THE AUTHENTIC AND THE POETIC

Documentaries made by students of the Yangon Film School in 2010

Since its inception in 2005, the non-profit organisation Yangon Film School has brought together experienced international practitioners from around the world and young Burmese men and women for regular residential trainings in all aspects of filmmaking – from screenwriting to editing – with a particular emphasis on documentary.

Inspired by workshops dedicated to the art of editing and the notion of film as a poetic medium, this double-DVD edition of short documentaries reflects its makers’ bid to broach not only different topics but also different styles of filmmaking.

The Authentic Visions on DVD 1 comprise gritty portraits and keenly observational works, while the short films on DVD 2 reveal how YFS students responded to the challenging task of Finding Poetry in Everyday Life. The collection is rounded off by a short film About the 2010 Editing Workshops featuring comments from tutors and participants on this most visceral aspect of filmmaking.

In 2010 the Yangon Film School Workshops were supported by:

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DVD PAL | 4:3 Letterbox / 16:9 Anamorphic | English Subtitles | Approx. 144mins
Dreaming in Colour

Director/Cinematography/Sound: Eh Mwee and Khin Khin Hsu, Editor: Zaw Win Htwe, Editing Mentor: Regina Bärtschi

Duration: 7’

A group of male workers at a batik dyeing factory: their dreams of winning the lottery are as vibrant as the colourful patterns they create on the printing screens.

Made during the 2005 YFS workshop filmmaker Eh Mwee’s portrait of a Yangon waitress A Day with Aye Nan Lin was one of the first YFS films to be broadcast on MRTV. Eh Mwee also directed and edited the NGO-commissioned work Respectful Encounters, which appears on the YFS DVD Stories from Myanmar 2010.

Since joining YFS in 2009 Khin Khin Hsu, a graduate of the University of Culture’s cinema studies course, has tried her hand at cinematography, directing and editing—a craft for which she exhibits a particular talent, inherited perhaps from her father, the well-known editor U Ohn Maung. She is the director of the short drama The Bamboo Grove, which can be found on the DVD True Fictions 2010.

Falling Blossoms

Director/Cinematography/Sound: Su Su Thaing Win, Mya Darli Aung, Sound Recordist/Editor: Hnin Ei Hlaing

Editing Mentors: Regina Bärtschi, Melanie Sandford, Project Mentor: Rachel Mathews

Duration: 5’49”

Images of a group of kindergarten toddlers at play and at rest are accompanied by the voices of two elderly people musings about love, death and friendship.

Su Su Thaing Win came to YFS as a screenwriting student in 2008 after having attended film courses at the Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation and the University of Culture. Her prowess as a cinematographer first came to the fore on the 2009 work Charcoal Boy. She is currently working as a Production Manager for Myanmar International Channel.

SAE graduate Mya Darli Aung has been a YFS student since 2007, during which time she has worked as a cinematographer or sound recordist on a number of YFS productions (Water Boy, My Positive Life, Stigmatize This!). Having also been a student camera trainer during the 2009 Beginners course, Darli was ready in 2010 to take up the challenge of photographing the short drama The Bamboo Grove (on the DVD True Fictions 2010) using a Canon EOS HD camera.

About the Editing Workshops

Camera and Sound: Students of the Yangon Film School, Editor: Regina Bärtschi

Duration: 13’32”

Many of the documentaries on these two DVDs emerged as a result of Yangon Film School workshops held in 2010 devoted to the art of editing. In this short film, course participants and tutors comment on the pleasures, frustrations and hard work involved in creating engaging films in the edit room.

DVD 1: Authentic Visions

The Game

Director: Okkar, Cinematographers: Aung Ko Ko, Pe Maung Same, Sound Recordist: Nyi Zaw, Han Linn Aung

Editor: Zaw Win Htwe, Editing Mentor: Stewart Young, Project Mentor: Aung Ko Ko

Duration: 25’

The cut and thrust of Myanmar kickboxing—as seen by four of its proponents. As title defender Saw Nga Mann and challenger Yan Gi Aung prepare to face each other in the ring, the game’s promoter, the referee and the two opponents mull over the sport’s attractions and dangers.

Maung Okkar’s film career began at the age of 14 when he starred in Dat-khe, a feature film directed by his father—the celebrated Burmese filmmaker U Illuma. Made during a YFS workshop in 2009, Okkar’s first documentary Charcoal Boy screened at several international film festivals. The Game marks his second work as a director.

On Holiday

Director and Editor: Shin Daewe, Cinematographer: Thu Thu Shein, Sound Recordist: Hnin Ei Hlaing

Editing Mentors: Melanie Sandford, Regina Bärtschi

Duration: 19’

Devotees of the centuries-old Ananda pagoda festival in Bagan wouldn’t miss this annual event for anything. A deeply felt observation of rural festival-goers as they spend four days relaxing, browsing, shopping and making donations.

Shin Daewe began her film career as an assistant producer at AV Media. Since joining YFS in 2006 she has created a number of films for NGOs such as Pyoe Pin, PSI and Metta Development Foundation. Her own projects include a portrait of the painter Rahula An Untitled Life and Robe (on DVD 2). She is currently working on a film about Myanmar’s recent election entitled The Collector.

Unreported Story

Director/Cinematographer: Lay Thida, Sound: Ei Nanda Phway, Editor: Eh Mwee

Editing Mentors: Jessica Ehlebracht, Regina Bärtschi

Duration: 12’

A shocking tale of routine domestic abuse in rural Shan State. Twenty-two year old Aye Piwnt describes her sad existence caught between a violent step-father and an indifferent mother.