

# THOU WAST MILD & LOVELY

Everything else was a surprise



Erotic thriller, USA 2014 | 79 MIN | HD  
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED by Josephine Decker  
CO-WRITTEN by David Barker

PRODUCED: Laura Klein, Laura Heberton,  
Lavallette Interests Ltd. and Russell Sheaffer  
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Third Room Productions



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## LOGLINE

Akin arrives at his new job as a farm hand to discover the erotically charged young Sarah, whose fascination with nature takes on an ominous bent when her father catches Akin in a lie – and forces him to reckon with it.

## SYNOPSIS

When Akin arrives at the farm, he finds his job. This is what he expected to find. When Sarah opens her legs, she finds someone watching. This is what she expected to find. When Jeremiah opens his mouth, frightening things come out of it. This has come to be expected. But what happens by the creek next to the cow. This was not expected.

*Thou Wast Mild and Lovely* is a highly intimate and subtly erotic thriller inspired by John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and featuring love, death, guns, goats, a farmer, his grown daughter and the secrets they no longer succeed in keeping.

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## DIRECTOR – JOSEPHINE DECKER

Having started her career in documentaries, helping to produce for A&E, ABC and Discovery, Josephine Decker often builds her work from improvisation and collaboration with real communities.

Her recent feature *Butter on the Latch* - called “a sexy, wild romp you have to see to believe” by *Indiewire* and “an utter exhilaration of cinematic imagination” by *The New Yorker* -- is set at a real-life Balkan folk song and dance camp. The film, based on a Balkan folk song, explores the dark intimacy and neuroses of a female friendship, was included in *Film Comment*’s year-end list of Best Undistributed Films of 2013, and will have its international premiere at the *Berlinale* 2014. Recently named one of *Filmmaker Magazine*’s 25 New Faces of Independent Film, Josephine has just completed her second narrative feature *Thou Wast Mild and Lovely*. Starring Joe Swanberg, Robert Longstreet, Sophie Traub and Kristin Slaysman and inspired by a character from John Steinbeck’s “East of Eden” *Thou Wast Mild and Lovely* balances horror, beauty, and intimacy as an erotic thriller set in the wilds of Kentucky. The film will World Premiere at the *Berlinale* 2014.



In 2008, Josephine directed the documentary feature *Bi The Way*, exploring the rise of bisexuality in America and available on Logo and Netflix. The film screened at *SXSW*, *Silverdocs*, and about 100 festivals worldwide and received write-ups in *The Austin Chronicle*, *Curve Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, and *The Dallas Morning News*, among others. Josephine’s short films and music videos have played at *MoMA*, *SXSW*, *Cucalorus*, *Maryland*, and *Austin Film Festival*, have won children’s programming awards, and can be seen on *PBS* and *Kidzbop*. Her short *Me The Terrible*, about a child pirate who tries to conquer New York City, received a glowing review in *The New Yorker*.

Fortunate to be collaborating with artists she admires, Josephine Decker spent the past few years producing short videos for *United Way*, creative producing a doc for performance artist Sarah Small and acting in films by directors like Joe Swanberg, Onur Tukel and Spencer Parsons. Josephine also raises awareness about environmental issues through her performance art.

More at [www.josephinedecker.com](http://www.josephinedecker.com)

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## FILMOGRAPHY

Thou Wast Mild and Lovely (2014) feature narrative  
Butter on the Latch (2013) feature narrative  
Me The Terrible (2011) short film

Bi The Way (2008) feature documentary  
Naked Princeton (2005) short film

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

How do you steer a bucking bronco towards the truth? How do you let the dirtiest worms slither onto the page and not stand up in disgust? How do you let yourself be, and suffer the consequences? Ironically, what I did in writing and making this film is something that all of the characters in the film also suffer through. We are ugly, gruesome people inside. No one knows this but us. And this knowledge makes us ever more likely to shrivel our shoulders, hold our breath and gargoye.

We hide. Both Akin and Sarah misguide the strange perversions and brutalities they have endured into new darkneses they can embrace, and through the collision of those darkneses, they discover the lightness of connection. After enduring an initial period of embarrassment – I had written a script deeply violent and perverse – and losing one lead actress because of the sexual nature of the material, I finally felt the deep liberation of putting something into the world that represented my darkest self. This enormous fear I had had all my life of this disturbing place inside me – left.

With this film, I have been groping at a truth – about how we can be bad, or we can be good, or we can both at the exact same time. And with that truth, I tried to build a cinematic experience that melded fantasy and reality in an erotically-charged, meekly joyous experience.

The movie you set out to make and the movie you make are two extraordinarily different things, and if you are lucky, through trial and collaboration, the final result ends up being almost what you intended. This film managed to torture me by spending a long time not being what I intended. Perhaps it was too personal. Perhaps it was too simple. Perhaps it was too closely rooted in my mind to something I may never match up to -- John Steinbeck's elaborate, intimate, subversive vivification of character.

But – the film has now become what I hoped it would, and I owe that largely to David Barker, who guided me through the dismal period of things-gone-wrong editing that easily could have continued into infinity, and also to the hard-working, incredibly talented collaborators who helped me make this. But I owe this film also – deeply -- to the people who saw something strange in me and didn't run away. My parents have never turned up a nose at art-making. They always allowed my banging on the piano and performances in the trees to be whatever I wanted them to be. In this realm, I have always had total freedom, and their support. So, I could sit and wait and discover in the place where the truth emerges – in the dark, silent realms of meditation and the stomach world it unfurls. The palm of it closes. And opens. What you see is withering and growing, delightedly, before you.

To those who feel that their cruelty is too cruel, their sadness too sad, I dedicate this film: an embrace.

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## CAST

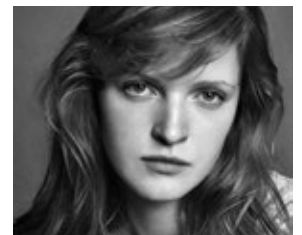
### JOE SWANBERG / AKIN

Prolific American filmmaker and actor. Known for microbudget dramas, which make extensive use of improvisation, Swanberg is considered a major figure in the so-called mumblecore film movement. His directing credits include *Happy Christmas*, *Drinking Buddies*, *Nights and Weekends* and *Hannah Takes the Stairs*. Josephine Decker has acted in three of his films: *Uncle Kent* (Sundance 2011, IFC), *Art History* (Berlinale 2011) and *Auto-Erotic* (IFC). Swanberg acts in his own films, but was seen recently at the Toronto International Film Festival as a main character in *You're Next*, by director Adam Wingard.



### SOPHIE TRAUB / SARAH

Sophie Traub has been acting professionally since her teens. Her feature film credits include *Tenderness* by John Polson starring Russell Crowe, *The Interpreter* by Sydney Pollack starring Nicole Kidman, *Daltry Calhoun* by Katrina Bronson starring Johnny Knoxville and *The Bend* by Jennifer Keirans.



Short film credits include: *Bite Radius* (Spencer Parsons). Her career began at 13 with the lead in a Canadian short *Pink* directed by Ed Gass Donnelly. For that role, she was nominated for a Canadian Actra Award.

At 18, she took a break from the professional work to focus on studying (at the Neighborhood Playhouse, HB Studios) and on branching out creatively (collaborating on performance pieces, music making/writing/performing, video piece making, music video making). Sophie also is a singer. She currently studies at the acclaimed SITI company in New York, with their roots in post-modern improv theory/work Viewpoints, and the rigorous physical training, Suzuki. She is from Canada but currently lives in Brooklyn.

### ROBERT LONGSTREET / JEREMIAH

Robert Longstreet is among the most celebrated actors in independent film, having acted in over 40 features including Sundance favorites *Take Shelter*, *Ain't Them Bodies Saints*, *Septien*, *The Oregonian*, *The Catechism Cataclysm*, and *This Is Martin Bonner*. In 2011, Robert was nominated for the Gotham Award, along with the ensemble of *Take Shelter* for Best Ensemble Cast. For his role in 2011's *Cork's Cattlebaron*, Robert won a multitude of acting awards, including Outstanding Performance at Indie Memphis and Best Performance by an Actor at Sidewalk Film Festival.



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#### **KRISTIN SLAYSMAN / DREW**

Kristin Slaysman is a Los Angeles-based actor and director. Recent feature film work includes: *Promised Land* by Gus Van Sant, *This is Martin Bonner* by Chad Hartigan (Sundance NEXT winner 2013), *Pilgrim Song* by Martha Stephens (SXSW 2012) and *Save the Date* by Michael Mohan (IFC). TV includes *Masters of Sex* (Showtime), *American Horror Story* (FX) and *Vegas* (CBS). Kristin is a graduate of Northwestern University's theater program and specializes in ensemble-devised performance. She has created work in American theaters both regionally and across NYC including The Public Theater, P.S. 122, St. Anne's Warehouse, Long Wharf Theatre, Portland Center Stage and Ars Nova. With her longstanding collaborators, Le Comité des Fêtes, she adapted a book of poems by Michael Ondaatje called "The Collected Works of Billy the Kid" which played at the Festival de Otoño in Madrid and the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord in Paris. Her microshort film series is available on [explosivebolts.tv](http://explosivebolts.tv).



#### **GEOFF MARSLETT / RICHARD**

Geoff Marslett screamed and moaned for Josephine as an actor, but he knows her through their crossing paths along the festival circuit. Geoff Marslett has directed twenty short films and segments of longer projects. His critically acclaimed short film *Monkey vs. Robot* screened at over 25 festivals worldwide, was distributed theatrically and broadcast on HBO, PBS, and Univision. In 2010 he completed his first feature film, *MARS*, an animated, sci-fi, romantic comedy starring Mark Duplass. *MARS* premiered at the 2010 SXSW Film Festival. He followed this up with a live action feature film *Loves Her Gun*, which won the prestigious Louis Black Lone Star Award at SXSW 2013 and received a critic's pick from The New York Times as well as great reviews from the Village Voice, Variety, Salon, Think Progress, and Slant. Geoff was recently named one of the "25 New Faces of Independent Film" by Filmmaker Magazine.

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## CREW

### MARTÍN HERNÁNDEZ / SOUND DESIGN

Martín Hernández has been nominated for BAFTA's and Golden Reels for his outstanding work. Selected projects include sound editing/sound design for *On The Road* by Walter Salles, *21 Grams*, *Beautiful* by and *Babel* by Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu, *Pan's Labyrinth* by Guillermo del Toro, *City of God* by Fernando Meirelles, *Into the Wild* by Sean Penn and *Nine Lives* by Rodrigo Garcia. He lives in Mexico and in Los Angeles.

### ASHLEY CONNOR / DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Ashley Connor received her BFA in Film, Photography and Visual Arts from Ithaca College. She has travelled the world working as a cinematographer and continues making experimental films and music videos in her spare time.

In addition to her DP work on Josephine's new feature *Thou Wast Mild and Lovely*, Ashley also shot Josephine's critically acclaimed first feature, *Butter on the Latch*, noted in *The New Yorker* and *Indiewire* for its groundbreaking cinematography. Her recent music video directing work has been featured on Pitchfork and NPR. Her work as a cinematographer has appeared on PBS' *FutureStates*, at Tribeca Film Festival and at SXSW. This fall, she collaborated with director Allison Bagnall as Director of Photography on her new feature *Funny Bunny*.

### DAVID BARKER / CO-WRITER, EDITOR

David Barker is a filmmaker, editor, and teacher. His 2009 micro-budget feature *Daylight* opened to rave reviews and was the Critic's Pick in both *The New York Times* and *The New York Post*. His prior feature "Afraid of Everything" featuring French actresses Nathalie Richard (Irma Vep) and Sarah Adler (Notre Musique) premiered at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival. A short film *Seven Days* about the Nixon White House premiered at the Rotterdam Film Festival and screened at over 40 international venues. He has edited numerous films and recently was the lead editor on the award-winning Sundance competition entry *HERE* by Braden King, as well as on Deepak Rauniyar's *Highway*, which was the first Nepali film to screen at a major festival and which is credited with launching a new wave of Nepali cinema. In addition, he was editorial consultant on Rachel Boynton's 2013 Tribeca Film Festival Competition documentary *Big Men*, and has worked with filmmakers such as Liza Johnson, Jesper Just, Harun Farocki, Leslie Thornton, and many others.

He was commissioned by Danny Glover's Louverture films to write *White Sun*, which will go into production in 2014 and has been awarded a Hubert Bals Award and invited to the Netherland's Binger Labs.

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#### **STEVEN SCHARDT / EDITOR**

Steven Schardt is a producer, filmmaker and editor. He produced acclaimed director Lynn Shelton's *Humpday* (Sundance 2009, Magnolia Pictures release), *Touchy Feely* (Sundance 2013, Magnolia Pictures release) and *Your Sister's Sister* (Sundance 2012, IFC Films). He also produced Calvin Reeder's *The Oregonian* (Sundance 2011). His own directing work has screened at SXSW and Tribeca Film Festivals.

#### **LAURA KLEIN / PRODUCER**

Laura Klein has produced multiple independent films; including, Stephen Cone's critically acclaimed *The Wise Kids*, his most recent project *Black Box* starring Austin Pendleton and Josephine Decker, and *Red Right Return* written and directed by George Manatos. In addition, she has worked as assistant director on numerous films; including, the award-winning *Medeas* directed by Andrea Pallaoro and starring Catalina Sandino Moreno, and 2014 Sundance selections *Obvious Child* written and directed by Gillian Robespierre and starring Jenny Slate and Desiree Akhavan's *Appropriate Behavior*. She has also produced and directed numerous short films.

#### **LAURA HEBERTON / PRODUCER**

Laura Heberton's recent award-winning productions include Matt Porterfield's *I Used to be Darker*, Lance Edmonds' *Bluebird*, Jonathan Lisecki's *Gayby* and Andrew Neel's *King Kelly*. Her films have all premiered at major festivals. Her current project in post-production is Alison Bagnall's third feature, *Funny Bunny*.

#### **RUSSELL SHEAFFER / PRODUCER**

Russell Sheaffer is an experimental film and documentary maker with a strong academic background. Recently, a film he co-wrote and co-directed with James Franco, *Masculinity & Me*, was an official selection of the 2011 Torino LGBT Film Festival and was featured in Franco's solo exhibition, "The Dangerous Book Four Boys". He has produced both fiction and documentary works.

#### **ADAM DONAGHEY / CO-PRODUCER**

Adam Donaghey, founder of micro-budget indie label Zero Trans Fat Prods., is an award-winning independent film producer. His work has been nominated for both the Independent Spirit and Gotham Awards, and has been showcased at fests including Sundance, SXSW, Sitges, LA Film Festival, AFI Fest and Thessaloniki; and via distributors such as IFC Films, XLRator Media, Cinetic Media and the Lifetime Movie Network.

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#### **SARAH O'BRIEN / PRODUCTION DESIGNER**

Sarah O'Brien is both set and costume designer, with a Masters degree in one hand and a Local 829 union card in the other. She has been working successfully in New York for a handful of years on creative projects that ranged from large scale sculptures, Off-Broadway theatre, fashion, television and of course, feature films. She currently is on a career sabbatical, however, ruthlessly traveling the world and investigating higher truths. Her current mission is a pilgrimage to the Himalayas .

#### **MOLLY HERRON / COMPOSER**

Molly Herron is a Brooklyn-based composer, performer, and educator. She is a recipient of the Exploring the Metropolis 2012/13 Con Edison Composer's Residency at the Brooklyn Youth Chorus Academy. Recent work includes commissions by the chamber orchestra Contemporaneous, JACK Quartet, The Cygnus Ensemble, The NYU Contemporary Ensemble and arrangements for the folk group The Great Republic of Rough and Ready, among others. She has worked with ECCE as a fellow at La Pietra Forum in Florence. Molly is a co-founding director of the W4 New Music, a composer's collective dedicated to enriching the possibilities for new music and its makers since 2010.

### **FESTIVALS AND AWARDS**

**World Premiere:** Berlinale Forum 2014

**Asian Premiere:** Hong Kong International Film Festival 2014

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## CREW

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED JOSEPHINE DECKER

CO-WRITTEN DAVID BARKER

CINEMATOGRAPHY ASHLEY CONNOR

SOUND MARTÍN HERNÁNDEZ

EDITING JOSEPHINE DECKER, DAVID BARKER,  
STEVEN SCHARDT

MUSIC MOLLY HERRON

PRODUCTION DESIGN SARAH O'BRIEN, MEGAN BILLMAN

COSTUME DESIGN WILBERTH GONZALEZ

SPECIAL EFFECTS MAKE-UP STACEY LOCKHART

CAST JOE SWANBERG / AKIN  
SOPHIE TRAUB / SARAH  
ROBERT LONGSTREET / JEREMIAH  
KRISTIN SLAYSMAN / DREW  
GEOFF MARSLETT / RICHARD

PRODUCERS LAURA KLEIN, LAURA HEBERTON,  
LAVALLETTE INTERESTS LTD.  
RUSSELL SHEAFFER

CO-PRODUCER ADAM DONAGHEY, RACHEL WOLTHER,  
BRADEN KING AND LINDAY OLBRYCH

PRODUCTION COMPANY THIRD ROOM PRODUCTIONS

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS EMANUEL AG, MATTHEW DECKER,  
WILLIAM GERBER, KATRINA LENCEK-  
-INAGAKI, IAIN MARCKS, REGINA RYAN,  
ARTEMIS SHAW, SARAH SMALL

## FILM INFO

TITLE THOU WAST MILD AND LOVELY

GENRE EROTIC THRILLER

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

COMPLETION FEBRUARY 2014

WORLD PREMIERE FEBRUARY 2014 - BERLINALE FORUM

DURATION 79 MIN

PICTURE COLOUR

SCREEN RATIO 1:1,85

SOUND SYSTEM 5.1

AVAILABLE FORMATS DCP, BLU-RAY, HD-CAM

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