



DALUYONG STUDIOS
ODDPUPPY PRODUCTIONS
MOMO FILM CO
PERENNIAL LENS
presents

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With the support of SINGAPORE FILM COMMISSION HESSEN FILM UND MEDIEN PURIN PICTURES ASIAN CINEMA FUND DMZ DOCS DANCE FILMS ASSOCIATION INSIDEOUT REFOCUS FUNDING SHEFFIELD DOCFEST MEETMARKET CANNES DOCS BY THE SEA FIRST CUT LAB

GENRE

Documentary Feature

LOGLINE

10s Across the Borders is a hybrid dance film and observational documentary following the three trailblazers in the underground ballroom scenes of Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines. We witness their journeys as they hold on to both their ballroom and birth families, connect with the subculture's origins in New York City, and build a flourishing queer community across Southeast Asia.



SYNOPSIS

If the world doesn't accept you and your kind, trailblaze a world that does. Inspired by the Black and Latinx underground Ballroom culture of New York, Sun, Teddy, and Xyza create Ballroom communities in Southeast Asia as safe havens from homophobia, transphobia, color discrimination and HIV stigma.

In Malaysia, Teddy runs away from his father's violence and fights for his right to be himself in a deeply homophobic country. Meanwhile, he still hungers for a father's love, and Ballroom is the place to seek out a new father.

Filipina Xyza dreams of being a model but is told that it is impossible because of her dark skin. In international Ballroom communities she finally finds her confidence. She comes home with a fire to build a community across the Philippines where everyone can feel beautiful and loved, regardless of color, sexuality and gender identity.

In Thailand, Ballroom is what helps Sun to make sense of his complex history as the queer mixedrace child of a sex worker, and of his fractured biological and foster families in Thailand and Norway. Buddhism and Ballroom merge in Sun's creative language as a performance artist, as he speaks up to honor the lives of his sex worker mother, transwomen, and others whose voices are rarely heard.



Profiles Aurora sun Labeija Teddy Oricci Xyza Pinklady Mizrahi

Director

SZE-WEI CHAN

Producers

ALEMBERG ANG SZE-WEI CHAN SI EN TAN YASMIN C. RAMS SOPHIA SIM

Executive Producers
GUGI GUMILANG
NATALYN ANG

concept

AURORA SUN LABEIJA Chan Sze-Wei

Directors of Photography TEY CLAMOR L.F.C. GRACE BAEY VITA SPIESS

Editors

REINER KRAUSZ B.F.S. SZE-WEI CHAN

Sound Design

ANDREAS RADZUWEIT

Music

PANOS CHOUNTOULIDIS Koppi Mizrahi **Countries of Production**

PHILIPPINES SINGAPORE GERMANY INDONESIA

Shooting Locations

MANILA AND DAGUPAN, PHILIPPINES BANGKOK AND , THAILAND KUALA LUMPUR AND , MALAYSIA NEW YORK, USA BERGEN, NORWAY

Production Date **SEPTEMBER 2025**

Language

FILIPINO

MANDARIN CHINESE

MALAY

THAI

NORWEGIAN

ENGLISH

Subtitles

ENGLISH

Duration

103 MINUTES

Aspect Ratio

16:9

Video

DIGITAL 4K, 24 FPS, COLOR

Sound

5.1

DIRECTOR'S PROFILE SZE-WEI CHAN (they/them)



Sze is a documentary and experimental dance filmmaker who observes alternate histories, identities and social issues as expressed in the body, movement and art. They are also a choreographer, arts journalist, parent and activist for LGBTQIA+ and artists' rights. Sze's dance and experimental films have screened across Europe, the Americas and Asia since 2015. Mentors include Tan Pin Pin (Singapore) and Alex Reuben (UK), and they are a member of the Cinemovement Collective (Singapore) founded by Jeremy Chua and Elysa Wendi. Their first feature has been presented at Cannes Docs, Sheffield MeetMarket, and Poitiers Film Festival and will have its world premiere at the Busan International Film Festival

in their Documentary Competition section. When not making art, they are also a specialist on the legal integration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

CAST



AURORA SUN LABEIJA / Phitthaya Phaefuang "Sun" (he/him)

IG @aurora_sun_labeija @kikihouseofsun @officialhouseoflabeija

Aurora Labeija is the trailblazer of Thailand ballroom scene. He was the first one from Thailand ball scene to walk balls, snatch trophies, teach voguing and judge abroad. He started the Thai scene in 2018. Known as Aurora Labeija in the major ballroom scene, Aurora joined The Royal House of Labeija in 2022. From 2015 to 2022, he was a part of house of Amazon. Aurora started the first Thai Kiki House in 2018, the Kiki House of Sun. Today the Kiki House has members in Thailand, Vietnam, Germany, Singapore and Indonesia.

He has been invited to judge in Japan, The Phillippines, Germany, China (Shanghai, Beijing, Hangzhou), Singapore, Vietnam, Poland and Indonesia. He has over 20 trophies in Vogue femme, Old way, New Way, All American runway, European Runway, runway with a twist, Butch Queen Realness and sex siren.

For Aurora it is important to make ballroom culture more accessible in Thailand as there are few opportunities for Thai queer people and the marginalized Thai people in general. Through Buddhist practices, Aurora tries to look deeply at the struggles and challenges that his South East Asian friends and family faces, and try to make ballroom more accessible through free sessions and classes, judging for free or judge and giving classes at local rates. When he can, he also tries to find job opportunities for the ballroom children in Thailand. Sun also works with with autistic and Down syndrome communities in Thailand, and shares voguing with them as well.



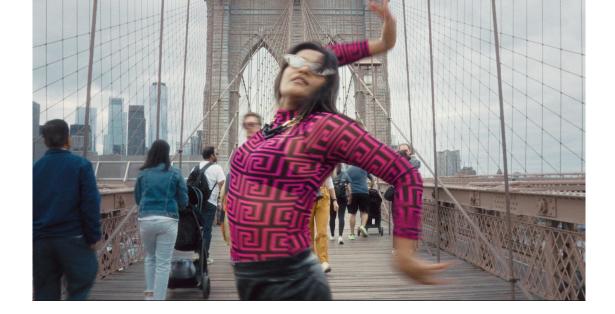
TEDDY ORICCI / ONG XING KAI TEDDY (he/they)

> IG Oteddyoricci FB Oong.teddy

Teddy is the Trailblazer of the Malaysian Ballroom scene. He is a multi-talented dancer, commentator, model and performer based in Kuala Lumpur. Teddy began b-boy as a teenager in Melaka and appeared on Malaysian national TV in the Astro Battleground series from 2012-2015, coming in 1st runner up in 2014 and 2015. He went on to the finals of street dance championships in the USA, and won Allstyles and Waacking competitions in Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan. In 2017, his choreography to the song "Faded" went viral on Youtube, with over 2.5 million views.

Teddy encountered Voguing while performing in the Japanese performance platform Dance Dance Asia in 2015-2016. He founded the first Kiki House in Malaysia in 2018, the Kiki House of Neverland, which grew to include members in the Philippines, Thailand and Taiwan up till its closure in 2024. In 2019, Teddy became the first member of the Iconic House of Prodigy in Asia. In 2022, Teddy joined the Royal House of Nina Oricci as Asia Overseer. Since 2019 he has snatched multiple grand prizes in Vogue Fem, Hands Performance and sex siren categories across Asia, as well as in New York and Paris.

Teddy continues to battle and perform around the world, with his uniquely acrobatic, gender-bending blend of multiple voguing styles, b-boy, popping, locking, capoeira, muay thai and a constantly expanding vocabulary of dance styles. He advocates HIV+ awareness in Malaysia, where HIV+ individuals continue to be stigmatised.



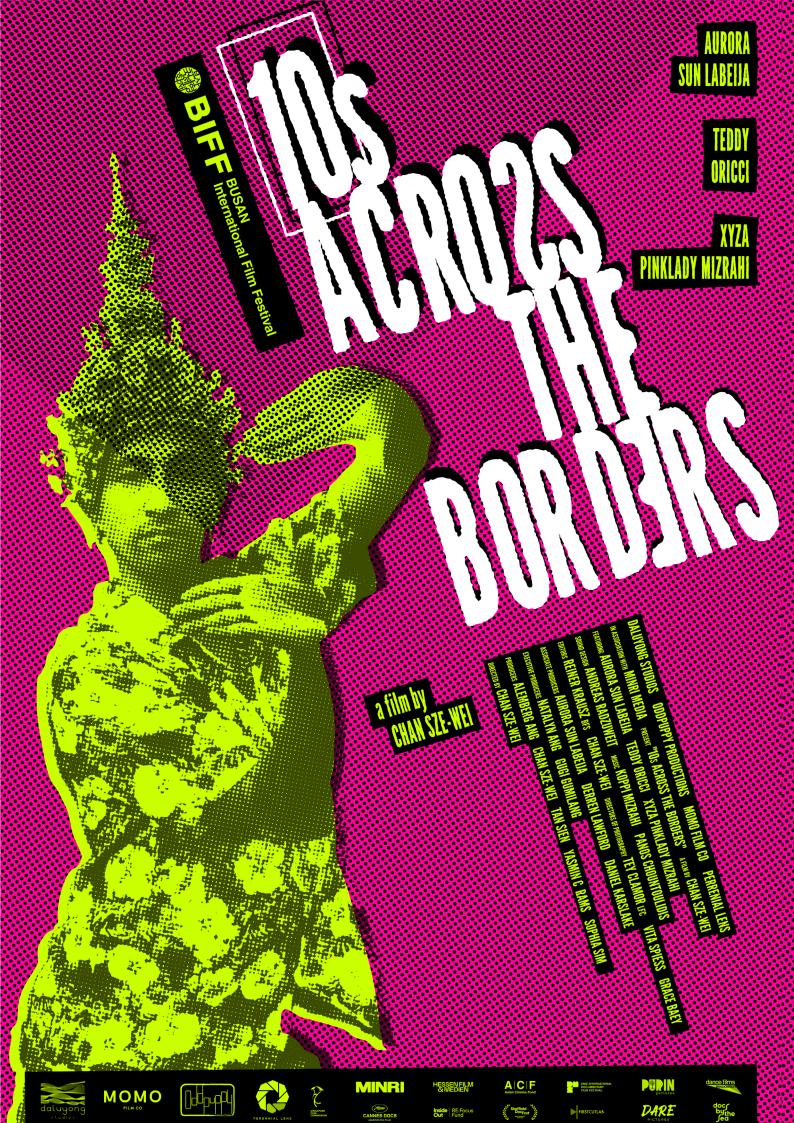
XYZA PINKLADY MIZRAHI / XYZA RAGUNJAN (she/her)

IG @xyzamizrahi @houseofmizrahi.ph @iconichouseofmizrahi FB @xyza.ragunjan

Xyza Ragunjan also known as Mother Xyza Mizrahi is the Trailblazer of the Philippine Ballroom Scene and the International Mother of the Iconic House of Mizrahi. She is also a member of The Iconic Kiki House of Pinklady. She is a movement artist, choreographer and creative director. She started her career as a professional street dance artist for around 15 years. She was a member of The Philippine Allstars where she competed internationally and performed with several local and international artists. She also has several Music Videos and commercials in the Philippines. She also has been constantly judging different All Style battles across the Philippines, and recently appeared as a Wild Card for Redbull Dance Your Style National Finals Philippines 2025

Xyza found her love for voguing and the ballroom culture (in 2015). She walks several categories such as Old Way, Best Dressed, Runway, and Womens Performance but her main categories are Face and New Way. The producer of several balls in the Philippines - The Labyrinth Ball, The Eclipse Ball, The Sweet Valentine ball and The Rainbow Ball to name a few. She elevates the ballroom community in the country by spreading the love and knowledge for the craft not only by organizing events, talks and workshops but also performing in several local fashion shows, working with different artists and brands, and by consistently supporting activities of the LGBTQIA+ community. Now she has been judging several balls in and outside the country while still constantly walking and representing her categories as much as she can.

Her vast experience both in the underground dance community and the industry is her instrument in becoming a nurturing community leader advocating and highlighting both women and queer expressions through podcasts, and other projects as well.



DIRECTOR'S INTENTION

In 2017, my friend Sun invited me to document the Vogue and Ballroom communities in Southeast Asia. Sun had a dream to build a regional community with his new friends including Teddy and Xyza. As a dance filmmaker and LGBTQIA+ activist, I jumped at the opportunity. Sun and I developed the concept for this film together, from an insider's perspective.

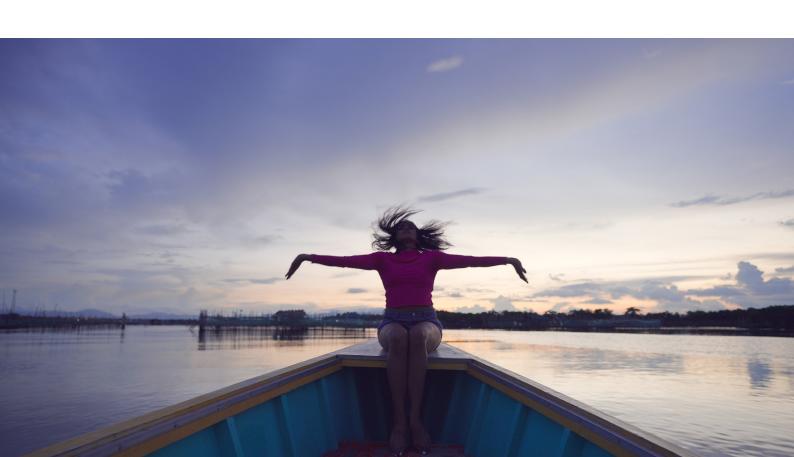
This first feature turned out to be the project I had been preparing for my whole life. I've had different lives - as a disillusioned diplomat in Southeast Asian regional cooperation, a contemporary dancer and improviser, a conceptual choreographer, a dance filmmaker, arts journalist and a queer feminist activist and community organiser. All of this has given me the tools to tell this story.

I am currently on my own bumpy journey as a gender nonconforming artist, parent, and human being. I know what it means to be out of place, to be misunderstood and to constantly fight for my right to exist. It has always been my found families that have literally saved my life.

I was deeply touched when our protagonists saw their own struggles reflected in different aspects of the Ballroom communities in North America. They were moved to tears when they realised that they were not alone in their struggles stemming from living in conservative societies riddled with homophobia, transphobia, racism and colorism, sexism and discrimination against the poor, people living with HIV/AIDS and sex workers.

"10s Across the Borders" shows that the protagonists' devotion to their adopted culture goes far beyond imitating an attractive meme. Their practice of Ballroom is unlike the many other popular art forms with roots in social movements, which have been stripped of their essence in the wake of globalisation. Through the house system, Ballroom continues to strive to maintain its relevance, even on its periphery in Southeast Asia.

The last 7 years' journey with this community has changed my life forever. These deeply human stories are connectors of worlds and hearts.





AN INTERVIEW WITH FILMMAKER, SZE-WEI CHAN

HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE IDEA FOR THIS FILM?

In 2017, my friend Sun and I were in a contemporary dance project together, covered in coloured chalk dust on a rooftop. He saw me documenting with a camera in my hand and asked if I knew any filmmakers who might be interested in the Vogue and Ballroom communities in Asia. I didn't need to think. "Me, bitch!"

During the next year Sun educated me about Ballroom culture's history and growth in Asia, and he took me to attend and document balls around the region. From 2018-2022, Sun and I brainstormed, while I shot hours and hours of development footage on my little camcorder.

While in an online doc lab, Alemberg Ang in the Philippines heard my informal pitch and shot me a text message immediately. He took a gamble on us unknowns, and became the cornerstone who brought together our wonderful coproducers and resources and made possible this mad plan to shoot in 5 countries and 8 cities/towns on a shoestring (and all the other places that sadly didn't make it into the film). Finally, in 2022 we began shooting with the concept and team that has seen us through to the completion of 10s Across the Borders.

ON WORKING WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

After I jumped onboard in 2018, Sun introduced me immediately to fellow trailblazers Teddy from Malaysia and Xyza from the Philippines, and they welcomed this project with open arms and invited me to film with their communities. We met the Ballroom children of Sun, Teddy and Xyza, communities in Singapore and Vietnam, and so many fascinating individuals with powerful stories, and explored many different angles and central characters....

In the end we settled on the stories of the struggle of Sun, Teddy and Xyza as the first individuals in Southeast Asia who each began their journey alone in their home countries and created thriving communities around them. We also decided to follow the threads that show paths of Ballroom's legacies from its origins into its future: Xyza and Teddy's connections to their Major Houses in New York City and Sun's journey to bring together his personal history and Ballroom culture for his first solo performance premiere in Norway.

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO FOCUS ON UNDERGROUND BALLROOM CULTURE?

From the first ball I attended in 2018, I fell in love with the powerful energy, collective activation and struggle of these communities. While learning about Ballroom and the communities in Southeast Asia, I saw that my new friends' devotion to their adopted culture goes far beyond imitating an attractive meme. Their practice of Ballroom is unlike the many other popular art forms with roots in social movements, which have been stripped of their essence in the wake of globalisation. Through the house system, Ballroom continues to strive to maintain its relevance, even on its periphery in Southeast Asia.

At the same time I was fascinated by how each of the communities makes this adopted culture their own. They channel their own local cultural identities and histories, and ballroom becomes an avenue for them to celebrate identities which are discriminated against or even criminalised against in their lives - gay and trans identities, gender fluid presentation, colour racism, indigenous identities, HIV+ status, and the celebration of sex work.

It resonated profoundly with me when I saw Teddy and Sun moved to tears on different occasions at the realization that they were not alone in their struggles of living in societies riddled with discrimination.

Their international and local ballroom families have inspired them, and others like them, to become staunch allies of BIPOC struggles and champions of LGBTQIA+ rights, joining movements to abolish homophobic laws. In Ballroom new communities are growing across a region that has long been fragmented by colonization. We make this film to shine a light on this amazing culture of activism and allyship, along with the sense of empowerment and belonging it brings. Hopefully, with 10s Across the Borders, we can help transcend ballroom's impact far beyond its communities.

Of course, Ballroom isn't perfect. The communities and houses and personal relationships can be turbulent as each individual struggles with their wounds. Their humanity resonates with a Chinese saying I grew up with: "Every family has a difficult Sutra it must recite." The inevitable tensions and the tea bring a dimension of humanity and vulnerability to these stories that makes me care all the more about broken humans trying to heal each other and themselves. They make me recognise that I am broken too and I can grow.

YOU'RE NOT FROM THE BALLROOM COMMUNITY. WHAT GAVE YOU THE CONFIDENCE TO MAKE THIS FILM ABOUT THEM?

This first feature has turned out to be the project I have been preparing for my whole life without knowing it. I've had different lives - as a disillusioned diplomat in Southeast Asian regional cooperation, a contemporary dancer and

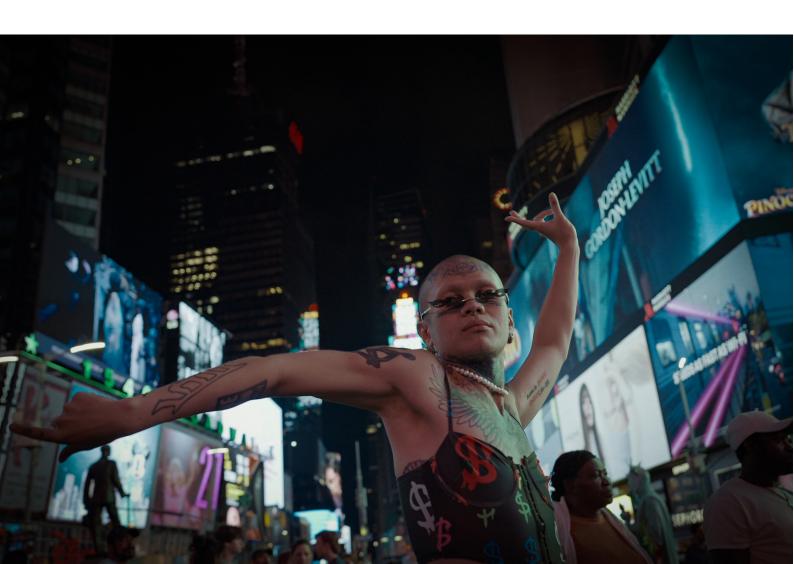
improviser, a conceptual choreographer, a dance filmmaker, arts journalist and a queer feminist activist, community organiser and queer parent.

When working with queer community support groups in the 2000s, I often wondered how to bridge gay, lesbian and trans communities that often had gaps of trust. I also wondered how to reach individuals who needed support the most - who were isolated, or younger, or who had less education, or who felt stigmatised - individuals who did not easily have access to information about community resources, and did not feel comfortable calling counselling hotlines, or attending support groups or talks mainly catered for privileged queers. I was amazed to see how Ballroom draws in and empowers so many across different identities and divides, and I admire it deeply for that.

While an outsider, I feel that my checkered journey has given me a unique perspective to approach this community, respectfully, compassionately and also within a wider context that can help these stories and messages to be read by others outside the community.

Lastly, the deep trust that has grown between me and Sun and the lead profiles is a humbling gift. We did have moments where some of them asked me point blank if I was trying to exploit them and if I would treat them fairly in this film. This led to difficult conversations which also strengthened our relationships.

Today the protagonists see this film as their own project too, a vehicle to tell the world about the situation of queer communities in their countries and to prove their vibrance and talent - gems that go unseen because of structures of discrimination and global development economics. They tell me that this project has given them confidence and validation, and they can't wait to share it with their communities. I believe that the protagonists and their communities know that I care deeply about their stories and have fought very hard to make their voices heard.



TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE IN FILMING 10S.

Growing to know the Southeast Asian Ballroom scene and finally working on 10s has been a rollercoaster. Sun and I started with absolutely no idea how to make a documentary and no idea what it would look like. We hit dead ends, we disagreed, collaborators came and went, many words were written and discarded, tears and sweat shed, COVID battled and borders closed and re-opened.

If I had known what was ahead of me I would probably have told sun in 2017, "Thank you, I'll pass". I jumped in headfirst, and we figured it out later. I made many painful (and costly) mistakes, and the whole team's nerves were constantly put through the wringer with Ballroom plans that change by the hour, the pandemic, a typhoon, and changing personal relationships in the Ballroom communities. Most of storylines I anticipated and pitched didn't actually happen. We picked up the threads from the tangle when we came to the editing table - and that was another harrowing adventure of its own!

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU AS A DIRECTOR?

Journeying on this path with 10s Across the Borders has taught me new perspectives and skills, and I have begun working with excitement on other arts-related documentaries, looking through the windows of cultural expression for the excavation of personal and collective histories.

HOW DID THE SOUNDTRACK OF THIS FILM COME ABOUT?

Music is so central to Ballroom culture that I knew we needed to prepare something very special. Early on I met Icon Koppi Mizrahi who is Xyza's mother and a multi talented Ballroom leader, performer and DJ. I asked her if she could make us the first tracks to feature the voices of Southeast Asian commentators (MCs) and I was elated when she agreed! I hope you enjoy the infectious beats and salty lyrics (translations on our film website). We were also so lucky to receive blessing to incorporate the voices of New York that we captured during filming, of Iconic commentators Kevin JZ Prodigy. Jack Mizrahi Gorgeous Gucci. Snookie Juicy West and the Ivrics of Precious Basquiat.

For the film scoring I reached out to my longtime London based collaborator Panos Chountoulidis who is a film scorer, sound designer and musician. He loved the Ballroom style and wove in terrific tracks and textures to bridge scenes and fill in atmospheres artfully. Finally, we wanted to integrate an element of local sounds. We included Sun's favourite Thai country artist Rasmee, and Filipino artist Mario Ignacio.

HOW DOES YOUR DANCE BACKGROUND INFLUENCE MAKING YOUR FIRST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE?

For over ten years I kept my performance making and activism/advocacy work separate. At that time it seemed that forcing them together would lessen the impact both ways! Then Sun came to me and this was the project where it made complete sense because in this subculture all those aspects (and more!) are intertwined.

10s Across the Borders is a hybrid of a dance film and observational documentary that reflects my own experiences as a dancer where performance bleeds into everyday life.

I really loved conceptualising the dance segments where the dancers perform solo for the camera in scenic locations that have special significance to them. Building on my background as a dance filmmaker, the camera moves with a sensitivity to the body and space, while the editing emphasizes composition and dynamic flow of action.



WHAT IS THE SITUATION OF LGBTOIA+ RIGHTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA?

Homosexuality has been illegal in Singapore since we were a British colony. For 19 years I fought as an LGTBQIA+ activist for change, and others here for much longer. In 2022, the law against homosexual sex was finally repealed – at the same time that marriage was enshrined in the constitution as being only between a man and a woman. It appears that my own identity, marriage and children will not be accepted officially in my country in my lifetime. We have a bitter victory – and much more to fight for.

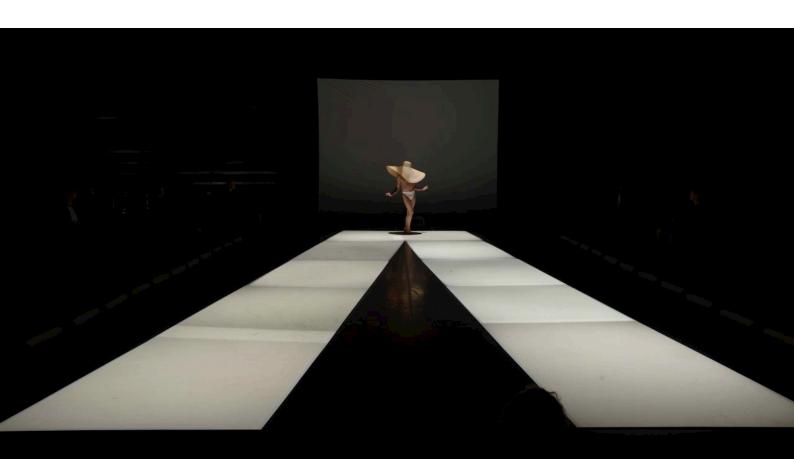
Across the border, Singaporeans watch sadly as our past is replayed in Malaysia, where authorities openly harass and arrest our queer family. Teddy and his daughter Kimmy were arrested in 2022 by religious police for "posing as a woman". Gay marriage was legalised in Thailand just this a year. It's a victory, but overshadowed by the fact trans individuals remain unable to change their gender assigned at birth in their official documents. Meanwhile, growing up in a remote province in the Philippines, Twyloit's childhood was haunted by murders of queer people in neighbouring villages. I also did not realise the extent of colour racism until I heard the stories of Xyza and her children of tribal and African heritage.

LGBTQIA+ organisations across this region began collaborating over ten years ago. The ballroom communities in this film are building parallel regional (and international) networks through their dancing and ballroom house networks – sharing strategies of support and resistance across boundaries, and reaching vulnerable individuals that some of the bigger queer organisations might never be able to.

HOW HAS WORKING ON THE FILM CHANGED YOU?

This film has been a gift and a burden! The stories and struggles of the film's leading and supporting profiles has really moved me and given me inspiration and courage. I needed that courage a lot while surviving the turbulence and despair of making this film. Sun likes to say that we grew into better people in these 7 years, in no small part from learning to work together and love each other. This journey has shown me that I have more strength and tenacity

I credit 10s it with turning my hair from black to ash grey, as well as my fine tuned sense for a story and how to capture context. I picked up a few camera operator and editor skills along the way too. At the same time, the profiles were my friends and counsellors who helped me find more confidence in my body and my identity. The first person who I came out to as non-binary was Teddy, who warmly cheered "good choice, very good choice!". Then on a whim, I put down my camera for a moment and walked the non-binary face category at Sun's ball in 2023. I was stunned when I won a trophy (there were only 3 of us walking). Now I walk from time to time, and enjoy a moment to feel beautiful and energetic, rather than feeling like the exhausted 45 year old parent and caregiver that I am.





LINKS

Posters & Stills https://www.thefilmcollaborative.org/films/10sacrosstheborders

Trailer https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tB1gVndB6cc



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