

SNAKESKIN

2014

Directed by Daniel Hui

Produced by Bee Thiam Tan, Joana Gusmão, Pedro Fernandes Duarte

Link: <https://vimeo.com/101276346>

Password: danielhui

Running length: 105 minutes

Synopsis: In 2066, a survivor of an enigmatic cult recounts his country's traumatic history and the events leading to the rise and fall of the cult. Through his reminiscence, ghosts from 2014 and before appear as witnesses. Part dream documentary, part city symphony, this film traces the lineage of oppression as inscribed in Singapore's landscape and collective unconscious.

Director's statement:

The 1950s is a very little known era in Singapore history. It was a time when Singapore had the most vibrant film industry in the region. It was also a time of huge political unrest.

I first became interested in making a film about the 50's because I fell in love with P. Ramlee's songs. P. Ramlee was a huge icon in Southeast Asia at the time, because he wrote, directed, and starred in his own films, in addition to writing all these wonderful music. I thought of telling the story of Singapore through his songs and movies. I especially wanted to discuss our reputation of being a docile, self-centered, and apolitical people.

But as I was doing my research, I realized that Singapore has had a long history of civil disobedience, culminating in the 1950s. This history has been buried by the ruling party in Singapore, because it still reflects negatively on them. Talking about this history today is still politically sensitive in Singapore. I was particularly interested in the cinema of this period because I found many parallels between its ideals and the ideals of activists and politicians at that time. Both wanted a racially-integrated society that is independent and no longer colonized.

Unfortunately, Singapore history has only proven to be the opposite.

Researching this history has been really saddening, because of all the lost opportunities and abandoned paths my country could have taken.

My film is about all these lost opportunities. It is about how history could have turned out. It is about the future, not the past. It is about ghosts, shadows, hallucinations, and dreams. It will be about the submerged unconscious of my nation.

Daniel Hui Director's Biography:

Daniel Hui is a filmmaker and writer. A graduate of the film/video program in California Institute of the Arts, his films have been screened at film festivals in Rotterdam, Hawaii, Manila, Seoul, Bangkok, and Vladivostok. He is the contributing editor to the Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema (NETPAC) online journal, Cinemas of Asia. He is also one of the founding members of 13 Little Pictures, an independent film collective whose films have garnered critical acclaim all around the world. He recently won the Pixel Bunker Award for International New Talent at the Doclisboa International Film Festival for his debut feature film, *Eclipses*

Daniel Hui Filmography:

Animal Spirits, (2013), Eclipses (2011), No Images (2011), Rumah Sendiri (2010), Sayang (2010), One Day in June (2010), Wanderlust (2009), Dreams of Youth (2008), The Bracelet (2007)