

A24

A Different Man

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New York/ Los Angeles

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112 minutes

R

USA

English

Color

Regional

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Synopsis

Aspiring actor Edward undergoes a radical medical procedure to drastically transform his appearance. But his new dream face quickly turns into a nightmare, as he loses out on the role he was born to play and becomes obsessed with reclaiming what was lost.

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A Different Kind Of Thriller

A man undergoes an extreme transformation in Aaron Schimberg's provocative and daringly original *A Different Man*, a darkly funny thriller that plunges into the murky zone between who we are and how the world sees us. The film follows a solitary New Yorker, Edward, offered a rare opportunity to reconfigure his face, to be reborn into a different reality. But the more that things change in Edward's life, the more things stay alarmingly the same. Yes, he can physically become a different man, slip the confines of his skin and start fresh as someone unrecognizable to his old life. But he cannot escape the startling cosmic joke that he's still not who he wanted to be, as a shocking reversal of fortune sweeps him into a mounting nightmare.

As eerily humorous and tensely paranoid as a great classic noir, the film announces the arrival of a potent cinematic vision entirely different from any other. With his third film, working on a larger scale than ever before, New York writer-director Schimberg joins the roster of American filmmakers who merge a mastery of comic suspense with a wealth of thematic ideas and an urge to tell stories that view the world from never-before-considered angles.

Classic as it feels, in *A Different Man*, Schimberg cuts close to the bone in a way only a film of these times could. Set in a world just slightly left-of-reality, where an uncanny, fictional treatment has the power to remold a man's head, the intense atmosphere references myriad films about a person unraveled by what looks back in the mirror: films about lost personas, false masks, impersonation, and entangled doubles. It plays out with all the dizzying illogic of a bad dream. But beneath all the thrills of its style, also roils a mind-spinning exploration of beauty, attraction, success, facades, and the slipperiness of who we really are.

Just how malleable is the self? How inseparable is it from appearances and perceptions? What exactly needs to change in a person to revamp their fate? And what happens when we see someone else appear to slide into the fate meant for us? These questions swirl in the film's carefully cultivated atmosphere of woozy disorientation, as envy, regret, and frustrated jealousy alter Edward's destiny as much as his fantastically reengineered face.

The film's precise and walloping narrative punches, slyly subverted expectations, and emotionally charged dialogue are all part of Schimberg's way of digging deeper. Schimberg makes no secret of his love of genre, a love palpable in his crackling comic dialogue and midnight-dark cinematic style. His office walls are lined with posters of Val Lewton's cavalcade of eerily beautiful RKO horror films. But for Schimberg, genre is simply the right vehicle for taking audiences on spellbinding rides to meet characters who haven't been seen on screen and delve into who we are as humans, how we're perceived by our exteriors, and what we yearn for in spite of those realities.

Schimberg has, from the start of his blossoming career, explored the oft-forbidden territory of facial differences, of what beauty (and purported beastliness) bestow, and how the gaze of the movie camera, so long associated with desire, can upend those concepts. His previous film, *Chained for Life*, was heralded as "a defining film about representation for any group that Hollywood marginalizes."

With *A Different Man*, he uses these themes not only to build suspense but to unknot the precariousness of identity, to enter into the tricky conversation about true and false representation, and to laugh in the face of our never-ending compulsion to want what we have not got (even if we once had it.)

"This is not an easy subject to explore in conversation, much less on film, which is commercially dependent on the highest standards of beauty," the writer-director admits.

For Schimberg, the subject is deeply personal. He himself has a corrected bilateral cleft lip and palate which left its mark on how he views the world. “As facial disfigurements go, mine is one of the most common, yet I’ve only seen depictions of people like me that are negative or insulting. As far back as I can remember, I’ve wondered: how do I present someone like myself positively, or at least realistically to my own experience?”

Initially, as he sat down to write *A Different Man*, Schimberg was thinking of doing a riff on Rouben Mamoulian’s 1931 pre-Code horror landmark *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, intrigued by the liberation of losing oneself to another persona. “I was thinking about a story in which a disfigured man becomes healed for a few hours each night, and enjoys life as a regular man,” the director says. “This idea proved too unwieldy, but I held onto the germ of it.”

At this point, Schimberg suddenly found himself transfixed by, of all things, the 2017 feel-good dramedy *Wonder*, starring Julia Roberts and Jacob Tremblay, about a young boy confronting grade-school life with the facial differences of Treacher Collins syndrome. Never one to take things at face value, Schimberg began to wonder about a deeper backstory that might lurk behind the famed background of R. J. Palacio’s multimillion-selling YA novel.

“The story goes that the book was inspired when she and her young son were at an ice-cream shop,” Schimberg says, relating the anecdote oft told by author Palacio. “And they saw this kid who looked different, her son got frightened and she was flustered because she didn’t know how to handle it. It shook her confidence as a parent and as a person of moral character. So, she wrote this book to show people that if you see a disfigured boy, for all you know, he might have the greatest personality.”

But in his restless mind, the writer-director wanted to know more about the person left behind—about the inner

reactions of that boy in the ice-cream shop who became the unsuspecting muse.

“I was thinking about what it might be like for the real boy when he was later sitting in the movie theater, watching a trailer about a kid who looks just like him, played by a kid who doesn’t look like him,” Schimberg explains. “He’s seeing his life as imagined by this mom who was unsettled by his presence. That’s when I started thinking about a movie about a man who suspects that his life is the basis of a *Wonder*-like phenomenon. He’s certain this successful story is based on him, but no one believes him.”

Schimberg put these disparate ideas together and thus was born Edward, the New York actor who is literally defaced by an experimental drug, as well as his resurrected alter-ego, Guy, a photogenic rising star who seems to have it made in the shade. Yet no matter how drastic Guy’s outer transformation is, he can’t seem to help but be drawn to replace his charismatic new visage with a simulated mask of his former face, oscillating between identities, unable to live with himself...with either of his selves. Worst of all he is in on the joke as his new life starts to circle the drain, while the actor portraying him in a play keeps rising astronomically.

Schimberg notes he had another reason while writing the script to contemplate the unintended consequences of those who set out to radically change their lives. He recalls meeting up with an old acquaintance who seemed completely different from how he had known her in the past. She told him she’d made a conscious decision to remake her personality, abandoning her endearing shyness for a more aggressive style. She no longer wanted to be considered a pushover, she explained, saying it was holding her back personally and professionally.

But Schimberg was stunned at the appealing aspects of herself she was giving up. “I wondered what was being gained and what was being lost,” Schimberg reflects. “Also, which version

was the real her? Both? Neither? And then I wondered if I was capable of executing a similar personality overhaul.”

All the unsettling elements of *A Different Man* began to take shape. Edward’s shambling, anxious existence before his transformation. His cramped, dingy apartment with its inexorably metastasizing ceiling leak. A mysterious and alluring neighbor who suddenly takes a flirtatious interest in him, becoming his only friend and a catalyst of his destiny. A modern medical miracle that plays into his fantasies of self-reinvention but comes with an unforeseen price. And the newly born Guy’s chance to shine in the role of a lifetime, a role he believes he is the only person on earth who could possibly understand.

Then came the film’s astonishing third character, the man who propels the story into more complex and layered territory, into a slyly captivating hall of mirrors, one reflecting upon another: Oswald, another actor with the same condition, yet one so strikingly confident, talented, and authentically himself, he quickly and unequivocally steals Edward’s thunder. When Oswald takes over the role of Edward, becoming a beloved star in the process, he leaves Guy in a brooding crisis that spins out of control.

“In a sense, Edward is robbed of his identity twice over,” Schimberg explains of the twist that remakes the film mid-way through. “And at the same time, Edward becomes a kind of imposter confronted by something real and authentic. There’s a sense of the passing of the torch, from actors playacting disabilities to disabled actors playing who they want to play.”

Cinema has always lent itself to probing the gulf between visual appearance and inner identity, between make-believe and the lacerating truth—and *A Different Man* belongs to a small but vital tradition of films about total facial makeovers. The list includes such enduring movies as Georges Franju’s horror classic *Eyes Without A Face*, Hiroshira Teshigahara’s face-transplant parable *The Face of Another*, John Frankenheimer’s

harrowing 60s sci-fi thriller *Seconds*, John Woo’s 80s action thriller *Face/Off*, and Pedro Almodóvar’s fable of a surgeon experimenting on a prisoner in his basement, *The Skin I Live In*.

But as much as it nods to its forebears, *A Different Man* then twists and turns in a bold new direction, reverse-engineering the roots of facial prejudice even as the audience is gripped by Edward’s story.

The fierce ambition, strong writing, and fearless structural and thematic risks of the film’s screenplay immediately caught the attention of Killer Films’ Christine Vachon, the legendary producer whose own trailblazing work stretches back to her first feature, Todd Haynes’s 1991 queer-cinema landmark *Poison*. Killer joined forces with Schimberg’s longtime producer and partner Vanessa McDonnell and the project began to quickly gather steam. Now it was time to find three unusually courageous actors, one of whom you’d hardly recognize.

Putting on the Mask: Casting

One early champion of Schimberg’s script was actor Sebastian Stan, well-known to the Marvel faithful for his *Winter Soldier* in the MCU, but uniquely adventurous in his choice of projects, with work that includes *I, Tonya*’s half-smart criminal ex-husband Jeff Gillooly, Mötley Crüe drummer Tommy Lee in *Pam & Tommy*, and the cannibalistic date from hell in *Fresh*. From the start, Stan was completely in on *A Different Man*. He came aboard both as a producer and to take on the film’s dual lead roles: connected and entwined, yet each with their own existential anxieties. While Edward is exquisitely shy and emotionally reserved, the toothsome, glibly successful Guy may be fawned over but is secretly insecure and increasingly alienated.

The challenges were myriad. For one thing, Stan would need to commit to wearing full facial prosthetics during a sweltering New York summer shoot. He would also have to burrow into

the imploding psyche of a man whose desire to change his life leads him down a spiraling path of unexpected degradation and destruction. Stan leapt straight into the fire of the role. “From his first reading, this film seemed to be something Sebastian needed to do,” Schimberg observes. “He was a man on a mission.”

Stan describes the screenplay for *A Different Man* as unlike anything he’d read, pointing out the rarity of such projects being presented to him in the first place. “Nobody ever sends me anything like this,” he says. “In the last five years or so, I’ve really gravitated toward stuff that feels like a challenge, with a transformative element to it. Not just the physical transformation — on an emotional level, this was very new territory for me. As an actor, of course, it’s always better when you lose yourself in the mirror.”

If you ask Schimberg, though, there’s something even deeper and more psychologically fascinating about Stan’s attraction to portraying Edward/Guy. “I felt Sebastian was able to express a tormented part of himself that he doesn’t get to express in other roles,” the director says, floored by the actor’s total commitment. “Sebastian is judged by his appearance. I know it walking down the street with him. People see him and they project certain things onto him. And, of course, many people would see that as a positive thing, something they desire. But being famous, being classically handsome, can also be confining.”

In an unusual but revealing piece of direction, Schimberg had Stan consider his own fame as a way of exploring the social objectification Edward experiences daily. Recalls Stan, “Aaron actually said to me, ‘You should lean more into what it feels like to be a celebrity.’ I never would have thought about approaching it from that angle, but he said, ‘You know what it’s like to feel you are public property.’”

To better understand Edward’s experience, Stan consulted with a neurofibromatosis specialist at NYU and absorbed personal testimonials of those living with facial differences. Most valuable for portraying Guy, he says, was a conversation he had with Elna Baker, the writer and *This American Life* podcaster who, after weighing 265 pounds in college, went on to lose 110 pounds afterwards at a clinic. The upside of her new appearance was more complicated than she’d imagined.

“Elna talks intimately about what happened to her as a result of suddenly walking into the world like everybody else,” Stan says. “Identity was lost, even though at first it felt like something massive was gained, a freedom, perhaps, that never existed. But it quickly turned into something monotonous. There was a real rollercoaster high, as Edward feels when he becomes Guy, and then, a crash.”

The one character in *A Different Man* who gets to know both Edward and Guy — if unwittingly — is Ingrid. We first meet her as Edward’s unexpectedly approachable and playful new neighbor, who brings a startling, unnerving joy into his life, opening herself up to him, and sharing her hopes of becoming a playwright. Years later, having written a play inspired by how she saw Edward, Ingrid becomes Guy’s director, attracted to the studly actor who seems to mysteriously, intuitively understand the pain of a character based on her former friend who suddenly disappeared.

Schimberg and Stan had both recently seen Norway’s Renate Reinsve’s breakout performance in *The Worst Person in the World* and coincidentally floated the idea of casting her to each other. Schimberg asked if it was even worth trying since she was in high-demand, but Sebastian said “it’s always worth trying if it’s what you want.” They sent her the script and, days later, she was in. “I was so blown away by her performance in that film,” Stan recalls. “I just thought we should call her. And she really responded.”

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“I loved the script,” Reinsve says of what would become her first movie in English. “I didn’t know Aaron at all, but I loved that he was tapping into dark humor in an unusually warm way. And then when I saw *Chained for Life*, I was like, this is a very different way of filmmaking. I love being in projects that are asking interesting questions.”

Schimberg calls Ingrid the most difficult role in the film. He’s thrilled to have found an actress up to the challenge. “I think Renate took pleasure in being the sole keeper of Ingrid’s secrets,” says the filmmaker. “One moment she’s seductive, then she’s sarcastic, then she’s dismissive, then she’s insecure. She comes into his apartment and overstays her welcome. The next time, she leaves abruptly. How can a person be all these things? Renate just made it seamless. She’s also a great comic actor, and she’s fearless.”

“I see Ingrid as someone trying to find her way in life,” Reinsve describes, “and as a true Norwegian, she’s kind of ashamed and doesn’t really believe in herself.”

Is that a true Norwegian thing? “Oh, yeah,” she confirms. “In America, you’re told your whole life you can be whatever you want. And in Norway, you’re told your whole life that you’re not better than anyone else, and you’re just a part of the group — which I think is good in some ways, but limiting, too. Maybe she came to America to get some self-confidence to actually do something. And then, when she is presented with this typewriter, she gets a tiny look into Edward’s life, which she makes her own.”

Reinsve seized on Ingrid’s voracious hunger for connection and her impulsive curiosity, the same qualities that shone through in her work for *The Worst Person in the World*.

“Ingrid’s very insecure, and I think she recognizes that in Edward, who she feels safe with,” Reinsve says. “I think she falls in love with Edward, but I don’t think she ever admits it to

herself, because of the image of the person she’s supposed to fall in love with. That’s what fuels her writing about Edward. And when she meets Guy, she doesn’t know why his performance affects her so much, but we know, as an audience. This is all happening subconsciously between them.”

The irony-tinged romance between Edward/Guy and Ingrid becomes a kind of inside-out, revisionist *Beauty and The Beast*, while also delving into the stark modern realities of performative identity and sexual confusion. But coming between them is Schimberg’s most radical creation: Oswald, the actor who resembles Edward but has the cool self-possession to steal any room.

Schimberg wrote the part of Oswald with his *Chained for Life* star Adam Pearson in mind. Witty, British-born and living with neurofibromatosis, Pearson first came to the attention of Schimberg via the actor’s extraordinary debut opposite Scarlett Johansson in Jonathan Glazer’s sci-fi stunner *Under the Skin*.

“I heard his scenes were improvised, so I didn’t know what kind of acting ability he possessed,” the director remembers. “But when I met Adam, I found out quickly he’s very extroverted. He’s comfortable being the center of attention, he’s incredibly charming, very sharp, something of a Renaissance man. And I also discovered that he was capable of doing something more complex than he did in *Chained for Life*. I was inspired to write a role to show off his range, also as a sort of homage to him.”

Pearson, a BBC presenter and disability campaigner, says he got into acting by mistake, applying for Glazer’s film on a lark: “It’s gone horribly well or horribly badly, depending on who you ask,” he cracks.

His partnership with Schimberg has resulted in work of which he’s especially proud. “This role is the closest to what I’m like outside of the crazy, beautiful three-ring circus that is art,”

Pearson says of Oswald. “Aaron knows how to write for me, and he knows what I’m like in real life. It’s always good to broaden one’s portfolio of characters — as a disabled actor, you run the risk of getting typecast anyway. It was a real joy to be involved in this, and to get the band back together.”

The actor is intrigued to see what conversations *A Different Man* will spark. “Identity is such a deep and rich topic to play with, narratively,” he says. “Who we are on the outside? Who we are on the inside? And what happens when those two worlds don’t necessarily operate in parity? I’m not a big fan of handholding in cinema. I think audiences are a lot more intelligent than people give them credit for, and Aaron makes the most of that.”

Schimberg describes his connection to Pearson in unusually intimate terms, as someone who touched his life profoundly. “Adam changed my view about my own disfigurement, because I’ve always lived in fear of the judgment of others,” the director says. “I’ve always lived with a certain sense of shame. Adam takes control of the way he wishes to be perceived. And that’s changed me. There literally is no *A Different Man* without him. If Adam hadn’t wanted to do it with me, I never would have considered making it.”

Says Renate Reinsve of Pearson, “Adam is so funny, so smart and brought so much energy. He owns every room he goes into, yet he has a sincere humbleness, too. We just had so much fun together.”

The charged rapport between Guy and Oswald, born of a volatile blend of recognition, resentment, and what-ifs, generated electricity on the set—and was the indispensable key to the final effect sought by Schimberg.

“By the end of the film, you believe that Sebastian Stan is jealous of Adam Pearson. You understand that. You feel that,” Schimberg says. “And that’s something I don’t think anyone has ever seen before.”

Only in NYC: Makeup, Camera, Music, and an Unforgettable Sex Scene

Taut as a wire, with not a frame wasted, *A Different Man* at the same time conjures the unsteady, vertiginous feel of an ever-darkening, absurdist nightmare. Schimberg set out to cultivate a gritty, off-kilter, but enveloping atmosphere in every element of the production, from composer Umberto Smerilli’s rich, haunting score to the Super 16-millimeter photography lensed by cinematographer Wyatt Garfield. The film was shot entirely on location in the East Village, the Upper West Side, and parts of Brooklyn over 22 days during July 2022, with production designer Anna Kathleen helping Schimberg to capture the ragged beauty of the noir side of New York.

Schimberg knew from the start that he wanted to shoot on film, as he did with his previous films. “It does cause you to be resourceful,” the director says. “There are some filmmakers who use digital beautifully, but I’d only switch to digital if I had an aesthetic reason for doing it. My natural instinct is always for film. I understand the mechanics of it, and I understand the process of using it.”

One element new to Schimberg was his prominent, creative, multi-layered use of prosthetics – both to create the character of the real Edward and within the play Ingrid penned about Edward. He was determined that Stan’s makeup must be at once full of realistic detail and a subtle tip-off to the audience. Edward’s face needed to not only convince but to slowly, terrifyingly shed, revealing Guy underneath. And then when Pearson’s Oswald entered the film, his visage had to register like a callback to Edward.

“Edward needed to look enough like Adam so that when he and the audience sees Adam, we understand that he’s reflecting on himself,” the filmmaker says. “This helps to create the idea of Edward being an imposter. He’s feeling shut out by somebody more real.”

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It was a gamble to hang so much of the film's thematic energy on makeup, but it had to be. Thinking back on the risk, Schimberg laughs, "I never thought too deeply about the reality of how we were going to do the makeup, and the film production came together so fast, it could have been a real disaster and sunk the film. But Sebastian saved the day by bringing in Mike."

Early on Stan suggested the artist who nailed the complex mask designs in record time: Mike Marino, the two-time Oscar® nominee responsible for wizardly makeup creations in *The Batman*, *Coming 2 America*, and *The Irishman*.

The project's boldness riveted Marino. "I loved the script," he says, and goes on to identify David Lynch's *The Elephant Man*, renowned for its radical makeup work, as the first movie he ever saw. "I was like four years old or something," he says. "That film disturbed me so much as a kid, it wasn't until many years later that I figured out it was a makeup job based on a real person. When I got older, I realized, oh, wow, what a beautiful person this was. Your empathy for the character starts from the moment you see the guy. And I felt similarly about Sebastian and Aaron's story."

After preliminary conversations with Stan, Marino told him he was in. Marino explains, "For me, the starting point had to be emotionally intense. The moment you see this person, you need to be completely engulfed into his point of view. And they were very open to the ideas that I had of what it should and could be."

"Mike really did us a favor, jumping onto this," Stan says, "because he was also shooting *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* at the time. There were often days when I'd have to go to his house at five, six in the morning and he'd get my makeup done first, before he would go there. And then I'd still have three, four hours before I started shooting."

Even at its speediest clip, applying Stan's makeup took several hours, so there was no removing it during a busy 16-hour shoot

day, each loaded with multiple setups. To the benefit of his performance, Stan began wandering the streets of New York in full makeup, soaking up the reactions of strangers. "I think it was really important for me to be able to have that experience of just going down the street and feeling the energies shift around you," Stan says. "It opened my eyes in a lot of ways."

The actor visited his local coffee shop, where he went unrecognized, most customers avoiding eye contact. "The only person who actually came up to me was a child," he recalls. "There was a child playing with her mother and she was, I think, maybe six years old. And she came up and she said, 'What's wrong with you?' And then her mom just came and said, 'I'm so sorry.'"

Apart from being proof of concept for the effectiveness of the designs, Marino understands why Stan would want to stray off-set into the real world. "Actors are so used to being adored that a lot of them in my experience want to wear makeup," Marino says. "Even Ryan Gosling always wanted to have a broken nose or something. He'd call me and say, 'Can we do this? Let's try that.' They want to change who they are, and not only hide how handsome they are, but I think it's more like: What is it like to be normal? Because being a star is not normal."

The mixed emotions of wandering New York as Edward struck Stan in a deep way and were parlayed into his every inch of his performance. "I felt a tremendous responsibility to understand as much as I could about his condition. I was having a lot of anxiety because it was so out of my element."

Despite this, and the film's punishing schedule, camaraderie was high among the cast. "We were all very tuned into each other and we actually had a lot of fun on set," Reinsve says.

That feeling of trust compelled a willingness to go to the edge. This was especially true in one of the film's most incendiary scenes, when Guy and Ingrid have sex — but with him

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wearing an Edward mask, at her insistence. It's a powerhouse moment, at once darkly funny and dangerous, as the twisting narrative swirls deep down a sinkhole of identity confusion and emotional fears.

Says Reinsve of the moment, "I really love and hate the line Ingrid has there: 'Put the mask on. This is my creation.' It's so..." The actress trails off, laughing. "I think at that point, she's exactly in the middle of it, defending what she's doing with this play, but also trying to get back to something that is truthful. But the way she started this process, she can never be truthful. So, she is lost."

Stan remembers the sex scene as being psychologically challenging, as they all should be, he suggests.

"Sex scenes are always very tricky because you want to find an authentic kind of intimacy without either overdoing it or underplaying it too much," he explains. "And this sex scene has 50,000 layers, you know? It's like a mindfuck: 'You're asking me to put on this mask. What are you really doing?' The mask allows them both to relax for a minute before all these other idiosyncrasies sneak in."

Even the scene's writer wasn't fully appreciative of the moment's intensity until he saw it transpire between Stan and Reinsve. "During that scene, it was a closed set, but I was lying on the floor under the bed, looking at the monitor. Sebastian steps over me when he gets out of bed. It's all as it is in the script, but it wasn't until I'm lying there watching it actually unfold that I started thinking, 'man, this scene is crazy. What the hell is happening right now?'" Schimberg reflects. "Whether Ingrid is thinking about Oswald, who she's just seen for the first time, or whether she's thinking about Edward, who she misses, or whether she's thinking about making love to her own play's character, whatever she's thinking is very unclear. And I truly don't know the answer."

When pressed to take a stab at an explanation, Schimberg reveals the open-ended aims lying behind the hypnotic filmmaking that has *A Different Man's* characters and ideas reverberating long after the final scenes. "When you're dealing with this type of subject, you have to devise various strategies to disarm people," he says. "That's how you provoke questions and deeper conversations about what you just experienced. And that's what I really like to do with my films."

The Cast

Sebastian Stan

Sebastian Stan can currently be seen in Hulu's limited series *Pam and Tommy* alongside Lily James portraying the iconic musician, Tommy Lee from the notorious band, Mötley Crüe. Stan's portrayal of the rocker has garnered him his first Emmy® nomination in the "Lead Actor in a Limited Series or Movie" category as well as his first Golden Globe® nomination and a Critics Choice nomination. He can also be seen in Mimi Cave's thriller *FRESH*, also currently on Hulu alongside Daisy Edgar-Jones.

Most recently, Stan was seen in Apple Original Film and A24's *Sharper*, alongside Julianne Moore which was released in theaters on Friday February 10th and on Apple TV+ on Friday, February 17th.

He recently wrapped production on A24's psychological thriller, *A Different Man*. Stan will executive produce.

In 2021, Sebastian Stan reprised his role as Bucky Barnes/The Winter Soldier in the highly successful Disney+ and Marvel mini-series *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*, alongside Anthony Mackie. Stan has also portrayed the role of Bucky in seven of the 15+ billion-dollar Avengers franchise films, including *Avengers Endgame*; *Ant-Man*; *Black Panther*; *Avengers Infinity War*; and three installations of Marvel's Captain America: *Captain America: Civil War* (2016), *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (2014), and *Captain America: The First Avenger* (2011).

Stan's work in independent films has included some of his most celebrated performances. In 2019, he starred in Drake Doremus' critically acclaimed film, *Endings, Beginnings* alongside Jamie Dornan and Shailene Woodley, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival; he starred opposite Nicole Kidman in Karyn Kusama's critically acclaimed drama, *Destroyer*, which premiered at the 2018 Toronto International Film Festival and released in theaters that December; and in 2017, he portrayed Jeff Gillooly in Craig Gillespie's Golden Globe®, Gotham and New York Film Critics nominated *I, Tonya*, alongside Margot Robbie and Allison Janney.

In 2015, Stan starred in Ridley Scott's Academy Award-nominated film *The Martian*, which generated over \$629 million worldwide. That same year, he also starred in Sony Pictures Classics' dark comedy *The Bronze*, directed by Bryan Buckley and alongside Melissa Rauch.

Stan's additional film credits include Simon Kinberg's ensemble spy thriller, *The 355*, Argyris Papadimitropoulos Greek drama, *Monday*, the Antonio Campos directed Netflix film, *The Devil All the Time*, and Todd Robinson's *The Last Full Measure*. Additionally, Steven Soderbergh's *Logan Lucky*, Jonathan Demme's *Ricki and the Flash* alongside Meryl Streep, *Gone with Amanda Seyfried*, Darren Aronofsky's *Black Swan* with Natalie Portman, *Rachel Getting Married* with Anne Hathaway, *Spread* with Ashton Kutcher, *Hot Tub Time Machine*, director Fred Durst's *The Education of Charlie Banks*, *The Architect* with Anthony LaPaglia, and Isabella Rossellini's *The Covenant*.

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Sebastian Stan (cont.)

Stan's television credits include *Gossip Girl*, *Once Upon A Time*, and Greg Berlanti's critically acclaimed mini-series *Political Animals*, for which he was nominated for a TCA Award for his performance as T.J. Hammond.

In 2007, Stan made his Broadway debut opposite Liev Schreiber in Eric Bogosian's Tony-nominated revival *Talk Radio*. He also starred alongside Maggie Grace and Ellen Burstyn in the 2013 revival of William Inge's *Picnic*.

Renate Reinsve

Renate Reinsve won Best Actress at Cannes for Joachim Trier's film *The Worst Person in the World*, which went on to get many accolades including several nominations for her performance. Last year she completed *A Different Man* opposite Sebastian Stan for Killer Films and *Handling The Undead*, a Norwegian film, reuniting her with her *Worst Person* co-star and Joachim's frequent collaborator, Anders Danielsen Lie. Renate is also attached to star opposite Lily-Rose Depp and Hoyeon in A24's *The Governesses*, which will be directed by Joe Talbot.

Adam Pearson

Adam Pearson is an award-winning disability rights campaigner, actor, presenter and speaker. Adam was nominated as UK Documentary Presenter of the Year at the 2016 Grierson Awards.

Adam has presented the critically acclaimed documentaries *Horizon: My Amazing Twin* (BBC Two), *Adam Pearson: Freak Show* (BBC Three), *The Ugly Face of Disability Hate Crime* (BBC Three) and *Eugenics: Science's Greatest Scandal* (BBC Four) as well as being a reporter on *Tricks of the Restaurant Trade* (Channel 4) and *The One Show* (BBC One). His other credits include *Celebrity Masterchef* (BBC One), *Celebrity Mastermind* (BBC One), *Pointless Celebrities* (BBC One) and *Celebrity Antiques Road Trip* (BBC Two).

Adam worked as a researcher for the BBC and Channel 4 before becoming a strand presenter on the first series of *Beauty & The Beast: The Ugly Face of Prejudice* (Channel 4). He was also one of the team who developed the series and he consulted on the Dutch version. Adam also worked on *The Undateables* (Channel 4) as a casting researcher.

The Cast

Adam Pearson (cont.)

Adam appeared in the BAFTA-nominated film *Under The Skin* directed by Jonathan Glazer and starring Scarlett Johansson. He also played himself in the independent feature *Drib*, which premiered at SXSW in 2017. Adam plays the lead role in *Chained For Life*, which has been released theatrically in the UK and US as well as being shown at film festivals around the world. Of his performance, The New York Times described him as “an actor of great charm.” He has most recently filmed *A Different Man* with Sebastian Stan.

Adam has spoken at a number of events for companies and organisations such as the World Health Innovation Summit, Public Service & Criminology Conference and British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy. He has also given a TEDx talk.

Adam is an ambassador for The Prince’s Trust, Changing Faces and Us In A Bus. He also won a RADAR Award and a Diana Award for his campaigning work. Adam was named in The Shaw Trust Power 100 List of 2020—a list of the UK’s most influential disabled people.

The Crew

The Crew

Aaron Schimberg

Writer/Director

Aaron Schimberg lives in New York. He made two commercially disastrous features, but the second one, *Chained for Life*, was well-received by critics. *A Different Man* is his third film.

Christine Vachon

Producer

Christine Vachon is an Independent Spirit Award and Gotham Award winner who co-founded powerhouse Killer Films with partner Pamela Koffler in 1995. Over nearly three decades, they have produced more than 100 films, including some of the most celebrated and important American independent features: *Kids*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*, *Happiness*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *Hedwig And The Angry Inch*, *Far From Heaven*, *One Hour Photo*, *Still Alice*, *Carol*, *Beatriz At Dinner*, and *Dark Waters*. In television, they executive-produced the Emmy® and Golden Globe® awarded miniseries *Mildred Pierce* for HBO as well as the Emmy Award® winning limited series *Halston* for Netflix. Recent releases include Celine Song's *Past Lives* (A24), which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and screened in competition at the Berlin International Film Festival, Rebecca Miller's *She Came To Me* (Vertical), starring Peter Dinklage, Marisa Tomei, and Anne Hathaway, and Todd Haynes' *May December* (Netflix), starring Natalie Portman and Julianne Moore.

Vanessa McDonnell

Producer

Vanessa McDonnell is a producer based in New York. She is the co-founder, with Aaron Schimberg, of Grand Motel Films and produced all of Schimberg's features: *A Different Man* (A24, 2024), *Chained for Life* (Kino Lorber, 2018) and *Go Down Death* (Factory 25, 2013), which she also edited. With Jane Schoenbrun, Vanessa produced and edited the 2016 omnibus film *Collective: Unconscious* and co-created and edited the independent series *The Eyeslicer* (2017-2019). Vanessa directed and edited the feature documentary *John's of 12th Street*, and made the archival discovery and oversaw restoration of the lost 1966 film *Who's Crazy?*, which was unveiled at Bologna's Il Cinema Ritrovato and released by Kino Lorber. Her films have screened at Sundance, Berlin, SXSW, Rotterdam, Tribeca Film Festival and over 75 other festivals throughout the world.

The Crew

Gabriel Mayers

Producer

Gabriel is the Head of Film at Killer Films and a firm believer in developing and sharing local narratives with global audiences. She works with early career filmmakers as well as veterans to support and usher original and unique stories to production. Gabriel feels by producing narratives while keeping local audiences in mind, stories can be amplified to greater communities. She is drawn to this work because she feels storytelling helps audiences build social empathy and develops the inroads toward societal change. She now uses her financial knowledge and production and development experience to further the renaissance of the most original and diverse narratives in cinema.

Jason Reif

Line Producer

Jason Reif is a New York-based producer whose credits span from feature films and television to commercials. His feature producing work includes Adam Leon's *Italian Studies* (Tribeca 2021), produced with Animal Kingdom and distributed by Magnolia Pictures and Bridget Savage Cole and Danielle Krudy's *Blow the Man Down* (Tribeca 2019, Best Screenplay U.S. Feature) produced with Secret Engine and distributed by Amazon Studios. In addition to *A Different Man*, his line producer work includes the New York unit of Florian Zeller's *The Son*, produced by See-Saw Films and distributed by Sony Pictures Classics in 2022, Jeremiah Zagar's *We the Animals* (Sundance 2018, NEXT Innovator Award), produced by Public Record and Cinereach and distributed by The Orchard, as well as Eliza Hittman's *Beach Rats* (Sundance 2017, Best Director), produced by Secret Engine, Cinereach and Animal Kingdom and distributed by Neon. His other recent credits include Matt Sobel's *Goodnight Mommy* produced and distributed by Amazon Studios and multiple seasons of *High Maintenance*.

His commercial producing work has been recognized with several leading industry awards including a Daytime Creative Arts Emmy, Cannes Entertainment Grand Prix and Clio.

Wyatt Garfield

Director of Photography

TBC

The Crew

Anna Kathleen

Production Designer

Anna is a Colorado-born Production Designer for film, television and commercials. She studied critical theory and the language of design at NYU Gallatin where she graduated with honors. Before transitioning into film, she worked as a fashion designer for a luxury womenswear label where her designs walked the runways of New York Fashion Week. These foundations in design influenced her to seek world-building opportunities in film for womxn-driven stories that break down traditional boundaries. Her approach to Production Design is grounded in psychology, rooting creative choices primarily in character pathologies which in turn inform a heightened aesthetic. Anna made her Sundance premiere in 2021 with *Resurrection* (IFC, directed by Andrew Semans, starring Rebecca Hall) and is excited to be returning this year with *A Different Man*.

Mike Marino

Edward's Make-up Designer

At a young age, Mike Marino became a protégé of legendary make-up artist Dick Smith. Now with over 30 years of experience in the film industry, Mike has worked with Hollywood's top filmmakers and stars, including Martin Scorsese, Darren Aronofsky, Matt Reeves, Colin Farrell, Eddie Murphy, Nicole Kidman, John Travolta, and many more.

As designer of Prosthetic Renaissance Studio, Mike has been able to realize his goal of leading a first-rate team and elevating the art of special make-up effects.

With various film and television award nominations and wins, Mike is Hollywood's most sought-after top special effects designer.

Stacey Berman

Costume Designer

A Different Man is Stacey's third collaboration as a costume designer with dir. Aaron Schimberg, along with *Go Down Death* and *Chained For Life*. Her Sundance projects include 2018 Grand Jury Prize winner *The Miseducation Of Cameron Post*, dir. Desiree Akhavan and 2019 Audience Award winner *Brittany Runs A Marathon*, dir. Paul Downs Colaizzo. Notable additional film work includes the Berlinale official selection *Electrick Children*, dir. Rebecca Thomas, the SXSW selection *Villains*, dir. Dan Berk and Bobby Olsen and Jenny Lewis's self-directed music video *She's Not Me*. Stacey has designed live performances at The Guggenheim, The Whitney and The New Museum in New York as well as site-specific presentations at the Johnson Glass House, the Farnsworth House and Villa Savoye. Most recently, she designed the film *E FOR EILEEN*, dir. Gerard & Kelly, at Eileen Gray's E-1027. She's currently an artist in residence at SomoS Arts in Berlin and is concurrently developing a project with Gerard & Kelly for the Festival d'Automne à Paris, 2024. She holds a BA from Barnard College and an MDes from the Harvard GSD. Stacey is based in New York and works all over the world.

The Crew

Taylor Levy

Editor

Taylor Levy is a New York based editor of award-winning feature films, short form content, and visual art. He recently edited A24's Sundance Film Festival 2024 Premiere film *A Different Man*, directed by Aaron Schimberg. Other recent collaborations include the SXSW film Halina Reijn's *Bodies Bodies Bodies*, and *Mona Lisa* and the *Blood Moon* by auteur Ana Lily Amirpour. Taylor worked his way up the editing ranks assisting high-profile editors and directors on films such as Academy Award® winner *Manchester By The Sea*, Joachim Trier's *Louder than Bombs* and Paul Dano's directorial debut *Wildlife*, which culminated in Taylor cutting 2018 Sundance Film Festival NEXT winner, *Night Comes On*. His other editorial work includes the coming-of-age comedy *Drunk Bus*, the international art installation *Enclosure* by Rachel Rose, and multiple award-winning short films.

Umberto Smerilli

Music

Umberto Smerilli is a film composer based in Rome. He studied film music at the Italian National School of Cinema with Academy Award winner M° L. Bacalov and sound engineer Federico Savina, who recorded legendary soundtracks by Ennio Morricone, Nino Rota for Federico Fellini, Sergio Leone, and many more. In this unique environment he had the opportunity to connect with the great tradition of Italian Cinema. In 2017 he was invited to join the Artist Academy of Film at Lincoln Center. Several of his works have been presented at international film festivals such as Venice, Busan, Rotterdam, BFI, Tribeca, etc. *Pugni chiusi* by F. Infascelli. won Best doc. Controcampo at 68° Venice Film Festival. *Worldly Girl* by Marco Danieli, is hailed as one of the most prized Italian debut movies, won David di Donatello presented at Venice Days and many more. In 2022 he scores *The Bunker Game* by Roberto Zazzara, a Shudder original. In 2023 he scores *A Different Man* by Aaron Shimberg for A24 Films. He loves a fresh approach to soundtrack composition in the wake of Italian tradition.

Melissa Chapman & Annie Pearlman

Music Supervisors

Chicago's Melissa Chapman and New York's Annie Pearlman are the music supervision company Groove Garden. Over the past 14 years, they've had the pleasure of collaborating with beloved auteurs including Whit Stillman, Alex Ross Perry, Lena Dunham, Tayarisha Poe, Jennifer Reeder, Eliza Hittman, and Nathan Silver.

Melissa and Annie have four films headed to Sundance in 2024: the world premiere of *A Different Man*, directed by Aaron Schimberg; two U.S. Dramatic Competition selections, *Between the Temples*, directed by Nathan Silver, and *Stress Positions*, directed by Theda Hammel; and the NEXT program inclusion *Desire Lines*, directed by Jules Rosskam.

Additional recent TV and film credits include HBO Original's *Reality*, starring Sydney Sweeney and directed by Tina Satter; *The Sweet East*, the critically acclaimed debut feature from cinematographer Sean Price Williams, which premiered at the 2023 Cannes Directors' Fortnight; Shudder's *Perpetrator*, written and directed by Jennifer Reeder; and *The Adults*, starring Michael Cera, directed by Dustin Guy Def and released by Universal.

As constant champions of independent film, Melissa and Annie feel especially grateful to have collaborated with so many singular voices sharing fresh perspectives in cinema.

Maribeth Fox

Casting

Maribeth Fox has recently opened her own casting operation after 16 amazing years with Laura Rosenthal Casting. She has had the privilege of working alongside major talents like Todd Haynes, Paolo Sorrentino, Oren Moverman, Joachim Trier, Ed Burns, Mindy Kaling, Anton Corbijn, and Lisa Cholodenko as well as up-and-coming feature directors Guy Nattiv, Olivia Newman, and Paul Downs Colaizzo.

Favorite credits include *Olive Kitteridge* and *Mildred Pierce* both for HBO, Jay-Z's music video for *Smile*, *Wonderstruck* with Todd Haynes, *A Quiet Place*, *Modern Love* for Amazon and Liz Garbus' narrative feature debut, *Lost Girls*. Two of her three films at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival broke sales records, *Late Night* and *Brittany Runs A Marathon*. Most recent credits include *Sharper* for Apple TV, directed by Benjamin Caron, *Bottoms*, produced by Elizabeth Banks, *Murder Mystery 2* with Happy Madison, and the upcoming *A Different Man* from Killer Films and A24.

Credits

Cast

(in order of appearance)

Edward	Sebastian Stan
Sean	Miles G. Jackson
Director	Patrick Wang
Corey	Neal Davidson
Man In Sunglasses	Jed Rapfogel
Ragged Man	Marc Geller
Intrusive Man	James Foster Jr.
Casting Director	JJ McGlone
Mover	Sergio Delavicci
Landlord	Lawrence Arancio
Ollie	Billy Griffith
Ostermeier	John Klacsmann
Ingrid	Renate Reinsve
Whistling Expert	Cosmo Bjorkenheim
Dr. Varno	John Keating
Carl	C. Mason Wells
Luther	Corey Taylor
Sally	Danielle Burgos
Sammy Silverheels	Sammy Mena
Johnny Handsome	Jon Dieringer
Dr. Flexner	Malachi Weir
Dr. Jewell	David Joseph Regelmann
Dr. Trutz	Nina Marie White
Ostermeier's Girl	Dena Winter
Abraham Lincoln	Peter D. Straus
Grinning Man	Cameron Steinfeld
Athletic Man	Marley Ficalora
Bartender	Cornelius Horgan
Guy Gaunt	Doug Barron
Heather	Stephee Bonifacio
Rowdy Man	Allan Anthony Smith

Credits

Rowdy Man	Trenton Hudson
Goth Guy	Sean Berman
Goth Girl	Annelise Ogaard
Nestor	Juney Smith
Mariana	Lucy Kaminsky
Nick	Owen Kline
Clay	Jarvis Tomdio
Boy On Subway	Ethan Lusk
Vivian	Karoline
Fiona	Liana Runcie
Mr. Sablosky	Bruce Kitzmeyer
Oswald	Adam Pearson
Make-up Artist	Martin Ewens
Karaoke Singer	Caroline Golum
Sadie	Eleanore Pienta
Laughing Girl	Hanna Edizel
Ron Belcher	Charlie Korsmo
Himself	Michael Shannon
Physical Therapist	Christopher Spurrier
Server	Katie Takahashi
PSA Narrator	Vanessa McDonnell
PSA Faces	Rory McGuire
	Alison Midstokke
	John Hewson
	Chrissie Riedhofer
	Mikaela Moody
	Emma Easton

Crew

Written and Directed by Aaron Schimberg

Produced by Christine Vachon
Vanessa McDonnell
Gabriel Mayers

Co-Producer Pamela Koffler

Executive Producers Sebastian Stan
Aaron Schimberg

Line Producer Jason Reif

Director of Photography Wyatt Garfield

Production Designer Anna Kathleen

Edward's Makeup Designer Mike Marino

Costume Designer Stacey Berman

Edited by Taylor Levy

Music by Umberto Smerilli

Music Supervisors

Melissa Chapman
Annie Pearlman

Casting

Maribeth Fox

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