



News Release

For immediate release

Singapore film *HERE* selected for the 41st Directors' Fortnight at Cannes

Singapore, 24 April 2009 – Singapore continues its strong showing at this year's Cannes Film Festival with *HERE* by Singapore filmmaker and visual artist Ho Tzu Nyen selected for screening at the 41st Directors' Fortnight section, which is known for selecting cutting-edge films with an original directorial style.

As a first-time feature film director, Ho is also eligible for the Caméra d'Or (Golden Camera) award, a distinction for best first feature film in any one of the Cannes' selections - the Official Selection, the Directors' Fortnight or the International Critics' Week.

Said Ho Tzu Nyen who is both the scriptwriter as well as the director of the film, "*HERE* represents a cinematic amalgamation of my interests and experiences in painting, conceptual art and sound art. I believe it to be a new kind of Singapore film – a total sensorial experience that is hopefully also a head-trip."

The film is supported by the Singapore Film Commission's (SFC) 35mm Fulfillment Fund, which helps local filmmakers defray the costs of converting the digital version of their film to a 35mm print master, a format required by the Festival.

Mr Kenneth Tan, Director of the Singapore Film Commission and Chief Operating Officer of Media Development Authority of Singapore said, "Singapore films have been gaining traction in the international markets over the last few years. Our varying styles and genres have been featured at Cannes every year since 2005, presenting our young filmmakers with a valuable launch pad for their international film careers. I

am confident that local filmmakers such as Ho will continue to make their mark around the world.”

Singapore's showing at Cannes began as early as 1997 when Eric Khoo's *12 Storeys* was invited under the Un Certain Regard section. This year marks the fifth consecutive year that a Singapore film has been featured at the Festival, starting with Khoo's *Be With Me* in 2005, which opened the Director's Fortnight. This was followed by the 2006 country showcase where 12 Singapore feature films and short films were presented at the World Cinema (Tous les Cinémas du Monde) event. In 2007, Anthony Chen's short film *Ah Ma* clinched a Special Mention at the Festival, while Pok Yue Weng's short film *SuperDONG* and Ekachai Uekrongtham's feature film *Pleasure Factory* were screened at Directors' Fortnight and Un Certain Regard respectively. Last year, Khoo's latest film *My Magic* became the first Singapore film to compete for the prestigious Palme d'Or award.

HERE is a co-production by Canada's gsmprjct'média and M'GO Films and Singapore's Akanga Film Asia, Oak3 Films and Tzological Films. The film was shot entirely in Singapore across 11 days in a former mental hospital. It tells the story of a middle-aged man who struggles to make sense of his reality following the sudden death of his wife. The protagonist of the film, played by lead actor John Low, is selected to undergo a mysterious treatment known as the 'videocure'. While undergoing treatment, he learns a profound lesson about love and fate. *HERE*'s screening at Cannes will mark the film's world premiere while the theatrical release in Singapore is scheduled for June this year. Please refer to the Annex for more information on *HERE*.

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Added Ho Tzu Nyen, "*HERE* is both a love story, and also a story about the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's idea of '*Amor Fati*' or love of fate – in which the test of an affirmative life is that of someone who is willing to live his life over and over again, without making a single change.”

Ho will join a delegation of film companies and directors led by MDA and SFC to the upcoming Cannes Film Festival and Market (Marché du Film) from 13 to 24 May 2009. The Cannes Film Market is a trade event that runs parallel to the Cannes Film Festival.

Chia Pei Siang (Ms)
Manager, Communications
Media Development Authority
Tel. : +65 9726 3151
Email : chia_pei_siang@mda.gov.sg

Karen Phan (Ms)
gsmprjct °media
Tel. : +65 6737 8907 x.110
Email : karen.phan@gsmprjct.com

Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA)

Formed in 2003, the Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA) plays a vital role in transforming Singapore into a Global Media City and positioning it at the forefront of the digital media age. MDA spearheads initiatives that promote developments in film, video, television, radio, publishing, music, games, animation, media services and Interactive Digital Media. At the same time, in ensuring clear and consistent regulatory policies and guidelines, MDA helps to foster a pro-business environment for industry players and increase media choices for consumers. For more information, visit www.mda.gov.sg and www.smf.sg.

Singapore Film Commission (SFC)

The Singapore Film Commission (SFC) is an agency under the Media Development Authority (MDA) that facilitates and assists film development for Singapore. The SFC's key areas of focus are: Funding, Facilitation and Promotion. Its mission is to nurture, support, and promote Singapore talent in film-making, the production of Singapore films, and a film industry in Singapore. For more information please visit, www.sfc.org.sg

gsmprjct °média

Since 2006, producers Michel Cayla and Panuksmi Hardjowrirogo of gsmprjct °média in Singapore have developed and produced award-winning films, television and museum multimedia productions. www.gsmprjct.com

M'GO Films

M'GO Films is a Montreal independent producer dedicated to film and multimedia productions. www.margofilms.com

Akanga Film Asia

Akanga Film Asia was set up in 2005 by Fran Borgia and produces film, theatre and visual arts projects. www.akangafilm.com

Oak3 Films

Singaporean company Oak3 Films was set up in 1996, producing film, documentary and television content. www.oak3films.com

Tzulogical Films

Tzulogical Films was set up by Ho Tzu Nyen and Stephanie Goh and produces films by Ho Tzu Nyen.

Annex

SYNOPSIS

A television switches on. A mind snaps. A man discovers his murdered wife. As he stares at her lifeless body, the events leading to her death play before him, like in a movie.

HERE follows the journey of He Zhiyuan, a middle-aged man who struggles to make sense of his reality. Reeling from the sudden death of his wife, he loses the will to speak and is interned at Island Hospital. There, he meets strident kleptomaniac Beatrice with whom he forms an inexplicable bond. As he adjusts to life within, he is selected for an experimental treatment, which forces him to confront the devastating truth behind his past, present, and future.

Meanwhile, a filmmaker visits Island Hospital to document the lives of the staff and patients.

(The Singapore premiere of HERE will be at The Picturehouse on 25 June 2009).

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I first visited a mental asylum ten years ago. A close friend had been involuntarily incarcerated in a facility. As I walked with him towards the garden, we observed the other inmates, who were in turn observing us.

Since then, a few more friends have experienced difficulty in distinguishing reality from illusion. One of them confused the reel for the real and believed his actions were being recorded by a mysterious device installed in his television set and his life broadcast for everyone to see.

More recently, I had the opportunity to visit a mental facility to prepare for a film I was planning to shoot. At the same time, I started researching on new advances in clinical treatments of mental illness. I came across a report of an experimental treatment involving the video recording of dysfunctional families who were later made to analyse their own behaviour and relationships. This idea filled me with both a sense of excitement and uneasiness.

In some way, *HERE* is a result of this ambiguity.

PRODUCERS' COMMENTS

The three of us, from Spain, Canada and Singapore, have alternately called *HERE* a love story, a philosophical head trip and a film about a film. For now, we would say that *HERE* is a kind of radio, tuning in and out of different worlds, bringing what is seemingly disparate together while cutting up what looks to be unified. In that sense, *HERE* is Singapore - a place where people, races, languages, ideas, information, influences, capital and goods flow in and out of; a place where things come together and fall apart; a place where methods are intricately bound to madness.

- Fran Borgia, Michel Cayla, Jason Lai

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

HO TZU NYEN is a filmmaker and artist born and based in Singapore.

Tzu Nyen works primarily in the audio-visual medium, and his projects traverse the fields of film, visual arts and the performing arts. His videos, paintings, performance-lectures, and theatrical projects have been presented at major art exhibitions, festivals and spaces around the world, including the Sao Paulo Biennale (2004); Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale (2005); Singapore Biennale (2006); KunstenFestivaldesArts (2006 and 2008); Singapore Arts Festival (2008); as well as at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, France; ZKM in Karlsruhe, Germany; and the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, UK. His short films have also been shown at international film festivals such as Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival (2008), Oberhausen International Short Film Festival (2007- 2009), Jeonju International Film Festival (2008); as well as Seattle International Film Festival (2008).

Tzu Nyen was one of seven Singaporean filmmakers involved in the collaborative feature film *LUCKY7* (2008) – which premiered at the 2008 Rotterdam International Film Festival, and went on to show at the Singapore International Film Festival and the Vancouver International Film Festival later that year.

HERE is Tzu Nyen's first feature-length film. He is currently developing his second feature film, *Endless Day*.

FILMOGRAPHY

- EARTH (2009, 41')
- NEWTON (2009, 4'16')
- LUCKY7 (2008, segment 6, 12')
- REFLECTIONS (2007, 13'28")
- SEJARAH SINGAPURA (2006, 10')
- THE BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY PROJECT (2006, 6'52")
- 4 x 4: EPISODES OF SINGAPORE ART (2005, 4 x 27')
- UTAMA – EVERY NAME IN HISTORY IS I (2003, 23')

ABOUT THE PRODUCERS

FRAN BORGIA PRODUCER

Born in southern Spain and based in Singapore for the past 5 years, Fran produces, edits and directs. His directorial works in film and theatre have been shown at festivals in Europe, Asia and North America.

As producer and editor, he has worked with many Singaporean filmmakers, including long-time collaborator, Ho Tzu Nyen. Their latest project as co-directors was *The King Lear Project*, a three-day theatre performance commissioned by the KunstenFestivaldesArts in Brussels and the Singapore Arts Festival in 2008.

He is now writing and directing *Film – Faust*, a film and theatre production to be presented at the Esplanade Theatre Studios Singapore in July 2009. Fran is also the director of Akanga Film Asia. www.akangafilm.com

MICHEL CAYLA PRODUCER

Michel is originally from Montreal where he was first introduced to cinema studies by Jesuit film professors and attended a series of lectures delivered by Jean-Luc Godard.

As director and writer, he was awarded the *Silver Mikeldi* for Short Documentary at the 2002 Bilbao International Film Festival. Other works have been broadcast on Sundance TV, Arte, Canal+, CBC and ZDF.

He is co-founder of gsmprjct média, a Singapore-based company that produces film, television and multimedia productions for museum exhibitions. www.gsmprjct.com

JASON LAI PRODUCER

Co-founder and content director of Oak3 Films, Jason has produced and directed over ten years of television programmes, documentaries and film.

Road Less Travelled (1996) was his first feature film project and subsequent co-production film projects include *Girl In The Park* (2007), starring Kate Bosworth and Sigourney Weaver, and *The Missing Star* (2006). *3 Feet Apart*, an animated short film that Jason wrote and directed, won the Best Asian Animation Award at the 2004 Bangkok International Film Festival. www.oak3films.com

ABOUT THE MAIN CAST

JOHN LOW (HE ZHIYUAN)

John Low is a Singaporean artist and educator who made his acting debut in Ho Tzu Nyen's seminal short film series – *4 x 4: Episodes of Singapore Art* (2005), playing the role of influential Singaporean artist Tang Da Wu. *HERE* marks Low's second acting role, and his first major role in a feature film. He is currently completing his PhD dissertation about contemporary art in Singapore.

JO TAN (BEATRICE TAN)

Jo Tan is a lawyer by training and now a professional actress. She has amassed numerous theatre and television credits since her acting debut two years ago and occasionally dabbles in jazz singing. *HERE* is her first major role in a film.

HEMANG YADAV (FREDDIE YADANG)

A professional actor since his school days, Hemang Yadav has performed in numerous Singaporean theatre, musical and film productions. Also a playwright, Hemang is currently involved in bringing drama to the classrooms and companies.

ANDY HILLYARD (ROBERT WILSON)

A business risk and security consultant by day, Englishman Andy Hillyard has played an impressive range of roles on television, in film and commercials.

SUDEEP BHUPAL SINGH (VALENTINO)

Born in Nepal and based in Singapore, Theatre Arts graduate Sudeep Bhupal Singh is a filmmaker who is currently working on his feature film.

PAUL LUCAS (DR CHRISTOPHER COLLINS)

Seattle native Paul Lucas has been a character actor for 20 years and performs professionally in the USA and Asia for TV, film, theatre, commercials and animation. Currently based in Singapore, Paul also directs theatrical productions for LASALLE College of the Arts involving student actors from all over the world.

CREDITS

Main Cast:

John LOW
Jo TAN
Hemang YADAV
Andy HILLYARD
Sudeep Bhupal SINGH
Paul LUCAS

Presented by: gsmprjct 9média
Writer / Director: HO Tzu Nyen

Production:

AKANGA FILM ASIA
M'GO FILMS
OAK3 FILMS
TZULOGICAL FILMS

Producers:

Fran BORGIA
Michel CAYLA
Jason LAI

Executive Producers:

Panuksmi HARDJOWIROGO
HO Tzu Nyen
Fran BORGIA
LIM Suat Yen

Director of Photography: Jack TAN

Production Designer: Patrick STOREY

Editor: Fran BORGIA

Sound Artist: George CHUA

Sound Mixer: Charles LEE

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Duration : 86 mins approx.
Year : 2009
Language : English, Chinese, Nepalese, Bahasa Indonesian
Subtitles : English
French
Image : Colour and Black & White
Format : 35mm
Screen Ratio: 16:9 or 1.78:1
Speed : 24 fps
Sound : Dolby SRD

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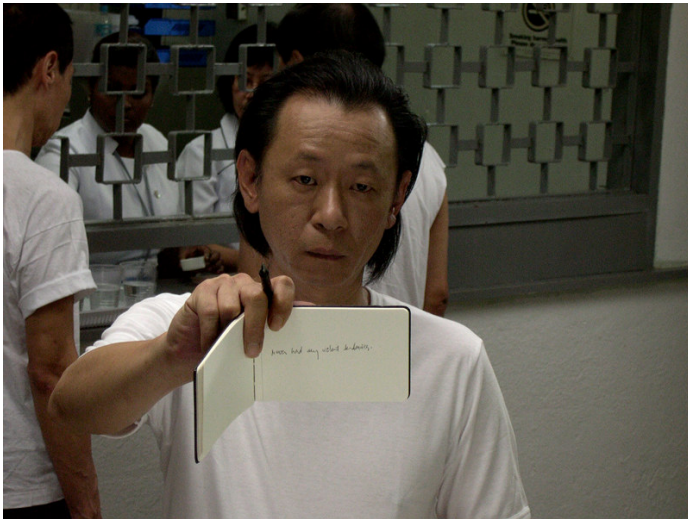
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the Substation

CAST

He Zhiyuan	JOHN LOW
Beatrice Tan	JO TAN
Freddie Yadang	HEMANG YADAV
Robert Wilson	ANDY HILLYARD
Valentino	SUDEEP BHUPAL SINGH
Dr Christopher Collins	PAUL LUCAS
Yap Lay Hong	HELEN CHAN
Shaun Wong	CHANG WAI CHONG
Dr Gregory Griffith	DERMOT MCGRATH
Monsters Man	ONG CHUEN BOONE
Sleepy Man	JOHNSTON ANDERSON CHEONG
Eileen Tan	DANA LAM
Danny Dong	DERRICK EE
Dr Ela Ekta	MAYURA BAWEJA
William Wee	JIM GAN
Nurse Helen Hong	KIM LAU
'Amazing Grace' Candy Chen	LIZZ
Dr Bipin Baldev	SURYA ADI
Nurse Bhim Bhaskar	VASU DEV VERRAPPA
'Amazing Grace' O	MICHAEL YAP
Xie Mei Li	WENDY ZHUO
Joe	JOSEPH ONG
Tissue Paper Woman	SITI FARIDAH MANGORO
Mei	LOW XIAO RONG
Betty	BEATRICE CHIEW
Wife	JACQUELINE CHOW
Hospital Founder	KARL CHAUNDY
John	CHARLES WU
Nurse Editor	GEORGE KURUVILLA NAVEEN
Nurse Security	KEONG FOK KAI
Nurse Security	MOHAMMAD B. SAID
Doctor for Admissions	LAURENCE PANG
Nurse at Dispensary	CARENA CHOR
Nurse at Dispensary	GRACE KALAISELVI PIRAMAYAN



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