



A FILM BY JIAYI LI

阿姨

āyí



LOGLINE

In a crowded dormitory in Flushing, NYC, an undocumented housekeeper, āyí, endures exploitation but Baduanjin offers her peace. As hardships mount, she must choose between silence and resistance.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE TRAILER](#)

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

āyí tells the story of a Chinese woman in her fifties, living in New York as an undocumented day laborer. By day, she brings order to the lives of others through domestic work. By night, she returns to a cramped shared dormitory with no privacy, no home, and no true sense of belonging.

In Chinese, *āyí* means “aunt.” It is a term of respect and familiarity, common in many Asian communities. Yet it can also erase individuality. We rarely ask *āyí* for her real name, her story, or her dreams. She is seen only in relation to her function—someone who helps, someone who serves.

This film is an attempt to truly look at her, to really see her. Through this story, I hope to ask a quiet but urgent question: Can someone without legal status, social safety nets, or language fluency still be seen as a full human being? Can her exhaustion, dignity, longing, and joy still matter?





JIAYI LI

Writer/Director

Jiayi Li is a filmmaker, actor, and interdisciplinary artist born in China and shaped by life across China, Australia, and the U.S. She is currently pursuing an MFA in Directing and Screenwriting at Columbia University. Her work focuses on lives at the margins—stories rooted in overlooked bodies, silences, and everyday rhythms. With a background in architecture, she brings a restrained, visually sensitive approach to narrative.

She is developing her debut feature, *Escaping*, about a New York-based Asian artist whose life unexpectedly intersects with an elderly unhoused woman from Central Asia—two women bound by gender, solitude, and the discovery of buried artistic brilliance.



āyí
WRITER / DIRECTOR





NIPPICH SUPPASIRIPOKA

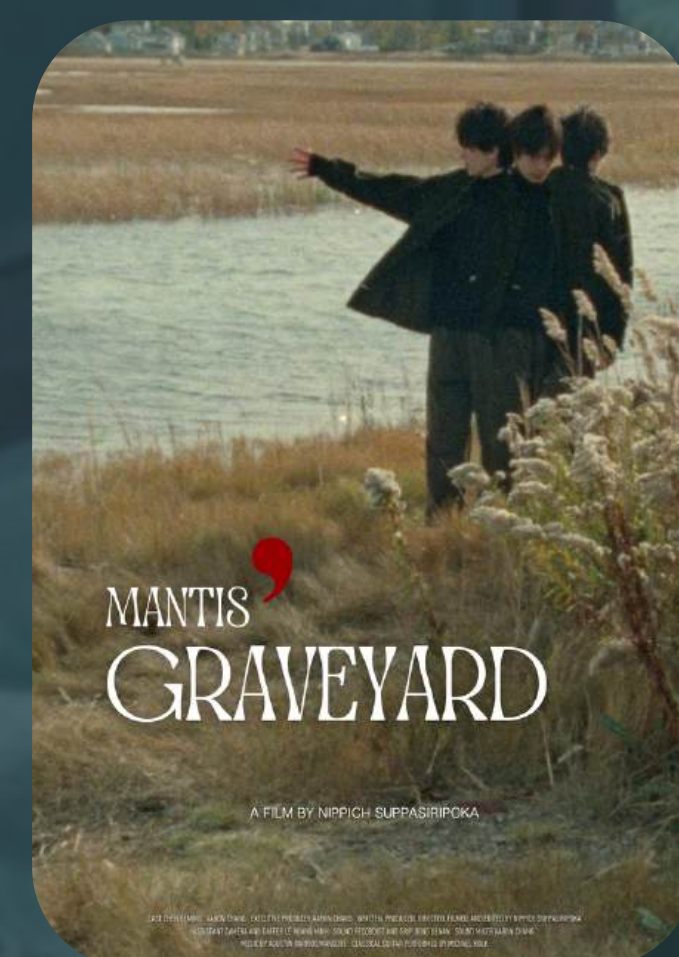
Producer

Nippich Suppasiripoka is a Thai film director. He graduated from Emerson College with a BFA in Visual Media Arts and previously worked as a writer for Asia-renowned producer/director Nonzee Nimibutr. He also has experience in international sales and distribution at EST N8 and currently serves as a creative producer at N8 Studios in Bangkok, Thailand.

His latest film, *Mantis' Graveyard*, was selected as a "Short Film Market Pick" at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival 2025. He has also been selected to participate in RIFF's Talent Lab 2025 in Reykjavik, Iceland. He produced *āyí*, which will have its world premiere at the Tribeca Festival 2025.



āyí
PRODUCER



MANTIS' GRAVEYARD
PRODUCER / DIRECTOR / WRITER



FEATURED IN TRIBECA'S AAPI SHOWCASE

āyí is selected as part of SHORTS: FLOATING ROOTS, the first-ever AAPI-focused short film program at the Tribeca Festival. This landmark showcase celebrates bold, personal storytelling from Asian American and Pacific Islander filmmakers, exploring themes of identity, heritage, and belonging across generations and cultures.

The program is co-curated by Seigo Tono, executive director of Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia in Japan.

TRIBECA
FESTIVAL

PRESENTED BY
Web3

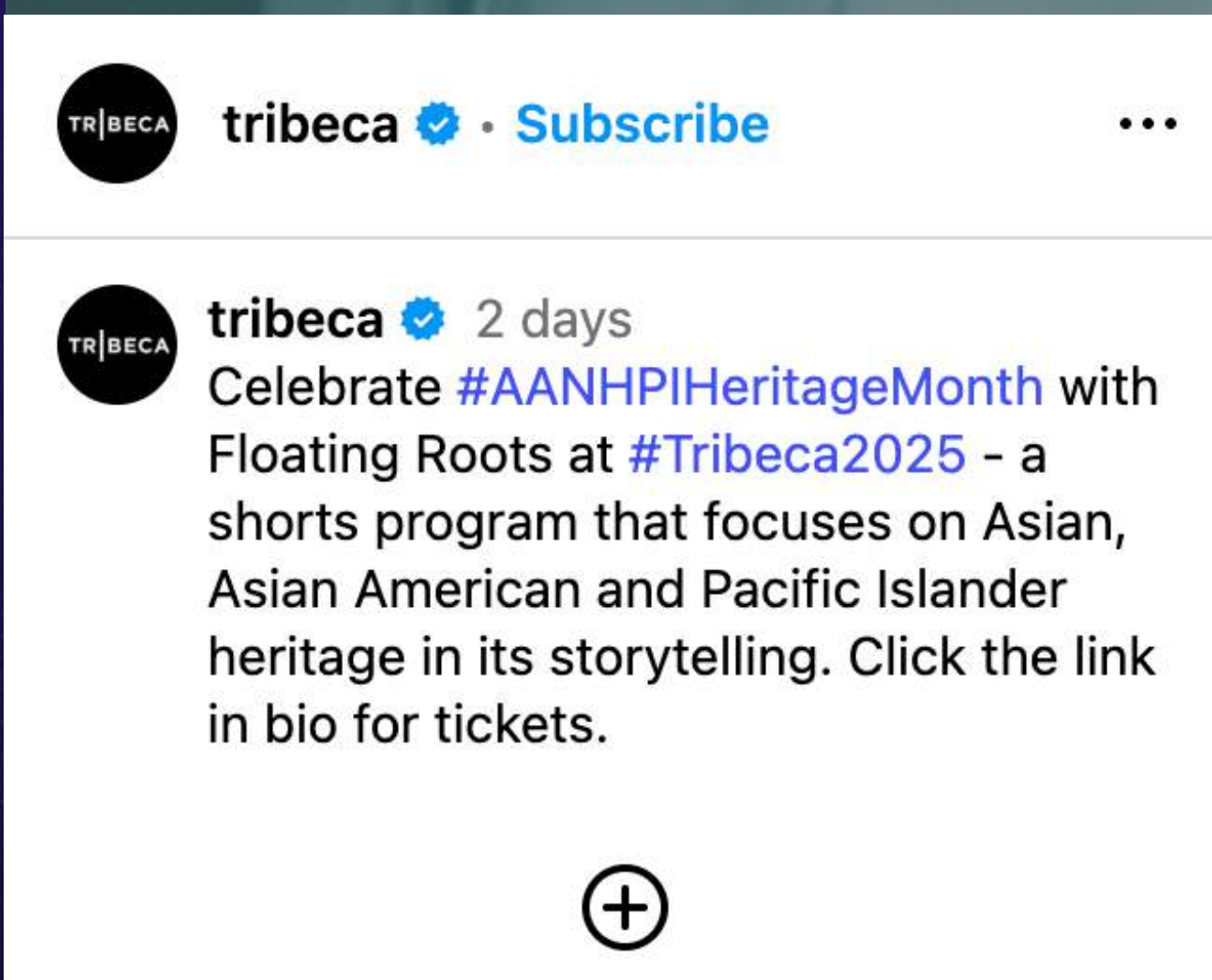
FLOATING ROOTS



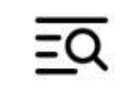
āyí

DIRECTED BY JIAYI LI

In a crowded dormitory in Flushing, NYC, an undocumented housekeeper, āyí, endures exploitation but Baduanjin offers her peace. As hardships mount, she must choose between silence and resistance.



āyí IN THE PRESS



DEADLINE

TIP US

Apocalypse Besties (United States) – World Premiere. Directed by Kristen Buckels Cantrell.

ATTAGIRL! (United States) – World Premiere. Directed by Klimovski.

āyí (United States, China) – World Premiere. Directed by Jiayi Li.

Baby Blues (Norway) – World Premiere. Directed by Helen Komini Knudsen.

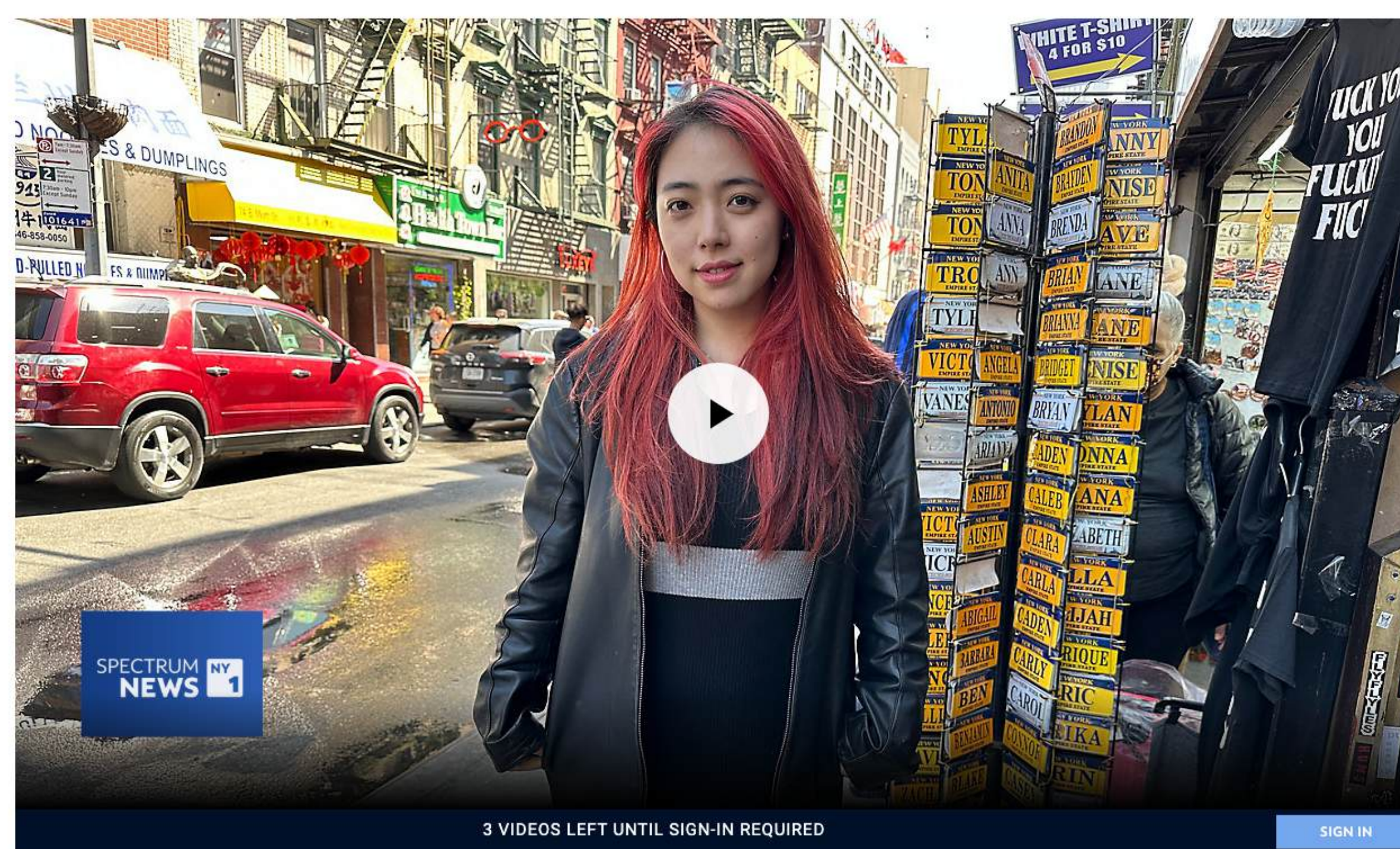
Baby Tooth (United States) – Directed by Olivia Accardo.

Beyond Silence (Netherlands) – International Premiere. Directed by Marnie Blok.

Chasing the Party (United States) – World Premiere. Directed by Jessie Komitor.

Cherry-Colored Funk (United States) – New York Premiere. Directed by Chelsie Pennello.

Cocoon (United States) – World Premiere. Directed by Sujin Jung.



Jiayi Li, 29, is the young Chinese director and screenwriter of "Ayi." (Spectrum News NY1/Noorulain Khawaja)

SPECTRUM NEWS NY1 CELEBRATES
ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH PRESENTED BY TOYOTA

ENTERTAINMENT

Young director's first film about Chinese immigrant experience to premiere at Tribeca Film Festival

BY NOORULAIN KHAWAJA | NEW YORK CITY
PUBLISHED 5:15 PM ET MAY 07, 2025

Jiayi Li feels a connection to the sights, sounds and smells of Chinatown. The 29-year-old moved to New York two years ago, to get her graduate degree in filmmaking.

"Living in New York, I can always find my community, find my people here. I see all the Chinese here play Chinese chess, it's really like at home," Li said.

What You Need To Know

- The Tribeca Film Festival is featuring six short films that touch on Asian heritage and culture in this year's festival starting in June
- Among them is "Ayi," a 13-minute short about a Chinese woman who comes to the city, lives in a crowded dorm in Flushing and works as a housekeeper. She navigates challenges like getting bullied by housemates and learning to speak English while trying to create a better life for herself
- Jiayi Li, 29, is the young Chinese director and screenwriter of "Ayi." Li, who moved to New York two years ago, is now set to have her first film premiere on the world stage

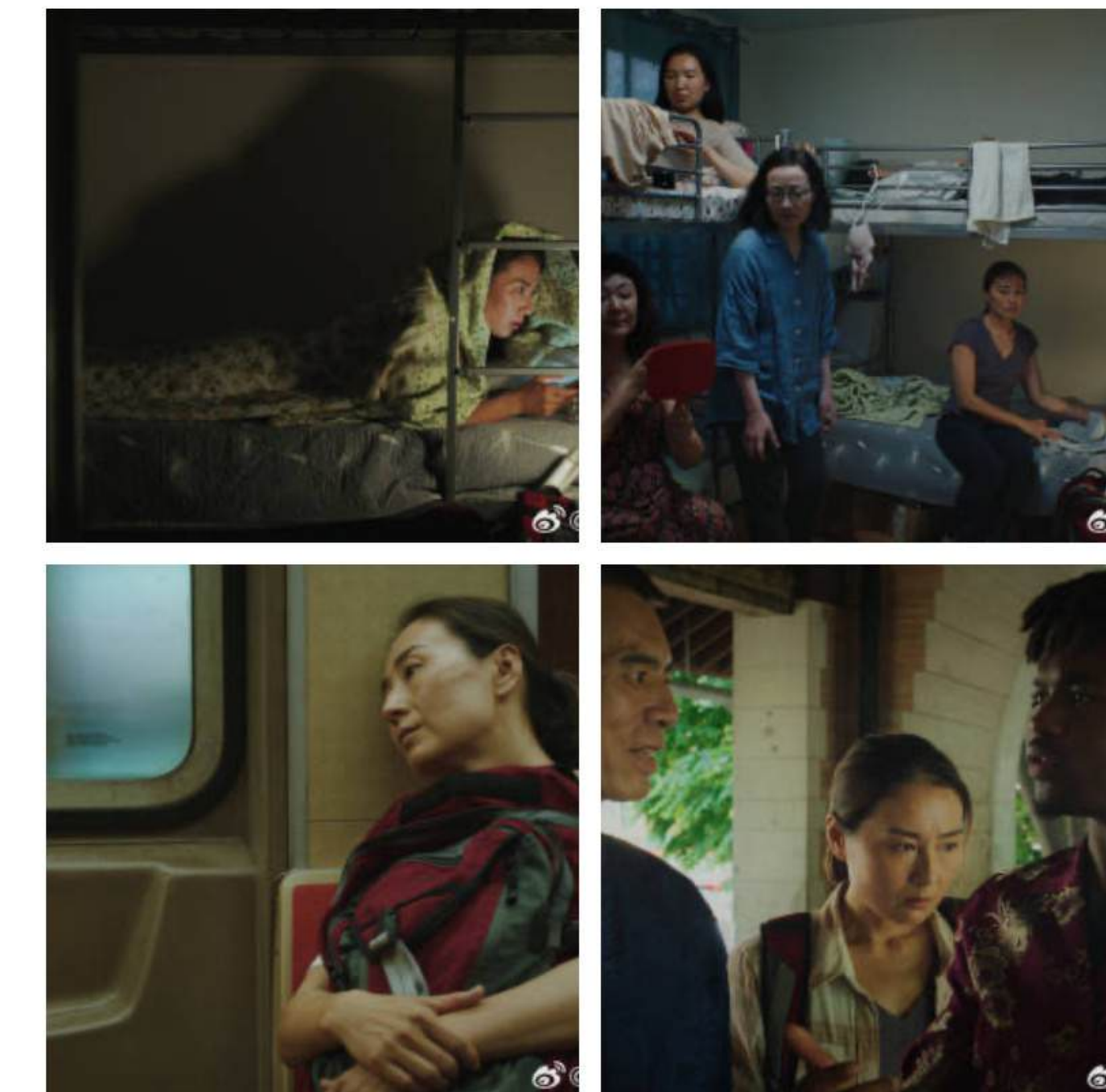


微博正文



1905 1905电影网官博
5-6 14:32

由导演李佳宜执导的短片《阿姨》入围2025年翠贝卡电影节短片主竞赛单元。影片讲述在纽约法拉盛拥挤的宿舍里，移民清洁工阿姨在剥削中挣扎，只为追求更好的生活。她唯一的慰藉是能带给她片刻宁静的八段锦。然而，随着困境加深，她不得不在沉默与抗争之间做出抉择。影片将于6月在纽约世界首映。



PRIMARY CREDITS

Writer/Director: **Jiayi Li**

Producer: **Nippich Suppasiripoka**

Assistant Director: **Ting Ting Wang**

Director of Photography: **Ru He**

Costume Designer: **Xiaoqing Zhang**

Production Designer: **Yiwei Lu**

Composer: **Renee Bruell**

Sound Designer: **Bokai Zheng**

Re-recording Mixer: **Xingmei Zhou**

Editor: **Jiayi Li**

Colorist: **Ru He**



CAST

āyí: **Eleven Lee**

āyí Jiang: **Joanne Liu**

āyí Yu: **Mira Jiang**

Xiao Ting: **Yixiao Zhang**

Manager Zhao: **Mijuan Ye**

Master Chen: **Dayu Jin**

Taylor: **Moses Chavez-Gray**

Amber: **Serena Lu**

Leo: **Thomas Goze**





TECH SEPCS

English Title: āyí

Original Title: 阿姨

Year of Production: 2025

Country: USA, China

Length: 13 mins

Language: Mandarin Chinese, English

Subtitle: English

Screening: 4K DCP

Audio: 7.1/Stereo

Shooting Format: Digital

Ratio: 16:9

Film Color: Color



CONTACT

JIAYI LI
Writer/Director
+1 (646) 866-9226
jiayili60@gmail.com