

NOT HERE

DIRECTED BY:
CAROL HO & TEO MEI ANN

14:32 Mins
35mm, Color, Dolby SR
In English & Cantonese
Country of Production: Singapore
Year of Production: 2008

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**“NOT HERE”
CREDITS**

CREW:

WRITERS & DIRECTORS: Carol Ho & Teo Mei Ann

PRODUCERS: Carol Ho & Teo Mei Ann

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Brian Gothong Tan

EDITOR: Carol Ho

MUSIC: Daniel Nielsen

PRINCIPAL CAST:

JASON – Brendon Fernandez

MEI LING – Charissa Soh

LITTLE GIRL – Chloe Chua

CHAMBERMAID – Liew Powan

“NOT HERE”
DIRECTORS’ STATEMENT
By Carol Ho & Teo Mei Ann

The idea of making *NOT HERE* came to us like a breath of fresh air. Having grown up in Singapore, and then moving to the United States to pursue our careers in both film and theater, we were always drawn to the idea of returning home to collaborate on a film together. Thus, the process of making *NOT HERE* was our journey of re-visiting places and memories, to capture a piece of Singapore that we are both familiar with and curious of. We both felt it was important to make a film that is not only expressive of our Singaporean sensibility, but also universal at the same time. The film is about lovers in search of intimacy in public spaces. *NOT HERE* is also a true story, as we wrote the film based on our real life experiences with former lovers in Singapore.

The concept of *NOT HERE* came about as a result of our goal to showcase Singapore as a cosmopolitan Asian city with many different faces. It is a city undergoing rapid urbanization, with dichotomous qualities - modern and primitive, East and West. The two main characters’ search for intimacy in this urban landscape is thwarted at every turn. The film is an observation on how human intimacy can be lost and revealed through time and place. We hope to shed a light on the sexual crisis that is prevalent amongst young Singaporeans who are living in a dehumanized society which progresses without them. The two main characters don’t really belong in this environment. *NOT HERE* is about the transformative power of journey. It is through their journey that they re-discover the delicate intricacies of human connection.

We decided to make the film almost dream-like and surreal. *NOT HERE* is an escape for the young Singaporean who has lost his or her lust for life. There is a certain protocol between lovers, and it is rather irrational and idiosyncratic at times. We also wish to laugh at and celebrate this phenomenon that is ultimately universal. Although *NOT HERE* is about sex, ironically there is a lack of it in the film. The film looks at how two people can repeatedly fail at having sex. With sparse dialogue and a minimalist approach, we hope that the film honestly captures what it means to desire another human being. It is a very simple concept, yet it leaves everything to the imagination.

“NOT HERE”
SYNOPSIS

A man and a woman decide to escape from their mundane workplace for a day, in search of physical intimacy with one another in the concrete jungle of Singapore. The film traces their 12 hour journey through various public places where they try to have sex, highlighting the lengths that they go through to make sense of their situation.

Singapore in all its urbanized glory, offers little refuge for lovers seeking intimacy. *NOT HERE* offers a revealing glimpse of the social and geographical landscape of Singapore, and the human condition it contains.

With minimal dialogue to chart their journey, the film observes the body language and facial expressions of the two core characters. The quest for intimacy in public places is after all an unspoken pact between two people, and a mental and physical journey on many levels. The film tracks the rising and falling of their evolving emotions as the two characters hurtle through their day. We see how a man and a woman react to each other in different environments. The search for desire can lead to extreme highs and lows. *Not Here* is a sensitive yet witty portrait of the lengths that young Singaporeans go to make sense of the impossibility of their situation, due to the need to escape from the repetitive demands of daily life. The child still exists in many of us, no matter how much we have infiltrated ourselves into society. *NOT HERE* hopes to investigate the possibilities of what we desire, and to rediscover the depths of what we might have forgotten.

**“NOT HERE”
SCREENINGS**

PAST FILM FESTIVALS:

- SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL 2009
- SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2009
- IN COMPETITION, L.A SHORTS FEST 2009
- MONTREAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL 2009
- SAN DIEGO ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL 2009
- DC ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL 2009
- LOS ANGELES ASIAN PACIFIC FILM FESTIVAL 2010

TV BROADCAST:

- FEB 2011 TV BROADCAST ON MNET – AMERICAN ASIAN TV NETWORK FEATURING THE LATEST TRENDS IN ASIAN CINEMA

DIRECTORS' BIOS

CAROL HO

DIRECTOR, WRITER, EDITOR & CO-PRODUCER – “*NOT HERE*”

Born and raised in Singapore, Carol Ho began her early background in stage acting and directing, whereby she trained under the Theater Studies & Drama Program at Victoria Junior College. In 2002, she graduated from the California Institute of the Arts (Calarts) with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Film & Video. During her film school residency, she directed a number of short films, amongst are *Her Afternoon* (3 min) which showed at the Literati Arts Screening in Singapore, and *The Lingering Flight* (60 min), which premiered at the 2003 Hong Kong Independent Film & Video Awards. She was also editing advisor on the feature documentary from China, *Three-Five People*, directed by Lin Li. The film premiered at the Vienna International Film Festival, and was winner of the prestigious FIRPRESCI Prize at the 2003 Yamagata International Documentary Festival.

Carol has worked as a post producer and editor in the Hollywood film marketing industry in the recent years. She has helped oversee the post-production completion and budgeting of various film-marketing campaigns, such as *Kung Fu Hustle*, *Curse of the Golden Flower*, *Casino Royale* & *Open Season*. Her commercial works as an editor have ranged from television documentaries for Discovery International Network to film marketing campaigns, including *Warriors of Heaven & Earth*, *Major Dundee* & *The Punisher*, for clients such as Sony Pictures and Lionsgate.

On the side, Carol finds time to work on meaningful personal projects that challenge her. Most recently, she edited a Lebanese narrative film *Houdoud Al-Zaman* directed by Darine El-Khatib. The film premiered at the REDCAT Theater in Los Angeles and was screened in the Middle East to raise funds for the Lebanese survivors of the 2006 Lebanon-Israel War.

TEO MEI ANN

DIRECTOR, WRITER & CO-PRODUCER – “*NOT HERE*”

Teo Mei Ann is a Chinese Singaporean theatre director and filmmaker, based in the United States. Her directing and acting training began in Singapore in the Theatre Studies & Drama Program at Victoria Junior College. She has continued her theatrical training with world-renowned artists Anne Bogart and the SITI Company, and Dijana Milosevic and the DAH Theatre of Belgrade.

As a professional theatre director for over 7 years, Teo’s directorial credits include: *Middle Flight* (critically acclaimed world premiere at Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2001-called “an intellectual feast” by *Three Weeks*, and a “stunning monologue...carefully constructed and paced” by *The Scotsman*, US/UK tour 2006), *Waiting for Godot*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *Porcelain* (Top Ten List SF BAY TIMES), and *Bee-Luther-Hatchee* (winner of multiple Dollie Awards, including Best Production and Best Director).

Teo helmed the creation of “*Red Books: Our Search for Ellen White*”, a controversial documentary theatre production that is “without a doubt a seminal moment in Seventh-day Adventist history” (Welaratna for KQED), and is “going to cause a paradigm shift of large proportions within the Adventist world” (Marcel Carioca). “*Red Books*” toured California, and the DVD of the play (Mahjong Pictures), has been screened nationwide.

Teo is committed to arts education. She has taught in Singapore, and lectured at academic conferences (American Academy of Religion, Chicago 2008) and universities across the country, including the New School University (NY) and Redlands University (CA). As Resident Artist with Pacific Union College, she heads the drama minor program where students are trained in avant garde techniques and intensive ensemble work. She also teaches in a landmark program, *Lyrical Minded* for the San Francisco School District, using Hip Hop, Spoken Word and Theatre to reach at-risk and marginalized youth.

In film, Mei Ann Teo has worked in varied capacities. Among other positions, she was the script supervisor on *Both*, an award winning feature by Solaris Films (International Film Award, Hamburg Lesbian and Gay Film Festival) and the UPM for Infinite Harp Films’ music videos for Liz Hope, an R&B/Smooth Jazz artist.