

Sally's Beauty Spot

a film by Helen Lee

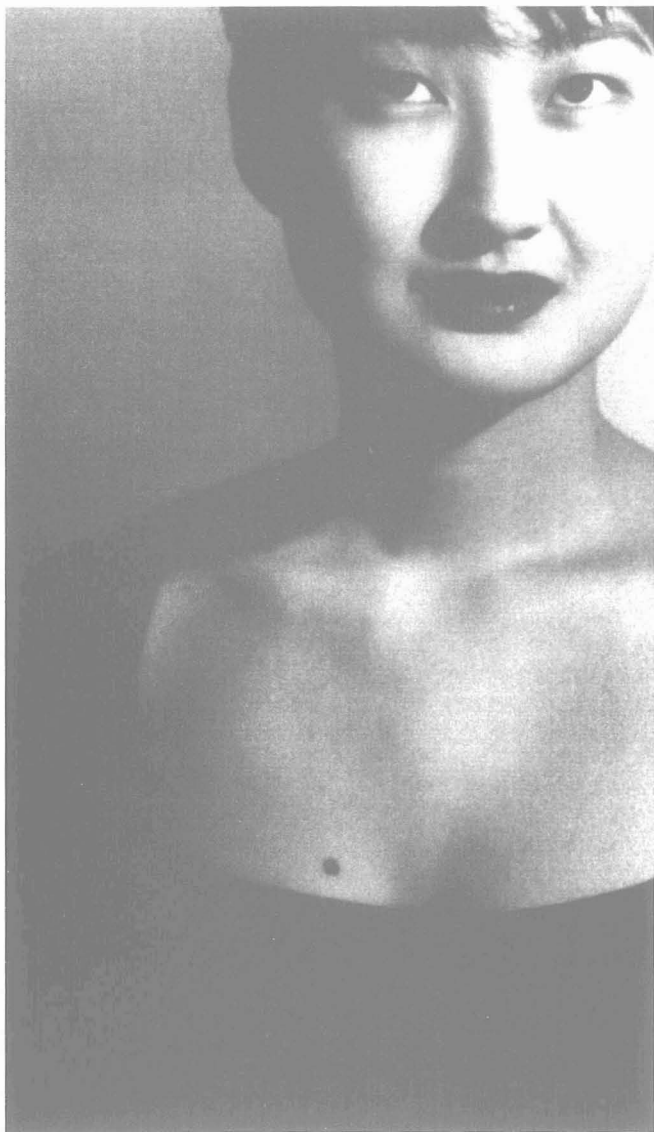


Photo: Rick McGinnis

Sally's Beauty Spot

["Robert" and "Suzie" are characters played by William Holden and Nancy Kwan in clips from the 1960 Robert Quine film, *The World of Suzie Wong*.]

SHOT	SPEAKER	VOICEOVER
black and white shot of hands meeting across bedsheets	ROBERT	<i>You are the most exasperating girl I've ever met.</i>
	SUZIE	<i>We not meet. I no talk to strangers.</i>
lips	SALLY	Mnnn Nmmm.
	JOYCE	It's just a little mole.
	SALLY	It's ugly.
	JOYCE	Everyone has a scar, silly. Or a birthmark like that.
	SALLY	I hate it. It's black and ugly. Don't talk about it anymore.
Sally's lips/body	HELEN	<i>Shhhhh.</i>
black screen	SALLY	<i>heaving breath</i>
Sally scrubbing her mole	SALLY	Get this/ If only I could get the/ Take it off and find/ Get it clean/ Off/ Get rid of this stupid little/Ugly/ Black/ Get this...

Suzie dancing with sailor/ eye, extreme close-up	DOMINIC	"Indeed, a feminist criticism, by dancing contrast, aims at seizing authority from men at the same time that it seeks to redefine traditional models (like the ethnographic one) of authority, power and hierarchy. Given the current state of affairs..."
eye/mirror	CHRIS	Your skin's very smooth. And the hair—so silky. And black.
Suzie in cheongsam	HELEN	<i>Specular fascination.</i>
Sally combing her hair, slow motion	JOYCE	He was just a guy, an American who took a year off from his business job to try to be an artist. So he goes to Hong Kong.
	SALLY	How does he meet Suzie?
	JOYCE	She's a Chinese prostitute who he first thought was a rich virgin. Anyway, she becomes his model.
	SALLY	Do they fall in love?
	JOYCE	Of course.



Mitsuyo	KERRI	When did you first become aware of it? Its presence, that is.
Yumiko	SALLY	When my breasts started to grow.
	KERRI	And how did you feel about that?
	SALLY	About what—the growing?
	KERRI	No. The fact that you had this, this blemish.
	SALLY	Oh. Like I had to hide it.
Suzie singing on bed as Robert paints her	SALLY	Do you really think she loves him?
	JOYCE	I guess so. Just watch.
Robert looks	SALLY	Why do you like the movie so much?
Suzie sings		
Sally close-up	SALLY	It's always been there, ever since I was a little girl.



Suzie teaching Robert
how to use chop-sticks

Sally close-up
tilt up dress

SALLY

It's the first thing I see when I
look in the mirror.

Tim's face

Suzie's face

SALLY

I feel it growing. It gets
bigger—and darker—every
day.

Robert's face

JOYCE

Sally... and what did he say?

Sally & Tim
kiss

SALLY

He said he liked it, still shiny
and black.

Robert confronts Suzie,
strips her

ROBERT

Take that terrible dress off.

SUZIE

This expensive dress!

ROBERT

*I don't care what it cost. You look
like a cheap European street
walker.*

SUZIE

You shut up!

ROBERT

*Why don't you put a ring in
your nose too?*



	JOYCE	What else?
Sally & Philip kiss	SALLY	I don't know, that I looked different, I guess.
Suzie in traditional Chinese empress dress bows to Robert	ROBERT	<i>You haven't the faintest idea what real beauty is.</i>
Tim & Sally kiss	JOYCE	Different from what?
Robert & Suzie kiss	DOMINIC	"Skin, as the key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype, is the most visible of fetishes, recognized as 'common knowledge' in a range of cultural, political discourses, and plays a public part in the racial drama that is enacted every day in colonial societies. Secondly, it may be said that sexual fetish is closely linked to the 'good object'; it is the prop that makes the whole object desirable and lovable, facilitates sexual relations and can even promote a form of happiness."
	CHRIS	Were you born with it? Can I see how it feels?



SALLY Don't touch it. Please.

KERRI Have you considered surgical methods of removal?

JOYCE It's like a small bump on your skin. So small I can barely see it.

SALLY He put it in his mouth yesterday.

JOYCE What's in-between?

HELEN Does it make a difference?

HELEN How could we not have any expectations? A face-to-face encounter based not on first impressions, a natural occurrence, but a pre-existing order of things. Finished. Closed. Defined.

HELEN
JOYCE
DOMINIC
SALLY [overlapping voices] They will always pose the problem of difference as that between the preconstituted, "natural" poles of black and white.

Kerri
Sally
Helen

Cameron



Sally reacts	SALLY	<i>Oops.</i>
side-view of Sally applying eye shadow	SALLY	<i>humming</i>
Sally applying lipstick		
Cameron's lips, extreme close up		
Sally's lips, extreme close up		
Sally, smiling, being photographed		

(1990)

