

MIRA

a film by EVA LOUISE HALL





LOGLINE

'Mira' is an 11-minute stop-motion animated surrealist horror film that tells the story of a struggling accordionist busker who gets more than she bargained for when her desire for success attracts the attention of a mysterious and enticing competitor.



MIRA (2023)

<i>Running Time:</i>	11:30 mins
<i>Category:</i>	Short Narrative Film
<i>Country of Production:</i>	USA
<i>Language:</i>	English
<i>Screen Ratio:</i>	16:9
<i>Audio:</i>	Stereo
<i>Medium(s):</i>	Stop Motion (various) 2D Digital Mixed Media
<i>Story and Animation:</i>	Eva Louise Hall
<i>Musical Direction and Score:</i>	Calvin Arsenia
<i>Composer (Mira's Theme):</i>	Erica Marie Mancini



SYNOPSIS

Ready to quit her dreams of becoming a celebrated accordionist after busking day after day for an isolating swamp metropolis that isn't listening, young Mira finally gets a taste of recognition one evening when she meets Lore; a charismatic and successful performer who takes an interest in Mira's talents.

Giving into her charm and status, Mira finds herself playing hostess to the mysterious and talented singer as Lore's self-serving behaviors make her increasingly more uncomfortable in her own home. Mira's desire for recognition from this elevated musician leaves her blinded to Lore's hidden intentions until her apartment begins changing around her and her anxieties start to spiral out of her control. Her inability to confront and remove the ever-dangerous Lore proves to have monstrous consequences once Lore shows her true sinister nature; that she is not the musical ally that she initially presents to Mira but a water demon who needs to scavenge and carve out a place for herself by taking advantage of others.

After Mira tries to escape, Lore cruelly adheres her to her beloved accordion, encasing her arms to the instrument's keys and sewing her lungs into to the accordion bellows. She must keep playing the instrument in order to breathe. Mira, entrapped by this demonic entity, is left with her home and sense of self forever changed.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

MIRA is an 11 minute short film that was created using stop motion puppetry and multiple, intertwined physical and digital processes, including charcoal, 2D digital puppetry and 3D illustration. I made this film almost entirely by myself in my one room studio in Kansas City, MO over the course of 35 years. Filming this type of animation takes usually an hour for every second of footage, without taking into account the time it takes to build, prep, light and set up camera for each puppet, set and shot. Executing this process of filmmaking by yourself is a tremendously difficult task. It has produced a film that, like my character Mira, has endured unexpected hardship and tremendous obstacles in the pursuit of creative accomplishment.

The overwhelming support I received in developing and in the completion of this film, however, has ensured a much happier ending for its production. This film received support in the form of grant awards from ASIFA Hollywood Educator's Forum, Arts KC, and the SVA Alumni Society. It received initial crowd-funding support at the beginning of its production from over 70+ members of the KC community and beyond. It has been met, upon its debut in the festival circuit this Fall, with admiration and praise, including winning top awards at the SCAD Savannah Film Festival and Fantastic Fest, and being a top 30 shortlisted artist out of 5000+ for the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards.

Mira is a film about abusive creative relationships – how artistic aspirations and kindness can be weaponized through the sinister motivations of those in positions of power. This story touches on themes of celebrity, abusive individuals and relationships, self-sacrifice and the loss of power and control. I am making this film out of a love I have for accordions, sea monsters, animation and surrealist horror film. In bringing this story to life I also wanted to express my personal experience in dealing with how horrific it feels when someone, through their abuse of others, can turn something you love more than anything into a living nightmare.

Through the contemplation of the dark and horrific it is my hope that we may expand our understanding and capacity for cultivating beauty and kindness.

-ELH



CREDITS

Animation + Direction:

Eva Louise Hall

Musical Direction + Score:

Calvin Arsenia

Story + Concept:

Eva Louise Hall

Composer (Mira's Theme):

Erica Marie Mancini

Lettering + Title Design:

Christine Dong

Fabrication Assistance:

**Theodore Bunch
Christine Dong**

*Additional Animation
(2D Charcoal Sequence):*

Mira Taliaferro

Recording + Foley:

**Calvin Arsenia
Ground Control Studio NYC**

Audio Mastering:

J Ashley Miller



CAST

Mira

Lore

Young Mira

Mama

Musical Performances:

Vanessa Severo

Jessica Paige

Ava Armstrong

Eva Louise Hall

Erica Marie Mancini *(Accordion)*

Calvin Arsenia *(Harp, various)*

Simon Huntley *(Rhythmic Bones)*

Laurel Parks *(Fiddle)*

Brandon J. *(Flute)*





SCREENINGS

Vancouver International Film Festival - Vancouver, BC - World Premiere (2023)
Santa Fe International Film Festival - USA - New Mexico Premiere (2023)
ANIMAGE Festival of Animation - Recife, Brazil - Brazilian Premiere (2023)
SCAD Savannah Film Festival - Savannah, GA USA - Georgia Premiere (2023)
Curtas Festival do Imaxinario - Vilagarcía de Arousa, Spain - Spanish Premiere (2023)
ANIMAC International Animation Festival - Lleida, Spain - Catalanian Premiere (2023)
Boston Underground Film Festival - Boston, MA - Massachusetts Premiere (2024)
Salem Horror Fest - Salem, MA USA (2024)
Fantaspoa International Fantastic Film Festival - Porto Alegre, Brazil (2024)
Atlanta Film Festival - Atlanta, GA USA - Oscar Qualifier (2024)
Short Shorts Film Festival and Asia - Tokyo, Japan - Asia Premiere - Oscar Qualifier (2024)
Brooklyn Film Festival - Brooklyn, NY USA - NYC Premiere (2024)
Kansas City Underground Film Festival - Kansas City, MO USA (2024)
Fantastic Fest - Austin, TX USA - Texas Premiere (2024)
FilmQuest - Provo, UT USA - Utah Premiere (2024)
Charlotte Film Festival - Charlotte, NC USA (2024)
Celluloid Screams Horror Film Festival - Sheffield, England UK (2024)

AWARDS

SCAD SAVANNAH FILM FESTIVAL (Savannah, GA)

Best of Shorts Spotlight: Horrors in Plain Sight
Shorts Spotlight: Best of Show

FANTASTIC FEST (Austin, TX)

BEST PICTURE in the Animated Shorts Category (Drawn and Quartered)

SONY FUTURE FILMMAKER AWARDS (Culver City, CA)

Eva Louise Hall was one of thirty filmmakers out of over 5,000+ submissions chosen to be invited to Sony Pictures in California for a bespoke week of master classes and meetings with Sony executives.



Calvin Arsenia *Musical Direction + Score*

"Jeff Buckley meets Nina Simone with this soul of Sam Cooke, and the sparkle of Bjork." - Peregrine Honig, Artist

Singer, harpist, and author Calvin Arsenia has built a reputation for turning the arts world on its head. Featured on Billboard.com, NPR.org, NEWNOWNEXT, Pride.com, and GRAMMY.com, Arsenia's angelic stylings on voice and harp create rare harmonies and arrangements that look past the boundaries of his traditional gospel and classical upbringing. Known for his elaborate and ceremonious sensory concert experiences that merge jazz and electronic influences, "Calvin has consistently deliver(s) genre-bending (and gender-bending) shows that tackle sexuality, religion, and race in a stunningly unorthodox manner - somewhere between sacred and sacrilege." - Fally Afani.

<https://calvinarsenia.com>



Erica Marie Mancini *Composer, Mira's Theme*

ERICA MARIE MANCINI is an accordionist/vocalist/multi-instrumentalist based in New York City. Her eclectic repertoire explores folk music from around the world, as well as Americana, jazz, Klezmer, Latin, blues, rock, and more. In addition to her interests in traditional accordion music, her electroacoustic improvisations / compositions, as well as aerial accordion circus performances, are testaments to the versatile and unique approach she has not only as a musician, but as a performer.

She has performed at Lincoln Center, Park Ave Armory, National Arts Club, NYPL, and Harvard University. Mancini has performed in productions by Apple TV, HBO, Dances of Vice, Élan Artists, Atlas Obscura, & North, Speakeasy Dollhouse, and Irondale Ensemble. She has worked with brands Hermès, Carven, GOOP, Delta, Snapchat, Hendricks Gin, and more. She tours internationally as the accordionist for acclaimed rock band Gogol Bordello.

<https://ericamancini.univer.se/projects>

Vanessa Severo

Voice of Mira

Vanessa Severo has studied at Missouri State University as well as The American Conservatory Theatre, San Francisco. She is the recipient of the TCG 11th Round of the Fox Foundation Resident Actor Fellowships, 2017. She has performed for the past 13 seasons at The Kansas City Repertory Theatre, and is certified in Suzuki Method, and Viewpoints under the instruction of Ellen Lauren, SITI company. She is the playwright and actor of "Frida.. A Self Portrait" (2020 Kilroys' List); a one woman production about the tumultuous and brilliant life of Frida Kahlo. Vanessa is passionate about utilizing the element of Suzuki method in her work to challenge the boundaries of storytelling, and explore the depths of movement, composition, and the power of stillness. <http://vanessasevero.com>



Jessica Paige

Voice of Lore

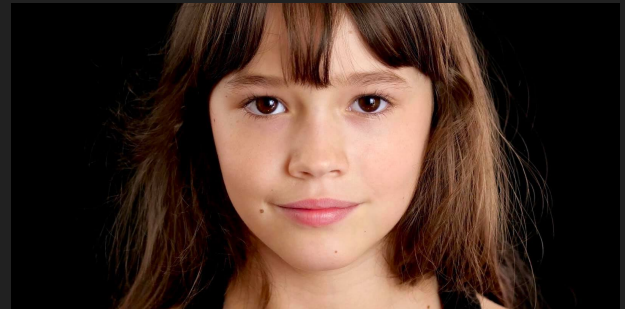
Jessica Paige brings the roots of her rural Kansas childhood to life with heartfelt, folky lyricism contrasted by her huge voice and personality. Jessica wavers between the influences of powerhouse voices like Janis Joplin and Brandi Carlile to the sultry and delicate inflections of Norah Jones and Jeff Buckley, a true master of vocal range and emotion. A three time semi-finalist on American Idol, twice voted "Best Vocalist" in Kansas City, TEDxKC Artist, Folk Alliance International Showcase Artist, featured vocalist with the Kansas City Jazz Orchestra, Jessica has become one of Kansas City's most respected musicians and band leaders. <http://jesspaige.com/>



Ava Armstrong

Voice of Young Mira

As an experienced up-and-coming actress and performer, 'Young Mira' marks Ava's debut role in contributing her talents to film and animation.



EVA LOUISE HALL

ARTIST BIO

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Eva Louise Hall is a professional, independent screenwriter and animator with over ten years of experience in commercial and fine art contexts. Since earning her MFA in Visual Narrative from the School of Visual Arts in 2020, she has been working to create a name for herself as a filmmaker through her intimately hand-crafted and emotionally powerful stop-motion films. Through the use of textural aesthetics, tonal horror, and arresting visual metaphor, her films explore the darkest parts of the human condition while exploring our potential for beauty and kindness.

Her most recent short, 'Mira,' toured the festival circuit to great success throughout 2023-2024, winning top awards in animation and horror categories at Fantastic Fest and SCAD Savannah Film Festival. Additionally, She was invited to Sony Pictures last spring as one of 30 nominees for the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards out of over 5,000 candidates. Her most recent script, 'Pluck,' was awarded a competitive Teri Rodgers Screenwriting Grant by ArtsKC and the KC Film Office this past fall.

Outside of her creative professional practice, she is passionate about arts education and advocacy and works full-time as an Assistant Professor of Animation at the Kansas City Art Institute in Kansas City, MO.

