

STARRING HAYLEY NGOC MAI & SAMUEL AN CINEMATOGRAPHY BY CHANANUN CHOTRUNGROJ EDITED BY LAWRENCE LE LAM SCORE BY VERON XIO
PRODUCED BY NIC ALTOBELLI EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY PHẠM GIA QUỲ

Chân

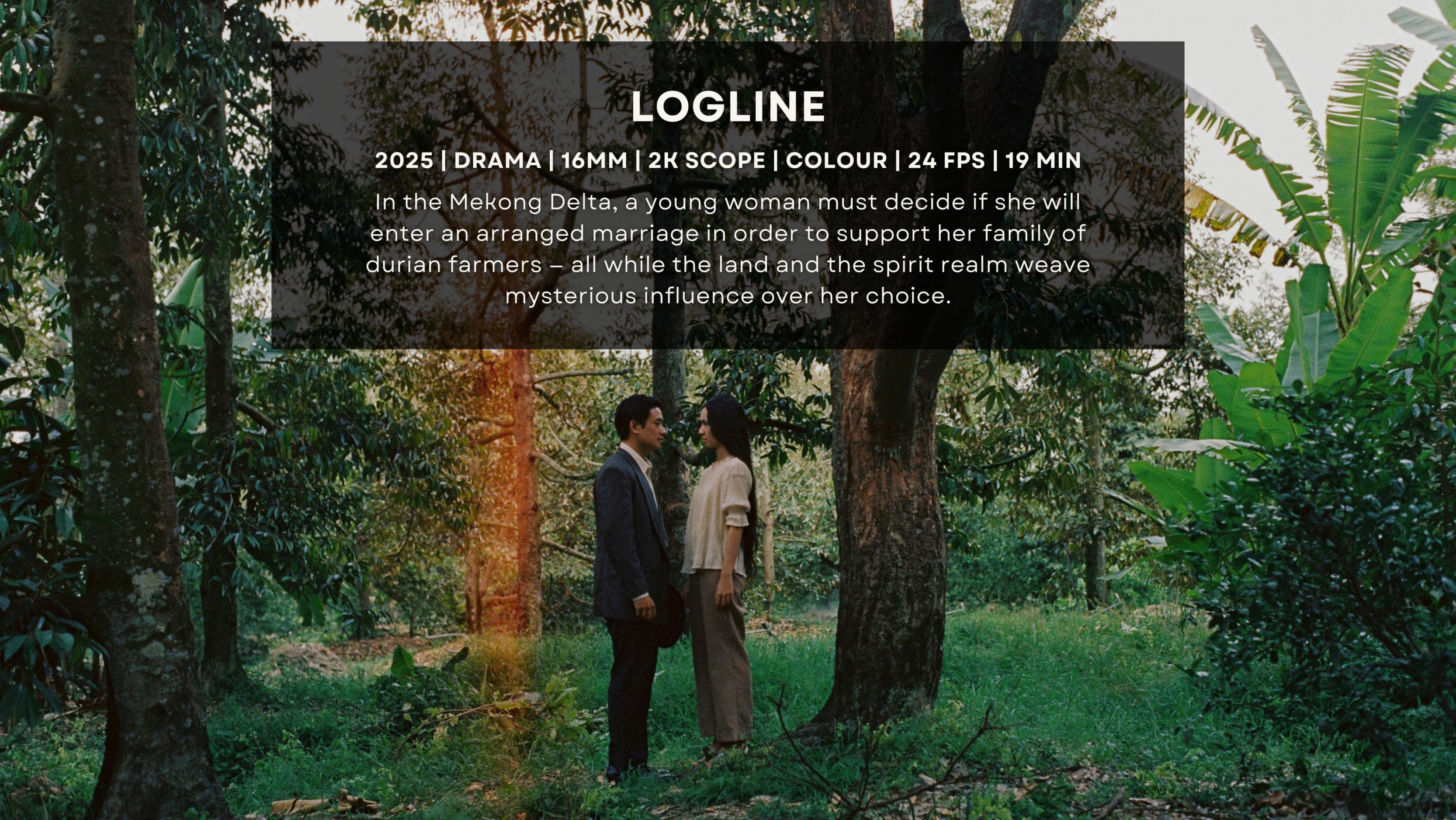
ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT
a film by SOLARA THANH BÌNH ĐĂNG



LOGLINE

2025 | DRAMA | 16MM | 2K SCOPE | COLOUR | 24 FPS | 19 MIN

In the Mekong Delta, a young woman must decide if she will enter an arranged marriage in order to support her family of durian farmers – all while the land and the spirit realm weave mysterious influence over her choice.



DIRECTORS STATEMENT

It was a hot summer's day when I was eating durian with my mother. My mother is from Nha Trang and is a chef; I must have inherited her affinity towards food and a predisposition for the natural world. My mother opened the durian with her hands and as I gazed upon the enticingly soft flesh of the fruit, it reminded me of a woman's body and her womb; the fruit as a whole evoked in so many ways the experience of being a woman on this earth.

Durian flowers grow in bunches and are pollinated at night, but when a fruit is ripe, it falls alone, before joining many others in import and export around the world. It is a lonely and beautiful existence. Much like how durian is grown and shipped, and rivers become oceans, our world is shaped by the movement of things -- both within and out of our control.

As someone whose own fate has been shaped by the migration of my ancestors, I wonder about the young women who become migrant brides in the Mekong Delta, who live in one of the most important ecological & agricultural regions in Asia, yet also one of the most affected by climate change and poverty. When they come from such a lush natural world, but quietly dream of leaving in order to support their families and seek opportunity, how do they feel? Are they scared, sorrowful, excited, hopeful, or possibly empowered? How does a young woman make decisions when she is thrown into a world of uncertainty? Perhaps something can be learned from the land she comes from and the women before her. Perhaps in the process of leaving home, you must simultaneously always be coming home.

DIRECTOR



SOLARA THANH BÌNH ĐẶNG is a writer, director, and curious human being who lives with her cat Mei Mei in "Vancouver", BC on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. Her family comes from the coastal cities of Nha Trang and Hong Kong, so she finds herself deeply connected to bodies of water and the natural world. Solara is interested in sinking her teeth into the strange and profound fruits of the past, present, and future.

Solara holds a BA with Distinction in Film Studies from the University of British Columbia and is a recipient of the Mark Harris Memorial Scholarship in Film Studies. In 2021 she was nominated for the Lieutenant Governor's Medal Program for Inclusion, Democracy and Reconciliation. She is an alumni of the UBC Arts Undergraduate Research Award (AURA) program, The Asian Canadian Living Archive Youth Critics Initiative III, VIFF Catalyst, and Leña Artist Residency.

PRODUCER

NIC ALTOBELLI is a Canadian-Italian independent filmmaker. She is a member of the Feature Film Committee at the CMPA, an alumni of the Canadian Film Centre Producers Lab and she has produced projects in Toronto, Vancouver, Vietnam and Los Angeles. Her production company AREA V5 PICTURES has a bold slate of features and TV series in development which have been selected for international markets. She has produced network television movies and has worked on the production team of a Netflix TV series.

Nic has produced films that have been selected by TIFF, Hollyshorts, EIFF, Raindance, Fantasia, Fright Fest, Whistler Film Festival, Reelworld, Sun Valley Film Festival and Vancouver Asian Film Festival. The feature films she has produced have been picked up for international distribution and sales. Nic's executive producing, writing and directing work lives under her banner NALTOBEL along with singular short form works such as *Ripe*. Her films have been seen around the world and impact on audiences continues to grow.



[IMDb](#)

[WEBSITE](#)

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

PHẠM GIA QUÝ



is an emerging film producer and director hailing from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He is an alumnus of the Asian Producers Network 2024 (SGIFF) and the Savannah College of Art and Design. Quý is also the CEO and Founder of Spring Auteurs, a Vietnam-based film company dedicated to showcasing local stories on the global stage, with a particular focus on Southeast Asian narratives.

He is currently producing two period feature films: Portrait of a Misty Sun, set in Indochina-era Vietnam, and The Chameleon Woman, set in Cold War-era Thailand. The Chameleon Woman has garnered significant attention, being selected for the Busan International Film Festival's Asian Project Market 2024, Festival des 3 Continents' Produire au Sud SEA 2025, and the TIFF Directors Lab 2025.

Quý's work has been screened at numerous prestigious festivals, including the Brisbane International Film Festival, LA Shorts Film Festival, Newport Beach Film Festival, Shanghai International Film Festival, and Vancouver Asian Film Festival. His upcoming Vietnamese short film, Ripe, a Canada Vietnam co-production, is set to premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival 2025.

CINEMATOGRAPHER



CHANANUN CHOTRUNGROJ is a director of photography based in Los Angeles, known for her exceptional ability to craft emotionally resonant and visually captivating cinematography. Chotrungroj's recent projects include *Birth/Rebirth* (2023), directed by Laura Moss, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and distributed theatrically by IFC. Chotrungroj also lensed *Three Mouths* (2022), directed by Jared Frieder and starring Troye Sivan, and *Palm Trees and Power Lines* (2022), directed by Jamie Dack, which won the Directing Award in the U.S. Dramatic Competition at Sundance 2022.

A graduate of New York University's prestigious Tisch School of the Arts, Chotrungroj earned her MFA in Film, where she was awarded both the Ang Lee Fellowship and a Department Fellowship. She is a two-time recipient of the Nestor Almendros Award for Outstanding Cinematography by a Woman (2013, 2015) and a 2020 Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Cinematography on *The Third Wife* (2018). Chotrungroj also won the Best Cinematography Award at the 2020 Tribeca Film Festival for *Materna*.

[IMDb](#)

[WEBSITE](#)

HUYỀN COCO is a Vietnam-based production designer, stylist, and art director who has over 11 years of experience in the fashion and entertainment industry. Huyền originally graduated with a degree in Architecture, and her passion for cultivating the feelings and emotions of a physical space through design choices remains with her to this day.

Huyền has been the art director for numerous photoshoots and music videos including for Vietnamese artists such as Liz Kim Cuong, Trịnh Thăng Bình, Dustin Phúc Nguy, Bảo Anh, and AMEE. She was a Set Decorator for feature films such as *The Guardians* (2021), Netflix's *A Tourist's Guide to Love* (2023), and *Daydreamers* (*Người mặt trời*).

PRODUCTION DESIGNER



COMPOSER

VERON XIO *x/o (they/them); a Vietnamese-Canadian electronic music producer and multidisciplinary artist based in Vancouver. Interested in disrupting gender binaries and transgressing codes of identity, x/o uses hyper-masculine and hyper-feminine tropes to build new worlds; an audiovisual exploration of duality and cyclical emotions.*

They have presented work internationally, including Phoenix Central Park (Sydney), Palais de Tokyo (Paris), ICA Institute of Contemporary Arts (London), La Casa Encendida (Madrid), Berghain (Berlin), and HeK House of Electronic Arts (Basel). In 2019, they were selected for the MUTEK Amplify residency at Somerset House Studios UK and Red Bull Bass Camp Calgary at the National Music Centre.



LAWRENCE LE LAM is an editor, writer, and director from Richmond, BC. He was nominated for a Canadian Screen Award for Best Feature Documentary Editing for the 2019 Docu-thriller, *The World is Bright* (winner at Hot Docs & VIFF). Lawrence participated in the 2017 TIFF Talent Lab, and was the recipient of the Talent To Watch Award from the 2018 Whistler Film Festival. In 2023, Lawrence edited the feature-length drama, *Mongrels* which won the FIPRESCI prize at the 2024 Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival. He's currently in post-production editing for his fourth feature film, *THE CHINATOWN DINER*.

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EDITOR

STARRING

HAYLEY NGỘC MAI is a Vietnamese actor and writer whose practice spans theatre, film, and storytelling in multiple forms. Passionate about telling Vietnamese stories and sharing them with the world, Hayley is drawn to narratives that bridge distance and difference, reminding us that what we share often runs deeper than what sets us apart. A well-traveled artist, she draws inspiration from her experiences living and performing in diverse communities across Vietnam, Bulgaria, Serbia, and the United States.

She holds a B.A. in History and Civilizations (Conferred with Honors) and a second major in Musical Theatre and Film from the American University in Bulgaria. In 2022, she was named co-recipient of the Al Cyrus Award for Theater for her meaningful contributions to the university's theatre community. In Vietnam, she was awarded the Silver Kite for Best Short Film in 2018, and made history at the Golden Lotus Bud Awards 2017 by becoming the first to win three awards in one year.



STARRING



SAMUEL AN is a Swiss-Vietnamese actor, born in 1993 in Lausanne, making French his first language, followed by Vietnamese and English. In 2017, he returned to Ho Chi Minh city to pursue an acting degree in theater.

Since 2020, Samuel An has taken on roles in major Vietnamese productions such as *The Guardian* (Victor Vu), *Em Va Trinh* (Phan Gia Nhat Linh), *The Trophy Bride* (Vu Ngoc Dang), *Linh Mieu* (Luu Thanh Luan) etc. Samuel An has notably wrapped principal photography on *Picturehouse* from director Nguyen-Vo Nghiem Minh as well as a biopic titled *Chrysalis* of director J. Robert Schulz. Both films are slated to screen worldwide in the upcoming year.

STARRING

CÔNG NINH is a highly acclaimed Vietnamese actor, director, and educator, renowned for his extensive contributions to stage and screen. As a lecturer at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Theater and Cinema, he has shaped many prominent talents.

His work spans over 50 theater plays and numerous films and television series. He earned the Best Actor award for the film *Ai xuôi vạn lý* (1996) and the Best Director award for the play *Dạ cổ hoài lang*. Honored with the prestigious People's Artist (NSƯT) title, Công Ninh is celebrated for his authentic portrayals, often embodying earnest and resilient characters.



STILLS



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