short film electronic press kit



written (by)
Molly Powers Gallagher

directed (by)
Michelle Bossy

produced (by)
Michelle Bossy
Molly Powers Gallagher
Sandy Bainum
Jeffrey Grover
Regina Myers
Monica Park
David M. Night Maire

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genres & nich(es)

independent short
drama
sexual harassment
inspired by real events
female BIPOC filmmakers
social justice & commentary

log li(ne)

A young Asian American university student grapples with what it means to be the only woman of color in her class when a film professor extends unwanted attention toward her.

short synops(is)

KATIE, a young Asian American university student, is seemingly favored by one of her professors for reasons other than her high-quality schoolwork. As this professor extends unwanted, suggestive attention about her looks, Katie grapples with what it means to be the only woman of color in her white, male-dominated filmmaker cohort. The story is based on real events.

summa(ry)

Film School.

KATIE is the only Asian American & woman of color among the first years in her white, male-dominated filmmaker cohort. While she excels in her classes, Katie finds that her professor GRAHAM seemingly favors her for reasons other than her high-quality schoolwork.

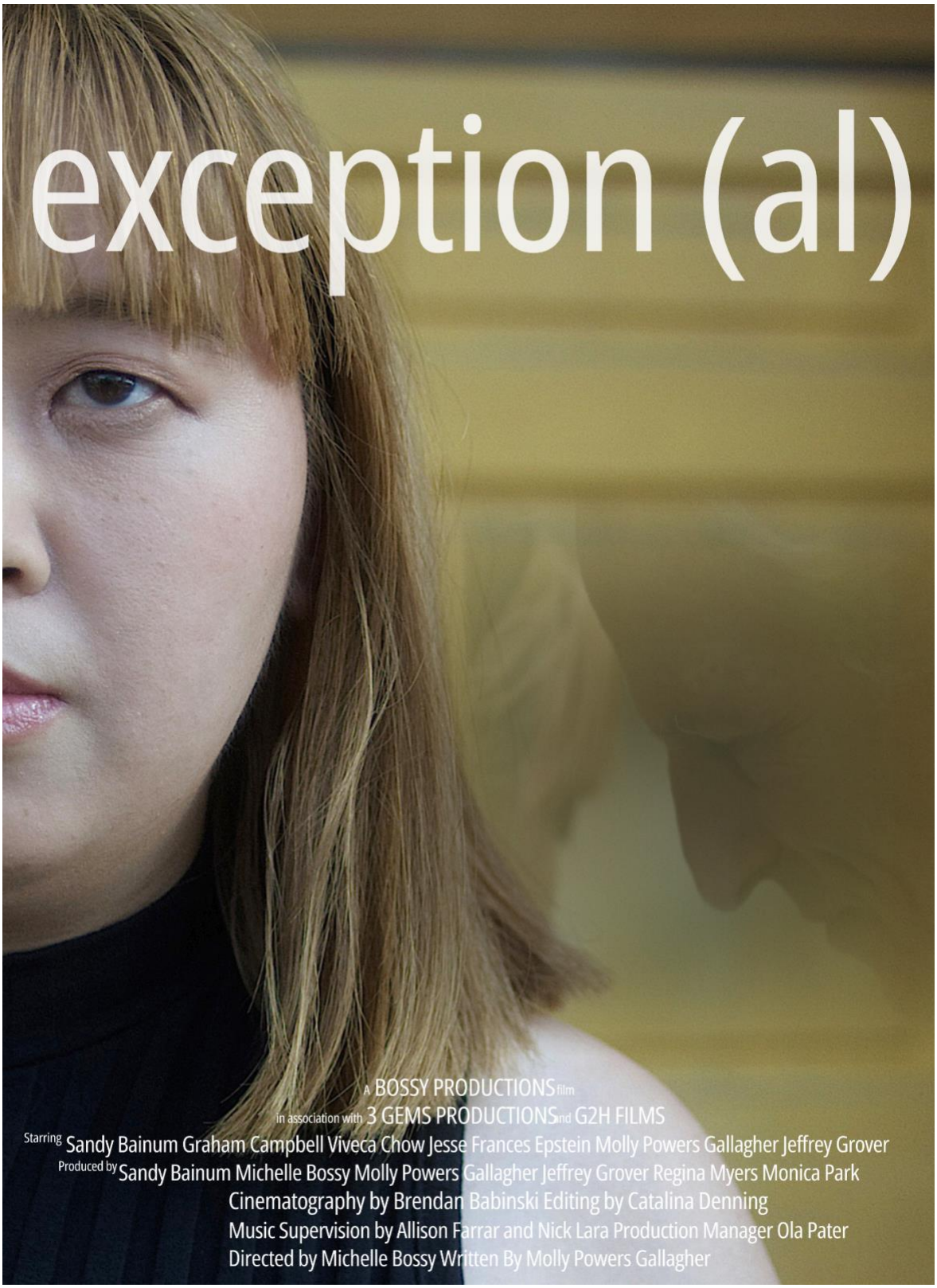
After her laptop crashes, Katie visits Graham at his office hours. She finds herself caught one-on-one with him as he attempts to give her tech help. Second-year student NORAH, also Asian American, comes to her rescue and warns Katie that Graham always picks a favorite girl in each class, “You don’t want to be his favorite.”

Norah’s cautionary advice proves sound, when Graham corners Katie at a school event and whispers suggestively that he likes the way she looks.

Katie confides in her best friend, ABBY, who encourages her to tell someone who can do something. She approaches her only female professor JACQUELINE, who commits a microaggression, mistaking a detail about Norah with Katie.

Katie chooses not to confide in Jacqueline.

office(al) poster



revie(ws)

"[The film] was written by and stars another **massive talent, Molly Powers**. … Molly drew from her own personal experiences in film school to dramatize the feeling of being an outsider, often as the only woman or Asian American person in the room. It explores **complex themes of representation and microaggressions in academia** without ever feeling pitying."

- Kyler Bingham, *Salt Lake Dirt Podcast – Episode 377*
https://saltlakedirt.com/tv-%26-film/f/michelle-bossy

"It was a true pleasure to include 'exception(al)' in our program. The film **stood out for its originality, emotional nuance, and confident storytelling**. The way you shaped tone and meaning throughout the piece demonstrated **a strong artistic voice and a clear sense of purpose** behind the work. Your ability to explore subtle emotional layers while maintaining **a distinct creative identity** made the film especially memorable for our programming team and judges."

- Lisandro "Lasso" Boccacci, *Stay Gold Film Festival Director*

distributi(on) platform partners

non-exclusive licensees – content delivery platform (media distribution system) – signatory date

1. FABA Films – FABA Films Streaming (VOD – OTT) – October 2026
link: www.fabafilms.com/s/41f3251b-fa0e-44ec-9779-df8b49c22e41
2. Open Film Zone – Open Film Zone (VOD – OTT) – October 2026
link: www.openfilmzone.com/videos/exceptional
3. The Eudaimonia Project Inc. – Eudaimonia TV (VOD – OTT) – November 2026

accolad(es)

Official Selections

1. Greater Lehigh Valley Filmmaker Festival 2025 (*World Premiere*)
2. Ischia Global Film Festival 2025 (*International Premiere*)
3. International Brightlight Film Festival 2025 (*North American Premiere*)
4. Woman, Life, Freedom Film Festival 2025 (*Oceanic Premiere*)
5. Phoenixville Film Festival 2025 (*USA Premiere*)
6. Ceylon International Film Festival 2025 (*Western US Premiere*)
7. Hobnobben Film Festival 2025 (*Midwestern US Premiere*)
8. The Root Experience 2025 (*Northwest US Premiere*)
9. Flick Film Fest 2025 (*Eastern US Premiere*)
10. Reale Film Festival 2025 (*European Premiere*)
11. Thilsri International Film Festival 2025 (*Asian Premiere*)
12. Asian International Filmfare Awards 2026 (*South Asian Premiere*)
13. The IndieFEST Film Awards 2026 (*California State Premiere*)
14. Brilliant Women In Film Festival / The Newbie Film Festival 2026 (*Southern US Premiere*)
15. Sittannavasal International Film Festival 2026 (*Indian Premiere*)
16. Nevada Women's Film Festival 2026 (*Southwestern US Premiere*)
17. Stay Gold Film Festival 2025 (*South Central US Premiere*)
18. International Istanbul Women Films Festival 2026 (*Turkish Premiere*)
19. The Great Film Club 2026 (*Northeastern US Premiere*)
20. Ouarzazate International University Film Festival 2026 (*African Premiere*)
21. The Accolade Global Film Competition 2026 (*San Diego County, CA Premiere*)
22. The Cecil County Independent Film Festival 2026 (*Mid-Atlantic Premiere*)
23. VisiOn Festival 2026 (*Mediterranean Premiere*)
24. The FilmJoint 2026 (*Nigerian Premiere*)
25. Unisphere Film Festival 2026 (*New York State Premiere*)
26. Valkyrie International Film Festival 2026 (*Erie County, NY Premiere*)
27. Film Olympiad 2026 (*Mediterranean Premiere*)
28. Scene Awards 2026 (*Wisconsin State Premiere*)
29. Almamoura Festival 2026 (*Middle Eastern Premiere*)
30. Altavilla Film Fest - Il Trionfo Cristiano di San Pellegrino 2026 (*Campagna Italian Region Premiere*)

Official Selections Continued

31. Thesan Short Film Festival 2026 (*Lazio Italian Region Premiere*)
32. Folkestone Film Festival 2026 (*United Kingdom Premiere*)
33. The Women's Film Festival 2026 (*Pennsylvania State Premiere*)
34. Miami Short Film Festival 2026 (*Southeastern US Premiere*)
35. The Eudaimonia Project Film Festival 2026 (*Maryland State Premiere*)
36. Ostia International Film Festival 2026 (*Rome Italian City Premiere*)
37. Open Film Zone 2026 (*Nordic Premiere*)
38. Morphé Film Festival 2026 (*East European Premiere*)

Nominations

1. Best Short Film – International Brightlight Film Festival 2025
2. Semi-Finalist – Best Narratives – Woman, Life, Freedom Film Festival 2025
3. Honorable Mention – Best Asian Short Film/Filmmaker – Stay Gold Film Festival 2026
4. Quarter-Finalist – International Best Short Film – International Istanbul Women Films Festival 2026
5. Best Short Film – The FilmJoint 2026
6. Best Dramatic Short – Valkyrie International Film Festival 2026
7. Best Idea in a Series or Film – Scene Awards 2026
8. Best Short Film in the “Women’s Section” – Thesan Short Film Festival 2026
9. Quarter-Finalist – Best Narrative (USA & Canada) – Miami Short Film Festival 2026
10. Quarter-Finalist – The Dr. Chester Pierce Award for Mental Health & Wellness Film – The Eudaimonia Project Film Festival 2026

Awards

1. Best International Film – Reale Film Festival 2025
2. Special Jury Award – Best Women's Short Film – Thilsri International Film Festival 2025
3. Best Women's Film – Asian International Filmfare Awards 2026
4. Award of Merit - Special Mention: Best Asian Theme – The IndieFEST Film Awards 2026
5. Best Social Impact Film – Brilliant Women In Film Festival / The Newbie Film Festival 2026
6. Best Social Awareness Short Film – Sittannavasal International Film Festival 2026
7. Award of Recognition – Best Liberation / Social Justice / Protest Film – The Accolade Global Film Competition 2026

distributi(on) platform partners

non-exclusive licensees – content delivery platform (media distribution system) – signatory date

4. FABA Films – FABA Films Streaming (VOD – OTT) – October 2026
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distribution da(ta)

Number of Continents Screened In 5x

Events Screened at Per Continent

20x North America	11x Europe	4x Asia
2x Africa	1x Oceania	

Number of Countries Screened In 12x

Events Screened at Per Country

20x U.S.A.	6x Italy	3x India
1x Australia	1x England	1x Finland
1x Greece	1x Morocco	1x Nigeria
1x Turkey	1x Ukraine	1x U.A.E.

Number of U.S. States Screened In 11x

Events Screened at Per U.S. State

4x California	3x New York	3x Pennsylvania
2x Florida	2x Maryland	1x Indiana
1x Nevada	1x Oklahoma	1x Texas
1x Washington	1x Wisconsin	

technic(al) specs

runtime	13 minutes
video format	digital, color
aspect ratio	16:9
audio format	stereo
language	English
subtitles	English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish
production country	United States of America
production city/state	Brooklyn, New York City, New York

producti(on) facts

“exception(al)” is the third short film Molly Powers Gallagher has written, produced and starred in.

“exception(al)” is the first collaboration between writer-actor-producer Molly Powers Gallagher and director-producer Michelle Bossy.

“exception(al)” is the third short film Director Michelle Bossy and Producer David M. Night Maire have collaborated on together.

Director-producer Michelle Bossy, director of photography Brendan Babinski and actor Viveca Chow all worked on episodes of Disney Television Discovers: Talent Showcase (2021)!

“exception(al)” is TRIPLE F-rated with BIPOC women in the roles of director, writer, and principal actor!

“exception(al)” is an accredited signatory production under the SAG-AFTRA Short Film Agreement.

“exception(al)” was shot on location at Brooklyn College in New York City, New York, of the course of 3 days.

fra(me) grabs



direct(or)'s statement

EXCEPTION(AL) is a drama set in the treacherous waters of film school. Molly Powers Gallagher (writer/producer/lead) draws from her own personal experiences as a young woman of color in an old boys' club where aggressions are micro and macro. I felt a symbiosis with the script as I too have often found myself to be the only minority woman in traditionally white/male spaces, which becomes especially complicated when trying to find your voice as an artist. EXCEPTION(AL) asks questions about power, privilege and allyship, finding strength in defying the devils you see coming and the dangers who are more subversive.

- Michelle Bossy

writ(er)'s statement

I was the only Asian American woman & woman of color in my MFA film program. Looking back on my tenure in grad school, it is clear to me where I fell through the gaps because I was the only person in the room who looked like me. EXCEPTION(AL) explores the specific tension that many women of color face in traditionally white, male spaces – being treated as the "exception," while feeling the pressure to be "exceptional" because you were lucky enough to beat the odds to make it there, even if you are inherently exceptional at what you do and who you are. Our film examines the intersection of gender, age, and race in academia, and ultimately celebrates a new generation of voices that can and will emerge from the breakdown of old systems.

- Molly Powers Gallagher

crew biographi(es)



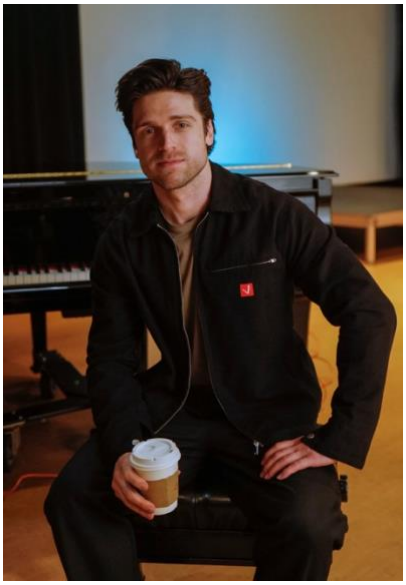
(*director - producer*) **Michelle Bossy** is an award winning Mexican-American theater, television, and film director. Her films include: 18, She Grinds Her Own Coffee, The New 35, Friendly Neighborhood Coven, Ladies Lounge, Miracle Baby, Incurable, klutz, Chance of Showers, Antisemite, and The Trespassed. Under the Lantern Lit Sky and Nobody's Home are Michelle's feature films. Michelle's films have premiered at the Austin Film Festival, St. Louis International Film Festival, LA Shorts International Film Festival, and the Female Eye Film Festival, among others. She directed music videos for the band Yassou and singer/ songwriter Brooke Josephson. Michelle directed the webseries There's a Special Place in Hell for Fashion Bloggers and the kids' show The Broadway Babies Show. Theater Michelle has directed in New York, across the US, and internationally includes Smile, The Oxy Complex, There andBack, Sex with Strangers, Every Good Girl Deserves Fun, Sex of the Baby, Cloven Tongues, Un Plugged In, South Beach Rapture, and Sarajevo's Child. Michelle co-created the musical High School Confidential for Primary Stages, where she was the Associate Artistic Director. She holds the first undergraduate directing degree from Webster University's Conservatory of Theatre Arts. This is her second year directing for the Disney Diversity Program. Member: Lincoln Center Director's Lab and SDC. www.michellebossy.com



(*writer – producer – actor*) **Molly Powers Gallagher** is a Korean-born, Irish American-raised writer/actor, who is committed to creating stories that make women feel seen. Her short films **TYPE A** (dir. Emily Hartford) and **eyeballs** (dir. Robert Thaxton-Stevenson) have screened at Woods Hole Film Festival, Twin Cities Film Fest, Adirondack Film Festival, Kansas City Film Fest International, Bridgeport Film Fest, and NYC Indie Theatre Film Festival. Her most recent film is **exception(al)**, directed by Michelle Bossy. She has been awarded residencies at The New Victory Theatre, Town Stages, and the Athena Film Festival Screenwriting Lab and grants from Felicia Pride's The Create Daily and the BU in LA Comedy Mentorship program. Her writing has been recognized by the Academy Nicholl Fellowship (Top 15%), Austin Film Festival (multiple 2nd rounders), Sundance Development Track (2nd rounder), SPACE at Ryder Farm (Finalist), and The Future of Film is Female (Semi-Finalist). Molly began acting professionally as a young teen and is a former Lincoln Center Theater Teaching Artist. She is currently writing a novel for Alloy Entertainment. MFA Screenwriting, Boston University. BA in History, Fordham Lincoln Center. www.mollypowersgallagher.com



(*producer*) **David M. Night Maire** is a creative independent filmmaker whose character-driven films have received endorsements and worldwide acclaim. A bilingual alumnus of NYU: Tisch School of the Arts, Night Maire earned his B.F.A. with honors in Film & T.V. with a focus on Directing. This native Alpine's passion for storytelling led him to pursue both an M.A. in Screenwriting for T.V. & Film from Royal Holloway's University of London, and an M.P.S. in Directing from the School of Visual Arts under famed music video and commercial director Bob Giraldi. David premiered music videos on MTV and Glamour, and produced content for the likes of Louis Vuitton . Moët Hennessy, and Red Bull, amongst others. Moreover, Night has garnered thousands of laurels and awards for the dozens of short films he's directed and produced. His cultivated persona and visual aesthetic have also precipitated invitations to judge diverse film festivals, including the likes of the DC Shorts International Film Festival & Screenplay Competition, FilmQuest, and Shriekfest Horror Film Fest. www.dmnightmaire.com

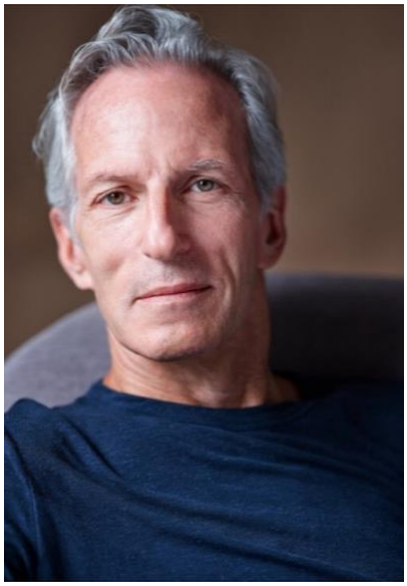


(*dir. of photography*) **Brendan Babinski** is an accomplished director of photography with over 11 years of shooting experience. After working in the camera department and shooting his first nationally distributed feature length movie in Chicago, Brendan moved to New York City where he works as a DP, splitting his time between both narrative and fashion/commercial productions. Brendan also does specialty camera operating, most notably operating on ice skates and roller skates to capture shots in specific environments. Brendan's favorite things to shoot aesthetically are thought provoking drama and mystery, as well as fashion projects. www.brendanbabinski.com



(*editor - colorist*) As an experienced content creator, video editor and graphic designer with over 8 years of experience, **Catalina Denning** is a versatile and skilled professional. Bilingual in English and Spanish, she can communicate effectively with clients and collaborators from around the world, bringing a global perspective to each project. Her extensive experience has given her a broad and diverse skillset, enabling her to tackle complex video projects with ease. She is a creative and inventive storyteller with a passion for producing visually stunning and emotionally engaging content. With a proven track record of delivering high-quality video projects for a range of clients, Catalina brings a unique combination of technical expertise and creative vision to every project. www.catalinadenning.com

act(or) biographies



(*as Graham*) **Jeffrey Grover** is an NYC based actor, producer, writer and director. He and his partners at g2h films have produced six films, including "On a Technicality," "Technically, Marvin," "You Go First," "Benchwarmers" and Christine Howey's "Exact Change." Jeffrey has appeared in over 50 films and television productions, and has a 25 plus year body of work on stage in productions both regionally and in NYC. Some notable films include roles in "Take Shelter," "Compliance," "Miles Ahead," "I Feel Pretty," "Two Cents From a Pariah", "Wise Guys," "Post-Truth" and "The Thaw." Television roles include HBO's "Succession" as Gavin Bentner, and Ryan Murphy's second season of "Feud: Capote's Women," as Richard Avedon. Jeffrey is a member of SAG-AFTRA and Actors Equity. www.jeffreygrover.com



(*as Norah*) **Viveca Chow** is a creative human deeply inspired by storytelling and the immense power it holds. Born and raised in Hong Kong, she is the first Hong Kongese to make her debut in a musical on Broadway. She feels very connected to her culture & heritage, and is extremely proud to be a part of and representing the Asian narrative. She is both a performer and creator with a combined following of 208k on all platforms, hoping to have a positive impact with whatever she does. www.helloitsviveca.com



(*as Jacqueline*) **Sandy Bainum** has been a veteran of the stage for 30 years. As an actor/singer/dancer, Sandy has performed leading roles on Broadway and in some of the best regional theaters on both coasts. She has appeared in various TV/film projects and has also started a new company, 3Gems Productions, where she hopes to create mission driven entertainment for both the stage and screen. Sandy Bainum is a celebrated performer, appearing on stages from Broadway to L.A. and on screens big and small in a range of riveting roles. Her striking style and sophistication are matched by her great humor and her one-woman shows have sold out coast to coast, garnering rave reviews. www.sandybainum.com

full credi(ts)

Produced by
Michelle Bossy
Molly Powers Gallagher
Jeffrey Grover
Monica Park
Sandy Bainum
Regina Myers
David M. Night Maire

Cast
Sandy Bainum
Graham Campbell
Viveca Chow
Jesse Frances Epstein
Molly Powers Gallagher
Jeffrey Grover

with
Ben Bauder
Ola Pater
Monica Park
Jackson Poulin
Joey Dudding
Sarah Misch
Hui-Shan Yong

Directed by
Michelle Bossy

Director of Photography
Brendan Babinski

1st AC & DIT
Ben Tillona

Camera Operator
Gigi Aquilina

Gaffer
Eli Kravetz

Key Grip
Chris Mitchell

Hair & Make Up Artists
Danielle Waugh
Min Hong

Production Assistants
Ben Bauder
Yasmine Ulvidia
Robert L. Gaines Jr.

Written by
Molly Powers Gallagher

Production Coordinator
Ola Pater

Editor & Colorist
Catalina Denning

Composer
Rowan Merrill

Music Supervisors
Allison Farrar
Nick Lara

Sound Mixer
E.J. Markland

Sound Design
Flavorlab

Special Thanks
Arline Vogel
Brooklyn College

contac(ts)

Short Film

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insta: @exceptionalthefilm
IMDb: www.imdb.com/title/tt27861546/

Molly Powers Gallagher (*writer – producer – actor*)

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Acting Rep.: Tiera Ashley & Katie Sasso - FireStarter Entertainment
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Manager- Ethan Harari: eharari@luberroklin.com
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