

Asian Film Festival 2007: Southeast Asian Popular Cinema

November 9-10, 2007

Boardman's Art Theatre

126 W. Church Street

Champaign, Illinois

Free and Open to the Public

Seating will be first come, first served, and theater will be cleared between screenings. Presented by the [Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies](#) and the Asian Educational Media Service. Special thanks to our [co-sponsors](#).



[Download Program](#) (1,598 KB)



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Screening Schedule

Friday, November 9

7:00 p.m. [Love For Share](#) (Indonesia)

9:45 p.m. [Citizen Dog](#) (Thailand)

Saturday, November 10

9:00 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. [Educator Workshops](#): Teaching about the Khmer Rouge: Cambodia (1975-1979) and Islamist Dreams, Women's Realities in Southeast Asia

1:00 p.m. [Out of the Poison Tree](#) (USA/Cambodia)

2:30 p.m. [Milan](#) (Philippines)

6:00 p.m. [Sepet](#) (Malaysia)

8:30 p.m. [Singapore Dreaming](#) (Singapore)

The Films:



Love for Share (*Berbagi Suami*)

Indonesia, 2006

Directed by Nia Dinata

120 min. in Bahasa Indonesian with English subtitles

Friday, November 9 - 7:00 p.m.

Suppressed in previous decades, polygamy is on the rise again in Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, and has become a hot social issue, with politicians and celebrities publicly admitting to taking multiple wives. Love For Share brings to life three very different stories of polygamy, from three very different women's perspectives.

In the first story, Salma (Jajang C. Noer), a Muslim gynecologist, tries to live in denial as her politician husband takes his second, third, and fourth wives. A health crisis brings them all together and forces her to evaluate her own life. In the second story, Javanese village girl Siti (Shanty) arrives in metropolitan Jakarta at her uncle's invitation, planning to attend beauty school. After moving in with him, his two wives, and their children, Siti realizes that he has other intentions and soon finds herself his third wife. The third story revolves around Ming (Dominique), a Chinese-Indonesian waitress and aspiring actress whose beauty draws the attention of customers as well as her married boss. Director Nia Dinata, whose previous film *Arisan!* was acclaimed for its boldness in presenting positive gay characters, here brings a nuance to a complex issue.

[View Trailer.](#)

Film Website: <http://www.kalyanashira.com/berbagisuami/eng.htm>

Awards:

- Best Feature Film, 2006 Hawaii International Film Festival
- Indonesia's submission for the 79th Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, 2007
- Silver Award, 11th Lyon Asian Film Festival, France 2006
- Best Movie, MTV Indonesia Movie Awards 2006
- Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, and Best Film, Jakarta Film Festival 2006
- Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Art Director, and Best Actress, Bandung Film



Citizen Dog (*Mah Nakorn*)

Thailand, 2004

Directed by Wisit Sasanatieng

100 min., in Thai with English subtitles

Friday, November 9 - 9:45 p.m.

This quirky, surreal comedy follows country boy Pod (Mahasamut Boonyaruk) as he tries to make his way in Bangkok. He finds work in a sardine cannery, loses his finger, finds someone else's finger, befriends a zombie, becomes a taxi driver for a foul-mouthed little girl with a whiskey-drinking teddy bear, and meets his grandmother reincarnated as a gecko. Along the way he encounters the love of his life in Jin (Saengthong Gate-Uthong) an office maid obsessed with recycling plastic bottles. Hyper-saturated, kaleidoscopic color punch the visuals, while Thai indie rock bands Modern Dog and Saliva Bastard provide the catchy soundtrack. Citizen Dog's sly social commentary and unique, surrealistic style have garnered praise; its whimsicality and clever editing has inspired comparisons with Jean-Pierre Jeunet's *Amelie*.

[View Trailer.](#)

Awards:

- Best visual effects, 2004 Thailand National Film Association Awards.
- Silver Prize for Most Groundbreaking Film and Bronze Prize for Best Asian Film at the 2006 Fantasia Festival.
- Critics prize, 2005 Deauville Asian Film Festival
- Named one of the Top 10 Best Films of 2005 by Time magazine film critic Richard Corliss.



Out of the Poison Tree

USA/Cambodia, 2006

Directed by Beth Pielert

56 min., in English and Khmer with English Subtitles

Saturday, November 10 - 1:00 p.m.

On the eve of the long-awaited Khmer Rouge trial, an American survivor of the genocide returns to Cambodia hoping to unlock the mystery of her father's disappearance in 1975. Thida Buth Mam's quest intersects with many silent voices: widows, survivors from remote villages, monks and even former perpetrators. Her search for the truth stirs up the fractured pieces of one family's nightmare, unearths an unimaginable heartbreak and ultimately shines light on a people's broken silence.

[View Trailer](#)



Milan

Philippines, 2004

Directed by Olivia M. Lamasan

135 min., in Tagalog, Italian and English, with English Subtitles

Saturday, November 10 - 2:30 p.m.

Charming and naïve Lino (Piolo Pascual) leaves his family in the Philippines when he realizes that his wife, working illegally in Italy, has gone missing. When he arrives in Milan, Lino meets Jenny (Claudine Barretto), who shows him the ropes. Self-assured

and driven, Jenny is the anchor of the local community of Filipino migrant workers; she helps people find housing and jobs, as they struggle to make ends meet and send money home. And she helps Lino look for his wife. As Lino and the others stay on in Milan, their goals and dreams shift, their ties to the Philippines change, and new relationships develop among them. Documentary-like interviews with migrant workers in Italy are interspersed, revealing the harsh realities and ambiguities of their situation. At the same time, Filipino stars Pascual and Barretto give the film a glamorous lift, as the camera sweeps through Italy's scenic beauty.

[View Trailer](#) (trailer does not have English subtitles--our apologies)

Awards:

- Best Actor (Piolo Pascual), Best Actress (Claudine Barretto), Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences (FAMAS) Awards 2005
- Best Actress (Claudine Barretto), Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP) Awards 2005
- Best Editing, Gawad Urian Awards 2005



Sepet

Malaysia, 2005

Written and Directed by Yasmin Ahmad

102 min., in Malay, Hokkien, Cantonese, and English, with English subtitles

Saturday, November 10 - 6:00 p.m.

When Jason (Ng Choo Seong) meets Orked (Sharifah Amani) at the street market where he sells pirated videos for a living, the attraction is immediate. The two come from different social worlds – she is middle class, Muslim, Malay, headed for academic success and an overseas scholarship; he is ethnically Chinese, working class, entangled in gang politics – but none of that seems to matter as they get to know each other and fall deeply in love. “Sepet” is Malay for “single eyelid,” but pejoratively it means “slit eyes,” and is an ethnic slur against Chinese in Malaysia. Yasmin Ahmad's second in a series of films about the character Orked makes a plea for tolerance, as it exposes some of the tensions and inequalities in multi-ethnic Malaysian society in this moving story of intense first love.

Director's notes (from Yasmin Ahmad's blog):

<http://yasminthetoryteller.blogspot.com/2004/08/sepet-notes-from-writerdirector.html>

Awards:

- Best Asian Film Award, 18th Tokyo International Film Festival, 2005
- Grand Prix, Creteil International Women's Film Festival 2005
- Best Film, Best Original Screenplay, Best Poster, Best Supporting Actress (Ida Nerina), Most Promising Actor (Choo Seong Ng), Most Promising Actress (Sharifah Amani), 2005 Malaysian Film Festival]
- Gold Award Winner, 9 th Malaysia Video Award, 2004



Singapore Dreaming (*Mei Man Ren Sheng*)

Singapore, 2006

Directed by Colin Goh and Yen Yen Woo

105 min., in Mandarin, Hokkien, and Cantonese Chinese and English with English subtitles

Saturday, November 10 - 8:30 p.m.

"The 5Cs"—cash, credit card, car, condo and country club—are the stuff of Loh Poh Huat (Richard Low)'s dreams, but his salary as a lawyer's clerk will hardly suffice. The entire Loh family face frustration and dissatisfaction as they try to "make it," Singapore style. Poh Huat's son (Dick Su) has just returned from studying in the US but cannot find a job, while his daughter (Yeo Yann Yann) and her husband (Lim Yu Beng), pregnant with their first child, struggle for material success in low-level jobs they don't like. Their mother (Alice Lim Cheng Peng), meanwhile, has long since cast aside her own desires in order to be a good wife. When Poh Huat wins \$2 million in the lottery, the money seems like it will solve all of his family's problems, but it proves to be a mixed blessing to say the least. In the end, everyone must re-evaluate their goals in life. Singapore Dreaming is a poignant, yet darkly humorous story about a typical Singaporean family dealing with loss, ambition and the search for what really matters in life.

Directors Goh and Woo are the creators of Singapore's popular satirical website, TalkingCock.com. This film grew out of the enormously popular response to their 2000 essay "Paved With Good Intentions," in which they professed their disillusionment with Singaporean society's ideals for achieving happiness.

[View Trailer](#)

The essay: <http://singaporedreaming.com/blog/?q=node/6>

Film Website: <http://www.singaporedreaming.com/index.htm>

Awards

- Audience Award for Narrative Feature, 30th Annual Asian American International Film Festival, New York City 2007

- Best New Screenwriter, 2006 San Sebastian International Film Festival
- Nominee, Best Asian Film Award, 2007 Tokyo International Film Festival

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*Asian Educational Media Service and
The Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies Present:*

Asian Film Festival 2007: Southeast Asian Popular Cinema

November 9 - 10, 2007



Indonesia

Love For Share

Thailand

Citizen Dog

USA/Cambodia

Out of the Poison Tree

Philippines

Milan

Malaysia

Sepet

Singapore

Singapore Dreaming

Boardman's Art Theatre

126 W. Church Street
Champaign, Illinois



ILLINOIS
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Welcome!

On behalf of the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies (EAPS) and the Asian Educational Media Service (AEMS), welcome to our fifth annual Asian Film Festival.

In 2007 we feature Southeast Asian film for the first time, hoping to bring more attention to this fascinating region of the world. To reflect (at least on a small scale) the incredible diversity of Southeast Asia, films from several different countries have been selected by our Asian Film Festival Committee (see below)—feature films from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, and a documentary film on Cambodia—engaging many aspects of life in contemporary Southeast Asia.

Many of the international films that we have the opportunity to see here in the United States were created with the international film festival circuit heavily in mind. In this festival, we aim to bring you films that were created primarily for their home markets, where they have enjoyed popular success. These are films by and for Southeast Asians, which we hope will be equally appreciated in Central Illinois.

It so happens that all five feature films this year deal with issues of contemporary urban life in cosmopolitan Southeast Asia. Rapidly growing, modern cities are in fact a prominent feature of the region, crossroads for transnational, multiethnic, and rural-urban encounters, sites for negotiation of changing gender, class and national identities. It is also noteworthy that four of the five feature films, as well as the documentary film, were directed by women.

The Asian Film Festival is the result of the contributions of many individuals and organizations. Please see the lists of those who gave time and assistance on this page and our financial co-sponsors on the back page. We extend our warm thanks and appreciation to all of them, most especially the Asian Film Festival Committee.

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Tanya Lee
Program Director
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• Women's Studies, U of I
- Clark Cunningham, Professor
• Emeritus of Anthropology, U of I
- Ramona Curry, Assoc. Professor of
• English, Cinema Studies and Women's
• Studies, U of I
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- Nelly Van Doorn-Harder, Valparaiso University
- Lily Ann B. Villaraza, Northern Illinois University

Asian Film Festival 2007: Southeast Asian Popular Cinema

Friday, November 9

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7:00 p.m. Love For Share (Indonesia)

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9:45 p.m. Citizen Dog (Thailand)

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Saturday, November 10

9:00 a.m. Educator Workshops:

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Teaching about the Khmer Rouge: Cambodia (1975-1979)

Islamist Dreams, Women's Realities in Southeast Asia

1:00 p.m. Out of the Poison Tree (USA/Cambodia)

6

2:30 p.m. Milan (Philippines)

7

6:00 p.m. Sepet (Malaysia)

8

8:30 p.m. Singapore Dreaming (Singapore)

9

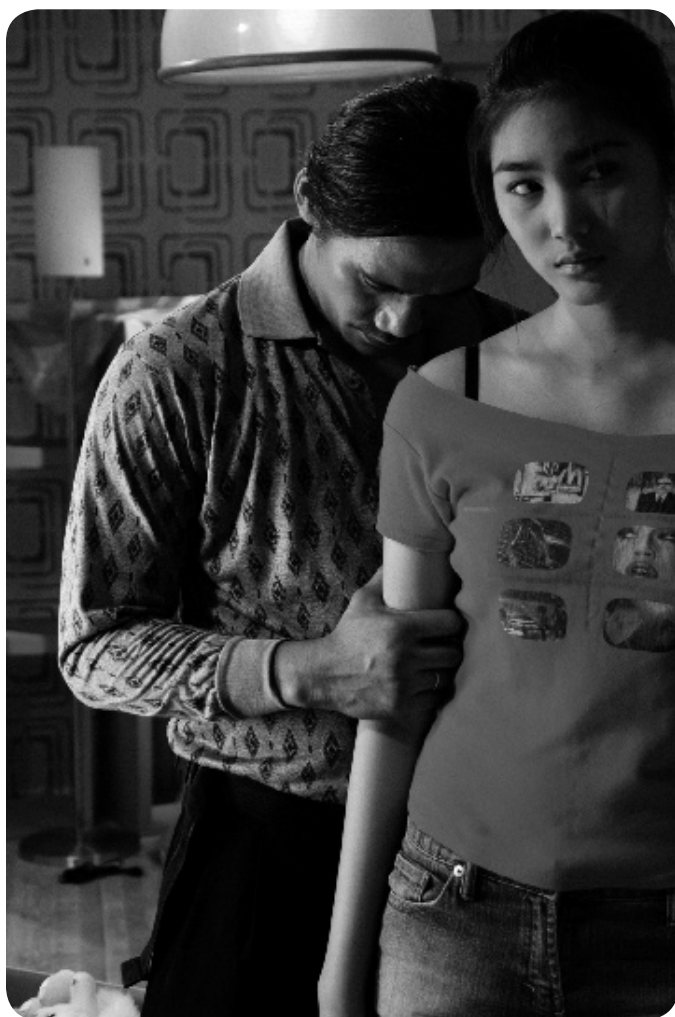


Love for

Share (Berbagi Suami)

Directed by Nia Dinata

Indonesia, 2006, 120 min.



In Indonesia, the fourth most populous nation in the world and the nation with the world's largest number of Muslims, polygamy is legal, and Islam allows one man to have four wives at a time. Polygamous marriage is not restricted to Muslims but is also found among non-Muslim Chinese, traditional communities, and even some Christians. Though still in the minority, polygamous unions are said to be increasing in recent years. They are found among social and educational elites as well as working people, and the practice is strenuously debated nowadays by the religious and by feminists.

The end of the autocratic regime of President Suharto in 1998 ushered in a new era of "reform" and democracy in Indonesia; freedom of expression now allows more open discussion of controversial topics and the film industry has experienced a rebirth. An example of such openness is this film, *Love for Share* (*Berbagi Suami* in Bahasa Indonesian, or "Sharing a Husband"). Its director, Nia Dinata, a woman, has dared to take on controversial issues such as homosexuality and polygamy in several of her acclaimed films, though she does not consider herself political or even courageous. In an interview, she said, "I've been observing polygamy in my country since I was in my preteen age. A lot of women in my family discussed it and I eavesdropped. I saw sadness in their eyes. I think as a woman director, I have a specific point of view about it. Especially in Indonesia polygamy is often discussed in the media from a male point of view." In this film her woman's perspective is clear, but she shows polygamy as a complex social phenomenon experienced differently by different women.

Now 37 years old, Nia took a film production program at New York University and was part of the French Cannes Young Directors Program. Since her directorial debut in 2001 with *Ca Bau Kan* (*The Courtesan*), she has directed two others and produced seven additional feature films. Several of her films have received both national and international awards and she now owns an independent production company, Kalyana Shira films, which produced *Love for Share*.

--Clark Cunningham is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Illinois



Like *Citizen Kane* (dir. Orson Welles, 1941), the classic movie that the English release title of *Mah Nakorn* (dir. Wisit Sasanatieng, 2004) playfully evokes, *Citizen Dog* depicts its characters sorting out what in life they most value. But the epic American drama and the whimsical Thai musical comedy have little else in common. A more literal translation of the Thai title --“Dog-opolis”-- more aptly captures both the film’s satiric tone and its focus on the challenges and small daily pleasures of cosmopolitan Bangkok. Trying to frame the film’s quirky originality in familiar terms, Western reviewers have compared *Citizen Dog* to Jean-Pierre Jeunet’s 2001 *Amelie*, but a more productive analogy might be to the French surrealist animated feature *Triplets of Belleville* (Sylvain Chomet, 2003): both capture the drive to survive in vividly memorable terms.

Citizen Dog

(Mah Nakorn)

Directed by
Wisit
Sasanatieng

Thailand, 2004,
100 min.

Citizen Dog, cont.

(continued from p. 5) Sasanatieng's second feature (following his parodic musical *Western Tears of the Black Tiger*) offers fresh visual and aural delights as we follow country boy Pod (Mahasamut Boonyaruk, known in Thailand as a rock guitarist) to Bangkok to make his way. His adventures begin when he loses a finger in a Chaplinesque work speed-up in a sardine cannery, then, in finding (and reattaching) it, meets a "finger buddy." He gradually makes other acquaintances who seem equally flummoxed but ultimately undefeated by urban life, including a zombie motorcycle taxi driver; a foul-mouthed 8-year-old girl (or is she 22?) and her whiskey-drinking teddy bear; and Pod's own grandmother, now reincarnated as a gecko.

He also encounters the love of his life in Jin, played by Saengthong Gate-Uthong, a young Thai model, here in de-glamorized guise. Like Pod, Jin has migrated to Bangkok from the countryside. While intently cleaning offices, Jin harbors vague ambitions about bettering her lot which Pod doesn't share; a young man without a dream, he is, in the film's terms, "without a tail." He just wants to soothe Jin's itchy arms and tell her how pretty she looks in her blue maid's uniform—inspiring the most entrancingly bizarre of the film's several musical numbers, performed by Bangkok passers-by and Thai indie rock bands Modern Dog and Saliva Bastard.

The film's trailer sardonically remarks on how "abnormal, lonely and cruel" life in Bangkok can be: Pod's powers of imagination and sensitive observation make it appear otherwise. You won't readily forget the film's hyper-saturated, kaleidoscopic color and unique computer animated imagery, nor its catchy soundtrack. Like as not, you'll leave the theater humming.

--Ramona Curry, Associate Professor of English, Cinema Studies and Women's Studies, University of Illinois

Out of the Poison Tree

Directed by Beth Pielert

USA/Cambodia, 2006. 56 min.



At seven years old, I remember sitting in a Hebrew school class reading about Anne Frank who perished in the Holocaust. We were told never to let the Holocaust happen again. It was 1977 and 13,000 miles away, the Holocaust was happening again, but instead of Eastern Europe, it was in Cambodia. Years later I met a former Nuremberg prosecutor who sparked a theme for a film: people who were creators of justice after a great injustice had occurred. After being introduced to one of the founders of the Yale Cambodian Genocide Studies Program at Yale University, in 1998 I began researching films that had been made about Cambodia and discovered many detailed accounts of the genocide, but none that explored the forgiveness and reconciliation process.

During the seven years that it took to make *Out of the Poison Tree* I traveled up and down Cambodia, cleared landmines with former Khmer Rouge cadres, listened to the stories of torture and starvation from monks who had been forced to disrobe and dozens of villagers who were brave and kind enough to talk to me about their experiences. All these people had one desire in common: they want to know how this happened and why.

--Beth Pielert, director, cinematographer, and editor

Milan

Directed by
Olivia M.
Lamasan
Philippines,
2004, 135 min.



FILIPINO DIASPORIC COMMUNITIES AND THE FILM MILAN

Filipinos are sojourners. From the designation of Las Islas Filipinas by the Spanish empire when the natives of the archipelago traveled into various parts of southeast and east Asia, to present day overseas workers spread out all over the globe, Filipinos have traveled long distances to seek their fortune and engage in trade to help improve the social and economic condition of those back home. Today, it is estimated that there are over 11 million people of Filipino descent outside of the Philippines (the majority of them, 4 million, reside in the United States). In 2006, it was estimated that there were half a million Filipinos legally living and working in Italy. The remittances that Filipinos overseas send back to their families in the Philippines totalled about \$14 billion in 2006, making up over 10% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

While the money sent back to the Philippines has improved the overall economic condition of the country, there have been both positive and negative ramifications upon the social and familial structures of Filipino society. Depression and feelings of loneliness and sadness amongst those who are abroad is coupled with the enormous pressure to send home balikbayan boxes filled with goods and money as a show of their faithfulness to the family. Families are broken and estranged as those abroad try to assuage their absence with material goods. The family, in turn, fills their homes with luxury items and spread the wealth across the extended family, showcasing of the success of their relative outside the Philippines as a show of that absent relative's continued commitment to the family.

--Lily Ann B. Villaraza, PhD student in History, Northern Illinois University

Milan is not the typical sort of Third World art film that circulates in the West. It's a big-budget production from Manila's commercial film industry. It stars a matinee idol. It is unabashedly melodramatic and populist. Perhaps "worst" of all, it has a cheesy English theme song. And yet *Milan* is arguably the best kind of Third World cinema: a film that marshalls craft, insight, affect and appeal to represent the hidden life of the global underclass.

Olivia Lamasan's film comes at a time when more than one out of every ten Filipinos is working abroad at any given time. The filmmaker's achievement lies in her ability to capture in the most mundane of events the painful contradictions haunting the migrant worker's experience of cosmopolitanism. In one scene, we observe Jenny (Claudine Barretto) in her routine of packing gifts for relatives back home. As she wraps the handbags and shoes snugly in plastic, they begin uncannily to resemble body bags—the emblems of her sacrificed life. In another scene, we see Lino (Piolo Pascual), a college graduate, tending to a lush vineyard, his presence and menial labor so calmly, painfully at home in the picturesque scene. His words from a different moment of painful epiphany supply non-simultaneous commentary to the scene: "Here in Europe," he cries, "a [Philippine] diploma puts you right in front of the crapper."

Milan registers Philippine society's changing attitude towards cosmopolitan mobility by modifying the conventions of the picaresque film. The images of beautiful Italy are tinged with the hues of melancholia rather than wonderment. Views of the Trevi fountain, the Spanish steps, the Venetian square function only as peripheral attractions. Characters move aimlessly around or past these landmarks in a striking image of the migrant worker's deceptively restricted mobility. Peregrinations of the sort that we witness in *Milan*—especially the harrowing leap across the Swiss border—trace narratives of globalization that are conveniently ignored by its beneficiaries in the First and Third Worlds. Such travel tales are nothing short of essential at a time when the members of a global underclass move in great numbers to places where hospitality towards their kind is scarcer than ever.

--José B. Capino, Assistant Professor of Cinema Studies and Gender & Women's Studies, University of Illinois



SEPET

Written and
Directed by
Yasmin Ahmad

Malaysia, 2005
102 min.

Sepet is not so much a realistic look at interracial relations in Malaysia as it is a gently subversive film that undermines Malay assumptions about ethnic identities and their historically strained relations. As the film begins we see the tender relationship between the ethnic Chinese boy Jason and his mother as he reads a passage from a Rabindranath Tagore poem entitled “The Judge” (1913).

*Say of him what you please, but I know my child's failings.
I do not love him because he is good, but because he is my little child.
How should you know how dear he can be when you try to weigh his
merits against his faults?*

The poem provides a warning to the viewer not to judge the film's characters for what they represent or even the actions they take, but to see them from the perspective of their loving parents. Indeed, the families of Jason and Orked, the young Malay girl Jason falls in love with, are not the ones who stand in the way of this relationship. Thus the movie is not a Romeo and Juliet tale of warring families, but rather an indictment of the wider institutional and economic disparity that threatens to tear these lovers apart. It is unfortunate that this message of tolerance and understanding was lost on the government censors who insisted that elements that were critical to ethnic Malays be edited out, while elements critical of ethnic Chinese were allowed to remain, thereby making the director seem more biased than she was.

Despite the cuts by the censors, *Sepet* maintains its humor and drama by not conforming to expectations. Time and again, stereotypes' racial assumptions are upended in this film as a way of saying “why not?”

Jason's mother guesses that the Tagore poem is by a mainland Chinese author, underscoring her own assumptions of cultural authority, but also providing the recurring message that other cultures can speak to us across social barriers. Similarly, when we are first introduced to the young Orked she is reading the Qur'an in prayer, demonstrating she is a good Muslim girl, but when she opens her closet, she reveals her infatuation with numerous pinups of Western-style pop singers. *Sepet* is not an exposé on Malay race relations but a daring wish for something better, something more mixed-up.

--Robert Petersen, Assistant Professor of Art, Theatre, and Asian Studies, Eastern Illinois University



Educator Workshops : Women and Islam Genocide in Cambodia

Saturday, Nov. 10, 2007

9:00am - 12:45 pm

Springer Cultural Center

Rm 207, 301 North Randolph, Champaign

- The Asian Educational Media Service (AEMS) is pleased to offer an opportunity for local educators—K-12 and beyond—to engage with Southeast Asian film as a tool to teach about culture and society. Registration is required. Free.

- 9:00 – 9:15 a.m. Registration (Springer Cultural Center)
- 9:15 – 10:15 a.m. Islamist Dreams, Women's Realities in Southeast Asia
- 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. Teaching About the Khmer Rouge: Cambodia (1975-1979)
- 11:45 – 12:45 p.m. Thai Lunch and Conversation
- 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Screening: *Out of the Poison Tree* (Boardman's Art Theatre)

● Workshop #1: Islamist Dreams, Women's Realities in Southeast Asia

- Nelly Van Doorn-Harder's presentation on woman and Islam in Southeast Asia will draw on two feature films: *Love for Share* (Indonesia, screens Friday at 7pm) and *Sepet* (Malaysia, Saturday at 6pm) Van Doorn-Harder is the Patheja Chair for World Religions and Ethics at Valparaiso University. Her studies of Islam in Southeast Asia and Christianity in the Middle East focus on gender studies, inter-faith issues, and contemporary daily practices. Before coming to Valparaiso University in January 1999, Van Doorn-Harder taught Islamic Studies at a university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and helped initiate an Institute for the Study of Religion and Inter-faith. Her recent publications include *Women Shaping Islam: Indonesian Women Reading the Qur'an* (University of Illinois Press, 2006).

● Workshop #2: Teaching about the Khmer Rouge: Cambodia (1975-1979)

- Judy Ledgerwood will present a workshop guiding educators on teaching about the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia, with reference to the documentary film *Out of the Poison Tree*. Professor Ledgerwood is a cultural anthropologist whose research interests include gender, refugee and diaspora communities, and the transnational movements of people and ideas. Her current research is focused on Cambodian Buddhism and ideas of cultural identity. Professor Ledgerwood's dissertation was on changing Khmer conceptions of gender in Khmer refugee communities in the United States. She teaches general cultural anthropology, anthropology and human diversity, history and theory of anthropology, women in cross cultural perspectives, Asian-American cultures, anthropology of gender, and peoples and cultures of mainland Southeast Asia at Northern Illinois University. Her new edited book, *At the Edge of the Forest: Essays on Cambodia in honor of David Chandler*, will appear from the Cornell Southeast Asian Studies Program in 2008.

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- to promote understanding of Asian cultures and •
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- in finding multimedia resources for learning and •
- teaching about Asia. •
- •

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Asian Film Festival 2007: Southeast Asian Popular Cinema

November 9-10, 2007



Friday, November 9

Love for Share (Berbagi Suami),
Indonesia, 2006

Directed by Nia Dinata, 7:00 pm, 120 min in Bahasa Indonesian

Suppressed in previous decades, polygamy is on the rise in Indonesia and is a hot social issue. Director Dinata brings nuance to three very different stories of polygamy: Salma, a Muslim gynecologist, tries to live in denial as her politician husband takes multiple wives; after moving in with her uncle, his two wives, and their children in metropolitan Jakarta, village girl Siti realizes that he intends her to be his third wife; and Ming, a Chinese-Indonesian waitress and aspiring actress whose beauty draws the admiration of customers as well as her married boss.

Citizen Dog (Mah Nakorn),
Thailand, 2004

Directed by Wisit Sasanatieng, 9:45pm, 100 min., in Thai

This quirky comedy follows country boy Pod as he tries to make his way in Bangkok. He loses his finger, finds someone else's, befriends a singing zombie, becomes a taxi driver for a foul-mouthed little girl with a whiskey-drinking teddy bear, and meets his grandmother reincarnated as a gecko. Along the way he encounters the love of his life in Jin, an office maid obsessed with recycling plastic bottles. Hyper-saturated, kaleidoscopic colors punch up the visuals, while Thai indie rock bands and choruses of passers-by provide the catchy soundtrack. Sasanatieng's second film delivers sly social commentary with unique, surrealistic style.

Educator Workshop:

Saturday, November 10, 9:00 am

Teaching the Cambodian Genocide with Documentary Film
Judy Ledgerwood, Anthropology, Northern Illinois University

Out of the Poison Tree Documentary Film Screening 1:00 pm
To register and for more information, see www.aems.uiuc.edu

Free and Open to the Public

All films subtitled in English

Boardman's Art Theatre
126 W. Church Street
Champaign, Illinois

Saturday, November 10

Milan, Philippines, 2004

Directed by Olivia M. Lamasan, 2:30 pm, 135 min., in Tagalog, Italian and English

Lino leaves the Philippines when he realizes that his wife, working illegally in Italy, has gone missing. Arriving in Milan, he meets Jenny, who shows him the ropes. Self-assured and ambitious, Jenny is the anchor of the local community of Filipino migrant workers, whose goals and dreams – and ties to the Philippines – shift the longer they stay. Interspersed documentary-like interviews with migrant workers in Italy reveal the harsh realities and ambiguities of their situation. At the same time, Filipino pop idols Piolo Pascual and Claudine Barretto in the leads add glamour to the film, as the camera sweeps through Italy's luscious scenery.

Sepet, Malaysia, 2005

Directed by Yasmin Ahmad, 6:00 pm, 102 min., in Malay, Hokkien, Cantonese, and English

When Jason meets Orked at the street market where he sells pirated videos for a living, their attraction is immediate. The two come from different social worlds – she is middle class, Muslim, Malay, headed for academic success and an overseas scholarship; he is ethnically Chinese, working class, entangled in gang politics – but none of that matters as they fall deeply in love. Ahmad's second in a series of films about the character Orked makes a plea for tolerance as it exposes some of the tensions and inequalities in multi-ethnic Malaysian society in this moving story of intense first love.

Singapore Dreaming (Mei Man Ren Sheng),
Singapore, 2006

Directed by Colin Goh and Yen Yen Woo, 8:30 pm, 105 min., in Mandarin, Hokkien, and Cantonese Chinese and English

"The 5Cs" – cash, credit card, car, condo and country club – are the stuff of Loh Poh Huat's dreams, but his salary as a lawyer's clerk will hardly suffice. The entire Loh family face frustration and dissatisfaction as they try to "make it" Singapore style. When Poh Huat wins the lottery, it seems their problems are solved, but it's a mixed blessing. In the end, everyone must re-evaluate their goals in life. Singapore Dreaming is a poignant yet darkly humorous story about a typical Singaporean family dealing with loss, ambition and the search for what really matters in life.

For more information, including trailers, see www.aems.uiuc.edu

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Co-sponsors: Unit for Criticism, Dept. of Anthropology, Dept. of East Asian Languages and Cultures, Unit for Cinema Studies, Dept. of Speech Communication, Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities, Dept. of Linguistics, Women and Gender in Global Perspectives Program, Program in Comparative and World Literature, Gender and Women's Studies