

PAINTING WITH LIGHT

INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVAL OF
FILMS ON ART

7-29
OCT
2017





Image: *Manifesto* by Julian Rosefeldt

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OF FILMS ON ART
7-29 OCTOBER 2017

This edition of *Painting with Light* examines the significance of art in society by looking at how people live and work with art around the world. It invites viewers to discover films that explore a diverse array of subjects, from the 20th century's most visionary manifestos on art to the timeless beauty of Southeast Asian classical art forms; from the explosive energy of the avant-garde to the powerful influence of censorship bureaus. These cinematic stories lay bare the passion and humanity of artists, museum workers and industry professionals, and testify to the transformative power of art.

Over 30 award-winning feature-length and short films have been selected for this programme, which consists of four sections:

HOLDING SPACE

Films on institutions of art and their communities

WAYS OF SEEING

Films on artists and their interventions in society

SPECIAL FOCUS: THE ART COMMISSION

Commissioned works by master filmmakers, now restored classics

SOUTHEAST ASIAN SHORTS

Short films on the art and culture of Southeast Asia

Find out more at www.nationalgallery.sg/paintingwithlight

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FOREWORD

Opened in 2015, National Gallery Singapore is a leading civic and cultural destination established for the enrichment, enjoyment and engagement of Singapore residents and visitors from all over the world. It is also custodian to the largest public collection of modern art of Singapore and Southeast Asia.

The Gallery offers a wide range of public programmes that allow for a deeper engagement with the art and artists that it presents. These range from daily tours through the Gallery's exhibitions, to screenings, workshops, and lectures that examine key issues in art and culture.

Painting with Light: International Festival of Films on Art is the Gallery's annual film festival which introduces audiences to the work of filmmakers from around the world, significant for their observations on art. This year, we are proud to present a carefully curated selection of over 30 international films on art and society, many of which are premiering here.

Festival highlights include documentaries that provide a rare glimpse into the world of museums and the art eco-system, essay films on conflict-ridden societies which could only be produced with special access, rare behind-the-scenes footage of royal court rituals, and commissioned films elevated to independent works of art in the hands of master filmmakers.

We invite you to join us in celebrating a group of filmmakers whose bold works push the envelope; daring artists who venture beyond present realities to visualise a more excellent future.

Enjoy the Festival!



Suenne Megan Tan

Director, Audience Development and Engagement
National Gallery Singapore

FILMS	Duration (min)	Sat 7 Oct	Sun 8 Oct	Mon 9 Oct	Tue 10 Oct	Wed 11 Oct	Thu 12 Oct	Fri 13 Oct	Sat 14 Oct
THE Ngee ANN KONGSI AUDITORIUM	The New Rijksmuseum	130	7.30 pm						
	Beauty and Ruin	75							
	Cuts	70							
	La Danse, The Paris Opera Ballet	159							
	EXPRMNTL	68							
	Leave the Saints Alone	75							
	My Dear Art	102		4.30 pm					
	The Royal Ballet of Cambodia	110		2 pm					
	Bamseom Pirates, Seoul Inferno	119							7.30 pm
	Burma Storybook	81							
	China's Van Goghs	80						7.30 pm	
	Koudelka: Shooting Holy Land	72							
	Manifesto	95		7.30 pm					
	Songs From the North	73							4.30 pm
	The Space in Between – Marina Abramović in Brazil	88							
	The Crown Jewels of Iran								
	Raid Into Tibet	90							
	The Diamond Finger								
	The Song of Plastic								
	Public Forum	60							
AUDITORIUM ANTEROOM	Without Mindfulness The Gong: Made in Tempawaddy	33							
	The King's Last Song Silent Light	38							
	Image Makers: John Clang Another City	41							
	RM10 Natpwe, the Feast of the Spirits	44							
	Art Through Our Eyes	30	7 pm	7 pm					7 pm

● Holding Space ● Ways of Seeing ● Special Focus: The Art Commission ● Southeast Asian Shorts

Sat Oct	Sun 15 Oct	Mon 16 Oct	Tue 17 Oct	Wed 18 Oct	Thu 19 Oct	Fri 20 Oct	Sat 21 Oct	Sun 22 Oct	Mon 23 Oct	Tue 24 Oct	Wed 25 Oct	Thu 26 Oct	Fri 27 Oct	Sat 28 Oct	Sun 29 Oct
								4.30 pm							
						7.30 pm									
2 pm	2 pm													7.30 pm	
							7.30 pm								4.30 pm
3.30 pm															
							2 pm	2 pm							
													7.30 pm		
	4.30 pm														
							4.30 pm								
3.30 pm															
	7.30 pm														7.30 pm
														2 pm	2 pm
														3.30 pm	
Daily at 11am															
Daily at 1pm															
Daily at 3pm															
Daily at 5pm															
7 pm	7 pm					7 pm	7 pm	7 pm					7 pm	7 pm	7 pm





HOLDING SPACE

Films on institutions
of art and their
communities

THE NEW RIJKSMUSEUM / HET NIEUWE RIJKSMUSEUM

By Oeke Hoogendijk

Sat 7 Oct | 7.30pm

By invitation only

Sun 22 Oct | 4.30pm

Netherlands | Dutch, English and French
with English subtitles | 2013 | 130 min | PG



The Rijksmuseum, home to the finest collection of works by Dutch masters like Rembrandt, Hals and Vermeer, closed for a major renovation in 2003. But what was supposed to take five years spiralled into a decade, incurring mounting costs and controversy for the state-funded public institution. In this documentary, director Hoogendijk observes the fascinating, complex and sometimes absurd process experienced by all involved, from the museum's curators, architects and conservators to its arts administrators, building superintendents and government bureaucrats, as they undertake the restoration of one of the most beloved arts institutions in the world.

We are introduced to the challenges of the monumental project almost immediately: crippling protests from the powerful Cyclists' Union over the winning design entry for the entrance, tender bids exceeding budget, Parliament's refusal to increase funding, losing a pivotal work at an auction, intense disagreements with exhibition designers, and the sudden resignation of a museum director.

But greater still is the sincere love revealed for the museum and its purpose, rendering the struggle sublime. For Menno Fitski, Principal Curator of the Asian Pavilion, this comes close to obsession. Several scenes offer glimpses into his emotional state as



he journeys with two sculptures of Japanese temple guards—pure pleasure when he first sets eyes on them as they are uncrated; immense grief during the years of delay; and finally irrepressible joy during the elaborate Buddhist rituals to welcome them into the exhibition space. The collective sentiment of contributing to something larger than oneself is perhaps echoed in the words of Reinier Baarsen, Principal Curator of the 18th Century. He describes the era's ethos that one's whole being should add to the meaning and beauty of the surroundings, so that "together we'll make life a work of art."

The New Rijksmuseum had its world premiere at the 27th IDFA (Netherlands, 2014) and was shown at the 11th European Feature Documentary Film Festival (Serbia, 2015).

DIRECTOR



Oeke Hoogendijk

(b. 1961) is an award-winning documentary filmmaker. Her 1998 feature *The Saved*, co-directed with Paul Cohen, won the Dutch Academy

Award (1998) and the Euro-Comenius Award (1999). Her other notable films include *The Holocaust Experience* (2002) and *How I Invented the Volkswagen* (2012). She worked on *The New Rijksmuseum* from 2005 to 2013.

BEAUTY AND RUIN

By Marc de Guerre

Fri 20 Oct | 7.30pm

Canada, France | English | 2017 |

75 min | PG13 (Some Nudity)



Once the centre of American industrial power, Detroit now faces bankruptcy and is under pressure to liquidate its assets to repay over 18 billion dollars in debt. After years of decline, the city is left with little, save its most valuable asset—The Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA). Home to masterpieces by Van Gogh, Brueghel, Titian and Fra Angelico purchased at the height of Detroit's affluence, it preserves the history of a city that was exceedingly important in the past. When it became likely that Detroit would no longer be able to honour its pension payments, keeping the art turned into a matter of injustice.

Beauty and Ruin chronicles the debate between city administrators, museum staff, creditors and pensioners over selling the DIA, and examines the true value of art to its public.

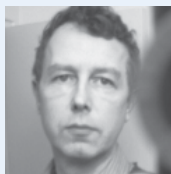
Director Marc de Guerre takes us beyond the immediate dilemma, delving deeper to reveal the underlying issues at play: the failure of municipal government infrastructure, disastrous financial transactions, a meltdown in manufacturing leading to massive unemployment, and unresolved racial tensions. But there are some who still hold to the hope that the



collection will remain safe. African-American artist Charles McGee recounts the impact of the artworks on him, "It's teaching; it's revealing; it's explaining; it's total, and it's giving. I think that our culture is richer because of it. I don't know what we'll do without The Detroit Institute of Arts." As he slowly exits the gallery in the film, the shot cuts to a school group entering to gaze at the art.

Beauty and Ruin competed at the 35th International Festival of Films on Art (Canada, 2017).

DIRECTOR



Marc de Guerre

is a two-time Gemini Award winner (2007 and 2008, Canada). After graduating from the Ontario College of Art and Design, he worked as a

visual artist before transitioning to documentary filmmaking in 2000, informing his filmmaking with his background in art. His most recent work is *Song of Extinction* (2017), a multimedia performance made in collaboration with composer Rose Bolton. Featuring large-scale projections, it is a visual and sonic exploration of the Anthropocene period.

CUTS / POTONGAN

By Chairun Nissa

Sat 14 Oct | 2pm

Sun 15 Oct | 2pm

Indonesia | Indonesian with English subtitles | 2016 | 70 min |

NC16 (Some Mature Content)

Post-screening Q&A with Meiske Taurisia (Producer)



Cuts examines film censorship in Indonesia through the experience of Edwin and Meiske Taurisia, director and producer of *Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly* (2008), during the assessment of their film. In Indonesia, all films must be approved by the Indonesian Film Censorship Board (LSF) before they can be released on the regular screening circuit. With total control over what is distributed, films containing sex, politics or other subjects deemed controversial by the censors do not make it to the cinemas. While the LSF sees itself as protecting the public from negative influence and unwarranted agitation, a check welcomed by some, the troubling fact remains that there is little clarity on how censorship is regulated.

It is under these circumstances that Edwin and Meiske submit their film to the LSF. After 26 days of waiting and multiple trips to their offices, *Blind Pig Who Wants*

to Fly is rejected and the filmmakers are asked to revise it. The filmmakers appeal for an audience with the board to better understand the thought process behind this verdict, which takes another two months. When the meeting proves inconclusive, they decide to undertake the Herculean task of examining the workings of the LSF more closely. Moving from the red carpet at the Indonesian Film Festival organised by the Indonesian Film Board, to the LSF's registration counters, waiting rooms and appeals offices, to the Constitutional Court and the House of Representatives, *Cuts* reveals just how convoluted the process of formulating and enacting laws and policies on film censorship is.

Cuts had its world premiere at the 29th IDFA (Netherlands, 2016). It has also been screened at the 15th Festival Film Dokumenter (Indonesia, 2016).

DIRECTOR



Chairun Nissa (b. 1984) graduated with a degree in Film Direction from the Jakarta Art Institute in 2009. Her thesis project, *Full Moon* (2009), achieved a Special Mention at the 9th Rome Independent Film Festival (Italy, 2010). In 2013, she became the inaugural fellow of the John Darling Fellowship at the Australian National University. Her short film *Chocolate Comedy* (2013) premiered at the 26th IDFA (Netherlands) in the same year. *Cuts* (2016) is her first feature film.



LA DANSE, THE PARIS OPERA BALLET / LA DANSE, LE BALLET DE L'OPÉRA DE PARIS

By Frederick Wiseman

Sat 28 Oct | 7.30pm

France and USA | French and English with
English subtitles | 2009 | 159 min | PG



Director Frederick Wiseman is renowned for documentaries that portray the human experience in a broad spectrum of social institutions. Here, he offers a rare glimpse at the inner workings of the Paris Opera Ballet, one of France's principal cultural institutions and the world's premier ballet companies. *La Danse* follows the rehearsals and performances of seven ballets: *Paquita* by Pierre Lacotte, *The Nutcracker* by Rudolf Nureyev, *Genus* by Wayne McGregor, *Medea* by Angelin Preljocaj, *The House of Bernarda Alba* by Mats Ek, *Romeo and Juliet* by Sasha Waltz, and *Orpheus and Eurydice* by Pina Bausch. But it also ventures beyond the stage and studios into the opera

house's cafeterias, sewing rooms and offices, shining the spotlight on unseen players without whom the show cannot go on.

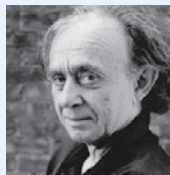
Wiseman accomplishes this in his signature observational style: armed with only a handheld camera, he allows events to unfold in the present, adding neither music nor commentary. We meet everyone from the maintenance crew to the artistic director, whose work ranges from discussing the repertoire of the company, to negotiating retirement reforms for the dancers with the Ministry of Employment, and hosting a gala tour for patrons costing \$25,000 a package. The filmmaker's



creative agency however, is manifested in his special emphasis on the dancers, waiting their turns, enduring criticism, and executing the same steps repeatedly, as they seek to realise the choreographer's vision and reach the pinnacle of their art.

La Danse has been shown at the 66th Venice International Film Festival (Italy, 2009), the 34th Toronto International Film Festival (Canada, 2009), the 53rd BFI London Film Festival (UK, 2009), the 22nd IDFA (Netherlands, 2009), and the 47th Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival (Taiwan, 2010). It was nominated for Best Documentary at the 2010 Oscars.

DIRECTOR



Frederick Wiseman

(b. 1930) is a film and stage director who has made more than 40 films. His first film, *Titicut Follies* (1967), saw him venturing inside a Massachusetts hospital for

the criminally insane. Since then, his subjects have included a ballet company in New York (*Ballet*, 1995), the oldest theatre in the world still in operation (*La Comédie-Française ou l'amour joué*, 1996) and the National Gallery, London (*National Gallery*, 2014). He was awarded the IDFA Living Legend Award (Netherlands) in 2009, the Golden Lion for Career Achievement at the 71st Venice International Film Festival (Italy) in 2014, and the Academy Honorary Award.

EXPRMNTL

By Brecht Debackere

Sat 21 Oct | 7.30pm

Belgium | French, English and Dutch with
English subtitles | 2016 | 68 min |
R21 (Sexual Scene)



This witty and irreverent documentary tells the story of experimental cinema through the history of EXPRMNTL, one of the most important film festivals ever organised for the international avant-garde. It only knew five editions between 1949 and 1974, but congregated artists who challenged mainstream aesthetics and dominant discourse, and created space for alternative ways of seeing. Participating filmmakers included now-icons of experimental cinema whose works have become, perhaps ironically, great classics: Agnès Varda, Luis Buñuel, Jonas Mekas, Roman Polanski, and Nam June Paik. Many appear in this film to discuss the significance of this milestone event, as well as the phenomenon

of the avant-garde and its explosive countercultural energy.

EXPRMNTL started out as a fringe programme at a casino in Knokke, Belgium, offering a survey of experimental works at that time through a showcase of surrealist, Dadaist and abstract films. Thanks to its visionary founder Jacques Ledoux, also director of the Royal Belgian Film Archive, the festival soon became renowned for advancing avant-garde cinema. Besides providing a platform for new filmmakers, it also supported them with film stock from Agfa-Gevaert and gave out money prizes for the best films. It was perhaps unsurprising that the limits of the festival were tested by controversial submissions like Jack Smith's



Martin Scorsese, *The Big Shave* (1967)

Flaming Creatures (1963), happenings, and protests against the USA's imperialist ambitions. While the festival may no longer exist, its spirit of innovation lives on in the astonishing filmic expressions it has inspired and their influence on today's visual culture.

EXPRMNTL had its world premiere at the L'Age d'Or Film Festival (Belgium, 2016), where it was the opening film, and its international premiere at the 60th BFI London Film Festival (United Kingdom, 2016). It has been shown in major festivals all over the world, such as the 46th International Film Festival Rotterdam (Netherlands, 2017) and the 18th Jeonju International Film Festival (South Korea, 2017).

DIRECTOR



Brecht Debackere

(b. 1979) is the co-founder of Visualantics, a production company based in Brussels.

He works with film, animation and motion-graphics, and has exhibited works in museums such as the Stedelijk Museum (Netherlands), SMAK (Belgium) and the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium. He is currently researching omni-directional and stereoscopic film for CREW, a Belgian artist collective.

LEAVE THE SAINTS ALONE / LASCIA STARE I SANTI

By Gianfranco Pannone

Sun 29 Oct | 4.30pm

Italy | Italian with English subtitles | 2016 | 75 min | PG



Leave the Saints Alone takes us on a fascinating journey across a century of religious processions, feasts and other observances that testify to the unwavering piety of Italy's masses. Largely rooted in the concerns of an agrarian society, the populace's devotion centres on the veneration of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the patron saints through close engagement with sacred art used in these cyclical rituals. These range from all manner of crosses to sculptures, paintings, tapestries and other objects that depict saints in accordance with religious iconography. From the southern villages of Sicily to remote mountain districts in the north, such art is a manifestation of the sacred and a vital part of public life.

Director Gianfranco Pannone draws on vintage documentaries and newsreels from national archives, footage of present-day practices, first-hand accounts from locals, as well as the writings on the sacred by Italian artists and intellectuals such as Pier Paolo Pasolini, Mario Soldati and Antonio Gramsci. Narrated by esteemed Italian actors, Sonia Bergamasco and Fabrizio Gifuni, and accompanied by Ambrogio Sparagna's enchanting score, the film reveals the authentic passion and joy with which Italian regional communities come together to celebrate their faith. In doing so, Pannone visualises a longing for the sacred, increasingly lost in the name of progress.

Leave the Saints Alone premiered at the Rome Film Festival (Italy, 2016).

DIRECTOR



Gianfranco Pannone (b. 1963) is a founding member of Doc/it, the Italian association for documentary filmmaking. He teaches documentary filmmaking at Roma Tre University, the National Film School (Italy) and the Suor Orsola Benincasa University of Naples. His notable films include three documentaries referred to as the American Trilogy (1991–1998), which explore the impact of the "American Dream" on Italian society, and *Latina/Littoria* (2001), named as the Best Documentary Feature at the

27th Torino Film Festival (Italy, 2011). He holds a degree in history and theory of cinema from the University of Rome, and a degree in film direction from the Experimental Centre of Cinematography in Rome.

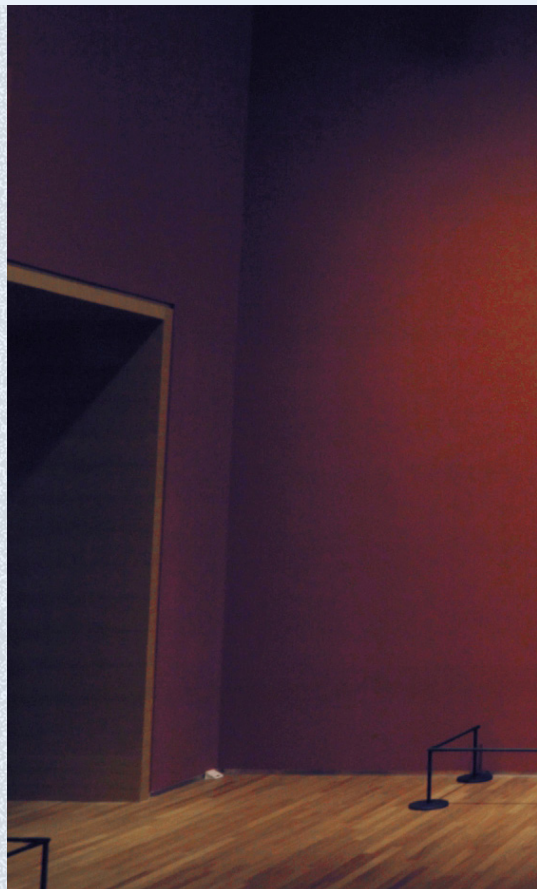


MY DEAR ART / YI GE REN DE SHOU CANG

By Hao-hsuan Hsu

Sun 8 Oct | 4.30pm

Taiwan | Mandarin and English with
English subtitles | 2017 | 102 min |
NC16 (Some Nudity)



My Dear Art explores today's dazzling and often bewildering world of art from an Asian perspective. Director Hao-hsuan Hsu accompanies Taiwanese art collector Yao Chien on a 100-day journey to art fairs, auctions and exhibitions, seeking to understand the industry, particularly its dealings with Chinese contemporary art. Through conversations with collectors, artists, gallerists and other industry experts, the film provides a glimpse of the art ecosystem. In this way, it attempts to address the questions asked by people on the street when approached by the

filmmakers: Why would you spend so much money buying other's works? What's the difference between rubbish and art? Who decides?

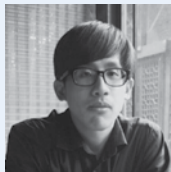
The film captures the diverse and sometimes conflicting points of view about art, across countries from China, Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore to Italy and the United Kingdom. The pair attend a Sotheby's VIP party, visit private art spaces like Eslite Gallery and stop by National Gallery Singapore. They go for an exhibition opening celebrating Uli Sigg's



donation of 14,603 artworks to the M+ Museum; chat with Zhao Gang, a broker who has sold many of Ai Weiwei's works; and explore a karaoke club in Shanghai that displays works by artists like Antony Gormley and Zheng Fanzhi, and counts Marina Abramović among its clients. The film brings us face to face with the people for whom art is a livelihood as much as an all-consuming passion.

My Dear Art had its world premiere at Art Basel Hong Kong (2017), where it opened the Film programme.

DIRECTOR



Hao-hsuan Hsu
(b. 1984) wrote *The Untrammelled Traveler* (2013), which won a Gold Remi at the 46th Worldfest-Houston International Film

Festival (USA, 2013), and was the assistant director for *A Life that Sings* (2015), which won Best Documentary and Best Editing at the 17th Taipei Film Awards (Taiwan, 2015).

THE ROYAL BALLET OF CAMBODIA



Produced by National Archives and Records Administration of the United States (NARA) in 1965, and dubbed in Khmer by Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center with the support of UNESCO in 2012

Sun 8 Oct | 2pm

USA, Cambodia | English and Khmer | 1965 | 81 min | PG

Introduction and screening of *The Royal Ballet of Cambodia*, with Her Royal Highness Princess Norodom Buppha Devi in attendance

Live solo performance by a principal dancer from The Royal Ballet

Post-show Q&A with Proeung Chhieng (Technical Director of the Royal Ballet, assistant to the Princess and former Director of the University of Fine Arts)

Print source: Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center

This programme is supported by Lotus on Water, and presented with the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Norodom Buppha Devi in collaboration with National Gallery Singapore, Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center and the Royal Ballet of Cambodia to raise awareness about classical Khmer dance.

The Royal Ballet of Cambodia is a rare document on classical Khmer court dance and the work of the troupe, which is supported by the royal family of Cambodia. The film starts with a lavish performance of *Preah Ket Mealea*, a dance drama on the myth of this divine king and the birth of Angkor. In the legend, *apsaras* or heavenly nymphs were commanded by the king's father, the god Indra, to reveal the secrets of their dance to the Cambodian court at his coronation. Jayavarman II who founded the Khmer empire, later drew on this legend, appropriating the god-king status to legitimise his rule. Notwithstanding the dance's mythical origins, the royal household has remained custodian of this traditional art form and its purity to this day.

To meet standards of perfection, performers and artisans are subjected

to immense rigour in their training and preparation. This is revealed through footage of dance rehearsals at the school in the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh, and of the making of costumes, masks and jewellery at the École des Beaux-Arts. The film also captures the rituals of a graduation ceremony graced by Her Majesty Queen Sisowath Kossamak Nearirath where offerings are made to the patron deity of dance, teachers, and the spirits of the masks, headdresses and instruments.

The grand finale is a spellbinding solo performance by Her Royal Highness Princess Norodom Buppha Devi for *buong suong*, a propitiation ceremony to seek ancestral protection for Cambodia. With her flawless posture and adherence to classical forms, she offers the utmost reverence to the spirits of former kings.



HRH Princess Norodom Buppha Devi (in foreground) and other dancers from the Royal Ballet of Cambodia performing for a propitiation ceremony.

SPECIAL GUEST



A member of the National Council, **Her Royal Highness Princess Norodom Buppha Devi** (b. 1943) has been working in culture and government for over 20 years. In 1993, she was appointed Advisor on Fine Art, with a focus on classical court dance. She served as Cambodia's Minister of Culture and Fine Arts from 1999 to 2004, and then as a senator for the FUNCINPEC party from 2005 to 2015.

A distinguished artist and performer, she began her classical dance training in the Royal Palace at the age of six. Since then, she has been instrumental in nurturing a new generation of gifted artists in Cambodia. She continues to choreograph for the Royal Ballet, which tours internationally under her leadership and guidance.





WAYS OF SEEING

Films on artists
and their interventions
in society

BAMSEOM PIRATES, SEOUL INFERNO

By Yoonsuk Jung

Sat 14 Oct | 7.30pm

South Korea | Korean with English
subtitles | 2017 | 119 min |
NC16 (Some Mature Content)



"All hail Kim Jong-il!" Bamseom Pirates yells these controversial lyrics on its album *Seoul Inferno*, a name inspired by the notorious line "North Korea can put Seoul in a sea of fire" in a 1994 speech by North Korean representative Park Young-soo. This South Korean band takes its musical code from grindcore, one of the most radical genres of contemporary music, comprising elements from rock, punk and metal, and its performative approach from avant-garde happenings. The band's self-deprecating humour, coupled with the sparkling wit and originality of its

satirical take on South Korean society, has provoked polarising responses.

In a country where any mention of North Korea conjures horror, the band plays on this taboo to shock listeners into reflecting on social ills at home. Its music has also brought attention to issues like the construction of a naval base on Jeju Island and the Korea-USA Free Trade Agreement. But in 2012, when their good friend and producer, Park Jung-geun, was arrested for violating the National Security Laws after re-tweeting messages from the North Korean account "Uriminzok,"



they faced the first and biggest crisis of their musical career.

By tracing the journey of Bamseom Pirates, director Yoonsuk Jung documents the eruption of a new youth culture and envisions the possibility of a new politics on the Korean Peninsula.

Bamseom Pirates, Seoul Inferno had its world premiere at the 46th International Film Festival Rotterdam (Netherlands, 2017). Since then, it has been shown at the 16th New York Asian Film Festival (USA, 2017) and the 19th Taipei Film Festival (Taiwan, 2017).

DIRECTOR



Yoonsuk Jung

(b. 1981) explores the relationship between state and society through art and documentary. His works have been shown all over

the world, including the 29th Vancouver Film Festival (Canada, 2010) and the 8th Gwangju Biennale (South Korea, 2010). Jung's first feature film, *Non-Fiction Diary* (2013), won the BIFF Mecenat Award at the 18th Busan International Film Festival (South Korea, 2013) and the NETPAC prize at the 64th Berlinale (Germany, 2014).

BURMA STORYBOOK

By Petr Lom

Sat 21 Oct | 2pm

Sun 22 Oct | 2pm

Myanmar, Netherlands, Norway | Burmese with English subtitles | 2017 | 81 min | PG13 (Some Coarse Language)

Post-screening Q&A with Petr Lom (Director), Corinne van Egeraat (Producer) and Maung Yu Py (Poet)



Burma Storybook is the tale of a nation emerging from years of military dictatorship told through its poetry. This beloved art form is part of the Burmese vernacular, and the film itself is structured like an epic poem: readings by leading poets in Myanmar and songs used in day-to-day communication interweave with the story of the heroic figure at its centre—70-year-old Maung Aung Pwint. The country's most well-known activist poet spent many years in jail for his writings, and now waits for his son to visit after 20 years of political exile.

Visually stunning moments throughout the film render the familiar spectacular—elaborate hot air balloons launched into the night sky, a lone farmer patiently ploughing his field by hand, hundreds of ducks released into the river for a paddle, sorrow on a son's face too deep to be verbalised. In this way, the film's cinematography exhibits the same sensitivity that local poetry displays in its re-looking of reality.

In one of the film's most evocative sequences, Burmese poet Maung Yu Py reads his composition *Under the Ice Sheet*, offering a penetrating insight into the effects of isolation:

*Under the great ice sheet,
a great country was buried alive.
Under the great country,
lies a temple no longer housing gods.
Under the temple, great wars
welded together six feet under.
Under the wars, a great
museum of culture, falling apart.
— Extract from Under the Ice Sheet*

Above all, this film is a picture of resilience in the face of struggle, and grace under pressure.

Burma Storybook had its world premiere at the 46th International Film Festival Rotterdam (Netherlands, 2017) and its international premiere at the 14th CPH:DOX (Denmark, 2017).

DIRECTOR



Petr Lom (b. 1968) received his PhD in Political Philosophy from Harvard University, and taught human rights and philosophy as an associate professor at George Soros' Central European University. Since 2003, he has focused on making documentary films about human rights. These have been screened at more than 250 film festivals across the world and won numerous awards including the Grand Prix at the 43rd Chicago International Documentary Festival (USA, 2007) for *On a Tightrope* (2007).



CHINA'S VAN GOGHS

By Yu Haibo and Yu Tianqi Kiki

Fri 13 Oct | 7.30pm

Fri 27 Oct | 7.30pm

China, Netherlands | Mandarin with
English subtitles | 2016 | 80 min | PG



Zhao Xiaoyong has produced thousands of paintings, but does not consider himself a real artist. He is one of thousands of peasants-turned-painters in Dafen Village, China, who churn out the millions of copies of Western masterpieces found all around the world, from high street chains like Walmart to boutique gift shops. But Zhao is not satisfied with mechanically reproducing works of art from images in photographs and books. Obsessed with Van Gogh's genius, he yearns to see the originals. *China's Van Goghs* follows Zhao on his pilgrimage to discover the artist for himself—he traces Van Gogh's footsteps through Amsterdam, Paris, Arles and Auvers-sur-Oise, and encounters his paintings for the first time at the Van Gogh Museum. Struck by the powerful

aura of the works, his life is changed in unexpected ways.

Like Zhao, many of Dafen's painters live, work, marry and raise children under Van Gogh's constant gaze. But the legend of Van Gogh represents more than just a livelihood to them: his art and life is emblematic of their own dreams for self-actualisation. Rising above the "Made in China" bias, the film surfaces the cycles of exploitation and poverty that entrench workers like Zhao who desire authenticity. The trip ultimately inspires a return to his ancestral village to find his own vision, and a source of creativity from within.

China's Van Goghs had its world premiere at the 29th IDFA (Netherlands, 2016). It has



been screened at festivals such as the 47th Visions du Réel (Switzerland, 2016) and the 14th Docudays UA (Ukraine, 2016). It won Best Documentary (International Co-production) at the 7th Beijing International Film Festival (China, 2017).

DIRECTORS



Yu Haibo (b. 1962) is one of China's most prominent documentary photographers, and is considered a pioneer of surrealist photography in the country. His photo

story *China Dafen Oil Painting Village* won the 49th World Press Photography Contest in 2006. Today, he is the Chief Photo Editor of the *Shenzhen Economic Daily* and director of the Shenzhen Professional Photographers Association. *China's Van Goghs* is his first feature film.



Yu Tianqi Kiki

is an Associate Professor of Film and Screen Studies at Shanghai Jiao Tong University (China), and a producer at Century Image Media Ltd. She is also the

co-founder of *DSL CineMag*, a magazine that promotes Chinese New Cinema, and has a forthcoming book titled *'My' Self on Camera: First Person Documentary Practice in Twenty-first Century China* (2017) published by the University of Edinburgh Press.

KOUDELKA: SHOOTING HOLY LAND

By Gilad Baram

Sun 15 Oct | 4.30pm

Germany, Czech Republic | English,
Hebrew and Arabic with English subtitles
2015 | 72 min | PG13 (Some Coarse Language)



Legendary Magnum photographer Josef Koudelka arrived in Israel and Palestine for the first time in 2008. Upon seeing the wall being built by Israel in the West Bank, he was deeply shaken. Determined to document the traces of conflict marked by this de-facto border, Koudelka embarked on a four-year journey to photograph the wall and the violence that it pre-empts for those living on both sides of the divide.

Koudelka is well acquainted with military and ideological barriers. Born in Czechoslovakia, he grew up behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War and photographed the now-iconic images of

the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968. In the face of unrest, he sees his role as an observer who positions himself to “show some people what they maybe haven’t seen,” so they may understand and be moved to seek change.

In a bid to grasp this master’s way of seeing, Israeli director Gilad Baram assisted him on this voyage through key sites in the Holy Land: Rachel’s Tomb in Bethlehem, Qalandiya Checkpoint in Ramallah, Al Baladiya Urban Warfare Training Facility near Tze’elim, the Judean Desert, and Mount Gerizim in Nablus. As he waits with Koudelka to crystallise his frames, Baram places this picture



of total devotion in his own breathtaking compositions. Together, their austere images of a landscape carved up by concrete walls and barbed wire reveal the tragic absurdity of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and make a quiet but powerful statement about war and art.

Koudelka: Shooting Holy Land has been shown at the 36th San Francisco Jewish Film Festival (USA, 2016), the 29th Galway Film Festival (Ireland, 2016), the 6th FILAF (France, 2016), the 18th Docaviv (Israel, 2016), the 31st DOK.fest Munich (Germany, 2016) and the 18th One World Film Festival (Czech Republic, 2016).

DIRECTOR



Gilad Baram (b. 1981) is a visual artist, photographer and filmmaker based between Berlin and Jerusalem. Baram has a BFA in Photography from

the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, and assisted photographers Josef Koudelka, Jeff Wall and Gilles Peress between 2009 and 2012. In 2010, he was awarded the Shpilman Institute for Photography Scholarship for Excellence in Photography. *Koudelka: Shooting Holy Land* is his directorial debut.

MANIFESTO

By Julian Rosefeldt

Sun 8 Oct | 7.30pm

Sat 21 Oct | 4.30pm

Germany | English | 2017 | 95 min |

PG13 (Some Coarse Language)



Manifesto pays homage to the 20th century's most impassioned statements on art that have revolutionised ways of seeing in society. Drawing on over 50 manifestos by influential artists and thinkers such as Karl Marx, André Breton, John Cage and Tristan Tzara, director Julian Rosefeldt scripted 13 monologues performed by Cate Blanchett.

In a bid to defamiliarise these iconic passages, Blanchett assumes unlikely personas to deliver founding texts of art movements like Futurism, Dadaism, Pop Art, Surrealism and Minimalism as everyday speech. Her transformations are mesmerising in their range and virtuosity, and often laced with humour: a Russian

choreographer shouts instructions at dancers from Yvonne Rainer's *No Manifesto*; a Southern mother leads a family prayer consisting of Claes Oldenburg's *I am for an Art...*; a schoolteacher corrects her pupils' work citing the rules of Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg's *Dogme 95*.

Displaced from their art historical contexts, the reworked manifestos challenge the viewer to question their relevance in present-day settings, and encounter anew the radical spirit behind the brilliant rhetoric. This contemporising action is mirrored in the film's form. These declarations—immortalised in word—now find new expression in ephemeral performance, and



are captured again on film. The re-visioning of these monumental texts surfaces their resolute call to action: what should be the role of art in society today?

Manifesto premiered as a multi-channel video installation at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image in 2015. Following this, it had its European premiere at the 46th International Rotterdam Film Festival (Netherlands) and its world premiere at the 33rd Sundance Film Festival (USA) in 2017. It also won the Main Award and the Audience Award at the Kino der K nst (Germany, 2017), and was nominated for the Ingman Bergman Award at the 40th G teborg Film Festival (Sweden, 2017).

DIRECTOR



Julian Rosefeldt

(b. 1965) is a German visual artist and filmmaker, known for his complex multi-channel video installations. His artworks are held in collections all

over the world, such as the Nationalgalerien (Germany), MoMA (USA), and The Saatchi Collection (UK). He was a guest professor at the Bauhaus-Universit t Weimar from 2009 to 2010, and is currently a professor in Digital and Time-based Media at the Akademie der Bildenden K nste.

SONGS FROM THE NORTH

By Soon-Mi Yoo

Sat 14 Oct | 4.30pm

South Korea, USA, Portugal | English and Korean with English subtitles | 2014 | 73 min | PG



Songs From the North is an essay film that turns its gaze upon the people of North Korea, a country typically seen through the lens of derisive satire and jingoistic propaganda. South Korean director Soon-Mi Yoo interweaves footage of her visits to North Korea with its music, mass spectacles, popular cinema, paintings and historical archives, seeking to understand the national psyche and coping mechanisms from their perspective. Her penetrating explorations offer a rare glimpse into the political ideology of absolute love for Leader and Party which continues to drive the nation towards its uncertain future.

Once guided by revolutionary zeal to create a truly equal society, North Korea's master narratives now stem from the memory of suffering inflicted by imperialist powers, and the necessary

struggle for independence. The film observes how these narratives permeate every area of life: they are the inspiration for the country's art, the content of state television and radio broadcasts, the political logic for nuclear war, and the script for day-to-day living. Challenging caricature, this multidimensional portrait of North Korea testifies to the enduring power of a heroic ideal and the genuine emotion with which its people sing. It is perhaps these conditions that make survival possible.

Songs from the North premiered at the 67th Locarno Film Festival (Switzerland, 2014), where it won the prestigious Golden Leopard for Best First Feature. It also won the Best First Feature-Length Film Award at the 12th Doclisboa (Portugal, 2014), and the Special Jury Prize at the 17th BAFICI (Argentina, 2015).

DIRECTOR



Soon-Mi Yoo (b. 1962) is known for her avant-garde and essayistic non-fiction films. After studying German Literature at Yonsei University, she earned a MFA in Photography from the Massachusetts College of Arts where she is currently Chair of the Film/Video department. Her works have been shown at the International Film Festival Rotterdam, the Centre Pompidou, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Harvard Film Archive. *Songs From the North* is her first feature film.

...the revolutionary state of North Korea was born out of songs—the songs the country's founding leader sang in his arduous march to National Liberation—and these songs are the soul and pulse beats of the Kim Il Sung generation.

Rodong Sinmun, 6 April 2007 (official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea)



THE SPACE IN BETWEEN – MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ IN BRAZIL

By Marco Del Fiol

Sun 15 Oct | 7.30pm

Sun 29 Oct | 7.30pm

Brazil | English and Portuguese with
English subtitles | 2016 | 88 min |
M18 (Nudity and Some Disturbing Scenes)



One of the most influential performance artists of our time, Marina Abramović was compelled by personal pain to travel to Brazil in search of healing and artistic inspiration through its mystical practices. Known for testing the limits of her body in her art, Abramović seeks to overcome physical and mental confines by committing to the process of these unfamiliar sacred ceremonies. Part-documentary, part-video installation, this film follows her as she engages in various spiritual acts: connecting with “psychic surgeon” John of God in Abadiânia; participating in healing rites at Vale Do Amanhecer; consuming hallucinogenic *ayahuasca* in Chapada Diamantina; and encountering the energy of crystals in

Corinto. Her body becomes the site of change, drawing the connection between ritual and performance.

From this experience, Abramović created new artistic interventions to empower the public to create their own performances and go on transformational inner journeys in the absence of the artist. The life-giving potential of art is realised, enabling one to access that shimmering space where things come into being, and faith resides.

The Space in Between – Marina Abramović in Brazil had its world premiere at the 23rd SXSW Film Festival (USA, 2016) where it was the only foreign film nominated in the Best Documentary



“I love to live in the space in-between. The space in-between for me is one of the most creative spaces for artists to be. It’s when you’re leaving old habits and you’re completely open to destiny. You’re open to new ideas, when everything is so vulnerable because you’re out of your control zone.”

– Marina Abramović

Feature category. It closed the 12th Biografilm Festival (2016) in Italy; the 37th Durban International Film Festival (2016) in South Africa; and was part of the official selection at the 10th Sydney Underground Film Festival (2016). It has also competed at the 60th BFI London Film Festival (UK, 2016) and the 38th Moscow International Film Festival (Russia, 2016), and been shown all over the world at festivals such as the 1st AyaFilm: World Ayahuasca Film Festival (Brazil, 2016), 33rd Bogotá Film Festival (Colombia, 2016), 53rd Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival (Taiwan, 2016), and 13th ZagrebDox (Croatia, 2017).

DIRECTOR



Marco Del Fiol (b. 1964) is a director, editor and screenwriter. His films—which include *Rafael França: Artwork as Testament* (2001), *Olafur Eliasson: Your Body of*

Work (2011) and *Isaac Julien: Geopoetics* (2012)—seek to broaden the dialogue between the contemporary artist, their artwork and the public. His works have been exhibited in festivals at the Museo Reina Sofia and Centre Pompidou, and are in the permanent collections of the Israel Centre for Contemporary Art and the Hong Kong Arts Centre.



A black and white photograph showing the silhouettes of several soldiers standing on a dark, sloping hill. They are positioned against a light, hazy sky. The soldiers are in various poses, some looking towards the camera, others looking away. The overall mood is somber and historical.

SPECIAL FOCUS: THE ART COMMISSION

Four commissioned works
by master filmmakers,
now restored classics

THE ART COMMISSION

An anthology of four short films commissioned by private industry, commercial entities and government departments, now beautifully restored—featuring *The Crown Jewels of Iran* by Ebrahim Golestan, *Raid Into Tibet* by Adrian Cowell, *The Diamond Finger* by R.D. Pestonji, and *The Song of Plastic* by Alain Resnais.

Sat 28 Oct | 2pm

Followed by a public forum (free admission, p.50)

Patrons who have purchased tickets to this screening are guaranteed their seats at the forum.

Online reservation for forum-only seats will start on Tue 10 Oct on the Gallery website.

Sun 29 Oct | 2pm

Post-screening Q&A

THE CROWN JEWELS OF IRAN / GANJINEHA-YE GOHAR

By Ebrahim Golestan

Iran | Farsi with English subtitles | 1965 | 15 min | G



Commissioned by the Central Bank of Iran, this film traces 300 years of dynastic rule in Iran by examining the fate of its crown jewels. The Bank is the custodian of these jewels, which are so valuable that they are designated as the guarantee for Iranian currency. Despite this state sponsorship, segments of the film were censored by the Ministry of Culture and Arts for their subversive undertones. Director Ebrahim Golestan criticises the decadence and treachery of past kings, and implies that the owners of the jewels at the time—the Pahlavi line of shahs—will fall just like the rest. Ironically, the Shah gave the film his royal blessing.

The Crown Jewels of Iran is Golestan's most stylistically accomplished film. In the cinematography, the bewildering riches of

the treasury and the pride of the shahs are expressed through endless pageantry—the bejewelled ornaments are paraded one by one, drawer after drawer. As the jewels rotate and glitter in space, the camera moves languidly around them, almost in a visual caress. But the subversive commentary strikes a jarring note in this elaborate show, surmising there is no glory in such excess. What Golestan considers true wealth is implicitly conveyed. Some of the most iconic landscape photography in the history of Iranian cinema can be seen after the opening credits: peasants of different tribes are presented in the simple act of ploughing in a series of close-ups and long shots, cuts and dissolves. Then, in an allegorical match-cut, a farmer is seen on the horizon before a cut to a diamond against a dark background—the farmer is the jewel.



The film presented in this festival is a digital restoration jointly funded and proudly brought to you by National Gallery Singapore and Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna. Material for this restoration was taken from original prints and great care has been taken to ensure that the film remains as close to its original form as possible:

censored lines have been recovered and clear signs of decay repaired. This beautifully restored version is the work of film laboratory L'Immagine Ritrovata – Film Restoration and Conservation, with consultation from Ehsan Khoshbakht, who supervises the restoration of Golestan's films and is currently writing a book on him.

DIRECTOR



Ebrahim Golestan (b. 1922) is one of the pioneers of pre-Revolutionary Iranian cinema and literature. Golestan's career in film began in 1958 when he founded his own film studio, working with a small crew that he hired and trained to make industrial films for oil companies. This outfit would eventually branch out, releasing increasingly ambitious films during Iran's first cinematic New Wave such as *The House is Black* (1963, directed by Forough Farrokhzad, the revolutionary poet, the studio's editor and occasional actress). Golestan himself directed two features: *Brick and Mirror* (1965), the first feature film in Iran to be shot in direct sound, and *The Secret Treasure of the Jinn Valley* (1972), filmed on a return trip to Iran after Golestan had moved to London in 1967. His short films include *The Wave*, *Coral and Rock* (1961) and *The Hills of Marlik* (1965). Sadly, it is difficult to gain access to Golestan's oeuvre—like many other pre-Revolutionary films, they are locked away in Iran's film archives with copies available only in a handful of places around the world. He has been living in Sussex, United Kingdom since 1975.

RAID INTO TIBET

By Adrian Cowell

United Kingdom | English | 1966 | 28 min |

Rating TBA



In 1964, director Adrian Cowell embarked on an expedition to film the untold story of the Tibetan guerrilla fighters who waged battle against the Chinese military. Initially commissioned by former British television company Associated Television (ATV) to produce a series of films on Buddhist sects in Asia, Cowell along with cinematographer Chris Menges and journalist George Patterson were granted special access to shoot in Nepal. They travelled into the remote Tsum Valley where a small contingent of Tibetan guerrillas was based and with the blessing of the monastery there, followed the guerrillas on a harrowing trek over a 20,000 feet mountain pass into Tibet. The resulting film was *Raid into Tibet*, released in 1966.

In 2010, Tibet Film Archive director, Tenzin Phuntsog, began an initiative to restore the 16mm print of the film, and two years later, partnered with World Cinema Foundation (founded by Martin Scorsese) and film laboratory Cineric to complete the project. The Gallery now presents this restored copy.

The restored copy of *Raid into Tibet* had its world premiere at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Ohio (USA, 2016). Since then, it has been shown at the 30th Il Cinema Ritrovato (Italy, 2016) and the Metrograph (USA, 2016).



DIRECTOR



Adrian Cowell (1934–2011) was an award-winning British documentary filmmaker whose works highlighted environmental and social issues, prompting action from both government and non-governmental organisations. His landmark series *The Decade of Destruction* (1990), resulting from his ten-year chronicle of the destruction of Brazilian rainforests, contributed to international debate on how the Amazon should be developed. He also worked extensively in Burma, documenting

the opium trade with shows such as *Opium* (1978) and *The Heroin Wars* (1996). His last documentary *Jungle Beat* (2005) is about government agencies struggling with illegal logging.

CINEMATOGRAPHER

Chris Menges (b. 1940) is one of Britain's greatest cinematographers. In 1963, he joined the team at Granada TV's *World in Action*, demonstrating his willingness to film in perilous and conflict-ridden places such as Myanmar, South Africa and Zanzibar. It was around this time that he started working on a collaboration with Adrian Cowell, which saw them returning to Asia repeatedly over 30 years. Menges then went on to work with directors such as Ken Loach, Lindsay Anderson, and Bill Forsyth, eventually winning two Oscars for Best Cinematography for *The Killing Fields* (1984) and *The Mission* (1986). His directorial debut *A World Apart* (1988) picked up three awards at the 41st Cannes Film Festival (France, 1988), including the Grand Prize of the Jury. Menges received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 23rd Camerimage Festival of Cinematography (Poland) in 2016.

THE DIAMOND FINGER / NIEW PETCH

By R.D. Pestonji

Thailand | English | 1958 | 27 min | G



Directed by the great Thai filmmaker R. D. Pestonji, *The Diamond Finger* is part of a collection of three short films commissioned by the Fine Arts Department of Thailand in 1958 to promote Thai culture. It features an exquisite performance of *khon*, the classical Thai masked-pantomime which dramatizes episodes from the *Ramakien*, the Thai derivative of the Indian epic poem *Ramayana*. The dancers' delicate and coded movements, reminiscent of puppets in shadow-play, are shot against a stylised backdrop and in highly saturated colours. The effect is at once strange and beautiful, drawing attention to the meaning of form in both cinematic and theatrical expression.

The story centres on the unfortunate Nontuk, a midget in the realm of giants,

mercilessly teased by the *apsaras* (heavenly nymphs) who pull out his hair until he is bald. Shiva, the god of destruction, takes pity on him and gives him a magic diamond finger that kills anyone it is pointed at. Nontuk then goes on a murderous rampage until Lord Vishnu the Preserver puts an end to it. Narrated in English by ex-Prime Minister and Thai intellectual Kukrit Pramoj, the film makes *khon* accessible to foreigners yet introduces it from a local perspective, thus resisting exoticisation of the subject.

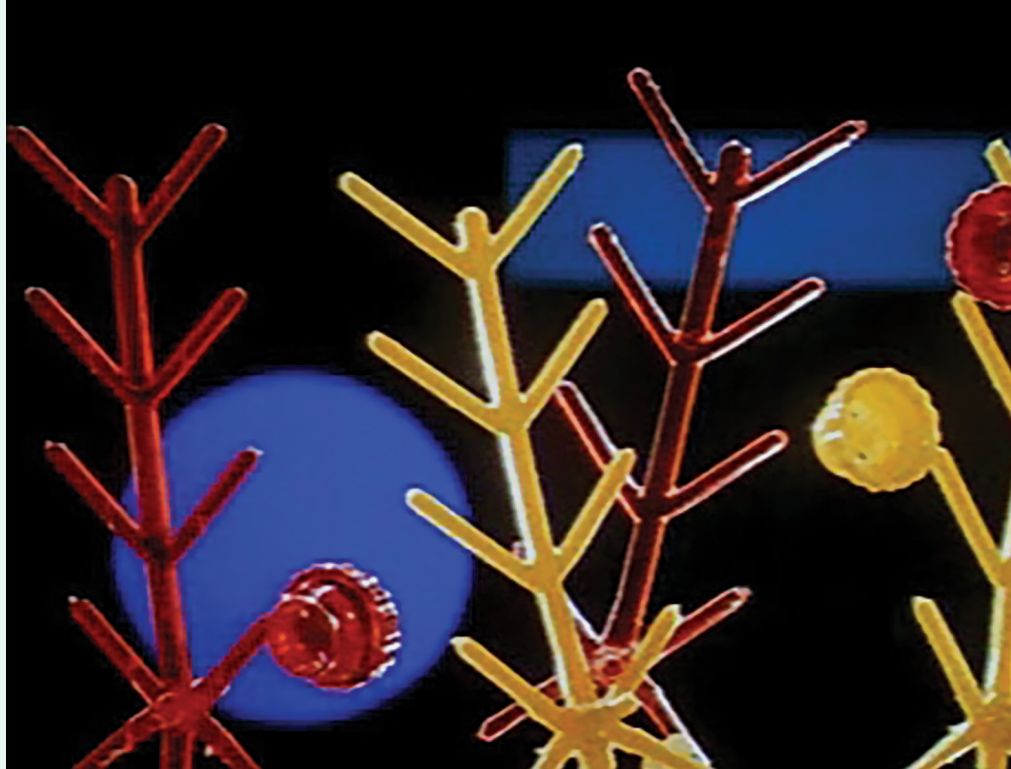
The version presented in this festival is a newly-restored one, scanned in 4K and restored by Film Archive (Public Organisation), Thailand, which listed it in the registry of national heritage films in 2011.

DIRECTOR



R.D. Pestonji (1934–2011) is regarded as the father of contemporary Thai film, credited with placing Thai cinema on the world stage. He founded Hanuman Films, the film studio behind the first film in Thailand shot with 35mm film, *Santi-Vina* (1954). Pestonji was also the cinematographer for the film, which won the awards for Best Cinematography and Best Art Direction at the 1st South East Asian Film Festival (Tokyo, 1954), today the Asia-Pacific Film Festival. He has directed five features: *Dear Doll* (1951), *Country Hotel* (1957), *Dark Heaven* (1958), *Black Silk* (1961), which competed at the 11th Berlin International Film Festival (Germany, 1961), and *Sugar is Not Sweet* (1964). He also co-founded and headed the Thai Film Producers Association, lobbying government bodies to promote the Thai film industry. On 17 August 1970, Pestonji passed away of a heart attack, while giving a speech urging the government to support the Thai film industry.





THE SONG OF PLASTIC / LE CHANT DU STYRÈNE

By Alain Resnais

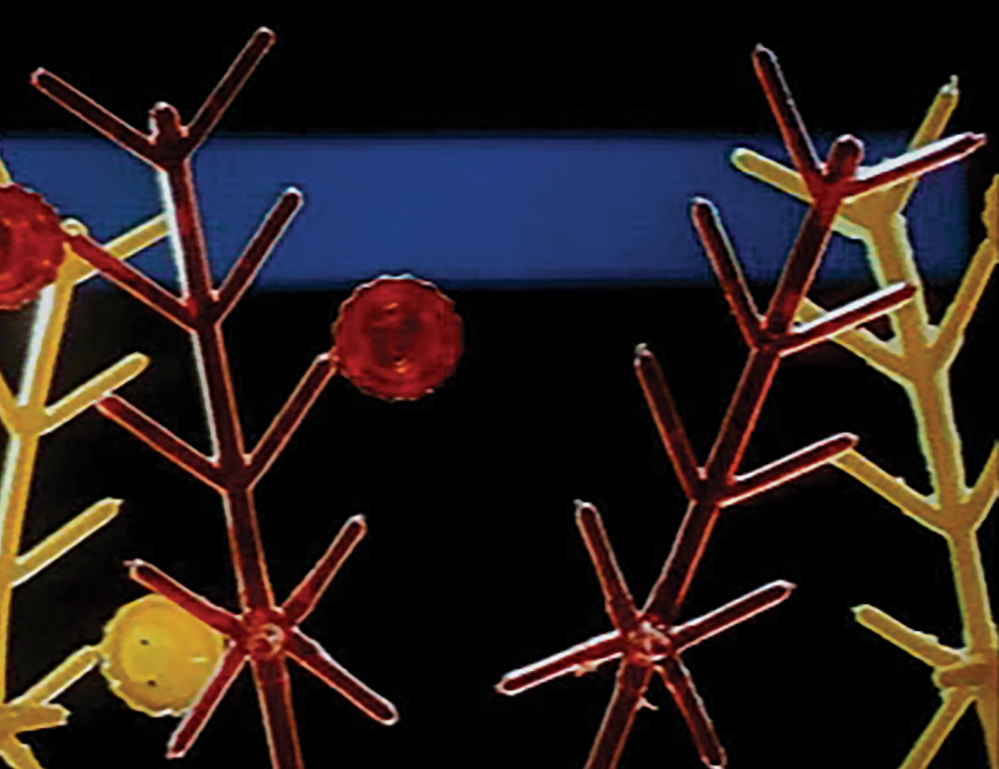
France | French with English subtitles | 1958 | 14 min | G

Commissioned by Société Pechiney to celebrate the polystyrene products manufactured at its factories, this film traces the metamorphosis of raw material to plastic object in reverse. Starting with melted-down masses of finished products, the film develops as an ensemble of the changes wrought by the mechanical processes applied to polystyrene components. This pursuit unexpectedly brings us to a non-material source—creative impulse.

At first glance, director Alain Resnais seems to fragment the mechanism of plastic-making. However, the juxtaposition of montage elements like stylised *mise-*

en-scène, Sacha Vierny's languid camera movements, Raymond Queneau's verse-commentary, and Pierre Barbaud's dramatic orchestral score simply serves to surface creative flux, which is at the heart of this process.

In an interview for *Film Quarterly* with Noel Burch in 1960, Resnais made light of the subject of his last documentary short: "polystyrene just happened to be the most amusing subject proposed to me at a time when I needed money." Nonetheless, the tongue-in-cheek deconstruction of the mechanical process reflects the innovative spirit of this enterprise. Just as chemists transform "lowly residue" into new and



valuable materials, the film transforms the prosaic workings of heavy industry into a beautiful “song of plastic.”

The film has been restored in 2K thanks to l'Agence du Court-Métrage and to the support of the CNC.

The Song of Plastic showed at the 19th Venice International Film Festival (Italy, 1958)—where it won the Mercure d'Or award—and the 8th Mannheim International Film Week (Germany, 1959).

DIRECTOR



Alain Resnais (1922–2014) is one of France's most distinguished and celebrated directors. A contemporary of the 1950s French New Wave, his films are known for their experimentation and innovative narrative structures. Resnais began his career making short documentary films about art, such as *Van Gogh* (1948, awarded for the Best Short Subject at the 23rd Academy Awards in 1950), *Gauguin* (1950), *Guernica* (1950), and *Statues Also Die* (1953, with Chris Marker). He went on to make the epochal *Night and Fog*

(1956), one of the first documentaries about Nazi concentration camps; his first feature film, *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959), also looked at World War II, combining documentary and fiction. His illustrious career spanned more than 60 years and garnered him many awards, including the Golden Lion at the Venice International Film Festival (Italy, 1961) for *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961); the Berlin Film Festival's Silver Bear (Germany) in 1994 for *Smoking/No Smoking* (1993), and again in 1998 for *Same Old Song* (1997); and the Cannes Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009.

PUBLIC FORUM

Sat 28 Oct | 3.30pm | 60 min | Free

Patrons who have purchased tickets to the Sat 28 Oct screening of *The Art Commission* anthology at 2pm are guaranteed seats at the forum. Online reservation for forum-only seats will start on Tue 10 Oct on the Gallery website.

Hack work is not the result of either clumsiness or provincialism; it is the result of the market making more insistent demands than the art. The period of the oil painting corresponds with the rise of the open art market. And it is in this contradiction between art and market that the explanations must be sought for what amounts to the contrast, the antagonism existing between the exceptional work and the average.

– John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*

In his seminal text *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger observes that oil painting's ability to render the lustre and solidity of its subject caused it to develop into a tradition of art that celebrated private property and status. In this way, oil paintings gave expression to the capitalist world view of reality as something that is tangible, quantifiable, and can be bought and sold. However artists, such as Rembrandt and Turner, were dissatisfied with this limited role of art. This led them to produce exceptional works that opposed its material values.

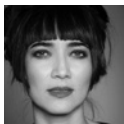
Today, the moving image is a principal source of visual imagery. The short films presented in this section are significant for the way in which the filmmakers have resisted commodification through innovation in the medium.

This forum will address the particularities of the film commission, the challenges and responsibilities of commissioners and artists, and how visionary directors like those represented in this selection—Ebrahim Golestan, Adrian Cowell, R.D. Pestonji, and Alain Resnais—transcend market considerations to create exceptional works of art.

Speakers



Putthapong Cheamrattonyu is a film programmer at the Film Archive (Public Organisation) in Thailand, where he is responsible for organising film screenings and special events. He is also a guide at the Archive's Thai Film Museum. He has a degree in Education from Silpakorn University.



Mitra Farahani is a filmmaker and artist. Her first documentary short *Just A Woman* (2001) won the Teddy Award at the 52nd Berlinale (Germany, 2002). She then went on to make films that interrogate key figures of modernity in Iran, namely *Behjat Sadr: Time Suspended* (2006), and *Fifi Howls from Happiness* (2013). She is now working on her next film about Ebrahim Golestan.



Charles Lim is a visual artist whose practice stems from an intimate engagement with the natural world. In 2005, he started working on *SEA STATE*, a long-term project that examines the political and biophysical contours of the nation-state through the lens of the sea—iterations of it have been shown at Manifesta 7 (Italy, 2008) and at biennales in Shanghai (2008), Singapore (2011) and Osaka (2013). He represented Singapore at the 56th Venice Biennale (Italy, 2015).



Joachim Ng currently serves as Director, Singapore Film Commission, where he is responsible for implementing development strategies for the film industry, and Director, PIXEL at the Infocomm Media Development Authority of Singapore, which aims to drive innovation by providing the infrastructure for a maker movement.



Erika Tan is an artist, and lecturer in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins College of Art in London. Her artistic practice is primarily research-led, and manifests in multiple formats such as the moving image and publications. She was recently commissioned by National Gallery Singapore to create *The Mis-Placed Comma (I, II, III)* (2017) for *unrealised*, a digital extension of the Gallery's long-term exhibitions.



Wee Li Lin is a pioneering Singaporean filmmaker. Her films have travelled to festivals such as the Tribeca Film Festival, the Cairo International Film Festival and the Shanghai International Film Festival. She was commissioned by The Singapore Memory Project to create *My Autograph Book* (2015), and by CiNE65 IV to create *The Perm* (2016).

Moderator



Shabbir Hussain Mustafa is Senior Curator at National Gallery Singapore. He curated Charles Lim's *SEA STATE* for the Singapore Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale (Italy, 2015) and recently co-curated *unrealised* at National Gallery Singapore, which commissioned three artists to create projects that would spark conversations about the modern art histories of Singapore and Southeast Asia.





SOUTHEAST ASIAN SHORTS

Short films on the
art and culture of
Southeast Asia

7-29 OCT | 11AM | FREE

WITHOUT MINDFULNESS

By Novice Bouasy

Lao PDR | Lao with English subtitles |
2016 | 7 min | PG



Without Mindfulness is a light-hearted tale about the woes of an absent-minded young monk in Luang Prabang. To gain self-mastery and learn mindfulness, he must turn to meditation. However, sitting alone in the forest—with only mosquitoes for company—proves no mean feat for the little novice.

DIRECTOR



Novice Bouasy was born in the Laotian countryside. *Without Mindfulness*, which is his first film, won Best Film at the 6th Vientiane Short Film Competition (Lao PDR, 2016).

THE GONG: MADE IN TEMPAWADDY

By Maung Okkar

Myanmar | Burmese with English subtitles
| 2016 | 26 min | G



The Gong Factory in Tempawaddy is one of the few remaining forges in the world where bronze gongs are still made by hand. This film is a tribute to the artisans who toil to master this craft and keep the tradition alive.

DIRECTOR



Maung Okkar (b. 1987) made his first foray into film at the age of 14, when he starred in *Dat-Khe* (2002), a film by his father, the celebrated

Burmese filmmaker Maung Wunna. A philosophy graduate from Dagon University, he is currently studying applied psychology in Yangon. His first documentary, *Charcoal Boy* (2010), screened and competed at 16 international film festivals around the world, including the 30th Munich International Festival of Film Schools (Germany, 2010).

7-29 OCT | 1PM | FREE

THE KING'S LAST SONG

By John Pirozzi

Cambodia, USA | Khmer with English subtitles | 2016 | 27 min | PG



The King's Last Song chronicles the Cambodian people's fond farewell to their "God King" Norodom Sihanouk during his three-day funeral in 2012. Interspersed with footage from films that he directed and starred in, this cinematic elegy celebrates his passionate advocacy for the arts and affirms the timelessness of Khmer cultural traditions.

DIRECTOR



John Pirozzi has directed three documentary films about Cambodian music and history. Besides *The King's Last Song*, his other works include *Don't Think*

I've Forgotten: Cambodia's Lost Rock and Roll (2014) and *Sleepwalking Through the Mekong* (2007).

SILENT LIGHT

By Liao Jiekai

Singapore | Mandarin with English subtitles | 2015 | 11 min | PG



Silent Light is a personal piece documenting the funeral of the director's grandmother. Shot on 16mm, the footage was stored for years before it was sent for processing, so visible traces of the degradation can be seen in the form of abstract shapes. The soundtrack features the voice of an elderly woman sharing about her childhood, the passing of a generation, and acceptance of death.

DIRECTOR



Liao Jiekai (b. 1984) is an artist who works with the moving image. His debut feature *Red Dragonflies* won the Special Jury Prize at the 11th Jeonju International Film

Festival (South Korea, 2010). In 2013, Liao won the Credit Suisse Artist Commissioning Award for his video installation, *Brother's Quarters*. In the same year, he presented *Bukit Orang Salah* at the Singapore Biennale.

7-29 OCT | 3PM | FREE

IMAGE MAKERS: JOHN CLANG

By Kirsten Tan

Singapore | English | 2012 | 16 min | PG



A Singaporean photographer who has been residing in New York since the 1990s, John Clang explores displacement in his art by observing the city he lives in from an outsider's perspective. Structured as a retrospective of his works, the film presents an intimate portrait of the artist.

DIRECTOR



Kirsten Tan (b. 1981) is an award-winning filmmaker who received the prestigious Tisch School of the Arts Fellowship. Her debut

feature *POP AYE* (2017) had its world premiere at the 33rd Sundance Film Festival (USA, 2017), where it received the Special Jury Award for Screenwriting.

ANOTHER CITY

By Pham Ngoc Lan

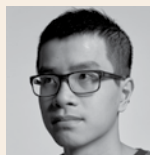
Vietnam | Vietnamese with English subtitles | 2016 | 25 min | PG

Print source: Asian Film Archive



Another City explores how the urban landscape shapes human relations. The fates of disparate characters—a middle-aged woman, a youthful bride and several young men—are bound by their desire for intimacy amid the anonymity of the big city. To truly connect, the city space must be urgently abandoned.

DIRECTOR



Pham Ngoc Lan (b. 1986) studied urban planning at Hanoi Architectural University, and considers his chief role to be an observer

of urban life. His photographic and video works focus on the influence of cityscapes on relationships. *Another City* had its world premiere at the 66th Berlinale Shorts Competition (Germany, 2016).

7-29 OCT | 5PM | FREE

RM10

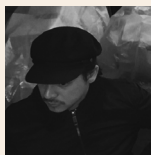
By Emir Ezwan

Malaysia | Cantonese and Malay with English subtitles | 2016 | 13 min | PG13 (Some Sexual References)



In a masterful single take, *RM10* follows the path of a banknote as it is passed from hand to hand, bearing witness to the nocturnal interactions of a neighbourhood. Satirical in tone, the film shows how the exchange of currency in a society reinforces social inequality and power structures.

DIRECTOR



Emir Ezwan is a visual artist who co-founded the design studio Karyalabs in 2007, and Entropy Studios with fellow visual artist Sufie in 2012.

NATPWE, THE FEAST OF THE SPIRITS

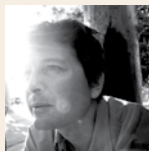
By Tiane Doan na Champassak and Jean Dubrel

France | No dialogue with English intertitles | 2012 | 31 min | PG13 (Some Mature Content)



Tens of thousands make an annual pilgrimage to a village in central Myanmar for *natpwe*, a festival celebrating the spirits of the Burmese pantheon. This film provides a glimpse of the ceremonies, which centre around trance rituals carried out by mediums. At points, banknotes are used in costumes and scattered to crowds, but the currency sought here is an otherworldly one.

DIRECTORS



Tiane Doan na Champassak (b. 1973) is a visual artist who was first recognised for his documentary photography. He received the SCAM Roger Pic Prize in 2001.



Jean Dubrel (b. 1972) studied philosophy and journalism. His most recent film is *Jharia, A Life In Hell* (2016).

FRI-SUN 7-29 OCT | 7PM | FREE

ART THROUGH OUR EYES

Commissioned by National Gallery Singapore, five award-winning Southeast Asian directors created filmic interpretations of masterpieces of their choice from the Gallery's collection. This anthology of short films had its world premiere at the 21st Busan International Film Festival (South Korea, 2016).

WOUNDED LION

By Joko Anwar

Indonesia | Indonesian with English subtitles | 2016 | 5 min | PG

Inspired by Raden Saleh's painting of the same name, *Wounded Lion* is the portrait of a classical dancer who is forced to perform on the streets to support his family. With every clang made by coins tossed into his metal tin, the dancer wrestles with the pride he still takes in his art and his diminishing sense of self.



DIRECTOR

Joko Anwar (b. 1976) is a writer and director whose films have found both commercial and critical success. His latest film, *A Copy of My Mind* (2014), premiered at the 72nd Venice International Film Festival (Italy, 2015) and was the only Southeast Asian film in the official selection.

AKU

By Ho Yuhang

Malaysia | No dialogue with English intertitles | 2016 | 5 min | PG

A man walks through a desolate landscape, and encounters another who asks if he is lost. This triggers a series of disturbing flashbacks, revealing that the man was once a soldier who is now struggling to cope with life after war. In this film, Ho imagines the psychological landscape and emotions simmering in *Aku*, Latiff Mohidin's portrait of poet Khairul Anwar.



DIRECTOR

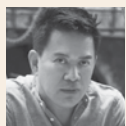
Ho Yuhang (b. 1971) directed *Rain Dogs* (2006), the first Malaysian film to compete at the 63rd Venice International Film Festival (Italy, 2006). His latest film, *Mrs K* (2016), had its world premiere at the 21st Busan International Film Festival (South Korea, 2016).

AMORSOLO'S DREAM

By **Brillante Mendoza**

Philippines | Tagalog with English subtitles | 2016 | 5 min | PG

As competing political parties flex their might in the run-up to an election, a grandmother and her grandson are forcibly removed from their fruit stall. When they return home, the family jokes about the incident, indifferent to the election campaigning on television. Mendoza was inspired by the festive mood in Fernando Amorsolo's *Marketplace During the Occupation*, which he saw as capturing the resilience of the Filipino spirit in the midst of crisis.



DIRECTOR

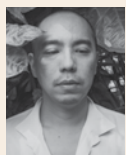
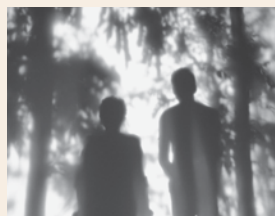
Brillante Mendoza (b. 1960) is the first Filipino filmmaker to compete and win in three major international film festivals: the 58th Berlin International Film Festival (Germany, 2008), the 62nd Cannes Film Festival (France, 2009), and the 69th Venice Film Festival (Italy, 2012).

ABLAZE

By **Apichatpong Weerasethakul**

Thailand | No dialogue | 2016 | 5 min | PG

Ablaze responds to two paintings by Raden Saleh—*Merapi, Eruption by Day* and *Merapi, Eruption by Night*—which capture the intensity of light at different times. Filmed in a single take, the camera moves across a dream-like forestscape until it reaches two silhouettes gazing into the distance.



DIRECTOR

Apichatpong Weerasethakul (b. 1970) is a filmmaker and visual artist. His 2010 film, *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*, won the Palme d'Or at the 63rd Cannes Film Festival (France, 2010). *Primitive* (2009), a major installation for dOCUMENTA (13) (Germany, 2012) was acquired by the Tate Modern and Foundation Louis Vuitton.

CHUA MIA TEE

By **Eric Khoo**

Singapore | English and Mandarin with English subtitles | 2016 | 5 min | PG

Chua Mia Tee pays tribute to the local artist in this film, inspired by his painting *Portable Cinema*. In the first half, a boy watches a silent film on a portable cinema, creating the dialogue and sound effects for it as he turns the crank. The second half features Chua Mia Tee himself as he shares about the importance of instilling truth, kindness and beauty in his works.

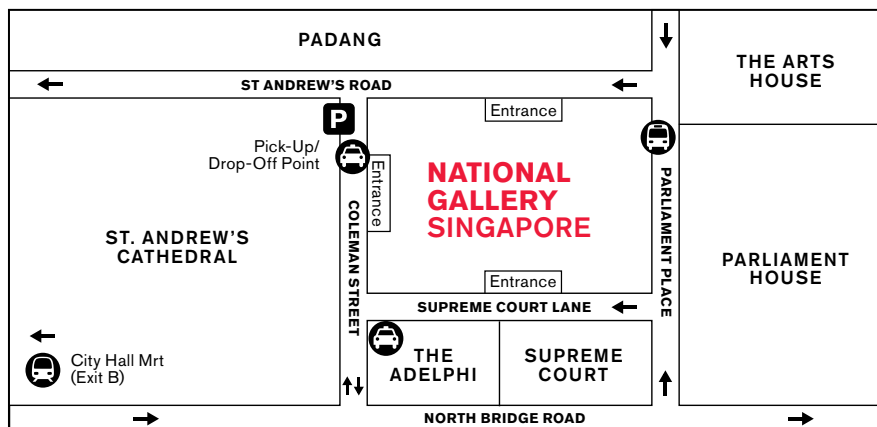


DIRECTOR

Eric Khoo (b. 1965) broke new ground in 1995 with his debut feature, *Mee Pok Man*, regarded as the first realist film in Singapore. He was the first Singaporean filmmaker to be invited to the Cannes Film Festival, the Berlin International Film Festival and the Venice Film Festival.

ABOUT NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE

National Gallery Singapore is a visual arts institution which oversees the largest public collection of modern art in Singapore and Southeast Asia. Situated in the heart of the Civic District, the Gallery is housed in two national monuments—City Hall and former Supreme Court—that have been beautifully restored and transformed into this exciting venue.



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Festival des films sur l'art (Montreal, Canada)

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Singapore Film Society

TICKETING

General Admission

\$10 per ticket (includes booking fee)

Concessions*

Gallery Insiders: **\$8**

Local and international students, NSF's, and seniors aged 60 and above: **\$8.50**

* Please bring along a valid ID for checks at the door. Patrons unable to present proof of eligibility are required to upgrade their concession tickets to full price tickets.

Group bookings

Purchases of 4 tickets or more in a single transaction: **\$8.50** per ticket

Singapore Film Society (SFS)

The following SFS cards enjoy a special rate of **\$8.50** per ticket. Available only at Gallery and SISTIC ticketing counters upon presentation of valid card:

- SFS Reel Card
- SFS Membership Card

Tickets are available from Gallery and SISTIC websites and ticketing counters.

All *Painting with Light* ticket holders are entitled to 15% discount off house drinks at Aura Sky Lounge and Gallery & Co. Cafeteria. Simply present your ticket at these venues to redeem the offer.

Terms & Conditions: Valid for 2 months from screening date, subject to venue availability. Not to be used in conjunction with other promotions and discounts. Not valid on eve of public holidays, public holidays and blackout dates.

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Logistics Gina Ang

Ticketing Gwee Simin



Image: *EXPRMNTL* by Brecht Debackere

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