

# A Portrait for my Aunt

Short film part I: Big or Small?

Short film part II: A Gift.

**Terms:**

First person point of view (1<sup>st</sup> PPOV) – Looking from the point of view of ‘Me’

Second person point of view (2<sup>nd</sup> PPOV) – Looking from the point of view of ‘You’ (in this case, ‘You’ is my aunt)

Third person point of view (3<sup>rd</sup> PPOV) - Looking from the point of view of ‘Them’ (audience viewing my film which is playing on a screen)

**Objective:**

Part I: Big or Small?

Ask my aunt which size of canvas she prefers for her portrait to be painted on.

- Sound: Environmental sounds, my voice in informal Singlish – a mix of Chinese and English in an awkward and clumsy way (the way I usually speak to my close ones)
- Environment: mainly outdoor
- Subject: me, shot mainly 3<sup>rd</sup> PPOV
- Props: wallet, two fifty cent coins, yellow “Art Friend” plastic bag with two different sizes of canvases in it
- Attire: casual – shorts, denim coat, t-shirt, sandals, no accessories, no make up

Part II: A Gift.

Complete a painting and present it to my aunt to ask her if she like it or not. (She’ll probably like it, because when I told my cousin that she didn’t like the previous drawings I did of her, he told me that his mother (my aunt) didn’t think that way...the reason why she wanted me to draw her prettier wasn’t because she felt that my previous portraitures I did for her wasn’t good enough. It was because she didn’t expect that I would draw her so well and had higher expectation afterwards, so she asked me if I could draw her prettier.)

# A Portrait for my Aunt

Short film part I: Big or Small?

**Ong Xin Hong**

**'A Portrait of my Aunt'**

## **Video**

'A Portrait of my Aunt' is a short film documenting the conversational process between Ong and her aunt whom have passed away in October 2015. The aim of this conversation is for the artist to achieve a satisfying portrait that her aunt had requested for before her death. Ong intends to reconnect with her aunt through belief and hope in the action of throwing coins. In the film, she employed symbolism on two faces of a coin to communicate with her aunt. She will hold two coins in her hands and drop them on the ground for a reply from her aunt:

If one head and one tail faces up, it represents a "Yes";

If two heads face up, it represents a "No";

If two tails face up, it represents "I don't know".

Ong's film questions the notion of belief. She allows her audience to choose whether to believe that communication with the dead is plausible or not.

### **Scene 1 (Indoor about 1 minute 30 seconds):**

- I enter my room. (medium close up – upper torso level)
- I pick up my wallet, which is on top of my bag, which is on the table
- I open my wallet and check that I have two fifty cents coins (close up)

Question: Why do I use fifty cent coins instead of one dollar coins?

Answer: I happen to have 2 fifty cent coins in my wallet at that time. I don't think the value of the coin matters.

- I put the coins back into my wallet and put my wallet into my bag (turns to leave and camera changes angle)
  
- I walk towards the door and take my short sleeves denim coat off the hook behind the door to put it on (Establish shot of the door of my room from the inside)
- I bend to take the plastic bag containing two canvases of different size
  
- I open the door of my room to leave (Establish shot of door of my room from the outside)

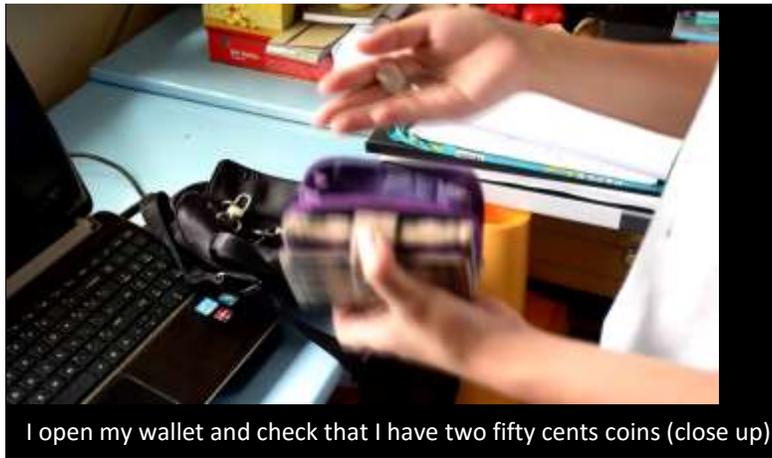
Question: Why is the shot an extreme close up?

Answer: I want to achieve a blur and sharp effect, so I placed the camera close to the door so that I can take a sharp image of the door with all its texture.

- I close the door of my room.
  
- I enter the living room and put on my sandals, prepared to go out of house (Establish shot of my living room with the main door from the inside)



I enter my room. (medium close up – upper torso level)



I open my wallet and check that I have two fifty cents coins (close up)



Ilo Ilo (2013)  
Shows the back view of an actor walking to the door



I walk towards the door and take my short sleeves denim coat off the hook behind the door to put it on (Establish shot of the door of my room from the inside)



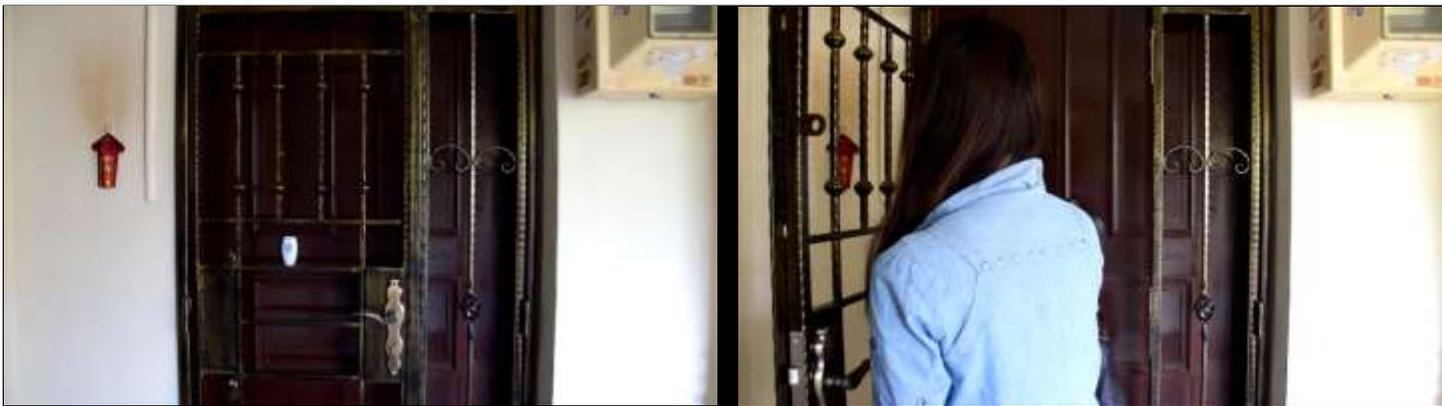
I open the door of my room to leave (Establish shot of door of my room from the outside)



I enter the living room and put on my sandals, prepared to go out of house (Establish shot of my living room with the main door from the inside)

## Scene 2 (Outdoor abt 6 minutes):

- I exit the house and take out the keys from my wallet to lock the main door and gate (Establish shot of the door of my house from the outside)
- I enter the lift (Establish shot of the lift)
- Bus trip to Mandai Crematorium and Columbarium to visit my aunt (1<sup>st</sup> PPOV looking out the window of the bus , fairly from eye level, to the flowers and signs along the roads – Establish direction of bus with signs, eg. ‘Yio Chu Kang’, ‘Meng Suan rd’, etc.)
- Alight at the bus stop near Mandai Crematorium (Establish environment with signs on left and right, eg. ‘Mandai Crematorium and Columbarium’)
- I make my way into the columbarium to find my aunt (3<sup>rd</sup> PPOV with various shots of me journeying to my aunt, background sound of vehicles’ motor, rustling plastic bag, dragging sound from shoes, crickets, funeral songs, janitors sweeping, Buddhist meditative chant playing from a battery operated statue from another family, birds chirping, coins hitting each other and dropping onto the ground)
- I ask my aunt if she prefers a big or small portrait through the action of throwing coins: head + tail = Yes, 2 heads = No, 2 tails = I don’t know (3<sup>rd</sup> PPOV/ 2<sup>nd</sup> PPOV)



I exit the house & lock the main door and gate (Establish shot of the door of my house from the outside)



Ilo Ilo (2013)  
Boy looking out of the window while he thinks of his maid (reminiscing the past)



I enter the lift (Establish shot of the lift)



Bus trip to Mandai Crematorium and Columbarium to visit my aunt (1<sup>st</sup> PPOV looking out the window of the bus , fairly from eye level, to the flowers and signs along the roads – Establish direction of bus with signs, eg. 'Yio Chu Kang', 'Meng Suan rd', etc.)



Align at the bus stop near Mandai Crematorium (Establish environment with signs on left and right, eg. 'Mandai Crematorium and Columbarium')



I make my way into the columbarium to find my aunt (3<sup>rd</sup> PPOV with various shots of me journeying to my aunt, background sound of vehicles' motor, rustling plastic bag, dragging sound from shoes, crickets, funeral songs, janitors sweeping, Buddhist meditative chant playing from a battery operated statue from another family, birds chirping, coins hitting each other and dropping onto the ground)





it means "Yes"

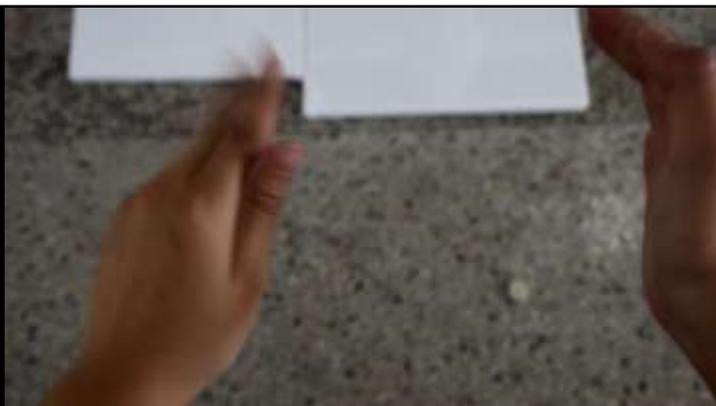


it means "No"



it means "I don't know"

I ask my aunt if she prefers a big or small portrait through the action of throwing coins: head + tail = Yes, 2 heads = No, 2 tails = I don't know (3<sup>rd</sup> PPOV/ 2<sup>nd</sup> PPOV)



Throwing coins (1<sup>st</sup> PPOV)



再给他开门

Ilo Ilo (2013)  
1<sup>st</sup> PPOV of a boy cutting and pasting

## Striking a contrast between close up and landscape shot

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When you make portraits and when you focus on the actions, the human emotions, you focus on the details and you focus...kinda like a close up.

When you step back really far away and you take a picture of landscape, that is, is kind of like a two extremes in working.

That is very interesting in making work when you have to fight and you have very different kind of instincts that try to grab you.

<https://vimeo.com/145637868#t=341s>



**Nguyen Trinh Thi (born 1973, Hanoi)**

**“Letters from Panduranga” (2015)** was initially inspired by the fact that the Vietnamese government is to build Vietnam’s first two nuclear power plants in Ninh Thuan by 2020. Public discussions regarding the project have been largely absent in Vietnam due to strict government controls over public speech and media; and local communities have also been excluded from consultations.

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To watch: <https://vimeo.com/145637868>

## Further experimentation with colour curves



Original colour of footage



Added warm colour curve to give the footage a pink tint



Added yellow tint through colour corrections onto the pink tint to achieve a similar colour to Ilo Ilo

## Shots from Ilo Ilo (2013)

Ilo Ilo is filled with sweetness, humour and humanity, a debut from 30-year-old Singaporean writer-director Anthony Chen, who graduated four years ago from Britain's National Film and Television School.

<http://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/may/01/ilo-ilo-review>

To watch: [https://youtu.be/lcxrPep\\_M98](https://youtu.be/lcxrPep_M98)



# A Portrait for my Aunt

Short film part II: A Gift.

出品  
Presented by

王欣弘  
Ong Xin Hong

A Production by

王欣弘  
Ong Xin Hong

出品人  
Executive Producers

王欣弘  
Ong Xin Hong

Producers

王欣弘  
Ong Xin Hong

Associate Producers

王欣弘  
Ong Xin Hong

王欣弘 作品  
An Ong Xin Hong Film

