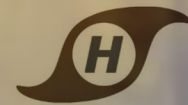


# **SECOND SKIN**

**A drama documentary film**

**by**

**Vincent O'Connell**



hurricane films

**XINESCOPE**

***Second Skin is a 90-minute cinema documentary, a memoir, a dramatized fiction, and a personal essay.***

***At its core, and driving it forward, is the compulsion of its writer/director to finally make peace with the tragic early curtailment of Sarah Kane's life.***



V

(NARRATOR)

And at that point I realise I'm in a dream,

a dream I don't want to let go of.

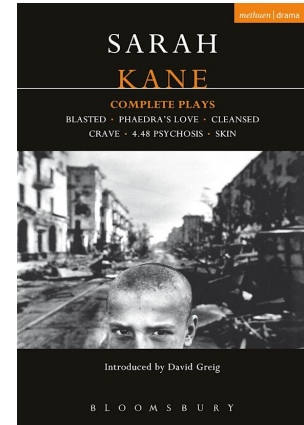
I try to stay in it. Try to stay close.

I know now what I'm looking for.

I'm looking for Sarah.



# SARAH KANE



***Sarah Kane was one of the most important playwrights of the 20th Century. She has changed the course of theatre history. Her five published plays break through structure and genre in an iconoclastic way which world theatre is still recovering from (and creating from). Her plays are considered classics, studied in universities and schools, and constantly performed around the world. In addition, her short film 'Skin' is recognised as an influential "cult classic". She died in 1999 at the age of 28.***



***'Skin' was produced in 1995, the year her first play, 'Blasted' was staged at the Royal Court Theatre and created a firestorm of criticism and debate. Britain was a nation at ease with itself: economically strong, culturally optimistic, and increasingly relaxed about the multi-ethnic society it had developed into. When 'Blasted' opened at the Royal Court Theatre, much of the shocked critical reception was asking what this play of horrors had to do with the society in which it was shown? Similarly, when 'Skin' was produced, many critics felt the extreme outlooks of the protagonists were anachronistic, and out of step with the spirit of the age. Britain now is a different place, and those thugs feel licensed to promote their views on the streets with impunity.***



***Neither the play, nor the film *Skin*, feel out of step with British culture now, and in this way, Kane was ahead of her time. It's not so much she saw what was coming, more that she saw what was always really there, the brutality beneath the shiny skin of that decade of liberty, optimism and indulgence.***

***It is a good time to re-examine this cult film of hers, and by doing so to bear witness to the huge impact her work has had on the world.***





YOUNG V

Is it a fight or a love scene?

SARAH

How would we know the difference?

YOUNG V

What even is our genre?

SARAH

It has not yet been defined.  
Once we're defined we're dead.

# **SARAH & VINCENT**

*I am Sarah Kane's close friend and collaborator; my name is Vincent O'Connell. I was the director of 'Skin'. My attempts to fulfil a new edit of the film, as we had planned, leads to a flood of memories, reflections and imaginings which cohere into a bigger film around the re-cutting process, and demonstrates the film's connection to the whole body of her creative work.*



***In recent times I have been haunted by a cluster of thematically connected dreams, with my dear lost friend Sarah always featuring in a starring role; dreams that seem to occur nearly always in theatres or film sets, involving communities of creative people, expressing their art and sexuality; it is a happy place, and it seems in the dreams a lost place, a sort of mythic Golden Age where people were living as they should, the key elements being community, creativity and sexuality.***

***The dreams have become important to me because it seems these are things we should be fighting for, protecting, in an age where Fascism is showing its face again. What does Fascism fear? What does Fascism attack? It attacks community, anywhere that community is not aligned to the Fascist cause. It attacks artists, fearing creativity as a subversive force. And it attacks sexuality, or rather any version of it that is not devoted to procreation of more Fascists- queer sex, gay sex, free sex are all abhorred by the Fascist.***

YOUNG V

You've got a million ideas.

SARAH

Not for a ten minute film I haven't.  
I watch films for fun, but when I think,  
it's theatre.


A curtain rises, lights come up, everyone stops  
talking. Then I'm alive. Then I can think. That's  
what I need, a place to think, and that place is the  
theatre. Theatre is church and cinema's a brothel.

YOUNG V

We need both.

SARAH

There's a steady stream between the two.



Directed By  
**VINCENT O'CONNELL**

SKIN

I feel like smashing my face into that wall.

V turns and looks at the wall behind him.

V

That'll hurt.

SKIN

Don't you ever feel like smashing your face into a wall.

V

Sometimes I do, yeah.



**The re-editing process opens out into a range of material including interviews with key participants in the making of the film. Kane is always at the heart of these discussions.**

**The film also stages a series of dramatic scenes revealing key influences on the film; a sequence of skinhead encounters involving Sarah and Vincent which led directly into the film and dramatically re-imagined exchanges between O'Connell and Kane working through the creative challenges of making the film.**

**Additionally dream sequences, with narration, bring together all the elements and take them further into an examination of politics, sexuality and grief.**



***Investigating the making of this 25-year-old film connects us to many resonant and urgent contemporary issues: it compels both a look back at the liberations of the '90s, and a look forward to where the tide is taking us now.***

***At its core, and driving it forward, is the compulsion of its writer/director to finally make peace with the tragic early curtailment of Kane's life.***

***The film is a creative séance, invoking her spirit and asking for a reply. At the centre of the film, and driving it, will be a confrontation with grief.***





Tracking down a nighttime alley. A fire door into a warehouse building. It opens. Framed in the doorway, barely seen, looming out of the blackness, skinhead men in various moments of sexual union - one on his knees, the other holding his head, one with a whip, about to swing it, a man chained to the wall, they all look round to Sarah.

SARAH (OOS)

Oh sorry.

SKIN 1

Come in, join the party.

SKIN 2

The more the merrier.

SKIN 1

You can be in charge if you like.

Their faces, all turned to her out of blackness.  
Her face, looking at them, she smiles.

***A re-invention of Sarah Kane's cult short film SKIN  
leads to an investigation on the nature of  
fascism, creativity, sexuality and grief.***



**SKIN**

**short film**

**online link**

# Key Participants



**NICK LOVE**  
Producer, *Skin*.



**SEAMUS MCGARVEY**  
Cinematographer

**EWEN BREMNER**  
Actor



**MARCIA ROSE**  
Actor



# ***Additional Interviewees***

**VICTORIA BOYDELL**

***Editor, Skin.***

**BEN GIBSON**

***Commissioned Sarah to write and Vincent direct a feature.***

**NICOLAS WINDING REFN**

***Saw Skin Premiere at Berlinale & says it influenced him.***

**TESSA ROSS**

***Tried to commission feature length version of Skin.***

**SEAN HOLMES**

***Acted in Edinburgh company with Vincent & Sarah.***

# **Writer/Director**



**Vincent O'Connell is a British writer and director for theatre, film, radio and television. Vincent's feature *ID* won the Audience Award at the Valenciennes Film Festival and was shortlisted for Best Screenplay by the Writers' Guild of Great Britain.**

***CRIMINAL* won the Royal Television Society's Best Television Drama Award. *SWEET NOTHING* won an Honorable Mention at the San Francisco Film Festival. He wrote and directed the BAFTA-winning educational film *BEYOND THE BOUNDARY*. His direction of the short film *SKIN* by Sarah Kane was shortlisted for the Berlin Film Festival Golden Bear and screened at the London Film Festival. The *ID* sequel, *ID2: SHADWELL ARMY*, was released by Universal Pictures in 2016.**

**KINESCOPE FILM**

# Producer

**Matthias Greving was born in Bremen, numerous engagements in film, television and theatre production followed after an extensive education. As an expert and mentor, Greving is involved in various programs for the promotion of young talent and is a member of the documentary film jury of the BKM as well as on the board of directors of the Bundesverband Regie. As film is an integral part of his life, he initiated the FILMFEST BREMEN in 2015, which he still shapes today as festival director.**



**1949 – WHAT WE DREAMED OF**  
Documentary 2024  
Director: Katja Herr



**BERNHARD HOETGER – THE BLACK MAGICIAN**  
Documentary 2024  
Director: Gabriele Rose



**ARMENIA'S NATIONAL PARKS**  
Series 2024



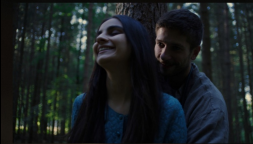
**GREETINGS FROM MARS**  
Feature Film 2024



**BREMEN WIRD BUNT – DIE JAHRE 1930 BIS 1959**  
Documentary 2023  
Director: Daniel Tilgner



**GOD'S OTHER PLAN**  
Documentary 2023  
Director: Moritz Müller Preißer



**ELAHA**  
Feature Film 2023  
Director: Milena Aboyan



**GAZPROM - DIE PERFEKTE WAFFE**  
Documentary 2023  
Director: Dirk Laabs





# UK Co-Producers

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**Roy Boulter & Sol Papadopoulos founded Hurricane Films in 2000, when they produced the Terence Davies documentary *Of Time and the City* (for which the duo received a BAFTA nomination).**

**Hurricane Films produced two further Davies films; *Sunset Song* and *A Quiet Passion*. These were followed by *A Prayer Before Dawn* directed by Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire, starring Joe Cole (Cannes 2017).**

**In 2018, Hurricane Films produced *Sometimes Always Never*, starring Bill Nighy, Sam Riley, Alice Lowe and Jenny Agutter, written by Frank Cottrell Boyce and directed by Carl Hunter.**

**Most recently Hurricane produced *The Last Bus* with Timothy Spall, which was released in Summer 2022.**



# Co-Producer

**Colin McKeown has been involved in producing 7 feature films and over 30 short films. His film work has garnered international recognition and awards including two BAFTA nominations, selection for Cannes Critic's Week and a BAFTA award in 2001.**

**In 2004 he was UK line producer for El Deseo on Isabel Coixet's THE SECRET LIFE OF WORDS starring Tim Robbins, Julie Christie & Sarah Polley.**

**He was script editor & creative consultant on both the BAFTA nominated Good Vibrations and the IFTA award winning Ordinary Love.**

<b>2024</b>	<b>MY FRIEND MILES</b>
<b>2024</b>	<b>aWake</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>AROUND HERE</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>BEL'S BOYS</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>NAILED</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>THE SECRET LIFE OF WORDS</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>THE HONEYMOONERS</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>NINE DEAD GAY GUYS</b>
<b>2001</b>	<b>TURNING POINTS</b>

SARAH

Who are you?

V

You know who I am.

SARAH

But you're old.

V

And you're dead.

# ***SECOND SKIN***



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