



## **The Great Buddha+**

2017 / drama / black and white, color / 104 minutes

### **Synopsis**

Pickle is a night security guard at a bronze statue factory, who also plays in a band at the funerals when time allows. Earning a meager income, Pickle lives with his elderly mother. His best friend Belly Button works as a recycling collector during the day, and Pickle's biggest pleasure in life is flicking through the porn magazines Belly Button collects in the small hours in the security room. Having late night snacks and watching television are an integral part of their dull lives. One day when the television is broken, their lives are changed forever.

At first, they watch the footages recorded on their boss's dash cam for fun, and soon they get addicted to peeping into the boss's colorful private life and accidentally discover the boss's unspeakable secret. As a result, a ridiculous chain reaction is triggered, and even the statue of Buddha, ready to be sent to the religious festival, is forced to play a role in this chaotic situation.

The story involves gods, the middle-aged men's sexual desire and the conversation between ghosts and humans. Maybe the audience will find it preposterous, but isn't life itself a farce?

## **Director's Statement**

I have always wanted to tell a story about some forgotten place or people in the southern Taiwan. I feel that the comical portrayal of Taiwanese people on television or in film often fail to convey the true nature of our lives. There are many laughable things in our lives, and when they are depicted in the movies, they make us laugh out loud. But somehow I feel that these laughable things actually stem from sadness. We can only look at it directly and then carry on with our lives. If we feel helpless, it may be a way of coping.

## **About the Director**

As a documentary filmmaker, HUANG Hsin-Yao is known for the satirical tone used to portray the dream and the disappointment of youth and the humorous narrative that enhances the preposterous situations one often faces in life. *Bluffing* (2005) won Best Documentary at the Golden Harvest Awards. His visual poem, *Nimbus*, shot by himself, won the Jury Prize at the 2010 Taiwan International Documentary Biennale, Best Cinematography at the Golden Harvest Awards and several other international film awards. In 2010, *Taivalu* bagged the Grand Prize and Best Documentary at the Taipei Film Awards. *The Great Buddha* is HUANG Hsin-Yao's first narrative short film, nominated for Best Live Action Short Film at the 2015 Golden Horse Awards. In 2015, he made *Cloud Nation*, the first Taiwanese documentary that has no narrative, no dialogue, no narration, no music and no protagonist. The 57-minute documentary consists of only 55 shots, depicting the moods of an island with pure image.

## **Director's Filmography**

### **Documentary**

*Cloud Nation* (2015)

Taipei Film Festival

Osaka Asian Film Festival

International Film Festival Agrofilm - International Competition

*A-li 88* (2013)

Taipei Film Festival

International Environmental Film Festival

*Taivalu* (2010)

Taipei Film Awards (Grand Prize, Best Documentary)

*Nimbus* (2009)

*Taichung 9x9* (2006)

*Bluffing* (2005)

*Dog With Man* (2002)

*Seaman* (2000)

## **Feature**

*The Great Buddha+* (2017)

- Taipei Film Festival – International New Talent Competition: Audience Choice Award
- Taipei Film Awards – Grand Prize, Best Narrative Feature, Outstanding Artistic Contribution Awards: Music, Editing, Art Direction
- Toronto International Film Festival – Discovery, NETPAC Award for World or International Asian Film Premiere
- Vancouver International Film Festival – Dragons & Tigers
- Busan International Film Festival – A Window On Asian Cinema
- Kaohsiung Film Festival – Long vs. Short Film
- Tokyo International Film Festival – World Focus
- Golden Horse Awards – won Best New Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Cinematography, Best Original Film Score, Best Original Film Song; nominated for Best Feature Film/Supporting Actor (Leon Dai)/Film Editing/Sound Effects/Art Direction
- Hawaii International Film Festival – Spotlight on Taiwan
- Hong Kong Asian Film Festival – New Talent Award
- San Diego Asian Film Festival – Discoveries
- Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival – Forum
- International Film Festival of India – International Competition
- Singapore International Film Festival – Competition
- Chennai International Film Festival – World Cinema
- Palm Springs International Film Festival – World Cinema Now
- Pune International Film Festival, India
- Tromsø International Film Festival – Competition
- Black Movie Geneva International Independent Film Festival – Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance
- Victoria Film Festival, Canada

- Portland International Film Festival – New Directors
- CinemAsia – Competition, Best First Time Director
- Vilnius Film Festival - Discoveries
- Asian Film Awards – 4 nominations: Best New Director, Best Music, Best Cinematography, Best Sound (won)
- Habitat International Film Festival
- New Directors/New Films, New York, USA
- East Asia Film Festival Ireland
- Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema – Avant-Garde & Genre Competition
- Hong Kong Film Awards – Best Film From Mainland and Taiwan
- IndieLisboa – Mouth of Madness
- Cines Del Sur - Festival de Granada, Spain – Bronze Alhambra
- Cinetopia Film Festival, Michigan USA
- Sydney Film Festival, Australia
- EstAsia Cinema d’Oriente, Reggio Emilia, Italy
- Art Film Fest Košice – Eastern Promises
- Edinburgh International Film Festival – World Perspectives, Best International Feature Competition
- Vancouver Taiwanese Film Festival, Canada
- Filmfest München – CineVision Competition: Special Mention
- Melbourne International Film Festival, Australia
- Atlantic International Film Festival, USA
- Focus On Asia Fukuoka International Film Festival, Japan
- Lychee International Film Festival, Spain – Best Film, Best Director
- Pacific Meridian International Film Festival, Vladivostok, Russia – Competition; won Best Director
- Cape Town International Film Festival – Best Cinematography
- Brisbane International Film Festival, Australia
- St. Louis International Film Festival, USA
- Asian World Film Festival, USA – Competition
- London East Asia Film Festival, UK
- OzAsia Festival, Australia
- Films From the South, Norway

*The Great Buddha* (short, 2014)

- Taipei Film Festival - nominated for Best Short Film
- Golden Horse Awards - nominated for Best Short Film
- Kaohsiung Film Festival
- Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia
- Ozark Short Film Festival
- Minikino Film Week

### **Cast**

Cres CHUANG as Pickle

Bamboo CHEN as Belly Button

Leon DAI as Kevin Huang

CHANG Shao-Huai as Sugar Apple

CHEN Yi-Wen as Congressman Gao

Na Dow as Peanut

TING Kuo-Lin as Miss Yeh

LEE Yung-Feng as Deputy Speaker

Pigheadskin as Singer

JC LEI as Gucci

LIN Mei-Hsiu as Sister

Xiao Liang Ge as Peanut's Uncle

YU An-Shun as Shun

Vincent LIANG as Deputy Commissioner

CHEN Tuo-Shen as Pickle's Uncle

ZHENG Yu-Tong as Valerie

**Producers:** YEH Jufeng, CHUNG Mong-Hong

**Director & Writer:** HUANG Hsin-Yao

**Assistant Director:** WANG Pan-Yun

**Production Supervisor:** SUNG Ming-Chung

**Director of Photography:** Nagao Nakashima

**Focus Puller:** LIU San-Lang

**Graffer:** CHEN Chih-Hsuan

**Art Director:** CHAO Shih-Hao

**Sound Recording:** KUO Li-Chi

**Music:** LIN Sheng-Xiang

**Sound Mixers:** TU Du-Chih & WU Shu-Yao

**Editor:** LAI Hsiu-Hsiung

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