



# Memento Mori

 Fís Éireann  
Screen Ireland

**BOULDER**  
MEDIA

**RTÉ**

## FILM SPECS

Country	Ireland
Language	English
Genre	Horror
Duration	8min 46sec
Format	Digital
Medium	Animation
Process	2D Rigged & Hand-Drawn
Frame Rate	24fps
Aspect Ratio	1.85:1



# LOGLINE

On a dark night in late 19th Century Dublin, a post-mortem photographer comes face to face with his demons as he photographs a newly deceased young woman in his studio.

# SYNOPSIS

Henry Huxley, an arrogant, focused and ambitious post-mortem photographer returns home to his fine townhouse in the midst of a poverty-stricken late 19th century Dublin, ignoring a homeless child sitting at his doorstep. He begins to write a letter replying to a prospective apprentice, detailing his process as he works on his latest subject, a newly deceased woman. When he roughly pulls her from her coffin, he notices she is holding a letter addressed to him which he abruptly discards.

As he describes his process of wet-plate photography we see him prepare the dead woman for her portrait. He is cold and unfeeling, almost macabre in his approach. As he works overnight, he becomes more and more affected by this dead woman and his mind begins to play tricks on him. He hears sounds and becomes convinced that her corpse is moving while he is trying to photograph her. Wet plate photography depends on a still subject, but his images of this dead woman are continually blurred. A violent storm cuts the electricity to the house, plunging him and the corpse into darkness. After the girl emits a chilling groan, He approaches the girl cautiously, reassuring himself that corpses tend to moan as the last of the air leaves the lungs. The girl suddenly moves, sending him leaping backwards. Embarrassed, he reminds himself that during the process of decay, the body may also twitch!

His frustrations get the better of him and he goes to bed, leaving his work for the morning.

Upon retiring to bed for the night, he has a broken night of sleep. As the storm rages outside his house and he is woken by the downstairs window shutters banging. He goes downstairs to close them but it seems the dead woman is blocking his path to the shutters. He loses his nerve and backs down from the challenge, locking the door behind him before returning to bed.

The next morning, he resolves to take one last photo. His is addled from his broken night's sleep and slips into a nightmare where he sees the dead woman contort her face like a demon. This final fright compels him to read the letter that he had discarded. It reveals that he knew this dead woman when she was a younger girl who begged on the streets. He did not help her in her time of need and she urges him in this letter to be a better man. As morning breaks, we see Huxley, a changed man, go outside to help the child who is begging on his doorstep. Huxley signs off on his letter to the prospective apprentice, reflecting on the choices that forged his path to fortune. All it seems, are now ghosts of the past.



# DIRECTOR STATEMENT

This film came to life because I love horror.

As an animator, I wanted to do a horror story, as horror is rarely seen in animation. I wanted to push it as far as we could, and have it comparable to its live action counterparts in terms of efficacy.

In choosing to tell a story in animation, I feel it needs to have a level of justification for choosing this medium. With this in mind, I decided to make it look like a graphic novel. In particular, I was very inspired by the comic art of Patrick Reynolds.

This is a story about a character's guilt, and his guilt manifests in tricks being played in his mind, this is where the film's horror comes from. The guilt is ignited by the orange letter that the dead girl is holding. Every subsequent wave of subconscious guilt is preceded by the colour orange in on-screen elements like a drum, electric lights and leaves. When he addresses his guilt towards the end of the film, the opposing colour, blue appears for the first time in the sky.

The choice of narrator was an easy one for me and had only one name on my wish list. I have been a fan of Mark Gatiss for a long time, especially the short stories he curates and narrates, such as EF Benson and MR James. To me, Mark Gatiss is literally the voice of horror. I felt very fortunate that he liked the script and was willing to come on board.

This film was made remotely, due to covid restrictions and lockdown. It was a challenge to not be in the same room as the crew, or the actors, or the producers. However, I feel that the film benefited from the time I had to consider the script and consider every detail carefully, without the distractions of the commute or any real social life getting in the way!



Paul O' Flanagan

*Director & Co-Writer*

Having graduated Senior College Ballyfermot in 2000 with a diploma in character animation, Paul joined Boulder Media later that year.

In the years since, Paul has acted as animation director and director for many high-profile shows such as *Fosters Home for Imaginary Friends* for Cartoon Network, *El Tigre* for Nickelodeon and *Danger Mouse* for BBC and Netflix.

Paul is currently the Senior Television Director in Boulder Media, creatively overseeing production on all TV shows being produced inhouse. *Memento Mori* is Paul's third short film.



# ACCOLADES



FOYLE FILM FESTIVAL  
2021 Official Selection



## KEY CREW BIOS

## Louise Ní Chonchúir

*Producer*

Louise is a highly experienced Line-Producer and freelance Producer.

After completing her studies in Animation at IADT, Louise has focused her career on Animation production.

*Memento Mori* is Louise's second frameworks film production.

Louise also Produced *An Gadhar dubh* with Paper Panther Productions under the frameworks scheme in 2018.

Louise is passionate about working in the Irish Animation & Film industry.

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## Graham Smyth

*Production Manager*

After pursuing a career in music - touring and recording with Irish band *Junah*, Graham has gone on to blaze an impressive career in media.

He broke into the Animation Industry in 2016, working as a Production Assistant on two Boulder Media Productions, *My Little Pony: Equestria Girls* and *Dorothy & The Wizard of Oz*. From there, Graham progressed to become a Production Coordinator on the studio's flagship production *Micronauts*, before landing the Assistant Production Manager role on *Pony Life: My Little Pony*.

Graham has progressed even further since then, taking the reigns as Production Manager on *Memento Mori*.

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## Piotr Bzdura

*Art Director*

After achieving his Master of Arts & Major in Industrial Design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice, Poland, Piotr has gone on to forge an illustrious career in Media.

Having worked as a Concept Artist for the major release video game "Transformers Battlegrounds", he has also been concepting for a number of Boulder Media productions, including *Transformers Cyberverse* and Leon Elliott's *Brother Ezekiel*.

Piotr has taken the helm as Art Director on multiple productions, and is proud to add *Memento Mori* to his back catalogue of work.

[www.artstation.com/piotrbdura](https://www.artstation.com/piotrbdura)

## Jean Texier

*Story Artist*

Trained as a feature animator, Jean is a mostly self-taught Story Artist, with decades of experience in the Animation Industry.

Having worked on the BAFTA award-winning Cartoon Network series *The Amazing World of Gumball*, Rovio's *Angry Birds*, *Zig and Sharko* and *Alvin and the Chipmunks*, Jean then undertook Storyboard Supervision in Boulder Media, later becoming Series Director on one of the studio's most recent flagship projects, *Transformers Cyberverse*.

[www.artstation.com/jeant](https://www.artstation.com/jeant)

## Marco Caradonna

*Senior Visual Development Artist*

A seasoned Visual Development Artist, Marco's body of work runs the gamut from television, to short films, and videogames – having worked with legendary videogame developer RARE in the past.

Marco began work on *Transformers Cyberverse* in June 2017 – a project which he considers to be a highlight of his career.

Initially collaborating with the show's directors by providing mood paintings and early design explorations, Marco progressed to manage a team of 16 people at Boulder Media.

[www.macalabs.com](https://www.macalabs.com)

[www.instagram.com/mr\\_macalabs](https://www.instagram.com/mr_macalabs)

## KEY CREW BIOS

## Jamie Carroll

*Lead Rigging Artist*

Having achieved his BA Hons Degree from BCFE, Jamie started working in the Animation Industry as an Animator/Composer at Giant Animation.

He then moved to Boulder Media as a Clean Up Artist, where he began to learn the ropes of a 2D Rigging Artist.

He considers himself very fortunate to learn from extremely talented and patient leads during his time at the studio, and is currently a Lead Rigging Artist on DC's *Super Hero Girls*.

## Gillian Comerford

*Animation Director*

Always with a passion for Art from the time she was young, it was Gillian's dream to follow a career path into the Animation Industry.

Having studied classical animation in Ballyfermot College from 1994-2000, Gillian began work as an Animator for Boulder Media in 2001 - working on hit shows such as Cartoon Network's *Fosters Home for Imaginary Friends* and *The Amazing World of Gumball*, as well as Nickelodeon's *El Tigre*.

Gillian was promoted to Animation Director/Supervisor on Disney XD's *Randy Cunningham: Ninth Grade Ninja* and *Wander Over Yonder*, before landing her current role as Director on shows like Discovery Family's *Littlest Pet Shop: A World Of Our Own*, *My Little Pony: Rainbow Road Trip* and *Pony Life: My Little Pony*.

## Emma Dunlop

*Compositing Lead*

Having studied live-action film-making at Dundalk IT, Emma became a "Turn Coat" and decided that the Animation Industry was a much more magical place to be!

She has been working in compositing for just over a decade - contributing to shows for Disney, the BBC, RTE, and having recently been the Lead for Hasbro's *Transformers: Rescue Bots Academy*, which is now on Netflix.

[www.linkedin.com/in/emma-dunlop-18a14525/](http://www.linkedin.com/in/emma-dunlop-18a14525/)

## Aoife Maguire

*Senior Editor*

Aoife has worked at Boulder Media for the past 3 years, before which she worked in the live action sector on a variety of different projects including promotional videos, outside broadcasts, TV series and short films.

As Senior Animation Editor at Boulder, Aoife is responsible for bringing the story to life, by contributing to the development of the look and feel of the studio's content.

She has worked on many interesting and fulfilling projects, including the Hasbro featurette *My Little Pony: Rainbow Road Trip* and the TV series' *Littlest Pet Shop*, *A World Of Our Own*, *Pony Life: My Little Pony*, *Transformers: Rescue Bots Academy*, *Micronauts* and *Transformers Cyberverse*.

## Kevin O' Brien

*Head of Editing*

Kevin is currently the Head of the Editing Department in Boulder Media. He began his media career in live action TV, working as an Editor and DV Director.

He switched to Animation as one of the creators of the RTE preschool cartoon *Inis Spraoi*, and has worked on many great animated shows since then – *Danger Mouse*, *Transformers Cyberverse* and *My little Pony* to name a few.

Regardless of the nature of each show, his focus is always on creativity and storytelling. He has a grá for the Irish language, music and sound design.

## FAQs

Paul O' Flanagan

*Directing*

***As a seasoned director of Animation Television, how did your approach to Memento Mori differ from your past work?***

The making of this film, like most short films, was outside of the work day, and so it was tough. While it's only a fraction of the length of the TV shows I work on during the day, the same resources just weren't accessible out of hours.

Even though I feel very fortunate to work on TV shows from large studios such as Disney, Netflix, etc, this is the first time I had the opportunity to write something completely my own. This gave me the chance to move tonally, aesthetically and thematically, into a completely different area.

This has been a fresh and rejuvenating project for me personally. Animation is well known to be time consuming so working outside the day job needed to be on a completely different type of project. And this certainly was different!

Gillian Comerford

*Animation*

***With so much experience directing content for a younger audience, what was it like to embrace the mature and dark-hearted subject matter of Memento Mori?***

It is really refreshing when something entirely different like Memento Mori comes along. The whole look of the short is unique from character to the locations designs, so I was excited to be involved.

The approach had to be completely different. You really want the audience to engage with the emotion and feeling while building the tension throughout. The timing of the animation had to play more realistic than what we normally would push on our regular shows. Pulling back on extreme squash and stretches, overshoots and settles and leaning more on gentle cushions and animating on 2's, 3's and even 4's.

We took inspiration from Japanese animation and their approach to this type of animation style.

Piotr Bzdura

*Art Direction*

***Memento Mori has a striking gothic and German expressionist-inspired art style - how does this reinforce both the narrative and setting of the film?***

*Memento Mori* focuses on the main character's internal struggle, a staple of German expressionism.

As the film unravels, Huxley becomes increasingly paranoid - bending perception of reality. Heavy black shadows, modest details and strong graphic lines were used to highlight the drama and mood of this tragic tale.

Both characters and environments are tall, top heavy - standing on delicate legs. This creates the illusion of environment towering over viewer, reflecting the unstable nature of their circumstances.



# FAQs

Jean Texier

*Storyboarding*

*Memento Mori relies heavily on the subtle movements and facial expressions of the characters, what were your sources of inspiration?*

Mike Mignola's work, particularly *Batman: Gotham by Gaslight*, was a big stylistic inspiration - and Hugo Pratt's stark treatment of light and shadow on characters was something I tried to emulate.

With regards to acting, I just went with the flow, having made sure I watched enough films within the genre prior to boarding.

Jamie Carroll

*Rigging*

*Tasked with ensuring the character of Huxley can move and express dynamically, did you encounter any technical challenges while working on such a nuanced project as Memento Mori?*

*Memento Mori* relies on pacing, acting and lighting to build suspense, so all of these elements had to be taken into account when approaching the build of Huxley. This is not pose to pose animation, it's very nuanced and deliberate so to achieve this I had to build Huxley as a fully Enveloped deformer rig. He needs to be able to hit a range of emotions as the viewer sees a lot of the story unfold through the expression in Huxley's eyes, this required me to take special care when rigging the character's face.

Another challenge was the lighting. Building any kind of shadows into a rig can cause it to become very sluggish to use. It required a lot of testing to get the shadows to a stage where they worked well and didn't add too much weight to the rig. We came up with a system where we built them into the rig, then rendered them flat from Harmony and exported them to After Effects for treatment.

Emma Dunlop

*Compositing*

*What were the challenges involved in creating the dramatic lighting and shadows for Memento Mori?*

The dramatic lighting and shadows are usually a very tricky challenge, but working with the talented and innovative rigging lead, Jamie Carroll, made this really easy. He came up with a way of creating incredible shadows within the rigs that could be animated and utilised by the comp team to create the contrasting and *spoooooky* shadows.

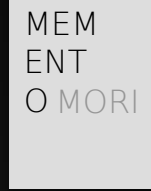
# CAST



MARK GATISS  
*as Huxley*

LAURA O'FLANAGAN  
*as The Girl*

# CREW



Director Paul O' Flanagan  
 Written by Paul O' Flanagan  
 Laura O' Flanagan

Background Designers Rubén Fernández Pinto  
 Billy Mac Donald  
 Alana O'Brien  
 Claire O'Reilly

FX Artists Deirdre Behan  
 Marek Winnicki  
 Compositing Lead Emma Dunlop  
 Compositing Artists Gemma Canet

Starring Mark Gatiss  
 Laura O' Flanagan

Animation Director Gillian Comerford  
 Technical Animation Lead María Aurora Rodríguez

Nádia Cardoso  
 Jennifer Daly  
 Sarah Gillick  
 Michelle Geraghty  
 Walt Habgood  
 Rory Kerr  
 Nuala Treanor  
 Collette Whyte

Art Director Piotr Bzdura  
 Senior Concept Design Marco Caradonna

Animators Eleanor Bourke  
 Alan Carruthers  
 Serena Cestari  
 Stephen Cunningham

Sound Recording provided by Soho Square Studios  
 Post Production Facility Windmill Lane Pictures  
 Online Editor Robbie O'Farrell  
 Re-recording Mixer Ed Costello  
 Sound Editors Conall O'Brien  
 Ryan Quinn  
 Post Coordinator Aurora Brennan

Composer Sanj Sen

Storyboard Artist Jean Texier  
 Storyboard Revisionists Adeola Lawal  
 Rohana Mentz

Manuela Gualtieri  
 Aminata Joseph  
 Laura 'Ray' Keogh  
 Mark Kiernan

Editors Kevin O'Brien  
 Aoife Maguire

Eugenio Laviola  
 Tereza Maslanova  
 Cormac McCabe  
 Brendan McCarthy

Character Design Paul O' Flanagan  
 Additional Character Designs Natalie Law

Eoin McDonnell  
 Emily O'Callaghan

Prop Designers Susan Ball  
 Heidi Brown  
 Dara Griffin  
 Liam Walsh

Paul O'Flanagan  
 Eamonn O'Neill  
 Sarah Peters  
 Jonathan Rice

Produced by Louise Ní Chonchúir  
 Production Manager Graham Smyth  
 Production Assistant Patrick McDonald

Rigging Jamie Carroll  
 Prop Design & Rigging Stefanie Reville

Alan Tighe  
 Kyla Tomlinson  
 Mitch Wilmot

Executive Producer for the Irish Film Board Emma Scott  
 Executive Producer for RTÉ Pauline MacNamara  
 Shorts Co-ordinator for the Irish Film Board Jill McGregor  
 Marketing Executive for the Irish Film Board Mags O'Sullivan

# ABOUT BOULDER MEDIA

Boulder Media is an Irish animation company based in Dublin.

The company was established in 2000 and since then we have gone on to become one of Ireland's largest animation studios, attracting high profile projects from across the globe and working with leading broadcasters such as *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends*, *El Tigre*, *Wander over Yonder*, *Danger Mouse* and *Pony Life: My Little Pony* - just to name a few!

The shows we have produced have garnered several awards and countless more nominations such as, BAFTAs, EMMYs, ANNIes, IFTAs, British Animation Awards, Cartoons on the Bay and many more.

Throughout all of these larger productions we have still found time to produce over a dozen pilots for Disney, Nickelodeon, Film Roman and the BBC - as well as nurturing our own talented crew by investing in many in-house short films, such as *Brother Ezekiel*, which have gone on to win many awards at film festivals around the world.

We are proud to present *Memento Mori* as the latest addition to our impressive oeuvre, in partnership with Frameworks.



## BOULDER MEDIA CONTACT INFO

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