

PERFECTION

"I'm just trying to make you more perfect." - Mom

Logline: From infancy, an Asian-American woman learns the game of perfection – but if your goal is perfection, will the game ever end?

Short Synopsis:

Playing Milton Bradley's game Perfection mirrors an Asian-American woman's struggle, from infancy to adulthood, to achieve success and gain her parent's approval.

Synopsis:

From infancy, an Asian American woman learns the game of perfection. But if your goal is perfection, will the game ever end?

Milton Bradley's game Perfection is "a race against time" where players must match shapes to a board in 60 seconds. The game mirrors an Asian American woman's struggle to achieve success and gain her parent's approval.

Taught the game as an infant, she races into her teens winning competitions and getting straight A's, only left to wonder whether or not her parents will love her even if she fails. Ultimately she must decide to end the game.

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CAST LIST

Ming-Na

Ming-Na, who won attention with her touching and critically acclaimed performance as June in *The Joy Luck Club* was named one of the 100 most influential Asian Americans of the past decade by aMagazine. Currently, a regular cast member on "ER" as the driven and compassionate Dr. Deb (Jing-Mei) Chen, Ming-Na fell in love with acting after her first stage experience in the third-grade. Born in China, Ming-Na immigrated with her family to New York City at the age of 4, and later relocated to Pittsburgh, PA where her family remains. She received her first contract role for an Asian Actor in a daytime drama when she won the part of Lien Hughes on "As the World Turns." Other television credits include series regular Trudy in "The Single Guy," "Outreach," and "Killer App" with director Robert Altman.

The diverse actress has tackled roles like Chun-Li, the butt-kicking female lead in *Streetfighter* and as the sex-hungry wife Mimi opposite Wesley Snipes in director Mike Figgis' film *One Night Stand*. She is proud to be the title voice of *Mulan*, Disney's animated feature (for which she won an Annie Award) as well as the lead voice of Aki Ross in the stunning CGI animated film *Final Fantasy*. The busy actress also formed Innovazian Records to produce and promote mainstream Asian American music talent. Ming-Na cherishes her family time with her husband and baby daughter. She also enjoys painting, photography, dancing, and decorating.

Stephanie Hu

Born and raised in Southern California, *Perfection* is thirteen-year-old Taiwanese American Stephanie Hu's film & acting debut. Stephanie lives in Cerritos with her parents and has an older brother, Andy, who currently attends UC Berkeley. She enjoys reading, swimming, sketching/drawing, watching TV and hanging out with friends and family. She is an avid golfer who hopes to make the high school varsity team. She hopes to someday travel to places like the UK, Japan and Hawaii.

Meeghan Henry

Born in Indonesia, Meeghan Henry came to the United States at the age of four and immediately began training as an actress and model. In 2000, she won the runner up title as Child Model of the Year in New York and was quickly discovered by agents. Meeghan has appeared in several national television commercials, on stage and in other short films. When she is not acting, she also enjoys singing, dancing and cheerleading.

Michaela Zee

Perfection is Michaela Zee's film debut. She has been seen nationally in ads for Taco Bell and Baby Gap.

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About the Filmmakers

Karen Lin (Writer, Director & Producer)

After receiving a Sociology/Public Policy degree from Pomona College and a Masters Degree in Public Policy from UC Berkeley, Karen decided to head to Hollywood and follow her passion for film. She started as an agent's assistant, and moved on to feature film production, working in various positions including: assistant to actor Nicolas Cage (*Face/Off*, *City of Angels*), and assistant to director Roger Donaldson (*Thirteen Days*). Three years ago she made the leap into production managing music videos and producing short films. In March 2001, she founded ZuZu Films, which has produced several projects for KSCI (Channel 18) and other national Taiwanese American organizations. *Perfection* is her first 35mm short film which she hopes will debut at film festivals this year. She is currently developing a documentary entitled "Voices of Taiwanese Americans" and a romantic comedy feature film, "A Lucky Accident." Karen's personal goal is to bring more Asian American faces to the silver screen.

Jorge Agraz (Producer)

Born in Mexico City, Jorge Agraz grew up in the United States and Europe. He made his first film by borrowing his friend's Super-8 camera when he was 9 years old. A graduate of Yale University, with degrees in Film Studies and History, Jorge has worked in production on commercials and feature films, including *Blade*, *Thirteen Days*, and more recently *Evolution*. Jorge is also a founding board member of Peace by PEACE, a New York-based non-profit organization which provides conflict resolution education for children in inner-city schools.

Ian Campbell (Director of Photography)

Ian Campbell has been shooting music videos, commercials and short films for the past eleven years. He has won awards, among them Clio and Mobius for his commercials for such products as Coke, Levis, Audi, Budweiser, Die Hard, Roxy, and the Palm Theatre. His short films have been seen nationwide in film festivals and have received many accolades, including a Student Academy Award nomination in 2000. Ian has a B.A. in film from Art Center College of Design.

Rachel Tejada (Editor)

Currently on tour with the punk rock band Rancid, Rachel Tejada is filming a behind-the-scenes documentary for their newly released album, *Indestructible*. Most recently she edited their music video "Fall Back Down." She has also been a freelance producer and editor for Warner Bros, Disney, Fox, Playboy TV and MTV2. In 2001 she co-founded the digital film collective Group 101 Films (www.group101films.com), which encourages filmmakers to "Get Off Their Ass" and make movies each month. She is a graduate of Cal State LA and got her start with IFP/West's Project Involve, a mentor program that matched her with music video and feature film director Tamra Davis (*Billy Madison*, *Crossroads*) on such films as *Half Baked*.

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Woody Pak (Composer)

Award winning composer and producer Woody Pak has composed works for feature films, documentaries, commercials, and musical theater. A graduate of MIT and Juillard, his feature film works have garnered critical acclaim internationally and include *Miss Monday*, *Southern Heart*, and *Oksu-tang*, as well as the documentaries *The Chinatown Files*, *E-Dreams* and *Black Pickett Fences*. Woody is also an accomplished guitarist and producer, helping develop new talent and performing regularly throughout New York, Asia, and Los Angeles. Woody resides in Los Angeles with his wife and son.

John Morris (Sound Design)

John Morris is a motion picture sound editor with an abiding interest in non-verbal communication. He's recent credits include *The Alamo*, *League of Extraordinary Gentleman*, *X-Men 2*, and *Baraka*.

Julia Hanna (Production Designer)

Julia Hanna has been designing for over 20 years. Trained in Europe, her impressive background includes production design, set decoration, interior design and home staging. Getting her start in the theater with wardrobe design, she worked her way into commercials, music videos and independent films. Julia uses her worldwide travels to influence her work and loves the creative freedom of working between set design and wardrobe.

Mary Lou Lim

At a young age, Mary Lou Lim knew she wanted to be a costume designer. She moved to LA in 1980 and got her feet wet as a PA on low budget films. Her first big break was working on the Mad TV pilot which led to a 3 year stint on the series. Soon after she started working closely with costume designer Sharon Davis and others on such films as *Thirteen Days*, *Nutty Professor II*, *Double Take*, *High Crimes*, *Antwone Fisher*, *Starsky and Hutch*, and currently *Sleepover*. Between projects she designs for commercials, independent features (*Goat aon Fire and Smiling Fish*) and short films.

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TIP SHEET

Genre: Experimental

Running Time: 6 min. 24 sec.

Shooting Format: 35 mm

Exhibition Format: 35mm

Color: Black & White

Contact: Karen Lin
ZuZu Films
1857 Midvale Avenue #101
Los Angeles, CA 90025
323-610-2413 cell
info@zuzufilms.com
www.zuzufilms.com

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ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

"I'm going to do a video on perfection. Throughout the video there is going to be the ticking away of a Perfection game (Milton Bradley). I hope it still exists."

-- Karen Lin, Diary entry, 12:15am, March 16, 1995

Eight years later, *Perfection* is a 6 1/2 minute black-and-white short film starring Ming-Na (*ER*, *Joy Luck Club*). Shot on 35mm, the film uses Milton Bradley's game of the same name as a metaphor for an Asian-American woman's life.

Perfection was shot on location in Los Angeles over two days in October 2002. A crew made up of 25 professionals, friends and family donated their time and energy to make the shoot a success. The shoot was also made possible by a grant from the Taiwanese United Fund and the generosity of many vendors who donated equipment and supplies.

The first day, the crew was settling in when baby Michaela Zee arrived with her father Eric and mother actress Ming-Na. They often warn first time directors on using children and animals; "All I can say is, the rambunctious baby rewrote my script that day.... Working with Ming-Na was amazing. She was professional and her performance added another level I could only dream of for the film." Later during the shoot, certain elements and metaphors became more evident: "Ming-Na approached me and asked if she could put ponytails in her hair for the workout shots because she remembered I use to do that. It was at that very moment that I realized that Ming-Na was playing me."

The second day had its share of memorable moments: "No one will ever forget my mother calling out from the kitchen for their breakfast order: you want some eggs? scrambled, fried or over-easy?" Karen's family had so much fun during the shoot, they asked when she would shoot another film because "my aunt has dibs on catering!." The production cranked through over 40 set ups in 2 days and were exhausted, but everyone agreed that the positive attitude and good food went a long way to everyone having a great time.

In January 2003 editor Rachel Tejada began working on the film. Over the next 6 months, she and Karen edited tirelessly after work and on weekends. A friend recommended John Morris (*X-Men2*, *Baraka*) for advice on sound design. A synopsis, a rough cut, and a meeting later, he was interested in working on the project. At the same time, Karen had reconnected with a high school classmate, award-winning composer Woody Pak, who had just recently returned to Los Angeles from New York. Despite an already hectic schedule he also signed on board immediately when he saw the locked picture. The picture was locked in June and the music and sound effects were completed in September. The final print was made in October 2003.

KAREN LIN - FILMMOGRAPHY

Perfection (2003) 35mm, Short

Drive By (1995) 8mm, Short