

DANCE — A Short Film

Written by Kathryn Georghiou
Longlisted Unsolicited Scripts Short Film Fund 2024

Sarah has given her whole life to ballet. Now in her mid-thirties, the twilight of a dancer's career, she finally lands the role she has always dreamed of. Then she discovers she is pregnant. Then, on opening night, she begins to miscarry. She goes on stage anyway.

~20 mins Duration	Tbc Budget	Ballet World
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THE STORY

Sarah is a grafter. Working-class in a world of privilege, she has clawed her way to the top of a profession that discards women the moment they stop looking young. At 35, 'geriatric' by the NHS's definition, she wins the role of Princess Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty*, beating out a younger, spiteful rival who has been circling for years.

But in rehearsals, Sarah begins to stumble. She is violently sick. And then, peeing on a stick in a backstage toilet, two blue lines confirm what she feared most. She is pregnant. To tell the company means handing the role to her rival. So she says nothing. She binds herself tighter, blames bloating, smiles through it all.

On opening night, a full house, press, celebrities, her mother in the stalls, the pain hits like a knife. In the dressing room toilet, the white porcelain runs red. She is having a miscarriage. The costume designer asks if she should call the understudy. Sarah says no. She packs herself with sanitary pads. She downs painkillers. She walks to the wings. And then, like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly, she becomes the Prima Ballerina.

THE VISION

I wrote *Dance* because I know this woman. I am this woman. I had a miscarriage at work and told no one. I went to hospital every day after my shift for six weeks, alone, while everyone else thought I was fine. This film is for every woman who has ever been told, silently or explicitly, that her body is an inconvenience to her ambition.

Visually, *Dance* is *Tár* meets *Black Swan* meets *Whiplash*. Slow-motion captures the transcendent beauty of ballet, the form that makes a lifetime of sacrifice feel worthwhile. Against this: staccato, cold frames for tension; the white of a tutu against the shocking red of blood. The beauty and the pain existing in the same image, inseparable.

WHY NOW

1 in 4 women in the UK will experience pregnancy loss. The majority do so in silence: at work, on stage, in public, because disclosure still carries professional cost.

Women over 35 are routinely classified as 'geriatric' patients. In ballet and the performing arts, 35 is already considered past peak. *Dance* asks what happens when biology, ageism and ambition collide.

Ageism in the arts disproportionately affects women. *Dance* gives a voice to the generation caught between the ticking of two clocks: career and fertility.

THE TEAM

Kathryn Georghiou — Writer/Director. Her debut *Changing Tides* won three Best First-Time Filmmaker Awards and a Best Drama Award internationally. Trained at Mountview Academy; MA Creative Writing (Distinction); former Director at London Business School. She writes from lived experience — and performs it too, having won six Best Actress Awards for the film *Prefer To Sip Tea*.

DISTRIBUTION & AUDIENCE

Dance will reach audiences who have lived inside this story: career-driven women navigating the cruel intersection of age, ambition and motherhood.

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