



NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE

PAINTING WITH LIGHT

FESTIVAL OF
INTERNATIONAL FILMS
ON ART

4-14 SEP 2025

Festival Guide





This year's Painting with Light key visual image includes stills from Virgilio Aviado's film *1978 Footages*, screening as part of the Artist Films programme.

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INTRODUCING THE FESTIVAL

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to a new edition of Painting with Light: Festival of International Films on Art. The Gallery's signature film festival is dedicated to the study and showcase of the moving image, celebrating artist films, documentaries on art, arthouse cinema, and restored classics. This year, it will present over 45 feature-length and short films in 11 days, bringing together perspectives from visionary filmmakers, past and present, who have engaged deeply with the social issues of their time through their practice.

Explore *Magellan*

The festival opens with the Singapore premiere of ***Magellan (2025)*** by Lav Diaz. The latest film by the Philippine auteur tells the story of the ambitious Portuguese explorer, Ferdinand Magellan, keen to discover the world in the 16th century. Starring Gael García Bernal in the titular role, *Magellan* is the perfect film for Lav Diaz fans or those looking to watch a film of his for the first time.

Discover rare Southeast Asian films

The festival also presents newly restored films by Southeast Asian artists. The Gallery commissioned the digital restoration of two 16mm films by Philippine artists, ***1978 Footages (1978)*** by Virgilio "Pandy" Aviado and ***Damortis (1986)*** by Briccio Santos. These rare and restored films make their world premieres at this year's festival. Of note too is the Singapore premiere of ***Turang (1957)*** by Bachtiar Siagian, an instance of leftist filmmaking in post-independence Indonesian cinema, which was, for many years, thought to be lost.

Mark defining moments in art

The Art History, Co-authored section features seminal moments in the history of art and cinema. A must-watch for the avid cinephile, ***Videoheaven (2025)*** by Alex Ross Perry traces the evolution of the video store, a vital space that shaped film culture and re-defined the way we interacted with movies and each other. The pioneering work of women in film and television is also highlighted in the double-bill pairing of ***Women Are Naturally Creative—Agnès Varda (1977)*** by Katja Raganelli, a documentary on the acclaimed French director Agnès Varda as she champions for female expressions in cinema, and ***The Long Road to the Director's Chair (2025)*** by Vibeke Løkkeberg, a stirring depiction of the first International Women's Film Seminar in 1973.

Focus on women filmmaking

This year's Special Focus programme features the work of women filmmakers and artists who advocate for an ethics of care. The short film ***Queen's Palace (2024)*** by Snow Hnin Ei Hlaing, documenting the stories of women activists and artists from Myanmar who have sought shelter at a border town in Thailand, is screened together with ***Timestamp (2025)*** by Kateryna Gornostai, which chronicles the state of learning in Ukrainian schools today. Laura Poitras' ***All the Beauty and the Bloodshed (2022)*** offers an intimate portrait of renowned photographer Nan Goldin, weaving together her groundbreaking art and lifelong advocacy for marginalised communities.

Go beyond the black box

Closing the festival is ***We Are Toast (2025)***, an expanded cinema performance by Singapore artists Mark Chua and Lam Li Shuen, which breaks the boundaries of traditional filmmaking. They will deconstruct the image of kaya toast—a classic Singaporean breakfast—and by extension, the Singaporean identity, using 16mm film projectors, and hand-processed 16mm loops treated with coffee, pandan leaves and coconut milk.

Enjoy daily screenings and curator tours

Screening daily are two short film programmes—Southeast Asian Shorts, which features emerging and innovative voices that tell the stories of our region, and Movement Pieces, which consists of dance films from Canada that celebrate the visual poetry found in moving image art. Other offerings include special curator-led tours that complement film screenings organised in conjunction with the exhibitions, *Singapore Stories: Pathways and Detours in Art* and *Fernando Zóbel: Order is Essential*.

In an age of disconnection—where content is often streamed and consumed in isolation—we invite you to step out and experience these festival offerings together, deepening our appreciation of art, ourselves, and each other.



OPENING FILM

MAGELLAN (MAGALHÃES)

By Lav Diaz

Portugal, Spain, France, Philippines, Taiwan | In Portuguese, Spanish, Tagalog and French, with English subtitles | 2025 | 163 min 33 sec | R21 (Some Homosexual Content and Nudity)

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

Thu, 4 Sep | 8pm (by invite only)
Sat, 6 Sep | 4.30pm
The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium

Magellan is an intimate portrait of the 16th century Portuguese explorer, Ferdinand Magellan, starring Gael García Bernal in the titular role. Shot in the Philippines, Portugal, and Spain, the film revisits the events surrounding Magellan's treacherous expedition to the Spice Islands (in present-day Indonesia), which led to his fall in the Philippines. The result of seven years of research by director Lav Diaz, *Magellan* re-examines prevailing narratives about this historical figure, as well as the myth of civilisation that fuelled the madness of colonial ambition.

At 164 minutes, *Magellan* is the shortest of Diaz's films, but it covers an extensive history—from the Capture of Malacca in 1511 by Portuguese conquistador Afonso de Albuquerque, to the Spanish defeat in the Battle of Mactan in the Philippines in 1521. The events in this decade of conquest and ruination unfold in scenes analogous to a series of painterly tableaux. Consequently, as the viewer is drawn into the world of the film through the action, the framing turns the gaze to its theatricality. This creates a critical distance and sense of agency for the viewer, as he observes this re-staging of the past.

The film sets out its vantage point and sympathies at the start: an Indigenous community celebrates the impending arrival of the "white man," but the viewer is soon met with bodies washed up ashore in "1511, Malacca." Yet, it is García Bernal's sensitive portrayal of Magellan that drives the psychological complexity of the film. Compelled by a lofty mission to discover a new passage through South America and circumnavigate the globe for the first time in history, Magellan eventually unravels and becomes obsessed with religious conversion when he reaches Cebu, first through persuasion, then by force. Unable to heed the pleas from even his priest, Magellan and his men become embroiled in violence that leads to an uprising that would forever change the fortunes of the region.

Magellan had its world premiere at the 78th Cannes Film Festival (2025).



Lav Diaz (b. 1958, Philippines) is a filmmaker who directs, writes, shoots, and edits his own films. Since 1998, he has made more than 20 films, and won several top international awards, including the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival (2016), the Silver Bear Alfred Bauer Prize at the Berlin International Film Festival (2016), and the Golden Leopard at the Locarno Film Festival (2014). His works have also been presented at the film festivals of Cannes, Rotterdam, Toronto, Busan and more. He is a recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship (2010), the Prince Claus Award (2014), and the Radcliffe Fellowship from Harvard University (2016-2017).

OPENING FILM

ART HISTORY,



CO- AUTHORED

Selections in Art History, Co-authored explore seminal moments in the history of art and cinema.

WOMEN ARE NATURALLY CREATIVE—AGNÈS VARDA (LES FEMMES SONT DE NATURE CRÉATIVES—AGNÈS VARDA)

By Katja Raganelli

Germany | In French, with English subtitles | 1977 |
47 min 18 sec | NC16 (Some Nudity)

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

When Katja Raganelli asked Agnès Varda if she could make a documentary about her, the latter invited her to visit a shoot. *Women Are Naturally Creative—Agnès Varda*, Raganelli's portrait of this visionary French New Wave director, thus begins on the set of *One Sings, the Other Doesn't* (1977). It then progresses to Varda's home, offering a rare glimpse of her domestic life as she discusses her personal relationships, and existing body of work, such as *La Pointe Courte* (1954) and *Cléo from 5 to 7* (1962).

Filming Varda at work afforded much insight into her views about cinema, her improvisatory methods, and her refusal to keep a strict separation between professional and family life, in the service of realism. "The mother of the Nouvelle Vague", as Varda is affectionately known, actively collaborates with her cast and crew, many of them women. In the film, Varda introduces Nurith Aviv (who also appears in *The Long Road to the Director's Chair*, the second film in this double bill programme) as the camerawoman. She also gives roles to her teenage daughter and four-year-old son, who later interrupts her interview with Raganelli to say goodnight.

But despite the freedom with which Raganelli and Varda seem to be able to approach their films, both are no strangers to the discrimination levelled by a film industry that was stymied by a lack of trust in women filmmakers. Raganelli, who wrote a film script that was greenlit by a German broadcaster, was pushed by her producers to allow a man to direct it. Forced to pivot to television, she often had to fund her documentaries: as a case in point, this film was made on spec. In the film, Varda also states that the only way to make the independent feminist cinema she wanted was to produce and finance it herself. However, when asked if she could speak of female expressions in cinema, Varda expresses her hopeful view that the beginnings of a movement were taking shape:

There are so many theoretical points of view from which to approach feminism that we can't get into details. But I think all women who do something for women, and express themselves and find a creative identity—that's the movement.



Katja Raganelli (b. 1938, Yugoslavia) was a documentary filmmaker, whose research produced not only primary sources in film history in the form of her interviews, but offers a way of thinking about cinema and the world. She was one of the few selected to be part of the inaugural class at the University of Television and Film in Munich, of which only a handful were women. Since the 1970s, she has created a vast body of work consisting mainly of portraits of pioneering women filmmakers like Agnès Varda and Valie Export, but also artists and actresses like Delphine Seyrig. Her approach for these documentaries for television was collaborative, and her films were, above all, informative and accessible for everyone.

THE LONG ROAD TO THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

By Vibeke Løkkeberg

Norway | In Norwegian, English and German,
with English subtitles | 2025 | 70 min |
NC16 (Some Nudity and Sexual References)

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

The first International Women's Film Seminar in 1973, organised by filmmakers Claudia von Alemann and Helke Sander, was an important milestone in the history of feminist filmmaking. Billed as a seminar due to funding requirements, it was essentially one of the earliest women's film festivals, which provided a platform for women in film and television to gather, screen and discuss their work. Held in the Arsenal cinema in Berlin, the programme comprised of 45 films from seven countries that covered topics like women in the workplace, representation of women in the media, abortion, sexuality and gender roles, and the women's liberation movements in Europe and the United States.

Among the guests was Norwegian filmmaker Vibeke Løkkeberg, who came to present her film, *Abortion* (1971), and to document the event. She recorded the comings and goings in the cinema, heated discussions, and conversations with participants about the prejudices ingrained in the patriarchal structures within which they work. There were disagreements, but open and honest dialogue too, affirming a commitment to solidarity and collective action in addressing systemic challenges faced by women working in a male-dominated profession.

The event was very much of its time. Issues addressed reflected the concerns of the "second wave" of feminism in the West in the 1960s and 1970s, which sought equality and greater personal freedoms for women. This was also a period that saw an acceleration in geopolitical tensions worldwide, triggered by flashpoints like the Vietnam War. This volatility reverberated in the field of cinema; the revolutionary approaches of the French New Wave film movement were especially influential.

Despite the historic content, state-owned broadcaster NRK refused to broadcast Løkkeberg's footage. As a result, the materials were shelved and thought to be lost for nearly 50 years, until they were unexpectedly re-discovered in the Norwegian National Library. Painstakingly restored, Løkkeberg's 16mm reels and audio recordings are now brought to life in *The Long Road to the Director's Chair*, which premiered at the 75th Berlin International Film Festival (2025). The film stands as a testament to the legacy of these women trailblazers, and their indomitable spirit that still echoes in the continued battle for gender equality and representation in the film industry today.



Vibeke Løkkeberg (b. 1945, Norway) is one of Norway's most prolific filmmakers. Married to producer Terje Kristiansen and mother to two children, she created a unique concept of blending her personal life with her filmmaking, often working with her family. Løkkeberg is known for groundbreaking and often controversial films, such as *Løperjenten* (The Story of Camilla), and *Hud* (Skin), which were selected for Critics' Week and the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes in 1981 and 1985, respectively. She was appointed Cavaliere by the Italian President in 2005, and received the Honorary Amanda Award for her contribution to Norwegian cinema in 2015.

GENERAL CARTOON

By Tha Du

Myanmar | In Burmese, with English subtitles | 1963 |
141 min 30 sec | PG (Some Violence)

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

Sun, 7 Sep | 8pm
The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium

General Cartoon is a satirical film that fuses poignant social commentary with dark humour. The titular character, General Cartoon, is a bandit who ruthlessly steals and kills to enrich himself. His life takes an unexpected turn when Nyunt Hlaing, a dim-witted but kind treasure-hunter who bears an uncanny resemblance to him, stumbles onto the scene. Mistaken for the notorious bandit wherever he goes, Nyunt Hlaing is presented with protection money from even other bandits.

Goaded on by his ne'er-do-well companions, Nyunt Hlaing starts to impersonate General Cartoon intentionally, to the ire of the real thug, who is temporarily incapacitated by malaria. Meanwhile, Daphne, a feisty young woman determined to avenge her brother's death, becomes entangled in Nyunt Hlaing's ruse. Despite the circumstances, a romance blossoms.

As the story unfolds, this comedy of errors reveals the absurdities of a world governed by 'the law of the jungle,' bringing to light the struggles of the poor, and the corruption in the military. The complexities played out in the film lead to an unexpected climax, which underscores the thin line between hero and villain, comedy and tragedy.

Myanmar has had a long history of filmmaking, but most of its output is now lost. In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that parts of the 35mm film reels that make up the complete *General Cartoon* are also missing. The version presented at Painting with Light has been re-constituted from 11 surviving reels that the Thai Film Archive recently digitised, and the gaps filled with data from the U-matic tapes digitised by the Indiana University Libraries Moving Image Archive.



Tha Du (b. 1918, Myanmar; d. 1991, Myanmar) was a prolific writer and filmmaker of his time. He gave up a military career in the 1940s to focus on writing, producing over twenty novels and many short stories. In 1954, his novel *Tet Hte Ka Myat Ko* won the Literacy Award, and was selected as a textbook for students taking the Matriculation Examination. He established a film production company—Tha Du Film—in 1959, under which he made many notable Burmese titles, such as *Ka Gyi Yay Ka* (1959), his first feature that won him the Best Burmese Director Academy Award in his country.

The director's grandson, Okkar, will be in attendance to introduce this film. He is a filmmaker who co-founded Save Myanmar Film, an initiative dedicated to preserving Myanmar's cinematic heritage.

TURANG

By Bachtiar Siagian

Indonesia | In Indonesian and Karo, with English subtitles |
1957 | 90 min 34 sec | PG13 (Some Violence)

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

Sun, 7 Sep | 4.30pm
The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium

Turang is one of several post-independence Indonesian films that feature the nationalist struggle against Dutch colonial rule. Set in a Karo community in North Sumatra, this film employs a neorealist aesthetic to show the pastoral beauty of their Indigenous lands, artistic traditions, and way of life. In doing so, Siagian accentuates the local resistance efforts of ordinary villagers in the larger liberation movement, and depicts events from their perspective.

The story follows Rusli, a freedom fighter who is wounded by Dutch troops during a mission and forced to hide out in a village closely watched by the colonial forces and their informants. As he recovers under the care of the village chief and his daughter, Tipi, Rusli seeks to re-join his unit. This sparks off a chain of events that surfaces the bonds of loyalty between the villagers and freedom fighters, and the love between Tipi and Rusli. The Karo term of endearment that gives the film its name forms the refrain in the haunting songs that Tipi and the villagers sing throughout the film, as they express their kinship and solidarity.

Turang (1957) won four awards at the Indonesian Film Festival in 1960, including Best Film. A vital part of Indonesia's film heritage, it was for many years believed to be lost. The version showing at Painting with Light was digitised from nitrate materials recently found at Gosfilmofond, the state film archive of Russia. It was first screened in 2024 at Seberaya village, where the film was shot. In 2025, *Turang* was part of the 54th International Film Festival Rotterdam's programme commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Bandung Conference.



Bachtiar Siagian (b. 1923, Indonesia; d. 2002, Indonesia) was a member of the Institute of People's Culture (Lekra), a leftist cultural institution in Indonesia that existed from 1950 until 1965. He wrote and directed 13 feature-length films from 1955 to 1965, and was active in the Afro-Asian film network that emerged after the historic 1955 Bandung Conference—a meeting of 29 Asian and African states, most of which were newly independent. Subsequently, the authoritarian *Orde Baru* (New Order) regime's anti-communist purges led to the loss of most of Bachtiar's films, and he was sentenced to prison without trial for 14 years.

The director's daughter, Bunga Siagian, will be in attendance for a post-screening dialogue. Bunga is an artist, researcher, and cultural producer. Her current research and practice explore Indonesian leftists' internationalism and political-cinematic commitments during the decolonisation era in the 1950s and 1960s.

VIDEOHEAVEN

By Alex Ross Perry

USA | In English | 2025 | 172 min 2 sec | R21 (Sexual Scenes)

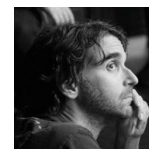
SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

Fri, 5 Sep | 8pm
The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium

For some forty years, from the late 1970s to the late 2010s, video stores were ubiquitous, vital spaces that shaped film culture, and re-defined the way we interacted with movies and each other. Today, video stores as physical spaces exist mainly in the past. For many, the only way to visit them now is through their onscreen depictions, commonly found in American films and television shows between the mid-1980s and the early 2010s. Alex Ross Perry retraces this history by thoughtfully piecing together footage of video stores from over a hundred titles—ranging from Hollywood blockbusters to low-budget B movies to arthouse films to television sitcoms—making *Videoheaven* one of the most comprehensive surveys of this subject, expressed in the language of the medium itself.

The film is inspired by Daniel Herbert's book, *VideoLand: Movie Culture at the American Video Store* (2014). More precisely, the idea for *Videoheaven* came from Perry's discussions with Herbert about making a documentary that expands on his unpublished writing about depictions of video stores onscreen. Structured in seven parts, the first half of the film reflects Herbert's approach as an academic, and presents a largely empirical history of the industry. The viewer is introduced to how the earliest video stores flourished as one-of-a-kind, independent establishments in the 1980s with their idiosyncratic selections, but were overtaken by corporate retail chains with mass-market, family-friendly collections in the 1990s. The arrival of DVD at the end of that decade is seen to shift the business to general retail stores like Walmart, before streaming services wiped out video rental or sales in the early 2010s.

The second half of the film strikes a more contemplative note as Perry, after a decade of studying the footage, offers his observations about why people eventually turned their backs on video stores, even when they were such a part of daily life. He attributes it to changing technology, but also examines the role of Hollywood in laying the groundwork for their disappearance. A labour of love ten years in the making, this essay film in which Maya Hawke narrates the story of an industry's meteoric rise and fall, is a visual record of an important chapter in cinema and American society, and a must watch for the avid cinephile.



Alex Ross Perry (b. 1984, USA) is an independent filmmaker who has written and directed a series of feature films that centre on unconventional characters. He is most known for *Listen Up Philip*, which premiered at the 30th Sundance Film Festival (2014), and later won the Special Jury Prize at the 67th Locarno Film Festival (2014), as well as *Her Smell* (2018), which premiered at the 43rd Toronto International Film Festival and screened at the 56th New York Film Festival in the same year. He also wrote the screenplay of Disney's *Christopher Robin* (2018), and his multi-genre hybrid film, *Pavements* (2024), premiered at the 81st Venice International Film Festival (2024).



ARTIST FILMS

Presenting films made by artists, this year includes an emphasis on early documentaries by Southeast Asian practitioners and a full-length movie independently made during the Marcos regime in the Philippines. National Gallery Singapore commissioned the digital restoration of two artists' films on 16mm, Virgilio "Pandy" Aviado's *1978 Footages* and Briccio Santos' *Damortis*, which will have their world premieres at Painting with Light.

With special thanks to Jeffrey Sonora, Marti Magsanoc, Manit Sriwanichpoom and David Hanan

To Perceive Things in New Patterns: 1960s-1970s Documentary Films by Southeast Asian Artists

By Clarissa Chikiamco

¹ These films by Southeast Asian artists deserve to be more fully explored within the history of Southeast Asian independent cinema. They may have anticipated or moved in parallel to it. Many of these films by artists have been overlooked by film history, partly because they are difficult to access or may be lost and partly due to the division of art history and film history as different disciplines. It is also important to locate these films by Southeast Asian artists as part of a global movement in artists' interest in working with the moving image, expanding their arsenal of mediums in the post-war period.

² See the author's previously co-written essay on experimental animation in the region. Clarissa Chikiamco and Cheng Jia Yun, "Insight, Incite, Inside: Impulses on Experimental Animation in Southeast Asia," *Painting with Light: Festival of International Films on Art*, 1-24 July 2022 (Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2022), 60-65. https://issuu.com/nationalgallerysingapore/docs/pwl2022_festival_booklet

³ Imelda Cajipe-Endaya, "Limbag Kamay: Postwar to Present," in Santiago Albano Pilar and Imelda Cajipe Endaya, *Limbag Kamay: 400 Years of Philippine Printmaking* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1993), 34.

⁴ Nick Deocampo, *Short Film: Emergence of a New Philippine Cinema* (Manila: Communication Foundation for Asia, 1985), 17.

⁵ Virgilio Aviado, personal interview with the author, online, 29 May 2025.

⁶ Aviado, personal interview, 29 May 2025.

This year's *Painting with Light* presents an anthology of early documentaries by Southeast Asian artists. These four short films, all originally on 16mm and spanning a decade from 1969 to 1979, provide a tincture of how artists in the region used the film camera to capture the world and the realities around them. While not aiming to be a comprehensive presentation, they still exhibit a wide range of subjects, reflecting the diversity of artists' interests as they probed this new tool.

I venture that it was in the 1960s and the 1970s when Southeast Asian artists—and by this I mean those practicing specifically in the visual arts and engaging in the traditional mediums of drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking—gathered momentum to experiment with what to them was the new medium of the moving image¹. They approached this visual medium with curiosity and excitement. They created films outside the mainstream, meaning making films which were not a part of commercial cinema or films produced for mass consumption and profit. Some artists naturally leaned towards animation, given that the basis for this genre of film was drawing, an already familiar medium². A few of the same artists, and other artists too, became enticed by making documentary films. Not merely shooting what was convenient, these artists keenly observed the subjects that drew their attention and mediated the recording of these images.

A Spirit of Discovery

Among them is Virgilio "Pandy" Aviado (b. 1944, Philippines), who started making films in the late 1960s. These 8mm short experimental films, unfortunately unlocatable, spanned documentary, animation, and roughly scripted scenarios. At that time, Aviado had already started making a name for himself as a leading young printmaker in the Philippines, having won printmaking competitions and training under Manuel Rodriguez, Sr, an established figure in the medium.³ He saw analogies between printmaking and filmmaking, leading him to experiment with the moving image composed of film prints which were variations of still images. His filmmaking took a hiatus when he furthered his practice in the graphic arts in Europe for several years. In 1977, he returned to the Philippines and struck a friendship and creative partnership with Michael "Mike" Parsons (1933-2013), who, like Aviado, was a pioneer of Philippine experimental filmmaking.⁴ Together, they founded the Monastery, an art facility in Baguio, a highland city and creative enclave north of Manila.

In 1978, Aviado explored filmmaking anew with Parsons' Scoopic 16mm camera, freshly purchased from Japan.⁵ The resulting film, retroactively titled *1978 Footages* by Aviado, reflects the free-spirited nature in which artists like him explored this medium of the moving image. He filmed Parsons in their studio in Baguio and captured their carefree trip to a Visayan island. He shot their printmaking facility where they also embarked on paper-making. Aviado tested changing the camera's frame rate, creating fast-motion excerpts in contrast to the languid atmosphere of their beach holiday. He tried dissolving effects and stop motion using slippers on the sand. He composed vignettes, drawing attention to flora and fauna, as well as to his new collaborator, Parsons. Captivatingly, he heralded the onset of the newer technology of video using a scene of hermit crabs crawling on a tree stump. Aviado noted he used a video camera, also Parsons', to record parts of the 16mm film projected on a wall. He played the resulting video on a television set, which he then shot again on film and this was spliced together with the original footage.⁶ The film shifts in and out of the sharp filmic image to the more subdued video image on the cathode-ray tube television, interrupted by the interference of the scanning lines which compose the electronic picture.

⁷ Their partnership ended in 1990 partly due to an earthquake and partly because Aviado became dean of Philippine Women's University. This work entailed him to be based in Manila. Aviado, personal interview, 29 May 2025.

⁸ Aviado, personal interview, 29 May 2025.

⁹ Banchong Kosalwat, personal interview with the author, Uthai Thani, 26 October 2024. With thanks to Mani Sriwanichpoom for arranging this interview.

¹⁰ Kosalwat, personal interview, 26 October 2024.

¹¹ Kosalwat, personal interview, 26 October 2024.



Michael Parsons in a still from Virgilio Aviado's 1978 Footages.

The film is silent, given that it was too complicated for Aviado to shoot synced sound at that time.⁷ As with his earlier films which also had no sound, Aviado likes playing music in a separate device alongside the projection, finding uncanny harmonization in the sound hinging with the image. For this screening, he has chosen British composer Gustav Holst's epic *The Planets, Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity* to accompany his film. The selection, with its buoyant and majestic atmosphere, emphasises the optimistic and exploratory nature of Aviado's filmmaking practice and the budding partnership he had with Parsons at that time. While Aviado has modestly described the process of creating this film as "fooling around,"⁸ *1978 Footages* reflects his spirit of discovery, providing an adventurous picture of his personal and creative realities—of friendship, techniques and mediums coming together in new sites of inspiration.

To Present Subjects in New Ways

Banchong Kosalwat (b. 1943, Thailand), now recognized as a Thai National Artist for Performing Arts (Film), started as a visual artist. The son of painter Kid Kosalwat, he initially followed in his father's footsteps and studied art at Silpakorn University. From depicting fishing villages, he became attracted to modern art and developed into an abstract painter. He went to New York in 1967 under a Rockefeller grant, training at the Art Students' League and with the intention to pursue the graphic arts at the Pratt Institute.⁹

Yet, while in New York, he became exposed to experimental film and regularly watched free films at the Museum of Modern Art. Kosalwat recounted the experience of himself as a shy, young boy from Bangkok watching a film in the dark and being shocked by a scene showing male masturbation. "It blew out my mind," he recalled.¹⁰ Whether it was the provocative subject matter, the breaking of social norms or the explicit display of vulnerability, it was nevertheless an awakening. Convinced of the power of filmmaking, Kosalwat bought his own Bolex and purchased 16mm reversal film sold cheaply by advertising companies in New York which were likely trying to get rid of excess film brought for shoots.¹¹ Kosalwat's first film, *Eye* (1969), focused on the human organ of perception and is likely the first

¹² Phanu Aree, "Experimental Film in Thailand," *Bangkok International Art Film Festival 1997* (s.n.: s.n., c. 1997), np. With thanks to the Thai Film Archive and Chalida Uabumrungjit. Note that Phanu Aree dates *Eye* to 1967 in his essay. Kosalwat provided the date of 1969 when the author interviewed him on 26 October 2024.

¹³ Kosalwat, personal interview, 26 October 2024. Unfortunately, all of these films, including *Eye*, are unlocatable as of current research.

¹⁴ Stephanie Krebs, "When Film is Art," *Bangkok World* (?), c. early 1970s. This article, which is kept in Banchong Kosalwat's personal archive, was kindly supplied by Kosalwat to the author and discusses Kosalwat's early films and interest in filmmaking. Unfortunately, the identifying publication information was not kept with the clipping. The article is written at the time Kosalwat returned to Thailand after his studies in New York and before he pursued his master's degree at Temple University so it would have been published in the early 1970s.

¹⁵ Kosalwat, personal interview, 26 October 2024.

¹⁶ Quoted in Krebs, "When Film is Art."

¹⁷ Kosalwat, personal interview, 26 October 2024.

¹⁸ This film is also lost or unlocatable as of current research.

experimental film of Thailand.¹² He followed this with *Gamma*, superimposing two modern dancers; *Vortex*, showing sexual intercourse; and *The Crossing*, of a man and woman meeting each other on a ferry at the Staten Island crossing.¹³ Shortly after, writer Stephanie Krebs wrote of Kosalwat as "a young painter who is also perhaps Thailand's only experimental documentary filmmaker."¹⁴

While in the US, Kosalwat managed to switch his studies to filmmaking, taking classes at Millennium Film Institute and New York University. He also later received another Rockefeller grant to study his master's degree in film at Temple University, Philadelphia, which is particularly known for documentary filmmaking. He abandoned art and felt that painting had already reached its culmination in abstraction while film still had the same qualities as painting but had additional complexity which challenged him.¹⁵ He said at that time, "Perhaps the only difference between film and painting is that film is more complicated: to the qualities of color, emotion, rhythm, and movement that exist in painting, film adds the dimension of time."¹⁶

Kosalwat channeled his zeal for the moving image to create *Pacer* (1976), a film on racehorses as part of Temple University's Advanced Documentary Film Class. He credits Temple for advancing his understanding of the conceptual aspect of filmmaking and he spent about a year at Liberty Bell Park Racetrack in Philadelphia to develop his film.¹⁷ For nearly the whole documentary, he juxtaposes the sound of faceless voices describing the life of the racehorse with images of the animal he deeply admires and respects. He demonstrates a clear empathy for racehorses, expressed through haunting close-ups of the animal's face, large eyes and strapped legs forced into the gait of pacing, presented in slow motion. The clamour of the gambling crowd and taunts of the chariot driver bearing a whip add inflections of human brutality. Although the documentary presents a story, Kosalwat does so through multiple unseen narrators who seem oblivious to his film's purpose and own point of view.



Banchong Kosalwat making *Pacer*.

Kosalwat developed another documentary, *Navajo*, on American Indians while at Temple University.¹⁸ In Thailand, he went on to direct several feature films while professionalizing the teaching of filmmaking at Thammasat University. Unfortunately, his early films from the late 1960s, which were unique copies, are unlocatable. Yet, it seems salient to recall his impetus into film was decidedly due to the power that an experimental treatment promised. As Krebs noted in her article, "According to

¹⁹ Krebs, "When Film is Art."

²⁰ For more on this, see Dylan M. Fagan, "The Excentric Film Project of Gotot Prakosa," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 2021, Vol. 177, No. 1 (2021), 97. [jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26988874](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26988874)

²¹ David Hanan, "Gotot Prakosa, and Independent Indonesian Cinema," *Cantrills Filmnotes*, 63-4, December 1990, 23. Fagan, "The Excentric Film Project of Gotot Prakosa," 95, 97.

²² These films and more were featured in Painting with Light's Field Experiments programme in 2022 which focused on experimental animation of Southeast Asia. See https://issuu.com/nationalgallerysingapore/docs/pwl2022_festival_booklet

²³ David Hanan, *Cultural Specificity in Indonesian Film: Diversity in Unity* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 2017), 160, 165.

²⁴ Quoted in Hanan, *Cultural Specificity in Indonesian Film*, 163.

²⁵ Quoted in Arthur and Corinne Cantrill, "Interview with Gotot Prakosa," *Cantrills Filmnotes*, 63-4, December 1990, 27.

²⁶ Quoted in Cantrill, "Interview with Gotot Prakosa," 27, 30.

Banchong, experimental films can help change the way film is regarded in Thailand, because experimental films present subjects in new ways, shake people up, wake them up, and challenge them to perceive things in new patterns."¹⁹

A Process of Poeticization

Gotot Prakosa (b. 1955, Indonesia; d. 2015, Indonesia) likewise took this experimental approach for his films in Indonesia, which he called *film pinggiran* (film of the edges).²⁰ Trained in painting at the Sekolah Seni Rupa Indonesia (Indonesian School of Fine Art) in Yogyakarta, Prakosa began painting on recycled film while studying at the Department of Cinematography at the Institut Kesenian Jakarta (Jakarta Art Institute).²¹ He made several stunning animated films, both abstract and figurative, such as *Impulse* (1977), *Meta Meta* (1978) and *Non-KB (A Film on Family Planning)* (1979). Yet, his most mesmerizing film may be the documentary *Meta Ekologi* (1979),²² which the Indonesian film historian David Hanan positions as on par with the leading global avant-garde short films, such as those by Luis Buñuel and Maya Deren.²³

The film documents a group performance choreographed by Sardono Kusumo, the internationally renowned Javanese dancer, who aimed "to create an awareness of earth and water and to emphasize the importance of the interdependence of human and natural ecologies."²⁴ It took place, as Prakosa described, in "a mud pool in a slum district of Jakarta, with the local people watching the performers who become entirely covered with mud."²⁵ Several men writhe and swim in this thick mix of soil and water. They become entangled with each other. They move in different directions but also come across as an organic unit. Prakosa said of *Meta Ekologi*, "It's a response to an attempt to enter into dialogue with the ecology of earth and water—humanity expressing its feelings through the body by trying to become one with the universe. It has references to farming peasants, working on the land and covered with mud."²⁶



Still from Gotot Prokosa's *Meta Ekologi*.

²⁷ Fagan, "The Excentric Film Project of Gotot Prakosa," 108.

²⁸ Quoted in Cantrill, "Interview with Gotot Prakosa," 30.

²⁹ Their names and respective roles appear in the opening credits of the film. No single person was named as the director.

³⁰ Eric Torres, "Artistic Motives," *The Manila Times*, 4 November 1967, 6-A. Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Archives digitized scrapbook ART XX, 117. Courtesy of Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc.

³¹ Alfred A. Yuson and Cid Reyes, *Bencab* (Philippines: Mantes Pub., 2002), 278. "A Photographic Portfolio," Philippines Free Press, 18 November 1967, 60. Purita Kalaw-Ledesma Archives digitized scrapbook ART XX, 138. Courtesy of Kalaw-Ledesma Foundation, Inc. "National Artist," Bencab Museum, <https://www.bencabmuseum.org/national-artist/> Accessed 5 July 2024.

³² He invited Aviado to show his films from the late 1960s in the Ateneo Art Gallery and defended him when other teachers at Ateneo de Manila University did not take his films seriously. He also exposed students from the Ateneo Arts Club to non-mainstream films. Virgilio Aviado, personal interview with the author, Manila, 18 February 2020.

Although the performance is Kusumo's artistic endeavour, Prakosa made it his own with his film. He cleverly chose to shoot in black-and-white because without the differences in colour, the performers more strongly appear like a cohesive organism immersed in the earth. It also made for higher contrast when Kusumo performs by himself in all white, distinct from the mud-soaked unit. Prakosa also elected jungle sounds of animals, adding to the primordial effect of the scenes. He combined several different angles and fast-tracked parts of the event that carried on into the evening after establishing the initial essence of the performance. Prakosa, who believed in film as a form of expression rather than simple storytelling,²⁷ remarked of the film, "It's a process of poeticization."²⁸

Its Substance and Shadow

Poetic would also describe the elegiac documentary on funeral rituals in Navotas, a Philippine fishing town. *Recuerdo of Two Sundays and Two Roads that Lead to the Sea* (1969) is a collaboration between Dolores "Bibsy" Carballo (b. 1941, Philippines; d. 2016, Philippines), credited for film editing and production; Romeo "Romy" Vitug (b. 1937, Philippines; d. 2024, Philippines), recognized for photography; and Emmanuel "Eric" Torres (b. 1932, Philippines; d. 2021), acknowledged for writing the script.²⁹ Vitug, who worked as a photojournalist and cinematographer, was part of the Philippine representation to the Paris Biennale in 1969. He was among the first in the Philippines to show photography as art with a solo exhibition at Gallery Indigo in Manila in 1967.³⁰ While Carballo herself was not a visual artist, she co-founded Gallery Indigo in 1966 with artists Benedict and Salvador Cabrera and friend Francisco Navarro.³¹ Torres, a poet and art critic, was also the first curator of the Ateneo Art Gallery, the Philippine modern art museum founded in 1960. He was a supporter of experimental film.³²



Still from *Recuerdo of Two Sundays and Two Roads that Lead to the Sea*.

³³ Nick Deocampo, *Alternative Cinema: The Unchronicled History of Alternative Cinema in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2022), 689. The author would also like to thank Deocampo for telling her about this documentary film.

³⁴ Deocampo, *Alternative Cinema*, 689.

³⁵ For example, Philippine sculptor Abdulmari Imao studied film production at Columbia University in New York in the 1960s and directed *The Columbia University Campus and The Search*, described as semi-documentaries. These films are currently unlocatable. Pablo J. Victoria, "A Young Muslim in the Field of Sculpture," *In the Grade School*, March 1967, np. With thanks to Patrick Flores.

³⁶ Erika Balsom and Hila Peleg, "Introduction: The Documentary Attitude," in Erika Balsom and Hila Peleg, eds., *Documentary Across Disciplines* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 18.

In *Recuerdo*, a voice-over narrator pensively recounts the customs of death for these local townspeople, accompanied by a haunting melancholic score by Michael A. Dadap. The locals of Navotas, being one of the major fish ports in the region, live and die by the sea. Their livelihoods are tied to fishing and, with their town cemetery located right by the ocean, being buried there is foreordained. Whether being persons of humble means or of great wealth, they must reckon with the inevitable ending. *Recuerdo* highlights the intense connection shared between human beings and the rituals that provide comfort to those left behind.

Philippine film historian Nick Deocampo noted Carballo and Vitug collaborated to utilize tail-end negatives, gathered from the darkroom after studio shootings, to shoot "films that they wanted to make and not dictated by the studio."³³ Carballo and Vitug went on to make other documentaries such as *Plaza Miranda Bombing* (1971) and *The Rites of Summer: Lent in the Philippines* (1970).³⁴

Through Artists' Eyes: Documentary as Attitude

These four films provide an entry point into further examining early documentaries made by Southeast Asian artists. These artists endured financial, logistic and material challenges to bravely testify to aspects of the realities of their time. Many of these early films need to be recovered and are regrettably only known now through textual descriptions and recollections.³⁵ While the world grapples with AI and deepfakes in the current digital age, studying the documentary stimulus—of this need to re-present the real—of these pioneering artist-filmmakers provides a historical context that would hopefully inspire contemporary practitioners to appreciate and persevere in the genre. Erika Balsom and Hila Peleg wrote in the introduction of their edited anthology *Documentary Across Disciplines*, "documentary emerges as an attitude—a way of doing, engaging, and creating that accords primacy to the multiple and mutable realities of our world."³⁶ May this documentary attitude long live on.

THROUGH ARTISTS' EYES: SOUTHEAST ASIAN DOCUMENTARIES

Sat, 13 Sep | 8pm | The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium



1978 FOOTAGES

By Virgilio "Pandy" Aviado

This film captures the friendship, collaboration and shared adventurous spirit between two pioneers in Philippine experimental filmmaking. After returning from Europe in 1977, Virgilio Aviado's vision found a crucial collaborator in veteran actor and producer Michael "Mike" Parsons. Their partnership led to "The Monastery," an art workshop in Baguio, which soon became a crucible for their joint creative endeavours. Significant arrivals from Japan—an etching press and a brand new 16mm SLR Canon Scoopic—further solidified their multimedia aspirations.

Early test footage from the Canon Scoopic reveals intimate moments at their Baguio studio and Parsons' playful spontaneity, alongside footage from their trip to a Visayas island. What truly stands out is Aviado's

Philippines | Silent | 1978 | 14 min 20 sec | Colour
16mm transferred to 4K digital video | PG

WORLD PREMIERE

audacious experimentation: he manipulated frame rates, executed dissolves and stop motion, crafted intricate vignettes, and pioneered film-to-video transfers and back to film. The 1978 footages are a powerful testament to the free-spirited artistic inquiry that characterized early Philippine experimental cinema.

It is currently the sole known remaining photochemical film by Aviado, solidifying his legacy as a pioneer of Philippine experimental filmmaking. Recognizing its historical and artistic value, the National Gallery Singapore commissioned the 4K digital restoration of this newfound film. L'Imagine Ritrovata carried out the restoration while respecting the artist's wishes to reflect the age of the film.

This silent film will be accompanied by music selected by the artist.
The artist will also be in attendance for a post-screening dialogue.



Virgilio "Pandy" Aviado (b. 1944, Philippines) is a senior visual artist from the Philippines with European printmaking training and a keen interest in film. He championed the intrinsic connection between printmaking and filmmaking within the visual arts. He participated in the inaugural Thirteen Artists exhibition at the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 1970, which developed into a prestigious recognition for emerging artists. He and his collaborator, Michael Parsons, were honoured at the 1984 Manila Short Film Festival for their groundbreaking efforts in creating films beyond the mainstream.

This programme screens four early documentaries by Southeast Asian artists made from 1969 to 1979. Their subjects range widely from personal collaborations to the life of racehorses to a group dance performance to death customs in a small fishing town. *Through Artists' Eyes* is a testament to the artists' visions and the diverse ways they cast their film camera on the world around them.



PACER

By Banchong Kosalwat

Banchong Kosalwat, a pioneer of Thai experimental film, created this empathetic documentary on racehorses while he was based in the United States. He presents a racehorse's life from birth to death. Various oral interviews of those involved in the racing industry are combined with footage of horses forced to comply with their cruel fate. *Pacer*, titled

Thailand | Sound | 1976 | 21 min 52 sec |
Black-and-white 16mm film transferred to
digital video | PG

after horses' man-made gait of pacing, appeals for compassion, asking for more than a utilitarian relationship to animals for entertainment and greed.

Kosalwat shot this film while pursuing his master's degree at Temple University, known for its focus on documentary filmmaking.



Banchong Kosalwat (b. 1943, Thailand) began as a painter and printmaker, studying fine arts at Silpakorn University, Bangkok. While furthering his studies in art in New York City in the late 1960s, Kosalwat became captivated by film and took up avant-garde and experimental cinema at the Millennium Film Workshop and cinematography classes at New York University. He later graduated with an MFA in Radio, Television, Film from Temple University supported by a Rockefeller grant. He taught filmmaking at Thammasat University's Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication. While a pioneer of Thai experimental films, Kosalwat has also created several feature films. In 2023, he was awarded National Artist in Performing Arts (Film) by the Thai Ministry of Culture.



META EKOLOGI (META ECOLOGY)

By Gotot Prakosa

In this mesmerizing film, Gotot Prakosa captures a performance of human bodies melding with the earth. Internationally renowned Javanese dancer Sardono Kusumo choreographed the performance with the aim of creating "an awareness of earth and water and to emphasize the importance of the interdependence of human and natural ecologies." Prakosa, then a teacher at the Jakarta Institute of Arts, filmed the event at the Taman Ismail Marzuki in Jakarta, Indonesia, and edited it to create his own hypnotic sequence. Prakosa called it "a process of poeticisation."

This film had its Singapore premiere at National Gallery Singapore in 2022.



Gotot Prakosa (b. 1955, Indonesia; d. 2015, Indonesia) was a painter, filmmaker and author. For much of his adult life, he was based in Jakarta, where from 2008 to 2012 he was Dean of the Faculty of Film and Television at the Jakarta Institute of the Arts. Gotot's work is noted for its sensitivity, light-heartedness, perceptiveness, and often irreverent humour, making him a completely original, yet unpretentious talent. In addition to his numerous minimalist short films and books on experimental filmmaking, Gotot worked on innovative projects with other Indonesian artists, such as performance artist Sardono W. Kusumo and writer-director, Eros Djarot.

Indonesia | Sound | 1979 | 15 min 38 sec | Black-and-white 16mm film transferred to digital video | PG



RECUERDO OF TWO SUNDAYS AND TWO ROADS THAT LEAD TO THE SEA

By Dolores "Bibsy" Carballo, Emmanuel "Eric" Torres and Romeo "Romy" Vitug

This wistful documentary focuses on funeral rituals in Navotas, a fishing town in the Philippines which has one of the largest fish ports in Southeast Asia. Bibsy Carballo, Romeo Vitug and Eric Torres portray the disappearing customs and how life goes on while mourning the deceased. Although it centres around death, *Recuerdo de Two Sundays and Two Roads that Lead to the Sea* expresses the connections between the living in this elegiac short.



Photo credit: Winnie Ferrer

Dolores "Bibsy" Carballo (b. 1941, Philippines; d. 2016, Philippines) was a teacher, journalist, entertainment columnist and film producer. In 1966, she cofounded Gallery Indigo with Ben Cabrera, Salvador Cabrera and Francisco Navarro, promoting photography as an art form. She also produced *Himala* (1982), a film by Ishmael Bernal that is now recognised as a classic of Philippine cinema.

Philippines | Sound | 1969 | 16 min 45 sec | Black-and-white 16mm film transferred to digital video | PG

SINGAPORE PREMIERE



Photo credit: Ateneo de Manila University Archives

Emmanuel "Eric" Torres (b. 1932, Philippines; d. 2021, Philippines) was a poet, teacher, art critic and curator of the Ateneo Art Gallery, the first museum of Philippine modern art, from its beginning in 1960 until his retirement in 2002. He served as commissioner-general of the Philippines' first pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1964, showing works by Jose Joya and Napoleon Abueva. As a critic, Torres wrote abundantly, publishing articles in different periodicals and authoring important books on Philippine art.



Photo credit: Wig Tysmans

Romeo "Romy" Vitug (b. 1937, Philippines; d. 2024, Philippines) was a photojournalist and cinematographer. He represented the Philippines in the Paris Biennale in 1969 with his photography work. Cinemanila International Film Fest recognised him with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000 and the Metro Manila Film Festival instated him into their Hall of Fame for best cinematography in 2019.

DAMORTIS

By Briccio Santos

Philippines | In Filipino, with English subtitles | 1986
| 98 min 18 sec | Colour 16mm film digitally restored |
M18 (Sexual Violence and Sexual Scenes)

WORLD PREMIERE

Fri, 12 Sep | 8pm
Sat, 13 Sep | 2pm
The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium

A haunting meditation on faith, power and the human cost of divinity, *Damortis*, originally shot on 16mm film, is a landmark of Philippine independent cinema.

In the remote northern Philippine town of Damortis, Miguel, a former seminarian, stumbles upon a mysterious gift—he can heal. Together with his wife, Anna, he establishes a profitable faith-healing practice. As crowds grow and offerings pour in, the couple's fortunes rise. But as their influence grows, so do the trappings of success.

Lando, Miguel's childhood friend whom he has taken under his wing, inherits Miguel's healing powers and quickly eclipses him in both ability and charisma. Caught between grief and disillusionment, Anna watches the world unravel to a climax.

Damortis weaves together religious symbolism, intense ritual imagery, and psychological tension. With striking use of colour and a hypnotic narrative rhythm, the film explores themes of faith, power, and moral collapse. The film is both an atmospheric cautionary tale and a critique of how spiritual authority can be corrupted by human desire.

Featuring performances by actress Madelaine Nicolas, painter Lito Carating and installation artist Roberto Villanueva, Santos shot the film in 1982 with borrowed equipment and the participation of the local townspeople. *Damortis* screened at a few venues in Manila and abroad, including the Mannheim International Film Festival in Germany (1987) and the Asian-American Film Festival in New York, United States (1988).

In 2025, National Gallery Singapore commissioned the 2K digital restoration of the film, carried out by L'Immagine Ritrovata.



The director Briccio Santos will be in attendance for a post-screening dialogue on both 12 and 13 Sep.



Briccio Santos (b. 1949, Philippines) is a multidisciplinary creative practitioner—filmmaker, painter, sculptor, photographer, and writer—and a pioneering voice in Philippine independent cinema. He directed his first full-length feature, *Manikang Papel*, in 1977 and went on to direct several other films, including *Damortis* (1986). Casa Asia honoured his work in 2018 through a retrospective of his films in Madrid, Spain.

As Chair of the Film Development Council of the Philippines (2010–2016), Santos led national efforts in film preservation and was instrumental in establishing the Philippine Film Archive. In recognition of his cultural contributions, he was honoured with the title of Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur (France, 2013) and the Ordine della Stella d'Italia (Italy, 2016).

He is represented in the Singapore Art Museum collection with his sculptural installation *Heritage Tunnel* (2011).

EXHIBITION READINGS

Exhibition Readings presents film programmes organised in conjunction with exhibitions at the Gallery. The two exhibitions featured this year are *Fernando Zóbel: Order is Essential* and *Singapore Stories: Pathways and Detours in Art*.



LA CAZA (THE HUNT)

By Carlos Saura

Spain | In Spanish, with English subtitles | 1966 |
83 min 34 sec | PG (Some Violence)

Mon, 8 Sep | 8pm
The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium

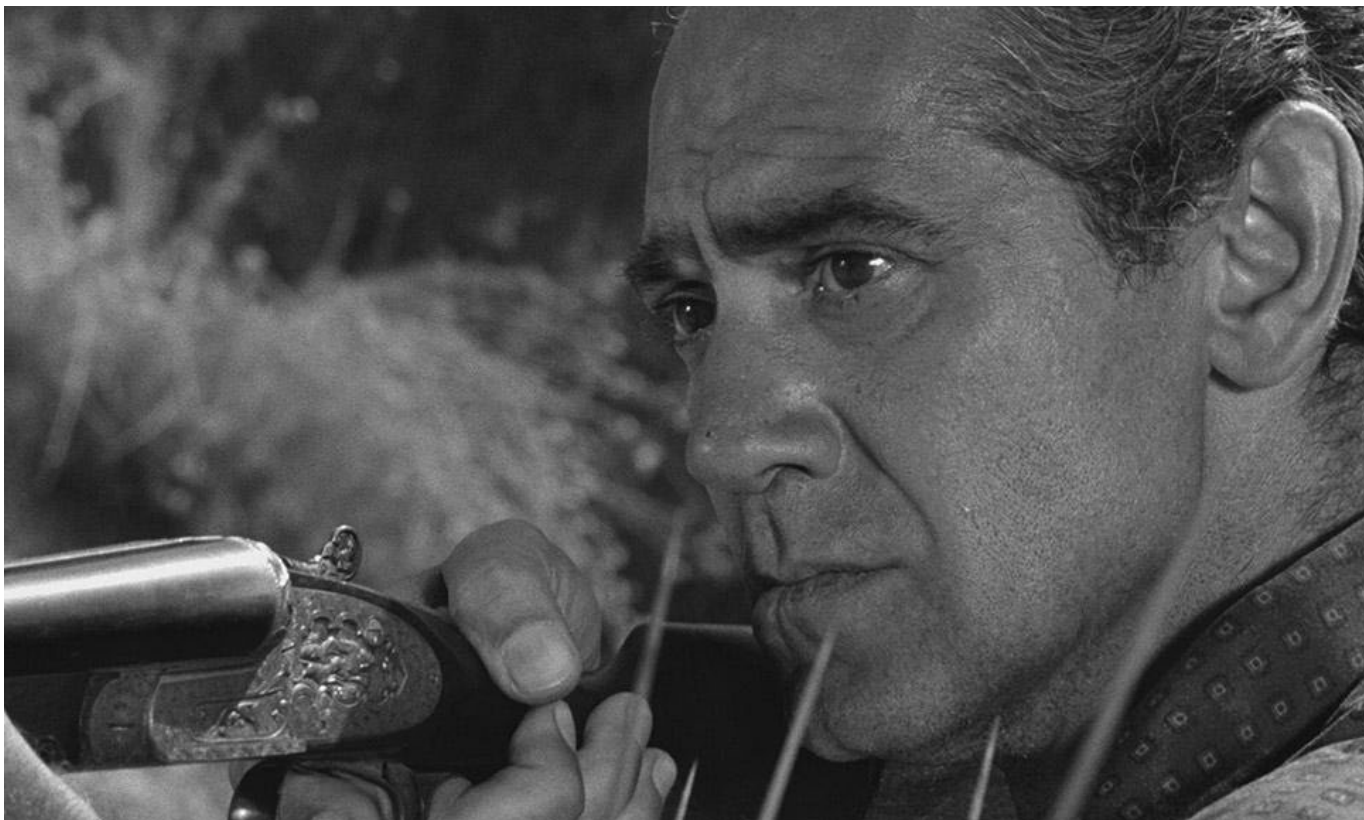
Simmering tension underpins this film of men on a rabbit hunt. This film by acclaimed Spanish filmmaker Carlos Saura was his first international breakthrough.

In *La Caza*, three men prey upon rabbits during a hot day. The heat, guns, adrenaline, veiled memories and underlying grudges densely accumulate to create a strained atmosphere. Confrontation seems inevitable.

La Caza is a political allegory of Franco-era Spain with its tense ambiance on the brink of explosion. The film won the Silver Bear for Best Director at the Berlinale in 1967, catapulting Saura into global fame.

La Caza, together with Saura's *Peppermint Frappé*, is programmed in response to the Gallery's exhibition *Fernando Zóbel: Order is Essential*. Carlos Saura is featured in the Zóbel exhibition with his first film, *Cuenca* (1958), a documentary on the Spanish town where Zóbel lived and established the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español with his collection. *Peppermint Frappé* includes a scene shot at this museum.

Complement the film experience with a free curator tour of the Gallery's *Fernando Zóbel* exhibition held at 7pm before the screening. The tour is available on a first come, first served basis with registration. To register, please visit the corresponding film listing page at nationalgallery.sg/paintingwithlight.



Carlos Saura (1932-2023, Spain) has won many international awards and is among the most well-known filmmakers of Spain. He studied at the Instituto de Investigaciones y Experiencias Cinematográficas in Madrid and was encouraged to study film by his brother, the artist Antonio Saura. He debuted with the documentary *Cuenca* (1958) which was influenced by his mentor Luis Buñuel.

In 1960, Saura directed *Los golfos*, clearly influenced by neorealism, and surprised with *La Caza* (*The Hunt*, 1966), which established him internationally as a director of note. During the 1980s, he filmed the popular Flamenco trilogy *Bodas de sangre*, *Carmen* and *El amor brujo*.

PEPPERMINT FRAPPÉ

By Carlos Saura

Spain | In Spanish, with English subtitles | 1967 |
89 min 54 sec | PG13 (Some Drug References)

Thu, 11 Sep | 8pm
The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium

Winning the Silver Bear for Best Direction at Berlinale in 1968 for this film, Carlos Saura directs this psychological thriller of infatuation and obsession.

Julian, a middle-aged single doctor, meets his childhood friend Pablo. The latter is back from Africa and has just married a beautiful young blonde, Elena. Julian falls in love with her and tries to seduce her, but she mockingly pushes him away. He then finds that Ana, his nurse, bears an uncanny resemblance to Elena. He gradually transforms the compliant Ana into the object of his desire.

Peppermint Frappé covertly alludes to Franco-era Spain with its atmosphere of repression which ultimately leads to violent acts. It is Saura's first colour feature-length film and his first collaboration with actress Geraldine Chaplin, who plays both the glamorous, confident Elena and the meek, submissive Ana.

Peppermint Frappé, together with Saura's arguably most well-known film *La Caza* (*The Hunt*), is programmed in response to the Gallery's exhibition *Fernando Zóbel: Order is Essential*. Carlos Saura is featured in the Zóbel exhibition with his first film, *Cuenca* (1958), a documentary on the Spanish town where Zóbel lived and established the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español with his collection. *Peppermint Frappé* includes a scene shot at this museum.

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Carlos Saura, *Cuenca*, 1958, film transferred to digital video, 39 min 5 sec, courtesy of Egeda Films. Saura's film is on display next to paintings of Rafael Canogar, left, and Gerardo Rueda, right. Installation view, *Fernando Zóbel: Order is Essential*.

AIR MATA DI KUALA LUMPUR (TEARS IN KUALA LUMPUR)

By Ridhwan Saidi

Malaysia | In Malay, Cantonese, Mandarin and English,
with English subtitles | 2025 | 94 min 59 sec | M18 (Nudity)

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

Sat, 6 Sep | 2pm
The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium

"Air mata di Kuala Lumpur" was the last song written by P. Ramlee, the renowned actor, director, singer and composer who made over 60 films in Singapore and Malaysia from the 1950s to the 1970s. He had intended this song for a film with the same title, but passed away before the film was made. It would have been the Malay star's first colour film.

By choosing to name his film after P. Ramlee's unfinished one, Ridhwan Saidi gestures to an absence, but also seeks to redeem what could have been with a vision of what is. In Saidi's film, present-day Kuala Lumpur is an ever-evolving city with inhabitants who find meaning in artistic endeavour, while caught up between loss and longing. In the soundtrack and mise-en-scene, fragments from P. Ramlee's body of work punctuate this homage to his enduring legacy.

The narrative centres on two women. Tze, a car workshop owner grappling with the disappearance of her husband, seeks solace in a performance workshop. Jay, a photographer preparing for an exhibition, converses with strangers in the city to escape from the familiar. As their paths converge, they find a serendipitous connection that changes their personal trajectories.



Ridhwan Saidi (b. 1984, Malaysia) is a filmmaker, writer and theatre maker who explores interdisciplinary experiments and lyrical intimacy in his works. In his 2020 debut feature, *No Love for the Young* (*Tiada cinta selama muda*), he blends body movements, documentary footage and poetry, creating a peculiar audiovisual experience. The film was selected for competition at the 31st Singapore International Film Festival (2020). *Tears in Kuala Lumpur* is his second feature-length film, which had its world premiere at the 54th International Film Festival Rotterdam (2025), and its Asian premiere at the 27th Shanghai International Film Festival (2025).

This programme is conceived in conjunction with the exhibition, *Singapore Stories: Pathways and Detours in Art*, which presents a layered and ever-changing story of Singapore's art history. Newly revamped, this exhibition features excerpts from several films by P. Ramlee, like *Penarek becha* (1955), *Pendekar bujang lapok* (1959), and *Ibu mertua-ku* (1962). It also showcases a new commission—*Four Malay Stories Redux* (2025)—by Singapore artist Ming Wong. This redux version re-stages footage from Wong's 2005 work and excerpts from the P. Ramlee films that have inspired it, revealing the fissures between the "original" and the "remake."

Complement the film experience with a free curator tour of the *Singapore Stories* exhibition, Gallery 1, where the abovementioned works can be found. The tour is available on a first come, first served basis with registration. To register, please visit the corresponding film listing page at nationalgallery.sg/paintingwithlight.

The director Ridhwan Saidi, and co-producers Nurul Aizam and Tan Cher Kian, will be in attendance for a post-screening dialogue.

HOME TO HE(ART)

By Gözde Zehnder and Russel Zehnder

Singapore | In English and Mandarin, with English subtitles |
2025 | 66 min 1 sec | PG

WORLD PREMIERE

Sun, 7 Sep | 2pm
The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium

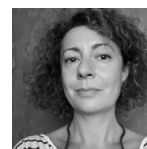
Home to He(art) offers a glimpse of how Singapore artist Chen Wen Hsi had lived and worked in his last place of residence at 5 Kingsmead Road, with a focus on the two murals he painted between 1959 to 1964. Entitled *Studio I* and *Studio II*, these abstract murals reflect the influence of Cubist art, but also exemplifies Chen's inclination to incorporate Nanyang subject matter into his compositions. As art historian Low Sze Wee points out, these works must have held personal significance, inscribed as they were in an intimate, domestic space Chen would encounter daily. Given that he made many of his works at home by drawing inspiration from the natural environment around him, the film also looks at the grounds of his estate, namely a garden adjacent to his studio where he kept a small menagerie of animals, including a gibbon that inspired his paintings on the subject. Besides archival footage, the film features first-hand accounts from his former neighbours, friends and students who had visited him at home, such as local artists Ho Chee Lick, Goh Beng Kwan, and Chua Soo Bin.

What the film also brings to light is the extraordinary dedication of those who committed themselves to the preservation of the historic murals. It presents behind-the-scenes documentation of this extended journey taken by conservators, architects and engineers, along with the current homeowner, passionate to do all they can to safeguard and share Chen's art with the world. The complex project involved extracting the mural wall, relocating it to a storage facility, before re-installing it back on site, fully restored. But the ambitious undertaking faced numerous challenges. It required painstaking preparations, extensive safety precautions to protect the structural integrity of the wall and dealing with disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The completed project, and film, testifies to a remarkable shared response to a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to contribute to the legacy of a pioneering figure in Singapore art history.

This programme is conceived in conjunction with the exhibition, *Singapore Stories: Pathways and Detours in Art*, which presents a layered and ever-changing story of Singapore's art history. Chen Wen Hsi's *Gibbons* (1977) is one of the featured artworks currently on display.

Complement the film experience with a free curator tour of the Gallery's *Singapore Stories* exhibition, Gallery 1, where the abovementioned works can be found. The tour is available on a first come, first served basis with registration. To register, please visit the corresponding film listing page at nationalgallery.sg/paintingwithlight.


The directors and project team will be in attendance for a post-screening dialogue.



Gözde Zehnder (b. 1973, Türkiye) is a Singapore filmmaker drawn to stories that live beneath the surface—quiet histories, personal memory, and forgotten spaces. Originally from Istanbul and now based in Singapore, her experimental and narrative shorts like *The Living Wall* (1997), *Happy Birthday Sharon* (2002) and *Daydream* (2002) received awards and screened at local and international festivals like the Videobrasil International Electronic Art Festival. Her transition into documentaries deepened her explorations into art, with several earning recognition for their sensitive storytelling and visual craft. With a wealth of production experience across film and television, she continues to explore the delicate balance between image and emotion, always guided by curiosity and intuition.



Russel Zehnder (b. 1970, Singapore) is a director and director of photography based in Singapore. He graduated with a degree in Media Studies and a minor in Photography from Edith Cowan University, and began his career by making short films, some of which received awards and recognition that led to the establishment of his production company, Freestate Productions, in 2000. Over the years, he has worked on both corporate and broadcast projects, earning awards for several documentaries produced for Channel News Asia. The work of creating documentaries has allowed him to travel and collaborate with people from diverse cultures—this has significantly enlarged his worldview. Consequently, he continues to find such projects rewarding and meaningful.

A photograph of a person with dark, curly hair seen from behind, looking out a window. The person's back is bare, and there are faint, reddish-orange marks on it. The window has a wooden frame and is partially covered by dark, textured curtains. The lighting is soft and natural, coming from the window.

SPECIAL FOCUS

This year's Special Focus programme celebrates the work of women filmmakers and artists who advocate for an ethics of care. Bold, innovative, and profoundly relevant, these films ask the question at the heart of artistic endeavour: What does it mean to be human?

ALL THE BEAUTY AND THE BLOODSHED

By Laura Poitras

USA | In English | 2022 | 121 min 54 sec | R21 (Nudity and Sexual Scene)

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

Sat, 6 Sep | 8pm
The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium

One of the most important and influential artists of her generation, Nan Goldin has revolutionised the art of photography through her honest and deeply personal portraiture. Since the 1970s, her work has explored notions of gender and definitions of normality. By documenting her life and the lives of the friends around her, Goldin gives a voice and visibility to her communities. The images of her "extended family" became the subject of her seminal slideshow and first book, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (1985). This work, along with *The Other Side*, *Sisters, Saints and Siblings*, and *Memory Lost*, as well as the legacy of her late sister Barbara, frames *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed*, Laura Poitras' moving portrait of Goldin's life, practice and activism.

Made in close collaboration with the artist, the documentary explores the inherently subversive quality of her art, seen especially in footage chronicling her responses to the HIV/AIDS and opioid crises. After her own ordeal with OxyContin addiction, Goldin founded P.A.I.N. (Prescription Addiction Intervention Now) in 2017. It is an organisation that advocates for harm reduction and overdose prevention, and seeks to hold the billionaire Sackler family accountable for manufacturing and marketing the highly addictive painkiller through their corporation Purdue Pharma. To call attention to their responsibility for the hundreds of thousands of deaths, all while being celebrated for their ample donations to the arts, P.A.I.N. staged several powerful actions at renowned museums that had accepted Sackler funds and named exhibition halls after them.

Poitras made this film under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, and took nearly two years to conduct a series of audio interviews with Goldin that often touched on very painful and intimate subjects—these would form the narrative backbone of her film. Weaving together stories from Goldin's childhood, rebellious adolescence, and immersion in New York City's thriving underground arts scene, *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed* captures a personal experience of historic moments. Most of all, it reveals the deep compassion of an artist compelled to end the stigmas carried by many marginalised communities.

All the Beauty and the Bloodshed won the Golden Lion for Best Film at the 79th Venice International Film Festival (2022).



Laura Poitras (b. 1964, USA) is an Academy award-winning filmmaker and journalist. *CITIZENFOUR*, the third film in her 9/11 *Trilogy*, won an Academy Award for Best Documentary, along with awards from the British Film Academy, Independent Spirit Awards, Directors Guild of America, German Filmpreis, and others. The first film of the trilogy, *My Country, My Country*, about the U.S. occupation of Iraq, was nominated for an Academy Award. The second film, *The Oath*, which focused on Guantanamo and the "war on terror," was nominated for two Emmy awards. She has received many other honours, including a MacArthur Fellowship and a Peabody Award. In 2016, the Whitney Museum of American Art opened her first solo exhibition, *Astro Noise*, a series of installations focusing on the "war on terror."

QUEEN'S PALACE

By Snow Hnin Ei Hlaing

Myanmar | In Burmese, with English subtitles | 2024 |
10 min 58 sec | NC16 (Some Mature Content)

ASIAN PREMIERE

Queen's Palace portrays the experiences of a group of women activists and artists from Myanmar who have sought temporary asylum at a shelter in Mae Sot, a border town in Thailand. Having been profoundly affected by the military coup and subsequent protests in 2021, they fled their homes for safety but now find themselves in unfamiliar territory, waiting for permission to make the journey to yet another country for refuge.

Filming with limited equipment, director Snow Hnin Ei Hlaing nonetheless manages to convey the complexity of the situation in which the women find themselves. Besides physical displacement, many struggle with psychological distress from intrusive memory flashbacks, survivor guilt, and a deep sense of abandonment. One woman asks, "What language should I speak so that the world hears us? I want to speak that language." She learns to sing a Ukrainian folk song, and in doing so, performs an act of calling for aid, by association.



Snow Hnin Ei Hlaing has been working as a freelance filmmaker since 2006, after completing her studies in Yangon Film School, Baden-Württemberg Film Academy, and Zurich University of the Arts. Her feature-length documentary, *Midwives*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival (2022), where it won the World Cinema Documentary Special Jury Award for Excellence in Vérité Filmmaking. The film went on to receive the Asian Competition Grand Prix at DMZ Docs, the Václav Havel Award at the One World Human Rights Film Festival, and was screened at over 40 festivals, including Hot Docs and IDFA. She is currently developing her second feature film through the "Caméra Libre" residency programme, created in partnership with the Centre National du Cinéma et de l'image animée (CNC) and *L'usage du Monde*, a residency at the Cité internationale des arts.

TIMESTAMP (STRICHKA CHASU)

By Kateryna Gornostai

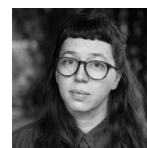
Ukraine, Luxembourg, Netherlands and France |
In Ukrainian, with English subtitles | 2025 |
125 min 22 sec | PG13 (Some Mature Content)

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

In battlefield medicine, a timestamp is used to record the time that a tourniquet is applied on a limb, and thereby alert medics to any prolonged use that would bring about permanent tissue damage. Quietly assertive, Kateryna Gornostai's *Timestamp* chronicles the state of learning in school classrooms across Ukraine today, as the country defends itself in war. Rather than focussing on the actual combat, this observational documentary follows its less visible impact on the daily lives of children and teachers at different educational levels—from kindergarten to high school—as they exist in a continuous state of emergency.

Shot in 2023 and 2024, the vignettes of school life presented in the film unfold to form a mosaic of a larger collective reality. The children and teachers appear to be unfazed by the challenges posed by the fighting: they continue with online lessons amid building wreckage, and patiently bear with constant interruptions from air raid sirens and national moments of silence alike. But every so often, real loss and emotional trauma become palpable. In one scene, a little girl heads into her school library, only to suddenly burst into tears when she sees a photograph of her father alongside those of other fallen soldiers. Yet minutes later, in the company of her teacher and classmates who immediately rush to comfort her, she manages to resume her composure, and her reading. It soon becomes evident that such empathy and resilience emanating from the stories constitute the essence of the film, speaking to the true mettle of a people who continue to transcend extraordinary circumstances.

Timestamp was selected for the Competition section of the 75th Berlin International Film Festival (2025).



Kateryna Gornostai (b. 1989, Ukraine) graduated with a degree in biology and later studied journalism at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. From 2012 to 2013, Gornostai studied documentary filmmaking at Marina Razbezhkina's School of Documentary Films and Theater. She returned to Kyiv during the Revolution of Dignity to film the events. *STOP-ZEMLIA*, her first feature film, premiered in the Generation 14plus section at the 71st Berlin International Film Festival (2021), and received the Crystal Bear Award from the Youth Jury. Gornostai lives and works in Kyiv, and teaches film directing.

SOMBER TIDES (MARÉE NOIRE)

By Chantal Caron

Canada | No dialogue | 2024 | 12 min 12 sec | NC16 (Nudity)

SOUTHEAST ASIAN PREMIERE

A cry of the species, the drawing of a final breath before being swept away by extinction. Or conversely, a battle to survive against all odds.

In this short film directed by celebrated Québécois choreographer Chantal Caron, two dancers personify geese inhabiting the Saint Lawrence River in North America, which also serves as its magnificent backdrop. *Somber Tides* is poetry in motion and a poignant meditation on our relationship with the natural environment, reflecting on "the art of being whilst not destroying."



Chantal Caron (b. 1960, Canada) is choreographer and artistic director of Fleuve | Espace danse. In 2018, she was named a Member of the Order of Canada for her artistic creations highlighting natural heritage and her contributions to the development of the next generation of dancers. Her dance films, *Ice*, *Crevasse and Drift* (2014), *Clémentine* (2019) and *Due North* (2022) have been selected by several international film festivals and won top honours since 2014. Her commitment to the environment and the community of her region has also earned her the title of Ambassador of the St. Lawrence by the David Suzuki Foundation.

NO MORE HISTORY WITHOUT US (NÃO HAVERÁ MAIS HISTÓRIA SEM NÓS)

By Priscilla Brasil

Brazil | In Portuguese and English, with English
subtitles | 2024 | 76 min 6 sec | NC16 (Some Nudity)

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

In this essay film, director Priscilla Brasil sets out to re-examine a series of 19th century European writings and beliefs that have perpetuated the image of the Amazon as an inexhaustible resource to be exploited, and the notion that its peoples are inferior to the white man. Seeking to retrace the steps that led to these narratives, Brasil and her Amazonian collaborator make “the opposite journey” to Munich, Germany, from where imperialist explorers travelled to Brazil some 200 years ago with the goal of colonising it. However, the filmmakers soon realise that they were not going to be granted any level of access to the centuries-old specimens that were taken from their land and formed the basis for the so-called scientific findings about their communities. They proceed with the re-telling of their history.

Without the material traces that are locked away in the technical reserves of museums, the director intersperses archival footage and drawings of Indigenous peoples of the past with imagery of present-day Brazil. Accompanying the visuals is a voiceover discussing the profound impact of classifying humans by race, a widespread practice carried out for scientific inquiry in the 19th century. It had legitimised occupation by “civilised” European settlers, as a means of “whitening” the population to save it from the so-called degeneration that was believed to be rooted in Indigenous communities. It had justified the abduction of natives from the tropics, who were displayed as exotic exhibits in world fairs and used for experimentation. It rationalised the continued depletion of the rainforest, which now threatens our very existence. The film asserts that it is ironically the ancestral knowledge of those who have been subjugated in the name of progress, which will be able to provide a viable alternative to the excesses of colonial violence. Framed as a manifesto, *No More History Without Us* calls for a re-opening of all the paths that close when Amazonians attempt to think and speak for themselves. It stands as part of a new wave of postcolonial cinema—clear-eyed and essential.

In 2024, *No More History Without Us* won Best Feature Film at the Environmental Film Festival in Brazil, and Best Documentary Film at the Bali International Film Festival.



Priscilla Brasil (b. 1978, Brazil) is an Amazonian filmmaker whose career began with her first film, *As Filhas da Chiquita* (Chiquita's Daughters), a documentary released in 2006 that was commercially distributed in Brazil and screened in over 30 countries. She is currently a PhD candidate in Post-colonialism and Global Citizenship at the University of Coimbra, Portugal. Brasil is also the coordinator of the Escola Livre de Cinema da Amazonia (Amazon Free Film School), an initiative that aims to assist in the training of audiovisual executives, independent producers, technicians in the sector, as well as students in the north of the country. It raises awareness of the importance of audiovisual media in representing communities and generating sustainable jobs in the Amazon.

FORAGERS

By Jumana Manna

Palestine | In Arabic and Hebrew, with English subtitles |
2022 | 63 min 33 sec | NC16 (Some Coarse Language)

Sun, 14 Sep | 4.30pm
The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium

Foragers chronicles the long-running disputes over the practice of foraging for edible wild plants native to Palestine/Israel. Shot in the Golan Heights, Galilee and Jerusalem, the film employs a blend of fiction and documentary to portray the impact of Israeli nature protection laws on these customs, and on the Palestinians who keep them. The laws prohibit the gleanings of the artichoke-like 'akkoub, and za'atar (thyme), and have resulted in fines and criminal trials for hundreds of mostly elderly Palestinians caught picking these plants. While the Palestinian foragers dismiss these laws as a front for legislation that further alienates them from their land, Israeli state representatives insist it is their duty to institute environmental protections.

With wry humour, the film depicts the never-ending cycle of infringements and arrests. The narrator makes a tongue-in-cheek comparison between a forager who decides to sell off leftover plants from his haul before they spoil, and a "dealer" who supplies weapons or hash. An unintentional slip creates something of an in-joke: a defendant named Wardeh is erroneously called "Varda" by her interrogator before she makes her case for gleanings as necessary for livelihood, a practice passed down in Arab families for generations. Between the field and the kitchen, the patrol and the courtroom, director Jumana Manna captures the inherited knowledge and cherishing of this tradition, as well as resilience against imposed curbs. In its attempt to reframe the terms of engagement, the film raises questions about ownership, namely, who determines what is made extinct and what lives on.

Foragers had its world premiere at Visions du Réel (2022), and has been screened in numerous film festivals around the world, including the Sharjah Film Platform, International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), Kassel Documentary Film and Video Festival, and Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival (CPH:DOX).



Jumana Manna (b. 1987, USA) is a Palestinian artist and filmmaker based in Jerusalem and Berlin. Her work explores how power is articulated, focusing on the body, land and materiality in relation to colonial inheritances and histories of place. Manna is Moving Image Associate Chair at Bard's MFA program in New York. She was previously Visiting Lecturer at Harvard University, and the Academy of Fine Arts Munich. Her first feature film, *A Magical Substance Flows Into Me* (2016), screened at the 66th Berlinale and 54th Vennale. Her documentary, *Wild Relatives* (2018), received the New:Vision Award at CPH:DOX and the Environmental Award at Sheffield Doc/Fest in 2018.

THE GLEANERS AND I (LES GLANEURS ET LA GLANEUSE)

By Agnès Varda

France | In French, with English subtitles |
2000 | 80 min | PG

Sun, 14 Sep | 2pm
The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium

A reflection on the humble act of gleaning, commonly illustrated by Jean-François Millet's famous 1857 painting *Les glaneuses* (*The Gleaners*) in encyclopaedias, inspires director Agnès Varda to set out on a journey to document the stories of modern-day gleaners who forage for what mainstream society discards. Her chance encounters and conversations with these who live on the margins take her on a joyful adventure across France, from the markets of Paris to the Avignon countryside to the island of Noirmoutier. "Gleaning, that's the old way," declares one farmer, speaking of the practice as collective wisdom imparted from one generation to another. Elsewhere in the film, this understanding is affirmed by a lawyer who cites a 1554 edict that allows the poor, the wretched, and the deprived to enter the fields and glean once the harvest was over.

With her handheld camera, Varda posits herself as a type of gleaner—of images, impressions, emotions. In the film, her expansive vision makes room for ruminations on everything, from aging to the birth of cinema to the charm of heart-shaped potatoes rejected by supermarkets for appearing "deformed." Following her self-reflexive gaze, the viewer is led to identify with otherness. Gradually, the humanity and contributions of those who glean to rehabilitate also come into focus. Artists who transform found objects from the streets into art, giving them "a second chance." A man who obtains all his food from rubbish bins as a matter of principle, in his personal fight against overconsumption. A vegetarian with a Master's degree who saves money by scavenging and gives free classes to illiterate immigrants at his shelter daily. By turns playful, philosophical, and satirical, *The Gleaners and I* is an essay film that sensitively engages with the incongruities of consumer culture, by an artist who, like her subjects, finds unexpected riches where few think to look.



Agnès Varda (b. 1928, Belgium; d. 2019, France) was a director and photographer, whose groundbreaking work has influenced generations of directors. Her first feature film, *La Pointe Courte* (1954), is regarded a precursor of the French New Wave film movement of the late 1950s and 1960s, earning her the moniker, "mother of the Nouvelle Vague." Under the company Ciné-Tamaris (a cooperative) she founded, Varda has written, directed and produced numerous cinematic masterpieces, such as *Cléo from 5 to 7* (1961), *Le Bonheur* (1964), *Vagabond* (1985), *Jacquot de Nantes* (1991), *The Gleaners and I* (2000), *The Beaches of Agnès* (2008), and *Faces Places* (2017), co-directed with the artist JR.



SOUTHEAST ASIAN SHORTS

Southeast Asian Shorts presents short films on the stories of Southeast Asia. This year's programme is co-curated by independent programmer Viknesh Kobinathan, and festival curator Pauline Soh.

Films will be screened daily at the UOB Theatrette, starting at the top of every hour.

Thu, 4 Sep–Sun, 14 Sep | 11am–7pm
General Admission Pass
(free for Singaporeans & PRs)

There will also be lunchtime screenings at The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium.

Tue, 9 Sep–Fri, 12 Sep | 12.30pm
Free

ZINKEPOEL

By Zulkhairi Zulkiflee

Singapore | In English, with English subtitles | 2025 | 7 min 31 sec | G

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

A letter recommends relocation to "Zinkepoel," a place that is unknown, and unknowable except as a trace of the conceptual terrain. Seeking to make sense of the uncanny, this short film meditates on the landscape of the ghost town of Singapore, Michigan, a settlement in the Midwestern region of America that was poised to be a port town. In this exploration of its traces in the form of maps and prints, Singapore, Michigan begins to assume familial resemblance to the mythic Zinkepoel, in its simultaneous "absence" and "excess."

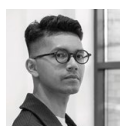
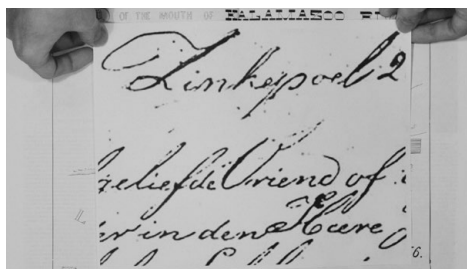


Photo credit: Billy Tucker

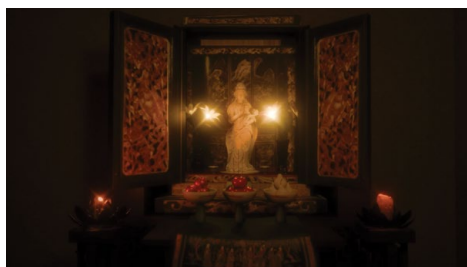
Zulkhairi Zulkiflee (b. 1991, Singapore) is an artist-curator whose lens-based practice focuses on contemporary Malay identity. Zulkhairi's dynamic practice is rooted in 'Malayness' as a propositional term, exploring its evolving representations. His image-centred artworks foreground the body as a plural marker, situating the Singaporean-Malay experience within broader global narratives.

SPACES AS TRACES

By Shi Yun Teo

Singapore | In Mandarin and English, with English subtitles | 2024 | 9 min 35 sec | PG

With an assemblage of diverse materials, ranging from found footage to 3D-rendered animation of deities, Shi Yun Teo maps the material universe onto the spiritual, and mediates a dialogue between a mythic past and modern AI. She gives form to these seemingly antithetical convergences, with the proposition that a ubiquitous feature of public housing in Singapore—the void deck—could be seen as a realm that allows movement between human and non-human worlds, given its use as a communal site for funerals. Resisting easy categorisation, this short film seeks to explore the relationship between being and becoming in an increasingly complex world.



Shi Yun Teo (b. 1999, Singapore) is a multidisciplinary artist, and recent graduate from the Slade School of Fine Art. She creates narrative and abstract works that feature historical documents, archival footage and personal recordings. Her video works have been shown at film festivals, as well as group and solo shows at art spaces such as Feelium Gallery, London (2024), Eleven Ten Studio, Basel (2024), and Erratum Galerie, Berlin (2024).

FOSSILIS

By Riari Rizaldi

Indonesia | In Indonesian, with English subtitles | 2023 | 12 min 57 sec | PG

Fossilis grapples with the 21st century reality that most of the planet's discarded electronics—products of planned obsolescence—are dumped and buried in Asia. Live-action sets fashioned from refuse, scenes shot in flea markets transacting in cannibalised machine parts, 3D assets and environments salvaged from abandoned projects, and AI images generated from thousands of unused photographs, form its fabric. The film thus offers more than concepts, narratives, or representations: its very mode of production harnesses both electronic and physical waste, and transforms these "fossils" from past generations into artistic media.



Photo credit: Dan Weill

Riari Rizaldi (b. 1990, Indonesia) is an artist who works predominantly with moving image and sound. His works have been shown at many film festivals such as the Berlinale, Locarno Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, the Viennale, and Cinéma du réel, as well as museums and biennials such as Centre Pompidou (2021), Museum of Modern Art (2024), Whitney Biennial (2024), Taipei Biennial (2023), and Istanbul Biennial (2023). His first feature, *Monisme* (2023), won the Golden Hanoman Award at the Jogja-Netpac Asian Film Festival (2023), Best Feature Film at the Bucharest International Experimental Film Festival (2023), and Grand Prix at Five Flavours Film Festival Warsaw (2024).

PROGRAMME 2

Daily | 12pm | UOB Theatrette
Also on Tue 9 Sep, at 12.30pm, in The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium



THE SCATTERED BODY OR A WORLD UNCLOUDED BY DUST

By George Clark

In collaboration with a Vietnamese community archive in Hackney, London, and a state film archive in Hanoi, director George Clark explores the often invisible labour of caring for the dispersed history of Vietnam. The film charts the establishment of the An Việt Archives, the largest known collection of documents and artefacts associated with British-Vietnamese communities, built from what was salvaged from their

Vietnam, United Kingdom | In English and
Vietnamese, with English subtitles | 2023
| 48 min 37 sec | PG

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

former building that was nearly completely lost to vandalism in 2020. The project also brought together Vietnamese and UK artists who explored alternative ways of articulating personal and collective memories, such as musician Bùi Linh Hà, cinematographer Tạ Minh Đức, choreographer Nguyễn Hải Yến, and dancers Lâm Duy Phương and James Olivo.



George Clark (b. 1982, United Kingdom) is an artist, writer, and curator. His work and research have focused on moving image in the expanded field, and exhibits an interest in inter-local collaborative practice. One of his many projects is *Double Ghosts*, an evolving, multi-part work involving a trilogy of 35mm films and installation that he developed with the 2018 Taiwan Biennial. He also co-founded the West Java West Yorkshire Cooperative Movement with Jatiwangi art Factory (Indonesia) and Pavilion (UK) in 2018. Their initiative, Mother Bank, seeks to build financial autonomy for a mother collective in rural Indonesia through agriculture and pop music.

PROGRAMME 3

Daily | 1pm | UOB Theatrette
Also on Wed 10 Sep, at 12.30pm, in The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium

TUNGGANG LANGGANG (AFTERLIVES)

By Timoteus Anggawan Kusno

Indonesia | In Indonesian, with English subtitles |
2024 | 21 min 57 sec | PG13 (Some Disturbing Scenes)

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

By beginning with *jathilan*, a traditional Javanese war dance here performed to celebrate Independence Day in Indonesia, *Afterlives* sets itself up as a confrontation with the ghosts of the nation's colonial past. In the film, the spectre of Dutch rule is traced to portraits of the Governor-Generals of the Dutch East Indies, which were hidden in abandoned sugar factories during World War II. As the film follows their trail to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, we see the original, empty frames woven into Kusno's installation for its *REVOLUSI!* exhibition, as a symbolic gesture. Stripped of their powerful images, these frames continue to carry the weight of their invisible presences into current reality, but also indicate space for new interventions.



Timoteus Anggawan Kusno (b. 1989, Indonesia) is a visual artist and filmmaker whose practice explores coloniality and its spectre. His works have been exhibited at prominent institutions and biennales like Tate Modern, the Rijksmuseum, Fundació Joan Miró, Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, and the Gwangju Biennale. His films have also premiered at major film festivals, such as Berlin International Film Festival, and International Film Festival Rotterdam.

PETA GULA (SUGAR MAP)

By Ali Satri Efendi

Indonesia | In Indonesian, with English
subtitles | 2023 | 16 min 45 sec | PG

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

In the colonial era, Indonesian farmers were forced to give up their land to Dutch rulers for the cultivation of sugarcane. While a key component of the *glebagan* system—the obligatory leasing of land to mills—was abolished in 1975, it has profoundly influenced agriculture and land use in Indonesia. Through documentary footage as well as archival materials, *Sugar Map* observes how the landscape of a village in the Krembung region has been shaped by the competing use of the land for sugarcane and rice production, and how a cycle of exploitation continues to be perpetuated.



Ali Satri Efendi (b. 1988, Indonesia) is a filmmaker and lecturer. His films have been screened at film festivals such as Arkipel - Jakarta International Documentary & Experimental Film Festival, Image Forum Festival (Japan), Festival Film Dokumenter (Yogyakarta), Bali International Short Film Festival, as well as Monitor 15, a programme organised by South Asian Visual Arts Center (SAVAC). *Sugar Map* is part of the Minke Project, developed by Forum Lenteng's Milisifilem Collective.



LUZONENSIS OSTEOPOROSIS

By Glenn Barit

Luzonensis discovers that his passport is missing, just hours before he is to fly to Canada for work. Together with his father, he retraces his steps to find it. The search soon turns inward, as encounters along the way lead him to contemplate his place in the world, with no clear answers in sight.

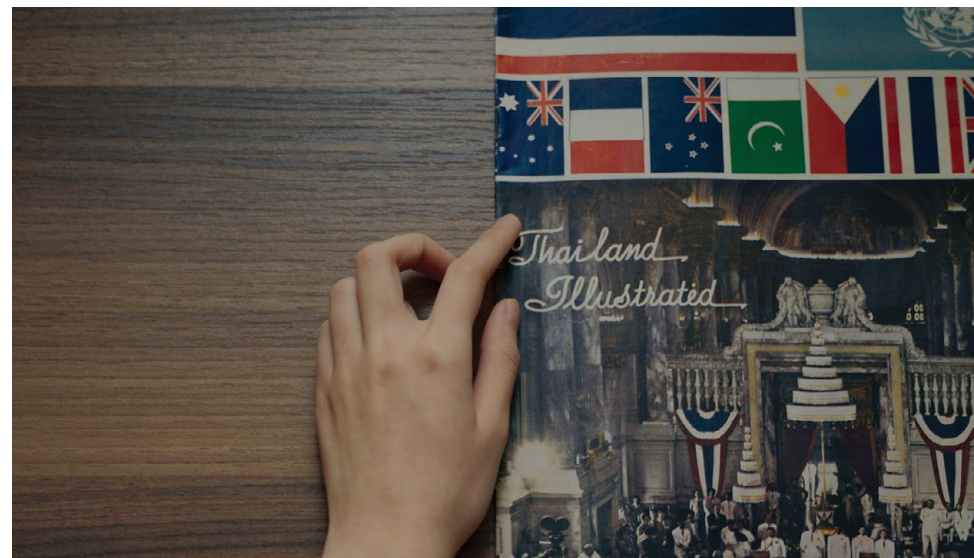
The homo luzonensis is a prehistoric hominid whose bones were first discovered in the Callao Caves in Cagayan, Philippines. Seeing this figure as not only the first Cagayano, but also the first Filipino, director Glenn Barit makes it the centre of this fantastical tale to express his own ruminations over identity, in a culture where working overseas to support families back home is common practice.

Philippines | In Filipino, English and French, with English subtitles | 2022 | 20 min 1 sec | PG

SINGAPORE PREMIERE



Glenn Barit (b. 1992, Philippines) is a filmmaker, sound designer, and scorer. His works often reflect identity, class struggle, and youth culture, usually in a playful way. His debut feature film, *Cleaners*, won Best Film, Best Screenplay and Audience Choice Award at the 7th QCinema International Film Festival (2019). It has since screened in Busan International Film Festival, Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival, and Torino Film Festival. He is currently developing his next feature film, *Luzonensis and Floresiensis*, about Southeast Asian migrant workers in Spain.



HERE WE ARE

By Chanasorn Chaikitiporn

A housekeeper receives a film made by her daughter, which combines footage of Thailand during the Cold War with present-day images of Bangkok. Not understanding it fully, she is however prompted by the images to recount private histories that span the time represented in the film. She relates anecdotes from "Auntie", for whom she now works, about her participation in student movements in Bangkok, and her own experience of migrating from her village to the city to find work, leaving her child behind with family. Her reflections provide for the narration of *Here We Are*, and also the deeply personal dimension of the piece.

Thailand | In Thai and English, with English subtitles | 2023 | 19 min 40 sec | PG



Chanasorn Chaikitiporn (b. 1997, Thailand) is a filmmaker and moving image artist whose work explores the socio-political histories of Thailand. He bridges fiction and documentary filmmaking, and his process involves investigating archival materials, found footage and declassified documents. Chaikitiporn is part of ELSE, a moving image screening series based in Bangkok, Thailand. He is known for his short films, *Blinded by the Light* (2021) and *All the Things You Leave Behind* (2022). His latest film, *Here We Are*, premiered at the 74th Berlin International Film Festival (2024).

FLOW

By Souliya Phoumivong

Laos | No dialogue | 2018 | 8 min 50 sec | PG

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

A lone human figure watches as buffalo tail each other in a herd. Out of curiosity, he puts on a buffalo mask to blend in, but soon finds it hard to extricate himself.

With the allegorical use of animated clay figurines, director Souliya Phoumivong critiques consumer society's unthinking pursuit of material things. In *Flow*, those who choose to conform in the name of advancement are compared to cattle that blindly keep pace behind each other in a never-ending circle. It raises the question: What distinguishes man from beast?



Souliya Phoumivong (b. 1983, Laos) is an animator and new media artist. He is known to many in Laos for his educational and entertaining animated television series produced at Clay House Studio, which he founded in 2012 and is the first of its kind in his country. His work is known internationally, and has been featured in the Asia Pacific Triennial (Brisbane), Cheongju Biennale, and Bangkok Art Biennale. Phoumivong also teaches photography and new media at the National Institute of Fine Arts in Vientiane.

TRIP AFTER

By Ukrit Sa-nguanhai

Thailand, New Zealand | In Thai, with English subtitles | 2022 | 10 min 34 sec | PG

In the 1960s, the United States Information Service (USIS) mobile film units travelled around the northeast region of Thailand to show their propaganda films to rural audiences. *The Community Development Worker* (1958), one of their most well-received works, was also filmed in a province in that region.

Trip After is a travel vlog inspired by the field trip reports of those mobile film units. Director Ukrit Sa-nguanhai revisits the locations where the original screenings or shoots took place, to trace, articulate, or reconstruct impressions of these past events.



Ukrit Sa-nguanhai (b. 1990, Thailand) is a video artist and filmmaker based in Bangkok. He has a particular interest in amateur film aesthetics and the history of rural and marginal cinema. His works have been showcased at several international film festivals. His short films, *Enduring Body* (2019) and *Celestial Space* (2012), were screened at the 72nd Locarno Film Festival (2019), and *Trip After* premiered at the 73rd Berlin International Film Festival (2023).

THE HOUSE OF BRICK AND STONE

By Ananth Subramaniam

Malaysia | In English, Malay and Tamil, with English subtitles | 2022 | 15 min 52 sec | NC16 (Some Mature Content)

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

A young girl, Aarti, finds solace and guidance from an unlikely figurehead.

As docufiction, *The House of Brick and Stone* takes the events surrounding a real-world financial scam as the starting point for exploring the psyche of youths in search for meaning in an unstable world. The narrative moves between fact and fiction, and in doing so, blurs the line between truth and fabrication.



Ananth Subramaniam (b. 1992, Malaysia) explores Tamil identity and ancestry in his work. His latest film, *Bleat!* (2025), became the first Malaysian short film to be selected at Cannes, premiering at La Semaine de la Critique and winning the Queer Palm. His other filmmaking credits include *Liar Land* which won a Special Mention at the Locarno Film Festival (2020). He is currently working on his debut feature with support from Berlinale's Talents Tokyo, Full Circle Lab and NAFF Project Market.

KIWO TENGEN

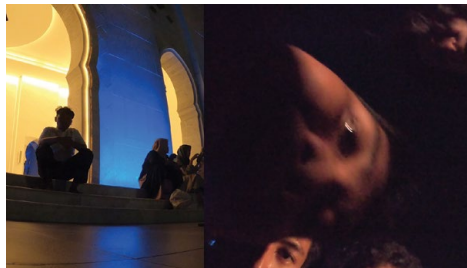
By Rizqullah Panggabean

Indonesia | In Indonesian and Javanese, with English subtitles | 2024 | 6 min | PG

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

A pair of sandals is separated amid the bustling crowd at the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Solo, Indonesia. They go on the adventure of their lives.

Built during the tenure of a president in his hometown, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Solo is valued as a place of worship, but has also inadvertently become a symbol of power. Director Rizqullah Panggabean attempts to capture the contradictions within the environs of the mosque, surrounded as it is by signs of poverty, through the perspectives of two lost sandals—Kiwo and Tengen—left and right in Javanese.



Rizqullah Panggabean (b. 2003, Indonesia) is a director and writer from Tanjungpinang, Riau Islands. Currently studying at Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta, he actively creates films through Acah Acah Films, a collective he founded in Surakarta. His works delve into social alienation and mundane absurdity, while exploring the thin line between reality and fantasy.

KULIHAT KAU LIHAT DIA (I WATCH YOU WATCH THEM)

By Helmi Yusron

Indonesia | No dialogue, with English subtitles | 2023 | 12 min 6 sec | G

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

Using a camera, a woman looks for traces of surveillance in the urban spaces around her, taking photographs of potential sites where surveillance cameras might be placed. Progressively, she starts to also take photographs of people, to better understand the position of a watcher. Mid-way into her exploration, the woman notices that she is being followed by a man with a camera, and images of her and her camera soon fill the frame.



Helmi Yusron (b. 2001, Indonesia) has been a participant in Forum Lenteng's Milisifilem Collective since 2023. A film that has resulted from the programme is *I Watch You Watch Them*, which premiered at the 10th Jakarta International Documentary & Experimental Film Festival (2023). He is currently working on the project, "Futures of Listening: Water Knowledge from Two Cities", which aims to develop an empathic platform for knowledge sharing from vulnerable communities in Jakarta and Istanbul.

"SMILE, NUR. SMILE."

By Syahirah Binti Suhairi

Brunei | In English and Bruneian Malay, with English subtitles | 2024 | 8 min 11 sec | PG

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

"*Smile, Nur. Smile.*" tells the story of a young girl through a series of her personal video logs. These logs offer glimpses into her daily activities and coping mechanisms, such as her attempts to self-soothe by recording the good parts of her day and speaking words of affirmation to herself. As time goes by, they begin to reveal that there is more than meets the eye.



Syahirah Binti Suhairi (b. 1997, Brunei) is currently pursuing a degree in Design and Creative Industries at Universiti Brunei Darussalam, where she explores storytelling through film and visual media. Together with Siti Solehah and Muhd. Danish, she created "*Smile, Nur. Smile.*", which was nominated for Best Fiction Short Film (Drama) at the 7th PRISM UBD Short Film Festival (2024).

PEACELAND

By Ekin Kee Charles

Malaysia | In Kadazandusun and Sabahan Malay, with English subtitles | 2024 | 11 min 31 sec | PG13 (Some Coarse Language)

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

Rena, Mina and Joni, fashionable besties in their 60s, are hitchhiking their way to town for a day out. It is a long journey from their remote village; along the way, the girls just want to have fun. They livestream themselves to show off their OOTDs (Outfits of the Day), swap gossip, and ask fellow passengers inappropriate questions. The real purpose of their visit, however, becomes apparent when they arrive. Rena makes her way to the shop where her estranged daughter is working, in hopes that she will come home.



Ekin Kee Charles (b. 1996, Malaysia) is an Indigenous filmmaker from Sabah, Malaysia. She is a descendant of the Kimaragang tribe, a sub-tribe from the Kadazandusun Dayak umbrella. Her works are often about her community and their unique way of life, and her people often included in them as cast and crew. She was the winner of the Han Nefkens Foundation - Loop Barcelona Video Art Production Grant 2022.



BISAN ABO, WALA BILIN (EVEN ASHES, NOTHING REMAINS)

By Kyd Torato

A strange skin disease spreads in a remote village, throwing its tight-knit community into turmoil. In search of healing, they make their way to the Sikwan, an ancient tree believed to have miraculous powers, where they perform an act of exchange by tying their clothes to its branches and taking on its name. As the authorities begin to forcibly relocate villagers, a little girl named Sabel is separated from her mother. In desperation, Sabel slips away to seek help from the Sikwan one last time, and realises how the fate of the tree is inextricably linked with that of her people.

Philippines | In Hiligaynon,
with English subtitles | 2024 |
13 min 56 sec | PG

SINGAPORE PREMIERE



Kyd Torato (b. 2000, Philippines) is a Capizeña filmmaker. Her first short film, *Si Oddie*, premiered at the 18th Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival (2022). *Even Ashes, Nothing Remains* received a production grant from Netflix at the 2023 INDIEGENIUS Project Lab. Recently, she participated in the AirAsia Cross-Residency Program in Vietnam, where she collaborated with visual artist Olive Gloria on an immersive work, *Weavers Are Poets, Poets Are Weavers*.



GREEN HOME

By Out Sreypich, Chov Kimsrong and Mao Mensocheata

Like a mother caring for her children, the community forest of Koh Kei in the Stung Treng province has long nurtured and sheltered its inhabitants, providing food and monsoon protection for humans and animals alike. Large swathes of it, however, has now been decimated by illegal logging. This documentary captures the profound connection of a village to their local forest, and surfaces what is truly at stake when our natural world disappears—not only the physical environment, but the identity, culture, and very survival of future generations.



Chov Kimsrong (b. 2002, Cambodia) is a filmmaker from the Kampong Cham Province. He studied documentary filmmaking at Bophana Center and produced two documentaries, *Savings* and *Green Home*, as part of the project, "Looking at the Mekong River: Youth Participation in the Community through Documentary Films." He is currently working on a new film entitled, *Golden Land*, in the Kampong Chhnang Province.



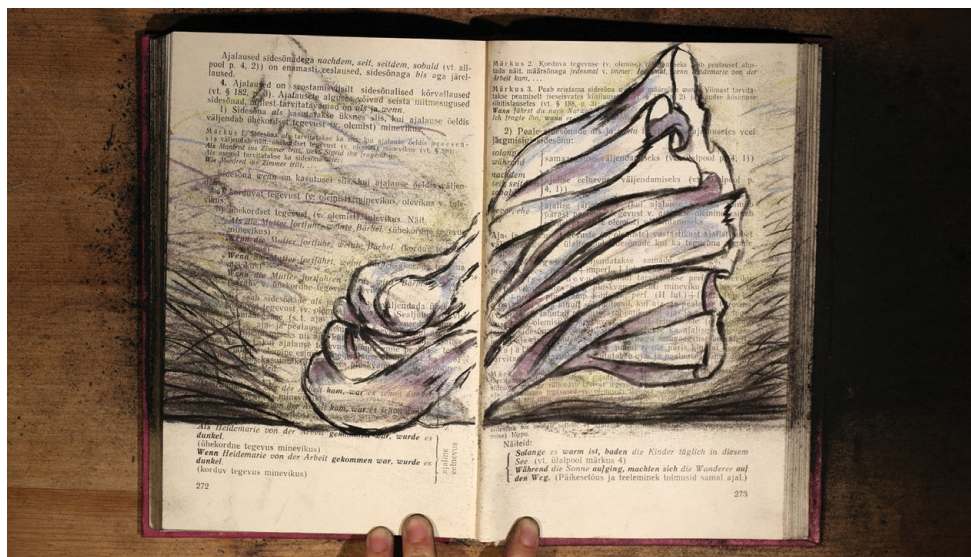
Cambodia | In Khmer, with English
subtitles | 2022 | 24 min 40 sec | PG

SINGAPORE PREMIERE

Out Sreypich (b. 1998, Cambodia) is a filmmaker based in Phnom Penh who produced documentaries such as *Pigeon and I* and *Green Home*, which were screened at the 11th Cambodia International Film Festival (2022). She was an assistant director on the Khmer Rouge documentary *M-13*, and wrote the script for *Boat Race*, which won second place at the Mekong Creative Film Festival (2025).



Mao Mensocheata (b. 1994, Cambodia) is a filmmaker from the Kampong Cham Province. She studied documentary filmmaking at Bophana Center in 2022, after graduating from the Royal University of Phnom Penh, Department of Media and Communication. She participated in the production of two documentaries, *Lotus Lake* and *Green Home*, both of which were screened at the 11th Cambodia International Film Festival (2022).



THE LAST VISIT (VIIMANE KÜLASTUS)

By Keawalee Warutkomain

To cope with her grief at the loss of a beloved aunt, director Keawalee Warutkomain turns to animation to revive traces of her life. As part of this remembrance, the director-animator brings to life drawings of both real and imagined encounters with her aunt—in Thailand where her aunt lived and died, and in Estonia, where she was studying when her aunt passed away. The result is *The Last Visit*, a film that chronicles Warutkomain's five-year journey from bereavement to acceptance, and honours the memory of her aunt.

Thailand, Estonia | No dialogue,
with English subtitles | 2023 |
15 min 41 sec | PG

SINGAPORE PREMIERE



Keawalee Warutkomain (b. 1990, Thailand) is an animator, facilitator, and co-founder of Klower⁹, an initiative dedicated to nurturing the diversity of Thai independent animation. She received her MA in Animation from the Estonian Academy of Arts, and is the Festival Director of SiamANIMA. Her 2023 film, *The Last Visit*, won a Special Mention and the Vichitmatra Award at the 27th Thai Short Film & Video Festival (2023). It was also part of a group exhibition, *Constellation* (2024), at Bangkok University Gallery.




BONE WHISPERERS

Talking to the bones of the dearly departed plays a central role in the funeral rites of the Pwo Karen people. This lively ritual is not only a sign of respect and remembrance for the dead, it also allows family members to share Buddhist merit with their departed relatives and make sure they cross safely into a heavenly abode. "Woe betide those who are not guided on their journey," warns one singer-performer, "they will find themselves wandering henceforth forevermore." Compellingly and discreetly filmed in well-composed camera shots, this documentary invites the viewer to take a seat amid this fascinating Karen ceremony.

Myanmar | In Kayah, with
English subtitles | 2024 |
26 min 29 sec | PG

ASIAN PREMIERE

MOVEMENT PIECES



Movement Pieces celebrates the visual poetry found in moving image art. It features short films that convey meaning through non-verbal modes of communication, like gesture and musicality, in lieu of dialogue. This year's programme is supported by the Québec Government and curated by guest programmer Philippe U. del Drago, Executive and Artistic Director of the International Festival of Films on Art in Montreal.

The set of five short films will be screened daily during the festival, starting at the top of every hour.

Thu, 4 Sep–Sun, 14 Sep | 11am–8pm

The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium Foyer

Free



SAINT-RÉMI

By Simon Vermeulen

Shot in the former asbestos mine of Saint-Rémi-de-Tingwick in Québec, this short film features a dancer's interactions with and within his tetrahedron iron sculpture. Serving as both a pedestal and a prison, the sculpture symbolises man-made structures that can both elevate and confine. This duality is echoed by the magnificent yet desolate landscape of the mine, which has remained barren since its closure in 1968. Despite its melancholic overtones, *Saint-Rémi* speaks to a hope that life will be restored.

Canada | No dialogue | 2024 |
4 min 1 sec | G

SINGAPORE PREMIERE



Simon Vermeulen (b. 1989, Canada) is a Québécois director, dancer, and artist. He choreographed and produced *Der Untermensch*, which premiered at the 38th Toronto International Film Festival (2013) and harnessed the expressive power of body language onscreen. Vermeulen also wrote, directed, choreographed, performed, and produced the short film *Muses*, which won a Special Mention at the 29th Saguenay International Short Film Festival (2025).



À BRAS-LE-CORPS (GOING ON STRIKE)

By Chélanie Beaudin-Quintin

On a street reverberating with the echoes of past protests, *À bras-le-corps* chronicles the birth of a new kind of uprising. Seeking to re-imagine collective action, Beaudin-Quintin adopts a discursive and participatory approach in the choreography for this piece, working collaboratively with her dancers to deconstruct familiar images of protest that are often rooted in aggression. Instead of head-on collisions, the dancers gradually turn to gestures of care and support to communicate mass dissent, transforming the fight into an expression of solidarity and emancipation.

Canada | No dialogue | 2025 |
14 min 1 sec | PG

ASIAN PREMIERE



Chélanie Beaudin-Quintin (b. 1984, Canada) is a filmmaker and artist based in Montréal, who makes films, video installations, and immersive experiences (VR/AR). Combining dance and film, her non-discursive narratives question how the body interacts with and transforms itself through encounters and the spaces it inhabits. Her work has been shown internationally; *Bodies of Water*, her virtual reality dance film, premiered at the 81st Mostra Venice International Film Festival (2024).



ÉCHO

By Édouard Lock

A lone ballerina dances with her reflection in *Écho*, a film directed by world-renowned choreographer Édouard Lock. Interpreted by the principal dancer of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Rachele Buriassi, this intimate solo piece was inspired by feelings of solitude experienced in lockdown. It begins with a ballerina in the familiar surroundings of a theatre, but the camera soon closes in on the figure and renders it almost abstract, disrupting one's sense of time and space. An evocative score by James O'Callaghan enters into dialogue with Buriassi's movements as she slips in and out of shadow and light, illusion and reality.

Director of Photography: Étienne Boilard

Production & Distribution: Phi Studio

Canada | No dialogue | 2021 |
23 min 10 sec | G

SINGAPORE PREMIERE



Édouard Lock (b. 1954, Morocco), a Canadian choreographer and founder of dance company La La La Human Steps, has been invited to create works for some of the world's leading dance companies, such as the Paris Opera Ballet, and the Dutch National Ballet. The experimental nature of Lock's work drew artists to him, such as Nam June Paik, with whom he collaborated on *Wrap Around the World* (1988). He was also artistic director for David Bowie's Sound+Vision world tour in 1990. His works have garnered many honours, including the Chalmers Choreographic Award, and the Prix Denise-Pelletier.



PRISON OF THE SUN

By Kaveh Nabatian

A reaction to social unrest, as told by world-renowned dancer Axelle Munezero through "waacking," an African-American street dance born in Los Angeles in the 1970s. The music for this short film is composed by director Kaveh Nabatian and mixed by Grammy Award winner DJ Joseph Ray.

Canada | No dialogue | 2022 |
7 min 25 sec | PG

ASIAN PREMIERE



Kaveh Nabatian (b. 1976, Canada) is an Iranian-Canadian director and musician who has brought to life stories from the margins of society in a wide range of films. His directorial credits include *A Crack in Everything* (2017), a documentary about Leonard Cohen, and *Sin La Habana* (2020), which was a New York Times Critic's Pick. His 2022 film, *Kite Zo A*, made in collaboration with Haitian musicians, poets, and Vodou priests, had its international premiere at SXSW, and won the Canadian Screen Award for Best Cinematography in a Documentary.



PIDIKWE (RUMBLE)

By Caroline Monnet

Director Caroline Monnet explores authentic representations of Indigenous women onscreen in *Pidikwe*, looking to the period of the Roaring Twenties, between 1920 to 1929, to capture feelings of freedom, self-expression, exuberance and creativity. By putting the spotlight on Indigenous women of different generations—survivors of centuries of assimilation and dispossession—as they express their spirituality in dance, Monnet returns their vital bodies to our realities and imaginations. Shot entirely on film to recreate the aesthetic of 1920s cinema, the project blends Indigenous and contemporary dance to create a unique object that blurs the boundaries between cinema, artwork and performance.

Canada | No dialogue | 2025 |
10 min 11 sec | Rating TBA

ASIAN PREMIERE



Photo credit:
Sébastien Aubin

Caroline Monnet (b. 1985, Canada) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Montréal. Her work has been programmed extensively in film festivals and museums around the world, including Sundance Film Festival, Berlin International Film Festival, and Göteborg Film Festival, as well as the Whitney Biennale, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, and National Gallery of Canada. She was selected for the Cannes Film Festival's Cinéfondation residency, and also received the Sundance Institute's Merata Mita Fellowship. She was named Compagne des arts et des lettres du Québec in 2023.

Q&A WITH GUEST PROGRAMMER PHILIPPE U. DEL DRAGO

Philippe U. del Drago will be in attendance for a Q&A session on Sat 6 Sep, 7.30pm at The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium Foyer. Registration and networking will begin at 7pm; light refreshments will be provided.

This session is available for free, on a first-come first-serve basis with registration. To register, please visit nationalgallery.sg/paintingwithlight.



Philippe U. del Drago has served as Executive and Artistic Director of the International Festival of Films on Art (Le FIFA) in Montréal since 2018. He has worked in the field of arts and culture for over twenty years, striving during this time to create bridges between artists and their audiences. Specialising in the management of cultural enterprises in fields as varied as classical music, theatre, dance and technological arts, he is passionate about artistic creation and its related processes. A graduate of the Institut National de l'Image et du Son (INIS), where he obtained expertise in film production, he also holds a master's degree in administration. He has developed a career as a designer, producer, videographer, photographer and creative director, which has brought him to work on projects around the globe.



WE ARE TOAST

By Mark Chua and Lam Li Shuen

Sun, 14 Sep | 8pm
Singapore Courtyard

Kaya Toast.

Are we toast?

Kaya Toast.

We are toast.

We Are Toast is an expanded cinema performance that utilises multiple 16mm film projectors to create a live film. In the performance, 16mm film loops—hand-processed with coffee, pandan leaves and coconut milk—feature vignettes of kaya toast: its ingredients, gestures and rituals.

Deconstructing the image of kaya toast, the performance considers its stereotypical association as the “quintessential Singaporean breakfast” in an existential unpacking of the Singaporean psyche and identity. The repetitions of the film loops construct an obsession with an idealised picture of society and self, as it is both layered and dissolved, broken and reformed through audiovisual interventions. Within the performativity of light and cinemachinery, something is revealed underneath the surface of our everyday rituals.

On two 16mm projectors, the film loops are performed and modified live with organic and botanical materials such as kaya, pandan leaves, bread and eggs. The film loops are prepared in varied ways: left in moldy kaya for a period, printed with DIY inkjet image transfer, as well as hand-processed with the organic materiality of kaya toast ingredients—evoking a raw tactility drawn over time. This is accompanied by a live soundscape of minimalist textures responding to the materialising forms of the performed film.

Through light and texture conjured live, *We Are Toast* draws out what might lie within the image of kaya toast—the traces of a society and its appetites, discontents and memories.

This is a live expanded cinema performance with an artist introduction and post-performance Q&A. Ticket is inclusive of drinks and small bites.

CLOSING EVENT



Mark Chua and **Lam Li Shuen** are an artist duo from Singapore whose practice spans film, installation and expanded cinema performance. Through speculative fiction, their work explores the intersections of histories, materialities and existential anxieties.

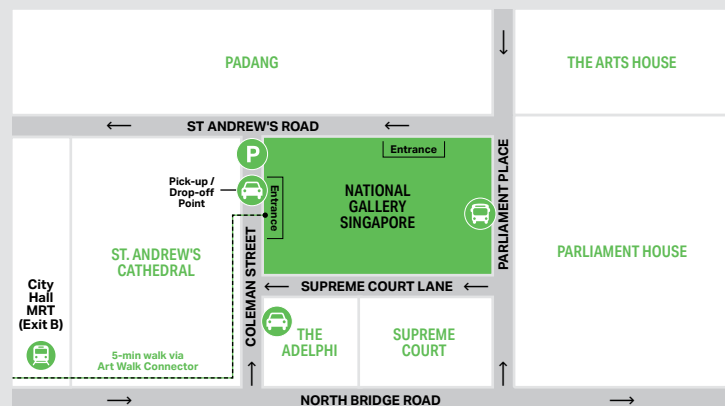
The duo have presented 16mm expanded cinema performances in Zurich, Singapore and Taipei, and screened their films at international film festivals such as the International Film Festival Rotterdam and New Directors/New Films (MoMA and Film at Lincoln Center).

In 2024, they started an artist-run analog film organisation, Film Nerve, focused on analog film experimentation as well as resource and knowledge sharing.

ABOUT NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE

National Gallery Singapore is a leading visual arts institution which oversees the world's largest public collection of Singapore and Southeast Asian modern art. 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.

GETTING TO THE GALLERY



BY BUS

Buses 195 and 961 stop at Parliament Place.



BY TRAIN

5-min walk from City Hall MRT station
10-min walk from Clarke Quay and Raffles Place MRT stations



BY TAXI/CAR

Taxi stand and drop-off point is located at the Gallery's Coleman Street entrance.



PARKING

Entrance to the carpark is only accessible via St. Andrew's Road.

Parking Rates

(Daily, including Public Holidays)

7am–6pm: \$1.30 per half hour

6pm–1am: \$3.20 per entry

\$1 per entry for motorcycles

SUPPORT THE GALLERY

The Gallery offers opportunities for you to enhance and cultivate your love for the arts. Your support helps us to build a world-class collection, pioneer original research, and develop our public programmes to bring art to a wider audience. To find out more, please visit nationalgallery.sg/join-give/support-the-gallery or contribute to giving.sg/national-gallery-singapore.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Ng Zheng Hong
Fong Wai Kei
and the entire team at
National Gallery Singapore

TICKETING

To get your tickets, please visit
nationalgallery.sg/paintingwithlight.

FESTIVAL SECTION	PRICING	VENUE
Opening Film (public screening) Art History, Co-authored Artist Films Exhibition Readings Special Focus	Standard: \$10 Concession*: \$7	The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium (Level B1, City Hall Wing)
Southeast Asian Shorts (daily screenings)	General Admission or All Access Pass required For more information on exhibition admission, please refer to the Gallery's website.	UOB Theatre (Level 5, Supreme Court Wing)
Southeast Asian Shorts (lunchtime screenings)	Free	The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium (Level B1, City Hall Wing)
Movement Pieces (daily screenings)	Free	The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium Foyer (Level B1, City Hall Wing)
Closing	Standard: \$20 Concession*: \$14 Drinks and light bites included.	Singapore Courtyard (Level 2, City Hall Wing)

TALKS AND TOURS

PROGRAMME	PRICING	VENUE
Movement Pieces Q&A with Philippe U. del Drago	Free • Register via corresponding film listing page at nationalgallery.sg/ paintingwithlight .	The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium Foyer
Exhibition Readings Curator Tours	Free (with associated film ticket) • Includes General Admission Pass • Limited to 25 slots per tour • Register via corresponding film listing page at nationalgallery.sg/ paintingwithlight .	Various exhibition venues

CONCESSION ELIGIBILITY

Concession rates apply to the following groups (valid ID required):

- Gallery Insiders
- Full time National Servicemen (NSFs)
- Seniors (aged 60 and above)
- Students/Teachers (local & international)
- Persons with disabilities and their accompanying caregivers

EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNTS & PROMOTIONS

The following groups may be eligible for exclusive offers or promotional codes. Please check with your institution or organisation for availability:

- National Gallery Singapore patrons, donors, staff, docents, and volunteers
- Staff from the Visual Arts Cluster and National Heritage Board

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Valid ID required: Concession Ticket holders must present proof of eligibility at the door. Those unable to do so will be asked to upgrade to a Standard Ticket.

No refunds, transfers or resales: All tickets are non-refundable, non-transferable, and not for resale.

Film ratings: Ratings will be posted on the official website—please check back for the latest updates. All films rated NC16, M18 and R21 will require ticket holders to show proof of age at the door.

FESTIVAL LOUNGE

The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium
Foyer (Level B1, City Hall Wing)

Open daily, 10am–8pm

Step into the Festival Lounge and unwind with drinks and light bites by Foreword Coffee, a homegrown brand with a social mission at its core. Every cup supports a more inclusive future—and tastes great, too.

As you sip and relax, catch free screenings of short films and festival highlights available throughout the day.

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

		11am		12pm	12.30pm	1pm	2pm		3pm		4pm	4.30pm	5pm	6pm		7pm	7.30pm	8pm	9pm		10pm		11pm	
THU 4 SEP	AU																	Magellan (by invite only)						
	FY	Movement Pieces																						
	TH	SEA Shorts 1		SEA Shorts 2		SEA Shorts 3		SEA Shorts 4		SEA Shorts 5		SEA Shorts 6		SEA Shorts 7		SEA Shorts 8								
FRI 5 SEP	AU																	Videoheaven						
	FY	Movement Pieces																						
	TH	SEA Shorts 1		SEA Shorts 2		SEA Shorts 3		SEA Shorts 4		SEA Shorts 5		SEA Shorts 6		SEA Shorts 7		SEA Shorts 8								
SAT 6 SEP	AU					Curator tour*	Air mata di Kuala Lumpur					Magellan (public screening)							All the Beauty and the Bloodshed					
	FY	Movement Pieces														Q&A with Philippe U. del Drago^								
	TH	SEA Shorts 1		SEA Shorts 2		SEA Shorts 3		SEA Shorts 4		SEA Shorts 5		SEA Shorts 6		SEA Shorts 7		SEA Shorts 8								
SUN 7 SEP	AU					Curator tour*	Home To He(art)					Turang							General Cartoon					
	FY	Movement Pieces																						
	TH	SEA Shorts 1		SEA Shorts 2		SEA Shorts 3		SEA Shorts 4		SEA Shorts 5		SEA Shorts 6		SEA Shorts 7		SEA Shorts 8								
MON 8 SEP	AU																Curator tour **	La Caza						
	FY	Movement Pieces																						
	TH	SEA Shorts 1		SEA Shorts 2		SEA Shorts 3		SEA Shorts 4		SEA Shorts 5		SEA Shorts 6		SEA Shorts 7		SEA Shorts 8								
TUE 9 SEP	AU			SEA Shorts 1 & 2														Women Are Naturally Creative-Agnès Varda & The Long Road To The Director's Chair						
	FY	Movement Pieces																						
	TH	SEA Shorts 1		SEA Shorts 2		SEA Shorts 3		SEA Shorts 4		SEA Shorts 5		SEA Shorts 6		SEA Shorts 7		SEA Shorts 8								
WED 10 SEP	AU			SEA Shorts 3 & 4														Somber Tides & No More History Without Us						
	FY	Movement Pieces																						
	TH	SEA Shorts 1		SEA Shorts 2		SEA Shorts 3		SEA Shorts 4		SEA Shorts 5		SEA Shorts 6		SEA Shorts 7		SEA Shorts 8								
THU 11 SEP	AU			SEA Shorts 5 & 6														Curator tour **	Peppermint Frappé					
	FY	Movement Pieces																						
	TH	SEA Shorts 1		SEA Shorts 2		SEA Shorts 3		SEA Shorts 4		SEA Shorts 5		SEA Shorts 6		SEA Shorts 7		SEA Shorts 8								
FRI 12 SEP	AU			SEA Shorts 7 & 8														Damortis						
	FY	Movement Pieces																						
	TH	SEA Shorts 1		SEA Shorts 2		SEA Shorts 3		SEA Shorts 4		SEA Shorts 5		SEA Shorts 6		SEA Shorts 7		SEA Shorts 8								
SAT 13 SEP	AU					Damortis					Queen's Palace & Timestamp							Through Artists' Eyes						
	FY	Movement Pieces																						
	TH	SEA Shorts 1		SEA Shorts 2		SEA Shorts 3		SEA Shorts 4		SEA Shorts 5		SEA Shorts 6		SEA Shorts 7		SEA Shorts 8								
SUN 14 SEP	AU						The Gleaners and I					Foragers												
	FY	Movement Pieces																						
	TH	SEA Shorts 1		SEA Shorts 2		SEA Shorts 3		SEA Shorts 4		SEA Shorts 5		SEA Shorts 6		SEA Shorts 7		SEA Shorts 8								
	SG																	We Are Toast						



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