TRUE FICTIONS 2010

Two docu-fiction films made by students of the Yangon Film School

In 2010, Yangon Film School students were invited to explore further the intriguing crossover between documentary and fiction filmmaking. The result is two short fiction films informed by the School’s strong documentary ethos. Both films were shot using non-professional actors in real locations in Myanmar; both are based on personal stories experienced by the screenwriters.

Having worked independently during a four-month period to develop the screenplays, find locations, audition non-actors and budget and schedule their films, YFS students set off during the November True Fictions II Workshop to film their projects in genuine locations in the Delta and within the Chin community of Yangon.

This DVD showcases both of the resulting films: The Bamboo Grove is an engaging drama about a young Yangon doctor who comes into conflict with traditional Kayin ideas about medicine, and Bungkus – the first drama ever to be made in Hakha Chin – is a poignant love story inspired by the ‘parcel’ phenomenon where young girls are sent to marry men abroad. Both works provide a rare and fascinating insight into life in Myanmar.

The DVD also includes a short film About the 2010 True Fictions Workshop in which participants and mentors describe the joys and challenges of creating fiction in a documentary setting.

In 2010 the Yangon Film School Workshops were supported by:

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DVD PAL | 16:9 Anamorphic | English Subtitles | Approx. XX mins
TRUE FICTIONS 2010
Two docu-fiction films made by students of the Yangon Film School

The Bamboo Grove

Director: Khin Khin Hsu, Screenwriter: Aung Min, Cinematographer: Mya Darli Aung
Sound Recordist: Kyaw Myo Lin, Producer: Shin Daewee
Assistant Director: Su San Zaw Win, Location Manager: Lu San
Camera Assistant: Pe Maung Same, Gapper Loader: Han Linn Aung, Editor: Hnin Ei Hlaing
Project Mentors: Rachel Mathews, Lars Barthel, Ivan Horák, Helke Madry, Regina Bärtelschi

Duration: XX mins

A naïve young city doctor’s first job out of medical school is a posting to a rural Kayin community in the Delta. Visiting his patients by boat, the doctor comes into conflict with traditional Kayin ideas about medicine in the form of U Kee Yo, an old man determined to remain in his beloved bamboo grove. The story is inspired by screenwriter Aung Min’s own experiences as a doctor amongst the Kayin people in the Ayeyawaddy Delta.

First-time director Khin Khin Hsu trained as cinematographer during the 2009 YFS Beginners’ Workshop and proved herself to be a talented and sensitive editor on various YFS projects in 2010 including the warmly observational Thursday’s Child. She grew up in a film environment and perhaps inherited her filmmaking talent from her father, the well-known Burmese editor U Ohn Maung.

Screenwriter Aung Min graduated as a medical doctor but is also a professional writer with prose stories ‘Bad Night’ (1999), ‘I Came To This Town On Assignment’ (2003) and ‘Incomplete Diary’ (2005) published in the Myanmar language. Since joining a YFS Screenwriting Workshop in 2006 and a FAMU workshop in the same year, several of his scripts have been turned into short films in Myanmar and the Czech Republic. In 2010, Aung Min directed a documentary The Clinic, about his own Yangon medical practice. He is currently developing a feature-length screenplay with YFS filmmaker The Maw Nang.

Bungkus

Director & Producer: Lay Thida, Screenwriter & Production Manager: Anna Biak Tha Mawi
Cinematographer: Kyaw Ko Ko, Sound Recordist: Hnin Ei Hlaing
Assistant Director: Khin Myo Myat, Camera Assistant: Lars Barthel, Editor: Khin Khin Hsu
Project Mentors: Rachel Mathews, Lars Barthel, Ivan Horák, Helke Madry, Regina Bärtelschi

Duration: XX mins

‘Bungkus’ is the Malay word for ‘parcel’, the name given to young women sent abroad to marry a man they may never have met so they can send money back to their families in Myanmar. Set in the Chin community of Yangon, the story follows Zing Zing whose tenderly flowering relationship with local boy Asang is threatened when her mother decides she must become a ‘parcel’. The film’s end is inspired by a real-life tragedy within the Chin community.

Born in Kayah State in eastern Myanmar, director Lay Thida joined YFS in 2005. Her first film, Just a Boy, screened at international film festivals. She has directed four films for clients in the development sector (The Change Maker, A Farmer’s Tale, Listen to Us and The Long Way Home). 2010 was a particularly busy year for Lay Thida: she also made two documentaries, Unreported Story and Wrong Side Up, the latter produced during a ten-week course at the UK’s National Film and TV School. Lay Thida is co-founder of the NGO Better Life which has projects in the Ayeyawaddy Delta and Rakhine State.

Screenwriter Anna Biak Tha Mawi is a Chin national from Hakka who now lives in Yangon where she is studying English Literature at the Myanmar Institute of Theology. Her poems and short stories have appeared in Chin magazines and her paintings and photographs have been shown in group exhibitions at the V30 Art Group and the New Zero Art Space. Anna joined a YFS Screenwriting Workshop in 2009 when she wrote early drafts of Bungkus. She would like to develop a feature-length version of this story once she has completed her University studies.