

*MARNIE GIBSON   MICHAELA BEDEL   AMY KNAPTON*

# STRAY

A NINE TALES STUDIOS PRODUCTION DIRECTED BY OLIVIA STAFFIERI

CO-PRODUCED BY SOPHIA GIULIANO, JENNY PHAM VO DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JEREMY COSTA

EDITED BY KEEGAN MEW ORIGINAL MUSIC BY ADAM FALLOON

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT

“Children, especially attractive, well bred young ladies, should never talk to strangers, for if they should do so, they may well provide dinner for a wolf. I say ‘wolf,’ but there are various kinds of wolves. There are also those who are charming, quiet, polite, unassuming, complacent, and sweet, who pursue young women at home and in the streets. And unfortunately, **it is these gentle wolves who are the most dangerous ones of all.**”

-Charles Perrault,  
Little Red Riding Hood

# FILM INFORMATION



Running time: 15 minutes, 55 seconds

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/strayshortfilm/](https://www.instagram.com/strayshortfilm/)

Website: [www.ninetalesstudios.com.au/stray.html](http://www.ninetalesstudios.com.au/stray.html)

**Synopsis short:** Kelly confides in two of her friends regarding a recent workplace sexual harassment incident, only to learn that they too have experienced gender-based persecution in other contexts.

**Synopsis medium:** Stray is a short film about the harassment faced by women and the way society has reacted to their stories. Kelly confides in two of her friends regarding a recent workplace sexual harassment incident, only to learn that they too have experienced gender-based persecution in other contexts. The three women share their stories and discuss the ramifications of Kelly's challenging decision.

**Synopsis long:** Kelly approaches her friends, Rose and Jess, to discuss her options after experiencing workplace sexual harassment. Through sharing her experience and hearing the stories of her friends, Kelly learns that gender-based persecution is more common than she thought. Kelly comes to understand how the 'cautionary tales' embedded within her society have contributed to a culture of shame and victim-blaming. Kelly must contemplate how her choice reflects upon herself and her society.



NINE  
TALES  
STUDIOS

# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I want to tell this story to highlight a flaw in our society. Most people understand sexual harassment to be a serious problem, yet the burden for preventing such persecution consistently falls on the women who have been victimised, rather than the perpetrators or the culture at large.

From a young age, girls are taught not to “**stray from the path**”. Growing up, I frequently found it unfair that my brothers were allowed to do things that I was never permitted to do. I couldn't understand why they were allowed to sleep over at friend's houses and go to skate parks and shopping centres without adult supervision. I was told that it was just “**the way the world works**” and, although it was unfair, there was nothing I could do about it. In school I was told that if I wanted to feel safe, there were certain things I couldn't do. The advice was always the same: “smart girls don't go out at night” or “young women should be wary of their surroundings at all times”.

As an adult, I find that this unsolicited advice hasn't changed much. When a woman is attacked or harassed in the street, the general conversation revolves around the victim's wrongdoings. The media is awash with messages of how to keep safe that, more often than not, frame the victim as responsible for the incident. Whilst girls have been conditioned to believe that it is in their best interest to limit their opportunities in the name of safety, our society has no qualms about excusing, encouraging and even rewarding predatory behaviour.

I want to tell a story that presents these issues as they are: uncomfortable and confronting. Using incidents that I have experienced personally or heard from friends; I want to portray the long-lasting effect that sexual harassment, and our response to it, can have. It is of vital importance to me that I work with a predominantly female-identifying cast and crew to ensure that women's voices are the driving force behind a story that, unfortunately, so many women have in common.

-Olivia Staffieri, Writer/Director/Producer



NINE  
TALES  
STUDIOS

# PRODUCTION TEAM



## **Olivia Staffieri, Writer/Director/Producer**

Olivia is a passionate filmmaker interested in the growth of the Australian film industry, and particularly enthusiastic about the emerging presence of women both behind and in front of the camera. With a background in floor managing community television, Olivia is an ambitious Producer, Director and Writer. After observing the need for collaboration amongst creative media practitioners, Olivia co-founded Nine Tales Studios in 2019 with the goal of sharing resources and knowledge with fellow artists.



## **Sophia Giuliano, Co-Producer/Script Supervisor**

As a Project Manager, Script Supervisor and Assistant Director, Sophia finds that she is at her best when working to help others achieve their goals. Organisation, encouragement, focus, and 'what's next' attitude are paramount to Sophia's work ethic. Sophia is a valued member of the Nine Tales Studios team and frequently finds herself stepping into new roles and responsibilities on set to ensure the project at hand runs smoothly.



## **Jenny Pham Vo, Co-Producer/Production Assistant**

An RMIT Alumna with a Bachelor in Media and Communications, Jenny loves to embrace all creative opportunities and industries. From Producing live community television shows (The Leak, C31; Tough Times, Foxtel Aurora) to running tech for award winning MICF comedians (Charlie Zangel Cockatiel 2021), there is nothing that she won't try. Having Stage Managed four shows with RMIT University Performing Arts, and Production Managed numerous independent short film scripts, Jenny has a reputation amongst creatives for being reliable, resourceful and respectful. Jenny is also a founding member and Board Director of Nine Tales Studios - an independent creative collective aiming to tell authentic Australian creative stories.

# CAST



**Kelly**  
**Rose**  
**Jess**

Marnie Gibson  
Michaela Bedel  
Amy Knapton

**Brad**  
**Marita**  
**Lizzie**  
**Henry**

Paul Weaver  
Buena Dinuzzo  
Olivia Giuliano  
Jack Sloan

**Nathaniel**  
**Stranger**  
**Uncle Marcus**

Damien Harrison  
Huw Davies  
Adam Falloon

# CAST

## **Marnie Gibson as Kelly**



Marnie completed a BA in Performing Arts at Curtin University and trained in musical theatre at WAAPA before moving to Melbourne to commence the BA acting course at the VCA. She later trained with David Mamet's Atlantic Theatre School in New York City. Marnie has appeared in many stage productions including *Short and Sweet*, *Your Text Here*, *Highway Ulysses*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Anthony Crowley's award-winning musical *The Wild Blue* and Jane Miller's Ross Trust award winning production, *True Love Travels on a Gravel Road*. TV credits include *Neighbours*, *Prank Patrol*, *Satisfaction*, *Hawke: The Movie*, *Bed of Roses*, *House Husbands* and *The Bazura Project*. She has also appeared in many short films and features including Channel 7's production *An Innocent Man* and numerous commercials and campaigns for Medibank, Target, Coles, Holden and more.

## **Michaela Bedel as Rose**



Michaela is a graduate of the National Theatre Drama School where she was awarded the William P. Carr scholarship for acting. She later trained in Meisner Technique with Ward Studio in New York, and was awarded artist residencies with Kingston Arts and NIDA Launchpad. Michaela has performed in numerous theatre productions including lead roles in a critically acclaimed season of *Slut* by Patricia Cornelius at The Burrow, and Complete Works Theatre Company's tour of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*, playing Juliet and Lady Macbeth in over 300 live performances. Her film credits include the US series *Preacher*, and leading roles in short films *The Spark* or *The Fuel*, *Uncovered* and *Dovetail*.

## **Amy Knapton as Jess**



Amy is a bright upcoming actor based in Melbourne, currently studying her craft in acting at Howard Fine Acting Studios. Amy is passionate about bringing truth to the characters she plays and strives to represent diversity for Asian Australians within the film industry. *Stray* is Amy's debut acting role.

# CREW

<b>Writer/Director/Producer</b>	Olivia Staffieri
<b>Co-Producer/Script Supervisor</b>	Sophia Giuliano
<b>Co-Producer/Production Assistant</b>	Jenny Pham Vo
<b>Director of Photography</b>	Jeremy Costa
<b>1st Assistant Camera</b>	Matthew Duong
<b>Production Assistant/ Continuity</b>	Dalena Omdara
<b>Sound Operator and mixer</b>	Adam Falloon
<b>Sound Operator</b>	Adrian Lapiz
<b>Hair and Makeup Artist</b>	Lauren Wynd
<b>Art department/Prop Master</b>	
<b>SFX Makeup Artist</b>	Alexandra Cox
<b>Craft services</b>	Natasha Rutter
<b>Still photography</b>	Emma Pugliese Emily Roach
<b>Editor</b>	Keegan Mew
<b>Score</b>	Adam Falloon
<b>Animation</b>	Eloise Large



# KEY CREW



## **Jeremy Costa, Cinematographer**

Jeremy Costa believes that any single film can change someone's life. He graduated from RMIT with a Bachelor in Media and Communications, and has honed his unique cinematic touch over many years of short film making and editing. Jeremy also hosts and produces the 'Don't Expect Anything' podcast.



## **Keegan Mew, Editor**

Keegan Mew is a passionate filmmaker and video editor who believes video and sound editing are two of the most vital techniques in creating an engaging story. At a young age Keegan played in a band that toured Eastern Europe whilst creating music videos. As well as short films, he has used these experiences to sharpen his creative abilities and aims to insert a unique flair into all his projects.



## **Adam Falloon, Composer**

Adam Falloon is an aspiring composer with a focus on unique and unusual sound design and manipulation, with a Bachelor in Creative Arts from the University of Melbourne. He has done a variety of audio work for short films and animation and is looking to pursue more work as a composer in both the film and video game industries.



## **Alexandra Cox, "You Bloody Beauty" Special FX makeup**

Alexandra Cox decided to combine her love for both SFX Makeup and Special Occasion Makeup to found "You Bloody Beauty", her own mobile makeup service. With a love for both the glamorous and the gruesome side of things, Alexandra has undertaken extensive training in everything from Special Effects Makeup to Beauty and Creative Makeup for Film, TV & Print.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Why this story?

The premise was simple enough: showcase the dark reality of living as a woman in a modern Western society. We felt it was important to intertwine this with the fables and cautionary tales that we grew up on. The moral of the story tells us that monsters exist, and it is the victim's responsibility to avoid putting themselves in a weaker position. We all agreed it wasn't right, but never broached the topic because it felt taboo, or too personal, to talk about our individual experiences with sexual harrasment. However, like the women in the film, the three of us (Olivia, Sophia and Myself) started talking about our own experiences, and how the repercussions have affected our lives and journeys into womanhood. We all felt it was significant that any female we approached about this film immediately understood what we were trying to convey. We knew that this was something we wanted to get off the ground and produce as a company.

- Jenny Pham Vo



## What did the filmmaking process look like during a pandemic?

The COVID-19 Pandemic brought with it many challenges- some we anticipated, such as running the casting and rehearsal process via Zoom, and some we could never have predicted.

The production team and I knew that when Melbourne's lockdown rules eventually lifted we would have a very small window of time to complete shooting. Everything had to be planned to a tee to ensure we could make the most out of the time we had. By the time we were on set, Melbourne's rules had changed to allow up to 15 visitors to a household per day. To abide by these guidelines, we had to operate with only a skeleton crew inside our residential locations. Craft services were packaged individually and delivered to the door, green room spaces were set up outside, and our makeup artist used different materials for each cast member.

Each day, we had a Covid Compliance Officer to ensure that the set and equipment was only being handled by select members of the crew and constantly cleaned.

Our cast and crew did an incredible job of adapting to guidelines set by Screen Australia, Film Victoria and the Victorian Government.

-Olivia Staffieri



# BEHIND THE SCENES



# SPECIAL THANKS

*Stray* would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the fantastic cast and crew. The producers wish to extend their gratitude to the following;

The Costa family  
The Giuliano family  
The Backhouse family  
Jemma Johnston  
Sell Ellett  
The Sun Theatre team

