

# M + Z

*a film by Jane Stiles and Meryl Jones*





## JANE STILES - DIRECTOR

- First film *One Eye Small* premiered at SXSW 2018
- Film *The Love Spell* published by *The New Yorker's The Screening Room* 2022
- Film *Dom* played at 10+ festivals, won 2 awards and was nominated for others
- Film *Dom* now screening on MUBI & No Budge with platforms Apple TV, Roku, iOS, Android, + Amazon Fire TV, with 100k + views
- Co-produced 16mm film "*Goldilocks*" Hamptons, Champs Elysees, Oberhausen 2023
- Series *Regular* in Rodrigo Garcia's award winning series *BLUE* (HULU)
- Starred in award winning shorts *Polished* (Short of the Week) & *Capture The Flag* (Tony Cox Showtime award @ Nantucket FF)
- MFA Hunter's Integrated Media Arts program 2023-present



## MERYL JONES - DIRECTOR

- 16mm film *Goldilocks* festival run Hamptons, Champs Elysees, Oberhausen 2023
- 16mm film *The Love Spell* published by *The New Yorker's The Screening Room* 2022
- Film *Dom* played at 10+ festivals, won 2 awards and was nominated for others
- Film *Dom* now screening on MUBI & No Budge with platforms Apple TV, Roku, iOS, Android, + Amazon Fire TV, with 100k + views
- Starred in *Sound of Silence* and *Roxanne, Roxanne* @ Sundance 2017 + 2019
- Member and Educator at analogue film collective *MonoNoAware* since 2018
- MFA Hunter's Integrated Media Arts program 2022-present



## ROZZ THERRIEN - PRODUCER

- Produces commercials for select clients such as: ABC's *DWTS*, Hulu's *SHRILL* & *UP HERE*, and Amazon
- Produced a Clio Award Winning commercial
- Production Manager for Disney + first original docuseries, *FAMILY REBOOT*, worked on the project from pilot development to airing of the series
- Production Manager for Oxygen's true crime series *EXHUMED*
- Successfully managed budgets ranging from \$50,000 to \$1 million USD
- Development consultant for Barbara DeFina and Cutter Entertainment



## ANNE LOUISE BRITTAIN - PRODUCER

- Director of marketing and media partnerships for distribution company *New Story*, films including *Memoria* by Apichatpong Weerasethakul starring Tilda Swinton, (Jury Prize, Cannes Film Festival 2021); *We* by Alice Diop, (Best Documentary and Best Film - Encounters, Berlinale 2021); *Coma* by Bertrand Bonello; *Earwig* by Lucile Hadzihalilovic (Special Jury Prize, San Sebastián Film Festival)
- Masters in Innovation and Digital Transformation at Sciences Po, Paris 2021
- Event producer and associate editor for literary magazine *Lapham's Quarterly* in New York City 2011
- Good Good Film Producer for clients such as *Celio*, *ATOL* and *The Kooples*, 2014
- Partizan Paris Executive Producer and TV Producer for clients such as *Louis Vuitton* and *Hyatt* 2017

## THE TEAM



### SHANNON FITZPATRICK - EDITOR

- Additional Editor on A24's *Past Lives*
- Produced feature-length documentary *Cisco Kid*, World Premier Jihlava 2022, SLAMDANCE 2023
- Producing feature-length documentary *Softly* in all directions, with development and production grants from Field of Vision and Sundance
- Assistant edited feature-length films for Walt Disney Company, Sony, New Line Cinema, Netflix, and Likely Story
- Edited multiple short films including *Goldilocks*, *Venus Melite*, *Life After*, *Millie*



### CORY FRAIMAN-LOTT - CINEMATOGRAPHER

- Indie Episodic "Do It To Me If You Want" Tribeca Film Festival 2023
- Short film "Homesick" premiered at SXSW 2022
- Feature documentary "Burn It Down!" premiered at BFI London 2021
- "November," an adaptation of Claudia Rankine's play "Help," commissioned by The Shed and Tribeca Studios 2020
- Short film "Imagine A Moon Colony" premiered on Hulu as part of their Black History Month series "Your Attention Please" 2020
- Emmy-nominated Netflix documentary "Fyre: The Greatest Party That Never Happened" 2018
- Debut feature "How To Tell You're A Douchebag" premiered at Sundance 2016
- Short film "Bandito" premiered at Tribeca 2015
- With work featured in the NY Times, LA Times, The New Yorker and Rolling Stone Magazine

[Website](#)



### BEGA METZNER - CONSULTING PRODUCER

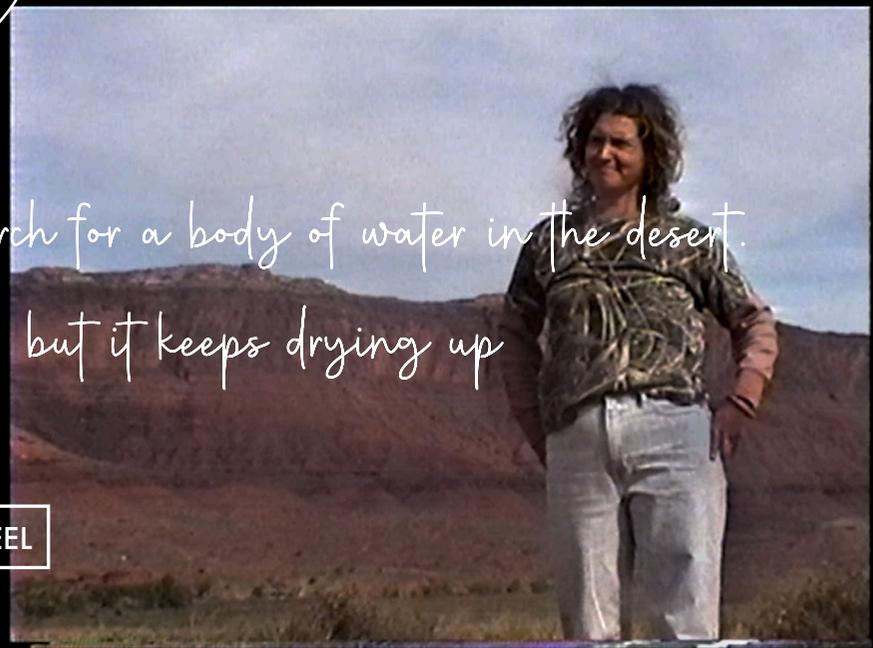
- 20 + years Film / TV / Commercial / Editorial Fashion / Print ads / e-commerce (Stylist, Costume Design, Key Set) NYC and LA
- Film Commission Director (Moab, UT) facilitating commercials, indie films, TV Series, Editorial Fashion/ Print Ads
- Work as Film Commissioner (Moab, UT) facilitating Major motion pictures, commercials, indie films, TV Series, Editorial Fashion/ Print Ads
- Endcrawl Special Thanks - Netflix: Electric State, Delicate Arch Movie, Retreat, Horizon: An American Saga 1+2
- Consultant (Moab, UT) - Horizon: An American Saga

We are looking for strategic partnerships to join our team!  
We can't wait to make this movie together!





Mona + Zephyr



Two estranged siblings search for a body of water in the desert.  
but it keeps drying up

[CLICK HERE FOR TONE REEL](#)



M + Z  
JANE STILES & MERYL JONES



## CO-DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*M+Z* is our debut feature; a dark comedy inspired by time spent together in the Southwest searching for water. We founded Sweet Potato Productions after collaborating on three shorts - *Goldilocks*, *The Love Spell*, and *Dom*. Desert movies are mostly told from the cis-male perspective, our culture reveres a man on the road. Homage is seldom paid to the female or non-binary counterpart without sexual violence. We are excited to share our perspective.

We wrote the script at The Home of The Brave artist residency in Cisco, Utah. Off a neverending two lane highway, Cisco feels as if it's on the edge of the world. It's unsurprising that a memorable scene from *Thelma and Louise* was filmed there just before they drive off the cliff. There is no running water in Cisco. We were unable to bathe, cool off, or fully hydrate. Each time we return to the region, the bodies of water dwindle. While following the cliché of trying to find ourselves in the American West, we were ultimately faced with the drought. We draw a bridge between this quest in a scorched landscape and the amorphous feeling of homesickness. Two siblings in a third-life crisis look for belonging in their relationship, that they've lost.

In *M+Z* queer characters exist in a nuanced way. The murders of lesbian couple, Kylene Schulte and Crystal Turner, in the La Sal Mountains, occurred while we lived in nearby Cisco. This act of violence was our worst nightmare, but affirmed the importance of queer representation in rural America. In response, we call out this horrific event yet subvert victimhood by exposing the psychology of misogyny with tender humor. We devote our story to womxn, LGBTQIA+ folks, and anyone on the fringe of heteronormativity. We sincerely thank you for the consideration of our film.

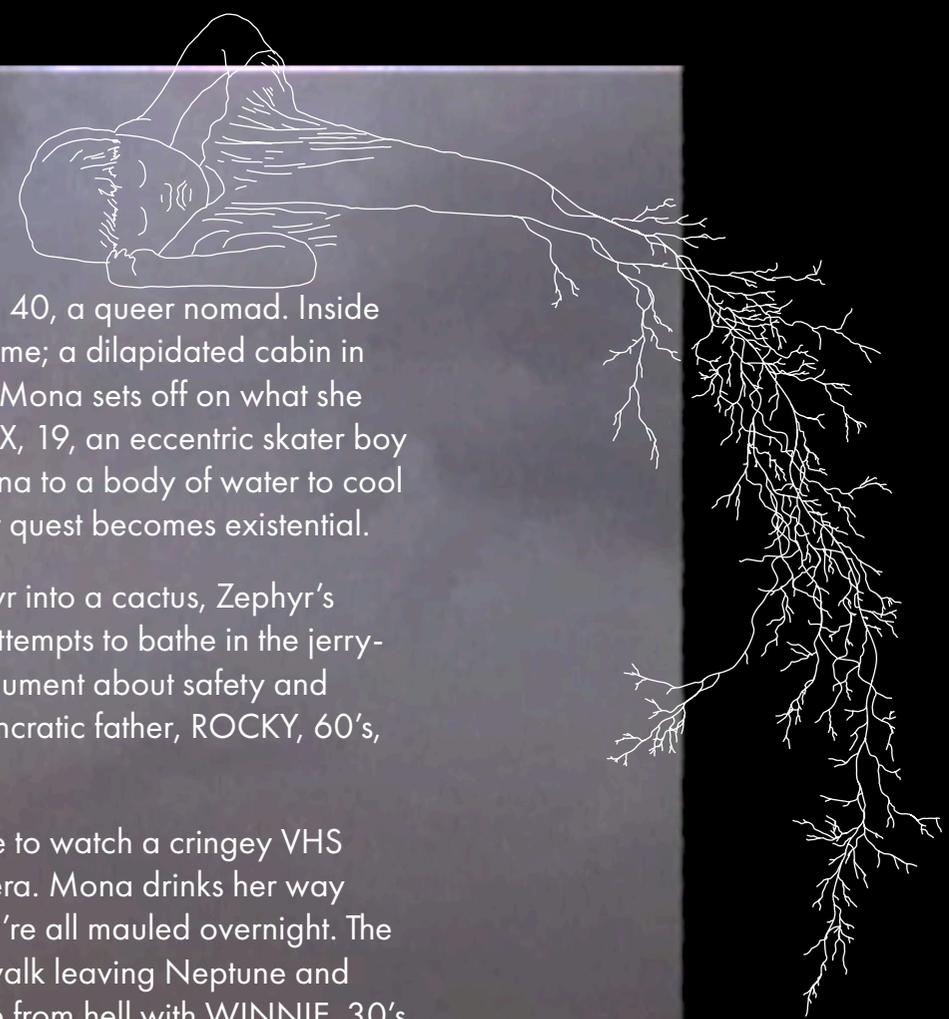
## STORY

MONA, 35, a homebody, receives a peculiar piece of mail from her sibling, ZEPHYR, 40, a queer nomad. Inside is a cryptic note with a lock of Zephyr's hair inciting Mona to visit them in their new home; a dilapidated cabin in a Utah ghost town with lots of quirks and no running water. After years of disconnect, Mona sets off on what she thinks is a mission to save her sibling. She meets Zephyr's child NEPTUNE, 4, and MAX, 19, an eccentric skater boy babysitter. In an effort to bond and escape the summer heat, Zephyr tries to bring Mona to a body of water to cool off, but the plan repeatedly hits a snag. In a landscape where water is drying up, their quest becomes existential.

Clunkily co-parenting, a series of little deaths ensue; Mona accidentally pushes Zephyr into a cactus, Zephyr's beloved chicken gets annihilated by coyotes, Neptune gets lost. After a filthy Mona attempts to bathe in the jerry-rigged bathtub and wastes a tank of Zephyr's water, the siblings erupt in a painful argument about safety and resources that exposes how strange they are to each other. A drop in from their idiosyncratic father, ROCKY, 60's, and his new life-partner, PEARL, an ageless psychic medium, comes at the worst time.

Raw from an ayahuasca journey, Rocky cooks a glutinous dinner and forces everyone to watch a cringey VHS of Mona and Zephyr as kids featuring their deceased mother's voice behind the camera. Mona drinks her way through this forced reunion. Dizzied, Zephyr forgets to lock the chicken coop and they're all mauled overnight. The siblings fracture and run away from home. Zephyr breaks off on a dissociative Jesus walk leaving Neptune and clings to a tourist family. They suffer a fainting spell. Mona disappears on a dicey date from hell with WINNIE, 30's, a local fuckboy. Adrift, the siblings have absurd visions; they see each other in child's clothes in the red rocks like psychic buoys. Left on the side of the road and longing for love, Mona steals the neighbor's sweet chihuahua, TINK. Zephyr hitchhikes home. In the witching hour, the siblings finally confess how much they miss each other.

Rocky and Pearl hit the road. Zephyr drags Mona to return Tink to her owner COOKIE, 60's, a red rock woman. Cookie directs them to a secret lake as an act of providence. At last, the gang makes their way to water. In the center of the lake, Zephyr panics. Mona instructs them to float on their back. The siblings both float in the melancholy of their impending silent farewell. Finally, they swim across childlike in homesick catharsis.



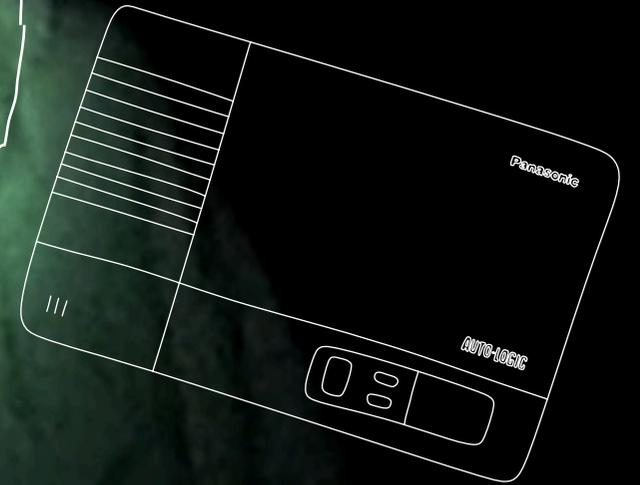
## ARTISTIC APPROACH

### MIXED MEDIA

Investigating the confessional, we're watching our families' Hi 8 tapes and archival footage. We find parallels between the disintegration of analog technologies, the receding water in the Southwest, and third-life growing pains. *M+Z* will be shot on 16mm and VHS to evoke the temporality of the sibling's disappearing memory of their shared childhood. The final film will inter-splice our written narrative with home videos and narrativized reenactments. The tone will strike a chord of off-beat and vulnerable humor found in our experiential writing process and the humiliation of tilling through our families' logs.

### SOUND

Mona and Zephyr's deceased mother is expressed through a voice-over; a message giving meandering directions on an old answering machine. This repeats over the image of the water they seek. To subconsciously signal the inability to hold onto our family, her voice will gradually decay and warp into the rush of water. Her absence structures the story and the repetition of the scene is a divination.





# CASTING



**MONA**

The lonely and pervy younger half sister who travels to the desert to "save" Z.

Jane Stiles



**ZEPHYR**

The impulsive and stubborn older sibling who bought land in a ghost town with no running water to start a new life with their child, Neptune.

Meryl Jones



**MAX**

Zephyr's odd-duck teenage neighbor with a sensitive soul.

Dominic Fike, Keir Gilchrist, Lily Jandreau, Kodi Smit-McPhee



**PEARL**

A unicorn wise medium and girlfriend to Rocky.

Amy Landecker, Hong Chau, Laverne Cox, Parker Posey



**ROCKY**

Mona + Zephyr's man-child father; collector and recently enlightened from an ayahuasca journey.

David Cross, Will Patton, Willem Dafoe, Larry Fassenden

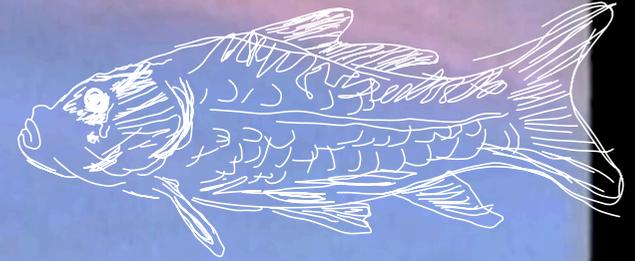


**WINNIE**

A van life influencer and fuckboy artist who's weaseled his way into Mona's head.

Caleb Landry Jones, Christopher Abbott, Keith Paulson, Jeremy Allen White

## PRODUCTION TIMELINE



**September 2023**  
Investor Pitch  
Meetings Begin

**May 2024**  
Key Crew & Department  
Heads Locked

**August 2024**  
Pre-Production Begins

**October 2024**  
Picture Wrap

**December 2024**  
Picture Lock

**August 2025**  
Sundance Film  
Festival Submission

**Summer 2026**  
Theatrical Release

**January 2024**  
Location Scout &  
Potential Labs

**June 2024**  
Investor Financing  
Secured & Budget Finalized

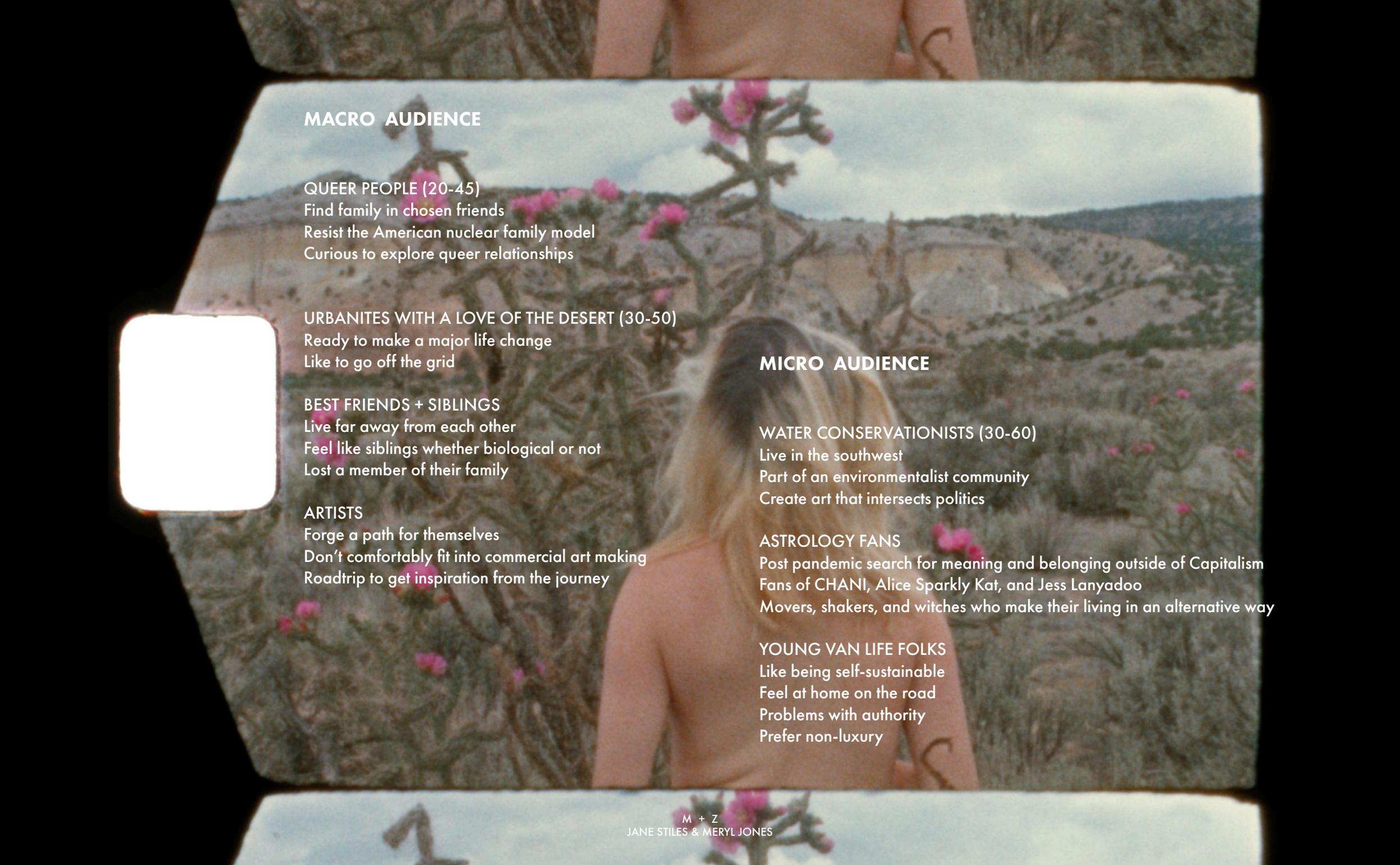
**September 2024**  
Begin Principal  
Photography

**November 2024**  
Post-Production

**May 2025**  
Final Cut & Sound  
Design Complete

**2026**  
Festival Circuit &  
Distribution Deal

\*Alternate Timeline available for Production starting May 2025



## MACRO AUDIENCE

### QUEER PEOPLE (20-45)

Find family in chosen friends  
Resist the American nuclear family model  
Curious to explore queer relationships

### URBANITES WITH A LOVE OF THE DESERT (30-50)

Ready to make a major life change  
Like to go off the grid

### BEST FRIENDS + SIBLINGS

Live far away from each other  
Feel like siblings whether biological or not  
Lost a member of their family

### ARTISTS

Forge a path for themselves  
Don't comfortably fit into commercial art making  
Roadtrip to get inspiration from the journey

## MICRO AUDIENCE

### WATER CONSERVATIONISTS (30-60)

Live in the southwest  
Part of an environmentalist community  
Create art that intersects politics

### ASTROLOGY FANS

Post pandemic search for meaning and belonging outside of Capitalism  
Fans of CHANI, Alice Sparkly Kat, and Jess Lanyadoo  
Movers, shakers, and witches who make their living in an alternative way

### YOUNG VAN LIFE FOLKS

Like being self-sustainable  
Feel at home on the road  
Problems with authority  
Prefer non-luxury

## SEEKING INVESTORS

With a Fiscal Sponsorship from the Utah Film Center, your investment is tax deductible. In addition to the support from The Utah Film Center, our film has the support of both the Utah and Moab Film Commissions.

We intend to apply for the Community Film Incentive Program for films under \$500,000, which is a 20% cash rebate upon film's completion.

### SEEKING INVESTORS WHO:

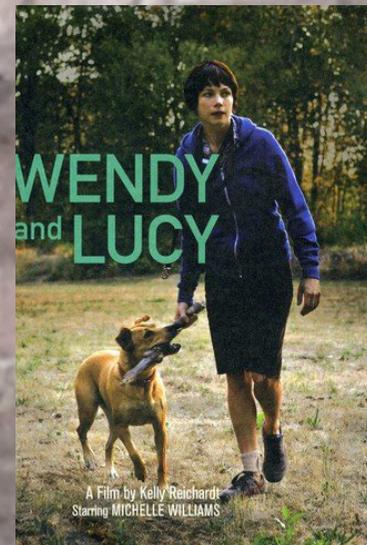
- Willingness to invest a minimum of \$10,000 USD
- Willingness to work with our lawyer in negotiating a contract
- Understanding there is no guarantee of Return on Investment
- Understanding that higher paying investments will get priority credit

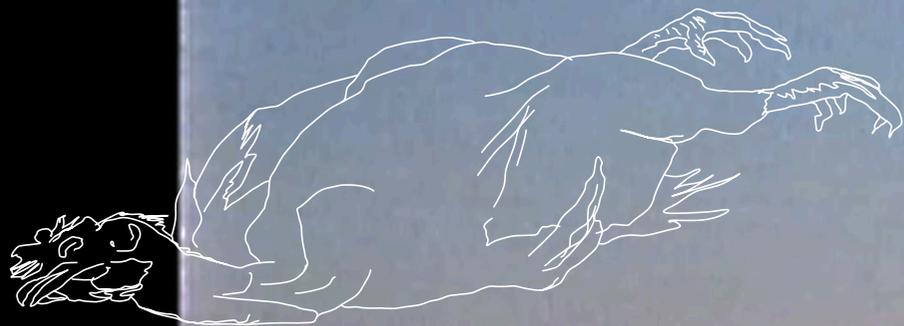
### INVESTOR ROLE BREAKDOWN:

- 50K+ Investors Receive Executive Producer Credit and "In Association With" Credit in Opening Credits
- 25K+ Investors Receive Executive Producer Credit
- 10K-25K Investors Receive Co-Executive Producer Credit
- Investors will have access to the following:
  - Attend festival premieres
  - Have Profit Potential: Recoup of Investment + 20% Interest +50/50 Profit Share with Production Company
  - IMDB Credit

\*Budget available

## SIMILAR BUDGETS





SWEET  
POTATO

PRODUCTIONS No22



BLOSSOM STREET FILMS

[info@sweetpotatoproductions.com](mailto:info@sweetpotatoproductions.com)

[blossomstreetfilms@gmail.com](mailto:blossomstreetfilms@gmail.com)



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