

HEAVY SILK OPSPREY
DRESS BY **ROKSANDA
ILINCIC**, COLLAR-SHAPED
DIAMONTE NECKLACE
BY **MIQUELLA**, AND EAR-
RINGS BY **PETER LANG**.

PHOTOGRAPHY: RANKIN AT RANKIN.CO.UK. PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANTS: NEIL DAWSON, MIKE LIN, JACK MCGUIRE, EVA PENTEL, AND DOM STORER. STYLING: NASRIN JEAN-BAPTISTE. STYLING ASSISTANT: HANNAH KENDALL. HAIR: PAUL DONOVAN. HAIR ASSISTANT: EMANUELE DANGELO. MAKEUP: ANDREW GALLIMORE FOR CLMUK.COM. MAKEUP ASSISTANT: RHEA LE RICHE. DIGITAL TECH: MATTHEW THOMAS. PRODUCTION: ANETTE WILMS FOR RANKIN.CO.UK.

SALLY HAWKINS

SUBMERSIBLE INNOCENCE

SUBMARINE'S VIBRANT LONDON ACTRESS
SCAMPERS ALONG MEMORY LANE

written by **Gregg LaGambina** photographed by **Rankin**

THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE:
DRESS BY **BERNARD
CHANDRAN**, SHOES BY
ALEXJANDRO INGELMO,
AND LUCITE AND OXI-
DIZED SILVER NECKLACE
BY **ERICKSON BEAMON**.



CHILDREN ARE SNEAKY BEINGS. SEEMINGLY HARMLESS DAYDREAMING crayon scribbles, sprawled out on carpets, inventing worlds, confused, heaving sobs at minor tragedies, scooped up by adult giants saying, “There, there,” as if your calamities were nothing at all to weep at.

Being so new is so very exhausting. You need naps throughout the day, blankets, milk, and things to chew. But the child is sneaky. You are told you’ll grow up, grow out of it, but the truth is you never do. There are secrets in those scribbles. The fact is, the child never leaves. If you’re lucky.

“I had another world, another sort of life at night. I have a lot of memories of being awake when others weren’t. Kids are amazing in the way that there would be nothing in the room to play with, but you’d discover worlds in the tiniest corners, in the wallpaper, and they’d become really important to you and you’d create stories around them—characters that lived in the carpet, or in my dad’s toes. It felt magical.”

Sally Hawkins says all of this gleefully, her eyes not quite settling upon any one particular thing, her dark hair never quite capitulating to the manipulations of her darting fingers trying to keep it all above her brow so that she might see at least her tea.

She is wearing large hoop earrings. Her sunglasses are folded and placed in the center of the wooden picnic table. They are also large and black and ornamented with false diamonds at the corners that sparkle occasionally depending upon the movement of the clouds above us. Her handbag is by her side; it is the color of gold.

“It was very important I had that other life that would just sort of exist,” she continues, running a hand through her hair again. “And that they didn’t know about it. Or if they did, they were polite. Too polite and too grownup to say anything and let me just carry on.”

Her parents illustrated children’s books professionally. Hawkins shared a bunk bed with an older brother. She had three-dimensional sculptured wall hangings of Spider-Man and Superman to ponder from her lower bunk, and Star Wars figures were strewn about the room. Her

shared space was hardly altered when the older boy moved out and her girliness was granted new liberty. Some dolls moved in, a plastic pony or two, but the Millennium Falcon stayed. All of this took place in South-east London, in Greenwich.

“There were lots of things on the walls,” she says, her eyes gleaming with that interior gaze one has when straining to see the past. “Sort of appetizing signs that were bright and colorful. Some Victorian ones that my parents had around, like Pear’s soap. Old Victorian children’s tin signs that I would stare at for long periods of time, probably because they were quite disturbing.”

She laughs, looks up, back in the present now.

At this point, dear reader, you would not be blamed for wondering aloud, “What’s with all this chit-chat about childhood? Let’s get on with it, shall we?”

Let’s stop you short of a tantrum then and let you in on the secret.

Sally Hawkins currently stars in a film called *Submarine*. In it, she plays Jill Tate, a quietly wound-up, Amish-like figure outfitted in a carefully feathered bob hairdo, buttoned up beige dresses, and with a speaking voice so purposefully modulated to be soothing it achieves the polar opposite.

Jill is married to Lloyd (played by Noah Taylor), a depressive marine biologist who perpetually mopes in an unkempt beard and robe (beige, again), clutching on to the handle of his mug of tea as if it were his last grasp on the totality of his minor life.

Newcomer Craig Roberts plays their son, Oliver. Oliver is in hopeless pursuit of a moody gal named Jordana (Yasmin Paige), desperate to shed himself of his virginal cloak, eager to step finally and once-and-for-all into the hallowed realm of adulthood. He becomes sidetracked, however, with trying to keep his parents together as his mother scurries off with mullet-haired New Age guru Graham (Paddy Considine) whose

miraculously airbrushed van is one of the film's finest visual gags.

The libidinous pursuit of teenage lust coupled with the obligation to prevent the same of your own mother is a recipe for comedic overindulgence. Yet *Submarine* succeeds precisely because of its restraint. It is an almost perfect small movie that could easily have been a large mess. (Are we still allowed to call things charming?)

Submarine will be called many things. It will be filed under "coming of age." Its filmic antecedents are worn proudly on its sleeve, so any mention of *Harold & Maude* and *Rushmore* should not be considered slights. Why? Because *Submarine* is also pretty great. Writer and director Richard Ayoade has imprinted his debut feature with enough of his own DNA that the *Submarine* he has built is sturdy enough to withstand the strain of any comparisons designed to discredit its originality.

For one thing, Oliver's bedroom is so convincingly detailed, so lovingly decorated with perfect ornaments of that stage in life where your bedroom walls become vast mosaics that say more about your interior life than your own face in a mirror. Everything is vital. The books you read, the films you see, the music you hear—they are life-changing because you are still young enough, clay-like, unhardened by the responsibility of living. Existing is enough, what you absorb becomes you.

You'll want to pause the film to take a closer look at that drawing of Oliver pinned above his headboard, a sketch of him trying to sleep, an arm over his forehead, a disruptive and restless sleep sketched by someone. Who? There's a poster of Alain Delon in *Le Samourai*. A hi-fi with French LPs strewn about. Aquatic accoutrements like the titular vessel haphazardly pinned to a blue wall as if it is submerged and surveying the outskirts of the room looking for clues into Oliver.

Later in the film, we witness Jill rifling through a lockbox filled with similar sketches, put away now in a safe place, hidden, because she is an adult and it is no longer appropriate to have such things on display. Briefly, we see a sketch, presumably gifted to her by Oliver, an undersea scene with a fish swimming beneath a sub and mournfully announcing in a thought bubble, "I don't like it down here." This, in many ways, is how the film communicates to the viewer: like the hieroglyphic walls of a teenager's bedroom.

Now, dear reader, you might have a better understanding of why we've been spending so much time in that faraway bedroom of Sally Hawkins' youth. If you'll permit us to continue...

"The best toy was a car, I think, that I sat on or stepped on. It became half a car. Just a wheel, really. Later on, it was The Doors, The Smiths—those were the posters. I didn't sleep. I had a lot of energy. I still don't. Sleep, I mean."

Hawkins was handed a Golden Globe Award by presenter Johnny Depp for her performance as Poppy in Mike Leigh's *Happy-Go-Lucky* in 2009. She was nominated in the category alongside Meryl Streep, Emma Thompson, Frances McDormand, and Rebecca Hall. Hawkins "beat" them. A discussion topic posted to a Hawkins-devoted website declares, "She should be more famous."



Talk then turns from childhood to fame and the business of making movies and how that particular gent who handed her the aforementioned award is so absurdly famous now that he can no longer just drop into a film for a walk-on without disrupting the entire story. He is too big; it's no longer an option for him to be small. "I'm sure that must frustrate him as well," she says. "To not be able to disappear. From the choices he makes, you can see that he struggles with that. That he's desperate to disappear."

Whether as Poppy in *Happy-Go-Lucky*, or the (composite) '60s labor movement hero Rita O'Grady in the recent *Made in Dagenham*, Hawkins has that ability to disappear at will. So much so, when she turned the corner at this café for this interview, there was a lengthy pause before her presence was registered and introductions were made. When she's told this, she immediately understands what it means. She says, "That's a real compliment. Thank you, thank you." She knows it is something to preserve, that it allows you to be a better actor.

In that way, fame is like adulthood. It is something thrust upon you that steals part of the magic of living. Necessary, in a way, yes. To live, to work, you must grow up; you must be known if you are to be offered parts. But it's this essential ability to maintain as much of that clean slate, that private world of a preciously adorned bedroom, to drag a great enough portion of that secret past into the future with you that allows you to keep evolving instead of merely enduring.

"It all crumbles when you're recognized," Hawkins says. "That's what's scary about fame. You lose the ability to morph, or to shape-shift, and to go and be creative. It restricts you. You lose your freedom. I wouldn't want that to happen."

At one point in *Submarine*, Oliver Tate attempts to regroup and calm himself, in the midst of the whirlwind of all that has gone awry in his life, to remind himself "none of this will matter when I'm 38."

"Yeah, I didn't agree with that a bit," says Hawkins, laughing.

It all matters. Everything in your life is a culmination. It gathers and makes you. And so the conversation circles back to being a kid again and how that is valuable, in anything, but especially in art. We try to sum it up. It might be impossible. But Hawkins gives it a go.

"You hope that by the time you get older, you've realized what the brilliant things were and just focus on those. Then they can come to the fore and the best parts of your childlikeness is always alongside you."

Assuming, dear reader, you have read an interview with an actress before, you know how these things end. Actors are proud creatures aren't they? Boasting is a reflex. There is always a next thing, a whirlwind adventure to embark on, something infinitely more wonderful than...

"I don't know!"

Sally Hawkins exclaims her predicament with equal parts fear and glee. She sits here once upon a time all over again with a future begging for invention. She is in a tiny corner. Exactly the kind of place a person like her can create a world.



DRESS WITH VELVET PANELS BY **STELLA MCCARTNEY** AND LACE SOLANE DRESS (WORN UNDERNEATH) BY **AGENT PROVOCATEUR**

STYLIST: **NASRIN JEAN-BAPTISTE**
HAIR: **PAUL DONOVAN**
MAKEUP: **ANDREW GAL-LIMORE**

BEAUTY NOTES: KOHL EYE PENCIL IN PHONE NUMBER BY **M.A.C COSMETICS**. THICKENING SPRAY BY **BUMBLE AND BUMBLE**