



Wild Nights With Emily

Written and Directed by Madeleine Olnek

Starring Molly Shannon, Amy Seimetz, Susan Ziegler, Brett Gelman, Jackie Monahan, Kevin Seal, Dana Melanie, Sasha Frolova, Lisa Haas, Al Sutton



World Premiere
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For hi-res press stills, contact CinemaHilarite@gmail.com and you will be added to the Dropbox/Google folder. Put "Wild Nights with Emily Still Request" in the subject line.

The OFFICIAL WEBSITE: <http://wildnightswithemily.com/>

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"Hilarious...an undeniably compelling romance. "

—INDIEWIRE

"As entertaining and thought-provoking as Dickinson's poetry."

—THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE

SYNOPSIS

THE STORY

SHORT SUMMARY

Molly Shannon plays Emily Dickinson in "Wild Nights With Emily," a dramatic comedy. The film explores her vivacious, irreverent side that was covered up for years — most notably Emily's lifelong romantic relationship with another woman.

LONG SUMMARY

Molly Shannon plays Emily Dickinson in the dramatic comedy "Wild Nights with Emily." The poet's persona, popularized since her death, became that of a reclusive spinster – a delicate wallflower, too sensitive for this world. This film explores her vivacious, irreverent side that was covered up for years — most notably Emily's lifelong romantic relationship with another woman (Susan Ziegler). After Emily died, a rivalry emerged when her brother's mistress (Amy Seimetz) along with editor T.W. Higginson (Brett Gelman) published a book of Emily's poems. Irreverent and surreal, Wild Nights was selected as one of "The 50 Most Anticipated American Independent Films of 2018"(Filmmaker Magazine); you will never look at Dickinson the same way again.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



MADELEINE OLNEK — Madeleine Olnek is a New York City based playwright and filmmaker. She was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship for her third feature film, *Wild Nights With Emily*, which premiered at SXSW 2018.

Her debut feature *Codependent Lesbian Space Alien Seeks Same* premiered at Sundance 2011 and screened at MoMA and The Viennale. Nominated for a Gotham award, it had theatrical runs in LA and NYC.

Her second feature *The Foxy Merkins*, included screenings at Sundance 2014, BAM Cinemafest, Lincoln Center, and an NYC theatrical run at IFP. The film had its international premiere at the Moscow Film Festival, and was nominated for an Independent Spirit award.

Her award-winning and widely screened comedy shorts, *Countertransference* (2009), and *Hold Up* (2006), were official selections of Sundance; *Make Room For Phyllis* (2007) premiered at Sarasota. Olnek was awarded best female short film director at Sundance in 2009, by LA's Women In Film organization. As a playwright, Olnek has been commissioned by Dixon Place, the Atlantic Theater, The Actor's Theater of Louisville, and the Public theater. She is one of the authors of "A Practical Handbook for The Actor" (with a foreword by David Mamet), a widely used acting textbook. Olnek graduated from NYU with a BFA in drama, where she trained in the acting conservatory program. She holds an MFA in playwriting from Brown University, which she attended on a full merit-based scholarship. She has an MFA in film from Columbia University, where she was awarded the prestigious William Goldman Screenwriting Fellowship.

How Molly Shannon Brought Emily Dickinson Out of the Closet as a ‘Lesbian Feminist Hero’

By [Ramin Setoodeh](#)



CREDIT: SXSW

South by Southwest isn't typically associated with movies that have a literary pedigree. But the film festival scored a coup this year, by bringing Emily Dickinson all the way to Austin. In [“Wild Nights With Emily,”](#) Shannon plays the 19th century poet as the opposite of her pop-culture archetype of a lonely hermit.

Madeleine Olnek's comedy offers a Dickinson who is a confident romantic. Between composing reams of poetry, she falls in love with her childhood best friend Susan (Susan Ziegler), only to have her true identity erased by a meddling acquaintance (Amy Seimetz), acting as her posthumous publisher. After the premiere of “Wild Nights With Emily” at SXSW, Shannon and her director (and long-time pal from NYU Drama School) Olnek spoke to *Variety* about making the film and why it's particularly timely in the era of Time's Up.

Molly, after the Q&A, you called Dickinson a “lesbian feminist hero.”

Molly Shannon: Yeah, she is. I think she made the most of the time she was born in history. It breaks my heart to think homosexuality has been around for centuries, but we just don't have studies on it because people had to be closeted. We've come a long way. I think she was so fearless and strong for her time. She was true to herself for being gay and wanting to be a writer.

How did the two of you first get interested in telling Emily's story?

Madeleine Olnek: I read an article in the New York Times about how advances in science have shed light on historical figures. And one of them was Emily Dickinson and how infrared technologies are restoring erasures to her papers. What was being uncovered in these erasures were things she had written about Susan. And then there were all these other letters Emily wrote to Susan that were just sitting there. The image of Emily Dickinson as this recluse spinster was so big in people's minds, they couldn't see the letters for what they were.

Shannon: I'm so attracted to these types of stories. She was born in 1830 and she did the best she could for what was expected of women. And the fact that she had to be sold as a virgin spinster when she was so lively and aggressive and hungry to be published. Most people have only heard of the other version of Emily. I feel like it's such an important movie for writers of female voices. It's so timely.

Because of everything that's been happening with Time's Up and #MeToo?

Olnek: I think right now we're having a reckoning where people are finally facing the fact that not having women as equal participants has a real cost. We are seeing that cost. Donald Trump is our president. Horrible things are happening. Will the country ever recover? I don't know. Women's issues were always seen as this weird aside. And we're understanding that the way we perceive women has to do with what we know about history. With the history of Emily Dickinson being so re-written and her being turned into the opposite of what she was, her life is almost held up as an example.

Shannon: People think, she held herself back. If you do that, and you're demure and quietly writing and not expecting anything, then maybe you too shall be rewarded in the end. It's such a bad message.

Olnek: It makes it so that when someone like Hillary Clinton comes along, there's no context for her. An ambitious woman? That's never happened before. This comes from the erasure and misrepresentation of women for reasons that have to do with not wanting to acknowledge their full humanity.

Did you always know that the movie would be a comedy? Or did you think it could be a drama like “Sylvia” starring Gwyneth Paltrow?

Olnek: I like that movie. I thought that was a good movie about a poet. But in her case, she stuck her head in the oven. That's sad. It was important that this was a comedy and included humor because Emily Dickinson herself had a great sense of humor and there was love in her life. There was happiness and joy. The idea of making a drama would reinforce her as having had this miserable life.

I was an English major in college, and I don't ever remember learning that Emily Dickinson was a gay poet.

Olnek: We are the first people to tell the story. Part of how second-class citizenship happens is not through force but through systems of language and having control of language. That's why this moment with female directors is so important.

Molly, did you ever feel like you didn't get the same opportunities in Hollywood because of your gender?

Shannon: I struggled so much when I was little with my mom dying in a car accident, I was very tough with Hollywood. I was like, “Nothing can be that bad.” I remember moving to LA and having no money. This is nothing against boys. I don’t know if they know how to write for girls. And we need to figure out how to write for ourselves. I didn’t consider myself a formal writer. But I could perform orally and somebody was like, “That’s writing.” Madeleine and I did this comic show at NYU, and people were like you should be on “Saturday Night Live.” When I first started at “SNL,” there were a lot of Harvard Lampoon guys who were formally trained as writers. And I was like, “Oh no, I’m in over my head.” But I had characters and drive and I was forced to pull from within. I relate to Emily’s drive and desire and plowing through that world. It’s different now, but I do feel it was a little bit hard then. There were more boy-dominated groups. And the girls had to be tough.

Has your career changed since you won an Independent Spirit Award for “Other People?”

Shannon: I do feel that way. Most comedians I think are very serious. They have a dark side or a sad side or they’ve been through stuff. I think that movie gave me an opportunity to really pull from parts of myself that are true and real and who I am. People think of me as a comedian, but I’m really an actress that got into comedy. That’s what I love about Madeleine’s work. This is a dramatic comedy, which is always my favorite thing. I always like to play the emotional truth even when I’m doing comedy.

Do you think this movie will be considered controversial?

Olnek: That’s a good question. I’m sure there’s room for lots of Emily Dickinsons in the world. One thing that we’ve found, I’ve done works-in-progress screenings in my apartment as I’m working on it. Young people love the movie. There’s something among the older generations, where we almost have PTSD from having gone through the AIDS crisis. Young people are honestly more progressive to the point where they are genuinely interested in seeing stories that aren’t necessarily about their life. The straight kids are interested in seeing gay stories.

1

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“WILD NIGHTS WITH EMILY” & THE SPINSTER MYTH

*“I love you as dearly, Susie, as when love first began, on
the step at the front door, and under the Evergreens...”*

– Letter from Emily Dickinson to Susan Gilbert

THE HOMESTEAD

(Emily & Lavinia Dickinson’s Home)



THE EVERGREENS

(Susan & Austin Dickinson’s Home)

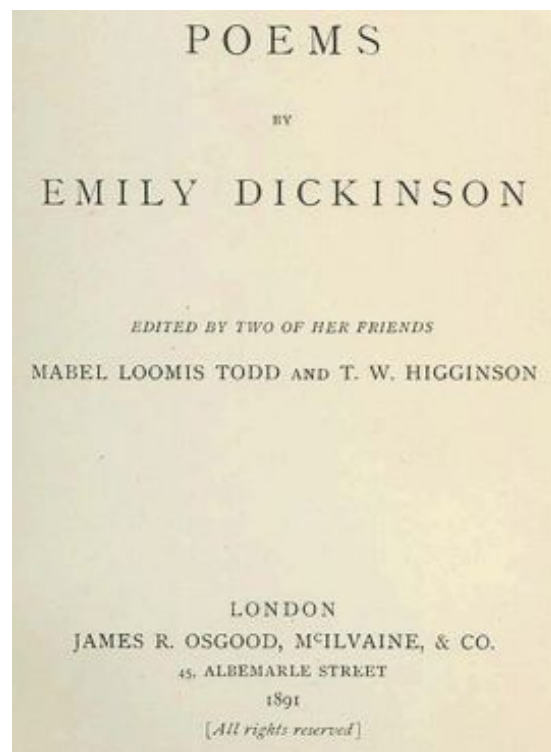


The Dickinson family lived in Amherst in a house they referred to as “The Homestead.” After Austin married Susan Gilbert – who hid her engagement to Austin from Emily for close to a year – they built a house next door and Susan named it “The Evergreens.” Living next door made Emily and Susan’s relationship sustainable, at a time when it was impossible by law for women – who were not able to own anything or control their finances – to set themselves up independently. They sent many letters back and forth to each other every day, in between their stolen visits. They often met to share cups of coffee and new writing in the “Northwest passage,” a pantry in the Dickinson house that had doors on each side, so they could leave if someone was coming in either direction. Susan’s children were also very close to Emily and delivered many of the letters between their mother and their aunt. In 1914, Mattie Dickinson, Susan’s eldest daughter, tried to bring the story of Susan and Emily’s romantic relationship to the world, but it could not hold the public attention the way that Mabel’s tale of a house-bound recluse, writing to heal a “love-disaster” could. After Mabel grew too old to lecture, Mabel’s daughter Millicent – briefly pictured in the movie – took the baton and continued telling the story of Emily Dickinson from Mabel’s point of view. Eventually, Millicent would negotiate with a scholar who wished to have access to Emily’s papers – passed to Millicent by her mother – in exchange for a book favorable to Mabel and negative of Susan. The book, “The Life Emily Dickinson,” by Richard Sewell, was the winner of the National Book Award and it included as an appendix Mabel’s own trashy tell-all entitled “Scurrilous But True.” Sewell’s biography – which cemented many of the reclusive spinster images of Emily Dickinson – did not include the very important information that in fact Emily never came out of her

room when Mabel was in the house because Mabel was having sex with Emily's brother downstairs. Years later, Mattie Dickinson would publish a book entitled "Emily Dickinson Face to Face" to emphasize the contact that Mattie had with Emily and that Mabel did not. Yet Mabel's version of Emily was always privileged over Mattie's, because an image of the poet as victim was too compelling for the public to resist.

GETTING INTO PRINT

Mabel Loomis Todd and Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson collaborated as editors of Emily Dickinson's work – but were far from being true friends of Emily's. T.W. Higginson rejected Emily's poetry during her lifetime, though many of the poems that she had sent him were the ones that became so popular after her death. Higginson was regarded as a radical figure, and in fact was the colonel of the first all-black union troops in the civil war. A self-styled advocate of female suffrage, he chose to champion Helen Hunt Jackson, another woman poet from Amherst who grew up at the same time as Emily – and who wrote poems with dainty rhyme schemes and traditionally female subject matter. Higginson made Helen Hunt Jackson the most famous female poet in America. Although Mabel would refer to Higginson as Emily's "Preceptor" in an attempt to diminish Susan's influence, Emily did not incorporate a single suggestion that Higginson had given her on her poems. In the end, after Emily's death, Higginson admitted that he had taught Emily "nothing."



THE DICKINSON FAMILY AND ASSOCIATED LITERARY FIGURES

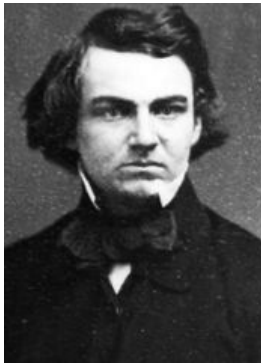
Shown With Their "Wild Nights With Emily" Counterparts



Emily Dickinson



Susan Gilbert Dickinson



Austin Dickinson



Lavinia Dickinson



Mattie Dickinson



Gilbert (Gib) Dickinson





Maggie Maher



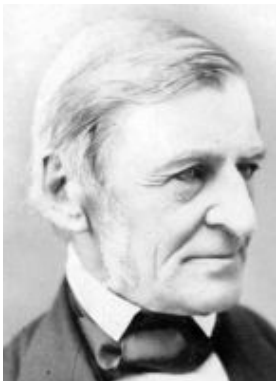
Mabel Loomis Todd



Thomas Wentworth Higginson



Helen Hunt Jackson



Ralph Waldo Emerson

ABOUT THE CAST

MOLLY SHANNON | “Emily Dickinson”

Molly Shannon has become one of Hollywood’s most sought-after talents on television and the silver screen. Shannon spent six seasons as a member of the repertory company on “Saturday Night Live,” primarily known for the eclectic characters she created, such as Mary Katherine Gallagher and Sally O’Malley. She is also praised for her parodies of Courtney Love, Liza Minnelli, Helen Madden and Terry Rialto. In 2000, she received an Emmy nomination for “Outstanding Individual Performance in a Variety or Music Program.” Prior to joining “SNL,” Shannon appeared at The Up Front Comedy Theater in Los Angeles in “The Rob and Molly Show,” an improvisational show she co-wrote with Rob Muir.

Shannon will be seen next in *Wild Nights with Emily*, which will premiere at this year’s SXSW Film Festival. Most recently, she was seen in Tamara Jenkins’ Netflix original movie, *Private Life* alongside Paul Giamatti and Kathryn Hahn. The film debuted at this year’s Sundance Film Festival. Last year, she was seen in two films that also premiered at Sundance Film Festival: *The Little Hours*, an ensemble comedy about a young servant who takes refuge at a convent full of emotionally unstable nuns which also stars Alison Brie, Dave Franco, Aubrey Plaza, John C. Reilly and Fred Armisen; and *Fun Mom Dinner*, a comedy that follows four moms (played by Shannon, Toni Collette, Katie Aselton and Bridget Everett) who get together for a harmless ‘fun mom dinner’ despite having nothing in common except their kids’ preschool class. Additionally, Molly co-starred in William H. Macy’s *The Layover*, a comedy which follows two best friends who find themselves competing for the same guy during an extended layover in St. Louis.

On television, Molly can currently be seen co-starring in the hit HBO comedy, “Divorce,” opposite Sarah Jessica Parker and Thomas Haden Church, which is now in its second season. “Divorce” tells the story of a woman who suddenly begins to reassess her life and her marriage and finds that making a fresh start is harder than she thought. Additionally, Molly co-starred in the “Wet Hot American Summer” miniseries for Netflix. The eight-episode series serves as a prequel to the cult comedy classic film of the same name, which Shannon also starred in.

Last year, Molly was awarded the Independent Spirit Award for “Best Supporting Actress” for her performance in the highly acclaimed drama *Other People*, written and directed by SNL writer, Chris Kelly. Shannon received rave reviews for her portrayal of Joanne, a mother who is struggling with terminal cancer whose son moves home to take care of her. The film features an all-star ensemble including Jesse Plemons, Bradley Whitford, June Squibb, Maude Apatow, and won the “Grand Jury” prize at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival.

She also co-starred in the independent feature film *Miles* from director Nathan Adloff and *We Don't Belong Here*, a drama about a crumbling family that also stars Catherine Keener and Anton Yelchin.

Shannon was seen in a memorable guest arc on Fox's comedy, "Raising Hope." In addition, Molly garnered rave reviews for her arc on HBO's series "Enlightened" and her performance earned her an Emmy nomination for "Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series." She also made several guest appearances on CBS's "Life in Pieces," HBO's comedy "Getting On," the ABC Rebel Wilson comedy, "Super Fun Night," the IFC mini-series "The Spoils of Babylon" alongside Tobey Maguire and Kristen Wiig, "Up All Night," "The Middle" and Lisa Kudrow's "Web Therapy." Other television credits include a recurring guest starring role on the Fox hit "Glee," the TBS animated series "Neighbors from Hell," the U.S. version of the popular Australian sitcom "Kath and Kim," as well as "Cracking Up," "Will & Grace" "Sex and the City," "Seinfeld," "Pushing Daisies" and "30 Rock," among many others. Her television movies include "More of Me," "12 Days of Christmas Eve," and "The Music Man."

Additional film credits include *Me, Earl and the Dying Girl*, an independent drama which won the Grand Jury Prize as well as the Audience Award at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival; the American zombie comedy, *Life After Beth*; the 5th installment of the popular *Scary Movie* franchise; the animated comedy, *Hotel Transylvania* and the sequel *Hotel Transylvania 2*; *Bad Teacher* alongside Cameron Diaz, Jason Segel and Justin Timberlake, *Superstar*, portraying everybody's favorite Catholic schoolgirl Mary Katherine Gallagher; Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette*; *Year of the Dog*; *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*; *Evan Almighty*; *Igor*; Keenen Ivory Wayans' *Little Man*; *Scary Movie 4*; Ron Howard's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*; *A Night at the Roxbury*; *Analyze This*; *Happiness*; *Never Been Kissed*; *The Good Boy!*; *Serendipity*; *Osmosis Jones*; *The Santa Clause 2* and *Wet Hot American Summer*.

In 2011, Abrams Books for Young Readers, an imprint of ABRAMS, released Molly's first children's picture book, *Tilly the Trickster*. The book tells the tale of Tilly, "a mischief maker of the best kind—one who learns her lesson but never lets the reader stop having fun." In 2010, Shannon made her Broadway debut replacing Tony Award winner Katie Finneran in the hit musical "Promises, Promises" alongside Sean Hayes and Kristin Chenoweth.

Born in Shaker Heights, Ohio, Molly earned a BFA in drama from New York University's prestigious Tisch School of the Arts. She currently lives in California with her husband and two children.

AMY SEIMETZ | “Mabel Loomis Todd”

Amy Seimetz is an actress and filmmaker who has become one of the most important voices in independent cinema. She stars in Ridley Scott's *ALIEN: COVENANT*, recurs on Netflix's *STRANGER THINGS*, and she is the co-creator and executive producer of Golden Globe nominated Starz series *THE GIRLFRIEND EXPERIENCE*. Seimetz has been nominated for a total of five Gotham awards including a nomination for her work in Shane Carruth's critically acclaimed *UPSTREAM COLOR*. Seimetz made history as the first person to ever receive two Gotham Awards for two different films in the categories of Breakthrough Director and Best Actress. She was a series regular on AMC series *THE KILLING* and recurred on Christopher Guest's HBO comedy series "Family Tree" as the love interest to Chris O'Dowd. Her directorial debut feature *SUN DON'T SHINE* won a special jury prize at South By Southwest, and was nominated for two Gotham Awards, bringing her total nominations to five. The film received rave reviews including being selected as a New York Times Critics Pick and it landed her on Indiewire's list of 12 Directors To Watch. Having worked with such indie powerhouses as Lena Dunham, Shane Carruth, Adam Wingard, Noah Baumbach, Megan Griffiths, James Ponsoldt, David Lowery and Joe Swanberg, Amy has quickly become a sensation in the independent film landscape and is poised for a significant career as an important new artist of her generation.

SUSAN ZIEGLER | “Susan Gilbert Dickinson”

A graduate of NYU's Experimental Theatre Wing, Susan has performed in numerous venues internationally, Off-Broadway, and in Los Angeles. She has a long history of working with Ms. Olnek, both in her plays and in film. Susan played the therapist in the award-winning short film *COUNTERTRANSFERENCE* (Sundance, Outfest-Grand Jury Prize, Newfest- Grand Jury Prize). She originated the lead role in the stage version of *CODEPENDENT LESBIAN SPACE ALIEN SEEKS SAME* which she then reprised in the Sundance – and Gotham Award nominated-- cult hit film. She also had a featured role in the Independent Spirit Award nominated Sundance comedy *THE FOXY MERKINS*. Recent projects: *SEARCH PARTY* on TBS (Charles Rogers, Sarah-Violet Bliss, Michael Showalter), *HELLO MY NAME IS DORIS*, *GOOD GIRLS GET HIGH* and *INEFFABLE*. Aside from numerous television and film appearances, she is also a member of the critically-acclaimed New American Theater Company, where she has collaborated with fellow company members Alfred Molina, Jack Stelhin and Eric Pierpoint.

BRETT GELMAN | “Colonel T.W. Higginson”

Brett Gelman's most recent film, "Lemon," which he stars in and co-wrote with director Janicza Bravo, premiered to rave reviews at this year's Sundance Film Festival. The film was also the opening night film for the 2017 International Film Festival - Rotterdam with the high praise continuing through its screenings at the SXSW Film Festival. Brett is

currently guest starring on Netflix's award-winning series, "Stranger Things" and can also be seen as the brother-in-law on Amazon's smash hit, "Fleabag." Other recent projects include his return as 'Dr. Greg' on the new season of Judd Apatow's critically acclaimed series, "Love," and the release of his third comedy special for Adult Swim, "Brett Gelman's Dinner in America." He can also be seen in the return of David Lynch's hit show, "Twin Peaks."

Brett's television credits include his "Dinner Specials" that he and Jason Woliner created for Adult Swim. He also co-starred on the Adult Swim cop parody "Eagleheart" opposite Chris Elliot, the critically acclaimed FX comedy, "Married," opposite Nat Faxon and Judy Greer, Comedy Central's "Another Period," Starz's critically acclaimed series "Blunt Talk" opposite Patrick Stewart, and NBC's "Go On" opposite Matthew Perry. Film credits include roles in the Columbia-distributed comedies "The Other Guys" and "30 Minutes or Less," the Sundance selection, "Joshy," and the Docu/Fiction film, "Drib" that premiered at this year's South By Southwest Film Festival. Brett graduated with a BFA in drama from North Carolina School Of The Arts. Brett is a long time company member of The Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre.

JACKIE MONAHAN | "Lavinia Dickinson"

Jackie Monahan is a comedian, actor, writer, and producer who is setting the comedy stages from LA to New York on fire with her fearless brand of humor. She toured the country featuring for Amy Schumer which included opening for her monthly in Vegas. Jackie has since been headlining clubs, colleges, and cruise Lines such as Atlantis, and Olivia She can be seen live at: The Comedy Store, The Improv and alternative rooms throughout Los Angeles. You may have seen her on Adult Swim's "The Eric Andre Show", Last Comic Standing, or Comedy Jam on Showtime. In addition, Jackie starred in and co-wrote Madeleine Olnek's beloved Sundance feature film "The Foxy Merkin" which was also nominated for an Independent Spirit award for best Director. Jackie was Zylar in Olnek's Sundance hit "Codependent Lesbian Space Alien Seeks Same" which received rave reviews from both Variety and The Hollywood Reporter. Roger Ebert called Monahan "A delight, and the Queen of Deadpan. " She has been professionally trained at UCB and Groundlings but she was born with a spot on sense of timing and a unique look at life that cannot be duplicated. Jackie won Time Out New York Joke of the Year and was voted comic to watch by Esquire magazine who said "Jackie has the looks of your friends hot older sister with the jokes of a deranged serial killer. She will kill you and you will be smiling." Jackie's dynamic presence both on television and on the stage, brings an unapologetic fearlessness mixed with spontaneous combustion to every performance that will give you an ab workout and make you want to dance in the aisles. According to The Comedy Bible "Jackie wins over the crowd with her contagious energy. Jackie is fearless and patient. She keeps the energy up

with every joke and she always delivers. She shines when being herself which is silly, relatable and absolutely disarming. She embraces universal humor that is genuinely entertaining to all audiences." So do as the Brink says and "...jump at the opportunity to see this unstoppable comedian on the rise."

KEVIN SEAL | "Austin Dickinson"

Kevin Seal was an MTV VJ and host of the show *Kevin Seal: Sporting Fool* (Cable Ace Award). Kevin worked with Madeleine Olnek for many years in downtown theater, starring in many of her plays, including the lead in "Help Police" at Soho Rep, and he also played Santa Claus in "The I'm Not Welcome Anywhere Christmas Special," and slow danced with Jesus in "How To Write While You Sleep." 20 years ago, he played a drunk plastic surgeon, married to his Wild Nights With Emily wife (actor Susan Ziegler) in Olnek's play "Three Stories High".

JOEL MICHAELY | "Edward Dickinson"

Joel Michaely has several upcoming films that include the SXSW premiere of "Wild Nights With Emily", with Joel as "Edward Dickinson". Joel will also star in the upcoming "1st Born", reteaming with Val Kilmer for their 3rd flick together. Joel is best known for his co-starring roles in Academy Award Winner Roger Avary's "Rules Of Attraction" opposite James Van der Beek, Jessica Biel, Kate Bosworth, and the lesbian film "But I'm A Cheerleader" opposite Natasha Lyonne and Rupaul.

DANA MELANIE | "Young Emily Dickinson"

Dana Melanie has steadily been building a solid foundation for a long lasting career with roles in both television and film. Top 10 Films named her a 'standout film stealer' for her performance in 'Treehouse' — her first lead role in a film. Recently, Dana won her first Best Actress Award for her role as an axe murderer in 'Lissy Borton has an Axe', and another Best Actress Award for her performance as a lonely teenage hypochondriac in the comedy short 'Waiting to Die in Bayside, Queens.'

In addition to 'Wild Nights with Emily', Dana co-stars in the thriller 'By Dawn' which will also be released in 2018.

Dana is a writer and passionate environmentalist.

SASHA FROLOVA | “Young Susan Gilbert”

A New York City native, Sasha Frolova is an actress and a photographer and has intertwined the two to establish a presence both on the big screen and in print. Her work has most recently debuted in print for King Kong Magazine alongside iconic photographers like David LaChapelle and this year an editorial for Marc Jacobs. Her previous photography collections, *Busts*, 2016 and *Nana*, 2015, both premiered with accompanying essays and had a powerful impact on their audience, getting picked up by magazines like *Paper Magazine*, *Refinery29* and even *The Huffington Post*. She also works in fashion in front of the camera, and can be seen most recently in Autumn De Wilde’s latest short film series *The Postman Dreams* for Prada opposite Elijah Wood.

In 2016 Sasha made huge strides in her acting career by booking the series regular role of young Cathy in the Amazon pilot *The Interestings*, directed by Mike Newell and adapted from the award-nominated novel of the same title. She then went on to star as a lead in Dark Rabbit’s feature *BLOOD SURF*, produced by James Franco and 20th Century Fox’s *THE EMPTY MAN* opposite James Badge Dale, coming soon. She most recently appeared in Netflix’s *The OA* and guested on CBS’s *Blue Bloods*.

This year, Sasha appeared in FOX’s *RED SPARROW* opposite Jennifer Lawrence, directed by Francis Lawrence and in *WILD NIGHTS WITH EMILY* which premiered at SXSW. In Television, Sasha joins the cast of *Snowpiercer* for TNT in the series regular role of Pixi Aariak, opposite Jennifer Connelly and Daveed Diggs and to shoot later this year.

ABOUT THE CREW

CASPER ANDREAS | Producer

Casper Andreas is an award-winning writer, director, actor and film producer. He runs the production and distribution company Embrem Entertainment.

Casper got his start as a filmmaker in 2003 when he wrote, directed, and produced the short drama *Mormor's Visit* as well as his first feature, the romantic comedy *Slutty Summer*. Since then Casper produced and directed another seven feature films, which have collected multiple awards at film festivals. His first six features opened theatrically in the U.S. and all of them have been released on VOD and DVD around the world. Originally from Sweden, Casper was excited to return to his home country and direct his first Swedish film, a short drama titled *A Last Farewell* (2014) based on his own script. The film went on to play over 130 film festivals worldwide, picking up 18 awards. Casper has been selected as one of the 100 most influential and newsworthy LGBT people by Out Magazine.

PRESS

CRITICAL RESPONSE TO “WILD NIGHTS WITH EMILY”

One of the *The 50 Most Anticipated American Films of 2018*—FILMMAKER MAGAZINE

INDIEWIRE: ‘WILD NIGHTS WITH EMILY’ REVIEW: MOLLY SHANNON IS EMILY DICKINSON IN THE BEST LESBIAN COMEDY IN YEARS — SXSW

“Madeleine Olnek’s movies may be an acquired taste, but the woman knows how to write a catchy premise. Her three feature films — all madcap comedies with absurdist leanings — include lesbian aliens looking for love, lesbian hustlers picking up women outside Talbot’s — and now, lesbian Emily Dickinson traipsing across her Amherst lawn after a tryst with her sister-in-law, her petticoats flung about her head. That’s the premise of “Wild Nights With Emily,” and to say that they just don’t make movies like this anymore would be grossly inaccurate: It’s hard to imagine anyone making this movie other than Olnek. Using Dickinson’s letters and poems (with the permission from Harvard University Press), “Wild Nights With Emily” paints a much sunnier portrait of the poet than that of the reclusive spinster terrified of publication. Instead, the film imagines a lively woman forced to hide a lifelong love affair whose work was mostly rejected by a literary establishment that would embrace it after her death.

Continuing a fruitful post-“Saturday Night Live” indie film career (she won an Indie Spirit Award last year for “Other People”), Molly Shannon is brilliant and warm as the literary icon. The movie begins with a lecture given by Dickinson’s first publisher, Mabel Todd (Amy Seimetz, in a rare comedic turn), who spins the yarn of the reclusive Dickinson with a syrupy grin and pink flat-top hat. Mabel’s narration is a necessary reminder of the Dickinson that the world knows, and its inaccuracy is hilarious when juxtaposed against this vivacious and joyful version, known here simply as Emily.

Though it is certainly a comedy, “Wild Nights With Emily” is anchored by a surprisingly touching love story between Emily and her friend from childhood, Susan Gilbert (Susan Ziegler). Their teenage romance develops during 19th century sleepovers that would make 21st century parents blush. (Young Emily and Young Susan are played by Dana Melanie and Sasha Frolova.) Soon, Emily is heartbroken to learn about Susan’s secret engagement to her brother, but softens when Susan explains her plan for them to be together. Sure enough, Susan and Austin (Kevin Seal) build their house right next door to Emily’s, and a lifetime of early morning scurrying across the lawn ensues.

Olnek takes every opportunity to showcase Emily’s poetry, sprinkled into the film in voiceover and graphic text. We see Emily scribbling lines on the back of a cake recipe that she stows away in her hair, and sending missives across the lawn to her constant champion and reader. The notion that she never sought publication is challenged by a meeting with the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, the bombastic blowhard T.W. Higginson (a note-perfect Brett Gelman), who dashes her hopes by suggesting she title her poems and use more rhyme. Meanwhile, it appears that “reclusive” Emily was really only reclusive around Mabel, and that was because she was having sex with Austin in Emily’s drawing room.

Olnek’s films are feminist statements on several levels, most significantly in the way that she casts so many compelling women, from romantic leads to character bits. The young actresses Melanie and Frolova are both excellent, and Olnek secured memorable turns for Jackie Monahan and Lisa Haas, stars of the only true lesbian hustler comedy, “The Foxy Merkins.”

Shannon keeps her natural zaniness just below the surface as Emily, but brings ever so much mirth to Olnek’s humorously formal 19th century dialogue. An accomplished theater actress and repeat player in Olnek’s films, Ziegler is the perfect match for Shannon, and their chemistry elevates the comedic premise into an undeniably compelling romance. It’s a joy to watch them fall sideways into bed together, tumbling on guests’ coats while hiding from the party downstairs. Their devotion drives home the film’s ultimately political message, and elevates the poignant final image to poetic heights. “Wild Nights With Emily” may be Olnek’s most political film to date, one that could forever change the narrative of the world’s most famous woman poet. In her director’s statement, Olnek writes: “The idea that she wrote without wanting to be

published exonerates the world that prevented her voice from being heard and also plants the idea that for women, it is wrong to desire recognition.” With that in mind, here’s hoping for many more movies like “Wild Nights With Emily”—though Olnek is definitely one of a kind.” —INDIEWIRE

“Wild Nights with Emily shows a different side to the poet... Dickinson is portrayed in a way that brings life to a writer who wrote such lively poetry...Period pieces are no easy feat, but director Madeleine Olnek does it excellently...so hilarious...fascinating.” —FILM SCHOOL REJECTS

“Amy Seimetz [is] hilarious....it’s lovely to see Shannon light up with joy...a passionate love story about two women...the film has the rich look of a period-authentic drama...[Wild Nights with Emily] reclaims Emily’s identity.”—VARIETY

“Wild Nights With Emily...comedically deflates portrayals of [Emily Dickinson]...Shannon's performance provides a new perspective... tackles antiquated views...with laughs...as entertaining and thought-provoking as Dickinson's poetry.” —THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE

“‘Wild Nights’ uncovers the vivacious and queer life of the world-famous poet...Led by the equally irreverent Molly Shannon...Shannon captures the enigmatic poet’s essence with a gut wrenching performance in – of course – true Shannon fashion, with perfect comedic timing and a face that tells a thousand mysteries.” —WASHINGTON SQUARE NEWS

“One of my favorite films at this year’s SXSW....a hilarious comedy with SNL vet Molly Shannon as the title character...Olnek’s previous features THE FOXY MERKINS and CODEPENDENT LESBIAN SPACE ALIEN SEEKS SAME showed her to be a director who can confront sexuality with both tenderness and humor and in WILD NIGHTS WITH EMILY she has found the perfect vehicle (and star) to bring that formula to a wider audience.” —AMFM MAGAZINE

CRITICAL RESPONSE TO “CODEPENDENT LESBIAN SPACE ALIEN SEEKS SAME”:

“Why She’s On Our Radar: Her debut feature, the hilarious black-and-white sci-fi romantic comedy “Codependent...” charmed the pants off critics and audiences at the Sundance Film Festival where it world premiered. The film’s since gone on to slay at a slew of festivals” —INDIEWIRE

“Sweet, funny, clever comedy...Olnek’s sensibility is singular, and the work of the cast-- notably the sweetfaced Haas and the hilariously robotic Ziegler-- make for a movie that seeks, and earns, affection.” — VARIETY

“Clever...witty...this enormously likable movie keeps sexual politics on the back burner and the universal search for connection front and center...Ed Wood would be proud.”—THE NEW YORK TIMES

“‘Codependent...’ is silly, cheesy and surprisingly enjoyable. As goofy and singular as its look-twice title... [‘Codependent...’ is] a memorable curio.”—THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

“A hilarious date movie for couples of all orientations” -- HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

“Aided by wonderful cinematography that brings to mind Woody Allen’s “Manhattan,” Olnek clearly has a real affection for New York. Her deadpan style and sympathy with life’s losers and outsiders brings to mind Jim Jarmusch’s landmark indie film “Stranger in Paradise.” “Space Aliens” is not only a worthy successor to that film, but it plants Olnek in the very best tradition of Downtown Manhattan indie filmmaking. Olnek takes her obviously very, very low budget and uses it for some nice, Ed Woodlike effects. She’s also helped by a very talented cast. As someone who normally rolls his eyes at the pretentiousness of most indie films, I was pleasantly surprised by “Codependent Lesbian Space Alien Seeks Same.” —EDGE

“Inspired silliness... satisfyingly incongruous—and slyly subversive” —THE VILLAGE VOICE

“Seriously funny” —VELVET PARK

“Really, really sweet and funny...hysterical...I watched it twice.” —KPCC FILM WEEK, an affiliate of NPR

“The title reads like a personal ad from the Twilight Zone. But it actually refers to a family-friendly lesbian sci-fi movie...a distinctively indie film, it lightheartedly pokes fun at the underlying strangeness of our courtship rituals.” —INTERVIEW MAGAZINE

“Straight” from Sundance, CLSASS might just be the most hilarious film of 2011... [a] deliriously demented celluloid laugh-fest.. the ultimate lesbian comedy... Kudos also to Nat Bouman’s solid black and white cinematography, Curtis Grout’s inventive editing, and Rebecca Conroy’s campy production design.” —CULTURE CATCH

“Codependent Lesbian Space Alien Seeks Same embodies Sundance and all its aspirations...with gravitas, and (*gasp) heart.” —SALT LAKE MAGAZINE

“Dispensing with realism, melodrama, and suffering, writer–director Madeleine Olnek’s Codependent Lesbian Space Alien Seeks Same makes a return to cheesy, 1950s-era science fiction: black-and-white footage, Twilight Zone sound effects, and all. ...Olnek’s pointed jokes and sweetheart ending mark Codependent Lesbian Space Alien Seeks Same as a modern-day lesbian fairy tale.” —B. RUBY RICH, “Film Quarterly”

“Madeleine Olnek’s beaming and daffy intelligence manifests elegantly in this, her first feature, a black & white film that reminds me of early Jim Jarmusch...Olnek makes the noirish surface of her film more drum tight by including a couple of hapless g-men, who follow the women around in a nondescript car... these guys banter is spot on, delivered with an unerring indie flatness that courts our recognition that this foolishness actually means something.” —Eileen Myles, ART IN AMERICA

"Olnek has a genuine gift for comic dialogue...it's FUNNY, and that is what counts." —ROOFTOP FILMS BLOG

“These wide-eyed baldies are just priceless.” —SCREENJUNKIES

“The funniest lesbian movie ever made.” —Jennifer Morris, Artistic Director of the Frameline Film Festival

“Whimsical... engaging” —WeAreMovieGeeks.com

“Warm, witty, irresistible” —Queerty.com

“You had me at Lesbian” —Quietearth.us (sci-fi fan site)

“Not down to earth at all (and all the better for it) was the wacky, Woody Allen - inspired Codependent Lesbian Space Alien Seeks Same, a black and white riff on 50’s schlock sci-fi, starring, of course, a lesbian space alien. You’d be hard pressed to find a flick more dedicated to its bizarre (and wonderful) vision this year” —AfterEllen.COM |

“Madeleine Olnek’s debut feature has some of the deadpan delivery, single-take timing and wry visual humor of early Kevin Smith—that is, if Jay and Silent Bob wandered into an East Village gay bar screening an Ed Wood double feature. The film pays cheerful homage to cheapo sci-fi B-movies of yore, but remains surprisingly grounded when chronicling its characters’ romantic exploits. Olnek inserts a baseline recognition of her script’s absurdity while playing the individual scenes largely straight. In this way, Jane and Zoinx’s low-key romance feels at once comically distanced and charmingly accessible: a knowing celebration of accepting your partner’s idiosyncrasies with a wink and a smile. Olnek’s good nature extends beyond her characters to the larger milieu. She and DP Nat Bouman take time to leisurely track through the streets of Lower Manhattan and Brooklyn, capturing bodegas and apartment buildings in fleeting black-and-white glimpses. For a film concerned literal and figurative alienation, it’s a pleasing irony.” —ALT SCREEN

“[Madeleine Olnek] exhibits an intuitive talent and sophistication that can put more "professional" names to shame...Ms Olnek appears to have the gift for taking the hoariest cliches of both the sci-fi genre and the rom-com and infusing them with new life via a combination of charm, honesty (particularly in the performances) and a now-and-then surprise. The writing is crisp and often clever...and the acting -- which ranges from the necessarily bizarre (those space aliens) to absolutely real and dear (the leading lady, beautifully portrayed by Lisa Haas) to another smart and wellconsidered stint by the increasingly versatile Alex Karpovsky.” —TrustMovies.com

"A film comedy of such seeming simplicity and charm!" —Janet Coleman, WBAI Radio

“Amusing...sweet-natured...[it has] things to say about love and about being an outlier...I’m already quoting it!” —HUFFINGTON POST

CRITICAL RESPONSE TO “THE FOXY MERKINS”:

“A comic bonanza of mind games, sexual stereotypes, and unexpected love” —HUFFINGTON POST

“The must-see-girl-on-girl comedy of the new millennium” —CULTURE CATCH

"I lost it and burst out laughing." —Dorri Olds, THE BLOT

"Co-writer director Madeleine Olnek renders gender roles productively wobbly by treating familiar fraught John-Jane scenarios as Mad Libs for an all-female cast...the film gets laughs arising from incongruous or parodic situations, but also has much to say, sincerely, about female relationships." —Mark Asch, BROOKLYN MAGAZINE

"Lisa Hass is absolutely winning" —Winnie McCroy, EDGE

**"Imagine that; a lesbian movie with a happy ending. We could get used to this..." —Winnie McCroy, EDGE
"Both actresses are game, and watching their scenes together is a delight (Monahan is a deadpan queen)" —Sheila O'Malley, RogerEbert.com**

"It's a very funny movie...just very amusing." —Ann Northrop, GAY USA

"Ms Haas is something else. Once witnessed in either of these films, she will re-main in your memory as one of the sweetest, most bizarre movie stars (and she is a star!) you've ever seen... [she] gifts us with one of the true amazements of this movie year, putting immediately in the shade all those great "acting" performances of the Birdman cast." —James van Maanen, TrustMovies.com

"At once sad, funny, brave and utterly dear" —James van Maanen, TrustMovies.com

"One of the best independent films of 2014...The movie is constantly whimsical, even at times John Waters-like in its outrageousness. And The Foxy Merkins also displays a great deal of heart, especially when it comes to the performances of its two leads." —Dean Treadway, MOVIE GEEKS UNITED

"Haas, who also played the lead in Codependent, reprises a similar, wide-eyed role, but is so effective at drawing out some of the film's more ridiculously awkward moments that it's hard to imagine any established actress outdoing her." —Justin Lowe, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

"By having much of her work featured at the Sundance Film Festival throughout the past 10 years, Olnek has developed a prominent voice in the queer filmmaking community" —Erik Leurs, FILMMAKER MAGAZINE

"The Foxy Merkins has so many great lines and situations and the talent to carry them that anyone could enjoy the film, LGBT or otherwise. In a time when people are still asking if women are funny, it's proof that yes, there are some truly dumb questions." —Trish Bendix, AFTERELLEN

"One of its charms is its cheerful demolition of female stereotypes, gay and straight, as Margaret embarks on her unlikely new career." —Stephen Holden, THE NEW YORK TIMES