



**PRESS KIT**

Written & directed by SARAH WATT

Produced by BRIDGET IKIN

Produced by Hibiscus Films P/L  
Level 2, 270 Devonshire St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010 Australia  
Tel +61 2 9319 7011 Fax +61 2 9319 6906

**Meryl imagines disaster coming from every direction  
- train crashes, man-eating sharks, baby-eating  
killer whales ... and then there's Nick.**

**AWARDS**

2004 Queensland Literary Awards - Best Screenplay  
World Premiere - opening night Adelaide Film Festival 2005  
Audience Award - Adelaide Film Festival 2005  
FIPRESCI Award - Brisbane International Film Festival 2005  
Audience Award - Brisbane International Film Festival 2005  
Discovery Award - Toronto International Film Festival 2005  
Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Editing,  
Best Actor (William McInnes)- (Australian Film Critics  
Awards 2005)  
Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Editing - IF Awards  
2005  
Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Supporting  
Actor - AFI Awards 2005  
Dutch Critics Award - Rotterdam Film Festival 2006  
Most Popular Film - Australian Film Festival, London 2006  
Best Screenplay, Best Actress - Mar Del Plata Film Festival,  
Argentina 2006  
Critics Prize - NatFilm Festival, Denmark 2006  
Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature: San Francisco  
Film Festival 2006

**NOMINATED**

European Film Academy: Non-European Film Award category

**INVITED to the following film festivals:**

**2005:** Adelaide, Brisbane, Toronto, Chicago, India,  
Melbourne, New Zealand, San Sebastian (Zabaltegi), Pusan,  
Tallin Black Nights, Vancouver

**2006: New Films/ New Directors - New York  
Critics Week (Special Screening) - Cannes**

Goteborg, Portland, Bangkok, Istanbul, Karlovy Vary, Mar del  
Plata, Palm Springs, Singapore, Tromso, San Fransisco, Alba  
Regia, Bermuda, Durban, Motovun, Philadelphia, Taipei,  
Vilnius, Shanghai

Running time 100 mins  
35mm colour. 1:1.85  
Dolby SR-D 5.1

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Australian Film Corporation, SBS Independent, 2005 Adelaide

Film Festival Film Victoria and Hibiscus Films Pty Ltd

Development assistance from the Australian Film Commission  
and the South Australian Film Corporation.

**Key Crew**

|                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Written and directed by            | SARAH WATT                    |
| Produced by                        | BRIDGET IKIN                  |
| Associate Producers                | BARBARA MASEL<br>VICKI SUGARS |
| Executive Producer                 | ANDREW MYER                   |
| Director of Photography            | RAY ARGALL                    |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Unit Director      | LAURIE McINNES                |
| Production Designer                | RITA ZANCHETTA                |
| Art Director                       | SIMON McCUTCHEON              |
| Casting                            | ANGELA HEESOM                 |
| Costume Designer                   | EDIE KURZER                   |
| Hair/ MU Supervisor                | TRACE PHILPOTT                |
| Production Manager                 | LEONA CICHON                  |
| Script Editor                      | BARBARA MASEL                 |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Assistant Director | CHRIS ODGERS                  |
| Locations                          | SARAH ABBEY                   |
| Stills                             | MATTHEW NETTHEIM              |
| Sound Recordist                    | TOIVO LEMBER                  |
| Editor                             | DENISE HARATZIS ASE           |
| Animator                           | EMMA KELLY                    |
| Animation Painting                 | SARAH WATT<br>CLARE CALLINAN  |
| Post-production Supervisor         | MARYJEANNE WATT               |
| Vfx Supervisor/Designer            | PETER WEBB                    |
| Original music                     | AMANDA BROWN                  |
| Sound Designer                     | ANDREW PLAIN                  |
| Sound Mixer                        | PETER SMITH                   |

**Key Cast**

|       |                 |
|-------|-----------------|
| Nick  | WILLIAM McINNES |
| Meryl | JUSTINE CLARKE  |
| Andy  | ANTHONY HAYES   |

Anna  
Phil  
Julia  
Linda  
Joan  
Jim  
Train driver

LISA FLANAGAN  
ANDREW S. GILBERT  
DANIELA FARINACCI  
SACHA HORLER  
MAGGIE DENCE  
EDWIN HODGEMAN  
ANDREAS SOBIK

## Synopsis

It's the hottest weekend of the summer, and a very recent tragic train derailment features in everyone's mind. With this news as backdrop, seven people are trying to deal with unexpected events.

Meryl, returning from her father's funeral, sees disaster everywhere. She has until Monday to finish her work or lose her job, leaving her with (in her mind), nothing.

Nick visits his doctor for a routine medical and learns that he has cancer. He has to wait until Monday to know more.

Andy is thrown by his girlfriend Anna's ultimatum - he has til Monday to consider the news of her unplanned pregnancy.

Their paths intersect at the site of another accident. A man has been hit and killed by a local train. Meryl is a witness; Andy the journalist and Nick the photographer, cover the story for their newspaper. Nick takes a powerful photograph of Julia, the young woman whose husband has been killed.

On Saturday, Nick finds that Phil, his editor, has placed the photograph of Julia on the front page. When Meryl goes to dump the paper in the rubbish, she runs into Nick who's had a sleepless night, consumed with images of cancer and how he might have got it. They talk awkwardly, before Nick leaves for a game of cricket with Andy.

Nick and Andy play a losing game, each preoccupied with his own concerns.

Later that day, Nick returns to Meryl's. He admires the sympathy cards she paints. Their talk of death leads to sex; his cancer and her disaster anxieties giving way to more pleasurable imaginings.

Meanwhile, Andy makes unsatisfactory contact with his girlfriend, Anna.

On Sunday, Nick invites Meryl to his mother's for lunch. Nick and his mother argue about his father's difficult death.

Andy spends time with his two kids; Anna arrives to talk. When his estranged wife, Cathy, comes to collect the kids, Anna realises his complicated situation.

Nick tries to apologise to Meryl for his behaviour over the weekend. She misinterprets it as a brush-off, and then he tells her his news. Mortified, she runs away. The first drops of rain herald a cool change.

Nick walks back along the railway line, picking up speed as he finds himself racing a train. When he comes to the spot where the man was killed on Friday, he finds Andy poised on the edge of the tracks. As the train bears down, Andy steps out of the way, just in time. Nick tells Andy he has cancer.

The Train Driver, holding one of Meryl's cards, comes to Julia's house to apologise.

Rain is falling heavily as Meryl runs home, narrowly avoiding being hit by a car.

The evening news reports that a child has been miraculously pulled from the rubble, three days after the big train derailment.

Meryl arrives home to find Nick waiting for her. They kiss. Their kiss becomes another moment in the many un-spooling moments of their lives.

People living, dying, a blur of moments.

### **Director's statement**

"I remember sitting on a train, thinking about what my fellow travellers weren't revealing to me ... whether they were on the brink of something wonderful or something terrible, whether anyone is ever in neutral mode ... whether knowledge held by one person could potentially help another.

"I also imagined our train hurtling over the pathetically insubstantial railing on the bridge, and into the chemical storage facility below - killing us all in a poisonous inferno. I thought about whether anyone else was feeling the same way.

"I set out to make a romantic comedy, but the stuff of most people's lives includes what we think of as tragedy, so LOOK BOTH WAYS ended up a bit of both I guess. I like searching for the universal aspects of people's experience, in both the big and little things. I tried to keep everything as 'real' as I could, to allow people to receive the film as part of their own experience, to bring their own lives to it and enjoy it that way."

- Sarah Watt

### **The Production**

The story of LOOK BOTH WAYS really starts with Sarah's previous animated short film LIVING WITH HAPPINESS, and is a natural extension of the sensibility of that film.

Producer Bridget Ikin: "I was immediately attracted to the potential of LOOK BOTH WAYS when I read a rough outline - for its organic extension of the ideas so beautifully realised by Sarah in her original short films. I also felt excited by Sarah's desire to work with her husband, actor William McInnes, whom she imagined playing the lead."

Script editor/Associate Producer Barbara Masel: "I think what made all the questions about story or character so energised, is that Sarah so

completely knew what it was that she was exploring in the material.

"Sarah's very unusual because, as well as big ideas, she's interested in fine detail and the everyday, in ordinariness. To be able to frame big ideas in the ordinary and the everyday is such a skill, I think."

The development of the screenplay was concentrated and intense - between late 2002 and mid 2003 - largely self-financed by the creative team. Development finance from the Australian Film Commission, and the South Australian Film Corporation contributed.

Sarah, who lives in Melbourne, had written the script to be shot around her 'backyard'. However, it proved not feasible to finance the film to shoot there, and, coupled with active encouragement from South Australia, the production was shifted to Adelaide. Generous production finance was received from the South Australian Film Corporation and the Adelaide Film Festival (whose extraordinary Investment Fund commissioned this film, and are hosting its world premiere in February 2005).

The film's principal investor is the Film Finance Corporation Australia; production finance was also provided by SBS independent, and, to a lesser extent, by Film Victoria.

The film was shot over 7 weeks from mid-March to late April 2004, in the lingering heat of the late Adelaide summer, with an enthusiastic, predominantly South Australian crew.

A characteristic of this story is how it draws people to it - almost everyone who has worked on LOOK BOTH WAYS has their personal stake in the story, which has made its making a felicitous process.

Sarah Watt: "The ideas were affirmed by the many people who brought their creativity and generosity to the collaboration which has become LOOK BOTH WAYS."

The screenplay for LOOK BOTH WAYS was awarded the 2004 Queensland Literary Award for Best Film Script.

### **The animation**

The hand-painted animated sequences in LOOK BOTH WAYS (which represent Meryl's internal life) have their origin in Sarah's short films. They use the same signature 'painterly' style, although the production method has evolved.

Animator Emma Kelly (who collaborated with Sarah on her shorts) drew all the cells over several months. Each drawing was scanned and printed onto suitable water-absorbent paper. Sarah then hand-painted all the 'watery' sequences, and Clare Callinan (again a previous collaborator) painted the other sequences, with Sarah finishing each painting. All the painted cells were then re-scanned at Iloura Digital Pictures in Melbourne, camera moves were resolved, and the sequences were recorded out onto 35mm, for integration into the film.

The photographic sequences (for Nick's internal imaginings) were all created by a vfx team (led by Peter Webb) at Iloura, using a broad collection of 'found', assembled and commissioned photographs and other digitally generated imagery.

Sarah Watt: "The animated sequences are a way of giving Nick and Meryl a visible internal life, rather than relying only on the actors' performances. It's one that's special to each of them: to a painter, and a photographer. From this example, you can imagine that all the characters would have internal lives.

"Meryl's animation enlarges a previous painterly style of mine, as well as the disaster-imagining neurotic character. I think it's how most people go through life, presenting an external appearance of coping while inside they're thinking each day 'HOLY COW! We're all going to die!' And how that can be exacerbated in times of stress. Meryl has just lost her father, so right now she's focussing on death.

"Nick's animation is about the visual memories you collect in your life.



He's having a summing-up kind of weekend. He can see what he's been and, at the end of the film, he finally sees where he's going. You know he'll remember that weekend all his life because, in some way, time paused."

**Sarah Watt WRITER AND DIRECTOR**

Sarah Watt is an award-winning filmmaker who has been working as a writer, director and producer of animation for 15 years. She lives in Melbourne with her family.

Her acclaimed animation **SMALL TREASURES** (1995; 15 mins) brought widespread international attention, winning - amongst many awards - the Baby Lion for Best Short Film at the Venice Film Festival that year. **LOCAL DIVE** and **LIVING WITH HAPPINESS** followed, both of which screened widely at festivals and theatrically, winning many international and Australian awards.

Sarah's hand-painted animated films are distinguished by her comic exploration of personal states, set against lush Australian landscapes.

**LOOK BOTH WAYS** is Sarah's debut feature. Unlike the shorts, it is live-action, interspersed with animated sequences.

**Filmography**

|  |                                 |                        |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>2005</b>                                | <b>LOOK BOTH WAYS</b>           | 100 mins drama 35mm    |
| Writer/ director                           |                                 |                        |
| <b>2001</b>                                | <b>LIVING WITH HAPPINESS</b>    | 6 min. animation 35mm  |
| Writer/ director/ producer                 |                                 |                        |
| <b>2000</b>                                | <b>WAY OF THE BIRDS</b>         | 24 min. animation 35mm |
| Director                                   |                                 |                        |
| <b>1998</b>                                | <b>LOCAL DIVE</b>               | 4 min. animation 35mm  |
| Writer/ director/ producer                 |                                 |                        |
| <b>1998</b>                                | <b>DERWENT ENVY</b>             | 15 min. drama 16mm     |
| Co-Writer/ director/ producer/ co-producer |                                 |                        |
| <b>1995</b>                                | <b>SMALL TREASURES</b>          | 15 min. animation 35mm |
| Writer/ director/ producer                 |                                 |                        |
| <b>1993/4</b>                              | <b>THE WEB series 1 &amp; 2</b> | 5 min. animations 35mm |
| Director                                   |                                 |                        |

**Bridget Ikin PRODUCER**

*Bridget Ikin's reputation for producing passionate, personal cinema was established with Jane Campion's AN ANGEL AT MY TABLE (Silver Lion, Venice Film Festival 1990), and even before that, with Alison Maclean's memorable short film KITCHEN SINK (In Competition, Cannes, 1989) and her debut feature CRUSH (In Competition, Cannes, 1992). She also produced Clara Law's lyrical FLOATING LIFE (Silver Leopard, Locarno, 1996).*

*From 1996 - 2000, she was the General Manager of SBS Independent, responsible for more than 400 hours of distinctive Australian programming. Both of Sarah's shorts LOCAL DIVE and LIVING WITH HAPPINESS were commissioned by SBSi during these years, and from this, Bridget's decision to want to produce a film with her evolved.*

*Bridget was the Associate Director, Film of the 2002 Adelaide Festival, which, in a world first, commissioned four new feature films - for which Bridget was Executive Producer: THE TRACKER, AUSTRALIAN RULES, WALKING ON WATER and the short feature KABBARLI. She has now been appointed as an Evaluation Manager for the Film Finance Corporation Australia.*

"I leapt at the chance to develop and produce LOOK BOTH WAYS, having felt very drawn to Sarah's short films. I saw LOOK BOTH WAYS as a natural extension of the anxiously comic world view she'd evolved in the shorts. The ideas in the story felt very current - and authentic - to me, and, together with Barbara Masel (script editor/ associate producer), we were full of momentum and excitement for the intriguing world of the characters, ideas and sensibility that Sarah was exploring.

"The making of LOOK BOTH WAYS has been a remarkably enjoyable process, full of the pleasure of working with a committed creative team, on a script we all felt really had something significant to say to us about how to deal with the absurdly random nature of our lives, in which we continue to look for 'meaning', and seek happiness."

**Ray Argall DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

*Ray Argall came out of 'retirement' to shoot LOOK BOTH WAYS. He had previously collaborated with Sarah as editor of two of her shorts.*

*Over many years, Ray has worked as an award-winning director of feature film, documentary, TV, short drama and music video, and as an accredited cinematographer, and editor. Ray's first feature as a writer-director, RETURN HOME, received the 1990 AFI Award for Best Director, and the Australian Film Critics Circle Award for Best Director and for Best Film. He established his reputation as a DOP on features such THE PLAINS OF HEAVEN, WRONG WORLD (1984) and THE PRISONER OF ST PETERSBERG (1988).*

"My visual style is often fairly simple. The challenge was how to enhance the story without overwhelming it. I instinctively watched the natural beauty of what was there, and really, for a lot of the time, I simply tried to enhance or recreate that."

**Rita Zanchetta PRODUCTION DESIGNER**

*Rita Zanchetta's production design credits include KABBARLI (2001), THE HONORABLE WALLY NORMAN (2002), SELKIE (1999) and SALLY MARSHALL IS NOT AN ALIEN (1998). She art directed the French/Australian co-production PARADISE FOUND (2001). She previously worked as a graphic designer..*

"Sarah's main concern was honesty. To make real to an audience who the characters were, where they were from, what kind of neighbourhood they lived in. Sarah had in mind a very urban, industrial look. We shot most of the film around the mixed industrial/warehouse neighbourhood at Port Adelaide, which also gave us the railway connection."

**William McInnes as NICK**

*William McInnes is best known to Australian audiences for his lead role in the mini-series MY BROTHER JACK and for the romantic lead in SEACHANGE. He won Logies for Most Outstanding Actor for both these roles in 2002 and 2000 respectively. Recently William starred in the celebrated mini-series THE SHARK NET for ABC TV.*

"Nick's a man who has distanced himself from his life, thanks to his occupation more than anything else. A photographer is an information gatherer and Nick has seen a lot. He's come back to his hometown because his father died and he was ostensibly keeping an eye on his mother. In fact he's been treading water and not really accepting or embracing life.

"You only really bring life into sharp relief when it's questioned, when you actually realise the fragility of it. I think the really interesting thing about this film is that it doesn't labour these things or make them grander than they are."

**Justine Clarke as MERYL**

*Justine Clarke's feature film credits include JAPANESE STORY (2002), DANNY DECKCHAIR (2002) and BOOTMEN (1999). In 2003 Justine starred in the telemovie GO BIG and appeared in THE BRUSH OFF (2004) directed by Sam Neill. Justine's theatre credits include leading roles in TRELAWNEY OF THE WELLS, CYRANO DE BERGERAC, and HEDDA GABLER (playing opposite Cate Blanchett) - all for the Sydney Theatre Company. Playing Meryl is Justine's first leading role in a feature film.*

"I really connected with Meryl over the way she suffers in her expression for the sake of politeness - that delicate balance between knowing the sort of person she is, and her 'self regulating' or being polite. I watched ANNIE HALL a fair bit when I was preparing because Meryl reminded me so much of Diane Keaton, who's so gracefully goofy in that film."

**Anthony Hayes as ANDY**

*Anthony Hayes' feature film credits include NED KELLY (2002), RABBIT PROOF FENCE (2000), BOOTMEN (1999) and THE BOYS (1997). Anthony played a lead role in NEW SKIN, a short feature film he wrote and directed, and for which he won several awards. Anthony is currently co-writing TEN EMPTY, a feature he will direct and co-produce.*

"Andy knows it's his problem he can't get his life together, but it's easier to blame everything else. I think men will seriously relate to him, and women will be tempted to laugh and go "oh for God's sake". Some people no matter what they do, they're honest or earnest and you can't

help but like them - even as they keep digging themselves a bigger hole."