



Figura Media Presents



# GASP

A film by  
Thiago Da Costa

**Figura Media, LLC.**  
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What if you were stuck with nowhere to go?

Have you ever been stuck? Or felt you're neither moving forward nor backward in your life? Or have you ever felt that the person who you wanted to be has slowly fizzled out into who you are now? Have you ever felt like the world has chewed you up and spit you out, and wants nothing to do with you?

Welcome to the world of Jim Petrarsky, the protagonist of GASP. Jim was once a good-looking youth in a punk rock band with dreams of making it big. He is now middle-aged, overweight, unmarried and unhappy. He has lost his creative urgency and suffers from a socially-debilitating case of sleep apnea that forces potential lovers to abandon him. And worst of all, he is haunted by a never ending dream where he finds himself underwater, with seemingly no way out.

GASP is a film about the death of a dream and the price one pays for not fulfilling it.

**GASP**

*Format: HD, Color, 15 minutes , English*

*Written, Directed & Produced by Thiago Da Costa*

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# CREW LIST



Writer / Director / Producer **Thiago Da Costa**

Co-Producers **Brantley Doyle**  
**Danny Ahn**

Associate Producers **Leonardo Iniguez**  
**Casey Hirshfield & Emily Flynn**

Director of Photography **Paul Shin**

Original Score by **Carlos Izcaray**

Sound Recordist **Orion Gordon**

Gaffers **Walter Strafford**  
**Miguel Silveira**

Editor **Tim Gann**

Pre-Production Coordinators **Atilla Yücer**  
**Miguel Silveira**

Underwater Cameraman **Pete Bucknell**

Grip **Tyrone Rhabb**

Production Assistants **Eric Fieland**  
**Heather Abel**  
**Andrew Chung**  
**Alex Cascone**  
**Paulo Testolini**



# CAST LIST



Jim Petrarsky (PRINCIPAL) **Owen Cooper**  
Susan **Jessica Angleskhan**  
Dr. Stern **Dr. Jordan C. Stern**  
Minnie **Shara Ashley Zeiger**  
Security Guard **Jaiden Kaine**  
Bum **Tony Salemmi**  
Sara Sederquist **Avery McNeil**  
Temp Agency Girl **Heather Abel**  
Temp Agency Guy **Andrew Chung**  
Guy in Subway **Brantley Doyle**

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# THE DIRECTOR



A native of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, **Thiago Da Costa** (writer, director, producer) is an award-winning renaissance man filmmaker who has been involved in film, video and photography since his mid-teens. He graduated from New York University's film program, where he was a Martin Scorsese Young Filmmakers Scholar and where he produced the short **THE LOVE SONG OF HENRY MILK** (as seen on the on the Sundance Channel). While still a student at NYU, Thiago wrote and directed **BEFORE TAKE OFF** (ANTES DA PARTIDA), a narrative film based on his own experiences growing up in Brazil that played in over 30 film festivals and earned him 6 awards.

In 2006, he started Figura Media, his own production company, after many years of freelance film and video work in New York. While producing his own work through the company, Thiago also worked in production and post-production for clients in the US, Europe and Brazil. His client work has been broadcast on FOX, France 24, HBO, Fashion TV, VH1, ARTE, NBC, FOX, ABC, The Speed Channel and A&E amongst other stations.

In early 2008, he began working as a director of photography on **MORE THAN A MONTH**, an ITVS-funded and PBS-bound documentary about the social effects of Black History Month in the social fabric of the USA. The film is slated for a PBS broadcast in early 2012. In April of 2009, he began a fruitful collaboration with Vice Magazine's Web Documentary Channel, VBS.TV, that has led to him producing, directing, shooting and/or editing more than 50 documentaries for them. He is currently working as director-producer on the documentaries **ERICH FROMM: THE COURAGE TO BE HUMAN** and **MY FRIENDS IN THE KKK** and on a feature fiction film that he has also written called **SILVERSCREEN DREAMS**, which he plans to produce in the Summer of 2012.



# THE FILMMAKERS



**Owen Cooper** (lead actor) is normally a producer of documentaries but has gracefully accepted to work with his friend Thiago Da Costa as an actor on GASP at Thiago's insistence. He is currently finishing up post-production on an ITVS Open Call funded documentary that he produced called MORE THAN A MONTH. Owen worked in broadcast television as a producer and multimedia editor for Dow Jones and the Wall Street Journal and as the Director of Broadcast Services for the American Stock Exchange. As a live television director, Owen has helmed programming for CNBC, CNN and ABC. He has worked on documentary series and specials for networks including ABC, A&E, National Geographic and The History Channel. He was an associate editor of JFK: # SHOTS THAT CHANGED AMERICA and worked with the same production team on the Emmy Award winning 102 MINUTES THAT CHANGED AMERICA.

**Brantley Doyle** (co-producer) attended the University of Florida. He has recently completed work on Todd Solond's DARK HORSE and has been working on a number of other independent film projects in and around New York City..

**Danny Ahn** (co-producer) attended the prestigious Hunter College High School as a native New Yorker, and then graduated from Boston College with several experimental and student shorts under his belt. He has recently completed work on Todd Solond's DARK HORSE.

**Paul Shin** (director of photography) attended New York University's film school. His works as a Director of Photography range from current documentary projects for Time Magazine Inc. and Vice Media, Inc to independent projects such as GASP. GASP marks his first collaboration with director Thiago Da Costa.

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# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



GASP is about being stuck in a situation where one sees no way out.

It's about a man who has allowed the years to roll by while he was doing his "fall back thing". Yet, as it often happens, his fall back thing ended up becoming his "only thing." The money gig became the main gig and the dream slowly faded. Aimless and dreamless, Jim begins to suffer an existential desolation brought about as a consequence of a personal sense of failure. This is manifested in the film through his dreary dreams and psychosomatic responses to his problems in the form of severe sleep apnea. This condition is a consequence of his existential issues and, at the same time, a contributing factor to his sense of isolation and alienation in his current life.

GASP is a cautionary tale about the danger of abandoning one's desired path. It's a warning of what may happen if one allows one's self not to follow one's star.

- Thiago Da Costa

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# INTERVIEW



## **THIAGO DA COSTA**

WRITER/DIRECTOR/PRODUCER, *GASP*

Transcribed from an interview given in the fall of 2010

### *Where did the idea for GASP come from?*

The original idea for *GASP* came to me first as a dream image of a man underwater inside of a pool. The man feels threatened and scorched by life and the underwater calmness of this “moment” he feels underwater brings peace to him. He feels protected inside of this pool, in this moment of quietness underwater. He feels the sharp edges of reality are dulled underwater. He feels warm and cozy inside of the pool’s protective womb. However, he can’t stay underwater forever and eventually, he is forced out of the water by his need to breathe. That was the original idea. A man having a moment under the pool, wanting to stay there, but needing to come up because of his need to breathe.

From there the idea developed into something more flushed out. I spent many years in the recent past working on a project with producer Owen Cooper and he struck me as a character who needed to star in a film someday. The more I got to know Owen, the more I thought a film should be made with him, even though he discouraged such thoughts of mine.

Eventually, I started to blend this film idea of this man underwater with this film idea of a project starring Owen. *GASP* was thus born. Elements of Owen’s life started to be brought into the script (his age, his suffering from sleep apnea, the fact he was in a punk band years before, etc) and *GASP* began to take the shape that it presently has.



***Which filmmakers inspired you during the conception and production of GASP?***

I was reading a few books on John Cassavetes during the pre-production of GASP. His independent spirit, inspired the way GASP was produced, entirely through my company, self-financed, with a small crew of dedicated volunteers. Stylistically though, the film has a more formal approach than a Cassavetes film. I yearned for more “graphic” control than Cassavetes yearned for in his approach to filming scenes although I was not a Nazi about it, in the way that Hitchcock was for instance, with so much pre-planning that spontaneity on set was virtually impossible. From a stylistic standpoint, I don’t really know who I drew from. But it must have been from filmmakers that are image-oriented as GASP is definitely not a talkie. The main character is largely a silent figure sleep-walking through his life.

***Your first film, BEFORE TAKE OFF, is about leaving your home and who you are behind you. GASP seems to be about wanting to leave who you are now to achieve a youthful dream. Is there anything that connects/disconnects these two films of yours?***

Yes, indeed. BTO and GASP have similarities and dissimilarities. They both spring from a personal side of myself. I write best from experience and from what I know. Both of these films have elements that came from my life in them. So, that is definitely a similarity. Now, BTO was a film about certain struggles I experienced as an adolescent whereas GASP is film about adult struggles and struggles I have had in my adult, working life. From a standpoint of the script these are the main similarities and differences. Another obvious similarity is that both films are largely about psychological/existential struggles of the main character. Exploring a person’s desires and motivations, what drives them and why they do what they do, is a favorite topic of exploration of mine in many projects I undertake.

***Please describe actual production.***

Production was a 6 day flash! It was intense and tiring but ultimately very satisfying. The crew and cast were great. My co-producers Danny Ahn and Brantley Doyle were amazing collaborators as was my DP Paul Shin who I think outdid himself in creating a moody feel to the film as a whole that really captures the tone of the script. Another highlight was the discovery in my friend Owen Cooper of an actor waiting to be born although he will probably never act again since he hated the experience of acting in GASP and swears that he will never watch the film although he said if I were to ask him to do it again he would do it out of respect for myself as a filmmaker, which is kind of reassuring.

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