



Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival
Official Selection – Competition



MARIETTA SUBONG

JOONEE GAMBOA

ODASAWAIA

SA PANULAT AT DIREKSYON NI DWEIN RUEDAS BALTAZAR



QCINEMA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL AND BLACKSHEEP PRESENT

AN EPICMEDIA PRODUCTION WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE QUEZON CITY FILM DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

SOUND BY IMMANUEL VERONA MUSIC BY RICHARD GONZALES

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LORNA SANCHEZ ASSOCIATE PRODUCER RICA MAY SALVADOR COLORIST DIA MAGSAYSAY

PRODUCTION DESIGNER MAOLEN FADUL DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY NEIL DAZA LINE PRODUCER IANA CELEST BERNARDEZ

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS CARLO L. KATIGBAK OLIVIA M. LAMASAN EDUARDO LEJANO JR. MANET DAYRIT

PRODUCED BY BIANCA BALBUENA KRIZ GAZMEN MARIZEL SAMSON-MARTINEZ IANA CELEST BERNARDEZ

WRITTEN, EDITED, AND DIRECTED BY DWEIN RUEDAS BALTAZAR

QCINEMA
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



EPICMEDIA

QUIAPO
COLLECTIVE

ODA SA WALA

(ODE TO NOTHING)

Written and Directed By
Dwein Ruedas Baltazar

Produced by
Bianca Balbuena-Liew, Iana Celest Bernardez, Kriz Gazmen, Marizel Samson-Martinez

Executive Producers
Carlo L. Katigbak, Olivia M. Lamasan, Eduardo Lejano Jr., Manet Dayrit

Cinematographer
Neil Daza

Sound
Immanuel Verona

Music
Richard Gonzales

Colorist
Dia Magsaysay

Production Design
Marxie Maolen Fadul

Editor
Dwein Ruedas Baltazar

Genre | Drama
Language | Tagalog (Filipino)
Running Time | 92 mins
Year of Production | 2018



SYNOPSIS

Sonya is an old maid stuck in a town that long ceased to recognize her existence but only until one fateful morning when a mysterious corpse arrives at the footsteps of their family owned funeral shop. Bringing forth strange luck and fortune, Sonya instantly gets drawn to the corpse's mystique, reinvigorating not only her life but also that of her father Mang Rudy. But luck would eventually dry up, provoking further distress back to Sonya's life. She faces the reality that her existence is nothing more than that of the corpse, at the tail end of its mortality staring life wither away.

DWEIN RUEDAS BALTAZAR

writer, editor, director

Dwein Baltazar first and foremost is a mother, who has a love hate relationship in writing and still dreams of becoming a theatre actress someday. Currently, Baltazar writes and directs for miniseries and movies. Her debut film, *Mamay Umeng* (2012) took home the Best Picture prize at the 14th Jeonju International Film Festival held in South Korea. Baltazar's sophomore feature, *Custo Kita With All my Hypothalamus* had its international premiere at the 2018 Busan International Film Festival and won two awards at the 2018 Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival.



ODE TO NOTHING:

Finding Humanity in the Macabre

by *Neil Daza*
(Cinematographer)

There is never a dull moment when you're shooting a Dwein Baltazar film, on set or behind the camera.

We share the same attitude in making films – experiment, improvise, and learn something new along the way. Oda Sa Wala is my third collaboration with Dwein; the first one was Mamay Umeng (2012) which was Dwein's first feature film and then Custo Kita With All My Hypothalamus (2018), her second film.

Coming from Hypothalamus, Dwein and I were still in the mode of making gritty, textured, non-glossy films by degrading the image – using old lenses, shooting at low light condition, trashing out basic rules in lighting and we felt Oda shouldn't be different. There's always a conscious effort not to repeat ourselves.

When I first read Oda's script, I was laughing and thought that it was something very original. It was a visual script with a lot of character details which I could use to graph and track my lighting approach. Dwein initially showed me David Lowery's 2017 film, *A Ghost Story*, suggesting that we shoot Oda with a square frame to simulate a coffin's glass window. I didn't say yes immediately because I needed to have a more organic reason why I should be shooting with a different aspect ratio. I am always wary of randomly using some cinematic elements that could come out feeling like a novelty with no relation to the film's story.

Too much visual treatment can sometimes come off as creative masturbation. We also wanted to shoot Oda in black and white but we struggled to come up with a good reason because although images are more graphic and stark in a classic monochrome, I think you also lose an emotional component and instrument in your storytelling – COLOR. If we were to shoot in black and white, I suggested that we study how the colors of the set and costumes translated into gray tones and created those broad range of tones in between the shadows and highlights.



Shooting Oda in black and white shouldn't look like an Instagram filter. From these initial ideas and reservations, Oda's visual journey was quite interesting. How it started out from an artist's pure vision, how this vision changed because of commercial consideration and how these changes and limitations forced you to find ways to work around the system and come up with something that actually worked better for the film.

While doing location check in San Miguel, Bulacan, I saw in one of the houses, (which later became our main location) statues of saints stocked up in a room. I saw an antique cabinet with a glass window like an upright coffin and there was a Virgin Mary statue inside staring at me. It was such an eerie image that it finally convinced me to shoot in a 4:3 aspect ratio. Short of saying, there were angels singing in the background. Looking like a 16mm open gate film with round edges in the corner, the squarish frame image when projected in a standard cinema screen creates a "window" effect because of the black edges during projection.



After abandoning the idea of shooting in black and white, we decided to make Oda colored monochromatic but in a more tedious process – by doing it on set. The set was an old “bahay na bato” Spanish-era house with capiz windows, dilapidated picture frames and wooden floors. Production designer Mao Fadul’s color palette became the jump-off point of Oda’s cinematography. The color of Oda bordered between old wood and a decomposing corpse while lighting and composition was bare, soft and simple, complementing the rhythm of Oda’s narrative.



Composing on a 4:3 aspect ratio requires reorientation on how you shoot and block actors. Its harder to do over the shoulder shots and you need to pull back a lot from your main subject to get a well composed shot. Except for two to three shots because I needed a closer shot and a zoom lens, Oda was shot 99% with 1 lens – a wide angle 25mm Carl Zeiss super speed lens. I decided to shoot with one lens for 2 reasons:

1. With a squarish 4:3 aspect ratio I was going to lose 1/3 of the information on the edges, I felt using a wide lens would compensate for that. Dwein usually does long takes on a wide shot with minimal close-ups or none at all so I need to get all the action in one shot.

2. I wanted a consistent depth of field and one angle of view throughout the film, creating a single point of view. When I finally sat down with colorist Dia Magsaysay, my only instructions were Oda’s quality of light and color should feel like it’s always sundown and the audience should smell the corpses.

Making films needs a large amount of pre-production and a high level of precision when you’re finally on the set but shooting Oda Sa Wala involved a lot of improvisation. It felt like we were shooting an experimental film, we would try something new and if that didn’t work, we abandoned that and moved on. I deviated a lot from my lighting plan and adjusted due to technical limitations, time constraint and Dwein’s shooting style. There were a lot of uncertainties whether what I did in Oda would work or not, but I just followed that inner voice, tried to find humanity in the macabre and hoped we create a distinct world for Oda Sa Wala.

NEIL DAZA, 2018

CAST

MARIETTA SUBONG / SONYA



CAST

JOONEE GAMBOA / *RUDY*



CAST

Angelita Loresco

Old Woman/Dead Body 1

Dido Dela Paz

Theodore

Anthony Falcon

Elmer

Iana Bernardez

Elmer's Wife

ALSO STARRING:

Owen Cruz, Red Musni, Sarah Brakensick, Shem Orinico, Zane Marinas, Lexter Tarriela, Delyn Orfinada, Dwein Baltazar, Louie Misgon, Kimberly Mae Santos, Julio Manalili, Anita Lopez, Felix Santos, Sheena Bagtas



STAFF

 54th Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival
June 28 – July 6, 2019

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
LORNA SANCHEZ

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
RICA MAY SALVADOR

PRODUCTION MANAGER
LEXTER FAVOR TARRIELA

SCRIPT CONTINUITY
REN'Z ESTACIO

LOCATION MANAGER
EUNNIESE MACALINAO

TALENT COORDINATOR
RICA SALVADOR

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS
KIRA ROMANA
LAURENZ RAYLA

2ND CAMERA OPERATORS
MAI CALAPRADO
ARION DIAZ
GIAN PAOLO CALUAG

RONIN OPERATOR
GIAN PAOLO CALUAG

GAFFER
ELMER DELA CRUZ

ASSISTANT CAMERAMAN
JIMMY DELOSTRICO

ART DIRECTOR
ISRAEL CLAVO

SET DECORATOR
KENNETH VILLANUEVA

SETMEN
ROY ROQUEJO
MANOLITO MANALASTAS
BANNIEX RODAVIA
JOSELITO MANALASTAS
ERVEE CORPUZ

PROSTHETICS ARTIST
REMTON SIEGA ZUASOLA

PROSTHETICS ASSISTANTS
PAULINE OLARTE
SHIELA MAE HOTINGOY
ANNA HELEN YAP

WARDROBE STYLIST
KIM PEREZ
WARDROBE ASSISTANT
RONELO LEONES
HAIR AND MAKE UP ARTISTS
ROVIEL CASTOR
MARCO "MHARCIE" PUNO

ASST MAKE UP ARTIST
RHYAN HELA

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
STELLE LAGUDA

SUPPLIERS

LIVE SOUND ON SET

PROMOVI STUDIOS, INC.

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RSVP

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RSVP



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