

PAPER FLOWER

BRENT GREEN

STATEMENT on PAPER FLOWER

When the opportunity came to our production company, Toy Gun Films, to tell a modern day story set in Tokyo, I knew this was the right project for my narrative directorial debut. *Paper Flower* gave me a chance to tell a non-linear story set in one of the world's most interesting cities.

Our development process began with the issue of Enjo-Kosai, which is a Japanese term for compensated dating. It's a growingly common practice in which young girls offer sexual favors in exchange for lavish gifts or money. I was fascinated by the notion that these girls aren't engaging in Enjo-Kosai to survive or put food on the table. They prostitute themselves for luxury designer gifts. They are often middle class girls supplementing their allowances, or in some cases, they are young housewives whose husbands cannot afford the material luxuries they long for, which seems almost surreal. This issue was the perfect starting point because it raised so many intriguing and important questions for the film to explore.

What I didn't expect as I dove into the story's narrative was that the film would spend less time focusing on the issue of prostitution, and place the real emphasis on self worth, greed, loneliness, and the need to fit in and find acceptance among one's peers. This form of prostitution is symptomatic of something deeper, and that's where I wanted this story to take us. On the surface it seemed like this world was so foreign to my own life experience, but I quickly found that the story's themes paralleled my own life's narrative very closely. The desire to be loved unconditionally, the struggle against materialism, and the pressure to succeed are all motivations that are very real in my life and in the lives of many of us in the United States.

As my producing partner Jeff Goldberg and I start developing the project, the vision for the film became very clear and specific. Instead of hiring a writer as we normally do, we decided to write it ourselves. So in addition to my debut as a director, this was Jeff's debut as a screenwriter. We dedicated ourselves to developing this project full time for six months. When it came time for production we teamed up with Director of Photography Tom Marvel, who we worked with on our first project *En Tus Manos*. It was extremely difficult to capture everything we needed in a five-day shoot. Additionally, it was challenging to even communicate with the cast and crew since I don't speak Japanese and they don't speak English. This forced us to work with translators and spend extra time in rehearsals. The key for me was putting together a team of top class professionals. Despite the obstacles, I really felt a special connection with the Japanese team during the production. The cast and crew in Tokyo really came through for us. They were so talented and took such pride in their work. It was an honor to work with them and I will be forever grateful for the team.

Japan has always been such an inspiration for the rest of the world, and I know that they will continue to inspire us as they band together and overcome the tragic events that have befallen them. It was a privilege to make the film in Japan, and my hope is that *Paper Flower* will entertain and affect its audience wherever it is shown.