

www.thepenandcamera.com
www.nadinetruong.com

Nadine Truong

Press Coverage of a Creative

SCREENWRITER · DIRECTOR · BLOGGER

2017 MEDIA KIT



- ☒ "Article Only"
- ☐ "Article with Comments"
- ☐ "Comments Only"  Print

NBC Announces Semi-Finalists For 12th Annual NBCUniversal Short Film Festival

By Dino-Ray Ramos 3 hours ago



NBCUniversal

The [NBCUniversal Short Film Festival](#) has announced 16 original short films and webisodes as semi-finalists for its 12th annual event. The festival, which includes notable alumni Randall Park (*Fresh Off The Boat*) and Hasan Minhaj (*The Daily Show*), celebrates diverse stories while finding the next generation of storytellers.

This year, there were more than 4200 submissions, which doubled from 2016's entries, making it the most in the festival's history. The collection of shorts feature stories about people of ethnically diverse backgrounds, the LGBTQ community, women and people with disabilities. Out of the 16 semi-finalists, 10 were written or directed by women, setting a new record for female

representation at the festival. Additionally, half of the shorts selected feature Asian-American stories or writer-directors, which is also a first for the festival. Karen Horne, SVP of Programming Talent Development & Inclusion, [NBC](#) Entertainment and Universal Television said in a statement, “this is proof of the wealth of stories about underrepresented people.

“I’m proud that our Short Film Festival along with our other NBC Talent Infusion Programs will continue to serve as a home to highlight those stories and their creators,” adds Horne.

The webisodes and shorts, which include a mix of comedies and dramas, will be showcased at public screenings in New York on August 15 and 16 before the finalists are chosen. The finalists will be chosen by a panel of entertainment industry professionals and NBCUniversal executives. Winners will be chosen for Best Writer, Best Director and Best Actor, among others. The finale screening and awards ceremony will be held in Los Angeles on October 18 at the Directors Guild of America.

The complete list of semi-finalists are listed below:

Akashi, Writer & Director: Mayumi Yoshida

Kana, a young Japanese woman, receives news that her grandmother has passed away. During her trip to attend the funeral, she recalls intimate conversations with her grandmother that lead her to examine her own life.

Audible Static, Writer & Director: Sai Selvarajan

Thaddeus, a clever teenager with a speech impediment, creates a new way to communicate his feelings to his crush.

Brothers, Writer & Director: Emmett Lundberg

Four transgender male friends explore life and love in Brooklyn. This episode of the web series focuses on Max as he opens up to his new girlfriend that he is transgender.

Couples: Movie Night, Director: Ryan Sulak, Writer: Chris Sturgeon

A quiet night-in for couple, Sara and Adam, turns into an epic thrill-ride to find the perfect movie in a race against time before Sara falls asleep.

Cul-De-Sac, Director: Damon Russell, Writer: Shawn Christensen

Parents living at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac discover a listening device inside their son's teddy bear. The film stars Phoebe Tonkin (*The Originals*, *The Vampire Diaries*).

Emergency, Director: Carey Williams, Writer: K.D Davila

A group of Black and Latino college students carefully weigh the pros and cons of calling the police when faced with an emergency situation.

Groundhog Day For A Black Man, Writer & Director: Cynthia Kao

A Black man continually relives the same day until he can survive an encounter with the police.

Joy Joy Nails, Writer & Director: Joey Ally

Sarah manages a Korean-owned nail salon with an ever cheerful iron fist. New manicurist Mia, who is Chinese, starts working at the salon and attracts the affections of Sarah's love interest. Threatened, Sarah becomes increasingly antagonistic toward Mia and later discover truths about herself and Joy Joy Nails.

Lost Dogs, Director: Cullan Bruce, Writers: Cullan Bruce and Chris Lee

A woman ridiculed by her family longs to escape. Striking a deal with her brother to clear his illegal debt, she delves deeper into darkness.

Madaran, Writer & Director: Rayka Zehtabchi

An Iranian mother decides whether to end or spare the life of her son's killer.

Misery Loves Company 1: "Pussy," Director: Gloria Calderon Kellett, Writers: Sara Amini and Emily Chang

Misery Loves Company 3: "Racist," Director: Nadine Truong, Writers: Sara Amini and Emily Chang

Two friends navigate being women of color in a post-election world, while trying (and failing) at a #blessedlife in LA. In this episode, Sara and Emily deal with cat-callers on the street.

Mr. & Mrs. Kim, Director: Jaehuen Chung, Writer: Josh Aichenbaum

Joshua Kim makes up a glamorous story about his Korean immigrants parents

for his fourth grade class. He later discovers that their real-life backstory is more extraordinary than what he could have ever imagined.

Mrs. Drake, Director: Caitlin FitzGerald, Writer: Kyle Warren

Laura is a single mother struggling to raise her son Jack. She is thrown into a spiral of confusion and guilt when Jack comes home from school claiming his teacher locked him in a closet.

Night Call, Director: Amanda Renee Knox, Writer: Joseph Sousa

During a routine patrol, a Black female cop (Marlyne Barrett, Chicago Med) is called to a disturbance that leads to her making a life-altering decision.

Pop Rox, Director: Nate Trinru, Writer: Alyssa Lerner

Jesse, an Iranian-American teenage girl, decides to tell her best friend, Roxanne, that she's in love with her.

This article was printed from <http://deadline.com/2017/07/nbc-short-film-festival-randall-park-hasan-minhaj-diversity-1202134906/>

NEWS MAY 5 2017, 1:56 PM ET

Asian-American Filmmakers to Hollywood: Give Us a Platform to Create Without Compromise

by TRACI G. LEE

NBC Asian America sat down with four filmmakers — Jeff Chiba Stearns ("Mixed Match"), Nadine Truong ("I Can, I Will, I Did"), Robin Lung ("Finding Kukan"), and Tanuj Chopra ("Chee and T") — during the 33rd Los Angeles Asian Pacific American Film Festival to talk about the challenges they've faced when knocking on Hollywood's gates, what their biggest concerns are when "whitewashing" becomes the focus of films, and how audiences can encourage better representation in the media they consume.



From left to right: Jeff Chiba Stearns ("Mixed Match"), Nadine Truong ("I Can, I Will, I Did"), Robin Lung ("Finding Kukan"), Tanuj Chopra ("Chee and T") Courtesy of Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival

Note: Full filmmaker bios are included below.

When you're looking for stories to tell, what are the top things you look for when you first are finding a story, finding the research, and deciding to dive right into the topic?

Jeff Chiba Stearns ("Mixed Match"): I think first you need to be very interested in the topic. I'm Japanese, English, Scottish, German, Russian. So I like to focus a lot of my filmmaking around multi-ethnic identity because that's a topic of interest for me. In America, multiracial people are becoming one of the fastest-growing demographics. I kind of feel like if we can capture these stories now, it kind of brings it to the forefront.

So in the case of "Mixed Match," we're looking at a film that explores why there are complications as our genetics get more complex. It's harder to match us when you're trying to find a genetic twin for a bone marrow transplant. And that's something I didn't know about prior to [making the film], but realizing it stems beyond identity, and now it's moving into the world of medicine and medical health. So I think for me, it's also nice that, when you're making a documentary, that there's a call to action. We're doing this to maybe heal the world a bit, you know? Make it a better place, or just in essence with something like "Mixed Match," essentially trying to save lives, right? Because if we can inform people, educate people, inspire people to join bone marrow registries, donate cord blood of their child when they're born, these are lifesaving procedures and things we can use to cure cancer.

Robin Lung ("Finding Kukan"): For myself, I've always been drawn to stories about women, both in fiction and nonfiction. So in my film career, I've concentrated on telling stories about women, and it just so happens that the films that I've worked on have been about women of color. And as I've gone through my film projects, I've learned how rare women of color stories are in the media and how important it is to document them. That's number one, but number two is really: is it a story that won't let me go, you know? There are a lot of stories that come into my head and I'll think, "Oh, that would be a great film." But there's only certain stories that really stick with you and haunt you and they won't let you sleep at night. And this is what "Finding Kukan" was, it was a story that literally was in my dreams, it pushed me out of bed in the morning. It was really that powerful.

Nadine and Tanuj, you've both directed narrative films [that are showing in this year's festival], but they're still drawing on real-life experiences. How important is identity when it comes to telling your stories – when it comes to casting, writing, creating the vision for your film?

|

“It’s not about ‘them’ telling our stories; it’s about giving platforms to people of color, to women to make that happen. We’re not asking to push out ‘white America’ and the films we already see. We’re just asking for that seat at the table.”

Nadine Truong ("I Can, I Will, I Did"): For me, it’s not always solely based on racial identity; it’s also about gender identity. ["I Can, I Will, I Did"] deals a lot with growing pains and growing from a place of pain to a place of health, whether that’s mental or physical health. And that all sort of ties in with identity and figuring out who you become. How you respond to adversity is something I’ve explored in my own life, so the film becomes a reflection of what you learn and how much – you know, once you’ve had enough space and distance, you can also put it on screen and tell that story.

Tanuj Chopra ("Chee and T"): [Identity] is the heart of all work on some level, but it’s something we actively didn’t discuss a lot, to be honest. We talked about representation a lot, and with ["Chee and T"], we wanted to do something that wasn’t very culturally predetermined. For us, it was more about creating, normalizing brown men especially, and creating a movie that’s funny and engaging and has an all brown cast, and features a multitude of brown personalities instead of having, like, just the sidekick character or the extra character. I mean, half the draw for our actors was that they get to play leads in the film, and these are really great actors you see all the time in television who don’t get to explore a character fully, and fully take a character through an arc.

I think our film could be the same film if it starred all black people, all white people, all Latino people. It would be almost the same film, with a few specific jokes, and I think that was important for us because we wanted people to respond to the comedy all over the country, and not just be limited to culturally-specific humor or stuff that we’ve kind of already seen.

There’s a lot that gets said every year about the lack of diversity and representation of Asian Americans behind the scenes, at the box office, at big award shows. What do you think is missing from the conversation in Hollywood at those top-level offices?

Nadine Truong: I think about this question a lot, particularly because the question of... well, for example, in casting, we have this whole whitewashing phenomenon right now. We’ve always had it. The go-to explanation is always that it’s about who we can draw people into

the movie theater, and therefore they cast a certain way. And I've always felt that to be such a bullsh-t reason. "Avatar" has blue people in the films, and we can put inanimate objects onto the screen and it still draws audiences. It's about the story, really. Sure, there is "star power" to get people into the seats, but at the end of the day, you can have a stellar cast but if the story sucks and the filmmaking is subpar, the movie is going to tank. They're not going to save you from that.

I think people in Hollywood are very much drawn by the bucks, but it's misplaced. So now that the conversations are getting to be a bit mindful, there'll be allies that will give us our own platforms to tell our stories. Because it's not about "them" telling our stories; it's about giving platforms to people of color, to women to make that happen. We're not asking to push out "white America" and the films we already see. We're just asking for that seat at the table.

"There's so much about representation of Asians in Hollywood, but what about the fact that we have [multiracial identities]? Does that count?"

Jeff Chiba Stearns: I find it interesting, being someone who's mixed Asian...there's sort of the in-between that gets blurry where you have actors like Keanu Reeves and Olivia Munn who have "star power," and they're leading actors in Hollywood but they don't necessarily identify as... well, Olivia Munn might take a stance where she says, "Yes, my mom is Chinese" and she actively lets that be known, whereas Keanu Reeves is a little more quiet about stuff like that. But at the same time...there's a lot of mixed Japanese directors doing great things in Hollywood. Daniel Destin Cretton is one of them, he's directing "The Glass Castle." You know, we're getting stories being told in that respect by people who might identify as mixed. And I feel like that whole thing with "Aloha" and – what's her name again? I always forget...

Robin Lung: Emma Stone? The famous hapa actress, Emma Stone?

Jeff Chiba Stearns: [laughs] Yeah. So this is where maybe the conversation sometimes veers. There's so much about representation of Asians in Hollywood, but what about the fact that we have [multiracial identities]? Does that count?

Right, so the politics of casting: who gets to have a platform to tell their stories? We've talked about funding. Is it hard when you go to people and say, "Here's the film I

want to make.” Do you have to make a lot of compromises to get people to put their dollars where your films are?

Tanuj Chopra: We had to give a lot of case studies of successful films that were all white casts. The way to contextualize it for investors and funders is to say, like... if I’m making a comedy, I put out “Pineapple Express” or “Sideways,” films that have resonance that they can connect to. But I don’t feel like that’s good. I don’t feel good about it because it’s already putting me artistically on this [level] I have to achieve.

I think as much as we fight for representation in Hollywood and we’re trying so hard to find that Hollywood dollar, and we’re so explosive about exclusion – exclusion and whitewashing are big issues in our communities – but we’ve had a history of making independent films starring Asian Americans for 15, 20, 30 years. And I encourage our audiences, our friends, our families to come out and support these movies because when we show that we have traction, we can reach critical mass in our own communities and people will follow pretty fast. To me, I can just look back and cite film after film after film for the last 10 years that are amazing Asian-American stories, from sci-fi to comedy to love stories. Not just “Better Luck Tomorrow,” but you can take it all the way down to “Charlotte Sometimes,” “Advantageous,” “Colma: The Musical,” “Eve and the Fire Horse,” “Journey from the Fall”... I mean movie after movie after movie – accomplished, Sundance award-winning pictures have come out in our community, and quite often our communities are so focused on what Hollywood is not doing for us and not supporting what we’re making.

Robin, your documentary focuses on one of those forgotten voices. Someone who was part of creating a film and then was essentially erased from the narrative. How do you go about pitching that to people in the first place when they might not already see there’s an issue?

Robin Lung: I’ve been fortunate that people have latched onto this story and have been supportive, but in the “mainstream,” I still don’t have a broadcast partner. So the story’s made, but I’m realizing that it’s considered a niche audience, that Asian Americans are “niche.”

Tanuj Chopra: Do they think your film is strictly for Asian Americans? Is that how they’re trying to market it? It seems like a universal story to me.

Robin Lung: My tag line now to try and sell it is: “White men like it too!” Because in my

audiences, I'll have white men come up to me and say, "Thank you for telling this story." But I think as soon as you say "history" and then there's "Asian" attached, there's a knee-jerk reaction that only a certain segment of the population is going to watch it. I think it's lazy decision making by gatekeepers who aren't really taking risks.

"As Hollywood begins to wake up, there are people who can deliver. We've proven there are people who can deliver."

But I think there's a hopeful sign that television is starting to wake up and it's economic. I had a talk with the head of diversity at HBO and a television writer at a retreat, and they said that in television, if a series doesn't have a diverse cast, it won't last after its first season. It's known now in the television world. So they're hiring diverse writers and they're purposely putting in diverse cast members – not because they want to be magnanimous and make sure we're all represented, but it's all about the bottom line. I think eventually Hollywood is going to wake up. I mean, "Hidden Figures" outsold "La La Land" at the box office.

Tanuj Chopra: And look at "Moonlight" and "Get Out."

Robin Lung: Yeah, things are going to start improving. I'm of a hopeful attitude about it. Tanuj, you named all these great films. The good thing is we have this huge slate of great actors, great directors, people who are very skilled, so that as Hollywood begins to wake up, there are people who can deliver. We've proven there are people who can deliver.

We interviewed John Cho during the festival and we asked him about "Better Luck Tomorrow" and its legacy, and he said he had mixed emotions because he hoped "it would be the first of 20 'Better Luck Tomorrows,'" but he doesn't think that it was.

Tanuj Chopra: It's funny, I was watching "Better Luck Tomorrow" [at the festival's opening night], and there's so much "Better Luck Tomorrow" in "Chee and T." There are shots – whether consciously or subconsciously – in the car having a conversation, on the grass like in "Better Luck Tomorrow" ... I think I made another "Better Luck Tomorrow" actually!

Nadine Truong: You remixed it! [laughs]

Tanuj Chopra: But to follow up on John Cho's comment... John Cho made "Better Luck Tomorrow" and then went into outer space. There actually have been a hundred more

“Better Luck Tomorrows” made. I’ve seen equally accomplished films come through the festival every year and it’s just that the media needs to put more of a spotlight on our filmmakers, on indie filmmakers. Nadine’s made three films. This is her third film! We’ve made a hundred “Better Luck Tomorrows” since “Better Luck Tomorrow.”

Nadine Truong: We just don’t have the Roger Eberts of the world...

Tanuj Chopra: People have gone to Sundance, people have followed Justin Lin’s path. And not that Sundance is the only marker of anything, but there are people who’ve replicated this. Last year, Andrew Ahn’s film “Spa Night.” There’s just... every year there has been another “Better Luck Tomorrow.”

Nadine Truong: “Gook,” this year.

Tanuj Chopra: Exactly.

Looking ahead, what do you hope to see grow out of this festival and influence what’s happening at that “mainstream” box office?

Robin Lung: I hope that Asian-American audiences continue to grow, and I think we all have to work to build those audiences. Our media matters, and supporting movies and going to watch movies and getting people out there to see diverse programming is really important.

Nadine Truong: I’d love in the future – I mean, really, right now – to see a lot more movers and shakers behind the camera and in powers of position who are women of color, specifically Asian-American women in really powerful seats to make these stories happen.

Tanuj Chopra: I hope that Asian-American artists and voices don’t have to make any more compromises in their production, and that they’re fully funded to execute their vision at the highest level, just like any other indie or feature film. I hope the resources are there to enable Asian Americans to express themselves at the highest quality of craft. Not just to shoot digitally, like shoot on film. Shoot with the crew and cast you want to work with. I hope the voices in our community get the dignity of that level of treatment.

And I agree: I hope we have more women – women of color, Asian-American female stories, Asian-American queer, transgender stories. I think we’re missing out on so many stories and perspectives right now and it makes me sick when I look at the numbers in Hollywood. It makes me sick to my stomach when you look at who’s getting jobs and who’s not.

“Quite often our communities are so focused on what Hollywood is not doing for us and not supporting what we’re making.”

Jeff Chiba Stearns: I think the National Film Board of Canada announced that 50 percent of all the films they’re going to fund are going to be directed by women, so there are initiatives in place that are happening, which is great.

You know, films are changing, it can’t help but keep changing. Distribution is changing, it can’t kept but keep changing. So the way people consume their media is going to keep changing...so if less people are going to theaters, then things are going to have to start waking up and maybe that’s the revolution. That’s the way we’re going to tell our stories and get it out to the mass population. It’s not so much about the big Hollywood blockbusters anymore. Maybe it’s going to shift. When? I don’t know. But I think people are discovering stuff now, and that’s great. I think because you have initiatives with HBO and NBC and, I don’t know about Netflix, but I do notice they’re buying more content that’s created by diverse filmmakers...so people are discovering it. And that discovery is exciting for people who might not know that it exists. We still have a ways to go, obviously, but I think it’s moving. Maybe that revolution is starting – slowly, but we’ll get there.

Nadine Truong: And those diversity programs are really great, but my wish is that they’ll not be necessary anymore at some point, that we’re so integrated and these stories are available to the wider audience, and the wider audience wants to see it and to see those different perspectives and voices.

This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

Follow NBC Asian America on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr.

The Filmmakers:

Jeff Chiba Stearns (director, "Mixed Match") - Jeff Chiba Stearns is an Emmy-nominated and Webby award-winning animation and documentary filmmaker. He founded Vancouver based boutique animation studio Meditating Bunny Studio Inc. in 2001 and has since created 9 short and feature animated and documentary films. Jeff’s work has broadcast around the world, screened in hundreds of international film festivals and garnered over 35 awards. "Mixed Match" is Jeff’s second feature length documentary.

Nadine Truong (director, "I Can, I Will, I Did") - A German-born Vietnamese filmmaker,

Nadine Truong earned her MFA degree in Directing in 2009 from AFI. In 2006 she was a proud fellow of the Los Angeles Asian American Pacific Film Festival's 'Armed With A Camera Fellowship'. Additionally, she received the San Diego International Asian Film Festival's prestigious George C. Lin Emerging Filmmaker Award in 2010. Her feature credits include "Someone I Used to Know" and "Senior Project."

Robin Lung (director, "Finding Kukan") - Robin Lung made her directorial debut with "Washington Place: Hawaii's First Home," a 30-minute film about Hawai'i's historic governor's mansion and home of Queen Lili'uokalani (aired December 2008). She was the associate producer for "Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority," Hawai'i unit producer for "Viva las Antipodas!," and unit producer for NOVA's "Killer Typhoon." In 2015, she was a documentary fellow at the NALIP ARC filmmaker residency.

Tanuj Chopra (director, "Chee and T") - Tanuj Chopra's first feature film, "Punching at the Sun," a story about South Asian teenagers coming of age in Elmhurst, Queens has premiered at Sundance and Tribeca Film festival. Variety called the fiery debut "a display of talent that's distinctive, original and iconoclastic." Other titles he has directed include: "Chee and T," "Grass," "Teacher in a Box," and the web series, "Nice Girls Crew." He is currently part of the 2017 Fox Director's Lab.

SCREENCRAFT The Craft of Screenwriting
The Business of Hollywood

2017 ScreenCraft Screenwriters Residency Program in Jamaica Semifinalists Announced

By [Cameron Cubbison](#) May 31, 2017



Listed below are the semifinalists that remain in contention for the 4 full scholarships to the inaugural [ScreenCraft Screenwriters Residency Program in Treasure Beach](#), Jamaica, presented by the [Calabash Literary Festival](#) and the Jamaica Film & Television Association (JAFTA). The program will provide four (4) screenwriters with free tuition to this six-day program in Jamaica, featuring mentorship with an all-star group of Hollywood professionals. Mentors include: Vanessa Ford from the **Weinstein Company**, screenwriters Peter Craig (THE TOWN, THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY), Geoffrey Fletcher (Oscar-winning writer of PRECIOUS), TV screenwriter and showrunner Zack Estrin (PRISON BREAK, new LOST IN SPACE on Netflix), Sony Pictures VP Eric Fineman and literary manager Hannah Ozer from Kaplan/Perrone Management.

Congratulations to the talented writers who have made it this far, and *thank you to everyone who submitted.*

Stay tuned for the winners announcement here and on our [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages within the next two weeks. We're accepting ten additional tuition-paying applicants until **June 15th, 2017**. [Click here to apply now!](#)

Congratulations to these talented semifinalists:

Bamboo Paper	Su Ching	Teh
Becoming Aphrodite	Karin	Maxey
Beginner's History	Emily	Cheever
Belief	Kris	Kosaka
Blood Brothers	Peter	Hunziker
Blue On Blue	David	Dasilma
Bluefields	Mezan	Morrison
Broad Tree Gun Club	Luke	McKenzie
Broken Head	Clare	Sladden
Conversations with Gunner	Nadine	Truong
Default	Hannah	Dillon
Device	CJ	Pelham
Divine Providence	Ann	Rosen
Dreamlanders	Angela	Magnus
Enemyway	Patricia	Meyer
Fairhaven	Kurt	Wright
Little Con Lili	Gabriela	Garcia Medina
Mount Pleasant	Cat	Dale
Paradise Lost	Amy	Taylor
Pilgrimage	Heather	Huntington
Provenance	Tiffany	Ho
Rebel Junction	Anika	Jarrett
Ripple	Heather	Faris
Scattering Jake	Erica	Tachoir
Sedger Mor	Catherine	Wright
Shoot The Girl	Tony	Hendriks
Sinclair	Roddy	Williams
St. Claire	Jessica	Sieff
Stone Drive	Sylvia Marie	Llewellyn
The Consultant	Hannah	Fitzpatrick
The Dance of the Bull	Alex	Hodgson
The Division	Clea	Frost
The Jane Collective	Lisa	Romagnoli
The Lean	Pearse	Lehane
The Lions of Mesopotamia	Robin Rose	Singer
The Magdalene Ranch: Hustle Up, Buttercup	Charlotte	Winters
The Seashell Sutra	Matthew	Wanniski
Tucked	Dale	Winton
We Killed the Boss	Alana	Igbe



FESTIVAL AWARD WINNERS

May 2, 2017

ST. PETERSBURG, FL – MAY 1, 2017, The Sunscreen Film Festival reveals today the award recipients at the 12th annual event. The festival announced the winners at the awards ceremony on Saturday evening. Sunscreen wrapped up last night with two sold out screenings of the Closing Night Film – *Albion: The Enchanted Stallion* by Director Castille Landon and starring Avery Arendes, Stephen Dorff, John Cleese, Jennifer Morrison and Debra Messing.

“We are thrilled to have presented this year’s stellar lineup to the St. Petersburg community. With the help of Sundance, Film Fatales, Ringling College, and many more, we were able to curate a program that premiered incredible films from around the world. A big congratulations to all our jury winners and filmmakers as we continue to support the art of making movies,” said Wey Lin, Senior Programmer, Sunscreen Film Festival.

The list of awards and winners are as follows:

GRAND JURY NARRATIVE FEATURE – “I Can I Will I Did” Directed by Nadine Truong

GRAND JURY DOCUMENTARY FEATURE – “Chicago Boys” Directed by Carola Fuentes & Rafael Valdeavellano

GRAND JURY SHORT FILM – “Don’t Think About It” Directed by Niv Klainer

GRAND JURY INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM – “The Holy Cave” – Directed by Aleix Massot
GRAND JURY FLORIDA FILM – “The Newest Member” Directed by Andi Matheny

GRAND JURY BEST FIRST TIME DIRECTOR – “Lady-Like” Directed by Brent Craft
GRAND JURY BEST LATIN FILM – “Perros” Directed by Harold Trompetero

GRAND JURY BEST HIGH SCHOOL FILM – “Winning the Game” Directed by Thomas Ernst
GRAND JURY BEST COLLEGE FILM – “Caliber” Directed by Tanner Cusumano

GRAND JURY AWARD BEST WEBSERIES – “Running with Violet” Directed by Lindsay MacKay, Rebecca Davey and Marie-Claire Marcotte

GRAND JURY AWARD BEST ANIMATION – “Nil: No Blood for Coffee” Directed by James Turner
SPECIAL JURY AWARD BEST DIRECTOR – “Created Equal” Directed by Bill Duke

SPECIAL JURY AWARD BEST ACTOR – Aaron Tveit from the Feature Film “Created Equal” Directed by Bill Duke

SPECIAL JURY AWARD BEST ACTRESS – Daphne Zuniga from the Feature Film “Those Left Behind” Directed by Maria Finitzo

SPECIAL JURY AWARD BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR – Timothy Omundson from the Feature Film “Carter & June” Directed by Nicholas Kalikow

SPECIAL JURY AWARD BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS – Selenis Leyva from the Feature Film “I Can I Will I Did” Directed by Nadine Truong

AUDIENCE AWARD FEATURE FILM – “Kate Can’t Swim” Directed by Josh Helman
LEGACY AWARD – Joe Pantoliano

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT – Robert Davi

The Grand Jury included the following industry individuals who brought their expertise to award the winners of the festival: Eugenie Bondurant, Actor(Hunger Games); Paul Booth, Talking Pictures, Ron Chapman, Director(The Poet of Havana) Steve Persall, Tampa Times Film Critic, Rob Sterrett,(Shameless, Dolphin Tale), Tony Stopperan, (Sugar), Joseph Mazzello, Actor/Director(Jurassic Park, Social Network).

“Congratulations to all the winners at the annual Sunscreen Film Festival. We could not be more proud of the success of the twelfth year. The attendance exceeded our expectations, the amount of filmmakers that attended was amazing and the audience response was all positive. The Sunscreen team from all the volunteers, staff and with the Support of our Presenting Sponsor St. Petersburg/Clearwater Film Commission and local organizations like the Tampa Bay Rowdies we could not be happier with the energy that was felt throughout the weekend as chapter twelve of Sunscreen unraveled,” said Ryan Tarrant, Executive Director, Sunscreen Film Festival.

The Sunscreen Film Festival showcased the craft of filmmaking and storytelling by advocating the work of filmmakers, screenwriters and all artists who use the medium of film and television to bring art alive.

The St. Petersburg/Clearwater Film Commission is a premiere sponsor of the festival and hopes to contribute to independent filmmakers and show their support by providing incentives for filmmakers to come to Pinellas County.

Visit the official site of the festival at www.sunscreenfilmfestival.com

For additional information, please contact:

Susan Engel PMK*BNC 212-373-0114
susan.engel@pmkbnc.com

Ashleigh Gallant
Aqua Marketing & Communications C:407-928-5389
Ashleigh@welcometoaqua.com

Film Festival Roundup: Sunscreen Unveils Main Slate, Montclair Announces Special Screenings, Dallas Names Honorees and More

Keep up with the always-hopping film festival world with our weekly Film Festival Roundup column.



[Kate Erbland](#)

Mar 30, 2017 2:30 pm

“Sámi Blood”

Lineup Announcements

– EXCLUSIVE: The 12th Annual Sunscreen Film Festival announced its official selections for the 2017 event featuring films with Alec Baldwin, Dylan McDermott, John Cleese, Daphne Zuniga and more. Opening night will feature Michael Mailer’s newest film, “Blind,” a romantic-drama, starring Alec Baldwin, Demi Moore and Dylan McDermott. Closing night will wrap up the festival with “Albion: The Enchanted Stallion,” a family fantasy adventure, starring John Cleese, Debra Messing, Jennifer Morrison and Stephen Dorff.

Retrospective Screenings will include Daphne Zuniga appearance at the festival honoring the 30th anniversary of “Spaceballs.” Also in this category will be “The Greatest Show on Earth,” from 1952 directed by Cecile B. DeMille, which won the Oscar for Best Pictures and Best Writing in 1953. The screening will honor the closing of the Ringling Bros. circus after 146 years.

The new programming team, led by Director of Programming Joseph Restaino and Senior Programmer Wey Lin, will present 125 films in total including 36 features and 89 shorts across all their categories. Check out the rest of the lineup below.

Social Awareness Immigration Program

“Who Is Dayani Cristal,” Documentary, Marc Silver, USA, 2013, 85m

“After Spring,” Documentary, Steph Ching and Ellen Martinez, Jordan, 2016, 101m

Social Awareness Environmental Program

“The Burden,” Documentary, Roger Sorkin, USA, 2015, 40m

“Nature’s Orchestra,” Documentary, Robert Hillman, USA, 2016, 24m

Narrative Feature Competition

“Diani & Devine Meet the Apocalypse,” Adventure, Comedy, Etta Devine & Gabriel Diani, USA, 2016, 90m

“Carter & June,” Action/Comedy, Nicholas Kalikow, USA, 2016, 87m

“Those Left Behind,” Drama, Maria Finitzo, USA, 2017, 102m

“Tracktown,” Drama, Sport, Alexi Pappas & Jeremy Teicher, USA, 2017, 88m

“I Can I Will I Did,” Drama, Nadine Truong, USA, 2017, 110m

“Residue,” Action, Horror, Thriller, Rusty Nixon, USA, 2017, 83m

Spotlight Films

“Sugar,” TV Series, Drama, Dylan McDermott, USA, 2017, 20m

“The Hero,” Comedy, Drama, Brett Haley, USA, 2017, 93m

“All About the Money,” Action, Comedy, Blake Freeman USA, 2016, 86m

“Created Equal,” Drama, Thriller, Bill Duke, USA, 2017, 91m

New Visions

“Elizabeth Blue,” Drama, Vincent Sabella, USA, 2017, 95m

“Lady-Like,” Comedy, Brent Craft, USA, 2017, 82m

“Kate Can’t Swim,” Drama, Josh Helman, USA, 2017, 90m

“Good Bones,” Comedy, Tim Bohn, USA, 85m

“Till the Aces Come,” Drama, Adam Everett, USA, 2016, 112m

Documentary Features

“Chicago Boys,” Carola Fuentes & Rafael Valdeavellano, Chile, 2015, 85m

“Whose Streets?,” Sabaah Folleyan & Damon Davis, USA, 2017, 103m

“Davi’s Way,” Comedy, Tom Donahue, USA, 2016, 86m

“Finding Babel,” David Novack, France/Russia, 2015, 88m

“The New 8-Bit Heroes,” Joseph Granato IV, USA, 112m

“The Forbidden Shore,” Ron Chapman, Canada, Cuba, 2016, 96m



“Whose Streets?”

Courtesy of Sundance

Florida Focus

“Thunder,” Drama, Rob O’Cruz, USA, 2016, 91m

“Paying Mr. McGetty,” Action, Comedy, Romance, Michael Baumgarten, USA, 2016

“Eat. Speak. St. Pete,” Documentary, David Vega, USA, 2016, 59m

“King Charles,” Action, Drama, Nicholas Naylor, USA, 2017, 90m

“Oklahoma Sun,” Andrew Andrade, USA, 2016,
34m

Latin Program

“Perros,” Drama, Hector Trompetero, Colombia, 2016, 75m

“Such Is Life in the Tropics,” Thriller, Sebastian Cordero, Ecuador, 2016, 100m

“The City of the Future,” Drama, LGBT, Claudio Marquez, Brazil, 2016, 76m

“Family Life,” Comedy, Drama, Cristian Jimenez, Alicia Scherson, Chile, 2017, 80m

“My Hindu Friend,” Drama, Hector Babenco, Brazil, 2016, 124m

International Program

“Sami Blood,” Drama, Amanda Kernell, Sweden, 2016, 110m

“Last Broken Darkness,” Action, Drama, Sci-Fi, Christopher-Lee dos Santos, South Africa,
2017, 118m



"Bullying is not just kids": *Orange is the New Black*'s Selenis Leyva on her new film, showing Saturday at Sunscreen

"I Can I Will I Did" features Leyva as a foster mom.

[Kate Bradshaw](#)

Apr 26, 2017 9 PM

There's a lot going on in director Nadine Truong's film, *I Can I Will I Did*.

As its title suggests, the primary theme is overcoming adversity through discipline and self-determination — the primary vehicle for which is study of Taekwondo as taught by Greenwich, Connecticut-based grandmaster Ik Jo Kang, who stars as himself in the film.

The impact of bullying — a major topic of interest in our current political climate — serves as a major plot driver. So, too, is the current state of the foster care system, in which young people face an uncertain future as they near the point where they age out of the system.

It all centers on a young protagonist who can't seem to, as Truong put it during a phone interview, “get out of his own way” as he tries to recover physically and emotionally from injuries related to a bullying incident.

“The theme of this was not *how do I conquer the bullying?*” Truong said. “It was more *how do I get out of that hole or that void that such an experience can leave with me.*”



Actress Selenis Leyva

It was the film's positive message — and its portrayal of the main character Ben's caring foster mother, Maria — that attracted actress Selenis Leyva to the the film, in which she portrays Maria. Leyva is perhaps best known for playing Gloria Mendoza in the acclaimed Netflix series *Orange is the New Black*. Much like her role on the show, Leyva's character in the film is that of a nurturing caretaker.

Leyva said her mother was a foster parent, so she knows the system — both the negative, generally inaccurate stereotypes of foster parents and what can happen when a young person turns 18 and has nowhere to go. She was glad she was able to take on such a role, she said, and being on a popular show like *Orange* has given her the ability to take part in projects with socially conscious messages and more realistic depictions of the human condition.

“I have been very fortunate,” she told CL in a phone interview. “Being part of *Orange* has opened so many doors. I love the fact that *Orange is the New Black* is a show that is so well



Director Nadine Truong

received critically and by fans, because I think we're just dealing with honesty, like this beautiful film. It's about honesty. It's about characters that are not stereotyped; giving them real dimension and going in and peeling off the layers. I'm drawn to stories that are human and that don't get tied up perfectly at the end. I don't need to read a story or see a film that in the end gets wrapped up perfectly. I like a little messy. I think life is messy. I like a message — projects that make you think.”

I Can I Will I Did — with a couple of somewhat hard-to-watch scenes in which the protagonist Ben is tormented by his peers — helps shed light on the fact that bullying is everywhere these days — the internet, the White House.

“We're seeing it more and more. Bullying is not just kids...Adults are bullying,” Leyva said. “We have someone in *office* bullying. That's a big, big part of what's happening now. So I'm very grateful that we're able to touch on really important subjects and at the same time leave people thinking and questioning instead of just going about life like nothing else is happening.”

While the project in part aimed to help show how harmful it is, Truong made room in the film to show the bullies' ringleader in his own struggle and evolution.

“Bullying is a symptom of pain as well,” Truong said. “It comes from somewhere. Especially in teenagers, but in people of all ages. It is a symptom

HUFFPOST

Artistic Director Anderson Le on The 33rd Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival

05/05/2017 05:13 pm ET | Updated May 05, 2017



Courtesy of Visual Communications

A Q&A with Anderson Le, Festival Artistic Director, about THE 33RD LOS ANGELES ASIAN PACIFIC FILM FESTIVAL presented APRIL 27 - MAY 4TH, 2017 in LOS ANGELES at select cinemas, and from MAY 5 - 11 in ORANGE COUNTY at the CGV Cinemas in Buena Park.

In LAAPFF's 33rd film festival of thought-provoking and inspiring programming, are there works of note set in Los Angeles/Orange County or involving/featuring LA/OC artists?

There are too many to name, because many of our filmmakers represented in the LA Asian Pacific Film Festival are local and of Asian descent and many of them grew up in the Los

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/artistic-director-anderson-le-on-the-33rd-los-angeles_us_590ce686e4b056aa2363d4d8

Angeles and OC areas. We have actors like Anthony Ma in the web series BEFORE I GOT FAMOUS and countless other short films, 120 in all represented this year!

We have several directors including Ham Tran (SHE'S THE BOSS), Charlie Nguyen (FANATIC), who hail from Santa Ana and Buena Park respectively. We also have Douglas Seok for TURN LEFT TURN RIGHT, who originally hails from Cerritos.

Can you tell us about your VIETNAMESE FILM SHOWCASE featured this year?

We are really excited to present a Vietnamese Film Showcase as part of our Buena Park schedule, especially screening films from Vietnamese American directors who grew up in Orange County including Ham Tran (SHE'S THE BOSS, Opening Night Film) and Charlie Nguyen (FANATIC, Closing Night Film). We also have Dustin Nguyen's JACKPOT, which was Vietnam's official foreign language film entry to the Academy Awards last year, and new film FATHER AND SON, a touching family drama that takes place in the bucolic Vietnamese countryside.

Our goal is to interface more with the Asian communities in Orange County, especially with nearby Little Saigon, but also the Korean, Chinese, Cambodian and Indian communities as well. CGV Buena Park is at the center of all of these communities and is a perfect gathering place to experience each other's cinema and culture.

And how about the SPOTLIGHT ON TAIWAN program?

This spotlight is presented and supported by the Taiwan Academy of Los Angeles through the Ministry of Culture of Taiwan. The programming team is excited to present this spotlight, which is headlined by two award-winning films – THE ROAD TO MANDALAY by Midi Z and SMALL TALK by Hui Chen-Huang. They have premiered in major, world-class film festivals in Venice and Berlin, and show that the best in Asian cinema comes from the rich diversity of Taiwanese perspectives and voices working in the island nation's film industry today.

What films/shorts do you recommend our readers come out to see?

Aside from the films just mentioned, I highly recommend some of the major gala presentations including the 15th anniversary of BETTER LUCK TOMORROW directed by Taiwan-born Hollywood director Justin Lin; GOOK, which premiered at Sundance, and is a racially-charged drama directed by Hollywood actor Justin Chon; and COLUMBUS starring John Cho, which closes the LA portion of the Festival.

What are your top picks for:

- an important social issue

UNBROKEN GLASS, a personal documentary by Dinesh Sabu, as he explores the history of mental illness in his family, which is a taboo subject in many Asian communities.

- comedy

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/artistic-director-anderson-le-on-the-33rd-los-angeles_us_590ce686e4b056aa2363d4d8

KING OF PEKING, from Sam Voutas, is a father-son story set in 1990s China, where the duo start a movie piracy business and discover that the plots in the movies they pirate start to permeate into their lives.

- family entertainment

The ITSY BITSY Shorts program, which contains several animated and children's short films that are great for young ones and the entire family.

- artistic value

A TIME TO SWIM, from Montreal-based Ashley Duong, is a lyrical documentary about an indigenous man from Malaysia, who as a political exile, yearns to return to his homeland.

- philosophical/intellectual growth

The animated WINDOW HORSES from Anne Marie Fleming and starring Sandra Oh is a tale of a young half Chinese and Iranian Canadian poet who reconnects to her Persian roots by visiting Tehran and immersing herself in its rich culture.

- drama

I CAN, I WILL, I DID from director Nadine Truong, chronicles a young loner who is constantly bullied and how his Taekwondo master coaxes him out of his shell to overcome and face his own fears and the bullies who constantly put him down.

Any additional things readers should know about LAAPFF?

After the LA portion is done on May 4, we move to Orange County with our "Best of the Fest" from May 5 – 11. The festival will relocate to CGV Cinemas in Buena Park! We will screen encores of the award winning films and also the Vietnamese Film Showcase, presenting 4 new films from Vietnam.



The Sunscreen Film Festival reveals today the award recipients at the 12th annual event. The festival announced the winners at the awards ceremony on Saturday evening. Sunscreen wrapped up last night with two sold out screenings of the Closing Night Film - Albion: The Enchanted Stallion by Director Castille Landon and starring Avery Arendes, Stephen Dorff, John Cleese, Jennifer Morrison and Debra Messing.

"We are thrilled to have presented this year's stellar lineup to the St. Petersburg community. With the help of Sundance, Film Fatales, Ringling College, and many more, we were able to curate a program that premiered incredible films from around the world. A big congratulations to all our jury winners and filmmakers as we continue to support [THE ART OF](#) making movies," said Wey Lin, Senior Programmer, Sunscreen Film Festival. The list of awards and winners are as follows:

GRAND JURY NARRATIVE FEATURE - "I Can I Will I Did" Directed by Nadine Truong

GRAND JURY DOCUMENTARY FEATURE - "Chicago Boys" Directed by Carola Fuentes & Rafael Valdeavellano

GRAND JURY SHORT FILM - "Don't Think About It" Directed by Niv Klainer

GRAND JURY INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM - "The Holy Cave" - Directed by Aleix Massot

GRAND JURY FLORIDA FILM - "The Newest Member" Directed by Andi Matheny

GRAND JURY BEST FIRST TIME DIRECTOR - "Lady-Like" Directed by Brent Craft

GRAND JURY BEST LATIN FILM - "Perros" Directed by Harold Trompetero

GRAND JURY BEST HIGH SCHOOL FILM - "Winning the Game" Directed by Thomas Ernst

GRAND JURY BEST COLLEGE FILM - "Caliber" Directed by Tanner Cusumano

GRAND JURY AWARD BEST WEBSERIES - "Running with Violet" Directed by Lindsay MacKay, Rebecca Davey and Marie-Claire Marcotte

GRAND JURY AWARD BEST ANIMATION - "Nil: No Blood for Coffee" Directed by James Turner

SPECIAL JURY AWARD BEST DIRECTOR - "Created Equal" Directed by Bill Duke

SPECIAL JURY AWARD BEST ACTOR - Aaron Tveit from the Feature Film "Created Equal" Directed by Bill Duke

SPECIAL JURY AWARD BEST ACTRESS - Daphne Zuniga from the Feature Film "Those Left Behind" Directed by Maria Finitzo

SPECIAL JURY AWARD BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR - Timothy Omundson from the Feature Film "Carter & June" Directed by Nicholas Kalikow

SPECIAL JURY AWARD BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS - Selenis Leyva from the Feature Film "I Can I Will I Did" Directed by Nadine Truong

AUDIENCE AWARD FEATURE FILM - "Kate Can't Swim" Directed by Josh Helman

LEGACY AWARD - Joe Pantoliano

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT - Robert Davi

The Grand Jury included the following industry individuals who brought their expertise to award the winners of the festival: Eugenie Bondurant, Actor(Hunger Games); Paul Booth, Talking Pictures, Ron Chapman, Director(The Poet of Havana) Steve Persall, Tampa Times Film Critic, Rob Sterrett,(Shameless, Dolphin Tale), Tony Stopperan, (Sugar), Joseph Mazzello, Actor/Director(Jurassic Park, Social Network).

"Congratulations to all the winners at the annual Sunscreen Film Festival. We could not be more proud of the success of the twelfth year. The attendance exceeded our expectations, the amount of filmmakers that attended was amazing and the audience response was all positive. The Sunscreen team from all the volunteers, staff and with the Support of our Presenting Sponsor St. Petersburg/Clearwater Film Commission and local organizations like the Tampa Bay Rowdies we could not be happier with the energy that was felt throughout the weekend as chapter twelve of Sunscreen unraveled," said Ryan Tarrant, Executive Director, Sunscreen Film Festival.

The Sunscreen Film Festival showcased the craft of filmmaking and storytelling by advocating the work of filmmakers, screenwriters and all artists who use the medium of film and television to bring art alive.

The St. Petersburg/Clearwater Film Commission is a premiere sponsor of the festival and hopes to contribute to independent filmmakers and show their support by providing incentives for filmmakers to come to Pinellas County.



‘Switched at Birth’ Star Vanessa Marano On ‘Senior Project’ (EXCLUSIVE)



[Dave McNary](#)

Film Reporter [@Variety](#) [DMcNary](#)



Jason Merritt/Getty Images

September 23, 2013 | 05:00AM PT

Shooting starting this week in Los Angeles

<http://variety.com/2013/film/news/switched-at-birth-star-vanessa-marano-on-senior-project-exclusive-1200661091/>

[Vanessa Marano](#), star of [ABC Family](#)'s "Switched at [Birth](#)," has come on board to topline high school comedy ensemble "[Senior Project](#)," which begins shooting this week in Los Angeles.

The film is produced by Fabienne Wen and co-produced by her daughter Ellie Wen ("[White Frog](#)") through their new banner Itsy Bitsy Productions. Stephane Gauger and Yaron Kaplan are also producing.

Nadine Truong ("Someone I Used to Know") is directing.

Fabienne Wen discovered the script by 16-year-old Jeremy Lin through a writers workshop in Hong Kong this year and fast tracked production on the company's slate.

Marano (pictured above) stars with [Katie Leclerc](#) in "[Switched at Birth](#)." ABC Family ordered a third season in July.

Marano is represented by Paradigm and Marano Entertainment.

DEADLINE | HOLLYWOOD

Logan Marshall-Green Joins ‘Madame Bovary’; ‘Senior Project’ Adds Sterling Beaumont

by [The Deadline Team](#)

September 30, 2013 7:15pm

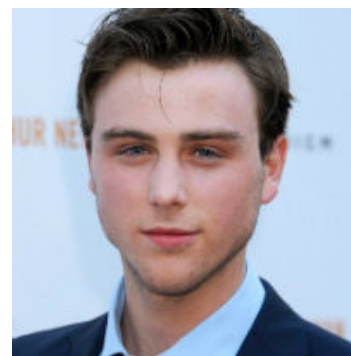


[Logan Marshall-Green](#) (*Prometheus*) has joined director Sophie Barthes' *Madame Bovary* along with Cesar-nominated Olivier Gourmet and *Downton Abbey*'s Laura Carmichael. The Occupant Entertainment-produced adaptation also stars [Mia Wasikowska](#), Ezra Miller, Paul Giamatti, Rhys Ifans, and [Henry Lloyd-Hughes](#) and begins production this week in Normandy, France. Rose Barrenche and Barthes scripted from Gustave Flaubert's classic novel about Emma (Wasikowska), who escapes her small-town life through marriage to a doctor and indulges in a string of adulterous affairs, with tragic consequences. Marshall-Green will play the Marquis, with Gourmet as Monsieur Roualt and Carmichael playing Henrietta. Marshall-Green is repped by CAA and 3 Arts Entertainment; Gourmet is repped by Artmedia; and

Carmichael is repped by Curtis Brown Group and Untitled Entertainment.

Sterling Beaumont (*Red Widow*, *The Pretty One*) has been cast in indie comedy *Senior Project*, directed by Nadine Truong.

Beaumont joins Venessa Marano in the pic, which is produced by Fabienne Wen from a script by 16-year-old Jeremy Lin, who was discovered through a writers workshop in Hong Kong. Ellie Wen, Stephane Gauger (*Saigon Electric*), and Yaron Kaplan are also producing. Filming starts this week in LA. Beaumont is repped by APA and Vanguard Management.



<http://blog.asianinny.com/business-education/where-are-the-asian-women-in-film/>



[Where are the Asian Women in Film?](#)

By

[AsianInNY](#)

– August 6, 2013

Posted in: [BUSINESS & EDUCATION](#)



[Nadine Truong, Di Quon, Christine Choy, and S. Casper Wong](#)

By William Kustiono

On July 30th, 2013, the Asian American International Film Festival collaborated with the Museum of Chinese American to host Where are the Asian Women in Film. This panel discussion focused on Asian female filmmakers getting started in filmmaking. This discussion also examined the role of females in the movie, the challenges of being Asian and female in the

<http://blog.asianinny.com/business-education/where-are-the-asian-women-in-film/>

film business – how to increase our visibility in front and behind the camera and how to benefit from the new channels in the era of international mobility and crowd-sourcing.



Nadine Truong, Di Quon, Christine Choy, and S. Casper Wong

The speakers at this panel were Nadine Truong, Di Quon, Christine Choy, and S. Casper Wong. Nadine Truong is a German-born Vietnamese filmmaker. She worked in talent representation and various production companies prior to earning and education at American Film Institute Conservatory. She received her MFA degree in directing in 2009. Her latest work is, "Someone I Used To Know".

Di Quon is best known for her role as nanny "Rita" in *Grown-Ups* starring Adam Sandler. She made a big debut as "Lily Kim" in blockbuster film *Maid in Manhattan* starring Jennifer Lopez. In 2006, Di Quon created, starred, and produced the first Asian American drama comedy television show with Eric Byler titled "My Life... Disoriented." Before her acting career, she signed to Wilhelmina Modeling agency and appeared on the Aerosmith's cover "Young Lust".



Nadine Truong, Di Quon, Christine Choy

Christine Choy is a veteran director and Professor of the New York University Graduate Film and Television Department. She has produced and directed about seventy works in various forms and receiving over sixty international awards. These awards are the John Simon Guggenheim, the Rockefeller, the Asian Cultural Council, and Academy Award Nomination for the documentary film, “Who Killed Vincent Chen?”

S. Casper Wong, the panel moderator, is a Silicon Valley attorney turned New York based writer, director and producer of both narrative and documentary films. Her recent feature documentary, *The LuLu Sessions*, has won 10 international awards and nominations, including Audience Award for Best Feature Documentary, Grand Jury Prize for Best Feature Documentary and Emerging Director Awards.

The panel discussion was opened with a brief introduction about each panelists and their experience as filmmakers. Afterwards, we took a deep dive into the film industry and named a few Asian people in films, especially women as protagonist. Do you know any western movie that the protagonist is an Asian woman? Very few, we have *Pacific Rim* and *Babel* starring Rinko Kikuchi, *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* starring Michelle Yeoh and Zhang Ziyi. Christine Choy commented that the reason why few Asian women starred in movies was because Hollywood’s directors preferred western people to star in their movies. There is racism in the Hollywood movie industry and even now, they have not changed. Christine further commented that she created films as an “alternative” to show people that Asian women can perform well in the movie. These “alternatives” are produced to broadcast people about Asian culture. In the

<http://blog.asianinny.com/business-education/where-are-the-asian-women-in-film/>

early years, when she was writing an “alternative”, she tried to distribute her script to other film producers, which at that time was hard because she does not have big connections. The movie attracted producers because it contained many features that are displayed in the U.S. from other parts of the world, which she refers to as “Anti-everything, anti-capitalism, anti-western, anti-radio, anti-televisions, and anti etc...” After the success, she gained funding to produce more films and became the first Asian American director in U.S. Nadine responded to Christine’s argument that in the movie shooting, sometimes she has an identity issues, that she discusses with the filmmakers because people’s perception about Asian women and her own perception is totally different.

During the discussion, there was the topic of contemporary documentary films. Christine is the veteran of documentary films and she explained that in the past there were similarities between documentary and journalism. Documentaries are all about accuracy, it has to match the news that the journalist presented to the public. Today, the documentaries are diverging from journalism. The story line is completely dependent on the producer’s mind. This is very important because a documentary film is about educating the audience about the real story that already happened before. It is not about entertainment, but re-enacting the story. One of the examples she mentioned is Sarah Palin’s documentary movie. Christine was amazed on the accuracy of the documentary. The film does not only criticize about Sarah Palin or the Republicans, but it is about politics in a larger content and what it means to be a politician in this period.

N



Nadine Truong, Di Quon, Christine Choy

<http://blog.asianinny.com/business-education/where-are-the-asian-women-in-film/>

When Casper was questioning the panelists about the biggest issues of filmmaking, they answered with the same answer: Finance. Nadine tells the audience that her biggest hurdle is finance. She needs to borrow money from her closest friends or families to create a movie. If it is a one-time loan, then it should not be a problem, but asking multiple times, then it is a problem. Christine replied that she is now working on a scholarship that will help aspiring filmmakers to step up and produce their movies. Christine has such a remarkable way to help expand the Asian film culture abroad, and is willing to put her money and time to create this scholarship to make sure the Asian filmmakers or actors especially women, get their chance to create and produce their films.

Overall, the panelists have left the audience with astounding answers and solutions. One of the audiences agreed to give Christine a special screening for her documentary work when she traveled around 50 different states. This panel was worth attending for any aspiring and talented filmmakers and actors who wished to pursue their ambitions and gain more connections within the film industry.



Di Quon, Christine Choy, and S. Casper Wong



‘Someone I Used To Know’ – A Conversation with Nadine Truong

by [Chi-hui Yang](#) | February 17, 2014 at 3:47 PM | [Cinema Asian America](#),



“Someone I Used To Know.” (Photo: Nadine Truong)

This month Cinema Asian American presents the feature film debut of Los Angeles-based director **Nadine Truong**, “[Someone I Used To Know](#).” A coming-of-age ensemble drama, “Someone” made its world premiere at the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival and has gone on to screen at film festivals nationwide. From the SFIAAFF’s program guide:

Three former high-school friends reunite for a long Los Angeles night in Nadine Truong’s bittersweet drama, a new-millennium remix of such classic eighties’ ensemble dramas as *The Breakfast Club* and *St. Elmo’s Fire*. Fresh from losing his girlfriend, his job and almost his life, the suicidal thirty-something Charlie (West Liang) heads to L.A. to reconnect with his best

friends from high school, Luke (Brian Yang, Hawaii 5-0), who's now a successful actor, and Danny (Eddie Mui), who's always been a rich boy. Their faltering nightclub reunion is quickly derailed, however, by two young women (Emily Chang, Kara Crane), one of whom will seemingly do anything to be with Luke, the other barely legal, yet wiser than her years. Later joined by the girls' best friend (the fabulous Rex Lee, a.k.a. Lloyd from Entourage), the group winds up at Luke's palatial hillside home, where a "few more drinks" soon becomes an all-nighter filled with revelations, recriminations and, well, a few more drinks.

The success of any ensemble drama, of course, rests on its actors, and *Someone I Used to Know* boasts some of the sincerest performances of the year. Nuanced and incisive, the film embraces what it means to grow older—but not necessarily wiser—while coming to terms with the person you've become.

Truong discussed the making of the film, as well as her upcoming projects:

“Someone I Used To Know” dives deep into themes of friendship, regret and acceptance – themes that many can recognize. At the same time the film feels incredibly personal. What was the starting point for the story; why Los Angeles, and a group of 30-something year old friends starting to gain a sense of the passage of time? What was it about this configuration which inspired you?

NT: The film was written by West Liang, who also plays “Charlie” in the movie. He sent me the script, we decided to collaborate, and then went into shaping the story even further. The characters in the screenplay are all based on real life people important to West's life, but I'd also say that they are closely modeled after my own personal experience. The screenwriter and the director may or may not have a very intimate working relationship, which was the case for us.

They always say “write what you know”. Well, West and I are both in our 30's now, and as artists we've shared that sense of “what the heck did I do with my life” at some point or another. I think it's natural. You're not a kid in college anymore, but you're also not completely accustomed to “real responsibilities”, whatever they may be. We all need mirrors or friends to help us out every now and then.

Your cast brings together a number of recognizable actors who have worked extensively in television and independent feature films; Brian Yang, Emily Chang, Rex Lee and others. Was the script written with them, or a specifically Asian American context in mind?

NT: The cast was not set when West wrote the script. Once we went into pre-production and started casting, the characters on the page just came further to life. The scope of the film is very small, the budget micro-tiny. We set out to tell a story, and this happened to be an Asian American story. We could have also just called it an American story. As filmmakers we wanted to put Asian Americans on the media landscape without having to necessarily address their Asian-

ness. We, as a population exist. We hang out in LA, we party, we laugh, we cry, we're there. Being Asian American in the context of a film that's really about friendship and growing pains is secondary to the story.

I am very keen to keep introducing more Asian American faces to mainstream cinema. I'd like to help make it part of the norm. Including an Asian American cast or cast member in my films is my way to do so.

Structurally, "Someone I Used To Know" takes place over the course of one night, and much of it is set in one location – a palatial hillside home in Los Angeles. Can you discuss these creative decisions and how these parameters helped shape your storytelling?

NT: Film is visual story telling. Since we didn't have the luxury of different locations and sets, it was important to me to keep the audience engaged and feed them with visual stimuli, even though I didn't have too many locations available. The script lent itself perfectly for it. I went for the split screen approach: different people conversing with each other in different parts of the house at the same time. It helped give us a real sense of time without having to waste screen minutes on mundane things. I also believe that our audience is very well versed when it comes to split screens. The days of social media picture and video posting in tiny little squares divided into further tiny boxes has contributed immensely to our movie viewing sensibilities. I'm actually waiting for more television shows and movies to take advantage of this!

What are you watching, reading and listening to that are exciting and perhaps part of a larger conversation you are engaged in, in terms of media, politics, film?

NT: I am currently working on a screenplay about a man on death row, who committed a hate crime against an Asian American man back in the 90's. It's a topic very near and dear to my heart. However, in recent years, I went through a personal transformation. I started practicing and teaching yoga, and as a result I seek to spread more awareness through my film and writing work. It's so easy to focus on what's wrong with this world, but to counter that, we have to nurture what is good. I currently teach yoga at a juvenile hall, and will likely move on to a prison with an adult population next year. It's part of me wanting to be of service to others, and part research for my hate crime screenplay. I believe in rehabilitation. I believe in redemption. These are themes I'm exploring in my film as well as my yoga work.

What are you working on now?

NT: I'm currently finishing post production on a teenage comedy called "[SENIOR PROJECT](#)." Be on the look out for a summer release in 2014.

SCHEMA MAGAZINE

FOR THE INTERCULTURALLY-MINDED

[VAFF 2013: Someone I Used to Know](#)

Posted November 6th, 2013 by Betty Mao & filed under [AAIFF](#), [Film](#), [Film Festival](#), [VAFF](#).



Someone I Used to Know

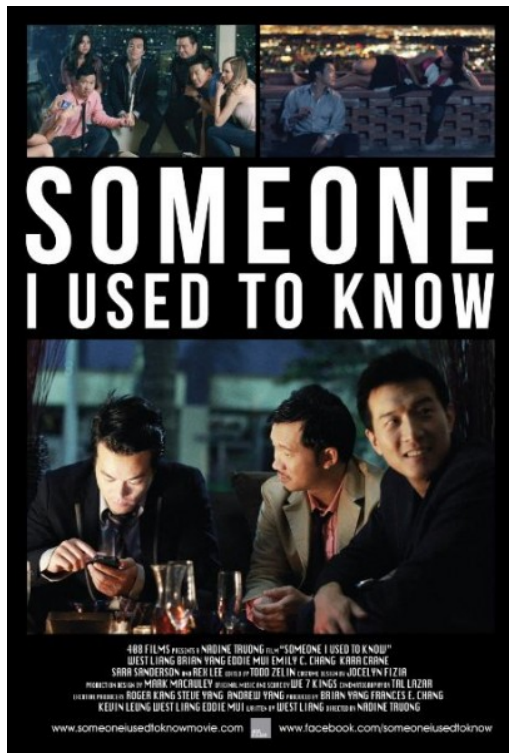
Director Nadine TRUONG | 2013 | USA | 81 mins

SCREENING: Saturday November 9, 2013 | 10:00 pm

Someone I Used to Know, previously named [Nightdreamblues](#), depicts the reunion of three former high school friends in L.A.: Charlie (West Liang), having recently lost his girlfriend, his job and almost his life, reconnects with his best friends Luke (Brian Yang) and Danny (Eddie Mui). Luke is now a successful actor, and Danny is still the rich boy. Joined by three girls (Emily Chang, Kara Crane and Rex Lee) and countless drinks, the reunion became a night filled with revelations and recriminations.

This story is written by [West Liang](#), who is clearly passionate about his [artistic process](#) in the creation of this film.

The director [Nadine Truong](#) is a German-born Vietnamese filmmaker. Her directorial credits include *Chopsticks*, *The Muse*, *One Never Knows*, *Mine*, and *Sushi*. In 2006, she received the “Armed with A Camera” grant under the Visual Communications for Asian Pacific fellowship program. Nadine definitely has a unique perspective, and the cast of the film has commented on Nadine’s leadership and directorial abilities. She has a clear vision for the film and is focused on translating that to the team.



[Brian Yang](#) is most known for his role in *Hawaii Five-O* as Charlie Fong. In an interview with Asians on Film, he explains that the film resonated with him because it highlights Asian American males. He produced and acted in *Someone*, in addition to producing [Linsanity](#), the 2012 Jeremy Lin documentary directed by Evan Jackson Leong.

Someone I Used to Know is not only about reconnecting with old friends, but also about identities, dreams, love and relationships. The film puts Asian American males under the spotlight and shares their difficulties in growing up, finding themselves, achieving success and establishing an identity.

The movie will be screening [Saturday, November 9th and 10:00 pm at Vancouver Asian Film Festival](#).

Originally reviewed for the Asian American International Film Festival in New York.



Creativity of student filmmakers transcends tight budget



The filmmaking team of writer-director Nadine Truong and cinematographer Tal Lazar was consistently told they did not have sufficient funds to shoot the script for *Shadow Man* because it was a period piece with battles, guns, children, and extras. But the short film, which is set during the Vietnam War, was completed on one of the lowest thesis budgets at the American Film Institute (AFI) last year.

Truong and Lazar both received their MFAs in 2009. Lazar previously earned a bachelor's degree in practical film studies from Tel Aviv University, and gained years of professional experience as a union assistant cameraman in Israel. This was their first full-length narrative project together.

It was a victory for the filmmakers, who not only succeeded in making their vision a reality, but did so using the most advanced tools with the help of Kodak, Panavision and FotoKem. According to Truong, "*Shadow Man* became what I set out for it to be: A short, epic film utilizing convincing battle scenes alongside moments of intimacy to tell the story of one man in his quest to protect his family and his country. And we did it for a lot less money than other thesis films that shot present day in HD format."

The film's visual theme relies on shadows, as the title implies. "The theme encompasses the physical shadow of the character on walls, as well as the dark side of his behavior and emotions," Truong notes. "We played a lot with darkness."

With financial restrictions in mind, the determined filmmakers used everything available to them to their advantage. "We looked around our AFI campus with new eyes," says Lazar. "Obviously nothing looked like period Saigon, but with a little bit of imagination and some production design, we were able to do wonders with the frame. We also had to be very disciplined."

Shadow Man was shot mostly on school property, with the exception of a few jungle sequences, which were filmed on a movie ranch in Santa

Clarita, California. "Out of necessity, every single dollar spent on this film was scrutinized," says Lazar. Limitations included the inability to transport equipment off campus, and the need to build a 20-by-20-foot black cube on AFI's lawn, in lieu of a soundstage.

The filmmakers decided early on that this particular story needed the cinematic feel of 35 mm film. Lazar chose KODAK VISION2 Expression 500T 5229 film in the 3-perf format. "As newer stocks improve, the grain starts to disappear, and we wanted the organic feeling of film," notes Lazar. "The low contrast, low saturation of the 5229 helped us achieve the period look in a much more subtle way than applying post techniques."

Film also provided the latitude and flexibility to work with available light, aside from some AFI locations that were shot using a small lighting package provided by the school.

Additionally, the filmmakers received grants from both Panavision and FotoKem, allowing them access to a full camera package, including a Panaflex GII, as well as processing, development and a limited amount of print dailies. A variety of Zeiss lenses were also used based on availability.

Lazar says camera movement underscored the main character's turmoil and ultimate demise. "The more agony he begins to feel, the more movement we used," he explains. "However, we didn't want the audience to necessarily feel those camera moves, so we decided against handheld and Steadicam, and mostly used a tripod or dolly."

The filmmakers also point out that no special processing was done in post. Color correction was applied to achieve a certain cooler look for the military scenes and a warmer look for the more intimate family scenes towards the end of the main character's journey.

Truong and Lazar proved that with determination and creativity, nearly everything is possible. They beat the odds and brought their story to life. Now *Shadow Man* is heading to the festival circuit.

1 Cinematographer Tal Lazar on the set of *Shadow Man*. (photo by Natalia Reyes)

2 The American Film Institute campus stood in for Saigon at night for the thesis film *Shadow Man*. (photo by Michael Yates)

diaCRITICS

Covering the arts, culture and politics of the Vietnamese at home and in the diaspora

2 Viet Am Films @ the San Diego Asian Film Fest

Posted on Oct 29, 2010 | [3 Comments](#)

At the 11th annual San Diego Asian Film Festival that kicked off on October 21st, a screening entitled “Young and Restless” featured two shorts by Vietnamese filmmakers: Nadine Truong’s “Egg Baby” and Adele Pham’s “Fine Threads.”



[Playing with Eggbert in Nadine Truong's "Egg Baby"](#)

“Egg Baby,” which Truong directed and co-wrote with Korean screenwriter Christine No as her American Film Institute thesis, follows Alison, an Asian Catholic school teen, through some of the seminal American coming-of-age experiences — making out with a cute grocery store clerk in the back of his van, taking her first hit off of a joint, fighting with her mother, confronting the “moose-like” shape of the uterus during her sexual education class, and steals the egg for which the film is titled. As the “baby” for her sex ed parenting project, the purloined egg, named Eggbert, is the object through which Alison negotiates the ever-shifting boundaries of her first romantic relationship and, most importantly, the rapport with her parents.

Like the other six films in the screening, “Egg Baby” explores the conflicts arising from generational and cultural differences between Asian youth and their parents. For Alison, Eggbert prompts her to explore and express her burgeoning sexuality in the face of her parents’ enforced silence about the topic. This tension erupts in a showdown between Alison and her mother, wherein fragile Eggbert, version 2.0 with a sloppily drawn face, is hurled at the mother’s slammed bedroom door. While this moment points to the complex struggle Asian teens reconcile their parents’ cultures and their own identities in shaping the type of adults and parents they want to become, this scene and others, especially the one in which Alison catches her parents having sex (don’t we all have a deeply buried memory of this traumatic moment?), elicited the multi-cultural, multi-generational audience’s sympathetic groans and laughter. Their responses suggest that films can be (and are!) at once specific to Asian/Asian-American issues of identity and culture, yet universal in capturing the joys and pains of adolescence.

Notable about the cinematic representation of these struggles is the depiction of varied spaces—the bright, austere classroom, the darkened hallways of home, the lights punctuating nights of teenage secrecy and sex. Commendable, too, are the acting talents of the young cast recruited by casting director Stacy Tannenbaum, each of whom is convincing, funny and sad in the in appropriate moments.

After the screening, Truong told me that she is impressed with the recent growth and diversity of Vietnamese films, and both “Egg Baby” and Pham’s documentary speak to this trend. Likewise, it seems that Truong’s film career is burgeoning right along this trajectory. Another of her short films, “Shadow Man,” was screened over the weekend at the film festival, and she is currently working on her first full-length feature. You can keep up-to-date on Truong’s films on her website: www.NadineTruong.com.



One of the interviewees in Adele Pham's "Fine Threads"

Previously featured on HBO, Adele Pham’s “Fine Threads” is a documentary featuring interviews with teenaged first-generation Indian-American girls who discuss the varying ways in which they express their bi-cultural, bi-lingual identities, namely through threading. This

grooming practice, as the documentary elucidates, carries with it various religious and cultural implications. All incredibly well-spoken and insightful, the teenage subjects share their varied uses of threading and the corresponding struggles to balance two cultures in their lives, paying due respect to their parents' cultural and generational expectations while forging their own identities as Indian-Americans in New York. The film is beautifully shot and well-edited, shaping a narrative that ends on the positive note that youth living between cultures are provided a new space in which to discover themselves. Unfortunately, Pham was not in attendance at the festival, but her information can be found at www.adelepham.com

The other films included in this panel were Shion Takeuchi's "When the Time is Ripe" (a hilarious and creative short animating a Jewish family on steaks and their adopted son as a lone pear), Adam Lee's "The Prodigy" (a dialogue-less story of abuse and depression set to classical piano music played by the title character), Joanne Park's "Just Curious" (an entertaining and well-written narrative set in a college creative writing workshop), "Struggle" (a film by Pacific Islander teens that addresses drugs, violence, teen pregnancy, and suicide), and "Top Spin" (a well-done documentary about 14-year-old table tennis champion Ariel Hsing).

If you want to catch films and panels at the film festival continuing through this week or indulge in the delicious eats from the foodtruck and other vendors in front of the festival's host theater in Mission Valley, check out www.sdaff.org.

—Jade Hidle

The George C. Lin Foundation

Congratulations to Nadine Truong

The San Diego Asian Film Foundation and The George C. Lin Memorial Fund are pleased to announce Nadine Truong, director of two short films, *Eggbaby* and *Shadow Man*, as a recipient of the 2010 George C. Lin Emerging Filmmaker Award.



Nadine is a young and talented filmmaker currently residing in Los Angeles. From her biography:

Nadine Truong, a German-born Vietnamese filmmaker worked at various production companies and additionally gained valuable experience in talent representation prior to her education at AFI. She has co-produced multiple short

<http://georgelinfund.blogspot.com/2010/10/congratulations-to-nadine-truong.html>

films and has worked as art director, first assistant director, and script supervisor. Nadine's directorial credits include CHOPSTICKS, THE MUSE, ONE NEVER KNOWS, MINE, and SUSHI. She was one of eight recipients of the "Armed with A Camera" grant under the Visual Communication for Asian Pacific fellowship program. During her first year at AFI, Nadine was appointed the representative of the Directing Fellows on the Fellow Advisory Committee at AFI. Additionally, Nadine is the proud recipient of the Mary Pickford Scholarship for Excellence in Directing. One of only three female directors in the program, she wrote and directed a second thesis film SHADOW MAN. Nadine received her BA degree in Anthropology from UCLA in 2003.

For more about these two films, we invite you to read her interview by Philip Lorenzo at the SDAFF blog:

<http://sdasianfilm.blogspot.com/2010/09/sdaff-talks-with-up-and-coming.html>



[Eggbaby](#)

[Shadow Man](#)



Nadine receives a \$1,000 grant from The George Lin Memorial Fund, as well as a bronze sculpture made by the artist Chin Wen Chuang.

In consideration of the Award and our on-going support of the San Diego Asian Film Foundation, the Fund made a \$2,500 total donation, inclusive of the grant amount for the Award.

Posted 27th October 2010 by [The George Lin Memorial Fund](#)



Monday, September 27, 2010

SDAFF talks with up and coming filmmaker Nadine Truong

Interview with filmmaker Nadine Truong, director of EGGBABY and SHADOW MAN

Q&A by Phillip Lorenzo

PL: First, I have to ask, how does it feel to have not just one, but two films in the Festival this year?



NT: I am very honored and excited to have such a great venue to screen my films at SDAFF. I have always had a great and amazing time ever since I first attended in 2006.

This festival feels like home.

PL: SHADOW MAN approaches the Vietnam War from a different perspective, what inspired you to explore the war through the complex view of a Vietnamese guide?

NT: I was especially interested to expose a potentially different point of view of the Vietnam War, one most audience members are not too familiar with. Like so many other Vietnamese

Americans, I have many family members who were refugees and who immigrated to either the United States or Europe during that time. Many have endured similar hardships depicted in the film. As a Vietnamese American of the generation after the war's conclusion, SHADOW MAN is really just my interpretation of the events.



In the end, I don't necessarily consider SHADOW MAN purely a war film. I've always seen it more of a family drama, a story about a man who has trouble connecting with his wife and child because of emotional baggage and scars. I think we all have gone through periods of disconnect with loved ones in our lives. It's something that I could relate to, and it's a theme I visit often in my other films as well such as EGGBABY.

PL: What inspired you to make EGGBABY? Is this based on any personal experience or was there someone you knew who had a coming of age story like this?

NT: My co-writer Christine No conceived the initial story. She conceptualized the foundations of each character and incorporated the eggbaby project.

I suppose the project is often times done here in the states, but having grown up in Germany, I had never heard of it. I remember thinking to myself "wow, what a strange way to teach the youth about the responsibilities of parenthood. I wonder if it actually works?"



During our writing sessions, we found that we both had a lot in common. Like our main character Allison, we both went to an all-girls Catholic school as teenagers, and grew up in an Asian household, that often times suppressed open conversation about sexuality. It's a confusing time to grow from being a child to becoming a young woman. Teens and parents

often times don't know how to deal with this and awkwardness ensues. Especially when there are slight communication breakdowns and cultural and generational barriers. Perfect material for a comedy or dramedy!

PL: These two films show a broad range of themes that you are capable of capturing on film, was there one project that was more rewarding than the other? Is there a certain genre you like staying in or do you want to do everything?



NT: Both films are very different in tone. I also collaborated with two entirely different teams. Both are AFI thesis films. I had originally conceived and written SHADOW MAN and had assembled my team around that script. EGGBABY on the other hand had lost their director and so I was brought in to take over. I learned a lot about people's different work styles from both projects.

EGGBABY is probably my most lighthearted film so far. I have a lot of respect for comedy filmmakers. In many ways, comedy done well is so much harder than drama, and prior to the filming of EGGBABY I was terrified of doing one. I feel more at home with dark dramas, which is probably why EGGBABY became a dramedy and not a straight comedy. I lean more toward drama (I like films like "Blood Diamond" and "Brokeback Mountain"), but would like to continue to dabble into other genres. It's good to open up your horizon, keep your instrument tuned, and get out of your comfort zone.

PL: Given how prolific you already have proven to be, what can we expect from you in the future?

NT: I am currently working with a team of very experienced and awesome Vietnamese American producers on my very first feature, which will hopefully shoot by the end of this year or the beginning of next. It's a love-drama between a man and a disabled woman. The tone will be rather lighthearted and inspirational and less dark, but very deep and meaningful nonetheless. There's a huge wave of films coming out of Vietnam, and I'm so excited at the prospect to be able to contribute to that. Other than that I am constantly writing and developing more projects.

Aside from being a writer/director, I am also a professional photographer and Asian Ball Jointed Doll collector. I am working on a short film that combines all these elements into one. It's a very long process though, as I plan on doing this entirely on my own. No camera team, no actors, no production designer, no costume/wardrobe designer etc.... Film usually is such a big collaborative enterprise, and I'll be experimenting with it being literally a one-woman-show.

See [SHADOW MAN](#) in our International Departures shorts program and [EGGBABY](#) in our Young and Restless shorts program.