



**OFFICIAL  
SELECTION**

INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
ROTTERDAM  
2024



World Focus



**GOLDEN  
HORSE  
AWARDS**

# Who'll Stop the Rain

A FILM BY  
**SU I-HSUAN**

*A romance film for youth,  
freedom and undeniable love.*



Debut Feature - Romance, Drama - Taiwan - Mandarin Chinese - Colour - Scope - 1.85 - 114 min

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**International Film Festival Rotterdam**  
Harbour



World Focus

**Tokyo International Film Festival**  
World Focus



**Golden Horse Awards**  
Nominated for Best New Performer  
& Best Cinematography



**Taipei Film Festival**  
Best New Performer

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International Sales

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Watch the Trailer





*In 1994, a female student joins a strike and encounters her first love, another girl.*

*She begins to understand the protest is not only for freedom but also an undeniable love.*





## Synopsis

In the 1994 post-martial law period in Taiwan, the students were in the midst of protest. Frustrated by the culture of implicit obedience in school, Chi-wei (19), a female college student, joins the strike to fight for their freedom of expression. During the protest, Chi-wei is slowly attracted by Ching (21), whose boyfriend Kuang (22) is the leader of the student strike. As the passionate protest enflames personal desires, the chemistry between Chi-wei and Ching gradually intensifies. However, Kuang also shows a romantic interest in Chi-wei.

Both the strike and their triangle relationship go wild and vibrant. The harder they love, the more hurt and damage they experience. The power and love struggles are closely intertwined. Eventually, Chi-wei realizes that her desire and emotion are unconstrained as their creative freedom. For her, it's not only a protest for freedom but also an inner fight for her self-awakening.









## Q & A with Director

*"Who'll Stop the Rain" is your debut feature film. Could you share some insights on what inspired you to become a director? What prompted you to enter the film industry?*

Since I was a child, I have had strong feelings for visuals and stories. Back then, I mostly watched Hollywood movies. But when I got exposed to film festivals in college, I started to watch films from various countries around the world and realized that cinema could be so diverse. It was during that time that I developed the idea of making films myself. For me, movies are somewhat like a medium that enables me to engage in a dialogue with the world.

*The film is set against the backdrop of the student strike at the Department of Fine Arts of Chinese Culture University in 1994 Taiwan. Could you share how you transformed this historical event into a narrative?*

This student movement is the longest-running strike in Taiwan's history, yet not many people know about this. Their pursuit of "creative freedom" resonates deeply with me, as I believe that creation serves as an honest reflection of the creator's essence, desires, and identity. Therefore, my initial idea was to merge this concept with love, because I perceive love as honest.







*Striving for creative freedom serves as the starting point of the story. In your view, what symbolic significance does this strike hold?*

Just like I said, this strike is to pursue creative freedom, not to express political demands. Creativity is personal and deeply connected to one's individuality, which is what intrigued me. Unlike the Western emphasis on personal independence, Eastern culture has traditionally highlighted collective interests and conformity. While this phenomenon has maintained harmony within certain systems, it has also led to a loss of individual uniqueness and identity. Therefore, the reason why I choose this strike as the backdrop is to highlight the individuals in a group that fight hard for common good. I want to explore what happens to them and how their identity is shaped in this strike.

*The film explores themes of freedom, identity, and growth. Do you think your story can bring any impact on today's society?*

Taiwan is one of the most democratic countries in Asia, yet the progress on gender issues has only taken place in the past decades. Many in our previous generation still hold deeply entrenched authoritarian beliefs. The youth of the 1990s were more rebellious; they took to the streets to protest against injustices and had a sense of hope for the future (with the possibility to save money, buy estates, and have a good life through hard work). However, the pressures faced by today's youth are even greater, and I feel that these pressures seem to drain their energy. Hence, I hope to use the reflection of the young students from 30 years ago as a mirror to shed some light on contemporary struggles.



*The film is set in the 1990s. Why did you choose this era to present themes related to homosexual relationships?*

In the 90s, Taiwan was just beginning to witness the awakening of female consciousness, and discussions around LGBTQ+ issues were still very conservative. The individuals who identified as LGBTQ+ during that time experienced a lot of suppression and hardship. I feel like I chose this era to connect the authenticity of creation with desires. Even under societal pressures, you cannot resist the recognition within yourself. The desire to love someone is much like the desire to create – it's something that cannot be resisted or ignored.

*The interaction between the two female characters is important in the movie. What prompted and influenced the decision to cast Lily Wei and Yeh Hsiao-Fei for these roles?*

Actually, in the initial stages of the project, I proposed the match of these two actresses because they were the closest to my imagination of Chi-wei and Ching. Later on, during the casting process, these two individuals were brought together, and it felt like a perfect match. Moreover, from the moment they first met, they seemed like old friends. I think that kind of chemistry is truly rare.







*For Kuang, the only main male character, what aspects did you consider when designing the role?*

Kuang is a typical boy. He desires to control everything, but seems to be a bit clumsy on his feelings. Perhaps he resembles the males of the 90s. He needs to balance the confidence of an intellectual leader with his interactions with the two female characters. This character was finalized last.

*The movie shows the awakening, resistance, and growth of women, including their defiance against patriarchal authority, the pursuit of freedom, and exploration of sexuality. How did you approach these feminist issues while crafting the screenplay and integrating them into the storyline?*

I've always paid attention to feminist issues. Women's struggles have always faced patriarchal challenges. Eastern women are often expected to be obedient and submissive, unable to truly be themselves, and often treated as appendant to men. Even though Taiwan is one of the most gender-progressive countries in Asia, deep-rooted patriarchy is still evident everywhere – it's also a form of authoritarianism. As most characters I create are centered around women and these issues are omnipresent, I naturally integrated them into storylines. Beyond the external struggles, aren't the actions of the student movement leaders also a kind of patriarchy?



*As a female creator, do you think the creative environment in Taiwanese society is affected by the patriarchal system? And is the process of presenting gender diversity issues particularly difficult?*

I believe that's definitely the case to some extent. In Taiwan, the majority of well-known directors are male, and the number of female directors is significantly lower than their male counterparts, so we naturally lack a female perspective. Moreover, films that can be released in the theater and at the same time truly be identified as "female-oriented" might only account for two or three per year. This ratio is the most challenging aspect for me as a female creator, as our creative environment hasn't fully recognized the necessity of incorporating female perspectives. I think this is an important issue to improve.







*The movie depicts the change of feelings between the two main female characters. Does this transformation relate to your own self-discovery and exploration of identity as the director?*

The character design for Chi-wei was intentional in breaking away from the typical portrayal of women in the 1990s, aiming to make her more contemporary. During the 90s, society's attitude toward gender issues remained conservative, and women's exploration of their sexuality still leaned towards seeking validation or denying their own experiences (like Ching). However, Taiwan passed same-sex marriage legislation in 2019. I've always wanted to tell a same-sex story from 30 years ago with a modern perspective. Therefore, in Chi-wei's characterization, she is someone who follows her inner feelings. She doesn't view her attraction to the same gender as wrong, which aligns more closely with today's outlook. This portrayal also symbolizes how modern women (Chi-wei) help women from 30 years ago (Ching) in breaking free from traditional confines.

*Do you have any plans for your next project or genre you would like to try?*

I have so many film ideas in mind, it's just a matter of which one can be developed first. Even though I find writing romantic films quite challenging, the next project I'm currently developing will still revolve around romance, but with a stronger emphasis on the psychological aspects. It aims to explore the distinct perceptions of love between men and women with some futuristic elements. I also hope to collaborate with actors from Japan. Meanwhile, my other project delves back into societal issues and tells the stories of the underprivileged in Taipei, depicting the wealth gap between rich and poor in bustling Taipei.









Director

SU I-HSUAN

SU I-Hsuan is a Taipei-based writer and director. Her 2018 TV Film "Where The Sun Don't Shine" won Best TV Film, Best Lead Actor, and New Actor in the 2018 Golden Bell Awards. Her first feature film "Who Will Stop The Rain" was selected for the 2018 Talents Tokyo, Produire au Sud workshop Taipei and the 2022 Venice Gap-Financing Market.

*Detention (Netflix Series / 2020)*

*Where The Sun Don't Shine (TV film / 2018)*



# Cast



**Lily Lee** as Chi-wei

*Who'll Stop the Rain (film / 2023)*

*Born to be Human (film / 2021) Osaka Asian Film Festival - Yakushi Pearl Award*

*Detention (Netflix Series / 2020)*



**Yeh Hsiao-Fei** as Ching

*Who'll Stop the Rain (film / 2023) Taipei Film Awards - Best New Talent*



**Roy Chang** as Kuang

*Little Blue (film / 2022)*





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WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY **SU I-HSUAN**

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EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **LIN SHIH-KEN**

PRESENTED BY **SUZ CREATIVE STUDIO, HOPE CONTENT MARKETING CO., LTD.** PRESENTERS **SU I-HSUAN, ANGEL WEN CHEN**

PRODUCED BY **SUZ CREATIVE STUDIO** CO-PRODUCED BY **OUTLAND FILM PRODUCTION CONTENT DIGITAL FILM CO., LTD.**

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COMPOSER **THOMAS FOGUENNE** COLORIST **HUNG WEN-KAI** SOUND DESIGNERS **AGNES LIU, NING TSENG**

