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A centuries-old barn in Germany provided the eerie backdrop of 'Mother Mary', A24's new psychodrama starring Anne Hathaway

Set designer Francesca Di Mottola explains how the rustic structure became another character in the film, now in theatres

BY KELLY ALLEN PUBLISHED 4 WEEKS AGO IN [FEATURES](#)

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Anne Hathaway in *Mother Mary*
(Image credit: Frederic Batier. Courtesy of A24.)

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A deep bond becomes otherworldly in the new A24 film *Mother Mary*. The psychodrama, directed by David Lowery, follows global pop icon Mother Mary (Anne Hathaway) who reunites with her estranged best friend and

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former costume designer Sam Anselm (Michaela Coel). When Mother Mary asks Sam to make her a dress for an unforgettable performance, the pair embark on an intense evening of confrontation and reinvention in Sam's somber workspace, set in a dark barn on an estate somewhere in the English countryside.



In real life, the barn is located not in the UK, but in Germany at a moated castle called Burg Adendorf. The structure became not only a leading character in the film but also a critical cinematic device for UK-based production designer Francesca Di Mottola. 'The stable is a container where the story unfolds and where the emotions are held,' says Di Mottola, whose credits include films like the Charli xcx satire The Moment and Luca Guadagnino's I am Love.



A view of Burg Adendorf, the German castle where a bulk of filming took place.
(Image credit: Getty Images)

With a soaring 14m-tall ceiling and ample open space, the barn performs like a stage for a revealing dance and séance scenes in the film. To make the centuries-old structure feel more claustrophobic and moody, the design team covered some lighter-toned walls in canvas, divided the room into zones and added an upper-level loft. Drained of colour, the barn offers a neutral atmosphere for vivid fabrics to pop as Sam crafts a garment for Mother Mary. Mannequins wear garments in subdued hues to underscore the effect. 'They move during the scenes and close in on them,' says Di Mottola of the mannequins, which represent the haunting recollections Sam holds in her work. 'It's meant to be imperceptible.'



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Michaela Coel and Anne Hathaway star in *Mother Mary*.
(Image credit: Photo by Eric Zachanowich. Courtesy of A24.)

The barn is just one setting in *Mother Mary* but its elements act as ‘connecting tissue’ uniting past and present throughout the plot. In *Mother Mary*’s concert scenes, which were filmed at an arena and on a soundstage, the barn’s rustic wood beams are echoed through lighting design onstage and in a 360-degree mirrored dressing room. For a backstage scene, Di Mottola recreated the wood beams as the backdrop for *Mother Mary*’s journey to her first séance (led by singer FKA Twigs) in a hotel room. The design team laid the same wood plank flooring they put over the barn’s dirt ground in front of the hotel room set to connect the two thematically.



Michaela Coel plays Sam Anselm, a costume designer.
(Image credit: Photo by Eric Zachanowich. Courtesy of A24.)

The barn served practical purposes for the design team, too; Some sets were built inside of it, including Sam’s bedroom where she first encounters the supernatural (the exteriors of the home were filmed at a different German castle called Burg Müddersheim).

To get the details just right, Di Mottola’s team intensely studied Sam and *Mother Mary*’s notable real-life counterparts. In fashion, that meant examining the workspaces of [Valentino](#) Garavani, John Galliano, and Daniel Roseberry of [Schiaparelli](#) through documentaries and short films. In music, that meant analysing stadium-tour footage of Taylor Swift, Madonna, Dua Lipa, Lady Gaga and more. The stage design also needed to complement original songs written by Charli xcx, Jack Antonoff and FKA Twigs. But, after so much research, says Di Mottola, ‘we did our own thing.’



(Image credit: Frederic Batier. Courtesy of A24.)

Casting away these influences resulted in an atelier that felt real but true to

Sam, and simple stage designs that let Mother Mary shine. 'Despite us being very inspired by huge artists, we then needed to find *our* artists,' says Di Mottola. And so they did.

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Mother Mary is on limited release in the US from 17 April 2026. It's nationwide and in UK cinemas from 24 April 2026. ✪

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Kelly Allen

Kelly Allen is a New York-based journalist with several years of experience covering interior design, entertainment, travel and culture. Her work has also appeared in *House Beautiful*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Delish* and more.

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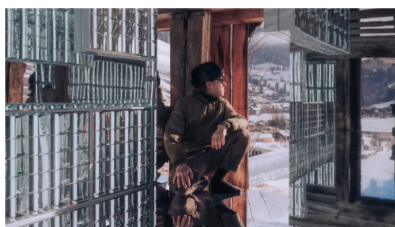
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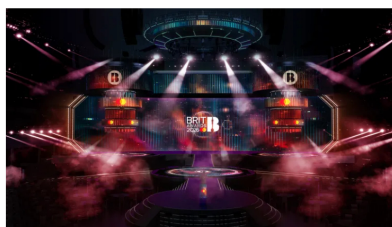
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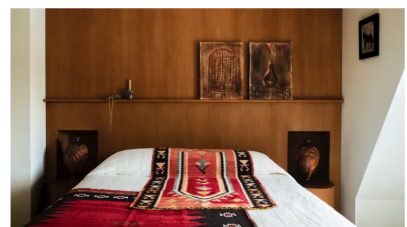
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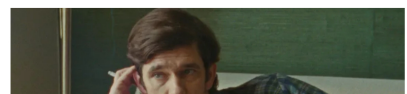
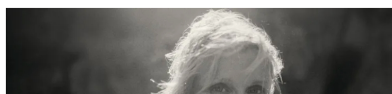


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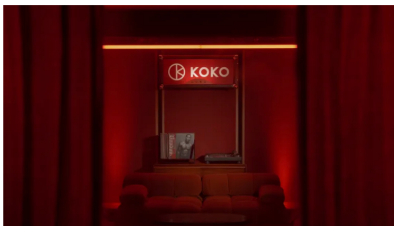


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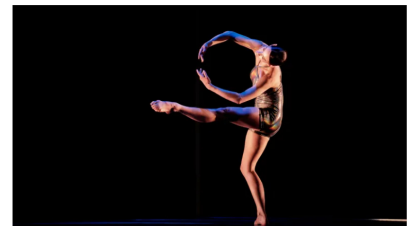
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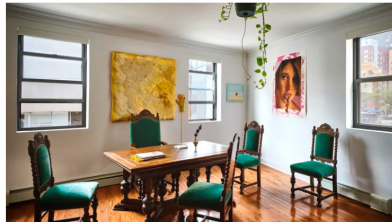
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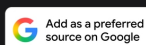


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