 Bana took on the role of John Meehan in Bravo's event series, ***Dirty John***, (alongside Connie Britton). In 2020, he produced and starred in the film adaptation of Jane Harper's bestselling novel, ***The Dry***, Directed by Robert Connolly. He collaborated with Connolly again on, ***Blueback***, and in 2024, he reprised his role as Aaron Falk in, ***Force of Nature: The Dry 2***. This is the second film he has voiced for Adam Elliot, (the first being, ***Mary and Max***, where he played a gay Greek man who falls in love with a New Zealand sheep farmer). In Adam's new film, ***Memoir of a Snail***, he plays a masturbating magistrate called James. In 2019 Bana was awarded an Order of Australia Queen's Birthday Honour for his services to performing arts and charitable organisations.

TONY ARMSTRONG as Ken

Tony Armstrong has left an indelible mark on Australian media. Breaking new ground in 2019, Tony became the first Indigenous person to provide live commentary for Aussie Rules Football on commercial radio. In 2020 he co-hosted the Indigenous comedy football chat show, ***Yokayi Footy*** and the ABC Melbourne's breakfast radio program alongside Sammy J. Later that year, he joined the ABC family, presenting sports news on the ***ABC News channel*** and then in 2021 became the full-time sports presenter on ***News Breakfast***. He has hosted, ***Great Australian Stuff*** and ***A Dog's World*** and has made regular appearances on ***The Weekly, The Yearly***, and ***The Project***. He has been a guest on several ***Play School*** specials and lends his voice to Mr Flip on ABC Kids ***Reef School***. Tony earned the prestigious Bert Newton Award for Most Popular Presenter at the 2023 Logie Awards and the Graham Kennedy Award for Most Popular New Talent at the 2022 Logies. Tony Armstrong is also a gifted writer and creator. His first children's book will be published in late 2024. This is his first time working with Adam and voices Sarah Snook's love interest, Ken.

PAUL CAPSIS as Ian and Narelle

Paul Capsis is one of Australia's most versatile performers. His extensive career has included theatre, live concerts,cabaret, television, and film. Paul has worked with many leading Australian theatre companies (STC, MTC,Malthouse Theatre, STCSA, and Company B Belvoir) and has performed in Vienna, Valletta, Hong Kong, London, Edinburgh, and New York. In 2021, Paul was able to perform in two original works at Sydney Festival: ***The Last Season for Force Majeure***; and ***Rapture***: ***a Song Cycle of Desire, Ecstasy, Murder and Mayhem*** directed by Michael Kantor, The Who's ***Tommy*** and the critically acclaimed show ***Paul Capsis with Jethro Woodward***, Barrie Kosky's ***The Lost Echo***, ***Boulevard Delirium*** in Vienna and Australia, ***The Lewis Trilogy*** (Griffin Theatre), ***The Chairs*** (The Old Fitz), ***La Cage Aux Folles*** (Concourse Theatre), ***Deep Blue Sea*** (STC), ***Lady Tabouli*** (Griffin Theatre), ***Resident Alien*** (45Downstairs), ***Black Rider*** (Malthouse), ***Cabaret*** (Hayes Theatre and Athenaeum), ***Rumpelstiltskin*** (Windmill Theatre and Southbank Theatre London), ***The Wizard of Oz*** (Belvoir), ***Calpurnia Descending*** (Malthouse/STC), ***The Rocky Horror Picture Show*** (Newtheatricals), and ***Angela's Kitchen*** (Griffin Theatre). More recently he has featured in the Netflix series ***Wellmania***, the and the critically acclaimed miniseries ***Deep Water*** for SBS and Black Fella Films. Paul's film credits include Ana Kokkinos' 1998 film ***Head On***, ***Love is Now, Carlotta, The Boy Castaways***, and Justin Kurzel's ***The True History Of The Kelly Gang*** and the upcoming film ***Body Blow***.

Crew Biographies

ADAM ELLIOT - Writer, Director, Production Designer

Adam Elliot is an Academy Award© winning independent animator and visual artist based in Melbourne Australia. His animated films and imagery are what he calls, ***Clayographies***, clay animated biographies based on the bittersweet lives of his family and friends. He has created seven animated films including, ***Memoir of a Snail, Mary and Max, Harvie Krumpet, Ernie Biscuit, Brother, Cousin and Uncle***. They have been voiced by some of the world's leading actors, including, Sarah Snook, Jacki Weaver, Kodi Smit-McPhee, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Geoffrey Rush, Barry Humphries, Eric Bana and Toni Collette. Viewed by millions of people around the world his works have participated in over a thousand film festivals and won over 100 awards, including the 2004 Academy Award© for Harvie Krumpet. They have won six AFI/ AACTA Awards from nine nominations; more AFI/ AACTA Awards than any other Australian Director. His first feature film, ***Mary and Max***, had its world premiere on the opening night of Robert Redford's Sundance Film Festival, and in 2010 it was included in IMDB's Top 250 Films of all time. Popular on Netflix the film is currently being developed into a Broadway Musical, and to date there have been six stage adaptations produced in Europe. His films are taught in schools and universities here and abroad and he has had multiple retrospectives including exhibitions in Paris, Japan, Canada, Mexico, Spain and Singapore, with more to follow. In 1999 he was the Young Achiever of the Year for Victoria and is an Honoury Councillor for the Australian Film Institute. He is the Official Patron for The Film Critics Circle of Australia and Patron for The Victorian Day Council. He is a voting member for the Annual Academy Awards and in 2017 was appointed an Adjunct Professorship at Swinburne University and RMIT University. Apart from his film work, he loves to draw and is having a solo exhibition in late October 2024.

LIZ KEARNEY - Producer

Liz Kearney is an Australian producer based in Melbourne and has produced numerous feature films, tv series and short films. Liz produced her first feature ***These Final Hours*** in 2013. The film premiered at the Melbourne International Film Festival in 2013 and screened in Cannes as part of Directors' Fortnight in 2014. Alongside Robert Connolly and Maggie Miles, Liz produced the Australian film ***Paper Planes***. The family feature was released by Village Roadshow and grossed almost $10 million at the Australian box office. The film screened at numerous festivals including Toronto and Berlin and won the inaugural Cinefest Oz Film Prize in 2014. In 2017 alongside producers Robert Connolly and John Harvey, Liz produced the comedy drama series ***The Warriors*** for the ABC. She also produced the 9 minute stop motion animated film ***Lost Property Office*** with card board sculptor Daniel Agdag. The short won Best Short Animation and Best Director at the 2017 Sydney Film Festival and Best Short Animation at the 2018 AACTAs and was shortlisted for an Academy Award in 2018. Most recently Liz produced Robert Connolly's feature film ***Blueback*** which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2022 and screened at the Sundance Film Festival in 2023 and Jub Clerc's debut feature ***Sweet As*** which screened at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2022, winning the NETPAC Award and at the Berlin International Film Festival where it won the Crystal Bear in the Generation Kplus section.

ROBERT CONNOLLY - Executive Producer

Robert Connolly is an acclaimed Australian screen producer, director and writer. His recent film ***The Dry*** was a critical and commercial success followed by the sequel ***Force Of Nature*** and ***Blueback***, screening at the Toronto International Film Festival and Sundance Film Festival. His most recent film ***The Surfer*** premiered in official Selection at the Cannes Film Festival this year. Robert's other feature film credits include ***The Bank, Three Dollars, Balibo, Underground: The Julian Assange Story*** and ***Paper Planes.*** He has worked with international and Australian cast that include Oscar Isaac, Eric Bana and Mia Wasikowska. On television, Robert was one of the featured directors of the International Emmy nominated limited series ***The Slap***, with other credits include ***Barracuda*** for NBC Universal, and the political thriller ***Deep State*** for Fox Network Group. Through his Australian production company Arenamedia, Robert's producing credits include Frances O'Connor's directorial debut ***Emily*** starring Emma Mackey, ***The Boys, Romulus, My Father*** and ***The Turning*** an acclaimed innovative feature film starring Cate Blanchett, Hugo Weaving and Rose Byrne. His company has championed new First Nations filmmakers including Jub Clerc ***Sweet As*** and Stephen Page ***Spear***.

ROBERT PATTERSON - Executive Producer

Robert has an extensive background in content creation, sales and marketing. Through his formative career in music he was responsible for some of the highest selling classical and classical cross-over albums in the history of the Australian record industry and was integral in building the careers of many of the country's most gifted singers, instrumentalists, conductors and composers. Robert held a number of senior roles at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, ultimately as Director of ABC Commercial. Since joining Arenamedia Robert has overseen the national expansion of the company, supplementing its long-term operations in Melbourne with offices in Sydney and Perth, alongside production initiatives in other states. He is currently working to build co-production partnerships between Arenamedia and major producers in the UK and US. Drawing on his experience in the global sale of content to broadcasters, cable networks, SVOD, online and emerging platforms, Robert has also worked to expand the company's development slate of film, TV and digital projects.

ELENA KATS-CHERNIN - Composer

Born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Elena Kats-Chernin AO came to Australia with her parents and sister in 1975 and studied at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music till 1980, continuing her studies in Hanover, Germany. After years of composing for German theatres she returned to Sydney in 1994. Since then, she created works in nearly every genre, from orchestral compositions to chamber and choral, among them pieces for the ***Australian Chamber Orchestra***, all major ***Australian Symphony Orchestras*** as well as several operas for ***Komische Opere Berlin, Opera Australia*** and ***Philharmonie Luxembourg***, among others. Her music featured at the opening ceremonies of the 2000 ***Sydney Olympic Games*** and the 2003 Rugby World Cup and she received several awards, including the Sidney Myer Award as well as the Green Room and Helpmann Awards in 2004 for her score to Meryl Tankard's ***Wild Swans*** (Australian Ballet). Eliza Aria from the concert suite of this ballet served as a jingle for the Lloyds TSB in UK from 2007 till 2013. Elena composed 4 soundtracks for the Silent Films, the most recent being 93 minute German 1929 film ***Variete***, recorded by the Cologne Radio Orchestra and premiered live to the film by the Belgian National Orchestra in Brussels in September 2023. The first time Elena met Adam Elliot was when he chose her ***Russian Rag*** to be Max's theme in his 2009 claymation ***Mary and Max***. This piece also served as the theme for "Late Night Live" on ABC Radio National for many years.

Cast

Sarah Snook as Grace

Kodi Smit-McPhee as Gilbert

Eric Bana as James the Magistrate

Magda Szubanski as Ruth

Dominique Pinon as Percy

Tony Armstrong as Ken

Paul Capsis as Ian and Narelle

Bernie Clifford as Owen

Davey Thompson as Ben

Introducing **Charlotte Belsey** as Young Grace
Mason Litsos as Young Gilbert

With **Nick Cave** as Bill Clarke

And **Jacki Weaver** as Pinky

Crew

Written and Directed by **Adam Elliot**

Produced by **Liz Kearney** and **Adam Elliot**

Composer - **Elena Kats-Chernin**

Score Performed by **The Australian Chamber Orchestra**

Director of Photography - **Gerald Thompson**

Editor - **Bill Murphy** ASE

Animation Supervisor - **John Lewis**

The Animators -
John Lewis, Craig Ross, Pierce Davison, Seamus Spilsbury, Donna Yeatman, Samuel Lewis, Nelson Dean

Sound Designer - **David Williams**

Executive Producers -
Robert Connolly, Robert Patterson,
Sébastien Raybaud, Louis Balsan, Grace Adams,
Carole Baraton, Johann Comte, Jean-Félix Dealberto, Pierre Mazars,
Ricci Swart, Tony King,
Paul Wiegard, Roger Savage, Michael Agar, Ester Harding, Shaun Miller

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