

British Theatre Guide

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The Last Client and Mr Thompson's Carnation

Two short films by Diene Petterle
The Other Cinema
(2004)

It has been a good fortnight for The Imaginary Body. The production company that has been touring the world with the award-winning [100](#) has returned to London for two openings.

Christopher Heimann's moving new production of [Interior](#) had a successful time at The Young Vic as part of its Direct Action Season.

Now stage writer/film director, Diene Petterle has responded with a new short film, *The Last Client*, which was accompanied at its first viewing by her previous effort, another award-winner, *Mr Thompson's Carnation*.

The main themes of both films are loneliness and death. This may sound grim but Miss Petterle has a light, often witty touch and a great eye for artistic, striking images.

The Last Client, based on a story by Neil Monaghan, tells the tale of a young female undertaker at life's crossroads. The film addresses her meeting with the long-absent father from whom she inherited the business.

This is an interesting, cathartic meeting for father and daughter with a twist in the tale worthy of Roald Dahl.

Mr Thompson's Carnation, written and directed by Miss Petterle, with a nod towards Gabriel Garcia Marquez, addresses an older generation.

The scrawny, eponymous Mr T seduces and toys with the affections of a painfully lonely florist. His life is possibly even worse than hers, robbing the cat of its dinner and playing solo draughts.

Once again, this is a touching investigation of failure to communicate. It too has an ending to die for.

Like the best short stories, these films leave one feeling entertained and satisfied. It will be very interesting to see how Diene Petterle fares when she moves on to full-length work. It is also very sincerely to be hoped that she doesn't forsake stage work completely.

Reviewer: [Philip Fisher](#)