



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
SHORT FILM
2022 OFFICIAL SELECTION

THE WATER MURMURS

a short film by Story CHEN

海边升起
一座悬崖



*An empty stirring fills the air.
Down fall the stars. The sky oblivious to the scars.
The water sleeps as the people languish in pain.*

*The tide in retreat as the seas wane.
And yet out of the sky plants emerge.*

*The fish swim back to the past and fly as they surge.
People of the north, south, east and west.
What next for them now?
What next for them now?*

.....

空空荡荡，摇摇晃晃，
星星下坠，天空蒙昧，
人群迷茫水中睡。

倒流的海水枯萎，
天空却长出了植被。

鱼儿游回过去再起飞，
东南西北人儿，
何处归？
何处归？

.....



SYNOPSIS

故事梗概

When an asteroid hits the Earth, underwater volcanic eruptions risk submerging a riverside town and the inhabitants start to flee inland. The day before leaving, Nian says goodbye to a childhood friend but on her way she crosses paths with some of the town's residents. Gradually, her memories of the town start to become clearer and clearer in her mind.

陨石撞击地球引发海底火山喷发，江边小镇随时有被海水倒灌的风险，人们纷纷逃离。念念在临行前一天，决定跟儿时好友告别，却意外跟小镇上的人们相遇，这座城市在记忆里的样子渐渐清晰起来。

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

导演阐述

The memories we have of our native land or acquaintances from our past grow within us. We are so familiar with those memories that we invariably take them for granted. What sets us aside from other living creatures on this planet? Subtle hints can stir up emotions and allow us to create or rebuild the past. Perhaps forgotten spaces and a humbled mankind can find a different way to coexist forever.

关于故人、故土的那些记忆长在我们的身体里，我们对那些记忆如此熟悉，因而波澜不惊。是什么让我们成为万物中独特的存在？飘渺的线索可以激起深情，让我们创造和重建过去，被遗忘的空间与渺小的人类也许可以以另一种形式永恒共存。





The film title in its original language means “A Cliff Rising by the Sea”, which comes from *The Flowers of Evil* by Charles Baudelaire, “Upon my love, deep and gentle as the sea / Which rose toward her as toward a cliff.” (À mon amour profond et doux comme la mer / Qui vers elle montait comme vers sa falaise.)

When faced by fatal challenges of the nature, what can human beings grasp? The unknowable end of the world and farewells may trigger the memories deep down to surge again.

电影的中文标题《海边升起一座悬崖》来自波德莱尔的《恶之花》：“我的爱深沉和缓有如大海，朝着她升起一如攀上她的悬崖。”

当自然的变化无可抵挡，人类可以抓住什么？末日与离别也许是让我们由内而外重新开始翻涌回忆的契机。





The true farewell is not saying goodbye, but oblivion. That's why the main character is called Nian, which means "Never forget" in mandarin.

Farewells always come unexpectedly. What we thought would stay with us forever might disappear in the next moment. It's not until the last day before Nian leaves her hometown, that she picks up the fragments of her past, realizing what's truly precious.

真正的告别不是说再见，而是遗忘。所以我的主角名叫念念，念念不忘。

告别总是不期而至的，我们以为会永远存在的东西，可能会消失在下一个瞬间里。在离开故土前的最后一天里，念念才拾起过往那些碎片，才意识到什么对她来说是珍贵的。

“If your city were to be submerged by the sea tomorrow, what would you do?”

Most of us would flee, and some of us might refuse to accept reality—not believing in it or even thinking about it. They choose to live in the moment, so that life could go on in pleasure.

There are also two groups of watchmen in this film. One is the swimmers seen at the beginning of the film, who stare into the distance like statues. In the end, they dive into the water as usual while everyone else flees.

The other one is the soulful old man who guards his decrepitude and neglected tea house, ready to spend the rest of his life with the memories of his wife, who’s long passed away.

“如果你的城市明天要被海水吞没，你会怎么办？”

大部分人会逃离，也有人拒绝接受现实，不相信，或完全不想思考这件事，他们选择活在当下，生活仍然在愉快地继续。另有两组守望者的角色，一是开篇在海边如雕塑般凝望远方的冬泳队员，在结尾大家都在逃离时却仍然悠然跃入水中，他们知道未来已来，但仍然坚守这方水土；二是为了陪伴已故老伴而守在无人问津的茶馆里的爷爷，他为深情而留下。



Yibin was the shooting location of my first feature, which was shut down due to COVID-19. I went back there to shoot this short for its captivating texture. It was a five-day shoot on both 35mm film and digital cameras.

For location and set design, I paid attention to the relationship between interior and exterior space, man-made structures and natural environments. Employing elements like water and glass, and focusing on different layers of blue and green, I tried to achieve a sense of surrealism, which was inspired by impressions from Angelopoulos' and Tarkovsky's films.

The themes of the scoring are “Love and Regret”, two contradicting but reconciling mood. My composer Oliver Mayo and I wanted the music to be subtle and delicate, without excess notes or melodies. We would love the score to tell the subtext—to reflect things left unsaid.

宜宾本是我第一部长片的取景地，后来因为疫情没能开机，但我很喜欢宜宾的城市质感，于是这次创作短片还是回到了那里。拍摄一共五天，所有的镜头都是数码拍一遍，再用胶片拍一遍。

在选景和布景上，我注重室内外空间的关系，以及人造建筑与自然环境的关系；在色彩上，我想强调不同层次蓝色和绿色，运用水和玻璃的元素去营造一种超现实感，这也是我在安哲和塔可夫斯基作品中感受到最深刻的印象和体验。

音乐的主题是爱与遗憾，两个矛盾又统一的感受。和作曲家 Oliver Mayo 一起，我们的目标是让配乐含蓄而微精巧，不要特别多音符，也不要特别明确的旋律。我们用配乐来代表人物的潜台词，表达那些没说出口的话。



BIOGRAPHY OF THE DIRECTOR

导演简介

Born in China in 1995, Story CHEN is a writer director with expertise in films, commercials and music videos. She graduated from NYU Tisch School of the Arts majoring in FILM & TV with a minor in psychology. Her two student short films made at NYU Tisch, *A Woman's Gaze* and *Marina*, received many festival awards.

Her own identity as a hybrid of Eastern and Western culture cultivates her keen eye on prevailing themes of humanity, transcending cultural and racial differences. She focuses on depicting the emotional struggles of real life. Her stories also put a spotlight on minorities like Asian women, LGBTQ and children.

Currently Story is based in New York and Beijing. She has been selected by Asian Film Academy Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) in 2018.

FILMOGRAPHY

- **2020** *Drunk of Sun* (4min | 16mm film | Experimental)
- **2018** *Marina* (15min | Short Fiction)
- **2016** *A Woman's Gaze* (18min | Short Fiction)

Story CHEN ©Yanhui FU



陈剑莹，导演、编剧、制片，毕业于纽约大学 Tisch 电影学院导演系，辅修心理学。曾求学于哈佛大学及伦敦政治经济学院，并获选釜山电影节亚洲电影学院。陈剑莹的作品往往跨越东西方语境，从自身身份出发，以现实为来源，描绘人类情感于其间的挣扎和多义性。导演短片作品有：《孪生》《水下美人鱼》《她的眼光》。





CAST 演员

念念 NIAN

Annabel YAO 姚安娜

天天 TIAN Taiwen ZHANG 张太文

彭爷爷 Mr.PENG Rongxi LI 李荣喜

CREW 工作人员

导演 Directed by Story CHEN 陈剑莹

编剧 Written by XIAOZI Muhua 萧子木华

监制 Executive Producer SHAN Zuolong 单佐龙

制片人 Producer LI Xiaoyuan 李潇远

摄影指导 Director of Photography XI Bing 席冰

美术指导 Production Designer WANG Yi 王懿

声音指导 Sound Designer and Mixer FENG Yanming 冯彦茗,
ZHANG Yancheng 张雁程

造型指导 Costume Designer HUANG Zixian 黄子娴

剪辑顾问 Editing Consultant QIN Yanan 秦亚楠

剪辑 Edited by DU Junlin 杜俊霖

作曲 Original Soundtrack Oliver MAYO

调色 Colorist FU Shu 付舒

电影节策略 Festival Strategy Rosie RONG 荣章歆

平面设计 Poster and Graphic Design 参考线 Guideswork

总制片人 / 出品人 Presenter ZHOU Hao 周浩

联合出品人 Co-presenters WANG Biaoxia 王彪霞, HAN Xiao 韩啸

TECHNICAL DETAILS 技术参数

Original title: Hai Bian Sheng Qi Yi Zuo Xuan Ya

English title: The Water Murmurs

Duration: 15 minutes

Shooting format: Digital & 35mm Film

Aspect ratio: 1.33

DCP: 5.1 Color

Year: 2022

Countries of production: China

T.H.ENTERTAINMENT **Coproduction**
with Dream Media Group, Dream Player



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