

THE BREATHE STORY

Louisiana native Shanna Forrestall will premiere her short film project entitled BREATHE in Baton Rouge at the 2018 Louisiana International Film Festival this April.

The film, written by Forrestall, was inspired by personal life events that caused her to focus on recovery from grief.

Although the film was shot in beautiful Lake Arrowhead, CA to take advantage of the snowy winter landscapes, the film touts a primarily Louisiana cast and crew.

The film stars [Escalante Lundy](#) and [Shanna Forrestall](#), with special appearances by Artist Jennifer Awad of [Kardia Gallery](#) (her original painting is also featured in the film) and young actor Daniel Francois (also a Louisiana native).

The film's Executive Producer was Louisiana resident [Neil Wells](#), and the film was directed by Michael Liu and scored by composer [Carlos Garza](#). Watch the film teaser trailer [HERE](#). Learn more about the film [HERE](#).

Follow the Breathe journey on Facebook at www.facebook.com/breathefilmtherapy.



###



“In 2014 I experienced one of the worst betrayals of my life. The months following that event were dark, to say the least, and I went through a time of deep grieving.

Breathe is not my personal story, but it is definitely an analogy, and a story of love and loss. It looks at the fragility of our humanity and how when we suffer a loss, we often feel isolated and can hardly carry on.

Breathe was born in pain and ends with the triumph of learning to let it go, and I hope it will impact our audiences the way it has our devoted and hardworking cast and crew. I look forward to sharing this story with the world.”

Shanna Forrestall - Writer, Producer, Lead Actress, Breathe



KEY CAST & CREW BIOS, WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA



Neil Wells, Executive Producer

Neil Wells studied Theatre Arts at Drake University and has 37 stage productions to his credits. He spent most of the 90's working in the theatre and acting in small films and commercials. In 2001 he left the entertainment industry for 10 years to raise his daughters, but in 2011 he moved to Louisiana and has been working consistently in film and television ever since. Some recent projects include television shows like Queen Sugar, Breakout Kings and Government Lies. Some of his most recent film credits include Keanu, Finding John Smith and Splatter. Neil is an accomplished producer of independent projects. His most recent work includes two shorts films entitled Homelicide and Breathe. He is also an award winning director for his work on the independent television series, Out of the Static, which premiered in 2009.

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm3526004/>

Social Media: FB - @neil.wells.3192

Shanna Forrestall, Producer/Writer, Lead Talent

Shanna Forrestall, known as “Shanna from Louisiana”, was a professional actress for over 12 years and has been featured in more than 100 film and television projects. She is also an **experienced producer** with years of experience as an Associate Producer for a variety of television projects for networks like The History Channel and TruTV. She has also produced six short films in the US that tackle social issues, and several video projects in India to support a school for disabled children and to raise awareness on the plight of eunuchs in Indian society. Shanna is now also a Consulting Producer on Restoring Balance: Autism Recovery, a groundbreaking documentary by brain trauma specialist Ryan Hetrick.

Shanna is a lifelong humanitarian and is most proud of her non-profit work around the world. She now resides in Los Angeles and is a social media and marketing consultant who assists corporate and non-profit clients with digital content creation.

Website: www.forrestallconsulting.com

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2082525/>

Social Media: FB - @shannafromlouisiana, @forrestallconsulting, IG - @shannafromla, Twitter - @shannafromla, @forrestallcon

Micheal Liu, Director, DP, Editor

Michael Liu is an experienced Director & DP who utilizes his training from the New York Film Academy to direct commercials, short film projects and live video projects in the Los Angeles area.

Website: www.matchstixstudios.com

IMDB: http://www.imdb.com/name/nm9187110/?ref=tt_ov_dr

Escalante Lundy, Lead Talent

Escalante Lundy is an American film and television actor and producer, from New Orleans, LA. Lundy graduated from St. Augustine High School, later receiving his Bachelor's degree in Urban Planning from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (USL). Lundy received Masters degrees in Urban Planning and Geographic Information Systems from the University of New Orleans.

Escalante's acting career began as a stage producer in Sacramento, CA. When an actor failed to show-up, Lundy took the role', garnered success and later decided to focus on acting as a career path. Admittedly, shy by nature, Lundy used acting as a tool to face his fears of public speaking and improve his diction. He continued to hone his acting skills by taking parts in small productions in film and on-stage in Los Angeles and Las Vegas.

Lundy returned to New Orleans in 2005, leaving his position with the California Department of Transportation in Sacramento to pursue acting full-time. Lundy's family members were victims of Hurricane Katrina and his valiant character motivated him to permanently relocate.

IMDB: http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2931166/?ref=tt_cl_t2

Social Media: FB - @escalantelundy.actor

Carlos Garza, Composer

Carlos Garza is a composer and orchestrator known for strong thematic writing and a versatile command of symphonic, jazz, pop and world music styles. He has written and performed with original rock, pop, and jazz ensembles in Washington DC at venues including the 9:30 Club, Blues Alley and the Bayou of Georgetown.

In 1998 he co-founded Silent Orchestra as an outlet for film composition and live performance. Together with percussionist Rich O'Meara he creates new scores for classic silent films and performs live accompaniment at film festivals, the National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Art Gallery and the AFI Silver Theatre.

A past winner of numerous composition awards, he now judges the Marvin Hamlisch Film Scoring Contest and the Mid-Atlantic Song Contest annually. He studied music theory at Frostburg State University, and film scoring and orchestration at UCLA Extension.

Website: www.carlosgarza.com

IMDB: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0308927/>

Social Media: FB - @cugarza

Jennifer Awad, Visual Artist

Jennifer Awad is a Toronto based artist presently residing in Washington DC / Virginia to expand her artistic career. Born into a family of creatives in varying disciplines, Jennifer found her unique expression at a very young age through visual art.

Primarily inspired by cultural diversity and the human condition, Jennifer's artwork attempts to capture these musings by using bright, bold, saturated color palettes and textural compositions which are trademark of her contemporary abstract style.

Her career as professional artist launched in 2005, and in 2007, Jennifer started painting in partnership with human rights and non-profit organizations, grassroots movements initiatives, community outreach programs and educational platforms through art talks, live paintings at fundraising events, community projects, open art studios, private and corporate commissions as well as solo and group exhibitions.

Today, her work continues to create opportunities and partnerships to bring about social change both locally and abroad, causing her perpetual growth in artistic identity, career and service.

Website: www.kardiagallery.net



Our Louisiana connected cast and crew. Nicole Lovince (1st AD), Shanna Forrestall (Writer/Producer/Lead Talent), Karen Clark (Wardrobe/Props), Escalante Lundy (Lead Talent), Megan Hebert (HMU), Neil Wells (Executive Producer).

KEY QUOTES ABOUT THE FILM

BY PROFESSIONALS

“Breathe successfully and beautifully portrays the complexities of grief, from the emotional pain to the psychological growth.

Breathe demonstrates how we can successfully embrace grief rather than running from it. There is no healthy way around grieving - one must go through to get to the other side.”

Janell Kalifey, LCSW



“Breathe allows you to become safe with uncomfortable feelings, and invites you to follow two people on a journey to an unknown destination. You’re not sure WHY you follow, you just know your eyes, ears and heart are all in.

Breathe is therapy in and of itself. It encourages the viewer to start an internal dialogue, and leaves one ready to believe in a the possibility of unpacking what has been held in a closed place.”

Maxine Crump, President/CEO, Dialogue on Race Louisiana

BY VIEWERS

"Breathe was very powerful. It speaks to your heart. The acting and music woo you into the final scene and it is so breathtaking. I would definitely recommend this film! It's like stepping into a painting... the acting invites you to become one of the characters in the film.”

Caroline McGraw, Documentary Filmmaker

“I recently had four family deaths within 7 months. It left a gaping hole in me. At a pivotal moment in the film, with ONE breath, I was able to release some of the pain. Bravo performances by Shanna and Escalante, and Carlos Garza (composer) does a phenomenal job carrying you through the movie with his musical brilliance. This film is a must see!”

Danielle Cheek, Pasadena, CA

“The film was a beautiful expression of loss and strength.”

Chancellor Skidmore, “Xero”, Competitive Slam Poet

BY OUR CAST & CREW

“In 2014 I experienced one of the worst betrayals of my life. The months following that event were dark, to say the least, and I went through a time of deep grieving. The next year while having dinner with Louisiana filmmakers Caleb Michaelson and Jency Griffin, I shared with Caleb some of my experiences over the past year and he encouraged me to create a story that would help me look intimately at what happened and to celebrate what I had learned.

I thought my days of making short films were over. It takes so much effort to make a film, especially with small budgets, so I tried to put the idea aside. But in the days following that conversation, the story of Breathe kept rising up in my mind and I finally had to write it.

Breathe is not my personal story, but it is definitely an analogy, and a story of love and loss. It looks at the fragility of our humanity and how when we suffer a loss, we often feel isolated and can hardly carry on.



When we are in those dark places, those ‘dark nights of the soul,’ we feel so alone, but I’ve seen in my own life and in the lives of other that we are never really alone. Most of us have a support system of some kind like family, friends or our faith that longs to help us, if we can just accept it.

Breathe was born in pain and ends with the triumph of learning to let it go, and I hope it will impact our audiences the way it has our devoted and hardworking cast and crew. I look forward to sharing this story with the world.”

Shanna Forrestall - Writer, Producer, Lead Actress, Breathe

"I love moving images. There's just something about cinema that speaks to people on an emotional level, a visceral level. But cinema is more than just pretty images with beautiful lighting and composition. It is like a dance between an actor and the camera, the pacing between each beat and the rhythm in the editing. That's what Breathe is to me.

When I first read the script, I was immediately immersed into the story and I wanted to find out what happened to this woman. I needed to learn about her and her past. It is because of this feeling that I knew I had to be a part of it.

Our entire crew and talent gave their 100% during the shoot and the final product is a testimony to their efforts."

Michael Liu, Director, Breathe

“Breathe was one of the most intimate films I have ever worked on. There was so much creative equity involved. I love this team.”

Escalante Lundy, Lead Actor, Breathe

“I fell in love with this project as soon as I read the original script and couldn’t wait to see it come to fruition. The story of a journey guided by the spirit world watching over captivated me. The power of the script captures this perfectly. I love this film and know you will too.”

Neil Wells, Executive Producer, Breathe

“When you get the opportunity to work with those you like and respect, secluded at a breathtaking location that is when magic happens. So that's what we did. We made magic!”

Nicole Lovince, 1st AD, Breathe

“Working on Breathe was a healing experience that allowed me to help share a story about grief through creative avenues that I thought I had lost after living thru Hurricane Katrina. Breathe brought me back to life and I hope that it will do the same for others that identify with any form of loss that’s keeping them from living a full life.”

Karen Clark, Costume Design, Art Direction, Set Dressing & Props, Breathe

“When I first saw a rough edit of BREATHE, I knew this was a film I wanted to work on. Everything about the film was top quality, from the acting to the story and the cinematography. The challenge of writing music for a film without dialogue is not new to me, having re-scored many classic silent films and also some modern short films.

Since BREATHE also includes natural sounds and creative sound design elements, I had an additional element to integrate my music with. For example, I wanted to keep the music arrangement lighter, or in some cases, completely out for scenes where the sound design is important to the story.

The first scene I scored was the final and climactic scene. I wanted to create a theme or motif that I could apply to other scenes so the motif could develop over the course of the film and be fully developed at the end. As I started writing, I developed motifs that joined different characters to a common emotion or need.



For example, the painter character has mystical aspect and is also a catalyst for the actions of the other characters. I used some of her melodic phrases and instruments, such as piano and harp in scenes that she is not in but where there is a subtext of motivation.

There is another theme that appears with all of the characters and is performed only on guitar. It is a 4 note melody that moves up and back down. This motif symbolizes a question that is carried through the film. The question creates a yin/yang relationship with the motivation concept. The question is simply, one character asking herself, 'am I ready', and another character asking, 'Have you decided...?' or, 'Are you ready?'

Another motivic element is created by the use of a Native American flute, a bass flute and other breathy low instruments to convey a dark feeling of anxiety and trepidation. This motif is associated with both of the lead characters but is designed to initially convey different emotions when viewing each of the characters. By the end of the film, this difference in the interpretation is resolved.

What I enjoyed most about this film was finding a way to add subtext, or information that is not fully spelled out in the dialog or action. By following the motivic elements relating to the internal questions, anxieties and motivation of the characters I think the audience will have a deeper understanding of the grieving/healing process that is central to the story of BREATHE.

I should point out that I rewrote that final music after adapting the motifs that began in my original sketch. I also realized that my original music was simply echoing the emotions that were already being conveyed so expertly by actors, Shanna Forrestall and Escalante Lundy. In my final music for this scene, I found a way to support the acting while building to the wonderful final shot and transitioning to the final credits.

I hope you enjoy this film as much as I enjoyed working on it. "

Carlos Garza, Composer, Breathe

"Despite the challenges we were faced with ... the weather, freezing equipment and cars being hit ... this was one of the BEST experiences I have ever had working on set! With an incredibly talented cast and crew, the obstacles we faced were just another interesting part of the experience. As a team we came together and faced those challenges with alternative solutions and because of this, I couldn't have been happier with the outcome!"



Megan Hebert, Hair/Makeup, Breathe

“Collaborating with other forms of artistic disciplines is something that brings me great joy as an artist. So when the opportunity came to work with the amazing cast and crew of Breathe, I was excited to be part of this new endeavor. However, after taking in the script and connecting with the subject matter of this film, I was honored.

When painting, I am usually musing on poignant moments of human experiences that connect us all. The ones that highlight our humanity, inspire me most.

Grief, is one of them. As I mused in preparation, two things were illuminated. Grieving over a loved one is the process of turning memories of them into monuments of their legacy. Grieving over something that needed to be lost, is the process of moving from illusions to truth, then healing and deeper still, freedom. Both, not easy.



As I was painting in this film, I tried to empathize with the journey the characters were going through to reach their ‘monumental’ moment. I thought of all the people, including myself, that walked a similar path and what became very clear was that the depth of pain perfectly mirrors the depth of love.

At that point, it was no longer about getting the painting ‘right’ per se, but about capturing a human experience that so intrinsically connects us all. Love.

This collective synergy, in seasons of grief, gives us strength to face the days ahead and is evidenced in every step taken forward. All that is left to do then, is breathe.

Thank you to all the wonderful people in the cast and crew of this beautiful film. It was a such a gift to work with and learn from you all. A truly unforgettable experience.”

Jennifer Awad, Visual Artist, Breathe

Video Interviews with key cast/crew:

[Shanna Forrestall Discusses How Breathe was Born](#)

[Carlos Garza Discusses Breathe’s Original Score](#)

[Escalante Lundy Discusses His Role in Breathe](#)

[Behind the Scenes Fun on the Set of Breathe](#)