

Media Release

For Immediate Release

Singapore Art Museum Presents the Fifth Southeast Asian Film Festival

Celebrating the diversity of Southeast Asia through independent cinema



Singapore, 16 March 2015 - The fifth edition of the Southeast Asian Film Festival (SEAFF) presented by the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) returns from 10 April to 3 May 2015 with an exciting line-up of the newest and most compelling cinematic work from the region. Celebrating the spirit of independent filmmaking in Southeast Asia and reflecting the region's diversity, the Festival features films from Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Taking a co-curated approach, SAM once again collaborates with independent film curators Philip Cheah and Teo Swee Leng for this edition's film selection, presenting a total of 20 films. The films *Chasing Waves* (2015) and *Fundamentally Happy* (2015) make their world premieres at this Festival, while *K'na the Dreamweaver* (2014) and *Riddles of My Homecoming* (2013) and *Sparks* (2014) are international premieres showing outside their home countries for the first time.

Opening and Closing Films

SEAFF opens with the film *The Last Executioner* (2014), directed by Tom Waller, which tells the story of Chavoret Jarubon - the last person in Thailand whose job was to execute death row prisoners with a machine gun. The film stars Vithaya Pansringarm in the role of Chavoret, for which he won Best Actor at the Shanghai Film Festival in 2014. He is also internationally known for his role in the 2013 crime drama *Only God Forgives* alongside Ryan Gosling and Kirsten Scott Thomas. The closing film, *NOVA* (2014) by Malaysian director Nik Amir Mustapha, is a tale about the madcap adventure of a group of friends on a quest to prove that UFOs are real. Focusing on the camaraderie of old friends and childhood memories, the film also pays homage to Malaysian cinema greats like P. Ramlee, Shamsuddin and Aziz Sattar.

Next Generation Directors

The screening of *NOVA* at SEAFF underscores the role the Festival plays as a place to discover the next generation of Southeast Asian filmmakers. In addition to Nik Amir Mustapha, this year's stellar list includes Charliebebs Gohetia (*Chasing Waves, 2015*), Daniel Hui (*SNAKESKIN, 2014*), Giancarlo Abrahan (*Sparks, 2014*), Tan Bee Thiam and Lei Yuan Bin (*Fundamentally Happy, 2015*), and Ida Anita del Mundo, daughter of celebrated Filipino film director Clodualdo del Mundo, with her debut feature film, *K'na the Dreamweaver*.

An Evolving Festival

SEAFF is also reflective of the changing times and demographics, evolving to mirror the transcendence of boundaries - an experience that characterises the region today. It is the subject that *Fluid Boundaries (2014)*, a cross-cultural film project by Mun Jeonghyun, Vladimir Todorovic and Daniel Rudi Haryanto, engages with. This experience is also reflected in the Festival with the increasing number of non-Asian filmmakers who have made Southeast Asia their home and those who have strong links with the region. They include Joshua Oppenheimer, a US-born MacArthur 'Genius' Grant recipient fluent in Bahasa Indonesia who directed *The Look of Silence (2014)*, the sequel film to his successful documentary *The Act of Killing (2012)* about Indonesia's so-called communist purge of the 1960s which saw the killings of hundreds and thousands of people; Tom Waller, Thai-Irish director of *The Last Executioner (2014)* who resides in Thailand; French director Bastian Meiresonne (*Garuda Power: The Spirit Within, 2014*) who is also an Asian film critic; and Australian Andrew Leavold whose fascination with popular Filipino cinema led him to direct the film, *The Search for Weng Weng (2013)*. This diversity offers an opportunity to present a snapshot of Southeast Asia with multiple points of view from within and without, pushing audiences to reflect on issues highlighted in the films.

"The Southeast Asian Film Festival offers a space for the exploration of film as contemporary artistic practice, expressing core issues and concerns of the region. These are articulated through the different filmic genres such as documentary, action, comedy, drama and science fiction and framed against the culturally, socially and politically specific backdrops of each Southeast Asian country. The films direct our attention on human struggles and triumphs, question social and political conditions, re-examine historical narratives and reflect upon the times we live in today. These explorations resonate with the spectrum of Southeast Asian contemporary art, which is SAM's focus." says Dr Susie Lingham, Director of the Singapore Art Museum.

New Genres

For the first time, SEAFF introduces the action film genre. As a special tribute, the Festival presents two films as part of *Action Asia: The Wild Wild Years of Asian Film Action – The Search for Weng Weng* directed by Andrew Leavold and *Garuda Power: The Spirit Within* directed by Bastian Meiresonne. The former is a documentary about 85-cm tall Filipino action hero, Weng Weng, who was known as the Filipino James Bond and is an investigation into the eccentric history of Filipino B-grade cinema and the business of film, power and politics. *Garuda Power: The Spirit Within* takes an incredible journey into Indonesia's action films from their beginnings in 1920s up to the latest international successes.

The science fiction and dystopia genres also make their mark at SEAFF's fifth edition with two films - *2030 (2014)* and *SNAKESKIN (2014)*. The films envision alternative futures based on existing social, political and environmental issues re-examine the present and the past with their narrative and experimental structures. *2030* by Nghiem-Minh Nguyen-Vo predicts a future in which rising sea levels adversely affect Vietnamese farmland, mixing this dystopic vision with a gritty noir mystery. In Daniel Hui's hybrid film, *SNAKESKIN*, Singapore's history and past is explored via the narrative of a single survivor of a mysterious cult from the year 2066.

SEAFF continues its practice of bringing film directors to the Festival for post-screening dialogues and discussions. Over the three-week festival period, audiences will be able to meet 13 directors, producers and other industry professionals associated with these films, participate in these sessions where filmmakers will discuss issues raised in their work and share insights into their filmmaking process.

SEAFF runs from 10 April to 3 May 2015 at the Moving Image Gallery, SAM at 8Q. Tickets are priced at \$10 and are available from SISTIC. More details about the film programme and post-screening discussions can be found at www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/SEAFF.

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About the Singapore Art Museum

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

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

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Festival Venue

The Moving Image Gallery at SAM at 8Q is located at 8 Queen Street Singapore 188535

Festival tickets

\$10 for each film screening. Tickets are available from SISTIC.

Concessions available, excludes SISTIC FEE

Limited seating, please purchase early. For ticket availability at the door, please call SISTIC at 6348 5555.

SAM Online

www.singaporeartmuseum.sg

www.facebook.com/singaporeartmuseum

www.twitter.com/sg_artmuseum

www.instagram.com/sg_artmuseum

www.youtube.com/samtelly

How to get to SAM

By Bus: SBS 7, 14, 16, 36, 111, 131, 162, 175, 508, 518
 SMRT 77, 167, 171, 700

By Train: 2-minute walk from Bras Basah MRT Station
 10-minute walk from Dhoby Ghaut, Bugis or City Hall MRT stations

By Car: Carpark spaces available at Waterloo Street, Queen Street, NTUC Income Centre, Plaza by the Park, Hotel Grand Pacific and Singapore Management University