



GLYFISH

**GILLYFISH IS A MODERN LOVE STORY,  
STEEPED IN THE SURREAL, THE VISCERAL AND THE TEXTURED.**

Social realism and magical realism collide to make more than the sum of their parts. Colorful and experiential, the themes and structure require an exploratory style.

Wide shots rooted in the land and aliveness of Ireland, detailed close ups of environmental details, reflections and mirrors in the human and natural world, bursts of digital animation, and vivid flashbacks convey the specific inner world of our main character.

A film about knowing without ever having been told, Gillyfish is a surreal telling of the mirrors we hold up to ourselves through relationship.

**GILLYFISH**

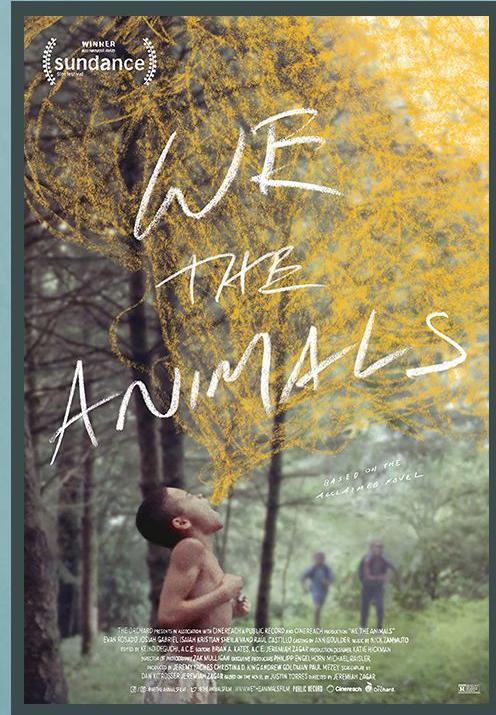
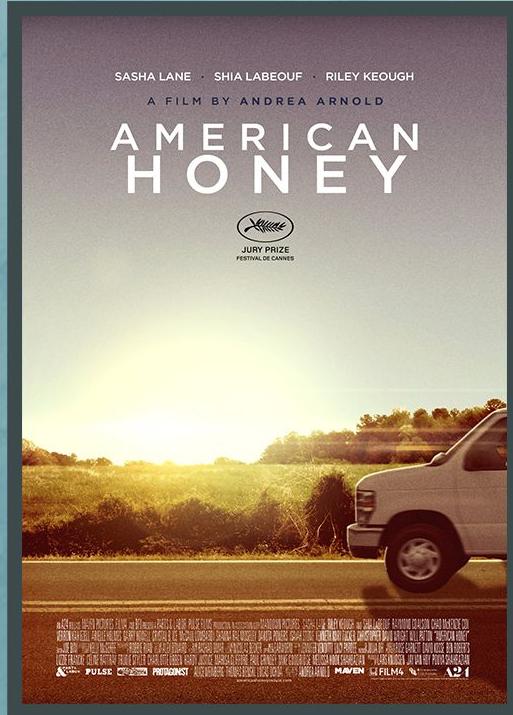




# LOGLINE

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Abandoned on a roadtrip to confront her new girlfriend's estranged family, Gillian chooses to knock on the door anyway, and take on her girlfriend's identity.



# CASTING



## GILLIAN CROWLEY SHE/HER, 28

Top picks: Bella Ramsey, Saoirse Ronan, Alia Shawkat, Beanie Feldstein

Our main character. A vibrant but struggling young woman. Her hands often full of chokecherries or plates of pancakes, eyes dark and crisp, long wavy brown hair. There is something special about the way she looks at people. She was a feisty child, always trying to save everybody and everything.



## EL WARD THEY/ THEM, 29

Top picks: Liv Hewson, Aisling Franciosi, Jack Haven, Vico Ortiz

El is Gillian's accidental love interest. Stunning in a way that they probably resent for how it's made their life more difficult, with vibrant red hair and intentional energy. They love to observe more than interact, watching the world with wide eyes. They have yet to engage their pain and that makes them a bit dangerous.



## DAVID WARD HE/HIM, 50

Top picks: Domhnall Gleeson, Collin Farrel, Ethan Hawk, Cillian Murphy

David is father to El and Max. He is a professor at a small college in North Ireland, barely coping with the grief and uncertainty of his lost daughter, and his son's challenges. He is the one who passed the red hair onto his children, and his kind eyes are shrouded by lines of concern.



## ROSE COOPER-WARD SHE/HER, 38

Top picks: Ruth Negga, Regina King, Tracy Ellis Ross, Katie McGrath, Carey Mulligan

Rose is a kind and gentle mother to Max and would have liked to be the same for El. She used to be one of David's grad students, and now she's his wife and nearly full-time caretaker for Max. She is grounded and practical, a protector at heart.

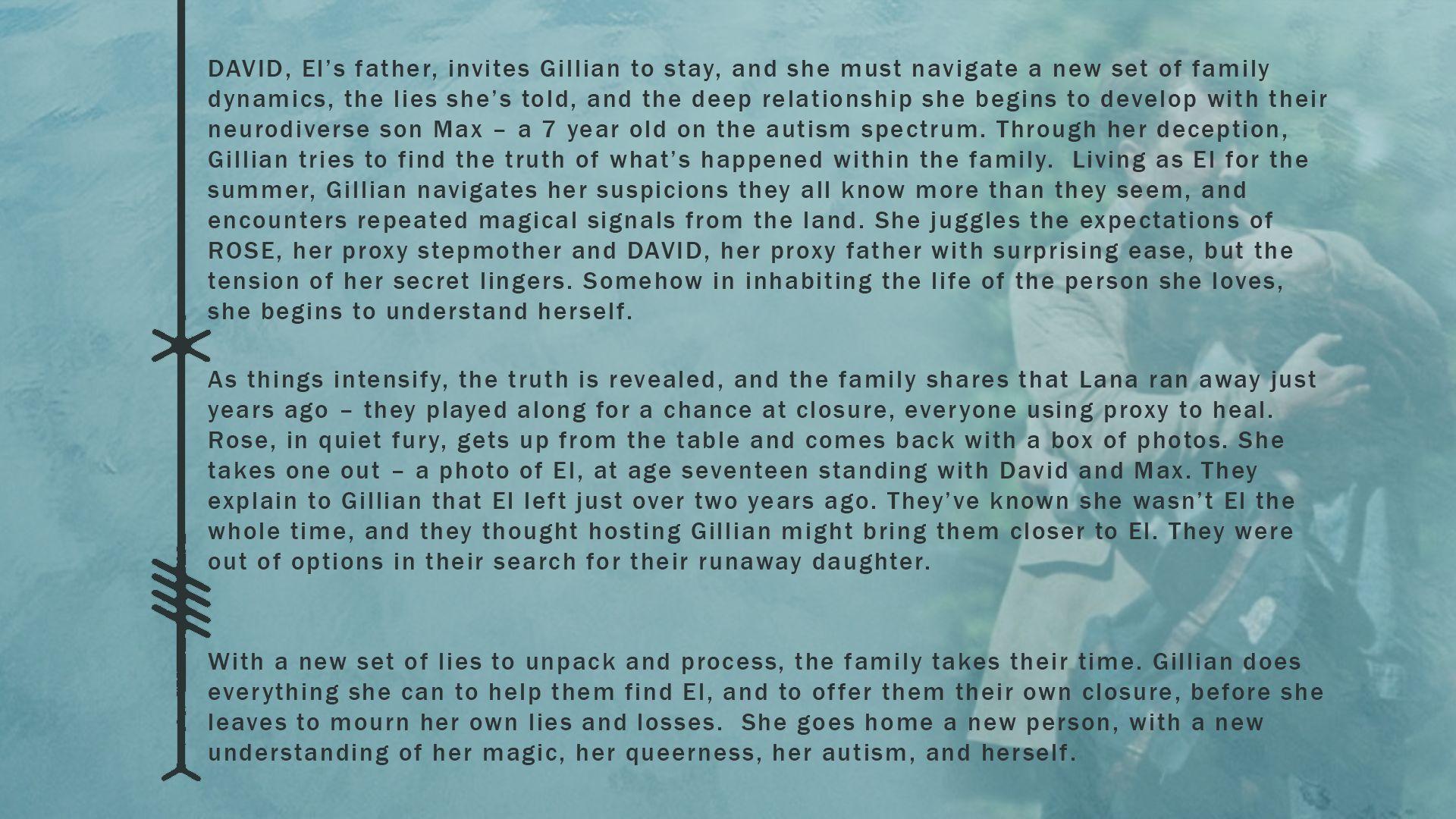
# STORY

GILLIAN CROWLEY has always believed she would know the identity of her eventual husband based on dreams she has of their future children. But while attempting to keep her mother's Bed and Breakfast afloat, she meets and falls in love with a young nonbinary drifter, EI WARD, and her understanding of her future must shift.

After a brief courtship, EI reveals that they were abandoned by their father as a child, and convinces Gillian, in search of a reason to leave her suffocating circumstances, to drive EI across Ireland to confront him.

On their road trip, Gillian wrestles with her identity questions, discovers some wild Irish magic, and explores her sexuality, finding herself completely in love with EI. But once they arrive in Donegal, things aren't as easy as they expected. EI panics when they see their childhood home. Unable to go through with the confrontation, EI takes the car and leaves Gillian stranded, and heartbroken.

After a few days of disorientation, Gillian finds herself back on EI's family doorstep, with the intention of seeking closure. She attempts to confront EI's father alone, where he mistakes her to be his long lost daughter. She doesn't correct him, effectively taking on the identity of the person she loves.



DAVID, EI's father, invites Gillian to stay, and she must navigate a new set of family dynamics, the lies she's told, and the deep relationship she begins to develop with their neurodiverse son Max - a 7 year old on the autism spectrum. Through her deception, Gillian tries to find the truth of what's happened within the family. Living as EI for the summer, Gillian navigates her suspicions they all know more than they seem, and encounters repeated magical signals from the land. She juggles the expectations of ROSE, her proxy stepmother and DAVID, her proxy father with surprising ease, but the tension of her secret lingers. Somehow in inhabiting the life of the person she loves, she begins to understand herself.

As things intensify, the truth is revealed, and the family shares that Lana ran away just years ago - they played along for a chance at closure, everyone using proxy to heal. Rose, in quiet fury, gets up from the table and comes back with a box of photos. She takes one out - a photo of EI, at age seventeen standing with David and Max. They explain to Gillian that EI left just over two years ago. They've known she wasn't EI the whole time, and they thought hosting Gillian might bring them closer to EI. They were out of options in their search for their runaway daughter.

With a new set of lies to unpack and process, the family takes their time. Gillian does everything she can to help them find EI, and to offer them their own closure, before she leaves to mourn her own lies and losses. She goes home a new person, with a new understanding of her magic, her queerness, her autism, and herself.







# PROOF OF CONCEPT

The proof of concept (co-produced with Leeona Duff of Upon Bridge, Galway) premiered at BFI Flare; had its International Premiere at Sao Paolo Kinoforum, US premiere Denver Queer, Canadian premiere Whistler Film Fest and we've played around 40 regional festivals around the world.



pw:fish

## PRESS

Here are some of our press links:

**VARIETY**

**C:NEMACY**      **OUTFRONT/**

**ACTION  
RELOADED**

**FLIM  
THREAT**

**GET  
THAT  
MOVIE**

# BUDGET

The estimated budget of GILLYFISH is €900K Euros. Financing will come from a combination of equity and non-equity sources. We would be striving to exploit Irish Section 481 tax credit with a Canadian post co production deal.

**TOTAL BUDGET- 900,000€**

**Confirmed in place: 270,000 (with tax credit)**

## Financing Plan

### SECURED FINANCING

10,000 initial equity investment confirmed, MHK Productions (Ireland)

99,000.00 initial equity investment confirmed, Patents Parent Corporation LTD (UK)

161,000 Section 481 Tax Credit 32% (Ireland)

### UNSECURED FINANCING

50,000 Nationwide Regional Financing, Cork

400,000 Co-production deal Screen Ireland / Telefilm Canada

30,000 MG Sales Agent (France, Canada etc)

50,000 Donor Advisor Fund (Mordecai Family Charitable Foundation)

### POST PRODUCTION CO-PRODUCTION DEAL

Canada

100,000 (Telefilm)



# FINANCING SUMMARY

Gillyfish is in development. We have already got into the following labs: Midpoint Focus Queer 2025 (culminating in a pitch at Karlovy Vary International Film Festival); the Galway Film Fleadh 2023 (Ireland's premiere movie market); Stowe Story Labs, USA, 2019; Cinestory, USA, 2019; Breaking Through the Lens (finalist) 2021; Constellation Incubator, (finalist), USA, 2021 & Sundance Screenwriting Lab (finalist), USA, 2021; which is a testament to the quality of the script. Similarly, we are grateful to be mentored and supported by both Jon Shestack (AIR FORCE ONE, BEFORE I FALL) and Gary Foster (SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE, DENIAL) who have offered to help us with the casting process.

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We envisage the script at a 900,000 Euro budget, being funded by a Canadian/ Irish majority co-production; with US/ UK equity, as well as an Irish tax credit. Through longstanding UK equity partnerships, MHK Productions own investment and the Irish tax credit we have raised 30% of the budget. After the success of our shoot in Galway, we have decided to re-draft the US based script for Ireland. Ideally we'd like to continue shooting somewhere regional, the Galway/ Cork incentives are less competitive than the Dublin based ones and MHK Ireland is in Cork. We'd also like to continue working with Irish rising star non-binary DP Alba Fernandez.

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In terms of Canada, we recently attended our proof of concept's Canadian premiere at Whistler Film Festival where Ireland was the country in focus. Here, we heard more about how well Ireland and Canada co-produce together (MHK Productions has an Irish branch), connected with Steven Davenport- the Irish/ US Screen Ireland representative and submitted to Out TV, a Canadian broadcaster who only finance queer content.

# DISTRIBUTION PLAN

The prestige awards success of film's like Todd Haynes **CAROL** and Celine Sciamma's **PORTRAIT OF A LADY ON FIRE** has set a precedent for queer cinema on a world sales stage. Our intention is to exploit the film within North America (along with English speaking countries) as the main 'bell weather' territories, followed by a roll out in the rest of the world. The film's unique selling point is its queer, coming of age themes – culturally we understand the salability of queer stories in a way that creates an opportunity for these stories to succeed. So many of the most successful queer stories have been about the construction of maleness and male identities. We have a space for a queer story that looks at woman-ness and female-ness through the lens of something more than coming out.

Comparable film Abdellatif Kechiche's **BLUE IS THE WARMEST COLOR** premiered at Cannes and had a healthy festival run. We'd be aiming for a festival premiere at Sundance, Berlin, Cannes, Toronto, SXSW, Tribeca, or Venice. Ideally we'll have locked a sales agent/ distributor before the premiere but if not we'd hope the premiere finds the right partner for us. In France, queer female stories sell very well so we'd like to get a pre-sales deal there.

In terms of distribution, we think this would be a good fit for online platforms like HBO Max (who are building a library of queer content), Hulu, Netflix and Amazon, providing access to a wide audience while promoting diverse stories and independent films. If the film does not hit this tier of distribution, our next plan would be to sell to pan territory distributors like UIP, Sony Pictures Classics, Lionsgate etc, then top tier independent distributors like Neon, A24, Utopia, Music Box, The Strand (specializes in queer content) and Mubi. This film's arthouse appeal would make it a great fit for arthouse European distributors like Canal Plus and Arte. We'd also look for Lesbian specific SVOD options for example [LesFlicks.com](http://LesFlicks.com)

# AUDIENCE

The film's unique selling point is its queer, coming of age themes which means its core audience are younger 17 to 25-year-old (Gen Z- Y) women (non-binary and queer leaning). Our secondary audience are 25 to 50-year-olds (Millennial- Gen X), driven to socially conscious, prestige films.

Impact is demanded with the Millennials / Gen Z's (biggest social-media contingent) so we want to hire an impact agency in pre-production, rallying around queer 'coming out' issues to build a custom audience around our festival premiere.



# DIRECTOR SARAH SELLMAN

Sarah is a queer, neurodivergent writer + director (pronouns- they, them) who uses genre narratives to explore the role of myth in distorting and healing personal and generational trauma. Born and raised in the agricultural community of Alamosa, Colorado, Sarah graduated from NYU's Tisch, where they also studied Neuroscience and Ancient Religion.

In television, Sarah worked as a Writer's Assistant on Netflix's **BLACK SUMMER**, for which they also wrote an episode. They have previously worked on shows at SyFy, Netflix and Amazon (**THE ABANDONS**, **Z-NATION**, **LORE**). Sarah's magically real pilot – **COTTONWOOD** – was selected as Series Fest's Writer's Initiative's Grand Prize Winner, presented at Gotham's Project Forum, featured in Deadline as a top un-produced pilot for 2020's **WeForShe** List, and is currently in development with Brad Silberling (**JANE THE VIRGIN**, **CHARMED**).

On the film side, their feature documentary – **American Bear: An Adventure in the Kindness of Strangers** – screened theatrically across the United States, and can be found online at Amazon, iTunes, and Hulu. Sarah's short narrative – **Hold Your Arms Out** – was offered a fellowship at Hewlett-Packard's inaugural post-production program at Sundance Film Festival, and screened at festivals across the country in 2018. Sarah's work has been supported by Gotham/IFP, Women In Film, Series Fest, The Stowe Story Labs, Cinestory, CDDP, Austin Film Festival and more. They are a founding member of **THIRD SPACE** artist's collective – a group of artist-activist-witches working to bring about a new America.

## WATCH AMERICAN BEAR

Instructions: to download 'American Bear', her documentary feature (that has distribution), select the Deluxe Edition, and enter coupon code: **relyonstrangers** in the checkout window to download it for free.



# PRODUCER MAYA KORN

Maya is a UK/German native. Her company MHK Productions (London/ LA/ Cork) celebrates feminist, diverse and queer stories. To date, she has produced films in Beijing, Budapest, NYC, Mexico City, Galway, LA and London.

Her feature credits include **DEATHCEMBER'S A CHRISTMAS MIRACLE** and Tribeca Untold Stories Grant winner **LUCKY GRANDMA**. Her lab success has come through **LUCKY STRIKES** that competed the Fantasia Frontieres Co Production Lab, Berlinale Talent Project Market Lab for producers & received Special Mention at Sitges Pitchbox; **ICON** film, that completed the Cine Qua Non, Eave, Stowe and **BIFFF** Market & **GILLYFISH** that completed Galway Fleadh's Market and Midpoint Focus Queer among others.

Recently, she's been diversifying into the commercial space, working with non-binary director Rhi Bergado to create content for brands with MTV and on Facebook Live's **CARDI TRIES S2**. Her short film, **JD Shields BLUE HOUR**, is part of the DWW AFI lab and received WIF funding and played over 80 festivals winning multiple awards. Her short, **DIABLA**, played over 60 festivals, won 15 awards, and premiered on Gunpowder & Sky's Alter platform to 60k views.

She is a Columbia University Creative Producing MFA Graduate '19, a participant of the La Femis Producing Atelier and WIF Producing Mentorship Program.

**WATCH DIABLA ON ALTER**





# CONTACT

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Maya Korn - Producer

[www.mhkproductions.com](http://www.mhkproductions.com)

[maya@mhkproductions.com](mailto:maya@mhkproductions.com)

US- +19293855879

UK- +447789657413

