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Comedy fires up under lockdown!

New ABC series *Retrograde* launches July.

Set in a virtual bar - Australia's first narrative comedy filmed entirely in isolation

ABC and Screen Australia are thrilled to announce that the new six-part narrative comedy series, *Retrograde*, premieres Wednesday 8 July at 9.30pm on ABC and iview. Developed, produced, and post-produced entirely under strict COVID-safe guidelines, *Retrograde* follows the lives of a group of thirty-something friends as they drown their sorrows at a virtual bar in the time of COVID-19.

The series features a terrific line-up of Australian talent including Pallavi Sharda, Ilai Swindells, Maria Angelico, Esther Hannaford and Nick Boshier with guest star Ronny Chieng. Shot in isolation, *Retrograde* will be the first remotely filmed narrative comedy series to hit Australian television screens.

Gemma is about to embark on an exciting career in Korea when COVID-19 crashes her farewell party. Faster than you can say “social isolation” she’s made unemployed and has to find a place to live — like, yesterday. Thankfully she hadn’t got around to dumping her boring but nice boyfriend Rob, so she can lockdown with him — and his daughter. Even at 32, adulting is not something that comes naturally to Gemma and to make things worse her ex has returned to Australia and is back on the (online) scene. At least she doesn’t have to drink alone. Her friends have created an online bar where they can commiserate and workshop their questionable life choices. Gemma is forced to take a good hard look at herself in the preview window — and work out what she wants her life to be in lockdown world and beyond.

Bringing you this out-of-this-world (but very much of this world) show are creator/producer/writer Meg O’Connell (*Content*, *Robbie Hood*) and lead writer/co-producer Anna Barnes (*Content*, *The Strange Chores*). Rounding out the creative team are director Natalie Bailey (*Avenue5*, *Run*, *The Thick of It*), script producer Sophie Miller (*The Family Law*, *Maximum Choppage*), and writers Declan Fay (*Ronny Chieng: International Student*) and Michele Lee (*Hungry Ghosts*). Alongside O’Connell, the producing team includes Dan Lake, Jackson Lapsley Scott and executive producer Kurt Royan.

Series Co-Creator, Meg O’Connell said, “The COVID-19 lockdown means the characters in *Retrograde* are finally having the existential crises they put off having in their twenties. They’re being forced to look at their reflections in the mirror (or video call) and are asking themselves: Do I like what I see?”

Sally Riley, ABC’S Head of Drama, Comedy and Indigenous said, “Making scripted content means it’s not always easy to respond in the moment to the terrifying events and changes in our world. But we’ve reimagined the way we make drama and comedy to bring Australian audiences a show that illustrates the very real impact the pandemic has had on life as we know it. Crossing humour with a layer of existential dread, *Retrograde* tracks from beginning to end our journey of the first wave of lockdown.”

Senior Online Investment Manager at Screen Australia, Lee Naimo, said, “We’re excited to support this team who have responded so quickly to the strange new normal with an incredibly innovative and clever series. *Retrograde* brings our online lives into focus and introduces a new kind of viewing experience to Australian audiences, and I can’t wait to see it.”



Production credit:

RETROGRADE is an Unless Pictures & Orange Entertainment Co production for the ABC. Principal production investment from Screen Australia, in association with Screen Queensland. Developed with the assistance of Film Victoria. Created by Mark O'Toole & Meg O'Connell. Producers Meg O'Connell, Dan Lake, Jackson Lapsley Scott. Executive Producer Kurt Royan. Directed by Natalie Bailey. ABC Executive Producer Que Minh Luu.

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