

THE SEASHELL



a film by Wyonna Rutledge
www.izakproductions.com/work/theseashell

About the Film

Logline

An adaptation of Jason K. Allen's "The Seashell" about a young girl who finds a seashell from which issues forth the voice of Mother Nature's young son.

Synopsis

Fishing along a polluted urban river, Nia reels in a seashell. Placing it to her ear, she hears the voice of a young boy claiming to be Mother Nature's son 'Ricky'. After some suspicious questioning, the two begin to bond over their shared love of nature and family dynamics they share which make them both feel like outcasts. When he mentions that his mother "has weakened due to the increase in pollution", Nia asks how she can help. Ricky responds that "humans need to see nature's beauty and understand its importance." He tells her that Mother Nature just needs people to care. Nia and Ricky wonder what kind of friendship they could share together when their conversation is interrupted by the commanding voice of his mother, telling Ricky that he's needed elsewhere in the universe and to go help with a drought. Ricky bids Nia farewell, leaving her holding a voiceless shell. As she picks up some of the garbage strewn along the riverfront, a large hailstone falls from the sky, landing beside her -- a sign from her new friend.

Director's Statement

In our current climate crisis, I find the lack of media coverage alarming. We may know in the back of our minds that change needs to happen, but honestly, how often are we confronted with that fact day to day? To be able to make this project as a reminder that the earth needs our help and care is what really made me want to bring "The Seashell" to life. I wanted this to be something that could resonate with anyone, and exploring the beauty of nature in both live action and animation felt like a good way for the message to land. I believe if we're reminded of what we could lose, then maybe more people will feel called to action.

Making the Film



Instead of shooting at a beach, as was done in a previous adaptation of Allen's script, we chose to set the story in an urban area. Peekskill New York, along the lower Hudson River, is an old city with numerous remnants of an industrial past. There's a looming nuclear plant at the river's edge. While the river is recovering from more than a century of pollution, the water is tidal so like many places across the planet, it is ground zero for the effects of sea level rise.

Our entire crew works or attends school full-time, so scheduling was tricky and true to the film's subject, weather was our biggest challenge. We knew shooting outdoors brings risks but didn't think an entire month of rainy weekends in October would be one of them. After the third schedule change, hospitality at the city clerk's office started to diminish. I consider myself a prayer warrior but never had I prayed for anything as much as I did for good weather during that period. Thankfully we only needed one day to

shoot and finally got a semi clear and sunny chance mid-November. The director and our colorist were able to brighten the late autumn lighting in post.

The director was instrumental in helping to assemble an emerging crew of talented artists from NYU including our animator Jordan Winick. While this film is female driven by our main collaborators, we are proud to say our team is diverse in gender and ethnicity, representing Latinx, Sudanese American, African American, and Caucasian backgrounds.

We are extremely thankful for everyone who found time to help complete this project. A special mention for family and editor Tim Rush for his help on this film from concept to post-production, and for his tireless work with our director and post-production team to push everything forward.

Main Crew

Akira Golz is an emerging Director/Actor and rising senior of NYU Film and Television Production program. Since 2011 she has worked professionally as an actress in television, film, and theater. Notably in NAACP & Emmy nominated Nella The Princess Knight, Matilda Broadway, and Amazon's Modern Love. With years of experience in front of the camera she's excited to work behind the scenes telling underrepresented stories.

Wyonna Rutledge is a New York based Producer with credits on award winning documentaries My Brooklyn and Never Enough, Dir. Kelly Anderson. Her short film It's Time won Best Shorts Competition, Hollywood Just4Shorts, selected by The Film Collective, Big Apple Film Festival, and The Great Message International Film Festival. Her next short is thriller Grandma's Hands, written by Chris Courtney Martin (AT&T/Tribeca Untold Stories finalist) and Co-Producer on Cerebral Palsy narrative short, I Want To Hear My Voice (NYWIFT script finalist), Dir. Julia Aldana.

Jason K. Allen is a writer, filmmaker, and award-winning journalist from Nashville. His first produced screenplay was the 2009 feature film Lucky Fritz starring Corey Feldman and Julia Dietze. He's won many awards since including Best Screenplay honors at the Nashville Film Festival, San Diego Film Awards, Mountain of Laughs Comedy Fest, TSA Screenwriting Awards, ect. Jason is a seven-time finalist of the Nashville Film Festival Screenwriting Competition and has won three Associated Press Awards for feature writing as a journalist.

Jordan Winick is a rising senior studying film and television at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts with a speciality in stop motion animation. She is a member of Fusion Film Festival's photo/video team and holds an officer position in her sorority.

Katelyn Contreras is an emerging Dominican-American filmmaker and graduate of NYU Film and Television Production program. She is an alumni of the award-winning Ghetto Film School and a member of the NYU Future Artist Scholars. Her first short film, "Kingdom Come" won a Special Grand Jury Prize at the Landmark Theater. Her goal in the industry is to tell stories that amplify underrepresented voices and uplift women in film.

Tim Rush is a Los Angeles-based Editor who has been working in documentary and unscripted TV since 2003 with the Sundance winning DIG! Dir. Ondi Timoner. His first narrative feature, Collection, Dir. Marianna Palka, will be released summer '21 by Vertical Entertainment. Not only is he proud to be a part of the *Seashell* team, he is also proud to call several of them family.



Principal Cast



Amanda F. Aikens has been dancing since the age of 3. Dancing in all genres she has been extremely successful competing in various regional and national competitions. "The Seashell" is Amanda's acting debut and just another one of her many interests and talents as a young performer. An excellent student, Amanda is a high school junior consistently on the high honor roll and a member of the National Honor Society. She also participates in her school's Marching Band and plays the flute.



Isaiah Givens has captivated audiences since early childhood, debuting in local theatrical productions at the age of four. His talent soon translated to film, landing roles in Sinners Wanted and HBO Max's Brie's Bake Off Challenge. Following his Hulu TV series debut on Soundtrack, he's made recurring appearances on Sesame Street and voiced a lead character in Nick Jr.'s Anna & Friends. He is also the lead in the new PBS series, Book Drop. You might spot Isaiah in commercials or hear his voice on a podcast or YouTube animation series. Outside of acting, he enjoys animation creation, video game coding, and tennis.

Full Credits

Directed by: Akira Golz

Produced by: Wyonna Rutledge, Akira Golz

Written by: Jason K. Allen

Animator: Jordan Winick

Editor: Tim Rush

Cast

Amanda Aikens, Isaiah Givens

Director of Photography: Katelyn Contreras

First Assistant Director: Asma Eljack

Music: Israel Golz

Sound Recordist: Walter Jackson

Sound Design: Adam Carl

Colorist: Sean Vahle

Props: Wyonna Rutledge

Casting Support Services - Breakdown Services

Production Company: IZAKproductions

Genre: Narrative animated comedic short film

Format: 4k

TRT: 7:04min | color | digital | 16:9 | Stereo | 23.98 fps | English

