

A FILM BY BEN RUSNAK & RUTH RUSNAK

BOY

A FILM BY BEN RUSNAK AND RUTH RUSNAK IN ASSOCIATION WITH STUDIO ODYSSEY MUSIC BY UMBERTO GAUDINO AND ALEKSANDRA VILCINSKA
FEATURING ARTHUR O'KELLY AND ABRAHAM KLEINMAN PHOTOGRAPHED BY REBECCA WOOLICH EDITOR MATILDA LAILEY COSTUME DESIGNER MARTA BELLAGAMBA EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BEN RUSNAK AND RUTH RUSNAK
PRODUCED BY JOÃO AMANTE SCREENPLAY BY BEN RUSNAK DIRECTED BY RUTH RUSNAK AND BEN RUSNAK



A young man's encounter with an older stranger exposes the cost of living in the closet.

While housesitting alone, Danny invites an older stranger over for a casual hookup. The charged encounter pushes Danny out of his comfort zone and into a world of confusion, forcing him to face the mismatch between who he is and who he appears to be.





Writer's Statement

BOY is an intimate story about denial, confusion and struggling with your identity. I'm drawn to focussing on queer experiences in my writing - more specifically when these experiences intersect with religion and the complexities of family life. Having personal experience in this area, my aim in spotlighting them is not just to spread awareness, but to expose the humanity behind these struggles and, with hope, to foster compassion in viewers.

Danny is a character that I think many young gay men can resonate with. Unsure of what he wants, he makes impulsive decisions that are ultimately bad for him.

Directors' Statement

BOY examines how shame can shape identity - particularly for queer people. The story follows Danny, a young man searching for connection, and Mark, an older stranger carrying his own experience of repression. Their encounter is awkward: full of hesitation from Danny and assertiveness from Mark. This imbalance reflects a reality queer people across generations might recognise: the mismatch of intentions and emotional response from one person to another.

As young queer directors, we've grown up in the world of online dating and modern hookup culture. While these spaces promise openness and liberation, BOY exposes our experience of the ongoing hidden and internalised homophobia that is still present in the background of an apparent liberal society. The film demonstrates the awkwardness of young, gay attraction, and highlights the nuances of situations like these when it comes to consent, power and expectation.

The film also taps into current issues around sex and relationships education in schools, as well as political hypocrisy.

For us, sex education at school did not meaningfully address safety and protection when it came to queer relationships, and was instead brushed over. This left us and our queer peers with an uncertainty to be navigated alone. It is this experience that lies at the heart of BOY, informing Danny's behaviour, and reflecting the quiet shame that can develop when desire exists without guidance.

We believe it is important that queer stories are told, and told by queer people.



The Filmmakers



Ben Rusnak is a filmmaker from London. He has a background in writing and journalism, having published for the JC and Bristol Epigram. This is his debut short film. His personal writing and film work focus predominantly on queer experiences.

He is currently studying Economics at the University of Bristol.



Ruth Rusnak has a background in directing theatre and has received multiple awards for direction of amateur dramatic productions. She tends to focus on relationships and character-driven plots.

Outside of film, she works as a resident doctor in Yorkshire.

Audience and potential placement

BOY is designed for theatrical short film programs, digital platforms or curated acquisitions. It is perfect for fans of queer films like *Weekend*, *Call Me By Your Name* and *God's Own Country*. The film is suited for cinema screenings and streaming or broadcasting platforms looking for provocative short-form storytelling about relevant issues in today's world.

The Filmmaking Process

The writing of BOY started in April 2025 when Ben already had a house in mind for the shoot. In May and June 2025, casting took place through a series of online campaigns. Ben and Ruth cast the four characters virtually through self-tapes and showreels. At the same time, they began building their crew for the shoot.

DOP João Amante joined the team only weeks before the shoot but came in with a clear and powerful vision. Amante is the owner of production company Studio Odyssey, which this film was made in association with. The film was shot in July 2025.

Ben and Ruth worked closely with editor Marta Bellagamba and assistant editor Chloe Laing from August to November 2025 in post production, with Amante doing the colour grade. Award winning composers Aleksandra Vilcinska and Umberto Gaudi joined the project in October to create the original score.



Technical Decisions

João and the directors adopted a visual approach, alternating between static shots to more unstable handheld camera work, to reflect the protagonist's current mental state. Ben was keen on the particular house used for the shoot because of its timeless feel. Though the film is set in the present, he wanted to keep the decor and production design vague (in respect to the era) to reflect the timelessness of internalised homophobia.



The Actors

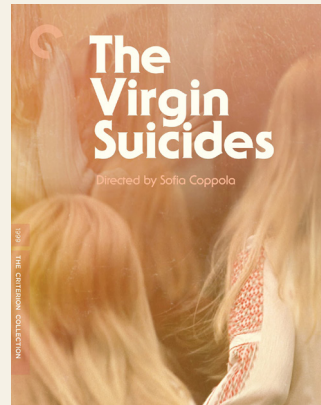
The role of Danny is portrayed by **Arthur O'Kelly**, a graduate of Drama at the University of Exeter. Mark is played by **Abraham Kleinman**, a RADA and Italia Conti graduate, who has appeared in various adverts, TV shows and short films; recently including Jack the Ripper: Written in Blood, which can be streamed on NowTV. The character of Danny's mother is played by **Lisa Rose**, a LAMDA graduate, who played a supporting role in the film 'Eleni', starring John Malkovich. **Amy Cash**, who played Nina in the film attended Mountview, and has since appeared in various short films and theatre productions, including the Cambridge Shakespeare Festival.



FAQs

What works influenced BOY?

The themes of internalised sexual repression in *BOY* contrast with the overt societal repression seen in films like *Disobedience* and *Brokeback Mountain*. *BOY* is a response to these films, contrastingly set in a world where there are no apparent external limits to sexual liberty, and yet we continue to impose our own taboos and judgements on our behaviour. The awkwardness of young attraction was influenced by *The Virgin Suicides*, and the inspiration for the use of minimalism came from films like *The Room Next Door*, which use simple visuals to amplify moments of emotion.



How does BOY engage with current politics?

BOY examines political hypocrisy - where politicians say and do one thing in their public role and the opposite in their private lives. Mark is a perfect example of this.

What inspired Ben to write BOY?

Ben is keen to tell lesser heard stories and to turn the spotlight on the experience of young gay men in the days of online dating and hookup culture.

How would you describe the tone of the film?

It is tense, uncomfortable and restrained. It was our aim to make the audience feel as though they are intruding on a private moment.

Key Specifications

<i>Country of production</i>	United Kingdom
<i>Length</i>	13 minutes
<i>Aspect ratio</i>	1.85:1
<i>Format</i>	4K digital
<i>Date of completion</i>	December 2025
<i>Genre</i>	Drama

Key Production Credits

Directors Ben Rusnak
Ruth Rusnak

Writer Ben Rusnak

Producers Ben Rusnak
Ruth Rusnak
João Amante

Director of Photography João Amante

Editor Marta Bellagamba

Assistant Editor Chloe Laing

Composers Aleksandra Vilcinska
Umberto Guadi

Costume Designer Matilda Lailey

Sound Designer Rob Ackerman Diaz

in association with

STUDIO ODYSSEY

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