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35TH Singapore International Film Festival

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Foreword

Chairperson



As a filmmaker, SGIFF has always been a space for education, inspiration and connection. In the darkened halls, we encounter a wide array of films, from entertaining ones to those that provoke deep reflection. There's a special bond that forms when we collectively discover something transcendent, and it's something I look forward to every year at the festival.

Even as I have joined the board, the festival continues to be that cherished space. With its carefully considered lineup, SGIFF remains a place for discovery—offering a chance to experience diverse voices and fresh talent, and a launchpad for new and emerging filmmakers across Asia and Southeast Asia.

More than ever, we are seeing an increasing number of SGIFF alumni being propelled onto the global stage, with their films being proudly presented at some of the world's most prestigious film festivals.

Having nurtured these filmmaking talents through our industry programmes such as Southeast Asian Film Lab, the festival is also a space for empowerment—where emerging filmmakers and hidden gems from the region find their voice. It is where unheard stories come to life, stirring hearts and opening minds.

The Festival has hit the significant milestone of 35 years, whose longevity it owes to the dedicated community of filmmakers and film lovers who have supported it throughout the years. As long as education, inspiration, and connection remain important, we will continue to celebrate this festival. See you at the cinemas!

Boo Junfeng

Foreword

General Manager



It is a great privilege to stand alongside my colleagues to present to you the 35th edition of the Singapore International Film Festival. We have spent the last year in dialogue with our peers from the film industry, public donors, former programme participants and stakeholders to understand how the festival can be more meaningful and impactful in its outcomes. In this process, we are recalibrating our strategies and dreams over the next few years to reimagine how the festival can further empower our filmmakers, audiences and partners to create and connect through the transcendental power of cinema.

This year, we introduced the talented Rebecca Lim as our first Festival Ambassador. In her numerous television and film roles, she captures the essence of what makes us beautifully human. Together, we yearn to create a space for introspective intimacy. To build a community eager to explore emotions outside of our comfort zone, challenge world views and satisfy our human desire for dialogue and deeper connection.

Acknowledging, and perhaps resisting, that a lot of contemporary culture is consumed on mobile devices or online platforms, one of our goals is for the festival to spark greater interest and excitement for unique face-to-face encounters with artistic luminaries who exemplify the audacious spirit of independent filmmaking. Accompanied with the new Cinephile Pass, cinephile writers and content creators can now navigate the festival freely to publish discourse and share experiences through their public channels and domains. From an industry-building standpoint, we are upgrading the Film Academy into SGIFF Pro, a professional levelling up programme designed to help emerging talent in all fields of filmmaking reach greater exposure and expertise.

To nurture new audiences of all ages and social backgrounds, we have set up the Audience & Community Development department to actively promote film education, literacy and criticism to schools and community hubs all year round. We deeply appreciate and recognise the dedication of our donors and volunteers, and thus have collaborated with brands who share our passion for cinema to offer more perks through a new rewards programme.

Thank you all for being together at the festival—it is because of you that the festival is so special.

Jeremy Chua

Foreword

Programme Director



It has been an incredible journey with SGIFF for the past three editions, and an honour to be offered the same trust and responsibility of overseeing this momentous 35th edition. As with every year, we continue to engage with global cinema trends and reflect upon the realities of the world, while imbuing a strong curatorial stance and our unique Asian perspective on how these can be reimagined. We also stay committed to our long-standing mission of championing talents from Singapore and Asia, all while presenting a multifaceted and distinctive festival programme that will reward your curiosity.

There is no better candidate than *Stranger Eyes* by Yeo Siew Hua to open the festival this year—a film that made history as the first from Singapore to compete for the Golden Lion at Venice Film Festival. We are also reintroducing our Cinema Honorary Award by celebrating the achievements and return of acclaimed Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi, especially since the lifting of his 14-year travel ban in 2023. In addition, the festival is recognising the illustrious decades-long careers of veteran Taiwanese actors Lee Kang-sheng and Yang Kuei-mei with the Screen Icon Awards. The pair is known for their close artistic collaborations with acclaimed Taiwan-based Malaysian director Tsai Ming-liang.

This year, Asian films comprise over 80 percent of the lineup, with more than 30 Singaporean productions and co-productions. We are proud to present three world premieres of Singaporean films: The *House of Janus* by Ong Keng Sen, *City of Small Blessings* by Wong Chen-Hsi and *Al Awda* by Jason Soo. For the first time, non-competitive sections will feature either opening films or acts that embody the spirit of their designations, most of which are directed by Southeast Asian filmmakers who have previously been supported or awarded by the festival. We are also pleased to announce two special presentation films from Asia: *The Fable* by Raam Reddy, a US-India co-production, and *The Unseen Sister* by Myanmar-born Taiwanese filmmaker Midi Z. Both showcases are accompanied by gala receptions, with the films' talents in attendance.

With 105 titles from 45 countries and a slate of film-related programmes, including our inaugural SGIFF Industry Days conference—there is something for everyone. Work up an adventurous appetite for the biggest cinematic feast of the year!

Thong Kay Wee

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105 films from filmmakers across **45** countries

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Other Information

Premiere Status
All new films in the festival programme are screened in Singapore for the first time.

Q&A with Filmmaker(s)
Indicates a live/hybrid post-screening discussion with the filmmaker(s). Check SGIFF.COM for the latest updates and guest list.

Ratings
Please check film ratings on SGIFF.COM before purchasing tickets.

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

Refer to the pull-out guide for Festival Schedule and Ticketing Information

Abbreviations

Venues

CT	Capitol Theatre
FG2	Filmgarde Kallang, Hall 2
FG3	Filmgarde Kallang, Hall 3
GVB3	Golden Village Bugis+, Hall 3
GVB5	Golden Village Bugis+, Hall 5
GVB6	Golden Village Bugis+, Hall 6
GVB7	Golden Village Bugis+, Hall 7
GVC1	Golden Village Cineleisure, Hall 1
GVC2	Golden Village Cineleisure, Hall 2
GVM	Golden Village VivoCity Max
LCC	LASALLE College of the Arts, Creative Cube
LF	LASALLE College of the Arts, Flexible Performance Space
NGS	National Gallery Singapore
NMS	National Museum of Singapore, Gallery Theatre
OT	Oldham Theatre
SAT	LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore Airlines Theatre
SL	Shaw Lido, Hall 1
TPGR	The Projector at Golden Mile Tower, Green Room
TPY	Golden Village x The Projector at Cineleisure, Yangtze

Film Credits

D	Director
P	Producer
C	Cast

Venues

Capitol Theatre
17 Stamford Road
Singapore 178907

Filmgarde Kallang
Kallang Leisure Park
5 Stadium Walk, Level 3
Singapore 397693

Golden Village Bugis+
201 Victoria St #05-01 Bugis+
Singapore 188067

Golden Village Cineleisure
Cineleisure
Level 6
8 Grange Road
Singapore 239695

Golden Village x The Projector
Cineleisure
Levels 5 & 6
8 Grange Road
Singapore 239695

Golden Village VivoCity Max
1 HarbourFront Walk
#02-30 VivoCity
Singapore 098585

LASALLE, Creative Cube
LASALLE College of the Arts
Block C Level 1 #C101
1 McNally Street
Singapore 187940

LASALLE, Flexible Performance Space
LASALLE College of the Arts
Block F Level 1 #F102
1 McNally Street
Singapore 187940

LASALLE, Singapore Airlines Theatre
LASALLE College of the Arts
Basement 1
1 McNally Street
Singapore 187940

National Gallery Singapore
1 St Andrew's Road
Singapore 178957

National Museum of Singapore
Gallery Theatre
93 Stamford Road
Singapore 178897

Oldham Theatre
1 Canning Rise
Singapore 179868

Shaw Theatres Lido
Level 5 & 6
350 Orchard Road,
Shaw House
Singapore 238868

All information is correct at the time of print. The organiser reserves the right to alter the programme and schedule. Visit SGIFF.COM for venue details and the latest festival updates.

Festival Opening

Stranger Eyes
默視錄

The fear and desire of being watched conjure new realisations in this mystery thriller that follows an estranged couple and their stalker.

CAST & DIRECTOR IN ATTENDANCE

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)

SINGAPORE, TAIWAN, FRANCE, USA / 2024 / 126MIN / MANDARIN / NC16 (SEXUAL SCENE)

28 NOV, THU | 8PM | CT
29 NOV, FRI | 4PM | Q&A | NMS

Months after the disappearance of their toddler, Junyang and Peiying reel from the police's waning investigations. When they begin to receive mysterious DVDs containing secretly filmed footage of their lives, their suburban facades crumble and repressed resentments surface. Desperate to uncover the voyeur, Junyang gradually sinks into a quicksand of surveillance and self-confrontation.

With taut but measured pacing, *Stranger Eyes* is a mystery thriller that comments on the growing scopophilia in our networked era. The prevalence of cameras all around us no longer just elicits the horror and anxieties of being watched constantly, but also gives rise to a complex desire to be truly seen.

Through the fractures in a middle-class family, Yeo Siew Hua's fourth feature evokes the simmering madness behind gazes that become stranger and stranger, wrapped in layers of power, mediation and performance. RN



D **Yeo Siew Hua**'s sophomore narrative feature, *A Land Imagined* (2018), won the Golden Leopard at Locarno and Best Asian Feature Film at the 29th SGIFF. *Stranger Eyes* made history as the first local film to be selected for the main competition at Venice. Yeo is a member of the Asia Pacific Screen Academy and a founding member of the 13 Little Pictures film collective.

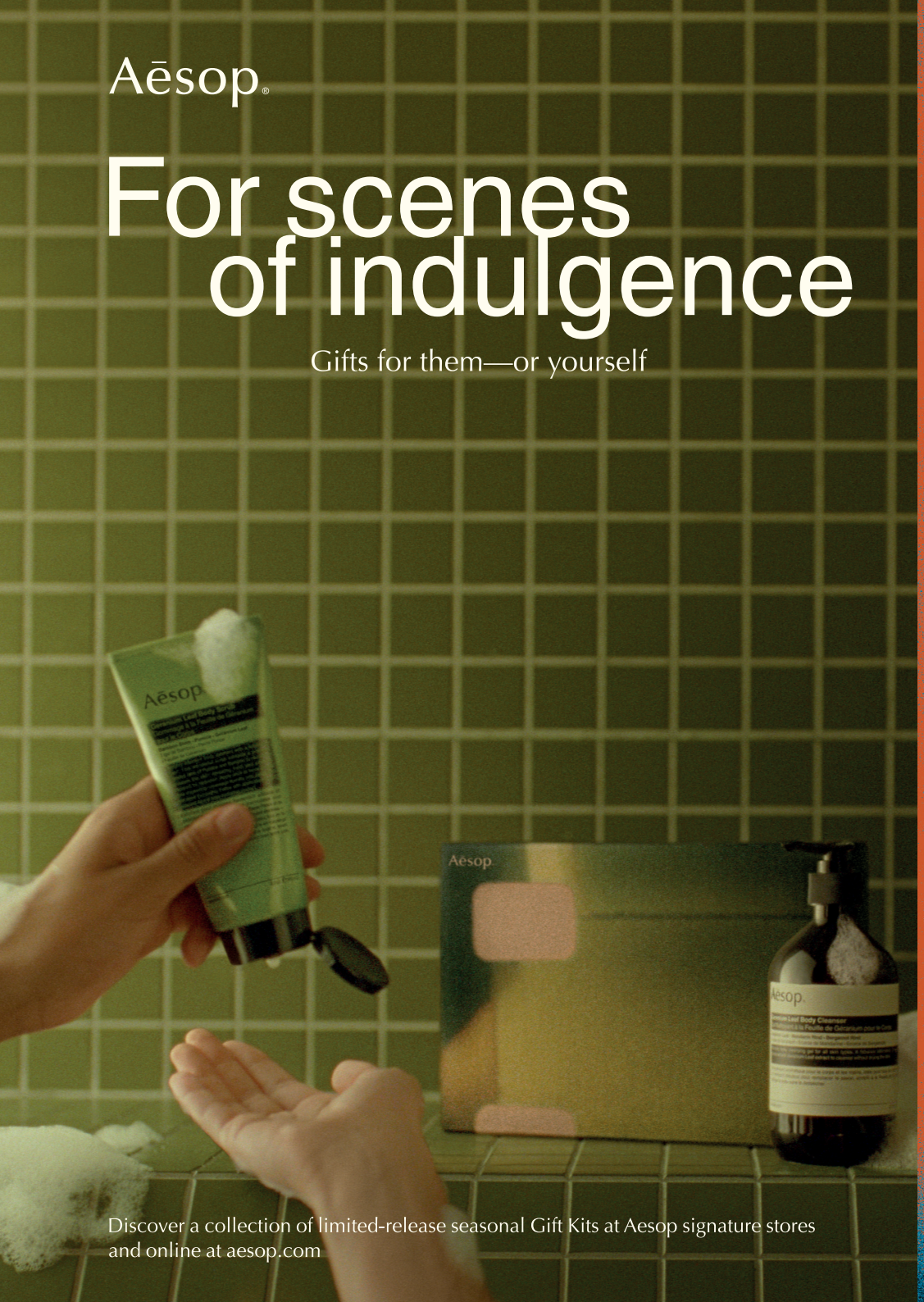
P Fran Borgia, Stefano Centini, Jean-Laurent Csinidis, Alex C. Lo

C Wu Chien-Ho, Lee Kang-Sheng, Anicca Panna

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Asian Feature Film Competition

Experience bold new cinematic visions by emerging Asian directors debuting their first to third feature films.

As a platform for discovery, the Asian Feature Film Competition shines the spotlight on some of Asia's most promising directors working today, often before they have been catapulted onto the world stage.

Dive into a thrilling new wave of filmmaking talent through these nine films, which collectively capture the vibrant pulse of Asia's cultural landscape.

April
აპრილი

A medical mishap compels an obstetrician moonlighting as an abortionist to risk her livelihood in defence of her values.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

GEORGIA, FRANCE, ITALY / 2024 / 134MIN / GEORGIAN / M18 (DISTURBING SCENES AND NUDITY)

7 DEC, SAT | 7PM | GVC1
8 DEC, SUN | 5:30PM | FG3



Nina, a seasoned obstetrician working in a remote hospital in Georgia, faces an investigation when a newborn dies during delivery. As rumours of her performing illegal abortions begin to surface, her career and reputation hang in the balance. Undeterred, Nina continues her secret work, driving to remote villages to help women in need while battling her own emotional scars and compulsions.

Through surreal, haunting sequences and static long takes, Kulumbegashvili highlights the emotional and physical torment on female bodies. Driven by the insistent gaze of the camera, *April* is an unapologetic examination of female subjectivities whose quest for liberty remains predicated on the gender hierarchy in society. DT



D **Dea Kulumbegashvili** is an award-winning Georgian filmmaker known for her uncompromising interrogations of social and gender injustices. *Beginning* (2020), her feature debut on the disillusioned wife of a religious leader, clinched the FIPRESCI Prize at Toronto and won Best Director at the 31st SGIFF. *April* won the Special Jury Prize at Venice.

P Luca Guadagnino, Ilan Amouyal, David Zerat, Francesco Melzi D'Eril, Archil Gelovani, Gabriele Moratti, Alexandra Rossi

C Ia Sukhitashvili, Kakha Kintsurashvili, Merab Ninidze

Crocodile Tears
Air Mata Buaya

This taut debut draws from emotion's extremes and nature's savagery to deliver a unique take on domestic horror.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE **VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD**

INDONESIA, FRANCE, SINGAPORE, GERMANY / 2024 / 98MIN / INDONESIAN / NC16 (SOME SEXUAL SCENES)

30 NOV, SAT | 4:30PM | Q&A | GVC2
7 DEC, SAT | 11AM | Q&A | FG3

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



Lanky, shy-natured Johan spends his youth tending to a rundown family crocodile farm. His personal life orbits around his single mother, who showers Johan with endless affection and watches his every action. All seems well in their hermetic world until Arumi, a woman close to Johan's age, arrives from out of town and disturbs their placid days.

The unhurried storytelling mimics a mushrooming love. But as the trio protect their wants with growing desperation, they turn inscrutable and their mere presence feels mortally dangerous. This startling drama, like its titular reptiles who sleep, cry and kill all at once, subsists on the terror of proximity: an intimacy that tightens irreversibly, and a love that spreads like venom. RL



D **Tumpal Tampubolon** is a filmmaker from Indonesia whose early screenplays have won awards domestically. His directed short film, *The Sea Calls For Me* (2021), took home the Sonje Award for Best Short Fiction at Busan. *Crocodile Tears*, his feature debut, premiered at Toronto.

P Mandy Marahimin, Claire Lajoumard, Anthony Chen, Christophe LaFont, Teoh Yi Peng, Harry Flöter, Jörg Siepmann

C Yusuf Mahardika, Marissa Anita, Zulfa Maharani

Edge of Night
Gecenin Kıyısı

Disquieting and atmospheric, this tale of two brothers on opposite sides of authority leaves more insinuations than answers.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

GERMANY, TÜRKIYE / 2024 / 85MIN / TURKISH / PG13 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)

5 DEC, THU | 7PM | Q&A | GVC2
7 DEC, SAT | 2PM | Q&A | FG3

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



For army officer Sinan, pride is patriotism while ethics is following rules to the letter. This is even when an unexpected order demands he escort his estranged brother to a military court across the country. However, when the overnight mission runs into a coup erupting around them, and as skeletons emerge from their military family's past, Sinan's stoic exterior frays.

Drawn from the 2016 failed but scarring coup in Turkey, the film is steeped in a paranoid political climate that demands unquestioning loyalty. Expertly eliciting tension through its minimal storytelling, cool palettes and reverberating synths, *Edge of Night* pulsates with the perils of a time where it is more convenient, even necessary, to suspect than to trust another. RL



D Based in Germany, **Türker Süer** is a filmmaker and screenwriter with Turkish roots. His short films have been screened at the Berlinale, where he was also an alumnus of Berlinale Talents. *Edge of Night*, his first feature, made its world premiere in Venice and was subsequently screened at Toronto.

P Viola Fügen, Michael Weber, Nadir Öperli

C Ahmet Rıfat Şungar, Berk Hakman

Happyend

A group of adolescents rise up against racial inequality and institutional surveillance in this visually striking film.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

JAPAN, USA / 2024 / 113MIN / JAPANESE / PG13 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)

7 DEC, SAT | 11AM | Q&A | NMS
8 DEC, SUN | 2PM | Q&A | FG3

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



In near-future Japan, a prank on the principal leads to a totalitarian regime of surveillance in a school. Previously living a carefree existence, best friends Yuta and Kou, part of a diverse group of music-loving adolescents, are now forced to confront the changes. As Kou joins activists in protesting against the oppressive environment and injustice, he begins to drift apart from Yuta.

Employing bold visuals and an edgy soundtrack, *Happyend* captures the journey from youthful indifference to political awakening with verve. This is a coming-of-age story that is not only moving in its depiction of friendship, but also a strident portrayal of a 'future' not too far from our present and which demands urgent address. WL



D **Neo Sora** is a filmmaker based in Tokyo and New York. His past works include the short film, *The Chicken* (2020), which premiered at Locarno, and *Ryuichi Sakamoto: Opus* (2023), a concert film capturing the final performance by composer Ryuichi Sakamoto. *Happyend*, his fiction feature debut, premiered in the Orizzonti section at Venice.

P Albert Tholen, Aiko Masubuchi, Eric Nyari, Alex C. Lo, Anthony Chen

C Hayato Kurihara, Yukito Hidaka, Yuta Hayashi

The Adamant Girl
Kottukkaali

When a young woman defies an arranged marriage to her maternal uncle, her family embarks on a religious journey to exorcise the cause of her rebellion.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

INDIA / 2024 / 100MIN / TAMIL / NC16 (COARSE LANGUAGE)

7 DEC, SAT | 9PM | Q&A | GVC2
8 DEC, SUN | 4:30PM | FG2

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



In love with a man from a lower caste, Meena defies her family's and societal expectations by rejecting an arranged marriage to her maternal uncle. Unable to understand her rebellion, her family believes she is possessed by an evil spirit. Their desperation leads them on a journey to exorcise the menace, ending with the ritual sacrifice of a rooster. The animal, a companion to Meena throughout the film, foreshadows her challenging future, marred by pervasive misogyny and casteism.

Featuring standout performances from a star-studded cast, this film offers a fresh perspective on the road trip genre. Its poignant conclusion challenges deeply held beliefs, traditions, and the notion of women's autonomy within contemporary Indian society. NS



D **P.S. Vinothraj** is an Indian filmmaker and screenwriter from Madurai, Tamil Nadu. His feature debut, *Pebbles* (2021), inspired by his sister's marital life, has garnered numerous accolades around the world, including the Tiger Award for Best Film at Rotterdam and Best Director at the 32nd SGIFF.

P Sivakarthikeyan D., Kalai Arasu P.
C Soori Muthuchamy, Anna Ben

Mongrel
白衣蒼狗

An undocumented Thai migrant reckons with the injustices he is both subjected to and complicit in as a caregiver in rural Taiwan.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE **VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD**

FRANCE, SINGAPORE, TAIWAN / 2024 / 128MIN / TAIWANESE HOKKIEN, MANDARIN, THAI / M18 (SEXUAL SCENE)

4 DEC, WED | 5PM | Q&A | GVC1
8 DEC, SUN | 11AM | Q&A | FG2

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



Oom, an undocumented Thai migrant in the mountains of Taiwan, works as a caregiver for the elderly and disabled. He contends with distrustful employers, a manipulative boss who coerces him into risky odd jobs, and fellow workers who question his loyalties despite his efforts to look out for them. Torn between complying in hopes of eventually receiving his delayed pay, or maintaining his integrity and humanity, Oom must navigate his difficult circumstances to survive.

The film employs silence and close-ups to convey the despair of not only Oom's situation but also those he cares for. With great restraint and control, *Mongrel* examines human morality and depicts the disenfranchisement of migrant workers with an unwavering gaze. AS



D **Chiang Wei Liang** is a Taiwan-based Singaporean filmmaker whose works focus on the Southeast Asian diaspora in Asia. His short films have been screened at Venice and the Berlinale, with *Anchorage Prohibited* (2015) winning Best Singapore Short Film at the 27th SGIFF. *Mongrel*, Chiang's feature debut, received the Special Mention for Camera d'Or at Cannes.

P Lai Weijie, Lynn Chen, Chu Yun-ting
C Wanlop Rungkumjad, Kuo Shu-wei, Lu Yi-ching

The Great Phuket
小半截

A moving portrayal of the turbulence of adolescence in southern China, melding fantasy and bittersweet realism.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

FRANCE, HONG KONG, CHINA, GERMANY, BELGIUM / 2024 / 97MIN / CHINESE / PG13 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)

4 DEC, WED | 7PM | Q&A | GVC2
5 DEC, THU | 5PM | Q&A | FG2

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



In a decaying district of southern China, amid post-industrial transformation, Li Xing lives with his family in the last standing structure of the neighbourhood. Li struggles with family tensions while dealing with trouble in school. One day, he and his only friend, Song, stumble upon a labyrinthine tunnel that leads to a mysterious underground world where ancient stones hold the echoes of the past.

Set in an era of rapid change, the urban landscape in this coming-of-age story reflects the turbulence of adolescence steeped in confusion, isolation and wonder. With stunning performances by nonprofessional actors, *The Great Phuket* blurs the line between documentary and fiction, capturing life's violent and beautiful realities. HIH



D Born in Kunming, **Liu Yaonan** worked as a set photographer and assistant director after graduating from Beijing Normal University. In 2013, he entered the École Nationale Supérieure d'Art de Bourges in France to study contemporary arts and cinema. *The Great Phuket*, his feature debut, premiered at the Berlinale.

P Cyriac Auriol, Shan Zuolong
C Li Rongkun, Yang Xuan, You Junfen, Liu Huiyun

Time to Be Strong
힘을 낼 시간

A trio of retired K-pop idols set out for Jeju to discover the island—and themselves—for the first time.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

SOUTH KOREA / 2024 / 102MIN / KOREAN / PG13 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE AND MATURE CONTENT)

4 DEC, WED | 8:30PM | GVC1
7 DEC, SAT | 2PM | NMS



After failing to achieve their dreams, former K-pop stars Sumin, Sarang and Taehee travel to Jeju Island, determined to make up for the school trips they missed. Instead, they arrive broke, exhausted and ambivalent about their future. Pressing on despite the circumstances, the three friends gamely throw themselves at new challenges, only to find that they have not escaped the unhealthy behavioural patterns formed over years of abuse in the idol industry.

As the trio work through the isolation of failure to rediscover the joy in companionship, the solace they find in each other becomes a collective strength they can depend on. Together, they might just be able to recover their lost youth and learn to live on their own terms. SH



D **Sun Nam-koong** is a South Korean director, editor and screenwriter. Commissioned by Korea's National Human Rights Commission, *Time to Be Strong* won the Grand Prize and Best Actress prize for Choi Sung-eun's portrayal of Sumin in Jeonju's Korean Competition. This is Sun's second feature after *Ten Months* (2020), which also stars Choi.

P Song Doo-hwan
C Choi Sung-eun, Hyun Woo-seok, Ha Seo-yoon

Việt and Nam

Việt và Nam

A lyrical queer love story of two coal miners facing imminent separation, with a touch of magic realism.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD

PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE, FRANCE, NETHERLANDS, ITALY, GERMANY, VIETNAM / 2024 / 129MIN / VIETNAMESE / R21 (HOMOSEXUAL THEME AND NUDITY)

5 DEC, THU | 7:30PM | Q&A | GVC1
8 DEC, SUN | 11AM | Q&A | OT

Nam and Việt love freely and passionately—though only in the inky depths of a coal mine. Separation looms as Nam plans to leave the country via a trafficker, but he must first help his mother locate the remains of her husband who was lost to the Vietnam War. Led by dreams and memories, they venture into fossilised pasts, exhuming personal and collective histories to process trauma and loss. Meanwhile, coal dust accumulates in bodies and blackens rivers.

Shot on 16mm stock, with an arresting cinematography at times otherworldly, the lyrical film straddles the real and the imagined. This is a story of two lovers torn apart by tragedy, but also that of a people still contending with the horrors of war and struggling to move on. FL





D The work of Vietnamese filmmaker **Trương Minh Quý** draws from childhood memories and the history of his home country. His sophomore feature, *The Tree House* (2019), premiered at Locarno and was screened at SGIFF. His 2021 short film, *The Men Who Wait*, won Best Southeast Asian Short Film at the 32nd SGIFF. *Việt and Nam*, his third feature, premiered in Cannes' Un Certain Regard.

P Bradley Liew, Bianca Balbuena
C Phạm Thanh Hải, Đào Duy Bảo Định

Southeast Asian Short Film Competition

The Southeast Asian Short Film Competition highlights the best short cinematic gems from the region. This year's selection presents 24 films across five programmes.

The sheer depth and range showcased in these works attest to the abundance of creative talent found within the region. Together, these short films form a vivid tableau of Southeast Asia that is as diverse as it is inspirational.

D Director P Producer C Cast

Southeast Asian Short Film Competition
Programme 1

5 DEC, THU | 5PM | 99MIN | NGS | R21

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)

The personal is often a window into the universal. This programme exposes fragmentation within the family unit and offers elegies of longing, unearthing the threads that bind us collectively.

1 I Talk to God but the Sky Is Empty

WORLD PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 16MIN / ENGLISH / PG13 (SOME MATURE CONTENT)



Eliza goes through a day away from work after her abortion.



D **Hattie Lee** is a Singaporean filmmaker. His past work includes the short film, *If They Can't Be Loved* (2018), which explores the traumas of two women.

2 The Nature of Dogs
หมา-ป่า

ASIAN PREMIERE

THAILAND, USA, SINGAPORE, HONG KONG / 2024 / 27MIN / THAI / PG



A family and their dog arrive at a seaside resort, but as their vacation unfolds, hidden wounds emerge, revealing fractured lives. VC



D **Pom Bunsermvicha** is a Bangkok-based filmmaker whose previous short, *Lemongrass Girl* (2021), competed at the 32nd SGIFF. *The Nature of Dogs* premiered at Locarno.

3 My Therapist Said, I Am Full of Sadness

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

INDONESIA / 2024 / 22MIN / INDONESIAN, ENGLISH / R21 (SOME MATURE CONTENT)



Mixing archival home footage of a childhood in Jakarta and glimpses of current life in Berlin, a queer nonbinary filmmaker reflects on their chosen life and relationship with their devout Christian parents. RB



D **Monica Vanesa Tedja** is a Chinese-Indonesian filmmaker whose films explore minority identity issues. Their previous short, *Dear to Me* (2021), premiered in Locarno Open Doors.

4 The Wells of Rameswaram

WORLD PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 15MIN / TAMIL / PG



Wrapped in grief, a mother and son talk about the loss of her husband and her isolation. He invites her to stay with him, but she refuses. RB



D **Nishok** is a Singaporean writer-director and editor whose works explore the half shades and hardly audible notes of human nature. His short films have travelled to festivals such as Oberhausen and Palm Springs.

5 My Paws Are Soft, My Bones Are Heavy

WORLD PREMIERE

INDONESIA / 2024 / 19MIN / INDONESIAN / PG13 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)



Jo spends his birthday with his best friend, who teaches him how to ride a motorbike. However, memories of his late mother surface as Jo recalls their time spent together. RB



D **Garry Christian** is an Indonesian filmmaker whose short films have screened internationally and won various awards domestically. These include the documentary, *End of the Tunnel* (2021), and *On the Lightness of Being* (2022), a narrative short.

Southeast Asian Short Film Competition

Southeast Asian Short Film Competition
Programme 2

6 DEC, FRI | 5PM | 95MIN | NGS | R21

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)

This programme foregrounds the delicate dance between the vulnerability and strength of women, exploring how they wield humour, tenderness and a fiery spirit to navigate life.

1 My Wonderful Life
早安健康

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 10MIN / MANDARIN, ENGLISH / NC16 (MATURE THEME)



Grace, an exhausted mom in Singapore, collapses at work and is admitted to the hospital, where she unexpectedly discovers a new sense of freedom as a patient. QG



D **Calleen Koh** is an animation filmmaker known for the award-winning shorts, *Sexy Sushi* (2020) and *To Kill the Birds and the Bees* (2021). Her work has been presented at numerous international festivals. She is developing her first TV series.

2 Mulberry Fields
Một Lần Dang Dở

ASIAN PREMIERE

VIETNAM / 2024 / 25MIN / VIETNAMESE / PG13 (SOME SEXUAL REFERENCES)



A woman working for a pyramid scheme laments her fading youth, while a young man idles in wait. As they wander the abandoned apartment building where they live, a quiet seduction grows. RN



D Based in Ho Chi Minh City, **Nguyễn Trung Nghĩa** is a self-taught filmmaker who has worked in various film production roles. *Mulberry Fields* premiered in Cannes' Directors' Fortnight.

3 Homecoming
Singaix Khraox

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

MYANMAR / 2024 / 19MIN / WA, BURMESE, SHAN / PG (SOME DRUG REFERENCES)



Nyi Rai returns to his village after his sister's unexpected bereavement. He sits down with his parents for the first time, uncovering a history of drug and domestic abuse, and a renewed hope for the future. TKW



D **Nyi Rai** is a filmmaker from Myanmar. He attended Haw Loi Loi, a filmmaking workshop aimed at fostering new voices for ethnic minorities in Shan State. *Homecoming* is his debut film.

4 Animal Lovers

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

PHILIPPINES / 2024 / 18MIN / CHAVACANO / R21 (MATURE CONTENT)



A pregnant woman, suspicious of her husband's romantic relationship with his carabao, schemes to banish her beastly rival and reclaim her title as the fairest creature of the land.



D **Aedrian Araojo** is a Mindanaoan filmmaker from Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay. His short films, including *Hondo* (2016) and *Displaced* (2020), won several awards in the Philippines. *Animal Lovers* clinched Best Short Film at QCinema.

5 Thank You, Daisy

WORLD PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 23MIN / MANDARIN, ENGLISH, HINDI / NC16 (COARSE LANGUAGE AND SEXUAL REFERENCES)



An eccentric senior breaks out of her nursing home and crosses paths with a suicidal runaway. They embark on a bizarre and serendipitous adventure, in a night that will change them both forever.



D **Dave Tan** is a writer, musician and voice-over artist based in Singapore. He directed the documentary, *Blame It on the Boogie* (2016), which revisits the legendary Mambo Jambo club night at Zouk.

Southeast Asian Short Film Competition
Programme 3

7 DEC, SAT | 2PM | 83MIN | NGS | R21

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)

This programme explores power dynamics within institutionalised structures, sparking new understandings of resistance through compelling character arcs and performative gestures.

1 The Inescapable Desire of Roots
根欲

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 6MIN / MANDARIN, ENGLISH / R21 (NUDITY)



A man with hair growing wildly over his body is taken by a mania of ecstasy and anguish. He struggles with the hair becoming a means of discipline and punishment, while being overwhelmed by the explosive jubilance of its sprouting.



D The surreal works of Singaporean filmmakers **Mark Chua** and **Lam Li Shuen** explore social existentialism through speculative fiction and body horror. The duo won Best Director at the 32nd SGIFF with their short film, *A Man Trembles* (2021).

2 WAShhh

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

MALAYSIA, IRELAND / 2024 / 24MIN / MALAY, ENGLISH, MANDARIN / PG13 (SOME DISTURBING SCENES)



A Chinese trainee in a Malaysian National Service camp is ordered to lead her female comrades in washing soiled sanitary pads at night.



D **Mickey Lai** is a Malaysian writer and director. Her short films include *A Worm, Whatever Will Be, Will Be* (2022), which was screened in competition at the 33rd SGIFF. *WAShhh* won Best International Short Film at Locarno.

3 Text FIND DAD and Send to 2366

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

PHILIPPINES / 2024 / 15MIN / CEBUANO, TAGALOG / PG



A socially awkward teenage girl, determined to reunite with her estranged father, must convince a mysterious voice to cast her in a reality TV show that could alter her future. QG



D **Kent Michael Cadungog** is a Filipino filmmaker. His previous short films include *Kuan, Puhon* (2021) and *Hosanna* (2024).

4 Spelling Test
Peperiskaan

WORLD PREMIERE

MALAYSIA / 2024 / 20MIN / MANDARIN, MALAY, CANTONESE / PG



Chinese primary student En Qi struggles with Malay spelling, often confusing it with English. This incurs the wrath of his strict teacher who humiliates and punishes him unsparingly. RB



D **Wong Tuck Hon** is an independent filmmaker based in Kuala Lumpur. His short films tend to explore issues concerning neglected communities in Malaysia.

5 Mantra of Neon

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

THAILAND / 2024 / 18MIN / THAI / PG



A Thai soldier returns home to find his father suffering from a mysterious illness. The affliction soon spreads in the village like a curse, causing inexplicable events.



D Bangkok-based filmmaker **Palita Chairit** graduated in film from Silpakorn University. Her work observes the relationship between people and politics in Thailand.

Southeast Asian Short Film Competition
Programme 4

7 DEC, SAT | 7PM | 97MIN | NGS | M18

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)

This programme features characters who contend with the heaviness of leaving and the tensions of returning. Memories and traumas are contemplated in order to propel new ways forward.

1 The Orange

WORLD PREMIERE

CAMBODIA / 2024 / 16MIN / KHMER / NC16 (SOME MATURE CONTENT)



Two childhood best friends reconnect in Phnom Penh after years of separation. A film screening prompts them to wonder about their future together.



D **Seakleng Song** is a Cambodian filmmaker based in Phnom Penh. He developed his short narrative work, *Blue Light by Night*, in Purin Pictures' Short Film Camp 2023. Most recently, he was a participant in the New Asian Filmmakers Collective.

2 Elephants by the Roadside
Những con voi bên vệ đường

WORLD PREMIERE

VIETNAM / 2024 / 19MIN / VIETNAMESE / M18 (SEXUAL SCENE)



In this existential vignette on urban migration, a mother watches her son's funeral through a phone while a gravedigger and paid mourner discuss moving to the city. RN



D Born in Ho Chi Minh City, **Đàm Quang Trung**'s films focus on migrant workers and their sense of escapism. His previous short, *Elephants in the City* (2021), was screened in competition at the 32nd SGIFF.

3 sighnight

WORLD PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 12MIN / ENGLISH / M18 (MATURE THEME)



A family dinner with a returning daughter turns into a violent confrontation, revealing dirty secrets and uncomfortable lies. RB

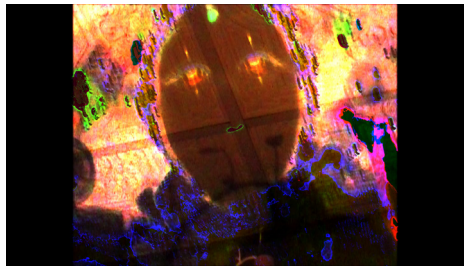


D **Jake Low** is a director and director of photography based in Singapore. With a background in music videos and short films, he enjoys crafting a visual experience that is both gritty and emotional.

4 No Exorcism Film

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

THAILAND / 2024 / 20MIN / ENGLISH, THAI / PG



Moving through different incarnations, enigmatic voices fuse with fleeting images extracted from various conditions of 'Thainess'. As one robotic voice recounts nightmarish returns to Thailand, another seeks to console. TKW



D **Komtouch Napattaloong** is an artist filmmaker from Thailand. His feature documentary debut, *Hours of Ours* (2023), screened at Visions du Réel and the 34th SGIFF. *No Exorcism Film* competed at CPH:DOX

5 Mycelium Memory

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

THAILAND / 2024 / 30MIN / THAI, ENGLISH / PG13 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)



After returning to her childhood home, a Thai-American finds herself exploring fragments of her Vietnam War-veteran father's memories through her fungi-infested house.



D **Felicia Luna King** is a Thai-American filmmaker and a graduate of Thammasat University. She is interested in filmmaking processes that intertwine space, time and history.

Southeast Asian Short Film Competition

Southeast Asian Short Film Competition
Programme 5

8 DEC, SUN | 2PM | 95MIN | NGS | PG

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)

Each of these films carries a blip containing a devastating secret, a split-second of the world that opens up to the phantasmagorical. This programme pushes the sky away only to reveal another sky.

1 Rumbles of the Earth

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

PHILIPPINES / 2024 / 13MIN / CEBUANO / PG (SOME DISTURBING SCENES)



In a town in Mindanao, earthquakes happen constantly and people mysteriously disappear. When Munya's mother goes missing, her investigation leads her to discovering the thin line between fantasy and reality. RB



D **Carl Joseph Lara** is a filmmaker from the Philippines. His stories foreground people with mental disabilities, the LGBTQ+ community, women and children. He directed the short documentary, *Kahayag sa Kangitngit* (2021), which won awards locally.

2 Mirage – Eigenstate

WORLD PREMIERE

INDONESIA / 2024 / 30MIN / INDONESIAN / PG



Displacing the dominance of Western science, this film embraces a pluralistic means of understanding reality, including Sufi mysticism and monorealism. VC



D **Riar Rizaldi** is an Indonesian artist and filmmaker whose works intersect technology, nature and mythmaking. *Tellurian Drama* (2020) was awarded Best Southeast Asian Short Film at the 31st SGIFF, while his debut feature, *Monisme* (2023), was in competition at the 34th SGIFF.

3 Vox Humana

ASIAN PREMIERE

PHILIPPINES, USA, SINGAPORE / 2024 / 22MIN / TAGALOG / PG (SOME NUDITY)



In the aftermath of an earthquake, a man found in the woods may be the cause of all the natural disasters that devastated a small mountain town.



D The works of Filipino filmmaker **Don Josephus Raphael Eblahan** examine trauma, spirituality and nature. He won the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance for *The Headhunter's Daughter* (2022) and is currently developing his first feature, *Hum*.

4 Spirits of the Black Leaves
ดงรกชัฏ

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

THAILAND / 2023 / 30MIN / THAI / PG



Feeling as if there is a void in her chest, a woman embarks on a transformative journey with phantasmagoric encounters and karmic connections.



D **Thaweechok Phasom** is a filmmaker of Thai and Tai Yai descent whose works delve into marginalisation with an experimental approach. *Spirits of the Black Leaves* premiered at Rotterdam.

Southeast Asian Short Film Competition

"YEAH, I WATCH FILMS AT SGIFF" STARTER PACK

Out in the wild, cinephiles are known to be mostly solitary creatures, their silhouettes lit up in the dark by the glow of a screen. Once in a while, they may choose to move in packs for safety and a sense of community.

Sounds like you or someone you know? Here's how you can dress the part.

SHOP ONLINE AT SGIFF.COM



$20

'24 FPS 24/7' BUCKET HAT

Keep your ears snug and cosy from the merciless air-con in theatres.



$20

'I STAY FOR THE CREDITS' TOTE BAG

Tag yourself. We're the slumbering cat with a butt cramp after watching a five-hour epic.



$35

'FOREIGN SUBTITLES ONLY' T-SHIRT

No, we don't actually screen films with foreign subtitles. But it's an attitude we rep whether we're watching the latest Cronenberg or the most obscure Southeast Asian short film.



$40

SGIFF X CRUMPLER FLOP BAG

Made from 100% recycled fabric in collaboration with Crumpler—an essential when you rock up to the cinema with nothing but your phone, wallet and a discreet pack of tissues.

Singapore Panorama

With its unwavering focus on local cinema, Singapore Panorama presents a selection of the latest short films from both emerging and established Singapore filmmakers.

These nine short films speak to the evolving concerns of our society, reflecting on what it means to navigate the environmental trauma of urban development, while also surfacing the moments of human connection in our everyday lives. By reinvigorating time-honoured themes in original ways, they broaden our view of what Singaporean cinema can be.

Singapore Panorama
Short Film Programme 1

1 DEC, SUN | 2PM | 68MIN | NGS | PG

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)

VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD

In diverse and creative ways, this programme speaks to our shared climate anxieties as humankind's destruction of our natural environment tragically persists.

1 Sandcastles

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 17MIN / ENGLISH, MANDARIN, MALAY / PG



As Singapore reclaims land to expand urban development, a town bearing its name on the other side of the world lies buried under sand.



D **Carin Leong** is a documentary filmmaker and multimedia journalist based between Singapore and New York. Her previous short film, *Canciones de Memorias* (2018), premiered at SGIFF.

2 Sky River (Director's Cut)
天河

WORLD PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 16MIN / ENGLISH, MANDARIN / PG



In a future where climate change has radically transformed landscapes, intense rainfall and eroded coastlines drive a desperate search for alternative freshwater sources. VC



D **Ong Kian Peng** is an artist who works at the intersection of art, technology and ecology. Originally exhibited at ShanghART Gallery, this version of *Sky River* was edited for screen.

3 From Before

WORLD PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 19MIN / MALAY, ENGLISH / PG



Overwhelmed by the turmoil in his life, Saiful finds solace in the tranquility of the forest and Buni, its enigmatic inhabitant. VC



D **Amir Bin Zubir** is a recent graduate from Nanyang Technological University's Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information. His filmmaking centres on his Singaporean and Malay identity.

4 Tropic Temper

WORLD PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 16MIN / ENGLISH, BABA MALAY / PG



Tropic Temper cracks open Singapore's code as a site of a disciplined tropics, deconstructing the roots that this garden city has forgotten. VC



D **Elizabeth Gabrielle Lee** is an interdisciplinary artist based in London and Singapore. Her practice slips between the fields of visual art, cultural research and education. *Tropic Temper* is her debut film.

Singapore Panorama
Short Film Programme 2

1 DEC, SUN | 4:30PM | 84MIN | NGS | PG13

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)

VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD

The heartfelt stories in this programme ruminates the passing of time, exploring the emotional weight of grief and desires that anchor our growth.

1 Withered Blossoms
花开花谢

ASIAN PREMIERE

AUSTRALIA, SINGAPORE / 2024 / 14MIN / CANTONESE, ENGLISH / PG



A young woman finally visits her grandmother who is grappling with old age, after evading and attempting to conceal her breakup with her long-term partner. EC



D **Lionel Seah** studied Film Directing at the Australian Film Television and Radio School. His previous short, *Holding On, Letting Go* (2020), premiered at the 31st SGIFF. *Withered Blossoms* premiered in La Cinef at Cannes.

2 Dragon Head Phoenix Tail Brow
龍頭鳳尾眉

WORLD PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 14MIN / MANDARIN / PG



A middle-aged woman and her daughter wind up at the same beauty salon to get their brows embroidered. This chance encounter rekindles their bond as they open up about their life struggles. EC



D **Li Lin Wee** is a director known for her short film, *Autograph Book* (2003), and feature, *Gone Shopping* (2007). Her debut short, *Norman on the Air* (1997), won Best Director at the 10th SGIFF.

3 Late Twenties

WORLD PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 22MIN / ENGLISH / PG13 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)



Two friends catch up, reminisce and reflect on their shared youth. VC



D **Seth Cheong** is a Singaporean writer-director. His previous short, *Lay Over* (2022), premiered at the 33rd SGIFF. His feature project, *Blue Buildings*, participated in the 2023 SGIFF Southeast Asian Film Lab and received a Special Mention.

4 Scent of the Gods
来世恩怨

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

SINGAPORE, THAILAND / 2024 / 17MIN / MANDARIN / PG



After her father's passing, Cass enters a vivid dream journey through his spirit's path to the underworld. She discovers his life experiences and regrets as she comes to terms with her grief. EC



D **Choānn** (alias of Martin Hong) is a Singaporean filmmaker and visual artist based in Los Angeles. His past works include *3 Seconds* (2014), which was screened at the 25th SGIFF, and *Summerdaze* (2018).

5 A Busman's Holiday

WORLD PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 17MIN / ENGLISH / PG

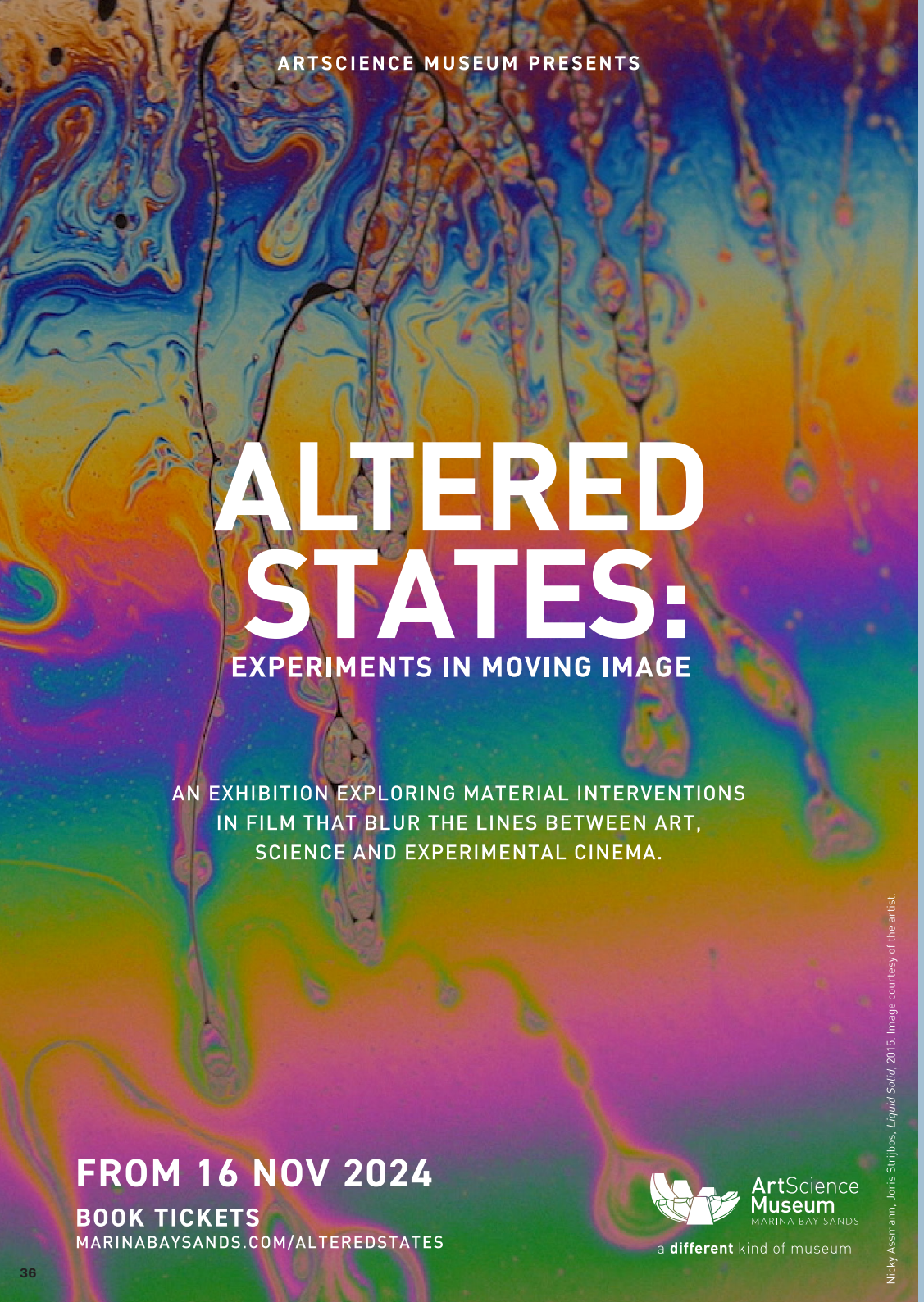


In a hospital ward, an unexpected friendship forms between Rong, who works in film, and a British expatriate. Their shared love for cinema ignites new desires to realise their dreams. VC



D **Chia Rong Liang** worked as a film production crew for more than a decade. *A Busman's Holiday* is his debut, and final, film before his passing in 2023.

Singapore Panorama



Booking Your Tickets

Tickets are only available online via sistic.com.sg or the SISTIC hotline at 6348 5555.

We encourage everyone to purchase their tickets early to secure a seat.

Door sales will only be available for limited Rush Queue tickets at screening venues.

'UNAVAILABLE' NOTIFICATION
If the 'unavailable' status appears while you are booking your ticket, it is possible that your booking has passed the cut-off time or the screening is filling fast. Should this occur, you can:

- Check sistic.com.sg for daily ticketing updates to verify if tickets are still available.
- Notify SGIFF by sending us a message through Facebook or Instagram.
- Email ticketing@sgiff.com for assistance.

REFUNDS AND CANCELLATIONS
All film tickets are non-refundable and non-exchangeable. A refund will only be made for cancelled and rescheduled films.

TICKET CONFIRMATION
You will receive your e-ticket via email. Simply present your e-ticket on your digital device to our front-of-house staff for entry.

Attending Screenings

ARRIVE EARLY – DON'T LOSE YOUR SEAT!
We kindly ask that you arrive on time to secure your seat.

Latecomers are not guaranteed entry as your seat may be offered to the Rush Queue. In order to catch the screening, you will need to join the Rush Queue (see below).

RUSH QUEUE
Try your luck at a screening if tickets are sold out online by joining the Rush Queue.

Ten minutes after a screening's start time, empty seats will be released to those in the Rush Queue on a first-come, first-served basis.

We recommend arriving for the Rush Queue no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the screening.

Each person in the queue will be entitled to one ticket only and entry is not guaranteed.

SHOWCASE

Films from the Philippines



Animal Lovers (p. 23)



Bona (p. 78)



Some Nights I Feel Like Walking (p. 70)



Vox Humana (p. 28)

In celebration of the 55th anniversary of Singapore–Philippines diplomatic relations, SGIFF is proud to spotlight a selection of films made in the Philippines or with Filipino co-production.

Whether it's a newly restored Lino Brocka classic starring Nora Aunor or a neon-lit portrait of Manila's disaffected youth, each film showcases the rich storytelling traditions of the Philippines, capturing its unfettered independent spirit and boundless creativity.

FILMS NOT PICTURED

Cu Li Never Cries (p. 59)

Don't Cry, Butterfly (p. 66)

Rumbles of the Earth (p. 28)

Text FIND DAD and Send to 2366 (p. 24)

Việt and Nam (p. 18)

WITH SUPPORT FROM

FILM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF THE PHILIPPINES

Standpoint

In Standpoint, the personal and the sociopolitical are intertwined in profoundly compelling ways. The 10 films in this section plunge headfirst into today's most hotly debated issues alongside stories of deeply personal struggles, fearlessly confronting these topics through uncompromising lens.

Emotionally potent and stylistically diverse, these films are bound to ignite lively post-show discussion and inspire new perspectives.

Opening Film

Until the Orchid Blooms
វាសនាផ្កាព្រៃ

Neang, an indigenous mother in Cambodia, fights to rebuild her life on her ancestral land after it is flooded by a dam reservoir.

ASIAN PREMIERE | **Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)**

FRANCE, CAMBODIA / 2024 / 103MIN / BUNONG, KHMER / PG

29 NOV, FRI | 6:30PM | GVC2

Neang is an indigenous woman in northeastern Cambodia whose village has been flooded by a hydroelectric dam. Industrialists collude with the government to pressure the locals to leave their ancestral land, but Neang fights to preserve the unity of her community and family, even as her children's dreams veer further from traditional ways of life.

Following his short film *Further and Further Away*, Polen Ly revisits the flooded forest of Stung Treng to record the daily lives and changing lifestyles of the Bunong people. The film documents a long-drawn, controversial hydropower project to dam the Mekong River, and how it is destroying local ecosystems, agriculture and communities.

Shot over six years and significant as a work made by a local, *Until the Orchid Blooms* is a sensitive and sincere documentary that brings to light an under-explored contemporary issue facing the highland peoples of Cambodia. AS



D **Polen Ly** is a Cambodian medical student-turned- filmmaker whose socially conscious works touch on human rights and nature. His short film, *Side by Side* (2021), won the Youth Jury Prize in Locarno Open Doors. His follow-up, *Further and Further Away* (2022), bagged Best Performance for actor Bopha Oul at the 33rd SGIFF. *Until the Orchid Blooms* is his debut documentary feature.

P Lucas Sénécaut, Rithy Panh, Thibaut Amri
C –

Double Bill

VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD

7 DEC SAT | 7:30PM | 110MIN + Q&A | FG3 | R21

A Stone's Throw
على مرمى حجر



A moving depiction of Palestinian elder Amine's multiple displacements in the context of broader geopolitical histories.

ASIAN PREMIERE

PALESTINE, LEBANON, CANADA / 2024 / 40MIN / ARABIC, ENGLISH / M18 (MATURE CONTENT)

Born in Haifa, Palestine, Amine was displaced to Beirut, then to UAE-owned Zirku Island. He toiled for years in oil and gas camps connected to pipelines established by Iraq and the British colonial authorities. His double exile and labour are linked to broader regional issues, including the continued displacement of Palestinians and the development of the Zionist project since World War I.

Combining documentary footage with satellite imagery, archival photographs, Google reviews and Python code, AlSalah reconstructs visual gaps and connects marginalised histories. She digitally trespasses Zirku Island where unofficial filming is forbidden, while positing an alternative historical trajectory for Palestine, once known as "a lighthouse for the region". SIS



D Palestinian artist **Razan AlSalah** investigates the material aesthetics of people and places in worlds constructed by colonial imagery. Her work has been shown at Prismatic Ground, Yebisu International Festival for Art & Alternative Visions, Melbourne International Film Festival and Sharjah Film Forum, among others.

P Sharlene Bamboat
C –

Al Awda

Activists on the boat *Al Awda* prepare for clashes with the Israeli military as they sail towards Gaza in an attempt to break the blockade.

WORLD PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 70MIN / ENGLISH / R21 (MATURE CONTENT)

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



In 2018, 22 activists from 15 countries sailed on *Al Awda* to challenge Israel's blockade of Gaza and deliver aid to Palestinians. Among them were two Singaporeans: filmmaker Jason Soo and doctor Ang Swee Chai, widow of exiled lawyer Francis Khoo. The film features brief portraits of the group, including an Israeli ex-air force captain, an Algerian journalist, a Swedish singer and a Malaysian academic.

As the boat nears their destination, the activists undergo training in nonviolent resistance—tactics to calmly deal with the inevitable forceful arrests by the Israeli military—and discuss strategies of care and solidarity. The film presents a snapshot of a specific moment in an interminable war. SIS



D The work of filmmaker **Jason Soo** examines contentious episodes in Singapore history. His films include *A Short Film on The May 13 Generation* (2014) and *1987: Untracing the Conspiracy* (2015), which was awarded at the Freedom Film Festival.

P Jason Soo
C –

Check SGIFF.COM for updates on Q&A with filmmaker(s) and film ratings

After the Snowmelt
雪水消融的季节

A young filmmaker documents her pilgrimage to the last location of her late best friend in this letter of love and grief.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

TAIWAN, JAPAN / 2024 / 110 MIN / MANDARIN, NEPALI, ENGLISH / NC16 (SOME MATURE CONTENT)

30 NOV, SAT | 2PM | OT
6 DEC, FRI | 9:30PM | OT



In 2017, Yi-Shan declines to join her best friend Chun and his boyfriend on a hiking trip in Nepal. Tragically, the pair find themselves trapped in a cave for 47 days, leading to Chun's passing. Grappling with survivor's guilt, Yi-Shan spends the next six years gathering Chun's photographs and final letters, and retracing his steps in the snowy Himalayan mountains in search of one last connection to him.

After the Snowmelt expresses the unfathomability of moving on from tremendous loss. Intertwining personal memory with the majestic landscapes of Nepal, this documentary is a tender ode to a loved one, the trio's bond and their complex love for the wilderness. RN



D **Lo Yi-Shan** is a Taiwanese filmmaker and writer inspired by the beauty and complexity of the wilderness, as well as how humans and nonhumans are entwined in natural landscapes. *After the Snowmelt*, her debut documentary, premiered in Visions du Réel.

P Chen Yung-Shuang, Cho Tze-Lan, Lo Yi-Shan
C –

All Shall Be Well
從今以後

In Hong Kong, a woman mourning the sudden passing of her lifelong partner navigates grief that unfolds in queer time.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

HONG KONG / 2024 / 93 MIN / CANTONESE / R21 (HOMOSEXUAL THEME)

29 NOV, FRI | 9:30PM | Q&A | GVB3
3 DEC, TUE | 5PM | OT

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



Lesbian couple Angie and Pat appear to have it all—a warm home, a daily routine filled with loving gestures, a tight-knit group of queer friends, and close relatives who cherish the pair. But when Pat unexpectedly dies, the thirty-year life they have built together unravels. With the couple's partnership unrecognised by the law, Angie finds herself in increasing discord with Pat's family.

When power over post-death matters is unequal and the need to fend for oneself cannot be disregarded, queer life is compelled to construct its own temporality of grief. Set against the urban and cultural backdrop of Hong Kong, this tender portrait of a woman in mourning highlights the inequities in gay rights that need urgent redress. DT



D **Ray Yeung** is a Hong Kong-born writer-director known for his nuanced depictions of queer narratives within broader societal contexts. Following up from the gay romance *Suk Suk* (2019), *All Shall Be Well* continues his exploration of later-life queer experiences. It premiered at the Berlinale, where it won the Teddy Award for Best Feature Film.

P Michael J. Werner, Teresa Kwong, Sandy Yip, Chowee Leow
C Patra Au Ga Man, Maggie Li Lin Lin, Tai Bo

Antidote

Journalists and activists working to expose Russia's poison programme are placed on a kill list in this high-stakes documentary.

ASIAN PREMIERE

UK / 2024 / 89 MIN / BULGARIAN, ENGLISH, RUSSIAN / RATING TBA

29 NOV, FRI | 9PM | Q&A | GVB5
30 NOV, SAT | 11AM | GVB6

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



Christo Grozev, Sherlock-like rockstar of investigative journalism, was always thrilled to outsmart Putin's statecraft and expose the secrets of his network of assassins. But in the midst of securing an escape route for an anonymous whistleblower, Grozev becomes a wanted man in Russia and begins investigating the assassination plot against him.

With astonishing access and immersion, *Antidote* documents the nerve and wit of those working to dismantle Putin's regime. Interspersed with the show trial of Russian dissident Vladimir Kara-Murza, the documentary follows the activists in their conviction to hold the world's most powerful autocrat accountable for his actions. SH



D **James Jones** is an Emmy- and Bafta-winning documentary filmmaker. Known for *Children of the Gaza War* (2015), *On the President's Orders* (2019) and *Chernobyl: The Lost Tapes* (2022), his films are characterised by journalistic rigour and cinematic sensibility. *Antidote* won Best Editing at Tribeca.

P James Jones, Vivien Jones
C –

At Averroes & Rosa Parks
Averroès & Rosa Parks

A moving, empathetic documentary on psychiatric care and the inner worlds of patients.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

FRANCE / 2024 / 143 MIN / FRENCH / PG13 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)

1 DEC, SUN | 7PM | FG2



Averroès and Rosa Parks are two units in the Esquirol Hospital, a psychiatric facility in Paris where patients undergo holistic treatment and programmes geared towards social reintegration. Set in this institution, this documentary comprises almost entirely of carer–patient interviews that centre the patients' voice. As they share their struggles, fears and hopes, diverse portraits of troubled individuals emerge.

The pared-down camerawork draws attention to articulations and expressions—we not only discern the sensitivity with which the patients relate to the world, but also their suffering and fragility. This is a deeply empathetic look into psychiatric care and the inner worlds of a stigmatised group, revealing much about the human soul and society. FL



D French filmmaker **Nicolas Philibert** is known for his documentaries such as the award-winning *To Be and To Have* (2002), about a small rural school, and *Nénette* (2010), centred on a captive orangutan. Premiering at the Berlinale, *At Averroes & Rosa Parks* is the second film in a trilogy on psychiatric care, after *On the Adamant* (2023) which won the Berlinale's Golden Bear.

P Miléna Poylo, Gilles Sacuto, Céline Loiseau
C –

No Other Land

Two young men, one Palestinian and one Israeli, are unlikely allies documenting forced displacement in the West Bank together.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

PALESTINE, NORWAY / 2024 / 96 MIN / ARABIC, HEBREW, ENGLISH / R21 (MATURE CONTENT)

4 DEC, WED | 9PM | GVB3



For years, Basel Adra, a young Palestinian activist filmmaker, has been documenting life in Masafer Yatta, in the occupied West Bank. Joined by Israeli journalist Yuval Abraham, the pair broadcast the community's forced displacement by the Israeli military and settlers, as well as its resistance. Even as Basel and Yuval strike up a friendship, the inequalities in their circumstances are amplified: mobility and opportunities are available to one, but denied to another.

Tight editing of personal and public footage forms a compelling narrative centred on the loss and injustice that colonialism brings. *No Other Land* is an urgent and frank portrait of Palestinian life under occupation, and the sustained fight for freedom. AS





D **Basel Adra**, **Hamdan Ballal**, **Yuval Abraham** and **Rachel Szor** are a Palestinian-Israeli collective of filmmakers, researchers and journalists. Made as an act of creative resistance, *No Other Land*, their directorial debut, premiered and won the top documentary prize at the Berlinale, in addition to audience awards at CPH:DOX and Visions du Réel.

P Fabien Greenberg, Bård Kjøge Rønning
C –

Xoftex

A young, amateur filmmaker documents the protracted and increasingly surreal limbo of refugees awaiting asylum.

ASIAN PREMIERE

GERMANY, FRANCE / 2024 / 99 MIN / ARABIC / NC16 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)

2 DEC, MON | 9:30PM | GVC1



After surviving the boat crossing from Syria, Nasser and his brother Yassin are confined to Xoftex camp in Greece while waiting for asylum. They bicker, make parody films of their statelessness and dream of the day they make it to Sweden. During their long, excruciating wait, a restless Nasser begins to make a zombie movie—only to find that there is little distinguishing the film from their terrifying reality.

Based on refugees' testimonies and the notorious Softex camp, *Xoftex* was conceived through a series of workshops held in camps. Incorporating documentary, fantasy and visual effects, the film asserts that any act of creation in such precarity is a radical means of seizing control of one's narrative. SH



D **Noaz Deshe** is an Israeli-born Romanian director, director of photography and composer. His feature debut, *White Shadow* (2013), won the Lion of the Future Award at Venice. *Xoftex* premiered in competition at Karlovy Vary. Deshe is currently completing a documentary companion to *Xoftex*.

P Andro Steinborn
C Abdulrahman Diab, Osama Hafiry, Jalal Albaroudia

Youth (Hard Times)
青春（苦）

A vivid portrayal of the working youth in contemporary China, and a requiem for those who toil in the shadows to keep the market running.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

FRANCE, LUXEMBOURG, NETHERLANDS / 2024 / 226 MIN / MANDARIN / NC16 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE AND MATURE CONTENT)

1 DEC, SUN | 10AM | GVB6



In this second part of the Youth trilogy, Wang Bing continues to explore the lives of young migrant workers in the town of Zhili. The sounds of sewing machines echo relentlessly day and night as workers race against time to meet targets in deplorable conditions, earning meagre wages to survive.

The camera captures the harsh reality of China, which, despite its communist facade, is ruled by the forces of capitalism and consumerism. Harsh working conditions as well as tensions between the working class and the entrepreneur are highlighted alongside the impotence and corruption of the authorities. The film delivers a comprehensive cinematic vision with a sharp political focus, serving as a synecdoche for Chinese society. HIH



D **Wang Bing** is a prominent documentary filmmaker known for *West of the Tracks* (2003), *Fengming, a Chinese Memoir* (2007) and *Dead Souls* (2018). His films offer a profound perspective on contemporary China amidst significant changes. The first instalment of the Youth trilogy, *Youth (Spring)* (2023), was screened at the 34th SGIFF.

P Sonia Buchman, Mao Hui, Nicolas R. De La Mothe, Vincent Wang
C –



Undercurrent

Tracing uncharted territories in cinema, Undercurrent taps into the audacious innovations of experimental filmmaking today and invites you to explore the art form's limitless possibilities.

Opening with a pair of live performances, the 13 moving image works in this section chart their own distinct path, drawing upon a wide range of inventive approaches to expand our notion of what cinema can be.

Opening Act

Figures of History and the Grounds of Intelligence

A performance lecture investigating the connection between history and technology by examining AI's generative quality.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE LIVE PERFORMANCE Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 80MIN / ENGLISH / PG

1 DEC, SUN | 1PM | LCC



Figures of History and the Grounds of Intelligence is a performance lecture by artist Ho Rui An that explores his longstanding interest in the circulation of images and their residual afterlives. Assisted on stage by live AI-generated images, Ho expands on an unlikely encounter with a familiar painterly figure from the National Gallery Singapore's collection which forms the departure point of this performance.

Ho also explores the epistemic foundations of generative models, examining how historical figures evolve into repositories of 'learning' for AI systems. Diffusion models transform abstraction into legible representations, which invites reflection on an AI-assisted reality—one in which the future is continuously shaped by feedback loops from the past. GG

Figures of History and the Grounds of Intelligence was co-commissioned by the Centre Pompidou and KADIST.

D **Ho Rui An** is an artist and writer working in the intersections of contemporary art, cinema, performance and theory. His research examines the relations between labour, technology and capital across different systems of governance in a global age. His short film, *24 Cinematic Points of View of a Factory Gate in China* (2023), was featured at the 34th SGIFF.

P Ho Rui An
C –

D Director P Producer C Cast

Opening Act

Melting Fire Iceman

This expanded cinema explores the hypnotic grip of film and questions its role in shaping our memories and perceptions long after the credits roll.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE LIVE PERFORMANCE Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)

SOUTH KOREA / 2024 / 60MIN / ENGLISH / PG

1 DEC, SUN | 4:30PM | LCC

In *Undercurrent*'s first-ever expanded cinema piece, performer-director HeeSue Kwon reimagines the filmic experience. The projector extends itself beyond a mechanical device: it transforms into a living entity, reanimating the collective memories of its audience. Through Kwon's live manipulation of flickers and intervals, the cinematic apparatus gains autonomy, continuously looping and coming alive.

Using a reverse diffusion model, *Melting Fire Iceman* employs AI to portray the fluid, shifting nature of cinema's core memories. Early films, drawn from online repositories and the Korean Film Archive, are dissolved and reimagined by AI, seemingly in an infinite cycle of rebirth. In this mesmerising process, the boundaries between memory, spectatorship and the cinematic experience are redefined. GG



D **Kwon HeeSue** is an audiovisual and performance artist whose work explores the interplay between optical media devices, sonic machines and the body's sensory system. Her films, video installations and live performances have been featured in festivals and exhibitions across South Korea, New York, London and Jakarta.

P Kwon HeeSue
C –

Check SGIFF.COM for updates on Q&A with filmmaker(s) and film ratings

Triple Bill

4 DEC, WED | 7PM | 84MIN | OT | R21

Grandmamauntsistercat

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

POLAND, NETHERLANDS / 2024 / 23MIN / POLISH / PG13 (SOME DISTURBING SCENES)



D **Zuza Banasińska** is a Warsaw-born artist and filmmaker based in Amsterdam. Their works examine archives, and their role in circulating knowledge and reifying truths. *Grandmamauntsistercat* won the Teddy Award for Best Short Film at Berlinale.

P Zuza Banasińska, Wytwórnia Filmów Oświatowych w Łodzi

C –



Drawing on archival footage from the Educational Film Studio in Łódź, the film recontextualises these materials as a child explores gender, kinship and self-representation. At the heart of the narrative is the Slavic folkloric figure of Baba Yaga, reimagined as a radical matriarch embodying different women. Together, these shadowy figures rewrite the terms of self-narration. GG

On the Impossibility of an Homage

ASIAN PREMIERE

ROMANIA, GERMANY / 2024 / 19MIN / ROMANIAN / PG13 (SOME MATURE CONTENT)



D **Xandra Popescu** is an artist, curator and filmmaker. She curated local art space Atelier 35 and was one of the initiators of video art platform D'EST. *On the Impossibility of an Homage* premiered in the Pardi di Domani section at Locarno.

P Ada Solomon, Xandra Popescu, Jonas Dornbach

C –



Ion Tugearu, once a celebrated star of Soviet-era ballet in communist Romania, is thrilled at the prospect of a documentary about his life. Yet, the futile attempts to pay homage reveal the impossibility of capturing a complete portrait, as memories, legacy and history intertwine in ways that defy simplification. GG

It's Not Me

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

FRANCE / 2024 / 42MIN / FRENCH, ENGLISH / R21 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE AND SEXUAL SCENE)



D **Leos Carax** is a French film director and screenwriter known for his unapologetic approach to breaking new cinematic ground. His work often explores love, loss and alienation between unlikely characters. His features, *Mauvais Sang* (1986) and *Holy Motors* (2012), have become celebrated classics of contemporary French cinema.

P Charles Gillibert, Leos Carax

C Denis Lavant, Kateryna Yuspina, Nastya Golubeva Carax



Leos Carax's latest is a diaristic reflection on his cinematic journey. A nod to Jean-Luc Godard's late aesthetic, *It's Not Me* celebrates the work of fellow artists from the French New Wave. Playfully irreverent and never too self-serious, each image delves into the impossibility of truly knowing oneself while embracing a persistent curiosity about the unknown. GG

D Director P Producer C Cast

Double Bill

VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD

1 DEC, SUN | 7:30PM | 94MIN + Q&A | GVC2 | PG13
6 DEC, FRI | 5PM | 94MIN | FG3 | PG13

File:\New_Order\Normal_Life\Fire_Island

File:\新秩序\普通生活\火燒島

This experimental film considers how political prisoners reorder their lives by performing semi-artistic practices.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

TAIWAN / 2023 / 14MIN / TAIWANESE HOKKIEN / PG13 (SOME MATURE CONTENT)



During the White Terror (1949–1987) in Taiwan, the Kuomintang government imposed martial law and persecuted dissidents and ordinary civilians. Drawing upon accounts of political prisoners confined on Green Island (formerly known as Fire Island), Chang's film poetically considers the relationship between the labour of production and acts of creativity in bleak circumstances.

In response to the imposed strictures, the prisoners gave new order to their existence on the island by developing their own work and practice. This film contemplates on what it means to produce something from nothing, and how to use and control one's time in the face of mortality. SIS



D **Chang Wen-Hsuan** makes installations, videos and performance lectures that expose the power tensions embedded in historical narratives. Recognised with the Taipei Art Awards and the Kaohsiung Award, Chang is the founder of Writing FACTory.

P Chang Wen-Hsuan

C –

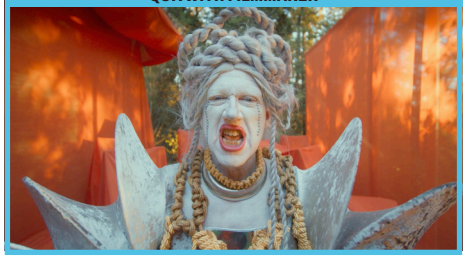
The House of Janus

A moving reflection on life, love and mortality, as one grapples with the inevitability of time's passage.

WORLD PREMIERE

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 80MIN / DUTCH, ENGLISH / PG13 (SOME MATURE CONTENT)

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER



Perched on the hills of Bettona, the House of Janus plays host to an annual summer vacation. It soaks in the amber glow of the Roman countryside and teeters on the edge of wakefulness—the romantic, timeless setting for this retelling of Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. Adriaan, the nonagenarian owner, confronts the inevitable march of time; like Aeneas, he must soon heed the call of destiny, leaving the rest behind.

Conversations illuminate the intertwined histories of suffering and redemption, honouring the multiple traces of existence that persist through time and space. Like Janus, the two-faced Etruscan god, the house speaks to life's fragile impermanence and eternity's enduring stillness. GG



D Singaporean director **Ong Keng Sen** has been the artistic director of TheatreWorks (now T:>Works) since 1988. He is known for advancing an intercultural and interdisciplinary approach to art-making. *The House of Janus*, his second feature film, marks Ong's return to the silver screen after 28 years following the groundbreaking success of *Army Daze* (1996).

P Traslin Ong, T:>Works

C Thomas Michael Allen, Michael(a) Daoud, Adriaan van der Staay

Check SGIFF.COM for updates on Q&A with filmmaker(s) and film ratings

Double Bill

7 DEC, SAT | 4PM | 74MIN + Q&A | FG2 | NC16

The Spirit Level

In this mysterious film, a shaman in northeastern Thailand seems possessed by the spirits of dissidents who suffered a violent death.

WORLD PREMIERE

THAILAND / 2023 / 21MIN / NO DIALOGUE / PG13 (SOME DISTURBING SCENES)

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)





D **Taiki Sakpisit** explores Thailand's tumultuous political and social histories through experimental films and video installations. His feature debut, *The Edge of Daybreak* (2021), won the FIPRESCI award at Rotterdam and was screened at the 32nd SGIFF. *The Spirit Level* was first exhibited as a two-channel installation at the 14th Gwangju Biennale.

P Taiki Sakpisit
C –

Set in northeastern Thailand around the Mekong river, this film evokes the syncretic beliefs and sociopolitical turbulence of the region. The Mekong's origins are associated with the divine Naga, worshipped in temples and underground caverns with a mix of Buddhist and animistic practices. As languorous images of the waters give way to the primal energies of painted temple murals, a shaman conducts an intense seance.

Juxtaposing black-and-white footage with startling colour imagery, the film's haunting sound design and editing effects create a foreboding atmosphere. The shaman's spirit possession alludes to the deaths of three activists whose violently mutilated bodies were found in the Mekong in 2019. SIS

The Periphery of the Base

基地之側

Employing documentary and defamiliarisation approaches, this film depicts workers on an immense structure in a harsh desert landscape.

ASIAN PREMIERE

CHINA / 2024 / 53MIN / MANDARIN / NC16 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)





D Trained in oil painting and mixed media, moving image artist **Zhou Tao** often depicts the relationship between people and disparate landscapes in his films. His work has been shown at M+ Museum, Venice Biennale, Sharjah Biennale, Guggenheim Museum New York, as well as the Berlinale and Locarno. This film garnered the Short Film Award at the Cinéma du Réel.

P Zhou Tao, Zhang Wei
C –

In the punishing Gobi Desert in Xinjiang, workers toil on a gigantic infrastructure project, their conversations casually brutish yet philosophical. Known for his roving, precise camerawork, Zhou depicts the complex scales between the immensity of the landscape, the ambition of the manmade base and the vulnerability of its human subjects. The camera's panning movements and changing exposures create shifts in perspective between details in the foreground and horizons in the distance.

As a sandstorm swirls and the workers depart, night appears to fall. The film becomes more abstract, with form, distortion, colour and contrast taking precedence over documentary narrative. This absorbing film suggests the multiple thresholds between natural and artificial worlds, and the uneasy complexity of their relationship in extreme conditions. SIS

Direct Action

A longitudinal observation of strategies of political resistance in contemporary France.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

GERMANY, FRANCE / 2024 / 212MIN / FRENCH, ARABIC, ENGLISH / PG13 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE AND MATURE CONTENT)

7 DEC, SAT | 10AM | FG2







D French filmmaker **Guillaume Cailleau** is known for his politically conscious work. His short film, *Laborat* (2014), was awarded the Silver Bear at the Berlinale. **Ben Russell**, an American artist-filmmaker, combines experimental cinema with his unique brand of 'psychedelic ethnography'. His feature debut, *Let Each One Go Where He May* (2009), won the FIPRESCI Prize at Rotterdam. *Direct Action* was named Best Film in the Berlinale's Encounters section.

P Guillaume Cailleau, Ben Russell
C –

Shot over two years, *Direct Action* presents a sustained examination of France's leading militant activist commune, the Zone to Defend of Notre-Dame-des-Landes. The commune, which comprises like-minded anarchists, environmentalists and farmers, has repeatedly resisted government attempts to build an international airport extension.

This film explores the commune's survival following its Pyrrhic victory in 2018 when further construction plans were halted. Eschewing agitprop methods, it immerses viewers in a community where the possibilities of individual and collective political activism serve as praxis for everyday life, highlighting a shared responsibility for addressing today's political injustices and ecological crisis. GG

Every Document of Civilization

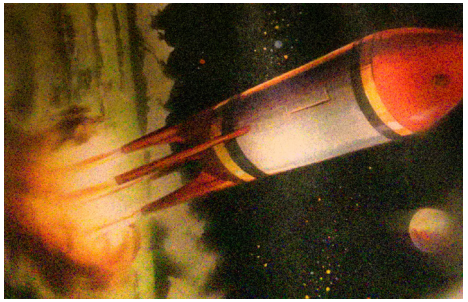
Todo documento de civilización

A mother recounts her son's life and his death at the hands of police in this delicate and layered film.

ASIAN PREMIERE

ARGENTINA / 2024 / 88MIN / SPANISH / PG13 (BRIEF COARSE LANGUAGE)

3 DEC, TUE | 7:30PM | OT





D The work of documentary-experimental filmmaker **Tatiana Mazú González** explores links between people and spaces, as well as the personal and the political. Her films have been selected and awarded by FIDMarseille, FICUNAM and DocLisboa, among others. She is a member of the Antes Muerto Cine collective.

P Nacho Losada
C –

Over grainy nighttime depictions of a busy Buenos Aires intersection, Mónica speaks of her teenaged son Luciano Arruga. It was where he was last seen before being beaten and killed by the police. In daylight, the streets become sites for protests against state-sanctioned forced disappearances and police brutality.

This film poetically focuses on urban marginalia, including street lights, graffiti and trash, juxtaposing them with old book illustrations and altered Google street views. Together, these counter-documents prompt us to pay attention to the inconspicuous. The city is presented as a shifting landscape where structural violence is perpetuated, but where social justice can also be sought through imagination and direct action. SIS

Small Hours of the Night

A man questions a woman in this psychodrama haunted by the history of Singapore's systems of deterrence and control.



SINGAPORE / 2024 / 104MIN / ENGLISH, MALAY, MANDARIN

NO SCREENING AVAILABLE



In a dark room, a man interrogates a woman, her disoriented and fragmented testimony unfolding against his seemingly omniscient insinuations. As they converse through a single night—rarely occupying the same frame—identities and realities shift and time periods jump between the 1960s and 1980s.

This black-and-white chamber drama is based on a little-known 1983 trial about an inscription on Tan Chay Wa's tombstone which the courts deemed to advocate acts that threatened Singapore's security. The woman's experiences are a composite of historical incidents involving marginalised figures. This film indirectly reveals the personal and societal stakes for ordinary individuals in the face of impenetrable political and legal systems. SIS

D A graduate of California Institute of the Arts' film programme, **Daniel Hui** is a filmmaker, writer and editor. He directed the features *Eclipses* (2011), *Snakeskin* (2014), which won the Award of Excellence at Yamagata IDFF, and *Demons* (2018), which premiered in competition at Busan. Hui is a founding member of the 13 Little Pictures film collective.

P Tan Bee Thiam, Daniel Hui
C Irfan Kasban, Yang Yanxuan Vicki

Taman-Taman (Park)
公園

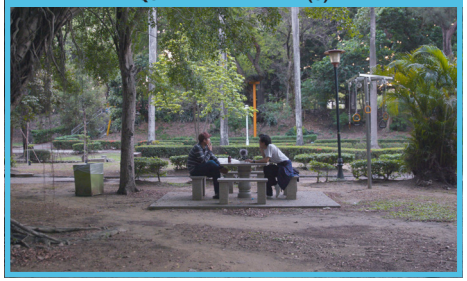
Two Indonesian migrants meet by night in Tainan Park to share poems and tales in this enchanting, formally inventive film.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

TAIWAN / 2024 / 101MIN / INDONESIAN, MANDARIN / PG13 (SMOKING SCENES)

2 DEC, MON | 5PM | FG2
8 DEC, SUN | 7:30PM | Q&A | NGS

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)





In the nighttime setting of Tainan Park, two Indonesian men meet to share their poetry and tell stories about their lives and the experiences of others they meet. Their presence represents the reliance of Taiwan on migrant workers from Southeast Asia. At the same time, their creative activities reflect the rich and multicultural history of Tainan, the oldest city in Taiwan.

As the film unfolds, park infrastructure such as a guard house and broadcast systems amplify the scope and scale of their tales. A gentle and magical film that gradually reveals its unexpected narrative approaches, *Taman-Taman* suggests how to imaginatively understand and represent the existences of oneself and others. SIS

D **So Yo-Hen** is a Taiwanese artist and filmmaker whose work often engages with the underrepresented in culture and society. He has exhibited at Taipei Fine Art Museum, Seoul Media Art Biennale and Yokohama Triennale. *Taman-Taman* won the Grand Prize for the Asian Vision and International competitions at the Taiwan International Documentary Festival. So is a co-founder of Your Bros filmmaking collective.

P Liao Hsiu Hui
C Asri Jalal, Hasan Basri Maulana Firmansyah

Horizon

Horizon offers a bird's-eye view of world cinema today, bringing together diverse filmic discoveries and celebrated works from the international film festival circuit.

Featuring established filmmakers and emerging talents, these 14 films showcase compelling stories from across the globe, each expanding our horizons a little further.

D Director P Producer C Cast

Opening Film

CO-PRESENTED WITH THE INSTITUT FRANÇAIS AND VOILAH! FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL

Spirit World

Legendary singer Claire Emery arrives in Tokyo for what she thinks will be her final concert, only to find herself unexpectedly crossing into a different realm.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD

FRANCE, SINGAPORE, JAPAN / 2024 / 94MIN / FRENCH, JAPANESE / PG

30 NOV, SAT | 4:30PM | SL
2 DEC, MON | 7PM | NGS



Renowned vocalist Claire Emery is invited from Paris to Tokyo for a farewell concert dedicated to her fans before her retirement. After this performance, her life on earth ends abruptly. Guided by devoted fan Yuzo, Claire embarks on a coastal journey. As interlopers in the realm of the living, they uncover life's hidden facets, their ethereal vantage point drawing us into a world where existence, artistry and memory entwine. Their converging journeys unfold like a haunting melody, bridging past and future while illuminating the elusive path to closure.

Spirit World deepens Eric Khoo's dialogue with Japan through a transcultural lens. Continuing from the themes in *Tatsumi* (2011) and *Ramen Teh* (2018), the film explores the intricacies of craftsmanship, shedding light on the sacrifices of a life devoted to one's art. Blending the supernatural with human experiences, it dissolves the veils between the living and the dead.

The film's impact reverberates long after the credits roll. *Spirit World* reminds us that moving forward often requires making peace with what we leave behind, offering a sensitive reflection on legacy and transition. SJY

D **Eric Khoo** is a filmmaker and producer credited with reviving Singapore's film industry in the mid-1990s. The founder of Zhao Wei Films and Gorylah Pictures, Khoo is known for award-winning films such as *Mee Pok Man* (1995), *12 Storeys* (1997) and *Be with Me* (2005). His films have been showcased at major festivals including the Berlinale, Venice and Cannes. In 2007, Khoo received the Singapore government's Cultural Medallion.

P Matilde Incerti, Tan Fong Cheng, Yutaka Tachibana, Shin Yamaguchi
C Catherine Deneuve, Yutaka Takenouchi, Masaaki Sakai, Jun Fubuki

D Director P Producer C Cast

Special Presentation



The Fable

Late '80s, the Himalayan slopes: a magical slow burn reveals the inexorable changes that threaten to reshape the world for good.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE CAST & DIRECTOR IN ATTENDANCE

INDIA, USA / 2024 / 116MIN / HINDI, ENGLISH, PAHARI / RATING TBA

30 NOV, SAT | 7:30PM | SL

On the slopes of the Indian Himalayas sits a slice of paradise—Dev's family orchard, which he is heir to. This expansive estate is the centre of the universe for the community, whose relationship between land and people is anchored on generational ties. Entrusted with the burden of maintaining the status quo, Dev emerges as an unlikely authority figure as the patriarch of both his family and the wider community. Searching for an escape, he finds solace in a peculiar hobby involving avian prosthetics.

The sudden appearance of burnt apple trees is taken as a prophetic omen, interrupting the delicate equilibrium that defines the daily lives in this deeply hierarchical society. The introduction of pesticides in the plantation, alongside the arrival of mysterious nomads, reinforces the community's deep-seated mistrust of change, threatening to fissure the tightly knit group. *The Fable* captures the eternal cycle of time while delving into the festering wounds beneath the sheen of this lush haven. GG



D Educated at the Prague Film School, writer-director **Raam Reddy** explores the power of magic realism in his storytelling across both film and literature. His debut film, *Thithi* (2016), won Locarno's Golden Leopard – Filmmakers of the Present as well as Best First Feature. This was followed by *The Fable*, which premiered at the Berlinale to widespread acclaim.

P Pratap Reddy, Park Sunmin
C Manoj Bajpayee, Priyanka Bose, Deepak Dobriyal

Check SGIFF.COM for updates on Q&A with filmmaker(s) and film ratings

An Unfinished Film
一部未完成的电影

A filmmaker returns to an unfinished work, determined to complete his vision as creativity clashes with life's shifting priorities in a changing world.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD

GERMANY, SINGAPORE / 2024 / 107MIN / MANDARIN / M18 (SOME MATURE CONTENT)

3 DEC, TUE | 8PM | Q&A | TPY
4 DEC, WED | 2PM | FG3

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



Director Xiaorui's discovery of old footage from a decade-old project rekindles the drive to complete his unfinished film. As he embarks on this creative ambition, his personal quest becomes entangled with China's collective struggle during the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Through a kinetic blend of old footage and handheld camerawork, Lou crafts a visceral experience that fractures the boundary between real and fabricated. *An Unfinished Film* delves into the tensions between art and survival, prompting viewers to ponder whether the pursuit of creativity can transcend pragmatic concerns, ultimately affirming life in the face of adversity. SJY



D A prominent figure among China's Sixth Generation directors, **Lou Ye**'s works explore complex social issues while navigating censorship. These include *Suzhou River* (2000) and *Summer Palace* (2006), both of which gained international acclaim but faced domestic restrictions. Lou's films have competed and received awards in major festivals like Cannes, the Berlinale and Venice, cementing his status as a bold voice in Chinese cinema.

P Yingli Ma, Philippe Bober
C Qin Hao, Qi Xi, Mao Xiaorui

By the Stream
수유천

The lines between artmaking and lovemaking blur in this playfully flirtatious dramedy set in a women's arts school.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

SOUTH KOREA / 2024 / 111MIN / KOREAN / PG13 (SMOKING SCENE)

30 NOV, SAT | 9PM | GVB5
2 DEC, MON | 2PM | FG3



University instructor and artist Jeon-im invites her once-famous uncle, Si-eon, to salvage a theatre skit after the original director was fired for dating and cheating on three actresses. While Si-eon rehearses, and reminisces his younger days and similarly fumbled romances, the ousted director returns with clumsy pleas for love and forgiveness. Romance remains stubbornly in the air when Jeon-im's boss becomes smitten with Si-eon.

Just as Jeon-im routinely goes to a stream to grasp its patterns by sketching it, *By the Stream* observes life's fleeting drama. With his usual slate of chance encounters, drunken confessions and oblique affections, this is yet another Hong Sang-soo ode to artmaking and the little things in life. RN



D Prolific South Korean auteur **Hong Sang-soo** is known for his naturalistic films. Since his debut in 1996, he has made 32 features and a few short films, and has won four Silver Bear awards at the Berlinale. *By the Stream* premiered at Locarno and won Best Performance for Kim Min-hee's portrayal of Jeon-im.

P Hong Sang-soo
C Kim Min-hee, Kwon Hae-hyo, Cho Yun-hee

City of Small Blessings

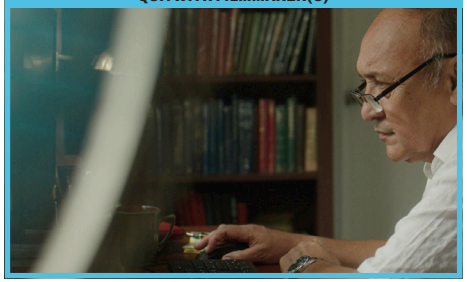
A retired civil servant in Singapore resorts to desperate measures to prevent his house's demolition for a new train line.

WORLD PREMIERE VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD

SINGAPORE / 2024 / 110MIN / ENGLISH / PG13 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)

6 DEC, FRI | 7:30PM | Q&A | GVC1

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



Retired civil servant Prakash and his wife Anna live in an old house with a lush garden. Their idyllic days there are numbered as the state has acquired their home, which will be demolished to make way for a new train line. Unwilling to accept this reality, Prakash seeks to amend the ruling, resorting to increasingly desperate measures that sour his relationships with his family. An unexpected invitation to meet the prime minister offers one final opportunity to make a personal appeal, but does not go as planned.

Helmed by emotional and dramatic performances, *City of Small Blessings* is a stirring portrait of one man's deep love for his home, even as the country becomes increasingly unfamiliar and hostile to him. AS



D **Wong Chen-Hsi** is a filmmaker and educator from Singapore whose works centre on displacement, loss and change. She is an alumnus of Berlinale Talents and Torino Film Lab. Her films have screened at Clermont-Ferrand, Rome and Shanghai. *City of Small Blessings*, based on Simon Tay's Singapore Literature Prize-winning novel, is her second feature after *Innocents* (2012).

P Fran Borgia
C Victor Banerjee, Noorlinah Mohamed, Brendon Fernandez

Cu Li Never Cries
Cu Li Không Bao Giờ Khóce

A poetic examination of the space memories occupy in our existence, through vignettes of two women at different points of their lives.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD

VIETNAM, SINGAPORE, FRANCE, PHILIPPINES, NORWAY / 2024 / 93MIN / VIETNAMESE / NC16 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)

1 DEC, SUN | 11AM | NGS
6 DEC, FRI | 2PM | OT



After the death of her estranged husband, Mrs Nguyện returns home, bearing his urn and his pet *cu li*, a pygmy slow loris. Back in Hanoi, she is greeted with unfamiliarity: the city is hardly what she remembers, and her niece is now a young adult preparing for her wedding. While the couple teeter towards a new beginning, Mrs Nguyện dwells within fragments of the past.

Besides revealing intergenerational tensions, the narratives of the two women form an affecting depiction of how memories underpin our existence, from their accretion to remembrance. Shot in lustrous monochrome, the film reveals the melancholy of the human condition: the ineluctable passage of time, where only reminiscences are left to dam the flow. FL



D Born and raised in Hanoi, **Phạm Ngọc Lân** is a self-taught filmmaker with a background in urban planning. His short films, *Another City* (2016) and *Blessed Land* (2019), both premiered at the Berlinale. *The Unseen River* (2020) screened at SGIFF, winning the Youth Jury Award. His feature debut, *Cu Li Never Cries* took home the GWFF Best First Feature Award at the Berlinale.

P Nghiem Quynh Trang, Tran Thi Bich Ngoc
C Minh Chau, Ha Phuong, Xuan An

Don't You Let Me Go

Agarrame fuerte

At her best friend's wake, Adela's grief sparks a surreal journey that challenges her understanding of memory and loss.

ASIAN PREMIERE

URUGUAY / 2024 / 74MIN / SPANISH / NC16 (SOME DRUG USE)

1 DEC, SUN | 9PM | FG3
2 DEC, MON | 5PM | FG3



Amidst the solemn crowd at Elena's wake, Adela retreats to her car, grappling with grief that contrasts with her late best friend's vivacious personality. But this brief moment of solitude is disrupted by an unexpected bus journey to where Elena eagerly awaits. Laughter and tears accompany their bittersweet reunion that brings forth a spectrum of emotions.

Don't You Let Me Go is a meditation on sisterhood and the persistence of love beyond death. Led by a strong female cast, the magic realist tale invites us into the heart of Adela's emotional journey. This is a crisp portrayal of the lingering impacts of friendship, how to honour life while acknowledging loss, and the places of love that grief takes us to. SJY





D Uruguayan filmmakers **Ana Guevara Pose** and **Leticia Jorge Romero** craft sensitive narratives that explore the dynamics of kinship, capturing life's complexities with humour and depth. Their feature debut *So Much Water* (2013) won the Norteado Award at San Sebastián, and *Aleli* (2019) was Uruguay's Oscar submission. *Don't You Let Me Go* garnered the Nora Ephron Award at Tribeca.

P Agustina Chiarino
C Chiara Hourcade, Victoria Jorge, Eva Dans

Familiar Touch

Ruth, a woman in her eighties, grapples with changes in her mental faculties and sense of self as she navigates the transition to assisted living.

ASIAN PREMIERE

USA / 2024 / 90MIN / ENGLISH / PG13 (BRIEF COARSE LANGUAGE)

8 DEC, SUN | 11AM | Q&A | NMS

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



Ruth is preparing to transition into an assisted living facility. Charming, elegant and a passionate cookbook hobbyist, the octogenarian struggles to deal with the harsh realities of ageing that impinge on her deeply rooted sense of identity. Though initially dismissive of assistance, Ruth eventually faces up to her vulnerability and reluctantly accepts the changes in her memory.

Familiar Touch presents a nuanced, gently heartbreaking portrayal of the complexities of ageing. It is an emphatic reminder that a person is far more than their age and illness, inviting us to reflect on the depth and richness of the human experience beyond the boundaries of time and memory. EC



D **Sarah Friedland** is an American director and choreographer. *Familiar Touch*, her directorial feature debut, premiered in the Orizzonti section at Venice where it won Best Director, Best Actress and the Lion of the Future 'Luigi De Laurentiis' Award for Best Debut Film.

P Sarah Friedland, Alexandra Byer, Matthew Thurm
C Kathleen Chalfant, Carolyn Michelle, Andy McQueen

Grand Tour

A man flees marriage and goes on a bizarre odyssey through 1917 Asia, encountering cultural clashes and personal revelation in this offbeat tale.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

PORTUGAL, ITALY, FRANCE / 2024 / 129MIN / PORTUGUESE, CHINESE, THAI, FRENCH, BURMESE, VIETNAMESE, FILIPINO, JAPANESE / NC16 (SOME NUDITY)

30 NOV, SAT | 7:30PM | GVC2
5 DEC, THU | 2PM | OT



Edward, a British Empire delegate, embarks on an expedition to escape his engagement to Molly. As Edward fumbles through vibrant cities, from Rangoon to Shanghai, his cultural missteps occasionally lead to comical mishaps. Meanwhile, Molly, who initially gives chase, becomes increasingly drawn into the rich diversity of Asian cultures, unexpectedly finding profound personal growth.

Set in 1917 Asia, *Grand Tour* navigates the complexities of a changing continent, blending modern and period aesthetics with playful sophistication. It is visually captivating and aurally immersive without exoticising. Instead, the film challenges preconceptions of East and West, seamlessly interweaving past and present. SJY



D A visionary of Portuguese cinema, **Miguel Gomes** debuted with *The Face You Deserve* (2004). His films blend reality and fantasy, including *Our Beloved Month of August* (2008) and *Tabu* (2012), the latter winning the Berlinale's Alfred Bauer and FIPRESCI prizes. The three-part *Arabian Nights* (2015) showcases his inventive, poetic approach to cinema. *Grand Tour*, his latest boundary-pushing work, marks his Cannes Competition debut.

P Filipa Reis
C Crista Alfaiate, Gonçalo Waddington, Cláudio da Silva

Living in Two Worlds

ぼくが生きてる、ふたつの世界

After moving from rural Japan to Tokyo, a Child of Deaf Adults discovers the value of Deaf culture while contending with his own biases.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

JAPAN / 2024 / 105MIN / JAPANESE / PG13 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)

7 DEC, SAT | 4:30PM | OT



Igarashi Dai grew up in a small port town in Miyagi, immersed in two rich linguistic worlds: Japanese and Japanese Sign Language. However, Dai's unique perspective as a Child of Deaf Adults becomes a source of inner conflict as he grapples with his identity. When Dai moves to Tokyo, seeking independence from his family, the city becomes a catalyst, challenging him to confront and embrace the roots he struggled to fully appreciate.

O Mipo crafts a complex bildungsroman that is an emotionally resonant exploration of identity, family and the unexpected gifts that come from bridging cultures. With each frame, the film celebrates the power of visual language, the vibrancy of the Deaf community, and the beauty of diverse forms of communication. SJY



D **O Mipo** is a Japanese film director and screenwriter. In 2005, her screenplay *The Sakais' Happiness* won the Sundance/NHK Award, leading to her directorial feature debut in 2006. This was followed by *Here Comes the Bride, My Mom!* (2010) and later *The Light Shines Only There* (2014), Japan's submission for the Academy Awards. *Living In Two Worlds*, her first feature film in nine years, premiered at Shanghai.

P Hideyuki Yamakuni
C Ryo Yoshizawa, Akiko Oshidari, Akito Imai

Olivia & the Clouds

Olivia & Las Nubes

This vibrant debut employs a whirlwind of animation styles to offer shifting perspectives on love with mesmerising fluidity.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC / 2024 / 81MIN / SPANISH / PG

30 NOV, SAT | 7PM | GVB7



Olivia drifts through cotton cloud fantasies gifted by someone under the bed. Barbara's romantic anxieties surface in an art project. Ramon hesitates over a woman reborn as a potted plant seeking intimacy.

Stringing together vignettes of lost loves, this visually astounding film launches into a dizzying kaleidoscope of animation styles: claymation, cut-outs, mixed media and more. Abstraction becomes the sole but generous language for the vast desires dormant in everyday tedium, freeing characters from the grip of memory and grief. The film makes an earnest case for buried feelings to burst forth in vivid expression. VY



D **Tomás Pichardo-Espaillat** is an animator whose work draws inspiration from magic realism and his upbringing in the Caribbean. *Olivia & the Clouds* was nominated for the Golden Leopard in Locarno's Filmmakers of the Present and for Best Animated Feature at the Ottawa International Animation Festival.

P Amelia del Mar Hernández, Fernando Santos Díaz

C Olga Valdez, Elsa Nuñez, Héctor Aníbal

One of Those Days When Hemme Dies

Hemme'nin Öldüğü Günlerden Biri

A worker's simmering desire for revenge against his harsh supervisor is waylaid as encounters steer him towards a path of introspection.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

TÜRKIYE / 2024 / 82MIN / TURKISH / PG13 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)

5 DEC, THU | 9PM | GVB5



Eyüp toils under the relentless sun on a tomato farm in southeastern Turkey. His wants are simple: fair wages and his dignity. Yet, like many others, Eyüp is burdened by unpaid wages and the unyielding demands of his supervisor, Hemme. After a heated confrontation, Eyüp, consumed by anger and a thirst for revenge, sets out to teach Hemme a lesson. However, as he wanders through the day, becoming an unwilling flâneur, chance encounters and conversations divert him from his goal, gradually eroding his resolve.

As daylight diminishes, so does Eyüp's anger. In the stillness of dusk, the tensions of social justice and pride ease into a fragile pause, his inaction quietly settling alongside the approaching night, without resolution. SJY



D **Murat Fıratoğlu** is a Turkish director and lawyer. His short films include *Straw Dust* (2007), *The Edge of All Possibilities* (2008), *Albatros Dreams* (2008) and *The Photo of Kholoud Ahmed* (2016). *One of Those Days When Hemme Dies*, his feature debut, premiered in the Orizzonti section at Venice where it won the Special Jury Prize.

P Murat Fıratoğlu

C Sefer Fıratoğlu, Salih Taşçı, Güneş Sayın

When The Phone Rang

Kada je zazvonio telefon

On a Friday in 1992, eleven-year-old Lana answers a call that shatters her carefree world, shaping the memories of her formative years.

ASIAN PREMIERE

SERBIA, USA / 2024 / 73MIN / SERBIAN, ENGLISH / NC16 (SOME DRUG USE)

2 DEC, MON | 9PM | GVC2
5 DEC, THU | 5PM | OT



Recollection of childhood often unfolds in fragmented and nonlinear ways: dislocated thoughts and feelings weave into a patchwork of innocence and uncertainty. *When The Phone Rang* encapsulates this, intertwining the fog of adolescent amnesia with the deep-seated trauma of a family's forced migration, alongside the collective forgetting that shadows the aftermath of war.

Through analogue memorabilia—clocks, landline phones, VCRs and cassette tapes—the film conjures the fragile 1990s, where these material objects evoke a past that is distant yet seemingly within reach, lingering on the edge of memory. Emotionally visceral and intellectually reflective, the film transforms remembering into a sensory encounter with cinematic time. SJY



D Belgrade-born **Iva Radivojević** crafts films on identity, migration and belonging. Her work collages diverse elements, linking to the metaphysical, such as her debut *Aleph* (2021), which intertwines ten characters' visions. *When the Phone Rang* premiered at Locarno where it garnered a Special Mention.

P Andrijana Sofranis Sucur, Marija Stojnić, Madeleine Molyneaux, Iva Radivojević

C Natalija Ilinčić, Srna Vasić, Vasilije Zečević

Yen and Ai Lee

小雁與吳愛麗

An incisive probe into self-sacrificial family dynamics and intergenerational trauma rendered by tour de force performances.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

TAIWAN / 2024 / 107MIN / MANDARIN, HAKKA, TAIWANESE HOKKIEN / NC16 (SOME NUDITY AND VIOLENCE)

1 DEC, SUN | 2PM | Q&A | NMS

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



Hurt people hurt people. This aphorism looms over the central tale of a mother–daughter relationship that unspools messily from the moment Yen returns home from prison. As Yen and her mother Ai-Lee move tenuously towards reconciliation, the sudden appearance of Yen's half-brother introduces further fractures. Meanwhile, a mysterious woman resembling Yen turns up at an acting class with fictions that threaten to expose Yen's secrets.

Set in the Hakka district of Meinong, accumulated trauma and resentment eat away at rural charms in this grim black-and-white variation of the Kaohsiung countryside. Through an elegant, layered screenplay, this drama examines the roles we take on for others and the acts we perform in their name. VY



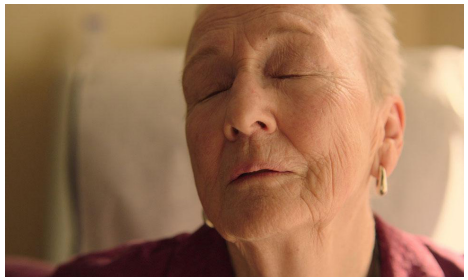
D **Tom Lin Shu-Yu** made his directorial debut with *Winds of September* (2008). His later works include *Zinnia Flower* (2015) and *The Garden of Evening Mists* (2019), which was nominated for nine Taipei Golden Horse Awards, cementing his status in Taiwanese cinema. Yen and Ai-Lee received the Kim Jiseok Award at Busan.

P Clifford Miu, Zhang Linhan

C Kimi Hsia, Yang Kuei-mei , Sam Tseng

SHOWCASE

Films from the USA



Familiar Touch (p. 60)



Happyend (p. 15)



I Saw the TV Glow (p. 68)



La Cocina (p. 69)



Nightbitch (p. 69)

WITH SUPPORT FROM

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Step into the world of contemporary American cinema with this selection of films that capture the richness of identity and personhood from unique and intimate perspectives.

Whether it's a surreal exploration of adolescence and digital life, a tender examination of caregiving and sensory relationships, or a dark comedy on motherhood and female rage, each of them creatively reveals the expansive range of the human experience.

Foreground

Foreground highlights 12 captivating, genre-driven films that celebrate the essence of popular cinema and its significance to audiences today.

From inventive plot twists to fascinating character studies, this section offers fresh and invigorating takes on familiar narrative conventions, promising thrills and spills that will keep you glued to the edge of your seat.

Opening Film



Don't Cry, Butterfly
Mưa trên cánh bướm

A middle-aged woman seeks otherworldly help as her family comes undone in this dark fantasy tale of contemporary womanhood.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE | **VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD**

VIETNAM, SINGAPORE, PHILIPPINES, INDONESIA / 2024 / 97MIN / VIETNAMESE / RATING TBA

29 NOV, FRI | 8:30PM | TPY
30 NOV, SAT | 11AM | NGS

When mother and breadwinner Tam discovers her husband's affair on live TV, her domestic life begins to unravel. As she grapples with the humiliation of neighbourly gossip and mourns the good old days, her daughter grows distant, dreaming of moving to Europe. Their alienation mirrors a mysterious leak on their ceiling, which seems to morph and grow ever larger. Determined to set things right, Tam turns to a spiritual master for help.

Don't Cry, Butterfly paints a wry but empathetic character study of a woman brimming with unbeatable resolve and deep-seated angst. Tam's austere, commandeering front as a wedding planner ironically nurses a gathering storm of stifling gender traditions and unrequited yearnings which constantly threatens to boil over.

Merging a pop colour palette with haunting subject matter, Duong Dieu Linh's spirited debut conjures repressive suburban realities with a touch of magic, tragic humour and hope. RN



D Vietnamese filmmaker **Duong Dieu Linh** captures eccentric yet authentic stories of middle-aged Vietnamese women. *Don't Cry, Butterfly*, her feature debut, premiered and won the Grand Prize in Venice Critics' Week. Her short films, *Sweet, Salty* (2019) and *A Trip to Heaven* (2020), were screened in competition at SGIFF.

P Tan Si En, Wilfredo C. Manalang, Nguyễn Mai Ka, Yulia Evina Bhara, Des Tan, Alicia Catubay-Watt, George K. Sommerrock, Nathaniel Lee, Madonna B. Sanchez

C Lê Tú Oanh, Nguyễn Nam Linh, Lê Vũ Long

D Director P Producer C Cast

Special Presentation



The Unseen Sister
乔妍的心事

The past of a famous actress begins to haunt her when her estranged sister makes an unexpected return to her life.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE | **CAST & DIRECTOR IN ATTENDANCE**

CHINA / 2024 / 112MIN / MANDARIN,YUNNAN DIALECT / NC16 (SOME COARSE LANGUAGE)

6 DEC, FRI | 8PM | GVM

Qiao Yan, raised in Yunnan Province close to the border of Myanmar, worked her way up to become a reputed actress. Status, fame and wealth—she seems to have it all. But beneath her glamorous exterior lies unresolved emotional entanglements and a hidden past. When she receives a blackmail text and her estranged sister makes an unexpected return, the life that Qiao Yan has carefully built over the years begins to crumble. Chaos ensues and she is forced to confront the unshakeable shadows of her past and choose what truly matters to her.

The film's patient and unsettling unravel is bolstered by compelling performances from a stellar cast. An adaptation of Zhang Yueran's novel, *The Unseen Sister* hauntingly portrays a sisterly bond shaped by distance and social disparities. It delves into how familial ties are tested under the weight of hidden wounds and unfortunate circumstances, while offering an introspective look at the complexities of love and estrangement, all marked by the regret of life's choices. EC



D Born in Myanmar, **Midi Z** has made a diverse repertoire of films. His narrative features include *Return to Burma* (2011), *Ice Poison* (2014), *The Road to Mandalay* (2016) and *Nina Wu* (2019), which premiered in Cannes' Un Certain Regard and was screened at the 30th SGIFF. His documentary works include *Jade Miners* (2015), *14 Apples* (2018) and *The Clinic* (2023), which premiered at IDFA.

P Yun Fei, Ma Ning, Hou Xiaolu

C Zhao Liying, Xin Zhilei, Huang Jue

Check SGIFF.COM for updates on Q&A with filmmaker(s) and film ratings

Brief History of a Family
家庭简史

A high schooler's entrance into a well-off family upends its fragile equilibrium as buried desires are forced into light.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

CHINA, FRANCE, DENMARK, QATAR / 2024 / 99MIN / MANDARIN / PG (SOME DISTURBING SCENES)

30 NOV, SAT | 9PM | GVC1
8 DEC, SUN | 8PM | FG2



Following an incident at school, outgoing Tu Wei and reclusive Yan Shuo start to hang out at Wei's sleek home. When Wei's parents learn of Shuo's troubled family background, they warmly welcome the teen. His caring gestures and inquisitive, sensitive mind readily gain their favour, amid dissatisfaction with their self-centred son. As Wei resists his schoolmate's encroachment on his place in the family, questions of blood and of desired kin demand urgent answers.

Propped by ingenious lensing and a tense score, this psychological thriller awakens the unspoken malaise of contemporary family life in China shaped by the legacy of its one-child policy. DT



D **Lin Jianjie** is a Chinese filmmaker who tells stories about China's contemporary society through the microcosm of everyday relations. His short films, *A Visit* (2015) and *Gu* (2017), have travelled internationally. *Brief History of a Family*, his feature debut, screened at Sundance and the Berlinale.

P Lou Ying, Zheng Yue, Wang Yiwen, Zhou Ping, Rikke Tambo Anderson
C Zu Feng, Guo Keyu, Sun Xilun

I Saw the TV Glow

Two teenagers' obsessive bond over an enigmatic TV show spirals into a disturbing, febrile nightmare.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

USA / 2024 / 100MIN / ENGLISH / RATING TBA

30 NOV, SAT | 9:30PM | GVB3



Classmates Owen and Mandy form a close bond over their shared obsession for a late-night TV show, *The Pink Opaque*. But this strange, alluring show becomes increasingly dark and soon encroaches on their waking life, sparking discordance and tragedy in deeply unnerving ways. As the edges of fiction and reality dissolve, Mandy descends into hallucinatory zones, experiencing visions and eerie phenomena that mirror the show's sinister and prophetic broadcasts.

The film plunges us into a nightmarish world anchored on the disorienting power of media. It turns the mundanity of media consumption into a disquieting act that warps our sense of reality and sends us into the darkest corners of our psyche. SG



D **Jane Schoenbrun** is an American independent filmmaker and writer dedicated to making and supporting personal, queer cinema. Their narrative feature debut, *We're All Going to the World's Fair* (2021), premiered at Sundance. Their other works include the documentary film, *A Self-Induced Hallucination* (2018), and the punk rock variety TV show, *The Eyeslicer* (2017).

P Ali Herting, Sam Intili, Dave McCary, Emma Stone, Sarah Winshall
C Justice Smith, Brigette Lundy-Paine

La Cocina

Tempers flare during lunchtime service at The Grill. While the kitchen heats up, questions arise when money goes missing from the register.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

MEXICO, USA / 2024 / 139MIN / ENGLISH, SPANISH / M18 (NUDITY AND COARSE LANGUAGE)

1 DEC, SUN | 11AM | GVC1



In the heart of bustling New York is The Grill. Estela, a fourteen-year-old illegal immigrant from Mexico, finds work there through family friend and chef Pedro. Over the course of the lunchtime rush, Estela finds herself acquainted with her fellow undocumented immigrant coworkers seeking a better life. Pedro, though, is more focused on his girlfriend, an American waitress, and the big decision they need to make together.

Based on Arnold Wesker's 1957 play, *The Kitchen*, Ruizpalacios examines inequalities in the kitchen, from workers' rights and visa precarity to social hierarchies. But even amid the frenetic noise and chaos, the film is interspersed with moments of lightness and quiet, allowing us to reflect on the nuances of each character's humanity. RP



D **Alonso Ruizpalacios** is an award-winning Mexican writer-director who works across film, theatre and television. *Güeros* (2014) bagged the Best First Feature Award at the Berlinale and *Museum* (2018) received the Silver Bear for Best Screenplay at the same festival. His other features, *A Cop Movie* (2021) and *La Cocina*, also premiered at the Berlinale.

P Ramiro Ruiz, Gerardo Gatica González, Ivan Orlic, Lauren Mann, Alonso Ruizpalacios
C Raúl Briones, Rooney Mara, Anna Díaz

Nightbitch

A woman embodies the beastliness of motherhood in this Kafka-esque comedy that critiques maternal roles.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

USA / 2024 / 98MIN / ENGLISH / M18 (SEXUAL SCENES)

7 DEC, SAT | 9PM | GVB3



Taking a break from her career to be a fulltime stay-at-home mother, an artist finds herself contending with deep malaise as she struggles with the demands of motherhood with an often-absent husband. Amid this emotional turmoil, she gradually morphs into a dog-like creature, with sharp teeth, fur, an insatiable appetite, and animalistic impulses.

Based on the eponymous novel by Rachel Yonder, *Nightbitch* draws on the allegory of metamorphosis to expose the hard truths of motherhood. The film denounces the idealisation of motherhood with Amy Adams's fierce portrayal of the female rage, redefining what it means to be both a woman and a mother. ECTS



D **Marielle Heller** is an American director, screenwriter and actor. She is best known for *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* (2015), which won the Grand Prix in the Berlinale's Generation 14plus, as well as *Can You Ever Forgive Me?* (2018) and *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* (2019), both of which toured internationally. *Nightbitch* premiered at Toronto.

P Anne Carey, Marielle Heller, Sue Naegle, Christina Oh, Amy Adams, Stacy O'Neil
C Amy Adams, Scoot McNairy, Arleigh Snowden

Orang Ikan

Two WWII prisoners awake stranded on an island. A deadly, fishy secret unfolds and they team up to survive the unknown.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD

SINGAPORE, INDONESIA, JAPAN, UK / 2024 / 83MIN / ENGLISH, JAPANESE / M18 (VIOLENCE AND GORE)

5 DEC, THU | 9:30PM | Q&A | GVB3

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



In 1942, on a ship deep in the Pacific, Japanese soldier Saito is imprisoned together with Bronson, a British prisoner of war. When the vessel comes under fire from Allied forces, both are thrown overboard. They become stranded on an island inhabited by fish-human creatures known as the Orang Ikan, who do not take kindly to their intrusion. In the face of a common enemy, the pair begin to forge an unlikely kinship.

Blending historical drama with creature feature, *Orang Ikan* is a thrilling entry to locally made monster films. It taps on the region's rich folkloric history with a story that packs action and heart in equal measure. The film's central friendship is a testament to working through differences and the power of empathy. RP



D **Mike Wiluan** is a Singaporean producer and director who works across film and television. His film production credits include *Be with Me* (2005) and *881* (2007). *Orang Ikan* is his third directorial feature after *Buffalo Boys* (2018) and *Motel Melati* (2023). Wiluan helms media company Infinite Studios.

P Eric Khoo, Freddie Yeo, Tan Fong Cheng, Fumie Suzuki Lancaster, James Khoo, Darryl Yeo

C Dean Fujioka, Callum Woodhouse

Some Nights I Feel Like Walking

A long night of camaraderie, chance and cruising in this oneiric celebration of queer belonging.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE VOTE FOR AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD

PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE, ITALY / 2024 / 103MIN / FILIPINO / RATING TBA

2 DEC, MON | 7PM | Q&A | TPY
4 DEC, WED | 4:30PM | Q&A | GVB5

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)



In a corner of Manila, the nights are sleepless while desire hangs in the air. Twinky street hustler Uno wanders the streets with his found family of misfits, who look out for each other and make a quick buck when they can. When they get entangled with a doe-eyed runaway with an enigmatic background, and one of them reveals a dying wish, the night unfolds in equal parts pain and passion.

With a kinetic camera that glides across grimy, intimate spaces, the film draws us into a prolonged hypnosis. A boundless cinematic imagination keeps the fever dream going. But this tender take on queer belonging also yearns for the world in its vulnerability, leaning towards those who remain hurt while hoping cautiously. RL



D **Petersen Vargas** tells stories about Filipino youth through queer and regional lenses. His short film, *How to Die Young in Manila* (2020), competed at SGIFF. *Some Nights I Feel Like Walking*, his fourth feature, won the SEAFIC Award in 2019. Vargas's other features include the Star Cinema-produced *An Inconvenient Love* (2022) and *A Very Good Girl* (2023).

P Alemberg Ang, Jade Francis Castro

C Miguel Odron, Jomari Angeles, Argel Saycon

The Killers
더 킬러스

A wild anthology of vampire killings, slapstick chaos and dark, murderous humour.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

SOUTH KOREA / 2024 / 119MIN / KOREAN / RATING TBA

30 NOV, SAT | 2PM | NMS



Blood-sucking vampires with a vehement desire to kill. An outrageous slapstick identity confusion. A muddled hunt for a ruthless killer whose face is unknown. And, an eccentric sequence in a downtown diner reminiscent of Edward Hopper's iconic *Nighthawks* painting—four South Korean directors come together to unleash their creative madness in this offbeat anthology

A liberal reinterpretation of Ernest Hemingway's short story of the same name, *The Killers* takes us on an exhilarating journey through the chaotic world of hitman killings. Unconventional and absurd, this joyride has just the right amount of twists, wicked humour—and bloodletting—to keep you at the edge of your seat. EC









D **Kim Jong-kwan** is known for his inventive narrative short films. **Roh Deok** is a director and screenwriter whose features include *Very Ordinary Couple* (2013). **Lee Myung-se** is a writer and director who made *Nowhere to Hide* (1999) and *Duelist* (2005). **Chang Hang-jun** is a film and television director known for *Forgotten* (2017).

P Lee Dae-yeon

C Shim Eun-kyung, Yeon Woo-jin, Hong Xa-bin

The Room Next Door

A terminally ill woman reconnects with an estranged friend to accompany her in her final days.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

SPAIN / 2024 / 107MIN / ENGLISH / M18 (MATURE THEME)

30 NOV, SAT | 2PM | TPY



In the wake of her terminal cancer diagnosis, Martha reconnects with her former close friend, Ingrid, whose company she seeks in her final days. The pair move to a rented vacation home outside of New York, where they tend gently to their fraught relationship. Amid Martha's looming mortality and the gulf of time between them which resists easy closure, the simple act of reaching out for understanding takes on a new significance.

Based on Sigrid Nunez's 2020 novel *What Are You Going Through*, this is an intimate exploration of female friendship. The emotional terrain of the women's tangled histories and imminent loss is drawn out with grace and restraint through a screenplay that swells with unspoken pleas for forgiveness. SG



D **Pedro Almodóvar** is a Spanish director internationally renowned for his complex characters and films that explore themes of desire, identity and human connection. His films have won numerous awards, including two Academy Awards for *All About My Mother* (1999) and *Talk to Her* (2002). *The Room Next Door*, his first English-language feature, won the Golden Lion at Venice.

P Agustín Almodóvar, Esther García

C Tilda Swinton, Julianne Moore, John Turturro

The Shrouds

Grief drama meets sci-fi necrophilia in Cronenberg's latest about a man who designs a device to monitor the bodies of the deceased.

ASIAN PREMIERE

FRANCE, CANADA / 2024 / 119MIN / ENGLISH / RATING TBA

3 DEC, TUES | 4:30PM | GVB5
6 DEC, FRI | 9:30PM | GVC2



Following the death of his wife Becca, businessman Karsh channels his grief into creating GraveTech—a technology that allows the viewing of corpses of departed loved ones in their shrouds. As he monitors Becca's decomposing body, Karsh notices odd growths on her bones. After visiting Becca's sister, Karsh discovers that multiple graves have been desecrated. The ensuing investigation spirals into full-blown conspiracy.

An enigmatic dystopian thriller, *The Shrouds* explores the boundaries between the flesh and the digital with a cold and caustic tone. This work arose from the passing of David Cronenberg's wife, signalling sentimentality beneath the layers of callousness, which leaves one to question the film's often sardonic appearance. RP



D **David Cronenberg** is a Canadian film director, screenwriter, producer and actor best known for his body horror and science fiction films that explore the disturbing intersections between technology, the human body and subconscious desire. His iconic films include *Scanners* (1981), *Videodrome* (1983) and *The Fly* (1986). *The Shrouds* premiered at Cannes.

P Saïd Ben Saïd, Martin Katz, Anthony Vaccarello
C Vincent Cassel, Diane Kruger, Guy Pearce

Universal Language

Iranian poetics meet Winnipegian deadpan humour in a whimsical collision of worlds and cinematic traditions.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

CANADA / 2024 / 89MIN / FARSI, FRENCH / PG

30 NOV, SAT | 5PM | NMS
3 DEC, TUES | 9PM | FG3



Two children embark on a quest to retrieve a banknote frozen in ice, a tour guide leads bewildered visitors through a city, and a bureaucrat faces a lonely homecoming with his mother. These events take place in the Canadian city of Winnipeg—performed by a diverse cast of Farsi-speaking characters as they navigate the peculiarities of this seemingly incongruous environment. Against the wintry streets of Winnipeg, a surreal blend of local lore and colloquialisms unfolds, all filtered through the lens of 1980s Iranian cinema.

Universal Language celebrates charming everyday mistranslations and misunderstandings. It takes viewers on an endearing odyssey through a world that delightfully exists in the interstices of cultures. GG



D Winnipeg-born **Matthew Rankin** has directed numerous films across various genres including animation, documentary and fiction. His feature debut, *The Twentieth Century* (2019), won the FIPRESCI Prize at the Berlinale. *Universal Language*, his sophomore feature, took home the inaugural Directors' Fortnight Audience Award at Cannes.

P Sylvain Corbeil
C Rojina Esmaeili, Saba Vahedyousefi, Sobhan Javadi

Landmark

CO-CURATED WITH
ASIAN FILM ARCHIVE

Co-curated with the Asian Film Archive, Landmark showcases recent restorations of classic films, with a special focus on Jafar Panahi this year.

Diving into geopolitics from the late 1970s to the 2000s, these 13 canonical works of world cinema are powerful, incisive allegories of their respective environments, revealing the cracks in cultures and societies that reverberate across time. Together they stand as a testament to the enduring power of the moving image, where histories and legacies continue to speak to the present.

D Director P Producer C Cast

Opening Film



Stars in Broad Daylight

Nujim An-Nahar

An allegory of the Ba'athist regime told through the dissolution of the Ghazi family amid wedding chaos.

ASIAN PREMIERE NEWLY RESTORED Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)

SYRIA / 1988 / 105MIN / ARABIC / NC16 (SOME SEXUAL REFERENCES)

1 DEC, SUN | 4:30PM | Q&A | OT

Set in a coastal village northwest of Damascus, this jewel of Syrian cinema traces the catastrophic dissolution of the Ghazi family as they prepare for a double wedding celebration. Their preparations for the festivities culminate in a pressure cooker of underlying resentments and stifled desires. When bride-to-be Sana inevitably gets cold feet, her humiliated family is forced to venture forth to a chaotic, spiralling city.

A richly layered allegory for the Ba'athist regime, the family is dominated by tyrannical patriarch Abbas whose obsession with power and control over his sister's marriage mirrors the broader oppressive political landscape. The village and wedding become political theatres to explore the illusion of freedom and belonging under dictatorship.

Told through stark imagery and with terrifying intimacy, *Stars in Broad Daylight* is a biting polemic against totalitarianism and has never been allowed a public screening in Syria. NK



D A pivotal figure in Syria's film scene, **Ossama Mohammed** now resides in France after his 2011 exile. His works examine power through diverse modes, from satire to street recordings. Notable films include *Sunduq al-dunyâ* (2002), which premiered at Cannes, and *Silvered Water, Syria Self-Portrait* (2014), an internationally acclaimed documentary on the Syrian civil war.

P –

C Zuhair Abdulkarim, Sabah As-Salem, Saad Eddin Baqdoones

CINETECA BOLOGNA WORLD CINEMA PROJECT THE FILM FOUNDATION

D Director P Producer C Cast

Jafar Panahi in Focus



Jafar Panahi is an Iranian filmmaker who has won numerous accolades including the Berlinale's Golden Bear for *Taxi* (2015) and Cannes' Best Screenplay for *Three Faces* (2018). His films often portray Iranian society in a humanistic and neorealist style. The explicit social critique in his work has incurred the government's ire, for which he has been imprisoned and placed under house arrest.

(refer to p. 92 for more info)

Double Bill

7 DEC, SAT | 9:30PM | 103MIN | OT

In these two films, Jafar Panahi paints a concise picture of how imposed religious values and inequalities shape a society.



The Accordion

A pair of siblings must recover their stolen accordion to continue supporting their family.

IRAN / 2010 / 8MIN / FARSI / PG

While busking along the streets, Kambiz and Khadije accidentally wander into a building and stumble upon a ritual prayer. Their hasty exit is thwarted by an irate passerby who berates them for playing secular music and confiscates their accordion as punishment. As the siblings chase the stranger, Khadije must find a way to talk her older brother out of violent retaliation.

The Accordion affirms the place of both religion and entertainment in society as deeply human acts of communal support and expression. Commissioned by ART for the World's for the Then and Now: Beyond Borders and Differences film project, this short film was Jafar Panahi's last work before his house arrest in 2010. SH

D **Jafar Panahi**
P Jafar Panahi
C Khadije Bahrami, Kambiz Bahrami



Crimson Gold

طلای سرخ

After a series of humiliating encounters, a war veteran becomes convinced that the only way to move up in life is through crime.

IRAN / 2003 / 95MIN / FARSI / PG

Hussein, a pizza delivery driver, dreams of gifting his bride jewellery for their wedding but is repeatedly refused service at the jeweller's. As he traverses neighbourhoods to fulfil delivery orders, he becomes increasingly aware of the stark difference in treatment of the wealthy and the poor. An unexpected taste of luxury leads Hussein to find that he can no longer tolerate being dismissed.

Fusing documentary and fiction to reimagine the true story of a failed burglary, *Crimson Gold* maps the tragedy of a hardworking man's demise in reverse chronology. This was the last collaboration between Panahi and his mentor, Abbas Kiarostami, who wrote the screenplay. The film won the Un Certain Regard Jury Prize at Cannes. SH

D **Jafar Panahi**
P Jafar Panahi
C Hossain Emadeddin, Kamyar Sheisi, Azita Rayeji

Check SGIFF.COM for updates on Q&A with filmmaker(s) and film ratings

Double Bill

Q&A WITH FILMMAKER(S)

8 DEC, SUN | 2PM | 108MIN | Q&A | OT

This double bill, with two decades between them, sheds light on the everyday life of women in Iran's patriarchy, which remains deeply entrenched even today.



The Circle

دایره

The stories of Iranian women intersect to reveal the brutal realities of a society that denies them agency.

IRAN, ITALY / 2000 / 90MIN / FARSI / PG

In the oppressive sociopolitical climate of contemporary Tehran, the intersecting experiences of a group of Iranian women form a mosaic of struggle, resistance and quiet resilience. What starts as a glimpse into the lives of the women fleeing the law expands into a chilling portrait of systemic entrapment. Following one character to the next, from hidden alleys to suffocating hospitals, the film lays bare the fear, uncertainty and desperation that punctuate their lives as each decision seems to only lead to further limitations.

Though forced to survive in unforgiving structures of law and tradition, beneath the women's struggles lies the endurance of the human spirit. *The Circle* is a provocative exploration of the implications of a system designed to suppress female autonomy. ECTS

D Jafar Panahi
P Mohammad Atebbai, Morteza Motavali, Jafar Panahi
C Nargess Mamizadeh, Maryiam Palvin Almani, Mojgan Faramarzi



Hidden

A gem concealed beneath layers of patriarchy yearns for the light of liberation and recognition.

IRAN / 2020 / 18MIN / FARSI / PG

Following his daughter and her theatre-producer friend, Jafar Panahi sets out on a journey to a remote Kurdish village in search of a young girl with a golden voice—but who can only be heard and never be seen.

In this documentary short, Panahi reveals the realities of women's lives under the oppressive patriarchy of post-revolutionary Iran, where religious traditions are wielded to suppress women's autonomy. *Hidden* is a homage to the female voice and the fight for gender equality. ECTS

D Jafar Panahi
P Dimitri Krassoulia-Vronsky, Philippe Martin
C –

Double Bill

8 DEC, SUN | 8PM | 97MIN | OT

Jafar Panahi's films have long incurred the wrath of the Iranian government. Panahi tells his story in this double bill exploring the weight of political repression against the need for artistic expression.



This Is Not a Film

این فیلم نیست

Even when under house arrest, Jafar Panahi continues to wield the art of filmmaking as protest in this documentary masterpiece.

IRAN / 2011 / 76MIN / FARSI / PG

Set against the backdrop of Jafar Panahi's house arrest and professional ban from filmmaking in Iran, *This Is Not a Film* is a striking reflection on personal and creative imprisonment. The documentary unfolds through the everyday gestures of filming and conversation, sitting between fiction and reality. Joined by co-director Mojtaba Mirtahmasb, Panahi narrates the film he never got to make, as the two discuss Iranian cinema under the regime's censorship.

In this quiet yet powerful act of defiance, Panahi utilises the confines of his apartment to show the frailty of freedom in a world where creation is a political act. Premiered at Cannes, the film was smuggled out of Iran through a flashdrive hidden in a cake. ECTS

D Jafar Panahi, Mojtaba Mirtahmasb
P Jafar Panahi, Yousef Panahi
C –



Where Are You, Jafar Panahi?

Où en êtes-vous Jafar Panahi?

A delicate portrait of the fragility of expression and the enduring fight for personal and artistic truths.

IRAN / 2016 / 21MIN / FARSI / PG 13 (SOME MATURE CONTENT)

Exiled from filmmaking, Jafar Panahi embarks on an inward journey as he reflects on the clandestine situation he has been forced into. Panahi and fellow filmmaker Majid Barzegar go on a trip to visit the grave of their mentor, Abbas Kiarostami, and spend the journey discussing cinema, political ideology and everything in between.

The film's layered existential reflections not only allude to Panahi's struggles but also the broader sociopolitical landscape of contemporary Iran. Its exploration of personal and national identities captures the fragility of expression in a world constricted by control and fear, where artistic creation remains a lifeline. ECTS

D Jafar Panahi
P –
C –

Barking Dogs Never Bite
플란다스의 개

Aggravated by the incessant barking of a dog in his neighbourhood, a young man sets out on a frantic mission to put an end to it.

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE **NEWLY RESTORED**

SOUTH KOREA / 2000 / 106MIN / KOREAN / PG

3 DEC, TUE | 9:30PM | OT
7 DEC, SAT | 2PM | OT



In an apartment within a drab, cookie-cutter building, Yoon-ju, an unemployed scholar, relies on his pregnant wife to run their home. The relentless barking of a dog in his neighbourhood with a strict no-dog policy sends him on a mission to eliminate it. As Yoon-ju's manic quest unfolds, his wife brings home Soon-ja, a new dog that appears to enjoy a far more contented life than he does. When Soon-ja goes missing, an apartment maintenance worker joins in the fervent search for the dog.

Bong Joon-ho aptly captures the moral corruption associated with the pursuit of social and financial mobility in early-2000s South Korean society. Still relevant today, the barking dogs are never really the problem—it is the avarice of the residents that truly poses a threat. NS



D With his directorial debut *Barking Dogs Never Bite*, **Bong Joon-ho** emerged as a formidable voice in South Korean cinema. Bong is best known for *Parasite* (2019), which won the Academy Awards' Best Picture, Best Director, Best Film and numerous other international accolades.

P Cho Min-hwan
C Bae Doona, Lee Sung-jae, Byun Hee-bong

Bona

A young woman runs away from home to follow a bit player in low-budget films.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE **NEWLY RESTORED**

PHILIPPINES / 1980 / 86MIN / FILIPINO, TAGALOG / NC16 (COARSE LANGUAGE AND SOME NUDITY)

8 DEC, SUN | 4:30PM | OT



Bona is a big fan of Gardo, a bit player in action movies. She follows his shooting schedule, brings him food, carries his things, and admires his every move. Gardo welcomes this but does not reciprocate her affections. Bona eventually leaves her middle-class home and moves into the slums with him, where she continues to be his servant. When Gardo starts bringing women home, Bona realises just how far her love can go.

Selected for Cannes' Directors' Fortnight in 1981 and largely unseen since, *Bona* is significant for its exploration of fanaticism and fandom within Filipino culture. It also marks the outstanding collaboration of Lino Brocka and actor Nora Aunor, two icons of Philippine film. RB



D An activist and filmmaker, **Lino Brocka** is best known for his social realist and political dramas. He directed over 60 feature films, some of which are considered classics of Philippine cinema. These include *Weighed But Found Wanting* (1974), *Manila in the Claws of Light* (1975), *Insiang* (1976) and *Fight for Us* (1989). This restored version of *Bona* premiered in Cannes Classics.

P Nora Villamayor
C Nora Aunor, Phillip Salvador, Marissa Delgado

Sambizanga

On the cusp of Angola's independence, a woman treks across Luanda to seek and demand the release of her incarcerated husband.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE **NEWLY RESTORED**

ANGOLA / 1972 / 97MIN / PORTUGUESE, LINGALA, KIMBUNDU / PG13 (SOME VIOLENCE AND BRIEF NUDITY)

5 DEC, THU | 7:30PM | OT



Maria shares a blissful life with her husband Domingos Xavier, a tractor driver and member of the Angolan anticolonial resistance. Their peace shatters when Domingos is brutally seized by the Portuguese secret police. As Maria sets out to locate him, with their baby strapped to her back, a subterranean network of informants and militants across Angola mobilises to support her.

An adaptation of José Luandino Vieira's 1961 novel, *The Real Life of Domingos Xavier*, *Sambizanga* pays tribute to the overlooked contributions of women, children and elders in the fight for Angola's independence. Remarkable for its striking mise-en-scène and political fervour, the film was made in direct collaboration with members of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola. SH



D **Sarah Maldoror** was a prolific political activist, theatre- and filmmaker of Caribbean and French descent. A pioneering figure in pan-African cinema, her work saw a surge in interest and acclaim following her death in 2020. This restoration of *Sambizanga* brings fresh life to Maldoror's only completed narrative feature film, and one of the first feature films made in Africa by a female director.

P Jacques Poitrenaud
C Elisa Andrade, Domingos de Oliveira, Jean M'Vondo

CINETECA BOLOGNA WORLD CINEMA PROJECT THE FILM FOUNDATION

The Dupes
Al Makhdu'un

In the 1950s, three Palestinian refugees put their faith in a smuggler to cross the desert border into Kuwait.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE **NEWLY RESTORED**

SYRIA / 1972 / 107MIN / ARABIC / NC16 (SOME MATURE CONTENT)

6 DEC, FRI | 5PM | OT



Set in the 1950s, *The Dupes* tells the story of three Palestinian men of different generations brought together by their desperation to enter Kuwait to earn a living. As they brave an arduous journey through the desert, stowed away in the back of a smuggler's tank truck, the trio develop solidarity and trust.

Incorporating documentary-style footage and interweaving each protagonist's backstory, Saleh's film is an unapologetic indictment of political elites' complicity in the Palestinian struggle. This is one of the first Arab films to address the Palestinian question, and was banned in several Arab countries due to its implied criticisms of Arab governments. The restored film remains timeless—and timely—as a sharp reflection of disenfranchised migrants' continued fight for survival. AS



D **Tewfik Saleh** was a pioneering realist filmmaker of Egyptian cinema whose works concern social injustice, political abuse and class struggle. *The Dupes*, based on Ghassan Kanafani's 1962 novel *Men in the Sun*, won six international awards but had few public screenings.

P –
C Mohamed Kheir-Halouani, Abderrahman Alrahy, Bassan Lofti Abou-Ghazal

CINETECA BOLOGNA WORLD CINEMA PROJECT THE FILM FOUNDATION

The Man Who Left His Will on Film
東京戦争戦後秘話

In 1970s Japan, a student radical witnesses his comrade's suicide and becomes obsessed with decoding a reel of film he left behind.

ASIAN PREMIERE **NEWLY RESTORED**

JAPAN / 1970 / 94MIN / JAPANESE / R21 (SEXUAL SCENES AND NUDITY)

2 DEC, MON | 7PM | OT



Fleeing the police, Motoki watches his comrade, activist filmmaker Endo, fall to his death while recording street scenes. He wakes up later to a contradictory reality where no one remembers Endo, despite finding the final footage in his camera. Certain that the spliced rushes contain his will, Motoki coerces Endo's girlfriend Yasuko into solving the mystery together, but the ensuing journey begins to fragment their realities and selves.

Quixotic yet self-aware, *The Man Who Left His Will on Film* packs fatalistic fantasies with wry cynicism. Nagisa Oshima's disorienting meta-cinema satire confronts the youthful hubris, impulsivities and existential impotence of a filmmaker's experience of the 1968 Tokyo riots. RN



D **Nagisa Oshima** was a Japanese filmmaker and left-wing activist, best known for *In the Realm of the Senses* (1976), *Night and Fog in Japan* (1960) and *Merry Christmas, Mr Lawrence* (1983). His films are often controversial due to their sexual subject matter and critique of Japanese politics.

P Takuji Yamaguchi
C Kazuo Goto, Iwasaki Emiko

Vive L'Amour
愛情万岁

In cold, urban Taipei, the lives of three lonely people converge as they unwittingly inhabit the same luxury apartment.

SINGAPORE PREMIERE **NEWLY RESTORED**

TAIWAN / 1994 / 118MIN / MANDARIN / M18 (SEXUAL SCENES)

1 DEC, SUN | 8PM | OT
3 DEC, TUE | 2PM | OT



Using a stolen apartment key, salesman Hsiao-kang secretly moves into a vacant unit for sale. He hides from real estate agent May Lin, who returns one night for a tryst with street peddler Ah-jung. Needing a place to stay, Ah-jung also begins squatting in the apartment. As the three silently, or unknowingly, share the condominium, they each long for a connection they cannot articulate.

Tsai Ming-liang's slow-burn drama of repressed intimacies paints melancholic 1990s Taipei with raw minimalism and empathy. While the busy city is rife with movement, its inhabitants exist in a fog of urban malaise. The abandoned apartment becomes a home to unrequited desires. RN



D **Tsai Ming-liang** is a Taiwan-based Malaysian filmmaker known for his Taiwanese New Wave classics such as *Rebels of the Neon God* (1992), *The Hole* (1998) and *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* (2003). *Vive L'Amour* won the Golden Lion at Venice and received the Best Asian Feature Film award at the 8th SGIFF.

P Hsu Li-Kang
C Lee Kang-sheng, Yang Kuei-mei, Chen Zhao-rong

Domain

Domain seeks to expand our collective sphere of knowledge, deepening our engagement with cinema through thoughtful curatorial interventions.

This edition introduces *Dwellings*, a series of short videos that revisit bygone or forgotten screening spaces in Singapore using archival materials. Catch these snippets from the past before each festival screening, as we gather to reencounter and reflect on the places where cinemagoers once gathered, if only for a little while.

D Director P Producer C Cast

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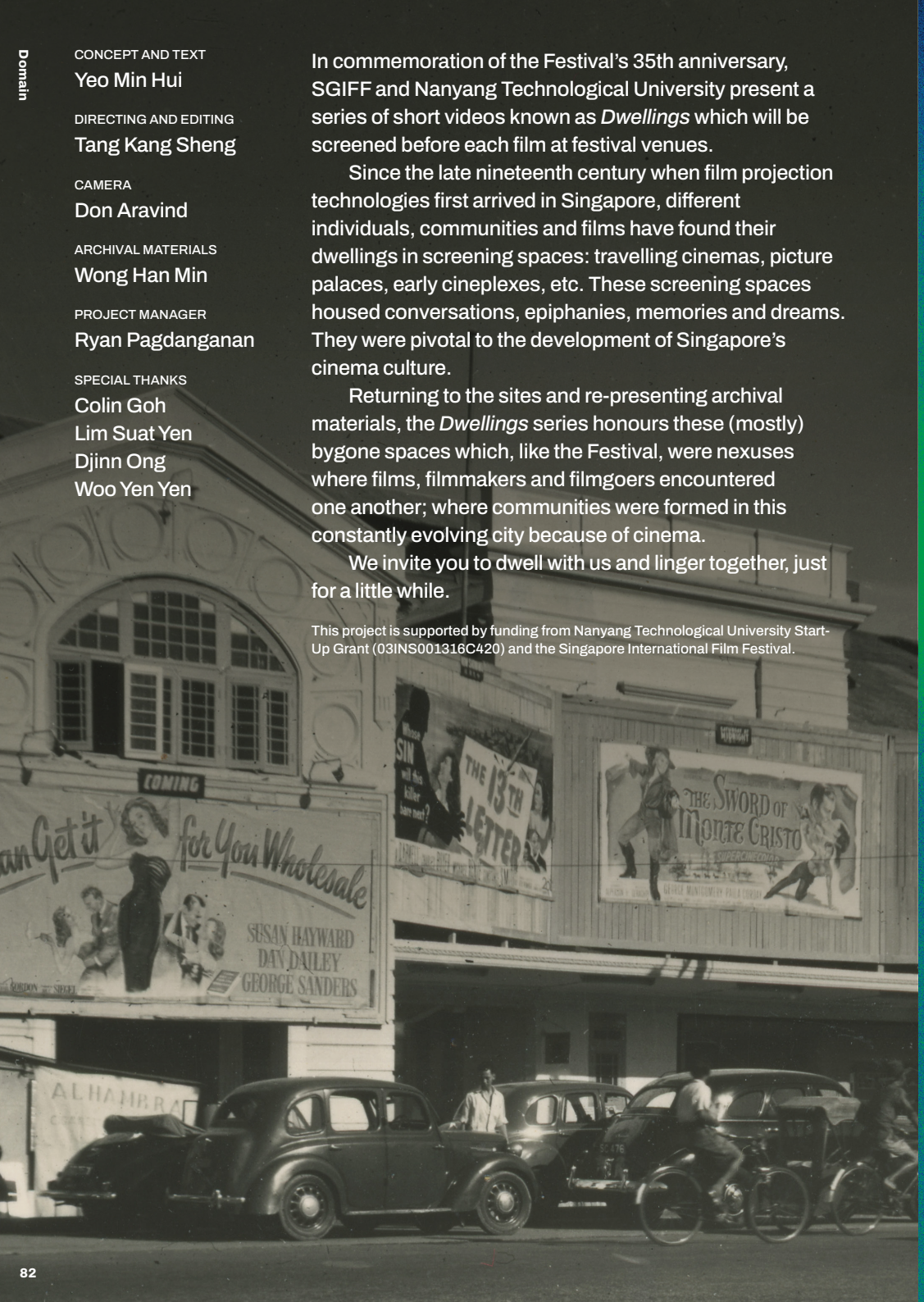
In commemoration of the Festival's 35th anniversary, SGIFF and Nanyang Technological University present a series of short videos known as *Dwellings* which will be screened before each film at festival venues.

Since the late nineteenth century when film projection technologies first arrived in Singapore, different individuals, communities and films have found their dwellings in screening spaces: travelling cinemas, picture palaces, early cineplexes, etc. These screening spaces housed conversations, epiphanies, memories and dreams. They were pivotal to the development of Singapore's cinema culture.

Returning to the sites and re-presenting archival materials, the *Dwellings* series honours these (mostly) bygone spaces which, like the Festival, were nexuses where films, filmmakers and filmgoers encountered one another; where communities were formed in this constantly evolving city because of cinema.

We invite you to dwell with us and linger together, just for a little while.

This project is supported by funding from Nanyang Technological University Start-Up Grant (03INS001316C420) and the Singapore International Film Festival.



Forum

Through a series of panels and exclusive dialogue sessions, Forum is a platform for filmmakers and industry visionaries to engage in dynamic discussions and a robust exchange of ideas.

Open to all audiences, the section aims to bring film-lovers and creators closer together, delving deep into evolving cinematic cultures and the artistry behind the silver screen.

In Conversation: Lee Kang-sheng with Yang Kuei-mei

30 NOV, SAT | 11AM | 120MIN | NMS

TICKET PRICE: $15

Conducted in Mandarin with English translation





Join renowned Taiwanese actors and Screen Icon Award recipients Lee Kang-sheng and Yang Kuei-mei as they explore their decades-long collaboration, often starring together in the visionary films of Tsai Ming-liang.

Known for his depictions of urban ennui and alienation, Tsai has cast Lee and Yang in his critically acclaimed works like *The River* (1997), *The Wayward Cloud* (2005) and *Stray Dogs* (2013). Outside of their collaborations with Tsai, the actors are also active in many other recent film performances, most notably Lee in *Stranger Eyes* (2024) and *Yang in Yen and Ai-Lee* (2024).

Reuniting for the first time in over a decade, join us for this rare opportunity to hear from the trailblazers of contemporary Taiwanese cinema as they discuss their craft, artistic journeys, and how they have shaped both their own and each other's creative paths. Explore the rich on- and off-screen dynamics, collaborative processes and unique methodologies that have come to define their work.

In Conversation: Manoj Bajpayee

29 NOV, FRI | 6:30PM | 90MIN | OT

TICKET PRICE: $15



Join in the conversation with acclaimed Indian actor Manoj Bajpayee, known for his iconic roles in *Satya* (1998) and *Bhonsle* (2018). Famed for his method acting, many of Manoj's performances have become canonical characters referenced fondly by both performers and directors alike.

His latest role in *The Fable* (2024)—a Special Presentation in the Horizon section—showcases the unparallelled acting chops of the three-time National Film Award winner and Padma Shri recipient, both bestowed by the government of India. Recently, his versatility has expanded beyond cinema as he connects with new audiences through rap music videos and crime thrillers on streaming platforms.

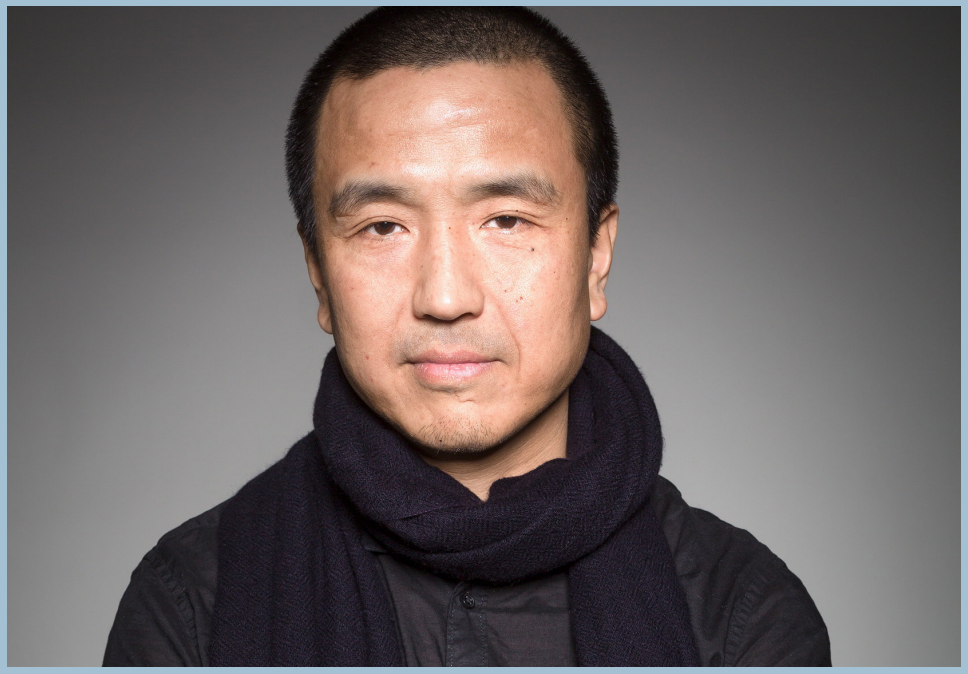
In this dialogue session, Bajpayee will share how he has honed his craft and is continuing to break new ground even after three decades on the silver screen. Gain invaluable insights into the unseen preparations for embodying the complex emotional textures that his characters often portray.

In Conversation: Lou Ye

5 DEC, THU | 8PM | 90MIN | NGS

TICKET PRICE: $10

Conducted in Mandarin with English translation



A visionary filmmaker renowned for his bold and inventive approach to storytelling, Lou Ye is a leading figure in contemporary Chinese cinema, with his films garnering international acclaim at prestigious festivals such as Cannes and Venice. His works, including *Suzhou River* (2000), *Summer Palace* (2006) and *The Shadow Play* (2018), explore profound themes of desire and longing in a society marked by continuous flux.

Hailed as a key figure of the Sixth Generation of Chinese filmmakers, Lou is celebrated for his incisive observations of the zeitgeist of his times. With a career spanning over three decades, he returns with his latest feature, *An Unfinished Film*—fittingly titled for a director whose journey is far from complete. Join us in an open conversation with Lou Ye, who will share his reflections on his practice and the future of cinema.

In Conversation: Jafar Panahi

6 DEC, FRI | 7:30PM | 90 MIN | SAT

TICKET PRICE: $10

Conducted in Farsi with English translation



The Festival proudly presents a dialogue with this year's SGIFF Cinema Honorary Award recipient, Jafar Panahi—a pioneering figure in cinema who is renowned for his profound humanistic sensitivity. Panahi's works capture the trials and tribulations of ordinary Iranians, particularly at a time when artistic expression faces significant challenges.

In this exclusive session, Panahi will reflect on his acclaimed journey in film spanning over three decades. Among others, he will speak about his works featured in the Jafar Panahi In Focus programme, such as *The Circle* (2000), *Crimson Gold* (2003) and *This Is Not a Film* (2011), as well as lesser-known gems like *The Accordion* (2010), *Where Are You, Jafar Panahi* (2016) and *The Hidden* (2020). These films exemplify his signature naturalistic treatment of social themes and his innovative approach to filmmaking.

Don't miss this rare opportunity to gain insights from a master whose work continues to inspire generations of film lovers.

Southeast Asia: What's in a Name?

3 DEC, TUE | 7:30PM | 90MIN | NGS

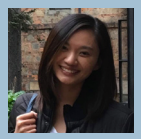
FREE WITH REGISTRATION

Taking a cue from Donald Emmerson's influential 1984 article on the etymology of 'Southeast Asia', this panel troubles the deceptively simple term, 'Southeast Asian cinema'. The term has been increasingly used to describe a category, a position, a community and a type of branding especially on the international film festival circuit.

It is timely to probe into the different ways in which 'Southeast Asian cinema' can be approached and understood, as well as to critically examine its potential and limitations. Join us in unpacking its meaning and finding out what exactly is Southeast Asian about Southeast Asian cinema.

This panel is supported by funding from Nanyang Technological University Start-Up Grant (03INS001316C420) and MOE-T1 Seed Funding (04MNP003000C420).

MODERATOR



Yeo Min Hui
Writer and Assistant Professor, School of Humanities, Nanyang Technological University

PANELLISTS



Lai Weijie
Producer, E&W Films



Richard Bolisay
Film Critic and Programmer



May Adadol Ingawanij
Writer, Curator, Professor of Cinematic Arts, CREAM, University of Westminster



Philippa Lovatt
Writer and Lecturer in Film Studies, University of St Andrews, UK

Mildly Offensive, Sometimes Accurate

4 DEC, WED | 7:30PM | 120MIN | LF

FREE WITH REGISTRATION

We're back again for the third edition of wildly popular *Mildly Offensive, Sometimes Accurate*. Join Singapore's finest filmmakers as we pose uncomfortable questions in a winner-takes-all gameshow where the beauty of democracy manifests itself in real-time votes that matter.

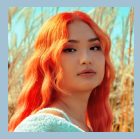
This interactive game will see gossipmongers thrive and unsuspecting stray bullets hit close to home. Pillow talk, half-truths, snakes and ladders—what are the secrets of the film industry in Singapore? Bring home behind-the-scenes anecdotes that capture both the highs and lows of local filmmaking. Come for the drama, stay for the tea.

MODERATOR



Xuan Ong
Actress, Best Performance Nominee for *Thank You, Daisy*

PANELLISTS



Calleen Koh
Director of *My Wonderful Life*



Daniel Hui
Director of *Small Hours of the Night*



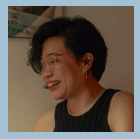
Lam Li Shuen
Co-director of *The Inescapable Desire of Roots*



Nishok
Director of *The Wells of Rameswaram*



Seth Cheong
Director of *Late Twenties*



Li Lin Wee
Director of *Dragon Head Phoenix Tail Brow*

SHOWCASE

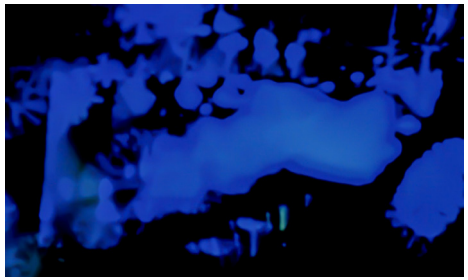
Films from South Korea



Barking Dogs Never Bite (p. 78)



By the Stream (p. 58)



Melting Fire Iceman (p. 49)



Time to Be Strong (p. 17)



The Killers (p. 71)

WITH SUPPORT FROM

kofic 영화진흥위원회 Korean Film Council

This year sees five diverse selections from South Korea in our lineup. Two of the most prominent directors working in Korean cinema today kickstart this showcase: Bong Joon-ho's feature debut, *Barking Dogs Never Bite*, and the latest outing by Hong Sang-soo, *By the Stream*. Emerging filmmaker Nam Koong-sun makes her mark with *Time to Be Strong*, centred on three retired K-pop idols on a journey of self-discovery in Jeju Island, while *The Killers* anthology revives the hitman genre with style and aplomb. As the opening film for the Undercurrent section, performer-director HeeSue Kwon reimagines the filmic experience with *Melting Fire Iceman*, a work of expanded cinema that will make you rethink the possibilites of film.

Silver Screen Awards

Introduced in 1991, Silver Screen Awards is the first international competition with a category dedicated to Asian cinema. The event spotlights filmmaking talents from across Asia, with a focus on Southeast Asia. Many of the awardees and nominees have since established themselves among the region's most prominent filmmakers.

CINEMA HONORARY AWARD

Jafar Panahi



IN CONVERSATION (P.87)
Catch Jafar Panahi in person at an exclusive dialogue session where he will share reflections on his filmmaking journey, the challenges he has faced, and the enduring power of cinema as a tool for social change.

JAFAR PANAHI IN FOCUS (P. 75)
Part of the Landmark section, this special showcase on Jafar Panahi will spotlight his earlier works and lesser-known short films.

CINEMA HONORARY AWARD

The Cinema Honorary Award has stood as SGIFF's highest accolade since its introduction in 2014, recognising filmmakers who have made exceptional and enduring contributions to Asian cinema. This prestigious award previously honoured visionary directors such as South Korea's Im Kwon-taek, Hong Kong's Fruit Chan, Indonesia's Garin Nugroho and Japan's Takashi Miike. This year, the festival is proud to present the award to celebrated Iranian filmmaker, Jafar Panahi.

Jafar Panahi is an Iranian filmmaker who has won numerous accolades including the Berlinale's Golden Bear for *Taxi* (2015) and Cannes' Best Screenplay for *Three Faces* (2018). His films often portray Iranian society in a humanistic and neorealist style. The explicit social critique in his work, however, has incurred the government's ire, for which he has been imprisoned and placed under house arrest. He was awarded Best Director and the Special Jury prize for *The Mirror* (1997) at the 11th SGIFF.

Known for his fearless storytelling, incisive sociopolitical critique and formally inventive style, Panahi's oeuvre is a testament to how cinema can serve as a powerful tool for personal, political and artistic freedom, even amid unfree conditions. His films not only highlight stories of resistance and change, but also embody boundless creativity and a fiercely independence spirit, pushing the boundaries of cinema.

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN CINEMA AWARD

Objectifs

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN CINEMA AWARD

The Outstanding Contribution to Southeast Asian Cinema Award recognises an individual's or organisation's special contribution to Southeast Asian cinema. Besides film production, the award takes into consideration achievements such as resource-building, heritage preservation and cultural promotion. Past recipients include Southeast Asia Fiction Film Lab (2021), In-Docs (2022) and White Light Post (2023).

This year's selection committee consists of filmmaker Amir Muhammad (Malaysia), film producer Bianca Balbuena (Philippines), curator Silke Schmickl (Germany/ Hong Kong) and filmmaker Sompot Chidgasornpongse (Thailand).

Established in 2003, **Objectifs** is a visual arts space in Singapore that is dedicated to film and photography. It aims to cultivate original voices in visual storytelling, and to inspire and broaden perspectives through the power of images. It presents a year-round programme of exhibitions, screenings, workshops, talks, mentorships and residencies, aimed at fostering dialogue on visual culture and advancing the practice and appreciation of photography and film.

Over the last 21 years, Objectifs has been championing Southeast Asian cinema. Its many mentorship and educational initiatives, like the Short Film Incubator and Film Programmers Lab, have nurtured a generation of filmmakers, writers and producers across the region. Through its distribution and curatorial efforts, Objectifs has brought short films to local and international festivals, broadcast, schools, airlines and its online Short Film Library. Objectifs continues to advocate for original visual storytelling from the region, and is proud to be part of the vibrant and wonderfully supportive film community in Southeast Asia.



From left to right: Lim Ming Rui, Ryan Chua, Leong Puiyee, Chelsea Chua, Emmeline Yong, Geraldine Cheng, Jesstine Seah, Tiffany Nah, Eunice Oh.
Photo credit: Deanna Ng.

SCREEN ICON AWARD

Lee Kang-sheng



Lee Kang-sheng is an accomplished actor, director and screenwriter who has contributed significantly to film. Best known as Malaysian-born Taiwanese filmmaker Tsai Ming-liang's frequent collaborator, Lee has earned critical acclaim for his performances in films such as *Stray Dogs* (2013), which won him Best Leading Actor at the 50th Golden Horse Awards, Taipei Film Festival and the 56th Asia-Pacific Film Festival.

As a director, Lee's 2003 feature debut, *The Missing*, won the New Currents Award at Busan. A few years later, Lee wrote, directed and starred in *Help Me, Eros* (2007), which was nominated for the Golden Lion at Venice.

Lee stars in SGIFF's Festival Opening film, *Stranger Eyes*, as a supermarket employee who becomes the prime suspect when a girl goes mysteriously missing. In addition to *Stranger Eyes*, SGIFF will honour Lee's achievements by screening the restored version of Tsai Ming-liang's *Vive L'Amour* (1994), the Best Asian Feature Film recipient at the 8th SGIFF. In this film, Lee plays a lonely urn salesman who is desperate for love. The role showcases his talent for embodying complex desires and emotions with minimal dialogue. As one of Lee's early roles as a nonprofessional actor, this distinctive performance would go on to establish him as an arthouse icon.

IN CONVERSATION: LEE KANG-SHENG AND YANG KUEI-MEI (P. 84)
Frequent co-stars and collaborators Yang Kuei-mei and Lee Kang-sheng will reunite in this intimate dialogue session where they reflect on their acting journeys and share insights into their artistic processes.

STRANGER EYES (P. 10)
Lee Kang-sheng returns to the screen in *Stranger Eyes*, our Festival Opening film.

VIVE L'AMOUR (P. 80)
Catch Lee Kang-sheng in one of his earliest roles in *Vive L'Amour* which kickstarted his career as an arthouse icon.

SCREEN ICON AWARD

The Screen Icon Award honours Asian actors who have made a profound impact as creative forces in film. This year's recipients, Lee Kang-sheng and Yang Kuei-mei, are the first Taiwanese actors to receive this honour.

SCREEN ICON AWARD

Yang Kuei-mei



IN CONVERSATION: LEE KANG-SHENG AND YANG KUEI-MEI (P. 84)
Frequent co-stars and collaborators Yang Kuei-mei and Lee Kang-sheng will reunite in this intimate dialogue session where they reflect on their acting journeys and share insights into their artistic processes.

YEN AND AI-LEE (P.63)
Watch Yang Kuei-mei in her latest silver screen appearance in *Yen and Ai-Lee*, featured in the Horizon section.

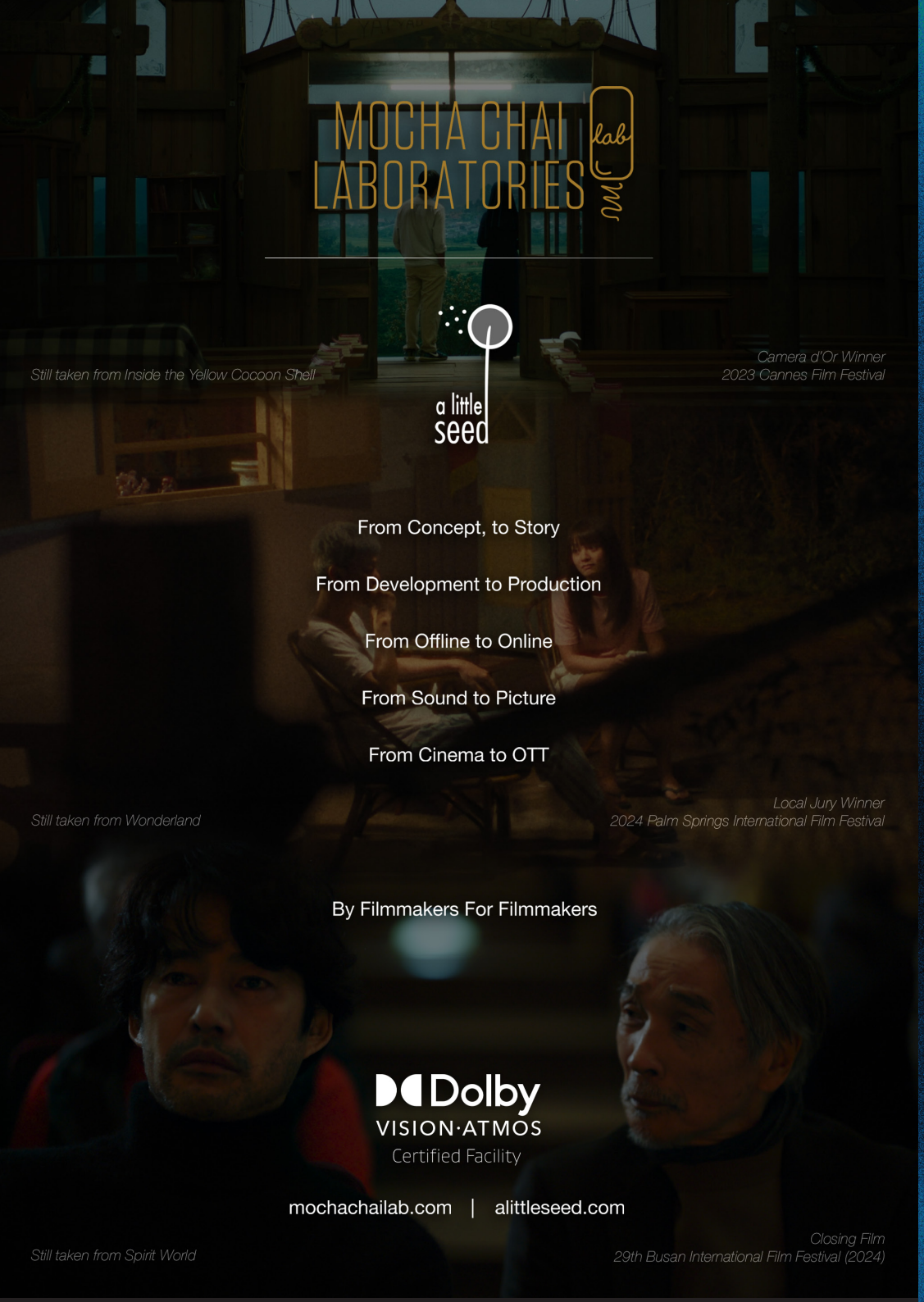
VIVE L'AMOUR (P. 80)
Relive the SGIFF award-winning performance of Yang Kuei-mei in *Vive L'Amour*, now considered a classic of Taiwanese cinema.

Previously known as the Cinema Icon Award, the Screen Icon Award celebrates an actor's exceptional contributions to bringing Asian stories to life on screen. Past recipients include notable figures such as Michelle Yeoh, Koji Yakusho, Joan Chen and Fan Bingbing.

Yang Kuei-mei is a renowned Taiwanese actress who has won the Golden Horse Award, Golden Bell Award and SGIFF's Best Actress Award. She began her career as a singer before becoming an acclaimed actress, earning recognition for her performances in films such as *Once Again With Love* (1981), *Hill of No Return* (1992) and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994), which was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

As a performer, Yang moves swiftly and effortlessly between long-suppressed emotions and passionate release, bringing her characters to life with vivid intensity. She often collaborates with prominent directors such as Tsai Ming-liang, Ang Lee, John Woo and Lee Hsing.

Yang holds the record for the most best performance awards at SGIFF—winning it an astounding four times in her career, including for her role in *Vive L'Amour* (1994), which beautifully captures the lives of three lonely people who unknowingly inhabit the same apartment in Taipei. She also stars in the 2024 film *Yen and Ai Lee*, which explores family dynamics and intergenerational trauma and is featured in the Horizon section of our programme this year.



SGIFF Pro

SGIFF Pro is a launchpad for the next wave of industry trailblazers in Singapore and the region.

Rebranded from Film Academy, SGIFF Pro brings together SGIFF's various industry initiatives under one umbrella to meet the changing and complex demands of the film industry. These include an expanded Asian Producers Network and the all-new SGIFF Industry Days conference, designed to boost market exposure and industry engagement.

SGIFF Pro marks an important transition for SGIFF as it evolves from an incubator of creative talent and a community space for up-and-coming artists, into a sustainable resource centre and key reference point for both established and emerging industry professionals locally and regionally.

SGIFF Industry Days

Supported by Sony Cinema Line

SONY

Newly launched this year, SGIFF Industry Days is the festival's knowledge-building platform and conference event, tailored for and by film professionals from Singapore, Southeast Asia and beyond.

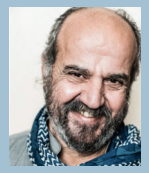
Over three days of panels and networking sessions, Industry Days gathers internationally renowned creative leaders and key decision-makers to share their expertise and insights. The programme is rigorous and wide-ranging in its approach, tackling pressing industry topics such as locating a global audience for Asian-based content, choreographing intimate scenes and adopting sustainable green practices, while also offering rare opportunities to engage with visionary creators like Ossama Mohammed and Santosh Sivan.

With 15 sessions across four programme strands—Visionary Encounters, Insiders, Big Ideas x Reality Checks, and Networking—Industry Days is designed to offer a comprehensive and dynamic experience for all attendees.

Featured Speakers



Marissa Anita
Indonesia
Actor



Ossama Mohammed
Syria/France
Film Director and Screenwriter



Jason Ishikawa
USA
Senior Executive and Co-Head of Sales, Cinetic Media

Programme Highlights

Visionary Encounters: Ossama Mohammed

3 Dec, Tue | 10:00 – 11:15 | Talk

In this intimate dialogue session, director and screenwriter Ossama Mohammed will discuss the evolution of his artistic practice and his experiences making films independently under violent conditions in Syria. His short film, *Step by Step* (1978), will be screened prior to the discussion.

Developing Asian-led Stories for a Global Audience

4 Dec, Wed | 11:35 – 12:50 | Panel

What does it take to create and produce compelling stories from Asia that will resonate with global audiences, transcending cultural norms and language barriers? Hear from our panellists and gain insights into the future of storytelling.

Exploring IMAX Potentialities in Filmmaking with Sony Cinema Line

5 Dec, Thu | 14:15 – 15:30 | Talk

Discover new possibilities of incorporating the IMAX format and approaches into independent filmmaking, exploring how the Sony camera can shape future cinematic experiences.

Asian Producers Network

The Asian Producers Network is a platform for film producers from the region to deepen dialogue and discover opportunities for collaboration. This year sees a newly expanded version of the programme that aims to significantly enhance market exposure and industry engagement.

Led by programme specialist Fran Borgia, participants will meet with leading industry experts, addressing topics such as project development, content production in Asia, and support from the international film festival circuit and granting bodies. Participants will also explore pathways to develop a feature film project for international co-production.

SGIFF Film Fund

SGIFF offers two grants for Southeast Asian film projects with compelling stories to tell across both fiction and nonfiction genres.

Submissions will open in December 2024. For details, visit sgiff.com/sgiff-film-fund

PAST GRANT RECIPIENTS FEATURED THIS YEAR:

The Nature of Dogs by Pom Bunsermvicha (p. 20)
Mulberry Fields by Nguyễn Trung Nghĩa (p. 22)
Vox Humana by Don Josephus Raphael Eblahan (p. 28)
Small Hours of the Night by Daniel Hui (p. 54)

TAN EAN KIAM FOUNDATION | SGIFF | SOUTHEAST ASIAN DOCUMENTARY GRANT

SGIFF | SOUTHEAST ASIAN SHORT FILM GRANT
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About the Festival

Entering its 35th edition, the Singapore International Film Festival is an illustrious cornerstone of the nation's annual cultural calendar.

It celebrates stories and artistry, bringing the magic of cinema to film communities in Singapore and Southeast Asia.

About the Festival

The Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) was established in 1987. With its focus on groundbreaking Asian cinema, SGIFF has become known for its dynamic programming and commitment to the development of a vibrant local and regional film culture.

This year, SGIFF strengthens its commitment to spotlighting homegrown talent by revamping the Audience Choice Award, now exclusively for Singapore or made-with-Singapore productions. By nurturing up-and-coming filmmakers while deepening the public's appreciation of independent film, SGIFF aims to inspire through the transformational power of cinema.

1987 Showcasing the best of international cinema, the very first edition opens with *The Name of the Rose* by Jean-Jacques ANNAUD (France).

1991 Launch of the Silver Screen Awards to recognise the best of Asian feature films and Singapore short films.

1992 The festival opens with an Asian film for the first time with *Raise the Red Lantern* by Zhang Yimou (China).

1997 Eric Khoo's *12 Storeys* wins the NETPAC-FIPRESCI Critics Prize at SGIFF, and later becomes the first Singapore-made film to be screened at Cannes.

2008 Launch of the Singapore Panorama section to celebrate local films.

2014 SGIFF commemorates its 25th anniversary with a new logo and opens with local film *Unlucky Plaza* by Ken Kwek.

The inaugural Honorary Award is presented to Im Kwon-taek (South Korea).

Launch of Southeast Asian Film Lab and Youth Jury & Critics Programme to nurture budding filmmakers and critics from the region.

2016 SGIFF commissions its first Singapore short film, *The Pursuit of a Happy Human Life* by Gladys Ng.

2017 Introduction of the Southeast Asian Producers Network.

Ana Urushadze (Georgia) receives the inaugural Inspiring Woman in Film Award presented by Swarovski.

2018 Launch of SGIFF Film Fund to support Southeast Asian documentaries and short films.

The inaugural Lesley Ho Asian Film Talent Award is presented to Yeo Siew Hua (Singapore).

SGIFF holds its first edition of Moonlight Cinema, an outdoor screening event.

Introduction of the Film Immersion Programme for youths.

2019 On the occasion of its 30th anniversary, SGIFF presents three commissioned short films by Southeast Asian filmmakers, Mouly Surya (Indonesia), Anucha Boonyawatana (Thailand) and Yeo Siew Hua (Singapore).

Launch of SGIFF Film Academy, the region's first holistic film training initiative for Southeast Asian Talents.

2021 The inaugural Outstanding Contribution to Southeast Asian Cinema Award is presented to Southeast Asia Fiction Film Lab (SEAFIC).

2024 The Cinema Honorary Award returns to SGIFF and is given to Jafar Panahi.

Lee Kang-sheng and Yang Kuei-mei receive the Screen Icon Award.

The Audience Choice Award open only to films made in Singapore or with Singapore co-production.

Film Education Programmes

The Singapore International Film Festival has long been a passionate advocate for film literacy and appreciation among Singapore's youth. The Festival now proudly runs two key outreach programmes that are designed to develop in students a deeper understanding of the art of film and provide exposure to alternative film-watching experiences.

We use local and Southeast Asian films to connect students with their community, and broaden their worldviews by presenting myriad perspectives and stories. Beyond developing practical skills in critical analysis and communication, our programmes spark love for cinema and foster deeper understanding of both Singapore and global film culture among young audiences.

Film Immersion Programme

In today's complex media landscape, our Film Immersion Programme is designed to equip students with the critical thinking skills needed to navigate and understand the images they encounter both online and offline. Participants enjoy a selection of short film screenings, facilitated Q&As, and a chance to encounter the workings of a film festival through volunteering.

Find out more at:
sgiff.com/film-immersion-programme

National Arts Council (NAC) Arts Education Programme

Structured as a deeper, more nuanced dive into film literacy, the NAC's Arts Education Programme focuses on relevant youth-related topics that prompt richer reflection through guided discussions, encouraging students to engage in discussions on sociocultural themes. In partnership with participating schools, SGIFF conducts a screening showcasing Singapore and Southeast Asian short films as well as a variety of technology-driven initiatives.

Find out more at:
sgiff.com/nac-arts-education-programme

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