



NEWS RELEASE

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CAMBODIAN WINNER OF TROPFEST SOUTH EAST ASIA HEADS TO LA

Day-long Tropfest film workshop provides masterclass for hundreds of young filmmakers from region

PENANG/SINGAPORE: On January 25, young Cambodian filmmaker Sothea Ines claimed first prize at the inaugural Tropfest South East Asia (Tropfest SEA) short film competition, winning a trip to Los Angeles to participate in a five-day film immersion course with filmmakers from across the globe, supported by the Motion Picture Association (MPA).

Sothea Ines's film takes place in a children's camp during the Khmer Rouge regime. Five orphan boys collect grains of rice day by day to stave off starvation, but are eventually caught and punished by the camp commander. The seven-minute film is shot in monochrome, and is entirely without dialogue. Ines received her prize from Tropfest SEA judge and internationally-acclaimed director, Robert Luketic (*Legally Blonde*), together with President and Managing Director of MPA Asia Pacific, Mike Ellis, in front of an enthusiastic audience of around 4,000 at the Esplanade, Penang, Malaysia.

"This is so incredible! I can't believe I've won the first prize," said Ines. "This is a real opportunity for me to move forward in my career. I'm so excited to go to Hollywood – I think I am the first Cambodian Tropfest winner to go there, so I'm very honored and excited." Born in 1989, Sothea Ines is a final year student at the Department of Media and Communications of the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

Tropfest SEA's Managing Director Joe Sidek said, "Southeast Asia and its future filmmakers deserve a platform that showcases their talent to the rest of the world, and there is no better platform for short films than Tropfest. There is a great depth of creativity just waiting to be given an opportunity to be expressed, and we hope that this is the beginning of a journey for hundreds if not thousands of filmmakers from this region to experiment with their craft, tell stories dear to their hearts and discover an audience that will welcome them, not only across Southeast Asia, but across the globe. Our thanks go to the MPA for their support of these emerging filmmakers who are greatly encouraged to develop their skills and build a career in film. Short film in Southeast Asia has a bright future."

Mike Ellis said, "The Tropfest short film competition and associated Roughcut film workshop is the perfect contribution to the exciting creative developments taking shape in Southeast Asia right now. These emerging filmmakers offer fresh new voices to reflect the breadth of Asian cultures in the region, and Tropfest will provide a showcase and launching pad that will connect their stories to a growing audience. We treasure our close association with Tropfest around the world, and we are incredibly pleased to help support filmmakers with their budding careers. Congratulations to Sothea and all of the finalists on their ability to entrance the audience with their films, and we hope to see more of their work as they establish themselves in film."

As of January 26, the 12 finalist films including winning film *Rice*, will be available to view on the dedicated Tropfest SEA channel, www.viddsee.com/tropfestsea - powered by Asian short film platform Viddsee, the festival's first ever online screening partner. The public will be able to view and vote the films for the Audience Choice Award until voting closes on 9 February.

Derek Tan and Ho Jia Jian, co-founders of Viddsee said, "Tropfest SEA and Viddsee share the same vision to promote and build an exciting short film community within Southeast Asia. Tropfest SEA affords filmmakers an opportunity to tell their stories and follow their dreams – and we at Viddsee would like to support them by making these films available via our online platform giving the chance for more people to see them. This is a fantastic collaboration and one that puts the spotlight on filmmakers and makes it easier for the audience to enjoy their favourite short films."

On January 24, MPA and Tropfest co-sponsored Tropfest South East Asia Roughcut, which brought international directors, actors, and curators into conversation with one another on the subjects of filmmaking and storytelling, at the E&O Hotel, Penang. Curated by Programme Director Tan Bee Thiam, the event explored the current opportunities for filmmakers in the region, and provided filmmakers with a wealth of advice and knowledge.

Speakers and guests at the event included Adam Elliott (Academy Award winner, *Harvie Krumpet*), Saw Teong Hin (director of award-winning film *Puteri Gunung Ledang*), Glen Goei (award-winning film and theatre director, *Forever Fever*), Afdlin Shauki (writer, director, actor, *Anna and the King*), Gurmit Singh (actor, *Phua Chu Kang Pte Ltd*), Jason Van Genderen (filmmaker, winner of Tropfest New York), Robert Luketic (director, *21, The Ugly Truth & Legally Blonde*), Lulu Ratna (co-founder of Boemboe), Victor Silakong (director of the World Film Festival of Bangkok), Gabriel Kuperman (founder of Luang Prabang film festival), Ho Jia Jian & Derek Tan (founders of Viddsee), Pepe Diokno (director of *Engkwentro*), Sheron Dayoc (award-winning director of *Halaw*) and Bianca Balbuena (assistant director and producer, *Clash*).

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About Tropfest South East Asia:

Tropfest SEA joins the global Tropfest family spanning New York, Abu Dhabi, Sydney and New Plymouth in New Zealand. The short film competition is open to all citizens and residents of Asia; the free-to-attend film festival premieres in Penang, Malaysia in 2014, a celebration of short films, music and in support of the culture of storytelling and creativity.

The winner receives a USD10,000 cash award from Tropfest SEA and a five-day film industry immersion trip in Los Angeles sponsored by the Motion Picture Association. Tropfest SEA is supported by the National Film Development Corporation Malaysia (FINAS) and Malaysia Major Events, a division of Malaysia Exhibition & Convention Bureau under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. For more information, visit www.tropfest.com/sea.

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About the MPA:

Promoting & Protecting Screen Communities in Asia Pacific

The Motion Picture Association (MPA) and the Motion Picture Association International (MPA-I) represent the interests of the six international producers and distributors of filmed entertainment. To do so, they promote and protect the intellectual property rights of these companies and conduct public awareness programs to highlight to movie fans around the world the importance of content protection. These

activities have helped to transform entire markets benefiting film and television industries in each country including foreign and local filmmakers alike.

The organizations act on behalf of the members of the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc (MPAA) which include; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.; Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation; Universal City Studios LLC; Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures; and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. The MPA and the MPA-I have worldwide operations which are directed from their head offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. and overseen in the Asia Pacific by a team based in Singapore. For more information about the MPA and the MPA-I, please visit www.mpa-i.org.

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