

# P R E S S   K I T



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

A Film Victoria Short Film Fund Production

**Written & Directed by Van Sowerwine**

Animated by Isobel Knowles  
Produced by Philippa Campey

**Production Company & International Sales:**

Film Camp Pty Ltd  
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<http://www.vansowerwine.com/clara>

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# Clara

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

Writer & Director	Van Sowerwine
Animator	Isobel Knowles
Producer	Philippa Campey
Production Company	Film Camp Pty Ltd
Gauge:	Super 16mm
Format:	Digital Betacam
Ratio:	16:9 Letterbox (4:3 Safe area)
Picture:	Colour
Sound:	Dolby Digital
Duration:	7 minutes (exactly 6 mins, 53 seconds)

## **LOG LINE**

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

## **SYNOPSIS**

Struggling with a massive change in her life, 12-year-old Clara is disoriented and confused. Her efforts to remedy the situation and make sense of her new world are thwarted when flowers attack her and ants invade her home. Her enchanted childhood has changed forever and now things will never be the same.

# CLARA

## **DIRECTOR'S NOTES**

***CLARA* slips under the veneer of suburban normality of Clara's life into the depths of her feelings of loss, grief and anger.**

There is a point in most of our lives when we begin to realise that terrible things can happen, and that nothing is permanent. This is particularly evident when we are confronted with death at an early age.

CLARA is a very personal story for me, a story that resonates many of my own experiences as I made the transition from childhood to adolescence. It is also a story about the terrible pain that we all can experience at any time in our lives. Ultimately, it is a story about both the resilience in all of us when confronted with terrible pain, and the beauty and terrible sadness that surrounds us at all times.

I have always been fascinated with stop motion animation. I feel it has a certain magical quality to it. I first became interested in using stop motion animation to animate plastic dolls I collected – I found myself drawn to particular dolls, around which I would develop a narrative that I would then animate. I then began sculpting my own animated characters as I became more interested in creating worlds that are a blend of the real and the magical.

This has culminated for me in the creation of *CLARA*, the first fully funded animation production I have written and directed. *CLARA* is set in Melbourne in the present day, and the sets are very realistic copies of parks and houses near where I live. Clara herself is made of silicon, a material that looks flesh-like, adding to the sense of realism in the film.

The realism in the film is juxtaposed with the strange and terrible things that happen to Clara. For me, this juxtaposition mirrors the precariousness of our existence – while we may exist in a happy, 'normal' world, terrible and strange things can happen to any of us at any time. At all times we are surrounded by and cannot escape death; this does not prevent us from also finding beauty and happiness in life.

# CLARA

## **DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY - VAN SOWERWINE**

Van Sowerwine is an animator and new media artist who works across the areas of stop motion animation, interactives, miniatures and comics. Her work explores ideas of childhood and its darker underpinnings, and Van has exhibited widely both nationally and internationally.

Her previous animation, *Gillian*, was highly commended in the 2001 Dendy Awards as part of the Sydney Film Festival, and won Best Animation at the National Student Film and Video festival. It was screened at *NewFest 2003*: the 15th Anniversary New York Lesbian & Gay Film Festival.

Van also incorporates stop motion animation into her installation practice. Her most recent animated installation (with CLARA animator Isobel Knowles) *Expecting* is touring around Australia in 2004/2005 as part of the *Experimenta: House of Tomorrow* exhibition. Her previous interactive *Play With Me* (2002) was selected for the inaugural Ann Landa Award (2004/2005) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales - the first award-exhibition for the moving image and new media in Australia. Both interactives *Expecting* and *Play With Me* have also be shown as part of Media City Seoul 2004, the Korean biennale of new media art.

## **PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY - PHILIPPA CAMPEY**

Philippa graduated from RMIT's Master of Arts (Communication) in 2003, with a major in cinema and has worked in Melbourne's film & television industry for the last six years. While working in the production offices of features films, documentaries and television dramas, Philippa has also been engaged with the screen cultural side of the industry, working at the Australian Film Institute, the Melbourne Cinémathèque, and the Melbourne International Film Festival. She also writes occasional articles for screen journals such as *Senses of Cinema* and was a contributor to *IF magazine*.

Philippa's other recent producing credits include *The Art of War* (4 episodes of art history by Betty Chucher and John Hughes, for SBS), *Open Cut* (an experimental documentary by Phil Burke), *The Bullet Seller* (a one-hour documentary for SBS about Iraq, 2004) and *ARTV* (16 x 30 second video interstitials for ACMI and SBS made by 16 of Australia's best contemporary artists).



## **KEY CREATIVES' BIOGRAPHIES**

### **ISOBEL KNOWLES - ANIMATOR**

Isobel Knowles is an animator who lives and works in Melbourne. Isobel completed a Bachelor of Media Arts at RMIT in 2001. Inspiration for her work comes from arcade games, children's book illustrations and film noir, and her animations explore a range of techniques including cut-outs, drawing and stop motion animation.

Isobel's recent works include *Expecting*, an interactive installation made in collaboration with Van Sowerwine for *Experimenta: House of Tomorrow*, September 2003, and *Like a Call*, an animated music clip for Architecture in Helsinki, April 2003. Isobel has also exhibited at West Space Gallery as part of the 2004 Next Wave Festival. (See [ik.rocks.it](http://ik.rocks.it))

### **JENNIFER SOCHACKYJ - SOUND DESIGNER**

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

### **CASSANDRA TYTLER - EDITOR**

Cassandra Tytler has been producing and directing films and videos since 1994. Her work explores contemporary cultural iconography, idealised reality and realised fantasy. She completed her Masters degree in Media Arts in 2003. Her work has been screened in numerous festivals including Microcinema all over the U.S.A., Raindance in London and Kurtzfilm in Vienna, and she has exhibited work in Melbourne galleries such as Gertrude Contemporary Art spaces and Westspace Gallery. (See [ctytler.customer.netSPACE.net.au](http://ctytler.customer.netSPACE.net.au))

### **SCOTT EBDON - MODEL MAKER**

Scott Ebdon works as a model maker and armature maker specialising in stop motion animation. He originally trained as a jeweller, and now specialises in building ball and socket armatures. He works in a wide variety of materials and mediums including wood, metal, plastics, polyester/epoxy resins and polyurethanes.

He has worked on many animated films and television series including *Plasmo*, *Slim Pickings*, *Bad Baby Amy* and *Dad's Clock* as well as television commercials for Maltesers, Kraft Peanut Butter, Yogo and Cadbury.

# Clara

## CREDITS

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

Special thanks to Glen Art Productions

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 **FILM VICTORIA**

Special Thanks to

**Kodak**  
Motion Picture Film

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