

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Fourth Southeast Asian Film Festival returns with 20 Singapore premieres – the freshest and most compelling cinematic work emerging from the region

11 April (Friday) to 4 May (Sunday) 2014, Moving Image Gallery, SAM at 8Q

19 March 2014, Singapore – Featuring the region’s best contemporary art expressed via the moving image, the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is proud to present the fourth Southeast Asian Film Festival (SEAFF). Organised by SAM, along with prominent film critic Philip Cheah, veteran arts administrator Teo Swee Leng and SAM curator Sam I-shan, this annual Festival puts the spotlight on Southeast Asia through the compelling contemporary visual art genre of film.

This year’s festival will highlight 20 films created by both established and up-and-coming directors from across the region including Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. All the films will be making their Singapore premieres at the Festival, including four Asian premieres and one world premiere. Festival-goers from the region will explore some of the most urgent contemporary challenges facing this diverse and rapidly developing region through the lenses of the directors, from the religious sectarian conflict in Mindanao to cross-border migration between Myanmar and China, to the hardship of ordinary families and more. Visitors will also get a glimpse of life in turbulent regions across Asia through *War is a Tender Thing* by Adjani Arumpac, *The Journey of the Stars into the Dark Night* by Arnel Mardquio, *Letters of Solitude* by Gutierrez ‘Teng’ Mangansakan II and *Ice Poison* by Midi Z, that tell the stories of communities that live through adversity.

This year’s selection will feature a strong focus on documentaries, with close to half of the festival’s lineup comprising such films. Some of the documentaries in the festival include *Denok and Gareng* by Dwi Sujanti Nugraheni, which features an Indonesian family’s struggle to make ends meet; the Director’s Cut of the controversial film *The Act of Killing*, by Joshua Oppenheimer, which explores mankind’s capacity for violence; and *Censor Must Die* by Ing K, which documents the film’s director’s

fight to screen their Macbeth adaptation, *Shakespeare Must Die*, which was banned under Thailand's 2008 Film Act.

Marking the Festival opening is *Behind the Flickering Light (The Archive)* by video artist and documentary filmmaker Hafiz Rancajale, a tribute to Indonesian legend Haji Misbach Yusa Biran, tracing the personal life of the renowned archivist, founder of Southeast Asia's first film archive – Sinematek Indonesia. The Festival will end with *Sayang Disayang* by celebrated local filmmaker Sanif Olek, which tells the stories of the Southeast Asian region's food and song through a relationship between a live-in nurse and a lonely and bitter elderly man who harangues his caregiver.

Another interesting new component of this year's festival would be the filmmakers' exploration of the art of storytelling beyond film alone. *Pascalina* by Pam Miras was shot entirely on a digital Harinezumi toy camera, successfully capturing the darkness of the main character's life, showing in fuzzy detail the troubles that she experiences. In his film *Rekorder*, Mikhail Red displays the influence of his renowned experimental filmmaker father Raymond Red, through his use of a full range of formats, reveling in the textures and shapes of high definition video, MiniDV, cinematic film, CCTV footage and more.

Dr. Susie Lingham, Director of SAM, says "The cinema screen might be described as both a window on the world as well as a mirror through which to envisage different futures. The medium of film allows for such threads and connections to be teased out, not just across time but also across space. Recognizing the importance of filmmaking as a contemporary art practice, the Singapore Art Museum is proud to continue our support of emerging filmmakers and veteran directors from Asia in our fourth edition of the Southeast Asia Film Festival. The Festival serves as a way to take the pulse of the region: highlighting contemporary political preoccupations and social issues while drawing attention to marginal communities or overlooked aspects of life as experienced in these parts of the world. We look forward to welcoming festival-goers from Singapore and beyond to this exciting season of Southeast Asian films!"

The Festival will feature up to ten post-screening discussions with directors of the featured films. Spread across the duration of the festival, the audience will get to interact and discuss the films with local and visiting artists including Hafiz Rancajale, Lee Chatametikool, Mikhail Red, Adjani Arumpac, Arnel Mardoquio, Ing K and Sanif Olek, as well as external speakers including Ben Slater and Fatily Sa.

Please refer to Annex A for the Festival schedule. For more information on the films featured, please refer to Annex B.

This year's Southeast Asian Film Festival will take place from 11 April (Friday) to 4 May (Sunday) at the Moving Image Gallery at SAM at 8Q. Tickets (\$10 for each film screening or \$8 concession for students with valid ID, senior citizens and NSFs) are available from SISTIC from 11 March.

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For more information, please read on:

- **Annex A** – Southeast Asian Film Festival Synopsis & Schedule
- **Annex B** – About the Films and Directors

About the Singapore Art Museum

The Singapore Art Museum (SAM) focuses on contemporary art practice in Singapore, Southeast Asia and Asia within the global context. It advocates and makes accessible interdisciplinary contemporary art through research-led and evolving curatorial practice. Opened in January 1996, SAM has built up one of the most important collections of contemporary art from the region. It seeks to seed and nourish a stimulating and creative space in Singapore through exhibitions and public programmes. These encompass cross-disciplinary residencies and exchanges, research and publications, as well as outreach and education. SAM is the organiser of the Singapore Biennale in 2011 and 2013.

SAM was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 13 November 2013 and has moved from the National Heritage Board to the Visual Arts Cluster (VAC) under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. The other institutions under the VAC are the National Art Gallery, Singapore, and the Singapore Tyler Print Institute.

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Annex A: Southeast Asian Film Festival Synopsis & Schedule

Southeast Asian Film Festival 2014

11 April – 4 May 2014 | Moving Image Gallery, SAM at 8Q

Now into its fourth year, the Southeast Asian Film Festival continues to present the freshest and most compelling cinematic work emerging from the region. Providing a window into the core issues and concerns of Southeast Asia, the Festival also provides a space for inter-cultural and philosophical sharing, and for art and film friendships to form. Audiences will have a chance to meet both emerging directors as well as veteran filmmakers. There will be 20 screenings, ten post-screening discussions and two special sidebars on films from Singapore and films from Mindanao. New works by Arnel Hardoquio, Sanif Olek, Hafiz Rancajale, Mikhail Red, and Joshua Oppenheimer will be shown.

\$10 for each film screening, \$8 concession for students with valid ID, senior citizens and NSFs. Tickets are available from SISTIC and include \$1 SISTIC fee. Due to limited seating, please be advised to purchase tickets early. For ticket availability at the door, please call SISTIC at 6348 5555.

Visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/seaff for more information.

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	FILM	DIRECTOR	YEAR	COUNTRY	RUN-TIME	LANGUAGE	RATING	DIRECTOR'S TALK	PREMIERE STATUS
Fri 11 Apr 2014	7:30pm	Behind the Flickering Light (The Archive)	Hafiz Rancajale	2013	Indonesia	155	Bahasa Indonesia with English subtitles	G	Hafiz Rancajale (Director)	Singapore premiere
Sat 12 Apr 2014	3:00pm	Aberya	Christian Linaban	2012	Philippines	108	Tagalog and Visayan with English subtitles	R21		Asian premiere
Sat 12 Apr 2014	5:30pm	Gaddafi	Panu Aree, Kong Rithdee, Kaweenipon Ketprasit	2013	Thailand	24	Thai with English subtitles	PG		Asian premiere
		Concrete Clouds	Lee Chatametikool	2013	Thailand, Hong Kong, China	99	Thai with English subtitles	NC16	Lee Chatametikool (Director)	Singapore premiere
Sun 13 Apr 2014	3:00pm	Letters of Solitude	Gutierrez 'Teng' Mangansakan II	2012	Philippines	105	Spanish, English and Maguindanaon dialect with English subtitles	R21		Singapore premiere
Sun 13 Apr 2014	5:30pm	KIL	Nik Amir Mustapha	2013	Malaysia	90	Bahasa Malaysia with English subtitles	PG13		Singapore premiere
Fri 18 Apr 2014	7:30pm	Mister John	Christine Molloy & Joe Lawlor	2013	Singapore, United Kingdom, Ireland	95	<i>(English)</i>	NC16	Ben Slater (Writer)	Asian premiere
Sat 19 Apr 2014	3:00pm	Pascalina	Pam Miras	2012	Philippines	96	Tagalog with English subtitles	M18		International premiere
Sat 19 Apr 2014	5:30pm	Ice Poison	Midi Z	2014	Taiwan, Myanmar	95	Myanma Bhasa, Mandarin and Yunnan dialect with English subtitles	R21		Singapore premiere

Sun 20 Apr 2014	3:00pm	Denok and Gareng	Dwi Sujanti Nugraheni	2012	Indonesia	89	Bahasa Indonesia with English subtitles	PG13		Singapore premiere
Sun 20 Apr 2014	5:30pm	Rekorder	Mikhail Red	2013	Philippines	90	Tagalog with English subtitles	M18	Mikhail Red (Director) and Pamela Reyes (Producer)	Singapore premiere
Fri 25 Apr 2014	7:30pm	A River Changes Course	Kalyanee Mam	2013	Cambodia, USA	83	Khmer and Jarai with English subtitles	NC16	Fatily Sa (Head of Film Team, Documentation Center of Cambodia)	Singapore premiere
Sat 26 Apr 2014	3:00pm	The Bit Player	Jeffrey Jeturian	2013	Philippines	111	Tagalog with English subtitles	PG		Singapore premiere
Sat 26 Apr 2014	5:30pm	What They Don't Talk About When They Talk About Love	Mouly Surya	2013	Indonesia	104	Bahasa Indonesia with English subtitles	M18		Singapore premiere
Sun 27 Apr 2014	3:00pm	War is a Tender Thing	Adjani Arumpac	2013	Philippines	70	Tagalog, Ilocano and Visayan with English subtitles	PG13	Adjani Arumpac (Director)	Singapore premiere
Sun 27 Apr 2014	5:30pm	The Journey of the Stars into the Dark Night	Arnel Mardoquio	2012	Philippines	119	Tagalog and Maguindanaon dialect with English subtitles	R21	Arnel Mardoquio (Director)	Singapore premiere
Fri 2 May 2014	7:30pm	Shakespeare Must Die	Ing K	2012	Thailand	172	Thai with Shakespearean subtitles	NC16	Ing K (Director)	Singapore premiere
Sat 3 May 2014	5:30pm	Censor Must Die	Ing K	2013	Thailand	150	Thai with English subtitles	PG13	Ing K (Director)	World premiere

Sun 4 May 2014	1:30pm	The Act of Killing (Director's Cut)	Joshua Oppenheimer, Christine Cynn and Anonymous	2012	Denmark, United Kingdom, Norway	159	Bahasa Indonesia with English subtitles	NC16		Asian premiere
Sun 4 May 2014	5:30pm	Sayang Disayang	Sanif Olek	2013	Singapore	70	Malay with English subtitles	PG	Sanif Olek (Director)	Singapore premiere

Annex B – About the Films and Directors

Fri, 11 Apr 2014, 7.30pm

Behind the Flickering Light (The Archive)

Hafiz Rancajale, 2013, Indonesia, 155 mins,
Bahasa Indonesia with English subtitles, G



Singapore Premiere

Featuring a post-screening discussion with director Hafiz Rancajale.

A tribute to Indonesian legend Haji Misbach Yusa Biran, this film traces the personal life of the renowned archivist, founder of Southeast Asia's first film archive – Sinematek Indonesia. Employing an experimental and non-linear style, this essay film looks at how the former film director dedicated most of his life to preserving crucial aspects of Indonesian cinema. One cannot imagine the fate of Indonesian cinema without Misbach, but while the Sinematek was established to preserve the cultural memory of the past, the film materials and institution are experiencing an inexorable march toward deterioration. This film was awarded Best Film at the Jogjakarta Documentary Film Festival (2013).

Hafiz Rancajale is a video artist, documentary filmmaker and curator. A graduate of fine art at the Jakarta Institut of Arts, he is the co-founder of Forum Lenteng (2003) and ruangrupa (2000). His artwork has been shown at Bentara Budaya, (Indonesia 1997); Gwangju Biennale (Korea 2002); and the 24th Edition Images Festival (Canada 2011), among others, while his films have been selected by the International Film Festival Rotterdam, Experimenta, India and Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, Germany. He has been the Chief Editor of Online Journal of Film-Video Footage since 2009 and is currently Artistic Director of ARKIPEL International Documentary and Experimental Film Festival, Indonesia, and a member of the Fine Arts Committee of Jakarta Arts Council. His films include 15.000.000 Parachutes (2001), The Valley of the Dog Songs (2004), Alam: Syuhada (2005), Meeting Jen (2008), Rangkasbitung: A Piece of Tale (2011) and Behind The Flickering Light (The Archive).

Director's Statement

This film is a tribute to Haji Misbach Yusa Biran, one of the central figures in modern Indonesian cinema who saw it through developments since the 1950s to the current new generation of Indonesian film. To me, it is important to recognize Haji Misbach as a controversial figure in Indonesia's cultural and political movement in terms of how he positioned himself in the country's socio-political map. This is not meant to glorify him, but to examine his other sides: as one of the founders of the Film Department in Jakarta Institute of the Arts, as a rascally boy from Lebak, West Java, and also as a husband and father.

Haji Misbach may be described as a figure who gave his entire life to preserve and interpret the film archiving discourse in Sinematek Indonesia as a source of Indonesian cinema. He decided to stop being a film director in the early 1970s, choosing to be a film archivist instead. Through this thinking, Sinematek was born and became the first and the largest film archive in Southeast Asia. More than a place of storage, it also serves as a space for the preservation of and discourse about historical ideas of Indonesian cinema.

But, the worsening situation in Sinematek has threatened these very historical artefacts and discourse prompting the fears of one of the most horrible things of human civilization: the extinction of historical knowledge. In 160 minutes, we present in this film two perspectives from different generations of understanding about what it means to archive and the discourse of Indonesian cinema.

Print Source

ARKIPEL International Documentary and Experimental Film Festival (Yuki Aditya)

Sat, 12 Apr 2014, 3pm

Aberya

Christian Linaban, 2012, Philippines, 108 mins,

Tagalog and Visayan with English subtitles, R21 (Sexual Scenes)



Asian Premiere

Four stories overlap in this time-tripping psychedelic film set in Cebu island. Filipino-American Lourd is a rising star on the boxing circuit. Visiting his parents' homeland for the first time to find his roots, he soon runs into trouble due to his large ego and penchant for women and drugs. Angel, played by Brillante Mendoza regular Mercedes Cabral, is an ex-nun turned prostitute and self-styled vigilante. Mike, the drug-dealing son of a Senator just wants to chemically travel through time, while heartbroken, accidental porn star Eden is a good girl at heart who just wants to start over and find her Mr Right. This ambitious debut film by Linaban features creative editing and slick cinematography.

Christian Linaban is a self-taught filmmaker based in Cebu who has created and directed several short films. He was the cinematographer for the feature-length film *The Dream of Eleuteria* (2010) directed by Remton Zuasola, and shot entirely in one take. *Eleuteria* won awards at the Cinemanila Film Festival and the 2011 Gawad Urian, and the Special Jury Prize at the 12th Jeonju International Film Festival. He was the cinematographer for *Not Like Us* (2011) and one of the seven directors in the omnibus *Friday Friday* (2011). *Aberya* is his first feature film.

Director's Statement

A decade ago, a close friend of mine, Ariel Llanto, wanted to write a short screenplay for me to direct. We shared a fondness for Woody Allen so we decided to fashion it much like his movies: character-oriented, lots of dialogue, and an emphasis on the city in which the story takes place. The latter had the most appeal to me. Having been born and bred in Cebu I thought it worth a try to paint a picture of it - not through wide shots of the city itself, but through the intimate eyes of the people who could be found in it.

Being an international terminal located at the womb of the Philippines, "The Queen City of the South" is a constant flux of cultures intermingling with each other. There are various foreigners falling in love with the island to the point of choosing it as the place of retirement while on the other

hand here are these locals so desperate to go abroad. People from all over the Philippines are moving in for education or business or merely just stopping over to go to a nearby province in the Visayas or Mindanao. Even though it's small, diversity abounds.

In 2005, my friend, Ariel, died of bone marrow cancer. The story however remained alive in my head, fermenting through the years.

Ariel and I were also big fans of the Beatles and John Lennon once said, "My role in society, or any artist's or poet's role, is to try and express what we all feel. Not to tell people how to feel. Not as a preacher, not as a leader, but as a reflection of us all." With *Aberya*, I aimed to express what I saw as a reflection of us all through the eyes of four archetypes: the warrior, the fool, the whore, and the virgin. Lourd—a megalomaniac Fil-Am boxer who wants to challenge Manny Pacquiao and take his power over the Filipino people; Mike—a local mestizo drug dealer who's aspiring to be a shaman, using psychedelics to travel through time; Angel - a morena ex-nun from Manila posing as a prostitute and using her sexuality to neutralize criminals; and Eden - a social climbing chinita from Davao who gets involved in an internet sex scandal, motivating her more to leave the country. Their paths were set, gained momentum, and they smashed into each other. I sought to balance the heaviness of the dark subject matter with bright lights and colours. *Aberya* is a superhero movie told differently. These characters are not real—they're mythic and like any good piece of fantasy it should influence reality, not escape it.

After screenings I've made a habit of asking some of the audience members who their favourite character is. Surprisingly I found that although a majority loved Mike, there were people who fancied the other three as well. For example, I met a man citing Angel as his favourite character, calling her very brave. Later on he tells me that he was raised by strict Bible Baptist parents and has issues with the Christian religion. Meanwhile, a devout Catholic woman also named Angel her favourite character because she's the only character who gets any redemption. I met a woman who names Lourd as her favourite character calling him the most enlightened character in the story while there is a handful who hates his guts, calling Lourd sleazy and arrogant. A handful dislike Eden too yet there are those who say that she's the most relatable character. By democratizing the four stories I'm making the audience choose who the protagonist is, creating an interactive mirror—"a reflection of us all".

One of the things that attracted me to this project was the architecture of the narrative. Each of these anti-heroes are given an equal amount of screen time causing so much density that at first glance it looks like unkempt coils tangled together. However, if you sift through the knots you'll realize that it's all just one big wire and therein lies a bigger reward. The trick was to make a movie no one would mind rewatching. More than that, it required multiple viewings in order to loosen the knots. For me the best films are the ones that get better the more you repeat them, like your favourite record album. Film is a cold medium after all - a historical document. It's meant to be reviewed again and again.

In pre-production, I was repeatedly told that the film was ambitious and that it couldn't be done with the limited resources and time that we were given. I come from the school of thought that you can improvise with whatever you have. Not only did the end result become a reflection of us all in content but also in context. If *Aberya* had been done a year later, maybe with a different budget and timeframe, it would have been an entirely different animal. But to me, this was the essence of alchemy: turning lead into gold.

Print Source

Creative Programs, Inc / Cinema One Originals (Ronald Arguelles)

Sat, 12 Apr 2014, 5.30pm

Gaddafi

Panu Aree, Kong Rithdee, Kaweenipon Ketprasit, 2013, Thailand, 24 mins,
Thai with English subtitles, PG



Asian Premiere

Of the 69 million people living in Thailand, four percent or 2.5 million—are Muslim. While many have both a Thai and an Islamic name, there is one of them who has only one name. Or, as he tells us, “my real name”. Mohammad Gaddafi is a handsome schoolboy who has to repeatedly explain to his friends how he came about his moniker. Former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi was his father's hero, but since his violent demise in 2011, his mother has been more worried than ever for her son's safety. By giving the floor to both advocates and opponents, the interviews with this Thai Muslim family pose the age-old question: what's in a name?

Panu Aree is a veteran director who also works in studio film acquisitions. His film *Destiny* (2001) won the Jury Prize at the Bangkok International Film Festival. Kong Rithdee has been a film critic and Op-Ed columnist at the Bangkok Post for many years, and his articles have been published internationally. He also lectures on Thai film industry and film criticism. Kaweenipon Ketprasit is filmmaker as well as a film editor, and he has edited films by Aditya Assarat and Mingmongkol Sonakul. The three have co-directed *In Between* (2006), *The Convert* (2009), and *Baby Arabia* (2011).

Directors' Statement

We didn't realise this until we had made our first two documentaries: With our limited means and capacity, we are actually trying to put a human face on the troubled image of Islam. In our 40-minute *In Between* (2006), we documented the lives of four “moderate” Muslims in Bangkok while probing their hopes and fears concerning their status as Muslims in a non-Muslim country. In 2008 we completed our second documentary, the 83-minute *The Convert*, in which we follow the up-and-down-and-up life of a Buddhist woman who converts to Islam to marry a Muslim man from the South, where insurgents have wreaked havoc since 2004. After that, we made *Baby Arabia* (2010), a

music documentary that narrates the life of a Thai Muslim band playing Arab-Malay music, and a year later we made O.B.L., a short documentary commemorating the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

Gaddafi continues that attempt to tell the story of Muslims in Thailand, especially in Bangkok, and how we have to reconcile the reality of our everyday life with the spiritual and political beliefs that form the core of our identities.

[Print Source](#)

Walad Dorleen Film

Concrete Clouds

Lee Chatametikool, 2013, Thailand, Hong Kong, China, 99 mins,
Thai with English subtitles, NC16 (Some Drug Use)



Singapore Premiere

Featuring a post-screening discussion with director Lee Chatametikool

Thailand, 1997. After a family tragedy, Mutt takes time away from his job as a currency trader in New York to return home to Bangkok. He decides to track down Sai, his old girlfriend from high school. Meanwhile, his younger brother Nic, is in love with Poupee, who lives in a shabby flat behind their townhouse. As the economic crisis looms over the city, both relationships face uncertainty. Intercutting between 1990s Bangkok and the childhood and school years of the brothers, the story drifts between the past and the present, between dreams and reality, in a collage of love songs, music videos and recorded memories. Can they hold together in the face of harsh reality?

Lee Chatametikool is an award-winning editor and filmmaker based in Bangkok. In 2001, he moved back to Bangkok from New York to work on Apichatpong Weerasethakul's first feature, *Blissfully Yours*. He has since edited the debut films for many young Thai directors. He was awarded Best Editor for Weerasethakul's *Syndromes and a Century* at the Asian Film Awards in 2007 and for Chris Chong's *Karaoke* in 2010. He was also named Best Editor for Aditya Assarat's *Wonderful Town* by Bangkok Film Critic's Assembly in 2008. He is the founder of Houdini Studio, a post-production facility for the independent film community. *Concrete Clouds* is his first feature film.

Director's Statement

When I returned to Bangkok in December 1997, landing in the midst of the financial crisis, the first thing I noticed was that the dust had settled. For the first time that I could remember, the streets were clean and empty. Skeletons of unfinished buildings dotted the skyline. They stood like monuments to the glorious economic boom.

I wanted to make a film about these monuments. Monuments of youth, and the journey home to a glorious past that may or may not exist. Monuments of time, where rooms that were once big can feel oppressively small. Monuments of love, when the sweetest romance becomes a futile exercise.

These are the monuments we build, only to realise that they have faded with time and are as empty as the abandoned skeletons in Bangkok.

Print Source

Mosquito Films Distribution (Sompot Chidgasornpongse)

Sun, 13 Apr 2014, 3pm

Letters of Solitude

Gutierrez 'Teng' Mangansakan II, 2011, Philippines, 105 mins,
Spanish, English and Maguindanaon dialect with English subtitles, R21 (Some Homosexual
Content)



Asian Premiere

After working for more than 25 years in Barcelona, Rashid Ali returns to his Maguindanao hometown. He dreams of using what he has learned in Europe to improve the lives of his people, but nothing has changed since he left. Politicians remain corrupt, poverty is widespread, his people desperate. Frustrated, Rashid retreats to a decrepit family villa far away from town, with Racma the housemaid as his only companion. Their only connection to the world is Andal, the family servant, who delivers their weekly rations and Malik the postman. In seclusion, Rashid writes to himself detailing the affairs of his day, combining his own experience and his opinions of the radio news everyday. These letters - written in Spanish - serve as Rashid's memories, and his remaining connection to his adopted home. The act of writing becomes a refuge until an imminent war threatens everyone's serenity.

Gutierrez 'Teng' Mangansakan II is a filmmaker and writer from Maguindanao in Southern Philippines. He has made numerous short documentaries and experimental works, mostly on the war in his home region. He writes for various news publications in the Philippines. His films include Limbunan (2010), The Obscured Histories and Silent Longings of Dagaluan's Children (2011), Letters of Solitude (2012) and Qiyamah (2013). Letters of Solitude was awarded the NETPAC award for Best Film, at the 7th Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival (2012).

Director's Statement

The character Rashid is inspired by the protagonist, Crisostomo Ibarra, in Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*. An exile returning home, he realises that his countrymen continue to live in destitution caused by an inept bureaucracy aggravated by a deep fatalistic attitude. Failing to rise to the challenges, Rashid withdraws into the remote part of the village. What drives him to do this? Is it lack of courage? Or is it the need for introspection?

The film is an allegory of more than 500 years of both the intellectual and political colonisation of the Moro people -arguably with the coming of the preacher, Shariff Kabunsuan, from Johor in the early part of the 16th century which fortified Islam and its institutions in Mindanao, then the Spanish occupation, the American colonial period, the integration of the Moro people into the Philippine body politic, and the radicalisation of Islam which started in the 1980s.

The film seeks to interpret the changes that my Mindanao is undergoing, rendering them in a sincere and genuine experience that I have of my hometown. By meditating on it, rather than engaging largely in the politicised banter that has become characteristic of films dealing with Mindanao, I hope to distill what is true and essential in our own experience of place and self.

Print Source

Reckless Natarajan Pictures

Sun, 13 Apr 2014, 5.30pm

KIL

**Nik Amir Mustapha, 2013, Malaysia, 90 mins,
Bahasa Malaysia with English subtitles, PG13 (Some Suicide References)**



Singapore Premiere

Akil is a depressed young man with suicidal tendencies that he continually fails to act upon. He finally decides to get it done right by employing the services of the Life Action Bureau, an agency specialising in assassinations in which the target would have no clue when, where, how, and by whose hand he would die. But after signing the contract, he meets Zara and immediately falls in love with her. How is he going to call off the hit on himself? The thrilling twists and turns taken by this dark romantic comedy are a radical take on forestalled mortality. KIL took the top awards for best film, director, screenplay and actress at the Anugerah Skrin 2013 Awards.

Nik Amir Mustapha is a freelance music video, commercial and corporate video director. Originally trained in electrical engineering, he pursued his passion for film, taking a year-long course at Metro Screen Sydney and subsequently refining his skills through independent commercial projects. His first feature, KIL, made with friends from the advertising and film production world, was quickly sold to a distributor and premiered in Malaysian cinemas. He has recently completed shooting his second feature, Bikin Filem.

Director's Statement

KIL started off as a very small-scale independent film production which was a passion project between myself and my good friends Rewan Ishak and Jeremy Little. We took three months to

conceptualise the idea, discuss the story and rewrite until the script was ready. We were introduced to leads Redza Minhat and Cristina Suzanne through friends of friends and we presented the synopsis to them, discussed the story and when I saw that they fit the characters and were eager to be involved, I decided they should play Akil and Zara. They have good chemistry on and off set. As it's their first time as leads they invested themselves seriously in the project.

We initially intended to shoot KIL without a proper production team, but set up one after engaging our director of photography. Our small production crew then started shooting KIL around Kuala Lumpur, taking 11 days. Shortly after, the team released a trailer that went viral and received positive reviews. From a small independent project, KIL became an anticipated Malaysian movie. After post-production by early 2012, a chance encounter between myself and producer Tengku Iesta Tengku Alaudin of Grand Brilliance led to them buying the rights and releasing it in cinemas in May 2013.

KIL was shot around the KL area on a low budget. I believe the story needs to come first before anything. Even though the film industry is a business, it's first and foremost about culture and not all about money. My main aim is to make films for Malaysians. There were huge blockbusters screening at the same time as KIL. So who else is going to watch Malaysian films if not Malaysians themselves?

Print Source

Primeworks Studios

Fri, 18 Apr 2014, 7.30pm

Mister John

Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor, 2013, Singapore, United Kingdom, Ireland, 95 mins,
NC16 (Coarse Language and Sexual References)



Asian Premiere

Featuring a post-screening discussion with writer Ben Slater.

Gerry Devine arrives in Singapore to settle matters after his brother John's death, even as he deals with his own wife's infidelity. After meeting John's widow, Kim, he moves in with her and her teenage daughter, and strangely, starts to wear his brother's clothes and become entangled in the lives disrupted by John's sudden death. As the dead brother is slowly revealed through the living one, questions of duplicity or possession emerge. Should Gerry seek to rebuild a life with his wife and family? Or does he replace his brother and become Mister John? Adian Gillen and Zoe Tay star in this noir-ish film, complete with a lush, heated showcase of Singapore locales, and a knowing nod to the infamous cult classic, *Saint Jack*.

Christine Molloy and Joe Lawlor were previously theatre practitioners, directing and performing in stage productions before turning their attention to the moving image. In addition to large-scaled community video projects for galleries, they wrote and directed 10 short films, including the award-winning *Who Killed Brown Owl* (2004) and *Joy* (2008). Their 35mm set of films *Civic Life*—including *Tiong Bahru* (2010)—have screened at various international film festivals. Their debut feature *Helen* premiered at Edinburgh International Film Festival and was nominated for an Evening Standard and Guardian First Film Award. *Mister John* is their second feature film.

Directors' Statement

While developing the very early drafts of *Mister John* we began an art project in Singapore, *Civic Life: Singapore*, which included the making of a short film in a Singaporean housing estate with local residents. Throughout the 18 months of working on this project we learned a lot about Singapore (confounding any expectations we had), and this greater appreciation of the richness of Singaporean

culture coupled with a strong working relationship with Fran Borgia (Akanga Film Asia) meant that setting Mister John in Singapore became something quite organic and inevitable.

The film begins with a death. However, rather than the morbidity of death being our focus we instead turn our attention to how death can have a profound and transformational impact on others, how it changes lives, how it forces us to cope - sometimes in unexpected, challenging and messy ways - how it creates emotional voids that can be filled with a strange longing.

The first thing that this death necessitates is for our central character, Gerry, to embark on a journey. Placing this Irish man in the context of South East Asia generally – and Singapore specifically – underscores a sense of being a long way from home.

Gerry is a man whose confidence has drained away, and with it any clear sense of his own identity. His life back home has fallen apart and his wife has been unfaithful. That Gerry must take this pain from one place and process it in an entirely different place puts him on a dangerous path. He is undergoing a personal crisis in an arguably (Irish) male way, which is to say, internally and alone by using denial, concealment and silence. In this way, one could then see Mister John as a story exploring a crisis of masculinity.

Ironically he loses his actual baggage when he arrives—a small but very significant detail in the film. Gerry tries to fill this emotional void with a borrowed identity, that of his brother's. What begins as a physical transformation mutates into something bigger and more psychological. In this way Mister John could be said to be a film about strategies for coping with depression. As Tim Lott writes, “[Depression] is the illness of identity, it is the illness of those who do not know where they fit, who lose faith in the myths they have painstakingly created for themselves”.

In the end, Gerry is an outsider, not just in relation to an unfamiliar culture and its people but also to his own family and even to himself. Gerry's doubts about his life, its direction and the lack of control he exercises over it will strike a chord with many adults who understand full well the mounting complexities of life. We feel this is what makes this film a compelling and timely story worth telling.

[Print Source](#)

Akanga Film Asia Pte Ltd

Sat, 19 Apr 2014, 3pm

Pascalina

Pam Miras, 2012, Philippines, 96 mins,

Tagalog with English subtitles, M18 (Sexual Scenes and Nudity)



International Premiere

Pascalina is a girl who just wants to get by. But she has to deal with work troubles, a nasty landlady, and an untrustworthy boyfriend, in addition to petty thieves, unpleasant officemates and bullying relatives. Life is always the same: one bad turn after another. One day she visits her dying aunt and hears about a curious bloodline legacy. Shortly after, strange, dark things start to happen. Shot entirely on a digital Harinezumi toy camera, the film roams through the dimly-lit corridors of Pascalina's life, showing in fuzzy detail the sordidness of her existence. Pascalina was awarded Best Film at the Cinema One Originals Festival in 2012.

Pam Miras is a director and screenwriter who graduated with a film degree from the University of the Philippines. She has been making short films for many years, including Reyna (1999), which was awarded best short feature at the 13th Gawad CCP Award and the 23rd Gawad Urian Award. Her film Blood Bank (2004) won best short film at the .MOV film festival and best screenplay at Cinemalaya (2005), and has been screened internationally. She is also a screenwriter for television and independent features. Pascalina is her first feature film.

Director's Statement

Pascalina to me is a film about the alienation experienced by the working-class single woman in a society that places a premium on image and meeting expectations. For those lacking in ambition or social skill, it is a merciless world. Those that can't keep up dissipate like faceless and voiceless

phantoms, or are pushed to unleash one's hidden monsters. Yes it is a monster story if it is to be seen in this light.

The film is also about the city and its spaces that feed the so-called inner monster—the daily commute, the ladies room as battlefield, both the high-rises and dingy cubicles where urban workers toil 9 to 5, as well as the bars and clubs and motels they go to after pay-day. The rough beauty of low-resolution video and its versatility in tight unusual angles is closer to the way I have experienced all this, and also how I wish to present the film.

This is the reason behind the decision to film in Digital Harinezumi. This point and shoot toy SD camera provides a dream-like quality to this reality that is unique from the common HD cameras currently used in many films. The decision to use this camera, and to adjust work flow, shots, lighting requirements and aspect ratio to it, is reflective of the main character in the story. It is an analogue girl's quiet fight in a digital world.

Finally, Pascalina is a tribute to the dead women whom I have loved and have been a great influence to me—friends and aunts and grandmothers. Their brief lives are the stories I will never tire of telling.

Print Source

Creative Programs, Inc / Cinema One Originals (Ronald Arguelles)

Sat, 19 Apr 2014, 5.30pm

Ice Poison

Midi Z, 2014, Taiwan, Myanmar, 95 mins,

Myanma Bhasa, Mandarin and Yunnan dialect with English subtitles, R21 (Drug Use)



Singapore Premiere

Barely able to survive on their meagre corn harvest, a young farmer and his father make their way down from the mountains to the village to seek help from their impoverished relatives who work in jade mines or on opium plantations. Now a transport driver, the son's first customer is Sanmei, who has returned to Myanmar from China to bury her grandfather. In an attempt to get out of her arranged marriage, she decides to stay to begin a new life in her own country. When she accepts a job as a drug runner, she persuades the young farmer to be her driver. With subtle humour and a minimalist style, the film quietly observes the couple's sense of alienation, job insecurities, and the temptations they face from the drugs that they are transporting.

Born in Myanmar, Midi Z's forefathers came from Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. At the age of 16, he went to Taiwan to study and graduated from the National Taiwan Institute of Technology, majoring in design. His work experience includes construction worker, restaurant cook, photographer, graphic designer, and commercial director, amongst others. His graduation work, Paloma Blanca, was selected by Busan, Copenhagen, Lyon, Spain Film Festivals; as well as the Golden Lion International Student Film Festival, Taiwan. In 2011, his debut feature, Return to Burma, was selected by Busan, Vancouver and Rotterdam film festivals. In 2012, his second feature, Poor Folk, also widely travelled the festival circuit. Last year, he was part of the omnibus feature, Taipei Factory, shown at Cannes Film Festival.

Director's Statement

Through the narrow gap, I watched the headlights sweep across the dark forest in Nay Pyi Taw.

In the dead of the night, we were rushing on the road, chasing after the elusive reality.
Dust and sand got into my bloodshot eyes.
I hesitated as I doubted if there was any use in rubbing it off.
The wild flowers had come out; only that they were buried under the yellow sand.
The old man, who died in the film, wished it was not just acting since he didn't want to wake up again.

A cow was slaughtered with its internal organs scattered on the floor.
A drug addict from hell showed up with a half-smile on his ashen face.

"You really don't remember me?"
You forced a cold smile on your face.
Your father said that an evil spell was cast on you.

Holding a new-born baby in her arms, a mother paced to and fro anxiously.
"Beat her to death?"
"My daughter, what an unfortunate soul you are!"
"You're only 15 years old!"
On the sugarcane plantations. In the corn fields.
"Your wedding is also the coming-of-age ceremony."
"What exists between you and him?" "You call it love?"

Nonchalantly, we watched.
We breathed with difficulty as our throats were choked by dust and sand.
The motorbike taxi drivers pushed and shoved one another when the bus arrived.
"Need a taxi?!" "Need a taxi?!" shouted the drivers.

We hid somewhere high up and pretended nothing was happening.
The morning fog blurred our view.
We saw neither the living nor the dead around us.
Like the stain on my father's army coat,
they stayed on us, refusing to leave.

This city was permeated with grievances.
They all said that happiness would be within their reach soon.
But the camera, which kept rolling all night, just captured
the ghosts that the ancient prayers failed to guide to the netherworld.
We were still rushing on the road.
In the dead of the night, the darkness stretched out endlessly in the forest in Nay Pyi Taw.
We were still rushing on the road...

[Print Source](#)

Flash Forward Entertainment (Patrick Mao Huang)

Sun 20 Apr 2014, 3pm

Denok and Gareng

Dwi Sujanti Nugraheni, 2012, Indonesia, 89 mins,
Bahasa Indonesia with English subtitles, (PG13) Some Mature Content



Singapore Premiere

At the age of 14, Denok ran away from home and for a while peddled drugs in Yogyakarta. She enjoys a brief time of marital bliss after getting together with Gareng, but they are soon saddled with a huge debt left to them by his runaway father. This documentary film follows the couple's struggles at their pig farming business and their efforts to support their own young family as well as their relatives. Despite the family's hardships, the film does not dwell on their poverty, but vibrantly fleshes out the lives and personalities of the subjects portrayed, depicting them as individuals leading tough lives defined by their own principles and philosophies. This film won Best Film at the Festival Film Indonesia (2013) and the Silver Hanoman and NETPAC awards at the Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival (2013).

Dwi Sujanti Nugraheni studied Political Science at Gadjah Mada University and worked for several local and international NGOs before turning to filmmaking. Since 2003, she has organised the Jogjakarta Documentary Film Festival and facilitates video workshops for adolescents and the local deaf community. She worked as an intern at Women Make Movies, New York City in 2009 and joined the IDFA Summer School, Amsterdam in 2012. Her first film Denok and Gareng was developed from the Cinema Capacity Building Programme, Indonesia—10 Years After Reformasi, organised by the Goethe Institut and The Jakarta Arts Council. Her new documentary, Our Daily Bread is in pre-production.

Director's Statement

Personally, I have learned a lot from Denok and Gareng's life, from the spirit to love, how they accept and face problems that continue to come their way, as well as their courage in laughing about themselves and their lives. Not many people have that courage. Daring to laugh at your self means to look at one's own life from a greater distance.

Print Source

credo:film (Liza Cramer)

Sun 20 Apr 2014, 5.30pm

Rekorder

Mikhail Red, 2013, Philippines, 90 mins,
Tagalog with English subtitles, M18 (Sexual Scene)



Singapore Premiere

Featuring a post-screening discussion with director Mikhail Red and producer Pamela Reyes

Maven, a tragic drifter with a hidden personal history, has a job recording movies currently showing in Manila cinemas for DVD pirates to sell. Leading an isolated, passive life, he finds solace only in the grainy images he has captured in his old camcorder. His routines are interrupted when he witnesses a senseless crime, and is forced to choose whether to participate in a society that has previously betrayed him. Showing the influence of his father, experimental filmmaker Raymond Red, Mikhail Red showcases a full range of formats in this film, revelling in the textures and shapes of high definition video, MiniDV, cinematic film, CCTV footage and more. Rekorder depicts a society that is unmoved by evil, and which treats as entertainment the recorded sights of violence.

Born in 1991, Mikhail Red started making short films at a young age, and his films *The Threshold* and *Kamera* were made and screened at international film festivals while he was still a teenager. Both these films were awarded at the Gawad Cultural Centre of the Philippines in the experimental categories. His short *Harang* was officially selected at the Cinemanila and Hong Kong International Film Festivals and won awards at Cinemalaya and Seoul International Youth Film Festival. *Rekorder* is his first feature film.

Director's Statement

A flicker fools the eye. Twenty-four still frames per second projected on screen create the illusion of motion. We do not see the reality in front of us; instead we fall for the illusion. Maven, the main character of the film, is a metaphor for that. He refuses to face the realities in front of him. He refuses to be a part of the world but instead sees the world around him through his lens, hiding and cowering behind his camera. He lives in the past, refusing to face the realities of the present. He is

trapped within his own memories, memories of his previous glorified career, of his wife, and his beloved daughter, all trapped within old tapes he repeatedly watches every night in isolation.

One fateful night he is pulled into the chaos of the world around him and he is forced to face reality. He is forced to deal with society. Rekorder is the story of his quest for self-redemption. It is a story inspired by an actual viral video of the lynching of a young boy that happened on the New Year's Eve of 2012. A story that touches on the evolution and bastardisation of cinema as it transitions into the digital realm; a story of viral media, movie piracy, and closed circuit television, a story of a world-weary man struggling to exist in modern society, with nothing but a device—a recorder.

[Print Source](#)

Pamela Reyes

Fri, 25 Apr 2014, 7.30pm

A River Changes Course

Kalyanee Mam, 2013, Cambodia, USA, 83 mins,
Khmer and Jarai with English subtitles, NC16 (Some Nudity)



Singapore Premiere

Featuring a post-screening discussion with Fatiy Sa, Head of Film Team, Documentation Center of Cambodia

Made over the course of two years, this film intimately captures the stories of three families living in different parts of Cambodia as they strive to break the cycle of subsistence living. Khieu Mok leaves her village for Phnom Penh to work in a garment factory, while her mother tends the rice fields alone. Sav Samourn, part of a minority tribe in northeast Rattanakiri, knows that her farm will be eventually be lost to commercial loggers. Teenager Sari Math, who fishes with his father, finds that the catch is dwindling and is eventually forced to seek work on a Chinese-owned plantation. In each story, children are a question mark. How will they make their future? This unsentimental, yet deeply felt documentary portrays a country at a crucial moment of industrialisation and change. This film won the World Cinema Grand Jury Prize at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival.

Kalyanee Mam was born in Battambang, Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge regime but fled with her family to refugee camps on the Thai-Cambodia border, and eventually immigrated to the United States in 1981. A graduate of Yale University and UCLA Law School, Mam has also worked as a legal consultant in Mozambique and Iraq. She was cinematographer and associate producer for the Oscar-winning documentary *Inside Job*, about the global financial crisis, and director and cinematographer for the short film *Between Earth and Sky*, about Iraqi refugee artists. *A River Changes Course* is her first feature documentary.

Director's Statement

My first trip to Cambodia was in 1998, only seventeen years after my family fled this war-torn country. I was shocked by much of what I saw—the poverty, desperation, and corruption that

plagued the country. But I was also deeply affected by the beauty that surrounded me—the beauty of the landscape, the people, the ancient culture, and the many smiles that greeted me during my journey.

Over a decade later, globalisation has transformed the Cambodian landscape. Dirt roads have been replaced with highways and high-rise department stores clog the city. The small streets of Phnom Penh bulge with traffic, the oversized SUVs incongruent with the narrow boulevards, its factories overfilled with young women making jeans and shirts for designer labels in the United States.

In the global race for low-wage workers and natural resources, Cambodia has transformed its ancient agrarian culture to compete for international investment. I made this film to document the human cost of this transformation. And to put a human face on the beautiful traditional livelihoods that may soon be lost to the world forever.

With our camera equipment and supplies, Cambodian Producer, Ratanak Leng and I travelled to three distinct parts of Cambodia—to the remote jungles of Rattanakiri in the Northeast, the floating villages of Kampong Chhnang in Central Cambodia, and the countryside of Svay Rieng just outside the capital city of Phnom Penh, to live with and document the lives of three young Cambodians and their families.

[Print Source](#)

Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-CAM)

Sat, 26 Apr 2014, 3pm

The Bit Player

Jeffrey Jeturian, 2013, Philippines, 111 mins,

Tagalog with English subtitles, PG



Singapore Premiere

The Philippine film and television industry is satirised in veteran filmmaker Jeffrey Jeturian's funny yet forlorn film. Starring Vilma Santos, the grand dame of Philippine cinema, the film follows the trials of single mother Loida, who is trying to put her daughter through school while working in the most thankless position in the movie business: an extra. Through various indignities in the course of a long day, Loida and her friends persevere, hoping for that big break of a speaking role, which would increase their pay and possibly launch them as a bit player. While depicting the excesses and ludicrousness of TV work, the film is buoyed by Santos' courageous performance and Jeturian's affection for his characters' dreams. This film won six awards at the Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival.

Veteran filmmaker Jeffrey Jeturian has, in his long and illustrious career, worked as production assistant, script supervisor, production designer, television director, and as last but not least, as film director. His features include *Enter Love* (1998), *Fetch a Pail of Water* (2000), *Larger Than Life* (2001), *The Bet Collector* (2006) and *Trespassers* (2011). His films have been shown internationally and been given numerous prizes, including awards at the Cinemanila and Cinemalaya Festivals, Cinefan, Tokyo International Film Festival, Moscow International Film Festival, and various NETPAC and FIPRESCI awards. *Trespassers* was shown at the 2nd Southeast Asian Film Festival, 2012.

Director's Statement

In one of the scenes in Ekstra, Loida, the lead character extolls the contributions and value of the extras (or bit players) in a film's mis-en-scene. "What would a restaurant look like without the customers or waiters, or a mass without the churchgoers?", says she. Indeed, what would a film (that isn't about Adam and Eve) look like without the bit players? Sadly though, while there's so much truth to Loida's claim, it is not the viewpoint shared by the majority of the TV and film industry workers who put bit players at the lowest rung of the industry's workforce hierarchy, and treat them correspondingly. My film Ekstra aims to put a human and humane face to one of the most oppressed and exploited sectors of the entertainment industry, collectively known as extras.

Print Source

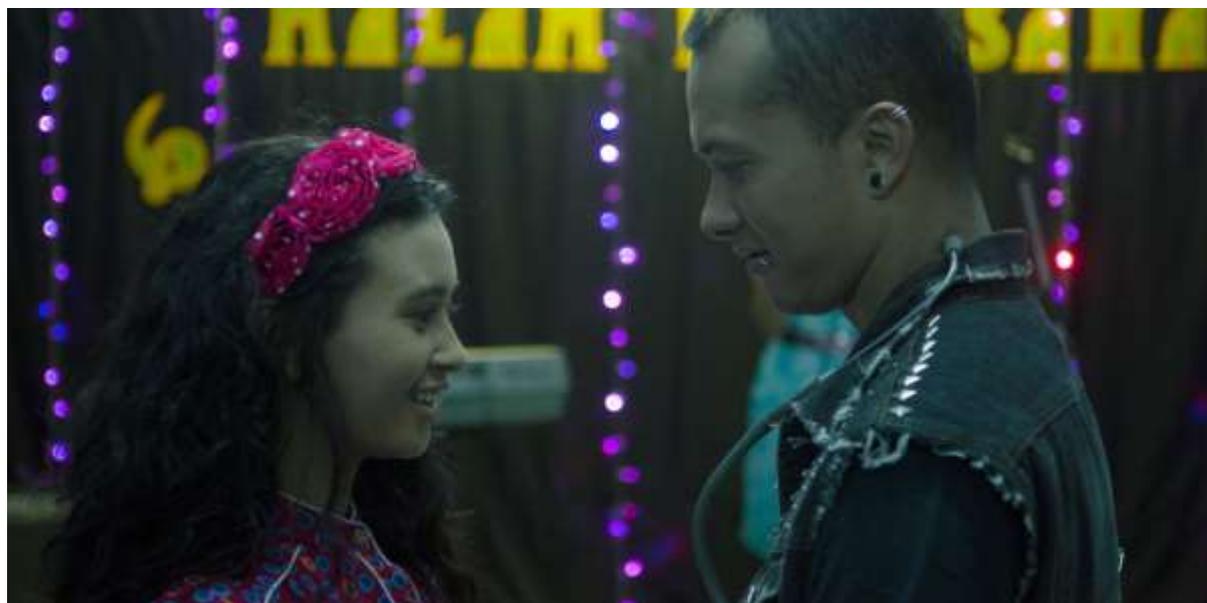
Quantum Films (Josabeth V. Alonso)

Sat, 26 Apr 2014, 5.30pm

What They Don't Talk About When They Talk About Love

Mouly Surya, 2013, Indonesia, 104 mins,

Bahasa Indonesian with English subtitles, M18 (Sexual Scene)



Singapore Premiere

20 year old Fitri is a high school student at a school for the visually impaired. She falls in love with a Ghost Doctor who resides at the school's swimming pool. Unbeknownst to her, the doctor is food seller Edo, who has a special condition of his own, and feels the same way about her. Meanwhile, Fitri's classmate Diana is balancing her love for ballet and her concerns about teetering on the cusp of puberty. She likes Andhika, a new student in the school who used to love fast rides on his motorbike. Combining music, movement and cinematic composition, this film portrays the pangs, yearnings and fulfilments of young love. The teenage characters transcend their lack of sight and other affected bodily senses with their own forms of resilience and affection. This film won the NETPAC Award at the Rotterdam International Film Festival (2013) and was an audience hit when in competition for World Cinema at the Sundance Film Festival (2013).

Mouly Surya is a screenwriter and director. She has a Masters in Film and Television from Bond University in Queensland, and teaches directing at Binus International Film School in Jakarta. Her first feature Fiksi (2008) premiered at Busan in 2008 and was awarded Best Director at the Jakarta International Film Festival, Special Mention at Jogja Netpac Asian Film Festival as well as Best Picture, Best Directing, and Best Original Screenplay at Film Festival Indonesia. Her latest film What We Don't Talk About When We Talk About Love was the first Indonesian feature to compete at the World Cinema Competition in the Sundance Film Festival.

Director's Statement

There are numerous films taking pity on people with disabilities. While those films are tearjerkers, there should be no tears shed in this particular movie. The story was born when I came across a visually impaired relative of mine who was updating her status on Facebook with her mobile phone. They might not have complete senses, but they might be luckier. They can see beyond the superficial things. They don't judge a book by its cover. They fall in love through touch and moments, instead of

beauty or words. They feel love, just like what it is supposed to be. But none of us can see neither fate, nor love, something we will always have in common.

The film is set in the Special School for the Visually Impaired where you can hear music at every single corner, in every single step.

Print Source

m-appeal (Katja Lenarcic)

Sun, 27 Apr 2014, 3pm

War is a Tender Thing

Adjani Arumpac, 2013, Philippines, 51 mins,

Tagalog, Ilocano and Visayan with English subtitles, PG13 (Some Mature Content)



Singapore Premiere

Featuring a post-screening discussion with director Adjani Arumpac.

This film explores the untold stories of Mindanao in the Philippines. In the 1930s, a land resettlement project led to a massive migration within the country, creating a state-sponsored experiment in forced integration. Without legal documents, the Philippines government gave ancestral Muslim and indigenous peoples' lands to Christian settlers. The result was a war that has raged on until now, almost half a century later. Through her family's memories of struggle, Arumpac reveals the narrative of war, showing how her Christian and Muslim great-grandfathers each tried to protect their families in the disputed lands, and how her parents' own union was indirectly born of this intra-migration. This film was awarded Special Mention at the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival (2013).

Adjani Arumpac is a writer and filmmaker from Mindanao, Philippines presently based in Quezon City, Metro Manila. A graduate in Film and Audio Visual Communications from the University of the Philippines, her films include *Walai* (2006), a full-length documentary film about Muslim women in Mindanao; *Nanay Mameng*, (2012) a documentary film on the life of Carmen Deunida, an octogenarian political leader beloved by the urban poor in the Philippines; and *War is A Tender Thing* (2013).

Director's Statement

I never met Modesto and Macaurog. It's not surprising as Modesto is the grandfather of my maternal grandmother and Macaurog is the father of my paternal grandfather. That our ancestors are essentially strangers to us is quite perplexing. The familial is not necessarily familiar. But how they weigh in, more so in absence.

In my documentary film, *War is a Tender Thing*, I reveal the narrative of a very long war in the Philippines through my family's memories of struggle. The battlefield is the place where I grew up—the "Land of Promise" or Mindanao, Philippines. Digging deep into the history of integration of cultures brought together by a state-sponsored land resettlement project in the 1930s, I arrive at ground zero—the massive migration within the country wherein ancestral Muslim and indigenous peoples' lands were given by the Philippine government to Christian settlers from the capital.

The result was a war among the people that has raged on until now, almost half a century later. The ease with which fond memory flows belies its context. Modesto, a Christian; and Macaurog, a Muslim, were both good husbands, fathers and grandfathers. For their family, they were gentle providers as well as fierce protectors. But their very survival makes up for the endless war in that land they both call home. My forefathers were pawns in a vicious sport by the colonial and, now, neocolonial powers. Modesto had the courage to move and settle. Macaurog had the strength to stay. Theirs is a fight for respite. But this narrative has been buried under decades of mainstream media misrepresentation as a war drenched only and only in violence and blood, wherein the men and women are rendered only as statistics—faceless and nameless.

Modesto's great granddaughter is my mother. Macaurog's grandson is my father. I am Muslim. I am Christian. How does one retell the story of a war so firmly entrenched in the quotidian it has become the norm? How does one redefine a war through one's kin, one's skin? One begins with what one holds dearest. I begin at home.

[Print Source](#)

Adjani Arumpac

Sun, 27 Apr 2014, 5.30pm

The Journey of the Stars into the Dark Night

Arnel Mardoquio, 2012, Philippines, 119 mins,

Tagalog and Maguindanaon dialect with English subtitles, R21 (Some Homosexual Content)



Singapore Premiere

Featuring a post-screening discussion with director Arnel Mardoquio.

Two women, both born into conflict, attempt to leave behind their life as rebels in order to protect a young boy whose parents have been killed in a gun battle. To do so, they undertake a journey through the war-torn region of Jolo, avoiding the dangers of both the U.S. Army as well as their own gun-toting former comrades. Mardoquio paints a vivid portrait of life during wartime, presenting the many facets and intricacies of the Bangsamoro struggle in Mindanao. This intensely quiet work subtly suggests that the stage of action is not limited by the frame of the film. Stars won Best Film at the Gawad Urian National Film Awards, Philippines (2013), the Special Jury Prize at the Cinemanila International Film Festival (2012) and the Special Jury Prize at the Cinema One Originals Film Festival (2012).

Filmmaker Arnel Mardoquio was born in Davao City, Mindanao, Philippines. His stories mirror the aspirations and uniqueness of the Mindanaoan people and culture, and emerge from his constant travels around Mindanao, as his family re-located around the region since he was 10 years old. He is a grand prize Palanca Awardee (a literary award and the Philippines' equivalent to the Pulitzer Prize) and a Gawad Urian Best Director and Best Screenplay nominee for his films *Earth's Whisper* (2008) and *Hospital Boat* (2009). His film *Sheika* (2011) won Best Screenplay, Best Actress and Best Editing at the 34th Gawad Urian Awards.

Director's Statement

My recurring childhood dreams served as a leitmotif, and the principal building blocks for this film. The chase scenes that gradually transform into trekking, hiking and traversing the long and winding rivers, are images that have haunted my dreams as a child. Many times, while having these dreams, I struggled to have full control of the images... images that have led me, later in life, to have one exciting adventure after another.

I was born and raised in Mindanao, and have lived here for most of my life. I have witnessed first-hand these heart-rending images of war, turmoil and conflict. Small armed conflicts often erupted near my home, and I have heard countless stories of families fleeing their homes, and entire villages relocating because the threat of war became too real for them.

The creative process that I underwent in the making of this film became a journey of self-discovery for me as well. I must express my gratitude to Sherad Sanchez, who served as my creative mentor for this film project, and who generously gave his time, effort and passion in reading, analysing and arguing over the discourses embodied in my screenplay. He has my eternal gratitude.

Print Source

Creative Programs, Inc / Cinema One Originals (Ronald Arguelles)

Fri, 2 May 2014, 7.30pm
Shakespeare Must Die
Ing K, 2012, Thailand, 172 mins,
Thai with Shakespearean subtitles, NC16 (Mature Content)



Singapore Premiere

Featuring a post-screening discussion with director Ing K

This Shakespearean horror movie takes place in two parallel worlds: In the “outside world”, the superstitious, megalomaniacal dictator Mekhdeth grieves for his mad, dead wife even as a mass uprising rages against him. Elsewhere, a theatre group stages a production of Macbeth, translated directly from Shakespeare’s 1606 play. Events from the “inside” world of the stage tell the classic story of ambitious general Macbeth, who, prompted by the prophecies of witches and aided by his ruthless wife, kills the king to crown himself. The black magic witches, vengeful ghost and murders of Shakespeare’s play intercut with the disintegrations of Mekhdeth and his wife’s corrupt lives, until the two worlds collide in a catastrophic moment when the players must pay for staging such a play in such a society. This film was awarded the NETPAC Award and the Best Feature Film in Fiction at the Tripoli International Film Festival.

Born and bred in Thailand, Ing Kanjanavanit first encountered Macbeth as a 15 year old studying in England. In 1980 she dropped out of an English art school to volunteer in a UN refugee camp on the Thai-Cambodian border, eventually becoming an investigative journalist and writer. As a filmmaker she has made five documentaries: Thailand for Sale; Green Menace: The Untold Story of Golf; Casino Cambodia; Citizen Juling; Censor Must Die, and two narrative features: My Teacher Eats Biscuits and Shakespeare Must Die, both of which are banned by the Thai government censors. Citizen Juling was the first documentary to win Best Picture at the Thai Kom Chad Luek Awards, and has been screened to acclaim at the Berlin and Toronto International Film Festivals.

Director's Statement

My aim was to make an emotionally and spiritually authentic Macbeth that brings the joys of Shakespeare to Thai people who must at the same time be able to relate to it. That's why I changed Norway, England and Scotland to mythic names from the realm of poetry and fantasy like Shangri-la, Atlantis and Xanadu, and use Thai folk opera tradition. (I love 'likay', or Thai folk opera. They're travelling theatre groups equipped with not much more than two canvas backdrops, usually one of a throne room and one of a forest, and fantastical sequin-encrusted costumes, including—since the 19th century—Western ballgowns and Napoleonic coats. Another major source of inspiration was TV melodrama: Thai soap operas and Mexican telenovelas gave the film its look and vibe (though with Caravaggio colours and lighting).

Like many people, I think Macbeth is the archetype of the horror genre. On the surface there are witches, dark prophecies, hallucinations, apparitions and the slaughter of innocents; then beneath that exotic manifestation we have the real horrors of spiritual corruption, guilt, insanity and torment, with the ultimate horror being of course the loss of his "eternal jewel". It is not a genre that's taken seriously because it is so enjoyable.

Thailand, or Siam, is nearly unique historically in that it was never colonised by Western empires. Most Thai people do not speak a second language. Shakespeare is heard of as a "high-end brand", like Gucci or Chanel. That's why it was so exciting to attempt such a challenge, which in the most ideal conditions would be almost impossible elsewhere, to perform Shakespeare with actors who would speak every word "as if for the first time".

While I was astonished that it took me only four months of total immersion to translate Macbeth into Thai, I soon realised it was because there is something innately universal, quintessential, about his music and rhythm. Like the Hindu mystics (and the bible), I perceive the physical universe as the manifestation of sound: "OM"; "the music of the spheres"; "In the beginning was the word." That's why I worked so hard to keep Shakespeare's sound.

Shakespeare Must Die is the first and so far only Thai cinematic adaptation of Shakespeare. The appeal of Macbeth to the Thai public is obvious. We are living through Shakespearean times and the world beyond our borders does not know it. High drama in the streets, in the courts, in parliament, everywhere we go. Rage and hatred, operatic villainy, extreme fear and violence, spindoctors staging obscene plays within the play, piling lies upon lies, you name it. The play also contains, in the so-called "English scene", a discussion on the divine right of kings, of leaders and rulers of men, which is the discussion we desperately need now.

As for the title, Shakespeare must die because true artists (as represented by Shakespeare), by their very existence, threaten tyranny's sense of security by shaking their flimsy constructs and versions of reality; by tyrants I mean those who would rule the world with fear and lies.

Adapted with permission from an interview between Ing K and Colleen Kennedy, first published at the MIT Global Shakespeares and The Shakespeare Standard. Kennedy is a PhD candidate in English at the Ohio State University.

Print Source

Manit Sriwanichpoom

Sat, 3 May 2014, 5.30pm

Censor Must Die

Ing K, 2013, Thailand, 150 mins,

Thai with English subtitles, PG13 (Some Mature Content)



International Premiere

Featuring a post-screening discussion with director Ing K

This film is a documentary of Ing K and Manit Sriwanichpoom's fight to screen their Macbeth adaptation, *Shakespeare Must Die*, the second film to be banned under Thailand's 2008 Film Act. A revision of 1930s laws with a new age-based ratings system, the Act nonetheless retained the authorities' power to ban a film outright. As Manit moves through the byzantine corridors of power and bureaucracy, from the Ministry of Culture to the Senate and the Human Rights Commission, he is continually filmed by Ing's camera. Their struggles are frustrating, astonishing and sometimes heartbreaking, but at the heart of this very serious film is a humorous awareness of the farcical nature of fear, and a testimony to the enduring power of art and culture.

Born and bred in Thailand, Ing Kanjanavanit first encountered *Macbeth* as a 15 year old studying in England. In 1980 she dropped out of an English art school to volunteer in a UN refugee camp on the Thai-Cambodian border, eventually becoming an investigative journalist and writer. As a filmmaker she has made five documentaries: *Thailand for Sale*; *Green Menace: The Untold Story of Golf*; *Casino Cambodia*; *Citizen Juling*; *Censor Must Die*, and two narrative features: *My Teacher Eats Biscuits* and *Shakespeare Must Die*, both of which are banned by the Thai government censors. *Citizen Juling* was the first documentary to win Best Picture at the Thai Kom Chad Luek Awards, and has been screened to acclaim at the Berlin and Toronto International Film Festivals.

Manit Sriwanichpoom is one of Thailand's leading photographic artists and has exhibited worldwide, including in the Venice Biennale, Gwangju Biennale (Korea), Bienal de Sao Paulo (Brazil), the Hayward Gallery (UK) and the International Photography Biennale (Mexico). His solo exhibitions have been held at Yokohama Museum of Art, the Singapore Art Museum and galleries in Beijing and Melbourne. He was the 2007 recipient of Japan's prestigious Higashikawa Overseas Photographer

Award. Manit is represented in the Singapore Art Museum, The Queensland Art Gallery, and the KOC Foundation, Istanbul, among others. He lives and works in Bangkok.

Director's Statement

I didn't consciously set out to make this documentary. Truly, it was not until the blind old man walked into my frame at the Administrative Court that I knew that we had shot another film, *Censor Must Die*, the spawn of our banned Thai *Macbeth*, *Shakespeare Must Die*.

Normally a filmmaker only has to see the Thai censors once to get a rating. When my producer, Manit Sriwanichpoom, came back twice empty-handed as the censors continued to defer a ruling on *Shakespeare Must Die*, I knew that something extraordinary was unfolding in the midst of unusually intense political pressure.

Partly for future legal protection, I decided to follow him with a camera as he went through the ordeal. Besides, I couldn't in all conscience continue to let him face them alone; so long as I could view the experience through the camera at a remove, I could stay calm. But of course this could not last. As the film's director, it was inevitable that I'd get sucked into the story in the end. In the edit I was tempted to tame it and remove the rawness of my pain, but then the audience wouldn't really know how very hard it is, how heartbreaking, to slave for years with love and perseverance only to be banned and condemned.

As one of the most banned people in the world, at work in a divided country under a regime that employs the best Western media and political lobbyists that money can buy, I'm uniquely qualified to be your tour guide to this artist's circle of hell. As a filmmaker I have been banned twice officially (*My Teacher Eats Biscuits* in 1998 and *Shakespeare Must Die* in 2012) and once unofficially. This last applies to *Censor Must Die*. Despite their own official conclusion citing a legal clause governing news reportage that the film is exempted from the censorship process "because it has been made from events that really happened," the censors have threatened to sue any theatre that releases the film to the public. In addition, both films have been subjected to a smear campaign by the aforementioned international lobbyists who strive to paint them as "royalist propaganda" and even "Ku Klux Klan hate speech"! The films themselves are proof of my truthful intentions. But this defense was denied me since their efforts have ensured that the films would not be seen. Very big thanks as well as deep respect are due, therefore, to the independent, courageous people behind the Southeast Asian Film Festival, who have made it possible at last for me to say: see the films for yourself.

Print Source

Manit Sriwanichpoom

Sun, 4 May 2014, 1.30pm

The Act of Killing (Director's Cut)

**Directed by Joshua Oppenheimer, co-directed by Christine Cynn and Anonymous, 2012,
Denmark, United Kingdom, Norway, 159 mins,
Bahasa Indonesia with English subtitles, NC16 (Mature Theme)**



Asian Premiere

What happens when perpetrators of crimes against humanity remain national heroes in their country? When the government of Indonesia was overthrown by the military in 1965, erstwhile small-time gangsters and cinema ticket scalpers like Anwar Congo and his friends were promoted to death squad leaders. In less than a year, they helped the army kill more than one million alleged communists, ethnic Chinese and intellectuals. In their exploration of mankind's capacity for violence, the directors invited these men to recreate the killings in form of the kinds of films they watched during their days of violence, including gangster flicks, westerns and musicals. As they play themselves as well as their victims, the film sets become spaces to challenge them about their acts of killing, presenting tense moments in which some realise that the deaths were wrong, while others cling to these crimes as the basis for their current power. For Anwar, an unexpected emotional journey ensues. This film won the BAFTA, Asia Pacific Screen Award and European Film Award in the categories of Best Documentary Film.

Joshua Oppenheimer has worked for over a decade with militias, death squads and their victims to explore the relationship between political violence and the public imagination. Educated at Harvard and Central St Martins, London, his award-winning films include *The Globalisation Tapes* (2003, co-directed with Christine Cynn), *The Entire History of the Louisiana Purchase* (1998, Gold Hugo, Chicago Film Festival, Telluride Film Festival), *These Places We've Learned to Call Home* (1996, Gold Spire, San Francisco Film Festival) and numerous shorts. Oppenheimer is Senior Researcher on the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council's Genocide and Genre project and has published on these themes.

Christine Cynn has been directing documentary and experimental films for the past 14 years. Educated at Harvard and the recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship to Uganda, she co-directed *The Globalisation Tapes* (2003) with Joshua Oppenheimer. She has written screenplays for FilmFour and was a founding member of the Vision Machine Film Project in London. She was a researcher on the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council's Genocide and Genre project. Cynn is currently developing a project, *Science Future*, combining documentary with fiction, about how scientists imagine the future.

Anonymous (Co-Director and many others): Due to the nature of this film—its subject matter, production methods and the context in which it has been made—it has become necessary to credit numerous Indonesian partners and collaborators, working across all aspects of the film (from Co-Direction and Cinematography to Sound Recording, Production Management, Make Up, Music, Choreography and Technical Support) as Anonymous. They are credited here to recognise their commitment to the project and tireless courage in bringing the stories the film tells to a wider audience.

Director's Statement by Joshua Oppenheimer

Unlike in Rwanda, South Africa or Germany, in Indonesia there have been no truth and reconciliation commissions, no trials, no memorials for victims. Instead, ever since committing their atrocities, the perpetrators and their protégés have run the country, insisting they be honoured as national heroes by a docile (and often terrified) public. But is this situation really so exceptional? At home (in the USA), the champions of torture, disappearance, and indefinite detention were in the highest positions of political power and, at the same time, busily tending to their legacy as the heroic saviours of western civilisation. And that Anwar and his friends so admired American movies, American music, American clothing—all of this made the echoes more difficult to ignore, transforming what I was filming into a nightmarish allegory.

When I began developing *The Act of Killing* in 2005, I had already been filming for three years with survivors of the 1965-66 massacres. Our efforts to record the survivors' experiences—never before expressed publicly—took place in the shadow of their torturers, as well as the executioners who murdered their relatives—men who, like Anwar Congo, would boast about what they did.

Ironically, we faced the greatest danger when filming survivors. We'd encounter obstacle after obstacle. For instance, we were interrupted by police seeking to arrest us. Or the village mayor would arrive with a military escort to tell us we didn't have permission to film. Not only did we feel unsafe filming the survivors, we worried for their safety.

But the killers were more than willing to help and, when we filmed them boastfully describing their crimes against humanity, we met no resistance whatsoever. All doors were open. Local police would offer to escort us to sites of mass killing, saluting or engaging the killers in jocular banter, depending on their relationship and the killer's rank.

Within Indonesia more generally, such openness about the killings might be exceptional. But in North Sumatra, it is standard operating procedure. For there, the army recruited its death squads from the ranks of gangsters. Gangsters' power derives from being feared, and so the thugs ruling North Sumatra have trumpeted their role in the genocide ever since, framing it as heroic struggle, while all the time taking care to include grisly details that inspire a constant and undiminished disquiet, unease, even terror of possible recurrence.

In this, I saw an opportunity: if the perpetrators in North Sumatra were given the means to dramatise their memories of genocide in whatever ways they wished, they would probably seek to glorify it further, to transform it into a “beautiful family movie” (as Anwar puts it) whose kaleidoscopic use of genres would reflect their multiple, conflicting emotions about their “glorious past”. I anticipated that the outcomes from this process would serve as an exposé, even to Indonesians themselves, of just how deep the impunity and lack of resolution in their country remains.

I realised that the filmmaking process would answer many questions about the nature of such a regime—questions that may seem secondary to what they did, but in fact are inseparable from it. For instance, how do Anwar and his friends really think people see them? How do they want to be seen? How do they see themselves? How do they see their victims? How does the way they think they will be seen by others reveal what they imagine about the world they live in, the culture they have built? The filmmaking method we used in *The Act of Killing* was developed to answer these questions. It is best seen as an investigative technique, refined to help us understand not only what we see, but also how we see, and how we imagine. These are questions of critical importance to understanding the imaginative procedures by which human beings persecute each other, and how we then go on to build (and live in) societies founded on systemic and enduring violence.

This is not, finally, a story only about Indonesia. It is a story about us all.

[Print Source](#)

Singapore: Indie Entertainment Company (Helen Yong)

Sun, 4 May 2014, 5.30pm
Sayang Disayang
Sanif Olek, 2013, Singapore, 70 mins,
Malay with English subtitles, PG



Singapore Premiere

Featuring a post-screening discussion with director Sanif Olek.

Live-in nurse Murni works for Pak Harun, a lonely and bitter elderly man who continually harangues his caregiver. Murni tries to cook a Sambal Goreng dish that is exactly like the one cooked by Harun's late wife but success seems to elude her. Despite this, she sings all day in the kitchen, which serves only to irritate Pak Harun further. What is the elusive ingredient that can unlock the tension between Murni and Pak Harun, remedy these damaged hearts and help them live in harmony? This film was awarded Special Jury Prize for Best Asian Film at the 1st SalaMindanaw International Film Festival, Philippines (2013).

Sanif Olek graduated from Film and Media Studies at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, and in Media and Communications at Murdoch University in Perth, Australia. Since 1996, he has been awarded multiple Best Director, Best Drama Series, Best Magazine Series awards for his television work. His short films have also won prizes internationally and been showcased at festivals and arts institutions at museums. In 2011, he received the Bawean Teladan (Model Bawean) award presented by the Singapore Bawean Association. He is head consultant at reeljuice, a collaborative creative agency promoting storytelling as a means to enlighten the human condition. *Sayang Disayang* is his debut feature film.

Director's Statement

I want to tell a story affecting all Singaporeans and the Southeast Asian region, especially of the elderly and the domestic caregivers. It is also to celebrate the various ethnicities that define the Nusantara (Malay Archipelago) in Southeast Asia—we may share the same food and evergreen songs, but our perceptions to one another differ because of the language, geography and (cultural and national) politics.

In developing the theme for *Sayang Disayang*, I used the Sambal Goreng. Sambal Goreng is a signature Javanese dish made of the chilli condiment, or sambal and traditionally is stir-fried, or goring, with livers and gizzards. Like many dishes of the Nusantara, flavour is achieved by the individual's preference, and the amount of ingredients is never exact, but usually estimated and simply thrown in. Growing up, I watched a lot of Malay films by legendary filmmakers such as P. Ramlee, Hussein Haniff and M. Amin whose socially-aware films had influences from classic Bollywood films, where music and dance are used as segues in their narrative. In *Sayang Disayang*, I wanted to pay homage to these film genres, but with a contemporary twist.

Print Source

Sanif Olek

Photos by han