

GLITCH

A SHORT FILM



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SUMMARY

LOGLINE

TWO LONELY HEARTS SEEK COMFORT IN THE ARMS OF A ROBOT SUPPLIED BY A DATING APP CALLED AI CUPID. THINGS GET COMPLICATED WHEN EMOTIONS, FRIENDS AND A TOXIC EX GET INVOLVED – WILL THEY FIND WHAT THEY ARE LOOKING FOR BEFORE THEIR TIME IS UP?

Set in the not-too-distant future, **GLITCH** is a story about sex, intimacy and relationships. In a world disrupted by climate change and relying on the advancement of AI for all the answers, it asks, what does it mean to be human? The script has just been awarded “Recommended” status by the Austin Film Festival and has an award-winning production and creative team attached to it. The short film is intended as a proof of concept for a TV miniseries.

THE STORY

Mid-30s Mia, still optimistic even after endless scrolling on dating apps, seeks a man who a) matches his profile pics b) doesn't ask cheesy questions c) doesn't ghost her. But her efforts only lead to her being stood up again, alone in a restaurant with a bottle of wine for what feels like the thousandth time.

Mid-30s Luke awaits a marriage proposal from Angus, his long-term partner, but misses signs of commitment issues. In a heart-wrenching moment, Angus publicly ends their relationship, shattering Luke's soulmate dreams.

Fortunately for Mia and Luke, their robot waitress, Sofia, introduces them to the ultimate solution: "AI Cupid," a cutting-edge dating app revolutionising romance. AI Cupid offers humans a choice of robots with a range of physical attributes, programmed with the latest Artificial Intelligence. Convincingly humanoid, the robots can adapt to meet their date's every need – great listeners, never ghost you

– ready to cater for every desire. Amidst the backdrop of climate change-induced disruptions, which Mia and Luke resolutely try to ignore, they find solace in the latest cutting-edge creation emerging from AI Cupid's innovative laboratory: Leaf. Leaf is physically perfect in their eyes and raring to deliver the "Fuck Buddy" programme they have both selected. After a few teething problems (robot's need very specific commands in order to provide the right service) they both enjoy great sex and book a follow up date with their respective Leafs.

Mia hopes that she can shape her Leaf into the ideal boyfriend. He's a great listener ... but sadly robots don't tell great anecdotes as they are not allowed to share stories about other dates they have been on. And as for their sense of humour ... AI still has a way to go.

Luke's date starts out more successfully. He takes his Leaf to a party where he knows Angus will be, hoping to win him back by making him jealous. But it soon becomes clear that partying with Leaf won't make Luke happy, and neither will getting back with his toxic ex.

By the end of the film, both Mia and Luke realise that you can't manufacture love. They find happiness in a way that's perfect for them – Mia at ease in her own company, Luke reconnecting with his friends.

And as for Leaf – both versions of Leaf get rebooked straight away and head off with their next dates – wiped clean and ready to go!



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

“It’s going to be interesting to see how society deals with artificial intelligence, but it will definitely be cool.”

Colin Angle, CEO of iRobot

The initial spark for this film came from a conversation with co-writer Sharon, where we shared our frustrating experiences using dating apps. We delved into the concept of finding the perfect date and how it could be achieved. As AI technology becomes more prevalent in our lives, we wanted to explore the intricacies of having a physical relationship with AI and how it interprets human connections to appear more “human.”

After the success of my debut short film, BLUEBERRY SMOOTHIE, I aimed to expand my directorial vision and venture into the realm of dark comedy. GLITCH will be shot using a single camera, immersing viewers in the dating experiences of Mia and Luke with their AI robot, Leaf. To enhance the comedic elements and maintain a brisk pace, some scenes will be presented in split-screen, showcasing the protagonists’ interactions with their respective Leafs simultaneously. The challenge lies in orchestrating these synchronised scenes, which I eagerly anticipate testing.

At first, Mia and Luke believe that Leaf holds the solution to their relationship woes. However, my aim is for audiences to gain a broader understanding that, regardless of gimmicks and technological advancements, a successful relationship starts with self-connection. AI is not a panacea and may even exacerbate existing problems.

While climate change looms in the background, GLITCH primarily foregrounds the inherent human need for connection, regardless of external circumstances. This short film serves as a proof of concept for a television series, where we will delve deeper into the emotional growth of the Leaf character while climate change becomes an increasingly disruptive force.

GLITCH is a captivating exploration of love, technology, and self-discovery, leaving audiences with a profound understanding that genuine connections cannot be manufactured. Through this film, we aim to entertain, provoke thought, and ignite conversations about the delicate balance between human emotion and AI interactions.

MOODBOARD



CHARACTERS



LEAF

AI Cupid's most popular model, multiple Leafs can be found around the City fulfilling their dating duties. Rippling muscles, supermodel handsome, advanced listening skills, the user can easily adapt them to their dating requirements. At least, that is what is promised...



LUKE

Mid 30s, has been in a relationship with Angus for five years – quite an achievement for this City! An extrovert out on the gay scene, his natural tendency to hope for the best has caused him to avoid dealing with the problems which lead to his relationship breakdown. He takes an impulsive punt on AI Cupid and soon finds a good-looking robot can be put to all sorts of good uses!



MIA

Mid-30s, straight, has been hitting the dating apps for what seems like forever. She moved to the City for work five years ago and is successful in all other areas of life – she just can't pin down a fulfilling relationship. Disappointment hasn't dulled her optimism and enthusiasm so when introduced to the idea of AI Cupid it doesn't take her long to get to grips with it – in all senses!

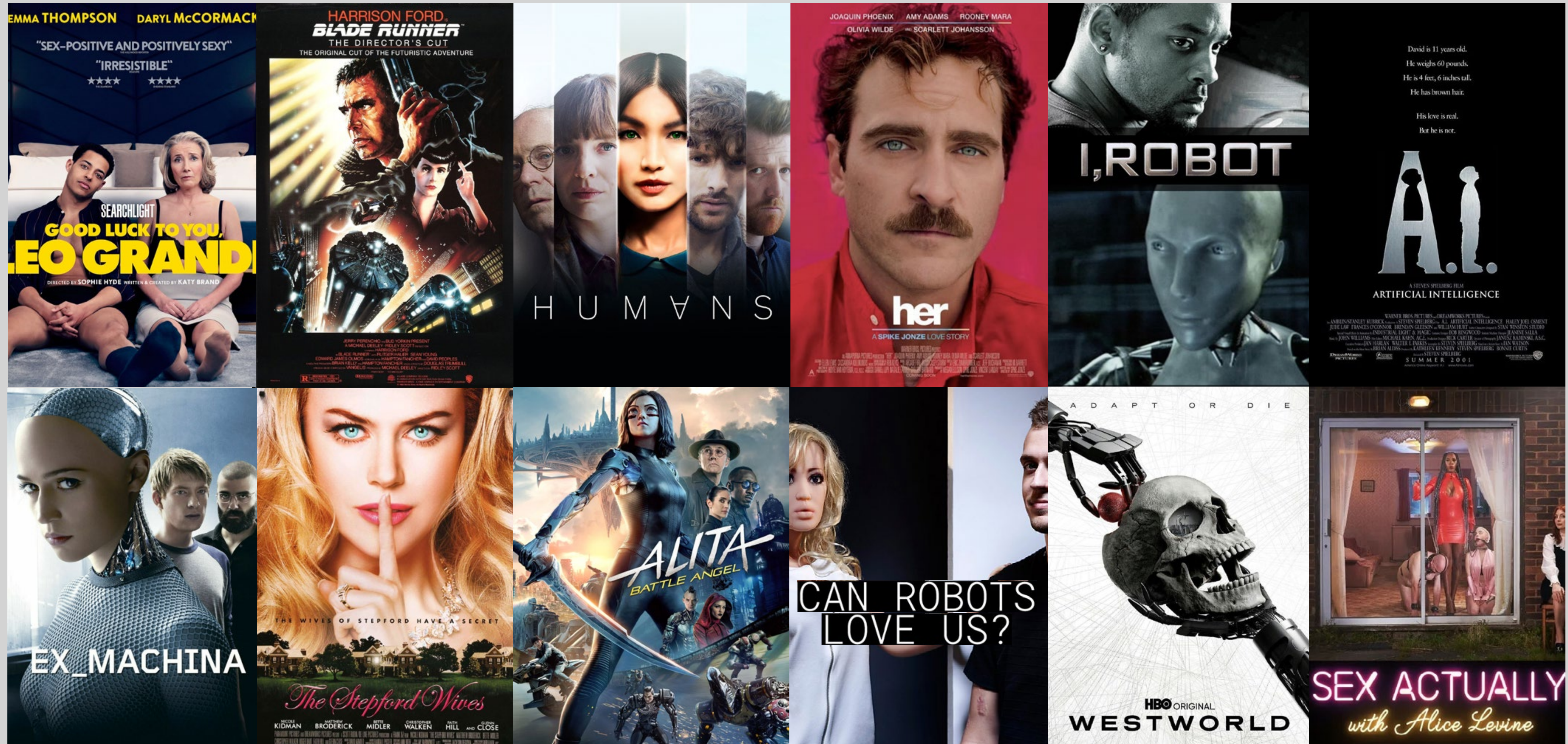


ANGUS

Mid 30s, has been in a relationship with Luke for five years but for him it has all turned stale and, to his mind, is irretrievable. He just wants to immerse himself in his work right now (he's an interior designer – they have a great apartment!) and Luke is blocking his creativity.

Images are for illustrative purposes only.

INSPIRATION





THEIR WORLD

GIUSEPPE'S RESTAURANT

INT. GIUSEPPE'S RESTAURANT - EVENING

A small trattoria style restaurant with wooden tables and chairs. Candles create a romantic ambience whilst plants of all descriptions hang from the beams. To one side, a well-stocked bar with a coffee machine and floor-to-ceiling wine rack. Behind the bar, SOFIA (mid 40s), a robot waitress with perfect poise and complexion, is attached by a cable from her hip to an electrical socket on the wall, her head tilting downward.

On one side of the main door, next to the large window, MIA (mid 30s), full beat hair and make-up in a flattering dress, is sitting alone at a table set for two. She sips her glass of wine and watches every man rushing past the window in the torrential rain. She tops up her glass from the bottle in the nearby cooler and turns over her phone next to her on the table, refreshing the screen.

At a separate table beside the window on the other side of the main door, also set for two, LUKE (mid 30s) smartly dressed, slightly anxious, finishes the remnants of his G&T.

A frisson of excitement for Mia and Luke as they see a man approaching the door. As he enters, Sofia raises her head, her sparkling violet-blue eyes flicker open. ANGUS (mid 30s) shakes his umbrella and catches Mia staring at him. Mia smiles towards him and flicks her hair. Angus throws Mia a puzzled look and sits on the chair opposite Luke. Mia slumps back, grabs her glass of wine and watches the action unfold at Luke's table.



MIA'S HOME

INT. MIA'S LOUNGE - SAME NIGHT

A small lounge with the furniture arranged around the television, a mix of photographs and paintings on the walls and a well stocked drinks cabinet personalise the space.

Mia, in sweatpants and a T-shirt that accentuates her figure, hair artfully tousled and full beat make up, tentatively opens her front door. LEAF (appearance early 30s) hair smooth and shiny, is standing on the doorstep, dressed casually in jeans and a tight-fitting light blue T-shirt which shows off his toned physique. Mia stares speechless into his sparkling violet-blue eyes.

LEAF 1

Hello Mia, I am Leaf.

MIA

Fuck.

She opens the door fully, expecting him to step through, but he just stands there on the doorstep, waiting.

MIA

Are you coming in?

LEAF 1

For your safety I have been programmed to wait until I am invited in.

MIA

For fuck sake. I am inviting you into my home.

LEAF 1

Thank you.

He enters.



LUKE'S HOME

INT. LUKE'S LOUNGE - SAME NIGHT

An open plan room with large bay windows looking out onto rooftops covered with sedum and solar panels. Luke is sprawled out on his luxury corner sofa amongst an assortment of cushions, silently crying into a G&T. SOUND: "Beep, beep, beep" Sniffing, he picks up his phone. A pop up reads: "You have exceeded your monthly alcohol allowance. Please be aware you are at risk of Impaired Judgment at this time."

LUKE

Fuck off.

He opens Instagram and begins to scroll through Angus's feed. As each image appears his sniffing intensifies until he comes across a sponsored advert for AI Cupid. His sniffing stops and his eyes widen, as he stares at the same handsome man from the bus stop advert, this time he's topless, smiling and pointing at him. A slogan reads: "Date the way you choose, whenever you choose, perfect date every time!"

He ponders for a moment remembering Sofia in the restaurant.

LUKE

Fuck it.

He clicks on the image and downloads the app.



KU BAR

INT. KU BAR - EVENING

A crowded bar with neon lights that illuminate a long counter. Beside the large windows, at a couple of high tables, Luke and Leaf are with a GROUP of MEN and one WOMAN. Luke is looking around, occasionally glancing at the door. One of the men, birthday boy ROBERTO, is teasing Leaf.

ROBERTO

(to Leaf)

Come on, show us your abs.

LUKE

Roberto!

ROBERTO

Alright then, show us your cock.

The group laugh.

LEAF 2

I'm sorry, I don't take commands from anyone except my date.

THE GROUP

Oooooooooohhh.

CREATIVE TEAM

DARREN MURPHY: WRITER / DIRECTOR

Darren is an actor, writer, producer and director. He recently completed his debut short film BLUEBERRY SMOOTHIE as a writer / director, where he was awarded the New York Screenwriting Award 2023 for Best Short Screenplay LGBTQIA Winner and Winner Best Performance – LGBTQ+ Toronto Film Festival 2023. The film had its world premiere at the London Independent Film Festival, 2023.

He founded his production company Making Productions in 2014 to produce bold new writing and existing work in new and exciting ways to engage and entertain audiences. Combining newly discovered talent with experienced collaborators, partner organisations and co producers, the aim is to extend the scope of creativity in the performing arts. He is passionate about championing Women, Global Majority and LGBTQ+ creatives.

With MP Darren has produced 24 plays, musicals and operas. Collaborating with King's Head Theatre, they have produced 10 shows including La bohème which was nominated for an Olivier Award for Best New Opera Production in 2018.

Glitch will be the fourth short film produced by Darren and his second as writer and director.

SHARON BURRELL: WRITER

As well as a screenwriter, Sharon is a Climate Psychology Consultant and was on the judging panel for the Climate Impact category in this year's Edinburgh Television Awards. GLITCH adheres to current best practice with regard to climate storytelling, exploring how we can make climate conversations more constructive by normalising disruption as part of our changing lives.

Sharon has over a decade's worth of experience in theatre and film making, as a writer, director and producer, most recently as First Assistant Director on BLUEBERRY SMOOTHIE (selected for the London Independent Film Festival, 2023) and notably as the director of OLD FOOLS which became The Independent's top pick of London theatre and received multiple 5 star reviews.

MEGHAN O'LOUGHLIN: PRODUCER

Meghan is a producer from Northern Ireland. After completing her degree in Business Management from Queen's University Belfast, she went on to study Screen Acting with Bow Street Academy Dublin in 2021. Meghan has assisted in numerous small budget productions and has been First Assistant Director of two feature films; HOPE directed by Bobby Marno, and THE UNHOLYLANDS directed by Paddy Duffy.

With her background in business and enthusiasm for the creative industries, Meghan has found her place as a producer and has recently worked on projects with Crayola, Scholastics, and Oxford University Press. Meghan is also a member of Women in Film and TV UK, and Female Film Club.

CHRIS CARR: PRODUCER

Chris is an accomplished producer with a diverse portfolio. He has worked for 15 years in commercials and corporate films and produced content for brands such as Epson, Microsoft, NS&I, Phaidon Press and Superdrug. He also produced Thomas Dolby's music video THE TOADLICKERS, nominated for a Webby Award. Chris has complimented corporate and commercial work by producing stage plays, short films and feature films. Chris produced the short film VICTIMS as part of Film London's Best of Borough Awards. It starred Hattie Morahan and Briana Corrigan. Singer and Presenter Alesha Dixon joined the film as an Associate Producer. The film explored the impact of domestic abuse on a family and gained recognition with screenwriter Rick Hughes being nominated for a Scottish BAFTA New Talent Award. The film is currently available on Apple TV and Amazon Prime. He also produced the micro-budget feature film HOW NOT TO DISAPPEAR COMPLETELY, which won Best Feature at the Arlington Film Festival. He also produced the stage plays ANTIGONE IN NEW YORK and THE CRAZY LOCOMOTIVE for the UWARGA theatre company.

Chris's recent work includes the short spy thriller THE DRY CLEANER, which received multiple award nominations and accolades, with former DSS Special Agent Fred Burton saying that the security services could use the film as a training film on the perils of espionage. Additionally, Chris actively conducts research in current affairs as the producer and host of the long-running Secrets & Spies Podcast, featuring insightful interviews with notable figures like John Sweeney, Frank Snep, Malcolm Nance, and recently with the former head of the US Department of Energy, Rolff Mowatt Larsen, discussing climate change and its geopolitical implications.

DISTRIBUTION

Our key film festival goals to achieve successful international film festival exposure

We aim to achieve successful domestic and international film festival exposure and to create the most desirable profile for the film. Most of our selection are Academy Award and BAFTA qualifying festivals and we aim to achieve our goals by targeting the following festivals for either World, National or International Premieres during the 2024/2025 season.

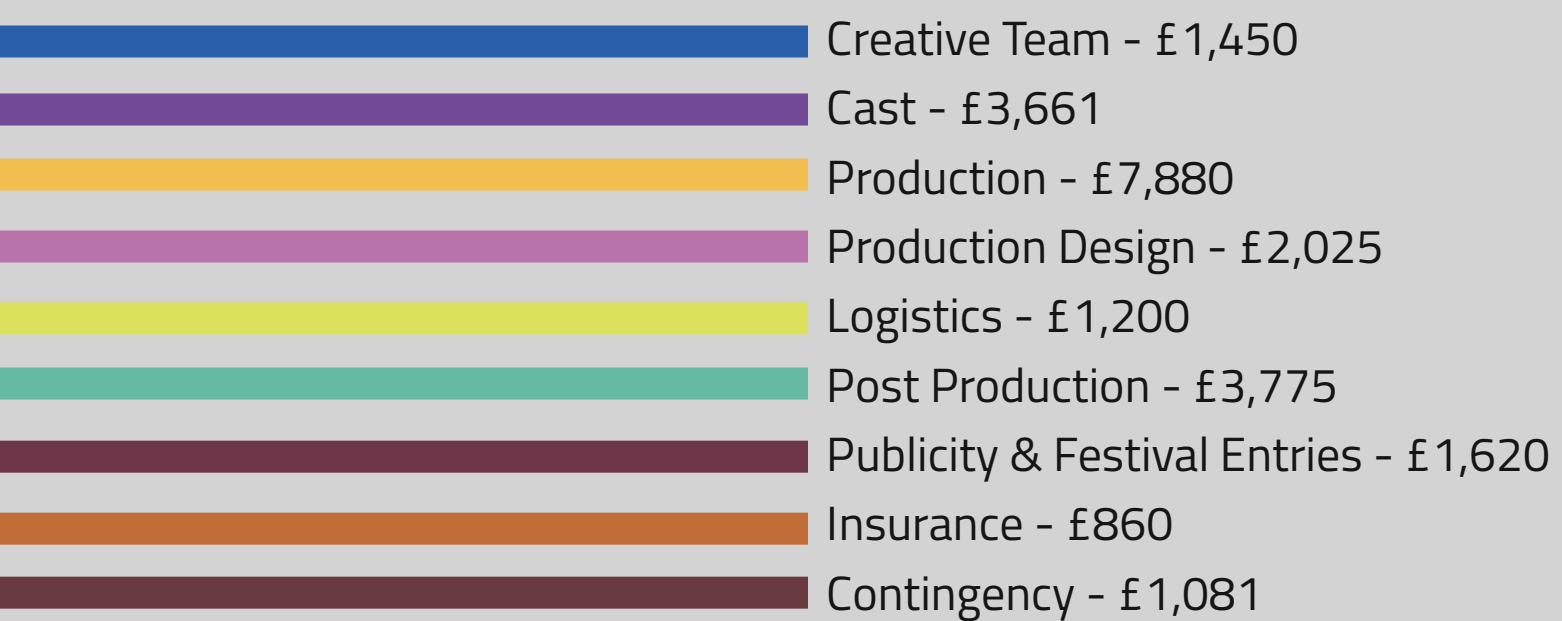
When the film has completed its festival run, we intend to acquire an international sales agent and distributor for the film with a view to having the film released on platforms that programme short films.

KEY FESTIVAL SCREENINGS:

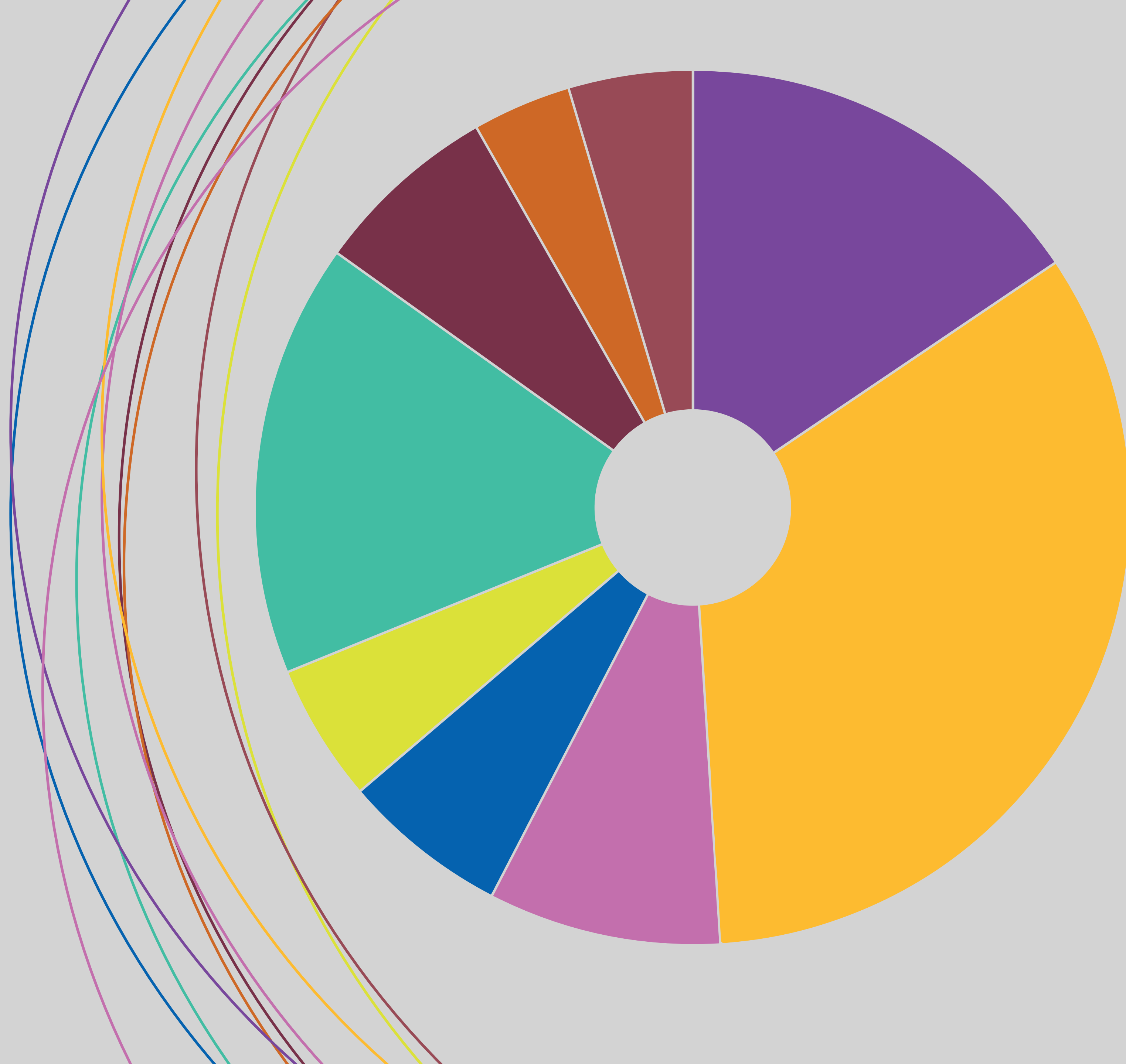
London Short Film Festival | January
Sundance US | January
Berlinale | February
Clermont-Ferrand | March
SXSW | March
BFI Flare | March
Glasgow Short Film Festival | March
Tampere | April
Film Fest Dresden | April
Aspen | April
Short Shorts Festival & Asia | April
Krakow Film Festival | May
Cannes | May
Tribeca Film Festival | June
St Kilda | June
Palm Springs Short Film Festival | June
OutFest | July
Rhode Island (Flickers) | August
Edinburgh International Film Festival | August
New York Film Festival (NYFF) | September
Out On Film: Atlanta's LGBTQ Film Festival | September
Venice Film Festival | September
Encounters | September
BFI London Film Festival | October
Raindance | October
Warsaw International Film Festival | October

BUDGET

Breakdown of Budget:



Total Budget - £23,552



FUTURE LIFE

This 20 minute film stands alone as a perfect story about love in a world grown reliant on AI. However, it is also intended as a proof of concept for a TV mini series (suggested format, eight hour long episodes). Over the course of the series, the audience will follow one of the Leaf robots. In each episode he will interact with a new human and learn new ways of thinking, behaving... and feeling. However, as the series progresses, we discover not even a high-functioning robot can escape the impacts of the changing climate on his environment. And humans can't avoid personal and societal problems by escaping into the arms of a robot.



THANK YOU.

We would very much like your involvement in making this project a reality.

GLITCH and our other project in pre-production, SHIFT, explore how comedy can help us face the difficult truths about our changing environment, and potentially change our behaviours. GLITCH is also a proof of concept for a TV miniseries, so could be a chance to get in at the beginning for something much bigger.

If you are inspired to help with financial or in kind support, we'd love to hear from you to see how we can work together.

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