

93 MINUTES | THAILAND | THAI WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES HORROR, THRILLER | NOT RATED

PRESS CONTACT

Michael Krause | Foundry Communications | (212) 586-7967 | mkrause@foundrycomm.com

FILM MOVEMENT BOOKING CONTACT

Maxwell Wolkin | Theatrical & Festivals | (212) 941-7744 x211 | maxwell@filmmovement.com

SYNOPSIS

Ruja (actress/model Chayanit Chansangavej) returns to Thailand from New York with her young daughter Rachel to settle her late father's estate. Included in her inheritance are two mysterious portraits of a bewitching woman that she is told are worth a fortune, if only they weren't damaged. Desperate to sell the paintings, Ruja hires Tim (K-pop star Nichkhun), an art restorer, to prepare the canvases for sale. But the cracks in the paint have begun to reveal long-hidden secrets, and as strange phenomena begin to emerge around them, Ruja and Rachel quickly realize their lives are in grave danger.



CAST

Nichkhun Horvejkul TIM, a young male art restorer

Chayanit Chnsangavei RUJA, a single mother of a five year-old girl

Nina Nutthacha Jessica Padova RACHEL, RUJA's daughter Byron Bishop PAKORN, a famous artist

Dream-Passalak Supasiripaisarn PRANG, a modelwho is passionate about art

Pu-Sahajak Boonthanakit WICHAI, an art dealer Jim-Kunkanit Khumkrong AUNTIE DA, a housekeeper



CREDITS

Directed by: Surapong Ploensang

Screenplay by: Eakasit Thairaat, Onusa Donsawai, Pun Homchuen,

Surapong Ploensang

Director of Photography: Natdanai Naksuwarn Production Designer: Toey Jaruwateekul

Art Director: Premsak Kadesrenarung

Costume Designer: Thida Rosthip
Casting director: Patitta Thinrat
Special Effects Make-up Artist: Kongkrit Thongdee
Computer Graphics (CG): NewOlder VFX

Music Score Composer: Sriwat Homkham, Mellow Tunes

Sound Designer: Noppawat Likitwong Film Lab: Onecool Production

Co-Producer: Kanokporn Boonthamcharoen

Line Producer: Yannassma Thannitsch

Producer: Yeonu Choi

Production Company: CJ Major Entertainment

PRODUCTION NOTES

STORY DEVELOPMENT

Yeonu Choi, the Managing Director of CJ Major Entertainment Company Limited is the Head Producer of CRACKED, the fifth film from Korean-Thai film studio CJ Major Entertainment, a Korean-Thai film studio that strives to produce films from unique sources and perspectives:

"The basic story of CRACKED is from a Korean screenplay which has not been produced in film yet. To adapt it to the Thai context, the plot was restructured and more characters were added. The title CRACKED really matches the story. It is short and right to the point. When you watch the film you will know why we chose this name."

Yeonu Choi addressed why Top Surapong, a director who is well known within the advertising industry, was chosen to direct his first feature film:

"I was very impressed by how energetic and eager he was to make the film. Actually, it's very easy to find directors who are interested in the idea of making their debut. But what I was looking for was someone who was not too concerned about that. Top always comes up with great ideas, and is always very well-prepared. Top showed us that he has a lot of patience. He stuck with the production for three years, and didn't give up when other people might have. So I am happy that I met him and that we could work together. When I visited the set, he was much better than I even expected. I respect his ideas and outcomes. However nobody is perfect. So my job is to support Top in order to make everyone accept him and work smoothly with him."

As CRACKED director Top Surapong explains:

"CJ Major sent me the script and asked if I would be interested in making it into a film. What I read was the original screenplay that had not been turned into a film in Korea. I found that it was really interesting, especially the question of what is underneath art or behind a portrait, the thing that irreversibly turns the fate of the characters upside down. I thought that this would make a great horror film because the plot had material that we could really develop into something great. That's why I accepted the offer. I asked whether it was possible to maintain the main plot about the dark side of beauty, because it is interesting, while creating new characters, new scenes, new storylines, new twists, and a new setting. I was lucky that CJ Major was very generous and gave me the opportunity to make the film more suitable, with more interesting elements, especially those appropriate for the Thai audience and Thai film.

Meo-Kanokporn Boonthamcharoen (Co-Producer):

"After talking to the Korean producers, I spoke to the director about who should write the script. The first to join our team was Eakasit Thairaat. He set the rough plot and brought the rest of the team onboard. We used a lot of the young generation of Thai screenwriters on this project, such as Onusa Donsawai and Pun Homchuen, who directed and wrote the Thai film Awasarn Lok Suey and the Thai television series Instinct. It was difficult to find the correct balance between horror and thriller when writing the script because the original screenplay was more of a drama-thriller. But for a Thai audience, the director wanted to place more emphasis on horror. The Korean producers liked this idea so they told us to go ahead and make our unique version."

CASTING

The role of the art restorer was intended for an actor with a natural and humble look. The director and production team looked for someone with a clean image who never worked on a horror film before. They ultimately casted Nichkhun Horvejkul, a Thai stars with an established international career, and came up with idea to show him in a different light.

"As for Nichkhun," director Top Surapong revealed, "this character had challenges. We created another problem for ourselves once again (laughs). The problem was that we needed a famous actor but I didn't want an actor who had been in horror movies before. We looked for someone to fill this role for five or six months until I watched *Brother of the Year* and saw Nichkhun and thought he was really cute. I thought it would be really nice to make him not look cute any more (laughs)."

They contacted JYP with rough script and got the answer YES. Then they filed to Korea immediately to meet Nichkhin and talked about the film and character.

Nichkhun Horvejkul: "At first I only read the synopsis. I saw that it was an interesting movie. I think anyone would want to be a part of it. The script seemed challenging. I've never played a role like this before. The director told me it's a ghost movie, a scary movie, and the filming would be tough. I told myself that I should try to challenge myself with new roles. I wanted to prove to myself that I could do it. So I decided to take it even before the script was finalized. At that time, Top met me in Korea. We sat and talked. I asked Top one thing. 'Why did you choose me? Do you think I can do it?' Top said, 'I don't know (laughs), but what I know is that I want the audience to see a different Nichkhun' That was his challenge. He wanted to challenge me as an actor. And I wanted to challenge myself with a different role that I had never had before."

Nichkhun agreed to shake off the image of a fresh-faced, innocent young man to take on the role of a sophisticated art restorer. "I had to have a mustache for the role, and the script is very long, with a lot of lines as well. I tried to read it and memorize it, until it just came without thinking. I prepared a lot for the character. After finishing the workshop I would go home and do all the homework and try to figure out the purpose of each word that the characters says, and what the character wants by saying it."

It wasn't easy to find actors to play the key roles in the film. Yeonu Choi said: "For cultural reasons we needed to find a young actress to play the role of the mother. But because the atmosphere of the film is dark and edgy, it was quite difficult to find an actress willing to take on the role."

Meo-Kanokporn Boonthamcharoen, the film's Co-Producer, added: "We were lucky that Patitta Thinrat joined us. She is the professional casting director who found Oakbab-Chutimon (from *Bad Genius*) and Minnie-Puntaira (from *Inhuman Kiss*). She is really good at finding interesting actors that match the characters. Because we have a first time director and the story is very dramatic, we did not want to use first time actors. So Patitta had to find very skilled and well-known talents. This was especially important for the main actress. It was not easy to find a young actress to play the role of a single mom. But, during the first day of casting, when we first saw Pat's audition, both the director and the assistant director immediately thought that she was the one for the role."

Top Surapong, the director, revealed: "After we received the script we were worried about who could fill the roles because the story is quite extreme and we wanted to try to do everything we could to make it the best version possible. Because if we don't have skilled actors it limits what we can do as directors and producers. When I first met Pat, I thought she was the perfect fit for the role of Ruja but I was not 100% sure. At first I told the team that I did not want an actress that had starred in horror movies before. The first time I saw Pat was when she starred in the film *Someone from Nowhere* and I really liked her performance in that film. When I heard that she had come to audition and I saw her act, I thought she was perfect for Ruja."

Pat-Chayanit Chnsangavei spoke about how she first felt about the character Ruja... "Actually, I said, 'What is this? It's crazy. It's so hard. What kind of unlucky person is this?'... I had been telling people for a long time that I wanted to be in a horror movie. I'm really scared of ghosts. Every time I watch horror movies, I need to put on my headphones to block out the sound of the movie. Because I am really scared of the sounds. I don't know why I want to be in a horror movie so much. It is like when you are really scared of something you want to test how much of it you can take. When I knew that I could audition for this role, I told them that I was really interested. It was challenging because the character is not like me at all.

When I went to the audition, Top was there. He contacted me and let me know that I got the part and that we would be working together. CRACKED is my third feature film. The first two were independent films. I personally like to watch indie films. That's why I took those roles before. So this is the most challenging role that I have faced. The first five minutes of the movie was the only comfortable part for me (laughs)."

"Actually, I was also worried about playing the role of a mother. But I was really clear to myself that I love acting. If I am this age, and I can make people believe that I am a mother, I think it is so cool. I talked to people on the production team and they believed in me and thought that I would do well. I have to thank the studio for really supporting me. I feel that if you decide to do something you have to do your best and you can't be afraid of the consequences."

Besides the lead actors, a young actor also plays an important role in this film. The talent of Nina Natcha (Jessica Padowan), half Thai-British, who plays the role of RACHEL, the daughter of the lead character surprised the whole production team. At only age of five, but acting like an old pro, she stole scenes from the other actors, and was loved by everyone.

Nina's mother revealed, "When I went to audition for this movie, I definitely didn't think that she would get the part because at that time she was only 4 years and 10 months old. She was very small, and according to the script, they needed a child of 7-8 years old. When she auditioned, the casting team brought me to the room because they were afraid that she couldn't do it. But surprisingly she did really well. Everyone was surprised because it was her first audition."

Meo-Kanokporn, co-producer of the movie: "Nina is an amazing child. At first, we intended to cast a child who was 7-8 years old to play this role. But Nina, was only 4 years old, the youngest. But she could do whatever we asked her to do and she had her own ideas. She designed her own acting. She would yawn if she had to show she was sleepy without being told. The more we filmed, the more amazed we were at her talent. The assistant director said that she would become the real star. It was the kid who only needed one take!"

Koy, Nina's personal acting coach, revealed that, "Actually, we almost didn't coach Nina at all. We just told her what the scene was, what she had to do, and she would improvise in a way that she understood. She could act in her own way. For example, for the scenes in English, we had an English dialogue for her to recite. But in the end she made her own dialogue. Sometimes she was very mature. We only had to give her direction once and she remembered it all and she understood the story. She is so tiny but she is so amazing. Nina is incredible."

Top-Surapong (Director): "With real child actors it's very difficult. The emotional stress can be difficult. But in the end, after a lot of auditions, I remember I watched so many audition tapes, there was only one person who shone – Nina. It was definitely a choice that couldn't go wrong. There was no scene that made us think that we made the wrong choice. We are so lucky to have her in this film. She is amazing. I think she has the potential to be a star if she still wants to continue in the film industry."

THE PAINTINGS

Top-Surapong (Director): "The art work is the protagonist of this story. Because many of the story's main characters work in the art industry, the art team was very important, while working well under the constraints of the budget (laughs). So when we chose Toey Jaruwateekul, he was really well prepared. He did a lot of research and came up with a lot of references, in the same way he would if he was preparing for an advertising project. Because the project involved fine art, it was fun for him. The challenge of making the paintings that plays a key role in the film was why he took this job. We had a lot of discussions about what style the painting should be in and who should be the model for the portrait. Once we finished the first painting, created a lot of copies because they tend to get damaged on set."

Top-Surapong, the director, added that "The paintings were not just a prop. The paintings are very important to the story. They are one of the characters in the story. Therefore, we had to do a lot of research to decide what style the paintings should be in, which techniques to use, which painter's paintings interested us. What will the prototype look like to make the story? So we started to come up with ideas for the images. Some suggested the work of a Scandinavian, Norwegian artist would be interesting because it is dark. But we thought that it might not be the image we wanted. In the end, we settled on referencing Gustav Klimt. What we were interested in was how he drew women or painted female nudes that do not look too erotic. For this era, the composition, the use of color, or the Gustav Klimt style is something that we found interesting. It is not too open or too hidden. It also doesn't try to hide that it is a nude portrait. With the reference, we let our artists draw and develop ideas, techniques, and skills until we got the collection of paintings that play such an important part in the movie."

Toey, the production designer, revealed the problem was that, "There are two original pictures in this story, Portrait of a Beauty Number One, and Portrait of a Beauty Number Two. Actually, the problem was the painting was made by the artist who is the protagonist of the story. And there are special techniques that are involved in being the protagonist. The pictures will be cracked. The problem of the art team was that the cracks must appear realistic. There is a process that tells the story of the movie. We had to make the painting as realistic as possible. When we did research about cracks, we found that cracks occur in very old paintings, paintings that are more than a hundred years old. So to tell a story about a painting that is only 20 years old, we had to work together to design how to make it as realistic as possible."

"The paintings were all painted by brush. But in the process of creating cracks, we needed to use special plaster mixed with glue to make the texture of the cracks right. Because if we used paint that really cracks over time, it can't be done, it has to be really dry. But because of our time constraints, we had to use cement to help create a stacked texture so that it can crack."

"The painting is a collaboration between the painter, who painted and the person who made the mockup of the cracked painting. They must work together and blend techniques so that the cracks and the painting work together. Doing this caused a lot of debates for a long time because new problems constantly came up that needed solutions that led to new problems to solve. We found a way to make the painting on the canvas and to make the plaster crack the right way. But when we put the plaster on the real portrait it didn't crack in the right way because the oil paint stuck to it like glue. So we had to adjust it."

"With the first painting we had to repeat it seven times. At first, we tried to only paint one painting and print out the rest with an inkjet. But when we tried it the inkjet didn't help much because it didn't have enough detail. So we had to paint on top of the inkjet prints, which just served as outlines."

SHOOTING THE FILM

Ham-Nattadanai Naksuwan, is a director of photography who has worked on many commercials, short films and music videos, including the film *One for the Road*. Before joining CRACKED, he said, "When Top invited me to do this project, he said he wanted to make the 'deepest, darkest' movie in terms of lighting, visuals, and story. He wanted to make it look as dark as possible. So I kept that in my mind all the time so that I could maintain that vision. During shooting, new ideas can come up. Locations change, and the ideas of other people in the team become involved, so it is possible to forget the original vision. But I tried to hold on to the original vision of making the 'deepest, darkest' film."

"I used references from many films, but I only used the reference as a background idea. The rest I had to develop based on what happened during the production of the film. Each script is not the same. Most of my ideas come from the feeling I get when reading the script, but also my reaction to how each actor interprets the script. So, I try to follow the actors. This means that in terms of shooting methods, the camera movement will try to follow the lead of the actor. In terms of lighting and color, Top and I threw ideas back and forth. We shared references. They didn't only come from films. Top gave me a book by the artist Rembrandt to read to help me come up with my own ideas."

"For this film, we were mostly shooting in the jungle at night. So we had to create our own light. We also had to balance the lighting. For example, in some scenes we wanted the look to be artificial light, not natural, but when we are doing that we also had to be concerned about the other natural light scenes and make sure that it did not stick out from other scenes."

Anamorphic lenses were used throughout the film. "This lens is a special lens that makes filming harder (laughs). It adds work for the computer graphics. The lens compresses the image. At one time it was really popular in foreign films because it gives a different feeling both in terms of aspect ratio and the look of the lens. It is used sometimes in Thai films but this is probably the first Thai film that uses it for almost the entire film. We argued a lot about this lens because of the cost and the time constraints. The lens consumes more light than normal lenses. So I had to add light. It was really challenging for me but it was a fun experience at the same time," says the director of photography Ham-Nattadanai.

The co-producer Meo-Kanokphon added, "When the DP requested to use an anamorphic lens, I had to check with the CG team to make sure they would be ok with it. Using ananamorphic lens will distort the picture. But the DP insisted that there is a new model that creates less distortion. And the Korean team gave us time to test the camera and the lens to find out if it would work. Then we brought it to the CG team to test it. The CG team said that it is possible but that instead of three months they would need five months to do their job. The Korean team was ok with that. I was impressed that they gave us the time to do a proper job. I wish this was the way that it worked with all Thai movies. If Thai production teams were given enough budget and time we could create high quality films, but in reality we usually don't get that."

The cast and crew put in a lot of effort, both physical and mental. Because all of the shooting locations were "brutal and vicious," everyone agreed that it was a good day when the actors came home free of injuries. In order to provide the audience with beautiful and realistic scenery, we had to trek into the jungle, and battle mosquitoes, monkeys and rainstorms.

Ham-Nattadanai: "I had to rappel 20 meters to take a picture looking back up at the mouth of the cave to create the feeling of how deep the hole is. There were geckos, frogs, other things I have no idea what they were, bats, and I was really scared there would be snakes. So I told myself they were not really there (laughs). I had no idea I would have to have to do anything like this. But after I learned more about the location and the script I figured out that the job would not be easy. But it's good, like taking a training course (laughs)."

Pat-Chayanit had to face her worst fear! "I'm already afraid of snakes. I feel that about 80% of humans in the world are afraid of snakes. I'm one of them (laughs). When I read the script and saw that I have a scene with a snake, I turned to the director and asked, 'Really, is it a real snake or a fake snake, a CG snake?' Top said, 'A real snake.' At first, I thought he was joking. But when the day came, it was the real thing."

The day Pat's scene with the cobras was filmed coincided with festivals in Ratchaburi, where the shoot took place. It was during the time of the Chinese ghost festival and the 123rd anniversary celebration of Ban Pong District, so there were sounds of firecrackers, dogs barking, trains running, and monks praying, which made the filming really difficult.

"The room where we shot the bathroom scene was tiny, and filled with the smell of the dead snake that we used, that had been frozen and thawed. The smell was really strong. The smell was enough to make the snake on the faucet seem like it was alive. It looked real. This was the first time in my life that I was this so close to a snake. Even though it was dead, at first I lost focus and couldn't manage to do the scene. I wanted to cry and I screamed... I was only able to get past it with the help of the team. When I walked to turn on the faucet I tried to look up to the sky. They told me to sing to myself. But I couldn't. I cried and I closed my eyes. The assistant director held my hand and helped me to turn the faucet. We kept shooting that for three or four takes. I cried every time. I shook, I screamed, and my hand was soaked. I wasn't really scared. It was more of a mixture of hate and fear when I got close to the snake. But the show must go on. We were like, nah... at least it's dead."

On the set, there was a moment Pat-Chayanit could not step out of the Ruja character, and she said "It's about the carrying the entire energy of the character in the body. When I act or when I'm in acting classes there are many techniques that I can use. But I like to use this technique the most. It's also quite risky to do this often, but it always happens. It happens a lot when I go to acting classes but there will be a coach beside me who can help me stop. But that day on the set there was no acting coach. So I couldn't stop crying and screaming after an intense scene. Everyone on set must have been shocked. But I really couldn't stop. I tried for a while. I went out the balcony to scream and let it all out. I thought after that I would be OK, so I went back to the monitor. But I started crying again and I cried for facing the wall. Nobody could help me. Eventually it got better. This is quite dangerous for my mental health. So I called my acting coach afterwards and she said this can happen if you are too into the moment. It is about uncontrolled energy."



A MULTI-NATIONAL COLLABORATION

CRACKED is international collaboration between Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand. The four countries decision to finance in CRACKED was a sign of expectation for CRACKED, but it is also evidence that the world audience are paying attention to Thai horror films.

Meo-Kanokporn, the Co-Producer, revealed that "after we finished writing the script, we had to translate everything into English and send it to the Korean side to read. Then they sent us back comments. These comments really made us want to work with the Korean production team. The comments were very systematic. We received very helpful comments on everything we sent. The type of comments were very different from what we usually get from Thai investors. We were in constant discussions to reach common ground. This process let us understand why the Korean movie industry is so strong."

"One of the few demands from the Korean side was to always keep them updated. If there was some difference of opinion the Korean team would ask us why we think the way we do. If we were able to give a reasonable response they would let us proceed. But sometimes, if our answer was not good enough they would provide us with some solutions. During pre-production we were in constant communication to make sure we had the same vision of the project before shooting. So before shooting, the Korean team requested a lot of meetings, which was great. On set we were left to implement the vision, and the Korean team just made sure that we kept on schedule."

CHEMISTRY ON SET

Top-Surapong, director said, "When Nichkhun and Pat were on the set together I really thought I was lucky to cast the two of them, they have really good chemistry."

Pat-Chayanit revealed "I gave all my time, all my heart, everything to this movie. I can tell you that in this movie, I am the ugliest I have ever been in my life (laughs). In the movie you can see my ugly crying, my ugly shocked expression, and my ugly terrified face. But I was so happy with all the ugliness that ended up on the screen. I felt like I had really good co-star in the film. Nichkhun is a very good partner and Also a new journey for both of us. We helped each other find the way that works best. It is rare to have such fun working with someone. Everyone put all that they had into acting. It is like we didn't communicate verbally but through performing. And it was really fun."

Nichkhun said, "Thanks to the acting coaches and all of the actors who played our emotions off one another so well during the scenes, especially Pat and Nina. We were always in scenes together and they are very talented and dedicated actors. During the filming, I was always focused on Top, and whether he was ok with my acting. I always consulted with him to see whether he wanted me to do something more or less with the character. We didn't always agree 100% but he always gave us the opportunity to exchange ideas and create the characters together."

Nichkhun continued, "Working together was so fun, and enjoyable too. The two of them are great people. Pat is very talented. Nina is a 5-year-old, but she knows everything. She knows what she has to do when the action starts. Her face changes from smiling to being scared."

Pat-Chayanit said, "What I was most worried about from the start was the energy of being a mom. I work shopped with the acting teacher Kookkai for a while. I felt, yeah, I have that feeling... everyone has a mom. After the workshop, I felt that I love my mom even more. I understood my mother's feelings. And I understood when people say 'if you want to hurt my child, hurt me instead.' It was very strange, and I was stunned to embody that emotion for several days. It was a confusing feeling, but very powerful, very strange. When I went back home and saw my mom, I thought it was really cute when she was complaining and talked so much."

Both Nichkhun and Pat addressed the audience: "I really want you to come watch this movie. We all worked really hard. We struggled (laughs). I guarantee that while you are watching you will feel exhausted because once the story starts, it is non-stop. You will be on the edge of your seat the whole time. Don't think that you will have the chance to relax."

Director Top-Surapong said, "The main idea that we wanted to convey to the audience through CRACKED was the pain caused by superficial beauty. Cracks are caused by the fact that we are not important people. We think it's a common feeling. And when it is a horror movie, it needs to haunt the audience and be entertaining, so that the audience feels it's worth it to sit and watch. That's the core of making this film. I hope that in the end it will be successful. I hope Thai people will like it. We have to wait for the audience to judge."

The co-producer Meo-Kanokporn revealed that "the main message of this movie is that everyone faces some cracks in their life. Everyone has cracks. But will it be a crack that leads to darkness? It depends on each family. Like every painting, no one knows what's behind the picture on the canvas. Can we accept the truth? Most importantly, the actors and staff are very dedicated. All in all, it took almost 3 years to complete and be ready for release. This movie is full of pain for both the characters and the staff involved (laughs). I want the Thai people to come out and support this Thai movie. Because a movie like this is not easily approved to be made."

Pat-Chayanit: "The audience must be wiped out for sure (laughs). Really, it is very exhausting to watch. It shows that a person can do anything to protect their child. If you feel that your life is really tiring this movie will show you there could be worse. I want people to come and watch this movie because it is different, especially the acting in the film. The production of CRACKED has faced every challenge: animals, kids, effects, slings, it really has it all. Nichkhun and I agree that this will be the scariest movie of the year."



ABOUT FILM MOVEMENT

Founded in 2002, Film Movement is a North American distributor of award-winning independent and foreign films based in New York City. It has released more than 250 feature films and shorts culled from prestigious film festivals worldwide. Its catalog includes titles by directors such as Hirokazu Kore-eda, Maren Ade, Jessica Hausner, Andrei Konchalovsky, Andrzej Wajda, Diane Kurys, Ciro Guerra and Melanie Laurent. In 2015, Film Movement launched its reissue label Film Movement Classics, featuring new restorations released theatrically as well as on Blu-ray and DVD, including films by such noted directors as Eric Rohmer, Peter Greenaway, Bille August, Marleen Gorris, Takeshi Kitano, Arturo Ripstein, Sergio Corbucci and Ettore Scola.

For more information, visit www.filmmovement.com.

