

Shape of Clay

A FILM BY CATHERINE ANDRE

ALINA ROTARU JARED DORECK

DIRECTOR OF
PHOTOGRAPHY

JARED YEH

PRODUCTION
DESIGNER

LINDA ZAUNER

PRODUCTION

IRIS GORBIK

ORIGINAL
MUSIC BY

ALIYA ULTAN

COLORIST &
POSTER ART

HARRY HUNTER

PRODUCED
BY

FAMU INTL & CHAMPAGNE SUPERNOVA SRL

LOGLINE

Actress Sara and director Andrew are perfect partners in life and art until their latest play reveals their issues bubbling beneath the surface. A comedy about creativity, love and life imitating art.

SYNOPSIS

Late one night, Romanian actress Sara has a vision of herself on stage, performing in her dream role: Catalina in *The Evening Star*, a traditional Romanian poem. When she shares her vision with her American partner/director, Andrew, he is more interested in sex than listening to what she has to say.

The next morning in a rustic, wooded cabin, Sara reads the poem in English as Andrew cooks pancakes. She pushes to find out more about his vision for the beloved text, but Andrew evades. As they eat in silence, he finally indulges her, smirking as Sara stumbles through her ideas. Andrew eventually bringing out a model box, a miniature of the theater's set design complete with figurines for actors, setting the scene for her. Sara criticizes his approach, and Andrew angrily dismisses her by telling her to focus on her character. Peeved, Sara does just that, and when Andrew comes to make peace, she scolds him in Romanian; they giggle, laugh and make up.

Hours later, Sara watches Andrew expound upon his vision on the phone, watching him lovingly until a pivot in topic to her character reveals his deep-seated misogyny. Sara quits the play, and Andrew tries to cajole her back into her part, insisting that he was speaking only about her character and not how he sees her. When he fails, Andrew sets the model box on fire, and they both watch it — and their happy life together — burn. That night, the two share a meal in silence. Andrew asks Sara if she would like more potatoes, serving them to her anyway when she refuses to respond. Sara gets up from the table and looks out into the dark, silent yard. She turns to Andrew, and he stares back at her — like two figurines in a model box.



WRITER & DIRECTOR



CATHERINE ANDRE is an American theater and film director. She is dedicated to telling female stories through powerful performances, using interpersonal drama to expose society's systems of power, abuse, and oppression.

After studying film directing at Interlochen Arts Academy, Catherine started directing plays at Princeton University. Throughout, she received research grants to study contemporary theatrical auteurship in Europe. Inspired by the power of stage poetry, Catherine brought this style to her work as a freelance director in New York City, where she directed new and classical plays while assisting Off-Broadway. Catherine won a Fulbright grant to move to Europe and spent three years assisting legendary theater directors, putting their methods for creative visceral performances and powerful stage poetry into practice in her own radical feminist, Shakespeare productions. During the pandemic, Catherine returned to the filmmaking space, and in July 2022, she completed FAMU International's one-year directing course in Prague, CZ.

Recent/upcoming work includes *The Reflection*, *Shape of Clay*, and *Bunny*. www.catherine-andre.com.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY



JARED YEH was born in Taipei, Taiwan. He started his work in filmmaking and film festivals after finishing the filmmaking programme at New York Film Academy.

As an art director, he has worked in numerous award-winning Taiwanese films and international cooperation movies since 2008. Yeh also works as a director and cinematographer for many commercials, music videos, and short films.

His short documentary film "Shangdrok" has been selected in 26 film festivals and won 4 laurels in 2021. Yeh is currently going on a journey of further study in film. He finishes a cinematography programme at FAMU in Prague in 2022 and is now pursuing a master's degree in cinematography at MetFilm School Berlin.

SARA



ALINA ROTARU (Sara) is a Romanian actress. A graduate of the University of Theater and Film in Bucharest (BFA, MA), Alina won the Romanian award for Best Actress for playing Madame de Tourvel in *Dangerous Liasons* (Cristi Juncu) and Nina in *The Seagull* (Andrei Serban). She is a leading actress at Teatrul Mic (the Small Theater) in Bucharest and bilingual (Romanian-English).

ANDREW



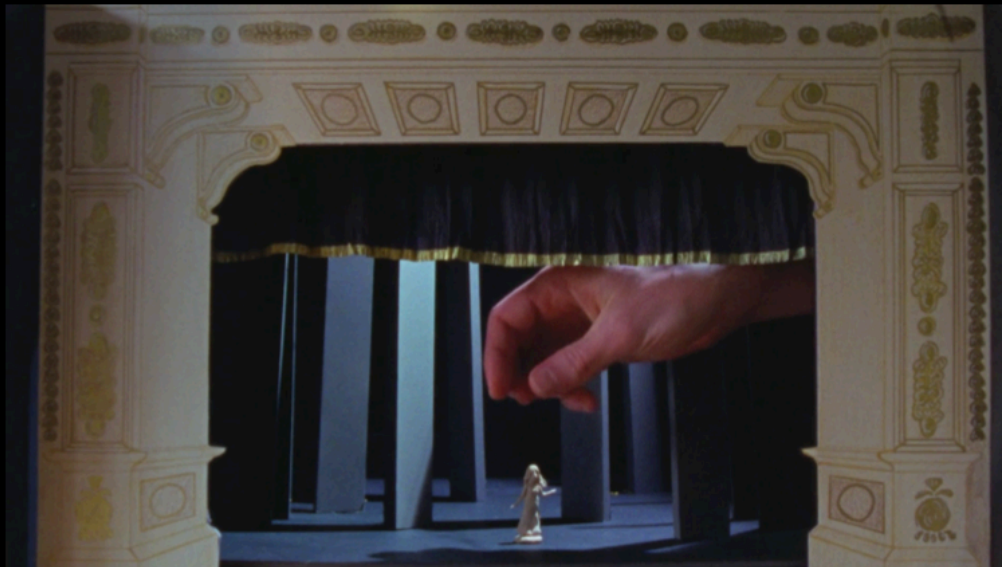
JARED DORECK (Andrew) is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice spans writing, craft, music, photography, video, and performance. As a Shakespearean actor and as a runway model. To celebrate the 400th year anniversary of Shakespeare's death in 2016, he was actor (and fight choreographer) in 20 different productions within a single year with the Prague Shakespeare Company.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Shape of Clay is a Fassbinder-inspired relationship dramedy about the disintegration of a romantic-creative relationship between two artists. Sara and Andrew are more comfortable playing in their roles and illusions than acknowledging the reality of the other person – or themselves. This is a comedy about disillusionment, gender-power dynamics, our attachment to social roles, and what happens when we see more truth in them than the people we love.

Audiences will be interested to know that this short was written and conceived with a 20-year age difference. Andrew had all the power: he was an older, white, male, American while Sara was his aging starlet, moving towards thirty with a one-way ticket out of Romania (dependent upon Andrew). Originally, the film was meant to follow Sara waking up to the compromise required to maintain a partnership where the other person holds all the power. When sudden production challenges required recasting Andrew at the last moment, Jared Doreck brought new youthful, comedic energy to the character, rewriting the relationship dynamic. Andrew became a self-important, bumbling buffoon, as oblivious in his work as he is to his partner's needs; the character had always been an emblem of the patriarchy, and now patriarchy was played in full absurdity. Yet Sara chooses to love this man and respect his authority; they are both made ridiculous through their adherence to the status quo – to make-believe.

Ultimately, this is still a movie about Sara's disillusionment. She stares down the man and role she has chosen for herself at his side, evaluating the compromise of herself and her values that would be required for her to remain there. And yet, I ask for you to notice that, in her critical moment of conflict when the kettle boils over, the camera distances itself – and the audience – from Sara, inviting the audience to fill in the space with sympathy, empathy, judgment, or even disgust.



Shape of Clay has hit a nerve with audiences, inspiring polarized reactions. Some women have been disgusted by Andrew's familiar misogyny; others have been disgusted at me for "ramming feminism" down their throats. Some men think that Sara is overreacting; others have admitted to remembering sobering moments where love was put on the line. Some detach from both, casting these characters as two ridiculous people who, in some gross way, deserve each other because they are both in love with their fantasies and not the person in front of them.

I invite you to watch this film and judge its players harshly as they act out their roles in the theater of society. But I also ask for you to consider the root of your reactions and whether *Shape of Clay* succeeds in tapping into your personal experiences and holding a mirror up to nature.

REVIEWS

*“Shape of Clay is an **arresting, intimate** exploration of the **vulnerability of female creativity** and the **impossibility of ever truly knowing those you love** and rely on.”*

*“A **piercing study** of the **misunderstandings** that **shape love and art.**”*

*“Andre’s **sensitively** and **effectively** captures the **joyful imagination** of her characters to the sad realities we all play out in the **theatre of society.**”*

*“**Well-written** and **beautifully told**, exploring the sometimes **painful paradoxes** of love between men and women.”*

*“With a **gentle** build and **authentic** atmosphere, Andre gives us an inside look at something far too many women in the arts have endured. We can feel Sara’s excitement and **are broken for her as her dreams burn.**”*

*“A **lovingly constructed** world oozing charm, perfectly **muddled by its dynamic inhabitants.**”*

*“**Beautiful** – about an **emotional amputation**, growing like a phantom limb, between two lovers. Behind the words and the lack of communication, the calmness of the trees, the atmosphere, the birds, everything leads to the storm. In this case, the burning.”*

*“**Unsettling, surprising, bizarre.** Really a treat to watch.”*

*“*Shape of Clay* hums with a **quiet vibrancy**. Visually, the film evokes a dream as much as real life - and, with help from a **deft directorial hand**, the actors explore their connection in a way that feels **simple, genuine, and familiar.**”*





TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Shooting Format	16mm, Kodak Stock, ARRI Camera
Aspect ratio	1.77
Audio format	Stereo
Total Run Time	13:23:01
Screening Formats	DCP, Apple ProRes, H.264
Resolution	HD: 1920 x 1080
Speed	24 fps

CONTACT DETAILS

Writer/Director	Catherine Andre
Production Company	FAMU International
Co-Production Company	Champagne Supernova SRL
Email	champagnesupernovasrl@gmail.com
Phone	+1 703 963 4637