

Feature film

Exposure

Pitch

*Alice moves to Japan
with the ambition of becoming
an established visual artist.
However, she must first
hit rock bottom
before she can begin creating truly
memorable artwork.*

*"Exposure" is a
psychological drama*

*"Whiplash" meets
"Lost in Translation"*





Summary 1/3

At 30, ALICE embarks on a new journey, pursuing her lifelong dream of becoming a professional artist photographer. En route to Australia, she makes a stop in Japan to reunite with her best friend, GLENDA (30), who resides in Tokyo. Their plan is to travel together to Sydney, where they intend to relocate.

However, Glenda has had a change of heart and now wishes to remain in Japan, a detail she neglected to share with Alice. Feeling betrayed and further disheartened when her Australian long-stay visa is rejected, Alice decides to give Tokyo a chance.

By chance, Alice discovers an underground event showcasing Japan's most innovative and avant-garde creators. Shrouded in mystery, the event occurs for one night only, with all attendees concealed behind masks. Intrigued and captivated, Alice becomes determined to be selected for this series of shows. Yet, there is no formal application process. A mysterious female curator known only as "Satu" handpicks the talented artists, her identity unknown to all.

Amidst her pursuits, Alice faces a harrowing ordeal when Glenda's boyfriend attempts to sexually assault her. To make matters worse, she is blamed for the incident and subsequently evicted from Glenda's apartment.

Navigating the competitive and unwelcoming art world proves challenging. Alice faces rejection from every gallery due to her lack of an established "profile." She is even ejected from a university exhibition for not being a student, an experience that leaves her humiliated and injured after accidentally cutting her hand on the broken glass of her framed photographs.

Alice finds refuge in a modest apartment within a sprawling building, situated between a bustling highway and the local thugs. Her upstairs neighbour, LILA (30), becomes a cherished companion, offering solace and friendship during Alice's tumultuous time.

Seeking to advance her artistic pursuits, Alice enlists the help of SURAT (45), a renowned traditional printmaker. Surat becomes an informal mentor, encouraging Alice to evolve her artistic practice. He advises her to move beyond her comfort zone and develop a unique, personal signature that sets her work apart.

Summary 2/3

In an effort to mend their friendship, Glenda secures Alice an invitation to an exclusive party at the Dutch ambassador's residence, where Alice is given the opportunity to exhibit her photographs. However, the event's outdoor pool setting presents a challenge, as there is no suitable place to hang her framed pieces.

Undeterred, Alice takes a creative risk. She designs waterproof visual panels and submerges them beneath the pool's surface. Completed just in time, the installation creates a striking visual impact. The water symbolises the "veil of perception" that separates us from reality, and the guests are captivated. The exhibition is a resounding success.

The following day, Alice witnesses a traumatic event: a man commits suicide by leaping from the building opposite her apartment. The disturbing image lingers in her mind.

Riding the wave of her initial success, Alice is commissioned to create a similar installation for a luxury hotel. Despite the stressful deadlines, the show proves to be another popular triumph. However, Surat remains unimpressed, critiquing her work as spectacular but "showy." Desperate for income, Alice risks selling out by agreeing to replicate her installation for luxury weddings.

Her next exhibition holds great promise, set to take place at Tokyo's trendiest venue, "Bed Club House"—a unique blend of restaurant, bar, and club. With no pool available, Alice encases her photographs in large ice blocks, using the melting process as a metaphor for the journey towards death.

The night before the show, however, turns into a nightmare. Lila's ex-boyfriend jumps from her balcony, narrowly missing Alice as he falls.

In the aftermath, Alice is interrogated by the police for hours. Though they ultimately rule out foul play, Alice must address her visa situation. She narrowly avoids deportation, adding another layer of stress to her already tumultuous life.



Summary 3/3

Alice rushes to Bed Club House for her exhibition, only to discover a catastrophe. The door to the cold storage room was left open overnight, causing the ice blocks to melt and her photographs to float in a puddle of water. The venue's frozen food is also ruined, and the owner is livid, threatening to blacklist Alice throughout the city.

Adding to her misfortune, an art student who had feigned friendship steals Alice's pool installation concept and secures the lucrative wedding deals that Alice had been counting on.

Teetering on the edge of despair, Alice creates a surreal installation in the empty pool of an abandoned building, symbolising her failed project. With no audience intended, her sole aim is to capture an image of the installation. However, without water to support it, the structure repeatedly collapses under its own weight. The self-portrait she takes reveals a broken artist amidst the chaos she has created.

Ironically, this very image catches the eye of the enigmatic Satu, who seems to have informants everywhere, even in Surat's printing studio. Alice is invited to exhibit a massive print of this photograph in the next underground exhibition, a highly coveted recognition for any artist. Surat denies being Satu but admits that he agrees with her choice. He praises the photograph, seeing in it a story of hope and despair that is truly personal and unique. Alice has finally achieved the depth and authenticity needed to earn Surat's approval, her ordeal serving as a catalyst for her transformation into a legitimate artist.

On her way home, Alice passes the local Yakuza members, whose tattoos and demeanour had once intimidated her. This time, however, she finds the courage to ask them to pose for her. Impressed by her boldness, they agree, striking a pose for her camera.



Berty Cadilhac is a French, British and Australian filmmaker based in London. He created three feature films in English ("Art Ache", "Roller Squad" and "Tide"), a play in French ("Cuisine Diplomatique"), and a web series ("Bouter les Anglais").

Writer-Director statement

"Exposure" is inspired by my personal experiences in Singapore and Bangkok, where I pursued my dreams and encountered a series of wonderful fiascos. However, I wanted to detach myself from this narrative and focus on crafting a compelling story rather than adhering strictly to my own reality. By making the protagonist a female, shifting the location to Japan, and altering several characters, I was able to concentrate on the essential elements of the story rather than the personal aspects.

I aimed to make Alice relatable. Like many of us, she does not come from an artistic background. She worked in an office and could have continued indefinitely, choosing comfort, safety, and boredom, much like her best friend, Glenda. But as Alice undergoes a transformative journey, she and Glenda find it increasingly difficult to connect and understand each other.

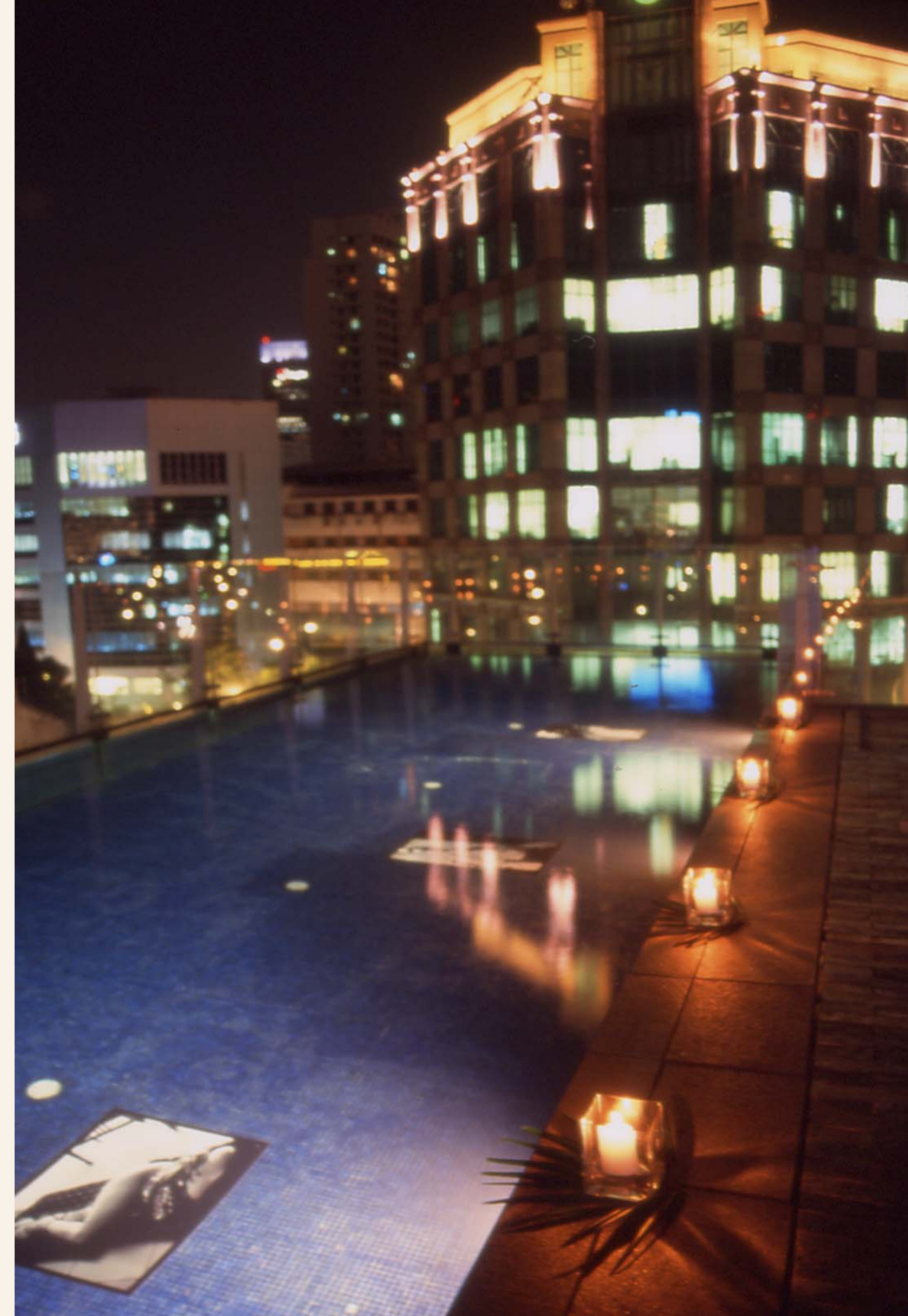
Alice's journey is far more challenging than she anticipated, her ordeal serves as a cautionary tale: there's a dark side in the pursuit of one's dreams, especially in the creative industry. Alice was taking her safety, peace of mind and financial stability for granted. Even her sanity was a given, but it's only once we lose something, that we become aware of its value.

And Alice needs to lose herself before she can find herself. "Exposure" is a film about change, and change always comes with destruction.

While the story touches on dark themes, it remains entertaining and fast-paced. The tension is constant, Alice faces numerous setbacks but remains a fighter, experiencing only a brief bout of depression towards the end. The narrative takes both Alice and the audience on an emotional rollercoaster, focusing not on the art itself, but on the human experience and the relationships Alice forms and navigates.

"Exposure" shares similarities with Damien Chazelle's "Whiplash", as the protagonist is driven by her artistic passion, leading her down a path of self-destruction. The film captures the energy and drive of "Whiplash" balanced by moments of self-reflection. Certain scenes evoke the sense of alienation and existential questioning found in "Lost in Translation."

My goal is to create a film that would fit within the portfolio of A24 or Neon, featuring stylish visuals that oscillate between grit and neon lights, an exploration of the human psyche as it navigates the spectrum between heaven and hell.





15 pages treatment
available upon request

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