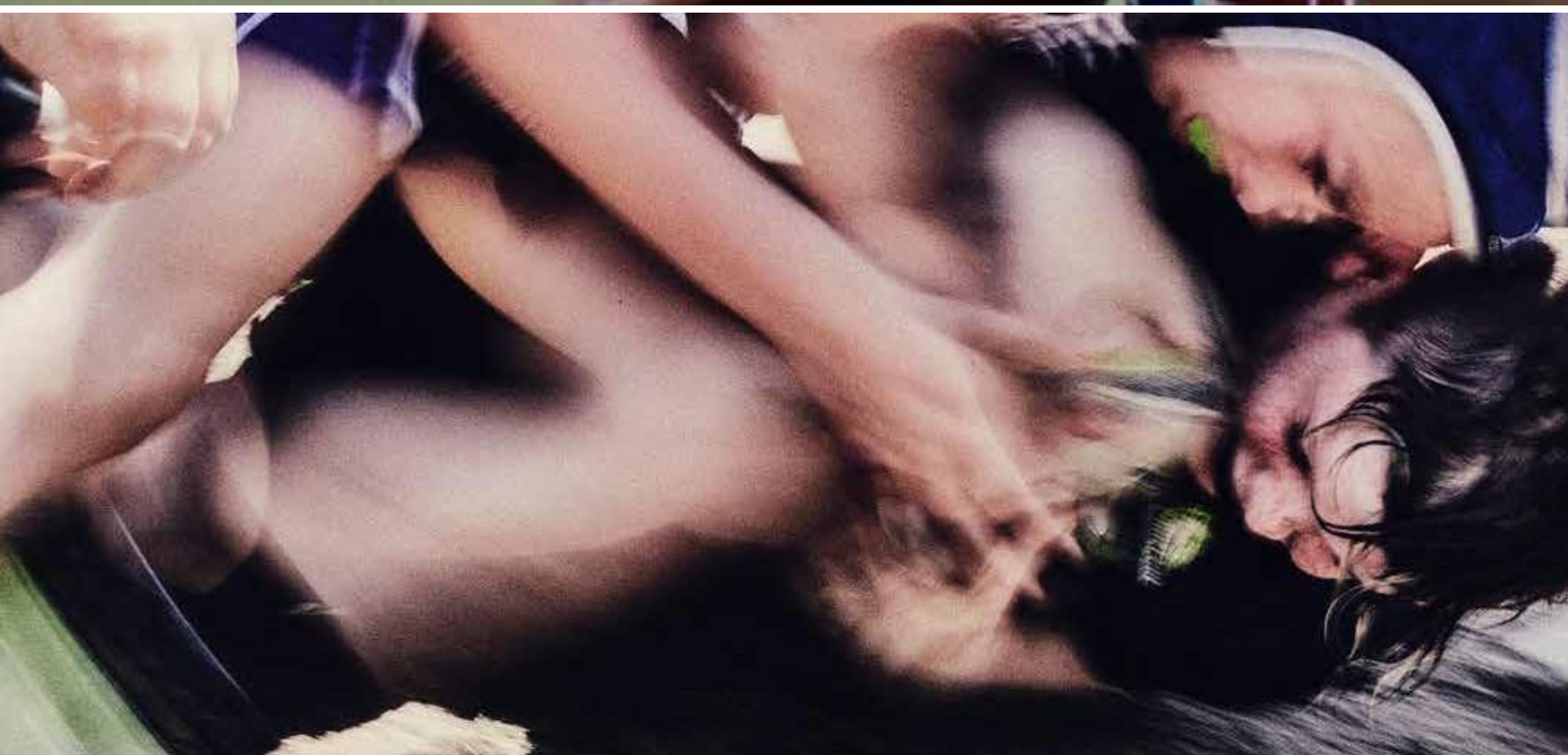


A young boy with brown hair, wearing a white and blue striped long-sleeved shirt, is sitting on the grass in the foreground, facing away from the camera. He is looking towards a soccer field in the background. The field is green and has several white cones scattered on it. In the distance, a group of people, including children and adults, are playing soccer. There are trees and buildings in the background, and the scene is lit with the warm, golden light of late afternoon or early evening. Two tall, thin white poles are visible on either side of the field, possibly for a goal or lighting.

JUST KIDS

A SHORT FILM BY
ALESSANDRO RICONDA





SYNOPSIS

Nine-year-old Alisha is the only girl in her rugby team. Each game comes with new boys who are not ready to lose to her, making her experience frustrating rather than enjoyable.

One day she plays against Ben: a boy who is suffering from the pressure of his mother's "tough-guy" expectations, who wants to make a "real man" out of him. Alisha and Ben end up physically fighting on the pitch, and Alisha channels her rage on a doll she finds in Ben's backpack.

It is Ben's mother who eventually puts an end to the fight. She gifts the doll to Alisha - who is "a better fit" than Ben - and she takes her crying son back to the pitch. Ben glances back at the doll one last time, saying goodbye to that part of his character, now lost forever... Alisha is shaken by what she has just seen, but she understands: she tidies the doll up and tucks it back in Ben's backpack. Perhaps not everything is lost yet for Ben...

It certainly is not for Alisha: she puts her captain band on and walks back to the pitch to support her team - more resolute than ever before.



WHY THIS FILM

Gender stereotypes are the underlying cause of major issues such as violence against women, the gender pay gap, and high suicide rates among young men.

Young girls as young as six years old suffer from self-esteem problems, and they believe certain tasks and positions of power are more suitable for boys. On the other hand, young boys struggle to express their emotions and develop violent behaviors.

“Just Kids” highlights how parents could be inadvertently fueling a negative loop that prevents us from living in a fairer society for both women and men.



CHARACTERS

Alisha

She has always been the only girl in her team. This means it took her time to gain her teammates' respect, but she eventually became one of the most loved and appreciated players. Nevertheless, each time they play against a new team some boy won't be ready for it. Thanks to her mother's attitude, she is equipped with the right mindset to keep doing what she enjoys, no matter what.





Alisha's mother

A progressive thinker. She supports Alisha's passion even if they live in a town with no female rugby team. She desperately tries to normalise Alicia's presence in the team - not always succeeding. Most importantly, she teaches her daughter she can do anything she wants as long as she enjoys it.

Ben

A quiet and insecure boy who suffers from the pressure of his mother's expectations. The presence of Alisha destabilises him as he is not ready to lose against a girl in front of his mother. He does his best to please his mum, but he hasn't given up yet on the beloved Molly he received as a gift from a family friend several years before.





Ben's mother

A conservative thinker. She has strong ideas on what is appropriate for boys and girls. She is trying to make a "real man" out of Ben, so she is worried about him still playing with his doll despite his age and she is pushing for him to "man up". When she meets Alisha, she is genuinely worried about her and she tries to do what she thinks is the right thing: tell the girl she should not be playing a dangerous boys' game.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I've never been the stereotypical "macho" boy. In my teenage years, I suffered the peer pressure of not being "man enough". Growing up, I understood there was nothing wrong with me. Instead, I was the victim of an old way of thinking that is still deeply rooted in many people's minds. Even if part of our society has moved on from certain stereotypes, many are still convinced that toys like cars for boys and dolls for girls are a child's "natural instinct" rather than the conditioning of a society that forces roles on individuals based on their gender. And sexism is so deeply rooted in our cultural inheritance that even the most progressive thinkers are somehow guilty of unconsciously fueling gender stereotypes. Cultural change is necessary and my goal with "Just Kids" is to help more people become more conscious of how we can all do something to evolve in a fairer society for both women and men.



MOOD





IMPACT & DISTRIBUTION

Apart from entering film festivals and following the traditional short film distribution cycle, the film will become an asset for our partner charities and organizations working to challenge gender stereotypes such as (but not limited to):

- UNESCO (<https://en.unesco.org/genderequality/division>)
- Global Equality Collective (<https://thegec.org/>)
- You be you (<https://www.youbeyou.co.uk/>)
- Lifting Limits (<https://liftinglimits.org.uk/>)
- Sonshine Magazine (<https://sonshinemagazine.com/>)
- Festival of the girl (<https://www.festivalofthegirl.com/>)

We believe this is the most effective way for the short film to have a real impact on society.

You can read more about our distribution plan in the a dedicated document.



ALESSANDRO RICONDA

WRITER / DIRECTOR

Alessandro is filmmaker based in London. His early work was broadcasted by BBC, FOX, MTV and Comedy Central, but he is best known for the short film “[Shame and glasses](#)”. The film won the “Best Overall” award at CineYouth (Chicago Intl Film Festival’s event for young filmmakers), and was an official selection at over 200 festivals including the Academy qualifying TIFF Kids and Chicago Children’s Intl Film Festival. It was also acquired by HBO Europe, MoMA New York, and education organizations around the world.

Apart from developing his projects, Alessandro works as a Script Reader / Editor for Netflix’s International Original Feature’s team, and as a script coordinator and director’s assistant for Film and HETV Drama. His credits include *Master of None*, *The Peripheral* (produced by Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy), an upcoming Marvel mini-series and an upcoming Amazon Studios fantasy franchise.

Links to previous work

[Shame and glasses](#) - short film

[Maria can't brake](#) - taster video



JUST
KIDS