



a want

in her

Written & Directed by Myrid Carten

"Raw, searing ... a daughter's shattering testament to her mother's absence, presence and endurance ... passages of cathartic beauty, grace and even humor."

Variety

"A profound reprocessing of personal archives and piercing conversations ... clearly impresses as a debut and could become essential viewing for anyone grappling with the indescribable complexities within a mother-daughter relationship."

Cineuropa

"Consistently compelling and impressive ... an example of how to make a strikingly original aesthetic statement from wrenchingly personal material"

The Film Verdict

"The work of an artist, one who is making her own rules about how to tell this story, far from documentary dogmas ... A Want in Her is reminiscent, at times, of the work of Jonathan Glazer. But it's too original and accomplished for such parallels to stick."

Screen Daily

"The term hybrid documentary scarcely does justice to the achievement of this picture, which aims rather to contribute to a wider discussion of what documentary and filmmaking at large can and will do."

The People's Movies

"Miraculous ... a raw portrait of vulnerability and confrontation."

Film Fest Report



LOGLINE

A compelling exploration of the messiness of family love. When her troubled mother goes missing, Irish filmmaker Myrid Carten returns home to find her, but risks losing herself.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

When her mother goes missing somewhere in Ireland, artist Myrid Carten returns from London to find her. Her search takes her into a feuding family, a contested house; and a history that threatens to take everyone down, including herself. *A Want In Her* is an immersive, first person account of the cost of love, and how difficult it can be to escape.

TECHNICAL DATA

LENGTH	81 min
PICTURE	Colour, 16:9
SHOOTING FORMAT	16mm, miniDV, Digital
SCREENING COPY	DCP
SOUND	5.1
ORIGINAL LANGUAGES	English, Irish Gaelic
SUBTITLES	English
AVAILABLE YEAR OF PRODUCTION	2024
COUNTRIES OF PRODUCTION	Ireland, UK, Netherlands
WORLD PREMIERE	IDFA (2024)

CONTACT

PRODUCTION	Inland Films Tadhg O'Sullivan tadhgosullivan@gmail.com Roisín Geraghty roisin.geraghty@gmail.com
PUBLICITY	NOISE Film & TV Mirjam Wiekenkamp +31 6 28652249 mirjam@noisefilmpr.com



IDFA SYNOPSIS

Artist and debut filmmaker Myrid Carten has been filming since she was a child. Her mother Nuala, once a successful social worker, suffered a mental breakdown after the sudden death of her own mother. She shuffles between rehab clinics, psychiatric hospitals, and occasionally the street.

When Nuala goes missing somewhere in Ireland, Myrid returns from London to find her and picks up her camera again in response to this new crisis.

Her search takes her into a feuding family, a contested house. Intimate, surprising, and often darkly funny conversations with her mother and other family members reveal the trials of loving someone who struggles with addiction and madness. Home videos from Myrid's childhood and recordings of video installations from her current work as an artist form a playful blend of fictional and documentary elements, which compellingly capture the vicious cycle of care and rage.

Atmospheric Irish ballads about vagrant drinkers and dreamlike images of the neglected family home conjure the cultural and relational roots at play. In fresh and inventive ways, the film returns to a familiar, universal question: how can we be with those we love without losing ourselves?

A Want In Her is an immersive, first person account of the cost of love, and how difficult it can be to escape.



DIRECTOR'S BIO

Myrid Carten is an Irish filmmaker who makes works for cinemas and galleries. She trained in Artists' Film at Goldsmiths University London and Fine Art at Central Saint Martins, UAL. Her work interrogates both the struggle for intimacy and the ways we are compromised by our pasts. She received the Arts Council of Ireland's Next Generation Artist Award 2018-19. Her films have screened internationally and been supported by the BFI, Doc Society, Screen Ireland, NI Screen, New Dawn Fund and the Netherlands Film Fund.

A Want in Her is her debut feature.

Recent solo exhibitions

Preta Act 2, Mother's Tank Station, London (2023)

Preta (Hungry Ghost), Mother's Tank Station, Dublin (2022)

Recent group exhibitions

In the Same Breath, Freelands Foundation, London (2023)

Bones in the Attic, Hugh Lane Gallery (2022)

A Different Horizon, Lismore Castle Arts, Waterford Ireland (2022)

My Body is an Exhibition, Sadler's Wells London (2021)

Recent residencies

ISCP NYC 2020-21

Hospitalfield 2020-2021

Artlink Dunree 2020

British Council/ACNI International Artist residency, India 2017-18

Recent awards

Arts Council of Ireland's Commission Award 2020-21

DocsIE Pitch Award 2019

TBG&S Project Studio Award 2018-19

Fire Station Artists Studio Digital Media Award 2018

Arts Council of Ireland's Next Generation Artist Award 2018-19

Her work is in the Arts Council of Ireland and Arts Council of Northern Ireland's national collections.

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

Myrid Carten in conversation with Savina Petkova

SP *Personal archive films capture time in a way where the past is always present. I feel like that's applicable to your work as well. Would you say you're interested in that amalgamation of past and present?*

MC Yes, it was definitely a concern in terms of inheritance—what you can refuse and what you can't—that's an ongoing question for me. At that time [of making the film], it was very potent: it felt like the past was coming to the surface in such a tangible way.

SP *How exactly?*

MC In the beginning, it was very much about mining the past. The film I thought I was making involved conducting interviews and trying to find out more about something that happened in the past, which was around this inheritance after my grandmother's death. Then, what actually happened was that the past started to make itself felt in the present through a dramatic situation - my mother's crisis. One of my uncles died in July 2018, and I filmed the funeral and the events that started happening afterwards. Most of the film was recorded between the end of 2019 and March 2020, so it actually ended up being far more in the present tense, with the past erupting. Sometimes that happens in life, in Ireland we call it the thin veil between realms. I think

there are certain episodes in your life where it feels like the veil is thin.

SP *That's actually made very palpable in the film! But I'm curious, when did you pick up the camera, instead of, for example, recording only voice interviews?*

MC I had a sense that the death of my uncle was the beginning of *something* in my mother's family. She's one of ten children and they were all big, fascinating characters. I'm an only child and I've always thought it would be good to have an archive of their stories from the past, even in terms of material for fiction. So when my uncle died, I thought I should start recording their history as a family,

and all the dramas I grew up around. And I was right, it *was* the start of something and had a knock-on effect, because from then on, every six months, basically, another sibling passed away. Five of my mother's siblings died in those three years. In the middle of this, my mother started to spiral. I think she was affected by the death of her siblings, for sure, but also in that spiraling, she was made homeless. So it was the first time she had to go back to the family house to live as an adult. Then it became clear to me, that instead of interviewing all my uncles and aunts about the house, what was happening there now was more alive than these stories of the past.





SP *Is it the case that life showed you what the film should be about?*

MC I just happened to be filming quite intensely at the time when my mother's crisis happened, it wasn't like her crisis was the catalyst. Maybe in some ways I reacted to the deaths by filming and her by spiraling. That's also why the film is edited in that way — I begin with my uncles and then my mother starts to become more present, and she kind of takes over the narrative. I like that approach, because for me, that's the way life is: you think what you're looking for is over here on your left, but actually, the real essence of what you're looking for is on your right.

SP *I want to ask you about the role or the position of the camera within that intimate space of the family. Since the camera is a*

recording device that gives us both images and sound, and kind of preserves that moment, can it also help make sense of it?

MC I'm not making art and films as a therapy, therapists are very well paid for a reason! I'm making a film because I want to communicate something, and

I think the space between the film and the audience creates something more than the sum of its parts. But for me, the one therapeutic reflection that I've observed is that having a camera always makes me feel like I have a purpose in a situation of crisis. I have agency here. I think it was useful in that it allowed me to ask questions that otherwise I might have been too afraid or defenseless to ask, or would entangle me in the dynamic. Also, I feel it allowed my mother to feel like I was taking her seriously and that she had a voice and that her experience mattered. So it did create a different dynamic for us that wasn't so much about codependency, but about being present and witnessing something for each other.

SP *How does one edit such potent footage?*

Can you talk me through the editing process and how it was for you, aside from the technical decisions that had to be made, did you feel like revisiting things in the edit shaped something differently?

MC I was editing from the start, really, from the end of 2019. We didn't get all our funding until 2022 and that's when I started working with other editors. It was quite a long gestation process of filming, editing, filming, editing. There were short filming times and lots of time in between to look at the material and to think about and shape it.

SP *Perhaps we can talk about this in relation to one particular scene in the film, where in addition to the image, we also hear about your own ambivalence towards it?*

MC Yes, this is probably the most contentious part of the film, the scene with my mother on the bench, and I think that had the biggest impact on me when we were editing. It was a long conversation with lots of reactions, lots of emotion, both from my editor and from myself, about whether we should include the actual shot in the film or not. Also the guilt I had around it and where it was placed in the edit made a big difference to the film. I think that shaped something for me, because on one level, it made me feel guilty—which isn't the best feeling to experience—but it also allowed me to admit to a mistake, and to accept myself regardless. As [physician and writer] Gabor Maté says, "it's better to feel guilty than

resentful." It's important to let an audience into something you're unclear about. Because I don't want to make art that's didactic, I hate that. So yes, that was the one part where I felt like it was stirring stuff up for me, while the rest of the footage, I saw how it was serving the story.

SP *You could have decided to omit the whole thing, but its inclusion had a profound effect on me, it shows such deep, deep levels of vulnerability that evokes the same amount of vulnerability from the viewer. Instead of self-censorship, there's this radical honesty; how do you relate to that in your artistic practice in general and in your approach to filmmaking?*

MC Thank you. I hope so. I really like what you said about the shared vulnerability. I suppose the extraordinary thing about people is how

they deal with their own hauntedness. More than their skills or their talents, and it's only when I look at my darkness that I can accept other people's darknesses. You know, I'm actually not the most public person when it comes to social media and stuff, I always think it's kind of a paradox, because my work is deeply personal and exposing. But I suppose I trust people enough that this specific and quite extreme story can be also universal. Many people's loved ones have struggles, it doesn't have to be an addiction. And the rage that comes along with that care is universal. I have a certain confidence that these are feelings that a viewer can share.

SP *You mentioned rage, but can you say something about shame? These are two very entangled emotions that shape parent-children relationships...*

MC There are certain things, like that shot we talked about, where there is a level of shame. And I don't feel shameful that often, because I suppose I have forgiveness for my mother, but also myself. That said, it's not an easy forgiveness, which is what the film's looking at. For years of my life, I used to cope by thinking I just didn't care, that this wasn't affecting me. Actually, I think that's neither truthful nor honest, and that there is a process that needs to

be worked through. The beauty of film is that when you replay something it does change its meaning and for me, to have honesty, you do need a level of craft. You have to have a degree of thinking about the listener or the viewer while actually doing some self interrogation. I could just tell you everything [that happened] without it making any sense or having any wisdom. But if I create meaning from it, and I show something that I'm not proud of, that would be a truthful thing. You do need a bit of distance as well to have honesty, weirdly enough. Thankfully, filmmaking is a very long process, so you do get a lot of time to create meaning and gain insight.

SP *A Want In Her is your first feature film, but artistic practice can give one quite a few clues about the things you're interested in, in performance and video art, etc, that also appear in the film, like whether it be a form of reenactment or lip syncing, or recordings of your uncle. Can you tell me more about how that practice that you've done before has informed this project?*

MC To be honest, I do feel like most of my practice to date has led to this project because I started making work about my family in art school, and some of that footage is actually in the film. And a lot of it has gone back to my relationship with my mother and the rupture it caused, because at the time I was making quite surreal work, and I was in that mode of, "I'm fine! My family is all the way over there in Ireland!" And then they started,



like, erupting into my films. One of my tutors said to me, "Have you heard about the theory of displacement?" [laughs] And yes, I'm interested in performance and inheritance, reality as well as insanity and lucidity, and that very much comes from Ireland. A lot of the filmmakers that excite me have performance backgrounds, like Josephine Decker. Then I also love social realist films, like those of Andrea

Arnold and Lynne Ramsay. I love drama and how we deal with the relationships between the self and the other, essentially, the dramatisation of that.

SP *So how does the documentary form come into this for the purposes of exploring interpersonal intimacy?*

MC I like the documentary form because of the stakes - the sense of things being alive and the viewer being invested because it's real. That's also why I didn't do a voiceover: I felt like if there was one, the experience of watching the film wouldn't be as embodied,



and that you might feel a bit safer as a viewer, thinking, "Oh, she's fine now, because she's talking about this from a point in the future."

SP *There's so much of your voice in the film already, but all of it comes from the exact point of filming; already existing calls, conversations, messages, etc. Was there any moment when you thought that you might not have everything you need [in terms of audio] in order to tell the story?*

MC Well, there was a moment where we tried to do a voiceover, and it didn't work. Actually, it was my husband who said to me: "You know

that your voiceover is the calls, right?" That helped me, as I had been recording calls for 2-3 years so had a lot of material. Of course, we had to do some little tricks here and there, like dropping a line into a phone call or something, but not often. It's funny, at one point my producer said, "I can tell you're acting in the part where you leave the voice note about your boyfriend. And the recording quality is too clear." But I

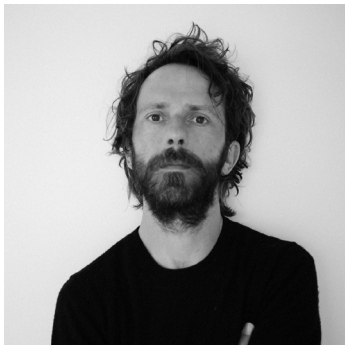
wasn't acting, that's real. [Laughs] WhatsApp voice notes are good quality! Also, what I love about drama is that it doesn't tell you things, it shows you things, and it creates emotion by putting you in relation to the image or in the middle of characters. It's like Sally Rooney says, "My books aren't about individuals; they're about relationships". Since the calls are constantly present, you can hear how I feel by the tone of what is being said and also the weight of what isn't. You can also imagine and relate to how someone feels listening on the other end of the call, and that actually creates space for a viewer.

ABOUT THE PRODUCERS

Tadhg O'Sullivan

Inland Films (Ireland)

Tadhg O'Sullivan is a film-maker, radio maker, sound artist and writer based in the west of Ireland. His films include the features *To the Moon* (2020), *The Great Wall* (2015), *Yximalloo* (2014) and *The Swallow* (2024), as well as numerous shorts, television pieces and gallery works. These have screened at festivals internationally including Telluride, Venice, CPH:DOX, MoMA Doc Fortnight and many others. For radio he has written and produced work for the BBC and for the Irish national broadcaster RTÉ, where he has an ongoing essay series – The Cloud of Unknowing. For many years he worked as a freelance editor and sound designer, with credits that included the Pat Collins features *Silence* (2012) and



Song of Granite (2016). He is on the board of the Irish Film Institute.

His company Inland Films was set up in 2012 to produce his own films. In recent years the company has expanded to work with new Irish

directors. *A Want in Her* is the first project completed from this expansion.

Roisín Geraghty

Inland Films (Ireland)

Roisín Geraghty is an independent producer based in the North West of Ireland, who has been working in the film industry for over ten years. In early 2020, she established the production company Little Rose Films. The company's first release was the multi-award-winning short film *The Passion*, based on the Donal Ryan short story and directed by Mia Mullarkey, which was nominated for an IFTA award for best short film. She also produced Claire Dix's narrative feature *Sunlight* (2023), *We Are Moving - Memories of Miss Moriarty* (2016) and *Take Me Swimming* (2018), as well as Oonagh Kearney's multi award winning short film *Five Letters to the Stranger Who Will Dissect My Brain* (2018) and is currently co-producing the feature documentary *Beyond the Fold* directed by Ross McClean, and producing *Amanda* by José Miguel Jimenez.



She has worked on many Irish indigenous productions and co-productions and has worked with various film organisations in Ireland, the UK and the US. She currently works as the Head of Industry and Marketplace for Docs Ireland in Belfast, serves as Industry Manager and Programmer for Cork International Film Festival.

Kat Mansoor

Snowstorm Productions (UK)

With over 20 years of industry experience, award-winning producer Kat Mansoor has worked with the likes of BBC Film, Film 4, Mubi, Netflix and distributors around the world to consistently deliver a slate of highly acclaimed films. Kat's work has been shown at festivals such as Cannes, Telluride, SXSW and IDFA. Her film credits include double Grierson-winning *Here's Johnny*, *The Man Whose Mind Exploded*, *Lost and Sound*, *What We Believe Making Time* and *In the Court of*



the Crimson King. Kat's most recent releases include BAFTA-nominated *Cow* by Academy Award winning Director Andrea Arnold and BAFTA-nominated *Rebellion* (Netflix). Kat's current productions include *Molly vs the Machines* (Luminate,

Screen Scotland, Doc Society), *Re-Evaluation* (Film4), *Bjork: Cornucopia* (Mubi), *Firestarters* (Cinereach), *Father Father* (Bertha), *A Want in Her* (Screen Ireland/BFI) and an untitled series with A24.

Eline van Wees

Basalt Film (Netherlands)

Eline van Wees has been working for Basalt Film since its foundation in 2012. In March 2021, Eline took over when Simone van den Broek left the company to take the position of the documentary film consultant for The Netherlands Film Fund. Over the years Basalt Film produced over 20 documentaries. Among them *If only night wouldn't fall* by Marc Schmidt (2023, Sheffield International Documentary Festival), *Dreaming Walls* (Berlinale Panorama 2022, CPH:DOX, Thessaloniki Documentary Festival IDFA Best of Fest, and many more, production Clin d'oeil films) by Amélie van Elmbt, Maya Duverdier, *Farewell Paradise* (2020, world premiere Limelight IFFR) by director Sonja Wyss. As well the film *Matthews Laws* (2012), directed by Marc Schmidt had a successful international festival tour with more than 20 festival screenings and the film won several prizes, like the Grand Prix (Visions du Réel, Nyon), Grand Jury Award (Open City Docs Fest, London), Golden Calf (NFF, Utrecht). Current productions include *Flophouse America* (production Fri Film) and *The Hunt* (in development) by Jan Louter.



CREDITS

A FILM BY	Myrid Carten
CINEMATOGRAPHY	Donna Wade Myrid Carten Seán Mullan
EDITOR	Karen Harley, edt
ADDITIONAL EDITING	Myrid Carten
STORY EDITOR	David Barker
EDIT ASSISTANTS	Jack Lunt Michael Bucuzzo
CONSULTANT EDITORS	Sabine Groenewegen Michael Nollet Maya Daisy Hawke
PRODUCERS	Tadhg O'Sullivan Roisín Geraghty Kat Mansoor
CO-PRODUCER	Eline van Wees
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Emma Norton
DEVELOPMENT PRODUCERS	Phil Harrison Charlie Falconer
FILM LAB	Cinelab
COLOUR GRADING	Gary Curran
COMPOSER	Clarice Jensen
SOUND DESIGNER	Morgan Muse
SOUND MIX	Mark Glynn

This project was selected at Doc Market (development),
Belfast Film Festival 2019 – Northern Ireland / IDFA Producers
Connection 2021 – AMS NL / DOK Leipzig Market 2021 / IDFA
Project Space 2022



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