

KINO
INTERNATIONAL

Wonderful Town

Written and Directed by Aditya Assarat



Winner Tiger Award in Rotterdam 2008

For press information, contact Rodrigo Brandão at
(212) 629-6880 ext. 12 or rodrigo@kino.com

High-res press images – www.kino.com/press

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I N T E R N A T I O N A L

Wonderful Town

Cast

Starring: Anchalee Saisoontorn as *Na*
Suphasit Kansen as *Ton*
Dul Yaambunying as *Na's young brother*

Featuring: Sorawit Poolsawat
Prateep Hanudomlap
Chatchai Sae-aong
Panumas Sae-bae
Piyanut Pakdeechat
Noppong Sae-aong
Aroon Uisakul

Crew

Written and Directed by: Aditya Assarat
Producers: Soros Sukhum
Jetnipith Teerakulchanyut

Cinematographer: Umpornpol Yugala
Production Designer: Karanyapas Khamsin
Assistant Director: Monaiya Tarasak
Costume Designer: Thanon Songsil
Editor: Lee Chatametikool
Sound Designer: Akritchalerm Kalayanamitr
Original Music Score: Koichi Shimizu
Zai Kuning

Wonderful Town

92 mins
35mm, color, Dolby SR
Thai with English Subtitles



Wonderful Town

SYNOPSIS

A fictional story set against a real-life background, Aditya Assarat's feature debut takes place in Takua Pa, a coastal area in southern Thailand that lost more than 8,000 inhabitants when the Asian Tsunami struck in late 2004. Caused by a 9.3 magnitude Indian Ocean earthquake on December 26, this natural disaster affected 15 countries across the globe and was responsible for the death of over 225,000 people.

Three years later, Takua Pa, once the site of a thriving community, still struggles with this collective trauma. And amidst the city's reconstruction, an architect mysteriously arrives from the cosmopolitan Bangkok.

Ton (played by Supphasit Kansen), the only person from his firm willing to re-locate to this desolate place, comes to supervise one of the city's many construction sites. As he looks for a place to live, he meets Na (played by Anchalee Saisoontorn), a young woman running a modest family-owned hotel.

While Na initially receives Ton with a mixture of curiosity and suspicion, the two develop a passionate love affair. But as discreet as they are, the neighbors in this small community quickly begin to wonder about their connection – and eventually, their romance brings to the surface an undercurrent of suppressed emotions and hidden facts.

Widely celebrated in the film festival circuit, filmmaker Aditya Assarat majestically captures diametrically opposing events: a blossoming love affair and the slow death of an urban space. But while Takua Pa is undoubtedly one of the film's three protagonists, its natural beauty and decayed architecture display much more than marks of a traumatic event. In Assarat's vision, Takua Pa is the battleground between the forces of nature and humanity.

As such, to view *Wonderful Town* as a reaction to the Tsunami is perhaps to miss the film's larger point. Here, this traumatic natural disaster also functions as a point of departure for the film's assertions about the relationship – and many parallels – between humans and the so-called natural world.



FESTIVAL PARTICIPATION:

Pusan International Film Festival 2007 (New Currents Award)

International Film Festival Rotterdam 2008 (Tiger Competition)
– WINNER OF THE TIGER AWARD; BEST FILM –

Berlinale Film Festival 2008 (Selected in Forum)

New Films/ New Directors

Wonderful Town

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Wonderful Town was inspired by the town of Takua Pa in the south of Thailand. It was here that 8000 people perished in the 2004 tsunami. But when I went to visit two years later, there was a strange feeling. The town was very peaceful and beautiful. All the reminders of the tsunami were gone, as if the people wanted to throw away the memory. The roads were repaved, the houses were rebuilt, the coconut trees swayed in the breeze as always.

But though the town looked new, the people were not. I felt that everyone was still walking around in a daze, like they just woke up and couldn't remember how to get home. The town's economy was still ruined as the tourists had not returned to the beaches. It was a strange sadness - a town of sadness. So it was this atmosphere that I wanted to document. It's my own way of making a tsunami movie.

DIRECTOR – BIOGRAPHY

Aditya Assarat

Aditya Assarat holds a masters degree from the University of Southern California. He started making short films which were invited to many festivals, especially Clermont-Ferrand, Sundance, and the New York Film Festival.

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In 2004, he was invited to attend the Sundance Director's Lab, a training ground for promising filmmakers from around the world. In 2005, he was chosen to work for one year with Mira Nair as part of the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. During the mentorship he also co-directed the documentary *3 Friends* which screened at Toronto and Pusan. In 2007, his debut feature film *Wonderful Town*, supported by the Hubert Bals Fund, won the New Currents Award at its world premiere in Pusan.

Filmography:

High Society (2009)
Wonderful Town(2007)
3 Friends (2005; co-director)
The Sigh (2005;short)
Boy Genius (2005; short)
Waiting (2003; short)
Motorcycle (2001; short)

Wonderful Town

PRODUCER – BIOGRAPHY Soros Sukhum

Soros Sukhum holds a bachelors degree from Rangsit University's faculty of Communication Arts. After graduation he worked as assistant to the producer Mingmongkol Sonakul gaining knowledge in all areas of film management and production. Now with almost ten years work experience, he is regarded as one of the most versatile independent producers working with both established directors as well as newcomers.

Most recently he produced *Wonderful Town* and *Silencio*, a short film commissioned by the Ministry of Art and Culture to commemorate His Majesty the King's 80th Birthday. His next project is *The Sparrow*, director Anocha Suwichakornpong's HAF 2007 project supported by the Hubert Bals Fund. It is shooting April 2008. Following this, he will work again with Aditya Assarat on the new film *High Society*.

Filmography:

High Society (2009); *The Sparrow* (2008); *Wonderful Town* (2007); *Silencio* (2007); *Always* (2006); *Graceland* (2006); *Ordinary Romance* (2005)

PRODUCER – BIOGRAPHY Jetnipith Teerakulchanyut