



SUBURBAN WILDLIFE

A FILM BY
IMOGEN MCCLUSKEY



Suburban Wildlife is an ambitious debut feature film from co-writer and director Imogen McCluskey.

A coming-of-age film set in Sydney's outer suburbs, Suburban Wildlife explores the struggles of friendship, love, sexuality and independence faced by young adults.

The dreams, desires and surreal yearnings of our characters play out against the hot tarmac, basketball courts, and swimming pools of suburban Australia.



A close knit group of university graduates are left at a crossroads as they are forced to face themselves and wrestle with harsh truths in order to find their way forward.

Synopsis -

Following their recent graduation, four friends distract themselves from the looming responsibilities of adulthood by any means necessary. But with one week left before the departure of their best friend, and as the boundaries between real and surreal blur, they each are faced with decisions that will define the rest of their lives.





Longer Synopsis

Recent graduates and longtime friends - Nina, Louise, Alice and Kane - celebrate their final week together before Louise leaves for London, forever altering their lives and marking the end of their adolescence in Australian suburbia.

Nina wrestles with her sexual identity, and after making a questionable advance on a woman at a party, she is left to come to terms with what she truly wants - and her love and dependence on Louise. The 'mother' of the group, Louise is searching for independence, using her final week in Sydney to come to terms with the reality of her trip, and to make amends with Nina.

Used to the absence of her parents her entire life, Alice has built a hard exterior to protect herself from harm. But when she realises it is hurting those around her, and her new relationship with Ravi, she begins to let her walls down.

Kane, the only friend not to attend university, plans on heading to LA to pursue tattooing full-time. But when his visa is rejected this path is no longer clear - and he must decide whether to reveal his failure to his friends, or head down a path of self-destruction and depression.

Once Louise decides to take them on a roadtrip in their final few days together, all four friends are left with no choice but to face their demons - and each other. By the time Louise leaves they are each left, a bunch of Suburban Wildlife, on the threshold of their lives.



Director's statement

Imogen McCluskey

I grew up not seeing a coming-of-age film told in an Australian voice. We could look to Britain or America or anywhere else in the world, but were left lacking a film that reflected our experience of reaching adulthood in this hilarious, beautiful and bizarre country.

So Suburban Wildlife is a coming-of-age film set in an Australia that I recognise. The suburbia of hot tarmac, brick houses, and messages scribbled on footpaths. Spending sweaty summers at public pools, joyriding at night through empty streets, and dreaming of being anywhere else. The feeling of living on the largest nation island, somewhere that feels so far away from the rest of the world. The feeling of being lost and young and scared. Sunburn and stretchmarks and peeling skin and bruised knees.

Movement is key to the film. Influenced by directors like Kelly Reichardt and Andrea Arnold, the handheld style aims to capture the frenetic energy and anticipation of youth. Quivering frames, whip pans and smooth car rides. The colours are bold and bright, capturing the heat and texture of Australian summers.

We wanted our first feature to speak loud and be bold. To capture the light in the country, its humour and spirit. This film is about the complexity of simultaneously being young and growing older: reaching a cross roads you weren't prepared to meet. It's all part of growing up, of becoming more than just Suburban Wildlife.





Producer's statement

Beatrice Barba-Scuria

Suburban Wildlife is a story very close to my heart. When Imogen and I came together to write this film we both wanted a coming of age film that we would have loved to see growing up in suburban Australia. We had similar ideas that revolved around delayed adulthood, tumultuous friendships, self-discovery and repressed queerness and through the merging of our ideas we came up with Suburban Wildlife.

When I left High School, I felt that the growing pains didn't stop and life continued being complicated, yet the friendship group stuck around. These four friends in the film have become habitual animals; going to parties, driving around, hanging out in car parks. Once a key member in their group, Louise – initiator of all plans and the one with the car decides to leave, they realise that maybe they're only friends because of convenience and habit.

We shot it in the heat of February 2017 and much like the film we spend lots of time in cars with friends, laughing and having fun. It was one of the most challenging experiences of my life, shooting a feature film with barely enough to feed the cast and crew but I wouldn't change anything. We all learnt so much on this film and have produced something fantastic.

Watching Suburban Wildlife now, I'm transported not only to the time when we shot the film but also taken to the place I was at when I was sitting in the front seat of my best friend's car, driving to absolutely nowhere. I really hope that the Australian youth can find something that they can

Filmed over a sweltering summer in February 2017, our passionate volunteer crew faced 50°C weather and challenging locations, filming inside sweaty cars, remote watering holes and beside busy highways. Most of the heads of department were female, and off the back of a successful Pozible crowdfunding campaign we raised just under \$4000 from 50 supporters, which was spread across the intense 14-day shoot.

Many of the cast and crew have gone on to collaborate together on other projects, including Hannah Lehmann's Instagram series @theoutthere and Imogen McCluskey's short film 'Gem', which is screening internationally.





Hannah Lehmann

An inquisitive and unconventional performer, Hannah's love of storytelling and creating is an all consuming lifestyle that drives her everyday. Hannah has performed in many short films, plays and features, and in 2018 she will star in 'Australia', an American road trip film set in the outback, as well as 'The Out There', a sci fi Instagram series which Hannah also wrote and produced. Hannah is also a writer and filmmaker, working with several companies in the US including New Form and Adolescent Content. Vulnerability and a sense of unbridled anticipation at the heart of everything Hannah does in her work, and making films is the joy of her life.





Maddy McWilliam

Maddy McWilliam is an interdisciplinary artist who has been dedicated to the Australian Theatre and Film industry for the past 12 years. Having completed an Advanced Diploma (Film & Theatre) at Sydney Theatre School (2013) Maddy went on to train internationally in The Acting Corps (USA 2014). After graduation with her Bachelor of Dramatic Arts at the Wesley Institute (2017) Maddy has continued to work in all mediums of performance including Film, Theatre and Performance Art.

Highlights of her credits as an Actress include ABC's "The Checkout" (2018), Sundance Finalist Short Film "Natural" (2018), U.S. T.V. Series "Deadly Women" (2017), Lumuma produced Short Film "Sugar" (2017), Mariko Tamaki Graphic Novel Reading "Skim" (2017) Sydney Writer's Festival, whilst her latest Performance Art Installation featured 2 GRRRLZ 1 CUBE (Oxford Arts Factory 2016). Maddy has featured in many Theatres around Sydney; most recently she featured in Dark dell'Arte (NSW High-School Tour, 2018) and "Sex Object" (The Depot Theatre 2017). Maddy specialises in teaching physical theatre and looks forward to continuing as one of Australia's rising young actors.

Alex King

Alex King is an actor based in Sydney. His career so far has spanned film, TV, theatre and radio. He most recently appeared on ABC's The Checkout. Driven by a desire to connect with viewers every time he appears onscreen, Suburban Wildlife gave Alex the privilege of portraying a complex and sensitive character that audiences will easily relate to. He aims to continue helping to tell honest and refreshing Australian stories.





Priscilla Doueihy

After leading in many shorts and featuring across TV and Web Series, Priscilla Doueihy makes her debut feature film in Suburban Wildlife. Born in Australia, Priscilla spent her childhood in Lebanon before returning to Sydney at the age of 13. She began her professional acting career at the The Actors College of Theatre & Television when she graduated with an Advanced Diploma in Stage and Screen.

Soon after, she moved to London for the role of Cecilia in Widows for the London Contemporary Theatre and continued stage performances across London for two years. Upon returning to Sydney, Priscilla continued Screenwriting and Video Editing while her acting career transitioned to screen acting. She is currently in production for an exciting upcoming SBS mini-series 'The Rope'.





Nina	Madeleine McWilliam
Louise	Hannah Lehmann
Alice	Priscilla Doueihy
Kane	Alex King

Ravi	Adrian Giribon
Phoebe	Madeleine Jurd
Alea	Emily Havea
Flora	Daniela Haddad

Manager	Matt Lausch
Shivani	Divya Vaman
Dylan	Adam Kovarik
Boy	Clayton McBride
Teen 1	André Shannon
Teen 2	Alex Culliver



Director Imogen McCluskey
Producers Sophie Hattch
Imogen McCluskey
Beatrice Barbeau-Scurla

Co-Writers Imogen McCluskey
Beatrice Barbeau-Scurla
Cinematographer Lucca Barone-Peters
Associate Producers Linus Carey Gibson

Editor Adam Shean
Sophie Hattch

Production Designer Alex Culliver
Art Department Assist Lou Dietz-Henderson
Lizzie Dingle

Composer Isha Ram Das
Sound Designer Shane Vancuylenberg
1st Assistant Director Stephanie Stretton
2nd Assistant Director Linus Carey Gibson
Sound Recordists Adam Boys
Oliver Brighton
Gavin Davis
Aaron Healey
James Henderson Matt
Kacey

1st Assistant Camera Adam Shean
Zac Hardaker
Davis Jensen
Parish Malitano Ramon
Samson Mikaeli Stanton
Katherine Williamson

Script Supervisor Katherine Williamson

Executive Producers Fat Salmon Productions
Take Two Productions

Press Clippings

Sydney Morning Herald: Tears, favours and pesto pasta: the challenge of making a feature film for \$4000 - [READ MORE](#)

SBS: Here are 12 queer highlights from the 2019 Sydney Film Festival - [READ MORE](#)

Rough Cut: The Spaces Between: An Interview with Imogen McCluskey and Béatrice Barbeau-Scuria - [READ MORE](#)

Film Ink: Straight out of the Suburbs - [READ MORE](#)

NEWS: Suburban Wildlife to close London Australian Film Festival - with director Imogen McCluskey honoured as Debut Director - [READ MORE](#)

Film Pulse: 2019 Taormina Film Festival Announces Lineup - [READ MORE](#)

See more at suburbanwildlifefilm.com/press



Specifications

Country	Australia
Year	2018
Duration	85 minutes
Genre	Drama
Original Format	HDV Sony MXF
Screening Format	DCP
Aspect Ratio	1.85
Sound	Stereo

Contact

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