

A low-angle shot of a woman with dark hair looking out a window in a bathroom stall. The stall walls are covered in small, circular tiles. On the windowsill, there are several bottles of toiletries and a potted plant. The lighting is soft and natural, coming from the window. The overall mood is contemplative and quiet.

Luteal

A short film about waiting

LOGLINE

One year after a woman's partner dies of leukemia, she decides to have their child on her own through insemination. But maybe she's not as alone as she thinks.

GENRE
Dark Comedy

FORMAT
short film



Synopsis

After Hil's partner dies from leukemia, she decides to use his frozen sperm to have a child on her own. We meet her after her first insemination, during the dreaded two-week waiting period between ovulation and menstruation: the Luteal phase. Hil has a beautiful community of friends, including her best friend, Jill. Jill couldn't be further from "the kid shit," but it turns out Jill and Hil are exactly who each other need as the Luteal phase comes to an end.

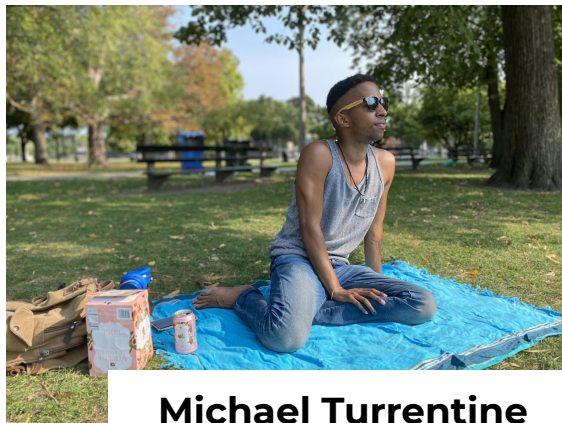
Meet the Director

Hilary Williams (she/her) is a Chicago-based Actor, Writer, and Filmmaker. Williams has had the immense pleasure of working on stage with many Chicago theatre companies, some of which include The Hypocrites, LifeLine, Rivendell Ensemble, Steep Theatre, New Colony, Broken Nose, and Northlight. She is a company member of Bramble Theatre. She has appeared on television in Chicago Fire and various commercials, and in the films Older Children, Dear Frankie (Cannes Festival Selection for 8mm), and Dad Man Walking. Williams' voice is featured on PBS cartoons and the fiction podcast Unwell. Her work behind the camera began with the short film atoms of ashes. Williams co-wrote, co-produced, and provided art direction. It was accepted into 7 film festivals and received the Best of the Midwest Award for Best Editing and Women of Now Anniversary Showcase Judges Choice Award. Timeout Chicago called the film "an exhilarating journey through cycles of love, loss, and rebirth that seems to encapsulate the entire universe in just seven minutes." Williams is a graduate of the School at Steppenwolf and represented by Shirley Hamilton Talent in Chicago. More about her can be found at hilwill.com



To view atoms of ashes:

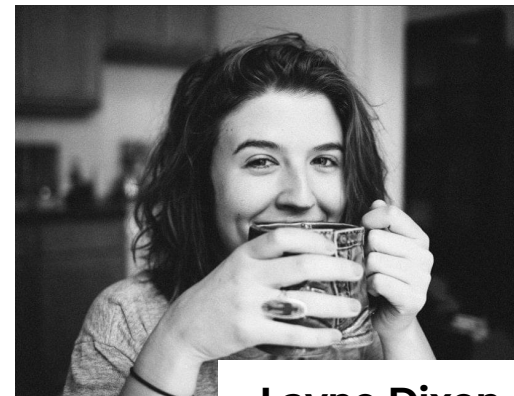
<https://vimeo.com/259991102>



Michael Turrentine

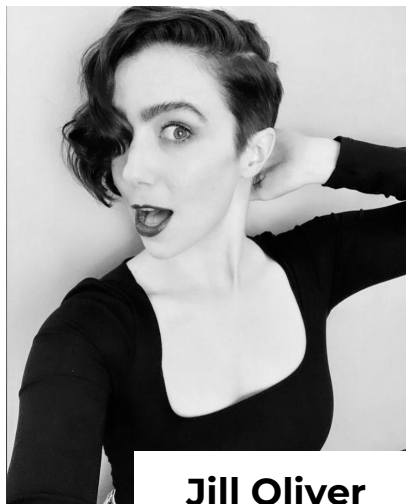


Emily Claibourne



Layne Dixon

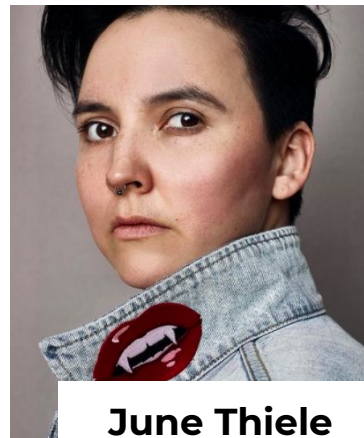
Cast & Crew



Jill Oliver



Hilary Williams



June Thiele



Jason Chiu

Cast Bios

Michael Turrentine (he/him) is so excited to be joining this wonderful team of *Luteal!* Michael is an actor in the Windy City of Chicago, but is originally from Oklahoma. Some of his credits include working with theaters such as *Steppenwolf*, *The Lyric Opera of Chicago*, *Court Theater*, *The Gift Theater*, *Remy Bumppo Theater Company*, *American Theater Company*, *Griffin Theater*, *First Floor Theater*, *Firebrand Theater*, and many others! He can also be seen in television series such as *The Red Line* and *South Side*. He would like to thank his family, especially his mother, for their undying support! Michael is represented by Gray Talent Group.

Layne Dixon (she/her) is a writer, performer and photographer living and working in Chicago. Originally from Atlanta (hey y'all), she moved here to pursue a career in comedy, build her photo portfolio and make new pals. A graduate of the Second City Conservatory, past member of Vienna Juvenile Sketch Comedy, and storyteller, Layne is super amped to be a part of *Luteal*. She feels incredibly lucky to be able to play with such a solid group of bright shiny humans. When she's not writing/performing she's doing impressions of her mom and trying to kiss strangers' dogs on the mouth.

Jill Oliver (she/her) is a Chicago-based actor, writer and filmmaker. She most recently co-produced the short film *After*. Currently she's pitching her original animated series *Spirit Force Five*, based on her first full length play *The Adventures of Spirit Force Five*, produced by The Factory Theater with rave reviews in 2018. Jill's repertoire consists of Chicago theatre, including A Red Orchid Theatre, Lifeline Theatre, Artistic Home and Shattered Globe. She spent nine years as an ensemble member of The Factory Theater, where she produced, directed, wrote and acted in over a dozen shows. In addition to Chicago theatre, Jill has worked on various commercials, voiceovers, independent films and web series. Her voice will be featured on season four of *Unwell*, winner of the Best Podcast award at the 2021 BBC Audio Drama Awards. Jill is represented by Hayes Talent Agency.

June Thiele (they/she) is an Indigenous, two-spirit actor, writer, filmmaker, and storyteller originally from Alaska. Recently they performed in a radio play with Theater for Young Audiences at the Kennedy Center, a radio play with A Red Orchid Theatre, Incomplete Conversations with Silent Theatre Company and wrote and performed an original story, *When Animals used to Talk with 2nd Story*. Film credits include *atoms of ashes* as co-writer, producer and story and *Adhara*, as writer and actor. Their play *K'kali* was accepted into the 2021 Native Voices 'Playwrights Retreat and 27th Festival of New Plays. June was selected as a scriptwriting fellow in 2018 with PBS Kids and are currently writing for the new animated series "Molly of Denali." June is represented by DDO Artist Agency in Chicago. For updated work, find them on IG @junosynthesizer.

Crew Bios

Emily Claibourne (she/her) *First Assistant Director & Producer* - is a Columbia College Chicago Theater alum with a wide range of talents varying from acting, directing, producing and people wrangling (aka stage management). Emily is thrilled to be making her assistant directing debut on this project. The Luteal story is near and dear to her heart having experienced the waiting and hoping that comes with every pregnancy journey, especially the unconventional quest in a same sex relationship. Emily is represented by Stavins Talent and whenever she's not flexing her creative talents she spends her time flexing her muscles—picking up heavy things and putting them back down again—as a personal trainer.

Jason Chiu (he/him) *Director of Photography* - is a DP currently residing in Chicago, IL. He most recently filmed the first season to a new Adult Swim series called "Joe Pera Talks with You". It released in Spring 2018 to critical acclaim. The LA Times "found art in the 11-minute episodes", Polygon called it "Adult Swim's best new show" and mentioned "each episode is shot beautifully", and Indiewire says it'll "make you happy to be alive". In addition, Jason has extensive DP experience on commercial and feature film projects. He shot Stephen Cone's "Henry Gamble's Birthday Party" which screened at the BAMCinemaFest, Maryland International Film Festival and the Chicago International Film Festival. He has DPed commercial projects for brands like Nissan, Samsung, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Feeding America, and Everytown for Gun Safety.



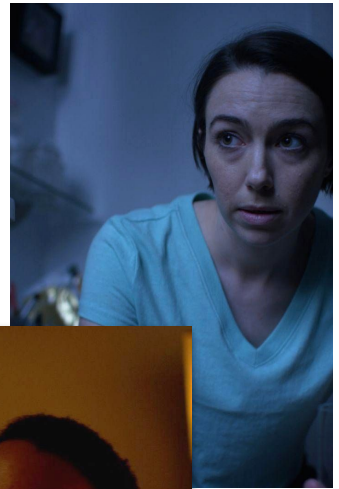
BTS Photos



Director's Statement:

My ideas of birth are inextricably intertwined with my notions of death, and so for me pregnancy is connected to grief. My personal journey with fertility is linked to my depression, my anxiety, and my heartache as much as it is tied to my hope, the love I have for my partner, and the love I have for my family (chosen & blood). This film is a love letter to my body, to the process of conception whatever it may look like, and to my friends. I hope the film gives the viewer the opportunity to challenge their own connection to the process of conception and creation. I wanted to make a film about an artist community that isn't about the work they make or the importance of art, but rather about the importance of who they are as a support system. I want this short film to express the familial aspects of a group of individuals who love one another, who understand how each other creates and helps one another do so. Our artistry so often defines us, and that can be beautiful, but the relationships and communities that artists build are also a thing of beauty and reflection.

The film is also about waiting. Waiting on life to begin, creativity to strike, careers to burst open, and grief to pass. The luteal phase seems like a stagnant position, but it can hold so much expectation and so much hurt. How we wait is often how we cope.



Credits

Directed by Hilary Williams

Written by Hilary Williams, co-written with Jill Oliver

Produced by Hilary Williams, Jill Oliver, Emily Claibourne and Jason Chiu

Cast Hilary Williams, Layne Dixon, Jill Oliver, Michael Turrentine, June Thiele

Cinematography Jason Chiu

Edited by Diego Lopez

Composer and Sound Supervisor Jeff McCollister

Sound Assistant Nasir Malik

1st Assistant Director Emily Claibourne

1st Assistant Camera Sonia Jourdain

Production Sound cody "coco" wallace

Gaffer Luciana Salinas

Key Grip Julia Benson

Executive Producer Lucia Milone Williams

Associate Producers Dana Black and Miss Robyn Claibourne