



# KARUPY

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY **KALAINITHAN KALAICHELVAN** | PRODUCED BY **ALISON ALMEIDA** AND **SHAISTA ROSHAN** | A **CFC** PRODUCTION





## logline

During her 65th birthday celebration, a bitter Tamil matriach shocks her family by announcing her plan to end her own life.

Year of Production: 2024 | Duration: 11 minutes, 47 seconds  
Country of Origin: Canada | Genre: Dark Comedy, Drama

Shooting Format: 35mm / Color  
Screening Format: DCP 4K  
Sound: 5.1  
Aspect Ratio: 1.5:1

Language: Tamil (English Subtitles)

# the story

At her 65th birthday party, Karupy makes an unexpected announcement: she will be ending her own life that very night, sparking a whirlwind of emotions amongst her family. As she prepares for this final act, her party guests confront her regarding her decision.

The film is an absurd, multi-generational portrait of a troubled matriarch. The narrative conceit of KARUPY seeks to confront a culture of silence when it comes to South Asian family secrets and dynamics while blending dark humor with interpersonal tension, unresolved grief and a touch of the supernatural.





# director's note

KARUPY is a darkly comedic exploration of family, mental health, shifting power dynamics, abuse, legacy and the burden of inheritance. It is centred around an older matriarch's attempt at reclaiming agency in a life where she's felt dismissed, misunderstood and burdened by what is expected of her. By examining conventions around how Tamil families do and don't communicate, it uses the communion of family as a canvas to crawl around and push forward the shadows of what is often left unsaid in these spaces.

The film is a kaleidoscopic portrait of the titular character, filtered through small vignettes following her family members. Loosely drawn from my own experiences growing up in a Tamil household, I wanted to interrogate the dysfunctional South Asian family while testing the boundaries between the real and the surreal, the familiar and the strange.

Visually, the film is designed to reflect the contradictions within the family: vibrant yet sombre, intimate yet suffocating. The birthday party becomes a stage for deeply repressed emotions to rise to the surface in surprising and disruptive ways. Ultimately, Karupy is about the push and pull of familial bonds. It's about the courage to confront life's most painful truths and both the beauty and the sheer ugliness that can emerge in the process. I hope viewers walk away reflecting on the ways they speak — or don't — to the people closest to them, and the quiet, radical power of choosing to break a cycle.



# production note

KARUPY was shot entirely on 35mm film, made possible through the generous support of Kodak and Metropolis Post. This collaboration was instrumental in crafting the film's distinctive aesthetic, elevating both the production process and the audience's cinematic experience.

Director Kalainithan and producers Shaista and Alison approached the making of KARUPY with a clear and inclusive mission: to build a collaborative team predominantly composed of South Asian and BIPOC crew members, championing diversity and amplifying voices from their community. Approximately 70% of the crew were BIPOC, with 60% being South Asian. The team prioritized professional development, offering promotions and training to empower crew members with valuable experience and career advancement opportunities.

Casting presented a unique challenge as the team sought authentic Tamil-speaking ACTRA actors. Given the limited pool of union members, they worked closely with ACTRA to obtain union permits for non-union Tamil-speaking performers, ensuring these talents gained future access to more opportunities. Through the Warner Bros. Access Fund, they also supported six crew members in joining ACTRA, further fostering professional growth and leaving a lasting impact on their team.







**Writer & Director | KALAINITHAN KALAICHELVAN** is a Tamil-Canadian writer and director whose films have screened at festivals such as the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, Melbourne International Film Festival, and Palm Springs International ShortFest. His recent short film credits include *Junglefowl* (2023) and *A Feller and the Tree* (2021). Known for his work in music videos as well, he was nominated for a Juno Award for Music Video of the Year. Kalaichelvan has participated in the Netflix-BANFF Diversity of Voices program and the Rogers-BSO Script Development Fund Program and has received support from the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, and Toronto Arts Council. He is an alumnus of the 2024 CFC Norman Jewison Directors' Lab.



**Producer | ALISON ALMEIDA** is a South Asian producer whose associate producing credits include *Amar Wala's Shook* (TIFF 2024), Hubert Davis's *The Well* (Fantasia 2025), Durga Chew-Bose's *Bonjour Tristesse* (TIFF 2024), Reza Dahya's *Boxcutter* (SXSW 2025) and Season 4 of New Metric Media's *Children Ruin Everything* (2025 CSA Winner Best Comedy Series). She began her career as a coordinator on acclaimed feature films, including Sofia Coppola's *Priscilla* (2023), Matt Johnson's *Blackberry* (2023), Clement Virgo's *Brother* (2022), and many more. She line-produced the musical short *"Before They Were Them"* (2019) and produced the 39-minute musical film *"More Together"* (2023), which won Best Musical at multiple international festivals. Alison has participated in the CMPA Production Mentorship Program with Babe Nation Films, the 2024 Whistler Film Festival Producers Lab and the 2024 CFC Norman Jewison Producers Lab.



**Producer | SHAISTA ROSHAN** is an international producer with South Asian & Middle Eastern roots. She has over a decade of producing experience, within the unscripted space across MENA, South Asia and US working on shows such as *'Sabah Al Dar'*, *'Dirhami'* & *'The Doctors'*. Over the past years, Shaista has assisted leading Showrunners and Directors on shows such as *'The Greatest'* (Amazon), *'Tokyo Vice'* (HBO Max), *'Brilliant Minds'* (NBC). She was a selected participant of TIFF's 2024 Big Pitch, Creators of Color Incubator, and is a 2024 alumna of the CFC Producers' Lab. Her recent short films include *'Goodnight Grace'* (2023) and *'Beyond the Wheel'* (2022) that has screened across several international film festivals.



## crew

**Cinematographer | SHADY HANNA** is a cinematographer born in Cairo, Egypt. He's currently living in Toronto, Canada, and working on narrative and commercial projects. He has filmed commercials for Nike, Adidas, Holt Renfrew, Canada Goose, and Toyota. He was nominated for a CSC Award for Best Dramatic Short Cinematography in 2023 and won the Best Cinematography Award at the 27th Brooklyn Film Festival. His recent narrative credits include *Junglefowl* (Palm Springs 2023), *Swan Song* (TIFF 2023), and *Xie Xie, Ollie* (TIFF 2023). His last short film, *Sleep Talking* was awarded Special Mention from the Jury at the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma in Montréal.

**Composer | KALAISAN KALAICHELVAN** is a composer based in Toronto, Canada. He's a 2021 Fellow of the prestigious Sundance Composers lab and an alumni of the Canadian Film Centre that same year. Named one of Playback's 10 to Watch in 2024, his work has been performed and premiered by celebrated ensembles such as Pro Coro Canada, the Dior Quartet, NMC Ensemble and Extended Music Collective. Kalaisan has scored feature films that have premiered at the Cannes Film Festival ("*In Flames*"), Toronto International Film Festival ("*This Place*", "*Shook*", "*In Flames*"), Santa Barbara International Film Festival ("*Junglefowl*") and the AFI Film Festival ("*Calabanta*"). He most recently scored a new original Netflix series called *BET*, directed by Simon Barry.

**Editor | JAKE LEE** is a Toronto-based editor who specializes in bringing directors' visions to life through emotionally driven, personal stories. Focused on relationships, family, and community, his work reflects modern shared experiences across various genres. His projects have been featured on platforms like Super Channel, Crave and in festivals including Canneseries.

**Production Designer | JOSETTE JOSEPH** is an experienced Production Designer with a passion for storytelling through set design. She believes that attention to detail can really elevate a story. Her Production Design experience ranges from feature films to commercials and music videos.



## cast

Karupy | **SUMATHY BALARAM**  
Jeya | **ARRTHAMI SIVA-KURUVINTH**  
Arjun | **UNNIKANNAN S S**  
Thinesh | **UMEASH SIVA**  
Vaish | **SMRITHI DHANASEKAR**  
Muthuraj | **RANJITH JOSEPH**











thank you.

Contact | Producers

[shaista.roshan@gmail.com](mailto:shaista.roshan@gmail.com) & [alisonkalmeida@gmail.com](mailto:alisonkalmeida@gmail.com)