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**CELEBRATED MALAYSIAN FILMMAKER DAIN ISKANDAR SAID'S FANTASY
NOIR THRILLER TO OPEN THE 27TH SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL FILM
FESTIVAL**

*'Interchange' will mark its Asian premiere at
Southeast Asia's longest-running international film platform*



Credits: Danny Lim © Apparat 2016

Singapore, 21 September 2016 – The 27th edition of the Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) will open with *Interchange*, a noir fantasy thriller by one of Malaysia's most celebrated filmmakers, Dain Iskandar Said. Making its Asian premiere at the SGIFF after successful receptions at Locarno International Film Festival and Toronto Film Festival, the film's opening will be on 23 November 2016.

Interchange brings together Dain Iskandar Said's love of noir films and his fascination with folklore. An Indonesian-Malaysian collaboration, the film is based on a chain of events triggered by a true incident that took place a century ago, when Norwegian explorer Carl Lumholtz travelled through central Borneo between 1913 and 1917. Among the photographs he took was one of a group tribal women bathing in a river, in an attempt to cleanse themselves of the evil effects of being photographed. The cast is



led by seasoned TV personality and actor Shaheizy Sam, who won Best Actor for his film *Songlap* in the 1st ASEAN International Film Festival in 2013, and award-winning Indonesian film and TV personality Nicholas Saputra. They are supported by rising star ledil Putra and Indonesian darling Prisia Nasution, recipient of the Citra Award for Best Leading Actress at the 2011 Indonesian Film Festival for her role in *Sang Penari*.

Taking on the journey together with young forensics photographer Adam (Putra) and his arrogant, gutsy colleague detective Man (Sam), audiences will find themselves entrenched in Borneo's traditional folklore and confronted by the mysteries behind a series of macabre ritual murders that have occurred through the city in Said's subterranean underworld. The mysteries intensified when Adam befriends his new neighbour, the enigmatic and alluring Iva (Nasution) – a Shaman tasked to free the souls of her ancient Borneo tribe who have been trapped inside antique glass-plate negatives. Blood-drained corpses hanging from the ceiling, feathers of an extinct Hornbill littering the ground, and the unfamiliar urban landscape add to Dain Iskandar Said's unique brew of cinematography in the film. Coupled with the heart-thumping cuts interlaced with intense and emotional pauses, *Interchange* will shake the audiences' trusted frame of reality as the story progresses.

Executive Director of SGIFF, Yuni Hadi, said: "SGIFF has always championed Southeast Asian cinema. *Interchange*, this year's opening film, combines Dain Iskandar Said's skill for genre story-telling with a distinct Southeast Asian flavour to produce a unique thriller that could not have originated from anywhere else. Choosing it as SGIFF's opening film shows our commitment to celebrating our own voices, highlighting the capability of our creative industry, and welcoming a wider audience to the promise of Southeast Asian cinema."

This is the second feature of Dain Iskandar Said, after his widely well-received feature five years ago – *Bunohan: Return to Murder*, which won eight awards at the 25th Malaysian Film Festival – the second most awarded film on the Malaysian Film Festival of all time. It was also selected as Malaysia's official entry for the Best Foreign Language Film nomination for the 85th Academy Awards.

Sharing his excitement to bring his film to straits shores for its Asian debut after its route in the festival circuit overseas, Dain Iskandar Said said, "It's exciting to hear and be near the waters closer to home, where after all the story of *Interchange* took root; shaped by the voices and stories that we all share in the whole of the Nusantara region, from Borneo to Singapore. It is fitting for me to have our Asian Premiere in the Republic, who have had their fair share of great storytellers, talented directors and wonderful world class films. It is indeed high praise and recognition for the Singapore



International Film Festival to invite my film *Interchange* as the opening film to their prestigious festival."

The 27th edition of SGIFF, which runs from 23 November to 4 December 2016, will take place across various venues, including National Museum of Singapore Gallery Theatre, Shaw Theatres Lido, National Gallery Singapore Auditorium, The Arts House Screening Room, Filmgarde Bugis+ and Objectifs Chapel Gallery. Ticket sales for SGIFF will begin on 28 October 2016.

The SGIFF is an event of the Singapore Media Festival, hosted by Media Development Authority (Singapore). SGIFF's Official Sponsors include Official Festival Time Partner, IWC Schaffhausen.

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About the Singapore International Film Festival

The Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) is the largest and longest-running film event in Singapore. Founded in 1987, the festival has become an iconic event in the Singapore arts calendar that is widely attended by international film critics, and recognised worldwide for its focus on Asian filmmakers and the promotion of Southeast Asian films. The SGIFF is committed to nurturing and championing local and regional talents in the art of filmmaking. The festival serves as a catalyst in igniting public interest in the arts, and encouraging artistic dialogue and cultural exchanges. The SGIFF is organised by the Singapore International Film Festival Ltd, a non-profit organisation and holds the Institution of a Public Character (IPC) status.

For more information, please visit www.sgiff.com.

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ANNEX

INTERCHANGE (2016)

Dain Iskandar Said

Malaysia / 100 minutes / Malay, English / PG13: Some Disturbing Scenes

The supernatural and the subterranean collide in this original contemporary film noir set in the heart of a mysterious Malaysian metropolis.

Making its Asian premiere in Singapore, *Interchange* delves into a subterranean underworld through a hefty slab of speculative fiction that conflates various film genres into its own unique brew. From a steamy underground antiques market, to dark alleys lined up with streetwalkers, drag nightclubs, and faceless facades of residential towers, *Interchange* conjures a fantastical action-thriller of ritualistic intent set in an unnamed metropolis in Malaysia, brought to life with leading actors from Malaysia and Indonesia.

Troubled by disturbing visions and recovering from a psychotic breakdown from a previous case, forensics photographer Adam (Iedil Putra) keeps away from work; locking himself in his room at a high-rise as he obsesses over taking voyeuristic photos of his neighbours at the opposite block. As a series of macabre murders are discovered within the city, detective Man (Shaheizy Sam, who expertly plays up the tropes of the hardboiled investigator) enlists Adam's help, just as the latter is drawn to Iva (Prisia Nasution), the mysterious femme fatale whom he had previously photographed.

With the inexplicable sights of corpses drained of blood, hanging from ceilings with littered feathers and shattered glass negatives, these murders hint of a much darker ritualistic purpose. As they delve deeper into the mystery, Adam gets closer to Iva whom he discovers is embroiled in these strange happenings that involve an ancient tribe from Borneo, as well as a man with unusual physiology and powers (the award-winning Nicholas Saputra).

With *Interchange*, director Dain Iskandar Said continues to exert his bold artistic vision – confidently conjuring a world of magical shape-shifting shamans and mystical beings within the urban landscape. As he amplifies the anxiety of the supernatural intruding into our rational society, the film also presents a parable about the entrance of modernity and its curse upon our secular world and its tribal past.

Producer: Nandita Solomon

Scriptwriter: Dain Iskandar Said, Nandita Solomon, June Tan, Redza Minhat



Cast: Shaheizy Sam, Nicholas Saputra, Prisia Nasution, Iedil Putra, Nadiya Nisaa, Alvin Wong, Chew Kin Wah

Biography of Dain Iskandar Said

Dain Iskandar Said is a Malaysian writer and filmmaker with an established TV commercials profile before moving into long form and experimental works in 2004. His 1st media installation was invited to the 2006 Biennale of Sydney, while a commissioned work is on permanent display at the Burj al-Arab in Dubai. In 2007, Dain Iskandar Said was a recipient of the Nippon Foundation's Asian Public Intellectual fellowship, during which time he researched the role of film in Indonesian history. In 2011, Dain Iskandar Said was part of the International Writers Unlimited Tour (Theme: Writing the Truth – Fact or Fiction), organized by Winter Nachten in the Netherlands.

His feature, *Bunohan: Return to Murder* (2011), world premiered at the 36th Toronto International Film Festival, had its European premier at the International Film Festival of Rotterdam and received the NETPAC award at the Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival and the Golden Hanoman at the Jogja NETPAC Film Festival. *Bunohan* is Malaysia's 2nd-ever submission to the Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film. On home turf it went on to win numerous awards, including 8 awards at the Festival Film Malaysia 2013, including Best Film, Best Director and Best Script. Dain Iskandar Said's next feature, *Our Mosque Turned to Ruin* is set for production in early 2017.

Main characters

Adam

A forensics photographer and Man's close friend, Adam, a loner from Sabah (North Borneo), turned into a nervous wreck after coming face to face with the serial killer's first handiwork five months prior. Disturbing visions and extended medical leave left him withdrawn, living in a limbo between reality and his camera lens. When he meets Iva, he is both repelled and intrigued by the strange things he sees. However, the more he sees, the more he wants to know.



Man

A hardnosed cop with the MetroPolis police force, Detective Azman (Man) has seen the worst there is in the criminal world. But the latest series of gruesome killings still shock him. A cynical, no-nonsense law enforcer with a sharp tongue and a singlemindedness in pursuing his quarry, Man will stop at nothing to capture the serial killer who haunts the city, even if it means risking his own life.

Iva

Iva is Adam's mysterious neighbour who bewitches him with her sultry aura. A woman from Borneo with a secret past, Iva is on the hunt for an object indelibly linked to her very existence in the mortal world, a quest into which she lures an unsuspecting Adam.

Belian

A shadowy figure who moves secretly through the deepest, darkest parts of the city in search of glass negatives, which he hands over to an antiques store proprietor. A wraith-like character who speaks in enigmatic tones and displays superhuman strength.

Sani

The antiques dealer who sources glass negatives for Belian. Despite her regal mannerisms, she is a wily and cunning woman who puts the cops on a wild goose chase.

Jason

Detective Jason is Man's partner at MetroPolis. A stickler for detail and procedure, Jason doesn't believe in anything supernatural or mystical. From past experience, he has developed a mistrust of Adam.

Heng

The proprietor of an old photo studio, Heng is a figure from Adam's past, a friend of his mother. Heng helps the cops in their investigation, because he is the only one who knows how to work with glass negatives. But it doesn't mean he's on their side.



Biographies of cast

Iedil Putra as 'Adam'

Iedil has had a successful career in theatre, most notably with his role in Instant Café Theatre's *Parah* (2011) that was performed in Malaysia, Singapore and Australia, and in the popular comedy ensemble *Projek Disko Baldi*. More recently he played supporting roles in the road-trip comedy *Terbaik Dari Langit* (2014) and *Showdown* (2016). *Interchange* is Iedil's first major role in a feature film.

Shaheizy Sam as 'Man'

Since 2010, Sam has carved a niche for himself in the horror, comedy and action genres. His previous films include the blockbusters *Adnan Semp-it* (2009), horror comedy *Ngangkung* (2010) and gangster comedy *Kongsi* (2011). He was also in *Songlap* (2011), which was invited to film festivals around the world. Sam's most recent outing was in buddy-cop actioner *Polis Evo* (2015), the current Malaysian box-office record-holder.

Prisia Nasution as 'Iva'

Prisia made her mark in Indonesian cinema as the lead in *Sang Penari* (The Dancer, 2011), her debut film performance, for which she received the award for Best Lead Actress at the 2011 Indonesian Film Festival. Prisia also played the lead in director Riri Riza's film *Sokola Rimba* (2013). Educated in the US and Germany, Prisia has a degree in Information Technology from the Swiss German University.

Nicholas Saputra as 'Belian'

Nicholas first came to prominence via his breakout role in the hit movie *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* in 2002. In 2016, he reprised his role in the sequel *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta 2*, a major success in Indonesia and Malaysia. Known for being selective with his roles, Nicholas appeared in Joko Anwar's debut feature *Janji Joni* and in Riri Riza's 2005 biopic *Gie*, for which he was named Best Actor at the Indonesian Film Festival. Nicholas also starred in Edwin's *Postcards From the Zoo* (2012) and Mouly Surya's *What They Don't Talk About When They Talk About Love* (2013).



Nadiya Nisaa as 'Sani'

One of Nadiya's earliest acting roles was when Dain Iskandar Said cast her in *Dukun* (2007).

She played the female lead in Chris Chong Chan Fui's *Karaoke* (2009) that premiered at the Cannes Director Fortnight. She won Most Promising Actress at the 24th Festival Film Malaysia and Best Supporting Actress at the 26th Festival Film Malaysia in 2014.

Alvin Wong as 'Jason'

A ubiquitous face in Malaysian Chinese-language sitcoms, TV serials and theatre productions, Alvin sometimes has to juggle several projects simultaneously. For his performance in the BMW Shorties 2009 winner, *Conversations with a Mad Man*, Alvin won Best Solo Performance. He also won Best Supporting Actor at the 2012 Golden Awards of the Malaysian Chinese entertainment industry.

Chew Kin Wah as 'Heng'

Kin-Wah has appeared in countless films like Amir Muhammad's *Susuk* (2008), *Kongsi* (2011), as well as Ho Yuhang's award-winning *Rain Dogs* (2006) and *At the End of Daybreak* (2009). He can also be seen in Season 2 of the Netflix series *Marco Polo*.