

VERY 狠主流
MAINSTREAM



Kiss

Directed by CHOU Tung-Yen • 2021 • Taiwan • 13 min.

Premiered at Kaohsiung Film Festival 2021

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Synopsis

Logline:

A man strays into a desolate gay sauna, drawn by the fantasy of a bygone era.

Short version:

In search of an unreachable fantasy, K strays into a desolate gay sauna. The decadent and damp smell permeates the rooms, and sounds of groans and licks still echo between the narrow hallways. An old tree seemed to have taken root in these moist quarters. Now only its withered branches remain, stretching out, longing for something. In this apocalyptic era, intimacy has become a tale of the past. The loneliness that is inherent in times of epidemics and isolation prevails and arouses the instinctive longings for each other's touch and the endless search for oneself.

Long version:

In an unbroken chain of disasters and epidemics, fewer and fewer people are surviving. If there's such a thing as the apocalypse, this must be it.

K strays into a desolate gay sauna. The decadent and damp smell permeates the rooms, and sounds of groans and licks still echo between the narrow hallways. An old tree seemed to have taken root in these moist quarters. Now only its withered branches remain, stretching out, longing for something. Intimacy has become a tale of a bygone era. A myth, a holy grail that people desperately quest after.

Dir. CHOU Tung-Yen offers a split view inside a space that both harbors documentary-like and science-fiction characters. With sharp contrasts between them, they portray the loneliness that is inherent in times of epidemics and isolation. A depiction of the longings for each other's touch and the endless search for oneself in a near-future scenario.

Credits

Cast

K/WANG Ko-Yuan (王可元)

Y/LIN Jing-Yan (林靖雁)

Written & Directed by/CHOU Tung-Yen (周東彥)

Assistant Director/CHUANG Yung-Hsiang (莊詠翔)

Line Producer/SU Yu-Hao (蘇瑜豪)

Company Manager/CHUANG Chih-Chung (莊執中)

Script Supervisor/LIN Ming-Chieh (林明潔)

Director of Photography/CHEN Kuan-Yu (陳冠宇)

1st Assistant Camera/YANG Che-Chi (楊哲奇)

2nd Assistant Camera/CHENG Hsiang-Yun (程詳芸)

Editor/HUANG Chia-Wen (黃嘉文)

Original Music by/PrintedNoise Lab LIAO Hai-Ting (廖海廷), LU Sophie (呂菱瑄)

Location Sound Mixer/ TSAI Doit (蔡篤易)

Boom Operator/ KUO Chia-Hsuan (郭家璇)

Sound Design Supervisor/ Kao Chin-Lun (高勤倫)

Sound Editor/ Huang Yi-Mei (黃懿梅)

Re-recording Mixer/ Huang Yi-Mei (黃懿梅)

Foley Artist/ Yo-Ting Wu (吳侑庭)

HousePeace

Gaffer/ WU Hsia-Ning (吳峽寧)

Key Grip/ LO Yu-Lun (羅宥倫)

Production Designer/ WU Zi-Jing (吳子敬)

Art Director/ TSAI Chuan-Ren (蔡傳仁)

Costume Designer/ CHEN Wen-Liang (陳玟良)

Hair&Makeup Artist/ TSENG Huang-Sheng (曾煥升)

Colorist/ CHAN Ben (詹謹嘉)

Assistant Colorist/ HUANG Willy (黃明偉)

Still Photographer／YANG Chin (楊子)
Graphic Design／HUANG Jia-Hong (黃嘉宏)

Sauna Guests／
小瑋 Wei, 李小狼 Leewolf, 阿任 CHAO Aaron, 吳欽漢 WU Chin-Han, 卓楷程
CHO Kai-Cheng, 張朝景 CHANG Austin, 蔡政鴻 TSAI Leo, 蔡蔡 TSAI Allen,
釋拉奇 YES Lucky

Venue／Hi Man Sauna (三溫暖)

Executive Producer／Kaohsiung Film Archive (高雄市電影館)
Co-executive Producer／畢業生有限公司
Advised by／Bureau of Cultural Affairs Kaohsiung City Government (高雄市政府
文化局)
Produced by／Very Mainstream Studio (狠主流多媒體有限公司)
Co-Produced by／Very Theatre (狠劇場)

Director's biography

Short version:

CHOU Tung-Yen is a theatre director and filmmaker from Taiwan. His main focus is on reconciling new media and theatre, with occasional involvement in video art, documentary, and music video. His VR film *In the Mist* was selected for the 78th Venice International Film Festival, and his documentary *Looking For?* was nominated for the Golden Horse Awards, and screened in Seattle International Film Festival, Outfest L.A. and NewFest.

Long version:

CHOU Tung-Yen is an award-winning theatre director, filmmaker and scenographer from Taiwan. After completing a MA in Scenography with distinction from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London and a BFA in Theatre Directing from Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA), he founded two sister companies to each produce different branches of his work. Very Mainstream Studio was founded in 2011 and grew out to be one of Taiwan's leading production houses for high-end projects across many forms of film including music video, documentary, performance documentation and VR. Very Theatre, founded in 2013, focuses on envisioning new ways of seeing and experiencing performance through the use of new media. Aside from producing performances as its core practice, the company's unbridled creativity has prompted the team to create various works in the form of video art, VR, installation, and exhibition. Most works by Very Theatre delve into contemporary themes such as human-technology relationships, collective memories through personal stories, cross-cultural exchanges, and LGBTQ+ culture, usually conveyed through highly aesthetical and poetic visuals, personal yet universal stories, and unanswered modern-day questions that reflect our social environment.

Over the years, the company has been actively working on international collaborations, and persistently honing its artistry and broadening its international visibility. The latest international co-productions by Very Theatre are *Chronicle of Light Year: Taipei - Copenhagen* (2017), co-produced with Culture Yard in Denmark and presented at Ars Electronica Festival in Linz, *Facing Cities* (2020), co-produced with WERC in the Netherlands, and *Virtual Intimacy* (2020), co-produced with ActNow Theatre in Australia and premiered at Asia TOPA in Melbourne. These endeavours have made Very Theatre one of the most renowned companies in the domestic performing arts field, especially in the new media area.

Rooted in his long-term care for gender, LGBTQ+ and intimacy topics and his curiosity about technology, CHOU has been using various formats to create a series of works focussing on those themes, which includes the theatre piece *Virtual Intimacy* (2020), but also the documentaries *My Leftover Ladies* (2015) and *Looking For?* (2017), and the social experiment *Will You Marry Me?* (2019). CHOU made his first cinematic VR experience in collaboration with Kaohsiung Film Archive's VR FILM LAB programme as his most recent addition to this series, resulting in *In the Mist* (2020), which got selected for the 78th Venice International Film Festival.

CHOU's work was laurelled with a World Stage Design Award for Interactive and New Media 2013 (for *Emptied Memories*), the Knight of Illumination Projection Design Award 2018 (for his set design in *Formosa* by LIN Hwai-Min and Cloud Gate Dance Theater), and the PANORAMA VR PRIZE at the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma de Montréal 2021 (for *In the Mist*).

Pictures

<https://reurl.cc/Wr3O7Z>

Trailer

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-2goggDqVGLARqca1-QSr9WmaETiAFJ0/view?usp=sharing>

Social links

Very Theatre / Very Mainstream Studio (producer)

Website: <https://www.vmstudio.tw/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vmstudio.tw>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/vmstudiotw/>

Kaohsiung Film Archive (executive producer)

Website: <https://kfa.kcg.gov.tw/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/kcgkfa>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/kfa_tw/

CHOU Tung-Yen (director)

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/yenniechou/>

WANG Ko-Yuan (lead actor)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WangKoYuan.1>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/_wang._ko/

Good to know

- *Kiss* is selected for Frameline46, the USA's oldest and largest queer film festival, and will be screened in the *Constant Craving* programme, a selection of six international shorts on the longings and desires to connect.
- The lead actor, WANG Ko-Yuan, is one of the most popular young actors in Taiwan and has 12.6K followers on IG.
- *Kiss*'s older brother, the VR film *In the Mist* (2020), has been screened to great success at Venice Film Festival (VR Expanded) and is still traveling around the world. The two films build on the same themes of the gay sauna, human touch, loneliness and feature the same main character.
- *Kiss* pays tribute to TSAI Ming-Liang's *The River* (1997). Both of the films build on the same themes of the gay sauna. TSAI Ming-Liang praised CHOU Tung-Yen to be his successor after seeing "In the Mist".
- CHOU Tung-Yen's documentary [Looking for?](#), on the way dating apps have become commonplace among the international gay community, was screened at Outfest, CAAMFest in SF (at Roxie Theater), SIFF, and NewFest, which he attended in person. In all of the above mentioned festivals the documentary received very positive feedback.
- Kaohsiung Film Archive supports this film to encourage filmmakers to come to Kaohsiung and make films again after the pandemic (a great gesture of governmental institute to support film after the pandemic).
- *Kiss* was shot on location in a gay sauna. The employees were so generous that they even directly joined as the extras.