

Alone in a Crowded Room



What happens to autistic children when they grow up?

Screening on ABC 1 on Sunday 2 May at 10.05pm (Compass)

A one hour documentary about adults with autism

Alone in a Crowded Room explores the line between ability and disability and takes us beyond our preconceptions of one of the most mysterious and challenging disorders of our time.

The one-hour documentary tells the stories of four autistic adults – James, Jeanette, Wendy and Akash – who get together at the autism social picnic, stories about love, family, work and friendship.

James, Jeanette, Wendy and Akash share with the audience their difficulties with perception, empathy, emotion, and the practicalities of daily life and open the door into a world that has often been described as unreachable. As we follow the stories and dilemmas of these characters' lives, we begin to question what we know about this condition – and what we think we know about ourselves. Beyond the notions of the inaccessible autistic child or the autistic savant there is the question: What happens to autistic children when they grow up?

Alone in a Crowded Room is a warm, intimate, moving and quietly challenging film about a condition that is usually either sensationalised or marginalised. Writer/Director Lucy Paplinska filmed the documentary over a period of four years, during which she developed very strong relationships with each of the four characters. As a result, she was able to produce an in-depth and intimate look at life as an adult with autism.

Lucy's interest in the Autism Spectrum was triggered by her father's scientific research into early intervention into the field of autism. Lucy says: *'At the beginning I was drawn to the topic as it seemed such an extremely complex subject. After searching, I found that there was very little portrayed in the media that truly humanised those diagnosed with the disorder. There were no programs that explored autism from the point of view of people who were trying to live a "normal" life- ie have jobs, friendships, partners and so on. My biggest challenge in making this documentary was trying to understand and stay true to the autistic characters' experience of the world.'*

Autism is a complex developmental difference that usually appears during the first three years of life. The incidence of autism in Australia is 1 in 100 people. It is life long and there is no 'cure'. Typically those with autism have difficulties in verbal and non verbal communication, and social interactions. Other symptoms include an insistence on sameness, a narrow range of interests, stereotyped movements, sensitivity to lights, sound and touch, and elaborate routines. For someone with autism, the world can seem like an overwhelming place.

For further information, screener and interview requests please contact:

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Writer/Director: **Lucy Paplinska** • Co-producers: **Lisa Horler** and **Lucy Paplinska** • Director of Photography: **Paul O'Connor** • Editors: **Steven Robinson** and **Lucy Paplinska** • Sound: **Lucy Paplinska**

For more information regarding this Media Release please call

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