

RSP



# A New York Story

Press Notes





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**94 MINUTES**

**NOT YET RATED**

**US**

**ENGLISH**

**COLOR**

## Synopsis

*A New York Story* follows Annabel, a young woman who risks being ostracized from an insular New York clique led by her socialite best friend when she falls for charming photographer Theo. Grappling with the sudden loss of her father, Annabel finds herself torn between the comfortable opulence of her upper crust circle and the vibrant ambitions of the artists downtown. As Theo introduces her to unexplored sides of the city and of herself, how far will Annabel push out of her gilded cage?

# Production Notes

# Production Notes

The Robert Sisters' second feature, *A New York Story* quietly picks at the seams of a woman's identity within an insular blue-blooded set, staying with the audience long after the last frame. A hauntingly romantic piano score by Tiffany Roman, reminiscent of *Love Story*'s Frances Lai, ushers us to the blocks uptown of New York, and a world left undisturbed by time: the Upper East Side. Set in the present day, the film lets us glance behind the velvet curtains and iron gates at the Old Money set of New York that has receded intentionally from view. While the rest of New York has charged boldly into a progressive future, this part of New York has remained affluent and unchanged. Through the decades, writer Truman Capote, photographer Harry Benson, important American figures like the Kennedys and filmmaker Whit Stillman have given the world the insight they crave into this world. The Robert Sisters likewise bring us an intellectual and engaging story that feels like one we thought we had forgotten, a whisper on the wind.

"New York is back. It's the roaring 20's!" declares the loquacious, WASPy, Will Cafrey, played brilliantly by Logan Miller (*Escape Room*, *Being Frank*) outside

the glitzy Frick Collection's Autumn Dinner event. The film opens in the way most New York nights start, with a chance encounter. Theo, a street photographer from Greenpoint, who happened to be included at a young patron's table at the Frick unknowingly snaps a photo of socialite Virginia Wyethe as she's leaving the gala. Virginia's friends are immediately interested in Theo's brazen act, particularly the beguiling Annabel, daughter of a well-known actor. Annabel and Cafrey convince Theo to join them for an after party at Virginia's nearby forty-million dollar Fifth Avenue apartment.

We proceed to witness Virginia's circle indulge in conversation, caviar, and dancing with Theo in tow. The Robert Sisters' skillful writing brings a subtle unease as we watch this billionaire class converse with an artist whose worldview is to critique their very existence, even as we're laughing at their anecdotes. In one endless Manhattan night, they discuss Theo's photographs (They've seen his exhibition post-New York Times feature, of course) and wonder openly at Theo's opinions on art, capitalism, and their main pastime: philanthropic events. Theo regards them, bemused, offering





"These events are a kind of necessary evil... they're romantic and formal so people of a certain class that long for that 'gilded age' thing spend their money on a party and end up supporting the real art, which hangs from the Museum's walls." Theo is charmed by their earnestness, and is surprised to have a real connection with Annabel, bonding over her artistry as she tells him a story about her father acting in a play.

Shortly after this night, Annabel loses her actor father to a Fentanyl overdose, and finds herself surrounded by tabloids but none of her friends. Spurred by the tragedy of a personal crisis, Annabel begins to question her place in the scene of parties where her friends have very little personal purpose. A second run in with Theo, begins her journey to uncover her buried creativity which was previously overshadowed by her father. Annabel's path of self discovery, becomes one of love as her clandestine entanglement with Theo offers the promise of a brighter, more fulfilled life.

*A New York Story*, captures some of the most classic places in New York such as The Frick Collection, The Conservatory Water in Central Park, Washington Square Park and Madison Avenue. As Annabel ventures through the city with Theo, we are drawn into the colorful nightlife of the village, with its comedy clubs, psychics, off Broadway theaters, and rooftop parties off the L Train. Theo introduces Annabel to his friends, all up and coming artists pursuing their dreams. They seem happy and vibrant to Annabel, in comparison to the life she knows.

The film explores the dynamics of social friend groups, specifically the idea that many friend groups operate as 'court systems' where there is an unspoken leader to whom the others defer. Especially in circles where money and influence attract people whose intentions are not pure. As Annabel challenges her own world views, this begins to disrupt the status quo, and indirectly challenge the Fifth Avenue circle of which Virginia is the unspoken ruler. But while there is discomfort in Annabel coming loose from the confines of her group, there is a glimmer of hope that her life is just beginning anew.





(left to right) Whit Stillman, Carolyn Farina, Fiona Robert, Sophia Robert

### Whit Stillman and Metropolitan Influence

Any film buff, or New Yorker for that matter, will recognize the influence of Whit Stillman's classic New York social drama *Metropolitan* (1990) on *A New York Story*. The Robert Sisters met with Whit Stillman and Carolyn Farina (who plays Audrey Rouget in *Metropolitan*) both have roles in the film.

**Whit Stillman added,**

**"As an actor whose career has been in Spanish language cinema I was grateful to the kind Robert sisters for giving me my first role in an American film -- which I hope they can fix in editing. I was especially pleased to perform opposite Carolyn Farina, who was so memorable in *Metropolitan* and Martin Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence*.**

**Finally, having grown up on a side street, I was delighted to get 'A New York Story'."**

*Metropolitan* is known for its intellectual, witty dialogue as a group of New York natives debate their plight in the city's elite social scene. They navigate a series of debutante balls throughout the holiday season, and discuss the imminent doom of the upper class whilst coining themselves the UHB "Urban Haute Bourgeoisie." The Robert Sisters aimed to make a film that was in conversation with *Metropolitan*, and examined the same class of New Yorkers in the present day. The Robert Sisters met with Whit Stillman and Whit and Carolyn Farina (who plays Audrey Rouget in *Metropolitan*) both have roles in the film. Where are the UHB now? The Robert





Sisters put forth that deb balls have been replaced by charity galas, where wealthy New Yorkers co-mingle. Whereas in *Metropolitan* Sally's circle goes from deb party to deb party, in *A New York Story*, Virginia's friends go from event to event supporting cultural institutions. But they still have the same insecurities about the way they are perceived which manifests in their commitment to living up to expectations and maintaining the status quo.

## Casting

Emmy Award winning casting director Julie Schubert and Lain Kunin undertook the daunting task of curating the actors for both Annabel and Theo's distinct friend groups which each have a unique New York sensibility. The Robert Sisters, both graduates of NYU Tisch School of the Arts, wanted to cast as many New York actors as possible but the net was cast as wide as Los Angeles and London. Fiona and Sophia Robert were playing Annabel and Virginia, respectively, marrying their knowledge of living in New York with their acting training. About working with the sisters, Julie Schubert said "[The Robert Sisters] are creative, kind, smart and there's no better combination than that for working with filmmakers. We were honored to be a part of *A New York Story*." Equally, the Robert Sisters were grateful to have Julie and Lain's expertise through the process of finding the perfect talent for each part in

a wide pool of brilliant actors.

One of the most challenging finds was the search for Theo ultimately played with immense charm by Paul Karmiryan. Theo was intellectual and it was important to find an actor with a strong grasp of text and natural curiosity. Theo is multifaceted, he's deep but also cool, playful and at the same time sincere— a real leading man. Of his process, Paul Karmiryan, said "I was compelled and inspired to immerse myself in the world and bring my character of Theo Offit, to life, and I am very excited for the world to see it - I know audiences will enjoy the journey and connect to the many themes the story touches upon." If Theo is the leader of the community of artists explored in the film, the uptown charmer is Cafrey, a part which proved to be an equally challenging search to fill.

The Robert Sisters were familiar with Logan Miller's work having seen him in the 2018 SxSW comedy *Being Frank*. After meeting to discuss the movie Logan signed on, and brought a powerful presence to Virginia's group. Miller's mastery of tricky dialogue, ability to turn a comedic phrase and expert timing makes him a beloved audience favorite.

The Robert Sisters also love to cast actors they admire, sometimes with whom they have worked with previously. Fiona put forward Noelle Miller to play



uptown socialite, Laurie, after the two girls met in an acting class in LA six years prior. The Robert Sisters also brought back Elaine Hendrix (*The Parent Trap*) from their first feature *The Country Club* to play Annabel's step-mother and Sean Ormond (Lumer from *The Country Club*). Fiona received a text from her manager where Richard Ellis had reached out after reading the script and gushed about wanting to be in the movie. That enthusiasm led Sophia and Fiona to offer him the role of Eli since they love to work with actors that bring enthusiasm to the table.

## Crafting New York Nostalgia

### Composition

"Artists who look at New York always look at it through two lenses, two time frames: present potential and past memories, because it has such a rich history, you cannot make new art about New York without an element of nostalgia" said director, Fiona Robert. Working closely with director of photography, Senda Bonnet, they chose to use baked in grain, smoke in some

scenes and rich contrasted lighting to give the final images the feeling as if they were coming out of the recess of someone's mind.

Compiling hundreds of paintings, film stills and photographs, Senda and Fiona worked side by side to storyboard the feature while stacking it with numerous references to the New York canon of films: *Love Story*, *The Age of Innocence*, *When Harry Met Sally*, *The Last Days of Disco*, *Frances Ha*, *You've Got Mail*, *Maggie's Plan* and of course, *Metropolitan*.

Another major visual influence for Senda and Fiona was Xavier Giannoli's *Lost Illusions* where the protagonist is torn between his friends who are writers and his loyalty to the aristocracy. Senda said, we wanted to "establish a clear contrast between two distinct realms. One was steeped in opulence, exuding warmth and luxury, deeply rooted in the past. The other represented the vibrant, contemporary New York, filled with colors and dynamic energy. I aimed to create a stark juxtaposition between these two worlds, symbolizing Anabelle's inner conflict."





Senda suggested using two sets of lenses to give Annabel and Theo's worlds different feels. In Annabel's world, where emotion is under the surface, and the spaces are opulent yet lonely, Anamorphics were used. Senda added, "we opted for elevated camera angles, visually symbolizing the weight of our characters' decisions and destinies as they loom over them, wides and static shots to translate the isolation of Anabelle." In Theo's world, where there is a warmth and vibrancy, Panchro Spherical Lenses were employed encircling the *mise-en-scène* to give Theo's world an immediate, close knit feel.

## Editing

By happenstance, The Robert Sisters found a native New Yorker to edit the film who knew the same sidewalks as them, who understood that a night in New York can just go on forever, who had fallen in love in the city and even gone to NY's famous LaGuardia High School for performing arts, Jasmin Way. Jasmin understood intrinsically how to craft the story describing the film as "a true love letter to New York City which is my home town." When the Robert Sisters interviewed Jasmin, they instantly clicked, and the team spent the snowy January days, giving their notes as Jasmin expertly weaved together a movie that feels like a New York memory. "It was such an enjoyable experience collaborating with Fiona and Sophia" Jasmin said, "[The Robert Sisters] were always very clear in their purpose to honestly, though sometimes satirically, represent the different factions of society that still exist in New York. While an update of the classic film *Metropolitan* the film flips the script to the

female gaze, filled with beautiful imagery and self-exploration." Piecing together each scene was like unwrapping a present with exciting performances inside. "We had a great cast of characters and lots of fun putting all the performances together. I hope audiences connect with the story as much as I did!" Jasmin added.

## Music

The final piece of nostalgia was supplied by Berkeley School of Music graduate Tiffany Roman Louk through her memorable score. The Robert Sisters fell in love with piano riffs Tiffany sent them after her initial interview, tunes reminiscent of Debussy piano pieces and Jazz standards that you might hear at Bemelmans Bar at the Carlyle.

To supplement the score, the Robert Sisters chose a wide range of classical pieces by Vivaldi, Bethoven, Fauré, Puccini and Chopin among others to accentuate the uptown world, and original songs by UK singer/songwriter King Charles, and NYU graduate Chris Tse, to bring novelty as Annabel pushes outside of her uptown world. That modernity was furthered by some exciting needle drops such as Nora Jones' "Back to Manhattan," "Bad Decisions" by The Strokes and "Strange" by Celeste. "Music is really important to me" said Fiona Robert, "I always make a playlist when we're starting a project that I share with Sophia and we add to it and listen to it while we write" says Robert. "Sometimes those songs end up in the film, in exactly where we hoped they would carry a plotline and sometimes they are just inspiration for a certain feeling we're trying to capture."

***A New York Story* certainly captures many feelings, mainly the tumultuous churnings of adults on the brink of the kind of life decisions that cement one's future. Both Virginia's group and Theo's group are entering their 30's deciding who to love, who to marry, making career strides, suffering setbacks, finally being the lead on a project or the chair of a major event. Suddenly, all the blithe joy of one's 20's is boiled down to a period where the questions that were raised during that decade beg answers: What do you care about? Who do you care for? What stand will you take, if any? What is your world, your responsibility, your view?**

## **STARRING**

Logan Miller

Paul Karmiryan

Anabella Sciorra

Richard Ellis

Elaine Hendrix

Noelle Miller

Fiona Robert

Sophia Robert

Francesca Root-Dodson

Tensaye Yosef

Dan Thompson



# Cast

# Cast

## LOGAN MILLER

starred in the hit Sony feature film *ESCAPE ROOM*, one of the most successful releases of 2019, as well as in the sequel, *ESCAPE ROOM: Tournament of Champions*, in 2021. Logan was last seen in the indie feature *SHITHOUSE*, which won the narrative feature competition at SXSW 2020. He also recently starred in the critically acclaimed Fox feature *LOVE, SIMON* and Kelly Reichardt's *NIGHT MOVES*, the sci-fi thriller *PLUS ONE*, and the drama *DEEP POWDER*. Logan can also be seen in the upcoming Lionsgate feature film, *PRIVATE PROPERTY* and just wrapped shooting the New Regency feature film, *PSYCHO KILLER*.

He previously starred in the drama *THE STANFORD PRISON EXPERIMENT*, and in writer/director Matt Sobel's feature debut *TAKE ME TO THE RIVER*, which IndieWire stated "the standout discovery is newcomer Miller". In 2017, Logan starred as the love interest in the adaptation of the best-selling novel *BEFORE I FALL*, as well as the DreamWorks feature *A DOG'S PURPOSE* for director Lasse Hallström. In 2016, Logan starred in Paramount's horror comedy *SCOUTS GUIDE TO THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE*, and was seen in *THE GOOD NEIGHBOR*. He also completed production on the independent feature *THE SCENT OF RAIN AND LIGHTNING*, as well as the lead role of the Universal / Blumhouse thriller *PREY*.

Logan's TV credits include roles in the hit AMC series *THE WALKING DEAD*, the *VERONICA MARS* re-boot and he continues to voice the role of Sam on the animated series *ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN*. He also provided voice over for the *GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY* animated series in 2018.

## ANABELLA SCIORRA

is best known for her powerful Emmy-nominated performance as 'Gloria Trillo' in HBO's *THE SOPRANOS*. She can currently be seen opposite Sylvester Stallone in Taylor Sheridan's recently renewed Paramount+ series, *TULSA KING*, as well as in the Apple limited series, *TRUTH BE TOLD*, opposite Octavia Spencer and Aaron Paul. Other television credits include *GODFATHER OF HARLEM* (Epix), *GLOW* (Netflix), Marvel's *DAREDEVIL* (Netflix), *NEW AMSTERDAM* (NBC) Marvel's *LUKE CAGE* (Netflix), *THE L WORD* (Showtime), and *LAW & ORDER: CI* (NBC), among others.

On the feature side, Annabella will next be seen opposite Jennifer Esposito in the indie feature *FRESH KILLS*, which premiered at this year's Tribeca Film Festival to rave reviews. Annabella also starred in the indie feature, *BEFORE I GO*, directed by Eric Schaeffer.

Annabella achieved leading lady status starting with Spike Lee's *JUNGLE FEVER* and Curtis Hanson's *THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE*. Other feature credits include *WHAT DREAMS MAY COME* opposite Robin Williams and Cuba Gooding Jr., among numerous others. She received an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Female Lead in Nancy Savoca's *TRUE LOVE*.

## PAUL KARMIRYAN

can most recently be seen co-starring in the Netflix feature film *ALONG FOR THE RIDE*, based on the bestselling novel by Sarah Dessen. He can also be seen recurring heavily in Hulu's latest season of cult classic series, *VERONICA MARS* and was a series regular on the Complex Networks/Go90 series *IN THE VAULT*, and the Snapchat original series *THE DEAD GIRLS DETECTIVE AGENCY*. He can also be seen appearing in Netflix's *ONE DAY AT A TIME*, CBS' series *FBI* and ABC's *THE ROOKIE*.

Aside from acting, Paul is also a trained, world-class dancer and can be seen in a variety of music videos ranging from Ed Sheeran to Camila Cabello to Justin Bieber.



# The Company

# The Company

**Robert Sisters Pictures** is an award-winning film production company founded in 2018. Created by sisters Fiona and Sophia Robert, the team writes, produces, directs, and stars in their films. The company was founded with the goal of creating inclusive work which strives to uplift both its audience and its team. With dynamic female leads, they create intriguing narratives which do not feature violence towards women on screen. Their commitment to equity while simultaneously not compromising quality is what makes the Robert Sisters unique. All Robert Sisters productions aim to have an inclusive and gender-balanced crew behind the scenes, earning their second feature film, *A NEW YORK STORY*, the ReFrame stamp of approval. The Robert Sisters' first feature, *THE COUNTRY CLUB* played five festivals taking home "Best Feature Comedy" upon its premiere at the Manhattan Film Festival and the "Marlyn Mason First Prize" at Flicker's Rhode Island Film Festival. The film was sold to Good Deed Entertainment for domestic distribution, and Archstone for International Sales. It will be released worldwide June 2023. The Robert Sisters' second feature, *A NEW YORK STORY* will world premiere as one of twelve films in Narrative Competition at Bentonville Film Festival June 2023 founded by Geena Davis. Robert Sisters Pictures are gearing up to produce their third feature, a Gosford Park style mystery set in the English Countryside.

# FIONA ROBERT

## WRITER + DIRECTOR

Fiona Robert is an award-winning filmmaker, actress, and co-founder of Robert Sisters Pictures. Starting her career as an actress she was chosen by Philip Seymour Hoffman to play opposite Tom Hardy in the Goodman Theatre's *The Long Red Road*. Since then, she found herself in other engaging roles such as *Write When You Get Work* (SXSW Film Festival, 2018) *Chekhov* (Sundance Film Festival, 2016) and TV Land's *Younger*, among others. As a director, her second feature, *A New York Story* was a finalist for the Golden Script Competition and will world premiere as one of twelve films in the Narrative Competition at Bentonville Film Festival June 2023. Her first feature, *The Country Club*, she directed and starred in, along with co-writing and co-producing with her sister Sophia. *The Country Club* was an official selection for festivals including Flicker's Rhode Island Film Festival where it won the "Marlyn Mason First Prize," the Heartland Film Festival, the Manhattan Film Festival where it won "Best Feature Comedy", and New York City Indie Film Fest where Fiona was awarded "Best Actress". The film was sold to Good Deed Entertainment for domestic distribution, and Archstone for International Sales. It will be released worldwide June 2023.

# SOPHIA ROBERT

## WRITER + ACTRESS

Sophia Robert is an award-winning producer, actress and writer and co-founder of Robert Sisters Pictures. Prior to her work in film, she studied to be a ballerina at the Staatliche Ballettschule und Schule für Artistik and performed with the Berlin State Ballet. She attended NYU Tisch School of the Arts and has a BFA in acting. The discipline she learned as a ballerina applies well to running a production company, acting and writing. She recently made her first feature film, *The Country Club*, which she starred in, co-wrote and co-produced with her sister Fiona. *The Country Club* went to five film festivals in 2022, including Flicker's Rhode Island Film Festival where it won the "Marlyn Mason First Prize," the Heartland Film Festival, the Manhattan Film Festival where it won "Best Feature Comedy", and New York City Indie Film Fest. The film was sold to Good Deed Entertainment for domestic distribution, and Archstone for International Sales. The film will be released worldwide on June 23rd. The latest feature film from the Robert Sisters: *A New York Story* will world premiere as one of twelve films in the Narrative Competition at Bentonville Film Festival in June 2023.



# Credits

# Credits

<b>Directed by</b>	Fiona Robert
<b>Produced by</b>	Sophia Robert Fiona Robert Drea Clark
<b>Director of Photography</b>	Senda Bonnet
<b>Written by</b>	Fiona Robert and Sophia Robert
<b>Chief Lighting Technician</b>	Jay Warrior
<b>Costume Design by</b>	Aaron Crosby
<b>Production Design by</b>	RA Arancio Parrain and Rhea D'Souza
<b>Edited by</b>	Jasmin Way
<b>Casting Director</b>	Julie Schubert CSA and Lain Kunin
<b>Music by</b>	Tiffany Roman
<b>Music Supervisor</b>	Julian Drucker
<b>Sound Mix by</b>	Lucien Palmer, Toolshed Audio Post
<b>Color by</b>	Luke Cahill