



# HUMANZEE

a film by TARO O'HALLORAN

# SYNOPSIS

Deep in the basement of an old house on a quiet suburban street, Jane Howell harbors a strange little creature named Ziggy. The two share their life in solitude, where Ziggy's only connection to the outside world comes from black and white movies on an old TV.

The odd pair's way of life is put into question when an old friend from the past appears at her door, leaving Jane scrambling to preserve Ziggy's innocence as he starts connecting the dots of his mysterious origins.



# TARO O'HALLORAN

**DIRECTOR, CO-WRITER, PRODUCER**

## BIO

Taro O'Halloran is a second generation Irish-Italian filmmaker based in Boston, Massachusetts. By enveloping intimate stories in heavy-handed "genre film" imagery, O'Halloran's work interrogates the role of escapism in contemporary human life.

Holding a Bachelor's of Fine Art in Film & Video from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, O'Halloran's filmmaking process has roots beyond the film medium. Much of his conceptual process comes in the form of illustration and painting before crossing the threshold into filmed material.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The production of *Humanzee* from conception to fruition was an exercise in confronting limitation. Partially self-funded by selling donuts and partially through crowdfunding, the film is a labor of love and dedication that began its life as a single illustration over three years prior to principal photography. *Humanzee* is a translation of human isolation, repression, and fear, articulated through images heavily influenced both in style and substance by the Giallo Horror films of yesteryear. With extensive use of prosthetic effects, elaborate set and production design - *Humanzee* is a handmade film through and through.

# THE STORY BEHIND 'HUMANZEE'

*Humanzee* began its life as a tiny doodle by Director Taro O'Halloran in 2021.  
(Pictured Top Right)

Inspired by the enormous backlog of 'Ape Films' throughout cinema history, a retrospective look at the feeling of isolation during the early Covid-19 pandemic, and an influx of ape related material cropping up on social media throughout the pandemic - O'Halloran became obsessed with the image of something halfway between the modern human brain and that of the early hominid. He got straight to work.

The idea initially took shape in late 2021, with a little-to-no budget 16mm analog micro-short. Unfortunately, the film was improperly exposed and the captured image never saw the light of day. Unwilling to abandon the idea, O'Halloran tried again in early 2022, still with a microscopic budget and still on 16mm. (Pictured Bottom Right)

O'Halloran broke away from the idea as he entered the latter half of his time at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, becoming more confident and skilled a Director through other projects. As he approached his final year and still unsatisfied by his prior attempts at *Humanzee*, he set out to tackle the idea one more time - with a brand new, stripped back story.

PRESS KIT



*Jane (Liz Bishop) and Ziggy (Zach Norton) watch television together in the basement.*



# ZACH NORTON AS “ZIGGY”

## HARRY POTTER AND THE CURSED CHILD - TOURING CAST

Born and raised alongside Director Taro O'Halloran in Weymouth, Massachusetts, Zach's career as an actor was born on the stage. Norton brings the heightened physicality of his stage work to the role of Ziggy, where his performance transcends the physical limitations that come with heavy prosthetic makeup.

Zach is currently performing in the North American tour of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* with the Original Touring Company.

*Fun fact: Norton initially thought he was being pranked when O'Halloran asked him to send a self-tape “running around the room on your knuckles while making ape sounds”.*





# LIZ BISHOP AS “JANE HOWELL”

**THE HOLDOVERS, THE WALKING DEAD: DEAD CITY**

A staple of the local Massachusetts film industry, Liz’s performances can be seen across independent and commercial film and television alike. She was the last role cast in *Humanzee*, despite being the primary perspective the audience follows throughout the film’s runtime. Casting a wide net, it took the production team multiple months of auditions before Bishop was found. After watching her audition, it was unanimous that Liz was the only one for the job.

In a role that could have gone in any number of directions, Bishop brings a subtlety to Jane that firmly cements a reality to *Humanzee* simmering beneath the surface.

## CHERYL DEDORA-PYNN AS “ANNIE CHASE”

Cheryl is a Rhode Island based actor, primarily performing in theater productions. Similar to Norton's casting, the production team was immediately drawn to Pynn's ability to seamlessly channel theatrical performance in her portrayal of a character that required a full command of every second she spends onscreen.

Annie is the second character in the film who required a full facial prosthetic in order to realize onscreen, whose grounded role in the film juxtaposes the fantastical nature of Ziggy and his appearance.

In what is perhaps the quietest, most human role in the narrative- Cheryl's performance is the heart and soul of the film.



# MEET THE PRODUCTION TEAM



## BRETT MELICAN

CO-WRITER, CINEMATOGRAPHER

From script to screen, Brett's contribution to *Humanzee* run deep into the DNA of the film. Brett is a programmer at IFF Boston and RPM Film Festival, and is on the production staff of the Telluride Film Festival. He is a founding member of Electric Goo Films.



## REN EVANS

FILM PRODUCER, 1ST AD

Beyond her experience as a producer, Ren is an interdisciplinary artist and experimental filmmaker. She has recently worked as a graphic designer for the Telluride Film Festival. Ren is a founding member of Electric Goo Films.



## EMILY CANALES

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Originally from New Orleans, Emily's training in production design comes primarily from her work as an art installer in the gallery/fine arts industry. From on the fly graphics to elaborate, handmade set design - Emily's work can be seen all over the world of *Humanzee*. She is a member of Electric Goo Films.



## DAN WOOL

COMPOSER, SOUND DESIGNER

Dan is San Francisco based film composer and sound designer, and a frequent collaborator with filmmakers Alex Cox (*Straight To Hell*, *Sid and Nancy*) and Phil Tippett (*Mad God*) His career as a composer includes over 35 feature films over

# MEET THE PRODUCTION TEAM (CONTO.)


## BEATRICE SNIPER

SFX MAKEUP ARTIST

Sniper is a Brooklyn-based SFX artist who runs an independent SFX shop, *Beahive Studios LLC*. Her work has appeared in feature films, photoshoots, exhibits, theme parks, and more.

Beatrice was in charge of design and application of both Ziggy and Annie's prosthetics in *Humanzee*.



A close-up, cinematic shot of a creature's face, likely a monkey or ape, with highly detailed prosthetic makeup. The creature has a pale, almost white complexion with visible skin texture, wrinkles, and fine hairs. Its eyes are a deep, dark color, and its expression is neutral. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a moody atmosphere. The creature is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, garment.

*Humanzee* is a love letter to countless creature films that came before it, including Ziggy's prosthetic makeup - which is directly influenced by the appliances used in the 1968 film *Planet of the Apes*.

# KEY FACTS

**GENRE  
SUBCATEGORIES** Psychological Horror, Drama

**TOTAL RUNNING  
TIME** 23:30

**PRODUCTION  
COMPANY** Electric Goo Films

**PRODUCTION  
LOCATION** Weymouth, Massachusetts

**ASPECT RATIO** 1.85:1

**AUDIO FORMATS** 5.1 Surround, Stereo

**LENGTH** Short

**ORIGINAL  
LANGUAGE** English

**PRODUCTION  
YEAR** 2024

**EXHIBITION  
FORMATS** Digital Projection (DCP)

**LANGUAGES** English

# FULL CAST & CREW

**Directed by** Taro O'Halloran

**Written by** Taro O'Halloran & Brett Melican

**Produced by** Ren Evans, Taro O'Halloran, Brett Melican

**Executive Producers** Jodi Purdy-Quinlan, Nancy Haverty, Kevin Haverty

## Starring

Liz Bishop as Jane Howell

Zach Norton as Ziggy

Cheryl Dedora-Pynn as Annie Chase

Marty Smith as Whitney Jenkins

Denise Marcotte as Spiritual Guide

## With Appearances By

Tanner Carig, Tendo Ochola, Michelle Trujillo, Stephen Wardell,  
Taro O'Halloran, Emily Canales, Boba

**Original Score** Dan Wool

**Cinematography** Brett Melican

**Production Design** Emily Canales

**Editor** Cassie Prentiss

**Costume Design** Alex Arruda

**SFX Makeup** Beatrice Sniper

**Location Sound** Matt Leake

**Sound Design/Mix** Dan Wool

**Still Photography** Coleman Cullinan

**VFX** Rohaman Sabbir

**BTS Footage** Matt Haverty

**Color by** Alter Ego

**Colorist** James Graham

**Color Assistants** Vika Svishchova, Sabrina Salerno, Jonah Vennari

**Assistant Director** Ren Evans

**Prod. Coordinator** Emily Canales

**Gaffer** Max Tanzer

**Key Grip** Evan Sinclair

**Best Boy** Maxfield Mascarini

**1st AC** Antonio Camasmie

**2nd AC** Tendo Ochola

**Catering** Denise Marcotte

**Runner** John O'Halloran

**PAs** Cassie Prentiss, John Boujnane

**Additional SFX** Amanda Pepin, Michael Bowen

**Producers** Sam Omand, Spencer Butt

**Executive Producer** Jane Garrah



# PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS



**Official Poster**

*Designed by Taro O'Halloran*



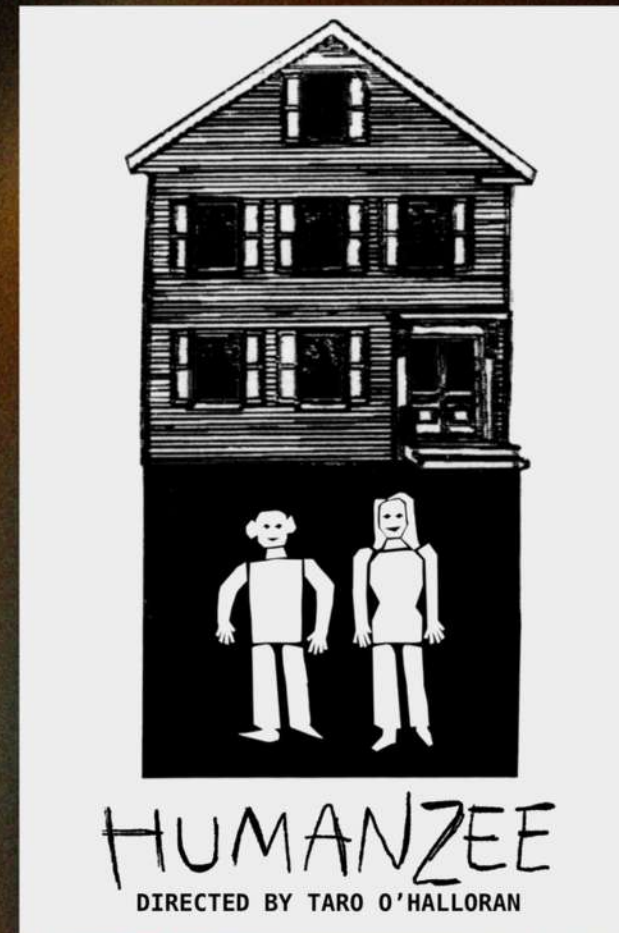
**Canvassing Print**

*Designed by Emily Canales*



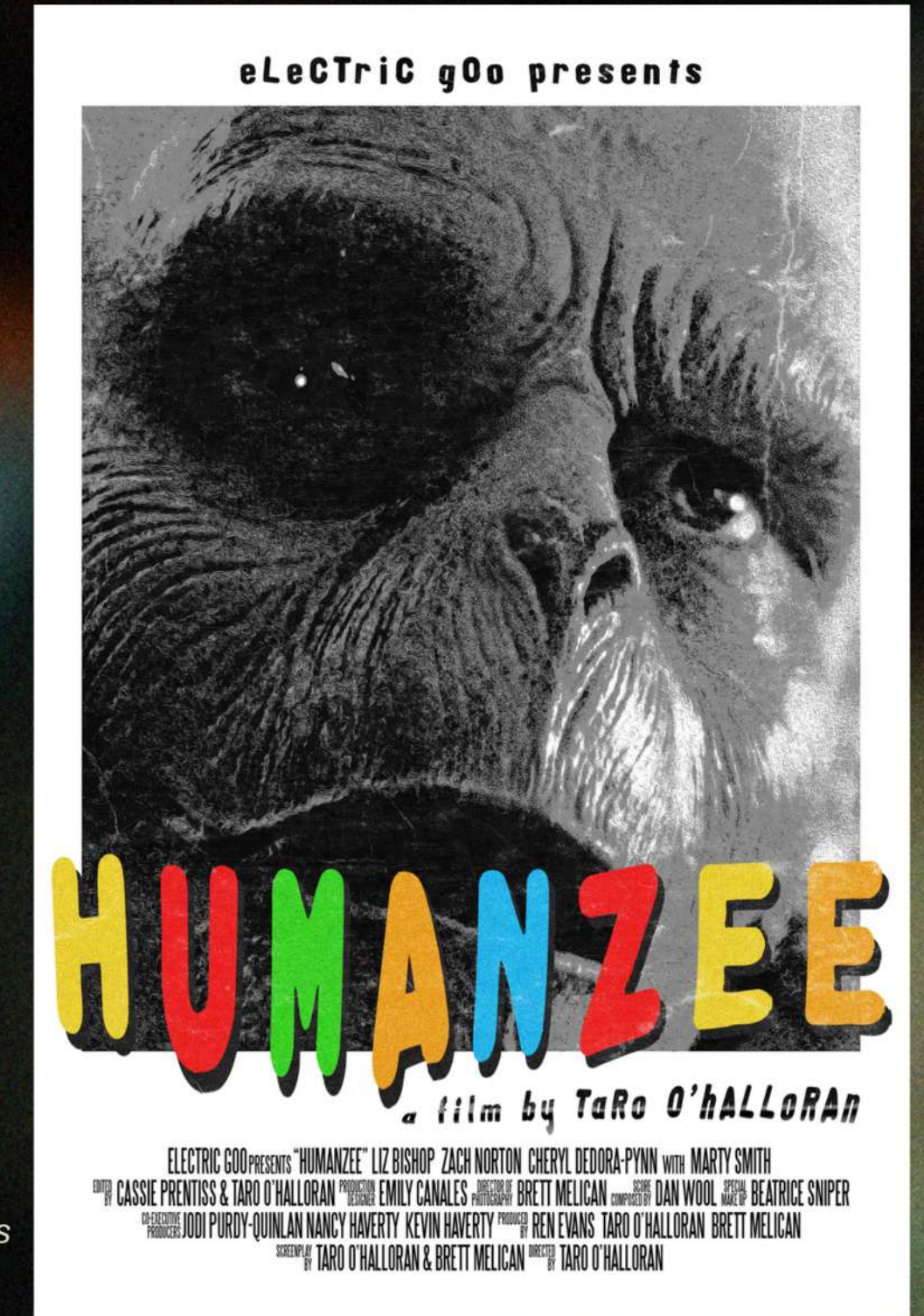
**Promotional T-Shirt**

*Designed & Screen-Printed by Taro O'Halloran*



**Promotional Postcard**

*Laser-cut wood stamp on paper  
Designed & Printed by Emily Canales*



**Secondary Poster**

*Designed by Taro O'Halloran*

# FESTIVALS/LAURELS

(As of Mar. 2025)



# PRESS



*'Humanzee: The Creature Feature Reimagined'*  
The Independent, Sara Crepeau

<https://independent-magazine.org...>

## LETTERBOXD

<https://letterboxd.com/film/humanzee-2024/>

# THANK YOU

**CONTACT ME**

Taro O'Halloran

**EMAIL**

TAROOHALLORAN@GMAIL.COM

**MOBILE**

+1 (781) 884-8885

**INSTAGRAM**

@HUMANZEEMOVIE

**YOUTUBE**

@TaroOHalloran

**STILLS COURTESY OF**

Coleman Cullinan