

Charming Stranger Films presents

in association with Genuine

Real Artists

A FILM BY **Cameo Wood**
BASED ON THE SHORT STORY BY **Ken Liu**

STARRING
Tiffany Hines and Tamlyn Tomita

RUNNING TIME **12 minutes**

Official Selection

2017 Cinequest – World Premiere
2017 San Francisco International Film Festival
2017 Hollyshorts - Winner

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REAL ARTISTS

SYNOPSIS

Real Artists, a dark tale set in the near future, is based on Ken Liu's short story of the same name. Against all odds, Sophia Baker just scored her dream interview at the world-famous Semaphore Animation Studios -- who'd have thought a fan edit of one of their hit films could land her a shot at a job? But when she meets arch, mysterious executive Anne Palladon, she soon learns all is not as she expects behind the curtain. Every instinct Sophia has ever had about art in filmmaking is about to be challenged.

Based on Nebula, Hugo and World Fantasy Award-winning author Ken Liu's short story of the same name, *Real Artists* asks a poignant question: In a dystopian near-future where big data, AI and natural language processing learn and create quickly and at massive scale, what role can a single artist play? Is Sophia a creative rebel who can make a difference? Or is the situation more serious than that?

ABOUT THE CAST

TAMLYN TOMITA (Anne Palladon)

Tamlyn Tomita won international attention in her screen debut in *THE KARATE KID, PART II*, and continued to create rich and engrossing characters in feature films such as *COME SEE THE PARADISE*, where she starred opposite Dennis Quaid, and in *FOUR ROOMS*, opposite Antonio Banderas. She also appeared in the film adaptation of Amy Tan's bestselling novel *THE JOY LUCK CLUB*. Her distinguished work in *PICTURE BRIDE* won her an Audience Award at the 1995 Sundance Film Festival. She is currently playing the role of Sandra Abe, who heads up the police station in *BERLIN STATION* on EPIX. "If this is a dark, hard, harsh reality, you play it warm and friendly, because you want to showcase and guide the viewer as well as your other character that this is a world that you shouldn't be afraid or suspicious of," Tomita says.

TIFFANY HINES (Sophia Baker)

REAL ARTISTS showcases the work of Tiffany Hines, known for her memorable television roles as Birdie Scott on *BEYOND THE BREAK*, Michelle Welton on *BONES*, Didi Miller on *DEVIIOUS MAIDS*, Jaden on *NIKITA*, and Kelly Baptiste on *DAMIEN*. She recently portrayed Tamar Braxton on *TONI BRAXTON: UNBREAK MY HEART* on the Lifetime Channel. She can currently be seen on FOX's new series *24:LEGACY*. "The more faces a character has to them, the more real they become to me, the more interesting I find them to be, and the more fun I have playing them," she says.

CONNIE JO SECHRIST (Receptionist)

Connie Jo Sechrist's credits include *SENSE8*, *THE ASTRONAUT*, *ARCiTEX*, and *FINAL FANTASY VII*.

NATALIE CONNEELY (Semaphore Technician)

Natalie Conneely is best know for her roles in *SCRATCHERS*, *ROSIE AND WICKENS*, and *CAKE WALK*.

SAMMY WEGENT (Semaphore Recruiter Man)

Sammy Wegent has appeared in numerous San Francisco films, *THE MAKING OF DRAGON PETAL*, *THE FEATHERSTONE METHOD*, *INSIDE FIFA*, and *THE WRATH OF JOHN*. He also wrote and appeared in the short *EVERYBODY'S A COMEDIAN*.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

What might it be like to have an AI as your main creative partner? Biometric data is already being used for neuromarketing in many different contexts, and film plots are influenced by how test audiences respond to key points. More than ever, new entertainment is developed through a process of quantitative measuring. It's easy to imagine a near future where it's more efficient and less risky to have an AI generate a film from millions of existing data points, test it on a human audience, and then adapt it, than to support artistic invention and experimentation.

In a climate like that, "taste" becomes one of the few rare quantities where a human perspective might -- for now -- be better than a machine's. *Real Artists*, then, is a story of what it means to be human. It asks what humanity means when inhuman devices can create just as well as we do, leaving us only to consume and react. Through science fiction, the film confronts the rapidly-approaching question of ethics in neuromarketing, and examines the power corporations have to tailor products to our biometric responses.

This is also the story of one young woman's dream, and how she may hold the key to the future of storytelling. She is a heroine because of her editing genius, hard work ethic, and how easily she's moved to emotion -- like at the sight of her favorite cartoon, no matter how many times she's seen it before. She is inspired to do whatever it takes to make the best movies the world has ever seen, and resists Palladon's enticements toward a life of merely being a barometer, not an originator.

We all love products designed especially for us. We willingly forgo our privacy for sake of being a part of the new, the trendy, what's hot. But when young people like Sophia are confronted with ultimatums, their actions — sometimes heroic, sometimes tragic — can rewrite many stories, not just their own.

Cameo Wood, San Francisco, September 2016

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

DIRECTOR | WRITER | PRODUCER

Cameo Wood

REAL ARTISTS is her first narrative film. Cameo had a long career in technology, working in voice over IP and computer security, and then studied artificial intelligence and neuroscience in university. She also opened up the first urban beekeeping store in America. Filmmaking has been her lifelong desire, and she is thrilled to have the chance to make movies.

PRODUCER

Ryon Lane

Ryon Lane has worked in film and commercial production over the last 13 years, producing festival-bound small indie shorts, spec projects and commercial spots for clients such as Salesforce, Microsoft, McAfee and AMEX. He previously worked at CAA and Innovative Artists, prior to serving as a Business & Legal Affairs exec at Lionsgate and Intermedia Films.

PRODUCER

Alexa Fraser-Herron

Alexa Fraser-Herron is a writer, director, and producer based out of San Francisco. Originally lured to the city to pursue fine art at the San Francisco Art Institute, Alexa later began channeling her myriad interests into film. Her work includes EAT, PRAY, WHATEVER, ALONE FOREVER, the experimental horror short 7 MINUTES IN HELL, PETE & VERONICA, and MINI SUPREME. Alexa is the production manager for Peaches Christ, runs Bay Area-based film collective Scary Cow Productions, and lectures on various aspects of creative development and film production.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Kimberly Culotta

Kimberly Culotta is a nomadic cinematographer who has worked across the globe. Raised in Louisiana, Kimberly moved to Los Angeles to study at the American Film Institute and is currently (some what) settled in Northern California. She has lensed six feature films, most recently award-winning ensemble piece AULD LANG SYNE and WAITING FOR THE MIRACLE TO COME starring Willie Nelson and Charlotte Rampling. She is currently lecturing at Humboldt State University's Film department and preparing to shoot a series for Egyptian Television.

EDITOR

Russell August Anderson

Russell is an editor living in Santa Monica. He loves finding structure in the chaos of footage and is always looking for new ways to meld technology with storytelling. You can find him trapped inside his VR headset.

ART DIRECTOR

Matt Evans

Matt began sculpting, painting, and drawing when he was four years old and has never stopped. Somewhat unexpectedly, this classically-trained fine artist spent fifteen years at Apple Computer as a UI designer, working on award-winning software like iPhoto, iMovie, GarageBand, and many others. His experience in this area, combined with an almost pathological interest in the technology of sci-fi TV and film, puts Matt in the perfect position to design our film's pervasive AI.

SOUND DESIGN

James LeBrecht

James LeBrecht has over 35 years of experience as a film and theater sound designer and mixer, author, producer and disability rights activist. LeBrecht is the founder of Berkeley Sound Artists (BSA), an audio postproduction house, located in Berkeley, California. Known as a skillful sound designer and mixer, LeBrecht's work can be heard in films that have played on HBO, PBS, and at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Films that he has mixed have screened at film festivals including Sundance, Tribeca, South by Southwest, True/False, Telluride and Berlin.

COMPOSER

Meredith Yayanos

Meredith Yayanos is an Oakland-based thereminist, violinist, singer and composer whose previous credits include *THE MILL AT CALDER'S END*, *EMPTY ROOMS*, *THE MARVELOUS MISADVENTURES OF FLAPJACK*. To develop a unique sound for the Real Artists score, Yayanos teamed up with fellow musician and Moog enthusiast Ryan Coseboom. Together, they've assembled an analog synth-heavy soundtrack that is ethereal and menacing in equal measure.

CREDITS

Written & Directed by CAMEO WOOD

Based on a short story by KEN LIU

Starring TAMLYN TOMITA, TIFFANY HINES, CONNIE JO SECHRIST, NATALIE
CONNELLY, and SAMMY WEGENT

Produced by RYON LANE and ALEXA FRASER-HERRON

Executive Producers CAMEO WOOD, RYON LANE, MACIEJ STACHOWIAK

Director of Photography KIMBERLY CULOTTA

Art Director MATT EVANS

Editor RUSSELL AUGUST ANDERSON

Original Music by MEREDITH YAYANOS and RYAN COSEBOOM

Costume Designer AMIE SARAZAN

VFX Artist ANNA ROTTKE