



SYNOPSIS

A *LETTER TO MY COUSIN IN CHINA* is an intensely personal and deeply moving account of one family's history. It is the universal immigrant's story about a lifelong search for home, and one man's personal realization of what home means to him. A *LETTER TO MY COUSIN IN CHINA* is a documentary, 20 years in the making.

The story begins with the extraordinary events of Henion Han's parents' early lives, documenting their childhood in Hainan Island (off the Southern Coast of Mainland China) their arranged marriage and tragic separation, to their poignant reunion in South Africa 14 years later. It tells of a family's struggle to forge an identity and find a home in a strange and foreign land, following the life of the small Chinese community living in a shadowy demi-monde, neither black nor white, in a society where those colors counted for everything.

Giving an inside view of what it was like to live as a second class citizen during the apartheid years. From Hainan Island to South Africa, from Taiwan to America, *A LETTER TO MY COUSIN IN CHINA* follows the life of the filmmaker's dying father as he prepares for the afterlife.



Henion Han



In Conversation

Robyn Aronstam has worked as a filmmaker since the 1980's, coming of age during the final throes of Apartheid and pioneering towards the reformation of our visual arts identity. She has produced, written and directed documentary and drama in Southern Africa. Her international resume as a script supervisor is considerable and she collaborates with Mira Nair on her films and was awarded Associate Producer on *Monsoon Wedding*, (Winner Golden Lion, Venice 2000). Robyn recently obtained her MA in Creative Writing (University of Witwatersrand 2020) on filmmaking as a liminal process from script to screen. She has taught film skills in India, USA, and most of southern Africa and currently teaches film to Honours students in Johannesburg. Robyn is the custodian of her late partner Henion Han's work, and is engaged in sharing his legacy far and wide.

Ruth Simbao is the National Research Foundation Chair in Geopolitics and the Arts of Africa at Rhodes University, South Africa. She is the founder of the Arts of Africa and Global Souths postgraduate research programme, and a Professor in Art History and Visual Culture in the Fine Art Department.

Ulf Vierke is the director of Iwalewahaus at University Bayreuth, Centre for Modern and Contemporary Art in Africa.



Henion Han:
*A Letter to my
Cousin in China*
(South Africa,
1999)

05.07.2021
18h-20h



Zoom Link