

31st Singapore International Film Festival

26 Nov
— 6 Dec
2020

Programme

20
20

26 NOV -
6 DEC

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26 Nov — 6 Dec 2020

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CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Who would have thought – having just dimmed the lights after the celebrations of our 30th edition last year, we would be faced with a global pandemic that would bring everything to a standstill. In the film world, we have seen productions postponed and cinemas shut. Some of the biggest film festivals in the world have been forced to change their formats or cancel their events for the year entirely.

At SGIFF, 2020 was going to be a year for rejuvenation. The team came together in January to envision the future of this festival that is beloved by so many in Singapore and the region.

We wanted to embark on the quest of deepening the appreciation for cinema in Singapore, and for SGIFF to become the leading platform for independent films from Southeast Asia. With our new Executive Director Emily J. Hoe coming on board, and Ming-Jung stepping up as Artistic Director, we started to chart the journey forward with them. I am very pleased that, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the commitment towards growing our community of film lovers remains stronger than ever.

During the lockdown when we were stuck at home, films have kept us company and given us a window to escape, to imagine and to explore. I invite you to continue this exploration with us this November, accompanied by a whole community of film lovers and filmmakers. Whether you are experiencing the films at home or in the cinemas, here's a chance for us to finally connect with one another again through the movies.

Have a good time at the festival!

Boo Junfeng



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Stories have a magical ability to transport us to different realities. They give us new perspectives, provoke conversation, inspire action. They bring us on a journey through someone else's eyes.

Film is one beautiful way in which stories are told. A group of individuals gather in a cinema serendipitously to experience a film together. When the credits roll and audiences gradually exit, no doubt, each person has a slightly different take on the film. Conversations spark as people figure out plotlines, discuss what they missed, make sense of what they just saw – certainly, film inspires connection.

The pandemic has put a pause on these social connections that we often take for granted. We crave their return, but we push on.

Local cinemas have reopened, albeit with strict safety measures. Filmmakers and their crews have had to figure out new ways of working. At the same time, all of us have also made do with the fact that our home or personal screens had become a substitute for the big screen. It felt like a necessary shift in how we experience film, but it is nevertheless a substitute. It's hard to replace that feeling of anticipation when you're sitting in a cinema eagerly awaiting the start of a film, surrounded by a community who is just as excited as you to see how this particular story will unfold.

We miss this feeling of community. We miss you, every single one of you. We have forged ahead with the festival to continue to put the spotlight on the amazing works of filmmakers in Singapore, Asia and the rest of the world. We are grateful for the opportunity to share the magic of film with you, and can't wait to join you at one of our screenings.

Emily J. Hoe



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

At the height of the pandemic, SGIFF was asked, and we asked ourselves, if cancellation was an option. We had decided early on that the festival should go ahead, taking whatever form was necessary. We felt SGIFF had to keep going as a supporter of films and filmmakers. When cinemas closed, we planned for an online festival even though the decision to go online was not an easy one. However, as cinemas gradually opened up, a hybrid festival became a possibility. So despite some restrictions, we still have one cinema screening for every selected film, maintaining and fulfilling our commitment to a full cinematic experience.

The films available for consideration in this edition of SGIFF were conceived and produced way before the pandemic, and the best films about our unique present state are likely to be made in the future, after a time of creative reflection. Nevertheless, the films in the programme still speak for the times we live in: personal stories, the search for identity, for one's belonging, for the meaning of existence, questions of community, of social change and the desire for improvement. These sentiments are as potent as ever. We see filmmakers asking honest and sometimes raw questions through their stories and characters. There is vulnerability but also strength in their message.

SGIFF continues its aim to support local and regional filmmakers whose works shape the Southeast Asian identity. This year's opening film, *Tiong Bahru Social Club* from Singapore, explores identity through its fantastical style, while the subject of identity is also examined in the documentary *Sementara*. A highlight of this year's programme is the strength of short films and documentaries from Singapore and Southeast Asia. SGIFF has also maintained its commitment to Southeast Asian talent with our Film Academy: Southeast Asian Film Lab, Southeast Asian Producers Network, and Youth Jury & Critics Programme.

Though travel restrictions have curtailed the attendance of many filmmakers to the festival, some will participate remotely. We believe that the semblance of a true festival experience remains vital. Whatever the future holds for festivals, their traditions or new hybrid forms, we strongly believe that the ritual of coming together for a shared experience, and the beauty of hearing diverse viewpoints and stories, contribute positively to our sense of community.

SGIFF is grateful to all who have given their time and support to the festival to continue its mission under the most difficult circumstances; to the filmmakers whose work continues to challenge and inspire us; and, above all, to the audiences, whose enthusiasm and dedication to cinema give film festivals their purpose.

Kuo Ming-Jung



CONTENTS

73 films from 49 countries

- 14** Silver Screen Awards
- 19** Talks and Panels
- 27** Films
- 28** Festival Opening
- 31** Films in Competition – Asian Feature Film
- 36** Films in Competition – Southeast Asian Short Film
- 45** Singapore Panorama
- 53** Asian Vision
- 65** Cinema Today
- 73** Moonlight Cinema
- 75** Film Academy
- 76** Southeast Asian Film Lab
- 78** Youth Jury & Critics Programme
- 80** Southeast Asian Producers Network
- 81** Film Fund
- 82** New Waves
- 83** Film Immersion Programme
- 84** Donate to the Festival
- 87** About the Festival
- 91** Acknowledgements
- 92** Film Index

Other Useful Information

Refer to the **centrefold** for Festival Schedule and Ticketing Information.

All information is correct at the time of print.

Visit **SGIFF.COM** for the latest Festival updates.

ABBREVIATIONS / LEGENDS

Venues

- SL** Shaw Lido
- FG3** Filmgarde Bugis+, Hall 3
- FG7** Filmgarde Bugis+, Hall 7
- FG8** Filmgarde Bugis+, Hall 8
- OT** Oldham Theatre
- TPG** The Projector, Green Room
- ONLINE** Virtual Film Screening

Film Credits

- D** Director
- P** Producer
- C** Cast

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)

Indicates a live or prerecorded Q&A with the filmmaker(s).

PREMIERE STATUS

While SGIFF has always maintained a Singapore Premiere policy for all new films, we are taking an exceptional stance on premiere policy this year in an attempt to support filmmakers. For many short films, in particular, prior screenings without geoblocking may have resulted in worldwide availability.

RATINGS

Please check film ratings on **sgiff.com** before purchasing tickets.

LABELS

SEA-DOC GRANT

SEA-DOC Grant indicates that the film has received support from the Tan Ean Kiam Foundation-SGIFF Southeast Asian-Documentary Grant.

SEA-SHORTS GRANT

SEA-SHORTS Grant indicates that the film has received support from the SGIFF Southeast Asian-Short Film Grant.

LANGUAGE

All films will be shown in their original language. Films with non-English dialogue will be screened with English subtitles.

EXPERIENCING THE HYBRID FESTIVAL

For the first time, some films will have virtual screenings due to tighter capacity limits and public health concerns. We will also connect with each other online in our offscreen programmes.

Our hybrid film festival format allows you to enjoy many of the films either in the comforting darkness of the cinema or in the warmth of home.

... IN CINEMA

Due to the reduced seating capacity in accordance with pandemic guidelines, tickets are more limited than usual. Please check sgiff.com for ticketing updates to verify if seats are still available. Remember to book your tickets early to avoid disappointment!

... AT HOME

The films that have virtual screenings are indicated as **ONLINE**. Each film will be available for 48 hours and may be accessed in Singapore only.

Sign up for an account with The Projector Plus to view the films at sgiff.com.

For ticketing information, please refer to the [centre fold](#).

TALKS AND PANELS

For our offscreen events, the In Conversation dialogues and panel discussions will be held virtually and available worldwide.

Register for free today at sgiff.com/talksandpanels

CONNECT WITH US!

After attending the film screenings and online events, remember to tell your friends, continue the conversation and share with us your festival experience using the hashtag **#SGIFF31!**

Always check sgiff.com for the latest updates in schedule and our social channels for exciting festival coverage.

 @sginternationalfilmfest

   @sgiffest

For information on Covid-19 safety guidelines, please check sgiff.com/faq

Introduced in 1991, the Silver Screen Awards was the first international competition with a category dedicated to Asian cinema. It aims to draw attention to filmmaking talent from across Asia, with a particular focus on Southeast Asia. Many of its nominees and awardees have since established themselves among the region's most prominent filmmakers.

This year, despite great upheaval and challenges for filmmakers, SGIFF has decided to reinforce the spirit of the Silver Screen Awards, pressing ahead with two film competitions and two programmes from the Film Academy to encourage and keep alive cinematic storytelling, cherishing film as a form of art for better times.

SILVER SCREEN

AWARDS

SOUTHEAST ASIAN SHORT FILM COMPETITION

Best Southeast Asian Short Film
Best Singapore Short Film
Best Director
Youth Jury Prize

ASIAN FEATURE FILM COMPETITION

Best Film
Best Director
Best Performance

YOUTH JURY & CRITICS PROGRAMME

Young Critic Award

SOUTHEAST ASIAN FILM LAB

Most Promising Project
Fellowship Prize

To read more about Films in Competition,
turn to pages 31–43.

ASIAN FEATURE FILM COMPETITION JURY



JOÃO PEDRO RODRIGUES

João Pedro Rodrigues is a Portuguese filmmaker based in Lisbon. His films have been screened at Cannes, Venice, Locarno, Toronto and Berlin, among others. His debut feature, *O Fantasma* (2000), was in competition at Venice Film Festival. His fifth feature, *The Ornithologist* (2016), won the Silver Leopard for Best Director at Locarno. In 2016, the Pompidou Centre in Paris hosted a complete retrospective of his work.



MARY STEPHEN

Mary Stephen collaborated with French New Wave director Eric Rohmer for more than 25 years editing and co-composing music. She was the assistant to his then-editor Cécile Decugis and the editor for Rohmer's films including *Winter's Tale* (1991) and *The Romance of Astrea and Celadon* (2007). In the past decade, Stephen has worked with independent filmmakers and producers worldwide in the capacities of editing, associate-producing and coaching, while still making her own films.



MOULY SURYA

Mouly Surya studied literature and filmmaking in Australia. Since her debut film, *Fiksi* (2008), she has won numerous local and international awards. Her latest film, *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts* (2017), premiered at Cannes and was released in 14 countries including the US and Canada. In 2018, it bagged a record 10 awards at the Citra Awards of her home country, Indonesia. The film was also Indonesia's entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the 91st Academy Awards.



JOHN TORRES

John Torres is a filmmaker, writer and musician from Manila, Philippines, whose films have been screened widely at international festivals. His debut, *Todo Todo Teros* (2006), won the Dragons & Tigers Award for Young Cinema at Vancouver International Film Festival, and the NETPAC and FIPRESCI Critics awards at SGIFF. He has made five features and numerous shorts as well as a multichannel work that was shown in Rotterdam and Berlin.



SOUTHEAST ASIAN SHORT FILM COMPETITION JURY



HOTZU NYEN

Ho Tzu Nyen is a multidisciplinary artist from Singapore. Spanning the mediums of film, video, performance and installation, his works have been shown extensively at galleries worldwide. Most recently, he was co-curator of the 7th Asian Art Biennale in Taipei (2019). Ho represented Singapore at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011).



**NAWAPOL
THAMRONGRATTANARIT**

Nawapol Thamrongrattanarit is a self-taught director, film critic and screenwriter. His works have earned critical acclaim for their unique and eccentric style. In 2012, his feature debut *36* won the New Currents Award at Busan. His other features, *Mary Is Happy*, *Mary Is Happy* (2013) and *Die Tomorrow* (2017), have been screened internationally.



WANG CHUN-CHI

Wang Chun-Chi is the director of Taiwan Film Institute. She received her PhD in Cinema-Television Critical Studies from the University of Southern California. As an academic, her research revolves around issues of gender and sexuality and the cultural history of film. She is currently the chairperson of Taiwan Women's Film Association and was formerly a programmer for the Women Make Wave Film Festival.

The Festival offers a series of dialogues and panel discussions by filmmakers and industry experts who will provide insights into their creative processes, and how to navigate a fast-changing film and media landscape. With these, we hope to inform, inspire and encourage the continuing conversation between filmmakers and audiences.

**AND
PANELS**

TALKS

IN CONVERSATION WITH ANN HUI and MAN LIM CHUNG

30 Nov, Mon | 9pm | 60min | Online

Keep Rolling profiles acclaimed Hong Kong director Ann Hui, charting her filmmaking career of over four decades. A key figure in the groundbreaking Hong Kong New Wave of the '70s and '80s, her diverse oeuvre ranges from martial arts films and thrillers to period melodramas and literary adaptations. Above all, she is best known for her nuanced and socially aware realist dramas that capture the most intimate anxieties of Hong Kong life.

What shines through her remarkable body of films – and is reflected in Man Lim Chung's documentary *Keep Rolling* – is Hui's fierce independence towards her work and her profound humanism towards the subjects of her stories, which carries over from her attitude to life.

Hui will be in conversation with Man to reflect on her extraordinary career and cinematic achievements, and share her inspirational approach to life.

KEEP ROLLING P56 | ASIAN VISION
29 NOV, SUN | 3.30PM | 113min | FG3

Man Lim Chung's directorial debut *Keep Rolling* is a closely observed portrait of Ann Hui's filmmaking career.



Ann Hui—Closely associated with the Hong Kong New Wave, critically acclaimed director Ann Hui has been a key figure of Hong Kong cinema since the 1970s.



Man Lim Chung—A frequent collaborator of Ann Hui, Man Lim Chung is a veteran Hong Kong art director and production designer.

IN CONVERSATION WITH SHOZO ICHIYAMA

1 Dec, Tue | 7pm | 60min | Online

Japanese producer Shozo Ichiyama's distinguished 30-year career has seen him enable some of the biggest names in international cinema: Takeshi Kitano, Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Samira Makhmalbaf and, most notably, Jia Zhangke. Having begun his career at the Shochiku studio, he quickly sought ways to broaden his horizons and to champion independent and creative voices, working alongside international filmmakers and those in Japan. He has long been an advocate of new talent, which he has increasingly sought to promote as his own career and reputation have expanded. His determination to encourage new voices led him to launch the Tokyo Filmex festival in 2000. He is currently collaborating on his first project from Singapore.

Ichiyama will be discussing aspects of his career, such as working with notable directors, international co-production, finding new directors and selecting projects he believes in. What does he value in new directors? What areas should aspiring filmmakers focus on? And what is the future of independent production?



Shozo Ichiyama—Founder and director of Tokyo Filmex, Shozo Ichiyama is known for the many award-winning films he has produced. He is the head mentor for this year's Southeast Asian Film Lab. See page 76 for more details.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Shaping Southeast Asian Identities through Documentary

29 Nov, Sun | 7pm | 60min | Online

SGIFF introduced the Tan Ean Kiam Foundation-SGIFF Southeast Asian-Documentary (SEA-DOC) Grant in 2018. Besides funding documentary projects, the festival also hopes to foster discussion of documentary filmmaking in Southeast Asia.

This panel discussion brings together documentary filmmakers, some of whom have received the SEA-DOC Grant, to reflect on the role of documentaries in the region. Drawing on the combined themes and narratives of the films in the programme, it explores the notions of witnessing, testimony and archive. Should documentaries observe or intervene in contemporary lives and culture? How do they reflect and express the diverse identities of the region? How do they record the present or narrate the past? How important are they as records of our contemporary world for the future?

Alyx Ayn Arumpac is a director and producer from the Philippines. Her feature debut *Aswang*, screened in this SGIFF, is a recipient of several documentary film grants across regions, including the SEA-DOC Grant.



Chew Chia Shao Min is a local writer, producer and director. Her short film *May and June* (2018) was featured at the 2018 SGIFF, and she wrote the feature *Wanton Mee* (2015), which was screened at the Berlinale. She co-directed *Sementara*, screened at this SGIFF.



Graiwoot Chulphongsathorn is a Thai film producer who has been working with Prapat Jiwangsan since 2015, as well as a programmer and lecturer. He was a guest curator for Screening the Forest in 2018, a programme by the Asian Film Archive.



Prapat Jiwangsan is a visual artist and film director from Thailand. His recent documentaries, which focus on the stories of migrant workers in Asia, have been screened at festivals in Rotterdam and Singapore.



Tan Biyun is an artist whose works focus on community, human rights and social justice, spanning film, performance and installation. *Citizen Hustler*, her feature debut, is screened at this SGIFF and is a recipient of the SEA-DOC Grant.



Joant Úbeda is a writer and director based in Singapore. His short film *Spirit from the Meadow* (2014) travelled to festivals worldwide. *Sementara*, his co-directed feature debut, is screened at this SGIFF.



PANEL DISCUSSION

Southeast Asian Producers Network: Accessing International Co-production—Why and How?

30 Nov, Mon | 7pm | 60min | Online

The talent and energy in recent Southeast Asian cinema are widely recognised. With limited and often unstable funding across its many countries, working with regional and international partners for access to co-production has become crucial for many projects. With the introduction of the Southeast Asian Co-production Grant by Singapore's Infocomm Media Development Authority and the Singapore Film Commission, local producers are in demand.

How can the next generation of producers gain a foothold in co-production? What knowledge should they acquire? What qualities must they possess? Is co-production suitable for everyone or every project?

Bianca Balbuena is a producer based in the Philippines. She produced *A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery* by Lav Diaz, which was awarded the Silver Bear at Berlinale 2016. She is currently a mentor at Locarno's Open Doors programme.



Fran Borgia is a Singapore-based producer credited with critically acclaimed films such as *Sandcastle* (2010), *Disappearing Landscape* (2013), *A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery* (2016) and *Apprentice* (2016). His latest film, *A Land Imagined* (2018), won the Golden Leopard at Locarno Film Festival.



Anthony Chen is a writer-director and producer from Singapore. His debut feature *Ilo Ilo* premiered at Cannes Film Festival 2013, and was awarded the Camera d'Or. His second feature film, *Wet Season*, was the opening film of SGIFF in 2019.



Isabelle Glachant is a producer based in Asia. She is known for the first official French-Chinese co-production, *11 Flowers*, directed by her frequent collaborator Wang Xiaoshuai. She founded two production companies, Chinese Shadows and Shasha & Co. Production.



Tran Thi Bich Ngoc is a producer of both commercial box office hits and independent feature films that travel the festival circuit. She co-founded Autumn Meeting in 2013, an international platform to support young filmmakers in Vietnam and across Southeast Asia.



PANEL DISCUSSION

**Future of Cinema:
Rethinking the Experience of Film**

2 Dec, Wed | 5pm | 60min | Online

2020 has proved a dramatic and challenging year for cinema. Film exhibitors, filmmakers and film festivals have all been hit hard, confronted with dilemmas and decisions about survival, and the 120-year tradition of cinema-viewing experience faces an unprecedented existential threat.

While the major players have received much attention, SGIFF wants to zoom in on the grassroots, the independent filmmakers and organisations that are the lifeblood of cinema. How can they adapt? What are some new modes of working or networks they could consider? Are traditional methods and the cinematic experience still relevant – or even necessary? What has the independent sector achieved in terms of mitigating the situation, even if sometimes only temporarily? In short, what might the future hold?

Alemberg Ang is a producer from the Philippines whose projects focus on socio-civic issues. During the Covid-19 lockdown in Manila, he co-organised Lockdown Cinema Club, an outreach programme targeted at the most vulnerable in the local film community.



Carl Chavez is a Filipino writer and producer. His breakthrough short film, *Sorry for the Inconvenience* (2017), has been screened at festivals and won national awards. During the Covid-19 lockdown in Manila, he co-organised Lockdown Cinema Club, an outreach programme targeted at the most vulnerable in the local film community.



Anderson Le is the artistic director of the Hawaii International Film Festival and a programme consultant on Asian cinema for film festivals worldwide. He co-founded the production company East, and its recent film, *Be Water* (2020), was selected for Sundance and Cannes.



Prashant Somosundram is the general manager of The Projector, an independent cinema in Singapore. The Projector recently launched a virtual cinema platform, The Projector Plus, in response to cinema closures due to the pandemic.



PANEL DISCUSSION

**SG Originals:
Funding Short Films: Thinking Outside the Box**

3 Dec, Thu | 7pm | 60min | Online

Securing funds for making a short film is often a difficult and competitive process. However, besides the limited funds provided by cultural and film institutions, there are also opportunities to be found in other sectors. Increasingly, we see social, educational, charitable and other bodies funding short films with messages that are aligned with their aims or mission.

What are some of these projects that are available? What obligations do the filmmaker have to fulfil? What are the application procedures? How can the filmmaker balance the required messages with their own cinematic vision and use these projects to their advantage?

Aimed at young and emerging filmmakers, this panel offers ideas and practical advice for making the most of under-explored and unconventional funding opportunities for short films.

Fran Borgia is a Singapore-based producer credited with critically acclaimed films such as *Sandcastle* (2010), *Disappearing Landscape* (2013), *A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery* (2016) and *Apprentice* (2016). His latest film, *A Land Imagined* (2018), won the Golden Leopard at Locarno Film Festival.



Kan Lume is an award-winning filmmaker. His short film *Libertas* (2012) won the NETPAC Award at Tripoli Film Festival and the feature documentary *The Naked DJ* (2014) earned Kan his second NETPAC Award, for best Asian film, at Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival. He has worked on various commission projects from the German Embassy in Singapore, Asian Film Archive and National Gallery Singapore.



Sangchul Lee has worked with Lebanese film producer Mario Kassab as the head of development, and participated in various film and media projects in Singapore and around the world. He is currently the chief operating officer of C47 Investment.



Tan Wei Ting discovered the wonders of filmmaking in film school, and has never looked back since. Her debut short, *CA\$H* (2018), was selected for international competition at the 41st Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival and won Best Directing at the National Youth Film Awards.





This year we have a slimmer selection, but we retain our core objective of bringing outstanding and unmissable gems from world cinema to you. The films of 2020 continue to explore, express and reflect the times we live in through bold views and imaginative storytelling that plumb the depths of humanity.

Join us to be charmed, excited, challenged and provoked by these 73 films that capture the zeitgeist of our times.

FILMS

OPENING FILM

TIONG BAHRU SOCIAL CLUB

Wes Anderson meets *Black Mirror* in this satirical comedy that questions the construct of happiness in Singapore.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

SINGAPORE / 2020 / 88MIN / ENGLISH, CANTONESE, MANDARIN, HOKKIEN, MALAY, TAMIL / NO16

26 NOV, THU | 7PM, 8PM | SL

Ah Bee leaves his dull office job at a factory to join the Tiong Bahru Social Club – an exclusive data-driven pilot programme that aims to create the world’s happiest residents in the idyllic, pastel-hued neighbourhood of Tiong Bahru.

Employed as a happiness agent, Ah Bee is tasked with taking care of Ms Wee, a rebellious elderly resident who joined for the freebies. From looking for her cat to participating in group happiness exercises, it seems like the best job in the world.

However, he grows increasingly alienated and questions the cold, mechanical nature of achieving happiness, where every happiness agent is at risk of being replaced if they do not contribute enough to the community’s overall happiness index.

Tan Bee Thiam’s offbeat satirical comedy takes a whimsical and soft sci-fi approach to poke fun at Singapore’s preoccupation with results-driven practicalities. In a society where everything – including happiness – is quantified and managed, tender moments in which vulnerabilities are revealed become radical acts that forge real bonds and rupture the veneer of an enforced happiness. *LSW*

D Tan Bee Thiam is a Singaporean producer, writer and director who has worked on multiple award-winning films. A founding member of independent film collective 13 Little Pictures, Tan co-directed *Fundamentally Happy* (2016) with Lei Yuan Bin and produced *Snakeskin* (2015) and *As You Were* (2014), among other local films. *Tiong Bahru Social Club* is his solo directorial debut.

P Huang Junxiang
C Thomas Pang, Goh Guat Kian, Jalyin Han



OPENING FILM



A BALANCE

由宇子の天秤

A psychological drama of moralities that dives deep into the complexities of individuals, as truths are altered as much as the perception of them shifts.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

JAPAN / 2020 / 152MIN / JAPANESE

1 DEC, TUE | 6:30PM | FG7 + ONLINE



Yuko is an empathetic documentary filmmaker who works after hours at her father's cram school, where she befriends a troubled student, Mei. For her documentary, Yuko tries to unearth the truth of a sensational case of school bullying, interviewing family members of the high-school student and teacher suspected of a love affair. While she carries the immense emotional burden as conduit and mediator between tortured parties' and their truths, Yuko also has to battle her own conscience after a shocking discovery about her father.

In a world where one's conscience, self-interest and the pressures of society continually collide to form lies, perhaps balance, or healing, can be reached by revealing the truth. *FL*

D Yujiro Harumoto's debut feature, *Going the Distance* (2016), which he produced, wrote, edited and directed, was screened internationally at festivals, and received a commercial release in Japan. *A Balance*, his second feature, was selected for festivals such as Tokyo Filmex and Busan.



P Yujiro Harumoto, Tetsuya Matsushima, Sunao Katabuchi
C Kumi Takiuchi, Ken Mitsuishi, Masahiro Umeda

BEGINNING

დასაწყისი

This stellar, award-winning debut examines the extreme isolation of a woman's suffering that is quiet, though no less acute.

GEORGIA, FRANCE / 2020 / 125MIN / GEORGIAN

27 NOV, FRI | 6:30PM | FG7
4 DEC, FRI | 6:30PM | FG3



D Dea Kulumbegashvili is a Georgian film director. Her first short film, *Invisible Spaces* (2014), was nominated for the Short Film Palme d'Or, becoming the first film from independent Georgia selected for competition at Cannes. *Beginning* emerged a major winner at San Sebastián Film Festival, clinching Best Film, Best Director, Best Actress and Best Screenplay.



P Steven Darty, Adrien Dassault
C Ia Sukhitashvili, Rati Oneli, Kakha Kintsurashvili

Yana, a former actress, and her minister husband are Jehovah's Witness missionaries in a remote Georgian town. Following a horrific attack on their church, her husband leaves on a work trip. Yana, alone with her young son, is faced with a hostile community and a corrupt police. Embroiled in an identity crisis herself, Yana endures physical and psychological trauma, with no one to turn to.

Through the juxtaposition of natural scenery against cold, domestic spaces, Yana's torment is not so much seen but felt, resonating through the spaces she inhabits. Dea Kulumbegashvili's still camerawork with precise mise en scène dispassionately paints a stoic front that belies the dark undertows of a woman's suffering. *GN*

THE CLOUD IN HER ROOM

她房间里的云

A young woman returns to her hometown where she connects with the old, the new, the city and herself.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

CHINA, HONG KONG / 2020 / 101MIN / MANDARIN / R21

28 NOV, SAT | 6:30PM | FG3
5 DEC, SAT | 3:30PM | FG7



Twenty-something Muzi returns to her hometown of Hangzhou for Chinese New Year. Through interactions with her friends, family and lovers, both old and new, Muzi navigates what it means to be female – as a daughter, a sister and, most of all, as a woman who desires and wants to be desired. The black-and-white film, its inexplicable cuts and documentary-style sequences mirror the disconcerting experience of being surrounded by the new and the familiar as well as the occasionally bumpy road of a young woman's self-discovery. Zheng Lu Xinyuan brings the audiences through Muzi's journey slowly, but with a confident hand. The film ultimately emerges as a charismatic and thoughtful take on a woman's identity in a constantly changing world. *GN*

D Zheng Lu Xinyuan is a director based in Hangzhou, China. Her works have been screened at various film festivals internationally. Winner of the prestigious Tiger Award at International Film Festival Rotterdam, *The Cloud in Her Room* is her debut feature.



P Wang Zijian
C Jin Jing, Liu Dan, Chen Zhou

GERANIUM

SARDUNYA

An affecting drama about mortality, familial relationships and morality as a 19-year-old unwittingly undergoes a crash course on life.

[WORLD PREMIERE]

TURKEY / 2020 / 82MIN / TURKISH / PG13

4 DEC, FRI | 6:30PM | FG7 + ONLINE



Defne returns home in the middle of her university studies following her father's stroke to help him recuperate, and their fraught relationship gradually mends during the rehabilitative period. At the same time, her aunt, who lives with them, and the family dog are suffering from terminal illnesses. The air at home is thick with mortality, lies and malaise. Through it all, their congenial longtime housekeeper Mari tries her best to continue caring for the family. Following a family tragedy, Defne, who is implicated in it, has to face the consequences or betray her morality.

Geranium is a striking debut that shows a young woman on the cusp of adulthood, forced by circumstances to confront the human condition. *FL*

D Turkish filmmaker and educator **Çağlar Bocu** completed his PhD in cinema and television at Marmara University in Istanbul in 2018. He has made a number of short films that were screened worldwide, and *Geranium* is his debut feature.



P Asli Erdem, Çağlar Bocu
C İlayda Elif Elhîh, Ali Seçkiner Alici, Evren Duyal

MILESTONE

मील पत्थर

Facing obsolescence, a stoic truck driver tries to retain control of his life in this gritty take on what it means to become one's work.

INDIA / 2020 / 98MIN / HINDI, PUNJABI, KASHMIRI

29 NOV, SUN | 6:30PM | FG3
2 DEC, WED | 6:30PM | FG7

Ghalib, a Punjabi trucker in New Delhi, has hit a milestone. While his truck has covered 500,000 kilometres, our aging protagonist finds his life stalled by a workers' strike, the loss of his wife, and an inexplicable pain in his back. When a young and eager Pash is assigned as his understudy, Ghalib realises what he must do to keep his life's work from falling apart.

The harsh North Indian winter looms above all this, its grip constricting every worker's life. Ivan Ayr's film is a sobering portrait of a man who—even as he confronts his own disposability—insists on preserving his dignity. A stunning follow-up to *Soni* (2018), *Milestone* establishes Ayr as the humanist filmmaker of our generation. *SH*



D Ivan Ayr is a filmmaker who grew up in northern India. His debut, *Soni* (2018), garnered multiple accolades including Best Film Award at Pingyao International Film Festival. *Milestone* premiered at this year's Venice International Film Festival.



P Kimsi Singh
C Suvinder Vicky, Lakshvir Saran

NO LOVE FOR THE YOUNG

TIADA CINTA SELAMA MUDA

Poetry, movement and theatre are fused in this lyrical experiment to express the ineffable feeling of being young in today's Malaysia.

[WORLD PREMIERE]

MALAYSIA / 2020 / 85MIN / BAHASA MELAYU, ENGLISH

30 NOV, MON | 6:30PM | FG7 + ONLINE

What is passion? What is pleasure? Actors and non-actors contemplate questions of the heart and play a game of word association, ruminating on definitions. And when words are inadequate, they employ movement. Drunk on life, art and a youthful honesty, characters reveal their inner worlds, relating a generation's sensibilities.

Collectively devised by Kuala Lumpur theatre group Ensembl Teater Kaos Nol, the film's theatrical emotive thread is woven through an immersive visual language; combined with the music of poetry, *No Love for the Young* becomes a wholly original and genre-defying voice. *SH*



D Ridhwan Saidi is a Malaysian film director, theatre practitioner and novelist. His short films include *Sisa Binasa* (2019), and *No Love for the Young* is his debut feature. The author of multiple novels, Ridhwan co-founded independent publishing house, Moka Mocha Ink, and established open theatre collective Ensembl Teater Kaos Nol.



P Nurul Aizam
C Ensembl Teater Kaos Nol

TIONG BAHRU SOCIAL CLUB

Wes Anderson meets *Black Mirror* in this satirical comedy that questions the construct of happiness in Singapore.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

SINGAPORE / 2020 / 88MIN / ENGLISH, CANTONESE, MANDARIN, HOKKIEN, MALAY, TAMIL / NC16

26 NOV, THU | 7PM, 8PM | SL

Ah Bee leaves his dull office job to join the Tiong Bahru Social Club—a data-driven programme that aims to create the world's happiest residents in the idyllic neighbourhood. Employed as a happiness agent, Ah Bee is tasked with taking care of Ms Wee. From looking for her cat to participating in group happiness exercises, it seems like the best job in the world. However, he grows increasingly alienated and questions their means of achieving happiness.

In a society where happiness is quantified and managed, tender moments in which vulnerabilities are revealed become radical acts that forge real bonds and rupture the veneer of an enforced happiness. *LSW*



D Tan Bee Thiam is a Singaporean producer, writer and director. A founding member of independent film collective 13 Little Pictures, Tan co-directed *Fundamentally Happy* (2016) with Lei Yuan Bin and produced *Snakeskin* (2015) and *As You Were* (2014), among other local films. *Tiong Bahru Social Club* is his solo directorial debut.



P Huang Junxiang
C Thomas Pang, Goh Guat Kian, Jalyn Han

This film will be screened together with *Newborn* (p. 30).

THE WASTELAND

دشت خاموش

In this bleak study of human agency, a brick factory and its community fall apart in quiet desolation.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

IRAN / 2020 / 102MIN / PERSIAN, TURKISH, KURDISH / PG

3 DEC, THU | 6:30PM | FG7 + ONLINE

Bricks are replaced by cement, which is cheaper to produce. And so it is for workers at a brick factory, who recognise the looming finality. They look to their supervisor to mediate differences, while the factory owner offers lies and platitudes as salve. When that last day arrives, there is little closure: unpaid salaries, familial and ethnic tensions, unresolved romances.

The filmic style invites comparisons to Béla Tarr, Abbas Kiarostami and Persian verse. Ahmad Bahrami has, however, created a personal artistic signature, crafting a powerful story in which the individual and the spaces they inhabit are inextricably connected. Like the act of bricklaying, his images are weighty; they gain in intensity, culminating in a devastating final act. *RL*



D Ahmad Bahrami is an emerging voice to look out for in the new generation of Iranian filmmakers. He made his debut feature, *Panah*, in 2017. *The Wasteland*, his second feature, was awarded Best Film in the Orizzonti section of Venice Film Festival.



P Saeed Bashiri
C Ali Bagheri, Farrokh Nemati, Mahdieh Nassaj

SOUTHEAST ASIAN SHORT FILM COMPETITION

All films in this programme will feature Q&A with the filmmakers.

1 THE UNSEEN RIVER GIÒNG SÔNG KHÔNG NHÌN THẤY



VIETNAM, LAOS / 2020 / 23MIN / VIETNAMESE

Along the Mekong River, a woman reunites with her ex-lover at a hydroelectric plant. Meanwhile, a young man travels downstream to a temple in search of a cure for his insomnia. *KMJ*

D Phạm Ngọc Lân's previous shorts, *The Story of Ones* and *Another City*, were screened widely at festivals and galleries around the world. He is currently developing a feature, *Cu Li Never Cries*.



2 JUDY FREE



PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE / 2019 / 20MIN / FILIPINO

[INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE] SEA-SHORTS GRANT

An impressionistic child's-eye view from Judy, of the hope, longing, disruption and disappointment experienced by the families of migrant workers like hers during their infrequent reunions. *KMJ*

D Che Tagyamon's animated short *Grandma Loleng* (2016) was screened at film festivals worldwide. She is an alumna of SGIFF's Southeast Asian Film Lab 2018 and Berlinale Talents 2019.



3 RED ANINSRI; OR, TIPTOEING ON THE STILL TREMBLING BERLIN WALL

อนินทรีย์แดง



THAILAND / 2020 / 30MIN / THAI

In an undercover spy mission, a transgender woman disguises as a masculine man to lure a student activist, only to fall in love. *KMJ*

D A graduate of the film department of Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke works as a scriptwriter, film lecturer and critic. He was selected for Berlinale Talents in 2020.



PROGRAMME 1

28 Nov, Sat | 1.30pm | 85min | OT + Online

FILMS IN COMPETITION

4 THE SMELL OF COFFEE



SINGAPORE / 2020 / 12MIN / TAMIL

[ASIAN PREMIERE]

In the wake of his grandfather's passing, Raga accompanies his grieving grandmother. A faint yet familiar smell piques his curiosity, leading him on a journey of self-discovery in the fading apartment. *sm*

D Nishok Nishok is studying filmmaking at the University of Westminster in London. *The Smell of Coffee* premiered at the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen.



SOUTHEAST ASIAN SHORT FILM COMPETITION

All films in this programme will feature Q&A with the filmmakers.

1 FILIPIÑANA



PHILIPPINES, UK / 2020 / 24MIN / FILIPINO, ENGLISH

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

At a dream-like golf course on an idyllic day, Isabel, the new 'tee girl', struggles to understand her role on the greens, from social hierarchy to staving off her youthful curiosity. *vc*

D Rafael Manuel is a Filipino writer-director, producer and editor based in London. He is currently working on his debut feature also titled *Filipiñana*, based on this short film.



2 HERE IS NOT THERE

这里不是那里



SINGAPORE / 2019 / 20MIN / MANDARIN

Against the stillness of the graveyard shift, two lovers reflect on the transitory lives they lead in Singapore. They wrestle with the inevitability of their fates, unwilling to give in. *vc*

D Local filmmaker **Nelson Yeo** was selected to participate in SGIFF's Southeast Asian Film Lab in 2017. He is currently working on his debut feature, *The Drought*.



3 BÌNH



VIETNAM, SOUTH KOREA, SINGAPORE, THAILAND / 2020 / 22MIN / VIETNAMESE

SEA-SHORTS GRANT

An alluring story of an alien in human form who arrives at the construction site of a colossal temple. His human encounters include a beguiling medium who has appeared in his dreams. *sm*

D Hanoi-born **Ostin Fam** is a filmmaker based in New York. His previous short film, *short/cut*, was screened at last year's SGIFF.



PROGRAMME 2

28 Nov, Sat | 3.30pm | 80min | OT + Online

FILMS IN COMPETITION

4 SUNRISE IN MY MIND

ថ្ងៃរះក្នុងចិត្ត



CAMBODIA / 2020 / 14MIN / KHMER

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

A young beautician working late at night in a salon tentatively gives in to her desires for a young delivery driver who cruises the streets of Phnom Penh on his motorbike. *KMJ*

D Danech San is a Cambodian filmmaker. Her debut short, *A Million Years* (2018), won Best Southeast Asian Short Film at SGIFF.



SOUTHEAST ASIAN SHORT FILM COMPETITION

All films in this programme will feature Q&A with the filmmakers.

1 PEOPLE ON SUNDAY



THAILAND / 2020 / 21MIN / THAI

In this homage to *Menschen am Sonntag* (1930), the watchful surveillance of the camera captures the paradox of actors trying to relax while working, revealing the artificiality of the moving image. *vc*

D Tulapop Saenjaroen is a Thai artist and filmmaker based in Bangkok. A *Room with a Coconut View* (2018) was screened in competition at SGIFF.



2 TO CALM THE PIG INSIDE ANG PAGPAKALMA SA UNOS



PHILIPPINES / 2020 / 19MIN / CEBUANO

Myths and memories meet in this contemplation of a typhoon's devastation on a seaside city. *sm*

D Joanna Vasquez Arong started making films in Beijing before relocating back to her native Philippines. Her documentaries include *Neo-Lounge* (2007) and *Yugong Yishan* (2008).



3 ROCKETSHIP



SINGAPORE / 2020 / 18MIN / ENGLISH

[ASIAN PREMIERE]

Ten-year-old Samuel takes it upon himself to save his parents' marriage by recreating a precious shared memory. *vc*

D Mathias Choo is a graduate of Nanyang Technological University's School of Art, Design and Media. As a director and editor, his films have travelled to several international film festivals.

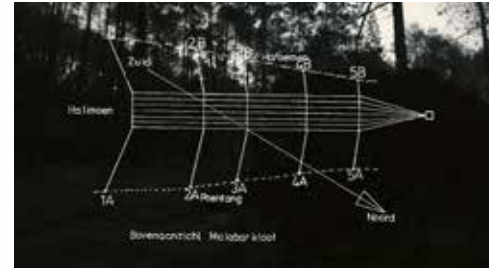


PROGRAMME 3

29 Nov, Sun | 1.30pm | 85min | OT + Online

FILMS IN COMPETITION

4 TELLURIAN DRAMA



INDONESIA / 2020 / 26MIN / BAHASA INDONESIA

[WORLD PREMIERE]

A docufiction that investigates alternative Indonesian histories through a rumination of colonial ruins, the role of technology, and the invisible power of indigenous ancestry. *sm*

D Riar Rizaldi is a Hong Kong-based Indonesian artist and researcher. His short films, such as *Kasiterit* (2019), have been screened at festivals worldwide.



SOUTHEAST ASIAN SHORT FILM COMPETITION

All films in this programme will feature Q&A with the filmmakers.

1 HOW TO DIE YOUNG IN MANILA



PHILIPPINES / 2020 / 12MIN / FILIPINO

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

An allegory for distraction, a teenage boy roams Manila looking for an anonymous hookup. The men he eyes end up dead, and he must now find his true desire. *vc*

D Petersen Vargas is a Filipino filmmaker. He is developing his second feature, *Some Nights I Feel Like Walking*, which was presented at the Cannes Cinéfondation Atelier this year.



2 PULANG 季後風



MALAYSIA, TAIWAN / 2020 / 25MIN / HAKKA, MANDARIN, CANTONESE

[INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE]

Yao-Wei takes his girlfriend home to Malaysia for the first time. In the midst of a monsoon, he tries to find the right time to tell his parents of his engagement. *KMJ*

D Malaysia-born **Kin Wai Yam** graduated from the Department of Motion Picture, National Taiwan University of the Arts. *Pulang* was his graduation film and debut.



3 ESTATE



MYANMAR / 2020 / 16MIN / BURMESE

[INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE]

A son looks after his dying father. Trapped together in the family home, old conflicts resurface while death approaches. *KMJ*

D A student at Yangon Technological University, **Lin Htet Aung** has published poetry and turned to film in 2017. He won student film awards for his shorts *Silence* and *Shower at 1am*.



PROGRAMME 4

29 Nov, Sun | 3.30pm | 85min | OT + Online

FILMS IN COMPETITION

4 THE CUP

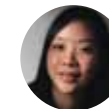


SINGAPORE / 2020 / 17MIN / TEOCHEW, CEBUANO

[WORLD PREMIERE]

Moving through the rhythms of the day, man, as an organism, needs water, sunlight, rest—and a nice cup of coffee—but not without a few mishaps. *KMJ*

D **Mark Chua** and **Lam Li Shuen's** features, *Cannonball* (2018) and *Revolution Launderette* (2019), were both screened at SGIFF. Their films have been shown internationally.



2 A TRIP TO HEAVEN THIÊN ĐƯỜNG GỌI TÊN



VIETNAM / 2020 / 15MIN / VIETNAMESE

Fifty-year-old Mdm Tam joins a bus tour to the Mekong Delta with a friend. On the trip, she bumps into her high school sweetheart and embarks on a mission of reconciliation. *vc*

D **Duong Dieu Linh** is a Vietnamese filmmaker based in Singapore. Her previous short, *Sweet Salty*, was screened in competition at last year's SGIFF.





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The winning film will be announced on Sunday 6 Dec, 9am on sgiff.com,
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For this year's Singapore Panorama, we doubled the short film programme to provide a richer experience of local films. The diverse showcase ranges from works with wider appeal to those of hybrid and unconventional forms. Together, they present a cross-section of the state of independent filmmaking in Singapore. Through their varied portayals, they capture a slice of eclectic Singapore that we hope will spark discussion and reflection.

SINGAPORE
PANORAMA

After Noon

CITIZEN HUSTLER

好公民

Work and welfare take many forms in this free-wheeling and unapologetically rowdy documentary centred on a used-goods trader.

[WORLD PREMIERE]

SEA-DOC GRANT

SINGAPORE / 2020 / 100MIN / CHINESE, HOKKIEN, TEOCHEW, ENGLISH

5 DEC, SAT | 3:30PM | OT + ONLINE

The forced closure of the Sungei Road flea market in 2017 leaves evicted hawkers like Fook Seng, in his 70s and with a variety of ailments, with little recourse. For him and his partner, negotiating is imperative to their survival—beyond their informal trade, it is also the way they wend their way through the thicket of bureaucracy to access financial aid.

Joining them is director Tan Biyun, who wears several hats in the film: a listener in warm interactions, an aide to their efforts in securing financial assistance, while amplifying moments demanding action. In this irreverent collaboration, neither filmmaker nor subject is taken for granted: "This film advertises me," Fook Seng declares. *RL*



D Tan Biyun's work focuses on community, human rights and social justice, spanning performance and installation. Her installations have been shown at the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art (2017) and in The O.P.E.N. programme of Singapore International Festival of Arts (2017).



P Tan Biyun, Sharmeen/Sifar
C Chan Fook Seng, Seah Siok Tiang

NOT MY MOTHER'S BAKING

不是我妈妈的烘焙

An unexpected romance between a Malay Muslim woman and a Chinese man whose parents run a roast pork stall.

[WORLD PREMIERE]

SINGAPORE / 2020 / 112MIN / ENGLISH, MANDARIN, BAHASA MELAYU

28 NOV, SAT | 3:30PM | FG3
4 DEC, FRI | 9:30PM | FG7

Sarah, a Malay Muslim, is the daughter of a celebrity chef. In a bid to strike out on her own as a baker, she engages Edwin to produce her baking vlogs. Despite the initial rocky encounters, they begin developing feelings for each other. But they face an awkward problem: Edwin's parents run a roast pork stall. How do the two families bridge this cultural gulf?

Not My Mother's Baking is not afraid of uncomfortable situations and brash dialogue that illustrate the characters' callousness. Instead, the film gamely employs the farcical elements to expose the ignorance and cultural insensitivities that are often swept under the carpet in Singapore. *FL*



D Remi M. Sali has been in the media industry for over two decades. He has directed music videos, telemovies and popular dramas, and produced award-winning trailers. His previous feature was the horror film, *Konpaku* (2019).



P Ho Pak Kin, Bella Julita, Sheikh Ahmad Bafadhah
C Siti Mastura Alwi, Sarah Ariffin, Vincent Tee

FARAWAY MY SHADOW WANDERED

遠く離れた影

A young man and a dancer, as well as choreography and reality, cross paths in a documentary that entangles as much as it explores.

[WORLD PREMIERE]

SINGAPORE, JAPAN / 2020 / 70MIN / JAPANESE, ENGLISH

28 NOV, SAT | 9:30PM | OT
3 DEC, THU | 9:30PM | OT

Once the heir to a family shrine, Junya leaves that behind to pursue his dreams, and now works at a pub. He befriends Sara, a visitor researching dance. Together, they return to Junya's hometown near the Sea of Japan. The friendship grows in generosity as they share personal histories—their interactions marked by tender movements and a graceful ambivalence.

Inspired by the wintry coast they travel along, *Faraway My Shadow Wandered* ebbs and flows. Its rhythms take cue from gestures that rise and fall, while undated artefacts wash up onscreen. With elegies for the past accompanied by praises for things yet to come, the film gingerly responds to an urgent question in a fractured world: What does it mean to share with strangers? *RL*



D For local filmmaker Liao Jiekai, the past is a territory, shaped by various inhabitants whom he examines. His oeuvre includes the features *Red Dragonflies* (2010) and *As You Were* (2014), while his video works have been shown at galleries and art festivals. He is pursuing his MA in film directing at Tokyo University of the Arts.



Sudhee Liao is an independent dance artist, choreographer and dance educator.

P Elysa Wendi, Jeremy Chua
C Kobayashi Junya, Sara Tan

SEMENTARA

Sementara casts a nonjudgmental eye on the anxieties of disparate individuals who call Singapore home.

[WORLD PREMIERE]

SINGAPORE / 2020 / 103MIN / ENGLISH, MANDARIN

29 NOV, SUN | 9:30PM | OT + ONLINE

Amid the noisy spectacle of Singapore's golden jubilee celebrations in 2015, filmmakers Chew Chia Shao Min and Joant Übeda conduct casual, unhurried interviews with people from different walks of life, each with their own set of values and beliefs. The subjects share deeply personal stories and their perspectives on issues such as religion, race, identity and mortality. Inspired by Chris Marker's *Le Joli Mai* (1963), the directors of *Sementara*, Malay for 'temporary', deftly weaves together scenes of profound subjectivities and societal structures to present a compelling yet sensitive portrayal of Singapore. *EC*



D Chew Chia Shao Min is pursuing her MA in filmmaking at New York University. Besides films, Singapore-based Joant Übeda also directs commercials and music videos. They previously collaborated on the short film *May and June* (2018), which was featured at SGIFF and won Best Cinematography at the Maverick Movie Awards.



P Joant Übeda
C -

All films in this programme will feature Q&A with the filmmakers.

1 21 DAYS

二十一天



SINGAPORE, US / 2020 / 18MIN / MANDARIN, TEOCHEW, CANTONESE

[WORLD PREMIERE]

Jin and his family are in mourning following his mother's death. While her spirit has returned to visit her husband, Jin is desperately looking for signs of her. *SM*

D Yong Mun Chee is a director and cinematographer known for *Where the Road Meets the Sun* (2011), which was theatrically released in the US. She won a Special Jury Award at SXSW for 9:30 (2003).



2 AND THEY ROAMED



SINGAPORE / 2020 / 14MIN / ENGLISH

[WORLD PREMIERE]

Two schoolgirls encounter the ghost of a former student in an abandoned school. Enlisting their help to pass into the afterlife, the ghost brings them around the building, reliving painful and joyous memories. *KMJ*

D Joshua Lim En is a student at LASALLE College of the Arts. He is interested in films that explore themes such as time, memory and love.



3 SEXY SUSHI

セクシーな寿司



SINGAPORE / 2020 / 3MIN / JAPANESE, ENGLISH

[ASIAN PREMIERE]

Life on a conveyor belt seems great for Sushi and his Topping friends. But as he begins to contemplate his existence, Sushi wonders if there is more to life than pimping himself out to savage consumers. *vc*

D Calleen Koh is a media specialist, working with animation, graphic design and photography. She is currently pursuing a BA in animation art at LASALLE College of the Arts.



4 FLOWER SHADOW SERENADE

花影小夜曲



SINGAPORE, AUSTRALIA / 2020 / 11MIN / MANDARIN, ENGLISH

[ASIAN PREMIERE]

In this ode to memory and loss, a familiar song leads a grandmother's spirit back to her family during the Chinese ghost month. *SM*

D Goh Lin Yuan graduated from Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne. *Flower Shadow Serenade* was screened in competition at the Palm Springs International ShortFest.



5 SAUDADE



SINGAPORE / 2020 / 20MIN / KRISTANG

[WORLD PREMIERE]

Narrated in Kristang, a critically endangered creole language of Portuguese Eurasians, *Saudade* reimagines rituals of early Eurasian kampongs to tell a story of loss and displacement. *SM*

D Russell Adam Morton is a Singaporean filmmaker and performance artist who explores folkloric myths and esoteric rituals in his works.



6 AFTER NOON



SINGAPORE / 2020 / 16MIN / ENGLISH, MANDARIN

[WORLD PREMIERE]

Two teenage boys idle away a seemingly ordinary afternoon, but as events stir up hidden feelings, confusion leads to the testing of boundaries. *KMJ*

D Koo Chia Meng received an MFA in film directing from Taipei National University of the Arts. Since 2009, he has worked in various aspects of production on films including *Ilo Ilo* (2013), *Apprentice* (2016) and *Wet Season* (2019).



All films in this programme will feature Q&A with the filmmakers.

1 MY BROTHER
मेरा भाई



SINGAPORE / 2020 / 22MIN / HINDI, ENGLISH, TAMIL

[WORLD PREMIERE]

Ram reluctantly becomes a brother figure to a young and helpless boy, both undocumented workers. Living in such intense precarity, mutual support might be the only way to survive. *vc*

D **Shreela Agarwal** graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts with a BA in film. She is now based in Mumbai, where she grew up, and Singapore.



2 NURSERY RHYMES
童谣



SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA / 2020 / 10MIN / ENGLISH, JAPANESE, HOKKIEN

[WORLD PREMIERE] SEA-SHORTS GRANT

Drawing inspiration from his memories of his grandmothers, Michael Kam imagines their childhood spent under different imperialist rule. *KMJ*

D **Michael Kam** teaches filmmaking at Ngee Ann Polytechnic's School of Film and Media Studies. His short films have travelled to numerous international film festivals, such as Berlin, Encounters and Palm Springs.



3 SILK



SINGAPORE / 2020 / 13MIN / TAMIL

[WORLD PREMIERE]

A dutiful son struggles to reunite his fractured family as they deal with his ailing father's condition. However, the shocking discovery of a family secret threatens to undermine his efforts. *KMJ*

D Local filmmaker **Don Aravind** works in film and television. His shorts have been screened widely in local and international festivals.



4 HOLDING ON, LETTING GO
释怀



SINGAPORE / 2020 / 14MIN / CHINESE, HOKKIEN

[WORLD PREMIERE]

After the death of her beloved grandmother, Ting struggles to cope with the loss, unsure of the lively funeral rituals. But beneath strong appearances, everyone copes with grief differently. *vc*

D An alumnus of Film, Sound and Video at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, **Lionel Seah's** passion for telling evocative stories has led him to pursue a career as a director.



5 WATERMELON PLEASE



SINGAPORE / 2020 / 4MIN / ENGLISH

[WORLD PREMIERE]

How does one change after having stared death in the face? In this hand-drawn animated short, a man's love for watermelon becomes the catalyst for introspection. *vc*

D A fresh graduate of Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, **Lim Jia Ying** is currently a Singapore-based freelance illustrator and animator.



6 EAST COAST PARK LOVERS



SINGAPORE / 2020 / 20MIN / ENGLISH, MANDARIN, TAGALOG

[WORLD PREMIERE]

In this microcosm of the modern world, three couples, each at a different stage of their lives and relationship, face up to the conflicts of their differing cultures, backgrounds and beliefs. *KMJ*

D **Li Lin Wee** is one of Singapore's pioneering female filmmakers. Best known for *Autograph Book* (2003) and *Gone Shopping* (2007), her films have been screened at festivals worldwide.



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Festival Starter

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Talk to Her

Female-centric narratives exploring the world through women's eyes: their emotions, psychology, perspectives and words. Finding courage, seeking hope, navigating their lives and places in the world.



On Cinema and Storytelling

Films capturing mesmerising encounters, with inspirational people and stories. The continuing adventure of cinema.

Asian Vision showcases the most exciting developments shaping the Asian film landscape. This year's selection offers a greater proportion of documentaries from Southeast Asia, not only demonstrating the strength of this genre in the region, but also proving that the documentary form is vibrant and elastic. There are also new fiction films from key auteurs who continue to deliver their bold visions. Finally, we are pleased to include a unique video essay series that spotlights promising Asian filmmakers.

ASIAN

VISION

100 TIMES REPRODUCTION OF DEMOCRACY

A tongue-in-cheek docufiction that turns authenticity on its head in this interrogation of centralised power.

[INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE]

THAILAND / 2020 / 115MIN / THAI

4 DEC, FRI | 9:30PM | OT + ONLINE

In 2013, the filmmaker's ownership of a work was revoked by his commissioners. In response, he distributed 100 copies of the award certificate and re-rendered the film 100 times on DVD, the quality of each successive version increasingly degraded until the original work became unrecognisable. Each DVD was sold as an edition of the film for 100 baht.

The performance is compared to the replacement of the Khana Ratsadon plaque—a symbol of democracy in Thailand—with a royalist plaque after it mysteriously vanishes. But it is resurrected in various guises and contexts, including the aforementioned DVD. By destabilising the notion of authenticity, this tongue-in-cheek docufiction embraces meaning-making from below as resistance in an authoritarian regime. *FL*



D Thai artist and filmmaker **Chulayarnnon Siriphol's** short film *Vanishing Horizon of the Sea* received the Special Mention at the 2014 SGIFF. In 2018, his short film *Planetarium* premiered at Cannes as part of the anthology, *10 Years Thailand*, and *Birth of Golden Snail* was screened in competition at last year's SGIFF.



P Chulayarnnon Siriphol
C Chulayarnnon Siriphol, Farida Jiraphan

ASWANG

Aswang takes an unflinching look at the nightmarish reality in Duterte-era Philippines as monstrous terror is unleashed upon the urban poor.

SEA-DOC GRANT

FRANCE, GERMANY, NORWAY, PHILIPPINES, QATAR, DENMARK / 2019 / 85MIN / FILIPINO

29 NOV, SUN | 3:30PM | TPG + ONLINE

The *aswang*, shapeshifting monsters in Philippine folklore, emerge at night to hunt their prey, striking fear in the community. In today's Philippines, the *aswang* are the police and vigilantes who kill with impunity under president Rodrigo Duterte's 'war on drugs' that targets the urban poor. As bodies mount in the streets, the nights in Manila become filled with terror and oppressive dread.

The film follows a child whose parents are in prison and an activist who fearlessly documents the deaths. Threading its way through narrow alleys in Manila's shantytowns, the camera gives us an unflinching view of a city gripped by violence and corruption. *GM*



D **Alyx Ayn Arumpac** is an up-and-coming director and producer from the Philippines. Her previous works, including *Beast* (2016) and *Garage Inventory* (2015), have been screened across Europe and in the Philippines.



P Armi Rae Cacanindin, Alyx Ayn Arumpac
C Ciriaco Santiago III, Orly Fernandez, Vincent Go

DAYS

日子

Tsai Ming-Liang returns to feature filmmaking with this tender, meditative portrait of two solitary men whose lives intersect briefly.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

TAIWAN / 2020 / 127MIN / NO DIALOGUE / R21

27 NOV, FRI | 6:30PM | TPG
2 DEC, WED | 9:30PM | TPG

Tsai Ming-Liang continues his longtime collaboration with actor and muse Lee Kang-Sheng, who in real life, and in *Days*, is plagued by chronic neck pain. Lee's character lives alone in a house up in the mountains, venturing into the city sporadically to seek different treatments for his ailment. Meanwhile, living in a small, spartan flat in Bangkok is a young man who similarly goes about his life unhurriedly, and mostly alone. One day, Lee visits Bangkok for treatment, and the two share a passionate encounter.

With plot, narrative and dialogue stripped to a bare minimum, quiet, mundane moments are allowed to unfold gently in real time. Imbued with a deeply meditative quality, *Days* is a tender study of intimacy, loneliness and the beauty of human connections. *AC*



D Known for his sensitive explorations of loneliness and urban isolation, Malaysia-born, Taiwan-based filmmaker **Tsai Ming-Liang** is a key figure in contemporary world cinema. His diverse oeuvre includes works in virtual reality and theatre as well as installations. Tsai's films are well represented in past editions of SGIFF, the last being *Stray Dogs* in 2014.



P Claude Wang
C Lee Kang-Sheng, Anong Hougheuangsy

GENUS PAN

LAHI, HAYOP

A haunting fable about myths and violence, *Genus Pan* charts humanity's dark impulses through a gold miner's tragic homecoming.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

PHILIPPINES / 2020 / 147MIN / TAGALOG / NC16

28 NOV, SAT | 6:30PM | OT + ONLINE

The island of Hugaw is rife with dark myths and strange histories. In one legend, sightings of a black horse bring certain death; in another, the miasmatic fear that clouds the island is a colonial leftover that blights the land and scars the people. Darker still are the hearts of mankind, whose greed and penchant for violence one character likens to the genus Pan, or chimpanzees, humanity's closest biological kin.

An allegory on the monsters that deprivation and avarice make of men, set against contemporary Philippines' violent, traumatic history, *Genus Pan* is a bleak examination of the inescapable fate of the underclass who remains trapped in an endless cycle of violence. The film won Best Director in the Orizzonti section at Venice. *AC*



D Award-winning Filipino filmmaker **Lav Diaz** is known for his lengthy films that deal with the themes of trauma, violence and the entanglements between national and personal histories. *The Woman Who Left* (2016) won the Venice Golden Lion, and *Season of the Devil* (2018) was shown at the 29th SGIFF.



P Lav Diaz
C Nanding Josef, Bart Guingona, DMs Boongaling

KEEP ROLLING

好好拍電影

Brimming with life and humour, *Keep Rolling* is a warm and richly humane portrait of celebrated Hong Kong filmmaker Ann Hui.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

HONG KONG / 2020 / 113MIN / CANTONESE, MANDARIN

29 NOV, SUN | 3:30PM | FG3 + ONLINE

In a filmic career spanning some four decades, Hong Kong director Ann Hui has made critical darlings and box office hits, as well as widely panned flops. But behind the accolades and pummeling from critics, Hui is as human as anyone, battling anxieties about life and career – though always maintaining her characteristic good humour and humility.

Keep Rolling offers an up-close and personal look at the trials and tribulations of an artist who has devoted her entire life to her craft. Rather than gloss over the foibles and insecurities of the documentary subject, *Keep Rolling* shines a light on them, revealing the complexities and contradictions of a modern-day maestro. *AC*



D A frequent collaborator of Ann Hui, **Man Lim Chung** is a veteran Hong Kong art director and production designer. *Keep Rolling* is his first feature.



P Jacqueline Liu, Man Lim Chung
C Ann Hui

Catch Ann Hui in conversation with Man Lim Chung (p. 20).

PLOY

Narratives of migrant workers' experiences in Singapore are stitched together in a documentary that is not afraid to play with form.

[WORLD PREMIERE]

SEA-DOC GRANT

THAILAND, SINGAPORE / 2020 / 51MIN / THAI, ENGLISH

2 DEC, WED | 6:30PM | OT + ONLINE

Longing for a life beyond her hometown in the Thai province of Buriram, Ploy moves to various Southeast Asian cities in search of work. She ends up in Singapore as a sex worker at an illegal, makeshift brothel operating under the cover of a jungle's leafy darkness that is eventually turned into a public park.

Ploy's story is interwoven with those of other migrant workers, backgrounded by scenes of labour, prohibition and surveillance. Nature, a silent witness to all this, is not spared from the violence of man's impulse to control. Employing a variety of materials such as photographs and paintings, *Ploy* joins a wave of recent films that centres these voices from the margins. *SH*



D **Prapat Jiwarangsana** is a visual artist and film director from Thailand. His recent documentaries – *The Asylum* (2015), *The Wandering Ghosts* (2017) and *Destination Nowhere* (2018) – focus on the stories of migrant workers in Asia, and have been screened at film festivals in Rotterdam and Singapore.



P Graiwoot Chulphongsathorn
C –

Ploy will be screened together with *You and I* (p. 60).

THE SALT IN OUR WATERS

নোনাজলের কাব

A sculptor from the city visits a remote coastal village in Bangladesh where he faces challenges to his world views and beliefs.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

BANGLADESH, FRANCE / 2020 / 106MIN / BENGALI

29 NOV, SUN | 6:30PM | TPG + ONLINE

Rudro, a well-meaning artist from the city, ventures into a remote coastal village to work on his figurative sculptures. However, he finds his secular values challenged by the village's religious dictates and social mores, which leads to conflict. Meanwhile, Tuni, the daughter of Rudro's landlord, falls for him, but their romance is frowned upon. A seafaring people, the villagers' survival hinges on their seasonal catches, which are in turn subject to the capriciousness of nature. Can one's god temper an increasingly volatile climate?

Amidst exquisite cinematography framed by open waters, turbulence in the film gradually intensifies as the characters find their respective shores to cling onto. *FL*



D Raised in the capital Dhaka, Bangladeshi director and screenwriter **Rezwan Shahriar Sumit** was a Tisch Fellow of New York University's graduate film programme. *The Salt in Our Waters*, his debut feature, was screened internationally, including Busan and London.



P Ilann Girard
C Fazlur Rahman Babu, Titas Zia, Tasnova Tamanna

THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE SEVEN SONGS

لیلا اور سات گیت

A lyrical tale of the circumstances of a young woman from a nomadic tribe doubles as a timely comment on the tense Kashmiri situation today.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

INDIA / 2020 / 96MIN / GOJRI, HINDI

29 NOV, SUN | 6:30PM | OT + ONLINE

After Laila marries a fellow nomadic tribesman, she and the rest of their tribe migrate to mountainous plains. Their move attracts the attention of local police officers, who are in awe of Laila's beauty. Through seven folk songs, Pushpendra Singh weaves a tale in which Laila interrogates what it means to be a woman desired by many but unable to act on desires of her own – an allegory of the political situation in Kashmir. Set against the beautiful Himalayan mountains in Kashmir and Jammu, Singh's lyrical, sometimes playful, story is a poignant comment on life at the intersection of desire, politics and culture. *GN*



D **Pushpendra Singh** is an Indian actor, writer and filmmaker whose works have travelled internationally including the Berlinale. His films focus on the impact that tradition, culture and politics has on the everyday lives of marginalised individuals or communities. His previous features include *The Honour Keeper* (2014) and *Ashwatthama* (2017).



P Pushpendra Singh, Gulab Singh Tanwar, Ajit Singh Rathore, Sanjay Gulati
C Navjot Randhawa, Sadakkit Bijran, Shahnawaz Bhat

TRUE MOTHERS

朝が来る

A subtle yet electrifying mystery drama that sensitively deconstructs the ideal of a nuclear family.

JAPAN / 2020 / 139MIN / JAPANESE

29 NOV, SUN | 9:30PM | FG7
2 DEC, WED | 6:30PM | FG3

Satoko and Kiyokazu struggle to come to terms with the news of their infertility, trying various treatments to conceive. Eventually, through an adoption agency, they welcome a baby boy into their lives, fulfilling their ideal of a family. But as the couple navigate the challenges of parenthood, they are met with a bombshell: a woman claiming to be the boy's mother demands for him to be returned to her.

Naomi Kawase brings to life the big-screen adaptation of the 2015 novel of the same name by Mizuki Tsujimura. Told through multiple perspectives, *True Mothers* is an emotionally sincere dive into the fears and morality of adoption, reiterating that family is not limited by biological connection. *vc*



D Naomi Kawase is a staple name of Japanese cinema and a regular of the film festival circuit. She was the focus of a special programme at the 27th SGIFF. Kawase's films often navigate harsh realities, intertwining them with the spirituality of physical landscape. Her 2007 film *The Mourning Forest* won the Grand Prix at Cannes.



P Yumiko Takebe
C Hiromi Nagasaki, Arata Iura, Aju Makita

VEINS OF THE WORLD

DIE ADERN DER WELT

A young boy must decide between supporting his family or honoring his father's traditions in this gentle and uplifting Mongolian drama.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

GERMANY, MONGOLIA / 2020 / 97MIN / MONGOLIAN / PG13

5 DEC, SAT | 6:30PM | OT + ONLINE

Eleven-year-old Amra and his family live the traditional Mongolian way, respecting their land despite the onslaught of international mining companies. Struggling to resist the ways of big corporations and the threat to their livelihoods, Amra and his community find their resilience tested. In time, Amra must decide between forsaking his dreams in order to care for his family or find the courage to stay true to himself.

Veins of the World reflects how indigenous communities deal with the imposition of modernity on longstanding traditions. With its strong message on youth empowerment through the conservation of indigenous heritage, the film had its world premiere in the Generation section at this year's Berlin International Film Festival. *AAB*



D Byambasuren Davaa is an award-winning Mongolian director, writer and producer. Her debut documentary *The Story of the Weeping Camel* (2003) was a Best Documentary nominee at the 77th Academy Awards. Her other features include *The Cave of the Yellow Dog* (2005) and *The Two Horses of Genghis Khan* (2009). *Veins of the World* is her second fiction film.



P Eva Kemme, Tobias Siebrt, Ansgar Frerich
C Bat-Ireedui Batmunkh, Enerel Tumen, Algirchamin Baatarsuren

WIFE OF A SPY

スパイの妻

After stumbling across an alarming national secret, a Japanese businessman and his wife embark on a treacherous journey to bring this discovery to light.

JAPAN / 2020 / 115MIN / JAPANESE

3 DEC, THU | 9:30PM | FG7
5 DEC, SAT | 3:30PM | FG3

Winner of the Silver Lion for Best Director at the Venice Film Festival, *Wife of a Spy* follows Kobe-based merchant Yusaku and his wife Satoko as they attempt to expose a horrific national secret. Navigating a complex, dangerous web of wartime political and military figures, Yusaku and Satoko's marriage and trust in each other also enter uncharted waters. This first period piece by the prolific Kiyoshi Kurosawa ingeniously shapeshifts between captivating romance, electrifying spy thriller and elegant historical drama. With a side plot involving the making of a film, *Wife of a Spy* also becomes a thoughtful reflection on the role of cinema in archiving, capturing and disclosing the truth. *SM*



D Kiyoshi Kurosawa is a Japanese director who first rose to prominence for his work in the crime and horror genres with films like *Cure* (1997) and *Pulse* (2001). He won the Jury Prize of the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes for family drama *Tokyo Sonata* (2008) and followed up with the Best Director award in the same section for his 2015 film *Journey to the Shore*.



P Keisuke Tsuchihashi, Takashi Sawada, Satoshi Takada, Tamon Kondo
C Yu Aoi, Issey Takahashi, Ryota Bando

THE WOMAN WHO RAN

도망친 여자

Continuing in his signature of repetition and difference, Korean auteur Hong Sang-Soo's latest focuses on women's interactions, revealing undercurrents of ambivalence.

SOUTH KOREA / 2020 / 77MIN / KOREAN / PG13

1 DEC, TUE | 9:30PM | FG3
5 DEC, SAT | 6:30PM | FG3

Hong's longtime collaborator Kim Min-Hee stars again as the protagonist in this trifurcated film. She plays Gam Hee, who, on the rare occasion of her husband's absence, visits two friends and bumps into a third. Mundane, meandering conversations between women – and the occasional men – play out in long takes with precise performances, yielding complex character studies. Through these interactions, Gam Hee's perception of the world and herself is subtly altered.

Resuming his characteristically unassuming yet self-reflexive directorial style, Hong once again transforms the quotidian into insightful observations about people and their relationships with seemingly effortless ease. *GN*



D Hong Sang-Soo is a South Korean film director and screenwriter who is known for his minimalist and intricate depictions of everyday life. He won the prestigious Golden Leopard at Locarno Film Festival for *Right Now, Wrong Then* (2015). A familiar name in the film festival circuit, Hong bagged the Silver Bear for Best Director at this year's Berlinale for *The Woman Who Ran*.



P Hong Sang-Soo
C Kim Min-Hee, Seo Young-Hwa, Song Seon-Mi

YELLOW CAT

ZHELTAYA KOSHKKA

A girl and a gun may be all you need to make movies, but it takes a lot more to open a cinema in the Kazakh steppes, it seems.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

KAZAKHSTAN, FRANCE / 2020 / 89MIN /
KAZAKH, RUSSIAN / PG13

5 DEC, SAT | 1:30PM | OT + ONLINE



D Adilkhan Yerzhanov is one of Kazakhstan's most prolific directors, with a body of work spanning multiple genres. *The Owners* (2014) was screened in competition at SGIFF, and *The Gentle Indifference of the World* made its premiere in Cannes' Un Certain Regard section in 2018. *Yellow Cat* is his ninth feature film.



P Serik Abishev, Olga Khlaseva, Guillaume de Seille
C Azamat Nigmanov, Kamila Nugmanova

To others, Kermek is an ex-con and a blithering idiot. To himself, he is a wide-eyed fanboy of Alain Delon who wants to build his own cinema. Accompanied by his beloved Eva, he relies on his pluck and a surprising sensibility for the cinematic—a folk hero for the screen. But the wilder their dreams, the more saboteurs they find on their tails: police and mafia, all in a territory where everything happens in full view.

Genre-savvy as always, Adilkhan Yerzhanov treks across sparse landscapes and classical cinema history to deliver a measured mix of the deadpan, the hopeful and the absurd. This is a film that wears its heart (and references) on its sleeve, approaching grim realities with a sincerity that may move the deepest cynics. *RL*

YOU AND I

Meeting in their youth as political detainees, Kaminah and Kusdalini embark on a lifelong journey together, supporting each other through the challenges of growing old.

INDONESIA / 2020 / 76MIN / BAHASA INDONESIA

2 DEC, WED | 6:30PM | OT + ONLINE



D Born in Bandung and currently based in Surakarta, Central Java, **Fanny Chotimah** works as a freelance writer. She is involved in women's issues as well as the literary and film communities. *You and I* is her directorial debut and first foray into filmmaking.



P Amerta Kusuma, Tazia Teresa Darryanto, Yulia Evina Bhara
C Kaminah, Kusdalini

Kaminah and Kusdalini met as Indonesian political detainees in 1965, when both were on the cusp of adulthood. After being rejected by her hometown, Kaminah went to live with Kusdalini. Since then, they have been inseparable, living together in Surakarta, Central Java. Now, in their 70s, they survive on the kindness of their neighbours, and the crackers that they sell. Growing old hand in hand, *You and I* charts a delicate moment in time when the pair are faced with the heartbreaking realities of growing old.

Fanny Chotimah skillfully stands as an observer, capturing the last few moments of a beautiful relationship. Her directorial debut, *You and I* exemplifies the best of humanity, reminding us to appreciate the simple, small gestures in life.

You and I will be screened together with *Ploy* (p. 56).

MONOGRAPHS

Monographs is a new series of films commissioned by Singapore's Asian Film Archive, conceived as a platform for engaging the Asian film community in discourse on the moving image. Originating as a response to the uncertainties of the pandemic, the current programme of 10 video essays showcases diverse filmmaking talents engaging with contemporary ideas and creating a fresh, dynamic interplay of stories and images. The films are grouped thematically into **Motifs** and **Movements**: the first is focused on the immediate, the visceral and the gaze; the latter on reflections, memories and histories.

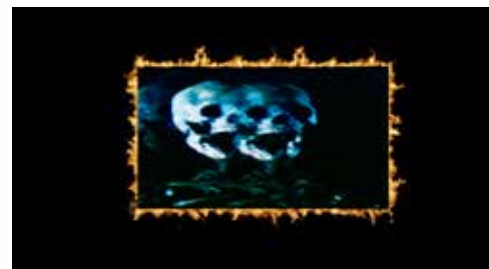
MONOGRAPHS MOTIFS

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

1 Dec, Tue | 6:30pm | 69min | OT + Online

1 GHOST LIKE US

INDONESIA, SINGAPORE / 2020 / 20MIN /
BAHASA INDONESIA



A multilayered, haunted film that invokes the spectres of Indonesian horror cinema to examine the othering of people on the peripheries. *FL*

D Riar Rizaldi is a Hong Kong-based Indonesian artist and researcher. His short films, such as *Kasiterit* (2019), have been screened at festivals worldwide.



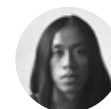
2 DEATH OF SOLDIER

VIETNAM, SINGAPORE / 2020 / 14MIN / VIETNAMESE



A montage featuring scenes of soldiers' deaths in Vietnamese propaganda war films reveals striking similarities, highlighting their crass nationalist agenda. *FL*

D Truong Minh Quý is a Vietnamese filmmaker. His second feature, *The Tree House* (2019), premiered at Locarno Film Festival, followed by screenings in New York and SGIFF.



1 Dec, Tue | 6:30pm | 69min | OT + Online

3 IRANI BAG



IRAN, UK, SINGAPORE / 2020 / 6MIN / NO DIALOGUE

In post-revolutionary Iranian cinema, the humble bag is often deployed as a surrogate for human touch, sometimes to hilarious effect. *FL*

D Based in London and Shiraz, filmmaker **Maryam Tafakory** works with filmic and textual collages, interweaving poetry, auto-ethnography, aural archive and cryptic forms of narrative.



4 SAVED BY THE PARTY-STATE



CHINA, GERMANY, POLAND, SINGAPORE / 2020 / 15MIN / MANDARIN, ENGLISH

Maja Korbecka offers a sharp, feminist analysis of two Chinese films made during different turning points in China's history, both dealing with Mao's campaign to 're-educate' former sex workers. *FL*

D **Maja Korbecka** is a freelance writer, translator and film studies researcher focusing on Sinophone cinemas. She is currently pursuing her PhD at Freie Universität Berlin.



5 HER FIVE LIVES



UZBEKISTAN, SINGAPORE / 2020 / 13MIN / NO DIALOGUE

The modern history of Uzbekistan is told through its cinematic history, focusing on the evolution of female heroine archetypes in Uzbek films. *FL*

D Artist **Saodat Ismailova** came of age in post-Soviet Uzbekistan. Her work has been shown at the Venice Biennale, and she is currently working on her second feature, *Barazh*.



1 Dec, Tue | 9:30pm | 83min | OT + Online

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

1 BRAVE REVOLUTIONARY REDUBBED



INDIA, SINGAPORE / 2020 / 20MIN / ENGLISH, HINDI

A close study of the cathartic final scene of Hindi box office hit *Krantiveer* (*Brave Revolutionary*), now a popular meme, reveals the instability of meaning and the power of one's subjectivity. *FL*

D Artist **Kush Badhwar**, who works across mediums, has shown at Videobrasil and the Berlinale. **Renu Savant** is an award-winning filmmaker whose work centres on the methodologies of documentation and the limits of fiction in film.



2 SPIRIT FILM



PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE / 2020 / 20MIN / NO DIALOGUE

Using archival footage, Raya Martin resurrects the fraught history of Philippine film, which leads us to wonder about the future of cinema—as the film asks, "How do we watch movies without cinema?" *FL*

D **Raya Martin** is a prolific Filipino director known for his breakthrough feature *Independencia* (2009). His works have been presented at Documenta 13 and New York's Museum of Modern Art.



3 A WEIRDO NEVER FEVER OVERRY



VIETNAM, THAILAND, CAMBODIA, SINGAPORE / 2020 / 14MIN / NO DIALOGUE

Arnont Nongyao's 'travelogue' about his personal history and stories is a hallucinatory journey into a fog of glitch, noise and fragments of memories, where bliss resides in the fuzzy edges of meaning. *FL*

D Based between Lumphun and Saigon, **Arnont Nongyao** is a sound and video artist whose works have been shown internationally. He was a participant in the Singapore Biennale 2019.



1 Dec, Tue | 9:30pm | 83min | OT + Online

4 REMINISCENCES



MYANMAR, SINGAPORE / 2020 / 15MIN / BURMESE

With his father, grandfather and uncles involved in Burmese cinema in one way or another, Maung Okkar's family history is inextricably entwined with Myanmar's film history. *FL*

D Burmese filmmaker **Maung Okkar's** short films have been screened internationally. He is actively involved in film restoration projects in his home country and overseas.



5 CASTING A SPELL TO ALTER REALITY



He would describe the smell as something akin to scented paper.

GERMANY, SINGAPORE / 2020 / 14MIN / ENGLISH, MANDARIN, HAKKA

Using scenes from Hou Hsiao-Hsien's *Coming of Age* trilogy, Pam Virada presents an entrancing, lyrical study of physical and psychological interiors shaped by spellbinding magic-realist stories. *FL*

D Bangkok-born **Pam Virada** is a visual artist based in Amsterdam. Her most recent solo exhibition was held in 2019 at TheTip in Frankfurt.



As part of the partnership with Asian Film Archive on Monographs, SGIFF's Youth Jury & Critics Programme participants this year will use Monographs as a case study. Under the mentorship of Chris Fujiwara, they will produce two video essays in response to the films to expand the creative conversation. The works will be published on SGIFF's Film Academy website, filmacademy.sgiff.com. For more information on the Youth Jury & Critics Programme, please see page 78.

Compelling stories with distinctive perspectives from both masters and emerging names, those making an essential contribution to world cinema.

This year's selection sees several politically charged stories in the form of dystopian allegory, devilish figures and accusatory polemic, all of them urgent and pertinent in questioning the current state of justice in different contexts. The search for personal identity continues to resonate, while several delightful films centre on love, the bringing of joy and the power of emotions. Expansive landscapes framing their respective protagonist's quest for personal freedom characterise two exceptional films that show US independent cinema at its best.

CINEMA

TODAY

First Cow

AMMONITE

In this period romance starring Kate Winslet and Saoirse Ronan, each little gesture of desire carries immeasurable weight.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

UK / 2020 / 117MIN / ENGLISH

28 NOV, SAT | 6:30PM | FG8

Mary Anning wears a seemingly impenetrable exterior, not unlike a fossil. Leading a humble existence as a fossil hunter, her brilliance as a palaeontologist is systematically undermined in patriarchal and classist Victorian England. One day, Charlotte, a wealthy young woman suffering from melancholia, arrives at Mary's shop with her husband, who leaves her behind to convalesce. Mary begrudgingly nurses Charlotte back to health; over time, both unearthen a tenderness for each other.

Winslet's and Ronan's breathtaking performances take the audience on a deep dive into forbidden love. With the ravishing Jurassic Coast framing the duet, *Ammonite* cements Francis Lee's place among the most exciting visionaries in queer cinema today. *SH*



D **Francis Lee** is a British filmmaker best known for his debut feature, *God's Own Country* (2017). Dubbed "the Yorkshire *Brokeback Mountain*", the gay drama won multiple accolades, including the World Cinema Direction Award at Sundance. Lee was awarded Outstanding Newcomer for British Feature Film Writing at the British Screenwriters' Awards in 2018.



P Ian Canning, Emile Sherman, Fodhla Cronin O'Reilly
C Kate Winslet, Saoirse Ronan, Gemma Jones

DOWNSTREAM TO KINSHASA

EN ROUTE POUR LE MILLIARD

Dieudo Hamadi's latest documentary on the survivors of Congo's Six-Day War is a triumphant show of the strength of the human spirit.

[ASIAN PREMIERE]

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, FRANCE, BELGIUM / 2020 / 90MIN / LINGALA, SWAHILI

3 DEC, THU | 6:30PM | OT + ONLINE

In 2000, the town of Kisangani became the epicentre of a war between Uganda and Rwanda that lasted six days. Two decades later, the tragedy is a faded memory in the country's history. Now, the survivors—mostly orphaned, widowed or suffering from permanent disabilities—are seeking their rightful compensation, enduring a treacherous journey along the Congo River to the capital Kinshasa for a chance to be heard.

Downstream to Kinshasa is an emotive work of memory from one of the most prolific voices in African cinema. Through creative interpretation and unobtrusive yet dynamic camerawork, Dieudo Hamadi's raw and impassioned story about those abandoned by the government became the first Congolese film to be selected at Cannes Film Festival. *AAB*



D **Dieudo Hamadi** is a Congolese director, writer, cinematographer and editor. His first feature documentary, *Atalaku* (2013), won the Joris Ivens Award at Cinéma du Réel. His other critically acclaimed works include *National Diploma* (2014), *Mama Colonel* (2017) and *Kinshasa Makambo* (2018). *Downstream to Kinshasa* is his fifth feature documentary.



P Quentin Laurent, Frédéric Féraud, Dieudo Hamadi
C Victims of the Six-Day War

FIRST COW

In Kelly Reichardt's atypical Western, two outcasts strike an unlikely entrepreneurial friendship in 19th-century Oregon.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

USA / 2020 / 122MIN / ENGLISH / PG13

5 DEC, SAT | 6:30PM | TPG + ONLINE

When 'Cookie', a hired cook, discovers Lu, a Chinese immigrant-turned-fugitive, in the woods, he offers his tent as a safehouse. An off-chance reunion later bonds the two further, as they try to scheme their way to a better life. What follows is an enduring tale of friendship between two gentle men, propelled by kindness under unforgiving circumstances, amidst the promise of the American dream.

In her seventh offering since 2016's award-winning *Certain Women*, Kelly Reichardt offers an enthralling tale of the little guy versus the big guy, whilst highlighting the intimacy in male camaraderie. *AAB*



D **Kelly Reichardt** is an American screenwriter and director. She has made a number of critically acclaimed works including her debut, *River of Grass* (1994), *Old Joy* (2006), *Wendy and Lucy* (2008) and *Certain Women* (2016). The latter three have been presented at previous editions of SGIFF.



P Vincent Savino, Anish Savjani, Neil Kopp
C John Magaro, Orion Lee, Toby Jones

GAGARINE

In this moving magic-realist tale, a teenage boy copes with the loss of his beloved community and home with gravity-defying means.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

FRANCE / 2020 / 97MIN / FRENCH

29 NOV, SUN | 6:30PM | FG7 + ONLINE
 30 NOV, MON | 6:30PM | FG3

Youri, who dreams of being an astronaut, has lived his whole life in Cité Gagarine, a real-life housing project built in the '60s and named after Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin. Youri's life and that of Cité Gagarine are deeply entwined: The building contains his childhood memories, and the community there is all he has ever known.

Following news of its planned demolition, Youri and his friends try to save the building, but residents gradually vacate. All life is soon drained from the edifice, where Youri resolutely remains. In a stunning magical turn, he creates a spaceship within the complex, and floats gently in space. *Gagarine* is a wildly imaginative exploration of isolation and community—themes that are especially relevant today. *LSW*



D French filmmakers **Fanny Liatard** and **Jérémy Trouilh** have been making films with a keen interest in documenting changes in urban spaces. *Gagarine*, their debut feature, is based on their 2016 short film of the same title. *Gagarine* was part of Cannes Film Festival's official selection this year.



P Julie Billy, Carole Scotta
C Alséni Bathily, Lyna Khoudri, Jamil McCraven

HERE WE ARE

An uplifting drama about a father's love for his son and the difficulties of letting go.

ISRAEL, ITALY / 2020 / 92MIN / HEBREW / PG13

27 NOV, FRI | 9:30PM | FG7 + ONLINE

Proud middle-aged single father Aharon's life revolves around his autistic son, Uri, who has grown into a teenager who loves Charlie Chaplin films and animals. Their heartwarming daily routine is uprooted when his ex-wife demands that it is time for Uri to live in a specialised institution so that he can be more independent. Father and son are deeply reluctant to part with each other and leave the safe and comfortable reality that they have built together. Torn between the pressure of letting go and his instinct to protect his son, Aharon, on a whim, takes a step into the unknown, leaving behind a world of familiarity for both. *FL*



D Nir Bergman is an Israeli film and television writer and director. He is known for his debut *Broken Wings* (2002), whose accolades include the Grand Prix at Tokyo International Film Festival, and television series *BeTipul*, which was adapted into the award-winning HBO series *In Treatment*. *Here We Are* is his fifth feature fiction.



P Eitan Mansuri, Jonathan Doweck, Marica Stocchi
C Shai Avivi, Noam Imber, Smadar Wolfman

IDENTIFYING FEATURES

SIN SEÑAS PARTICULARES

In Mexico's northern frontier region, lyrical and horrific moments follow a mother who knows no bounds in finding her missing son.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

MEXICO, SPAIN / 2020 / 97MIN / SPANISH, ZAPOTECO / NC16

30 NOV, MON | 6:30PM | OT + ONLINE
 4 DEC, FRI | 3:30PM | OT



D Director and producer **Fernanda Valadez's** first short film, *De Este Mundo* (2010), received the Best Short Film Award at Guanajuato Film Festival. *Identifying Features*, her feature debut, won the Audience Award and Jury Screenplay Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. She is currently writing her next feature, *Rambler*.



P Astrid Rondero
C Mercedes Hernández, David Illescas, Juan Jesús Varela

Magdalena's son disappears while trying to enter the United States. Not acknowledging his death, she retraces his steps to seek the truth. Along the way she meets Miguel, recently deported from the US and returning to a home that is no more. In the borderlands that their search takes them through, peril is understood yet seldom recognisable, while the kindness of strangers exists alongside devilish aggressors.

Fernanda Valadez looks beyond ruin to embrace a visual signature of distortions and apparitions, never far from our incendiary reality. Rounded off by unyieldingly stoic performances and Clarice Jensen's haunting score, this smouldering thriller both retells and resists the extremes of a humanitarian crisis. *RL*

MALMKROG

A period chamber drama that challenges the existence of absolutes – even death.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

ROMANIA / 2020 / 200MIN / FRENCH, HUNGARIAN, GERMAN, RUSSIAN / PG13

27 NOV, FRI | 6:30PM | OT + ONLINE

In an ostentatious manor in 19th-century Transylvania, six aristocrats spar with one another about the nature of good and evil, war, mortality and religion. Their serious pontifications are backgrounded by the constant presence of expressionless servants working in perfectly choreographed movements. Contradictions abound and no resolution is ever reached.

Based on Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovyov's influential text, *War and Christianity: Three Conversations*, *Malmkrog* illustrates the violence of dogmatism cloaked in intellect, yet the incessant discursive turns also call into question the existence of absolutes – including death. The film won Best Director in the Encounters section at the Berlin International Film Festival. *FL*



D **Cristi Puiu** is an award-winning Romanian director and screenwriter who is regarded as the pioneer of Romanian New Wave. His critically acclaimed second feature, *The Death of Mr Lăzărescu* (2005), won the Prix Un Certain Regard at Cannes. *Malmkrog* is his sixth feature film.



P Anca Puiu, Smaranda Puiu
C Frédéric Schulz-Richard, Agathe Bosch, Diana Sakalauskaite

NEW ORDER

NUEVO ORDEN

In this taut dystopian thriller, a posh wedding is interrupted by unwelcome guests who seek to destabilise the current social order in Mexico.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

MEXICO / 2020 / 86MIN / SPANISH / M18

30 NOV, MON | 9:30PM | FG7
 4 DEC, FRI | 9:30PM | FG3



A newlywed's lavish wedding celebration takes an unimaginable turn for the worst when angry dispossessed protestors stage a coup d'état at their swanky private residence. The violent upheaval by the disenfranchised in Mexico immediately gives way to a more insidious evil: a military that capitalises on the riots to extort from the rich by imprisoning and torturing them for ransom. The poor become further stratified, their lives in constant peril in the new dystopian state rule.

New Order's unapologetic indictment of class and racial inequalities as well as state corruption resonates well beyond the Latin American experience, providing an extreme depiction of a future if present disparities are left unchecked. *LSW*

D Mexican filmmaker **Michel Franco** is no stranger to the festival circuit, known for his unflinching portrayals of suffering and trauma onscreen. Two of his features, *After Lucia* (2012) and *April's Daughter* (2017), clinched the Jury Prize in Cannes' Un Certain Regard section. *New Order*, his sixth feature film, premiered at Venice, where it won the Grand Jury Prize.



P Michel Franco, Eréndira Núñez Larios, Cristina Velasco L.
C Naian González Norvind, Diego Boneta, Mónica del Carmen

NIGHT OF THE KINGS

LA NUIT DES ROIS

The condemned do not go gently into the good night, fighting with their stories instead, in this kinetic and dizzying thriller.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

CÔTE D'IVOIRE, FRANCE, CANADA, SENEGAL / 2020 / 93MIN / FRENCH, DIOULA, NOUCHI

4 DEC, FRI | 6:30PM | OT + ONLINE

The writer Joan Didion once said we tell ourselves stories in order to live, and this frenetic feature takes that aphorism up to eleven. A pickpocket enters a notorious prison expecting the worst, only to be given new garb and a new name: Roman. The prisoners are ruled less by guards than rites, and on a red-mooned night, Roman is to tell them tales—what awaits him after is unknown.

With Roman's desperate tale of Zama King, an outlaw who witnesses various periods in Ivorian history, *Night of the Kings* not only pays homage to West African griot storytelling. From pantomime and mythology, down to the expressions Roman wears, it testifies to the ability of fictions to write themselves, no matter how forsaken its authors may seem. *RL*



D Beginning as a radio reporter, **Philippe Lacôte** from Ivory Coast has gone on to produce documentaries and narrative-driven works. His first feature, *Run* (2014), was presented at Cannes' Un Certain Regard. *Night of the Kings*, his second feature, was shown at Venice, Toronto and New York film festivals.



P Delphine Jaquet, Yanick Létourneau, Ernest Konan, Yoro Mbaye

C Koné Bakary, Steve Tientcheu, Rasmané Ouedraogo

NOMADLAND

In this graceful portrait of nomadism, Chloé Zhao challenges the romanticism of American freedom against a forced life on the road.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

USA / 2020 / 108MIN / ENGLISH / M18

28 NOV, SAT | 9:30PM | FG3 + FG7

Alongside a whole generation of middle-class, middle-aged Americans affected by the recession, Fern takes to the roads. Living in her van, she chases seasonal jobs as they come along, spending summers in desert communes. On her journey, Fern meets many other nomads. They enter Fern's world, like short chapters in a story, each with a wealth of tales from their own travels. While this camaraderie gives her temporary respite, Fern's heart lies in wandering. Her unwillingness to settle down propels her to move steadfastly onwards.

Chloé Zhao presents a tender antithesis to the American dream. Her sensitivity to transitory connections and instinctive empathy craft a deeply meaningful, circular tale of introspection. *vc*



D Born in Beijing, **Chloé Zhao** is a writer, director and producer currently based in the United States. Zhao's previous features *Songs My Brothers Taught Me* (2015) and *The Rider* (2017) question intimately the American way of life. Zhao continues this discourse with *Nomadland*, which won the Golden Lion at this year's Venice Film Festival.



P Chloé Zhao, Frances McDormand, Peter Spears, Mollye Asher, Dan Janvey

C Frances McDormand, David Strathairn, Linda May

A PERFECTLY NORMAL FAMILY

EN HELT ALMINDELIG FAMILIE

A young girl struggles to deal with her transsexual father's transition in this contemplative semi-autobiographical debut.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

DENMARK / 2020 / 97MIN / DANISH / M18

5 DEC, SAT | 9:30PM | OT + ONLINE

Emma shares a very ordinary life with her seemingly tight-knit family. Her supportive parents Thomas and Helle cheer her on at her football matches, and her older sister Caroline still makes time for her despite a busy schedule. However, all this changes when her parents announce their divorce with a bombshell: Thomas wishes to become a woman.

Malou Reymann draws from her own experiences in this powerful, sincere and quietly observant debut feature showing the crumbling of the archetypal nuclear family unit, whilst grasping at the hope that no matter what happens, a family will always stay a family. *A Perfectly Normal Family* premiered at Rotterdam where it garnered the Big Screen Award. *AAB*



D **Malou Reymann** is a Danish filmmaker and actress. She holds a degree in literature from the University of Copenhagen and a master's in Directing Fiction from the National Film and Television School in England. Her short film, *13*, was named Best Short Film at the 2011 Odense International Film Festival.



P Matilda Appelin, René Ezra

C Kaya Toft Loholt, Mikkel Boe Følsgaard, Rigmor Rante

SLALOM

A tense, compelling drama of sexual abuse in the world of high-performance sports.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

FRANCE / 2020 / 90MIN / FRENCH / R21

30 NOV, MON | 9:30PM | OT + ONLINE

Slalom follows Lyz, a 15-year-old competitive skier who falls prey to the sexual advances of her coach. Throughout the film, the emotionally isolated Lyz hurtles down the physical slopes and an internal whirlwind of pleasure and pain, as she struggles to understand her own identity while being Fred's student, lover and victim. Relying less on script than on body language, Charlène Favier effectively communicates the psychological trauma experienced by Lyz. Chilling and disconcerting, *Slalom* makes for an essential watch in the #MeToo era, particularly following the accounts of abuse emerging from the sports world. *GN*



D **Charlène Favier** is a French writer and director whose previous works include short films and a documentary. Her work often features strong female protagonists who navigate social and personal circumstances in search of their identity. *Slalom*, her debut feature, was selected for Cannes.



P Edouard Mauriat, Anne-Cécile Berthomeau

C Jérémie Renier, Noée Abita, Marie Denard

THE TRUFFLE HUNTERS

Old-timers and their canine friends go on perilous journeys for elusive truffles in this insightful and sumptuous documentary.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

ITALY, USA, GREECE / 2020 / 84MIN / ITALIAN, PIEDMONTESE / R21

29 NOV, SUN | 9:30PM | TPG
3 DEC, THU | 9:30PM | TPG

The Alba white truffle is a most sought-after delicacy, fetching exorbitant prices at auctions and favoured in world cuisine by the elite of society. But what about the people whose purpose in life is to search for this lavish ingredient, no matter how arduous the task?

Filmmakers Michael Dweck and Gregory Kershaw shine a light on this disappearing trade, following some eccentric old boys and their loyal furry companions, as they traipse through the forests of northern Italy and contend with corporate villains who no longer respect the traditional ways. Delightful, humorous and visually stunning, this documentary was executive produced by Luca Guadagnino. *AAB*



D Michael Dweck is an award-winning filmmaker and visual artist. **Gregory Kershaw** is a documentary and narrative filmmaker. Their debut collaborative effort, *The Last Race*, won Best Documentary Feature at the Motor Film Awards 2019. Their second film, *The Truffle Hunters* was part of the selections of Cannes, Toronto and New York film festivals after its premiere at Sundance.



P Michael Dweck, Gregory Kershaw
C Paulo Stacchin, Piero Botto, Egidio Gagliardi

WINDOW BOY WOULD ALSO LIKE TO HAVE A SUBMARINE

CHICO VENTANA TAMBIÉN QUISIERA TENER UN SUBMARINO

In this poetic, magic-realist film, a portal is a chance for connections – but only if we embrace the unknown.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

URUGUAY, ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, NETHERLANDS, PHILIPPINES / 2020 / 84MIN / SPANISH, TUWALI

2 DEC, WED | 10PM | OT + ONLINE

Aboard a luxurious cruise ship, a listless deckhand discovers a portal that leads to a woman's apartment in Montevideo. Meanwhile, a group of rural farmers in the Philippines come upon a mysterious hut that they have never seen in the forest. Fearing that it may harbour evil spirits, they plan to destroy it. Faith and the trust in the unknown are examined in how different characters react to strange situations that elude belief.

Window Boy Would Also Like to Have a Submarine is an atmospheric film that forgoes a traditional narrative. It searches for kindness and a fundamental human connection that can be possible in serendipitous encounters between isolated individuals around the world – but only if we give it a chance. *LSW*



D Alex Piperno is a poet, director and producer from Uruguay. Besides several critically acclaimed short films, he has also published books of poetry. *Window Boy Would Also Like to Have a Submarine*, his debut feature, premiered at the Berlinale this year.



P Alex Piperno, Esteban Lucangioli, Araquén Rodríguez, Rachel Ellis, Frank Hoeve, Armi Rae Cacaindin
C Daniel Quiroga, Inés Bortagaray, Noli Tobol

MOONLIGHT CINEMA

20–21 NOVEMBER 2020 | ONLINE | FREE SCREENING

Moonlight Cinema returns this year with two films that will allow us to dream together!

Join us for a weekend of online evening screenings that tell the stories of Hong Kong singer Denise Ho's journey of self-discovery and transformation, and a delightful trip through France with filmmaker Agnès Varda and photographer JR. Both are available for home viewing in anticipation of the 31st SGIFF.

Tune in to watch at sgiff.com/moonlightcinema

Moonlight Cinema is brought to you with the support of the U.S. Embassy in Singapore.

1

Don't miss singer Denise Ho and director Sue Williams in conversation with SGIFF.

Submit your questions for them at sgiff.com/film-qna

2

Take a tour around the nooks and crannies of Singapore with your friends over the weekend, like what the late filmmaker Agnès Varda and photographer JR did in France. Did you chance upon any charming wall art or intriguing architecture?

Share with us your 'Faces Places' local sights and tag us with [#sgiffmoonlightcinema](https://twitter.com/sgiffmoonlightcinema) to stand a chance to receive complimentary tickets to online Festival screenings or a full Festival merchandise kit!

Contest runs from 20 November Friday to 22 November Sunday.

For more details, visit our Facebook [@sginternationalfilmfestival](https://www.facebook.com/sginternationalfilmfestival) and Instagram [@sgiffest](https://www.instagram.com/sgiffest)

MOONLIGHT CINEMA

DENISE HO: BECOMING THE SONG

In this story of courage and finding one's true voice, acclaimed Hong Kong singer Denise Ho searches for her identity.

[SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE]

USA / 2020 / 83MIN / CANTONESE, ENGLISH,
MANDARIN

20 NOV, FRI | 8PM | ONLINE

The documentary follows the remarkable journey of Cantopop superstar Denise Ho, as she grapples with identity and the freedom of expression. It accompanies Ho on the road as she tours the US, Canada and the UK, while preparing to release a new song. She reflects on her life's trajectory: her childhood, family life, her dream to work with the late Cantopop legend Anita Mui, stardom, and having to rebuild her career in the wake of pressures resulting from her outspoken views on social issues.

The film reveals her belief in personal freedom and liberty and her commitment to an open and democratic world where each person can find their own true voice.

KMJ



D Sue Williams is a documentary writer, producer and director. She formed Ambrica Productions in 1986 to produce documentaries of international scope and interest, including the CHINA trilogy and biographies on American icons. In 2016, she was awarded the Boston Globe Filmmaker Fund Award for *Death by Design*.



P Sue Williams
C Denise Ho

FACES PLACES VISAGES VILLAGES

Iconic photographer/muralist JR strikes up an unlikely friendship with illustrious French New Wave filmmaker Agnès Varda as they embark on a tender, enchanting road trip through the French countryside.

FRANCE / 2016 / 94MIN / FRENCH / PG13

21 NOV, SAT | 8PM | ONLINE

Nominated for Best Documentary Feature at the 2018 Academy Awards, the film follows the travels of the late filmmaker Agnès Varda and photographer JR through rural French towns. They meet coal miners, farmers, cheese-makers, truck drivers and factory workers and create epic-size portraits of them. With these two kindred spirits shaping the film from both behind and in front of the camera, this personal/road-trip documentary profoundly captures the power of art to connect communities.

Between stops, Varda and JR share honest musings about their artistic practices and philosophies of image-making. With Varda in her golden years, *Faces Places* also becomes a poignant conversation on life and the relentless forward march of time. *SM*



D Agnès Varda (1928–2019) was one of the few French New Wave female directors. She received an honorary Palme d'Or at Cannes Film Festival in 2015. Her major works include *Cléo from 5 to 7* (1962), *Vagabond* (1985) and *Jacquot de Nantes* (1991).



JR is an acclaimed French photographer known for his giant portraits on buildings, trains and bridges.



P Agnès Varda, JR, Rosalie Varda
C Agnès Varda, JR

SGIFF nurtures future talent and film appreciation with developmental programmes and outreach projects for upcoming filmmakers and the next generation of film critics.

FILM ACADEMY

SOUTHEAST ASIAN FILM LAB

The Southeast Asian Film Lab provides a nurturing and collaborative space for Southeast Asian filmmakers who are embarking on their first feature-length film project. During the Film Lab, filmmakers will receive personal feedback from three mentors, and hear from fellow filmmakers as they share their experiences and insights. The programme will end with the filmmakers pitching to a panel of industry experts. Two filmmakers will be awarded Most Promising Project and Fellowship Prize at the Silver Screen Awards.

Projects that have emerged from the Southeast Asian Film Lab have gone on to thrive in other prestigious workshops and markets such as Busan's Asian Project Market, Cannes' L'Atelier, Locarno's Open Doors, SEAFIC and TorinoFilmLab.

HEAD MENTOR

Shozo Ichiyama | Japan

Shozo Ichiyama is the founder and director of Tokyo Filmex. As a producer, he has worked with Asian filmmakers on award-winning films including Jia Zhangke's *A Touch of Sin*, *Ash Is Purest White*, Hou Hsiao-Hsien's *Flowers of Shanghai*, Samira Makhmalbaf's *Blackboards*, among others. His latest film, *The Calming* by Song Fang, took home the CICAIE Prize at the Berlinale Forum 2020.



MENTORS

Nandita Solomon | Malaysia

Nandita Solomon is the co-founder of Malaysian independent film production company Apparat, and its film *Bunohan* was Malaysia's official submission for Best Foreign Language Film at the 2013 Academy Awards. She has presented projects at Hong Kong's HAF, Focus Asia Genre Market in Udine, Singapore's Southeast Asian Film Financing Project Market and Docedge Kolkata. Solomon also serves as Industry Advisor to the Malaysia Multimedia University's Faculty of Cinematic Arts.



Mai Meksawan | Thailand

Mai Meksawan is a former Bangkok International Film Festival programmer and co-founder of Thai production and distribution company Extra Virgin. The latter's most successful title, *Agrarian Utopia*, was screened in more than 100 festivals worldwide and received 11 international awards. His most recent production, *Manta Ray* (2018), won Best Film in the Orizzonti section of Venice Film Festival.



PARTICIPANTS

Ananth Subramaniam
CITY OF SIMPLE SIMONS

Malaysia

In the dry midlands of Malaysia where the machines of mining refineries make the ground tremble, two brothers go in search of a mythical creature in the hopes of finding closure to their mother's death.



Bianca Balbuena
OLIVIA

Philippines

In a seaside town, pregnant 18-year-old Olivia lives vicariously through the townspeople she observes, creating worlds where she becomes them. As her due date gets closer, Olivia realises that the lives she observes are moving on without her and that she must reclaim her own reality.



Carl Adrian Chavez
SAD BOY

Philippines

Quantified through headcounts and told through fragments of his experiences, *Sad Boy* is an examination of a lonely gay man's life in Manila and his countless efforts on trying to be seen in the hypersexualised world of homosexuals in the city.



Charlotte Hong Bee Her
TROPICAL RAIN, DEATH-SCENTED KISS

Singapore

In a vision of Singapore slowly falling into a wilderness populated by spirits, the ghost of a girl's best friend follows her home.



Mony Kann Darung
DETOUR

Cambodia

A suicidal school-bus driver finds that he is wanted for kidnapping after taking a detour in search of a reason to live, with the help of a high-spirited student.



Jirassaya Wongsutin
FLAT GIRLS

Thailand

Jane is the daughter of a police sergeant. She has lived in the same block of flats since birth. Following the death of her father, Jane and her mother must prepare to leave.



Primrin Puarat
BURIED DEAD MOUNTAIN
DOCUMENTARY

Thailand

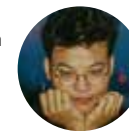
Following the lives and struggles of villagers who have suffered from the waste mismanagement crisis in eastern Thailand for over a decade, the filmmaker reflects on the pattern of systemic failures and asks whether there are any realistic solutions to the problem.



Nong Nhat Quang
BABY JACKFRUIT BABY GUAVA
DOCUMENTARY

Vietnam

A conservative mother, schizophrenic daughter and gay son recount the divergence of their lives as they welcome a newborn to the family.



Russell Adam Morton
PENUMBRA

Singapore

A man on the run washes up on a kelong. Caught between land and sea, dreams and monsters, he awaits escape.



Zaw Bo Bo Hein
GARUDA DRAGON

Myanmar

An unhappily married man searches for his true sexual identity with the help of his uncle's ghost.



YOUTH JURY & CRITICS PROGRAMME

The Youth Jury & Critics Programme aims to nurture new film critics who can contribute to Southeast Asian film culture and discourse. This programme provides the opportunity for mentorship in the art of film criticism, while invited speakers also enrich the learning experience by sharing about different types of critics, their role in film culture and what it is like to have a career as a film critic.

In the lead-up to and during the festival, the young critics' articles and video essays will be published on SGIFF's Film Academy journal, *Stories*. The mentor will award one of the young critics with the Young Critic Award for originality of writing and for contributing to cinematic discussions in the region. The programme will culminate in the young jurors awarding the Youth Jury Prize to one of the films competing in the Southeast Asian Short Film Competition during the Silver Screen Awards.

MENTOR

Chris Fujiwara | Japan

Chris Fujiwara has written and edited several books on cinema, including *Jacques Tourneur: The Cinema of Nightfall* (1998), *The World and Its Double: The Life and Work of Otto Preminger* (2008) and *Jerry Lewis* (2009). He was the editor of *Undercurrent*, the film-criticism magazine of FIPRESCI (International Federation of Film Critics) and a film critic for the *Boston Phoenix*, and has contributed to numerous magazines, journals and newspapers. A former artistic director of Edinburgh International Film Festival, Fujiwara has also developed film programmes for other institutions and has organised and served as a mentor for numerous workshops on film criticism and film programming.



SPEAKERS

Viknesh Kobinathan

Programmer, Asian Film Archive, Singapore

Kevin B. Lee

Professor of Crossmedia Publishing, Merz Akademie, Germany

Edna Lim

Senior Lecturer, English Language and Literature, National University of Singapore

John Lui

Senior Correspondent, *The Straits Times*, Singapore

Thong Kay Wee

Programmes and Outreach Officer, Asian Film Archive, Singapore

PARTICIPANTS

Kathleen Bu

Filmmaker

Anyone can critique a film, but having the opportunity to learn it professionally comes rarely.



Chan Jonathan Bertram Chiu Yee

Yale University (August '21)

To read a film is an act of love, a quiet dwelling in sight and sound.



Charles Kurniawan

Marketing

Film theory classes sparked my interest in film criticism and it inspired me to constantly evolve myself as a writer.



Lee Jian Hao Ernest

University of Oxford

The sociohistorical context and afterlives of films intrigue me – but really, Lynch started it.



Li Zhenhong Daryl

Editor

My main interests lie in ideas of spectatorship, genre, memory and culture.



Joshuah Lim

LASALLE College of the Arts

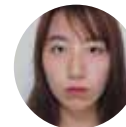
Intrigued by the mysteries of life and why the moving image transcends.



Lim Mei Pei

Nanyang Technological University

Let's critique films to like them better, and make better ones.



Ng Zu En Casidhe

Yale-NUS College

Film criticism allows me to crystallise the personally resonant aspects of a work.



Euginia Tan

Freelance Writer

I see film criticism as another foray to expand on the potential of textual possibilities.



Teo Xiao Ting

Freelance Writer

I'm curious about the distances and intimacies within (and without) film.



Wong Kar Mun Nicole

Executive, Checkpoint Theatre

Seeing worlds in the quiver of a silence or flicker of light on screen.



Joellene Yap Yu Ean

University of California, Berkeley

Loves coming-of-age, animation and good representation.



Alan Yuen

Nanyang Technological University

I want to write like Ebert and make video essays like Tony Zhou.



SOUTHEAST ASIAN PRODUCERS NETWORK

The Southeast Asian Producers Network invites producers from the region to share their wealth of knowledge and ideas with one another. The network is a platform for further dialogue and opportunities for collaboration.

In an intimate closed-door setting, six invited Southeast Asian producers with projects in development will share the process of developing their works – the unknowns, shortfalls, and possibilities of stretching the potential of their company's works.

This year will see greater interaction among the participants of Producers Network and Southeast Asian Film Lab as well as Silver Screen Award nominees, as they explore the potential for collaboration, exchange ideas and inspire one another.

Find out more at filmacademy.sgiff.com

PARTICIPATING PRODUCERS

Angelina Marilyn Bok

Xeno Pictures | Singapore
Projects: *The Beast from the Trees*; *The Blameless Life of Rev. Barnaby*; *If You Are Not Here on Sunday Morning*



Dan Koh

Freelance Producer | Singapore
Project: *Stranger Eyes*



Luhki Herwanayogi

Catchlight Pictures | Indonesia
Project: *Our Son*



Noorahaya Lahtee

Vertical Films | Thailand
Projects: *Breaking the Cycle*; *Flat Girls*; *Hours of Ours*; *I open a curtain to see a dead bird*



Lee Yve Vonn

Afternoon Pictures | Malaysia
Project: *Oasis of Now*



Thaidhdi

Third Floor Production | Myanmar
Project: *Fruit Gathering*



PRODUCERS NETWORK TALK

Accessing International Co-production – Why and How?

30 NOV, MON | 7PM | 60MIN | ONLINE

Find out more on page 23.

SGIFF FILM FUND

SGIFF offers two film grants for Southeast Asian film projects. These grants are dedicated to supporting filmmakers with compelling stories to tell across both fiction and non-fiction genres.

Submissions open in December 2020. For details, visit filmacademy.sgiff.com

TAN
EAN
KIAM
FOUNDATION

SGIFF

SOUTHEAST ASIAN
DOCUMENTARY
GRANT

The Tan Ean Kiam Foundation-SGIF Southeast Asian-Documents (SEA-DOC) Grant aims to support the production and post-production of engaging stories told through the art of documentary filmmaking in Southeast Asia. The grant supports four mid-length or feature documentaries annually – two production projects with a cash amount of S\$30,000 awarded to each recipient and two post-production projects with a cash amount of S\$20,000 awarded to each recipient.

2020 GRANT RECIPIENTS

- *Breaking the Cycle* by Aekaphong Saransate and Thanakrit Duangmaneepon (Thailand)
- *Sandcastles* by Carin Leong (Singapore)
- *Small Hours of the Night* by Daniel Hui (Singapore)
- *Worship* by Uruphong Raksaad (Thailand)

The SEA-DOC Grant is supported by

陳延謙基金
TAN EAN KIAM FOUNDATION

CATCH THE 2019 GRANT RECIPIENTS AT THE FESTIVAL

Aswang (p. 54)
Binh (p. 38)
Citizen Hustler (p. 46)
Judy Free (p. 36)
Nursery Rhymes (p. 50)
Ploy (p. 56)

SGIFF

SOUTHEAST ASIAN SHORT
FILM GRANT

The SGIFF Southeast Asian-Short Film (SEA-SHORTS) Grant aims to be a launchpad for the brightest, upcoming names in filmmaking from the region. This year, we are excited to support four short films each with a cash amount of S\$4,000 and post-production support worth S\$4,000.

2020 GRANT RECIPIENTS

- *Further and Further Away* by Polen Ly (Cambodia)
- *Father's Father* by Cao Viet Hoai Son (Vietnam)

The SEA-SHORTS Grant is supported by

C47 FOUNDATION whitelight

NEW WAVES

A PROGRAMME BY
SINGAPORE
INTERNATIONAL
FILM
FESTIVAL

RE-FRAMING ASIAN STORIES:

FILM FOR ALTERNATIVE VOICES

Launched in 2016, New Waves shines the spotlight on young filmmakers making waves in Southeast Asia. Through film screenings and dialogue sessions with guest speakers from different disciplines, the programme centres on their personal approaches in using film as a mode of expression.

Held at Oldham Theatre on 24–25 October, the 2020 programme was expanded to include works from the broader Asian region, bringing together young directors with established filmmakers. Their unique and powerful stories reflect courageously on the past while evoking principles of change. Female filmmakers took centre stage in

this iteration, their works adopting a fresh approach to messages that are familiar yet no less important, with the potential to positively shape the way we look at our communities.

Find out more at sgiff.com/newwaves

FILM IMMERSION PROGRAMME



The Film Immersion Programme aims to nurture film literacy, cultivate the appreciation of the film medium and share the creative process of filmmaking with youths. Designed for students from upper secondary, post-secondary and tertiary institutions, the programme consists of three main components: short film screenings, discussion about the films, and the experience of film festivals. At the end, students may choose to get involved with the film festival by becoming a volunteer.

This year, we have brought the programme online, which has seen the participation of almost 2,000 students since August.

Find out how you can support our Film Immersion Programme on [page 84](#).

MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN CINEMA DONATE TO SGIFF TODAY

SGIFF is a charity committed to championing and nurturing visual storytelling in Asia. Make a difference in cinema by helping us raise \$30,000 by 31 March 2021 – this is matched dollar-for-dollar by the Cultural Matching Fund up to \$60,000!

WITH YOU: WE CONNECT THE COMMUNITY

Our community longs to reconnect and engage. Your pledge to SGIFF allows us to continue bringing unique, diverse and independent stories to the festival so we can create new memories together.



In 2019, Anthony Chen's highly anticipated *Wet Season* premiered at SGIFF with sold-out screenings, bringing together the film community and viewers from all walks of life to support and celebrate homegrown talents!

WITH YOU: WE SUPPORT THE INDUSTRY

Your contribution helps support the SGIFF Film Academy, the region's first holistic training initiative for Southeast Asian film talents. The Academy aims to enhance the capabilities of the regional film scene collectively and nurture young filmmakers.



**SGIFF Film Academy:
Southeast Asian Film Lab**
A nurturing and collaborative mentorship programme that has produced projects that have gone on to thrive in other prestigious workshops and markets.

SGIFF Film Academy: Film Immersion Programme

Thousands of students have benefitted from the enriching sessions, which cultivate media literacy, appreciation of the film medium and the creative process.



WITH YOU: WE GO BEYOND THE SCREENS

With your help, we can create meaningful conversations through masterclasses, panel discussions and post-show dialogues, as well as recognise cinematic excellence with the annual Silver Screen Awards.



Prolific cult Japanese director Takashi Miike conducted a masterclass to a large audience in 2019, sharing about his approach to storytelling and his craft.

DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT TODAY!

Whether you choose a one-time or monthly contribution, every bit counts! All donations will be matched dollar-for-dollar through the Cultural Matching Fund. A 250% tax deduction is available upon request for donations above \$50.

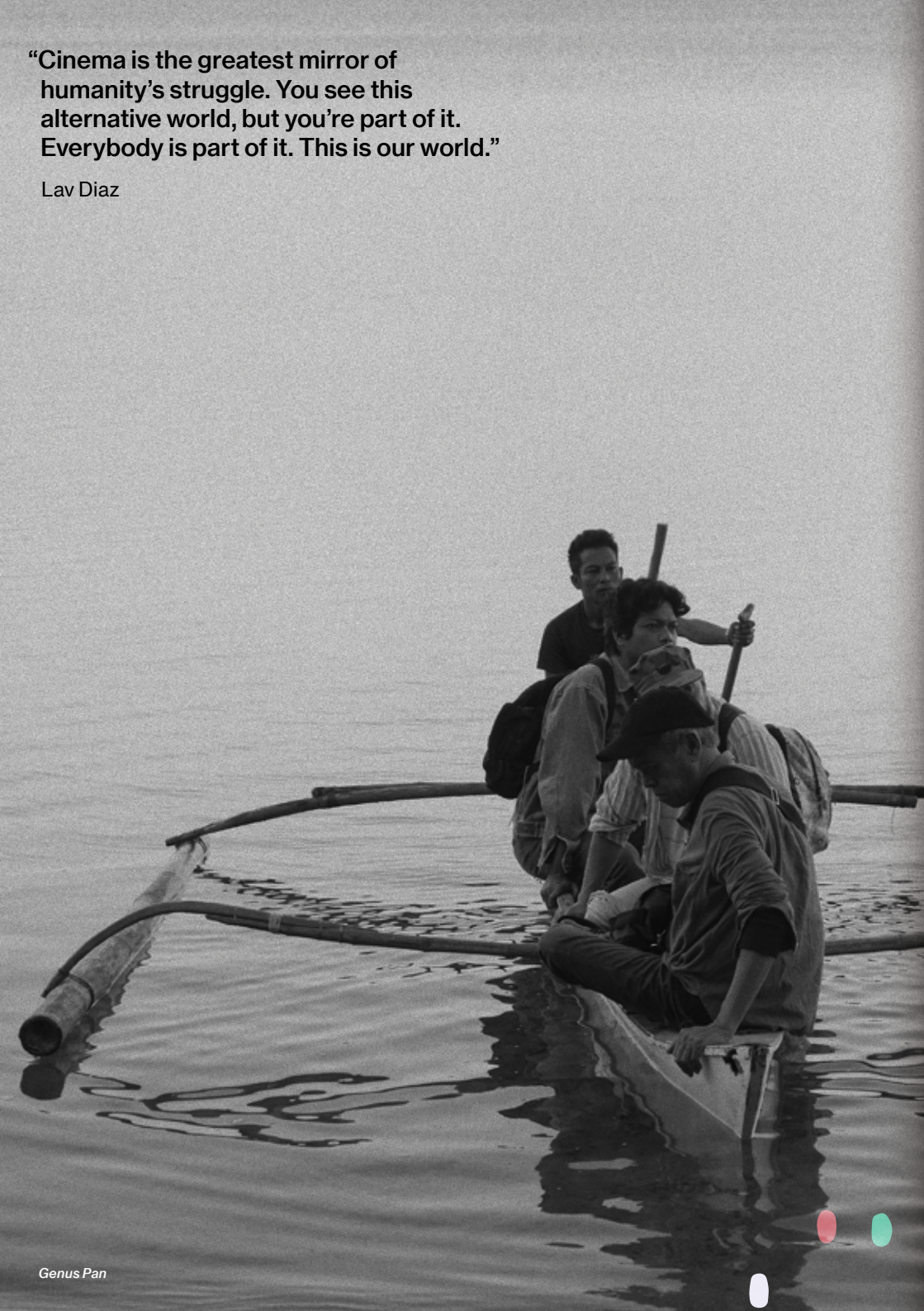
For more information, please visit sgiff.com/donate-to-the-festival or email us at partnerships@sgiff.com

SCAN TO DONATE
via your banking app



“Cinema is the greatest mirror of humanity’s struggle. You see this alternative world, but you’re part of it. Everybody is part of it. This is our world.”

Lav Diaz



The Singapore International Film Festival was established in 1987, and is the longest-running film event in Singapore. Now in its 31st edition, the Festival would not have been possible without our audiences, patrons, supporters and the devoted film communities in Singapore and the region.

| ABOUT

| THE
FESTIVAL

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

Over the years, SGIFF has been an integral contributor to the independent film industry in Singapore and the region. The Festival is steadfast in its mission to nurture and champion homegrown talents, and be a platform for new voices. By providing a vibrant film experience and deeper appreciation for cinematic culture, SGIFF aims to ignite public interest in the arts, and to give thousands of film lovers around the region direct access to the best of what cinema has to offer.

1987

- The first edition showcases the best of international cinema, and opens with the film *The Name of the Rose* by Jean-Jacques Annaud (France).

1991

- Introduction of the Silver Screen Awards to recognise the best of Asian feature films and Singaporean short films.

1992

- SGIFF opens with an Asian film for the first time with *Raise the Red Lantern* by Zhang Yimou (China).

1994

- Best Singapore Short Film is awarded to *Pain* by Eric Khoo.

1995

- K. Rajagopal receives the SGIFF Special Jury Prize, Singapore Short Film for three consecutive years with *I Can't Sleep Tonight* (1995), *The Glare* (1996) and *Absence* (1997).

1997

- Best Director, Singapore Short Film is awarded to Wee Li Lin for *Norman on the Air*.

1998

- Best Director, Singapore Short Film is awarded to Jack Neo for *Replacement Killers*.

2000

- Best Singapore Short Film is awarded to *Sons* by Royston Tan.
- Young Cinema Award is presented to Kelvin Tong and Jasmine Ng.

2005

- Best Singapore Short Film is awarded to *A Family Portrait* by Boo Junfeng.

2006

- *Singapore Dreaming* by Colin Goh and Woo Yen Yen is presented as a charity gala screening.

2008

- Launch of the Singapore Panorama section in celebration of local films and a growing community.

2011

- Best Singapore Short Film is awarded to *Hentak Kaki* by James Khoo.

2014

- The Festival commemorates its 25th anniversary with a new logo and opens with Singaporean film *Unlucky Plaza* by Ken Kwek.
- Introduction of the Honorary Award with Im Kwon-taek (South Korea) as the first recipient.
- New initiatives to spotlight regional talents:
 - Southeast Asian Short Film Competition: Best Southeast Asian Short Film awarded to *Dahdi* by Kirsten Tan (Singapore).
 - Southeast Asian Film Lab: Most Promising Project awarded to *Singing in Graveyards* by Bradley Liew (Malaysia/Philippines).
 - Youth Jury & Critics Programme: Youth Jury Prize awarded to *The Weight* by Giancarlo Abrahan (Philippines).

2016

- SGIFF commissions Singapore short films starting with *The Pursuit of a Happy Human Life* by Gladys Ng.

2017

- Introduction of the Southeast Asian Producers Network.
- Introduction of Inspiring Woman in Film Award presented by Swarovski with Ana Urushadze (Georgia) as the first recipient.

2018

- Launch of SGIFF Film Fund for Southeast Asian documentaries and short films.
- Introduction of the Lesley Ho Asian Film Talent Award with Yeo Siew Hua (Singapore) as the first recipient.

2019

- Launch of SGIFF Film Academy housing the Festival's educational and developmental programmes.
- As part of its 30th anniversary, SGIFF presents three commissioned original short films by Southeast Asian filmmakers Mouly Surya (Indonesia), Anucha Boonyawatana (Thailand) and Yeo Siew Hua (Singapore).

BOARD, COMMITTEE MEMBERS & FESTIVAL TEAM

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Festival Guide

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EMILY J. HOE
Executive Director

Love that film brings people on a journey, giving voice to stories and perspectives.



KUONG MING-JUNG
Artistic Director

I hope that together we find some great films, and a fond memory for a difficult year.



VESS CHUA
Programming Executive

I used to watch films for fun, now it's my job!



SARA MERICAN
Programming Executive

Images flicker. We laugh, we cry, we gasp. Long live cinema!



VERA LAU
Programming Intern

Extremely excited to watch every single film... twice!



JOLYN WU
Business Development Manager

Shhhh... The film is starting...



ERNY MELISSA
Business Development Executive

Now, more than ever, we need a dash of hope and cinematic magic in our lives.



MAY PHYU SIN
Marketing Manager

Hope is about seeing the light at the end of the tunnel—just like in the cinemas after the show.



KELLY PHUA
Marketing Executive

Film marks periods in our lives; images take root in our minds. So does the Festival!



MABELYN OW
Senior Hospitality Manager

Film People are My People. Always have been and always will be!



SELENA TAN
Hospitality Coordinator

Maybe there's no answer; keep making, keep watching.



DEBBI ENG
Ticketing & Front of House Manager

Needed the job.



VANESSA MOSTAFA
Ticketing & Front of House Coordinator

Seeing the world lens by lens.

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Claude Wang
Wu Fan
Therese Ching-Hsu Yang
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#

- 100 Times Reproduction of Democracy 54
- 21 Days 48

A

- After Noon 49
- Ammonite 66
- And They Roamed 48
- Aswang 54

B

- A Balance 32
- Beginning 32
- Binh 38
- Brave Revolutionary Redubbed 63

C

- Casting a Spell to Alter Reality 64
- Citizen Hustler 46
- The Cloud in Her Room 33
- The Cup 43

D

- Days 55
- Death of a Soldier 61
- Denise Ho: Becoming the Song 74
- Downstream to Kinshasa 66

E

- East Coast Park Lovers 51
- Estate 42

F

- Faces Places 74
- Faraway My Shadow Wandered 47
- Filipiniana 38
- First Cow 67
- Flower Shadow Serenade 49

G

- Gagarine 67
- Genus Pan 55
- Geranium 33
- Ghost Like Us 61

H

- Her Five Lives 62
- Here Is Not There 38
- Here We Are 68
- Holding On, Letting Go 51
- How to Die Young in Manila 42

I

- Identifying Features 68
- Irani Bag 62

J

- Judy Free 36

K

- Keep Rolling 56

M

- Malmkrog 69
- Milestone 34
- Monographs 61
- My Brother 50

N

- New Order 69
- Newborn 30
- Night of the Kings 70
- No Love for the Young 34
- Nomadland 70
- Not My Mother's Baking 46
- Nursery Rhymes 50

P

- People on Sunday 40
- A Perfectly Normal Family 71
- Ploy 56
- Pulang 42

R

- Red Aninsri; Or, Tiptoeing on the Still Trembling Berlin Wall 36
- Reminiscences 64
- Rocketship 40

S

- The Salt in Our Waters 57
- Saudade 49
- Saved by the Party-state 62
- Sementara 47
- Sexy Sushi 48
- The Shepherdess and the Seven Songs 57
- Silk 50
- Slalom 71
- The Smell of Coffee 37
- Spirit Film 63
- Sunrise in My Mind 39

T

- Tellurian Drama 41
- Tiong Bahru Social Club 28, 35
- To Calm the Pig Inside 40
- A Trip to Heaven 43
- True Mothers 58
- The Truffle Hunters 72

U

- The Unseen River 36

V

- Veins of the World 58

W

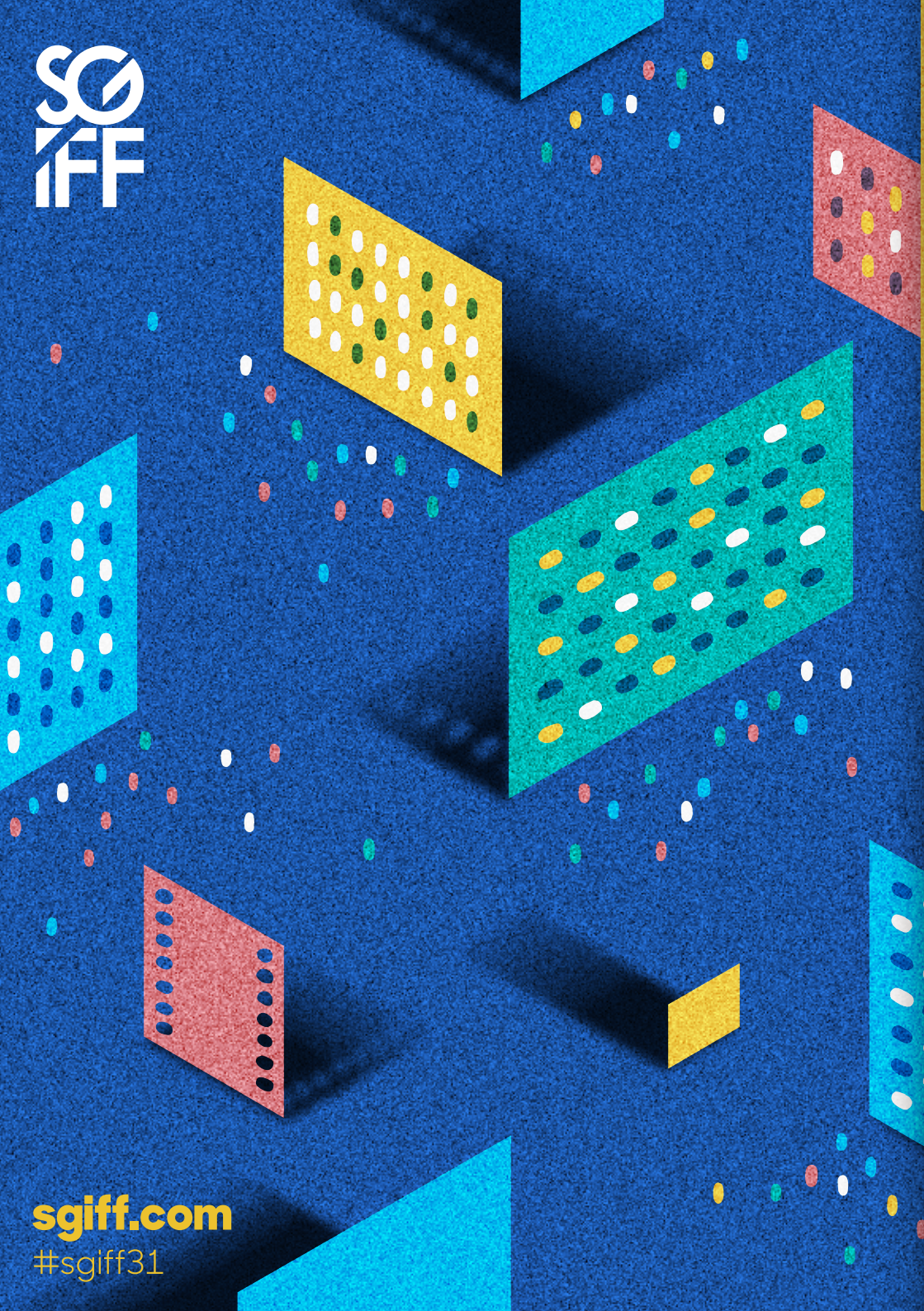
- The Wasteland 35
- Watermelon Please 51
- The Woman Who Ran 59
- A Weirdo Never Fever OverRy 63
- Wife of a Spy 59
- Window Boy Would Also Like to Have a Submarine 72

Y

- Yellow Cat 60
- You and I 60







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