

A Fish Tale



Presskit



TEL: 64 4 382 7680 FAX: 64 4 384 9719 PO BOX 11 546 WELLINGTON

LEVEL 2 THE FILM CENTRE 119 JERVOIS QUAY WELLINGTON NEW ZEALAND
www.nzfilm.co.nz marketing@nzfilm.co.nz

Production Notes

Director: Jane Holland
Writer: Michael Bennett
Producer: Chloe Smith
Production Company: 53 Productions Ltd

Colour

12 minutes

Beta sp

Log Line

A story of a man with a head full of dreams, a heart full of tears....and the fish he loved.

Synopsis

A FISH TALE is Tony's story of his father Diego, an immigrant to New Zealand, a man blessed and burdened by love and dreams.

Diego loves his son Tony and tries to capture that which has gone – his other great loves – his wife Maria and his homeland.

A stranger in a strange land, he has never fitted into his adopted home until one particularly hot summer when a single perfect orange appears and it seems that anything is possible...

Director's Notes

A FISH TALE is a story of loss and hope told through a blend of tragedy and humour, but above all it is a story of love.

It's a story where emotions are so strong they overcome the laws of physics. In the tradition of magic realism it inhabits a heightened reality in which Tony's emotional journey towards understanding is explored.

I am drawn to this style of storytelling where what happens is driven by why it happens and enjoy the visual freedom a non-literal world offers. With Tony's realisation of his father's pain the story unfolds in an improbable sequence of events. What actually happens is open to interpretation, the resolution is provided in the growth of the characters.

The beauty of the magic realism tradition is that it can be interpreted in completely different ways by different people. It can be seen as something that literally happened, or it can be taken as a metaphor. It doesn't matter to me which way people look at it as long as they've experienced something – either enjoyed a whacky tale or understood an emotional journey.

About the film

A FISH TALE was filmed in Western Springs, Auckland in a cluster of small stucco houses that hold a Mediterranean look and are striking for their colour and uniformity and atypical New Zealand feel.

Holland liked their strange ordinariness and the sense that the backs of the houses are secret, lending itself to the idea that within the confines of an ordinary backyard Diego created his own world.

Once shot, the film was digitally colour treated to enhance the extraordinary nature of events. As Holland explains, the treatment is subtle to keep an ordinariness of style that still allows the magical elements to be accepted easily by the viewer.

Director's Biography

A FISH TALE is Jane Holland's debut as a director. She is best known as a costume designer, whose recent work includes Pacific Renaissance Pictures' series Xena Warrior Princess, Hercules the Legendary Journeys, Young Hercules, Cleopatra 2525 and Jack of All Trades and Sci Fi Channel's telemovie Riverworld. She is currently designing costumes for US feature film The Legend of Johnny Lingo.

Holland also designed costumes for the Australian feature film Soft Fruit, New Zealand television dramas The Chosen, Duggan, CoverStory and House of Sticks and several short films in New Zealand and Australia, including Cow, Bella and One Man's Meat.

Holland's early work includes assistant costume designer on Peter Jackson's The Frighteners and costume standby on Jane Campion's The Piano and Gaylene Preston's Ruby & Rata.

After gaining a BA and most of a BSc at Otago University, Holland moved to Auckland University, where she gained a post-graduate diploma in drama. Her involvement in acting and drama at university evolved into a passion for design and costume design for film. She attended the Australian Film, Television and Radio School in Sydney, achieving a Diploma in Film and Television (Design).

Holland's partner is writer/director Michael Bennett, who also wrote this film.

Writer's Biography

Michael Bennett has written several short films, including *Michelle's Third Novel*, which was selected to accompany the Gala US Premiere of Pulp Fiction at the 1994 New York Film Festival. He also wrote and directed three shorts before graduating from the Australian Film Television and Radio School in 1996.

Michael was a finalist for best feature film script in the New Zealand Film Awards 2000 for his feature film, *Jubilee*, and won Best Short Film Script for *Cow* at the same awards in 2001. Michael currently has three features in development. His television writing includes *Street Legal* and *CoverStory*, for which he won best television script at the New Zealand Film and Television Awards 1997.

Of Ngati Whakaue and Ngati Pikiao descent, Michael has just finished directing an episode of *Mataku*, a series described as a Maori version of *The Twilight Zone*.

Producer's Biography

Chloe Smith started in the New Zealand film industry in 1983. She has spent the past eight years as a producer with Pacific Renaissance Pictures, the makers of *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *Hercules - The Legendary Journeys* and was involved in the production of 300 hours of television drama. Prior to that, she produced and managed Jane Campion's award winning *The Piano*, Alison McLean's *Crush* and several other feature films and television series.

Chloe co-produced *FOREVER*, a one-hour dance work created by choreographer Douglas Wright, which was part of the prestigious *Work of Art* television series and *A FISH TALE* follows her previously produced short film *COW*, which was financed by the New Zealand Film Commission Short Fund as well.

Credits

Cast

Diego	Paul Norell
Tony	Michael Langley
Brian	Joseph Main
Maria	Micheala Rooney
Pet shop owner	Syd Mannion
Brian's mum	Lori Dungey
Brian's dad	Jim McLarty
School children	Swanson Primary School

Crew

Director	Jane Holland
Writer	Michael Bennett
Producer	Chloe Smith
Cinematography	Donald Duncan
Composer	Keith Ballantyne
Editor	Margot Francis
Sound Designer	Chris Burt
Colourist	Clare Burlingson
Costume	Jaindra Watson
Art Director	Vivienne Kernick
VFX Supervisor	George Port
