

AS I LAY DYING

A film by Le Quynh Anh





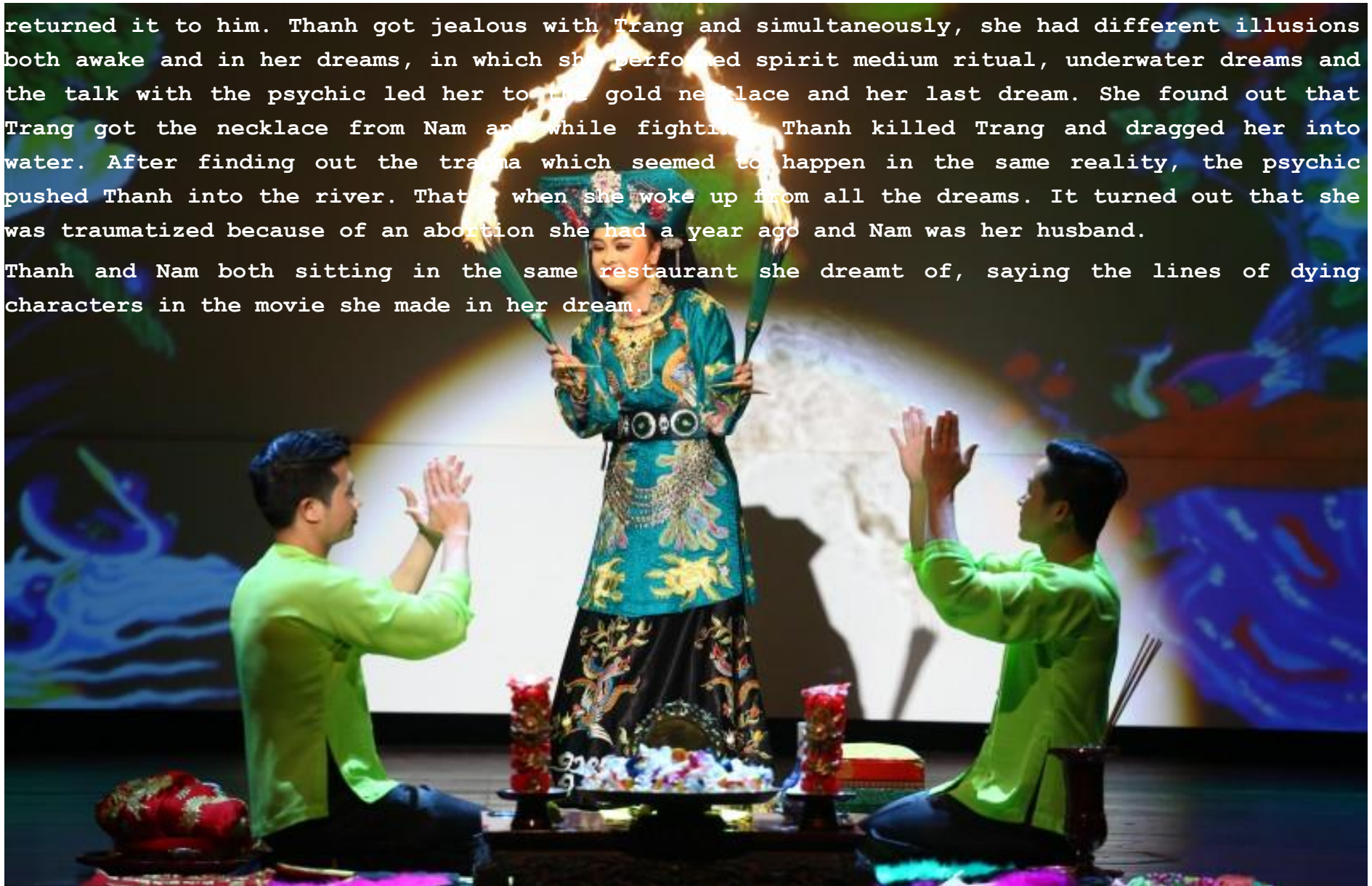
LOGLINE

A short paranoid fiction film about a young woman in search of answers to her dreams, subsequently absorbed into an emotional journey that had an unexpected exit.

SYNOPSIS

After having a weird dream of drowning in water, Thanh went to a psychic, who performed spirit medium ritual, to get answers. The psychic gave Thanh a gold Buddha necklace for protection and asked her to come along with him to a temple to pray for blessings. On the way there, Thanh saw a young girl of 10-12 years old, seemingly a ghost haunting her. She also had another dream in which she was a film director and in the film, the psychic was the male lead named Nam and the ghost was the female lead named Trang. Nam was Thanh's boyfriend but their relationship was in dry spell and Nam kept playing around Trang. He gave Thanh a gold Buddha necklace but Thanh

returned it to him. Thanh got jealous with Trang and simultaneously, she had different illusions both awake and in her dreams, in which she performed spirit medium ritual, underwater dreams and the talk with the psychic led her to the gold necklace and her last dream. She found out that Trang got the necklace from Nam and while fighting, Thanh killed Trang and dragged her into water. After finding out the trauma which seemed to happen in the same reality, the psychic pushed Thanh into the river. That's when she woke up from all the dreams. It turned out that she was traumatized because of an abortion she had a year ago and Nam was her husband. Thanh and Nam both sitting in the same restaurant she dreamt of, saying the lines of dying characters in the movie she made in her dream.



TREATMENT

The film starts with Thanh underwater, seeming dead.

She then wakes up in an unknown space.

It cuts to the scene Thanh sits in front of the psychic, telling him about the long dream she had. In the room there are photos of the psychic performing spirit medium ritual hanging on walls and a large altar with layers of offerings and statues, one of them is a living girl dressed in costume, looking at her.

The psychic gives her a gold Buddha necklace and asked her to come with him to the temple to pray for blessings.

She has another dream in which she puts her face on water surface and something underneath pulled the necklace out of her.

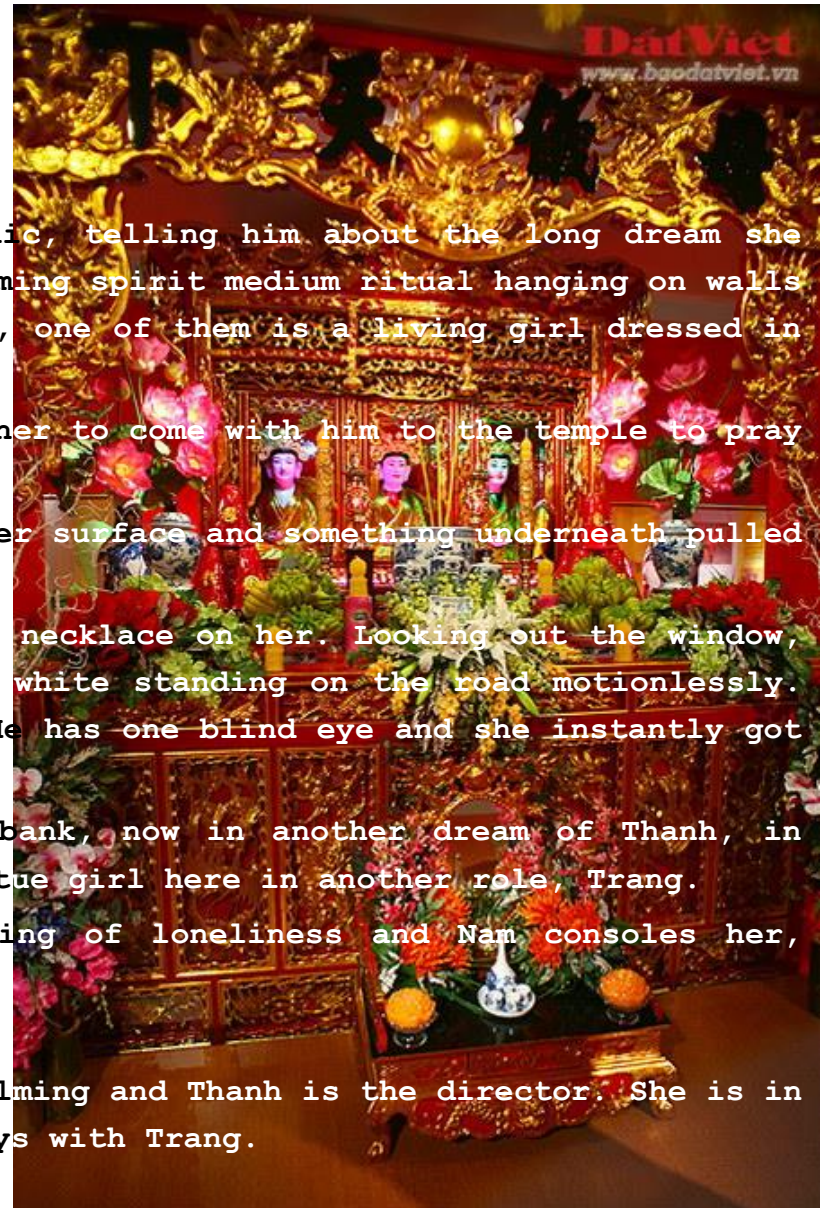
She wakes up in a bus and finds that she still has the necklace on her. Looking out the window, she sees the statue girl with heavy makeup dressed in white standing on the road motionlessly. The psychic sits next to her, asking about her dream. He has one blind eye and she instantly got flash of him doing spirit medium ritual.


It cuts to the psychic soaking in blood by a river bank, now in another dream of Thanh, in another role, Nam. A girl crying on him, that's the statue girl here in another role, Trang.

They spoke a line in which Trang expresses her feeling of loneliness and Nam consoles her, telling her that they eventually have to live anyway.

He then dies and Trang pushed him into water.

Then Thanh shouts CUT and we found out that they are filming and Thanh is the director. She is in relationship with Nam but he keeps ignoring her and plays with Trang.





Thanh and Nam go to a restaurant. There, Thanh speaks up about Trang and opens up a bit about her doubt and weakness. Nam doesn't respond. He gives her a gold Buddha necklace. But Thanh returns it to him and walks away.

We returns to Thanh who is praying in the temple. She walks out of the door, looks afar and sees Trang, dead, dressed in white, floating on the river.

The psychic touches her shoulder and they walk together.

Then we see the film crew again, they are shooting a scene in which Nam and Trang got intimate with each other. In the break, an assistant questions the relationship of Trang and the girlfriend of Nam in the film, stating that it could be a maternal relation.

Thanh doesn't pay attention to her, she sees that Nam is giving the necklace to Trang.

Thanh slowly walks into darkness with the only spotlight and she is performing a spirit medium ritual, alone.

There comes another dream in which a woman's hand above and a child's hand underwater touch each other at the water surface.

We see Thanh walking with the psychic on the pathway, talking about her dream, yet reciting the lines of Trang in the shoot at the river bank.

Suddenly, she finds blood running down from her belly and then comes a train of illusions: Trang crying, Trang's looks to her, her water dreams, the spirit medium in which both Trang and her performing, the dreams of the necklace...

Thanh sees her searching through stuff and Trang appears behind her. She shows Thanh the necklace asking if she's looking for it. Thanh tells Trang to give it to her but she refuses.

They got into a fight and Trang finds a knife, stabs into Thanh's belly. She is about to stab Thanh again but Thanh eludes and she stabs Nam's eye, who suddenly appears behind Thanh.

The girls are so surprised that they both let go of each other. Nam pulls the knife out of his eye and stabs Trang senselessly.

Thanh is shocked and asks why Nam is killing Trang. The psychic appears behind her and tells her to look carefully.

Thanh opens her eyes and the darkness gradually lights up, revealing Thanh holding the knife, confirming that she is the one who killed Trang, with Trang lying dead at her feet, soaking in blood.

Another Thanh standing with the psychic, sees that she is dragging Trang and pushing Trang into the water herself.

The psychic questions her feeling and Thanh pours out that she repents and wants to be forgiven.

The psychic smirks and pushes her into the water.

Thanh slowly sinks and above her head, a light suddenly appears brightly, then fades away.

Thanh wakes up in her bedroom. She put her stuff into her bag, hearing the talk downstairs between her mother and Nam. It turns out that she had an abortion a year ago and Nam is her husband.

Thanh and Nam go to a restaurant together. There, Thanh sees a girl on TV who looks like Trang running on a river bank.

Thanh and Nam then speaks to each other, saying the exact lines of Nam and Trang on the scene at the river bank.

The film ends with the image of Trang standing motionlessly in the spirit medium costume in the spotlight, the light goes out gradually.



DIRECTOR'S INTENSION

Since I was a child, I've always noticed the fascination of my own dreams: they vary in time, places, people, seem to have no boundaries and their meaning ties closely to my emotions.

Also I want to dig deep into the mind of fellow young women in Vietnam: when they are growing older from youngsters to the middle-aged, mostly they will get married and have their first child. Always, they handle domestic matters on their own with very little help from their men and regularly depend on the psychic or fortune-tellers; for everything could be solved spiritually by Gods and Goddess nowadays in modern Vietnam, where the disbelief in real-life authorities is growing. This woman in my film is suffering from troubled dreams as she gave up her first child and her maternal feelings are holding on to her. She got lost, confused reality with dreams and in between, she seeks redemption for her act of killing her own child.

In the film, there are scenes of spirit medium ritual. This is a part of Vietnamese traditional religion in which people worship spirits of Nature in the form of Goddess Mothers. It also relates to the character as in Vietnam, people consider a child that is given to its mother by blessings will be easily claimed back by Goddess Mothers.

It will be a film with four layers of reality, the first being the character in real life and her journey through three different dreams, that is dream in dream. Regarding the complexity of the story, the cinematography will be simple, smooth movements with key transitions connecting the layers of the film.

In the end, we collect from the shattered emotional dreams, fill the hole in our hearts and keep on living. No matter how lost you are, there is always a way out. That is how we survive.



ACTOR

THANH TU as THANH

Graduated from Music Department, Hanoi College of Arts, Tu has starred in leading roles in 2 musicals which sold out tickets in all nights and attracted much attention from media: "HOPE" and "THE LAST SUMMER", both created by Phi Phi Anh Nguyen, who was in top 30 most influential under 30 in Vietnam by Forbes. With full potentials of acting and singing, she is truly a rising star of Vietnamese stage.





QUANG MINH as NAM

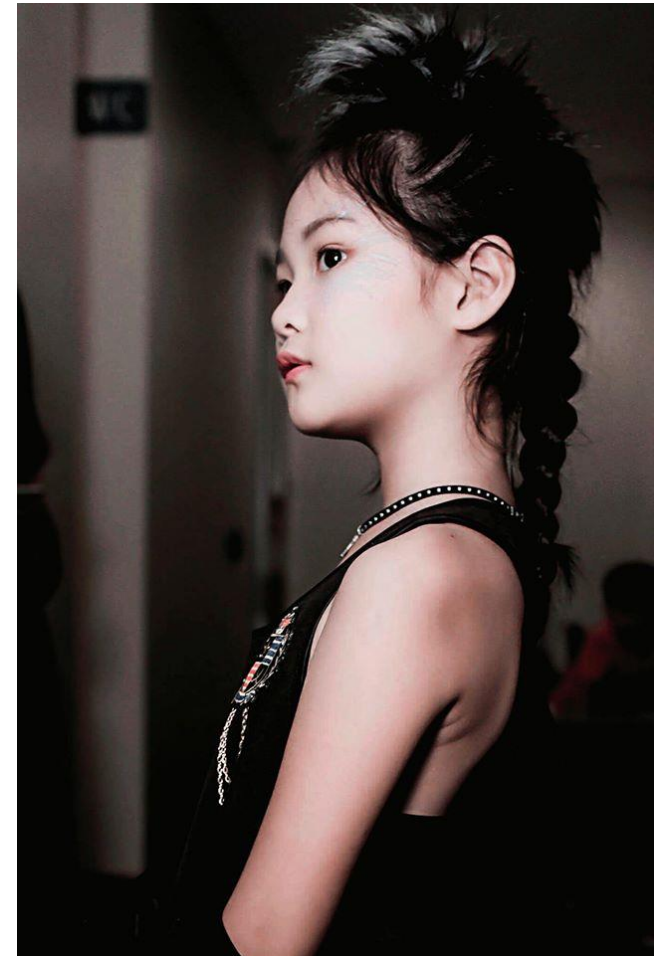
Graduated from Acting Department, Hanoi Academy of Theatre and Cinema, Minh has acted in numerous TV series, comedies and TVCs. He is best known from "Tao Quan", a comedy which is shown on national TV broadcast every year on the New Year Eve. He is also familiar to audience with different characters in a lot of popular web series and is a promising star who can handle various roles.





THIEN TRANG as TRANG

She is a child star who started her career since very young age. Currently she is a model who has appeared on major magazines and countless TV ads and has walked for prominent fashion shows in Vietnam such as Do Manh Cuong, Chula... She has also acted in various projects from TV series to movies, short films...



Director LE QUYNH ANH

Born in 1992 in Haiphong, Vietnam, Le Quynh Anh graduated from Hanoi Academy of Theatre and Cinema, specialized in Film Directing. Before that, she attended Foreign Trade University, majored in International Trade.

In 2013, she made her first film, "YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW", which was screened in Hanoi mini Docfest 2013 at Goethe Institute and was awarded Excellent Award in Student Film Festival 2013.

She continued to attend filmmaking workshops in Hanoi Doclab and The Centre for Assistance and Development of Movie Talents (TPD) from 2013 to 2015.

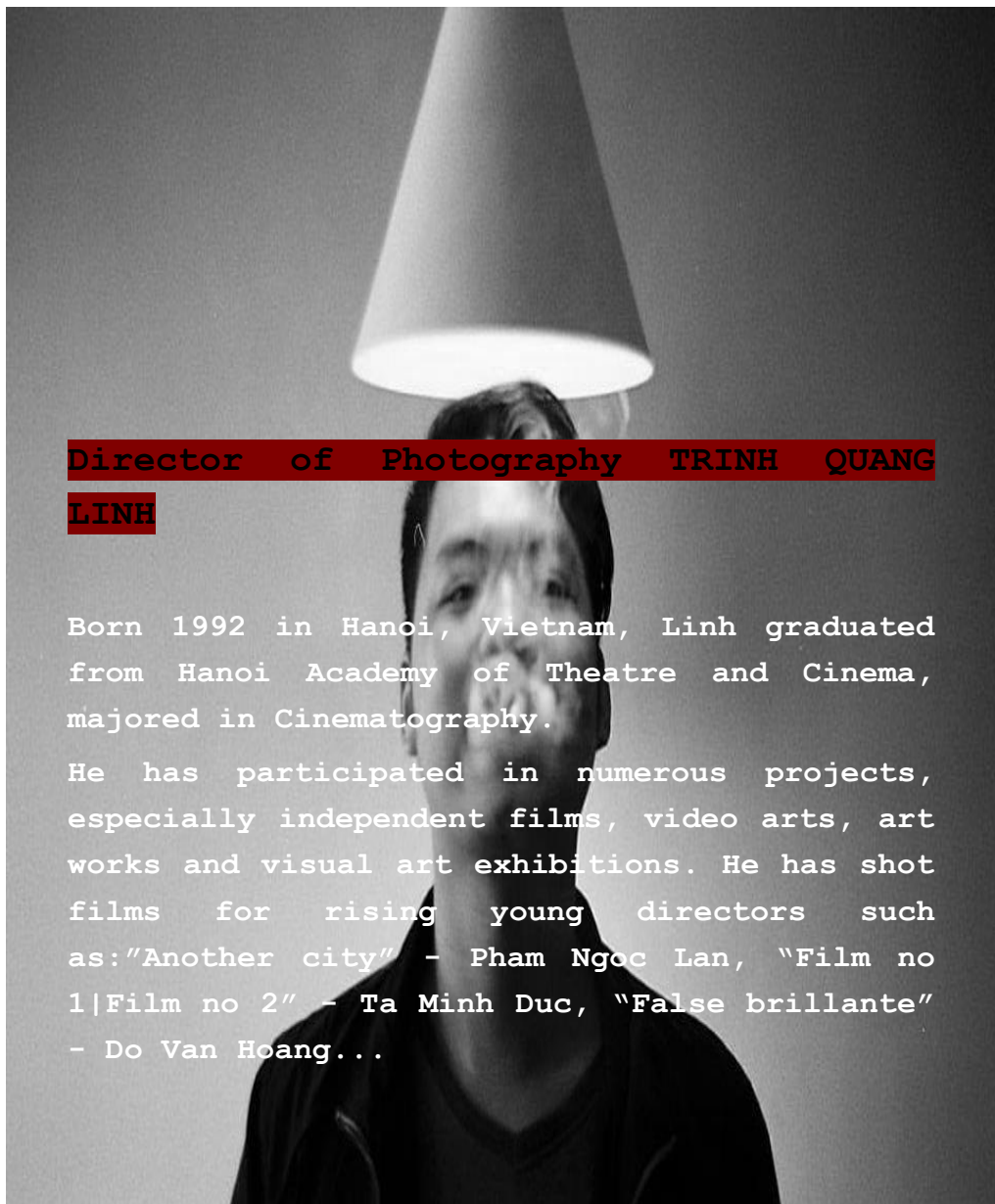
In 2014, she attended workshop in Docnet - Southeast Asian Documentary Film Festival.

In 2016, she attended HANIFF Campus for young filmmakers in Hanoi International Film Festival with the project "AS I LAY DYING" and claimed Excellent Award in Directing.

In February/2017, her short, "A MALE CAT" was chosen in 12th Mobile Film Festival and screened in Paris.

Recently, she has joined "BLACK SHEEP" project, which aims to make films and teach filmmaking to the poor and contribute to the social development of the local communities.

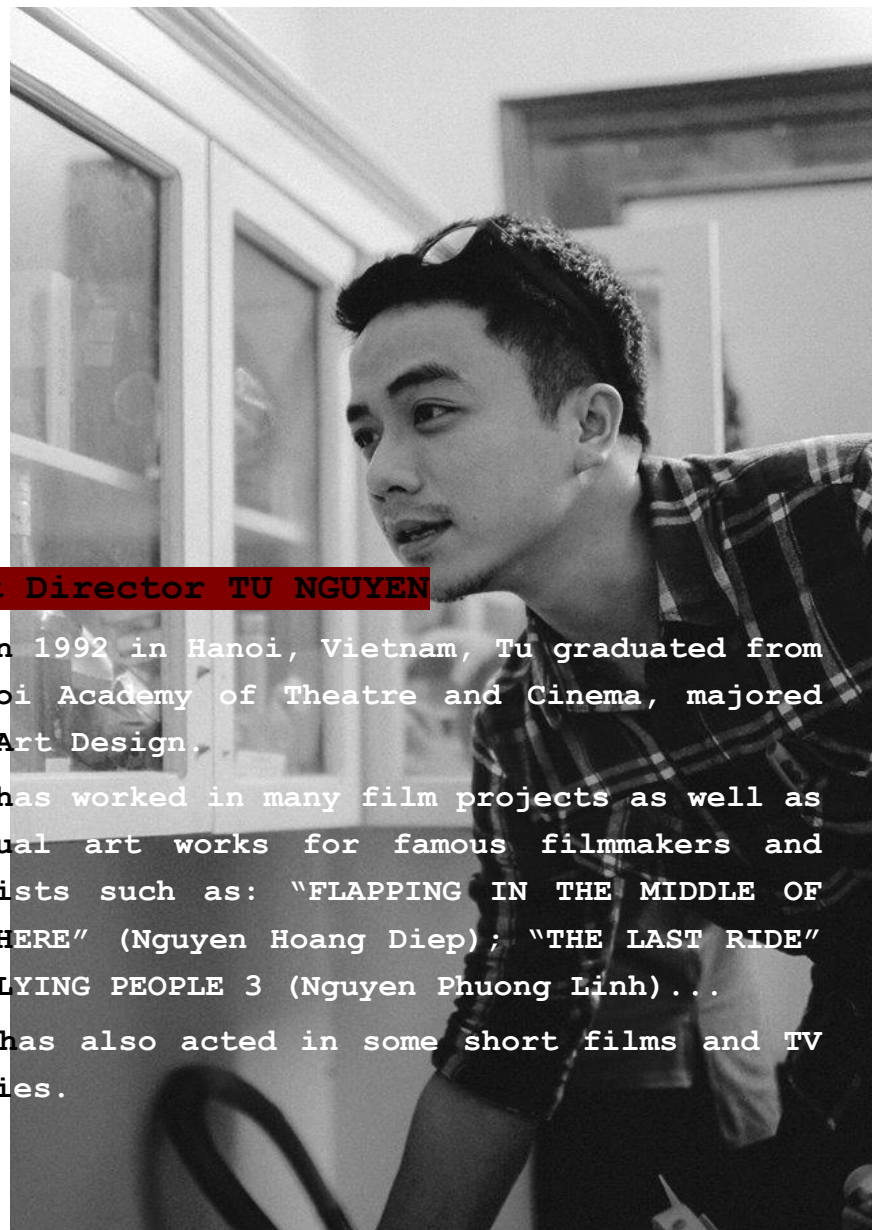




Director of Photography TRINH QUANG LINH

Born 1992 in Hanoi, Vietnam, Linh graduated from Hanoi Academy of Theatre and Cinema, majored in Cinematography.

He has participated in numerous projects, especially independent films, video arts, art works and visual art exhibitions. He has shot films for rising young directors such as: "Another city" - Pham Ngoc Lan, "Film no 1|Film no 2" - Ta Minh Duc, "False brillante" - Do Van Hoang...



Art Director TU NGUYEN

Born 1992 in Hanoi, Vietnam, Tu graduated from Hanoi Academy of Theatre and Cinema, majored in Art Design.

He has worked in many film projects as well as visual art works for famous filmmakers and artists such as: "FLAPPING IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE" (Nguyen Hoang Diep); "THE LAST RIDE" - FLYING PEOPLE 3 (Nguyen Phuong Linh)...

He has also acted in some short films and TV series.

Producer PHAM LE DUNG



Born in 1994 in Haiphong, Vietnam, she graduated from Academy of Journalism and Media.

She has worked in many film projects, TVCs, music videos...with most prolific young directors such as Nguyen Le Hoang Viet...

In 2016, she joined HANIFF Campus and also her film was screened and got special mention in Short Film Category, Hanoi International Film Festival.

Executive Producer NGUYEN THANH HUONG



Born in 1993 in Bac Ninh, Vietnam, she graduated from Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam.

She has worked as Producer for a number of feature documentaries and TV series, TV programs for Discovery Channel, BBC...In 2016, she produced a high budget documentary for Viettel - the biggest Telecoms Corporation in Vietnam.

In 2016, she joined Producing Class of HANIFF Campus with project "AS I LAY DYING".

