



MOTH TO FLAME PRESENTS

THE EARTH BELOW

Running time.....15:56 min

GenreDrama

Rating.....G: General Audience

Year.....2016

LanguageEnglish

Country of OriginUnited States

Format4096X2160, 24fps, 2.39:1, Sound Stereo

Virtual Press Office.....www.theearthbelow.com

Links.....Official website: www.theearthbelow.com

Official Facebook: www.facebook.com/theearthbelowfilm

IMDB: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt6251702/?ref_=nm_film_prd_3

Twitter: www.twitter.com/mothtoflame

Hashtag: #theearthbelow

SYNOPSIS

P19256, a young woman in a futuristic world that has eliminated men from its gene pool, struggles with her duty to become pregnant for her people. One evening, a fateful decision must be made: whether she will remain with the life she knows or escape with a mysterious lost traveler to unlock a future she dreams of.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



"The Earth Below" for me is a combination of my admiration for Puccini's opera "Madam Butterfly" and the themes of Alienation, Woman Power, and Unrequited Love.

Ever since I watched the opera "Madame Butterfly," I have been fascinated with the balance and influence of East meets West. This stems from my upbringing as an Asian American, which often times consisted of finding equilibrium between these two very different cultures. Growing up, I often felt "stuck in the middle," never fully identifying with either my family's cultural ideals or those of my Western friends. For me, "The Earth Below" explores some of these emotional struggles as an Asian American – not feeling like I belonged, wanting what I was told I should not want, and being constantly alienated within my own family and amongst my friends.

The story of Madame Butterfly also touches upon the strength of being a woman in a misogynistic environment. Though we are lucky in the U.S. to have progressed in the treatment of women, much of the world still does not see women as equals to men. In the original story, Butterfly's handles her fate weakly and is limited by her cultural circumstances—I wanted to explore a different perspective. In "The Earth Below", Butterfly's strength grows as she recognizes and embraces her own self-value and independence.

Finally, I wanted to explore the question: "Can you love more than one person at a time?" Society puts pressure on monogamous relationships and it is interesting to challenge these societal norms and put the characters through the ebb and flow of passion, developing relationships, forbidden and unrequited love.

It has been an amazing opportunity collaborating with my long-time friend and writer, Eric Hwang. When I pitched the story to him and to the rest of the crew on a challenge to develop our first science fiction drama, the support has been incredible. Together we have been able to put together a tiny glimpse into this story that we hope to eventually develop into a full-length feature.

-Christine W. Chen



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WRITER'S STATEMENT



The initial story concept for “The Earth Below” was pitched to me as an adaptation of Madame Butterfly that takes place in a dystopian world where men no longer exist. I was excited by the project because of the opportunities it presented—it was a chance for me to write a female lead character and create a story in a science-fictional world. The challenge was tying it to an Asian-American theme.

I was primarily determined to stray away from Puccini’s portrayal of a weak and submissive Butterfly and make her a more complex character with agency. In the process of unearthing her personality and her relationship to Luther (the analog to Puccini’s Pinkerton), I found that the story lent itself so organically to one of the most challenging and fundamental Asian-American experiences: the reconciliation of a dual identity.

Butterfly’s plight of having to decide between staying on her own planet and escaping with Luther is a direct parallel to a struggle that many Asian-Americans face: whether to adhere to the expectations of parents and ancestors or to pursue individual desires. The film echoes this existential crisis—one that is not easily explained to outsiders and one that does not have a clear resolution.

The relationship between Butterfly and Luther is maddening—their attraction for each other is undeniable, but both are held back by their confusion and obligations. Pitting these clashing and sometimes contradictory emotions into an urgent circumstance allowed the characters to give in to the reckless part of themselves—despite the heartbreaking consequences they both know will follow.

I have always adored complicated love stories, strong female characters and science fictional worlds—it was a privilege to be able to blend these elements with “The Earth Below”.

- Eric Hwang

A woman with dark hair is shown in profile, looking out a window. The window shows a dark, snowy landscape with bare trees. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the window.

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CAST



ELIZABETH TRIEU

as P19256 (Butterfly)

Elizabeth Trieu is a native TexAsian, an adventurer and activist of good vibes. She recently debuted in “#Slaughterhouse,” a witty slasher, as her role as Lisa. She has lived in Los Angeles, New York, and Austin, and looks forward to the release of “The Earth Below” and a couple of other shorts that are in post. In addition, she is starting production on her own piece, “An Affair For The Birds” at the beginning of 2017.



COREY LANDIS

as Luther

Corey Landis is an actor in Los Angeles. He has appeared in 11 feature films and nearly as many shorts, recurred on “That ‘70s Show” as Young Red Forman, and has starred in over 100 commercials, most frequently as the spokesman. Landis is a singer-songwriter who just released an album with legendary Beatles engineer Geoff Emerick. He also co-directed the feature-length documentary “Toy Masters” about the He-Man franchise.



CREW



CO-PRODUCER/ DIRECTOR

Christine Chen

Christine Chen started filming at an early age with her parent's VHS camera. She soon discovered it was more than a hobby when she filmed her first documentary in Lijiang, China during undergrad for Rice University.

Christine later started her production company Moth to Flame, while obtaining her MBA at the University of Texas McCombs School of Business.

Her feature film, "Funemployment" will be coming out in 2017 and her short films, "A Bird's Nest," "Two Roads," and "Ya Albi" can all be seen on Shortshd.



CO-PRODUCER/WRITER

Eric Hwang

Eric Hwang is an independent film producer and screenwriter from Colorado. An avid cinephile and filmmaker since high school, he hopes his stories, like "The Earth Below", will bring more exposure to Asian-Americans and their unique experiences into mainstream media. He currently resides in Los Angeles, CA.



DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Taylor Camarot

Taylor Camarot is a cinematographer based out of Austin TX, specializing in dramatic narrative work. His visual approach pushes what would be unconventional to the sci-fi genre, forgoing traditional tropes and focusing on being honest to the story. Through his process, he highlights the capacity and beauty of human emotion.





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CREDITS

CAST

Elizabeth Trieu..... P19256
 Corey Landis Luther
 Teresa Tullos AI Voice
 Gloria Tsai..... The Matriarch

CREW

Director Christine Chen
 Writer..... Eric Hwang
 Producers Christine Chen and Eric Hwang
 1st Assistant Director Mattias Alegro Marasigan
 Director of Photography..... Taylor Camarot
 1st Assistant Camera Jesse Vielleux
 2nd Assistant Camera..... Ali Nidzgorski
 2nd Assistant Camera..... Stephen Laughrun
 Gaffer..... Charlie Pearce
 Editor Christine Chen
 Art Director..... Kellie Penna
 Original Music Nick Longoria
 Sound Design & ADR..... Kirby Meador
 Sound Recordist..... Jason Cates
 Makeup Artist..... Roxy McDanel
 Hair Stylist..... Gloria Tsai
 Hair Stylist..... Antonio Palacios
 Props and Costumes..... Kellie Penna
 DIT..... John Bechinina
 Colorist..... Taylor Camarot
 Production Assistant Autumn Hope
 Production Assistant Jon Grandstaff
 Production Assistant Albert Rondan
 Production Assistant Taylor Fontana