



**FAST**

**FORWARDS**

written and directed by  
Ari Kwasner-Catsi

produced by Josie Alexandra &  
Manuela Leigh

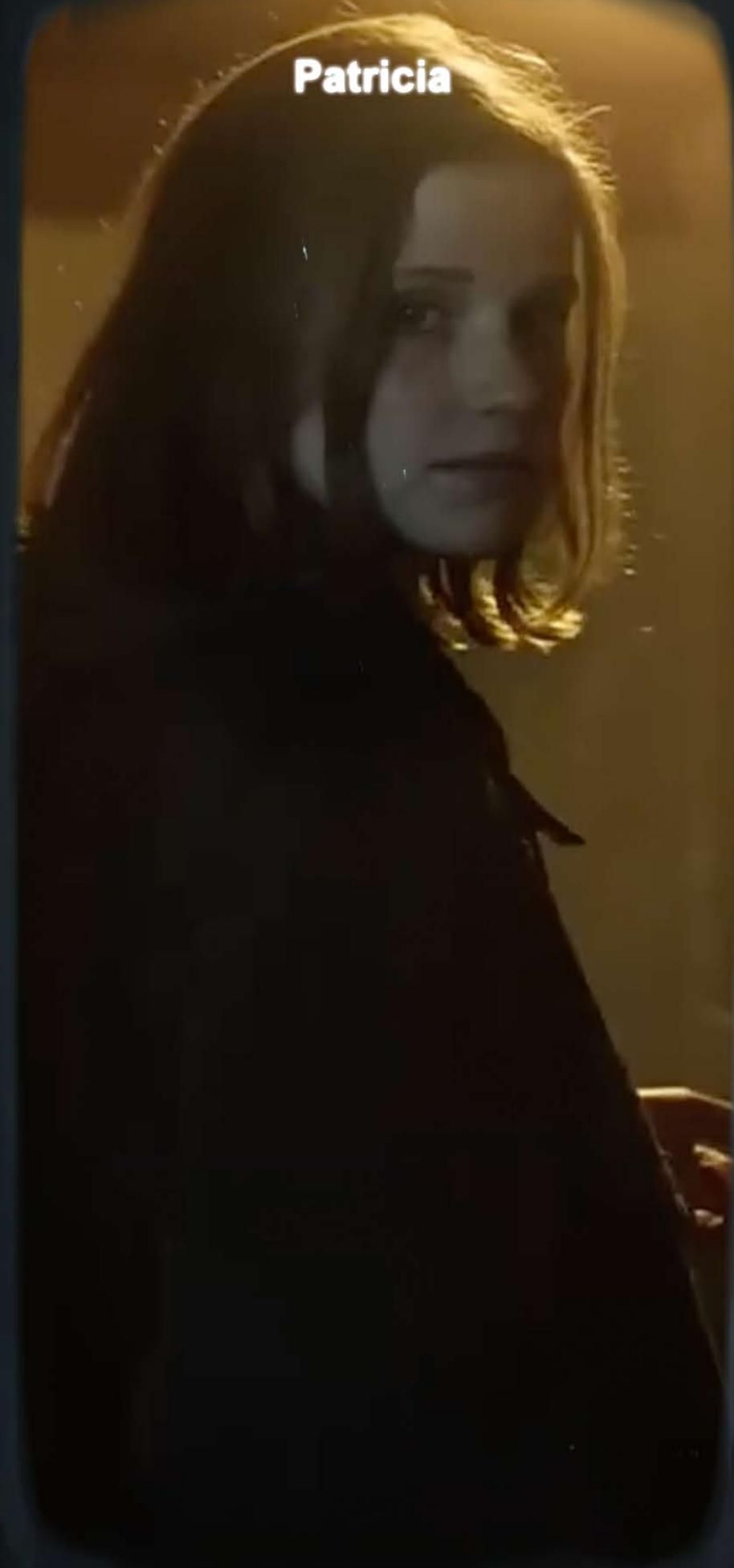
**FIVE KITCHENS** is a surreal short film drama and installation art piece. It's designed for cinema as well as a three-channel immersive experience.



Polish-Australian Patricia processes the grief of her recently deceased grandmother's death by diving through her past, Patricia's own memories and the old daytime Polish cooking show they used to watch.



**Patricia**



**Irena**



**Jacek**



# SYNOPSIS

Five Kitchens is a non-linear, surreal triptych, each scene anchored by the preparation of Polish Beetroot Soup (Borscht).

Patricia, a third-generation Polish-Australian, visits her great-aunt Krystyna in Poland for the first time, which awakens an imagined journey through her deceased grandmother Irena's life.

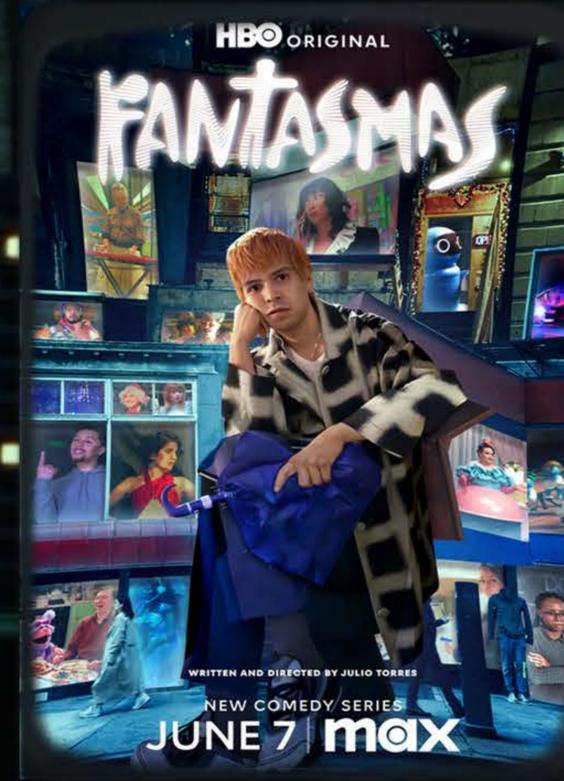
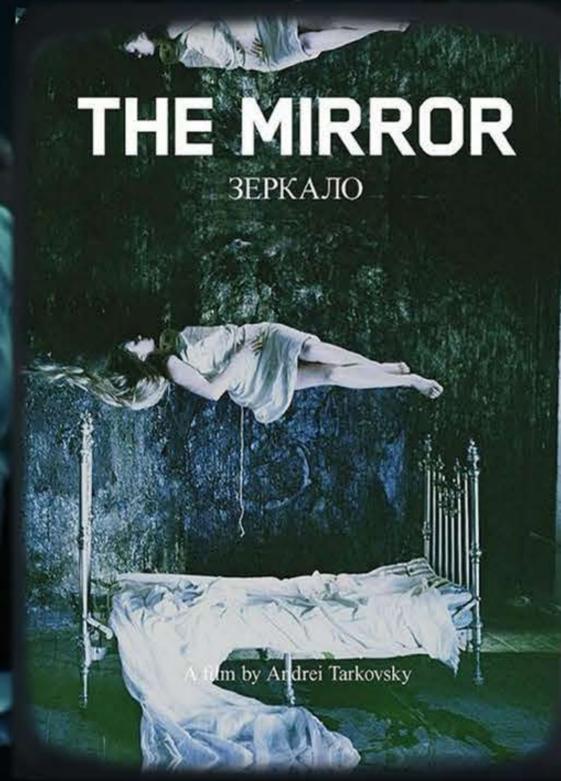
Patricia's scenes run backwards, Irena's run chronologically, whilst interwoven is a VHS tape from a 2000s Polish cooking show they watched together.

With borscht simmering across scenes, the film dives from 1939 wartime Poland to 1960s Australian suburbia and ends in 2023 modern Australia.



**Here their timelines meet, before Irena's death, where the two share the borscht, giving catharsis to Patricia's grief and understanding of her grandmother.**

# TO NE AND STY LE



Five Kitchens unfolds entirely through Patricia's point of view. The film is surreal and dream-like blending memory, imagination, and reality.

The film physicalizes Patricia's internal emotional world rather than recreating exact physical spaces and time periods.

**The camera floats like Patricia's eye—using Steadicam, long takes, and sensory details to navigate time and memory.**

**Sets are intentionally artificial and fragmented, reflecting Patricia's imagined, incomplete memories.**

**Sound design heightens sensory moments and warps them into abstraction, while an ambient electronic score guides the film's emotional flow.**

Performances will remain naturalistic to anchor the dreamlike tone. Irena will feature a distinct birthmark to allow audiences to track her through time.

This style draws viewers through a fragile dreamscape, constantly reminding them the film's world is constructed and mutable.

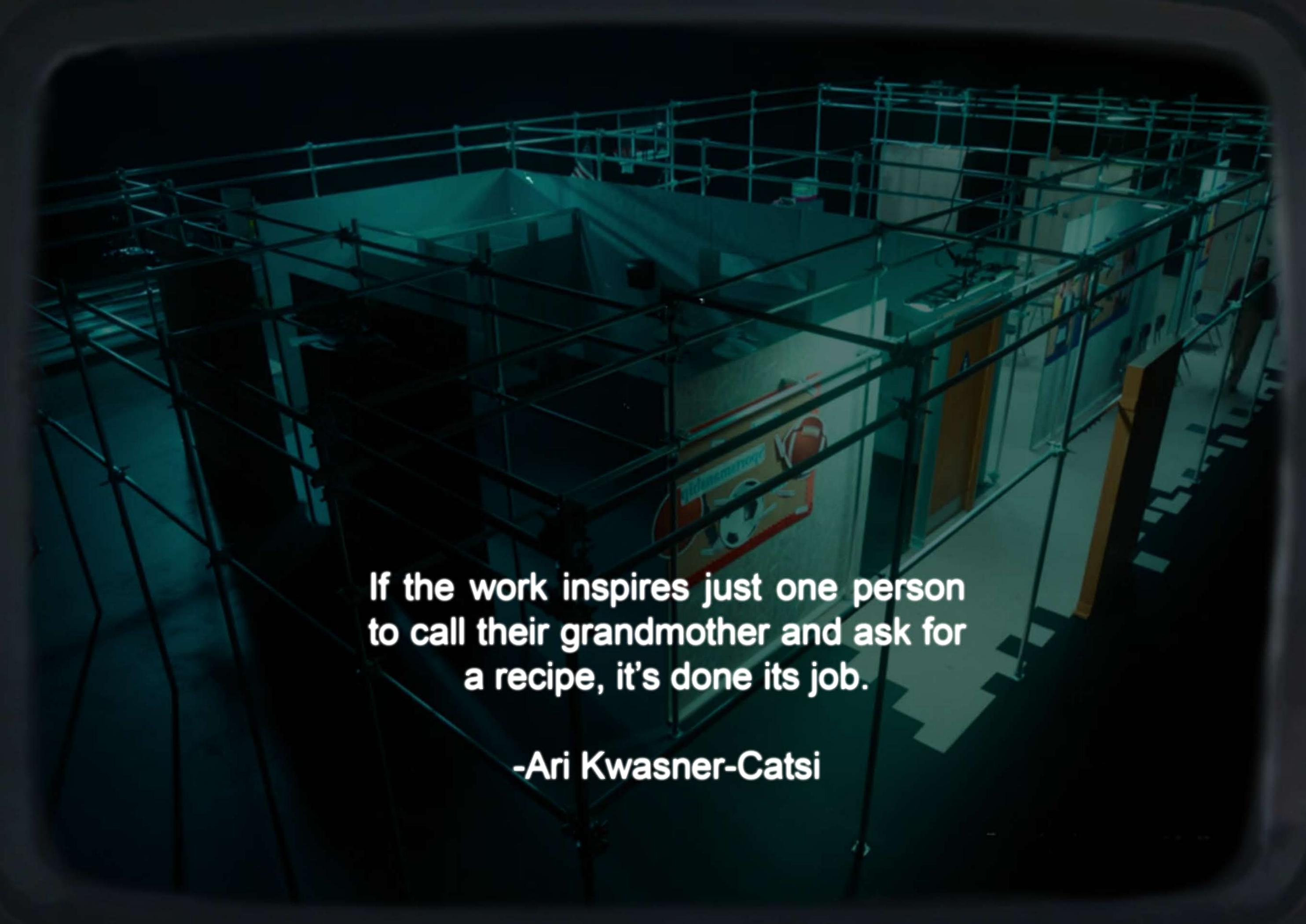
A still from the film 'Five Kitchens' showing a wooden table with a hat, glasses, and a bowl. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, reddish-brown color palette. A brown hat sits on the left side of the table. In the center, a pair of glasses and a small bowl are visible. The background is dark and out of focus.

# DIRECTORS STATEMENT

**Five Kitchens is a dream-like drama about food, memory, and the fragmented lives of diasporas.**

**At its heart, it's a memory film—where borscht soup becomes a symbol of identity, loss, and connection.**

**Five Kitchens asks: what memories live within a dish, and how do they connect us to something bigger than ourselves?**



**If the work inspires just one person  
to call their grandmother and ask for  
a recipe, it's done its job.**

**-Ari Kwasner-Catsi**

# INSTALLATION

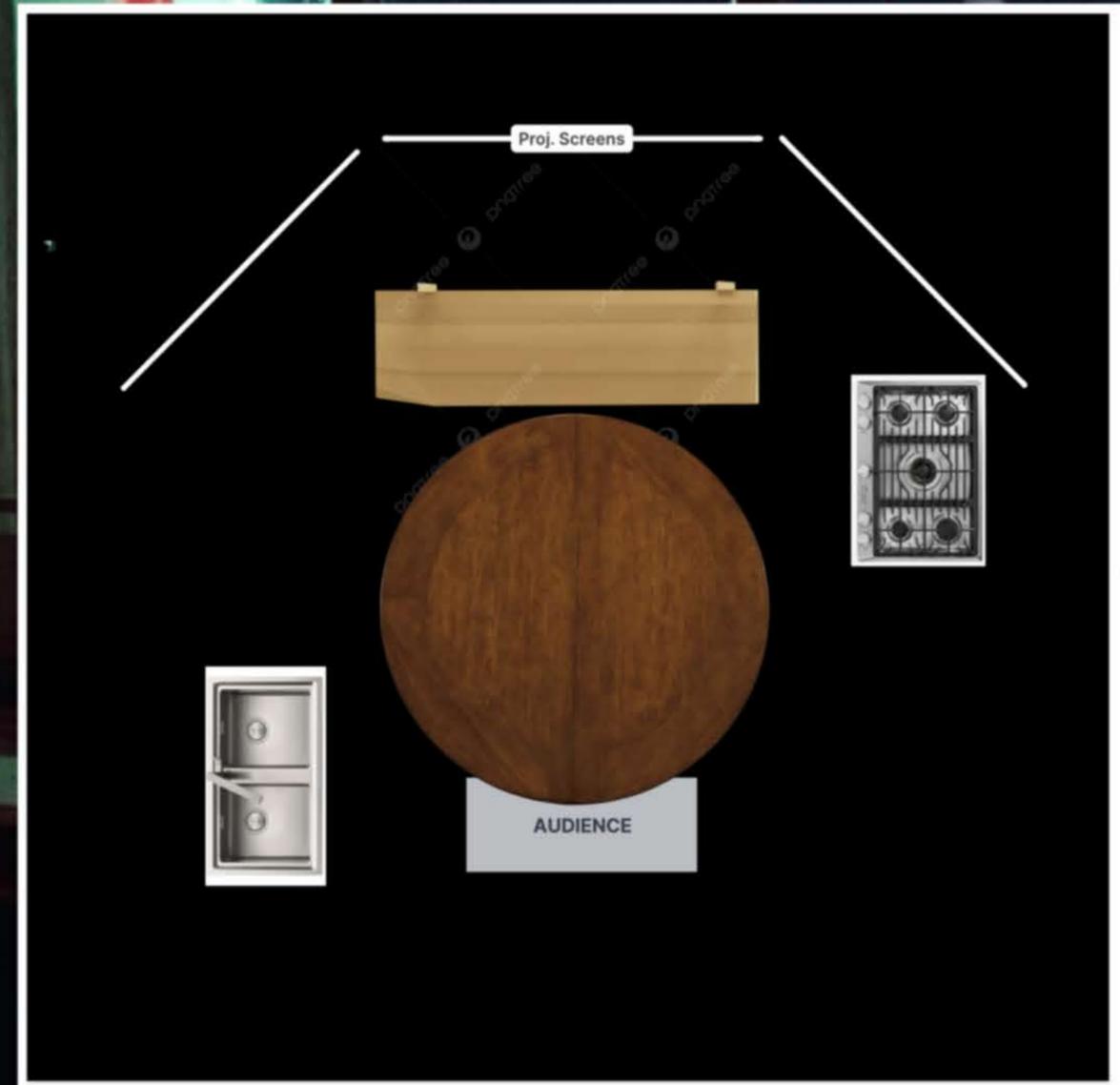
Five Kitchens is designed to act as both a multi-sensory, three-channel immersive art installation and as a single-channel experimental short film, making it a highly adaptable project that sits between both the art world and cinema.

For the installation version, audiences will enter in a deconstructed kitchen, and will sit at an old wooden table.

At the opposite end of the kitchen table three large projections screens placed in a concave-like shape will almost envelope the viewer.

The three timelines within the film will play out on the different screens as the stories separate and intertwine.

We will also utilise ambisonics audio to create an immersive soundscape.



In some of the planned installations, audiences will be invited to eat a bowl of freshly prepared Polish borscht, mirroring the film and adding taste, smell and texture to this memory and sensory driven piece.

# KEY CREATIVES



**Ari Kwasner-Catsi**  
**Writer/Director**

Ari Kwasner-Catsi is a Greek-Polish-Australian writer/director and producer, based in Sydney and London, whose works interrogate identity, memory and belonging through highly stylised, genre-driven, pieces.

In 2022, working with University of Technology Sydney, Ari was shortlisted for an Australian Writers Guild Award. His 2023 film **CONCRETE** was the recipient of the Blackbird Foundation's Protostars Grant and premiered at Melbourne Underground Film Festival. He was then awarded Blackbird's exclusive Follow-Up Fund to develop the feature version. In 2025, he was shortlisted for the BFI's Short Film Fund.

Ari has produced for emerging directors, including Miski Omar's **Button Pusher** (2025) which premiered at Sydney Film Festival and Gee Small's **BABY** (2025), with several other projects in development. Currently, Ari is assisting BAFTA-winning director Nick Hamm on two feature film projects.

Ari is the early stages of launching a joint production company with longtime collaborator and friend, actor Milly Alcock (**House of the Dragons**, **Supergirl**).



**Josie Alexandra**  
**Producer**

Josie Alexandra is a multi-award-winning artist-filmmaker and producer. Based between London and Australia, Josie creates experimental and non-linear works that interrogates their fascination with intra-personal relationality as sites for reclamations and transformations, to present narratives for understanding neurodiverse & non-binary life that are unbound by preconceptions.

Their short film 'Compass in Hand', won Best Cinematography at the Multicultural Mental Health Film Festival (2023) and was awarded by Samantha Littley, curator of Australian Art

at QAGOMA, as the winner of 2024 'the churchie' emerging art prize (\$30,000). Josie is currently developing the series second film: 'Revoke the Narratives {Opacity's Spearhead}'.

Since completing Raindance Film Producers' Foundation Certificate (2024), Josie has been developing their company Aea Studios, June 2025, Josie secured ArtsACT funding to develop as a producer. Josie also is producing the short film 'Nun-fluences' currently in post-production.



**Manuela Leigh**  
**Producer**

Manuela Leigh is a Sydney-based mid-career commercial producer with a versatile career delivering high-quality work across documentary features, music video and commercial production.

She has extensive experience working in fast-paced environments that demand strong communication and independent problem-solving skills. Manuela has worked at well-known Sydney creative agencies such as Sibling, where she honed her skills across production, post-production and project management.

She was Head of Production for the Sydney based production company, The Kitchen. Manuela is known for her skillsets in merging creative vision with precision in production resulting in detailed execution.

Manuela has produced largescale commercial projects with budgets of up to 2 million, working for local and overseas brands such as Telstra, Apple, and Qantas. In the realm of music and experimental work, in 2021, she produced Shortwave: Deepfaith – A Deepfaith Digital Odyssey, Act 1, which was featured at the Sydney Opera House.



**Milly Alcock**  
**Executive Producer**

Milly Alcock is an Emmy-nominated actor celebrated for her powerful performances across film and television.

She first gained acclaim for her role as Meg in the series *Upright* (2019–2022), earning an AACTA Award nomination for Best Comedy Performer. Alcock rose to international prominence portraying young Rhaenyra Targaryen in *House of the Dragon* (2022–2024), a performance that garnered her a Critics' Choice nomination.

In 2025, she was cast as Supergirl, that is premiering 2026. She also stars in Netflix's *Sirens* (2025) alongside Julianne Moore and Meghann Fahy.

Alongside, Ari Kwasner-Catsi, she is in the early stages of starting their own production company.



**Veronica Gleeson**  
**Executive Producer**

Veronica Nadine Gleeson is a writer and producer. She began her career as a film critic for *Ninemsn* and *Inside Film*, whilst producing and writing independent theatre, and working as a feature film script consultant.

Veronica has held senior creative executive positions at Screen Australia, Madman Entertainment and Icon Films where she was instrumental in the development and funding of countless screen projects.

Veronica produced the feature film *Below* for Good Thing Productions, as well as co-writing *Spookers* and *Nude Tuesday*. Internationally, Veronica has been supported by BBC, Lionsgate and BBC Studios.

She is currently developing projects with See Saw Films, Causeway and Sibel Pictures. Her 2022 Belvoir play *Tell Me I'm Here* was the recipient of the Blake Beckett Award. Veronica is represented in the UK by Cathy King at 42.



**Darwin Schulze**  
Director of Photography

Darwin Schulze is Sydney-based award-winning Cinematographer and colourist working across commercial, narrative and experimental video.

Darwin's progressive and experimental approach to cinematography has made him in-demand for some of Australia's most upcoming directors.

His selected projects include short films tint. (2023), Bluebird (2025), Purity (2025) and the web series Spacerats (2024) for which he was award Silver at the Australian Cinematography Awards.



**Nicolas Baviere**  
Composer/ Sound Designer

As a visual media composer, I experiment with sound, from synthesizers to orchestras, to create immersive sonic experiences. Each project begins with in-depth creative research, uncovering micro-stories that shape the broader narrative. I build unique sound libraries, challenging conventions and blurring the line between composition and sound design.

Inspired by everything around me, I absorb emotions and perspectives to shape my work. With a background in Electronic Music Production from Catalyst Berlin and a master's in Composition for Film & TV from the London College of Music, I've worked with bands like Les Pleureuses and explored diverse projects. Now, I compose for film, theatre, and art installations, pushing sound beyond convention to redefine its role in storytelling.



**Phoebe Taylor**  
Costume Designer

Phoebe Taylor is a talented costume designer and wardrobe professional known for her work on both film and television projects. She has contributed to a range of productions, including the critically acclaimed film Nitram (2021), where she worked as a costume assistant, and the 2023 film Foe as an assistant costume designer.

Phoebe's expertise extends to television, with credits on series like High Country (2024) as a costume buyer and The Narrow Road to the Deep North (2025) TV mini-series as an assistant costume designer. She is also the costume designer for shorts and music videos such as Analog Medium (2024) and King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard: People-Vultures (2016).



**Geri Docherty**  
Editor

Geri (she/they) is a film editor whose work is guided by a shrewd intuitive touch and a perfectionist's attention to detail. Having worked across both commercial and independent film spaces, including narrative shorts, documentaries, music videos, and fashion films

Geri's work has been screened and revelled at Berlinale International Film Festival, Melbourne International Film Festival, Melbourne Queer Film Festival, Melbourne's Women in Film Festival, Mardi Gras Film Festival, St Kilda Film Festival & The Atom Awards. One of her latest works, Eden Alone Surpasses Thee, won best short form documentary at the Australian International Documentary Conference (A.I.D.C).

Geri has just completed her debut feature film, FIRST LIGHT, directed by James Robinson and set to premiere in 2025.

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