



SHIFT

A SHORT FILM

INDEX

LOGLINE	—	3
THE STORY	—	4
DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT	—	5
MOODBOARD	—	6
THE CHARACTERS	—	7
INSPIRATION	—	8
LOCATION	—	9
THE CREATIVE TEAM	—	10
DISTRIBUTION	—	11
BUDGET	—	12
CONTACT DETAILS	—	13

LOGLINE

AWARD-WINNING ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGNER GAIA IS ABOUT TO SEE HER REPUTATION GO UP IN SMOKE AS HER SUV-LOVING BOSS TAKES ON A NEW FOSSIL FUEL BURNING CLIENT. SHE FINDS HERSELF ON A SURREAL TRIP, MEETING A HOST OF STRANGE, AND YET FAMILIAR, CHARACTERS WHO TRY TO HELP HER DO THE RIGHT THING. CAN SHE FIND THE COURAGE TO SPEAK OUT BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE, OR WILL IMPOSTER SYNDROME DEFEAT HER?

THE STORY

Morning sun illuminates a PR agency's open plan office space. A few people in casual dress dash about trying to look busy. Every surface is covered with awards: "Marketer of the Year – Gaia Pankhurst"; "Campaign of the Year – Gaia Pankhurst for Love Your Green Self"; "Top 30 Under 30 – Gaia Pankhurst, Category: Sustainability". The walls are also covered with magazine covers and campaign posters: the tagline "A Million Tiny Rebellions" accompanies an image of a young mother rejecting plastic packaging in the grocery aisle of a supermarket and a Greenpeace logo; the tagline "Count Carbon, Not Calories" accompanies an image of a young woman throwing a set of weighing scales out of a window and a World Wildlife Fund logo; an Evening Standard magazine cover with a photo of a mixed race woman, in her early 30s, dressed in a vintage shirt and jeans, holding a houseplant, and the headline "Love Your Green Self – meet the woman making eco-living cool".

Gaia, the woman on the cover of the Evening Standard, stands looking out the window at the garden terrace. Her reverie is disrupted by Sophie (early 20s, tattoos and piercings), the office

assistant, who calls her to the breakout area. Gaia joins her team – Trisha (50s, shit-hot at numbers and looking fabulous), and Frank (mid 20s, shit-hot at tech and working a "geek-chic" look).

Frances (40, big hair, bigger personality) swings through the glass doors, carrying a Starbucks paper cup, an assortment of designer shopping bags and a selection of holiday brochures rolled under her arm. She throws her cup in the wrong recycling bin and instantly we see why there is conflict between her and Gaia's team.

Frances has an announcement to make – the future of the London office has been under threat but great news – they have just won the Carbonix account. This doesn't land well with Gaia and her team – Carbonix is a fossil fuel burning, plastic creating, pollution dumping corporate behemoth. They definitely don't want anything to do with helping them greenwash their activities. But as Frances points out, the environmental organisations they work for don't pay enough to keep the lights on – no Carbonix, no London office. There'll be a celebration later, some bubbles and some food that Sophie is organising. Indeed, Sophie has made a vegan mushroom quiche – knowing full well that Frances and most of the office won't touch it.

Gaia, Trisha and Frank hang back in the breakout area after everyone else has gone. What to do? Gaia in particular is conflicted – she doesn't want the London office to close and everyone lose their jobs, but her whole reputation is built on being authentically green. Can she make a success of going her own way? She comfort eats a substantial amount of the vegan mushroom quiche.

Gaia goes outside to think. As the sun beats down on her she starts to feel a little woozy. She becomes aware of a ladybird crawling across her hand. She looks at it lovingly. It looks her in the

eye and says "Don't be giving me those doe eyes, bitch, it's your fault I'm the only ladybird out here." Gaia tries to explain but the ladybird flies away. Trisha and Frank watch on bemused – Sophie joins them and realises Gaia has eaten all the vegan mushroom quiche – bad idea, it was packed with magic mushrooms...

Gaia is having a lie down in the sunshine but is quickly woken by someone shaking her. It's Trisha. But not Trisha. She has a silvery aura around her – like a Disney Fairy Godmother. She urges Gaia to get away from the office – danger is coming, she must escape. Too late, Frances arrives. But not Frances. Her red hair has spiralled up into horns and her designer gear has turned vampish – like a Disney Wicked Witch. She laughs at Gaia – escape from here? Never. She could never leave the agency and join those crazy tofu-eating environmentalists – she sometimes forgets her keep cup and those shoes aren't vegan!

Gaia fights back – at least I'm trying, and at least I have my ideas, you have nothing without this office! Frances gasps, wounded. She summons a shadowy figure from the bushes. As it approaches it is clear it is almost human – made up of keep cups, bags-for-life and odd-shaped vegetables that the supermarkets didn't want. Gaia starts to quake – it's her Imposter Syndrome.

Frances laughs maniacally but suddenly Frank appears – with a tiger. The tiger speaks – he was adopted for £30 last year as a birthday present from the team and look what he has become – a symbol of all that is good in Gaia and her friends. He urges Gaia to have faith in herself and her abilities, to drive out materialistic values and love her green self! Gaia's Imposter Syndrome disappears in a puff of smoke, as does Frances.

She is shaken awake by Trisha. Normal Trisha. The drinks trolley has arrived. Frances is holding court,

bragging about the holiday in the Maldives she has booked with her Carbonix bonus for her husband and her six children. Still high, Gaia interrupts her. "You know what Frances, you and everyone like you made me feel I couldn't make a difference. But I can, and I will!" Gaia, Trisha and Frank stride out to applause from Sophie and confused looks from the others. Frances tries to stop them but the tiger appears, blocking her way, letting out a massive roar.



MISSION STATEMENT

This film, based on an original story set out by Sharon, exploring climate and queer themes, holds profound personal significance for me as both a writer and director. It delves into the intricate choices we face in light of climate change and its far-reaching environmental impact. Through this cinematic journey, we aim to awaken the audience to the power of even the smallest actions, illustrating how they can collectively lead us towards a brighter future. Gaia and her team provide a fresh take on what environmentalists look like, moving away from negative activist stereotypes perpetuated by mainstream media. They serve as relatable and inspiring role models, showcasing that making a difference can be fun and enjoyable.

Sharon and I share a common belief in the importance of portraying Gaia and Frank as queer characters without emphasising their sexuality as the primary focus. By presenting their identities within a world that wholeheartedly embraces them, we shift the narrative spotlight onto their values and the global issues they confront. Irrespective of their sexual orientation, our intention is to weave relatable, everyday stories that resonate with viewers, transcending stereotypes and embracing universal human experiences.

In Gaia's workplace, an initially ordinary day takes an unexpected turn when news emerges that jeopardises her very existence. Faced with a critical decision, Gaia must confront whether to accept the status quo or embark on a transformative journey to effect meaningful change. Her path becomes a compelling exploration of self-discovery and resilience in the face of adversity.

The film intricately blends a light-hearted and humorous tone with fantastical scenarios, while delicately portraying the struggles we all encounter in the face of climate change. Drawing from our personal experiences with imposter syndrome, we weave Gaia's story with authenticity and vulnerability. Despite her achievements and contributions to the planet, Gaia grapples with feelings of inadequacy and the fear of being an imposter. This internal struggle, and the power of ego-driven voices, are confronted through the artistry of fantasy, ultimately leading Gaia towards self-empowerment and growth.

Inspired by the film "Everything, Everywhere, All At Once," we sought to create a vibrant and visually captivating fantasy world, challenging Gaia's ideals and allowing her to emerge stronger, more confident, and optimistic about her future prospects. By juxtaposing reality with fantasy, we invite the audience on a transformative journey of their own, prompting reflection upon the choices we make and the impact they have on the world around us. To visually enhance the storytelling, I will employ a mix of 16mm film stock for the office scenes and digital technology with VFX and SFX for the fantastical elements. This fusion of traditional and modern techniques creates a rich tapestry, bringing the characters and their extraordinary world to life.

In conclusion, we invite the audience to confront the issues often overlooked and ignored, using Gaia's journey as a narrative device to question our own choices. Together, let us embark on this cinematic exploration, raising awareness that even the smallest actions can pave the way towards a better world for all.

MOODBOARD



CHARACTERS



GAIA

An award-winning PR campaigner for green causes, Gaia walks the talk and lives a sustainable lifestyle with her girlfriend the best they can in a large city. But her kind of clients are best suited to smaller agencies – and her Imposter Syndrome is holding her back from setting up on her own. With the help of her team, can she do what's best for them and for the planet?



TRISHA

Sales director Trisha, late fifties, loves the environment – always wears pre-loved, supports her greentech entrepreneur husband, goes all out to get the best for her environmentally-friendly clients. When the chance to escape the agency comes around, she is Gaia's biggest cheerleader, eager to see the team she loves thrive before she retires.



SOPHIE

Eco-warrior at the weekends, tolerates her job in a PR agency during the week to pay the bills before she travels the world. Loves Gaia and her team and supports them best she can while still keeping Frances on side.



FRANCES

A designer-clad, ruthlessly ambitious boss in an international PR agency. Frances, early forties, will do anything to protect the office she heads up. An SUV driving mother of four, she goes through life with no conscious awareness of her impact on the environment. Can Frances persuade Gaia that greenwashing for their new client Carbonix is the only way forward?

Olivia Hallinan is confirmed for the role of Frances.



FRANK

Digital campaign guru - bespectacled, nerdy, yet handsome geek in his early 20s. Tea lover with a keen interest in blending his own Earl Grey. Has enthusiastically supported Gaia's sustainability campaigns but always has to have an eye on paying the bills.

Images are for illustrative purposes only.

INSPIRATION





GAIA'S WORLD

INT. OPEN PLAN OFFICE - DAY

Morning sun illuminates a long, stylish, open plan office space with rows of hot desks and one glass cube set up as a private office. A few people in casual dress dash about, trying to look busy. At one end is a set of glass doors onto a bustling foyer with a sleek reception area servicing the rest of the building. To the side, a breakout zone containing a well-equipped kitchen, a couple of sofas, more beanbags than needed and a huge TV.

Every surface is covered with awards: 'Marketer of the Year - Gaia Pankhurst'; 'Campaign of the Year - Gaia Pankhurst for Love Your Green Self'; 'Top 30 Under 30 - Gaia Pankhurst, Category: Sustainability'. The walls are also covered with magazine covers and campaign posters: the tagline 'A Million Tiny Rebellions' accompanies an image of a young mother rejecting plastic packaging in the grocery aisle of a supermarket and a Greenpeace logo; the tagline 'Count Carbon, Not Calories' accompanies an image of a young woman throwing a set of weighing scales out of a window and a World Wildlife Fund logo; an Evening Standard magazine cover with a photo of a mixed race woman, dressed in a vintage shirt and jeans, holding a houseplant, and the headline 'Love Your Green Self - meet the woman making eco-living cool'.

GAIA (early 30s), the woman on the cover of the Evening Standard, places her keep cup on one of the hot desks by a window. She stands looking out at the garden terrace. On the desk is a laptop, a vegan lip balm and a photo of Gaia and a woman, on top of a mountain, kissing.

SOPHIE (early 20s), the office assistant, dressed in a boho shirt and ripped jeans, her Celtic and wildlife tattoos peeking through, approaches Gaia.

SOPHIE

Sorry Gaia, Frances wants us all in the breakout zone for an important announcement.

Gaia turns to look at Sophie and raises an eyebrow. Sophie turns away guiltily and heads towards the breakout zone. Gaia follows.

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.

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

SHARON BURRELL: WRITER

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, which is on a successful tour of the film festival circuit, and notably as the director of OLD FOOLS which became The Independent's top pick of London theatre and received multiple 5 star reviews.

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. SHIFT is an exploration of whether we can influence thoughts and feelings about environmentalists through storytelling, in order to encourage greater pro-planet collective action.

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.

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 possible. Most of our selection are Academy Award and BAFTA qualifying festivals and we aim to achieve our goals by targeting the desired festivals for either World, National or International Premieres during the 2024/25 season.

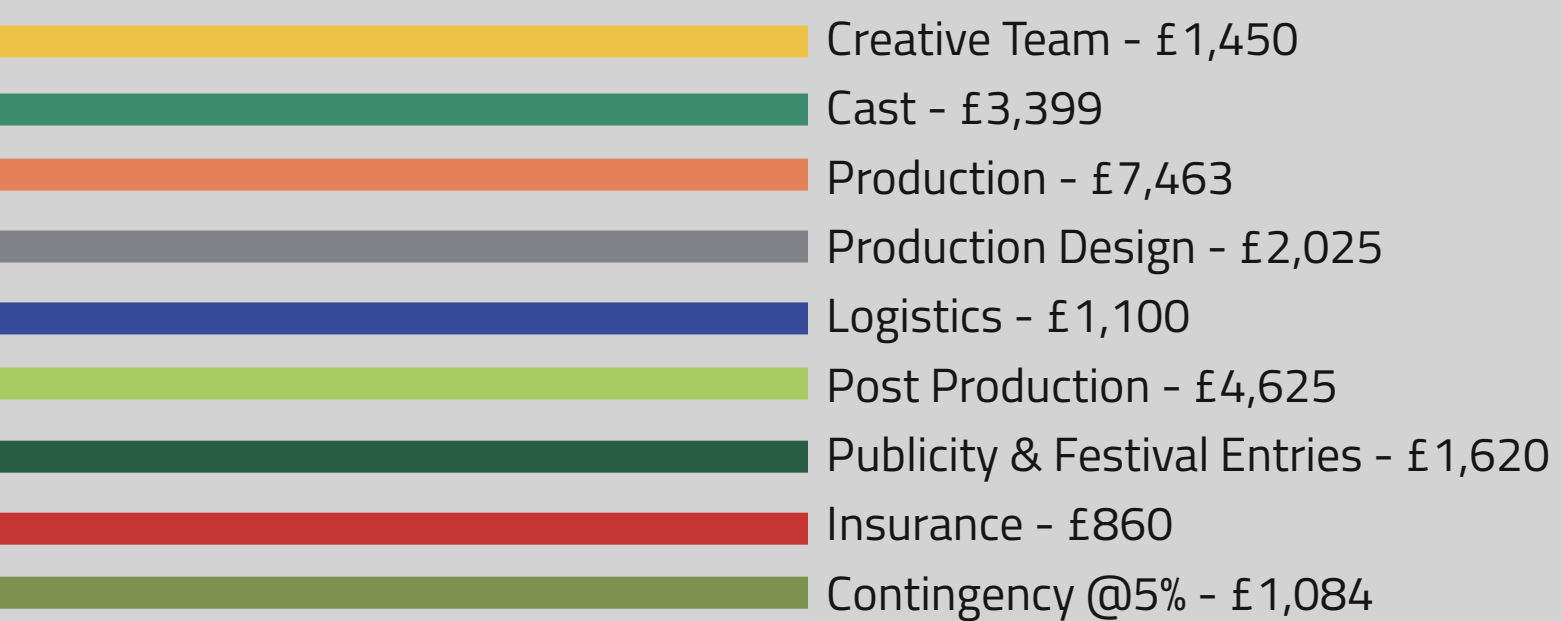
When the film has completed its festival run, we intend to acquire an international sales agent and distributor for the film with a view to having the film released on platforms that programme short films.

KEY FESTIVAL SCREENINGS:

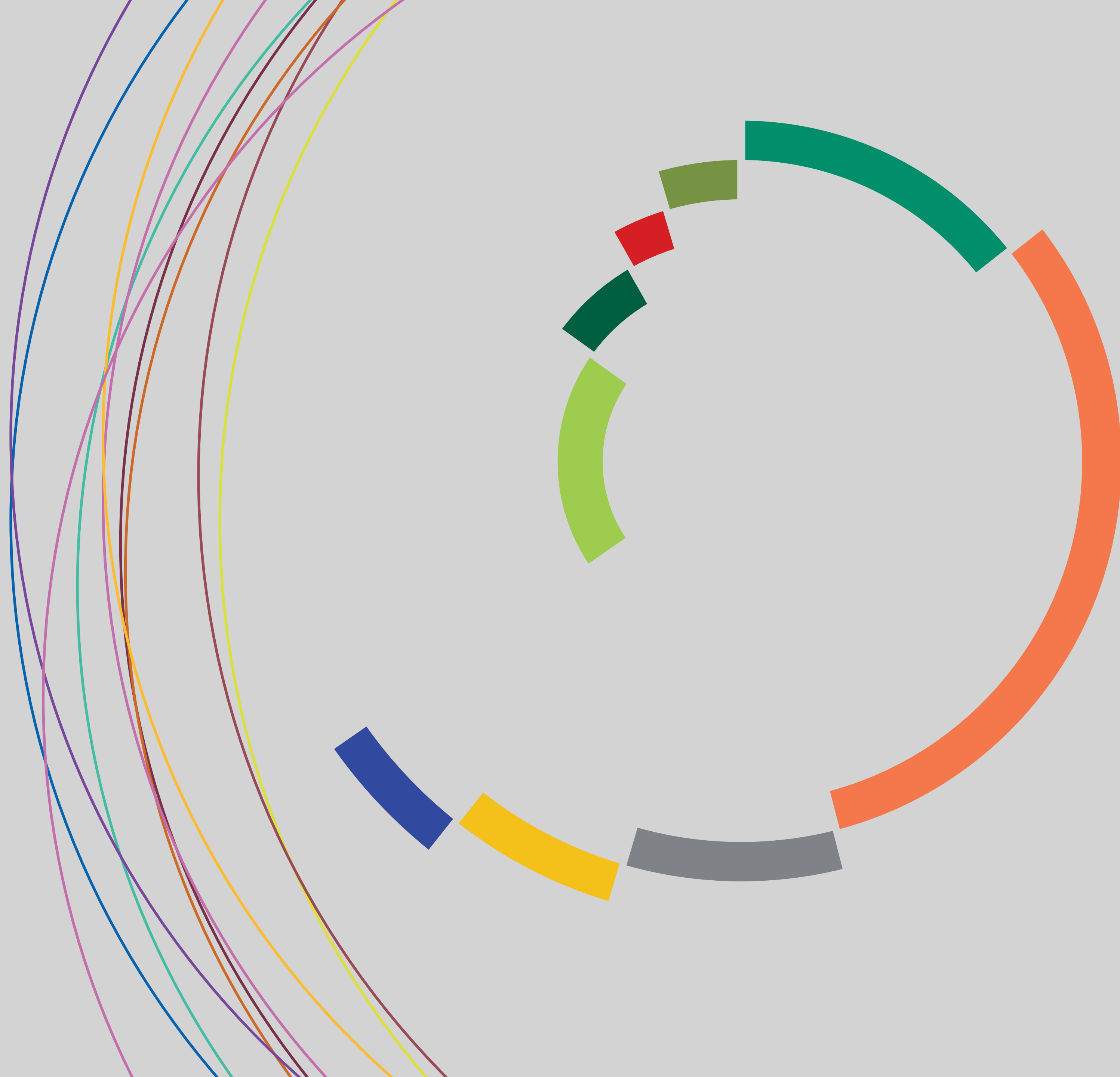
London Short Film Festival | January
Sundance US | January
Berlinale | February
Clermont-Ferrand | March
SXSW | March
BFI Flare | March
Glasgow Short Film Festival | March
Tampere | April
Film Fest Dresden | April
Aspen | April
Short Shorts Festival & Asia | April
Krakow Film Festival | May
Cannes | 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: £23,626



THANK YOU.



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

Both SHIFT and our other project in pre-production, GLITCH, explore how comedy can help us face the difficult truths about our changing environment, and potentially change our behaviours.

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.

DARREN LEE MURPHY | WRITER / DIRECTOR | DARREN@MAKINGPRODUCTIONS.COM | +44 7557 732 275

MEGHAN O'LOUGHLIN | PRODUCER | MEGHANOLOUGHLIN02@HOTMAIL.COM | +44 7467 617 196