

## H.O.M.E.

A "love letter" to New York City through its subways & enclaves, H.O.M.E. is a film woven of two stories. One of a missing young man with Asperger's Syndrome who seeks refuge in the underground labyrinth of NYC. The other follows a gambling Ecuadorian taxi driver and a Chinese woman desperate to get home to her sick child. Along each of their journeys through the urban landscape, they discover the deeper understanding of communication and their intimate connections despite their barriers. The title of the film is also significant as it is referred to as the "acronym of home," which is an open interpretation and a symbolic place wherever one feels comfortable and safe. As the director explains, the film is about the human condition and in particular urban verbal communication. "What we see is that these characters are able to communicate in a universal language and it brings out the idea of universality and the ability we have to cross linguistic and cultural barriers. So while it's about intimacy and human connection, the story is told through the lens of a disconnected city in constant motion."



**Themes:** family; urban alienation; diversity

**Director:** Daniel Maldonado (2016)

**Official film website:** <http://www.homeacronymfilm.com/>

## SET THE STAGE | THOUGHT-STARTERS

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

New York City is composed of five boroughs: Manhattan, the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. Queens is geographically the largest borough, the most ethnically diverse county in the United States as well as the most ethnically diverse urban area in the world. The Ecuadorian community is the 6th largest ethnic population in the city. The New York City Subway is the largest rapid transit system in the world by number of stations, with 427 stations in operation, connecting all five boroughs and its diverse ethnic neighborhoods.

### WORDS TO KNOW

- **borough:** an administrative division within a large city with limited governmental powers
- **Asperger's Syndrome:** a developmental disorder related to autism and characterized by higher than average intellectual ability coupled with impaired social skills and restrictive, repetitive patterns of interest and activities.
- **alienation:** the state or experience of being isolated from a group or an activity to which one should belong or in which one should be involved.

## TALK ABOUT IT | DISCUSSION

- What details in the setting of the film are similar to the setting in which you live or in various places you have been? What are those similarities and what are the differences?
- Why do you think the film is titled "H.O.M.E.?"
- What comment is being made in this movie about what it is to be human?
- Which person's story did you think was the most interesting? What made them stand out to you?
- In what ways are the characters like you or someone you know?

## GET CREATIVE | EXTENSION ACTIVITIES



## MAKE CONNECTIONS | ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### BOOKS

#### **Forgotten Borough: Writers Come to Terms with Queens**

Editor - Nicole Steinberg

The stories, poems, and essays in *Forgotten Borough* offer twenty-four takes on New York City's biggest underdog: Queens. From the immigrant communities of Forest Hills to the unsung heroes of Maspeth and the bustling crowds of Flushing, Queens is the most diverse county in the United States, but unlike the iconic boroughs of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and the Bronx, it's neither as well known in other parts of the country nor as well traveled by New Yorkers

### FILMS

#### **Chop Shop**

Directed by Ramin Bahrani.

The film tells the story of a twelve-year-old street orphan living and working in Willets Point, an area in Queens, New York filled with automobile repair shops, scrap yards and garbage dumps.

#### **A Father's Journey**

Directed by David Fernandez Jr.

Explores the complicated relationship between a father and his son. A tragic accident sends the father on an unplanned journey in search of faith and healing.

### LOCAL CONNECTIONS

<https://www.sdmts.com/>

MTS is one of the oldest transit systems in Southern California, dating back as early as the 1880s. Although the names have changed over the years, the two modes of transportation – buses and light rail – have remained consistent over most of the past 125 years.

## BEYOND THE FILM | RELATED INTERNET LINKS

<http://www.autism-society.org/>

The Autism Society, the nation's leading grassroots autism organization, exists to improve the lives of all affected by autism. Their mission is to increase public awareness about the day-to-day issues faced by people on the spectrum, advocate for appropriate services for individuals across the lifespan, and provide the latest information regarding treatment, education, research and advocacy.

[http://www.nycsubway.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://www.nycsubway.org/wiki/Main_Page)

A site dedicated to the history of the New York City Subway system, including photos, maps, and documents.

**Media Arts Center San Diego** offers project-based Youth Media classroom residencies where students can learn the art of digital storytelling. Contact Larry Da Silveira at [larry@mediaartscenter.org](mailto:larry@mediaartscenter.org) or (619) 230-1938 to learn more.