

ESPERANZA Productions et MISE EN LUMIERE présentent

# WALLABOUT

A film by Eric McGinty



*"WALLABOUT... comes from a place of truth... a beautiful exploration of finding oneself after losing it."*  
- New York Minute Magazine



A VERONIQUE FILMS PRODUCTION "WALLABOUT" STARRING IVY ELROD STEVE WARD JO-ANNE LEE JESSICA KAHLER MARK REAY  
MUSIC BY VERNON REID SOUND DESIGN ERIC HELMUTH DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY CHRISTOPHER RAYMOND EDITED BY ELIZABETH McDONOUGH CO-PRODUCER MONICA VEGA-GORSUN  
PRODUCED BY ANNA SANG PARK WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ERIC MCGINTY



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- Une sélection authentique -

veronique films

Esperanza Productions and Mise en Lumière Present  
a Veronique Films Production

# WALLABOUT

A film written and directed par **Eric McGinty**

Produced by **Anna Sang Park**

with

**Ivy Elrod, Steve Ward, Jo-anne Lee**

USA / 2014 / 102 minutes / color

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**WALLABOUT OPENS IN PARIS: APRIL 13, 2016**

Paris Press Screenings:

Wednesday March 9 at 10:30am and Friday March 25 at 10:30am

at Cinéma LE LINCOLN 14 rue Lincoln - 75008 Paris

Distribution by ESPERANZA Productions and MISE EN LUMIERE

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# WALLABOUT

Feature Film / Color / USA

(Running Time: 102 minutes)

Shooting Format: Arri Alexa HD

**Written and Directed by Eric McGinty**

**Produced by Anna Sang Park**

## Log Line

A single woman struggles to rebuild her life in Brooklyn after spending 10 years abroad as the unrecognized muse to a famous filmmaker.

## Synopsis

Alex struggles to reinvent herself in Brooklyn after having spent 10 years in France as the unrecognized muse to a famous filmmaker. It's been over a decade since Alex finished college and her resume is out-of-date. As she tries to start over in New York City, Alex is still determined to pursue a creative career and help care for her ailing father. But when she gets evicted and loses her job, Alex turns to family and friends only to be rejected. At the end of her rope, she picks up shady part time work to get by. Eventually she meets Frank, an enigmatic film producer, and they fall in love. But Frank's even more checkered past catches up with the couple.

*Wallabout* is an intimate first-person account of an overeducated and underemployed outsider who survives by her wits and determination as she encounters an often corrupt and hypocritical society. It's an urban meditation on artistic perseverance and the eternal search for family.

## Cast

Ivy Elrod Steve Ward Jo-anne Lee Jessica Kahler Mark Reay

**Co-Producer:** Monica Vega-Gorsun **Director of Photography:** Christopher Raymond

**Sound Design:** Eric Helmuth **Editor:** Elizabeth McDonough

**Original Music by:** Vernon Reid

## Bios

**Writer-Director:**

Eric McGinty

WALLABOUT is Eric McGinty's feature debut as a writer/director. Previously, Eric directed short films, including *The Mitten*, starring Vivian Bang, and a documentary, *TransMission 1998*, featuring the painter Luke Gray. He has also worked extensively as a first assistant director. Eric is half French/half American and has often collaborated with French directors, including Luc Besson (*The Professional*), Cedric Klapisch, Oscar-nominated filmmaker Rachid Bouchareb, and the American Sundance Grand Jury prizewinner Jonathan Nossiter (*Sunday*).

Previously, Eric worked in theatre and dance in Paris as an actor and stage manager. He grew up in Paris and Washington, D.C., attended the American School of Paris and the Sorbonne, and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, where he concentrated his studies in film and literature.

**Producer:** Anna Sang Park

Anna Sang Park has directed several unscripted TV series and has produced programs for the BBC, PBS, TLC, Discovery, The History Channel, among others. She was the development producer on *The Loving Story*, the Emmy Award-winning HBO/Augusta Films documentary directed by Nancy Buirski based on the Supreme Court case *Loving vs. Virginia*. Anna was also a producer of *Pangea Day*, a 4-hour multi-media program created for TED Conferences that was broadcast live simultaneously to 200 countries.

Previously, Anna worked in feature film casting. She was the casting director on Rachid Bouchareb's French art house hit *Little Senegal* and the associate casting director on Spike Lee's *Bamboozled*. Anna began her career as an assistant to legendary casting director Mali Finn (*Titanic*, *LA Confidential*, *Matrix*). Born in South Korea, Anna grew up in Seoul then Philadelphia and graduated from Emerson College. She is a member of the Independent Filmmaker Project and the Producers Guild of America.

**Director of Photography:** Christopher Raymond

Christopher Raymond is a New York City-based cinematographer and still photographer. His work includes feature and short dramatic films, commercials, and music videos. Christopher has also shot documentaries in Mongolia, Brazil, the Philippines, Jordan, and Haiti. He learned his craft working as a camera assistant for twelve years under the guidance of cinematographers such as Ellen Kuras, Eigil Bryld, Declan Quinn, and Dion Beebe.

**Original Music/Composer:** Vernon Reid

Vernon Reid is the recipient of Grammy Awards, International Rock Awards and MTV music video awards. Best known as the founder of the groundbreaking African-American multi-platinum rock band Living Colour, Vernon has repeatedly been named one of the best guitarists of all time by many publications including *Rolling Stone* magazine. He's composed for the Miramax film *Paid In Full* by Charles Stone III, *Dr. Hugo* by Kasi Lemmons, the documentaries *Ghosts of Attica*, *That's My Face*, *Almost Home* and many others. Vernon was the music supervisor for the film *Mr. 3000* starring Bernie Mac and scored for *Five Fingers*, a film produced by and starring Laurence Fishburne.

Vernon has collaborated with Bill T. Jones, Mick Jagger, Spearhead, Public Enemy, Tracy Chapman, Carlos Santana, B.B. King, Jack Bruce, DJ Spooky, John Zorn, Salif Keita, James Blood Ulmer, Bill Frisell, Donald Byrd, The Roots, and many others artists.

# WALLABOUT

## Director's Statement

In WALLABOUT, Alex is a fish out of water, an artist trying to start anew in a world that once was her oyster. But Alex's story is also a coming of age tale where a single woman grapples with the pressures of reinventing herself in her thirties when many women from her middle-class background have begun to solidify their careers and start a family. In both cases, WALLABOUT tells a story that echoes the experience of many in New York City and elsewhere around the globe.

As Alex makes her way through different parts of Brooklyn, a narrative pattern emerges akin to the picaresque novel often associated with 17th and 18th century literature. But WALLABOUT is firmly anchored in the present-day. It's a first-person account of a troubled yet sympathetic heroine navigating various situations in an almost episodic manner. In keeping with this picaresque framework, WALLABOUT borrows from a realist tradition. In this case, it is naturalism influenced by filmmakers as diverse as Ken Loach, Jerry Schatzberg, Laurent Cantet, and Susanne Bier. It's the story of an outsider who survives by her wits as she navigates an often corrupt and hypocritical society.

The tinge of satire often typical of the picaresque genre also makes an appearance in WALLABOUT. By fusing a documentary-like aesthetic with lyricism, flashbacks and more subjective representations of reality, WALLABOUT adopts a more stylized and personal approach previously embraced by filmmakers such as John Schlesinger, Agnes Varda, early Roman Polanski, even David Lynch. WALLABOUT plunges the audience into the memories and daily adventures of its protagonist, Alex Loden, the spiritual heiress to Wanda, another defining character from American independent cinema, brought to life by the seminal work of Barbara Loden.

I love films from the 70's, especially those shot in NYC. It was a great era for American cinema and I wanted to capture some of that feel in WALLABOUT. As we follow Alex in her urban alienation, an almost film noir atmosphere surfaces. But it's updated film noir, let's call it World Noir, and that's where Brooklyn's melting pot becomes a central character in the film. Brooklyn might have one of the earth's most thriving artistic communities, yet it can be a minefield for a sensitive soul, like Alex. This is especially true today when many in the middle class are having trouble finding work that corresponds to their education. More than ever, people with college diplomas, even graduate degrees, are forced to make ends meet in jobs previously reserved for those with only a high school education.

I felt the time was right to make an intimate film exploring the plight of a woman with a checkered past as she strives to re-establish herself in a creative career. The Brooklyn in WALLABOUT is a world of gentrification and quickly mutating neighborhoods. It's also a place where people have fallen on hard times and struggle to realize their dreams. This is Alex's story. Wallabout is an urban meditation on artistic perseverance and the eternal search for family.

- Eric McGinty

## Production Notes

# WALLABOUT

"What is WALLABOUT?"

Wallabout is the area in Brooklyn near Fort Greene between Dumbo and Williamsburg along the East River. Today, Wallabout is often associated with the Brooklyn Navy Yard. It's a rapidly evolving neighborhood (like many in New York) that is still mainly industrial, but with several large self-storage facilities that figure prominently in the film.

In the early 1600's it was the site of the first European settlement, the beginning of "Breuckelen", now known as Brooklyn. Wallabout was a settlement of Protestant French-speaking Walloon farmers. Their Dutch neighbors lived across the river in New Amsterdam, or Manhattan. Wallabout translates roughly as "Walloon bend" or "Bay of the Walloons."

Two hundred years later, in the mid 1800's, it was the area that the great American poet, Walt Whitman, called home. His editorial advocacy was actually instrumental in the creation of what is now Fort Greene Park (originally called Washington Park), another major location in the film. In fact, Whitman wrote a poem entitled The Wallabout Martyrs that is part of his masterpiece Leaves of Grass. And these martyrs of the Revolutionary War prison ships and their corresponding monument in Fort Greene Park also become major obsessions for Alex, the film's heroine.

"WALLABOUT's Genesis "

The ideas behind the story that became Wallabout, the movie, coalesced around the time the Occupy Wall Street Movement was in full swing. The Occupy Movement had a lasting effect on the nation's (perhaps the planet's) zeitgeist, but the people I've encountered in my daily life who are struggling to get by despite their middle-class backgrounds and college educations have provided firsthand inspiration. Ultimately, Alex (WALLABOUT's protagonist) is a casualty of the world that the Occupy Wall Street protestors were denouncing. But her predicament can still be found today in New York and around the globe. As Alex wanders the streets of Brooklyn, there is a "wall" around her. Wherever she goes, she seems to run into a wall. It seems fitting that the street blamed for the misery of so many has such a name. "Wallabout" seemed to perfectly capture that spirit.

On another level, this area called Wallabout that I have known well for many years, having lived in its adjacent Brooklyn neighborhoods, was a perfect receptacle for Alex's story. Ivy Elrod, the actress who incarnates Alex, was actually living in Wallabout when we first met. She and her family continued to make the Wallabout neighborhood her home while we were shooting the film and afterwards. Ivy's living conditions were certainly less precarious than those of Alex in the movie, but there were elements in Ivy's past that came awfully close to resembling Alex's plight. Though their "stories" differed, the similarities helped Ivy embrace the true nature of Alex's character. And individuals who have been in Alex's shoes are easier to find than one might want to admit.

– Eric McGinty

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