



BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL

TRUE THINGS (15)

Director: Harry Wootliff

Starring: Ruth Wilson, Hayley Squires, Tom Burke, Elizabeth Rider

UK, 2021, 1 hour 42 minutes

Ruth Wilson pairs up with Tom Burke (who played Anthony in the catastrophic relationship at the heart of Joanna Hogg's *The Souvenir* and *The Souvenir Part II*) in a casual love affair that is doomed from the start in Harry Wootliff's *True Things*. This is her second feature; her 2018 romantic drama *Only You* won a BAFTA nomination and 2 British Independent Film Awards.

Can you explain how this project, and Deborah Kay Davies' originating novel, came to you?

Harry Wootliff: The book came to me through Ruth Wilson; Ruth was working with Jude Law – he'd read the book and shared it with Ruth, and they both wanted to develop a project. I met with Ruth, as she was looking for a writer-director, to write, develop and direct the film. I presented to her what I loved about the book, what I didn't like, what I thought would work – the idea of how to make it cinematic. And we really clicked, and then very quickly moved on from there.

Could you talk about how you engendered such truthful and affecting performances from the lead actors? Do you have a specific method that feels unique to your process? It's a particular attribute of British filmmakers, like Mike Leigh or Ken Loach – this detailed work with the cast, prior to shooting.

I'm always looking for actors to see what they have. It's like a Venn diagram where they have a bit in the middle: I like to see what bit of them they share with the character. I enjoy casting against type, like I'd argue Tom is. I think it adds an immediate complexity and depth to the person because they're hiding a lot. I think we, as people, never reveal our whole, true selves; we're chameleon-like, as we're different people on our own and different people with other people. I liked working out what Tom wants to expose of himself, that maybe he's reluctant to expose. And it's the same with Ruth, I think. What I wanted with Ruth was to really extract what I saw in her. I want to observe them as real people. Ruth laughs a lot; she's not as strong as she appears. She's got a lightness and a sweetness to her. I encouraged her to bring that out. I don't think she's comfortable playing that – I don't believe she's used to pulling that out of herself.

Interview with director Harry Wootliff on [Cineuropa.org](https://www.cineuropa.org)

Preview courtesy of Picturehouse Entertainment

Notes compiled by Jo Comino