

LONG SHOT FACTORY

presents

SMALL, BEAUTIFULLY MOVING PARTS



Written and Directed by Annie J. Howell & Lisa Robinson

Narrative Feature | USA | 73 MIN | Unrated



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SYNOPSIS

When technophile Sarah Sparks (Anna Margaret Hollyman) becomes pregnant, her uncertainties about motherhood trigger an impulsive road trip to the source of her anxiety: her long-estranged mother living far away and off-the-grid. Annie J. Howell and Lisa Robinson co-direct this comic coming-of-parenthood tale for the internet age.

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

At the beginning of the road that led to *SMALL, BEAUTIFULLY MOVING PARTS*, we were two friends—film school classmates—who simply began a conversation about how technology has radically changed our lives. We were drawn to the notion that suddenly, unlike any other time in human history, most adults carry around small, elegant machines virtually everywhere they go and cannot seem to function without them. As two New Yorkers with burgeoning digital addictions, this absolutely resonated with us. As we had similar sensibilities in filmmaking, appreciating the dry ironic humor of Jim Jarmusch and the lush visual sensibilities of Terrence Malick and Sofia Coppola, we decided to collaborate on a project that explored how technology intersects with human emotion. People had come to treat their tech devices with potent feelings: affection, disgust, obsession, and outright rage. We created a protagonist named Sarah Sparks who is a “freelance technologist,” someone who truly adores machinery, looks out for it, and protects it in a world of impulsivity and disposability.

The resulting first project was a web series, *Sparks*. After completing six episodes and licensing them to the Sundance Channel, we were inspired to continue to question what it means to be “connected.” We wanted to explore the characters we had created in a more emotionally complex way, and place Sarah at a charged crossroads in her life. We chose to put her firmly on the path toward parenthood, a life change we’d both recently experienced and felt deserved a more complex portrayal on screen. In our film, Sarah is pregnant and uncertain; she fears she relates better to machines than to people. This scenario presented us with the opportunity to play with ideas from the series, but also to develop new themes, to stretch characters we already knew into something recognizable but different. We also continued to explore tone, creating a world that framed serious situations with a light touch. Our hope is that audiences will fully experience both the drama and comedy we’ve created, and reflect on their own relationships, human and otherwise.

—Annie J. Howell & Lisa Robinson, Directors

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

SMALL, BEAUTIFULLY MOVING PARTS was born from the desire to make something beautiful and funny that speaks to issues and ideas we value. At its inception, we were both developing other projects in the indie film world, and in the spring of 2010, we decided to forgo film-business waiting and make something that was exciting to us right now. Being micro-budget, the film was conceived to capitalize on existing resources: the gorgeously unruly flower garden of Lisa's brother in Los Angeles, and the geodesic dome next door to Annie's childhood home. Keeping Google maps open while writing in order to calculate distances, we were inspired by the landscapes of the West where we grew up; these locations, from the blinking mania of Las Vegas to the sweltering desert of Arizona, became characters that helped us shape the mood and emotional beats.

Our production fit into exactly one van, which performed double duty as the picture car. In various cities, we would pick up crew locally, fly cast in, and then shrink back to our core team and get back in the van. As such, the film is a product of meticulous planning as well as in-the-moment decisions. We would wake up in the morning and know we had to find a visually compelling gas station before noon somewhere between the Hoover Dam and Flagstaff. Each crewmember wore many hats and played various production roles, including one that had our wonderful lead Anna Margaret Hollyman navigating our fastest route, an innate skill she should list on her resume. In this intimate family-like scenario, we shot the film in 21 days, leaving our own families behind, which at the time included one, one-year-old baby each.

Technology may trouble our main character in the story, but it was mostly on our side during production. Our cinematographer Charles E. Swanson shot the film on the HD video function of a DSLR still camera, the Canon 7D. A camera that passes for an everyday (if fancy) still camera, it was perfect for our scenario, as we were arriving in some locations in nearly the same way a documentary crew would: small, with a stealth approach. By the time we were editing, we were living in different cities, but able to Skype into the same virtual space with editor Jennifer Lee using Final Cut Pro's then-brand new live chat / live cuts interface. Despite our actual distances we felt like we were living in one metaphysical post-production brain.

The size of our production and the ways in which we utilized technology echo our film's content and themes. Along with Sarah, we negotiate the timeless search for family and belonging, as well as the new, 21st century quest of balancing all things wired with all things human.

—Annie J. Howell & Lisa Robinson, Directors

FILMMAKERS

Directors ANNIE J. HOWELL
LISA ROBINSON

Screenplay by ANNIE J. HOWELL
LISA ROBINSON

Producers ANNIE J. HOWELL
LISA ROBINSON
JENNIFER DOUGHERTY

Co-Producer JENNIFER LEE

Executive Producer YAEL MELAMEDE

Editor JENNIFER LEE

Director of Photography CHARLES E. SWANSON

Original Music XANDER DUELL

Music Supervisor CINDY YOON

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Sarah ANNA MARGARET HOLLYMAN

Leon ANDRÉ HOLLAND

Navigator (voice) ANNIE J. HOWELL

Emily SARAH RAFFERTY

Henry RICHARD HOAG

Towie SUSAN KELECHI WATSON

Marjorie MARY BETH PEIL

FESTIVALS & AWARDS

SXSW 2011

Hamptons International Film Festival 2011
WINNER Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize

The Mill Valley Film Festival 2011

Starz Denver Film Festival 2011

New Orleans Film Festival 2011

Port Townsend Film Festival 2011

Siren Nation Film Festival 2011, Portland, Oregon

Fargo Film Festival 2012
WINNER Best Actress, Anna Margaret Hollyman

Cinequest 2012

Sun Valley Film Festival 2012

Cleveland International Film Festival 2012

Phoenix Film Festival 2012

Atlanta Film Festival 2012

Santa Cruz Film Festival 2012

River Run International Film Festival 2012
WINNER Audience Choice Award

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

ANNIE J. HOWELL (Co-writer/Co-Director) has written and directed short films that have played internationally at film festivals including SXSW, Newport, Full Frame, and Clermont-Ferrand. Her work has aired on the Sundance Channel, PBS, and the Independent Film Channel, and as part of the ITVS web series, FutureStates. Her screenwriting work has been the recipient of a Nantucket Screenwriters' Colony fellowship, the Grand Prize Award at IFP's 2008 Independent Film Week, and a SFFS/Kenneth Rainin Foundation grant. Her most recent script is in development with producers Jordan Horowitz (THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT) and Jared Ian Goldman (SOLITARY MAN). Her web series, *Sparks*, co-created with Lisa Robinson, is syndicated on the Sundance Channel's website, where she also blogs about film and storytelling. Howell earned an MFA at New York University's Graduate Program in Film and is currently Assistant Professor of Film at Ohio University.

LISA ROBINSON (Co-writer/Co-Director) works as a screenwriter and director. She has written and directed three short films that have screened at film festivals around the world including Cannes-Directors Fortnight, Telluride, Edinburgh, and Clermont-Ferrand. Her writing includes MIND BLAST, an IMAX project for the Blue Man Group that is currently in development. Her web series, *Sparks*, co-created with Annie J. Howell, is syndicated by the Sundance Channel. Her feature project, SYNAPSE, received the Sloan Foundation Feature Production Award and is in development with Salty Features. She is the recipient of the Martin E. Segal Prize, the Mitsubishi Digital Media Lab Award for Excellence, and a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship. Robinson received her MFA from New York University's Graduate Film Directing Program and is currently Assistant Professor of Film at Long Island University.

JENNIFER DOUGHERTY (Producer) got her start in the independent film industry at Rebellion Pictures in New York City and Bona Fide Productions (LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE, COLD MOUNTAIN) in Los Angeles, before spending several years as a script reader and analyst at Lionsgate Studios. She also worked as the assistant to director Rodger Grossman on the Rhino Films feature WHAT WE DO IS SECRET (starring Shane West and Bijou Phillips) and as a post-production assistant on PUNK'S NOT DEAD, a documentary about the punk music scene from the 1970s to today. Since 2005, Dougherty has worked in development and production at Salty Features, a New York independent film company whose principals were the creative forces behind BOYS DON'T CRY and MY ARCHITECT. Salty's most recent film, BRIEF INTERVIEWS WITH HIDEOUS MEN, premiered at Sundance and was released in September 2009 by IFC Films. Dougherty is currently producing the feature film FIASCO, a dark satire of the Bay of Pigs invasion written by Donald Diego.

Yael Melamede (Executive Producer) founded Salty Features in 2003. Salty's goal is to make feature films that showcase unique vision, strong storytelling, and thought-provoking subject matter. Salty's last film, *BRIEF INTERVIEWS WITH HIDEOUS MEN*, premiered at Sundance in 2009 and was released that fall by IFC Films. Based on the book by David Foster Wallace, the film was written and directed by John Krasinski (*The Office*). Salty's current projects include *MARTYRS' CROSSING*, a political thriller adapted from the bestselling novel by Amy Wilentz, to be directed by Paulo Morelli and featuring Frank Langella; and the documentary feature *INOCENTE*, directed by Sean Fine and Andrea Nix Fine, directors of the Academy Award nominated *WAR/DANCE*. Melamede also co-produced the Academy Award-nominated documentary feature *MY ARCHITECT*. She holds a BA and M.Arch from Yale University.

Charles E. Swanson (Cinematographer) has photographed the feature films *ALL THE BEST: BILLY SEARS*, *FROM BARBADOS WITH LOVE*, *CONTRADICTIONS OF THE HEART*, and *THIS IS NOT A TEST*. Swanson also photographed the award-winning short films *RAIN* (aired on the Showtime network), *I'D RATHER BE DANCING*, and *TIA AND MARCO* (SXSW 2010). The music video *JAGUAR*, which he photographed for Techno artist DJ Rolando, received wide play on MTV Europe. Swanson earned an MFA from the University of Southern California's School of Cinema and Television and is currently Associate Professor and Chair at Loyola Marymount University's School of Film and Television.

Jennifer Lee (Editor/Co-producer) has built a storytelling career working across film, comics, and prose. She edited and co-produced Craig Johnson's *TRUE ADOLESCENTS* (Flatiron Film Co.), starring Mark Duplass and Melissa Leo. She also edited Vincent D'Onofrio's directorial debut, *DON'T GO IN THE WOODS*, and was an additional editor for Alexandre Rockwell's *PETE SMALLS IS DEAD*, starring Peter Dinklage, Tim Roth, Steve Buscemi, and Rosie Perez. As a former comic book editor for Marvel and DC Comics, Lee oversaw stories from development to visual execution. Her books include *Wolverine*, *Daredevil*, *Black Widow*, *100 Bullets*, and *The Sand Man: The Dream Hunters*. She recently edited Nancy Savoca's *UNION SQUARE*, starring Mira Sorvino, Tammy Blanchard, and Patti LuPone. Currently, Lee is producing Craig Johnson's next feature, *THE SKELETON TWINS*, and is editing Olivia Silver's *ARCADIA*, starring John Hawkes and Ryan Simpkins.

Xander Duell (Original Music) is an independent composer, singer, songwriter, and instrumentalist based in New York. He has recorded and toured extensively with such diverse bands as Inouk, Mercy the Contours, and Ambulance LTD. Duell plays a variety of roles in the Early Morning Opera theater company, ranging from composing and conducting string quartets to fronting punk bands. His first solo album was released by New York City-based record label Mexican Summer in spring 2011.

ABOUT THE CAST

ANNA MARGARET HOLLYMAN (Sarah) was born in New York City and grew up in Connecticut and Austin, Texas. She studied Theater and Art History at Sarah Lawrence College, trained with Suzanne Esper at the William Esper Studio, and studied Improv with Upright Citizens Brigade and the P.I.T. in New York and Los Angeles. She has performed at the HERE Arts Center, P.S. 122, Soho Playhouse, and 59E59th St in New York, and at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Her films include *GAYBY*, *THE ROMANCE OF LONELINESS*, *THE BRAVE ONE*, *THE ONES YOU LOVE*, *ANNA*, *SAMANTHA*, *THE COLOR WHEEL*, and *ADELAIDE* (which won Hollyman Best Actress at the 2010 Hill Country Film Festival). Her television roles include ABC's *My Generation*.

RICHARD HOAG (Henry) has been featured in over 40 stage musical comedies and is an award-winning writer and playwright who recently won the Arts Fund Award for his one act play, *Straight Men*. He has also received numerous awards for acting, including many for his touring one-man show, *WILL ROGERS' AMERICA*. As a writer he has contributed scripts to the Discovery and Disney Channels, and just completed principal photography for his role in the feature-length thriller *KILLER HOLIDAY*.

ANDRÉ HOLLAND (Leon) has appeared in plays with The Public Theater/Shakespeare in the Park, Playwrights Horizons, and Georgia Shakespeare Festival. His film credits include Spike Lee's *MIRACLE AT ST. ANNA* and *SUGAR*, co-directed by Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden. His Broadway debut was playing Jeremy Furlow in the acclaimed revival of August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. He recently appeared in Daniel Sullivan's production of *All's Well That Ends Well* in Central Park, and Matthew Lopez's *The Whipping Man* at the Manhattan Theatre Club. He also appeared in Tarell Alvin McCraney's *The Brother/Sister Plays* at The Public Theater in New York City. His television credits include *Burn Notice: A New Day*. Holland earned an MFA in Acting from New York University.

MARY BETH PEIL (Marjorie) currently plays the role of Jackie in CBS's *The Good Wife*, and has recently performed on Broadway in the revival of *Follies*. Prior to that, Peil performed on Broadway in *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, the acclaimed revival of *Sunday in the Park With George*, *Nine* (Outer Critics nomination) and *The King and I* (Tony nomination). An Obie Award winner, her off Broadway credits include *Hedda Gabbler* (New York Theatre Workshop), *Later Life* (Playwrights Horizon), and *Sylvia* (Manhattan Theatre Club). Her regional credits include *Third Story* (La Jolla Playhouse), *33 Variations* (Helen Hayes nomination), *A Month in the Country* (Arena Stage), and *Sweeney Todd* (Kennedy Center). Her television credits include *The Reagans* and *Dawson's Creek*, and her film credits include *MIRRORS*, *FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS*, and *THE STEPFORD WIVES*. Peil is a member of the Atlantic Theatre Company.

SARAH RAFFERTY (Emily) has worked in theatre, film, and television in both New York City and Los Angeles. Her theatre credits include productions at The Roundabout Theatre Co., Second Stage, MCC, and several productions at South Coast Rep. Her independent film credits include *FOUR SINGLE FATHERS*, produced by Gabriele Muccino, and *FALLING FOR GRACE* (Tribeca Film Festival). Rafferty's television credits include shows such as *Brothers and Sisters*, *Bones*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *Six Feet Under*, and the Lifetime movie *WHAT IF GOD WERE THE SUN*, in which she acted opposite Gena Rowlands. She currently appears as Donna in the USA original series *Suits*. Rafferty is a graduate of The Yale School of Drama.

SUSAN KELECHI WATSON's (Towie) television appearances include *The Good Wife*, *Private Practice*, *Numbers*, *Law & Order*, as well as recurring roles on *Third Watch*, *Kidnapped*, and *NCIS*. Susan's film roles include that of Fatima in *BLACKOUT* (Tribeca 2007) and Tia in *TIA & MARCO* (SXSW 2010). Theater credits include *A Naked Girl on the Appian Way*, written by Richard Greenberg and directed Doug Hughes (Broadway); *Missed Connections* at Ars Nova; and *The Story* at the Public Theater (Off-Broadway). Watson recently played the role of Olivia in the Westport Country Playhouse's production of *Twelfth Night*. Susan received her MFA from New York University.