



**IFC**Films

# TINY FURNITURE

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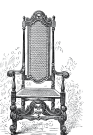
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## SHORT SUMMARY

22-year-old Aura returns home to her artist mother's TriBeCa loft with the following: a useless film theory degree, 357 hits on her Youtube page, a boyfriend who's left her to find himself at Burning Man, a dying hamster, and her tail between her legs. Luckily, her trainwreck childhood best friend never left home, the restaurant down the block is hiring, and ill-advised romantic possibilities lurk around every corner. Aura quickly throws away her liberal-arts clogs and careens into her old/new life: a dead-end hostess job, pathetic Brooklyn "art shows," drinking all the wine in her mother's neatly organized cabinets, competing with her prodigious teenage sister, and desperate sex in a giant metal pipe. Surrounded on all sides by what she could become, Aura just wants someone to tell her who she is. *Tiny Furniture* was shot in Dunham's family home, starring Dunham, her mother (photographer Laurie Simmons) and her precocious sister Grace.



# LONG SUMMARY

It's September, and Aura (LENA DUNHAM) arrives home after four years at liberal arts college. Dunham's real-life mother (LAURIE SIMMONS) and sister (GRACE DUNHAM) play Siri and Nadine, Aura's super-successful mother and super-ambitious younger sister. Aura is looking for sympathy, or maybe just some attention, but Nadine declares her sister's life "like the epilogue to *Felicity*," and Siri glibly advises her to "never regret anything, and never look back." But Aura has never met a feeling she didn't want to wallow in. Funny, self-aware, but a little bit spoiled and a lot bit overdramatic, Aura is searching for an entry point into life post-college (but she'd also like to stay under the covers for a little while.)

Her old life has been waiting for her – the takeout is just a phone call away, and her over-privileged high school friends never left home. The glamorous and unsupervised Charlotte (JEMIMA KIRKE) greets Aura with an involuntary slap in the face and vows never to let her out of her sight again. At a party on a fire escape in the East Village, Aura meets the intriguing Jed (ALEX KARPOVSKY), a filmmaker "in town for meetings." Meanwhile, she lands a job as a restaurant hostess, where she meets The Chef, aka Keith (DAVID CALL), a mustachioed pretty boy with a penchant for making Aura feel belittled and seduced all at the same time. Still, it feels to Aura like nothing is happening, especially compared to her mother's early-twenties in the 1970's Soho art world, chronicled in pithy journal entries that Aura has taken to reading illegally. When Siri and Nadine leave for a college tour, it's the perfect time for the restless Aura to stir up some trouble.

First order of business: get a man in the house. In the middle of what may or may not be a date with the director Jed, Aura invites him to stay in the loft while he's in town, and eagerly starts him on a regimen of her mother's wine and frozen entrees. As the days tick by, freeloader Jed moves from the air mattress to Siri's room into – reluctantly, on his part, because "girls often sweat the bed" – Aura's bed. By day, she ponders the maddeningly flirtatious yet elusive chef, who reveals that he has a rageful girlfriend. Charlotte, meanwhile, has nowhere else to be than wherever

Aura is going; her constant attention and indulgent lifestyle are both addictive and irksome. Second order of business: get a gallery show. Aura's college video art (which has already garnered 375 hits on Youtube) gets a spot in the show that Charlotte is "curating" (whatever that means.)

But Aura has bigger things to worry about: her mother has come home, with Nadine, and confronts Aura with one question: "Who drank all my wine?" After a petulant, tearful confrontation, Siri agrees to let Jed keep sleeping on the floor, although she makes her disapproval known. Aura also gets her first paycheck, for an amount so paltry that she decides to quit on the spot. The art show turns out to be a pitiful 'open studio.' This is nothing like what her mother's journals describe. Frankie (MERRITT WEVER), the clog-wearing college friend that Aura has been studiously avoiding, arrives and calls Aura out on her bad manners. Suddenly, the chef arrives and suggests they find a secluded spot. Her artistic future is in shambles, she's abandoned her friends, and all that awaits her at home is a furious mother and a skinny sister ... Aura is primed to do something very, very reckless.

*Tiny Furniture* explores the depths of romantic humiliation and the heights of post-college confusion; the darkest parts of the big city's bright lights and the newest ways to tell the oldest story in the book.





COMPLETED Dec 2009  
LOCATION New York City  
RUN TIME 98 Min  
CAMERA Canon 7D



## PRODUCTION DETAILS

*Tiny Furniture* was conceived last October, shot last November, and completed this January. It was Dunham's first time working with professional producers and paid crew. She chose her own family as co-stars, and set most of the movie at her parents' own Tribeca loft. The decision to shoot with the Canon 7D, an HD SLR still/video camera, makes this one of the first feature films to utilize this new technology. By choosing to work with Jody Lee Lipes as cinematographer, Dunham was opting for a more formally rigorous aesthetic of careful composition than her previous work. Dunham and Lipes decided to shoot more than half the film with no coverage at all; many scenes were executed in just one shot.





## INSPIRATION & ACCLAIM

Dunham's first film, *Creative Nonfiction*, also starred Dunham as a character based on herself, and depicted a frustrating collegiate non-romance based on one from Dunham's own life, performed by non-actors and shot in the dorm rooms and hallways of Oberlin College. As Michael Tully wrote in *Hammer to Nail* this year, "*Tiny Furniture* isn't just a major leap forward [for Dunham.] It's like a rocket launch to a bigger and brighter planet." Starring in your own movie about a narcissistic girl is a careful high-wire act of exhibitionism and self-parody, but Dunham decided to walk the line again with her second feature, adding to a grand tradition of personal filmmaking, inspired by classic 1970's neurosis-comedy and the best/worst Sandra Bullock romantic comedies.

The film premiered at the SXSW Film Festival in March 2010, and went on to win the Jury Prize for Best Narrative, as well as a generous cash award from the Chicken & Egg Foundation for Best Emergent Narrative Female Director. An article

in *The New York Times* followed the award, a profile of Lena by fellow autobiographer David Carr, entitled, "Lena Dunham finds Her Worth in *Tiny Furniture*". Glowing reviews in *Variety*, *Indiewire*, *LA Weekly*, *The Village Voice* came next; the twitterati and blogosphere have thrown their support behind the film. A few weeks after its premiere, the film was acquired by IFC Films, and will be released theatrically in the Fall of 2010.





## CREW

**WRITER / DIRECTOR** Lena Dunham  
**PRODUCERS** Kyle Martin & Alicia Van Covering  
**CINEMATOGRAPHER** Jody Lee Lipes  
**EDITOR** Lance Edmands  
**CO-PRODUCER** Alice Wang  
**SOUND** Micah Bloomberg  
**FOCUS** Joe Anderson  
**GAFFER** Jeff Peixoto  
**GRIP** Anna Farrell  
**ART** Jade Healy  
**SCRIPT SUP** Julia Newman  
**COLORIST** Sam Daley / Technicolor  
**POST SOUND** Gene Park  
**COMPOSER** Teddy Blanks  
**GRAPHIC DESIGN** CHIPS

## CAST

**AURA** Lena Dunham  
**SIRI** Laurie Simmons  
**NADINE** Grace Dunham  
**CANDICE** Rachel Howe  
**FRANKIE** Merritt Wever  
**ASHLYNN** Amy Seimetz  
**JED** Alex Karpovsky  
**CHARLOTTE** Jemima Kirke  
**KEITH** David Call  
**JULIA** Sarah Sophie Flicker  
**NOELLE** Garland Hunter  
**JACK** Isen Hunter



## ABOUT CAST & CREW

Exactly one year before *Tiny Furniture*'s SXSW Premiere, Dunham met Lipes, as well as producer Kyle Martin and editor Lance Edmands, at SXSW in 2009, who had all graduated from NYU film school together in 2004. She and producer Alicia Van Couvering (also NYU '04) met when Van Couvering interviewed her for *Filmmaker Magazine* at SXSW. Lena wrote the script in one week, with her cast already in mind; some of them relatives, the others friends. She had met Alex Karpovsky ("Jed") at an afterparty for his SXSW film, *Trust Us, This Is All Made Up*. She has known Jemima Kirke ("Charlotte") since childhood, and Garland and Isen Hunter (the neighbors "Noelle" and "Jack") live in the apartment below the Dunham Family in Tribeca.

## CAST BIOS

### LENA DUNHAM *Writer / Director / "Aura"*

Lena graduated from Oberlin College in 2008, where she studied Creative Writing. Her first short film, *Dealing*, premiered at the 2007 Slamdance Film Festival. Her first feature, *Creative Nonfiction*, premiered at SXSW 2009 and enjoyed a theatrical premiere at Anthology Film Archives. She has made two webseries, *Tight Shots* (nerve.com) and *Delusional Downtown Divas* (delusionaldowntowndivas.com). In 2009, she was commissioned to make ten more episodes of *DDD* to project at the Guggenheim's first annual Art Awards, an event for which she also hosted and wrote the teleplay. In 2009, she was named one of *Filmmaker Magazine*'s "25 New Faces of Independent Film." As an actress, she will soon appear in *Mildred Pierce*, by Todd Haynes and *The Innkeeper* by Ti West. She writes about film and interesting characters for various publications, including *Interview*, *The Onion A/V Club*, *HammertoNail.com*, and she loves to tweet (twitter.com/lenadunham).

### Laurie Simmons *"Siri"*

Laurie Simmons is an internationally recognized artist. Since the mid-70's, Simmons has staged scenes for her camera with dolls, ventriloquist dummies, mannequins and occasionally people, to create images with intensely psychological subtexts. Her photographic based works are collected by many museums including in New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art and the Guggenheim as well as The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Walker Art Center and the Hara Museum, Tokyo. In 2006 she produced and directed her first film titled *The Music of Regret*, starring Meryl Streep, Adam Guettel and the Alvin Ailey 2 Dancers with cinematography by Ed Lachman. The film premiered at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and has been screened at many international museums and film festivals. Simmons was featured in Season 4 of the PBS series "Art 21: Art in the Twenty- First Century". Simmons lives and works in New York City and Cornwall, Connecticut with her husband, the painter Carroll Dunham and their two daughters Lena and Grace.

### GRACE DUNHAM *"Nadine"*

Grace Dunham was born in New York City in 1992. She is currently a senior at Saint Ann's School in Brooklyn, New York, where she is a contributing writer to the Saint Ann's Ram and a yearbook staff member. She is an involved playwright and theater director, and an active debater, having been one of four elected candidates for president of Princeton Model Congress (nb: "State of Grace" campaign buttons still available for purchase.) She is the 2009 recipient of the Poetry Society of America's Louise Louis/Emily F. Bourne poetry prize. She will matriculate at Brown University in the fall of 2010.

### ALEX KARPOVSKY *"Jed"*

Alex studied visual ethnography at Oxford University before wasting the next few years of his life embracing obscure and misguided performance art. He now acts and makes movies. Alex's debut feature, *The Hole Story*, earned

## CAST BIOS CONTINUED

him a slot in *Filmmaker Magazine*'s 25 new faces of independent film, several prizes and a plastic key to a small city in Northern Minnesota. His subsequent films - *Woodpecker* (SXSW 2008) and *Trust Us, This is All Made Up* (SXSW 2009) - were also met by acclaim and awards. As an actor, Alex recently played the voices of several Russian gangsters in *Grand Theft Auto IV*, and appears in the films *Beeswax* (Berlin 2009), *Harmony and Me* (New Directors/New Films 2009), *Lovers of Hate* (Sundance 2010), *Bass Ackwards* (Sundance 2010), *Almost In Love* (2011), *Thanks Minnesota* (2011), and *Codependent Lesbian Space Alien Seeks Same* (2011). He delights in moonscapes, soviet era psychokinesis, taking walks (solo), pistachios and playing basketball with urban teenagers. Alex hopes to shoot his next film, a psychological thriller, in the Boston area later this year.

### DAVID CALL "Keith"

A graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, David Call can most recently be seen as star of the films *Two Gates of Sleep* (Cannes 2010) and *Northeast*, as well as *Did You Hear About The Morgans?* w/Sarah Jessica Parker, IFC Films' *Breaking Upwards*, *Evening* with Clare Danes, Chad Lowe's *Beautiful, Ohio*, *The Architect* with Anthony LaPaglia and Isabella Rossellini, and *The Notorious Betty Page*. Call maintains recurring roles on the television shows *Mercy*, F/X's *Rescue Me* and *Fringe*; his past credits include *Army Wives*, *Canterbury's Law*, *Numb3rs*, and *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*. Call has also directed and co-written the short film, *B.U.S.T.*, which won a Special Jury Prize at the 2010 Dallas International Film Festival.

### MERRITT WEVER "Frankie"

Film and television work includes Noah Baumbach's *Greenberg*, Oren Moverman's *The Messenger*, *The Missing Person*, *Righteous Kill*, *Michael Clayton*, Sean Penn's *Into the Wild*, M. Night Shyamalan's *Signs*, *Series 7*, *The Adventures of Sebastian Cole*, *All I Wanna Do*, Aaron Sorkin's *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip*, HBO's *The Wire* and *Something The Lord Made*, and numerous *Law and Order* episodes.

She has performed on stage at New York Theatre Workshop, Clubbed Thumb, Summer Play Festival, and The Play Company. Most recently, she appeared at The Geffen Playhouse in "The Female of The Species" opposite Annette Bening. She can currently be seen on Showtime's *Nurse Jackie*.

### JEMIMA KIRKE "Charlotte"

Jemima was born on April 26th, 1985 in London and raised there until she was ten years old. Since then she has lived in New York City where she attended the Little Red School House and later Saint Ann's High School, where she met Lena Dunham. She moved on to study fine arts at the Rhode Island School of Design where she majored in painting. She resides in the East Village and works from her studio in Williamsburg. This is her feature film debut.

## CREW BIOS

### ALICIA VAN COUVERING *Producer*

Alicia is a New York City native who began working in independent film at age 16, as an associate producer for Oscar-winning documentarian Barbara Kopple on her film *My Generation*. She has worked as an assistant to producer Mike S. Ryan on such films as *Junebug*, Todd Solondz's *Palindromes* and *Life During Wartime*; other production credits include Comedy Central's *Important Things with Demetri Martin*, Cruz Angeles *Don't Let Me Drown*, Joel Schumacher's *Twelve*, Lee Daniels' *Precious*, Rebecca Miller's *The Private Lives of Pippa Lee*, and Bertha Bay-Sa Pan's *Almost Perfect*, and numerous art installations and music videos. She is currently in pre-production on several features, including the newest by Ronald Bronstein (*Frownland*). She is a contributing editor to *Filmmaker Magazine*.

# CREW BIOS CONTINUED

## KYLE MARTIN *Producer*

Kyle graduated from NYU's Maurice Kanbar Institute of Film and Television in 2007 and began working alternatively in advertising as well as independent film. As a Producer for Jay Walter Thompson, Kyle has overseen production of broadcast television spots and branded online content for Microsoft, Johnson & Johnson, and many others. His first film as producer, short film *Blue Dress*, won the Best Student Film Award at the Hamptons International Film Festival. *Wild Combination: A Portrait of Arthur Russell*, his first feature length documentary, premiered at the 2007 Berlin Film Festival, was released theatrically by Plexi and aired on the Sundance Channel. His next film, Jody Lee Lipes' *Brock Enright: Good Times Will Never Be The Same*, premiered at the 2009 SXSW Festival and is slated for release via Factory 25 in 2010. He recently completed *NY Export: Opus Jazz*, the first feature film adaptation of a Jerome Robbins work since "West Side Story". *Opus Jazz* will premiere this coming March nationwide on PBS's Great Performances series.

## JODY LEE LIPES *DP*

One of *Filmmaker Magazine's* 25 New Faces 2009, Jody Lee Lipes wrote and co-directed the scripted adaptation of Jerome Robbins' ballet *NY Export: Opus Jazz*, winner of an Audience Award at SXSW 2010. Starring an ensemble cast of New York City Ballet dancers and photographed on 35mm, the film is currently airing on PBS. Jody's first feature length documentary *Brock Enright: Good Times Will Never Be The Same*, follows an emerging artist struggling to create his first solo show at a prominent gallery in New York City. *Brock Enright* premiered at SXSW 2009 and will be released by Factory 25. In addition to lensing his own projects Jody has earned DP credits on the features *Two Gates of Sleep* (Cannes 2010), *Afterschool* (Cannes/NYFF 2008), and *Wild Combination: A Portrait of Arthur Russell* (Berlin/Edinburgh 2008). Upcoming cinematography projects include Lance Edmands' *Bluebird* and Sean Durkin's *Martha Marcy May Marlene* (both 2010 Sundance Screenwriting Lab participants).

## LANCE EDMANDS *Editor*

Lance Edmands graduated from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts in 2005. In addition to *Tiny Furniture*, his feature editing credits include *Wild Combination: A Portrait of Arthur Russell*, and *Brock Enright: Good Times Will Never Be The Same*. His commercial clients include Sharp, Delta, Siemens, Citibank, and Adobe. As a writer/director, Lance has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, The Jane Morisson Film Fund, and the Warner Bros. Film Production Award. His short films have screened at the Director's Guild of America and the Student Academy Awards. He is currently developing his first feature, *Bluebird*, which was invited to the 2010 Sundance Screenwriters and Directors Lab.

## TEDDY BLANKS *Composer*

Teddy is a singer-songwriter and performer whose debut solo EP, *Complications*, featuring six songs about strange diseases and medical trauma, was released in July 2009. Previously, as lead singer of synth-pop duo the Gaskets, he shared bills with a diverse group of artists, including Girl Talk, Camper Van Beethoven, R&B singer Monica, Daniel Johnston, Violent Femmes, Mudhoney, and Weird Al. He provided the score for Lena Dunham's first feature, *Creative Nonfiction*, as well as her web series *Tight Shots*. Along with Adam Squires, he runs the Brooklyn-based graphic design studio CHIPS who made the film titles, website, and promotional materials for *Tiny Furniture*.