

A24

Past Lives

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Synopsis

Nora and Hae Sung, two deeply connected childhood friends, are wrest apart after Nora's family emigrates from South Korea. Two decades later, they are reunited in New York for one fateful week as they confront notions of destiny, love, and the choices that make a life, in this heartrending modern romance.

Production Notes

One night a few years back, Celine Song found herself sitting at a bar sandwiched between two men from vastly different parts of her life. One was her husband from New York, the other her childhood sweetheart, who was visiting the city from Korea. Playing both a translator and a middleman, Song had the strangest sensation that she was piercing through alternate dimensions, fusing them as one in this bar.

“I was sitting there between these two men who I know love me in different ways, in two different languages and two different cultures. And I’m the only reason why these two men are even talking to each other,” Song recalls. “There's something almost sci-fi about it. You feel like somebody who can transcend culture and time and space and language.”

It was there, sitting in this convergence of worlds, that Song—a mainstay in New York theater as a playwright (*Endlings*)—saw the inspiration for what would become her filmmaking debut, *Past Lives*. Appropriately, the film opens on its protagonist, Nora, sitting in between her husband and her first love, a mirror image of Song's memory.

It would be a mistake, though, to read this dynamic as an early scene of a melodramatic love triangle. Instead, Song turned this seed of experience into a quietly gutting film, concerned with something far more emotionally complex: the parts of a self that we lose as we become the people we are, and the ways our lives are shaped by those we love.

The film, at once strikingly intimate and bracing in its scope, is broken into three parts spanning countries and decades: first with Nora (Moon Seung-ah) as a young girl in Korea, developing an early bond with her best friend, Hae Sung (Leem Seung-min), before she immigrates with her family to Toronto; then, following Nora in her early 20s (Greta Lee) as she reconnects virtually with Hae Sung (Teo Yoo); and finally, more than a decade later, when Hae Sung visits Nora, now a playwright married to an author, Arthur (John Magaro), in New York.

It all makes for a remarkably ambitious canvas for Song's debut, but also a deeply personal story that she knew only she could direct. Song's first film has the instincts and control of an artist with a precise vision of the story's every conflicted, emotional note.

“I've worked with directors who've directed lots more movies who don't have the confidence she has,” Magaro says.

The triptych that tracks Nora over the years is, in the most basic sense, about the different parts of her past. But in the film's breadth—sketching out the long arc of her relationships with Hae Sung and Arthur, and the memorable moment when they all eventually come together—Song constructs a deeply resonant and warmly generous meditation on the trajectory of a life.

“It's about, on a very simple level, what it is like to exist as a person,” Song says. “Or what it is like to choose a life that you live.” More specifically, what that choice means for Nora, and what happens when the other choice, her phantom life in a sense, is suddenly staring at her through a computer screen, or across a park in New York City.

“It's so unfair, the devastating thing about us as people, the fact that we only have one life,” says Lee, who gives a nuanced and supremely powerful breakout performance as Nora. “We only have this. It's inconceivable. How incredible would it be for Nora to also have this other life? But the truth is she can't.”

The simple, poignant tragedy in the film is also its animating idea: that choosing one life means losing another. “I think that there's a piece of yourself that you leave behind in the place

you left," says Song, who like Nora, emigrated from Korea at the age of 12 for Toronto, before moving again to New York in her 20s.

It is a strangely ineffable and visceral human truth, one that Song's film manages to capture—via its deeply grounded intimacy, its restraint, its tender, moving form—with a cutting emotional acuity. Even now, Song struggles to explain this feeling her film encapsulates, which is to say the feeling of a life.

"It's like you're a donut," she says. "You're already formed with a little hole inside of you. My husband, when he fell in love, he fell in love with the donut. And it's not like I think about being a donut as a sad thing. It just makes me who I am, that's my shape. And my partner, anybody's partner who is loving somebody, has to love that person as that shape. And then, imagine the donut hole flying twelve hours to come visit."

Hae Sung, Nora, and Arthur

Across Marina Abramović's prolific, decades-long career, the legendary performance artist's most iconic, or at least most viewed, moment likely comes from a single encounter in her staging of "The Artist Is Present" during a 2010 retrospective. In a viral clip of the moment, Abramović—whose performance involves sitting in silence and sharing a gaze with various participants one-by-one—opens her eyes unexpectedly to her ex-husband, the artist Ulay, whom she hasn't seen or spoken to in decades. He shakes his head as her eyes well up with tears. They say nothing. They reach for each other.

"We watched that video so many times," Lee says. The moment, and the meaning and history filled in that gaze, bears a striking resemblance to the moment in *Past Lives*, when Nora and Hae Sung finally see each other, in person, for the first time in years.

"It's like seeing a reflection of yourself from a different time," Lee says. "I keep going back to this idea, yes, of love, but also identity in its simplest form: this person holds so much of who I was, and does the person I was still exist?" Seeing Hae Sung is both a vision of Nora's past and a glimpse into the what-ifs and roads not taken: "It's a hologram of a totally different existence, what could have been. If I had chosen not just to be with someone entirely different, but if I had moved there, if I had walked through that door."

That moment, and everything leading up to it, is something Song knew intimately. The connection that Nora develops—first as a child, then over online messages and Skype sessions in her 20s—and revisits in-person later in life is, structurally, a carbon copy of what happened in Song's own life. "That was one of the easiest scenes for me to direct, because it was so specific, that feeling," Song says. "Because it really does feel like this person has come back to life. It really feels like you're seeing a ghost."

For her, the experience—one that is at some level universal for anyone who has simply moved into, say, another city or another phase of life—is especially disorienting and wistful, imbued by a distinctly diasporic longing as an immigrant who left behind her country, culture, and language at a formative age. "You're not just seeing this person as they are, but you're seeing them as you remember them, which is in childhood," Song says. "And you see them surrounded by the feeling, the architecture, the smell, the lighting of childhood."

That feeling is often powerfully invoked through Song's understated, but stealthily affecting directorial hand, particularly in shots that are constructed to mirror previous ones from Nora's past life.

Song recalls constructing a shot of a young Hae Sung staring out the window of a car, with Nora sleeping on his shoulder, a snapshot that the film calls back to in its final moment. “I pulled those screenshots, and I'd show it to my Korean crew, being like, it has to look like this. That's how deliberate I was,” Song recalls.

Her simple compositions can often carry the weight of the entire story, delivered in one silent, devastating blow. She references another mirrored shot that the film makes more explicit via a shattering cut toward the end: Nora and Hae Sung standing in front of one another, just as they did once years ago, at a fork in the road in a Seoul corridor. “There's some shots that you're like, oh, I know that they can speak for everything,” she says.

Past Lives fictionalizes and heightens the drama of Song's own reunion with her former sweetheart, and while she notes there was nothing explicitly “romantic” about the visit, there was an underlying truth—one that is more overt in the film—that she was reluctant to face in real life. “I was in denial, he was in denial,” Song said. “My husband said it from a month ahead. He was like, ‘What are you talking about? He's coming to see you because he's in love with you.’”

Yet Song was also adamant about turning away from the tropes of love triangle histrionics. “The very flat interpretation of the movie would be: which guy is she going to go with?” she says. “The film is about real people. The boring version is about a war between these characters. But it's more complex as to why these two men love Nora. Both of them have to respect Nora for them to love her well.”

Nora, in other words, is her own person, rather than an idea sketched out by the binary of which man she chooses. “She is so certain about what she wants,” Lee says. “We see love stories, romantic dramas where the woman at the center is lost in her desires, and channels life solutions and projects them on different men. This is not that.”

And yet, as Nora's worlds collide between these two men, the third act eventually returns us to the bar scene that opens the film, with renewed context, if also a new, uneasy tension: Nora sitting between Hae Sung, a ghost resurrected from her past who has struggled to let her go, and her husband, Arthur, who hovers awkwardly on the margins, listening to them reconnect in a language he can't speak.

In sketching out Hae Sung's character, Song intentionally wanted to make him as unremarkable as possible. “But there is one way that he is absolutely remarkable, which is his capacity to love without needing anything or wanting anything from her,” Song says. “It is the simplest thing that he's able to offer her.” The same, she notes, is true of Arthur. “He is terrified, but he is going to sit, and he's going to shut the fuck up because a part of him not saying anything is [what it takes] to get to love this Korean immigrant. He actually has to fully love and accept this feeling that there is a part of her that he will never know.”

“There aren't any villains,” says Magaro, another New York theater mainstay whose range and sensitivity in films by Todd Haynes, Kelly Reichardt, and others brought him to the attention of the filmmakers. “But there are people who are filled with pride and people who are jealous and envious and angry, but they have to fight through those emotions. And what Celine does is portray two really good men—they're really kind, generous men—who are able to put their childish jealousies and insecurities behind them because they care about this woman.”

"It's like you're watching these two men be absolutely heroic in the most mundane way," Song says. "They're making a decision here to love her for exactly who she is, because she's not going to be somebody who abandons one for another. But she's also not going to stop having this conversation because it makes her husband uncomfortable."

What often defines drama in films and in storytelling, Song notes, is adults behaving like children. *Past Lives* is a film, conversely, "about three people that are doing their very best to be adults," Song says. "None of them argue, none of them shout. Just through the power of their love and respect for each other, they're somehow able to get through this very intense reunion, doing their best to not hurt each other."

Teo, Greta, and John

When Greta Lee first read the script for *Past Lives*, her reaction could largely be boiled down to: "Who is this person? How dare she do this?" Lee recalls of the intense emotions it evoked. She hadn't been particularly familiar with Celine Song's work, but what she read cut straight through her.

The script presented a vehicle for Lee to become a front-and-center lead, rich with nuance and grounded humanity, in a way she never had been before in a feature film; it was also a stark contrast to her typical instincts as an actor. "I'd always had this irrational hunger for wanting to take on roles that felt great and full, and weren't contingent on some sort of expectation of what an Asian person is like," Lee says. "I'm not good at that."

Nora, though, was someone whose culturally specific experience as an ambitious Korean American immigrant writer was both fundamental to *Past Lives* and also served to color in what was an innately, almost excruciatingly human story. "The thing that was like an electric shock after I read the script was this feeling of: this is sacred," Lee recalls. "This is free of serving any sort of gaze, any sort of white gaze, male gaze, any of the systems and infrastructures that we operate within."

Lee happened to be the perfect vessel for Song, who had specific technical needs for the part. "It had to be somebody who's obviously Korean American, and somebody who spoke both languages," she says. The language also had to nail a very particular cadence and vocabulary that mirrors Nora's experience having left Korea at a young age. "The amount of Korean that Greta spoke is so perfect because she sounds like a child. It reflects the way [Nora] is stuck in childhood." (Lee also worked with Sharon Choi, Bong-Joon Ho's translator, during pre-production to fine-tune her Korean to the perfect sound.)

Song's conversations with Lee also confirmed something deeper. "You have to be a soul match before anything else," Song says. "And then you also have to believe that this person is a great actor. The work that Greta has done outside of our movie speaks to how good of an actor she is, but also the willingness to go to the deep end of any performance."

Lee was up for the challenge, even if it meant the demanding work of creating the specific dynamic between Yoo and Magaro that spans years, countries, and forms of communication. "I had to realistically portray a marriage with one stranger and a first-love scenario that spans decades with another complete stranger in a different country," Lee notes.

Early on, she'd toggle between video calls with Yoo, who was in Korea, and rehearsals with Magaro in New York. "I mean, it made me feel crazy, which was right for Nora," whose own connection to the two in the film is largely seen through these two respective forms of communication. Inhabiting both

worlds only became more surreal: after Yoo arrived in New York, he and Magaro deliberately avoided one another until the moment they saw each other on-camera, emulating their dynamic of two men who are strangers to one another, but are bonded by their love for the same woman.

“I felt like a totally different person when I was with John, and everyone would remark on it,” Lee recalls.

“Until that scene where Hae Sung and Arthur meet each other for the first time, I made sure that the actors never actually met,” Song says. “Credit to my crew for making sure that they never ran into each other, which was a little extra logistical thing, but I really believed in it.”

“We avoided each other for hair and makeup things,” Magaro says. “We just didn't meet. We didn't talk. When I would go through the script, I stopped reading those scenes between Nora and Hae Sung.”

Magaro was tasked with calibrating a delicate balance tonally as Arthur. “It's a deceptively difficult role, and he worked so hard to create something very specific and subtle,” Song says. The performer had to be believable as a writer, a surprisingly elusive quality to find in actors, and he also had to be naturally likable, even as Arthur wades through the messy emotions he finds himself experiencing upon Hae Sung's visit.

“There is a soulfulness to him, an intelligence to him. It's believable when he says something like, ‘Is this the life you imagined for yourself when you left Seoul?’” Song says of Magaro, referencing a question Arthur poses to Nora in the middle of the night.

She adds, “Arthur is a part of the story in such an important way, in that he can really fuck up the balance between Nora and Hae Sung if he's not right for her.” In the bar scene, as Hae Sung and Nora begin to talk deeply in Korean, Song explains: “when we cut to Arthur, it has to be funny, but it also has to be heartbreaking, and it can't be ridiculous or stupid.”

Capturing that perfect emotional balance meant having Magaro react in silence in just about every way one could. “We did nothing but just cover him sitting there,” Song says. Magaro, though, happily complied, giving her “truly every color in the palette”; there were only two divas on-set, she notes, and none were her actors. “One was our 35mm film camera, and the other was New York City.” Song shepherded a shoot that toured some of the city's biggest tourist spots, and also, in a pivotal scene that involved the camera going down a 150-foot track, a busy street in the East Village on a Friday night. “A horrendous idea,” she laughs. “So many drunk people.”

And yet, on set, the odd mixture of anxiety and jealousy that Arthur is attempting to put aside became real, if only playfully so, between Magaro and Yoo as they avoided one another. “We would rehearse their scenes separately, and after each rehearsal, I would ask Greta to tell the actor that she's been rehearsing with about the other actor, which is a little sick,” Song says with a laugh.

“We both felt this sense of weird competition because we'd only hear about each other,” Magaro recalls with a smile. “Greta would go off and shoot three days with him and then come back with me, and I'd be like, what was it like? And then she would be like, Teo made everyone laugh. I'd be like, ugh.”

Yoo came on board after a tricky process in Korea, where Song was met with an entirely different filmmaking culture. Song had to be a deft liaison, navigating differences not only in languages but also how entire departments, and even the mechanics of storytelling itself, operated. “My Korean crew spoke English, but they didn't totally understand the way that we were making the movie, which had been established in

America with a New York crew" Song says. "We don't have storyboards. A lot of Korean films and TV shows shoot with very tight storyboards."

In her search for a Korean actor to play Hae Sung, she had to reckon with a casting culture where auditions are largely nonexistent for established actors. "It was an uphill battle convincing Korean managers to allow clients of Teo's caliber to audition, because often in Korea, auditioning is only for unknown or lesser-known actors and can seem insulting," Song recalls.

Song, though, was ultimately able to corral a substantial pool of actors, from which Yoo stood out as singular after a three-and-a-half-hour callback. "We worked for a long time," Song recalls. "I wanted to see what he could do. And we just talked about the movie, read, talked about it, read more. It was pretty intensive finding Teo, but he was the perfect person for the role."

Yoo was able to embody the subtleties between the younger version of Hae Sung, and the one that 12 years later, flies to find Nora.

"It really is just a difference in hair," Song says of the cosmetic changes they made between the two versions of Hae Sung. The rest came down to the smallest tweaks that make Yoo both a believable young 20-something—a slightly lighter voice, traces of both more insecurity and more energy, "quicker to both smile and look upset," Song notes—and within minutes, a different, older version of the same person.

In-Yun

If *Past Lives* is a film about adults trying their best to behave like adults—no dramatic professions of love, no teary-eyed fights, no villains—this isn't to say it isn't a film that deals in sweeping emotional sentiment. But for Song, these ideas must be rooted in naturalism and a rigorous authenticity. Or to put it another way: "It's important that the movie is not seen as a movie about dating. It's a movie about love," Song explains.

Nora's life in the film is a testament to our capacity for love, Lee says—that "one person could hold this much love, for her husband, for her childhood first love, and for herself, that is sacred." As for Arthur and Hae Sung, "it's about these two men who know her," Song says. "And that's the most romantic thing to me—I think all love is, is knowing the other person."

The heartbreak of the film, then, is rooted not in lost love, but in the not-knowing, the parts that can never be reached. "He knew a part of me that was different. He really knew something that I know is not fully accessible to my husband," Song says of her childhood sweetheart. The food she ate as a child, the smell of Seoul. "He could probably talk to my mom in Korean."

When Nora talks in her sleep, Arthur tells her at one point, she speaks in Korean—stepping into a version of herself only in her dreams. If Arthur can never know that part of Nora, there is a different, more alienating sense of absence for Nora and Hae Sung. "He's here to sort of lift the veil and see that that little girl is gone," Song says of Hae Sung's journey to New York. "And the only people who truly remembers that girl are Nora and Hae Sung."

The film culminates in a breathtaking sequence—a scene that tells the story of the entire film in miniature, and that immediately confirms Song as a maestro auteur of the devastatingly human—of Nora simply walking with Hae Sung down a New York street.

"My director of photography, Shabier Kirchner, asked me, which direction should they walk and which direction should

she return home? And the answer was so easy," Song says. "When you draw a timeline, it always works left to right. By walking from right to left, you are walking quite literally into the past. You walk them there, the wind sort of blows her towards the past, and then he gets in the car, and then the Uber of course has to drive into the past."

Then, Nora goes back, left to right, in the direction from which she came. "She will stand there for a moment, and then she's gonna go back home, and every step is going to be a walk towards the future from the past."

The scene, culminating in Nora crying after a fateful goodbye, was partly inspired by Song's own tearful experience at the end of her friend's visit. "It wasn't because I was missing the alternate universe," she says. "It actually had nothing to do with that. It was much more about the fact that I was finally grieving the little girl that I now recognized was gone."

Love exists not as a neat savior or as one right or wrong path in *Past Lives*, but rather as the genuine form that manifests in our lives, complicated and enriched by time and movement and mutual understanding. Similarly, it would be a mistake to consider In-Yun, a Korean concept about fate—specifically, the destined connection between two people that has been informed by countless other connections with each other in past lives—that is threaded throughout the film, as some sort of romantic notion about the battle to find one's soul mate.

("When you talk about destiny in Western cultures, it is very much a thing that one needs to do something about," Song notes. "But often Eastern cultures, when they talk about In-Yun, it is not necessarily an actionable item. Sometimes it is something that just comes to you.")

And yet, the film is just as deeply emotional about the cosmic forces that shape our lives: if there is a bone-deep mourning over past selves, there is also the beauty in human connection, in the fact that a woman can find herself sitting with two surreally disparate parts of her lives, as if bending the rules of time and space.

"You and I are In-Yun as well," Hae Sung tells Arthur at one point as they sit awkwardly next to each other, alone together for the first time. How else would these two strangers, from different worlds, end up together like this?

"I know that In-Yun is, and can be, a romantic notion, but at the end of the day it is more just about people's relationships and intimacy than anything else," Song says. It is about the feeling of being connected and appreciating the people who enter your life— in this one, or the one before, or the ones to come.

Song anticipates people who watch the film might, nevertheless, see the concept as shorthand for who Nora's true soul mate is. She anticipates viewers will identify with Nora, or Arthur, or Hae Sung—with their own versions of what any of them should or shouldn't have done, with what the film says about homesickness, or truly knowing someone you love, or the existential longing that comes with living a life. If there are 50 people in the room, she wants there to be 50 different reasons each of them have cried, and 50 different ways they've seen themselves in this story of love. In all those ways of watching her film, she says, "there is actually no wrong answer, except for the one where you don't feel connected at all."

The Cast

Greta Lee

Greta Lee can be seen in Season 2 of Apple+'s "The Morning Show" as "Stella Bak," an ambitious leader of an online media company that caters to a millennial and Gen Z audience.

She will next star as the lead of the upcoming A24 film, *Past Lives*, written and directed by Celine Song. This feature is an original love story about childhood sweethearts who meet in Korea and live parallel lives until they later reunite. The film will release in 2023.

Greta is also currently adapting Cathy Park Hong's book *Minor Feelings* for FX/Hulu with A24 and Onyx. She will star, write and executive produce the comedy series.

She can also been seen in the critically acclaimed Netflix comedy, "Russian Doll" written and executive produced by Natasha Lyonne and Amy Poehler. The first season of "Russian Doll" was nominated for 13 Emmys, including Outstanding Comedy Series.

Previously, Greta starred as the memorable nail technician, "Hae-Won" opposite Tina Fey and Amy Poehler in the Universal feature, "Sisters." She also recurred as "Homeless Heidi" in the HBO comedy, "High Maintenance," and has made memorable appearances on HBO's "Girls," and Comedy Central's "Inside Amy Schumer," and "Broad City."

Teo Yoo

Internationally acclaimed actor Teo Yoo will next star in A24's *Past Lives* directed by Celine Song and opposite Greta Lee. He can be seen in Park Chan-Wook's romantic mystery feature *Decision to Leave*.

Yoo's other film credits include the Russian musical film and Palme d'Or nominated *Leto*, *Black Money* opposite Hanee Lee, Jin-Woong Cho and Sung-Min Lee, *Vertigo* opposite Woo-Hee Chun, *Seoul Searching*, and Drake Doremus' feature *Equals* opposite Nicholas Hoult and Kristen Stewart.

His television credits include Apple TV+'s "Dr. Brain," the European/Japanese co-production "The Window," "Money Game," "Vagabond," "The Cravings," "Arthdal Chronicles," and "Chocolate."

Yoo is set to star in Netflix Korea's original romantic comedy series "Love to Hate You" opposite Kim Ok-Vin, which is set to be released in 2023.

Born and raised in Cologne, Germany, Yoo began acting when studying at the Lee Strasberg Theater and Film Institute in New York and later continued his studies in an intensive course at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London.

John Magaro

John Magaro has spent his career nurturing an impressive body of work that encompasses film, television, and theatre.

John can now be seen in *Showing Up*, opposite Michelle Williams, in a reunion with Kelly Reichardt. The film made its world debut in competition at Cannes 2022. John can soon be seen in Celine Song's *Past Lives* opposite Greta Lee (A24) which is premiering at Sundance 2023, and a supporting role in *Call Jane*, directed by Phyllis Nagy, that premiered at Sundance 2022.

Magaro recently wrapped filming the independent film *Laroy*, directed by Shane Atkinson. Up next, he can soon be seen in the George Tillman Jr. directed biopic feature, *The Heart of a Lion*, for Sony and then will go into Jack Huston directorial feature debut, *Day of the Fight*, with Michael Pitt and Joe Pesci.

Last Fall, Magaro had a supporting role in the Warner Bros./New Line feature film, *The Many Saints of Newark*, the prequel to "The Sopranos" that reunited him with David Chase. The film, which takes place during the Newark riots era in the 1960s, also stars Michael Gandolfini, Alessandro Nivola, Leslie Odom Jr., Jon Bernthal, and Vera Farmiga, among others. He was also the co-lead in Eytan Rockaway's *Lansky* where he plays Young Meyer Lansky opposite Harvey Keitel and Sam Worthington. The feature film looks into the life of Meyer Lansky as told by Older Lansky to David Stone.

Magaro starred as 'Otis "Cookie" Figowitz' in *First Cow*, directed by Kelly Reichardt, with a screenplay written by Reichardt and Jonathan Raymond. The film, which had its world premiere at the 2019 Telluride Film Festival, and was selected to compete at the 70th Berlin International Film Festival, was released by A24 in the US on March 6, 2020 and subsequently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was released via VOD on July 10, 2020. *First Cow* was selected as the Best Film at the 2020 New York Film Critics Circle Awards, and it was named one of the 10 Best Films of 2020 by the National Board of Review. On behalf of his performance in the film, Magaro was nominated for a 2020 Gotham Award.

Paramount's *The Big Short*, which was written and directed by Adam McKay. The cast was awarded Best Ensemble by the National Board of Review in 2015, and received the Ensemble Performance Award at the Palm Springs Film Festival. He was also nominated, among the cast, for a Critics' Choice Award for Best Acting Ensemble, in addition to a SAG Award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture.

Additional film credits for Magaro include *The Finest Hours* (dir. Craig Gillespie), *Carol* (dir. Todd Haynes), *Unbroken* (dir. Angelina Jolie), *Not Fade Away* (dir. David Chase), for which he received

John Magaro (cont.)

a “Hollywood Spotlight Award” from the Hollywood Film Awards, *Liberal Arts* (dir. Josh Radnor), *Down the Shore* (dir. Harold Guskin), *My Soul To Take* (dir. Wes Craven), *The Box* (dir. Richard Kelly), *Assassination of a High School President* (dir. Brett Simon), *The Life Before Her Eyes* (dir. Vadim Perelman) and *The Brave One* (dir. Neil Jordan).

No stranger to the small screen, Magaro most recently appeared opposite Elliot Page in the hit Netflix series “The Umbrella Academy,” based on the comic book series of the same name by Gerard Way. He was also seen in the Amazon series, “Jack Ryan,” alongside John Krasinski, and starred as the young male lead in Amazon's “Crisis In Six Scenes” opposite Rachel Brosnahan, Miley Cyrus, and Elaine May. Other television credits include recurring roles on “Orange is the New Black,” “The Good Wife,” “Taking Chance” opposite Kevin Bacon, and guest star appearances on “Law & Order: SVU,” “Person of Interest,” “Body of Proof,” “Law & Order” and “Conviction”.

A stage actor as well, Magaro was last seen as Joe Papp in The Public Theater's *Illyria*, written and directed by Richard Nelson. He made his Broadway debut in a flashy supporting role in Scott Rudin's revival of *The Front Page*, directed by Jack O’Brien, opposite Nathan Lane, John Slattery and John Goodman. Magaro also played the male lead in the critically acclaimed production of *Tigers Be Still*, written by Kimberly Rosenstock and directed by Sam Gold (*Fun Home*) for the Roundabout Theatre Company, as well as Rod McLauchlan's *Good Television*, directed by Bob Krakower, for the Atlantic Theater Company.

The Crew

Celine Song
Director/ Writer

Celine Song's play *Endlings* received its world premiere in 2019 at American Repertory Theater and had its New York premiere in 2020 at New York Theatre Workshop. She has been a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and a semifinalist for the American Playwriting Foundation's Relentless Award. Celine also wrote on the first season of Amazon's “Wheel of Time."

David Hinojosa, p.g.a.
Producer

David Hinojosa is Founding Partner and Head of Production at 2AM. David spent over a decade at the iconic, award-winning production company Killer Films. While at Killer, he developed such titles as the Academy Award winning *Still Alice* and Todd Haynes' *Carol* which premiered in competition at the Cannes Film Festival and received six Academy Award nominations. Hinojosa's producing credits include Janicza Bravo's *Zola*, Todd Solondz' *Wiener Dog*, Josephine Decker's *Shirley*, Brady Corbet's *Vox Lux*, Miguel Arteta's *Beatriz at Dinner* and Paul Schrader's *First Reformed*. Hinojosa recently released Halina Reijn's *Bodies Bodies Bodies* for A24. His upcoming work includes Sam & Max Eggers *The Front Room* and Bernardo Britto's *Omni Loop*. He is Co-Vice Chair of the Producers Guild of America East, Chair of the Independent Producer's Task Force and lectures at New York University's prestigious Tisch School of the Arts Graduate Film Program. Prior to Killer, Hinojosa worked at The Weinstein Company.

Christine Vachon, p.g.a.
Producer

Christine Vachon is an Independent Spirit Award and Gotham Award winner who co-founded powerhouse Killer Films with partner Pamela Koffler in 1995. Over more than two decades, they have produced more than 100 films, including some of the most celebrated and important American independent features: *Kids*, *I Shot Andy Warhol, Happiness, Boys Don't Cry, Hedwig And The Angry Inch, Far From Heaven, One Hour Photo, Still Alice, Carol, Beatriz At Dinner,* and *Dark Waters*. In television, Vachon executive-produced the Emmy and Golden Globe-awarded miniseries “Mildred Pierce” for HBO as well as the Emmy Award-winning limited series “Halston” for Netflix. Recent releases include Janicza Bravo's *Zola*, distributed by A24, “Pride,” six-part documentary series produced with Refinery 29 for FX, and Todd Haynes' *The Velvet Underground* for Apple TV+.

Pamela Koffler, p.g.a.
Producer

Pamela Koffler co-founded powerhouse Killer Films with partner Christine Vachon in 1995. Over more than two decades, they have produced more than 100 films, including some of the most celebrated and important American independent features: *Kids, I Shot Andy Warhol, Happiness, Boys Don't Cry, Hedwig And The Angry Inch, Far From Heaven, One Hour Photo, Still Alice, Carol, Beatriz At Dinner,* and *Dark Waters*. In television, Koffler executive-produced the Emmy and Golden Globe-awarded miniseries "Mildred Pierce" for HBO as well as the Emmy Award-winning limited series "Halston" for Netflix. Most recently, Koffler produced Zach Braff's *A Good Person*, starring Florence Pugh and Morgan Freeman, which will play in theaters this March, and Rebecca Miller's *She Came To Me*, starring Peter Dinklage, Marisa Tomei, and Anne Hathaway, which will open the 2023 Berlin International Film Festival.

Shabier Kirchner
Director of Photography

Shabier Kirchner is an accomplished cinematographer who has worked on several acclaimed projects.

His latest work, *Past Lives*, is Celine Song's debut feature for A24, starring John Magaro, Greta Lee and Teo Yoo.

In 2020, he collaborated with Academy-Award Winner Steve McQueen, lensing his anthology series, "Small Axe," with a stellar cast that included Letitia Wright and John Boyega.

In that same year, he went to Nigeria to shoot Akinola Davies' short "Lizzard" which was nominated for a BAFTA and won Best Short at Sundance.

Prior to that, he shot *Bull*, a feature directed by Annie Silverstein for which Shabier was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Cinematography. *Bull* was also selected for several festivals including Cannes' Un Certain Regard.

Other credits include *Only You*, Harry Wootliff's award winning film starring Josh O'Connor and Laia Costa; and *Solliers Point* with Matthew Poterfield.

In 2018, Shabier worked on *Skate Kitchen* for Pulse Films with director Crystal Moselle, with whom he also shot the short film "That One Day." That same year, Variety profiled Shabier as one of ten Cinematographers to watch

Grace Yun
Production Designer

Grace Yun is a Production Designer who works in feature and television projects. She earned her BFA at Parsons School of Design, exploring her passion for fine art, architecture, and film. Starting her career in the Art Department, Grace moved on to serve as Production Designer on several feature length films; designing Eliza Hittman's Sundance Director Award winner *Beach Rats*, Ari Aster's *Hereditary*, Paul Schrader's Academy Award nominated *First Reformed*, and Celine Song's *Past Lives*. Television projects include the Golden Globe and Peabody Award winner "Ramy" and Lee Sung Jin's upcoming A24/Netflix series "Beef" starring Ali Wong and Steven Yeun.

Keith Fraase
Editor

Keith Fraase is a professional Film & TV Editor based in New York. He has experience across all mediums of on-screen production including television, documentary, & feature-length narrative, and is a frequent collaborator with such acclaimed directors as Terrence Malick. His career initially gained traction with Malick's *The Tree of Life*, on which Keith served as Artistic Consultant. From there, he served as Editor on Malick's *To the Wonder*, which was nominated for an International Online Cinema Award, as well as *Knight of Cups*, also directed by Malick. Keith has served as Editor on other feature films such as the John Curran-directed *Chappaquiddick*, James DeMonaco's *This Is the Night*, as well as *A Mouthful of Air*, directed by Amy Koppelman. In the Documentary sphere, Keith has worked on projects such as *Long Strange Trip* (dir. by Amir Bar-Lev), DIRTY *Money* (dir. by Kristi Jacobson), and *Naomi Osaka: Playing By Her Own Rules*, directed by Garrett Bradley. You can find Keith's most recent work in the upcoming HBO-Max Docu-Series "Love Has Won," directed by Hannah Wilson, and the upcoming A24 feature film directed by Celine Song titled *Past Lives*.

Katina Danabassis
Costume Designer

Originally from Vancouver, Katina is now an LA-based costume designer. She's currently working on the A24 feature *Y2K* dir. Kyle Mooney and Evan Winter. Last Fall, she was in New Mexico designing A24's upcoming Showtime series "The Curse," created/EP'd by Benny Safdie and Nathan Fielder. She also worked with Celine Song on *Past Lives*, an Official Selection at Sundance this year, and Lena Dunham on *Sharp Stick*, an Official Selection at Sundance in 2022. Her other recent credits include the A24 films *Bodies, Bodies, Bodies* dir. Halina Reijn and *C'mon C'mon* dir. Mike Mills.

Christopher Bear

Composer

Christopher Bear is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, and music producer based in Los Angeles, CA. While studying jazz and music production at both the New School and New York University, Christopher met his three future bandmates who, over the span of the following 15 years, would go on to create 5 full length albums and tour the world extensively as Grizzly Bear. In addition to his melodic and polyrhythmic drumming style, his songwriting contributions helped shape the band's sound known for its vast array of rich sonic layers and detailed arrangements. Additional artists he has been lucky to perform and record with include Fleet Foxes, the War on Drugs, Beach House, Dirty Projectors, TV on the Radio, and Paul Simon as well as touring alongside Radiohead, Arcade Fire, Florence & the Machine, and the XX. Over the years Grizzly Bear's music has been featured in numerous films, television productions and advertising.

In between tour cycles Christopher continued work on his own music which led to the opportunity to contribute original compositions for the popular web series, High Maintenance. When the show made its eventual move to HBO, he came along for the ride to score 3 full seasons. In addition, he has created original music and scored numerous projects including Hailey Benton Gates' short film Shako Mako, starring Alia Shawkat, as part of the Women's Tales film series commissioned by fashion house MIU MIU, as well as the Culture Trip documentary Soul of Soho. Christopher crafted the theme song for Waffles & Mochi, Michelle Obama's children's series for Netflix, and composed original score for AppleTV+'s docuseries HOME, as well as director Carter Smith's forthcoming horror film Swallowed. His compositions have been commissioned by the high profile luxury brands BMW, Louis Vuitton, Kate Spade, and David Yurman for worldwide advertising campaigns. In 2020 he released Fools Harp Vol.1, a 13-track ambient/fusion-leaning LP with renowned Dutch label Music from Memory. Christopher is currently composing the score for the dramatic performance Becoming Patroclus to debut at the Sydney Opera House in 2023, as well as the original score for the upcoming A24 feature film Past Lives starring Greta Lee and Teo Yoo directed by Celine Song.

Daniel Rossen

Composer

Daniel Rossen is a singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist best known for his work in Grizzly Bear. In addition to many albums with the band, he has released music under his own name and as Department of Eagles. Rossen toured internationally with Grizzly Bear, headlining venues including Radio City Music Hall, Sydney Opera House, and the Hollywood Bowl. He has contributed to the score of films such as Blue Valentine by Derek Cianfrance (2010), Valedictorian by Matthew Yeager (2015), Past Lives by Celine Song (2022), and an upcoming feature The Line by Ethan Berger.

In April 2022 he released a full length solo album entitled You Belong There on Warp Records. He currently lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Ellen Chenoweth
Casting Director

Ellen's casting credits include *Causeway*, *Michael Clayton*, *Terms of Endearment*, *Broadcast News*, *No Country for Old Men* and many other films with Joel & Ethan Coen, *It's Complicated*, *Doubt*, *Good Night, and Good Luck*, and *Meet the Parents*. She started her career casting *Diner* with Barry Levinson, is still working with him today, and now happy to be working with Celine Song.

Susanne Scheel
Casting Director

Susanne Scheel is a New York-based casting director with a Bachelor of Science in Film and Television from Boston University. Susanne has won three Casting Society of America Artios Awards and has been nominated for nine more. Susanne has had the honor of collaborating with several visionary creatives including Joel Coen, Ethan Coen, Frances McDormand, Barry Levinson, George Clooney, Kasi Lemmons, Ryan Murphy, Jim Mickle, Cherien Dabis, John Lee Hancock, Celine Song, Dean Craig, Bjorn Runge, Xavier Manrique, Danya Taymor, and Whitney White. She has worked for and with some of the industry's top casting directors including spending the last ten years and counting working with Ellen Chenoweth.

As a casting director, Susanne's debut feature film was *The Wife*, which starred Glenn Close, who was nominated for best actress for several major awards such as the SAG Awards, Golden Globes, and Academy Awards. More recently, Susanne co-cast Celine Song's *Past Lives* with Ellen Chenoweth. *Past Lives* is premiering this year at Sundance Film Festival.

Susanne resides in Brooklyn with her husband, Robbie Eleazer (Director of Design at Trahan Architects), their two daughters, Elsie and June, and their beloved miniature schnauzer, Emma.

Credits

Crew

Written & Directed by	Celine Song
Produced by	David Hinojosa, p.g.a. Christine Vachon, p.g.a. Pamela Koffler, p.g.a.
Executive Producers	Miky Lee Hosung Kang Jerry Kyoungboum Ko Celine Song Taylor Shung Christine D'Souza Gelb
Co-Executive Producer	Yeonu Choi
Co-Producers	Khan Kwon Yale Chasin
Director of Photography	Shabier Kirchner
Production Designer	Grace Yun
Edited by	Keith Fraase
Costume Designer	Katina Danabassis
Music by	Christopher Bear & Daniel Rossen
Casting by	Ellen Chenoweth & Susanne Scheel

Cast (in order of appearance)

Nora	Greta Lee
Hae Sung	Teo Yoo
Arthur	John Magaro
Young Nora	Seung Ah Moon
Young Hae Sung	Seung Min Yim
Nora's Mom	Ji Hye Yoon
Nora's Dad	Won Young Choi
Hae Sung's Mom	Min Young Ahn
Young Si Young	Yeon Woo Seo
Hae Sung's Friend 1	Kiha Chang
Hae Sung's Friend 2	Hee Chul Shin
Hae Sung's Friend 3	Jun Hyuk Park
CBP Officer	Jack Alberts
Actress	Jane Kim
Na Young's Childhood Friend 1	Noo Ri Song

Na Young's Childhood Friend 2	Si Ah Jin
Na Young's Childhood Friend 3	Yoon Seo Choi
Hae Sung's Girlfriend	Seung Un Hwang
Janice	Jojo T. Gibbs
Rachel	Emily Cass McDonnell
Robert	Federico Rodriguez
Peter	Conrad Schott
Heather	Kristen Sieh
Ferry Line Security Guard	Oge Agulué



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