



Juno: The Graveyard Of Memories (2024)

A Marionette In The Play Of Strangers

Directed, Shot, Written, & Produced By Tariq Stone

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Synopsis

Juno is an short film that delves into themes of memory, identity, and the quiet burdens of hyperconsumption. The film follows the journey of Juno, a deeply empathetic and isolated character, who experiences life in an unconventional way: through the memories of others. These memories, however, are not conjured from living people but from discarded objects—trash that has been carelessly abandoned in the world around her.

Juno invites viewers to reexamine their relationship with the material world and to consider a new kind of stewardship—one that is mindful and intentional, where both people and the things they create and discard are treated with greater care. The film's speculative take on the life of trash critiques the disposable, extractive culture we live in and advocates for a more deliberate connection to both objects and the human stories they carry.

Expanded Synopsis

Juno is a short film that delves into themes of memory, identity, and the quiet burdens of hyperconsumption. The film follows the journey of Juno, a deeply empathetic and isolated character, who experiences life in an unconventional way: through the memories of others. These memories, however, are not conjured from living people but from discarded objects—trash that has been carelessly abandoned in the world around her.

Juno can see the echoes of past experiences from objects in the graveyard. Through each encounter with these forgotten objects, she relives moments from the lives of strangers—fragments of joy, sorrow, passion, and loss. Yet, while the memories she experiences are vivid and full of life, Juno remains detached, a passive observer unable to fully connect with the world on her own terms. She is forever trapped in the borrowed lives of others, unable to carve out her own identity beyond these fleeting recollections.

All characters in the film, including those who populate the vivid memories Juno witnesses, are portrayed by the same performer. This choice serves to emphasize her profound isolation, reinforcing her existence as a solitary figure who is perpetually surrounded by the remnants of others' lives but never truly a part of them. The sameness of the performer across different roles and scenes underscores Juno's inability to escape her loneliness, even as she drifts through vibrant and varied pasts.

Juno is not only a meditation on human detachment and emotional resonance but also a critique of modern society's disposable culture. The film prompts viewers to reflect on the objects we discard and the stories they hold. Through Juno's psychometric journey, we are asked to consider the emotional weight and hidden histories of the items we throw away without thought. In each object, there is a story—moments of human existence, feelings, and connections that have been lost in the pursuit of material excess.

In the world of *Juno*, the focus is not on precious heirlooms or objects of sentimental value passed between generations. Instead, it highlights the everyday detritus—forgotten toys, cracked clocks, broken furniture, and miscellaneous debris—that forms the backdrop of modern life. These objects, though seemingly insignificant, hold within them the traces of human experience and emotion.

Ultimately, *Juno* invites viewers to reexamine their relationship with the material world and to consider a new kind of stewardship—one that is mindful and intentional, where both people and the things they create and discard are treated with greater care. The film's speculative take on the life of trash critiques the disposable, extractive culture we live in and advocates for a more deliberate connection to both objects and the human stories they carry.

Director's Statement

The Garden of Memories was born from my fascination with the hidden stories embedded in the objects we often discard. I was chosen as the student artist in Recology's Artist In Residence program which allows artists to pull things from the dump to use in their artworks. I was struck by how personal and intimate some of these objects were—old family photos, a grandfather clock commemorating decades of service, and even mundane items like shopping carts—all of which carry the weight of human experience.

With this film, I wanted to explore the idea that objects are more than just things we use and discard. They are witnesses to our lives, absorbing and preserving the fragments of our experiences. Juno, the protagonist, acts as a vessel for this exploration, navigating a world of memories that are not her own, reflecting the emotional resonance of the lives she can never truly touch.

Visually, I wanted to blur the line between the surreal and the ordinary. A lot of the main parts of the film I saw as shots in my head and then wrote the story around those visuals. I strive to contrast the familiar with the strange. This tension mirrors the emotional journey of Juno—caught between her detachment as a celestial being and her deep yearning to feel the warmth of human connection.

It was also a fun challenge because this was my second time ever directing a film, and I was also shooting it, having that level of control over the lighting concepts and visual aesthetic made it way more interesting. We were also on a tight timeline since I was making this film in tandem with a photo series that is loosely connected as apart of the residency. From first draft to final product, the film took 70 days to complete.

At its core, Juno: The Garden of Memories is about how we connect with the things we leave behind, and how even the forgotten can carry immense meaning.



Cast & Crew Bios



Mehaa Mekala

LEAD / WRITER

Mehaa Mekala is an actress, singer, and writer born and raised in the Bay Area. Growing up with a theatrical background performing in plays, musicals, and dance performances, she works now primarily in on-camera storytelling. Recently she's started in a multitude of diverse short films ranging from (but not limited to) heartwarming love stories, coming of age retellings, and wacky satirical horror comedies. She has trained for years in classical and contemporary acting methods through the teachings at many renowned theaters in Berkeley and SF. With an undergraduate degree in Psychology, Mehaa's deeper understanding of human emotion and her fascination with the brain have lent to her intuitive ability to breathe life in characters. She believes that the beauty of film lies entirely on how it aims to influence and hopes one day to collaborate on stories that deepens audiences' communal sense of empathy towards each other and people of the world.



Theo Garvey

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Theo Garvey is a dedicated director, writer, and 1st AD with an unwavering passion for creating art that resonates with the LGBTQ+ community. Constantly striving to enhance their skills, Theo embraces challenges across diverse mediums, including documentaries, short films, animation, fashion photography, and portraits. Passionate about supporting their peers, they excel in producing and bringing others' visions to life, even within limitations. Currently, Theo is directing the short film *Oh Honey, Take Me Away!*, which delves into themes of grief, queer identity, and female rage, resonating with young femme queer individuals navigating self-discovery in a complex world.

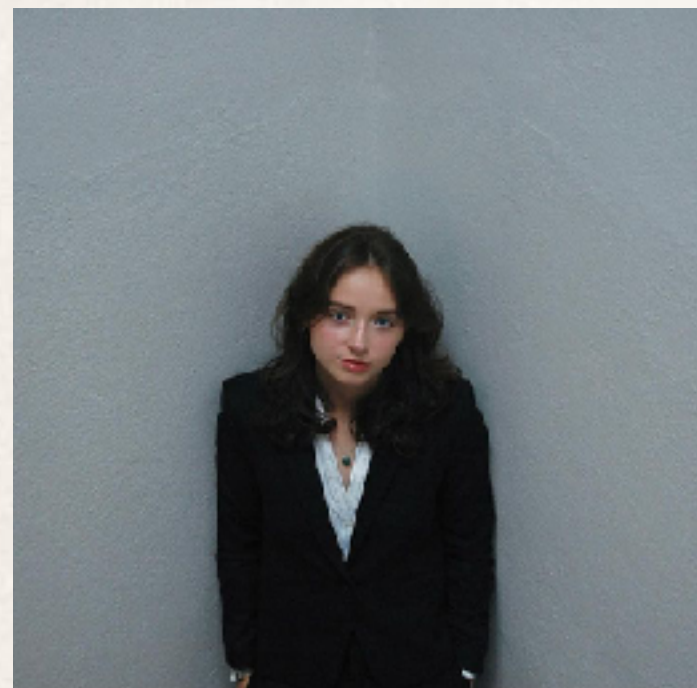
Cast & Crew Bios



Gabby Yabut

EDITOR / SCRIPT SUPE

Gabby is a Filipino filmmaker and editor based in San Francisco. She enjoys the filmmaking process, particularly the collaborative aspect. Gabby's favorite places to be are on set and in the editing room, where they witness creative minds clashing and combining to create something greater than what any one person can accomplish alone. Gabby believes that filmmaking is a medium capable of touching the hearts of its audience. Her goal is to inspire people to take action by telling stories about environmental and social injustices.



Samantha Williams

COMPOSER

Samantha Williams is a film and media composer born and raised in Silver Spring, Maryland. Samantha has composed additional music for a PBS-NOVA special-Sea Change: The Gulf Of Maine. She has also composed for short films from film students at California College of the Arts, Rhode Island School of Design, Mass Art, Emerson College and Maryland Institute College of Art. Through her close collaborations with film directors and artists, Samantha has established herself as a composer that's "pushing creative boundaries" (Director. Boxi Chen) and dedicated to achieving excellence in her work. She's recently been selected as a composer for the upcoming show "Evolution of Earth"- A live orchestra performance and visual experience with the help of an all immersive 360 degree space.



Technical Specifications

Running Time: 9 Minutes

Genre: Fantasy Drama

Format: Digital

Aspect Ratio: 1.90 (Varies)

Languages: English

Sound: Stereo

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What inspired the concept of *Juno*?

During my residency at the dump, I was struck by the personal items I was finding and it prompted me to think of their histories and that made me realize I could create an imagined history for things which also gave them new meaning and presence as they were. The core idea being to make art, not landfill. The film seeks to explore what it means to engage with the material world more mindfully and asks us to imagine the emotional weight that even the most mundane items can carry.

Why are all characters played by the same performer?

This decision was based on the actor, Mehaa Mekala. I had seen her in a variety of projects displaying incredible range, and we had talked about her starring in my next project. With that in mind I wanted to have a single film that leaned on her acting range and encompassed that in different settings and scenarios. On a character level, this choice was made to emphasize Juno's deep loneliness and her inability to connect with the world around her. Though she relives vivid and emotionally rich memories, they are not her own, which reinforces her sense of isolation. Having Mehaa portray all characters serves as a visual metaphor for her emotional detachment and the fact that, despite being surrounded by people's lives and stories, she remains alone.

How long did the project take?

The residency is a 4 month long term and while I had the idea early on I didn't get started on it until about 2 months in. From first draft to finished film it took 2 months and 7 days to complete.

Contact Information

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Screeener Link: <https://vimeo.com/tariqstone/juno>