

SEA SEA

2021 SOUTHEAST
ASIA X SEATTLE
FILM FESTIVAL
ONLINE, MAY 10-JUNE 4

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Presented by:



SOUTHEAST ASIA CENTER

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

Henry M. Jackson School
of International Studies





THEME GUIDE

This year, you can watch the SEAxSEA lineup on demand in our Vimeo page (registration required). You can pick and choose, but you can also check out this theme guide for particular film content you might be interested in.

PANDEMIC DIARIES

Joy Is My Mother's Name by Carlo Enciso Catu
Lonesome by Zhen Yee Khor
Sisig and Puchero by Christine Vicera & Michael B. C. Rivera
Sunyi Bersama by Rendro Aryo

RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

The Giving (ການໃຫ້) by Montry Phommachanh
The 3 Day Nun by Lava Buckley
Betrayal (ເລຂະຄຸນ) by Sansany Keosavanh
Upekkha (ອຸປະຂາ, Equanimity) by Somkiet Siyangvongsar
Apa Khabar, Adiguru? (How Are You, Grandmaster?) by Badrul Ismail
Ikapitong Awit (The Seventh Song) by Mark Sherwin Maestro

FINDING CONNECTION

Jalan-Jalan Sore (Evening Stroll) by Candra Aditya
Same Same and Different by Seok Wun Au Yong
Tadau om Vuhan Kopisoomo (Were the Sun and the Moon to Meet) by Nadira Ilana
Bangkok Department by Nuttawat Attasawat
Những Con Voi Trong Thành Phố (Elephants in the City) by Dam Quang Trung

ENVIRONMENT

In Search of Hope by Fié Neo
Forest-Coast-City (ป่า-ฝั่ง-เมือง) by Weeraya Wichayaprasertkul & Narudol Sittirat
Selai Kayu Yek (Roots of My Land) by Apa Kata Orang Asli

ALTERNATE TEMPORALITIES

Hãy tỉnh thức và sẵn sàng (Stay Awake, be Ready) by Pham Thien An
(dis)appearance by Julie Thi Underhill
Our Own Wind by Chheangly Yeng
Kami sa Lahat ng Masama (Gulf) by Cristian Tablazon

FAMILY MATTERS

Baby Boy by Jessica Heng
Eja by Muhammad Andriandino Nugraha
Mẹ (Mom) by Hien Dinh
I'm Adopted by Chong Jiawei
Kalinga (Care) by Kent Donguines
Sending Grandfather's Spirit Home by Yaxengly Chuechonglee

LIFE SNIPPETS

Wido by Dewi Prastiningrum
Shin Hua by Andreas Erick Sutanto
Super-Able by Arjanmar Rebeta
Yai Nin by Champ Ensminger

TIDES OF UNREST

Pinatay Nila si Hesus (They Murdered Jesus) by Karl Castro
Simfoni Reformasi (Symphony of Reform) by Daffa Amrullah
With Whom Shall We Live? by Long Tran
Petani Bukan Pemalas (Farmers Are Not Lazy) by NurFitri Amir
Ritmo ng Palahaw (Rhythm of an Outcry) by Ronaldo Vivo, Jr.
Red Aninsri; or, Tiptoeing on the Still Trembling Berlin Wall (อนินทรียมแดง) by Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke

LIMINALITIES

Rumah Ndak Betanah (The House Without A Ground) by Putri Purnama Sugua
Tamu (The Guests) by Azalia Muchransyah
Young Filipino-Hongkongers by Joni Gutierrez
Left Unsaid by Mei Lian Hoe
Thuyền Nhân by Long Tran
The Waves Now Calm by Dominique Teoh & Khoa Truong
Ode to a Seafaring People by Joella Cabalu



SEAxSEA 2021 FILMS

Apa Khabar, Adiguru? (How Are You, Grand Master? 23 min, Malaysia) by Badrul Ismail- A young Muslim scholar is torn by the fact that religion is used to kill local art, culture, and traditions. He goes on a journey to visit the Grandmasters of a dying art called Mak Yong to hear from themselves what the old tradition means to them.

Baby Boy (24 min, Singapore) by Jessica Heng- In this coming-of-age film, 17-year-old Zaki's ambitions are disrupted by his troubled family past. He now has to wrestle with the idea of fatherhood when he learns that his ex-girlfriend is pregnant.

Bangkok Department (23 min, Thailand) by Nuttawat Attasawat- Towards the end of year 2016, Noom meets Jane when he helps her throw garbage at the mall's disposal area. Their relationship grows at a noodle house. Roaming around the Memorial Bridge and smoking, Jane unlocks some repressed feelings about her family.

Betrayal (ເລລະຄຸນ, 11 min, Laos) by Sansany Keosavanh- Vone struggles to come to terms with her friend's betrayal until she finds solace in the beliefs and practice of her culture.

(dis)appearance (3 min, USA) by Julie Thi Underhill- This short experimental film considers how an indigenous people's departure from the political map threatens to erase them from academic relevance. Performed in 2016 by a graduate student at UC Berkeley.

Eja (20 min, Indonesia) by Muhammad Andriandino Nugraha- Reza, a child who loves playing football, wants to represent his school in a tournament in Jakarta. However, he must first pass an unfair selection process.

Forest-Coast-City (ป่า-ฝั่ง-เมือง, 10 min, Thailand) by Weeraya Wichayaprasertkul and Narudol Sittirat- A documentary reflecting the beauty of three groups of people in Thailand; people in the city, along the coast and in the forest. Each group has their own methods in helping to reduce CO2 and Methane which are two of the gases responsible for global warming.

The Giving (ການໃຫ້, 7 min, Lao PDR) by Montry Phommachanh- Max's needs and lack of money lead to unthoughtful action until unforeseen events lead him to reconsider what is important.

Hãy tỉnh thức và sẵn sàng (Stay Awake, Be Ready, 14 min, Viet Nam) by Pham Thien An- A motorbike crash happening before the street stalls on a street corner was embedded in the mysterious story of three young men. *Available May 10 to 14.

Ikapitong Awit (The Seventh Song, 17 min, Taiwan) by Mark Sherwin Maestro- A phenomenon wherein people of different races sing a Filipino song in spite of being unfamiliar with the language in a Catholic church in Taiwan. Discover the spectacle of how a community has been unified that breaks cultural and language differences through music and religion.

I'm Adopted (15 min, Singapore) by Chong Jiawei- Joan discovers that she's adopted and decides to run away from home. She meets a domestic helper, a Bangladeshi worker, and an old man with dementia who mistakes them for his family. Determined to bring the old man home, Joan goes on an adventure with the trio.

In Search of Hope (18 min, Singapore) by Fié Neo- What hope can you find when everything is messed up? Our ecosystems are collapsing and 2020 welcomed us with a global pandemic. With her journey interrupted by the lockdown, the filmmaker starts a podcast documenting change making efforts worldwide, reflects on actions that people are taking towards regenerative futures, and reminds us that we are not alone.



Jalan-Jalan Sore (Evening Stroll, 16 min, Indonesia) by Candra Aditya- A couple rediscovers their love through evening conversations about life, politicians, rich people, and sandals.

Joy Is My Mother's Name (10 min, Philippines) by Carlo Enciso Catu- In transit, Carlo reminisces the blissful memories of his beloved mother, Joy, who died three months ago while the country was in lockdown facing a worldwide pandemic. As he returns to his hometown Pampanga to reunite with his family, he will be celebrating his birthday without his mother for the first time.

Kalinga (Care, 29 min, Canada) by Kent Donguines- Kalinga tells the story of several Filipino caregivers and nannies in Canada, sharing their struggles and sacrifices to be reunited with their families while helping filmmaker Kent Donguines understand why his mother left him to be a nanny at 6 years old.

Kami sa Lahat ng Masama (Gulf, 41 min, Philippines) by Cristian Tablazon- A young couple's life in a coastal town is disrupted when the landlord's grandchild goes missing, presumed to have been taken by a malignant sea spirit.

Left Unsaid (3 min, United Kingdom) by Mei Lian Hoe- Left Unsaid is an experimental animated film about cultural dysphoria and the disconnect between grandfather and grandchild caused by an ever-growing language barrier.

Lonesome (17 min, Malaysia) by Justice Khor- The COVID-19 Lockdown as a metaphor for queer existential invisibility. LGBTIQ people are no strangers to isolation. The film 'Lonesome' by Justice Khor is a documentary that explores the intersection of queerness and isolation. The film weaves together stories left as voice mails that talk about loneliness, seeking love and connection, and ultimately, self-acceptance.

Mẹ (Mom, 6 min, United States) by Hien Dinh - A young Vietnamese American girl struggles to communicate to her immigrant mom about an altercation with a bully.

Những Con Voi Trong Thành Phố (Elephants in the City, 18 min, Viet Nam) by Dam Quang Trung- In this intimate portrayal of the lives of workers migrating away from home to the city in Vietnam, a young woman goes to the zoo to meet ex-boyfriends, and a married teacher has a secret relationship with a security guard.

Ode to a Seafaring People (3 min, Canada) by Joella Cabalu- Featuring spoken word artist Sol Diana, this film poetically reveals the often hidden world of Filipino seafarers and in so doing, celebrates the resiliency of the Filipino community. *Available May 10 to June 2.

Our Own Wind (22 min, Cambodia) by Chheangly Yeng- The verse "I'm a thousand untold stories" echoes on the image of a dancer who, at the edge of a mountain, talks, through the movements of his body, with the Cambodian sky. This film is a collection of visual poems that propose new perspectives and experiences of the country's landscapes. They interact and at the same time give a new shape to natural elements, even as they reconfigure the urban landscape as well.

Petani Bukan Pemalas (Farmers Are Not Lazy, 17 min, Malaysia) by NurFitri Amir- A rural smallholding rice farmer from Alor Pongsu in Malaysia, Azhar rues the bitterness of an exploitative system where farmers like him are shortchanged with expensive commercial seeds that increasingly yield poor harvests despite all their hard work and dedication. Angered by the declining harvests and rising costs, Azhar takes matters into his own hands by restarting an age-old practice of cultivating his own rice seeds. However, he faces a battle to correct government-sown misconceptions of farmers being failures due to laziness and unwillingness to learn modern techniques.



Pinatay Nila si Hesus (They Murdered Jesus, 6 min, Philippines) by Karl Castro- In the Philippines, there is a culture of impunity giving rise to incidents of police brutality. Current Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief Debold Sinas was the architect of deadly systematic crackdowns on activists in Negros Island. All the killings remain unsolved; in the meantime, Sinas was promoted to PNP Chief in 2020. We dedicate this song to the memory of Jesus “Dondon” Isugan, one of the victims in Negros. Born to a family of farmers on December 25, 1991, he was killed with five others in separate but related incidents on December 27, 2018. We continue to seek justice for Jesus and all victims of this murderous administration.

Red Aninsri; or, Tiptoeing on the Still Trembling Berlin Wall (อนินทริย์แดง, 29 min, Thailand) by Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke- A queer espionage film made in the tradition of Cold-War-era Thai dubbed films. A ladyboy prostitute-cum-spy is assigned a mission to disguise himself as a cis-masculine gay to acquire important information from an idealistic student activist.

Ritmo ng Palahaw (Rhythm of an Outcry, 7 min, Philippines) by Ronaldo Vivo, Jr.- A short film stitched together from found footage, clandestine voice recordings, and sit-down interviews from a mysteriously abandoned documentary about an unidentified corpse found at the apartment of a man who claims to be a police informant.

Rumah Ndak Bertanah (The House Without A Ground, 18 min, Malaysia) by Putri Purnama Sugua- Toteng is an 11-year-old stateless child. He works with his mother at a garbage disposal center in Sabah. One day, he finds a book and takes the book to show his sister. The question raised by his sister made him feel curious about the contents of the book. He became determined to steal 50 cents from his mother so that he could attend school. Unaware, his action changes his life forever.

Same Same and Different (25 min, USA) by Seok Wun Au Yong- A docu-dramedy four-part short series of a young international film student from Thailand discovering her sexuality in a 21st century's U.S college setting.

Selai Kayu Yek (Roots of My Land, 12 min, Malaysia) by Apa Kata Orang Asli- Aleh, a young Orang Asli woman, struggles to find support from her village when her family's ancestral land is encroached. In fear of losing her land that she also uses to grow ubi kayu, she seeks out famous Orang Asli YouTuber Rien to expose and share her story. But Rien refuses at first as she believes that their community should pursue a better life in the city instead of farming on their land. Aleh and Rien eventually realise that they share similar struggles because of their identity. Together, they find their voice and speak out.

Sending Grandfather's Spirit Home (7 min, Laos) by Yaxengly Chuechonglee- An intimate, visual portrayal of the customs and dignity of the funeral of a Hmong Shaman, the filmmaker's grandfather. In accordance with custom, the funeral Khene, drum, and sounds of grieving were not recorded.

Shin Hua (15 min, Indonesia) by Andreas Erick Sutanto- Shin Hua, a barbershop since 1911, used to be a well-known favorite. Among the 12 brothers, only Freddy, the fourth son, was willing to continue the family business. Year after year, Freddy preserves the place without the help of his brothers. Even his descendants were adamant in taking up their grandfather's mantle. As the years continued to pass, the number of clients dwindled, and today's Shin Hua is nearing bankruptcy. A love for the simple act of a barber is keeping Freddy from closing Shin Hua forever.



Simfoni Reformasi (Symphony of Reform, 15 min, Indonesia) by Daffa Amrullah- In September 2019, there were large demonstrations by students in front of Indonesia's People's Representative Council Building which led to riots around Jakarta. Chants of criticism, yells of unity, and curses are one of the atmospheric lives that buzz throughout the big days. The unity of the aspects echoed like a symphony that was lilting amidst student riots, an invisible spirit that reverberated across the demonstrations at that time. The filmmaker captures all the audio visual elements as well as the real experience, weaving them together with the spirits he felt that day.

Sisig and Puchero (23 min, Hong Kong) by Christine Vicera and Michael Rivera- This short film documentary follows the story and COVID-19 experience of Julie, the owner of a Filipino restaurant and karaoke bar in Hong Kong.

Sunyi Bersama (Lonely Together, 11 min, Indonesia) by Rendro Aryo- The filmmaker goes outside with his Mother in the new normal conditions in Jakarta, finding the city lonely.

Super-Able (20 min, Philippines) by Arjanmar Rebata- Marites Burce, a victim of polio outbreak in 1970's, is now a mother, a wife, an employee & a national para athlete who is preparing for her journey to represent Philippines in ASEAN Para Games to be held in her own country & to be qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics until the CoViD-19 pandemic happens.

Tadau om Vuhan Kopisoomo (Were the Sun and the Moon to Meet, 15 min, Malaysia) by Nadira Ilana- A pair of young lovers rendezvous as the sun sets on the coastal city of Kota Kinabalu. Emory is a Kadazan traditional dancer struggling to make ends meet whereas Eleanor is an aspiring singer, raring for bigger things. She reveals to him that she is moving to Kuala Lumpur and as a final farewell, sings to him 'Terang Bulan', an Indonesian folk song that resembles the Malaysian national anthem.

Tamu (The Guests, 15 min, United States) by Azalia Muchransyah- As an example of the success Indonesian diaspora, a group of film students come to make a short documentary about Novi, an Indonesian woman who is married to an American man and opens a small batik shop in downtown Buffalo, NY. At the same time, two Indonesian women come to the shop and interrupt the film shoot. Things turn sour when prejudices are slowly revealed.

The 3 Day Nun (7 min, United States) by Lava Buckley- This is a video about Lava's journey as a Novice Nun for 3 Days at Wat Phaputthothayan in Ubon Ratchathani with her mother and auntie. Lava's family wanted her to follow the tradition of their family being a nun (or monk) in a forest temple in Thailand. Lava was on a healing journey but ended up with a life changing experience being among their Thai tradition of a giving community.

Thuyền Nhân (Boat People, 7 min, United States) by Long Tran- A short documentary film produced during the COVID-19 crisis for a second-year Vietnamese summer language program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The film was produced with archival footage and materials obtained online, cut together at home during quarantine. The film is in Vietnamese/English for accessibility and simply presents general information about the Vietnamese "Boat People," refugees fleeing the Việt Nam War. The film is narrated by the son of one of these refugees, Vietnamese and Vietnamese Americans, and a refugee.

Upekkha (ອຸປະຂາ, Equanimity, 14 min, Laos) by Somkiet Siyangvongsar- Noy wrestles with the judgements of society and her own shortcomings until her Abbot's ancient Buddhist teachings provide her a path towards peace.



The Waves Now Calm (14 min, Malaysia and United States) by *Dominique Teoh and Khoa Truong*- A Malaysian filmmaker documents the remains of a Vietnamese refugee camp on an island off the coast of Malaysia, while a Vietnamese American filmmaker documents his mother's memories of that same camp.

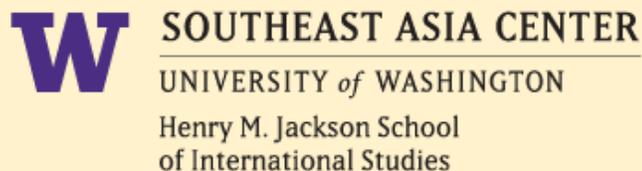
Wido (17 min, Indonesia) by *Dewi Prastiningrum*-Widowati is one of the multitalented art workers in the Magelang region, Central Java, Indonesia. She plays traditional opera, dancing and singing, and others to support her family's life. This film shows the daily life and the ups and downs of an artist in the area of Magelang, Central Java, which is now starting to become increasingly scarce.

With Whom Shall We Live? (3 min, United States) by *Long Tran*- A meditation on today's situation concerning Asian Americans.

Yai Nin (13 min, Thailand & United States) by *Champ Ensminger*- Ninlawan Pinyo is the matriarch of a Thai American family, who hustled for her fortune by founding a naem (pork sausage) factory in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Young Filipino-Hongkongers (14 min, Hong Kong) by *Joni Gutierrez*- Portrays the subjectivities of young Filipino-Hongkongers in two parts, namely, direct cinema coverage and shots from interviews on their aspirations. Part of Joni Gutierrez's Life-world Series project.

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The Southeast Asia Center (SEAC) at the University of Washington in Seattle promotes and sustains the study of Southeast Asia and encourages understanding of Southeast Asia in the Pacific Northwest and the nation. We pursue this mission by offering degree programs, language study, and undergraduate and graduate-level coursework in various disciplines that focus on Southeast Asia. The Southeast Asia Center's interdisciplinary academic programs include an MA in Southeast Asian Studies and a BA in Asia Studies with a Southeast Asia Concentration. The Center also supports PhD and professional degrees involving area concentrations & research in Southeast Asia.

SEAxSEA is part of our mission to actively organize Southeast Asia-related programs. We aim to feature films that explore Southeast Asia and its diasporas in their diversity, emphasizing underrepresented communities and youth-produced visions of the past, present, and future.

