

HER MAJESTY // DESIGN PROCESS SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Budget - £700

Shoot days - 3

Production Design/ Set Decorator/ Art Director/ Prop Master - May Davies

Art Assistant - Rahil Patel

Her Majesty was my second film made with director Rebekah Fortune. Knowing each other's working style before was beneficial for this project which was ambitious for the budget. Short film budgets are always low but with a total art budget of £700 and shooting in the midlands required me to also provide the transport which I am able to do as my everyday vehicle is a van.

The film follows a woman who believes she is the Queen of England and so part of the film required period elements to place it in the 40s and when we return to her house we understand the reality of the situation. We had discussed building a set for the living room but there wasn't nearly enough money however all the locations we looked at for potential options were very blank and didn't have enough access for prep to make a significant change.

It was important to me to have complete control over the living room set and so Rebekah offered her living room which she was about to decorate which worked well as it meant I could re-decorate and age without having to completely reset afterwards. I had to contain the extent of work as there was hardly any budget for crew, I was working with one very helpful art assistant albeit right at the beginning of his career and very little previous experience.

One of the major challenges was to do with the decision to shoot the film in 1:1 ratio. This meant that there wouldn't be many wide shots of the set and in order to make sure my ideas were being seen at all had to quite tightly pack the set. Being on standby was important as there wasn't much opportunity in this set to make images that supported the narrative.

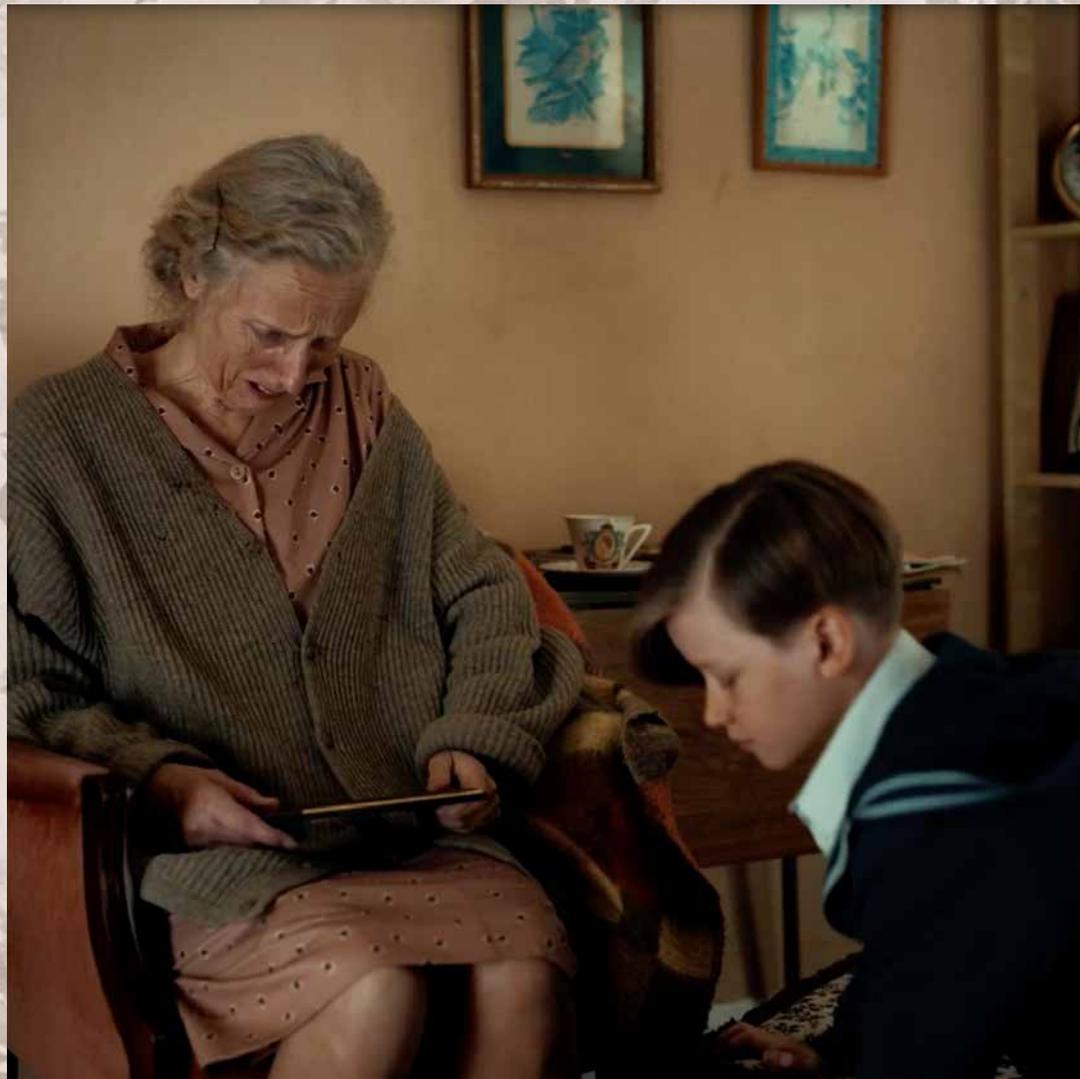
Design elements include a muted British flag colour palette - pinks, browns, creams, blues. I planted clues about dementia into the design such as ghost marks from missing pictures on the wall to emphasise memory loss, peeling wallpaper and also planting props into the objects on the shelves that then feature in her imagination.

When it came to creating the 40s I enjoyed a bit of creative license as we wanted to deliberately plant false things that were glitches in the imagination such as the bright straws in the ice creams and the colour newspaper the angry man is reading. We chose exterior locations that were fairly neutral and didn't need to worry too much about things that gave away the time period.

This film is very much an actor led story and the performances are fantastic so although it was a lot of work to strip, repaint and wallpaper to transform a room we don't see very much of, I think the film would be very different had we had to shoot in an existing location we couldn't change much to, and therefore I think helps the audience to relax into the ending to focus on the excellent performances from both actors.

HER MAJESTY

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

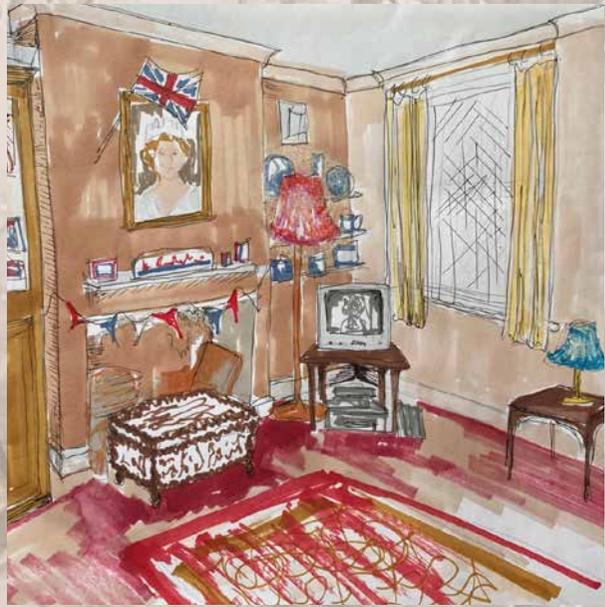


Short Film. Poetic and nostalgic in style, Her Majesty is a story about dementia and love told with intimacy, whimsy, and a large dash of magic.
Writer + Producer | Carmela Corbett. Director | Rebekah Fortune, Cinematographer | Haridas Stewart

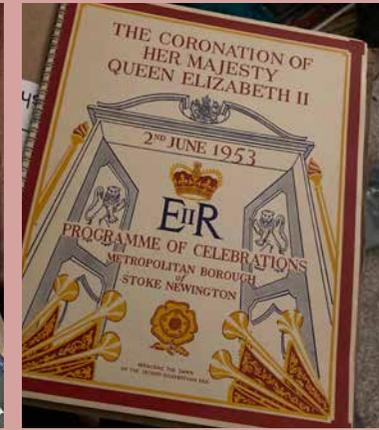
LA Shorts (Oscar Qual) 2021, PIIFF 2021 - Best Production Design honorable mention

HER MAJESTY DESIGN PROCESS

Room transformation into living room set where the elderly woman suffering dementia watches her favourite video of the Queen's 21st birthday speech, 1947, on repeat



HER MAJESTY DESIGN PROCESS



Developing colour palettes from faded royal colours and selecting wallpaper, paints and fabrics

HER MAJESTY DESIGN PROCESS

King or Queen
It's called 'Patient Condition'
You must not just say
'Good morning', 'Goodbye'
It minimises the relationship
Try and appraise interest
Tenderness, conscientiousness, confidence
The fact you are sharing with them
Uplift the feeling
Feel better already
Not just a dummy
Pretend you have all the time
In the world
we will feel like King or Queen

Research: Poem by 'Ellen' suffering dementia
written with help from Susanna Howard



Production design elements inspired by
dementia-related memory loss



Carefully selected props placed in the living
room set that then feature in the elderly
woman's dementia-related delusion

