



Carnavalesque Films

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ORPHANS
A film by Ry Russo-Young



Carnavalesque Films is distributing the personal and intimate SXSW award winning narrative ORPHANS. Five years after the death of their parents, two estranged sisters reunite at the isolated farmhouse where they spent childhood summers and holidays. Rosie agrees to visit Sonia for an unusual birthday party Sonia's planned for herself. From the get-go, it's clear that not everything's okay between these sisters – and as the two revisit their past and catch up on their present, tensions flare, threatening to end what's left of a family already ravaged by death, jealousy and secrets.

CAST

James Katharine Flynn
Lily Wheelwright

CREDITS

Director Ry Russo-Young
Producer Amir Naderi
Edited by Amir Naderi, Ry Russo-Young
Supervising Editor John Walter
Sound Dahna Abourahme
Assistant Director Marilee Reina
Assistant Camera Judi Stroh

SPECIAL FEATURES

- Deleted Scene: Sick Scene
- Deleted Scene: Rosie's monologue from the graveyard
- Trailer
- MARION – Award Winning short film by Ry Russo-Young
- Photo Commemoration for Lily Wheelwright

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR (OR THE SPREAD MAGAZINE INTERVIEW)

ORPHANS is Ry Russo-Young's first feature film. It won a special jury prize at the 2007 SXSW film festival. The film has screened at numerous film festivals in the US and abroad.

Russo-Young's short film, MARION won the jury award for best experimental film at the 2006 SXSW film festival and at the 2005

International Chicago film festival. The film has played at many festivals and galleries.

Russo-Young appeared as ROCCO in Joe Swanberg's HANNAH TAKES THE STAIRS in 2007. In addition, Russo-Young worked on artist Doug Aitken's large-scale film installation SLEEPWALKERS that appeared on the exterior of the MOMA in New York in January of 2007.

In 2004, Russo-Young was featured on the cover of The New York Times Magazine in an article about growing up with lesbian mothers. She grew up in downtown Manhattan and graduated from Saint Ann's School and Oberlin College where she studied visual arts. She also studied drama at Yale and HB Studios as well as film production at New York University Tisch School of the Arts.

AWARDS and HONORS

- SXSW Film Festival (Special Jury Award in narrative feature competition)
- Sarasota Film Festival
- Maryland Film Festival
- Nashville Film Festival
- Wurtzburg Film Festival
- Thessaloniki Film Festival
- Tekfestival
- Saint Louis Film Festival
- BendFilm Festival

"Orphans," a striking... first film that simultaneously summons the spirits of Bergman's "Cries and Whispers" and Brian De Palma's "Sisters."..." **Andrew O'Heir, Salon.com**

"...Silence from a Sunday afternoon audience is a good thing with a challenging drama like "Orphans," a stark, solemn drama about two adult sisters still coming to terms with the death of their parents and the emotional baggage. It's a strong drama of heartache with two lead performances that are honest, blemishes and all..."Orphans" is the start of a promising directing career for Russo-Young, a true discovery..." **Steve Ramos, Indiewire**

"..*Orphans* is beautifully shot, and the performances of both women seemed heartbreakingly real, with a tentativeness that seemed straight from the heart ... An early sequence, in which the sisters are happily doing each

other's hair one minute, displaying an intimacy only siblings understand, then sitting far apart on a couch, as though they barely know one another, says more about familial relationships than most filmmakers can manage in 90 minutes..." **Chris Kaltenbach, Baltimore Sun**

"...We awarded a Special Jury Prize to Ry Russo-Young's *Orphans* for "its personally crafted visual aesthetic." The film, which placed the story of two sisters attempting to reconcile after the death of their parents amidst a textured collage of pastel backgrounds and flowing party dresses, has its share of Bergman references but it also shares something with the experimental melodramas of Peggy Ahwesh and Ronnie Abate..." **Scott Macaulay, Filmmaker Magazine**

"...Russo-Young's vision is well-rewarded by the Special Jury Award, and it should affirm the young director's rise in a new American independent cinema." **PopMatters online**

"...SXSW has found part of their identity in embracing this group of filmmakers that feel like they're staging something of a revolution with their intimate, often uncomfortable comedies and dramas that boast no stars and sometimes even no scripts, but share an amazing feeling of authenticity. In fact, when a character disrobes in Russo-Young's searing sibling story *Orphans*, your first instinct is to look away out of politeness..." **Premiere Magazine online**

"...an evocative, character-driven feature..." **The Daily Texan**

"A sensitive & peculiar pastoral, *Orphans* manages to derive as much compelling energy from its locations & spaces (of the wide open & claustrophobic variety alike) as from its two terrific lead actresses, a rarity these digital days." **Andrew Bujalski**



The cast and crew