
76. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Berlinale Perspectives
Truly
Naked
Creative
Europe
MEDIA
Writer & Director
Muriel d'Ansembourg

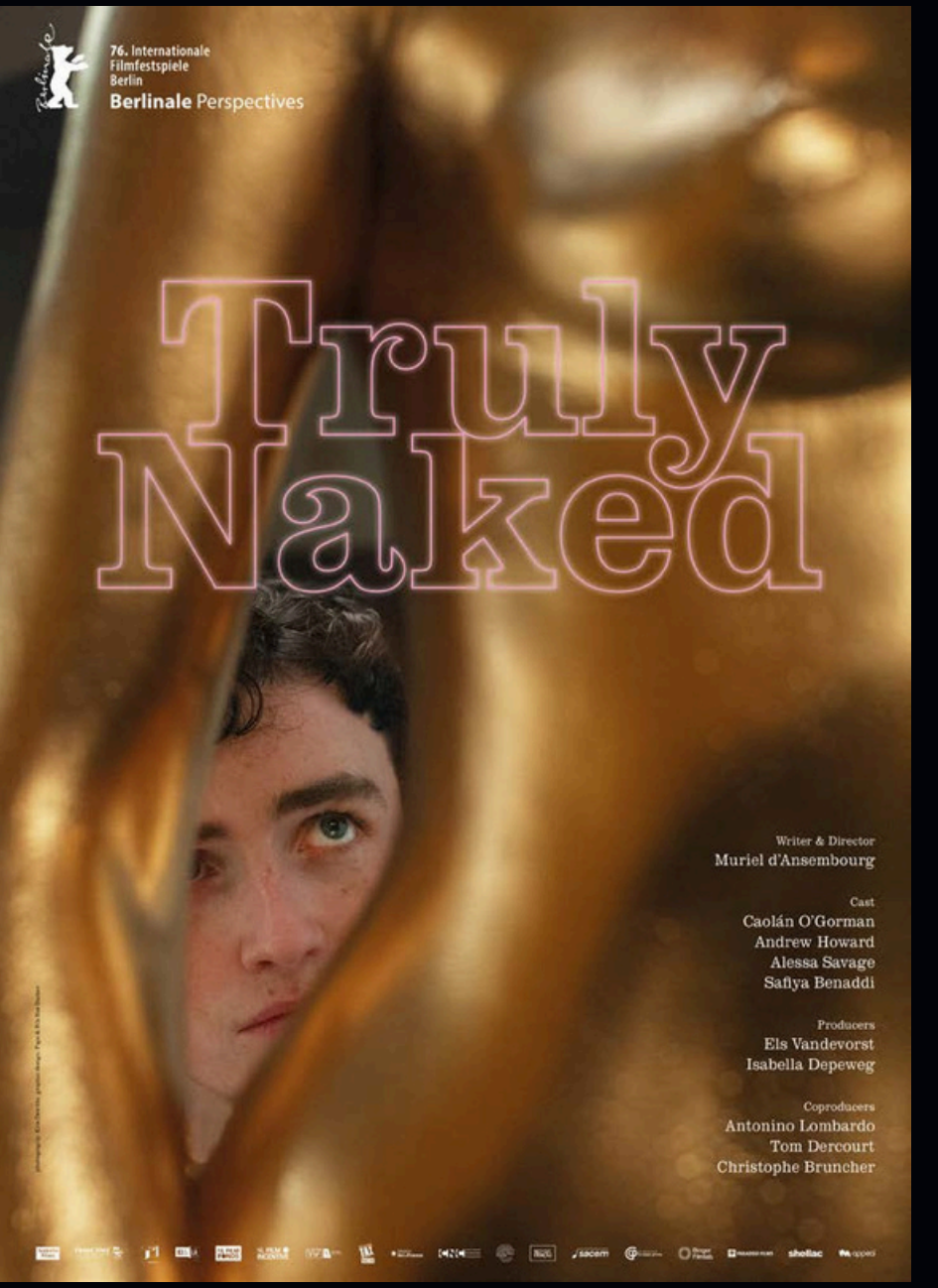
Truly Naked

Surrounded by the family business of porn, Alec encounters a radically different understanding of intimacy when he meets Nina.

Alec, a soft-spoken, introverted teenager, has always viewed life through the lens of his father's small-time pornography business. When they relocate from London to a sleepy seaside town, Alec hopes for a fresh start, trying to make friends without revealing his unconventional life. Everything shifts when he meets the fiercely independent Nina, whose convictions redefine the world he has grown up in. As their relationship deepens, Alec's understanding of sexuality and desire begins to shift. What begins as an unlikely connection evolves into a tender and unexpectedly heartwarming story about discovering real intimacy—and what it truly means to be seen.

International Title
Truly Naked
Original Title
Truly Naked
Year
2026
Countr y
The Netherlands, Belgium, France
World Premiere
Berlinale 2026, Perspectives

Genre
Drama
Language
English
Film running time
102
Screening format
2K
Shooting Format
2.8 K
Colour
C olour
Speed/Frame Rate
24 fps
Sound Format
5.1 mix





Cast

Caolán O'Gorman
Andrew Howard
Alessa Savage
Safiya Benaddi

Supported by

Netherlands Film Fund
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Belgian Tax Shelter
Binger FilmLab
Paradiso Filmed Entertainment
Shellac
Isabella Films
Prime Time BVBA
Cinema DeFacto
Ici & Là Productions

Crew

Directedandwritten by Muriel d'Ansembourg

Production company: Isabella Films

Producers: Els Vandevorst, Isabella Depeweg

Coproducers: Antonino Lombardo (Prime Time BVBA),
Tom Dercourt (Cinéma Defacto),
Christophe Bruncher (Ici et Là Productions)

Cinematographer/DoP: Myrthe Mosterman

Production Designer: Fleur Ankoné

Editor: Emiel Nuninga

Sound Designer/Mixage: Herman Pieëte

Composer: Evgueni and Sacha Galperine

Costumes: Isabel Van Renterghem

Hair and make-up: Diana Dreesen

Post-production supervision: Miga Bär

VFX supervision: Laurent Creusot

Casting: Georgia Topley

Stills: Kris Dewitte

Poster design: Faye & Rik Bas Backer




“I didn’t become a filmmaker to play it safe,
but to create something authentic and true.
And truth can live in the places
we’re told to hide.”

Muriel d'Ansembourg



Filmography
Truly Naked (2025)
Fuck-A-Fan (2024, short)
Good Night (2012, short)
Sharp Edges (2010, short)
Play (2008, short)
Just Another Day (2007, short)

Muriel d'Ansembourg spent her early childhood in New York before moving to Amsterdam, where she grew up. She later lived in London for several years. She began her artistic journey studying screenwriting, then earned a Master's degree in Directing from the London Film School, graduating with Distinction.

She was selected for the Binger Writers Lab, received mentorship from director Pawel Pawlikovsky (*Ida*, *Cold War*, *My Summer of Love*) and was noted as "One To Watch" by Moviescope and Creative Skillset.

The shorts Muriel wrote and directed have won 35 awards and screened at over 200 film festivals world-wide. Her graduation film *Good Night* received a BAFTA nomination for Best Short Film and enjoyed theatrical releases in the UK, Germany and Ukraine. Her most recent short, *Fuck-A-Fan*, premièred at the 2024 Tribeca Festival.

Truly Naked is her first feature film, building on the foundation of her body of short films that define her voice and vision.

Muriel has developed a strong theme in her work: exploring intimacy in surprising settings, featuring characters that search for connection in places where genuine intimacy is an unlikely find. She has an affinity for naturalistic performances and narratives that push the envelope—exploring themes that spark conversation, letting the audience experience something unfiltered, complex and unexpectedly sensitive. She often works with a combination of seasoned actors and first-time actors.

Alongside her work as a writer and director she worked as a script consultant on various features and shorts produced and funded in the UK, Australia and The Netherlands. She has been a guest speaker and panel member at various institutions including BAFTA, BFI, National Youth Film Academy and Goldsmith University of London, as well as a jury member at several international film festivals.

Director's note

I remember the first time I went to a film screening followed by a Q&A with a female filmmaker. I was amazed it had such a strong effect on me to hear a woman speak about filmmaking instead of a man. I never realized it would make a difference, but the sense of belonging and empowerment that came over me in the cinema that day was essential in my belief that I could become a filmmaker myself. Whenever I find the filmmaking process hard, I remind myself that I was once inspired by a woman who had to go through similar struggles to be able to stand there and speak about her film.

I didn't become a filmmaker to play it safe, but to create something authentic and true. And truth can live in the places we're told to hide. *Truly Naked* would never have existed if I had obeyed that instinct to stay silent. I've realized that wanting to be liked by everyone is a trap, but it's a tricky one because it's so deeply ingrained in our culture, and in the way many girls are brought up. I try not to let any of this stand in my way of speaking up, sharing my opinion, or disagreeing. It's far more interesting when someone brings their true voice into the room.

This story kept pulling me somewhere I hadn't been before, and I followed that. I wanted to make a film that pushes into uncomfortable territory, but with care. A film that invites you to sit close to its characters without judgment. Not to explain or resolve everything, but to feel.

I can imagine that some will focus on the elements surrounding pornography. But to do so would be to reduce the film to a narrow reading. No matter the family or environment we are raised in, our souls crave connection. The film explores intimacy in its different forms: within the family, within friendship and love, and within oneself. The bond between Dylan and his son Alec is close, yet challenging and unorthodox. Alec is a gentle soul navigating a complex world. He gets to redefine his own values around sex and love through Nina, who is raised in a matriarchal household, in contrast to Alec's testosterone-driven home. While a parent's profession often impacts their children, it's sometimes the subtle wisdom of the younger generation that ignites transformation.

Truly Naked opens a debate about what we long for versus what we get served in sex and so-called 'intimacy' on the internet. I have accentuated this issue by not only putting the pornography on the computer of a teenager but involving him directly in the making of it. Here, this isn't just a business, it's a family business, where Alec gets to experience what is behind it all through the involvement of the man he looks up to most in his life, his father.

In most pornography the personality and the body are disconnected. In *Truly Naked* I show the 'in-between moments' in which the personalities of the porn actors and the human circumstances during the filming process are seen. Behind the scenes, amongst these participants, there is a much bigger personal story that we gradually gain insight into.

Capturing raw, naturalistic performances is something I'm passionate about. I worked with a combination of seasoned and first-time actors. Additionally, I cast Alessa Savage currently working in the adult entertainment industry, to play Lizzie. Her performance brought an authenticity we couldn't have achieved otherwise, and she also played a vital role as a consultant, helping to accurately depict the world in which the film is set. I wanted to stay close to the truth, to show something real. At times confronting, but always with a beating heart.

I've applied a similar filming method I adopted in my earlier work, in which I simply let the intimate events 'breathe' while keeping the camera up close to the characters. The camera regularly rests on the actors' faces, to seize the authenticity of the personal experience. The pornography is given a surprising twist through a peek into the private sphere, which can give the viewer the sensation of being the only one to see these personal moments.

The film was made with a core creative team of women: me as writer-director, the mother-daughter producing team, the cinematographer, the production designer, the costume designer, and many more. The subject matter can be challenging, and I felt it was essential to shape the story through a female gaze that could hold complexity and contradiction with care.

The characters in *Truly Naked* have become close friends. I have laughed and cried with them, fought with them and embraced them after every fight. I would like to invite people into the singular world of *Truly Naked* as I believe we have something important to show them.

Muriel d'Ansembourg



Q&A with Writer/Director Muriel d'Ansembourg

Where did the idea for the film start for you, was it the characters or this world of amateur porn?
It started with an image: a porn scene being recorded and then the camera is put down and we see it's held by a teenage boy. As I wasn't someone who regularly watches porn I was surprised but intrigued it came to me. It was telling me something. The boy was part of it while standing outside of it at the same time. I started thinking: what if he knows the people in front of the camera? What if it involves someone really close to him? Someone he looks up to. What if he's filming his parents, the ones who are there to teach him about life? I'd been exploring teenage sexuality in my short films, but this image was taking it to a next level.

Why are those teenage years so interesting to you as a storyteller?
What fascinates me about teenagers is that lots of things are a first. They don't have that voice in their head yet that says "wait, think this through." The emotions are just so pure and intense. That vulnerability really moves me. As we get older, we develop a shield. We've been in the mud before, so we're more powerful. aware, more careful. We learn to put on this polished version of ourselves. But teenagers? They're all exposed nerve endings.

What research did you do in this world of low-budget porn?
I was really interested in behind-the-scenes stuff and interviews with performers. I watched documentaries too, though it was hard to find ones that felt completely unbiased. Then I started talking to people from the industry as well as consumers, including someone who was addicted to porn.
This project began in 2011, and things have evolved since then. The world changes, and porn changes with it. OnlyFans became huge after COVID. Working with Alessa Savage, who plays Lizzie and is an adult actress, gave me even more insights. We talked about how the father, Dylan, represents a type of old school porn while Alec is the new generation who looks at it completely differently.

Why did you want to show the explicit material?
I wanted to tackle this subject as directly as the material that's out there, that many teenagers including pre-teens are exposed to. Alec has learned to accept these images as normal. The audience gets to see and understand what has shaped and troubled him. That makes his journey to finding real intimacy so much more

Was casting tricky?
Casting was hard—because of the subject matter, some agents wouldn't let their actors audition. I'm impressed by everyone who had the guts to audition, they got that this film wasn't about shock value but about finding something real in a messy situation.
I'm really drawn to authenticity; I don't want it to feel like a good technical performance but more like I'm watching real emotions unfold in front of me. This is why the street castings were so exciting to me, those tapes felt much more personal. One of the things I liked about Caolán O'Gorman's tape when he read for the role of Alec, was that he wasn't trying to 'sell himself'. He's naturally introverted and soft-spoken, and he shared key experiences with his character including losing his mother at age 12.
For Lizzie, I wanted someone from the adult entertainment industry. I collaborated with Alessa Savage on my short film *Fuck-a-Fan* first to see if she'd be right for the part. There's something about her that's both streetwise and playful. She just brought this electric and authentic energy that made everyone else on set sit up. Plus, having her as a consultant was invaluable. She could tell me things about that world that I never would have figured out on my own.
We mixed newcomers with seasoned actors. Andrew Howard usually plays the tough guy or antagonist, but here he got to show real range as this complex father fighting his own demons. He took quite a leap stepping into this world and didn't hold back. It's a risky role to play.

How did you prepare this mix of actors, having newcomers as well as more experienced actors on a film set?
I pushed for three weeks of rehearsal time, which was crucial for the newcomers and for my way of working. With Caolán, who's naturally soft-spoken, we focused a lot on physicality to help him find his presence on camera. I like to break scenes down during rehearsal and see what each actor brings naturally, then adjust the script based on what I discover. It's about finding what feels authentic for each person rather than forcing them into something that doesn't fit.

An intimacy coordinator is very important on a film like this—how early did you bring Philine Janssens on board?
Yes, she was already involved in the rehearsals for the intimate scenes, including some of the casting sessions. She explained how we could make the casting work without the actors actually having to touch intimately during the auditions, and the actors had the option to speak with Philine privately beforehand if they had any questions or concerns about what would be expected.
Working with an intimacy coordinator was new territory for me. I'm very hands-on as a director and I wasn't sure if I was supposed to step back completely from directing the intimate moments. But I quickly realised that an intimacy coordinator should be there to help, not to take over and direct the scene. What's really valuable is that together we can create this safe space where actors can be completely honest about their boundaries.

I have to ask, was that a real octopus?
That's a good sign that you asked me! That means the octopus looks real. When I wrote it, I thought we could use a real octopus, and the actors could really interact, helping in terms of creating a raw performance. Then I found out that octopuses need water to breathe and can only be out of water for a very short time.
So first we considered visual effects. Besides being expensive, it easily becomes perceived as fake. We ended up with an animatronic creature, a puppet kind of octopus. It was huge, it weighed 27 kilograms, that's 60 pounds, and they worked on it for a long time, painting every dot on its skin by hand.
Even at script stage, some people questioned whether I should remove it as it was going to be expensive and controversial. But it was essential for the story, which is my responsibility as a writer. The octopus sequence is a catalyst. It exposes how far Dylan will take things to save the business and how deep Alec's loyalty runs, given that Dylan is the only parent he has left. But that Alec too has a breaking point. The scene is deliberately uncomfortable but it's not glorifying what's happening. It needed to be something extreme and unexpected that would make Alec as well as Lizzie finally say: Enough!

How did you and your DoP Myrthe Mosterman talk about the overall visual style of the film, for instance the scenes at school look very different to the porn shoots?
I always wanted to have a very realistic feel, but with beauty in it. Myrthe really understood the delicate balance we needed to strike. We used a lot of natural lighting, especially in the school. But the porn scenes are all in the studio with this huge light box which creates the coldness and rawness we were looking for in the porn. The intimate scenes with the teenagers had to look totally different from that, especially their first sex-positive experience needed to feel warm compared to what they later view when they look back at the footage they captured by mistake.
I wanted the camera to regularly rest on the actors' faces, also during the porn scenes, to show the human experience. And for the intimate scenes between Alec and Nina, we kept the camera close to the skin to create that sense of being right there with them. There's symbolism there: porn focuses on the exterior, on penetration. Yet intimacy is about what you're feeling from the inside. That's what this film is about: seeing, being seen, moving from disconnection to connection.

What do you think you learned moving from shorts into your first feature?

It's quite intimidating at first, to find yourself on set where almost everyone has more experience than you. I felt like I needed to know everything, but you don't and you can't. I could feel how natural it was for the crew while the scale was new to me. What I really wanted was collaboration and not to be a filmmaker who tries to act in control while actually hiding their insecurities. I tried to find the right balance to stay aware of my vision within that openness. It was a great lesson in clear communication. I felt lucky to work with such experienced people who wanted the film to succeed just as much as I did. After the first few days I could feel a real change as I trusted myself more and through that I could give trust to others. From that moment on, I got to really enjoy the process.

What do you think *Truly Naked* says about you as a filmmaker, and the kinds of stories you want to explore in the future?

I keep returning to situations in my films where people are longing for connection, but something is holding them back. I like to put them in situations where it's challenging to deeply connect with themselves and each other. I'm also interested in exploring boundaries and how things cross into taboo. What does our society allow, what doesn't it, and why? Porn itself doesn't interest me as a subject, but it's interesting in the context of my love for telling stories that are essentially about human connection in environments where intimacy is under pressure. I think I'll keep exploring stories where people have to fight for genuine connection in a surrounding that seems to work against it.

What do you hope the audience reflects on after watching *Truly Naked*?

I can imagine that people will be surprised by how gentle this film is, in a way. It's a story about a boy figuring out how to be intimate for the first time. The fact that we—writer, director, producers and DoP—are women making a film set in the porn world through a female gaze brings a new perspective to a subject usually seen through a patriarchal lens. That said I hope people will realise that this isn't a film about the adult entertainment industry but about human complexity. It's about people; flawed, funny, vulnerable people whose lives are shaped by longing and the need for connection. I'm not throwing in porn to simply shock people. I want to reveal something more human and meaningful through it. So many people watch porn, including teens. It's worth exploring real intimacy next to it, not just hardcore sex but deep connection that feels good on a whole other level. This setting makes those questions about intimacy so much more intense and urgent.

Q&A with producers Els Vandevorst and Isabella Depeweg of Isabella Films

When did you first meet Muriel d'Ansembourg and learn about her work?
Els: I met her in 2018, she had made a great graduation film and another short that was BAFTA nominated. Muriel had already been working on this feature script and she knew she needed an older, experienced producer. Isabella came into the company also in 2018. Muriel liked that we were a mother and daughter producing together.
Muriel entrusted us with the project she had been developing independently for years, and we felt that our mother–daughter bond could add to the intimacy and depth she had already built into the story.

What impressed each of you about Muriel as a filmmaker and the story she wanted to tell with *Truly Naked*?
Isabella: It's a very interesting topic and a very interesting perspective. She had been researching this for years. Hearing her perspective, you just wanted to be part of it. She had definitely done her due diligence to present it in the best way. She really knew why she wanted to tell this story, and how. She had a clear vision. I was intrigued by it because she was so intrigued by it. I also felt connected to these themes of sexuality, intimacy and love.
I had known her talent since seeing her graduation film *Good Night* (2012). The way that story unfolds is really offbeat but intriguing. The first version of the *Truly Naked* script we read had layers and richness to it.

Els: We knew it would be a challenging project—Muriel wasn't that well known in Holland, she'd been living in the UK and this was an English-language film. We knew there would be obstacles from the start. For me I always need to have one reason why I'm making any film. For my entire life, I've been struggling with intimacy, I think it's a real, difficult thing and people are always talking about it like it's no problem. But I think everyone is actually struggling with true intimacy. From the moment I met Muriel, I knew this topic was so important to both of us—I felt a similarity between us. At our first meeting, even before I read the script, Muriel said to me, 'Els, you might be shocked by some scenes. But the 'loudness' is there to appreciate the 'silence' in the intimacy that follows.' Perhaps it's the same in therapy, when you're talking about things that you are suffering from, by speaking out loud, you find out the real truth behind it. All in all, the film took 13 years for Muriel to make, and at times it felt like no one else believed in it. But I knew this film needed to be made.

Were you nervous to cast Alessa Savage, who is better known as a porn actress?
Els: We had been looking for an actress within the porn scene for a while, and associate producer Mark Lee came up with the idea of Alessa. We wanted to be sure that she could carry this important part in the long run, so Isabella suggested doing a short with her first—which was also a great thing for Muriel to do. The short (*Fuck-a-Fan*) worked really well. We took it to Tribeca and saw how a festival audience reacted to it. So many young people have seen the film and said how important it is in helping them talk about sex or porn with their peers.

We don't see many mother-daughter producing teams, how does your collaboration work?
Els: We come from two different generations in the film world, and that's very interesting because we can both add a different point of view. We are very close, and take care of each other, but we are also very different. We have different talents. I can think about the overall scale of the film, and who I need to bring on board to get the best results. I like to bring people together and to motivate them, stimulate them and put that stress on my shoulders to make the best possible film. I want to be the engine behind it, to make it happen.

Isabella: What worked really well from the start was that when I said I wanted to be part of the company, Els suggested that I should also have shares in it, so we became partners. Even though I didn't have practical experience in filmmaking then, she gave me that equal base to start from. Even though she'd given her blood, sweat and tears for years in this company, she said, 'If there's ever anything that we really disagree with, you can have the final say.' We work together with a lot of trust and freedom also. For many years, even when I was a teenager, we had a very open and mutual way of talking about the film industry and the work she was doing. We communicate well together, we're always discussing in a constant dialogue. I have an ongoing fascination with understanding the producing process better.

Els: Producing is a hard job and maybe it's easier because we are together. Even if we disagree, I respect her. Film is a big part of both our lives, and we're still growing and evolving.



“The fact that we as women—writer, director, producers, DoP—made a film set in the porn world through a female gaze gives it a new perspective on something that’s usually seen through a patriarchal lens.”

Cast

Caolán O'Gorman (Alec)

BorninNorthern Ireland,Caolán O'Gorman is a young actor who makes his feature acting debut in *Truly Naked*. On stage, he could be seen in the National Stage School production of *Oliver* at the Mac Theatre in Belfast a.o.

Andrew Howard (Dylan)

Andrew Howard is a Welsh actor, screenwriter and producer known for his gritty performances in *Limitless* (as Gennady, 2011) and *Hatfields & McCoys* (as Bad Frank Philips, 2012). On stage, he's taken on iconic roles like Alex DeLarge in *A Clockwork Orange, Peer Gynt and Orestes*, with acclaimed runs at London's Royal National Theatre and Donmar Warehouse. His screen credits include *Band of Brothers, Revolver*, and *The Lion in Winter* alongside Patrick Stewart and Glenn Close. Howard won Best Actor at the Tokyo International Film Festival for *Mr In-Between* (2001) and later earned awards for *Blood River* (2009) and *Luster* (2009). He also co-wrote and starred in the British crime drama *Shooters* (2002)

Safiya Benaddi (Nina)

SafiyaBenaddi is ayoungBritishactress who makes her screen debut in *Truly Naked*.

Alessa Savage (Lizzie)

Alessa Savage is a Britishactress and content creator who grew up around the London fetish scene. By 26 she had worked a wide range of jobs, from a funeral parlor to bare-knuckle boxing events to years behind the bars of Camden and Soho's biggest rock clubs. In 2015 she wondered whether anyone would pay to see her naked, signed with an agent, and quickly built a significant following. She later expanded her presence on platforms like OnlyFans, where she shares adult content and connects directly with her audience. After Brexit and COVID caused the British porn industry to collapse, she began producing her own content. During this period, associate producer Mark Lee tracked her down to discuss Muriel's film plans. She has since appeared in two of Muriel's films, *Fuck-a-Fan* and *Truly Naked*.

Cast

Cameron James-King (Jamie)

BorninOxfordshire,Cameron James-King is best known for his versatile performances across film and television. He gained early recognition as Millard Nullings, the invisible child, in Tim Burton's *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (2016). His television credits include roles in *Turn Up Charlie* (Netflix, 2019) alongside Idris Elba, *His Dark Materials* (2019), *Hard Sun* (2018), and *The Lodge* (2016). In 2023, he appeared in *Hulu's Spellbound*. A graduate of the Sylvia Young Theatre School, for which he won a full scholarship, James-King began acting professionally in 2014 and has also appeared in several short films such as *Tuesday* (2021) and *The Treehouse* (2015).

Lyndsey Marshal (Julia)

LyndseyMarshal is a British actress acclaimed for her work across stage and screen. On screen, she is best known for her role as Cleopatra in HBO's *Rome* (2005-2007), and has appeared in *The Hours* (2002), *Hereafter* (2010), *Trespass Against Us* (2016) and *Garrow's Law* (2009). Her television work spans *Inside Man* (2022), *Dracula* (2020), *Hanna* (2019), *Death in Paradise* (2019), and *Agatha and the Curse of Ishtar* (2019). She also starred in the BBC film *A Short Stay in Switzerland* (2009) alongside Julie Walters. A Royal Welsh College alumna, Marshal has won multiple theatre awards and performed at the National Theatre and Donmar Warehouse.

Juliet Aubrey (Mrs Bennett)

JulietAubrey is a British actress acclaimed for her work in television, film, and theatre. She won a BAFTA TV Award for Best Actress for her role as Dorothea in the BBC series *Middlemarch* (1994) and is widely recognized for playing Helen Cutter in ITV's *Primeval* (2007-2011). More recently she appeared in such series as *Professor T* (2021-2024), *Snatch* (2017-2018) and *All Creatures Great and Small* (2024). Her film credits include *The Constant Gardener* (2005), *Iris* (2001), *Welcome to Sarajevo* (1997) and *The Infiltrator* (2016). A graduate of the Central School of Speech and Drama, Aubrey has also performed extensively on stage, including productions at the National Theatre and the Soho Theatre.

Crew

Myrthe Mosterman
Director of Photography

Myrthe Mosterman discovered her passion for the technical aspects of filmmaking during her final year of Film Studies at the University of Amsterdam. After graduating, she furthered her education at the Dutch Film Academy, specialising in cinematography.

Since graduating in 2012, she has traveled the world working on documentaries and commercials. Myrthe's work is known for its personal and intimate style which she likes to describe as naturalistic and poetic with a good eye for lighting and textures. Her adaptable approach allows her to work across various genres and styles.

Film work includes *White Flash* (*Witte flits*, 2024), *A Beautiful Imperfection* (*Een schitterend gebrek*, 2024), *Sea of Time* (*Zee van tijd*, 2022), *La Ultima Ascensión* (2022, short), *Splendid Isolation* (2021), *Gold* (*Goud*, 2020), *The Walking Fish* (2019, short), *The Other Side of Town* (2018) and *The Day My House Fell* (2017).

Emiel Nuninga
Editor

Emiel Nuninga is a versatile film editor whose expertise spans across films, TV series and creative projects. After studying Art and Technology in Enschede, he enrolled at the Netherlands Film Academy where he graduated in 2015.

He began making his mark in the film industry by assisting editor Jessica de Koning on *The Surprise* (*De surprise*, 2015) by Academy Award winning director Mike van Diem. This early experience laid a strong foundation for his career.

Emiel's journey reflects a dynamic blend of technical skill, creativity, and a passion for film editing. He was the editor on features such as *Young Hearts* (2024), *Hardcore Never Dies* (2023), *Femi* (2022), *The East* (2020), and *A Divine Call* (2020). His editing prowess also shines in the series *Modern Love Amsterdam* (2022) and the Dutch adaptation of *Skam* (2018-9), further showcasing his ability to adapt to diverse storytelling styles.

Crew

Evgueni and Sacha Galperine
Composers

Evgueni and Sacha Galperine are Russian-born French film composers celebrated for their evocative and innovative scores. The brothers began their musical journey in Moscow before relocating to Paris in 1990. Soon after arriving in Paris, Evgueni was drawn to composing film scores while still studying symphonic composition and electro-acoustic music at the National Conservatory (CNSM) in Paris. Sacha turned to rock and electronic music after receiving a first prize for violin performance at the Conservatory of Versailles.

The duo gained international acclaim for their score in Andrey Zvyagintsev's *Loveless* (2017), which earned them the European Film Award for Best Composer. Their work also includes such titles as *Kraven the Hunter* (2024), *When Fall is Coming* (2024), *Happening* (2021), *Corpus Christi* (2019), *Split* (2016), *The Bélier Family* (2014), *The Family* (2013) and *The Past* (2013), and graced TV series such as *Becoming Karl Lagerfeld* (2024), *Baby Reindeer* (2024), *Scenes From A Marriage* (2021) and *The Undoing* (2020). Their compositions blend minimalist trends with Slavic influences, creating a unique sound that resonates across arthouse and mainstream cinema. The brothers's ability to craft music that deeply connects with audiences solidifies their reputation as trailblazers in the world of film scoring. In addition to film and TV, the Galperines have ventured into contemporary composition, releasing the album 'Theory of Becoming' in 2022.



Q&A with Philine Janssens—Intimacy Coordinator

When did you start working in intimacy?
I had my masters in choreography and I followed this up in London with a screen dance post-graduate study, which is looking at everything non-script based from choreographing actors to choreographing camera work. In 2020, there was a workshop in Belgium that was an introduction to intimacy coordination. That was for stage and when I did that workshop, I realised that clearly this was something I was already doing without knowing it had a name. I work with bodies telling stories anyway, and I understood the potential of intimacy coordination. Then I did more courses online during the pandemic. And I also got into the whole psychology aspect of it through other courses. It's an ongoing process.

Did the *Truly Naked* team approach you early in their process?
They were in pre-production. That's really helpful because I'm in the process from the get-go. They had me involved in some of the final castings and auditions in London.

This is a film about intimacy at its core, does that make your job even more important?
Yes, for sure. I knew Muriel had been working on the script for a long time, and she knew exactly what she wanted to say, which is helpful. But she was also open to other people's ideas. There were still so many ways to have some agency for the actors. They could think about how they wanted to play aspects of the roles, and reflect where they were in their own lives, and what they were able to give the characters.
For me it was a very interesting project to do, from rehearsals to the set it was an organic process that was very much alive and not stuck in a formula. All these sex scenes were important because they are never free of content, there is no sex shown just for the sake of it. It's to build these relationships.

On this film, how did you work with actors of many different experience levels?
That was actually the most interesting aspect of this film.
I get to have all these in-depth discussions with all these lovely and very different people that were in very different places in their lives and careers. We had these young people who didn't have much experience on set, and they had not done any intimate scenes before. And on the other side, you had Alessa Savage, who is a queen of porn, so she had a totally different vision.

Andrew Howard was in the middle of that with his experiences. It was nice to bring them all together. Of course there are similar guidelines and protocols for every set, but you adapt each project. So much of it is finding out the needs of this specific cast and crew. We had to have different ways of working for all these different people, they each needed different ways to be reassured. Some people need to be pampered and others need you to stay out of their way. We had the time to figure all of that out before the shoot.

As you mentioned, Alessa has been in intimate scenes in a different context, but do you have to talk through this being in an arthouse drama?
Just because you work in the adult film industry doesn't mean you don't have boundaries. She had been through similar situations, and she knew exactly what she needed on set, which was very helpful. I did the exact same work with her that I'd do with the other actors, even though she'd done adult film work, I still wanted to ask her all the usual questions. This is a new context of more mainstream cinema, and she went with it and was also very helpful with the other actors.

For the younger actors, Caolán O'Gorman and Safiya Benaddi, how do you help them find those boundaries for the first time?
Consent and boundaries shift—they shift depending on the context, depending on what each scene is supposed to be saying, what the story beats are, what the content is of the scene. For each scene we would readdress boundaries again and again and again and again. We did rehearse with the two of them, just to get them to bond, to get them to trust each other. It actually had to start with trusting their own bodies first. It was a process about knowing their own boundaries and what felt right for them as a person, to then go into character work and to see how the couple would work and how the story would be told. Also, because they were new to a film set, we went through some basics: who is on the set, what does a closed set mean? Where is the monitor and who can see it? They could visualize all this ahead of the shoot days.

With this film, did you have any instances of an actor agreeing to do something and then changing their mind, or the other way around, saying they didn't want to do something at first but agreeing to it later if they felt more comfortable?
Yes, it happened both ways. It's all about navigating and making sure nobody is under pressure at any time. I would step in to say, 'initially you said you didn't want to do this,' and they would give me a clear cue that they were actually understanding what was happening and clear headed about their decision and not feeling any pressure.

You need to make sure you have their trust and they have the freedom to talk. Muriel and Myrthe (Mosterman) the DoP were very good at making sure there wasn't this pressure during the creative process.

An intimacy coordinator's work is not just for sex scenes, right?
I was on set for about 15 days. We talked about these characters even if they are just holding hands or riding a bike together.

How do you work with Muriel and the whole production team on a good collaboration between everyone, and also giving you space to do your work?
I was installed pretty early on. I know that Muriel and the DoP Myrthe work very closely. They would decide about how scenes were going to be shot. I would be very much present in prepping the actors mentally and physically for the scenes. Also, following an intensive shooting day, maybe they only shot a kissing scene, but I would see how they felt and how we wanted to move forward. Working with the production was really lovely. They knew it was crucial that I was there, so I never felt left out. And in the scene with the octopus, for example, I had to inform and guide the puppeteers into how we were showing the nudity. Itwas complex. I felt the crew and actors were very thankful I was involved.

How do you think filmmakers in general should work best with an intimacy coordinator?
It can be interesting to have intimacy discussions even without a sex scene. It's all about the content that is being told, and the context can be complicated. It's interesting just to have this role taking care of all that. An intimacy coordinator can work in a way that's tailored to every person's needs. I've even worked recently on a film about a child and his grandmother, to help build intimacy between the older actor and the younger actor, it's about physically protecting your own boundaries and understanding it's all about storytelling. I also help explain the psychological side of things. And it's not just the actors, the whole crew might need to feel supported.

***Truly Naked* is very female-led, with a female writer/director, a female DoP, female producers. Does that mean it's a different energy on set?**
Yes, it is a different vibe, but that's not to say you can't have great working relationships with men as well. For this project it totally made sense that women were in charge.The dynamic worked really, really well. I was never afraid to say when things should be adapted.



Production Company

In 1997, Els Vandevorst and Wilfried Depeweg brought their creative vision to life with the launch of Isabella Films, named after their beloved daughter, Isabella Depeweg.

Both trailblazers honed their craft at the Netherlands Film Academy in Amsterdam, with Els making waves early on—her production of Alaska, directed by Mike van Diem, earned a coveted Student Oscar.

Meanwhile, Wilfried had begun his career as a talented writer/director before discovering his true passion for producing. Together, they transformed their cinematic dreams into a powerhouse production company.

From the very beginning, Isabella Films aimed to work both in the Netherlands and abroad, (co-)producing films from acclaimed directors such as Lars von Trier, Alexander Sokurov, Thomas Vinterberg, Martin Koolhoven, Stijn Coninx, Ineke Smits, Ágnes Kocsis and Christophe Van Rompaey.

In February 2018, Isabella Depeweg became an equal partner in the company, infusing it with a fresh burst of energy and creativity. Together, the dynamic mother-daughter duo is laser-focused on crafting films that strike the perfect balance between artistic brilliance, commercial appeal and global accessibility.

Bridging the gap between generations and experience, Els Vandevorst and Isabella Depeweg are on the hunt for the next big thing—championing both emerging talent and celebrated filmmakers ready to push boundaries. This powerhouse partnership is all about shaping stories that resonate on an international stage.

Isabella Films

Distributor
The Netherlands

Since its founding in 1994 by CEO Martien Uyttendaele, independent film distributor Paradiso Filmed Entertainment has become a household name in the Benelux, boasting an impressive catalog of top arthouse films interspersed with beloved mainstream titles. Releases include modern classics like *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain*, *The King's Speech*, *The Imitation Game*, *Y Tu Mamá También*, *Blue Jasmine*, *Her*, *Pan's Labyrinth*, *Spirited Away*, *Les Misérables*, and *A Rainy Day in New York*.
Dutch and Flemish films like *Brimstone*, *Vele hemels boven de zevende*, *Waterboys*, *Ay Ramon*, and *De Patrick* have also enjoyed successful releases under the banner of Paradiso Films, which has offices in both the Netherlands (Amsterdam) and Belgium (Groot-Bijgaarden).

PARADISO FILMS

Distributor
France

Shellac is a label committed to production, international sales, theatrical distribution, and video publishing. We also manage the programming at the Gyptis and the operation of La Baleine, two cinemas in Marseille, as well as the Saint-André des Arts in Paris.

Particularly recognized for our role in developing new talents (Miguel Gomes, Pietro Marcello, Justine Triet, Alain Guiraudie, Antonin Peretjatko, Virgil Vernier...), we have also regularly worked with established authors (Philippe Grandrieux, Chantal Akerman, Claire Simon, Paul Vecchiali...).
For 20 years now, through our loyalty to authors and our editorial choices, we have been committed to defending a free, engaged, often radical, always unique cinema, from France and elsewhere, and to proudly upholding the diversity of the seventh art.

shellac

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