Luang Prabang Film Festival
2018 Report
Dear Supporters,

Without government approval, the ninth Luang Prabang Film Festival (LPFF) unfortunately had to take a break from this year’s big event. However, as an organization, LPFF continued to promote cultural expression, mutual exchange, diversity, and a sustainable industry through educational workshops, special screenings and film events, and the Lao Filmmakers Fund. With the help of a grant from Oxfam’s Voice, LPFF piloted a mentorship program among experienced and beginner Lao filmmakers. Below, you will find an overview of the activities that took place under these programs within the 2018 calendar year.

**Talent Lab**

In the third year of an exciting collaboration with the Tribeca Film Institute (TFI), the LPFF Talent Lab for was expanded to three days in order to accommodate additional voices from industry experts. The Lab, which trains Southeast Asian filmmakers on grant writing and project pitching, was held on 7-9 December 2018. Eleven projects representing seven ASEAN countries participated in the Talent Lab, which was hosted at Avani+. Those projects were:

- **Anito** (Philippines), represented by Kyle Nieva (producer)
- **Siri** (Malaysia), represented by Lim Ying Xian (producer)
- **Selfie To Freedom** (Malaysia), represented by Nor Arlene Tan (director, producer)
- **Solids by the Seashore** (Thailand), represented by Patiparn Boontarig (director)
- **Alternating Voices** (Philippines), represented by Ramon Garilao (director, screenwriter)
- **Double Jeopardy** (Cambodia), represented by So Chandara (producer)
- **The Crossroad** (Myanmar), represented by Yee Nan Thike (writer, director, producer)
- **The Perilous Odyssey to Mount Gulsuk** (Philippines), represented by Jordan Dela Cruz (director)
- **QUÂY** (Vietnam), represented by Nguyen Hien Anh (director)
- **Black Velvet** (Malaysia), represented by Shanjhey Kumar Perusal
- **Something’s Off** (Singapore), represented by Sue Yin Goh (screenwriter)

After sessions of instruction, practice, and a pitch forum with feedback given by a jury composed of Jeremy Sim (Aurora Media Holdings), Nicholas Simon (Indochina Productions),
and Bree Fitzgerald (Luang Prabang Film Festival), the Philippine project *The Perilous Odyssey to Mount Gulsuk* was selected as the main winner. *The Perilous Odyssey to Mount Gulsuk*’s team will attend the TFI Network market, which will take place in New York City during the 2019 Tribeca Film Festival®. There, TFI will arrange meetings for the filmmakers with editors, distributors, and financiers. TFI will then mentor the filmmakers through the completion of their project.

Lim Ying Xian’s *Siri*, a mysterious Malaysian drama, was awarded a $10,000 cash prize for production funds from Aurora Media Holdings. Indochina Productions presented its first ever Rising Star Award in the amount of $1,500 to QUÂY, a Vietnamese food documentary represented by Nguyen Hien Anh.

**AFS Workshop**
From 7-12 December 2018, the American Film Showcase and the U.S. Embassy Vientiane teamed up with LPFF to host a six-day animation workshop. Through trainings focused on story and pitch development for animated feature film, 12 animators from ASEAN member states developed their skills in a master class with Academy Award®-winning producer Aron Warner (Shrek, Shrek 2, Book of Life) and visual development artist Arthur Fong (The Croods, Kung Fu Panda 3). On the final day of the workshop, participants received feedback from regional animators Patrick Effendy (Indonesia), David Kwok (Singapore), and Juck Somsaman (Thailand) at a pitch forum.

**Lao Filmmakers Fund**
Founded and operated by the Luang Prabang Film Festival, the Lao Filmmakers Fund is the country’s first and only regular granting system specifically for making film. The Fund is publicly generated, and allows Lao filmmakers to apply for small grants to help make their film projects possible. This year, a $25,000 USD contribution from Oxfam allowed projects to receive more funding than ever before. The 2018 grantees were the following projects:

1. **You and I Are Friends Forever**  
   Director: Somchit Kittisak  
   Two young boys from a poor Khmu village apply to become Novice monks, but only one is able to remain in the city, while the other must return to the village.

2. **Expiration Date**  
   Director: Vannaphone Sithirath  
   A young man ends his engagement with his fiancé, and takes a road trip with the fiancé’s vengeful best friend in Vang Vieng.

3. **Raising a Beast**  
   Director: Xaisongkham Induangchanthy  
   Two Hmong siblings with diverging destinies are responsible for grooming a bull.
into a prize fighter that will earn the family money and honor.

#IWTMekong
This summer, the UK Government and LPFF, in cooperation with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), called upon Mekong region filmmakers to raise awareness about illegal wildlife trade through short films. The Mekong region is a perfect storm: a source, transit route, and final destination for many of the world’s most valuable and threatened wildlife species. This multi-million dollar trade significantly threatens the survival of endangered species, positioning Southeast Asia among the most critically affected regions in terms of severity and volume of wildlife trafficking. After posting 10 videos on LPFF’s Facebook for the Viral competition, along with two additional winning videos, LPFF was able to spread awareness of this issue to 5,205,248 Facebook users.

Ambassador for Your Country
On the occasion of Visit Laos Year 2018, LPFF teamed up with the Skills for Tourism Project (LAO/029), the Technical and Vocational Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Sports to present a short film competition to celebrate the Lao tourism and hospitality sector. The tourism/hospitality sector is one of the most important in Laos, offering varied and interesting education/training opportunities that equip young people with the skills for a diversity of jobs in the sector. Judging from recent trends, the industry is expected to grow further in the coming years. With more international visitors to the country, people working in hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, tourist attractions and so on have the opportunity to introduce visitors to Laos’ unique culture and way of life.

Finding a VOICE through Film
LPFF was selected by Oxfam International as the only recipient of its Innovate and Learn grant, as part of its new Voice program. Our full $70,000 USD grant was approved by the NGO. Through this project, LPFF held educational events and created opportunities throughout the year for Lao filmmakers that focused on expression, exposure and training.

In order to promote these goals of expression and exposure, LPFF selected and funded filmmakers for Many Voices, One Laos, a short program that showcases the voice and experience of one of the following groups within the Lao community: the young, the elderly, indigenous, LGBTI, disabled, and women.

LPFF also hosted two training opportunities for young filmmakers. Throughout 2018, LPFF led seven “How to Tell a Story” workshops that introduced basic analytical concepts of
storytelling in film to young people currently working with video. Critical viewship, analysis, and storytelling concepts are rarely taught in Lao schools, and LPFF aims to begin to fill that gap with this series. In July 2018, LPFF also organized a weeklong “Developing Skills” training for the Lao Children’s Workshop, a young filmmaking team from the Luang Prabang Orphanage School. Led by an experienced filmmaker from Vientiane with assistance from two Luang Prabang filmmakers, the filmmaking team learned how to conceptualize and plan short film projects.

In addition to these projects, LPFF worked alongside Luang Prabang’s @ My Library to produce the video series Take a Closer Look. These videos offer visualizations of basic physics concepts in order to assist Lao teachers in teaching a subject that is difficult for students to learn without visual aids.

**Festival Coordinators**

In July, the LPFF team gained two new members: Alex Curran-Cardarelli and Amanda Silberling. Both Alex and Amanda are working for LPFF through Princeton in Asia, a highly competitive fellowship program that matches people with job opportunities across Asia.

Alex Curran-Cardarelli graduated from Denison University with a degree in creative writing and art history, and she brings valuable arts-related press, communications, and writing experience to the festival team. Before joining LPFF, she worked as an editorial intern at CityScene Magazine, and as a Helen L. Yeakel Research Scholar at Denison University. Since moving to Luang Prabang, Alex has helped to boost press, sponsorship, and social media following.

Amanda Silberling is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where she studied literature, creative writing, and fine arts. After working to develop artistic communities at the Kelly Writers House and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Amanda joins the LPFF team with the goal to encourage filmmaking as a tool for diverse storytelling. Her short film "We’re Here, We’re Present: Women in Punk" premiered on VICE and screened internationally as part of Cineteca Madrid’s "Mujeres Hechas de Punk" program. As a community organizer and activist, her work has been featured in The New York Times, Buzzfeed, Teen Vogue and others.

**2019 Festival**

Pending official approval from the Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism, we plan to hold our ninth festival in the beginning of December 2019. We have some fantastic new sponsors already on board, and we are looking forward to expanding the relationships we have with several existing ones. As always, we will work to grow our network, creating more and more opportunities for regional filmmakers to connect and exchange, while also continuing to develop the capacity of the Lao film industry.

Thank you very much for your support!

Gabriel Kuperman
Founder and Director