



3 CENTS A KILO

a film by Chew Chia Shao Min



Logline | 3 Cents A Kilo documents the day-to-day lives of three cardboard collectors. It takes us through their routines and ruminations, showing us how they meet unremitting hardship with grit, humour, and back-breaking hard work.

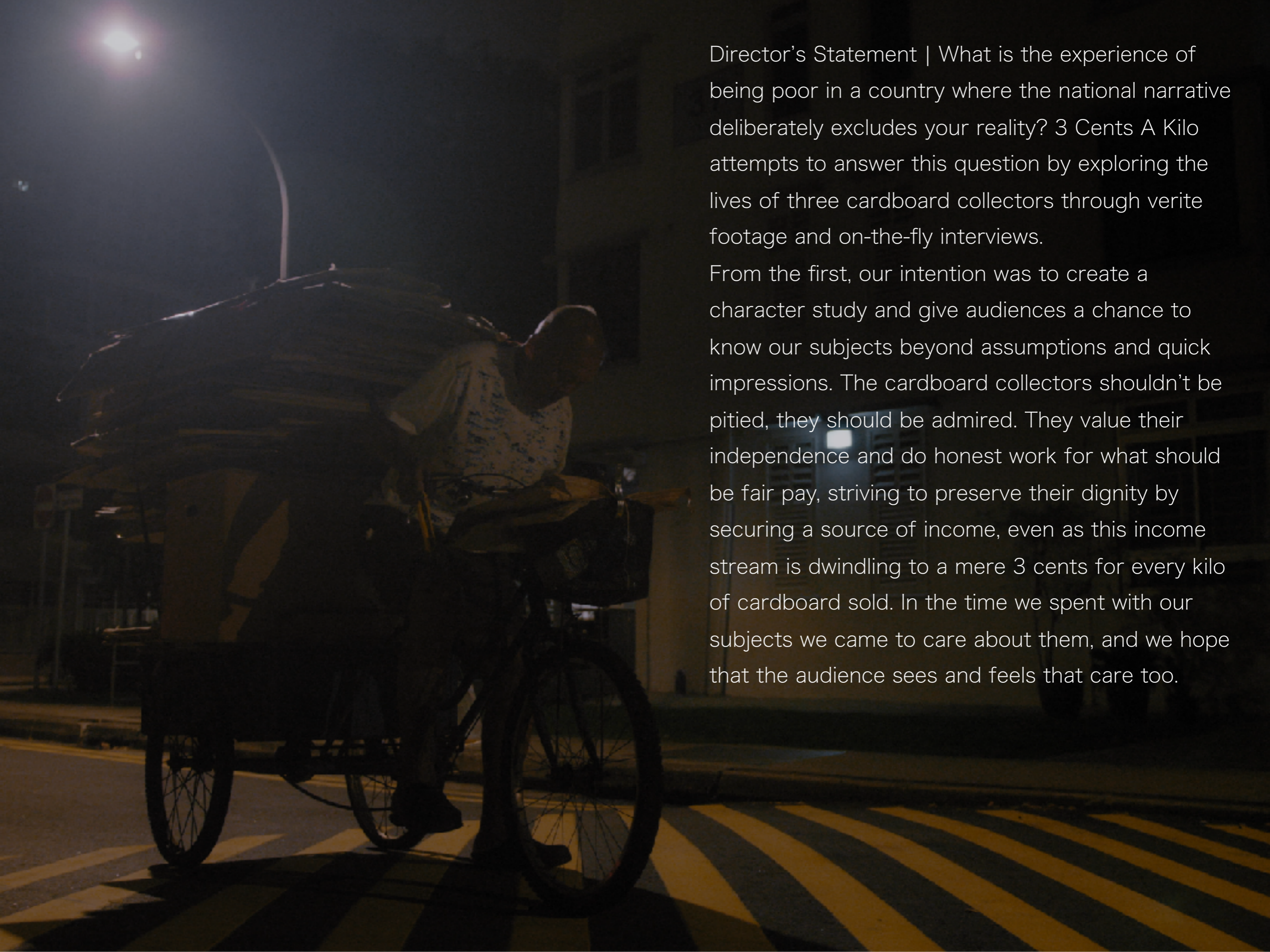


Synopsis | The economic policies responsible for Singapore's rapid development came with a cost: letting in unprecedented numbers of semi-skilled labourers severely depressed wages for Singapore's working class for 20 years. Today increasing numbers of blue collar workers retire in the most expensive city in the world. For some, the only way to feed themselves is by collecting recyclable materials to sell.

In this short documentary, three cardboard collectors, John, Yi Mei, and Weng Yip, invite us along as they go about their day, freely sharing their thoughts and feelings about their personal history and present circumstance.



Length 23 mins | Shooting Format Digital 4K | Aspect Ratio 16:9 | Audio Format Stereo



Director's Statement | What is the experience of being poor in a country where the national narrative deliberately excludes your reality? 3 Cents A Kilo attempts to answer this question by exploring the lives of three cardboard collectors through verite footage and on-the-fly interviews.

From the first, our intention was to create a character study and give audiences a chance to know our subjects beyond assumptions and quick impressions. The cardboard collectors shouldn't be pitied, they should be admired. They value their independence and do honest work for what should be fair pay, striving to preserve their dignity by securing a source of income, even as this income stream is dwindling to a mere 3 cents for every kilo of cardboard sold. In the time we spent with our subjects we came to care about them, and we hope that the audience sees and feels that care too.



Chew Chia Shao Min is a writer and director from Singapore. Her short film *May and June* featured at Singapore International Film Festival, Oslo Independent Film Festival, and SF Shorts, and won Best Cinematography at the Maverick Movie Awards. She wrote the feature film *Wanton Mee* (dir. Eric Khoo), which featured at Berlin International Film Festival and San Sebastian Film Festival. Shao Min graduated from Harvard University in 2013 and NYU's Filmmaking MFA program as an Ang Lee Scholar in 2020.



Goh Koon How is a Singaporean independent artist and has produced several short films including *May and June* (dir. Chew Chia Shao Min). He is also an Associate Producer for the upcoming feature film, *Tiong Bahru Social Club* (dir. Tan Bee Thiam).

Koonhow was a research assistant with the MIT-SUTD International Design Center till July 2018. He is part of the Empowering Traditional Trades team and his research interests are Digitalising the Karang Guni Trade and Anthropological Studies on Karang Guni and Recycling in Asian Societies.



Olivier Theurillat is a Spanish cinematographer based in Madrid, Spain. He obtained his Master of Fine Arts in film from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. His first "on set" experiences were as a camera PA on Reed Morano's *"Meadowland"* and Rob Reiner's *"And So It Goes."* His portfolio includes a range of commercials, music videos and short films. Most notably he shot Raed Alsemari's *Dunya's Day*, winner of the Jury Award in International Fiction at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival.

Full Credits

Presenting - John Gomez, Yi Mei, Kan Weng Yip

Writer and Director - Chew Chia Shao Min

Producers - Chew Chia Shao Min, Goh Koon How

Cinematographers - Olivier Theurillat, Tom Seah

Original Score Composer - David Loke Kai Yuan

Colourist - Eugene Seah

Sound Designer - Sng Ye Min

Line Producer - Low Ziqi

Editors - Chew Chia Shao Min, Goh Koon How

Equipment Sponsor - PixelMusica

Research Consultant - Yeoh Lam Keong

Translator (Cantonese) - Chia Kwok Ying

Archival Footage - Mediacorp, National Archives Singapore, National Library Board



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