

Shadow Over The Sun



PRESS KIT

I N T E R N A T I O N A L S A L E S

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N E W Z E A L A N D F I L M

Technical Information

Writer/Director	Rachel Douglas
Producer	Michelle Turner
Production Company	Shadow Films Limited
Technical Information	35mm
Film Ratio:	1:1.85
Sound:	Dolby SR
Video Format:	Digibeta/Beta SP
Video Format Ratio:	16 x 9
Running Time	8 Mins 14 Secs
Country of Production	New Zealand
Date of completion	2006
Sales	Juliette Veber New Zealand Film Commission Email: juliette@nzfilm.co.nz Tel:+6443827686

Logline

A new mother in colonial New Zealand is visited by a tui in her garden, with the bird comes fear and hope for a new life.

Short Synopsis

“A masterpiece of brevity and scope”.

Shadow Over the Sun is a short atmospheric drama set in colonial New Zealand. It is a brief window into the world of a colonial woman and new mother. Into a beautiful day, the recent past visits, momentarily casting a cloud across the sun.

Shadow Over the Sun is about New Zealand, loss and healing, the land, the flora and fauna, motherhood, isolation, immigration and belonging.

Festivals and Awards

2007 Palm Springs International Short Film Festival, USA
2007 Show Me Shorts Film Festival, New Zealand

Director's Notes

My previous films had relied heavily on dialogue and my debut feature *Blessed* had eschewed many visual elements in the storytelling due to the extreme low budget. In *Shadow Over the Sun* I wanted to tell a story that unfolded purely in pictures and sound, without spoken dialogue.

Shadow Over the Sun was written during a writing retreat in isolated rural farm cottage in the Southern Wairarapa.

In writing the script I drew on the isolated and rich natural environment, my own personal experience of grief and the literary inspiration of short story writer Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923).

Mansfield's short stories often unfold quietly to end with a surprise twist where the story, on a subconscious level, makes complete sense – thematically and structurally. Filming the interior scenes at the Katherine Mansfield Birthplace Museum in Wellington rounded out the homage to Katherine Mansfield.

"We were close to the tui, yet she sang as if her song could have no ending, as if the world was too full of the ecstasy of life for wrong and rapine to exist. The sun was shining above the flowing river, the leaves green, of every shape and shade, her great love had cast out fear."

Early NZ ornithologist, William Herbert Guthrie-Smith

Thematically I sought to explore grief and hope and in some small way the personal rituals we construct around death. I wanted to represent these themes on a subtle level – suffering doesn't have to be a big car crash, it can be the smallest moment where a cloud passes in front of the sun or hope can be the brief delight of birdsong. I wanted the character to acknowledge her grief but also to be able to move beyond it.

To sell the themes, I sought to create a quiet rural world from time past where isolation and quiet brings a greater awareness of the natural world around us and how this bears on an everyday life.

In working to express this authentic isolated postcolonial world (1880's) the key creatives and myself committed to a static camera and a slow pacing for the performance and edit. In a world of fast cut, constantly moving cameras it was at first frightening and then strangely liberating to just allow the story to unfold in the time that it needed.

In a short film with no dialogue or incidental music track, the sound-scape was vital. *Shadow Over the Sun* sought to replicate the quiet world that our forebears lived within. We were fortunate to work with sound designer Tim Prebble to create a lush and dense soundscape. With the buzz of summer, grazing animals, New Zealand native birds calling, the tui singing, insects, rustling trees, a nearby river, the touch of fabric and the breathing of a woman and her baby.

WRITER/DIRECTOR

Rachel Douglas

Rachel Douglas gained a Bachelor of Arts, in theatre and film at Victoria University of Wellington. While studying she freelanced as a camera assistant in the New Zealand film industry. Douglas was fortunate to work alongside and learn from many of New Zealand's finest cinematographers and directors.

Douglas left camera work in 2000, to write, produce and direct her debut feature film *Blessed*. *Blessed* screened at the 2002 Venice Film Festival (New Territories).

Douglas followed up her debut feature with a Masters degree in script writing in 2003 from Victoria University of Wellington.

Douglas has a short documentary *Devotion* and two dramatic shorts behind her – the controversial *Purge* and the 'tongue in cheek' Western, *Para Recorda*. *Para Recorda* screened at a number of international film festivals including Clermont Ferrand, Mill Valley and picked up a commendation for "the intelligent reconstruction of a non-traditional Western story" at the Mostra Internazionale Montecatini Terme 1996.

Douglas works predominantly in the non-broadcast video field as a director, editor and production manager. She has a long list of educational and professional development videos, DVD's and web based clips to her name.

Douglas is currently awaiting the birth of her first child while seeking support for her next film project.

PRODUCER

Michelle Turner

Michelle has produced feature films, shorts and a documentary. Her first feature *Stickmen* was produced in New Zealand and directed by Hamish Rothwell. *Bollywood Queen* was her second feature as Co-Producer, shot in London's East End it was in official selection at Sundance (2003).

She has produced two short films in the UK. The first short *The Unicyclist* was shot in Spain. The second short *Paris Brixton* was shot in London. Both shorts screened in various festivals around the world including the NZ Film Festival.

In New Zealand she was Line Producer on the short film *Valley of the Stereos*, Executive Produced by Peter Jackson. She was Production Co-ordinator on the feature film *Ruby & Rata* and the TV series *Bread & Roses* working with Producer Robin Laing. She was Co-ordinator on Peter Jackson's cult classic *Braindead* of which she also had a small cameo role. She was Production Co-ordinator for the Fiji unit of Dreamworks production *Castaway* starring Tom Hanks.

In 2003 she produced the feature length documentary *Children of the Migration*. This was selected for the NZ Film Festival in 2004 and screened on TVNZ the same year. It has recently screened at the DocNZ Festival, the Real Life Film Festival in Melbourne and the Tahiti Film Festival.

She also worked for several years during the 90's as Sales Assistant for the NZFC at the Cannes Film Festival. She served for two years on the AFTA board (Academy of Film & Television Awards) and is President of WIFT Wellington.

She is currently working as Co-Producer on the children's TV series *The Lost Children* and is in development on two feature films and a feature documentary.

CINEMATOGRAPHER

David Paul

" Interestingly the last three short films I have shot including *Shadow Over the Sun* have been dialogue free scripts for women directors.

I enjoy shooting for women directors as I believe they tell a story or an idea in a different way to men and I like their interpretation."

David Paul

David Paul is a Wellington based Director of Photography. Commercials, drama, documentaries, music videos and short films are David's staple diet.

David's credits include the documentaries *Hone Tuwhare*, *Who Ate All the Pies?*, *Settlers* and *Long Lost Sons*.

His recent television work includes the critically acclaimed *Insiders Guide to Happiness* and the sartorial series *Facelift*.

Since wrapping from *Shadow Over the Sun* he has been up in the Hokianga shooting a documentary and also back in Wellington filming and directing a music video for the Kiwi band *Tourist*. He is about to start work on the drama series *Ducks and Geese*.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Simon Harper

Simon Harper has worked in the film industry since 1998. Beginning in Wellington with short films and music videos he soon found a permanent position in the Art department of the successful *Hercules* and *Xena* television series in Auckland. An invitation to work on Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy led Simon back to Wellington. Simon has since worked on many New Zealand film projects including *In My Fathers Den*, *Two Cars One Night*, and *Eagle Versus Shark*. New Zealand television shows *The Strip*, *Spin Doctors* and *The Lost Children*, plus international feature films *Without A Paddle* and *King Kong*.

EDITOR

Jo Priest

Jo Priest has been in postproduction for the last ten years. She started as a trainee Assistant Editor on Peter Jackson's *The Frighteners*, training under editor Jamie Selkirk. Amongst various projects she has been the editor on *Shortland Street*, the Visual Effects editor on *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and has edited documentaries and many short films. She is very proud to have been part of the team that brought *Shadow Over the Sun* to the big screen.

SOUND DESIGNER

Tim Prebble

Tim first began experimenting with sound as a six year old playing in the grain silos on his parent's farm in the South Island of New Zealand. After studying engineering & attending film school his passion for the creative use and manipulation of sound and music has intuitively led him to a career in sound effects editing and sound design for film. As a freelance sound effects editor he has contributed to New Zealand feature films including *End of the Golden Weather*, *The Price of Milk*, *Memory & Desire*, *Channelling Baby*, *Savage Honeymoon*, *Saving Grace* and *The Frighteners*. In 1997 he established Substation, a sound editorial facility based in Wellington, New Zealand where he has completed sound design for New Zealand feature films such as *Stickmen*, *Toy Love*, *The Locals*, *Fracture*, *Perfect Strangers*, *No. 2*, *The World's Fastest Indian* and many short films & documentaries.

JOCELYN CHRISTIAN

'The Mother'

Jocelyn Christian grew up in Dunedin before moving to Wellington in 2001. Aged seventeen, she studied acting at the Wellington Performing Arts Centre. During that year she worked with The Bacchannals as part of a co-op in their trilogy, *The Jew of Malta*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Volpone*. Since graduating she has focused on film appearing in *Event 16*, a feature length sci-fi, and a string of short films. *Side View* was a finalist for the Fringe festival in 2003. *Speck Circuit*, an experimental short and *The Prologue*, part of a multimedia production called *The Bacchae*, at Bats Theatre in 2003. She has also worked in music videos for Wellington artists, Video Kid, Pearl Band, and Module.