



REMOVAL OF THE EYE

PARORI PRODUCTIONS presents "REMOVAL OF THE EYE"

Starring Katerina Shaw Artemis Shaw Prashanth Kamalakanthan and Niko Kamalakanthan

Music by WILL EPSTEIN Sound Design by ELI COHN Color by MARCY ROBINSON

Written and Directed by ARTEMIS SHAW and PRASHANTH KAMALAKANTHAN





LOGLINE

Struggling with new parenthood and stalling careers, Kallia and Ram's lives are thrown into chaos when Kallia's aging mother goes on a mission to exorcize the family from the evil eye.

SYNOPSIS

New parents Ram and Kallia are at their wits' end with their sleepless baby Niko. Their world is further upended when Kallia's father suffers a freak accident, and they become primary caretakers for her ailing mother, Katerina, who lives downstairs. Convinced that the family's misfortunes have been caused by the evil eye, Katerina insists on performing an ancient exorcism to save the family, to Kallia and Ram's dismay. As chaos brews, the couple are tossed between the pressures of modern parenting, age-old superstitions, and the brutal market for creative work.



KNIFE

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PRODUCTION

Upon the birth of our first child, we were struck by the lack of films about new parenthood and the world of infants more generally. We were going through the most emotionally turbulent, incredibly chaotic, and profoundly beautiful moment of our lives, yet we could relate to so little art. The obvious dawned on us - the logistical challenges of filming with a baby are too vast to contemplate in our traditional filmmaking model. We knew that we had to move quickly to capture our experience. Babies only stay babies for so long, and this moment in our lives was fleeting.

We began writing an outline in the fall and principal photography in late spring. We shot in bits of pieces over the course of the next two months, using improvised dialogue, a DSLR, no operator, and no professional acting experience. Besides ourselves, the principal cast is rounded out by my mother and our baby. We shot a few hours a day — a production schedule more creatively rejuvenating than the 12-hour Hollywood standard.

To all our delight, the process was especially rewarding for my mother, who suffers from a neurological disorder and blindness. The film gave her a place to channel work through personal difficulties she does not ordinarily discuss. We developed a process of collaboration where technical aspects of acting — which are difficult for someone with her condition — were streamlined in favor of authentic performance. Despite the transcendental themes, this is, in fact, a relatable and loose experimental comedy. We play ruder, messier versions of ourselves and find humor in the ultra-specificity of relationships heightened by their realness.



FILMMAKERS

Artemis Shaw

Cast, Writer, Director & Producer

Artemis is a filmmaker and educator from New York City. She directs and produces across documentary, narrative, and digital formats, but the vibe is usually tragicomedy and satire. She was profiled in Filmmaker Magazine's New Faces of Independent Film 2022.

Artemis has taught filmmaking at Tribeca Film Institute, Museum of the Moving Image, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the NYU Production Lab. She holds a BA in Art History from Columbia University and a dual MFA/MBA in Filmmaking from NYU. Her first feature collaboration with Prashanth Kamalakanthan, *New Strains*, won a Tiger Special Jury Award at International Film Festival Rotterdam 2023 and is distributed by MEMORY. Her solo feature debut, *Mothership*, participated in TorinoFilmLab's 2024 ScriptLab and is currently in development.



Artemis' note:

Shortly before our son's birth, we moved into the same apartment building as my parents. This particular set-up has, over the last two years, created a curious clash of contemporary cultures. While in India and Greece, our parents' native countries, it is an expectation and honor to care for one's aging parents, the expectations in the United States are much different. Countless child-rearing gurus and self-help guides teach you how to set boundaries with grandparents, rather than how to welcome them in; how to reject your their unsolicited advice, rather than how to listen to their wisdom. We found both darkness and humor in this maddening gap between contemporary individualism, and the traditions we all inherit.

As we all get older, I also feel highly attuned to the fleetingness of Niko and Katerina's current states. Making a film now, with them, is a celebration of growth, tradition, and remembrance.

FILMMAKERS

Prashanth Kamalakanthan

Cast, Writer, Director, Editor & Cinematographer

Prashanth Kamalakanthan is a filmmaker and professor born in Tirupati, India and raised in North Carolina. He has been named Filmmaker of the Year at Duke University, a Gotham Marcie Bloom Fellow in Film, and as one of the “25 New Faces of Film” by Filmmaker Magazine. Prashanth teaches cinema at Virginia Commonwealth University, and previously at Brown University and NYU's Tisch Graduate Film.

His award-winning short films have played festivals worldwide and are featured in The New York Times, Mother Jones, and The Nation. His debut feature, *Have a Nice Life* (2021) is distributed by the Film Desk. It was followed by *New Strains* (2023), which won the Tiger Special Jury Award at IFFR and is distributed by MEMORY.



Prashanth's note:

Our guiding aesthetic principle was to inhabit the headspace of both Niko, a baby experiencing the world for the first time, and Katerina, whose neurological disease impairs her visual perception. Through the edit and the story's visuals, we aimed to capture fleeting moments of ecstasy hidden in the permeable borders between life and death.

Our approach flickers between highly embodied and static, in the same way our film's tone flickers between anxiety and comedy. In scenes with Niko and Katerina, where Artemis or I were available to operate, we pursued a kinetic, haunted feeling. In the scenes featuring both Kallia and Ram, our logistical constraint of shooting without camera crew created the opportunity for a inventive visual styles for each scene, exploiting static frames and hidden-camera perspective to underline our characters' paradoxical feelings of stasis amid tumultuous life changes.

FILMMAKERS

Will Epstein

Composer

Will Epstein is a composer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist born in New York City. Will has worked on major pieces for the Martha Graham Dance Company, Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Joyce Theater, and Jacobs Pillow, and collaborated with renowned artists and institutions such as MoMA, Marilyn Minter, and Laurie Simmons. Previous film work includes scores for HBO Documentary *BABY GOD*, Amanda Kim's *NAM JUNE PAIK: MOON IS THE OLDEST TV*, and Prashanth Kamalakanthan and Artemis Shaw's *NEW STRINS*. His albums *Whims* and *Wendy* were released by Fat Possum Records in 2022 and 2023.



Will's Note:

Removal of the Eye felt like an extension and evolution of my last collaboration with Prashanth and Artemis, *New Strains*. Their work has this blend of intimacy, humor, and filmmaking finesse that I find very appealing. My earliest musical background was as an improviser, so I feel a kinship to this approach - wanting the piece to feel off-the-cuff, but also very composed.

For this project, we honed in on creating distinct themes for each central character - Kallia, Ram, Katerina, and Niko. These themes were like Lego pieces we could rearrange and combine. This structural constraint excited me, as I haven't worked so explicitly in that mode before. It got me thinking about composers like Ennio Morricone and Nino Rota, whose work always has this slightly metaphysical quality.

Throughout the process, I felt like I was trying to summon spirits musically. In the movie, there's this sense of summoning, a sense that you're constantly at the precipice of something dangerous happening. I liked being in that place musically, and the challenge of creating this haunted energy while working with very digital imagery. It was a fun juxtaposition, bouncing that ethereal sound off the film's modern visual style.

Instrumentally, I was drawn to sounds with a lot of breath in them, but aimed to give them an uncanny feeling. At the time, I was exploring a technique in my personal work of using small contact speakers that resonate metal, and it felt apt for *Removal*. For Katerina's theme, for example, I sampled flute sounds through metal chairs, and you can actually hear the chair vibrating and the metal on the seat bouncing from the vibration.



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Original Title	Removal of the Eye
Original Language	English
Genre	Comedy / Drama
Total Running Time	93"
Shooting Format	Digital
Aspect Ratio	1.85
Sound Format	5.1
Projection Format	DCP
Production Country	United States
Shooting Location	New York, NY
Year	2024



CAST

(In order of appearance)

Katerina	Katerina Shaw
Kallia	Artemis Shaw
Niko	Niko Kamalakanthan
Ram	Prashanth Kamalakanthan
Robert	Robert Shaw
Tayarisha	Tayarisha Poe
Lex	Alexios Shaw
Cassandra	Zephyra Shaw
Dr. Bellanger	TyRuben Ellingson
Dr. Fray	Jomo Fray
Dr. Donger	William Donger
Sheree	Sheree Chen
Dax	Mons Vi
Kamal	Pokaloorie Kamalakanthan

CREW

Directors	Artemis Shaw Prashanth Kamalakanthan
Producer	Artemis Shaw
Cinematographer	Prashanth Kamalakanthan
Production Sound Editor	Artemis Shaw Prashanth Kamalakanthan
Composer	Will Epstein
Post Sound Studio	Nocturnal Sound
Sound Designer & Re-recording Mixer	Eli Cohn
Dialogue Editor	Ben Chesneau
SFX Editor	Jack Sasner
Foley Artist / Foley Editor	Artyom Busel
Foley Recordist	Alexi Busel
Color VFX	Marcy Robinson Richard Cabrera
Additional Photography	Lorena Duran Jack Kendrick





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