



B L O O D R U N S D O W N

Genre: Horror/Short
Director: Zandashé Brown
Producer: Lauren Domino
Total Run Time: 17:30
Aspect Ratio: 1.85

SYNOPSIS

It's the night before Ana's birthday and Elise wants to make sure all is in order to give her daughter the best celebration yet. Invitations have been sent, food has been prepared, and Ana's last braid is finally secured, meaning it's time to rest before the big day. Consistently weary from the never-ending job of single motherhood with no outlets for her own care, Elise searches for a place for her own peace and vulnerability. But for women like her, vulnerability comes with a price.

When Elise undergoes a frightening transition, Ana must decide between saving her or protecting herself in this haunting account of inheritance, daughterhood, and demons.

ANA

Over the course of a night within the confines of one home, a mother and a daughter's mistrust for one another turns into a night of terror in which their biggest fears are revealed.

Ana, young and imaginative, creates a world out of her mother's love, fear, weakness, and weariness. Stuck somewhere between navigating childhood and adolescence, she must learn to fend for herself in her mother's distant moments and cherish the ones that are joyful.

But Ana senses a threat of impending doom that threatens to interrupt even the few warm moments she and her mother share.



ELISE

Elise is a woman in search of a safe place. For her, there is no real existence of self outside of her obligations as a mother, caretaker, and all of the other responsibilities the world places onto her.

She is the heir of her mother's demons - the current possessor of their family's curse. Aware that the clock is always ticking, Elise must determine what to do with this wealth of shame, tragedy, sadness, and anger before it's her turn to pass her inheritance down to her own daughter.

For Elise, a woman in search of a safe place, vulnerability means danger, and there is no time to be spared. History insists on repeating itself and family demons demand don't like to be forgotten.



NEW ORLEANS

“Southern Louisiana - specifically New Orleans - sets the scene for this story in a way no other place can. Its interwoven relationship with Catholicism and Afro-diasporic religions such as Vodou make it a breeding ground for mysticism and magic in a very beautiful way. The story explores the beauty, magic, and terror of inhabiting the body of a Black woman or girl. Moreover, it examines what it means to have your life’s demons waiting for you before you are even born.

Water is an important theme to emphasize for this film, not only for its relevance to the African diaspora, but also the relationship it has to the city of New Orleans. The Birdsfoot delta at the Mississippi River made for an ideal place to build a thriving city that was never supposed to exist. On New Orleans’ tricentennial, I wanted to commemorate the resilience of a city that knows its swiftly fading away. Water has brought to it both life and death in a consistent cycle. It is one a few reliable sources.

Katrina disrupted and displaced Black families who had been bound to the land for generations. Many of which were the descendents of African slaves who were introduced to the city via the Mississippi, the water that would later take its revenge. In BLOOD RUNS DOWN, I likened water to an ambiguous force somewhere between rage and rebirth.

Between drowning and baptism.” - Zandashé Brown





ON INHERITANCE, DAUGHTERHOOD, AND DEMONS

A statement from the director.

Blood Runs Down is the product of several different stories that have lived inside me for the past few years. All of them focused on a mother-daughter relationship, but within the larger confines of a full family dynamic. This story is two characters - a mother and a daughter - in one house over the course of one night. We see how a mother and daughter behave together without outside influencers. There is a horror to what a relationship with a loved one can look like when stripped down of so many other obligations.

The story is based on my own relationship with my mother and the relationship to depression and trauma that all the women in my family seem to hold.

Elise and Ana resemble multiple facets of myself. During a five year period in which I had to navigate life without my mother due to her mental breakdown, I began to view my past self as another person. I was disconnected from this little girl's innocence and freedom. As far as I was concerned, I never was her. I wanted to protect her and her innocent, loving relationship with her mother. But Ana also resembles my transitional self, the one who endured the trauma that's made me who I am today. Elise not only represents my mother but all of my fears of inheriting an unnamed family curse which I now interpret as generational trauma, depression, and mental illness.



THE SOUTHERN GOTHIC AESTHETIC

“The Southern Gothic Aesthetic has the power to offer a look at race and class throughout the history of the south. It tends to focus on the past and the complicated ways that we’re linked and at odds based on our identities.

It’s also a genre and aesthetic that has lots of potential to play on generational change. The themes from many southern gothic based films deal with unresolved matters from decades before - revenge, lost love, and the like. What I wanted to explore with BLOOD RUNS DOWN was pain. The Southern Gothic aesthetic can be sad, morbid, and beautiful at the same time. It provides a sense of being stuck in a very particular time. I think the question to be answered is how do we escape it? That’s what I wanted to answer.”

- Zandashé Brown



BLACK WOMEN IN MATERNAL HORROR

“Horror films allows an audience to sympathize with the protagonist through anxious or frightening situations in a more immediate and desperate way than other genres. Outside of my love for horror growing up, it’s one of the many reasons I wanted to utilize the genre for BLOOD RUNS DOWN. I’d like to promote that sort of sympathy for Black female characters as well and allow for vulnerability and all of the real-life terror that comes along with it.

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- Zandashé Brown



DIRECTOR BIO

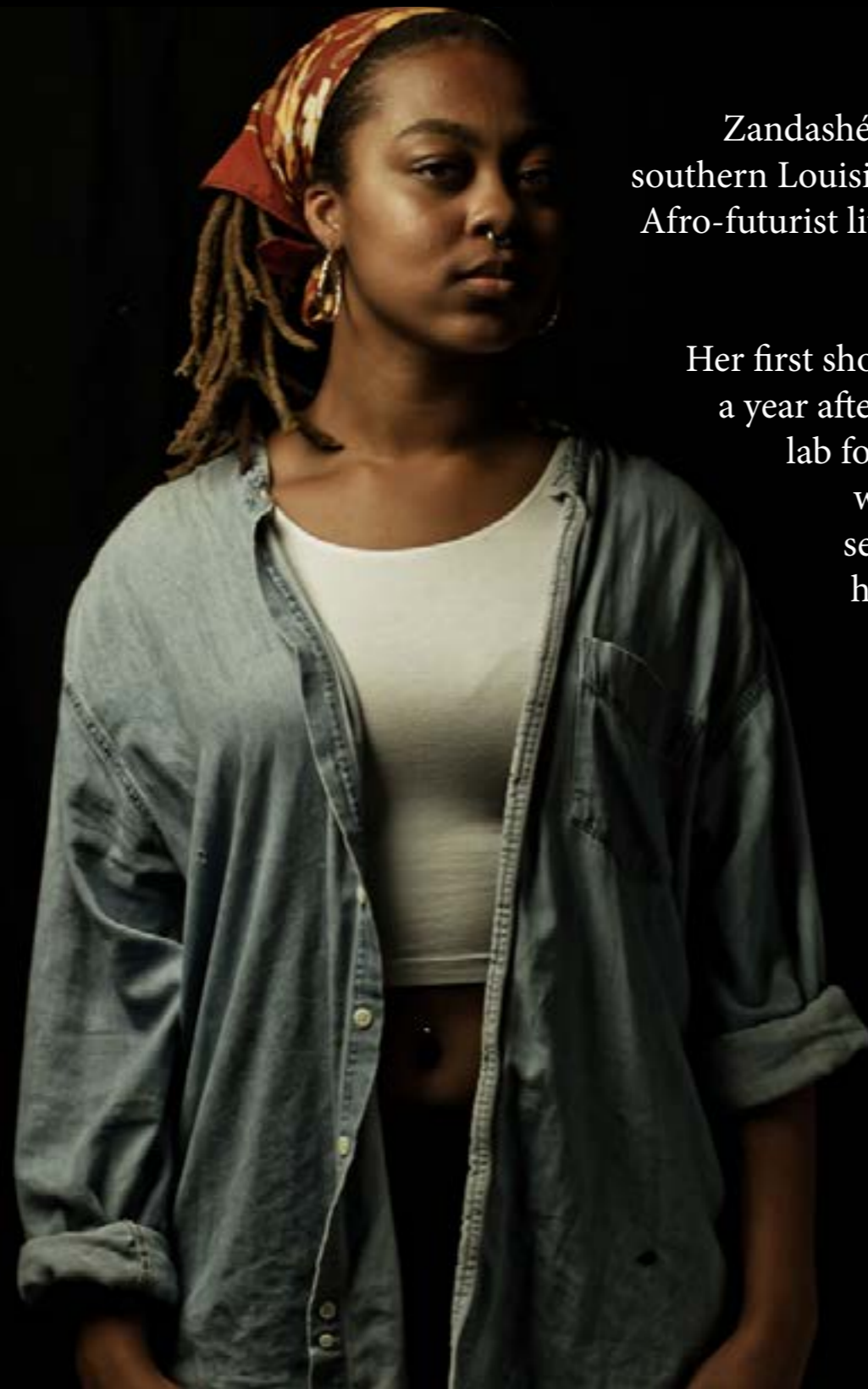
ZANDASHÉ BROWN

Zandashé Brown describes herself as a visual artist and storyteller hailing from and inspired by southern Louisiana. Compelled by horror, science fiction, and identity, Brown's work pays homage to Afro-futurist literature such as the work of Octavia Butler, the study of people and the interpretation of their fears, and her own experience as a young Black female artist.

Her first short film, *THE CONJURE WOMAN*, premiered at the 2016 New Orleans Film Festival a year after Brown attended as a mentee for the 2015 Emerging Voices Program, a development lab for emerging Louisiana filmmakers of color. Her 2016 short documentary *SUMMER16* was selected as a part of the New Orleans Video Access Center's "BetteR Baton Rouge" series which covered the death of Alton Sterling, several police shootings, and the city's historic flood. It was the recipient of the "BetteR Microgrant" as well as Artless Media's Magnifying Glass Grant.

Most recently, Brown wrote and directed the psychological horror short film *BLOOD RUNS DOWN*, which was one of five films selected for the New Orleans Tricentennial Story Incubator. This initiative by Kickstarter, the New Orleans Film Society, NOVAC, #CreateLouisiana and Film New Orleans was created with the goal of uplifting local filmmakers to tell local stories in honor of the city's 300th birthday celebration. The organizations provided a \$5,000 matching grant alongside our aided Kickstarter campaigns.

BLOOD RUNS DOWN made its premiere at the Overlook Film Festival in August of 2018 during its first year in New Orleans.



Crew

Directed by	Zandashé Brown
Produced by	Lauren Domino
Executive Producer	Idella Johnson
Director of Photography	Zac Manuel
Production Designer	Jesse Ray Guillory
Production Design PA	Tysean Riles
Editor	Jalea Jackson
Co- Producers	Alexis Clarke Zandashé Brown
Costume Designer	Kai Bussant
HMU Artist	Tiri Bean
Music Composer	Sultana Isham
Score Engineer	Preston Holm
Casting Director	Lauren Cargo
Casting Director	Jesy Rae Buhl

Cast

Farrah Martin as Ana
Idella Johnson as Elise
Karen Kaia-Livers as Adele

This film was produced as part of the Tricentennial Story Incubator Project, with support from Film New Orleans, Kickstarter, NOVAC, the New Orleans Film Society and #CreateLouisiana.





BLOODLINE PRODUCTIONS

BLOOD RUNS DOWN is one of five short films cultivated and funded by the New Orleans Tricentennial Story Incubator, an initiative to empower filmmakers to share the rich history and culture of New Orleans through their projects. Four film and artist support organizations - NOVAC, The New Orleans Film Society, Kickstarter, and The Mayor's Office of Cultural Economy/Film New Orleans - provided funds for the completion of this project.



KICKSTARTER

#CREATELOUISIANA