

The Umbrella Men, Lightyear, Last Seen Alive and The Artist's Wife

 By [Daniel Dercksen](#)

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Warm up your winter blues with the vibrant local comedy *The Umbrella Men*, experience the adventures of a space ranger in *Lightyear*, uncover a deadly mystery in *Last Seen Alive*, and discover the woman behind the man in *The Artist's Wife*.



The Umbrella Men

This fun, poignant and so quintessentially authentically South African film is from writer-director John Barker, the man behind *Bunny Chow*, and who turned politics inside out and upside down with his biting independent mockumentary *Wonder Boy For President*.

When musician Jerome Adams flies into Cape Town for his estranged father's funeral, he finds his dad has bequeathed him his beloved Goema Club as well as the care of The Umbrella Men minstrel troupe. Unfortunately, the Club comes with a huge overdraft, due in two weeks for repayment to the bank on penalty of repossession, in a shady deal engineered by Tariq Cupido, a long-time family rival.

Jerome decides to rob the bank itself under cover of the annual carnival parade when thousands of troupes invade the streets, Tariq's troupe, The Maulers, competing against Jerome's Umbrella Men. And as Jerome reconnects with friends and community, and he learns about himself and why he must stay in this special place.

"My dream for the film is for the Klopse community to love the film and feel as though we captured their culture in an authentic and loving way," says Barker.

Directed by Barker from a screenplay by Barker, Lev David and Philip Roberts. It stars Abduragman Adams, Omar Adams and Irshaad Ally.

The Umbrella Men is available to watch on [Evod](#)

Lightyear

A sci-fi action-adventure and the definitive origin story of Buzz Lightyear, *Lightyear* follows the legendary space ranger (voiced by Chris Evans) on an intergalactic adventure.

It follows him after he's marooned on a hostile planet 4.2 million light-years from Earth alongside his commander and their crew. As Buzz tries to find a way back home through space and time, he's joined by a group of ambitious recruits and his charming robot companion cat, Sox.

Complicating matters and threatening the mission is the arrival of Zurg, an imposing presence with an army of ruthless robots and a mysterious agenda. Marooned on the decidedly hostile planet, the crew settles in for the long game.

Toy Story placed Buzz Lightyear centre stage as the brand-new, highly sought-after action figure that gave vintage pull-

string Sheriff Woody a run for his money as Andy's favourite toy. 21 years later director Angus MacLane (co-director of *Finding Dory*) found himself asking: What movie inspired Andy to beg for a fancy toy with lasers, karate-chop action and aerodynamic space wings?

"*Lightyear* is the movie that Andy, his friends and probably most of the rest of the world saw," says MacLane, who co-wrote the screenplay with Jason Headley.

"I wanted to make something that felt true to those fun, big-budget popcorn films."

"Ever since we met the character, Buzz has had this inherent and interesting tendency to view the world in a unique way," says producer Galyn Susman. "His version of reality is never quite the same as everybody else's, and there's something super entertaining about that. He's an aspirational character. The world really needs more aspirational characters right now."

Read more [here](#).

Last Seen Alive

After Will Spann's wife suddenly vanishes at a gas station, his desperate search to find her leads him down a dark path that forces him to run from authorities and take the law into his own hands.

Writer and producer Marc Frydman wanted to come up with a script and unconventional filmmaking style that would complement the genre. His plan hinged upon three things: a short shooting schedule, limited locations and, incredibly, a lead actor who could improvise his dialogue.

The screenplay for *Last Seen Alive* included scripted dialogue for every actor except Gerard Butler. It was also designed to be shot in continuity with the lead actor only seeing a few pages at a time, so he'd never know what might happen next.

"He wrote this script, and it was like a blueprint," says director Brian Goodman. "We had a lot of faith in each other."

Read more [here](#).

The Artist's Wife

Claire (Lena Olin) lives a domestic life in the Hamptons as the wife of celebrated artist Richard Smythson (Bruce Dern).

Once a promising painter herself, Claire now lives in the shadow of her husband's illustrious career. While preparing work for his final show, Richard's moods become increasingly erratic, and he is diagnosed with dementia.

As his memory and behaviour deteriorate, she shields his condition from the art community while trying to reconnect him with his estranged daughter and grandson from a previous marriage. Challenged by the loss of her world as she knew it, Claire must now decide whether to stand with Richard on the sidelines or step into the spotlight herself.

"Lee Krasner. Elaine De Kooning. Camille Claudel. Dora Maar. History is filled with female artists who have supported their more famous husbands or partners," says writer-director Tom Dolby. "A tribute to these women, a contemporary imagining of the journey of the stronger woman behind the man—and what happens when the relationship begins to crumble due to circumstances beyond either person's control."

"Showcasing themes of loyalty, new beginnings, personal sacrifice, and life choices in a nuanced way, *The Artist's Wife* reclaims the narrative of spouses who support unconditionally," says Benjamin Cowley, CEO of Gravel Road Distribution Group. "The film also inspires with quiet courage in the face of challenging circumstances."

The Artist's Wife is available to watch on DStv Box Office

Read more [here](#).

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ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za

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