



PRODUCEUR AU SUD
FESTIVAL DES FEMMES
NANTES

I, THE SONG

Bhutan

2020 Arthouse Produire au Sud Kolkata

MAIN DATA

Genre: Thriller/Drama

Length : 95'

Language : Dzongkha

Shooting location : Bhutan

Shooting dates : December 2020

Expected date of completion : January-February 2022

PRODUCTION

Budget : 526 200 €

Financing in place : 194 000 €

Production company : Dakinny Productions

Coproduction company : Praxis Films (France)

Workshops and platforms attended : Asian Project Market (2018), Goa NFDC Coproduction Market (2019)

Current situation : development stage, seeking for partners

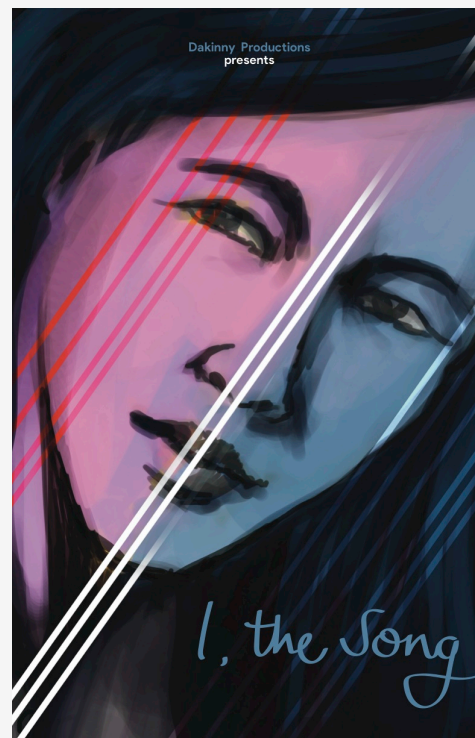
Thinley CHODEN, producer

Thinley Choden is a producer and social entrepreneur. She established a successful non-profit in 2008, which she headed till 2014. Her first film project was in 2003, where she worked as the cultural advisor of the Emmy Award winning documentary- *Bhutan: Taking the Middle Path to Happiness* (2007). As country director of the non-profit READ Bhutan she produced several short documentary films from 2009 to 2014. She more recently co-produced a Bhutanese Arts exhibition in Hawaii, USA, and collaborated on *Honeygiver Among the Dogs* (2016) directed by Dechen Roder, where she assisted in fundraising, publicity and also became an investor/presenter of the film. *I, the Song* will be her first feature as producer.



Dechen RODER, director

Dechen Roder is one of the few female filmmakers from the kingdom of Bhutan. She founded her own production company – Dakinny Productions in 2009. In 2015 she wrote and directed *Lo Sum Choe Sum* (her third short film) which competed in the Berlinale Shorts. That year she began production of her debut feature - *Honeygiver Among the Dogs*, recipient of the ACF 2016 post award, which premiered in Busan, had its European premiere in Berlinale and won three awards at the Fribourg International Film Festival in 2017. It was also nominated for an Asia Pacific Screen Award in the Cultural Diversity category. Dechen Roder is also the co-founder and co-organizer of Bhutan's first film festival- Beskop Tshechu.



SYNOPSIS

Nima is accused of being in a non-consensual pornographic video and is fired from her job. In an attempt to prove her innocence, she travels to a town in the south of Bhutan in search of her lookalike seen in the video.

Once in the dilapidated town, she is told that her doppelganger, Meto skipped town. Unconvinced, Nima starts to dig around through close encounters with Meto's most intimate friends and lovers.

A visit to Meto's village only confuses Nima further, since the brother is convinced Meto is still in Bhutan, while her grandmother is waiting for Meto's return after attempting to recover a sacred song which was stolen by 'city people.'

As Nima unravels the fragments of Meto's life, she finds herself entangled in a web of uncertainty and she realizes that she may be the only person who can find both the answer to Meto's disappearance and 'recover' the stolen song.

Moving between Nima's search and Meto's life, *I, the Song* is a film about exploitation, music, identity, love, and a culture balanced precariously on the threshold of a reckless digital age.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT (excerpt)

«I initially wanted to make two films. The first one was inspired by a local newspaper article where a remote community in Bhutan claimed that the capital city had "stolen" a sacred song of theirs, performing it on TV, over the radio, on stage, and essentially always for entertainment. The community felt that this song was sung out of context, and thus "desecrated" and would upset their local female guardian deity. They claimed they wanted the song "back." [...]

I also wanted to make a film about the experiences of two female friends- both of whom were accused of being in local "pornography"- where in both cases the video was shot without their knowledge. [...]

Over the years I found a strange parallel in these stories and themes. A parallel between the "thefts" and reckless sharing of a sacred song and of private experiences, and the repercussions and trauma on the victims, who are left feeling vulnerable and as though they are losing their identity. I know we cannot simply denounce modernity and digital media. I wanted to see if I could find an answer as to how to maintain and understand the "sacredness" of experiences, identities, culture, self, and if that is not possible, at least try to understand how we can confront and battle this frightening whirlwind of thefts and abuses and still hang on to who we are.

This is why *I, the Song* is perhaps a kind of hybrid dramatic poem. It is a thriller, a drama, a mystery, a tragedy, a noir, a cultural reflection, a ponder, a pause, a film about music, identity, culture, love, exploitation. A film about the essence of a song- something in the air, something hard to contain, to cage, something both vulnerable yet fundamental to humanity. »

CONTACTS

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