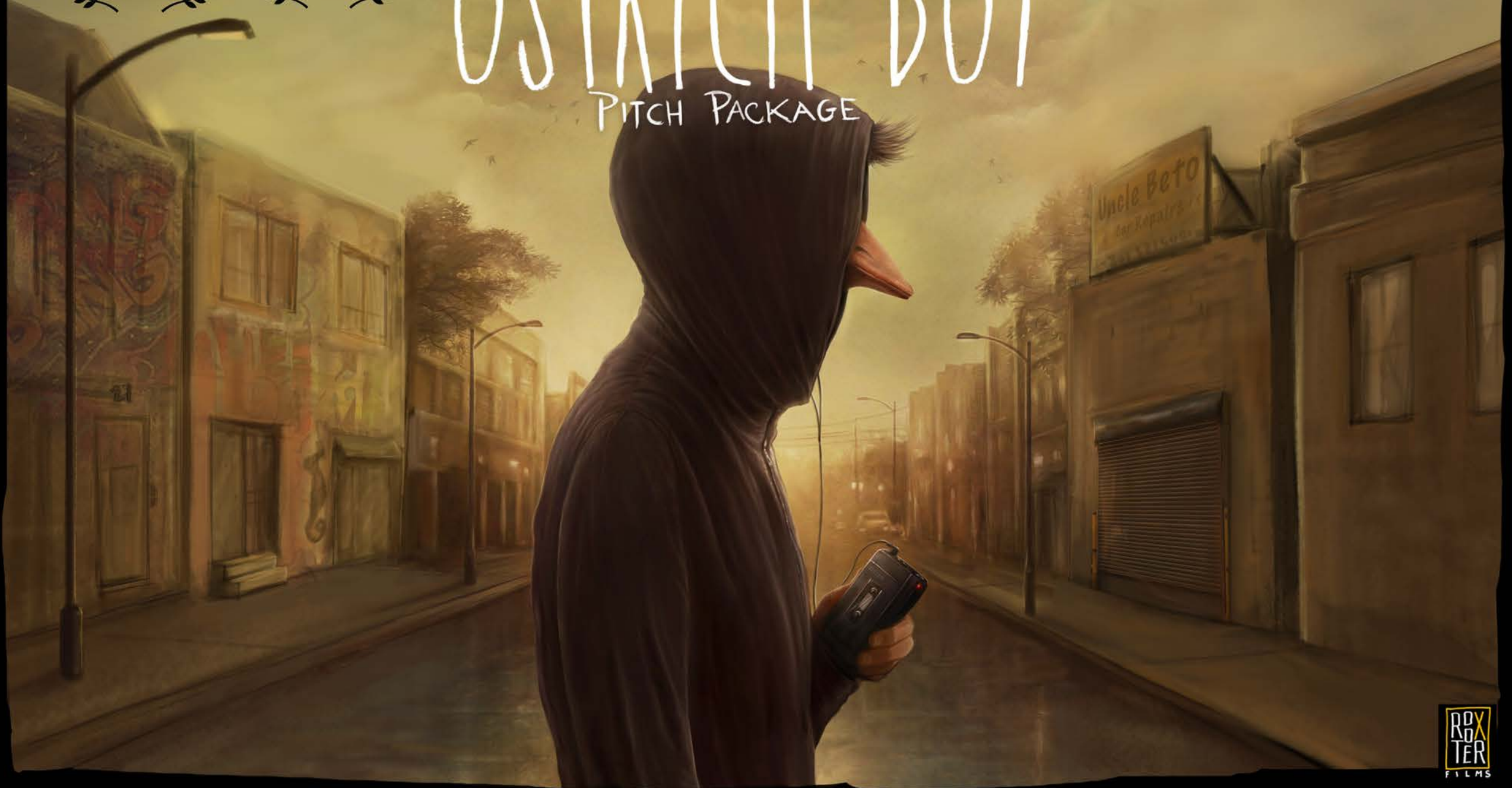




# OSTRICH BOY

PITCH PACKAGE



# ABOUT

## GENRE

Fantasy - Drama - Dark Comedy

## LENGTH

90 mins

## TECHNICAL ASPECTS

4k - 5.1

## LOGLINE

Marked by a rare facial condition called Ostrich Syndrome, a unique looking lonely teen seeks acceptance by joining a speed walking group.

# SYNOPSIS

Oskar is a teenager who emotionally suffers from a physical deformity known to medical professionals as the "Ostrich Syndrome", a mysterious condition where one's face and limbs resemble that of an ostrich. Bullied throughout the city for his unique appearance, Oskar's Mom packs up their lives to begin a new one in the Canadian countryside of Gillingham (population 1, 236) hoping that her son will find sanctuary amongst the kindness of small town folk.

Unfortunately for Oskar, his troubles worsen as the sheltered students of Gillingham High have a hard time accepting his abnormality. After having bird seed thrown in his face by fellow classmates every lunch hour, he eventually attempts to fly under the radar by eating lunches in bathroom stalls. One day while sitting on the toilet pecking at some fries, a mysterious note reading "StArDuSt 12Am" slips through the stall cracks. The instructions are accompanied by a handwritten make-shift map, adding a frightening level of intrigue that only someone with nothing to lose would explore.

That night, Oskar follows the note's guidance to an abandoned roller skating rink with a flickering neon 'StArDuSt' sign that's on its last breath. It is here where he is greeted by Gillingham High's hallway monitor, Jim, also known to a very niche few as "Falcon" - a name achieved back in 1997 during his prime as the town's speedwalking champion. Oskar quickly learns that the dilapidated roller skating rink now serves as the backdrop for an underground speedwalking ring where athletes walk and spectators gamble away their savings.

As the main man behind both this operation and the bathroom note, Jim sees great speedwalking potential in Oskar after often mistaking his walking for running in the highschool halls. He takes him under his wing and introduces him to a gritty world littered with unusual characters who all share the same passion for the sport. With this opportunity, Oskar is challenged to not only seek acceptance amongst the secret society, but more importantly turn the curse of his condition into something that makes this flightless bird-like boy soar.

# MOODBOARD



# CHARACTERS

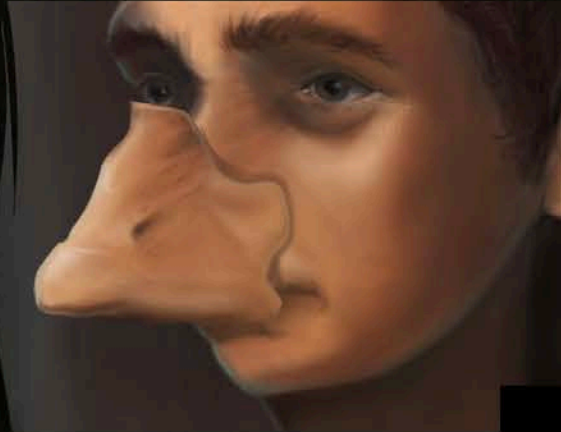
**Oskar** is a wannabe wallflower who's striking appearance makes it impossible for him to be so. His formula for interacting with the world around him is to be as invisible as possible to avoid scrutiny from his peers. To do this, Oskar has developed a daily routine to ensure the highest level of invisibility possible: his day starts by arriving at school a half hour early and his day ends by leaving last class a half hour late. Eating lunch in a bathroom stall everyday is another tactic he's adopted that has reduced his visibility ratio but has increased the rate of unfortunate scenarios for his olfactory senses. A small price to pay.

With his inability to handle the most basic of social situations comes a beautiful naivety that makes Oskar a trusting and loyal individual to those who take a kind interest in him. His insecurities battle his desire to fulfill all basic friendship duties: hanging out in well lit areas, doing activities in public, and even taking selfies together... the most horrific of all. And as no amount of Instagram filters can fix his appearance, Oskar's awkward build lends itself well to speedwalking physics and it is with this sport that he develops the confidence he needs to fly in the face of adversity.

**The Ostrich Syndrome** Oskar's your typical angsty teen but instead of the usual acne prone skin that comes along with this, he's got a rare condition known to medical professionals as the Ostrich Syndrome. Not much is known about the defect other than that it is a full-bodied deformity resembling the flightless African bird: a beak-like nose and limbs for days with the occasional feather sprouting from a hair follicle or two. Affecting 0.0000001% of the population, little has been done to find a cure and acceptance is the only remedy.



# CHARACTERS



**Oskar's prosthetic beak** Given the importance of Oskar's prosthetic beak and the amount of times in which it will be showcased in the film, we plan to go the practical route, using special effects to create a foam latex prosthetic. It will be modeled based on the actor's face in order to integrate the actor's actual features with bird-like ones.



## Potential Actor

Jackson Kelly, 6'1", 130lbs,  
Credits: Chucky (2023),  
V/H/S 99, Hard Miles



3D Studies



# CHARACTERS

## Oskar Make up FX & CameraTest



Make up prosthetic by Chelsea Delfino (Credits: Harry Styles: Music for a Sushi Restaurant, Doja Cat: Get into it, Ed Sheeran: Shivers)



# CHARACTERS



**Jim:** A former speedwalking champion, Jim spends his days as Gillingham High's volunteer hallway monitor. Passionate about walking, Jim takes pride in making sure there's, "No running in the hallways!" In contrast to this wholesome task, Jim's nightly activities showcase a dirty, big talking entrepreneur wannabe who operates an underground speedwalking ring and the betting that happens there. Always trying to make a quick buck, Jim sees dollar signs in Oskar's long legged stride and his pursuit of quick fortune comes to overshadow their friendship that has unexpectedly developed.



**Mother:** Although she's just one individual, the love Teresa has for Oskar is equal to the love of one hundred mothers combined. A retired beauty queen, she led an easy life in her pretty bubble up until it popped when she birthed her ugly duckling son. A rude awakening for how cruel people can be, Teresa has developed little trust in the kindness of others and has created a sheltered life for Oskar that has been socially crippling. Even though she has the best of intentions, Oskar resents Teresa and tends to blame her for all his problems like an archetypal teen.



**Father:** Known to be a very handsome and flawless man, Oskar's Dad seeked perfection in all aspects of his life. So when imperfect Oskar was born, he was horrified and vanished, never to look back at the broken child he created. Not much is known about this mysterious father figure we never see and as a coping mechanism Oskar invents a fictitious one with qualities that aim to fill the patriarchal hole in his heart.



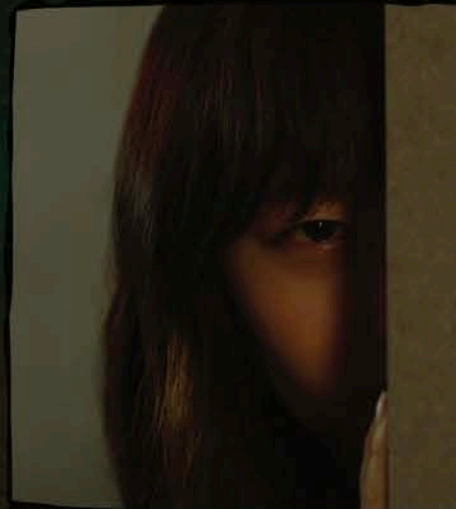
# CHARACTERS THE SPEEDWALKERS



**Ruthless Ruth** By Ruth's standards, she is the sexiest woman alive. Taking 'self love' to the extreme, she runs her own fan club and has her own name tattooed across her chest. Using speedwalking as an excuse to be around sweaty men, she has a lot to prove since she's an 82 year old woman but her technique mirrors her young, fiery spirit. Loving men of all shapes and sizes, she is the only woman to ever look Oskar directly in the eyes (other than his Mom) and this terrifies him.



**Beef** Beef believes he can do literally ANYTHING and so can you. Per Beef, everybody needs an unsolicited motivational speech and although he has good intentions, his intimidating size and dangerous appearance make them feel like military drills. Despite this desire to inspire, the right trigger can cause a sharp personality shift in Beef that sucks him into a darker side within milliseconds. It's the reason he makes the other speedwalkers nervous, however Ruth still scares Oskar more.



**Ninja Cat:** To Ninja Cat, when one speedwalks, one moves closer to God and the meaning of life. She is a mute athlete who has devoted her whole being to the 'art of walk' and refuses to speak in order to preserve oxygen for the next racing event. Her focus makes her unapproachable and withdrawn but Oskar finds relief in her presence knowing Ninja Cat has zero interest in him or the way he looks.



**Lars:** Lars is the personification of the speedwalking page on Wikipedia. He knows every technique written from petroglyphs to ancient scrolls. Lars believes that what was once considered to be a human's casual walking pace is what is known today as "racewalking" (the politically correct term) and that people have just become lazy over thousands of years. His endless knowledge of the sport makes him a formidable foe on the track. Lars is keen to teach Oskar the ins and outs and pop his speedwalking cherry.



**Shania and the Twains:** Shania had always been a mommy's girl, so when her mom died in a tragic speedwalking accident she vowed to honor her name by becoming the fastest speedwalker in Canada. Her four cousins (aka the Twains) believe family is everything and are determined to help. They follow Shania everywhere acting like personal hype-ladies and often speaking in unison. Their matching outfits and choreographed mannerisms are evocative of a mid 90's boy band.

# THE WORLD

## THE TOWN



Gillingham is the smallest town in the Canadian Prairies. As one of the oldest rural communities in the country, it has remained unaffected by major technological advancements. The community, jam packed with seniors, moves at a slow pace and it is theorized that this is where its love for the act of walking comes into play. During the 2008 recession, communities rebelled against the corruption of its new mayor. To demonstrate his power, he enforced strict laws within the town and banned its citizen's favorite sport: speedwalking.

# THE WORLD



## SPEEDWALKING

Speedwalking, or racewalking, is a long-distance discipline within the sport of athletics. Although a foot race, it is different from running in that one foot must appear to be in contact with the ground at all times.

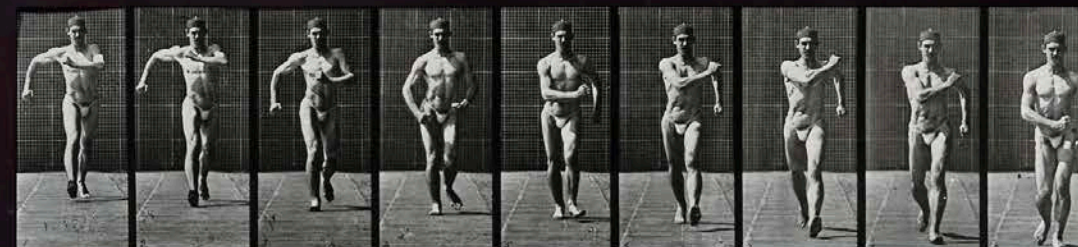
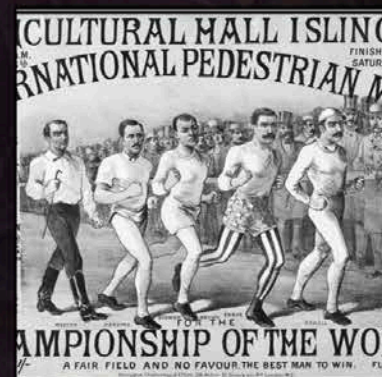
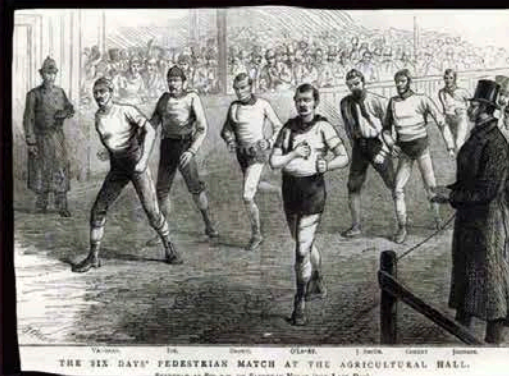
The sport emerged in the late 18th century from a British culture of long-distance competitive walking known as 'pedestrianism', which had developed as a popular working class pastime and a venue for wagering.

There are only two rules that govern the sport. The first dictates that the athlete's back toe cannot leave the ground until the heel of the front foot has touched. Violation of this rule is known as loss of contact. The second rule requires that the supporting leg must straighten from the point of contact with the ground and remain straightened until the body passes directly over it. These rules are evaluated by judges and the unaided human eye.

## R.U.N

The Racewalking Underground National (R.U.N.) is the biggest underground speedwalking event that happens once a year at StArDuSt. It's a magical time for Jim as blue collars, suits and crime lords all come together to bet on their favorite walkers in hopes of making a quick, non-taxable dollar.

The money pot is big, and everyone gets a cut based on the wagers that have taken place and one's success rate. However, the speedwalkers themselves have the added incentive of earning the title of "Underground Racewalking Champion".



# THE WORLD



## StArDuSt (THE SPEEDWALKING ARENA)

StArDuSt is an abandoned roller skating rink that was once big in the early 90's but shut down after going bankrupt as Gillingham's town folk shared a lacking interest in shoes with wheels. It is now run by Jim and serves as a popular underground destination for speedwalkers and gamblers. Racers walk laps around a make-do track built on top of the deteriorating rink. Many suffer severe injuries including broken legs, head trauma, and cardiac arrest but even though there is a high rate of injury, StArDuSt draws the most exceptional speedwalkers to compete. Jim is instrumental in this, as he sells his recruits on the all-Canadian speedwalking dream.



# THE WORLD



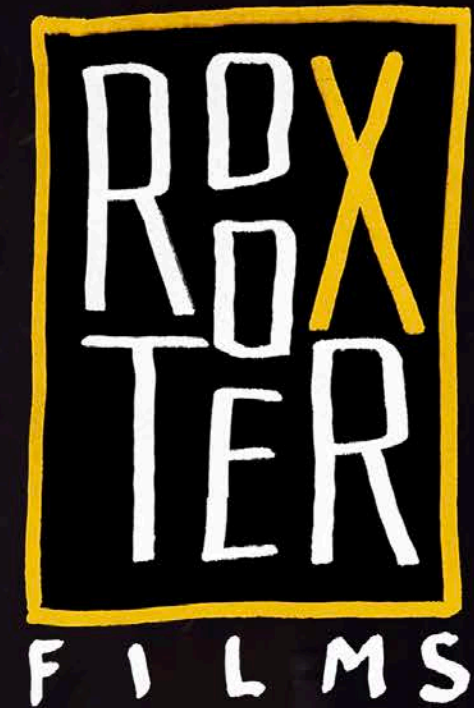
# THE TEAM

## VISION STATEMENT

Rooxter Films is an award winning independent production team based in Vancouver British Columbia, Canada. We are composed of visual effects artists and other talented film industry friends who believe in cinema as a powerful medium for exploring out of the box ideas and who aim to use the fascinating world of magical realism in film to bring unconventional and bizarre tales into existence.

As experienced visual effects artists who work on cookie cutter blockbusters daily, we feel it is our duty to break the mould and create narratives that do not fit within the category of mainstream storytelling. Rooxter Films invites viewers into the unique world of peculiar characters with narratives that are beautifully strange and accompanied by strong visuals to match. Inspired by the likes of Terry Gilliam, David Lynch and Jean-Pierre Jeunet, the purpose of our projects is to spark conversations and let the audience decide for themselves what the stories represent and ultimately, what they mean to them.

The Rooxter team experienced recent success with the short film *The Seahorse Trainer* which has screened at multiple film festivals around the world, picking up many awards and nominations during its run. Most notably, the film won one of three jury awards at the Seattle Int'l Film Festival which qualified it to be considered for the 2020 Academy Awards. Aside from creating our own content, the Rooxter Films VFX division is active in facilitating indie features with VFX supervision as we aim to support and collaborate with others in the independent film community.



# THE TEAM



**Ricardo Bonisoli - Writer/Director**

Ricardo is a VFX artist and independent filmmaker based in Vancouver and LA. After studying illustration at the Instituto de Diseno de Caracas, wanting to dive into 3D waters he then went on to study at the Vancouver Film School and graduated with honors from the 3D Animation and VFX Program.

Since then, Ricardo has gained experienced as a 3D artist at multiple VFX facilities like Industrial Light & Magic and Digital Domain VFX. Credits include, X-Men: Days of Future Past (2014), Star Wars: the Last Jedi (2017) and Aquaman (2019).

Ricardo has also a big passion for independent filmmaking. His most recent project, "The Seahorse Trainer" a surreal short film where he co-directed, has made an appearance at multiple international film festivals like "LASHorts", "New Jersey International Film Festival" and "The Seattle International Film Festival" where the film won one of the jury awards making it Oscar Qualified for the 2020 Academy Awards edition.



**Holly Pavlik - Writer/Editor**

Experienced in both live-action and animation, Holly Pavlik's editing credits range from Marvel Knights' Ultimate Wolverine VS Hulk (TV mini-series) to The Seahorse Trainer (short film) for which she received a Leo Award for her dramatic editing work. Feature films are a part of Holly's editorial repertoire as well. With experience at visual effects facilities such as Sony Pictures Imageworks and Marvel Studios, VFX editor credits include Loki S2, Men in Black: International, Kingsman: the Golden Circle and Suicide Squad, to name a few.

Holly co-wrote/directed/produced season 1 of the animated web series Under the HUD, picking up 6 awards in the 2014 web festival circuit. The first of its kind to use Kinect as a motion capture device, the series won Merging Media 5's Viewer's Pick Contest and was invited to showcase at the 2014 conference in Vancouver. Season 2, among other independent projects, is currently in the works.



**Rodmon Sevilla - Writer**

Rodmon is a writer, filmmaker and VFX artist from the Philippines based in Vancouver BC.

Although his early years were flooded with a great interest in traditional art, Rodmon's passion quickly transitioned into filmmaking and visual effects. After completing Vancouver Film School's 3D Animation & VFX program, Rodmon worked at multiple Animation and VFX companies such as DNEG, MPC and Lucasfilm's ILM. Working on projects such as: Stranger Things, Black Adam and Monsters Inc. series.

During his free time, Rodmon writes and produce independent films. His most notable work is the award winning short film The Seahorse Trainer, which screened at multiple film festivals around the world, including "SIFF" where the film won one of the jury awards making it Oscar Qualified for the 2020 Academy Awards edition.



# THE TEAM



**Rhys Claringbull - VFX Supervisor**

Rhys is a CG supervisor whose credits include feature films such as Elysium, Jurassic World, and Star Wars: Rogue 1. Most recently, he served as Associate VFX Supervisor for The Creator, which is currently in the running for Best VFX at the 2024 Academy Awards. Rhys also served as VFX Supervisor at Industrial Light and Magic on Marvel Studios' The Marvels.

Apart from successes in the blockbuster world, Rhys has a strong affinity for independent film. In 2019, he oversaw the on-set VFX for the Oscar qualified short film The Seahorse Trainer, which picked up a Leo Award win for its VFX work and won the Spark FX Rising Star in VFX Award.



**Dan Cantrell - Composer**

Dan Cantrell is an Emmy award winning composer known for his innovative and evocative film and theatre scoring approach, as well as his virtuosic playing abilities on the accordion, piano and musical saw. Dan's work has been featured in the cult classic horror film It Follows, and in 2019 he picked up a Leo Award win for Best Musical Score in a Short Drama for The Seahorse Trainer.

In recent years, Dan has performed and recorded with Tom Waits, Joanna Newsom, Beats Antique, Bono, Danny Elfman, members of the Klezmatics and Fishbone.

Learn more about Dan at [www.bellowhead.com](http://www.bellowhead.com).



**Humberto Corte - Sound Designer**

Humberto Corte is a Sound Designer based in Vancouver, BC Canada. As the owner and operator of Parlante Sound Inc., his sound design and mixing work has earned him 4 Leo Award wins, 1 NYX Award, and an Emmy Award Nomination in 2022 for his work on Scaredy Cats for Netflix.

Humberto's credits span over a wide range of feature films, TV series and commercials, also having done work for Universal Pictures and NEON (among other studios). Most recently, Beto served as the Sound Editor on Oz Perkins' Longlegs starring Nicolas Cage, which is due out in Summer 2024.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The idea of "The Ostrich Boy" emerged many years ago during my childhood in Venezuela. I used to play soccer daily with my friends, and one of the enjoyable activities we engaged in was creating legendary fictional characters, pretending to be them as we played. "The Goalkeeper Ostrich" or "El Portero Avestruz" (in Spanish) was one of the characters that remained vivid in my and my friends' memories throughout the years. He was a very lanky boy with a peculiar ostrich-like appearance, and according to us, he was one of the best goalkeepers in the world. I imagined him as a shy and mysterious person from some exotic island.

Beyond my desire to develop a story about this unique character, I believe this narrative provides an excellent opportunity to explore relevant themes such as discrimination and self-loathing. These challenges will accompany Oskar, our protagonist, as he grapples with his rare condition in a sheltered town that struggles to accept it. As someone from a minority group in North America, I can relate to him in many ways. I believe he is a character that represents different underrepresented groups —those who might sound, look or think differently from the majority. I hope to convey two strong messages with this film: the first one is about self-love, and the second one is about acceptance.

It has been a great experience working alongside two of my most creative partners Holly Pavlik and Rodmon Sevilla while solving the puzzle of who this mysterious boy from my childhood is, decoding his world and his story.

*Ricardo Bonisoli*

# CONTACT



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