

## HAF 23 Ten Thousand Happiness



**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** China, Canada

**GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:** Drama | HD | Mandarin | 120 mins

**DIRECTOR:**

Johnny MA

**PRODUCERS:**

WANG Jing, WU Xianjian

**HAF GOALS:**

Funds, Co-producers, Sales agents

**BUDGET:**

US\$2,500,000

**SECURED BUDGET:**

US\$300,000

**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

2016 *Old Stone*

## ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

The sudden divorce of an 80-year-old grandfather from an elite Chinese family sets off a chain of reaction, forcing each member to evaluate their own relationships with love and happiness.

## SYNOPSIS

When the grandparents of the powerful Lu family suddenly announce their divorce after 65 years of marriage, all members of the family must dig deep within themselves to re-evaluate their relationship with love and marriage, and ultimately, with happiness. *Ten Thousand Happiness* is set in the concrete city landscape of Beijing, where the air is dusty and super-speed modernization collides in open warfare with traditional values and obligations. Love and marriage are never easy decisions between two consenting adults, even without the interference of family and social ridicule.

*Ten Thousand Happiness* is a story of three generations of the Lu family, each searching for happiness in contemporary Beijing. The 30-year-old unmarried son, Ming, confused about his identity after nine years of living abroad, returns home and is pressured by his parents to be married as soon as possible. His father Lu and mother Ling are living together more for convenience and to uphold the image of the perfect family. And finally, the eighty-year-old newly-divorced grandfather rediscovers bachelor life in his golden age in Beijing's morning park culture.

As a family, the characters must accept each other's differences in order to strengthen their bonds of family and move on. And like all explorations of the great questions of life, the answer of what happiness is proves as complicated and as simple as each character will find for themselves.

Our story ends with the simple statement... For what is happiness, but a chirping of a songbird?

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Although there were always variations of the *Ten Thousand Happiness* (TTH) story swimming around my head, the original inspiration came to me when I was researching for my short film. I traveled around, staying in random small towns looking for a possible subject for the film. My instincts during the late night walks always led me into the parks where the elderly gather nightly for dancing. I saw a 60-year-old elderly man picking up a 65-year-old woman and spinning her around, not so gracefully. When she landed, the elderly man managed to cop a feel around her hip, and she blushed like a flower. Never had I seen passion like this coming out of any Chinese people and here are these elders frolicking like 18 year olds in love. I made a point to remember that I must capture this feeling. And when I heard from a friend that her 90-years-old grandfather had divorced his wife and started to go out on the dating scene, I knew that I finally had the "in" for my story.

In this film, I want to be truthful with experiences as an unmarried mid 30's son living in my own

family. Ultimately, I am the character of the son, Lu Ming in TTH, and writing this story and eventually shooting it is for me an exploration of the world of my parent's generation and my grandparents, as well as my own true feelings and current cynicism about the issue of marriage and love.

TTH is a story about love and marriage as much it is about the people of Beijing at this very moment in our history. Just like *Yi Yi* was a love poem for Taipei, this is a film that will encompass everything about the city I love.

## **DIRECTOR**

### **Johnny MA**

Johnny was born as Ma Nan, in Shanghai China, and emigrated to Toronto at age of ten. After careers in both mergers and acquisition and then textile fashion, Johnny first made the move to documentary filmmaking in 2008. Johnny enrolled at the Columbia University (New York) for the MFA program in Directing / Screenwriting. There he directed the award winning short film *Grand Canal* (2014) that won the NBR Student Award as well as a nomination for the Canadian Screen Award for Best Short Film. Johnny's directorial debut, *Old Stone* (2016), had its world premiere at the Berlin Film Festival in 2016. Most recently it was awarded the Best Canadian First Feature Film at the Toronto International Film Festival. He is a recent alum of the Sundance Institute Screenwriting / Directing Lab and winner of the Telefilm Canada Pitch This competition with his project *Ten Thousand Happiness*.

## **PRODUCERS**

### **WANG Jing**

Jing Wang is a film producer based in Shanghai. She holds a BA from Fudan University and MFA in Film Production from Columbia University. Her first feature, *Old Stone* (2016), a Sundance Institute supported film, world premiered at the Berlin Film Festival and recently won Best Canadian First Feature Film at the Toronto International Film Festival. The film had its theatrical release in North America by the end of 2016. Her project in development, *Heavy Craving* (dir. Hsieh Pei-Ju), was part of Berlinale Talents Script Station 2016 and won the Script Development Award at the 14<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong Asia Film Financing Forum.

### **WU Xianjian**

Known fondly in the Shanghai simply as "Awu". Awu was one of the last batch of hand drawn illustrators in Shanghai before the industry shifted to 3D computer generated animation. After over 15 years as a high-end commercial producer in Shanghai, in 2015 Awu transitioned to narrative film and produced his first feature film, *Old Stone* (2016). It had its world premiere at the Berlin Film Festival and won Best Canadian First Feature Film at the Toronto International Film Festival.

## PRODUCTION COMPANY

### **Image X Productions**

Founded by Shanghai-based veteran producer Wu Xianjian, Image X Productions is a full service production company specializing in high-end commercials. It has partnered with top agencies and created campaigns for clients like Coca Cola, Tiffany and Sony. Its industry recognition includes One Show Gold Pencil, Great Wall Awards and Times Awards. In 2013, Image X partnered with Shanghai-born Canadian director Johnny Ma and since then transitioned into narrative filmmaking with *A Grand Canal* (2014) which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and *Old Stone* (2016), world premiere at the Berlin Film Festival and winner of Best Canadian First Feature Film at the Toronto International Film Festival.