

For immediate release

Press contact: Phuong Pham
Phuong@vilcek.org
212-472-2500

The Vilcek Foundation grants \$40,000 to support the production of ***Pit Stop***: Gay Romance in a Small Town in Texas, a movie by acclaimed filmmaker Yen Tan

New York City, NY (February 28, 2012) – The Vilcek Foundation today announced \$40,000 in grant to fund the production of ***Pit Stop***, Malaysian-born and Austin-based filmmaker Yen Tan’s third feature film.

Pit Stop is a 90-minute narrative feature film that tells the parallel stories of two gay men in a small Texas town. A construction foreman and a Latino factory worker, both heartbroken and struggling amidst personal misfortunes, meet each other and face the possibility that they might just be meant for each other. The script of ***Pit Stop*** was selected to be part of the Outfest Screenwriting Lab in 2009.

Yen Tan was born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Mr. Tan first came to the United States to pursue a bachelor degree in Journalism at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. After completing his undergraduate studies, Mr. Tan worked in the field of advertising but started to take acting and screenwriting classes in the evenings, which quickly led to a full-fledged career as an independent filmmaker. His first feature films, *Happy Birthday* and *Ciao* were screened at festivals worldwide and received multiple jury and audience awards.

In 2009, as an applicant of the Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Filmmaking, Mr. Tan impressed the distinguished panel of jury members with his multiple talents, clear artistic vision and achievements as a young independent filmmaker who has both a day job and a remarkable filmography. “As a juror for the 2009 Vilcek Prize for Creative Promise in Filmmaking, I can relay that it was the consensus of the jurors that Yen Tan was truly an exceptional filmmaker and a talent to watch,” said Rick Kinsel, Executive Director of the Vilcek Foundation. “As the Vilcek Foundation’s mission is to showcase and honor the accomplishments of foreign-born scientists and artists, we are very pleased to support Mr. Tan as he embarks on a new exciting and ambitious project.”

“I am truly honored and grateful to be awarded this generous grant from the Vilcek Foundation,” said Yen Tan. “***Pit Stop*** was first written in 2004 and has significant meaning to me over the years of development. The Foundation’s support to me as a foreign-born artist is tremendously validating, and their grant has turned the

screenplay from a *could* to a *can*. I am now more confident than ever before that the film will finally see the light of day.”

Not only the Vilcek Foundation is eager to see the story of ***Pit Stop*** on screen, so do the 169 backers of the project on the crowd-funding website United States Artist (USA). Over the course of 60 days, Yen Tan and his production team raised \$29,545 with the help of family, friends, and cinema aficionados who follow the project on the USA website. ***Pit Stop*** was also awarded a \$7,000 grant by Austin Film Society’s 2011 Texas Filmmakers’ Production Fund. Mr. Tan hopes to film ***Pit Stop*** this spring and complete post-production in the fall. Other members of his team include David Lowery (Co-writer and Editor), Jonathan Duffy (Executive Producer), James M. Johnston (Producer), Kelly G. Williams (Producer), and Eric Steele (Producer).

About the Vilcek Foundation:

The Vilcek Foundation was established in 2000 by Jan and Marica Vilcek, immigrants from the former Czechoslovakia. The mission of the Foundation, to honor the contributions of foreign-born scholars and artists living in the United States, was inspired by the couple’s careers in biomedical science and art history, respectively, as well as their personal experiences and appreciation for the opportunities they received as newcomers to this country. The Foundation hosts events to promote the work of immigrants, awards annual prizes to prominent immigrant biomedical scientists, and sponsors cultural programs such as the Hawaii International Film Festival.