

# NEEMKOMOK



Old San Gabriel Mission  
San Gabriel, California

This is to Certify

Seen in (not stated) Study of \_\_\_\_\_  
on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_



AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE PRESENTS NEEMKOMOK STARRING NITZIA CHAMA AND ANDONI GRACIA  
CASTING BY CARLA HOBI & NATALIE BALLESTEROS SOUND DESIGN BY UGO DEROUARD MUSIC BY JONATHAN KAWCHUK  
EDITED BY HEO LI STORY EDITED BY SHEILA WILSON PRODUCTION DESIGNER HARRISON PAUL DYLAN BOCANEGRA AND BEN ROSA  
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY PALLAVI REDDY PRODUCED BY SHANSHAN SUN WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY DOUGLAS CUSHNIE

Neemkomok.com

# Short Synopsis

Early 1800's: Isadora, an Indigenous Californian (Gabrielino/Tongva) woman, faces a battle to survive after being emancipated from the abusive Los Angeles mission where she was raised. She's helped by Domingo, a Franciscan friar, on the journey to bring her to a Native village where she can finally be safe.

# Long Synopsis

Early 1800's: Isadora, an Indigenous Californian (Gabrielino/Tongva) woman, lies delirious and in shock on the dirt floor of her room, a bloodied knife evidence of a failed suicide attempt. Soon, a Spanish Franciscan friar, Domingo, discovers her. Realizing that she's done something awful, he ushers her out of the Mission before anyone else can find her and punish her for what she's done.

On their journey to bring her to a Native village where she can be safe, memories of her past gradually come back to her: the hopelessness of her life of servitude at the San Gabriel Mission near Los Angeles, the abuse of her Spanish husband, and the fear of a similar future for her infant daughter.

As her memories return, she begins to question the motives of Domingo, the man who's rescued her, and the prospect of returning her to the Native village begins to look less promising than they expected.

Only when all this destructive baggage is behind her can she come to peace with the awful truth of her past.



# Director's Statement

For our thesis at the AFI Conservatory, we were required to shoot a short film in Los Angeles and its surrounding area. This is the same area that the Gabrielino/Tongva people-- and at the far reaches of the 30 mile zone-- the Chumash, Juaneño/Ajachemen, Luiseño, Cahuilla, Serrano and Tataviam people, have inhabited for thousands of years. Yet despite this rich cultural history underneath its very feet, Hollywood has never told those people's stories.

'Neemkomok' is a look into the lesser-known side of California (and by association, US) history. In Los Angeles in particular, not many people know the origin story of how this massive city of 11 million+ people came to be, and many are unaware of the atrocities that native Californians faced under both Spanish and US governments. In fact, much of this history has been covered up or forgotten, hands washed clean of a tumultuous past.

By going back to the source, we hope to tell a unique tale of loss, hope, and redemption, from an Indigenous perspective that popular history tends to overlook.



# Neemkomok'

(verb)

"She returns"

"Neemkomok" is a basic verb and can be used on its own as a complete sentence with a "he", "she", or "it" subject. It can be followed with or without an apostrophe, indicating a glottal stop in the pronunciation.

To express another subject you need to add either a singular noun word or a subject particle (or, with a plural noun word, both that word and the "they" particle).

Ex:

- Neemkomokne. "I return"
- Neemkomok. "He returns" / "*She returns*"
- Neemkomok tokoor / Tokoor neemkomok. "The woman returns"
- Neemkomokme totookor / Totookorme neemkomok. "The women return"
- Neemkomokme. "They return"
- Neemkomokre. "We return"

## The Team: AFI Class of '17



**Douglas Cushnie**  
*Writer/Director*

Douglas is a filmmaker from the small town of Sherman, CT. Having traveled extensively through Latin America, he has shot projects for non-profits and coffee companies in Nicaragua and abroad since the age of 16. A 2013 short, VOLAR EN LINEA RECTA, has shown in film festivals around the world. He's interested in capturing social issues in a narrative format, using creative methods to tell important stories of underrepresented people and places.



**Shanshan Sun**  
*Producer*

Shanshan has been interested in film since she was a kid. She previously worked on several Hollywood movies such as THE MUMMY III and interned at Legendary Ent. and Beacon Pictures. She also worked at a TV broadcast company in NYC, producing a popular unscripted program LIVING IN NY which gained tremendous popularity in the local community. Her dream is to make movies that send positive message to people and motivate them to pursue a better life.



**Pallavi Reddy**  
*Cinematographer*

Pallavi is a graduate in Electronics and Communications Engineering from Osmania University in India. She was schooled in Saudi Arabia and has worked as a copywriter and freelance photographer for three years prior to becoming a cinematographer. Since mid-2011, she has been working as an assistant to cinematographers in Bollywood. She has also lensed a full-length documentary, two short films and a couple of promotional films for internet advertising.



**Jifu Li**  
*Editor*

Jeff Li graduated from Beijing Film Academy's sound recording department in 2012 where he won the national scholarship. He decided to work for China Film Group as a senior sound editor, mixer and project manager for more than 30 big movies in China from 2010 to 2015. Some of his work, like THE GRANDMASTER, directed by Wong Kar Wai, won the 61st MPSE Golden Reel for Best Dialogue Editing. He also worked as picture editor on three short feature movies and movie trailers.



**Sheila Wilson**  
*Story Editor*

Sheila is a recent graduate of Columbia College Chicago, where she received her BA in Cinema Art + Science with a concentration in Directing. Her film, Amerikkka, is set to begin its festival run at the Academy-Qualifying Urbanworld Film Festival this year in New York City. Sheila's passion for filmmaking stemmed from theater, where her plays SCARS and ASHES AND POSY were produced by the Actors Theatre of Louisville New Voices Young Playwrights Competition.

*Sanus des Califo*

# Principal Cast



Nitzia Chama  
*Isadora*

Nitzia is an actor, dancer, and activist from Veracruz, México. Born to a family of artists, poets and ballet dancers, she's lived in Los Angeles since around 2010, where she's worked as an actor as well as a producer and reporter for Despierta América UNIVISION and as a TV host at Despierta Los Ángeles Univision 34.



**Andoni Gracia**  
*Fray Domingo*



Andoni Gracia was born in Bilbao, País Vasco, Spain. He is an actor and writer, known for “Futuro: 48 horas.” Since the early 2000’s, he’s lived and worked in Los Angeles as an actor as well as a high school tennis instructor. In mid-2017 he was nominated for an Ariel Award (Mexico’s version of the Oscars) for Best Supporting Actor in “La Cuarta Compañía”

# Secondary Cast

Francisco Ovalle  
*Sergeant Camacho*



Israel Sáez de Miguel  
*Corporal Rigoberto*



Stephanie Hoston  
*Toypurina*



Tsulan Cooper  
*Bona*



Richard Manriquez  
*Odón*



Julian Garcia  
*Tomás*



George Paez  
*Estanislao*



# Behind the Scenes









## Cast

Isadora	Nitzia Chama
Fray Domingo	Andoni Gracia
Sergeant Camacho	Francisco Ovalle
Toypurina	Stephanie Hoston
Bona	Tsulan Cooper
Estanislao	George Aaron Paez
Odón	Richard Manriquez
Tomás	Julian Garcia
Corporal Rigoberto	Israel Sáez de Miguel
Isadora's Baby	Ameilie Vienna Tolentino
Fray Lasuén	Harrison Paul
Stunt Coordinators	Randall Archer Deven MacNair Stephen Hart

## Background Talent

Matt Adams	Isabelle Gama
Donny Avila	Victoria Gama
Donny Avila Jr.	Talon González
Maya Avila	Rebecca Hammond
Nicolas Avila	Billy Henry
Jessica Beheter	Nancy Kelly
Manon Bizaur	Lesta Kline
Destiny Cloud	Dee Lonnon
Stephanie Coudeman	Adrian Lopez
Sheila Dibby	Carly Panc
Allyon Gama	Graciela Patino
Crystal Gama	Ben Rosa

Unit Production Manager	Mianda Lu
First Assistant Director	Jason Allen
Second Assistant Director	Jianna Maarten Talon González

Camera Operator	Pallavi Reddy
Steadicam Operator	Sam Law
First Assistants Camera	Roi Vissel Yair Halper Yvgeniy Zhuk
First Assistant Camera - Reshoots	Majd Mazin
Second Assistants Camera	Tatsuya Ouchi Badra Haidra
Second Assistant Camera - Reshoots	Tim Finn
Still Photographers	Bill Taylor Mia Zhao Gordon Best Enrique Gutiérrez
Script Supervisors	Mariana Gomez Samantha Telford
Production Coordinators	Talon González Gordon Best
Accountant	Danwen Lei
Gaffer	Marcin Banasiak
Gaffer - Reshoots	Kaushal Shah
Best Boy Electrics	Olesia Saveleva James Swartz
Electrics	Daniel Santoyo Joey Luu James Wilson Daniel Kautz
Electrics - Reshoots	John Nguyen Noah Kentis
Key Grip	Oliver Lukacs
Key Grip - Reshoots	Ashish Dawar
Best Boy Grips	Mark Jeevaratnam Nathan Mielke
Best Boy Grip - Reshoots	Fernando Nevarez

Grips	Scott Summers Jesse Mendelsohn Dan Kleba Milo Saranin Tsubasa Maruno Michael Oshins
Grips - Reshoots	Kunal Shah David Barahona Sam Thuoh Ilija Gavran
Dolly Grip	Mark Jeevaratnam
2nd Second Assistant Director	Eric Hellberg
Assistant Editor	Zoe Mao
Production Sound Mixers	Delroy Cornick Phil Jackson
Boom Operator	Christian Lainez
Set Decorators	Veronica Whipple Kevin McCarthy
Property Master	Matt Adams
Art Department Assistants	Lyle Feinberg Mark Meyer Chris Tripp Gretchen Ariate Marri Caballero Alex Nishi Nancy Ramos
Costume Designer	Suzan Berberian
Costumer	Tomika Smalls
Make-up & Hair	AJ Bourque
SFX Make-up	Alicia Rae

Digital Intermediate	EFILM
Supervising Digital Colorist	Jill Bogdanowicz
Post Finishing Producer	Jose Williams
Post Finishing Color Assist	Jake King
Visual Effects	Picture Shop
Executive VP	Tom Kendall
VFX Producer	Dave Lyons
CG Supervisor	Mike Kirylo
Compositing Lead	David Geoghegan
Compositing	Michael De Lorenzo
Additional VFX	Justin Chandra
Supervising Sound Editor	Ugo Derouard
Re-Recording Mixer	Ugo Derouard
Dialogue Editor	Mehrnaz Mohabati
ADR Recording Engineer	Mehrnaz Mohabati
Assistant Sound Editor	Jordan Dunn
Studio Intern	Justin M. Green
Guitarist	Robert Grieve
Additional Music Mixer	Dennis Patterson
Vocals and Additional Percussion	Craig Torres
Transportation Coordinator	Mike Hellerstein
Drivers	Cuit Buenrostro
	Tim McIntosh
	Calli Hellerstein
	Kyle McConnell
	Walter Spohn
	Manny Velazquez
Key Set PA	Nic Alvarez

Production Assistants Marshal Rittenger  
Jared Pockalny  
Bill Gardner  
Dawn Peters  
Melissa Viesca  
Noel Lpina  
York Zhou  
Sky Lan

Studio Teacher Cheryl Watson  
Catering School House Catering  
IT Catering  
Craft Service Yilin Huang  
First Aid Sylvia Wildfire  
Security Triumph Protection

“Going Home” Song  
Written by: Ti'aat Society/Traditional Council of Pimuu  
Performed by: Craig Torres  
Courtesy of: Craig Torres

The filmmakers wish to thank:

Our families and friends  
Craig Torres  
Cindi Alvitre  
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Mati Waiya & Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation  
Tima Link Lotah  
River Tikwi Garza  
Urban Rez @ The Cornerstone Theater  
Virginia M. Bouvier  
Deborah A. Miranda  
Rancho Los Alamitos  
Angeles National Forest

La Purísima Mission  
Malibu Creek State Park  
Joachim Gautier  
Alexa Lopez  
Alex Portin

Executive Producers Srikanth Gopisetty  
Lili Sun

Associate Producer Nitzia Chama

Donors

Carlos Betancourt	John Jenner	Thomas Nailor
David Brown	Deepthi Kapila	Nadur Prakash
Jocelyn Chan	Jonathan Kawchuk	Yi Shao
Yunchieh Chang	Alexander Kettering	Ajay Shroff
Karen Cushnie	Grant Kettering	Logan Silbert
Feng Chen	Jean Kettering	Standard, Inc
Yanna Chen	Lisa Kettering	Dhruva Sulibhavi
Min Chi	Kyle Kim	Jingjing Sun
Ruihai Chi	Joy Kivana	Mr. & Mrs. Sun
Xia Chi	Haibin Li	Yinhui Sun
Courtney Cox	Maoguo Li	Peter Swartz
Morgan Cox	Rebecca Li	Ka Lo Tsui
Karen Cushnie	Steve Li	Rohan Venaousala
Danosky & Associates	Jue Liao	Gerard R Waddell
Teresa Fiamengo	Shumin Lin	Robert Walther
Lingshan Gao	John Michael Lightfoot	Debra Williamson
John Garniewski	Zichen Liu	Katie Williamson
Joseph Garniewski	Shan Lu	Lesilie Williamson
Goldring Family Foundation, Inc	Macys	Peter Williamson
Raul B Fernandez	Mark Meyer	Shuangbo Xu
Hildegard Grob	Ankur Mittal	Bowei Yue
Dada Guo	Fred Mletzko	Wu Zhang
Mauricio Guzman	Jim & Georgia Morgan	



Edited on Avid Media Composer

Camera equipment courtesy of Panavision / Clairmont

No animal was harmed in the making of this film.

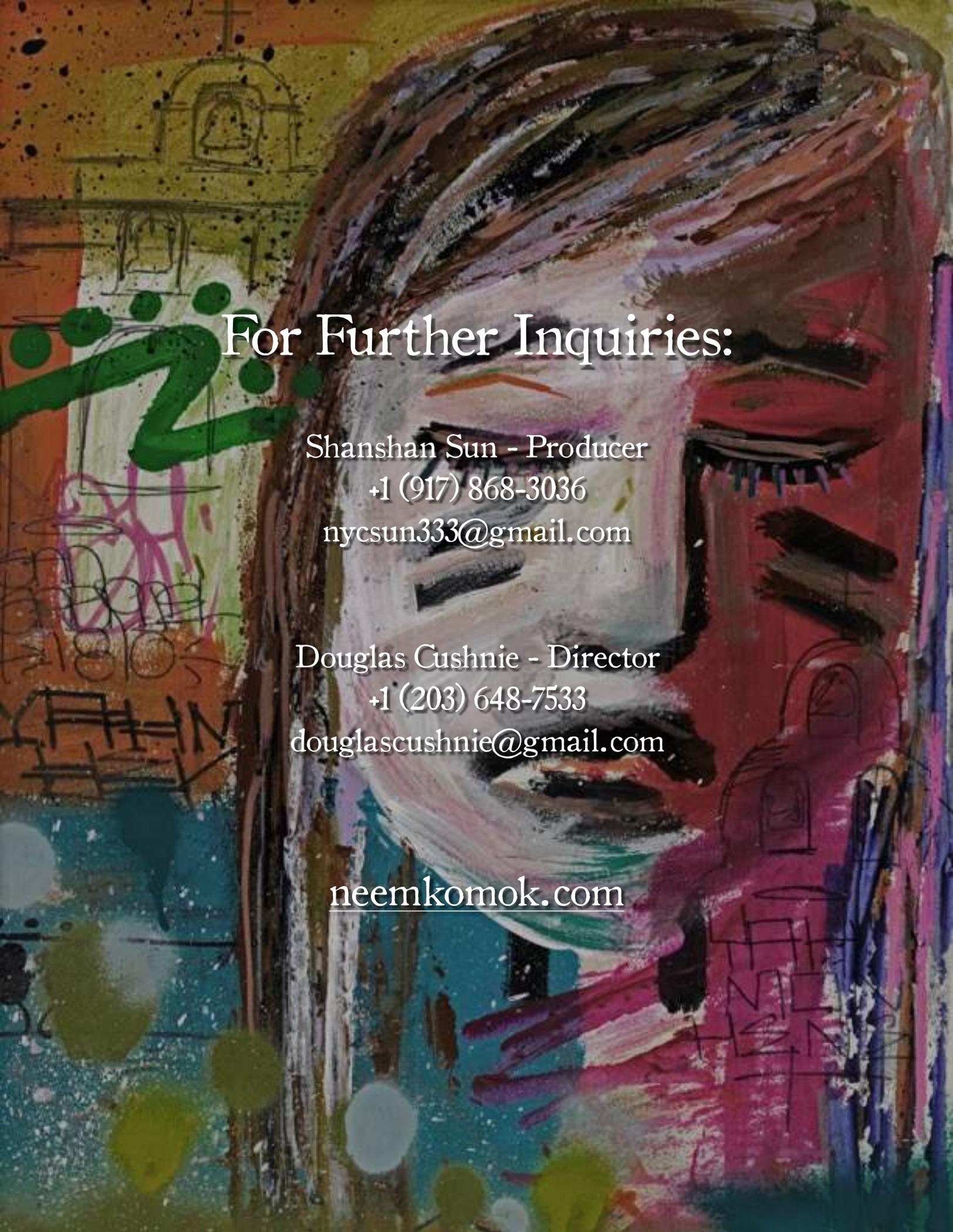
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Produced at the AFI Conservatory in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts Degree or Certificate of Completion.

Douglas Cushnie Jr., AFI Directing Fellow  
Jifu Li, AFI Editing Fellow  
Pallavi Reddy Vennapusala, AFI Cinematography Fellow  
Shanshan Sun, AFI Producing Fellow

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An abstract painting of a face, rendered in a style reminiscent of Vincent van Gogh's 'Olympia'. The face is composed of thick, expressive brushstrokes in shades of brown, white, pink, and red. The eyes are dark and heavily shadowed, with long, dark eyelashes. The background is a complex mix of colors, including green, blue, and purple, with various geometric and organic shapes. The overall texture is rough and layered, suggesting a sense of depth and movement.

# For Further Inquiries:

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