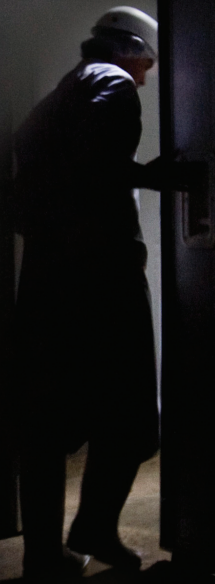


IT'S MATTER OVER MIND



SHORT FILM  
competition  
FESTIVAL DE CANNES



# MEATHEAD

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A SHORT FILM BY SAM HOLST

PRESS KIT



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## SYNOPSIS

Michael is a seventeen year-old kid who gets a job at the local meat works. The place is challenging and his fellow workers aren't exactly welcoming of new blood. It soon becomes clear that this day isn't going to be about just trying to fit in. His biggest concern will be getting out alive.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

My friend Mike told me a true and personal story, set in a New Zealand meat works.

This sparked great curiosity, wonder and a desire to explore it further, in life and on film. I wrote a screenplay based on this tale. It was called 'Meathead'.

Early on, after scouting numerous locations it became clear that we would be unable to maintain any sense of authenticity unless we filmed in a live and fully operational abattoir environment.

We needed to get in there - with the workers, the machines, the meat, the cold, the heat, the blood and the noise and make the film, for real.

This approach would of course be the most difficult way to make it. But also, I felt, the only way.

Our cast would need to be mostly non-actors, employees at the factory where we filmed and locals from the surrounding rural region of the location in Waikato, New Zealand.

We would shoot on 35mm, in anamorphic format, using mainly available light only.

The idea was to take that pure reality of the meat works world, but treat it in a cinematic manner, to reflect the experience of the main character and form our narrative. To develop a filmmaking method which fused neo-realist principles with filmic expression to heighten reality.

The shoot was challenging, but one of the most incredible experiences in my life.

While the end result isn't an experimental film as such, the process of making it, in a lot of ways, was very much an experiment. Whether it is a success or not and what people take from the film, is up to the audience.

I'm just thankful to everyone involved who made it all possible.



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## **BACKGROUND**

'Meathead' is based on a true story, inspired by the real life experiences of Mike Robinson.

The events and ideas within it sparked the development of a short screenplay by writer / director Sam Holst, which was in turn funded by The New Zealand Film Commissions' Short Film Fund.

'Meathead' premiered in the Official Selection – In Competition at the 64th Cannes Film Festival, 2011. It was one of only nine short films in the world selected.

## **A FILMMAKER'S**

### **APPROACH**

After scouting operational meat works locations in the North Island of New Zealand, writer / director Sam Holst began to develop what would become an immersive, neo-realist approach to the filmmaking process.

A style that would dictate filming occur on-shift in a functional and live meat works setting. The script and filming would adapt to these conditions and the physical restrictions or opportunities they presented.

The casting would be of mostly non-actors from the surrounding rural areas of the chosen location. Also, the actual workers employed at the plant in the majority of on-screen roles.

It would involve the narrative filmmaking process integrating with the abattoir environment as seamlessly as possible.

A documentary world, to be expressed cinematically.

The process took a year of logistical and creative planning to achieve, with the director spending significant periods on location, photographing and visualising the film in great detail as well as developing the extensive casting required.

The result is a film that fuses documentary realism with a searing cinematic vision to create a true experiential world on-screen.



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## CASTING

The casting for the lead role occurred over several winter months in schools and towns throughout the North Island of New Zealand.

The call was for teenage non-actors who lived within or nearby the rural meat works location in which the film would be made.

After meeting and interviewing over 200 teenagers, seventeen-year-old Jesse James Rehu Pickery was cast in the role.

He was discovered in the town of Ngatea at Hauraki Plains High School.

'Meathead' is his first and only film role.

For other roles, actors and non-actors were auditioned in Auckland and at the meatworks locations.

The workers featured in the film are the non-actor employees of Wallace Meats, Waitoa and Thames, where filming took place.

## SHOOT AND LOCATION

The film was shot at Wallace Meats at two plants in the towns of Waitoa and Thames in New Zealand.

It occurred over six days during New Zealand's summer and was filmed on 35mm Fuji Film in anamorphic format by cinematographer, Andrew Commis ACS.

The Auckland-based crew travelled to the rural region of Waikato, New Zealand and filmed on location.

## POST PRODUCTION

Post-production was an international effort.

Peter Sciberras ('Hail') from The Butchery in Melbourne edited the film, with the graphics and titles designed by Sydney-based Howard Matil of The Howard Society.

The 35mm film was scanned at Weta Digital for DI and flame artist Mike Robinson conformed the scanned files before being graded in DI by Matthew Wear at Park Road Post.

Meanwhile, London based sound designer Maxwell Scott oversaw the sound design, with the foley recorded by Matt Scott in Christchurch with tracklay and pre-mixing by Nick Buckton in Auckland.

The Dolby Mix was completed by Park Road Post in Wellington, New Zealand.





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## THE FILMMAKER

### SAM HOLST

#### WRITER/DIRECTOR

Sam Holst graduated from RMIT University, Melbourne. While studying he wrote and directed the short film 'Swing', which screened at various festivals around the world including the Young Director Award at the Cannes Lions Festival.

His latest short film 'Meathead', funded by the New Zealand Film Commission, appeared within the Official Selection - In Competition at the 64th Cannes Film Festival, 2011.

Sam is currently developing his first feature film and directing international commercials for The Sweet Shop.

He lives in Auckland, New Zealand.





## KEY PRODUCTION CREDITS

### Production Companies

Eyeworks Film Ltd & StanStrong Ltd  
In association with  
New Zealand Film Commission and  
The Sweet Shop Films

### Writer / Director

Sam Holst

### Original Story

Mike Robinson

### Producers

Desray Armstrong,  
Chelsea Winstanley

### Supervising Producer

Robin Scholes

### Executive Producers

Vicky Pope, Robert Sarkies,  
Big Shorts Ltd

### Cinematographer

Andrew Commis ACS

### Production Designer

Sinclair Lonsdale

### Costume Designer

Emma Skudder

### Film Editor

Peter Sciberras

### Sound Designer and Composer

Maxwell Scott

### Casting Director

Adrian Dentice

### Michael

Jesse James Rehu Pickery

### The Father

Greg Smith

### The Supervisor

Mick Innes

### The Foreman

William Hemming

### Hallway Guy

Jesse Mcgrath

### Country of Production

New Zealand

### Date of Completion

2011

### Shooting Format

35mm Anamorphic

### Film Stock

Fuji Film

### Ratio

2:35:1 Anamorphic

### Duration

11 mins 07 secs 12 fr

### Genre

Drama

## INTERNATIONAL SALES & ENQUIRIES

Lisa Chatfield

New Zealand Film

T: +64 4 382 7686

E: [lisa@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:lisa@nzfilm.co.nz)

## USEFUL LINKS

### Film Trailer

<http://vimeo.com/29303870>

### Facebook - Meathead Movie

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Meathead/124874830929762>

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## **FESTIVALS /**

## **AWARDS**

2011

Cannes Film Festival

Official Selection

In Competition

Melbourne International Film Festival

Official Selection

New Zealand International Film Festival

Official Selection

Montreal World Film Festival

Official Selection

Chicago International Film Festival

Official Selection

Winner - Silver Plaque

Show Me Shorts Film Festival

Official Selection