

HAF 09 I Wish I Could Hibernate



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Mongolia

GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME: Drama | Digital Format | Mongolian | 90 mins

DIRECTOR:

Zoljargal PUREVDASH

PRODUCER:

TAN Chui Mui

Dulguun BAYASGALAN

HAF GOALS:

Funds, Co-producers, Sales agents

BUDGET:

US\$ 320,000

SECURED BUDGET:

US\$ 95,000

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

First Feature Director

ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

A poor but proud Mongolian teen aspires to win an Academic Olympiad; first, he and his siblings must survive the bitter winter in Ulaanbaatar's Ger district.

SYNOPSIS

When Bat learns that the winner of the national Olympiad receives a scholarship, he decides to enter. Bat, 15, is the eldest of five children living with their widowed mother in the poor Ger district of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. It is winter and his mother has lost yet another job; they cannot even afford coal to heat their home. To his surprise, Bat wins a special award at the local Olympiad competition and his physics teacher, Bilegt, agrees to tutor him for the nationals. Bat returns home with this news, only to find his mother leaving to work in the countryside. Bat is left to find ways to survive the bitter winter with his two eldest siblings. He needs to make enough money for food and coal. He starts skipping school, working at many odd jobs. The government meanwhile, is about to enforce a ban on unrefined coal entering the city. Underprepared, Bat fails in the Olympiad nationals. He returns home to find their dog has frozen to death. Yet Samdan, his neighbour, then appears with a gift – a truckload of coal.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I have lived in the Ger District of Ulaanbaatar since I was 13 years old. My mother had a small corner shop there, so I know the lives of my neighbors very well: their joys, their struggles and their dreams, and how happy they are to be able to afford just one sack of coal that helps them stay warm at night in the harsh Mongolian winter. In December 2016, a friend of mine added me to a Facebook group called "Parents against Pollution". The members of that group were planning to organize a demonstration with the slogan "Extinguish the Smoke". I was taken aback by the attitude of the people in this group, who demanded that the Ger district residents stop burning coal or return to the countryside. At that moment, I realized that my city was divided in two between the rich and the poor. They no longer understand each other. For me, what we are breathing is not pollution, it is poverty. Through *I Wish I Could Hibernate*, I want the people living in the apartments to witness, understand and empathise with how hard life is in the poor Ger district.

DIRECTOR

Zoljargal PUREVDASH

Zoljargal Purevdash is a Mongolian filmmaker who studied at University of Obirin, Japan. Her first short film, *Over the City, Under the Sky* (2010), won the Cinema Club Award from West Tokyo City Film Festival. She returned to Mongolia and directed two shorts, *Burgundy* (2013) and *Outliers* (2017). She is currently developing her first feature, *I Wish I Could Hibernate*, which won the top award at Talents Tokyo 2017. It later received a grant from the Next Masters Support program. In 2018, Zoljargal attended the Torino Film Lab and Asian Film Academy where she received the President's Special Recognition Award.

PRODUCER

TAN Chui Mui

Tan Chui Mui has produced many films under Da Huang Pictures since 2004, the latest of which is *Family Tour* (2018) by Ying Liang (Associate Producer). Tan has also worked with films by Amir Muhammad, James Lee, Liew Seng Tat, Midi Z, Tsai Ming Liang, Royston Tan and many first films.

Dulguun BAYASGALAN

Dulguun Bayasgalan has worked on various productions since 2012 including the 2013 BIFF New Currents winner, *Remote Control* (2013) by Byamba Sakhya. He co-founded No Wonder Films, an independent production company. *I Wish I Could Hibernate* is their first feature film.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Da Huang Pictures

Da Huang Pictures was established in 2005 by Tan Chui Mui, Amir Muhammad, James Lee and Liew Seng Tat. The company had produced many award-winning films and supported many young Malaysian filmmakers in making short films or first feature films.

No Wonder Films

No Wonder Films is an independent film production company established in 2018. We dream of making bold and exciting new films that capture the lives and stories of Mongolians on film and forge a new identity and voice for Mongolian cinema.