

Floating Lives

Vietnam / Singapore

NGUYEN Phan Quang Binh

INTRODUCTION



Genre: Drama
Format: 35mm
Estimated Running Time: 100 min.

Budget:
US\$ 457,600 (HK\$ 3,569,280)
Funds Secured:
US\$ 361,600 (HK\$ 2,820,480)

Executive Producers:
NGO Thi Bich Hanh
Jonathan FOO

Writing Credits:
NGUY Ngu
NGUYEN Ho

Production Companies:
Vietnam Studio
Mega Media

HAF Goals:
Funds

Contact:
Vietnam Studio
(NGUYEN Thi Bao Mai)

Address:
18th Floor, Prime Center,
53 Quang Trung Str.,
Hanoi, Vietnam

Tel: +844-3943413

Email: baomai@bhdvn.com

Based on NGUYEN Thi Ngoc Tu's best selling short story *The Boundless Rice Field*, winner of the Best Short Story prize from the Vietnam Writers' Association in 2007 and the ASEAN Literature Award, *Floating Lives* will draw audiences into the colorful daily life of unsophisticated peasants making their living in the beautiful but unforgiving landscape of the immense and mysterious Mekong Deltas; characters whose strength, flaws and beauty – as they search for the sustenance of life and love – tear at one's heart.

SYNOPSIS

Set in the exquisitely beautiful Mekong Delta of Vietnam, this film tells the story of Mr. VU and his children: his daughter Nuong and his son Dien. VU, a man wounded by his wife's infidelity, burned down his house and all his memories of the past. He restarts his life with his two children, living on a boat in a nomadic existence among the labyrinthine canals of the Mekong. He is in exile not because of the war – which is now only a distant memory in Vietnam – but from the modern life and materialism that he sees as the reason for his wife giving into the temptations of self-indulgence.

Twisted and made bitter by her betrayal, but still an attractive man, VU takes his revenge through his abuse of the women who fall in love with him and, increasingly, against his own daughter who is growing up to look more and more like her mother. VU is now a man who can no longer believe in love, an attitude that has affected his son and daughter, who are becoming emotionally twisted, inheriting their father's hatred, distrust and coldness. It is only when the children rescue Suong, a prostitute, from being beaten by a mob of outraged women and, despite their father's disapproval, take her into their life and form a surrogate family around her, that Suong's physical and spiritual healing allow the children – and perhaps their father – to achieve their own healing and their own reconciliation with love.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film portrays the life of a family separated from the mainstream of modern society, yet it contains within its microcosm the complex layers and dramas of all human relationships: conjugal life, sexual trauma, and the failures and bonds of fatherhood, brother and sisterhood. It is about a unique social stratum in a remote place in Vietnam with unspoken traditions, customs and lifestyles. But most of all, it is the universal story of a family whose members must find strength and direction in each other to navigate their way through the choices and consequences in humanity.

DIRECTOR

NGUYEN Phan Quang Binh started his directing career in 1996. He initially spent 15 years studying the fine art of painting at the Hanoi Fine Arts College.

His first feature film, *Song of the Stork* (co-directed with Jonathan FOO), received the Best Feature Film award from the Milano Film Festival, Italy in 2002 and was invited to participate in many other film festivals around the world, including the Paris Film Festival, the Taormina Film Fest, the Montreal Film Festival, the Quebec Film Festival, the Bangkok Film Festival and the Singapore Film Festival.

Quang Binh was one of ten directors chosen from more than 500 entries all across Asia to receive funds from National Geographic U.S. to produce the 30 minute documentary *Love Market in the Clouds* (2002). His work in television has brought innovative ways of producing reality shows and television dramas to Vietnam, where he is one of the first and few directors of reality television programs. His talent search reality show, *Cung Uoc Mo Xanh*, was voted the best show in Vietnam in 2004. Quang Binh is also the Executive Producer of *The White Silk Dress*, a feature film which is the official selection for the New Currents Section of the Pusan International Film Festival, the Torino Film Festival and the Mannheim Heideberg International Film Festival.

PRODUCERS

NGO Thi Bich Hanh became a published writer at the age of 13. She was a producer and scriptwriter for the television series *Cultural Address* and *Blue Forever* as well as being the executive producer for most of Vietnam's top game shows including *The Price is Right*, *Name That Tune* and *Pyramid*. She was one of the executive producers of the feature film *The White Silk Dress* as well as *Song of the Stork*, a co-production between Vietnam and Singapore. Working as the vice president of Vietnam Media Corp for sales and acquisitions, she has been actively involved in many activities to promote Vietnamese films internationally and she was named as the Honorable Advisor for the Asian Film Awards.

Jonathan FOO is currently the Managing Director and Executive Producer of Mega Media Pte Ltd in Singapore, where he oversees the production of television projects. The company currently has clients such as the Television Corporation of Singapore, Arts Central and Channel News-Asia. Before joining Mega Media, Jonathan was formerly the Executive Producer for MTV Asia. He was responsible for overseeing all creative output for MTV's 3 channels in Asia. Tasked with the localization and regionalization of

MTV Asia, Jonathan has built a strong understanding of the cultural sensitivities and preferences of young people across Asia. In his work, he has created numerous regional shows including *Kan-Yi-Kan*, the winner of a 1999 Asian Television Award for the best magazine programme. A Master graduate in Media, he was Executive Producer and Producer for the Singaporean feature film *The Teenage Textbook Movie* released in November 1998, which topped the local box office charts for a month. The film went on to be the first Singaporean film to be offered an international syndication contract by Cinemax.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Vietnam Studio is a film and video production and post-production company, founded in 1996. With offices in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, it produces many television shows such as *Sunday at Home*, *The Lyrics Board*, *The Price is Right* and *MTV Music*. Each year, Vietnam Studio produces approximately 300 hours of local dramas including the Vietnamese versions of *Ugly Betty* and *Full House*. It also worked with Mega Media to produce the first Vietnamese-Singaporean co-production, *Song of the Stork*, which was released theatrically in Vietnam, France, Japan and the United States, and *The White Silk Dress*, which was selected for the New Currents section of the Pusan International Film Festival 2006.

Mega Media is the most established independent media company in the South East Asia region and the only company in SEA to cover the entire media content workflow in High Definition. It has become the latest broadcaster in Singapore, and the leading High Definition channel provider and producer in the region. Being the first company in Singapore to acquire High Definition facilities and pioneer HD product workflows, Mega Media has co-produced HD programs with Voom HD Networks, the world's largest HD producer. With the introduction of the new IPTV service, mio TV in 2007, the company became Singapore's second broadcaster providing a total of six channels on this new platform. Mega Media has produced many feature films such as *Kawin LARIS Sold out Marriage*, *High Cost of Living*, *Unarmed Combat*, *S-11*, *Song of the Stork*, *The Teenage Textbook* and television shows *Singapore Slingers*, *SAFRA Football Championship*, *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare* and *Ultra Eye Singapore*.