

A man and a woman are walking away from the camera along a rocky coastline. The man is wearing a light blue shirt and dark pants, and the woman is wearing a light-colored dress. They are walking on a path that is partially covered by large, dark rocks. To their left is a dense wall of green foliage, and to their right is the ocean. The sky is a pale blue with some light clouds. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

As You Were

a film by Liao Jiekai



Synopsis

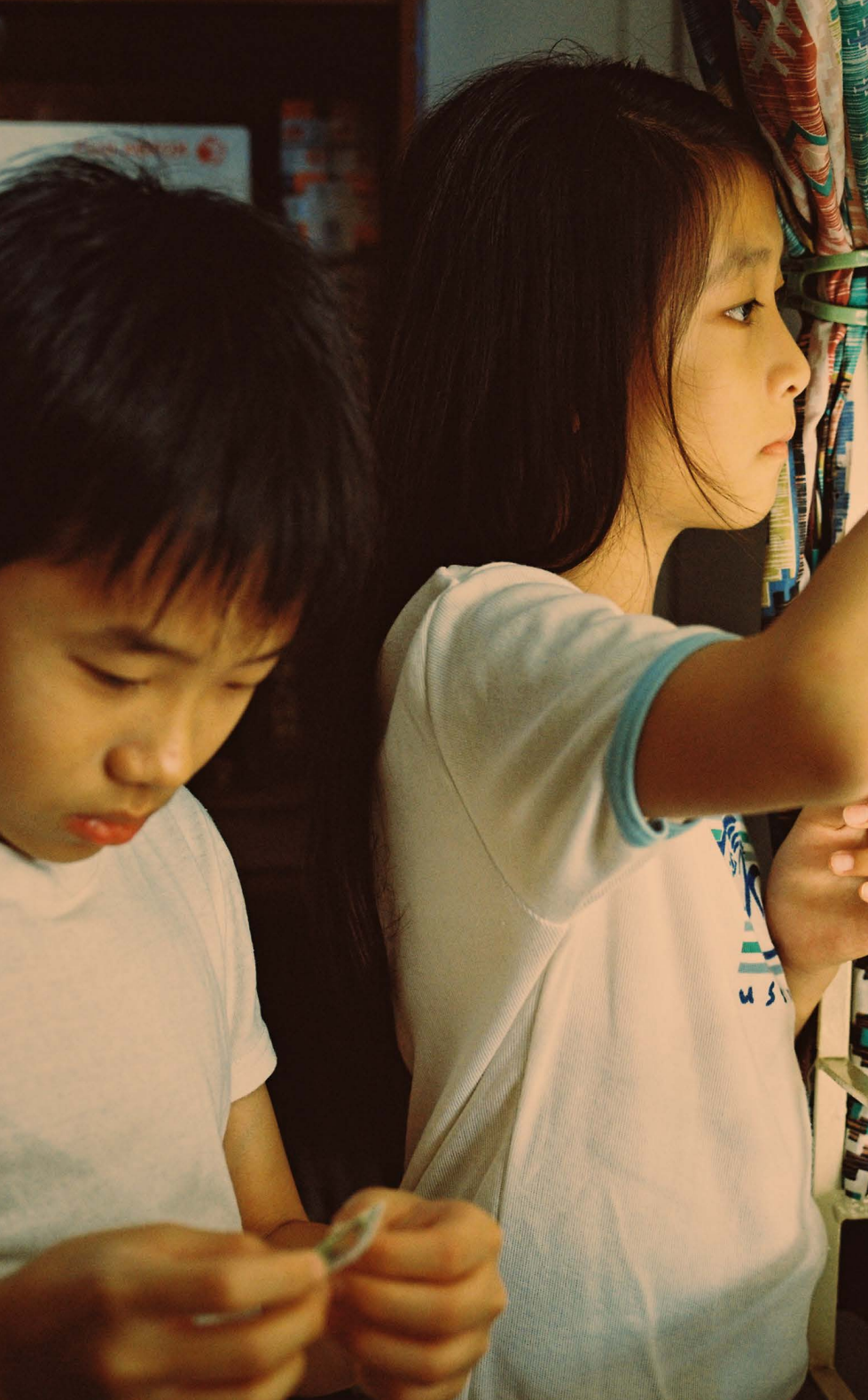
On an idyllic island south of Singapore, Guohui and Peiling spend their last moments together as their relationship falls apart.

The film is set in contemporary Singapore and structured into three distinct chapters. Through the country's ever-changing landscape, the two lovers realise that what is transitory can also be eternal.



I. The Hill of Misfits

In St. John's Island, a tiny island south of Singapore, a uniformed group of delinquents undergoes a rehabilitative programme of hard labour and discipline. One day, one of them takes a leap of faith to break out of the confines of the regime. He swims across the sea towards the metropolitan city of Singapore under a sky of sweeping lights and exploding fireworks.



II. Song of Tomorrow

Guohui and Peiling are childhood sweethearts who meet again after years of being apart. Soon after their reunion they become a couple. One day, Peiling visits Guohui on the island campsite where he works as a counsellor for the uniformed group. Her heart is heavy and unsure - all the years spent apart have gradually torn the fabric of their relationship. Her trip becomes a final swansong for the couple, as memories of their childhood together slowly return.



III. As You Were

Rachel is a singer who comes to the spend some time alone. She meets Guohui over at sea, and the two lonely souls are drawn together. Under the night sky, the inhabitants of the island get together for a campfire by the beach. Through the fire, Guohui sees a phantom image of Peiling - a past never to return, a future that can never be.

A woman with dark hair tied in a ponytail, wearing a sleeveless patterned dress, stands on a sandy beach. She is looking out towards the ocean. The background shows gentle waves and a clear blue sky.

Director's Statement

After living in America for three years, I returned to Singapore only to find a different city from the one in which I grew up. Nostalgia has always been part of a natural reaction towards a place with a disappearing past. In this film, I chose to use romance as the vehicle for a story of change - I want to tell the story of two lovers who had to part because they no longer understand each other. Hearts have changed and memories have been displaced.

Water is often used as a symbol of change. But for me, it is the constant that unites the various moments/fragments in the film, from the childhood heartlands to the metropolitan city of Singapore - the water in the swimming pools where the lovers first learned to swim as children, the water they used to separate stamps from envelopes, the water in the sea that separates Singapore and the island. And finally the water that keeps them afloat but also pulls them under.

Part of the film is set on St. John's Island, a tiny island south of mainland Singapore with an oppressive past (it was at various points in modern history, a quarantine center, a penal colony and a drug rehabilitation center). The fictional narrative of a uniformed group living on the island was inspired by the past and hints at a state where every citizen is conditioned to be a patriot. This is a state where behaviors and ideologies are manufactured, and those who think otherwise are frowned upon.

Director's Biography

Liao Jiekai is a filmmaker and artist based in Singapore. He is a founding member of the film collective 13 Little Pictures. Since 2005, he has directed several shorts, most notably *Before the Wedlock House* which won the Best Documentary Short at the 2nd Salaya International Documentary Film Festival. His 2010 debut feature film, *Red Dragonflies*, won the Special Jury Prize at the Jeonju International Film Festival and was selected for competition at various film festivals such as Buenos Aires, Santiago, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tokyo.

Jiekai was conferred the Young Artist Award for Film by the National Arts Council of Singapore in 2012. He won the Credit Suisse Artist Commissioning Award for his 16mm film installation, *Brother's Quarters*, which was presented at the President's Young Talent Exhibition at the Singapore Art Museum in 2013. In the same year, he was invited to participate in the Singapore Biennale with the video installation *Bukit Orang Salah*. *As You Were* is his second feature film.



Technical Specifications

Runtime: 92 minutes

Aspect Ratio 1.33:1

Screening Format: DCP

Sound Format: Dolby Pro Logic

Language: English, Mandarin, Malay

Subtitles: English

Country of Production: Singapore

Key Cast

Guohui	Josh Lai
Peiling	Eshley Gao
Singer	Cheryl Tan
Runaway Youth	Jerome Chee
Young Guohui	Kieron Tan
Young Peiling	Tan Xuan Ying

Key Crew

Director / Writer / Editor	Liao Jiekai
Producer / Editor	Tan Bee Thiam
Producer	Leon Cheo
Associate Producer	Lyn-Anne Loy
Screenwriter	Gladys Ng
Voice-over Writer	Chiang Weiliang
Cinematographer	Looi Wan Ping
Production Designer / Editor	Vivien Koh
Production Designer	Tan Jingliang
Production Designer	Yeo Siew Hua
Sound Designer	Lim Ting Li
Music Composer	Matt Kelly

a 13 Little Pictures Production
in association with White Light

13 Little Pictures

Contact Person: Tan Bee Thiam
Address: 6 Kovan Close,
Singapore 548199
Tel: +65 97689986
Email: bthiam@gmail.com
<http://www.13littlepictures.com>

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