

HAF 01 Among Us



REGION: Taiwan

GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:

Documentary | Digital Format | Mandarin | 120mins

DIRECTOR:

LIN Cheng-Sheng

PRODUCER:

LIN Chi-Chieng

HAF GOALS:

Funds, Sales agents, Pre-sales

BUDGET: US\$ 387,000

SECURED BUDGET: US\$ 174,000

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

2010 *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* (Documentary)

2005 *The Moon Also Rises*

2001 *Betelnut Beauty*

1997 *Murmur of Youth*

1996 *A Drifting Life*

ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

Each autistic person is unique. Yet, despite rare talents in art and musical expression, their lack of understanding of common social behaviours makes them feel lost from time to time.

SYNOPSIS

People with autism have trouble learning how to communicate their emotions and thoughts the way that other people do. To outsiders, they may seem like travellers from the outer space who have become lost on Earth. Nonetheless, many autistic people display a range of strengths and talents that actually come with their conditions. These qualities often are overshadowed by their seemingly indifferent attitude towards others.

Art teacher Han Shu-Hua has been teaching painting to children with autism spectrum disorder for over a decade. Deeply in awe of the unconventional genius these children exhibit, Han founded a shelter institute where the now grown-up autistic children with art talent can keep painting and playing music. The film revolves around four of her students, closely following their daily interactions with their mentors, peers, and family members, revealing their unique ways to express their emotions and needs. Their fierce devotions to their art reveals their bursting passion for life that we all share as humans.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My first encounter with children on the autistic spectrum took place about 10 years ago, resulting in a heartwarming documentary film, *Twinkle Twinkle Little Stars* (2010), that presents the uniqueness of these autistic children. Ten years have passed; these children are all grown up now. What strikes me the most is their persistent lack of empathy towards others, understanding nothing about the unspoken rules of the mainstream society and the nuances of human interactions. To me, it is as if they are a group of lost travellers from the outer space who accidentally get stuck in this world where their inborn uniqueness and mystical qualities become incomprehensible to us common folks. I want to capture how these unique people interact with others while navigating this complex world that is littered with power struggles, conflicts, and pragmatism. Their pureness and single-mindedness actually help us to see right through the absurdity and pretension of all the so-called mainstream norms and values of our society. And it is when we learn how to understand their unique qualities that we can come to appreciate the beauty of diversity that life brings us.

DIRECTOR

LIN Cheng-Sheng

Lin Cheng-Sheng is a director, screenwriter and writer. Born in 1959 on the East Coast of Taiwan, he dropped out of school at sixteen to become an apprentice baker for ten years. At 26, he attended a film production workshop, starting a new career in filmmaking. Lin has made eight

fiction films and eight documentaries subsequently, and has won many awards, including Best Newcomer Director Award, Tokyo IFF (*A Drifting Life*, 1996) and Best Director Award, Berlin Film Festival (*Betelnut Beauty*, 2001). In 2003, Lin met art teacher Han Shu-Hua and her autistic students, and has been making documentaries about them since.

PRODUCER

LIN Chi-Chieng

Producer and scriptwriter Lin Chi-Chieng is a long term working partner of director Lin Cheng-Sheng. He has produced four of director Lin's fiction films. Lin Chi-Chieng also has worked with director / producer Chen Kuo-Fu, Doze Niu Chen-Zer and Wang Tong on many fiction films.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Among We Film Production Co., Ltd.

Among We Film, co-founded by Lin Cheng-Sheng, his wife Han Shu-Hua, and a group of close friends in 2018, is dedicated to promote life education and documentary film productions that focus on the challenges that autistic youths are facing in the real world. This documentary film is one of its latest projects in production.