
The Significance Of Others

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PANOPTICON COLLECTIVE

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VCA
Victorian College
of the Arts


THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

A film by Sebastian Bertoli

Produced by Laura Faulkner

Running time: 18:28
Genre: Tragicomedy
Year: 2017
Language: English
Format: XDCAM
Aspect Ratio: 4:3

www.panopticoncollective.com/thesignificanceofothers

www.facebook.com/thesigothers

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Logline

(41 words)

What if a slap in the face was all it took to expose a dirty little secret that could tear a family apart?

"The Significance Of Others" is an improvised Australian dramedy in the vein of "Happy-Go-Lucky" and "The Skeleton Twins".

Long Synopsis

(73 words)

An improvised Australian dramedy in a which a friend request turns into an accidental friendship between an alcoholic pessimist and a hopeful man-child, as they discover that life is too messy to handle all by themselves.

Problems occur when their drunken behaviour at a family affair exposes their impulsive, destructive nature.

"The Significance Of Others" explores alcoholism, isolation and the importance of authentic human connection in a world where it's easy to feel insignificant.



"It's like a front row seat to the greatest show on Earth - you see the richest and poorest all on the worst day of their lives."

Director's Statement

The Significance Of Others is an exploration of two characters whose lives are in a slow-motion spiral into disarray. After all, life can be messy, lonely and surprising. This film is an exploration of these three things, in both the lives of the May and Steven, and in the lives of the ones they are connected to. More than anything, at its core, this is a film about connection.

I was interested in the way that smartphones and social networking has changed the way we connect. Or if indeed it has? On one hand it has made it easier to connect, and, on the other hand, we're constantly distracted and distanced from each other by them. How we connect with each other, how we connect with ourselves and our pursuit of the things that we want in our life, hasn't changed though. And the price of pursuing what we want, especially when it involves taking from the ones we care about, is definitely just as real. And devastating.

This all sounds very dark and serious, and the story of May and Steven is, at its core, tragic. But it's also lots of fun. They're complicated, and charming, and awful. Aren't we all?

I started the year with a very different idea of the graduate film that I was going to make in my final year of film school. The film that I started writing was called *Seed* about a fame-hungry florist and the relationship that she strikes up with her violent stalker. After I spending a good two and half months writing, toiling away for hours in the dark huddled over a laptop, I found I was spiralling into a dark place of isolation and depression that I had no idea how to escape.

Hours before we were going up on stage to pitch our films to a crowd that had been assembled of independent film crew from the Melbourne filmmaking community, I made a bold (and somewhat insane) choice. I followed my gut and decided to completely jettison the film that I had written and instead strike out on a path much less travelled: the path of developing a film through character-based improvisation.

Departing from the traditional methods of developing films that I had been taught during my time at the Victorian College Of The Arts, I chose instead to follow a path similar to ones that have been mapped out by British filmmaker Mike Leigh in the very unique way that he creates his films. I chose to interpret in my own personal style, and often deviated from, the methods and processes that are attributed to Leigh. Sometimes this was to suit my own instincts and curiosities (and the instincts of my actors) and sometimes this was necessary due to limited time, resources and circumstances.

Over the 6-8 weeks of improvisational sessions and rehearsals, my lead actors Jeni and Gavin first developed their characters separately, then their relationship together, during which the world, and ultimately the story, emerged from our sessions. In the final few weeks I brought several others characters in, taking on one myself as well - ultimately out of desperate necessity as the shoot drew alarmingly close!

We shot the scenes with most of the dialogue and some action improvised. However, in contrast to the loose and explorative early sessions, these scenes had been distilled and refined through our rehearsals following breakdowns for structure, as well as key lines, moments and plot points that would be covered every time the scene was ran.

This resulted in intensely immediate and authentic performances from the cast. It was hard work on our sound recordists David Ross and Brendan Muller who were kept on their toes as no take was the same. And on the bodies of our camera operators (DP Clement Soo and Neal Engelbrecht) who shot most of the film with two cameras simultaneously and shot most of the film handheld in takes that would sometimes last up to 7 minutes at a time.

The edit was a very challenging process as our editor Marco Treglia and I rewrote the film in a microscopic way, combing through the 6.5 hours of footage to finally arrive at the 18 minute cut we have today.

I am incredibly proud of *The Significance Of Others*. Many talented people have poured a tremendous amount of work, and energy, and love, into it. I hope you enjoy May and Steven's journey watching this film as we have had discovering it.



Key Crew



Sebastian Bertoli - Director/Writer

Sebastian is an acting graduate of Arts Academy (Ballarat). He is passionate about creating original Australian content. In 2015 he co-founded Panopticon Collective with Jeni Bezuidenhout. They have written together for both theatre and film. Sebastian has directed award-winning shorts which have screened all over the world, including

The Happiest Of My Life, which was awarded "Best Ozploitation Short Film" at the American Grindhouse Film Festival last year, and *Candy Cravings*, which has been embraced by audiences as far as San Francisco to Prague to Bangalore. He also directed for web series *Something Nautical*.

His theatre directing credits include: *Altar Girl* (as Associate Director, Rotten Honey/Panopticon Collective), which enjoyed a sell-out season at Adelaide Fringe 2017, *Thula Thula* (a staged reading, Panopticon Collective/Theatre451), *Goblins* (Panopticon Collective/La Mama Theatre).

Sebastian lives in the western suburbs of Melbourne, Australia.

www.sebastianbertoli.com



Laura Faulkner - Producer

Laura is a Melbourne based producer and production manager. She is a VCA Master of Producing graduate and holds a business degree from RMIT University. Her producing credits include the award winning shorts *Plunge*, *Ladies*

Without Lipstick, and *Blood Trust*. Last year she production managed and postproduction managed over 65 hours of television on shows *My Restaurant In India*, *Everyday Gourmet with Justine Schofield*, and *Everyday Health*. In a past life she held job titles such as finance manager and paralegal, but ditched the corporate world to pursue her dream of living a creative life.



Clement Soo - Director of Photography

Born in Malaysia, graduated with a Bachelor Mechanical Engineering from the University of Western Australia, now Clement Soo is a writer and director based in Melbourne, Australia. Being an idealist, he often angry and disappointed in humanity, but at the same time compassionate and hopeful. He uses his film to share his visions and beliefs, teach people to see what can be, or to improve the human condition.

Clem's first short film, *Nia* (2015) screened at more than 10 major international film festivals and won several awards, including Best Thriller at the Alaska International Film Awards.

His work and style are influenced by James Wan, Neill Blomkamp, David Fincher, Edgar Wright and J. J. Abrams.

www.clementsoo.com

Main Cast



Jeni Bezuidenhout - May

Jeni emigrated from South Africa at age 15. She graduated from Arts Academy (Ballarat) in 2012. She has appeared in award-winning shorts films that have screened internationally including *Plunge* and *The Happiest Day Of My Life*, as well as cult horror feature *Cat Sick Blues*.

This year Jeni played the lead in the sell-out season of *Altar Girl* at Adelaide Fringe in a performance which was described as “incredibly magnetic” (yaniism) and that “at times chills you to the bone, and at other times nearly makes you laugh out loud” (Emma Connell-Doherty, Great Scott). Her other theatre credits include: La Mama Theatre plays *Goblins* (which she co-wrote), *Tip Toe*, *Jenny* and *Meet Me For Meaning*. In 2014 she appeared in the sell-out season of *Wendy House* at Adelaide Fringe.

Jeni co-founded film and theatre production company Panopticon Collective with Sebastian Bertoli.

Jeni will be appearing in web series *Back To Goode* and short *Death By Bloom* later on this year.

www.jenibez.com



Eliza Wood - Janet

Eliza trained at Arts Academy (University of Ballarat), graduating in 2012.

She is active in the Melbourne theatre scene, a founding member of the successful Baker's Dozen Theatre Company.

Previously she has appeared in short film *No Junk Mail* (2009) and on stage in *Ruby Moon* (2014), *Killing Game* (2013) and *The Kitchen* (2012).



Gavin Ingham - Steven

Gavin was born and raised in Sydney, and adores his musical home town of Melbourne. He grew up on the musical influences of Sesame Street. Since completing his training as an actor he has tried to gain a wide range of performance experience, including quite a lot of theatre work. His acting performance experience includes working with professional theatre companies, touring educational shows, writing and performing in cabarets, musicals, pantomimes, street theatre, clowning, corporate entertainment, short films and television commercials. Yes, he was “Drunk Guy no.2 coming out of the toilet” in a Drink Driving TV ad. He also appeared in *The Legend Of Ben Hall* (2016).

Gavin is also a writer who has had his work performed for the theatre. He has completed the Advanced Diploma of Professional Screenwriting at RMIT University and is currently undertaking his Masters in Screenwriting at VCA.



Sebastian Bertoli - Marty

Sebastian trained as an actor at Arts Academy (Ballarat). He has spent the last decade acting professionally in Australia and internationally.

Most recently he appeared in *Wentworth* (SoHo), short film *Love* (dir. Gavin Ingham) and music videos for China Doll, Surkuy, and Stereolove. His other screen credits include: *The Doctor Blake Mysteries* (ABC), *Fringe* (Fox) and Emmy award-winning mini-series *The Pacific* (HBO).

In addition to his screen work, Sebastian also has extensive experience on stage. About his performance in *The Temperamentals* (Mockingbird Theatre, 2014), Ross Larkin from Theatre Press wrote, “Bertoli is exceptional as the unassuming Jannings, with the ability to maintain striking presence and poignant subtlety at once.”

Full Credits

A Panopticon Collective/VCA School of Film & Television Production

May	Jeni Bezuidenhout	Gaffer	Glen Cook
Steven	Gavin Ingham	Best Boy	Lewis Revell
Janet	Eliza Wood	Hair and Makeup Artist	Daphne Goulter
Marty	Sebastian Bertoli	Sound Recordist	David Ross
Watto	Luke Lennox		Brendan Muller
Baby Bradley	Matilda Maddison	Boom Operator	Hugh Palmer
Waiter	Matthew Slocum		
Mum	Monika Thomas		
Director/Writer	Sebastian Bertoli	Stills Photographer	Sharon Lapkin
Producer	Laura Faulkner	Behind The Scenes Videographer	Paola Jojot
Associate Producer	Jeni Bezuidenhout	Caterers	Jeni Bezuidenhout Alida Bezuidenhout
Story By	Jeni Bezuidenhout Gavin Ingham Sebastian Bertoli	Editor	Marco Treglia
Director of Photography	Clement Soo	Assistant Editor	Sebastian Bertoli
Production Designer	Kim Ritchie	Editing Consultant	Cindy Clarkson
1st Assistant Director	Mollie Traynor	Music Composer	Stephen Chambers
2nd Assistant Director	Dia Taylor	Sound Designer	Sebastian Bertoli
Script Supervisor	Claire Ewart	Visual Effects Artist	Jack Nolan
Set Dresser	Monique Bettello	Colourist	Chris Bennett
Costume Designer	Jeni Bezuidenhout	Online Editor	Andrew Connell
2nd Camera Operator	Neal Engelbrecht	Sound Mixer	Ant Bohun
1st Assistant Camera	Ben Luck	Post Production Supervisor	Gordon Lyon
2nd Assistant Camera	Dana Simon	VCA Screen Production Coordinator	Donna Hensler
Grip	Vee Shi	Supervising Producer	Sandra Sciberras

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