



**QWEEKEND**  
WEEKEND 12-13-14

**THE FUTURE OF WORK**

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Meet the pioneering siblings...  
 ...of getting indie films out there without having a huge cost to pay



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**SISTERS DO IT FOR ALL**

Meet the pioneering siblings thumbing their nose at traditional filmmaking channels in the hope of paving the way for others

**MEGAN MILLER**

Sophie and Dominique Mathisen are sisters who want drama to follow them. It's the name of their debut feature film, an indie charmer underwritten entirely through a crowd-funding campaign and from their own pocket.

Drama is out on Thursday via a day-and-date model, which means it's released online the same day it shows in cinemas. And the duo has self-distributed the film on FanForce, a platform that books screenings with cinemas and if enough people buy tickets to the screening, it goes ahead. "It's a way of getting indie films out there without having a huge cost to pay," Dominique, 35, explains. "Usually a distributor would buy the film and liaise with the cinemas and pay the screening runs, but as an independent filmmaker there's not enough money in the coffers to do that. It's terrifying. It's like pleading with people to come to the biggest party you've ever had. Please RSVP. Please (she laughs). It's exciting but nerve-racking."

Drama has been four years in the making for the London-born, Newcastle (NSW)-raised sisters. Sophie wrote, directed and starred in the film while Dominique produced it. It's the first feature for their production company Little Sure Shots and was filmed in Paris and London over six weeks in 2013 with a crew of 30. "As if we're doing the job of an entire production company and juggling other work, it's taken this long," Dominique says. The inner-Melbourne Brunswick local has been a hair make-up artist for more than a decade, recently working on television shows including *Winners and Losers*, *Jack Irish*, *Wentworth* and *The Doctor Blake Mysteries*.

Sophie, 29, who moved to Sydney one year, graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts



Sophie Mathisen (top, at left, with sister Dominique) and with Jonathan Burtiaux in *Drama*.



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as an actor in 2008, worked in theatre for a few years, then decamped to London for an MA in acting for screen at London's Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

She started penning *Drama* as her master's thesis, inspired by her strong friendship with a gay friend. She plays Anna, an aspiring actor in London down on her luck and reeling from a breakup who goes to stay with her best friend Jean (Jonathan Burtiaux, Sophie's real-life bestie) at the Paris apartment he shares with his partner, Philippe (François Vincentelli). When Anna's ex turns up, things get messy.

It's engaging, warm and witty, with lots of penny-drop moments about relationships and career. Dominique says the film celebrates "gay husbands", the saviour of many an inner-city single girl. "It's a love letter to all our gay friends. Sophie's in a relationship now but I'm single and it's a thing we always talk about - there's no stories for women who are happy being single."

"It's almost like you're looking for love in all the right places and sometimes you don't find it, but often you've got it around you anyway." It's such a powerful love. Without (my gay male friends) I wouldn't be the person that I am."

The cast also includes two longtime friends of the Mathisens, Nicole da Silva (*Wentworth, Doctor Doctor*) and Tom Wren (*Winners and Losers*), who donated their acting skills to the project. Meanwhile, a friend's parents' apartment in Paris was used for a variety of locations.

"We robbed the 'favour bank' for this," Dominique says. "There's a definite friend economy." *Drama* cost \$350,000 to make, with only about \$35,000 - one-tenth - raised through crowd-funding via Indiegogo. The rest was self-funded. The sisters did not apply for government assistance. "It was difficult because we're first-time filmmakers," Dominique says. "No one will give you the chance... We didn't even apply. There was no point. Projects sit in development for years. We needed it done. We wanted it as our calling card (for more work)."

"It's hard for the little guy now. The arts are really struggling, but when someone puts their hand up and puts their hand in their pocket and goes 'Let's do it', that kind of entrepreneurial drive needs to be supported and encouraged."

"I want other people to see that we've made a film and there's success and they go, 'Let's do it as well' rather than fall flat and have the industry go, 'You've got to do it our way'. It's important to say there's lots of different ways of making films and having them seen and supported."

*Drama* has screened at several film festivals, premiering last July at the East End Film Festival in London, one of the UK's biggest. It made its American debut in Portland before showing in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago and making its Australian premiere at the Gold Coast Film Festival in March this year.

It was also made with a gender quota of a minimum of 50 per cent females working on the project. *Little Sure Shots'* next project is a docudrama about the dating world of sugar daddies, older rich men who date much younger women.

**Drama opens in cinemas and online (\$5 download via iTunes/Google Play) on Thursday. [afilmcalledrama.com](http://afilmcalledrama.com)**

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**THIS WEEKEND**  
 @ **Qpac**  
 RESTAURANT  
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- 00 Kiss Me, Kate in Concert**  
 Saturday 2pm & 8pm
- QT Turfite**  
 Saturday 7.30pm
- QSO Music on Sunday**  
 Sunday 11.30am
- 2036: The Future is No**  
 Saturday 6pm

- COMING SOON**
- 18 Nov A Tribute to Elvis - If I Can Dream
  - 19 Nov At Last - The Etta James Story
  - 18 & 19 Nov ACPA: Flight
  - 22-25 Nov Bill Bailey - Larks in Transit
  - 25 & 26 Nov The Bootles
  - From 25 Nov Mattia The Music
  - 26 Nov Australian Girls Choir At Concert 2016
  - 27 Nov 6x5 Heavenly Voice
  - From 29 Nov The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show
  - 29 & 30 Nov QSO Season Final