



NIAGARA CRUSH

BLOOD IN THE SNOW PITCH PACKAGE

PROJECT INFO

Niagara Crush • Feature Film • Body-Horror Dark Comedy • 90 minutes • Christina Dovolis

LOGLINE

When a lonely Niagara Falls enthusiast develops a violent and obsessive crush, she enters a beauty pageant in the hopes of winning him over—only to find herself entangled in a love triangle with the kitschy town’s most infamous escort.

SYNOPSIS

The story follows POLLY, a lonely 40 year-old at the miniatures store in Niagara Falls, Ontario. A Falls enthusiast, Polly finds solace in its natural splendor during work breaks. Having grown up in the radioactive wasteland of Love Canal, New York, Polly crosses the border to Niagara in search of love, and to escape her traumatic past. One day while getting a photo printed, Polly’s life takes a turn when she encounters LAUREL, a malaised 20 year old. Their brief romance blooms against the backdrop of Niagara’s touristy Clifton Hill carnival, before Laurel suddenly ends their relationship and leaves Polly devastated. Not willing to let Laurel go, Polly makes a plan to win him back: she (1) befriends a young escort, ROSE, to learn about relationships and sex, and (2) enters the “Maid of the Mist Pageant” to woo Laurel in front of the whole city. Rose and Polly start working together—going on dates, meeting men, beautifying their appearances—and form a profound companionship. Inspired by 1940’s “Women’s Pictures,” they meld into one another, both aesthetically and emotionally, and Rose unexpectedly falls for Polly. Rose yearns to nurture their budding, queer relationship, but Polly is laser-focused on Laurel. As Polly’s limerence deepens, her lovesick fantasies get the best of her, leading Polly back to the toxic, grimy world she worked so hard to escape.

THE WORLD

Niagara Falls, Ontario

The perfect backdrop for a heartbreaking crush. A bizarre combination of breathtaking waterfall, cheesy tourist promenade, and deserted suburb. Niagara Falls receives 12 million visitors every year, but despite its buzzy attraction, the Niagara-St. Catharines region has some of the highest poverty rates in Ontario due to the collapse of manufacturing. This film showcases how Rose, a young Niagara resident and escort, navigates this precarious paradise.



Love Canal, New York

In the 1970s, residents of Love Canal, a working-class neighbourhood in Niagara Falls, New York, discovered that their community was built on top of a Hooker Chemical waste dump, wreaking havoc on their health. After a grueling battle with the federal government, residents were evacuated and the canal was razed. To this day, residents continue to suffer from diseases and deformities. This film sheds light on this forgotten piece of history and re-imagines the Love Canal Disaster from the perspective of Polly. I believe this comparison between Niagara, ON and Niagara, NY is especially pertinent as border politics with the U.S. grow increasingly complex. I grew up between Winnipeg and Minnesota, giving me a firsthand view of borderlands, and the pull toward one side while standing in the other.

OUR STARS

POLLY: 38, female, from Love Canal, NY. Due to the toxic pollution, she has paper thin skin, making her veins visible. Embarrassed, solitary. Dreams of love, sex, and Niagara Falls. Polly isn't taking no for an answer as she embarks on a lovesick quest with new friend Rose's help.

ROSE: 23, female, from Niagara, ON. Charismatic and working as an escort, but has become bored and disillusioned. Polly offers Rose a chance to escape by trading identities. As their relationship deepens, Rose falls for Polly, realizing she's been yearning for love all along.

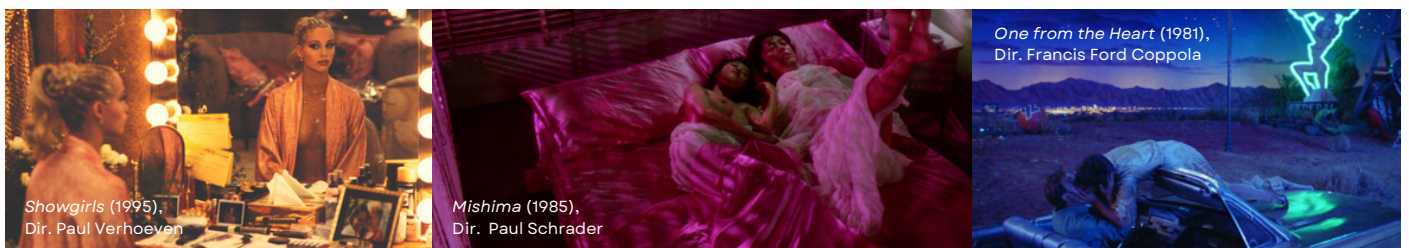
tone, style & comparables

Niagara Crush is a girly, but bleak horror. As Polly's crush intensifies, the tone and style evolves from dreamy romance, to sleazy scheming, and ultimately grotesque horror. Tonally, it's *The 40 Year Old Virgin* à la Roy Anderson. Stylistically, the film contrasts bright, 1980's style with austere Southern Ontario Gothic.

ACT 1: The film opens with a sense of awe, capturing Niagara Falls in a dreamy and romantic tableau. Through meandering long shots, the camera glides gracefully into each scene, conveying a goddess-like perspective. Even though Polly is painfully awkward, the imagery is soft like vintage Niagara Falls postcards, with hues of pale greens, teals, and blues. We understand Polly's deep connection to this place and the melodrama to come.



ACT 2: As Polly and Rose scheme, the tone shifts and we enter Clifton Hill, aka the Las Vegas of Canada. Here, the atmosphere is fun, cheesy, trashy. The camera becomes frenetic, with fast-paced cuts as the crowd and neon lights blur together in a mess of colours (blues, pinks, reds, yellows). This is Polly's first foray into sexy, seedy nightlife.



ACT 3: Polly's obsessions consume her, and the film takes a darker turn, culminating in a final descent into the blighted outskirts of Niagara and Love Canal. We see abandoned motels, overgrown ivy, and mildewed swimming pools. The frames are static, framing the grime, and Polly through shades of black, brown, and flashes of ominous red. Jarring and unsettling editing mirrors the sick landscape – each cut will feel like Polly gasping for her last breaths.



VISION & PERSONAL CONNECTION



I want to tell this story because I've lived this story – the repercussions of our industrial choices, of rotting pollution, of the people who have nowhere else to go. For years, I worked as an environmental activist in Minneapolis, fighting to shut down a toxic factory. We took inspiration from the community organizers of Love Canal, who set the precedent for environmental advocacy. This film grapples with our environmental and urban failures, in the context of an all-consuming crush. Drawing from my own experiences, I look to portray this toxic phenomenon in relation to an intoxicating female desire. The central companionship between Polly and Rose mirrors my own relationship with my best friend: I was a religious late-bloomer and she was a stripper. She guided us through coming-of-age: smeared lipstick, polaroid nudes, and bad bikini waxes. It's the feminine grotesque. I'll be looking at this darker, unexplored side of womanhood: how do beauty, performance, desire, and delusion become weapons that wound as much as they empower?

AUDIENCE

Niagara Crush targets audiences with connections to female/queer/LGBTQ+ perspectives, and are drawn to feminine-forward storytelling around identity and body. For any woman that's experienced an insane crush, this film is for them. The tagline for this film literally is: *Niagara Crush* is a love letter to the love sick. Our secondary audience has an appetite for provocative, visually crazy work. Think horror-heads, camp-core, wacky-tacky, kitchy-delix. They want something they've never seen before. These demographics are highly engaged in online and grassroots spaces for strong word-of-mouth and cult longevity.

DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Niagara Crush is currently in the pre-production stage and will move into production in August 2027. We have successfully secured \$250,000 in Telefilm's Talent to Watch funding and are additionally applying for support through the Canada Council, Women in the Director's Chair, and festival pitch competitions. During the Development Lab, I would love feedback on the script, as well as mentorship on production opportunities, strategies, and tools as we prepare to go to camera. We are also interested in learning more about festival strategy and distribution once the film is complete. Being part of the lab at Blood in the Snow would be an incredible opportunity to meet other filmmakers and learn from some of the best. I am a very collaborative person and team player, and love being part of a community of genre-minded filmmakers pushing our projects forward together!

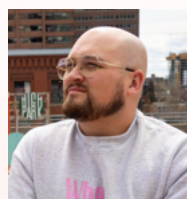
KEY BIOS



Writer & Director - Christina Dovolis is a filmmaker who explores how our built environments shape community and identity. Christina has screened at Museum of the Moving Image, SXSW Sydney, Fantasia, Calgary Underground Film Festival, Aga Khan Museum, and more.



Producer - Torrin Blades is a creative producer working across documentary and and genre. A graduate of the Canadian Film Centre Producers Lab and OYA Black Arts Coalition Emerging Producer Incubator.



Producer - Braden Brickner is a producer from Whitehorse, Yukon, with a deep connection to the frigid wilds of northern Canada. A graduate of York University's MFA, he produced *PsyBorgs* (2019) and upcoming *Meat* (2027).