

Directed by McKinley Benson

Written by McKinley & Mackenzie Benson

Produced by Bruno Caetano, Mackenzie Benson

Executive Produced by Jodi Benson

A CO-PRODUCTION





**DISTRIBUTION** 



selected films distribution

### Awards & Selections

































"Two Ships is a moving visual poem. The sensitive choices for acting were so touching in their identifiable resonance. I love when animation is allowed to express such delicate moments in life as this film has done."

Glen Keane
 Academy Award-Winner and Disney Legend







While working opposite schedules, a couple attempts to maintain their connection through fleeting encounters.

### Synopsis

An intimate, slice-of-life tale following Mason and Sam — a couple madly in love but divided by space and time. Sam works a typical day job, while Mason works overnights. They live together but lead vastly separate lives, rarely crossing paths — like two ships passing in the night.

However, in their few spare moments at home, while the other partner is still sleeping, Sam and Mason manage to find ways to connect and show affection, even during their difficult circumstances. In doing so, their love seems to transcend space and time, blurring the lines between reality and fantasy.

Two Ships celebrates the beauty of the mundane and chronicles the challenges of navigating an 'opposite shift' relationship — one that is not often depicted in cinema.

### Director's Statement

Back in 2021, while working as a film production assistant, I experienced the challenge of an opposite shift relationship firsthand. My call times on set would be at two or three in the morning, whereas my wife, Mackenzie, was working a consistent nine-to-five. During the week, it felt like we weren't able to have any meaningful face-to-face interactions.

Nevertheless, we found creative ways to show our affection: leaving notes, cleaning up after each other, and doing simple acts of kindness to make each other's day a little bit easier. This became our routine for a while, and even though we never truly crossed paths on weekdays, it felt like pieces of us did—fragments of our love that transcended time and space. That feeling is what I wish to convey in this film.



Two Ships is a deeply personal story — one that carries significant meaning for me, yet I believe it will resonate with others as well. At its core, it's a story of love and the longing for connection, set against the backdrop of everyday life. In a world where our days are often dictated by schedules and routines, the film explores the beauty found in the ordinary and the quiet moments that define our relationships.

### Director's Statement

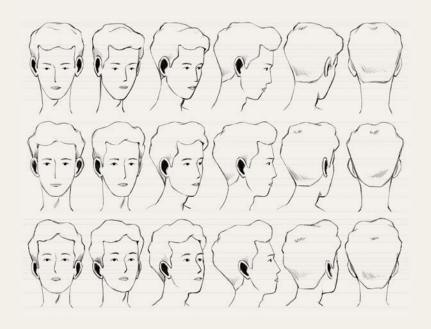
Aesthetically, I wanted every aspect of the film to feel handmade. From the background art to the character animation and titles, each element is crafted with a personal touch. Even the notes that the characters write for each other are in my wife's and my own handwriting, adding a layer of intimacy to the story.

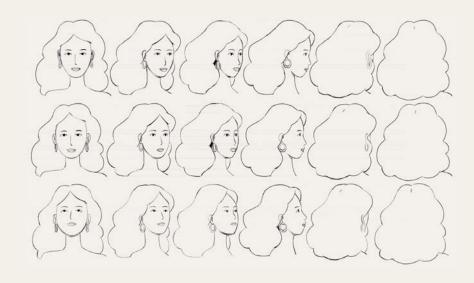
The handmade approach extends to the sound design as well. All the foley sounds for the characters' movements were captured organically, rather than sourced from sound libraries, enhancing the authenticity and warmth of the sound.

Two Ships is a heartfelt and precisely crafted film set in the quiet, often overlooked moments of daily life, brought to life with the collaboration of the most talented and hardworking team of artists that I could have asked for. I couldn't have been luckier.



## Character Descriptions





#### **MASON**

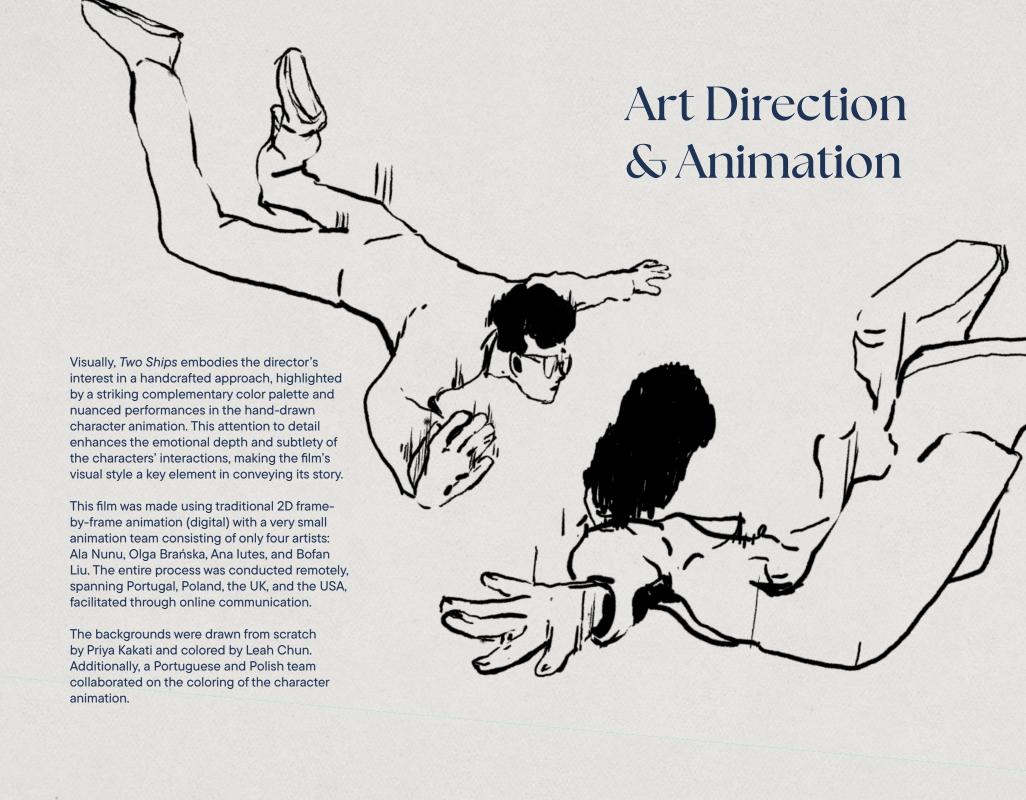
Mason is a gentle and reserved individual who works a night shift, moving through life with a calm and thoughtful demeanor. Standing tall with a lanky build, his dark, wavy hair frames a face that is observant and attentive. He prefers to listen and reflect rather than dominate a conversation, and his distinctive eyeglasses are a signature accessory, underscoring his quiet yet perceptive presence.

#### **SAM**

Sam is an outgoing and vivacious person who works a day shift, embracing each moment with confidence and energy. Her "Type A" personality drives her to excel in everything she does, fueled by her intelligence and a natural enthusiasm for life. Standing at a shorter height with an average build, she carries herself with boldness, accentuated by her dark, wavy hair and signature gold hoop earrings that add a touch of flair to her vibrant presence.

## Character Designs









# Soundtrack & Sound Design



The original soundtrack of the film, divided into three distinct parts, was composed by Zach Pelham & Mason Palanti. Their collaboration began with a shared vision to capture the emotional essence of the story, leading them to experiment with unconventional soundscapes to evoke the film's unique tone and atmosphere.

Being their first experience composing for an animated film, Pelham & Palanti embraced the challenge with enthusiasm, learning to adapt their compositional techniques to enhance the visual storytelling. The soundtrack was recorded by the duo in Atlanta, Georgia and mixed/mastered by industry veteran James Trevascus (*Civil War, Blonde, Devs*) in London, England. The post-production process involved extensive mixing to achieve a distinct and melancholic sonority, complementing the film's emotional landscape.

The film's sound design was created and mixed by Jérémy Ben Ammar in Paris, France. It was an ongoing and meticulous process that involved layering intricate sound textures and fine-tuning every detail to seamlessly integrate with the visual and musical elements, ensuring an immersive and cohesive auditory experience.





### Specifications

Title Two Ships
Runtime 06:50
Year 2025
Country of Origin Portugal, United States
Resolution 1920x1080 (HD)
Frame Rate 24 fps
Language No Dialogue
Format DCP, MOV (ProRes), H.264
Sound 5.1 Surround
Animation Technique
2D Frame by Frame Animation
Drawing Count 4,500+

Official Website twoshipsmovie.com

Trailer vimeo.com/1013653689

Instagram @twoshipsmovie

Screener links available upon request



## Team

# Structure

#### DIRECTOR / WRITER



McKinley Benson

#### **PRODUCER**



Bruno Caetano



### **ANIMATORS**



Ana lutes



Bofan Liu

#### PRODUCER / CO-WRITER



Mackenzie Benson

#### **COLORING**



Jakub Kaczmarek

David Mateus

#### **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**



Jodi Benson

#### **ART DIRECTOR / LAYOUTS**



Priya Kakati

#### **BACKGROUND DESIGN**

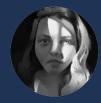


Leah Chun

#### **ANIMATION DIRECTOR**

Ala Nunu

#### **ANIMATION LEAD**



Olga Brańska

#### **STORYBOARDS**



Gaia Alari

#### COMPOSITOR



Luís Soares

#### MUSIC



Zach Pelham



Mason Palanti

#### MUSIC MIX / MASTER



James Trevascus

SOUND DESIGN / MIX



Jérémy Ben Ammar

#### **EDITOR**



McKinley Benson

#### TITLE DESIGN



Mackenzie Benson

### Director's Biography

McKinley Benson



McKinley Benson is a filmmaker and alumnus of the Savannah College of Art and Design, graduating summa cum laude with a BFA in Film and Television. He is a director, producer, and writer responsible for dozens of narrative shorts, television pilots, and documentaries, screening at Oscar-qualifying festivals around the world and garnering three Emmy awards. In 2017, McKinley co-founded the independent production studio Room 330, dedicated to high-quality, storyteller-driven projects. Over the course of his career, he has had the pleasure of working with companies such as Netflix, Amazon Studios, The Walt Disney Studios, Paramount, and XYZ Films.

Two Ships marks McKinley's first animated film which he is grateful to be producing in partnership with the Oscar-nominated production cooperative, COLA Animation.

### Filmography





**Death of Childhood** 2019 | 8:00 Documentary

**Director, Producer, Editor** Room 330 Productions

Student Emmy Awards — Best Nonfiction Short SCAD Savannah Film Festival — Official Selection Indie Shorts Mag Film Festival — Nominee Deep Focus Film Festival — Honorable Mention





Homestead 2020 | 15:00 Narrative

**Director, Writer, Editor** Room 330 Productions

Indie Shorts Mag Film Festival — Best Cinematography Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival — Semi-Finalist Film Shortage — Official Selection

## Producers' Biographies

Mackenzie Benson



Mackenzie Benson is a photographer and alumnus of the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, graduating with a Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree in Photography. She is currently based in Atlanta, Georgia working as a freelance photographer, retoucher, and color specialist.

Her portfolio combines soft, ethereal tones with bold contrasts, capturing the unique character of her subjects in both color and black-and-white. This sensibility extends to the visual style of *Two Ships*, which marks Mackenzie's first venture into filmmaking and animation.

#### Bruno Caetano



Bruno Caetano is a self-taught animator and a graduate of Lisbon's Faculty of Fine Arts Multimedia Investigation and Studies Centre (CIEAM) with a specialization in stop motion. Despite having a strong preference for this technique, his professional career led him to participate in several projects with various animation techniques as well as in other areas of artistic interest. Has worked as an animator, producer, and director in productions from various production companies, and is a founding member of COLA Animation, an evergrowing international cooperative of united artists, focused in producing, teaching, and divulging animation.

Bruno was the first ever Portuguese producer to be nominated for an Academy Award, and the second to win a Annie Award, in connection with the animated short film *Ice Merchants*.

# Executive Producer's Biography

Jodi Benson









Jodi Benson has received worldwide recognition & critical acclaim as the voice of Ariel in *The Little Mermaid*, Tour Guide Barbie in *Toy Story 2*, Weebo in *Flubber* as well as Thumbelina in *Thumbelina*. Other projects include *The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Beginning*, *The Little Mermaid 2: Return to the Sea*, *Lady and the Tramp II: Scamp's Adventure*, *101 Dalmatians 2: Patch's London Adventure*, *Joseph: King of Dreams*, *Balto: Wolf Quest, Balto III: Wings of Change*, and *Enchanted*.

She starred in *Crazy For You* as Polly Baker, receiving Tony and Helen Hayes award nominations for Best Actress in a Musical. Other Broadway credits include *Smile, Welcome to the Club,* and *Marilyn.* Internationally, she has had the honor of sharing the stage with her husband Ray Benson at the European premiere of Ira Gershwin's *My One & Only,* starring as Miss Edythe Herbert. In Los Angeles, she starred in the critically-acclaimed Reprise/UCLA production of *Babes in Arms, South Pacific, Flora the Red Menace, Oklahomal, My Fair Lady,* and *Chess,* for which she won the Best Actress Drama League Award.

She can be heard in over a dozen recordings and has a 6-part DVD series titled *Baby Faith*. Her animated television works include *Camp Lazlo!*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Batman Beyond*, *The Grim Adventures of Billy & Mandy*, *The Wild Thornberrys*, *Hercules: Zero to Hero*, *P.J. Sparkles* as well as many others. On the concert stage, she has performed as a concert soloist with symphonies all over the world such as the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, The National Symphony, Cleveland Philharmonic, Dallas Philharmonic, Tokyo Philharmonic to name a few. She has starred in the Kennedy Center Honors for Ginger Rogers, The 25th Anniversary of Walt Disney, Central Park Disney Spectacular, and Disney's 100 Years of Magic. She's honored to be the resident guest soloist for the Walt Disney Company/Disney Cruise Line and an ambassador for feature animation.

## Production Companies

#### **COLA — ANIMATION COLLECTIVE**



COLA is an international production cooperative specializing in bringing high-quality, handmade film content to life. Having worked for years in various projects with distinct animation techniques, together we are stronger, more experienced, and capable of facing advanced creative challenges.

#### **ROOM 330 PRODUCTIONS**



Founded in 2017 by filmmakers Enzo Hui and McKinley Benson, Room 330 is an independent film production studio specializing in high-quality narrative work.

### **OTHER PRODUCTIONS (COLA)**



#### Ice Merchants

2022 | 14:30 | Traditional animation (digital)

Short film directed by

#### João Gonzalez

Co-Production Wild Stream (FR), Royal College of Art (GBR)

#### **SYNOPSIS**

Every day, a father and his son jump with a parachute from their vertiginous cold house, attached to a cliff, to go to the village on the ground, far away, where they sell the ice they produce daily.

More than 380 selections and 140 awards and distinctions, including a nomination for the 95th Academy Awards in the category of Best Animated Short Film.



#### **Slow Light**

2022 | 11:00 | Stop motion & traditional animation

Short film directed by

#### Kijek/Adamski

Co-Production Animoon (PL)



#### **SYNOPSIS**

A story of a man with a very dense eyes who sees all the surrounding reality only after seven years. The consequence of the eye defect translates into the mental immaturity of the man, lack of understanding of the present and belated reflections on long-gone facts. The man is never mature enough for his age and constantly lingers on the past.

More than 100 selections and 30 awards and distinctions.



#### L'Ombre des Papillons

2022 | 8:00 | Traditional animation

Short film directed by

#### Sofia El Khyari

Co-Production Am Stram Gram (FR)



#### SYNOPSIS

In a mysterious forest, a woman is slowly lured into a nostalgic daydream as she observes butterflies.

World Premiere at the 2022 Locarno International Film Festival.



#### The Peculiar Crime of Oddball Mr. Jay

2019 | 10:50 | Stop motion

Short film directed by **Bruno Caetano** 

Co-Production Wild Stream (FR)

#### SYNOPSIS

In a city where nature has been forbidden, a small crime by a simple man triggers a chain of unexpected consequences.

More than 120 selections and 40 awards and distinctions.



#### Ahead

2019 | 5:20 | Traditional animation (digital)

Short film directed by

#### Ala Nunu

Co-Prodution Royal College of Art (GBR)



#### **SYNOPSIS**

The fear of being overwhelmed by the outside world can almost literally make you lose your head. A short story about living with and as a headless person.

More than 65 selections and 10 awards and distinctions.



#### **Herbe Verte**

In production | 12:00 | Traditional animation



#### Elise Augarte

Co-Production Novanima (FR), Le Lokal (FR)



#### SYNOPSIS

Rouge is a woman who would be nothing out of the ordinary if her hair weren't so incandescent. She looks worried and discreet. She has a blue dress, carries a very heavy fabric suitcase. She is a sad woman who feels incomplete. She is troubled, distressed, but also determined. She senses something. She needs to move on.



#### With Each Passing Day

In post-production | 10:55 | Stop motion

Short film directed by Emanuel Nevado

Co-Production **ZVVIKS** (SI)

#### **SYNOPSIS**

Mrs. Piedade, an old mouse, has grown tired of her daily routine. Realizing that her friends will never join her on a hike, she decides to take action and return alone to the place where she was once happy.

#### **FEATURE FILMS**



#### O Natal do Bruno Aleixo

2022 | 1:31:00

Feature film directed by

João Moreira and Pedro Santo
Co-Directing João Alves, Rafael Hatadani, Jorge
Ribeiro, Pedro Brito and Bruno Caetano
Co-Production O Som e a Fúria (PT)

#### SYNOPSIS

Bruno Aleixo suffers a car accident the week before Christmas, leaving him in a coma. However, doctors are unanimous: there is no physiological reason for this comatose state, so they conclude that it is psychological. Bruno Aleixo, an assumed hater of the Christmas spirit, simply refuses to wake up. Using the well-known archetype of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, the sleeping Bruno Aleixo relives, in his dreams, several traumatic Christmases of the past, present and future.

### Contact Information

#### McKinley Benson (Director/Writer)

Email <u>mckinleyrbenson@gmail.com</u> Instagram <u>@mcknley</u>

#### Mackenzie Benson (Producer/Co-Writer)

Email <u>mackenzieebenson@gmail.com</u> Instagram <u>@kenzielizbenson</u>

#### Bruno Caetano (Producer)

Email <u>b.caetano@hotmail.com</u> Instagram <u>@brunocaetanoanimation</u>

#### **COLA Animation**

Email <u>cola.audiovisual@gmail.com</u> Instagram <u>@cola\_anima</u>



