UNSPOKEN

“UNSPOKEN packs a potent yet tender gut punch, as its protagonists from across the queer Asian diaspora navigate, challenge, and subvert accepted norms around ‘coming out.’ It’s evident the protagonists and crew are engaged in a process of collective healing through the making of this film, and it’s a rare privilege to be connected to their journey.”

- Karen McMullen, director of programming, The TIDE Film Festival

Directed by Patrick G. Lee
Produced by Patrick G. Lee
Release Year: 2021
Production Year: 2020
17.07 minutes, United States, English
Format: Digital 1080p (16:9), PCM 48 KHz 16-bit audio (ProRes version)
Screening Formats Available: mov, mp4, BluRay, Virtual Cinema on Vimeo
Hashtags: #QTAPI #QTPOC #QTBIPOC #QueerAsian #RepresentationMatters #ComingOut #FamilyAcceptance #AsianAmericanStudies #QueerStudies #WGSS #AsianAmericanCinema #AAPICinema #AsianAmericanFilm #AAPIFilm #AAPIFilmmaker #AsianAmericanFilmmaker #KoreanAmericanFilm #QueerAsianFilm #QTBIPOCfilm #QTPOCfilm
UNSPOKEN

ONE-LINE SYNOPSIS
Through letter-writing, a community discussion, and a drag performance, six queer and trans Asian Americans grapple with their queerness and consider what family acceptance might look like.

ONE PARAGRAPH SYNOPSIS
UNSPoken is a short documentary that follows six queer and trans Asian Americans as they grapple with their queerness and consider what family acceptance might look like. The interviewees hail from across the Asian diaspora — with roots in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, China, and Korea. Through letter-writing, a community discussion, and a drag performance, the audience bears witness to recitations from this group of Asian Americans that might forever alter family dynamics.

TWO PARAGRAPHS SYNOPSIS
Through letter-writing, a community discussion, and a drag performance, six queer and trans Asian Americans grapple with their queerness and consider what family acceptance might look like.

UNSPoken’s interviewees hail from across the Asian diaspora — with roots in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, China, and Korea. Some are not yet out to their immigrant parents, and this film is their way of starting that process. Some have tried to initiate conversations around their queerness, only to meet sustained denial. Others cannot communicate fluently in the same language as their families of origin. In this film, they all share what they would say if one day they woke up and their families' ruptures across generation, culture, and language were healed.
REVIEWS

“Patrick G. Lee’s UNSPOKEN offers an emotional and intimate look into the struggle for family acceptance that continues to organize so much queer and trans Asian American life, art, and activism. With a capacious cast representing various East, Southeast, and South Asian diasporic experiences, the short film provides an accessible entry into themes ranging from intergenerational language barriers to the life-sustaining power of community. Eminently teachable, UNSPOKEN is essential viewing for anyone whose interests lie near the intersection of race, gender, sexuality, and diaspora.”
—James McMaster, Assistant Professor of Gender and Women’s Studies and Asian American Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison

“We had an overwhelming response from an audience of university students in an Asian Americans in Media class, who connected with UNSPOKEN on a very personal level. Queer students were emotional about seeing their experiences represented in this film in a way that they have not seen before. The honesty and vulnerability of the cast inspires us all to speak our truth.”
—Pamela M. Quan, executive director, DisOrient Asian American Film Festival of Oregon

“The piece acts as a powerful and timely film that captures an important emerging experience in the Asian American community, in raw and moving honesty. Its messaging of courage and hope, entwined with a rich showcase of diverse Asian American experiences, allowed this film to elevate itself among the rest.”
—Austin Asian American Film Festival, Documentary Jury (2020)

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—, director of programming, The TIDE Film Festival

Third World Newsreel
545 8th Avenue, Suite 550, New York, NY 10018
(212) 947-9277 x 10, twn@twn.org
Trailer: https://vimeo.com/ondemand/unspokenfilm
Filmmaker’s Website: https://www.patrickglee.com
AWARDS, FESTIVALS & SCREENINGS

GRAND JURY PRIZE, BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT (2020)
Austin Asian American Film Festival

COURAGE AWARD (2020)
DisOrient Asian American Film Festival of Oregon

WINNER, LGBTQ SHORT FILM (2020)
Oxford Film Festival

AUDIENCE FALL CHOICE AWARD (2019)
NewFilmmakers NY

FESTIVALS
Asian American International Film Festival
Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival
Outfest Los Angeles LGBTQ Film Festival
San Francisco Independent Film Festival
Scottish Queer International Film Festival
Busan International Art Film Festival
San Diego Asian Film Festival
Guam International Film Festival
DisOrient Asian American Film Festival
Austin Asian American Film Festival
KAFFNY Infinite Cinema
NewFilmmakers NY
Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival
Seattle Asian American Film Festival
Houston Asian American & Pacific Islander Film festival
Oxford Film Festival
The TIDE Film Festival
FilmPride - Brighton & Hove Pride LGBTQ+ Film Festival
SAFILM - San Antonio Film Festival
Outfest Fusion QTBIPOC Film Festival
Big Apple Film Festival

SCREENINGS
UCLA Asian American Studies Center 50th Anniversary Film Festival (2021)
UMass Amherst Asian American Film Festival (2019)
KQTcon – Korean Queer & Trans Conference at The New School (2018)
University of Southern California – Asian Pacific Cinema Association (2018)
BIOGRAPHY OF DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER

SHORT BIO
Patrick G. Lee (he/they) is a queer diasporic Korean documentary filmmaker, writer, and community organizer. He’s interested in building collaborative, community-based models of filmmaking that reject traditional hierarchies of authority and that equip queer and trans people of color with media-making skills. Patrick has made award-winning films about Asian American coming out stories, LGBTQ self-representation, and queer Asian history. His writing has appeared in Mother Jones, The Nation, ProPublica, The Atlantic, and more. His work-in-progress feature documentary, UNTITLED KQT PROJECT, is supported by Firelight Media, Sundance, and CAAM. He has been coping with pandemic times mostly by eating carbs.

LONG BIO
Patrick G. Lee (he/they) is a queer diasporic Korean documentary filmmaker, writer, and community organizer. He’s interested in building collaborative, community-based models of filmmaking that reject traditional hierarchies of authority and that equip queer and trans people of color with media-making skills. His recent project, UNSPOKEN, won several festival awards, including the Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary Short at the Austin Asian American Film Festival. Patrick’s five-part docuseries for NBC News on LGBTQ Asian Pacific American history won the NAMIC Vision Award for Long Form Digital Content. His writing has appeared in Mother Jones, The Nation, ProPublica, The Atlantic, and more. In 2018, Patrick helped organize KQTcon, the first national Korean queer and trans conference in the U.S. His work-in-progress feature documentary, UNTITLED KQT PROJECT, is supported by Firelight Media, Sundance, and CAAM. He has been coping with pandemic times mostly by eating carbs.

Director’s Statement
I started imagining a film like UNSPOKEN around the same time I started seriously considering what coming out to my Korean immigrant parents might look like. In that process, I realized that coming out was a personal choice for me to make based on my instincts and my circumstances — not a default “milestone” required of all queers, as it’s often assumed to be. I also realized that, before I could potentially navigate sharing my queerness with my family of origin, I first needed to find grounding in my own community of fellow diasporic queers of color.

I wanted to make a film that would transform the often solitary, even lonely process of coming out into a shared experience grounded in community, collective care, and celebration. And I hope UNSPOKEN will help initiate honest and hopeful conversations around what unconditional acceptance can look like within immigrant communities.

As a director and producer, I work within a tradition of filmmaking as community activation, which means that my values as an artist align with my values as an organizer and activist. Specifically, I seek to center the perspectives of those most directly impacted by the issues I address — namely, the interlocking systems of queerphobia, racism, and imperialism — in part by recruiting community members as protagonists and collaborators, hiring them as crew, and engaging them as audience.

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members. I also seek to build a shared vision for the film with everyone involved, and to create a supportive culture as we navigate the unpredictable process of making an independent film. In these ways, working on UNSPOKEN has afforded me an opportunity to expand my creative practice by integrating principles of community organizing and social justice more deeply into my process.

CONTACT INFO:
Patrick is available for speaking engagements and screening events. You can reach him at pgleefilms@gmail.com.
Website: www.patrickglee.com
Instagram: www.instagram.com/patrickglee
STILLS & CAPTIONS

Burmese drag queen Emi Grate in a candid moment.

Burmese drag queen Emi Grate lip syncs onstage while flanked by a crew of fellow queer Asian performers.

Burmese drag queen Emi Grate performs onstage at a queer bar in Brooklyn.

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A joyful, behind-the-scenes moment.

Julie slight smile

Julie CU

Kevin and Steph emotional
Patrick contemplative

Rathini CU contemplative (profile)

Sen CU smile

Title design by Daniel Hyo Kim.
PRODUCTION CREDITS

Directed, Produced & Edited by Patrick G. Lee
Music by Ariel Loh
Cinematographers: Bruce Wang, Grace Naw
Mixing Engineer: Lien Do
Sound Recordists: JT Takagi, Connor Donahue
Designer: Daniel Hyo Kim
Colorist: Dree Lee
Assistant Editor: Bruce Wang
1st Assistant Director: Moxie Peng
Production Assistant: Ann Kaufman
Photographers: John Cheng, Danny Kim
Our Interviewees: Sen Ayané, Kevin & Stephanie C., Emi Grate, Rathini Kandavel, Julie Kim
Additional Music: “I’ll Be There” written and performed by Nenci & Leaviathe, courtesy of Text Me Records

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Aya Yabe
Unjoo Lee Byars
Sy Nakao
John Yang
The Ibach Family
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Elaina Natario

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