

HAF 03 Inspirare



REGION: China, Canada

GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:

Documentary | Digital Format | Mandarin | 90mins

DIRECTOR:

KANG Yuqi

PRODUCER:

CAO Xi

Dana KALMEY

HAF GOALS:

Funds, Co-producers, Sales agents, Pre-sales

BUDGET: US\$ 576,640

SECURED BUDGET: US\$ 136,268

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

2017 *A Little Wisdom*

ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

Inspirare is an intimate and unyielding journey with female freediving champion, Jessea Lu, as she faces her biggest fear and attempts to dive over 90 meters on one single breath.

SYNOPSIS

Inspirare takes us into the life and underwater world of Jessea Lu, the first Chinese female freediving champion. In intimate, cinéma vérité-style, we travel with Jessea on her unwavering journey to become a world champion. An accomplished pharmaceutical advisor by day, and top freediver during her free time, Jessea unflinchingly commits herself to everything she does. Two years ago, Jessea's life was nearly cut short when she blacked out 20 meters underwater during her last world-record attempt: a dive of 93 meters. She was lifeless for seven minutes. After coming face-to-face with death, instead of quitting, Jessea decided to continue her training—preparing and sharpening her skills with the rigor of the world's most preeminent competitors. In 2020, we follow Jessea's return to the world freediving stage as she emerges with a bigger, more dangerous goal: breaking the current world record in the same contest where she nearly died just two years ago. Will Jessea reemerge from the abyssal depths with the gold medal this time around?

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

On the surface, this is an extreme sports story about a female athlete. Yet, beneath the surface, Jessea's story connects to each and every woman who strives for success and independence in the world today. Our subject, Jessea Lu, our cinematographer, Cecile Zhang, our producer, Dana Kalmey, and I have combined to create a passionate group of young women who believe in the power of perseverance to overcome obstacles and failures, to break through barriers, and to inspire. This topic is timely because Jessea is embarking on a once-in-a-lifetime journey this year. As a young, female Asian filmmaker at the early stages of my career, I know that females are still being undermined in many fields and profession, including sports; similarly, before the "Time's Up" movement, in the filmmaking world, only about 31% of women had speaking roles in TV and film. Even today, very few cinematic stories portray a promising, minority heroine are also created by minority women. Through my experience and lens, I aim to address these topics and, most importantly, to tell a complex story of a strong-willed Chinese woman, a story of female athletic prowess and courage based solely on a determined woman's inner strength.

DIRECTOR

KANG Yuqi

Documentary director Kang Yuqi earned a film MFA at the School of Visual Arts, NYC, winning the Paula Rhodes Memorial Award. Her first feature, *A Little Wisdom* (2017), won Best Canadian Feature at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, the Grand Jury Award at DOC NYC, Best Camera at Golden Tree Film Festival and Best Feature Film at the Nepal International Film Festival. She was selected for the Talent Lab for TIFF 2018 and one of the five breakthrough directors by the Director Guild of Canada. In 2019, she was named in the "40 under 40" by DOC NYC.

PRODUCER

CAO Xi

Cao Xi is a producer / director whose prize-winning works have premiered worldwide in prestigious film festivals. Projects include *Our Kangding Love Songs* (2016), *The Principal* (2017), *OINK* (2017), *A Little Wisdom* (2017), and *One Night on the Wharf* (2017). *The Dust From Yesterday* is his new fictional project.

Dana KALMEY

Dana Kalmey is a filmmaker, Impact Partners Producing Fellow, and former architect and college soccer coach. Her films include the award-winning *Trapped* (2016), *Well Groomed* (2019), *(Dis)Honesty: The Truth About Lies* (2015), and *E-Team* (2014). She currently directs sports documentaries, *The Last 90 Minutes* and *Tandem*, while producing *Inspirare*.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Inner Mongolia Lanshanyang Cultural Communication LLC

Inner Mongolia Lanshanyang Cultural Communication LLC is a film production company that focuses on producing high-quality film content. Aiming at developing film projects that have international market potential, artistic and commercial values, the company's business covers film development, production, and distribution. In 2017, we produced the feature-length documentary *A Little Wisdom* (2017), which has won several prestigious prizes and also entered worldwide renowned film festivals.