

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DISCOVER THE MAGIC OF CINEMA AT THE  
29<sup>TH</sup> SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

*SGIFF 2018 continues to celebrate Asian storytellers, nurture new generations of filmmakers, and propel their works to international attention*

**Singapore, 4 October 2018 – Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF)** continues its effort to nurture and champion talent in filmmaking in Asia at the 29<sup>th</sup> SGIFF here, with the introduction of a new series – Moonlight Cinema. A first this year, SGIFF partners with Gardens by the Bay to host two free outdoor screenings as part of the celebration of storytelling through cinema. The inaugural Moonlight Cinema series begins with *My Girl* (USA, 1991) and *My Girl* (Thailand, 2003) – two coming-of-age love stories set in the time of childhood.



*Winner of Locarno Film Festival's top prize – the Golden Leopard, and Golden Star award in the Feature Narrative competition at El Gouna Film Festival, Egypt; A Land Imagined by Singaporean filmmaker, Yeo Siew Hua, makes its local premiere in competition at the 29<sup>th</sup> SGIFF, stars local veteran actor Peter Yu*

"We're committed to an inclusive programme that is designed to allow cinema to be discovered by audiences of all ages. The Moonlight Cinema series is a new addition this year and serving as a platform for the Festival to encourage local audiences to expand their horizon to different types of cinema. We would love for the younger audiences to learn about the classic Thai box-office hit such as *My Girl (Fan Chan)* as way of getting to know more about Southeast Asian films," says **Wahyuni Hadi, Executive Director, Singapore International Film Festival.**

Among the key highlights at the 29<sup>th</sup> SGIFF, winner of Locarno Film Festival's top prize – the Golden Leopard, *A Land Imagined* by Singaporean filmmaker, Yeo Siew Hua, will make its local premiere in competition at the Festival this year. The film is Yeo's sophomore feature after his debut in 2009's *In the House of Straw*, and stars local veteran actor Peter Yu in his debut feature film role. The film also garnered the top Golden Star award in the Feature Narrative competition at the recent El Gouna Film Festival in Egypt. The Mandarin thriller tells the tale about the disappearance of a migrant Chinese construction worker at a Singapore land reclamation site.

"The Singapore International Film Festival has been the biggest part of my own film education and being a part of it now means a lot to me. Having travelled with my film to festivals all over the world, I'm very proud to finally present it in Singapore where it's meant to be seen", says **Yeo Siew Hua, Director, *A Land Imagined***.



*Rotterdam 2018 NETPAC Award winner, Nervous Translation by Shireen Sino*

In line with Singapore Media Festival's (SMF) Country of Focus initiative this year, the Philippines will be in the limelight at the 29<sup>th</sup> SGIFF with a selection of Filipino films and filmmakers featured across this year's line-up. Fresh off a New Wave that began in the 2000s, Philippine cinema has since matured into a thriving industry with rich stories and diverse talents. It is a special milestone for the country this year as it celebrates 100 Years of Philippine Cinema.

"This monumental cinematic achievement in the Philippines will be encouraging to the upcoming generations of filmmakers to tell a diversity of stories, showcasing their voice and exchanging their knowledge," says **Pimpaka Towira, Programme Director, Singapore International Film Festival**.

Filipino artist and filmmaker, Shireen Seno, joins the panel of Southeast Asian Short Film Competition Jury at SGIFF this year, and will be showcasing her second feature, *Nervous Translation*, that is based on her personal experiences growing up as a reluctant child of the Philippine diaspora. Set against the backdrop of Filipino society in the years just after the People Power Revolution in late 1980s, *Nervous Translation* captures the uncertainty and curiosity of childhood in a strikingly unique way. The film premiered at the International Film Festival Rotterdam and won the Rotterdam 2018 NETPAC award for best Asian film.

The line-up of key films from the Philippines to be showcased at SGIFF 2018 also include short films in competition – *Manila is Full of Men Named Boy* by Andrew Stephen Lee, *The Imminent Immanent* by Carlo Francisco Manatad, *Please Stop Talking* by Josef Gacutan, and *Judgement* by Raymund Ribay Gutierrez. Additionally, the three Filipino features that will be featured in the Asian Vision line-up this year, which aims to present new works by both renowned auteurs and future visionaries of Asian Cinema, are *The Ashes and Ghosts of Tayug 1931* by Christopher Gozum, *Season of the Devil* by Lav Diaz, and *Nervous Translation* by Shireen Seno. Meanwhile, Mikhail Red's *Eerie* will make its world premiere at the midnight section – Midnight Mayhem that lets audiences discover cult films of the Festival circuit with some genre-bending thrills.

The 29<sup>th</sup> SGIFF which runs from 28 November to 9 December 2018, will be hosted across multiple Festival venues, including Capitol Theatre, National Museum of Singapore, National Gallery Singapore, The Cathay, Filmgarde Bugis+, Objectifs, and \*SCAPE.

SGIFF is an event of the Singapore Media Festival (SMF), hosted by Info-communications Media Development Authority of Singapore (IMDA). SGIFF 2018's Official Sponsors include Official Red Carpet Venue, Capitol Theatre; Official Hotels, Fairmont Singapore and Swissôtel The Stamford Singapore; Official Automobile, BMW; and Official Airline, Singapore Airlines.

The full Festival line-up and ticketing details will be announced in end October 2018.

For more information, please visit [www.sgiff.com](http://www.sgiff.com).

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#SGIFF2018 #LetTheMagicIn

Please refer to appended annexes for more information.

**Annex A:** About Moonlight Cinema: *My Girl* (USA, 1991) and *My Girl* (Thailand, 2003)

**Annex B:** About *A Land Imagined* (Yeo Siew Hua)

**Annex C:** About Spotlight on Philippine Cinema

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## ABOUT THE SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



Founded in 1987, the Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) is the largest and longest-running film event in Singapore. It has become an iconic event in the local arts calendar that is widely attended by international film critics; and known for its dynamic programming and focus on ground-breaking Asian cinema for Singapore and the region. Committed to nurturing and championing local and regional talent, its competition component, the Silver Screen Awards, brings together emerging filmmakers from Asia and Southeast Asia while paying tribute to acclaimed cinema legends.

With its mentorship programmes, masterclasses and dialogues with attending filmmakers, the Festival also serves as a catalyst for igniting public interest, artistic dialogue, and cultural exchanges in the art of filmmaking. The SGIFF is organised by the Singapore International Film Festival Ltd, a non-profit organisation with Institution of Public Character (IPC) status.

The 29<sup>th</sup> Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) will be held in Singapore from 28 November 2018 – 9 December 2018.

For more information, please visit [www.sgiff.com](http://www.sgiff.com). Follow us on Instagram [@SGIFFest](https://www.instagram.com/SGIFFest) and on Facebook [@sginternationalfilmfestival](https://www.facebook.com/sginternationalfilmfestival).

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**Annex A: About Moonlight Cinema: *My Girl* (USA, 1991) and *My Girl* (Thailand, 2003)**

**MY GIRL**

**Screening on Friday, 26 October 2018, 9.00pm**

A pre-teen hypochondriac with an unusual fascination with death navigates the perils of growing up.

USA / 1991 / 102MIN / ENGLISH

Vada is the only child of a widower, Harry, who operates the funeral parlour in their town. At 11, she spends her days hanging out with her best friend, Thomas, and caring for her Alzheimer's-stricken grandmother, whose affliction rubs off onto young Vada as a morbid obsession with death and sporadic bouts of hypochondria. Wrecked with guilt over her involvement in the death of her mother, Vada's life changes after the appearance of a new woman, Shelly, who starts working for her father.

*My Girl* features career-best performances from young co-stars Anna Chlumsky, now known for TV's *Veep*, and Macaulay Culkin, fresh off his *Home Alone* star turn. A box-office success during its first release, the film is a mature treatment of grief in between moments of whimsy.

**Director:** Howard Zieff was a celebrated commercial director and advertisement photographer throughout the 1960s and '70s. His most notable feature film, the Goldie Hawn-starring *Private Benjamin*, is included in the American Film Institute's '100 Years... 100 Laughs' list. *My Girl* and its sequel, *My Girl 2*, were his last two features.

**Producer:** Brian Grazer

**Screenwriter:** Laurice Elehwany

**Cast:** Anna Chlumsky, Dan Ackroyd, Macaulay Culkin, Jamie Lee Curtis

**MY GIRL (FAN CHAN)**

**Screening on Saturday, 27 October 2018, 9.00pm**

A young man en route to the wedding of his first love reminisces about his childhood in 1980s Thailand.

THAILAND / 2003 / 110MIN / THAI

As the children of rival barbers, Jeab (Charlie Trairat) and Noi-Naa (Focus Jirakul) grow up next to each other in small-town Thailand. After a traumatic accident keeps Jeab from venturing too far from home, he and Noi-Naa occupy themselves playing house with girls from the neighbourhood. As Jeab grows older, he longs for more masculine companionship. He makes friends with a ragtag group of boys who demand he sever his ties with Noi-Naa to join them. Fast forward many years, and now Noi-Naa is getting married...

The debut feature of a group of six Thai filmmakers who met in university, *My Girl* was the top domestic film at Thailand's box office in 2003, grossing over 140 million baht. It is regarded as a cult hit, as is its soundtrack, which featured 1980s Thai pop music.

**Director:** Vitcha Gojiew, Songyos Sugmakanan, Nithiwat Tharathorn, Witthaya Thongyooyong, Anusorn Trisirikasem and Komgrit Triwimol are screenwriter-directors from Thailand. *My Girl* was their debut feature.

**Producer:** Jira Maligool, Prasert Vivattanananpong, Yongyoot Thongkongtoon

**Screenwriter:** Vitcha Gojiew, Songyos Sugmakanan, Nithiwat Tharathorn, Witthaya Thongyooyong, Anusorn Trisirikasem, Komgrit Triwimol, Aummaraporn Phandintong, Yongyoot Thongkongtoon

**Cast:** Charlie Trairat, Focus Jirakul, Charwin Jitsomboon

**Annex B: About *A Land Imagined* (Yeo Siew Hua)**

**A LAND IMAGINED**

An insomniac police inspector tries to unravel the mysterious disappearance of a Chinese construction worker at a land reclamation site.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

SINGAPORE, FRANCE, THE NETHERLANDS / 2018 / 95MIN / MANDARIN, ENGLISH, BENGALI

Amidst a Lynchian vision of Singapore's metropolis, worn-out police investigator Lok sets out to solve the mystery behind the disappearance of a migrant Chinese construction worker from a land reclamation site. As Lok's insomnia sets in, the truth he seeks begins to seep out from the reclaimed sand.

The story then turns on itself to follow Wang, a lonely Chinese construction worker living in fear of being repatriated after a work site accident renders him expendable. He finds kinship in two others: his sympathetic Bangladeshi colleague, Ajit, and the aloof supervisor of a dreamscape cybercafé he begins to frequent during his own sleepless nights.

When Ajit needs help, Wang enacts a doomed scheme that sparks a sinister, irreversible turn of events, and throws him headlong into the path of inspector Lok's investigation.

**Director:** Yeo Siew Hua studied philosophy at the National University of Singapore and is a founding member of the 13 Little Pictures film collective. His second feature, *A Land Imagined*, was developed at Tokyo Talents, Autumn Meeting and the Asia Pacific Screen Lab. The film premiered at Locarno Film Festival 2018, where it won the Golden Leopard; and the Golden Star award in the Feature Narrative competition at the El Gouna Film Festival in Egypt.

**Producer:** Fran Borgia

**Screenwriter:** Yeo Siew Hua

**Cast:** Peter Yu, Liu Xiaoyi, Luna Kwok

## **Annex C: Spotlight on Philippine Cinema**

### **NERVOUS TRANSLATION**

A magical realist tale of the fantastical world dreamed up by a young girl left to her own devices in her Manila home.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

PHILIPPINES / 2017 / 90MIN / FILIPINO

Eight-year-old Yael, shy to a fault, is often left at home by her parents. Her father works abroad in Saudi Arabia and her mother is always exhausted after long hours assembling shoes at a local factory. Most of Yael's time is spent in a fantasy world of her making, obsessing over everyday items—particularly tape recordings made by her father for her mother. When a typhoon threatens to hit Manila, Yael deals with it the only way she knows how: buying a magic pen that will solve all her problems.

Charming audiences wherever it has screened, Shireen Seno's beautifully woven, delightfully precocious drama set in a post-Marcos Philippines celebrates all the quirks and little wisdoms in children as they try to make sense of the uncompromising, humdrum world around them.

**Director:** Shireen Seno was born to a Filipino family in Japan, where she spent her childhood. Prior to making her debut feature, *Big Boy* (2012), which premiered at International Film Festival Rotterdam, Seno shot production stills for Lav Diaz and John Torres. Since its premiere, her second feature, *Nervous Translation*, has collected numerous awards internationally.

**Producer:** John Torres

**Screenwriter:** Shireen Seno

**Cast:** Jana Agoncillo, Angge Santos, Sid Lucero, Cocoy Lumbao

## EERIE

The girls of St Lucia Convent are dying mysteriously—and their deaths may be related to a student suicide committed years before.

WORLD PREMIERE

PHILIPPINES / 2018 / 101MIN / TAGALOG

In the Philippines of 1995, guidance counsellor Pat is a listening ear for all her convent school students. Possessing a secret clairvoyant ability, Pat also becomes a sympathetic ear to the ghost of Eri, a former student who hanged herself in the school bathroom. As Pat holds ‘sessions’ with Eri every night, she learns more about the girl’s life, as well as the school’s dark history of physical punishment and abuse. Their relationship becomes increasingly complicated after a sudden spate of deaths among the students.

An homage to the genre of convent-school horror, director Mikhail Red teases his audience with conventional horror tropes yet subverts the expected delivery. *Eerie* is a sensory experience that calibrates an emotional balance between fear and sympathy towards misjudged youth.

**Director:** The son of Palme d’Or-winning filmmaker Raymond Red, Mikhail Red has been screening his films at festivals since the age of 15. At 21, he wrote and directed his first feature, *Rekorder* (2013), clinching six international awards. His second feature, *Birdshot* (2016), became the official Filipino entry for the Oscars, and the first Filipino film to be on Netflix.

**Producer:** Micah Tadena

**Screenwriter:** Mikhail Red, Mariah Reodica, Rae Red, Cheska Marfori

**Cast:** Bea Alonzo, Jake Cuenca, Maxene Magalona

## SEASON OF THE DEVIL (ANG PANAHOM NG HALIMAW)

Lav Diaz's newest is a bleak and surreal musical drama set in the brutal era of martial law in the Philippines.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

PHILIPPINES / 2018 / 234MIN / TAGALOG

1970s Philippines. Ferdinand Marcos's martial law is in full swing. Innocent inhabitants of a remote settlement are terrorised by an armed militia bent on quelling rebellious activities. When young doctor Lorena disappears after being captured, her husband Hugo, a poet and activist, goes in search of her. In doing so, he is confronted with the fog of terror and anguish that haunts the village.

Bold and unusual, the film takes the form of a musical. Lines are delivered in *a cappella* verse composed entirely by director Diaz, who looked to rock operas for inspiration. A spiritual sequel to his 2014 feature *From What Is Before*, *Season of the Devil* deals with one of the darkest chapters in Philippine history while inadvertently addressing the nation's current-day socio-political turmoil.

**Director:** Lav Diaz is among the most prolific and critically acclaimed directors in Southeast Asia. His recent works include *The Woman Who Left* (2016), which won the Golden Lion at Venice Film Festival, and *A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery* (2016) which received the Alfred Bauer Silver Bear Award at Berlin International Film Festival.

**Producer:** Bianca Balbuena, Bradley Liew

**Screenwriter:** Lav Diaz

**Cast:** Piolo Pascual, Shaina Magdayao, Bituin Escalante, Pinky Amador

## THE ASHES AND GHOSTS OF TAYUG 1931(DAPOL TAN PAYAWAR NA TAYUG 1931)

A layered historical docudrama centred on a forgotten Filipino revolutionary who led a peasant revolt against American colonialism.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

PHILIPPINES / 2017 / 115MIN / PANGASINAN, ILOKO

A nameless filmmaker walks the streets of Tayug, Philippines in search of an obscured part of the town's history—a failed agrarian insurgency against imperialism in 1931 by folk hero Pedro Calosa. The film shuttles between this and two distinctly presented timelines: one set in 1930s, tracing the origins of the revolution; the other in the 1960s, featuring an elderly Calosa as he recounts his past to a pair of eager journalists.

Originally intended as a play in 2001, *Ashes and Ghosts* marks Christopher Gozum's return to filmmaking after a six-year hiatus. His approach to history is distinct and hybridised, eschewing the epic for the personal and the lyrical. The consistency of the film's black-and-white cinematography and sensitive editing allows for a sense of fluidity across space and time—constructs that are subverted and transcended by the story's mystical underpinnings.

**Director:** Christopher Gozum founded Sine Caboloan, which produces films about the Filipino Pangasinan province from which he hails. Gozum's previous works include *Child of the Sun* (2009) and *Forever Loved* (2011). *The Ashes and Ghosts of Tayug 1931* won the Circle Competition NETPAC Jury Prize at QCinema International Film Festival in 2017, and had its international premiere at Rotterdam in 2018.

**Producer:** Fe GingGing Hyde

**Screenwriter:** Christopher Gozum

**Cast:** Fe GingGing Hyde, Donna Cariaga, Brigida Concepcion Calosa-Rodico, Ruby Calosa Torio-Marquez, William Calosa-Torio, Rosita Calosa-Torio

## **Short Films in Competition – Silver Screen Awards**

### **MANILA IS FULL OF MEN NAMED BOY**

PHILIPPINES, USA / 2018 / 20MIN / TAGALOG, ENGLISH / SOUTHEAST ASIA PREMIERE

A man travels from the U.S. to the Philippines to attend his estranged father's birthday party. Hoping to impress his dad, he purchases a child to pass off as his own son.

Andrew Stephen Lee is an M.F.A. candidate at Columbia University's Graduate Film Program. His thesis film, *Manila is Full of Men Named Boy*, premiered at the 75th Venice Film Festival.

### **JUDGEMENT**

PHILIPPINES / 2018 / 15MIN / TAGALOG, ENGLISH / SINGAPORE PREMIERE

Joy, the mother of a young girl, decides to file charges against her abusive partner after a horrific incident. But the court case adds more woes to her already troubled life.

Raymund Ribay Gutierrez is a Filipino director and screenwriter, and mentee of director Brillante Mendoza. His short films have screened at Cannes Film Festival and Toronto International Film Festival.

### **PLEASE STOP TALKING (WAG MO 'KONG KAUSAPIN)**

PHILIPPINES / 2018 / 14MIN / FILIPINO / INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

An animated film centered on Sixto, an elderly man who tries to repair his relationship with his estranged son, *Please Stop Talking* explores loneliness, regret and isolation at old age.

Josef Gacutan is a freelance filmmaker and graphic designer who likes working with mixed media collages and traditional animation.

**THE IMMINENT IMMANENT (BAGA'T DIRI TUHAY TA'T PAMAHUNGPANGUNG)**

PHILIPPINES / 2018 / 15MIN / WARAY WARAY / ASIAN PREMIERE

A rural town carries on its mundane existence, unaware that strong forces of nature are silently conspiring against it.

Carlo Francisco Manatad is a Filipino filmmaker and editor. His short films have been screened at festivals such as Cannes and Locarno. He is currently working on his first feature film.

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