



MADAM PHUNG'S LAST JOURNEY

A FILM BY NGUYỄN THỊ THẨM

An Icarus Films Release

Theatrical Premiere Engagements

November 12-18, 2015 at Anthology Film Archives, New York

November 12-18, 2015 at Facets Cinematheque, Chicago

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LOGLINE

Where does real life end and theatre begin? Fiesty Madam Phung and her troupe of gay and cross-dressing singers travel through rural Vietnam, sparking fascination and hostility from locals along their route.

SYNOPSIS

"I saw beautiful fags praying, and felt like running away," explains former monk Madam Phung. After leaving the monastery, Madam Phung, a canny businesswoman, got her start as a singer and saved her money in the form of gold bars she buried in the ground. Now the den mother to a largely gay and transgender troupe, she berates them when they drink or fight too much, warns them to stay out of trouble and deals with local police and hostile locals when necessary.

Theirs is the classic carny existence: long hours on the road; setting up and tearing down the stage; exhorting the crowd to buy raffle tickets and play games; putting on a show. But the people we meet in MADAM PHUNG'S LAST JOURNEY are not your ordinary fairground workers.

This verite documentary takes viewers on a year-long ride with an itinerant troupe of cross-dressing performers, led by Madam Phung, as they travel the remote southern regions and central highlands of Vietnam.

MADAM PHUNG'S LAST JOURNEY also captures Madam Phung at a critical moment in her life. Now 40, she is haunted by fears of ageing, concerned with fixing bad karma, and worried about what might happen to her troupe after she is gone.

From dressing rooms to tour buses to on-stage performances, director Nguyen Thi Tham's feature-length debut conveys the remarkable rapport that she developed with the performers. Her subjects share their fears, expose their vulnerabilities, and talk about the challenges of being gay in Vietnam, from employment discrimination to facing audiences who might just as easily throw rocks at the performers as try to hit on them during the show.

SELECTED FESTIVALS

Margaret Mead Film Festival, American Museum of Natural History, USA
DOXA Documentary Film Festival, Canada
Cinéma du Réel, France
Special Mention, ChopShots Jakarta
Festival de Films Documentaires Lasalle, France
Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival, Myanmar
European-Vietnamese Film Festival, Hanoi
Taiwan Women's Film Association, Taipei City
Q! Film Festival Jakarta, Indonesia
FreedomFilmFest, Malaysia
Hanoi Mini Documentary Film Festival, Vietnam
Luang Prabang Festival, Laos
Pink Film Festival, Philippines
A propos d'Elles, Toulouse, France
Trace de Vies, Clermont-Ferrand, France
Festival Visor, Mexico
Festival LGBT Cheries-Cheri, France
Tampere Film Festival, Finland

FILM CREDITS

English title: *Madam Phung's Last Journey*
Original title: *Chuyen Di Cuoi Cung Cua Chi Phung*
Language: Vietnamese
Subtitles: English
Country of Production: Vietnam
Year of Production: 2014
Year of Release: 2015
Running time: 86 minutes

Director: Nguyen Thi Tham
Writer: Nguyen Thi Tham
Cinematographer: Nguyen Thi Tham
Editors: Aurelie Ricard & Phạm Thị Hảo
Producers: André Van In & Sylvie Blum

With: Chị Bích Phụng, Chị Mỹ Hằng, Chị Ngọc Phụng
Í Ệ ,The,Cu Lý, Sương, Tâm,Tuấn, Lan Anh, bé Quỳnh
Gia đình cô Hoa Nô ,Gia đình cô Hoa,Duy Cường

Sound: Đào Thi Thơ, Nguyễn Huỳnh Bảo Anh & Lan Anh
Color correction: Rémi Berge
Sound effects: Daniel Gries
Sound design and mix: Laurent Thomas
Post production supervisor: Vincent Legrain
Production manager: Vincent Encontre
Production assistant: Marion Tixier
Production company: Varan Viet Nam Production
Administration: Lê Tuyết Nhung

Team: Trần Phương Thảo, Đoàn Hồng Lê, Nguyễn Thị Thắm,
Phạm Thị Hảo & Swann Dubus
Advising Administration: Chantal Roussel
Co-produced by: Ateliers Varan
Administration: Manon Blanfumet & Noémie Guillou
Technician: Frédéric Cueff
Communication: Julien Guignans & Clémence Pleuvry
In co-production with: INA France
Media content division: Frédéric Schlesinger
TV Production: Fabrice Blancho
Production manager: Olivier Gallais
TV Production & Post-production manager: Francisco Camino
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DocNet Southeast Asia
ARTE France
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