

Fantasies of a Rescue Dummy

A rescue dummy gets forgotten at the bottom of the pool

Written and directed by
Adrian Maganza

Running time: 6'37" | Genre: Comedy/ Fantasy | Technique: 2d animation/ live-action
rescuedummy-short.com / [#rescuedummy_short](https://www.instagram.com/adrianmaganza/) / IG: <https://www.instagram.com/adrianmaganza/>
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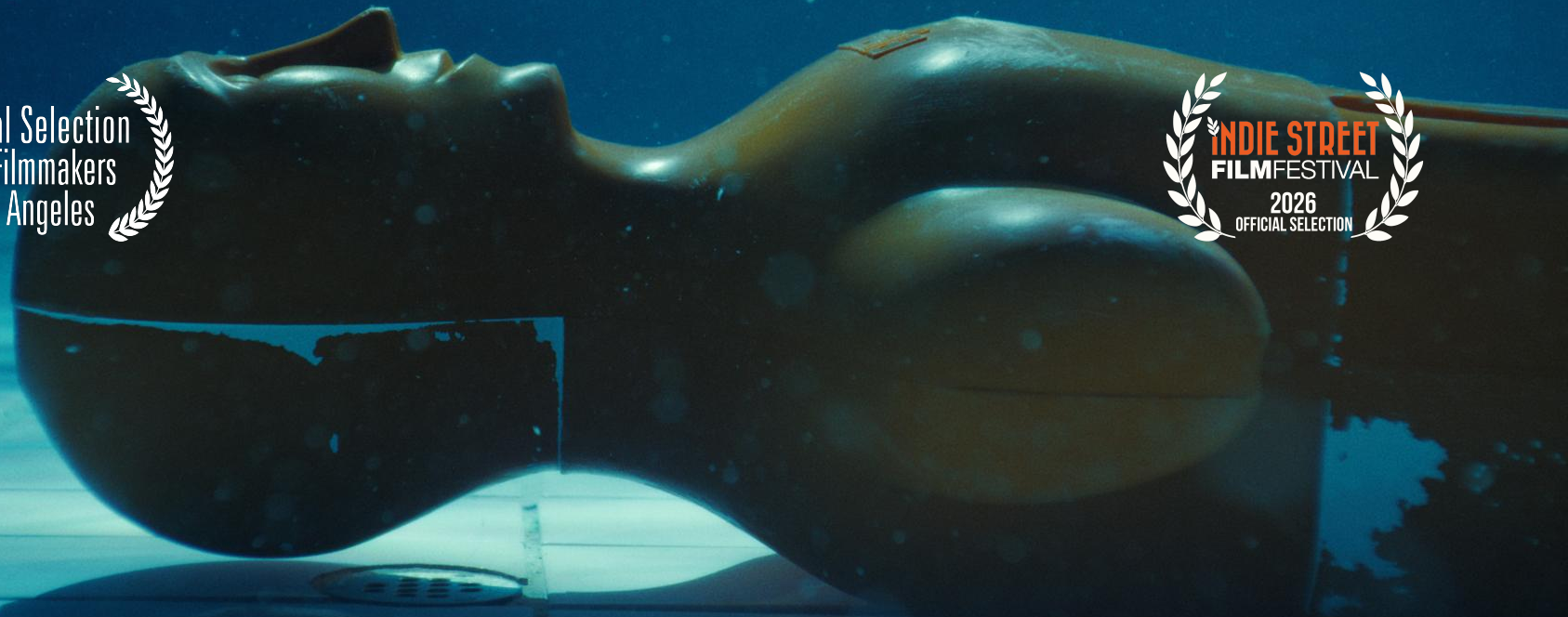
ANNEY
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SHORTSHORTS
FILM FESTIVAL & ASIA 2026



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The Story

Logline: A rescue dummy get forgotten at the bottom of a pool.

Short synopsis: A rescue dummy gets forgotten at the bottom of a swimming pool. Behind his fixed smile, a whirlwind of emotions floods his plastic carcass as he fantasises about being picked up and brought to the surface in the strong and reassuring arms of a swimmer.

Long synopsis: During a routine life saving exercise, a rescue dummy gets forgotten at the bottom of the swimming pool. He slips into a 2d animated fantasy world where the arms of a swimmer feel like a tender, loving embrace, but he is brutally brought back to reality as he gets carelessly fished out of the water by a life guard's hook... not really what he had in mind. In a gamble to obtain his long desired rescue, the dummy takes a leap of faith.

An orange mannequin stands in the foreground of a swimming pool. The mannequin is a simple, stylized figure with a round head, a small nose, and a slight smile. It is positioned in the center of the frame. The background shows the swimming pool with blue water and lane lines. In the distance, there are bleachers and some banners. The lighting is bright, suggesting an indoor pool setting.

**“I NEVER KNEW A LEISURE CENTRE
COULD SO SENSUAL”**

Letterboxd

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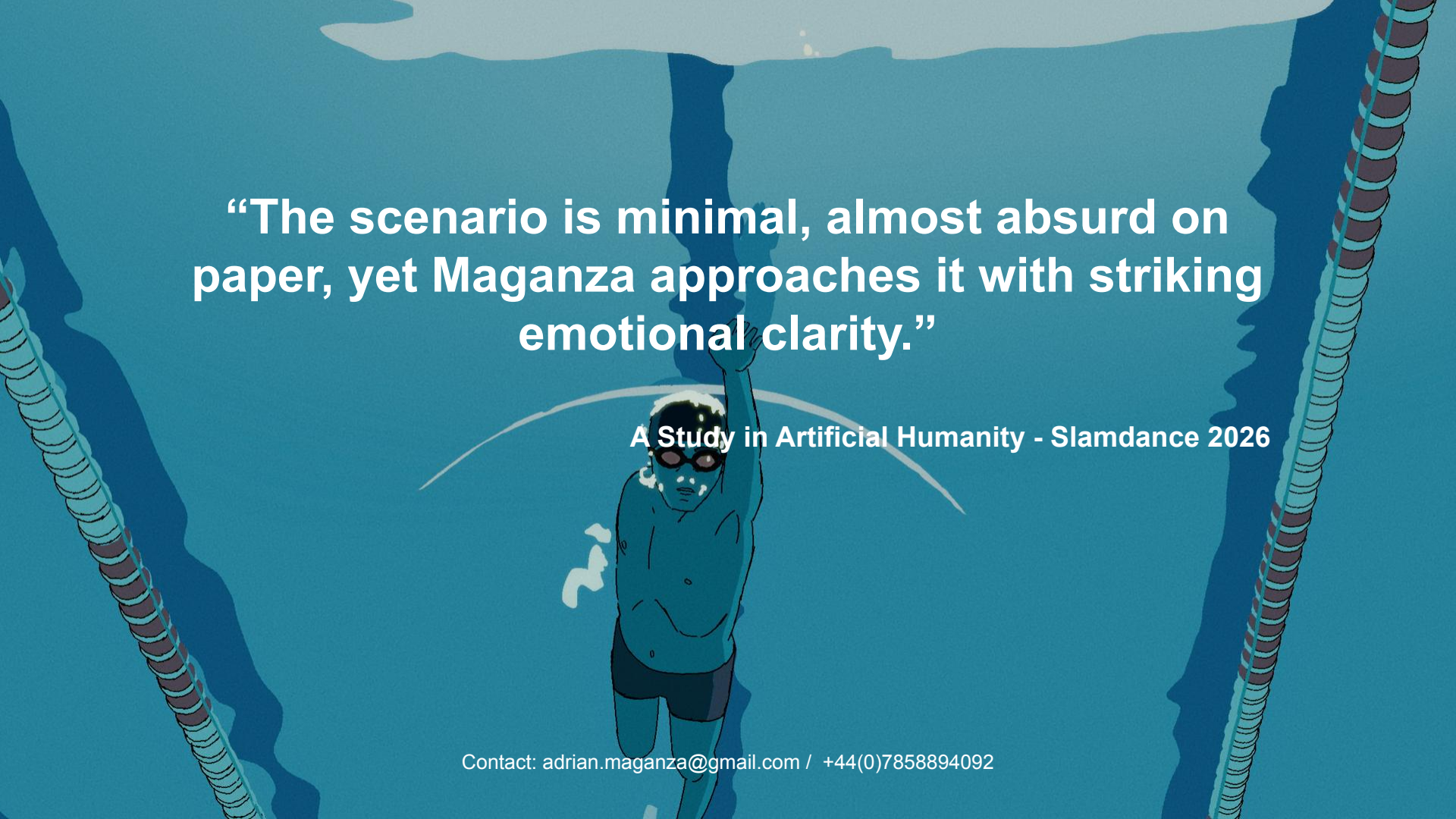
The Director

Adrian is a French and Italian filmmaker living and working in London. He grows up with a passion for drawing and discovers storytelling through Japanese and European comic books. His father introduces him to the work of film directors such as Hirokazu Kore-Eda, Wong Kar Wai and Celine Sciamma which will have a huge impact on the way he tells stories

After graduating, he quickly establishes himself as a versatile storyboard artist working on series, short films and features. His credits include multi award winning series The Amazing World of Gumball, Star Wars Visions, Asterix and Obelix: The Big Fight and the upcoming Bad Fairies starring Cynthia Erivo. In his own work, Adrian strives for a slow paced and contemplative approach to storytelling, guided by emotions arising from his everyday life mixed with a touch of fantasy.



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An illustration of a person in a pool, wearing a blue swimsuit and goggles, with their arms raised. The background is a deep blue with stylized, wavy lines representing water or a pool. The person is positioned in the center, with their arms reaching towards the top of the frame. The overall style is minimalist and artistic.

“The scenario is minimal, almost absurd on paper, yet Maganza approaches it with striking emotional clarity.”

A Study in Artificial Humanity - Slamdance 2026

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Director's Statement

Pool rescue dummies are funny and weird. Their fixed expressions beg you to ask: is that a happy smile or a sad smile?

They are training devices, without arms or legs, helpless. They exist for the sole purpose of being rescued. But what if one of them got forgotten?

That's the story of 'Fantasies of a Rescue Dummy' . It follows the hero dummy's perspective and uses the romantic embrace of his rescue as a metaphor for love along with all the ups and downs that come with it: the expectations, the rejection, happiness and sorrow, all of which reflected on its blank, still face.

This lack of expression is an invitation to the audience to project emotions on the dummy and feel for him through his journey of love, loneliness and desire. The transitions between the dummy's thoughts and the outer world are outlined by a shift in the visual language: one being 2d animation and the other, live-action.

The 2d animation allows for greater control over the environment (eg: making the pool gigantic) and the characters (dialing up the romance in the way the swimmer picks up the dummy).

One of the last animated shots (the last glimpse into the dummy's mind) shows the dimensions of the swimming pool scaled up to colossal proportions. In the dummy's mind, the moment he reaches the surface and the swimmer releases him, the romance is over. The dummy wants the journey upward to never end.

Fantasies of a Rescue Dummy is a playful film that invites the audiences to take a dive at the deep end of the pool, enter the dummy's mind, and see an inanimate piece of plastic come to life.

Festival Selections

October 2025

HOF International Film Festival (World Premiere)
Austin Film Festival (North American Premiere) - Oscar qualifying

November 2025

Norwich Film Festival (UK Premiere) - Bafta/ Bifa qualifying

January 2026

London Short Film Festival - Bafta / Bifa qualifying
Würzburg Internationales Filmwochenende

February 2026

Slamdance 2026 - Bafta/ Oscar qualifying
Providence Children's Film Festival

April 2026

Athen International Film+Video Festival - Oscar qualifying
Love is Film Festival
Filmfest Dresden International Short Film Festival - Bafta qualifying

May 2026

Pictoplasma Berlin 2026
Genoa International Film Festival (Italian Premiere)

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Festival Selections

June 2026

Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia - Oscar qualifying (Asian premiere)

SXSW London

Southside Film Festival

Annecy International Animation Film Festival - Bafta/ Oscar qualifying (French premiere)

Palm Springs International Shortfest - Oscar/ Bafta/ Goya qualifying

July 2026

Dresden Movie Nights

August 2026

New Filmmaker LA (NFMLA)

Indie Street Film Festival

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Press/ Interviews

- A Study in Artificial Humanity - Slamdance 2026
- Passions Outside the Studio: Spotlight on Adrian Maganza and Fantasie of a Rescue Dummy
- Testkammer: Interview with Adrian Maganza
- Testkammer: Fantasies of a Rescue Dummy review
- DNEG screening and presentation of Fantasies of a Rescue Dummy as part of the INSPIRE series.



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A stylized illustration in shades of blue and teal. It depicts a man and a woman in a romantic pose. The man is at the top, looking down, with a single teardrop falling from his eye. The woman is at the bottom, looking up at him. The background is a solid blue color.

“CAN I BE THE DUMMY?”

Letterboxd

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Key Crew

Alex Grigoras - Cinematographer

Berlinale Talent alumni Alex Grigoras is a cinematographer living in London, with a background in visual arts and experience in shooting fiction and non fiction in various parts of the world.



Rob Hill - Underwater Operator

Rob is a UK based underwater camera operator working across a wide range of productions including feature films, TV dramas and commercials. He captures high-end, cinematic shots, working closely with directors and DOPs to realise their creative vision. Some of his work includes Ridley Scott's Napoleon, The Swimmers by Sally El Hosaini and A Working Man by David Ayer.



Alisa Tritenko - Co-Producer

Alisa is a London based producer, who came on the project to help put together a highly skilled crew for Fantasies of a Rescue Dummy thanks to her vast network of contacts. Some of her recent work includes mini series In Other Words, I love you by Bacon Hill Creative, Dongni Lanca Li and The Impact (Zade Aerial)



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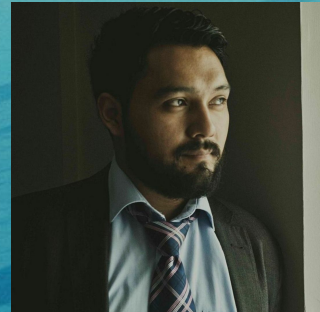
Raphaëlle Thibaut - Composer

French composer raphaëlle thibaut is part of a new class of up-and-coming composers. she was nominated as a breakthrough composer of the year by the international film music critics association. Some of her work include composing for documentary Secret of the Whales produced by James Cameron and narrated by Sigourney Weaver as well as Introducing Selma Blair directed by Rachel Fleit.



Jimmy Ferrufino - Sound Recordist and Sound Designer

Jimmy is a sound designer and composer with a passion for sound. He has spent his career developing his skills and expertise in sound design, capturing live performances, designing sound effects, and composing music that tell a story.



Polona Kasal - Music Supervisor

With a background spanning from NTS radio to being a musical artist and electronic music enthusiast – Polona will find the deeper cuts you've always wanted but didn't know existed. As a Music Supervisor at London, Polona always seeks to bring a creative left field approach to sourcing music for films.



THE CREW



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An underwater scene in a swimming pool. A swimmer in a dark blue swimsuit is holding a mannequin (dummy) in their arms. Bubbles are rising from the dummy's head. The pool floor has a blue and white grid pattern. A lane line is visible in the background.

[Link to film stills](#)

[Link to film poster](#)

[Website: rescuedummy_short.com](http://rescuedummy_short.com)

[Instagram: @adrianmaganza](#)

[Letterboxd](#)

[IMDB](#)

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