

A24

Janet Planet

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New York/ Los Angeles

Claire Colletti
claire@a24films.com
+1 646 568 6015

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A24Berlin@premiercomms.com

Sales

sales@a24films.com

Synopsis

In rural Western Massachusetts, 11-year-old Lacy spends the summer of 1991 at home, enthralled by her own imagination and the attention of her mother, Janet. As the months pass, three visitors enter their orbit, all captivated by Janet and her spellbinding nature. In her solitary moments, Lacy inhabits an inner world so extraordinarily detailed that it begins to seep into the outside world. Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Annie Baker captures a child's experience of time passing, and the ineffability of a daughter falling out of love with her mother, in this singularly sublime film debut.

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This uncannily funny, visually rich, emotionally surprising trip to the center of a young girl's darkly magical inner existence—as she begins to escape her mother's magnetic orbit in the late days of summer—heralds the arrival of a new filmmaking voice: the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Annie Baker.

Baker calls her debut feature film, *Janet Planet*, a story “about falling out of love with your mother.” And in that sense the film goes where stories about the daughters of single mothers haven't gone before. This is not the story of a daughter going to war with her mother. Nor of a daughter and mother reconciling a peace over their differences. It's a singular tale of breaking your mother's beautiful, inexplicable, haunting spell over you.

At the same time, the film is also a story about a girl falling into enthrallment with the strange power of her own imagination. And an incisive comedy in which an unsentimental kid navigates a vivid Western Massachusetts landscape of earnest, searching, hippie-idealist adults. Defying categorization and tapping into childhood's enigmatic textures, most unsayable feelings, and abrupt moments of transcendence, *Janet Planet* creates its own electrified territory somewhere between charged reality and delicately spun fable.

It's the summer of 1991 and 11-year-old Lacy couldn't countenance camp, so she's back home, in her mother Janet's flawed but alluring universe, observing Janet's myriad complicated relationships. Sharp, tart and so lonely it's become her way of being, Lacy's life consists of conjured fantasies, stretched-open time, an ineffable connection to the natural world and, most of all, the absolute ecstasy of receiving Janet's sole attention. When three intruding adults—troubled Wayne, exuberant Regina, and intense Avi—come to visit Janet over the summer, Lacy's private world and bond with her mother start to wobble.

Baker has dreamed of making movies since she was six—but first took a turn into theatre. She also entered that world with a seemingly already-formed voice, a voice so fresh she would be

lauded as that generational talent who pushes the form, creating what some dubbed “untheatrical theater.” Her initial trio of plays set in fictional, working-class Shirley, Vermont took a powerful, if tender, magnifying glass to those tiny moments of fleeting communication and elliptical silence that accumulate into the beauty and comedy of human connection. *Circle Mirror Transformation*, about five strangers taking a drama class, and *The Aliens*, in which two 30-something slackers meet daily on a café patio, both won the Obie for Best New American Play.

Her 2014 play, *The Flick*, an epic encounter with three minimum-wage workers at a run-down movie theater, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Her most recent plays include *John*, in which a New York couple stay at an eerie Pennsylvania inn while visiting Civil War sites, and *The Antipodes*, about a group of writers in an endless brainstorming session. In 2017, Baker received a MacArthur Foundation “genius” grant.

All through these events, Baker had a word document titled *Janet Planet* sitting on her laptop. She'd opened the file in her twenties, soon after she graduated from college, then left it untouched.

“I've always thought about making a movie about what it was like growing up in Western Massachusetts because it was such a distinctive place, especially in the 90s,” says Baker, who came of age in Amherst before heading to NYU. “And I knew this movie would involve the romance between a single mother and her daughter. But it just existed as an idea for 20 years. I didn't actually sit down to write it until 2020, and I wrote it during my infant daughter's naps in the early days of the pandemic. While writing it, I realized I had been thinking about the film for most of my adult life.”

Once she did, *Janet Planet* opened up into a girl's variation on the cinematic spiritual odyssey. “Most of the movies I've ever seen about girls of Lacy's age are about the onset of puberty,”

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Baker reflects. "But I wanted to explore how Lacy experiences time, nature, philosophy, God...and her mother."

Lacy is coolly entranced by her mother, an acupuncturist with a luminous earth mother energy, and especially by the mystifying feelings she gets from Janet. Even if Lacy has a shrewd clarity about Janet's psychological blind spots, and even if she is at the total mercy of Janet's sometimes bewildering decisions—not to mention the often-bewildering people she brings into their lives—she wants to hold onto her in ways that resist explanation.

Much as Lacy is entwined in Janet's ever-churning social life, Lacy also lives very much in her own inky dreamworld that no one else can touch. This is the world Baker creates visually, texturally, and emotionally—a mysteriously stilled, numinous world of things you can't necessarily name but are inexorably forming you.

Baker continues, "There's a certain feeling I used to have at 11, this feeling that a part of my brain was very powerful. I wanted to explore that moment just before 12 when you're on the outskirts of the adult world, and you feel like a little wizard, because I felt like I hadn't ever quite seen that captured on film the way I experienced it."

As Baker wrote Lacy, she found herself digging into the stitching that makes up a 11-year-old consciousness, into the fabric of a world that is part make-believe, part looming reality, part refracted through your parents' lives, and entirely in limbo. She especially remembered the sheer animism of being 11, that feeling that the environment and objects might respond directly to your feelings and that the unknowable is just part of what you have to abide in life.

"That's when I started to realize that Lacy's story was heading towards a strange, otherworldly moment of wish fulfillment," says Baker.

Baker decided to write the script in chapters, each focused on a new person who enters Janet's life—and by extension Lacy's, giving Lacy a fluctuating series of moving obstacles through which she keeps chasing her mother's attention. "I was really interested in exploring the mother as love object," Baker says. "There's this kind of longing you can have for your mother that's not sexual but is about possession and touch. And when Lacy is pulled into a series of what are really love triangles, because her mother is dating, that brings up a lot of issues around ownership and access. There's a dance of intimacy going on the whole summer."

Dreamers, searchers, and artisans surround Lacy in a Western Massachusetts that incorporates hippie counterculture, tobacco farms, radical theatre collectives, alternative healers, and the brightly lit, unexpectedly thrilling microcosm of a local mall.

Adding to her summer anxieties are the trio who drop in one-by-one: Janet's unpredictable boyfriend Wayne (who gifts to Lacy the least annoying day of her summer through his own intriguing daughter Sequoia); theatre-world friend Regina; and the imperious stage director Avi. Each has their merits and their messiness.

"At that age, it can seem like your parent's friends are Olympian Gods," comments Baker. "I was thinking about how the child of a single parent can experience a person as a major part of their life, partly because of how slowly time can move for kids, and then one day literally never see that person again. I wanted to capture the sweet sadness of that, of not knowing that day was the last day you'd ever spend with that person."

Baker's screenplay employs not only the very specific setting of Western Mass but a palpable season—a sweltering summer that completely resists the ease and liberation summer is purported to bring to children. "There are lots of movies about

how great summer is when you're a kid," Baker observes. "But summer can also be endless and kind of awful."

Finding Lacy

To film *Janet Planet*, a lot hinged initially on uncovering the right Lacy—a girl who could be at the same time grim and enraptured, naive and knowing, spiky yet needy, hungry for friendship and a master of being alone. This was the first major uncertainty Baker ran into as a film director: was it even possible to find a child actor with that blend of sullen bite and heightened wonder to carry this unusual fable? At first, despite undertaking an exhaustive, nationwide search with the film-making team, it seemed unlikely.

"I started to get scared when we were 2 months away from shooting and I was still holding out for the right person," recalls Baker. "We watched thousands of tapes, saw hundreds of girls in person. I had every girl tell me a nightmare she'd had recently. I was bowled over by the weirdness and power of those dreams."

"But though I saw many very talented kids, it was absolutely essential that Lacy not have any hint of sweetness to her, and that was really hard to find. It's what I finally discovered in Zoe Ziegler," Baker continues. "Kids who pursue acting are such natural people-pleasers. But I was looking for someone pricklier, even a little alienating, someone who would naturally resist the warm-and-fuzzy. Lacy is a character who isn't immediately loveable, who it takes time to get to know. And there was no real model for that, because I hadn't seen that kind of girl in a movie before. I had seen a young boy like that in Pialat's *Naked Childhood*."

Ziegler, who had never been in a movie before, let alone a school play, broke the mold, but authentically, without a trace of self-consciousness. And once they started working together, Baker found her a constant revelation. The combination of

a first-time director and untrained actor could have been chaotic, but turned out to be the opposite, with Baker directing Ziegler with an attentive minimalism.

"The most important thing was to make Zoe feel safe, for things to be quiet, for it not to be too hot," Baker explains. "A lot of it was just about controlling the environment and then trying to not direct her too much. With all the other actors, we had long dialogues with about their character's backstories and the emotional nuances. But with Zoe, I found the more we talked, the more she got into her head. I realized the key was to just put her in front of the camera, to help her to be present, to react as herself, and luckily she was word-perfect."

Ziegler's surprising reactions and expressions became one of the deep pleasures of making the film. "So often her affect, emotions and psychology were a mystery to me," says Baker, "and that was really beautiful because I wanted Lacy to remain a mystery."

Janet and Her Visitors

The setting of *Janet Planet* is Lacy's world, but Janet is the one who sets the gravitational pull. She is hard-working, expressive, perhaps overly-candid, and often flummoxed, but also easy to love—a reality that makes her life more difficult in ways Lacy can see clearly. Inhabiting Janet with an invitingly complicated warmth is Julianne Nicholson, who recently garnered an Emmy Award for her emotionally raw performance opposite Kate Winslet in *Mare of Easttown*.

"Julianne was the only person I ever met for Janet and as soon as I did, that was that," explains Baker. "It turns out she is from Wendell, Massachusetts. She grew up in a cabin, her mom is an herbalist, and we both bought our first bras at the same JC Penny that's in *Janet Planet*. We already shared this very intense history with the area. And I could see she had an instant, strongly intuitive relationship with the material. Julianne

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brings a deep, intelligent form of sensuality to Janet, but also a self-effacing quality that I think is essential for her.”

As the film opens, Janet is living with Wayne, a single dad and taciturn war veteran quietly roiling with volatility. Playing Wayne is Will Patton, renowned for his screen and stage work and recently seen in Lee Isaac Chung’s *Minari* and the acclaimed television series *Yellowstone*.

“I’ve known Will for years. He was in a show of mine in New York and is a good friend, so getting the chance to work with him in this way was really special,” says Baker. “The most vital thing to both of us was that Wayne not be just the ‘bad boyfriend.’ He needed to be a person with real pain, a real history, and a real gentleness that you can feel underneath the violence that also lives in him. There are moments where he’s imbued with a deep spirituality, and Will is so good at getting at those kinds of enigmas.”

Patton likes to look at things from the inside out, which jibed well with Baker’s storytelling. “Will has this thing where if I had a note for him, he’d ask, ‘is it literal, allegorical, or anagogical?’ Literal of course is ‘walk over there’ or ‘you’re angry at her’ and allegorical would be about what kind of symbolical meaning we’re going for. But ‘is it anagogical’ meant ‘are we speaking on a higher celestial plane?’ And I loved that I could in fact give Will notes about the cosmos and he could approach things on that level. I could say very very strange things to him, and he’d say, ‘I got it.’ He can be quite stylized while also putting real psychology into a character.”

To Lacy, Wayne mostly inspires profound ambivalence. She’d prefer that her mother leave him, but she can’t help but cut him slack when he introduces her to a captivating, if fleeting, comrade-in-summer-misery: his own appealingly offbeat daughter, Sequoia. “I think it’s very common when you’re a kid to have ambivalent feelings towards adults who suddenly come into your life,” says Baker.

When Wayne exits eerily, Janet’s old friend Regina, an actor with a local puppet theatre collective, moves in like a refreshing breeze at first. Playing Regina is Sophie Okonedo, the Tony Award winner and Oscar nominee renowned for embracing the depths of every character she inhabits.

In one of the film’s many unforeseeable moments, Janet and Regina take ecstasy, tell secrets, and instead of sealing a deep bond, utterly infuriate one another. It’s an upfront exposure of a rarely seen side of female friendships. “They both have nothing but good intentions towards the other, and they both are trying to communicate those good intentions, yet it ends up going terribly wrong,” muses Baker.

She continues, “Sophie was amazing to work with. Since we’re both theatre people, we had that immediate shorthand with each other. Directing her was a total joy and very playful, especially because she has a great sense of humor and was so up for Regina’s theatre scenes. She even came early of her own volition and rehearsed with this little theatre company that we formed for the film. Vitally, she was able to work in two different registers—one doing incredibly detailed, nuanced work with Julianne and Zoe; and the other, just letting it rip in her theater scenes.”

Last in the trio of visitors comes Avi, the softspoken yet intellectually mesmerizing theatre director and puppeteer who turns his attentions from Regina to Janet, setting off Lacy’s threat perception. Elias Koteas, the Canadian stage, screen, and television actor who has worked with such visionary directors as Atom Egoyan, Terrence Malick, David Cronenberg, David Fincher, and Martin Scorsese, among others, took the role.

“In thinking about Avi, I watched a lot of videos of alternative theater-makers from the 60s and 70s—and I came across some of these very soft-spoken, bearded guys who also had an intense charisma. I wanted that gentle magician-like energy with perhaps something a little sinister going on behind it,” Baker

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describes. “I was thinking about how scary it would be if your mom started dating that guy. He had to be very alluring because he plays a more complicated role in Lacy’s journey than you might initially expect.”

After reading the script, Koteas told Baker that he thought he might approach playing Avi as possibly being a figment of Lacy’s imagination. Unexpectedly, she liked that approach. “He came at it from a very deep, funny place, thinking about how his character would be seen through a child’s eyes. Elias is the kind of actor who can really get into that kind of thing, where he can be both a symbolic figure and a literal person. It was cool to watch him play it both ways simultaneously.”

Baker shot the film mostly in order, mirroring the way the characters appear in Lacy’s life. “We had Will first, then Sophie and Elias, which was great because all of us, and especially Zoe, got to know them one-by-one in the same order as Lacy,” notes Baker.

Unlike in the theatre, there was little time for rehearsal on this lightning-paced shoot with shortened days to accommodate Ziegler. But that led Baker to rapidly find her feet and flex her intuition. “At first, I thought, oh no, this is my nightmare as a theatre person: minimal rehearsal. But as soon as I started watching dailies, I’d notice how often a first take can be absolutely extraordinary. Good things happen when you work in that space where no ideas have been predetermined. That’s a part of filmmaking I really enjoyed. And then you can try the same thing ten more times in different ways. I had to learn to throw out ideas very quickly and decisively at the actors and that was very exciting.”

Janet’s Planet

Offsetting the performances, the visuals and sound of *Janet Planet* conjure an evocative background that hums and buzzes and rolls through undulating hills, occasionally collapsing into

the surreal. From the start, Baker seemed to have an innate sense for framing the characters against their pastoral environments. More so, she was eager to play with the elastic nature of cinematic time, blurring the edges between what is happening, what is felt, and what is imagined.

“The movie is intentionally elliptical, in the sense that it will jump quickly over a major event, and then something very simple will take minutes, which is how time often works when you’re 11,” says Baker.

Her close partner in this exploration was Swedish cinematographer Maria von Hausswolff, who recently shot Hlynur Palmason’s acclaimed *Godland* in Iceland, garnering a European Film Award nomination. The pair chose early on to shoot *Janet Planet* on 16mm film. “The danger of 16mm is that you could so easily make a sweet and nostalgic looking film about childhood and that is exactly what we didn’t want,” Baker notes. “The question was: how do we conjure spiritual dread on 16mm? It also captures nature so beautifully.”

Baker and Von Hausswolff spoke at length about the POV of each scene. “Maria was brilliant, and we spent an enormous amount of time together, sometimes with our three-year-olds in tow. We talked a lot about different levels of watching and being watched,” says Baker. “Sometimes Janet is watching Lacy. Sometimes Lacy is watching Janet. But it’s not just Lacy and Janet watching and being watched. Nature and God and inanimate objects are watching everyone too, and those are feelings I wanted to layer into the movie.”

The pair looked closely at those few films that have innovatively tried to refabricate a child’s-eye-view of the world’s overwhelming complexities, including Kiarostami’s *Where Is the Friend’s House*, Bergman’s *Fanny & Alexander*, Erice’s *Spirit of the Beehive*, Pialat’s *Naked Childhood*, and Tarkovsky’s *Mirror* and *Ivan’s Childhood*. But ultimately, Lacy’s world emerged with its own texture, emanating directly from her acerbically awed way

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of observing the natural world, Janet and Janet's friends included. Baker and Von Hausswolff also revisited favorite films about unexpected, alchemical moments of transformation, like Weerasethakul's *Tropical Malady* and Rohmer's *The Green Ray*, and their favorite Bergman movies about "female psyches melding" like *Autumn Sonata* and *Persona*.

Another unexpected influence on Baker was the French impressionist painter, Édouard Vuillard. "I have this giant book of Vuillard prints, and I was intrigued by how he painted women in relationship to fabric and domestic interiors and nature. Maria and I carried that book around during the shoot," she says.

They also spent time exploring Western Massachusetts during the winter, spring and summer, including the sites Baker had written into the screenplay, crossing her fingers they could shoot at each of them. A world away from Boston, Western Massachusetts has a singular, largely unexplored American character, with its loosely woven tapestry of scrappy small towns, liberal arts colleges, homestead farms, gentle mountains, and puppet theaters. It was essential to Baker to get that ambiance right.

"Even in the theatre, I've always seen setting as a container for character psychology," Baker comments. "So, it was non-negotiable for us to shoot in Western Massachusetts and in those very specific places I'd written into the script. For example, when Lacy runs down the hill at camp at the start of the film--I wrote it for a certain hill at a certain camp, and the time it took to run down that hill as a child."

Another casting challenge materialized during pre-production: finding Janet and Lacy's home, which needed to feel like it had a life of its own. This took Baker on a mid-winter quest that ended in Leverett, Mass, a woodsy small town just north of Amherst, at the edge of the Pioneer Valley. "I actually joined nextdoor.com for the area so I could pester people about houses and I did lots of driving around," Baker recalls. "When I saw the house

you see in the film, it felt like it cracked the whole movie open for me. It's in the middle of a lush, jungle-like forest, and I immediately had a picture of Lacy rattling around alone inside it."

Baker collaborated on the house with Emmy nominated production designer Teresa Mastropiero (*Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, *30 Rock*). Mastropiero laid down linoleum, hung prints by local artists, and painted the walls brown and purple. They both took a deep dive sourcing Lacy's hodge-podge of dolls and doll-adjacent objects. "Even while prep was still months away, we were hunting on eBay together," Baker recalls. "We talked about how Lacy's dolls needed to be home-made but not feel overly romanticized or sacred—they might be a troll or saltshaker—and also not silly so we take them seriously. I'd say half of them are clay figures I made as a kid. It was Teresa's idea to create the saltshaker people which I thought was so amazing because kids always repurpose things like that."

When Lacy and Janet heads into the hills for a night at the theatre, they are surrounded by towering puppets in dreamlike forms. These creatures were all hand-made by Jeremy Louise Eaton, design director of Double Edge Theatre, an artist-run collective based in Ashfield, Massachusetts, renowned for their outdoor spectacles.

"Some of the puppets were used in past productions and some she made expressly for the movie," Baker explains. "They're all created out of recycled materials, from newspapers and plastic straws and things like that. Jeremy also hand-painted the title cards for the film's chapters. She painted dozens of different colors on cloth."

The show Janet and Lacy attend is a hybrid of an actual Double Edge production with monologues written specifically for the film and adapted by Baker from poems by Rainer Maria Rilke. "I was working on that theatre piece for a year before we shot the film," Baker admits. "We rehearsed a lot before prep officially started. And then, after all that, we shot it in 2 days. I was so

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glad I put in all the work needed to put on a real show because otherwise I don't think it would have worked. And half of the show isn't even in the movie."

As the speedy shoot wrapped, Baker's film education deepened further in the editing room, where she convened with Lucian Johnston, who has worked with Ari Aster on *Hereditary*, *Midsommar*, and *Beau Is Afraid*, and Joel Coen on *The Tragedy of Macbeth*.

Editing a feature film for the first time was a shock to Baker's creative system. "There's nothing I've experienced in my life so far that parallels the film editing process," she confesses. "It was incredibly fun, and absolutely maddening. I'm still thinking about it—about all the downstream effects of changing one little thing. I thought editing would be a logic-driven activity and instead it was unexpectedly intuitive and kind of trippy. It's not always just about the storytelling. It's where the full energetic life of the movie that you don't even realize is there comes to life. It became the most fascinating and absorbing challenge of the film for me."

One thing Baker gleaned from the process was "that we had to listen to the movie. It would tell us what it wanted and didn't want."

An element she knew the film didn't want early on was a traditional score. Instead, the music is mostly diegetic, pouring out of tinny car and home stereos. If there is something approaching orchestration in the film, it emerges out of the natural world, a wilder symphony of rustling trees and pulsating insects.

"Even while writing the script, I always felt this story shouldn't have a score. It wasn't any kind of purist thing," Baker explains. "The film is so much about loneliness and silence and distended time. Lucian felt the same way. A traditional score wouldn't work. The music that is in the movie, from Beverly Glenn-Co-

peland to Bob Carpenter, was music I wrote into the screenplay from the beginning."

These environmental sounds were collected and then wedded to the film's images in collaboration with sound designer Paul Hsu. "We really saw the natural sounds of Western Massachusetts as being the score. So, before the crew even showed up, Paul came up to Leverett and put a microphone in the forest surrounding the house where we filmed. He made hundreds of hours of field recordings from that forest. In a beautiful way, the sounds changed throughout the summer, so it became its own dynamic force in the movie."

The blended realness and strangeness of those forest sounds echo the photography, design, and performances. From the accumulation of each of these components comes the casting of the film's own lingering spell, invoking that childhood maternal spell Lacy knows cannot remain intact, yet somehow will also never let her go.

The Crew

Annie Baker

Director/Writer/Producer

Annie Baker grew up in Amherst, Massachusetts. Her plays include *The Flick* (Pulitzer Prize for Drama, Obie Award for Playwriting, Susan Smith Blackburn Prize), *The Antipodes* (Signature Theatre, National Theatre), *John* (Signature Theatre, National Theatre, Obie Award), *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Playwrights Horizons, Obie Award for Best New American Play, Drama Desk nomination for Best Play), *The Aliens* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Obie Award for Best New American Play), and an adaptation of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* (Soho Rep, Drama Desk nomination for Best Revival), for which she also designed the costumes. Other honors include a MacArthur Fellowship, Guggenheim Fellowship, Steinberg Playwriting Award, American Academy of Arts and Letters Award, and the Cullman Fellowship at the New York Public Library.

Dan Janvey

Producer

Dan Janvey is a producer with Present Company. Past films include *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (Benh Zeitlin), *Tchoupitoulas* (Bill & Turner Ross), *Heart of a Dog* (Laurie Anderson), *Patti Cake\$* (Jeremy Jasper), *Time* (Garrett Bradley), *Nomadland* (Chloé Zhao), *A Love Song* (Max Walker-Silverman), and *Janet Planet* (Annie Baker). His first job in movies was as an usher at the Walter Reade Theater. He's based in Brooklyn, NY.

Derrick Tseng

Producer

Derrick Tseng has worked in N Y film and television production for over 30 years, as lighting technician, 1st A D, production manager, line producer, and producer. Among other projects, he has produced Annie Baker's *Janet Planet*, Braden King's *The Evening Hour*, Alla Kovgan's *Cunningham*, David Gordon Green's *Red Oaks* Pilot, *Manglehorn*, *Joe*, and *Prince Avalanche*, and Todd Solondz's *Wiener-Dog*, *Dark Horse*, *Life During Wartime*, and *Palindromes*.

He has co-produced/line produced numerous feature films, including Adrienne Shelly's *Sudden Manhattan*, Kevin Smith's *Chasing Amy*, Brad Anderson's *Happy Accidents*, Peter Lauer's *Cry Baby Lane*, Patrick Stettner's *The Business of Strangers*, Bertha Pan's *Face*, David Gordon Green's *All the Real Girls* and *Snow Angels*, Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato's *Party Monster*, Steve Buscemi's *Lonesome Jim*, Robert Altman's *Tanner on Tanner*, David Wain's *The Ten*, Clark Gregg's *Choke*, Andrew Lau's *Revenge of the Green Dragons*, and Tom Shadyac's *Brian Banks*.

Tseng was born in Queens, N Y. He attended NYU's Graduate Film Program, and holds an M.A. in Comparative Literature from NYU and a B.A. in English and Art History from Columbia University. He lives in picturesque Gowanus, Brooklyn.

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Andrew Goldman

Producer

Andrew Goldman is an Academy Award-nominated producer with Present Company. Most recently, he's produced *Janet Planet*, the debut film by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Annie Baker; *Marcel the Shell with Shoes On*, the stop-motion animated feature directed by Dean Fleischer Camp; and *After Yang*, the critically acclaimed science fiction film directed by Kogonada. Andrew also produced the Sundance award-winning films *We The Animals* directed by Jeremiah Zagar, *Beach Rats* directed by Eliza Hittman, and the documentary *Matangi / Maya / M.I.A.* about the Sri Lankan artist, activist, and musician M.I.A.

Rebecca Ling Wyzan

Co-Producer

Rebecca Wyzan is a producer and the Head of Development at Present Company. She recently co-produced Annie Baker's directorial debut *Janet Planet*. Past work includes *A Love Song* (Max Walker-Silverman) and the Academy Award nominated documentary *Time* (Garrett Bradley). She lives in Brooklyn, NY.

Ivan Lafayette

Co-Producer

Ivan Lafayette is a production manager and line producer. He production managed and co-produced Annie Baker's *Janet Planet*. Prior films include *I Carry You With Me*, *Og*, *Swallow*, and *Christine*. He is currently wrapping up production on Max Walker-Silverman's latest feature. He was born in Lisbon, Portugal and raised in Baton Rouge, LA.

Michael Gottwald

Co-Producer

Michael Gottwald is a founding partner and producer with the Department of Motion Pictures. He was one of the producers of *Beasts Of The Southern Wild*, directed by Benh Zeitlin, which won the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance and the Camera d'Or at Cannes; it was nominated for four Academy Awards. Michael also produced Jeremy Jasper's debut feature *Patti Cake\$*, the closing night film of Cannes' Directors' Fortnight, and Jasper's upcoming *O'dessa* with Searchlight Pictures. He has produced episodes of *High Maintenance* and collaborated with acclaimed filmmakers Bill & Turner Ross on their last five films including *Western* (Special Jury Prize at Sundance, 2015), *Bloody Nose*, *Empty Pockets* (Berlinale, 2020) and their latest, *Gasoline Rainbow*, which premiered at Venice in 2023. He also produced ITVS and Topic's Peabody Award-winning documentary series *Philly D.A.*, which premiered at Sundance 2021 before being broadcast nationwide on PBS. Currently he is in development on proj-

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Michael Gottwald (cont.)

ects with Pete Nicks, Josephine Decker, and Carlos Lopez Estrada. Before producing, Michael worked for both Barack Obama presidential campaigns, in 2008 and 2012.

Maria von Hausswolf

Director of Photography

Maria is a Danish cinematographer known for her collaborations with Hlynur Pálma-son, including *Winter Brothers*, *A White, White Day* and *Godland*, which premiered in Cannes. She most recently worked on A24's *Janet Planet*, with Director Annie Baker.

Teresa Mastropierro

Production Designer

Teresa Mastropierro is an Emmy-nominated production designer based in Brook-lyn, NY. She began her career painting scenery for film and theater and soon segued into design. She has designed numerous seasons of television, including *Strangers With Candy*, the Emmy-winning comedies *30 Rock* and *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, the Tina Fey/Meredith Scardino series *Girls5eva*, and Jenny Han's latest series for Amazon *The Summer I Turned Pretty*. Her feature film credits include Tom Shadyac's *Brian Banks*, the 12-part anthology *New York I Love You*, Bertha Pan's *Face*, Tom Di-Cillo's *Delirious*, and the Sundance award-winners *Two Family House* directed by Raymond DeFelitta, and *40 Shades Of Blue* directed by Ira Sachs. She recently de-signed Annie Baker's first feature *Janet Planet*.

Lizzie Donelan

Costume Designer

Lizzie Donelan is a Brooklyn-based costume designer for film, TV, and theatre. Her recent film *The Adults* a Universal Films release with director Dustin Guy Defa pre-miered at the Berlin Film Festival in 2023, and starred Michael Cera and Sophia Lillis. Other recent work includes *Funny Face* with director Tim Sutton, *Come Find Me* with director Daniel Poliner, and numerous short films. Her work has premiered at many other festivals including Sundance and Tribeca.

As an assistant, she has worked with celebrated designer Suttirat Anne Larlarb most notably on the James Bond film *No Time to Die*, and the Star Wars television series *Obi-Wan Kenobi*. In addition to designing numerous off-Broadway and regional pro-ductions, she has worked in both assistant and associate designer roles for several Broadway productions including *Macbeth*, *Finding Neverland*, and *Waitress*.

The Crew

Lizzie Donelan (cont.)

Her TV work has aired on networks including HBO, Disney Plus, Netflix, Adult Swim, and Comedy Central. When not designing, Lizzie is an avid painter.

Lucian Johnson

Editor

Lucian Johnston is a film editor based in New York City.

He became an apprentice editor in the Motion Picture Editors Guild in 2013 on Darren Aronofsky's *Noah*, and spent the next 5 years working as an assistant editor for Ang Lee, Noah Baumbach, Scott Cooper, and the Coen Brothers.

He edited his first feature film, *Hereditary* (A24) with Jennifer Lame in 2018, which marked the beginning of an ongoing collaboration with director Ari Aster. He went on to cut Ari's second film, *Midsommar* (A24) in 2019, and just finished *Beau is Afraid* (A24), their third feature together.

Other work includes the *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (A24 | 2021) alongside the inimitable Reginald Jaynes, and *Causeway* (A24 | 2022), directed by Lila Neugebauer. Most recently, he edited Annie Baker's debut feature film, *Janet Planet*, which will have its world premiere at the 50th Telluride Film Festival in September 2023.

Paul Hsu

Sound Design

Sound Designer Paul Hsu has worked on a wide range of films as both Re-Recording Mixer and Supervising Sound Editor. Director collaborations include mixes for Noah Baumbach, Spike Lee, Tom McCarthy, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Harold Ramis, Sam Mendes, Ari Aster, and Bennett Miller. Notable projects include the Academy Award winning and nominated films *Foxcatcher*, *Spotlight*, *Tick, Tick...Boom!*, and *Summer Of Soul*. Paul is an owner/principal of c5 sound, along with partners Ron Bochar and Phil Stockton. Paul's background is originally in music, attending conservatory before moving to New York and training as a music tracking and mixing engineer, and then making the switch to film only thanks to the inherently cross-pollinated creative culture of NYC.

Jessica Kelly

Casting Director

Jessica Kelly is an award-winning casting director based in Los Angeles and New York. She was recently nominated for an Emmy for her work on HBO's award-winning series *Euphoria*.

Jessica's notable feature credits include *Midsommar*, starring Florence Pugh; *Pieces of a Woman*, starring Vanessa Kirby; *X* and *Maxxxine*, starring Mia Goth; *The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent*, starring Nicolas Cage and Pedro Pascal; *John Wick* and *John Wick 2*, starring Keanu Reeves; *Hereditary*, starring Toni Collette and two-time Oscar-winner *Precious*. Other recent television credits include Netflix's *Emily in Paris*, Onyx's *How To Die Alone* starring Natasha Rothwell and HBO's series *The Idol*, starring Lily-Rose Depp and The Weeknd. Other credits include Oscar nominated *Marcel the Shell*, *Rosaline*, *Not Okay*, *Resurrection*, *When You Finish Saving The World*, *A Love Song*, *Blow the Man Down*, *The Climb*, *Nine Days*, *After Yang*, *Luce*, *Wedding Season*, *Boogie*, *See You Yesterday*, *The Other Woman*, *Young Adult*, *Obvious Child*, *Jackie*, *Assassination Nation*, *Skate Kitchen*, *Patti Cake\$*, *Demolition*, *Book Of Henry*, *The Wolverine*, *Perks of Being a Wallflower*, *Lola Versus* and more!

The Cast

Julianne Nicholson

Julianne Nicholson has roles in two forthcoming films for A24. *Dream Scenario*, with Nicholas Cage, will make its world debut at the Toronto International Film Festival and *Janet Planet*, written and directed by Pulitzer Prize winner Annie Baker. Nicholson has also wrapped production on *The Amateur* with Rami Malek. Additionally, she is executive producing and will star in the limited series *Separation Anxiety* based on the best-selling book by Laura Zigman.

In addition to her Emmy award-winning turn in *Mare of Easttown*, Nicholson can be seen in *Winning Time: Rise of the Laker Dynasty* opposite Tracy Letts, *The Outsider*, based on the best-selling book by Stephen King and *Boardwalk Empire* with Steve Buscemi, all for HBO.

Further television credits include guest starring on Showtime's *Masters of Sex*, which earned a Critics' Choice nomination and USA Network's *Eyewitness*, based on the critically acclaimed Norwegian drama. The series was recognized with a GLAAD Award for Outstanding Limited Series. She has worked with John Wells on the medical drama *Presidio Med* which he produced, Steven Spielberg's paranormal drama *The Others*, and David E. Kelly's *Ally McBeal*.

Nicholson's additional film credits include Andrew Dominic's Marilyn Monroe biopic *Blonde*, based on Joyce Carol Oates' novel of the same name and the Roku original comedy *Weird: The Al Yankovic Story*. Previous film projects include *Monos* which received the Special Jury Award in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition at Sundance, the Latin American film, *Initials S.G.*, the Disney+ feature *Togo* with Willem Dafoe, *I, Tonya* with Allison Janney, Maggie Bett's *Novitiate* and *Who We Are Now*, for which IndieWire declared, 'Julianne Nicholson Proves Once Again She's One of the Greatest Actresses Alive.'

Furthermore, Nicholson co-starred in *Black Mass* for Scott Cooper and in John Wells' *August: Osage County*. The ensemble cast won the Hollywood Film Award for Best Ensemble and was nominated for a SAG and Critics' Choice Award in the same category.

Her stage work includes a role she originated in Sam Shepard's play *Heartless*, Melissa James Gibson's play *This* at Playwrights Horizons and Rattlestick's production of Adam Rapp's *Hallway* trilogy.

The Cast

Zoe Ziegler

Eleven-year-old Zoe Ziegler made her acting debut in the lead role of Lacy in the movie *Janet Planet* directed by Pulitzer Prize -winner Annie Baker.

Zoe also has a YouTube channel with over 3,000 subscribers (zns_eventing) where she tailors her videos to those enthusiastic about equestrian matters.

Zoe's other passion is spending time with her horse Selene, as well as her 8 chihuahuas. She has been riding horses since she was 3 years old. Zoe has won numerous ribbons in Hunters and Eventing. Zoe also enjoys running and jumping hurdles, playing piano, swimming, and gymnastics. Zoe also learned to play piano for *Janet Planet* in less than two months.

Zoe hopes someday to be in a movie where she can ride horses.

Elias Koteas

In a career that has spanned over three decades, Elias Koteas has worked seamlessly across film, television and stage, with some of the most talented directors and actors working today. His film credits include multiple collaborations with Atom Egoyan (*The Adjuster, Exotica*), David Fincher (*The Curious Case Of Benjamin Button, Zodiac*), Martin Scorsese (*Shutter Island*), Antoine Fuqua (*Shooter*), Terrence Malick (*Thin Red Line*) and David Cronenberg (*Crash*). He also starred in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles I and III*.

On the television side, Elias can currently be seen in the last and final season of *Goliath* on Amazon opposite Billy Bob Thornton as well as opposite Kate Beckinsale in *Guilty Party*. Prior to that he starred on Dick Wolf's hit series *Chicago PD* for five seasons, and AMC's critically lauded *The Killing* alongside Mireille Enos and Joel Kinnaman.

Elias can currently be seen in the feature film *The Baker* with Ron Perlman. He recently finished filming *Silent Planet*, opposite Briana Middleton.

Will Patton

Will Patton has worked extensively in film and theater. He is perhaps best known for his roles in *Remember The Titans, Armageddon, and No Way Out*. Patton was recently seen in the Oscar nominated film *Minari*, and in the three latest big-screen reboots of

The Cast

Will Patton (cont.)

the *Halloween* film franchise. Patton was nominated in 2022 for Best Actor by the Film Independent Spirit Awards for his performance in *Sweet Thing*.

Patton's upcoming role in Kevin Costner's four-part western epic *Horizon* reunites the two for the fourth time. His many other film appearances include *Boarding School*, *An Actor Prepares*, *Megan Leavey*, and the indie favorite and Cannes Festival Prize winner, *American Honey*.

His recent television credits include recurring roles in the hit series *Yellowstone*, as well as in Amazon's *Outer Range*. He played the role of Captain Weaver for five seasons of Steven Spielberg's *Falling Skies* on TNT. In 2023, Patton can be seen in the Apple+ series *Silo*.

Theater credits include the original production of *Lie Of The Mind*, *Valparaiso*, and *Shoppers Carried By Escalators Into The Flames*. Patton garnered Obie awards for his performances in *What Did He See* and *Fool For Love*. He was last seen on stage in 2017 leading the ensemble cast of Pulitzer prize-winning playwright Annie Baker's play *The Antipodes*.

Sophie Okonedo

Tony & Evening Standard Theatre Award-winning, and Emmy, Academy, BAFTA, BIFA & Olivier Award-nominated actress Sophie Okonedo was born in London and trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Sophie has worked in a variety of media including film, television, theatre and audio drama.

Sophie began her film career in British coming-of-age drama *Young Soul Rebel* and later Stephen Frears' *Dirty Pretty Things* (2002). She received an Academy Award nomination and SAG Award nomination for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Tatiana Rusesabagina in the 2004 film *Hotel Rwanda*. Other notable film credits include: *The Secret Life of Bees* (2008), *Wild Rose* (2019), *Catherine Called Birdy* (2022) and *Heart Of Stone* (2023).

She has starred in numerous television series' including *Criminal Justice* (2009), for which she received a BAFTA TV Award nomination. BBC One's, *Undercover*, for which she won a Royal Television Society Award (2016) and was Emmy Award nominated for her performance in Ryan Murphy's *Ratched* (2020) and BAFTA nominated for *Criminal* (2020) both for Netflix. Other work includes: Amazon's anthology series, *Modern Love*

The Cast

Sophie Okonedo (cont.)

(2021) and fantasy series, *Wheel Of Time* (2021) also Amazon, *Slow Horses* (2022), *Flack* (2019), *Chimerica* (2019) and *Britannia* (2021).

Sophie made her Broadway debut in the 2014 revival of *A Raisin In The Sun* and won the Tony Award for Best Featured Actress in a Play. She was also nominated for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role for her portrayal of Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible*, and an Olivier award for her performance as Cleopatra in *Antony And Cleopatra* opposite Ralph Fiennes. Most recently she starred as the titular role *Medea* on London's West End.

Credits

Crew

Written and Directed by	Annie Baker
Produced by	Dan Janvey Derrick Tseng Annie Baker Andrew Goldman
Executive Producers	Rose Garnett Eva Yates Chelsea Barnard
Co-Producers	Rebecca Ling Wyzan Ivan Lafayette Michael Gottwald
Director of Photography	Maria von Hausswolf
Production Designer	Teresa Mastropiero
Costume Designer	Lizzie Donelan
Edited by	Lucian Johnson

Credits

Sound Design by

Paul Hsu

Music Supervisor

Joe Rudge

Casting Director

Jessica Kelly

Credits

Cast

(in order of appearance)

Lacy	Zoe Ziegler
Male Counselor	Luke Bosco
Susanna	June Walker Grossman
Emily	Abby Harri
Janet	Julianne Nicholson
Wayne	Will Patton
Sequoia	Edie Moon Kearns
Davina	Mary Shultz
Performer 1	Jeremy Louise Eaton
Performer 2	Raky Sastri
Performer 3	John Peitso
Performer 4	Carolyn Walker
Performer 5	Matthew Glassman
Regina	Sophie Okonedo

Credits

Avi

Elias Koteas

Bonnie

Mary Beth Brooker

Contra Dance Caller

George Marshall

Person at End

Laura Litterer

New York

info@a24films.com

646-568-6015

Los Angeles

infoLA@a24films.com

323-900-5300

