

THE FRUIT HUNTERS

CHASSEURS DE FRUITS

A FILM BY / UN FILM DE
YUNG CHANG



IN THEATRES NOVEMBER 23 / EN SALLES LE 23 NOVEMBRE

INDEPENDENT FILM

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THE FRUIT HUNTERS

CHASSEURS DE FRUITS

A Film by Yung Chang
93 minutes

In Theaters November 23, 2012

Montréal & Toronto - November 23, 2012

Vancouver - November 30, 2012

Québec - December 7, 2012

Featuring

Juan Fernando Aguilar Morán

Richard Campbell

Isabella Dalla Ragione

Noris Ledesma

Ken Love

Bill Pullman

Bala Tingang

Production :

EyeSteelFilm

Kinosmith

Office National du Film du Canada (ONF)

Distribution :

EyeSteelFilm Distribution

7095, rue Marconi, Suite 201

Montréal (Québec) H2S 3K4

Tel : (514) 937 4893

Courriel : damien@eyesteelfilm.com

Press :

Sylvie Roy

Tel : (514) 270 9108

Courriel : foskifo@videotron.ca

Synopsis

You can find them deep in the jungles of Borneo; in the canyons of the Hollywood Hills; in market stalls in Bali; and even in your own backyard. They're the Fruit Hunters, the subjects of the new film from acclaimed director Yung Chang (*Up the Yangtze, China Heavyweight*). Driven by an unquenchable passion to taste the wondrous, weird and unique, they've dedicated their lives to creating a Garden of Eden in a world increasingly dominated by industrialized monoculture.

The Fruit Hunters is a dizzying ride through human history and culture, a colourful kaleidoscope of a film that shows us just how intertwined we are with the fruits we eat, told through the stories of devoted, lifelong fruit fanatics.

There's Bill Pullman, the movie star (*Independence Day, Lost Highway*) whose passion for fruit leads him on a crusade to save one of the last untouched patches of land in Hollywood, a peak just below the iconic sign, and turn it into a community orchard. In Bali and Borneo, Noris Ledesma and Richard Campbell, the "Indiana Joneses" of fruit, seek to find and preserve rare varieties of mangos and durians before they're steamrolled by industrialization. In the jungles of Honduras scientist Juan Aguilar races against time to breed a banana resistant to Tropical Race Four, a devastating fungus that wiped out the world's banana crop once before and threatens to again. And in the hills of Umbria, Italy, fruit detective Isabella Dalla Ragione investigates Renaissance-era paintings for lost fruits and hunts down the last remaining examples of those ancient cultivars.

The Fruit Hunters interweaves the stories of these modern-day obsessives with gorgeous glimpses of humanity's long love affair with fruit: from our prehistoric beginnings as hunter-gatherers whose lives literally depended on it, to Victorian-era adventurers who set out to parts unknown to bring home the rare gems now commonplace in supermarkets.

And, just as important as the human characters in the film are the fruits themselves, presented in their mouthwatering glory: brilliantly colourful mangos, silky ice cream beans, creamy cherimoyas and sense-altering miracle fruit. With its luscious visuals and stunning soundtrack by Montreal composer Olivier Alary, *The Fruit Hunters* is truly a feast for the senses.

A thrilling journey through nature, commerce and adventure, *The Fruit Hunters* is a cinematic odyssey that takes viewers from the dawn of humanity to the cutting edge of modern agriculture—a film that will change not just the way we look at we eat, but what it means to be human.

Director's Statement :

Here's my new film, "The Fruit Hunters." How to describe this creature? Well, it's a true departure for me. I spent 2 years following fruit-obsessed horticulturalists, pomologists, and backyard enthusiasts. We've traveled to Bali in search of white-fleshed mangoes, gone hunting in Borneo for the rare kura-kura durian, joined an Italian fruit detective sleuthing amongst Renaissance paintings for long-forgotten figs, trudged through fermented banana sludge in the hopes of finding a replacement for our threatened banana. Not to mention tasting fruit with the Rare Fruit Council International at the Mango Festival in Miami and following Bill Pullman pursuing his dream of creating a community orchard in Hollywood.

And to what end? Through the fruit hunters we can gain a greater appreciation for our symbiotic relationship with fruit through culture, history, and ecology. Through the world of fruit, we can glean a sense of our infinite biodiversity so clearly under threat by an all-consuming monoculture.

As I delved deeper into fruit, I too, became obsessed...to taste and film as many varieties around the world. The producers had to put a stop to it. I was so hell-bent obsessed in capturing the details of our relationship with fruit that I even had my team toil day-and-night to build detailed dioramas from fruit history. In some ways, fruit (in all its forms, colors, and tastes) came to represent to me, a celebration of imagination... that even nature's imagination is limitless. Not even CGI effects could recreate what I've witnessed in the fruit world. I hope we've succeeded in sharing that sentiment in "The Fruit Hunters."

- Yung Chang

PS : You may want to have a bowl of fresh fruit in arm's reach. The filmmaker's are not responsible for any hunger pangs that may result from viewing. May I suggest a run to the local farmer's market to pick up some seasonal fruits?

Bios :

Yung Chang - Director

Internationally award-winning filmmaker, Yung Chang made his first feature documentary, *Up the Yangtze* in 2007. The film used China's highly contested Three Gorges Dam as a dramatic backdrop for a moving and richly detailed narrative of a peasant family negotiating unprecedented historic changes. *Up the Yangtze* played at numerous festivals and was one of the top-grossing documentary box office releases in 2008. *China Heavyweight*, Chang's sophomore film, is an intense and intimately observed narrative documentary; following the lives of a boxing coach and his two fighters in rural China. The film uses the burgeoning sport of Western-style boxing to explore social change in China. *China Heavyweight* is nominated this year for Best Documentary at the 49th Golden Horse Awards ceremony in Taipei (Nov. 24, 2012). *The Fruit Hunters*, a feature documentary about nature, commerce and obsession in the fruit underworld, will have its premiere in 2012 at the RIDM and its first international screening at the International Documentary Films in Amsterdam. Yung Chang is currently working on his first feature fiction, *Eggplant*, about a Taiwanese wedding photographer in China.

Adam Leith Gollner - Author «The Fruit Hunters», Associate Producer

Adam Leith Gollner is the author of *The Fruit Hunters, A Story of Nature, Adventure, Commerce, and Obsession*, published in 2008 (QWF's McAuslan First Book Prize). He has written for *The New York Times*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *the Guardian*, and *the Globe and Mail*. He used to be the editor of *Vice Magazine*. His second book of non-fiction, *The Book of Immortality*, will be published in 2013 by Doubleday Canada/Random House of Canada Limited, and Scribner in the US.

Bob Moore - Producer

Bob Moore is an award-winning film producer based in Montreal. He joined Eyesteelfilm in 2008, fresh out of law school, to work on fair dealing arguments for "*Rip: A Remix Manifesto*"; a film about copyright law and mash-up music culture. He has since had the opportunity to produce some great feature documentaries, among them "*Last Train Home*", "*Taqwacore: the Birth of Punk Islam*", "*Inside Lara Roxx*", "*Fortunate Son*", and most recently, "*China Heavyweight*". Prior to exploring his passion for film, Bob completed degrees in law, philosophy and print making, managed musicians, consulted for record labels, founded a web design collective and threw parties for a skateboard company. This wild grab bag of experience allows Bob to maintain an inventive and open approach to producing social interest documentary films.

Kat Baulu - producer (ONF)

Katherine Baulu started working for the National Film Board of Canada in Québec in 2008. Her work as a producer includes documentary features, new medias and workshop programme for emerging filmmakers. Her most recent works include acclaimed movies such as *Little Caughnawaga: to Brooklyn and Back* and *R.I.P.: a Remix Manifesto*. She has also worked with CitizenShift, a participating web-platform for independent filmmakers, where she has produced two web-projects, *First Person Digital* and *Work For All*.