

Signatory and advocate for the Uluru Statement from the Heart



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the country, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation where the conference is located, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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AFTRS

presents

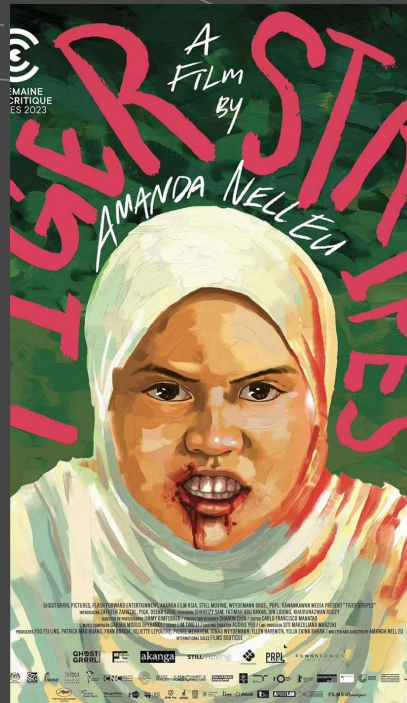
International Screen Media Finance and Policy Conference
12 June 2024 | 6:10pm - 6:30pm AEST

An Experiential Audiovisual Journey by



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A Colloquium on The Rise of Independent Filmmaking in Malaysia and the ultimate beneficiaries



Beta Test Run on 12 June 2024, 18:10 AEST / 16:10 MYT
Join us on YouTube LIVE “EQNFILMS”

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The rise of independent filmmaking in Malaysia resulting from innovative fundraising avenues



**Live Streamed from Gadigal Land of the Eora Nation in
Sydney, Australia and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

Background Music Copyright: Yasmin Ahmad Website



Session Promo (50 words)

A cohort of independent filmmakers from Malaysia are winning over international film festival juries and the media with their bold narratives. The films are genre-surfing and exploring cultural-isms like never before.

What is their secret and who is funding them? This tripartite colloquium features experts from government, industry and institutions.

An AFTRS Colloquium on The Rise of Independent Filmmaking in Malaysia Resulting from Innovative Funding Avenues



Moderated by
Jasmine H. Low

Producer & Director,
EQn Activation Film Studios

Master Arts: Screen Media Cohort 2024
Australian Film, Television & Radio School (AFTRS)



Moderator: Jasmine Low

Hi, I'm your moderator, Jasmine Low.

In 2009, I was featured in STYLE Magazine, and at the time, I was a strong advocate of independent music and even ran a music café and created a youth festival where we awarded a Hadi Koh 1st prize for his short film. I will be introducing you to Malaysia's independent filmmaking scene and together, we will unravel the secrets behind the successes of these independent filmmakers.

Penang-born Jasmine H. Low is a writer, producer & podcast host of three podcasts under the banner of AFT Podcasts. 'Listen by Heart Podcast' interviews women with heritage from countries surrounding the South China Sea and inspired by her mother Shirl. Jasmine juggles her creative escapades, while running a creative agency. A runner-up at the Motion Picture Association APAC Script-to-Screen Pitch Competition (Malaysia) 2019 for 'Kurang Manis', the documentary pivoted into a podcast. For a decade, she hosted 100+ music and spoken word events in Kuala Lumpur, co-created a digital youth festival supported by MDEC, brought 65 young Malaysian gamers, musicians, filmmakers and drone pilots to participate at international festivals. She created the Penang In-between Arts Festival, was a moderator at the Georgetown Literary Festival (2014-2015) and received a VIMA Hall of Fame Award in 2009 for her contribution to the independent music scene. Hence the pic!

An AFTRS Colloquium on The Rise of Independent Filmmaking in Malaysia Resulting from Innovative Funding Avenues

Welcome by Moderator, Jasmine Low

- The aim of this Colloquia is to understand **the drive** or 'the why', 'the how' and "the who" behind funding of independent, or indie filmmaking, the heart of filmmaking at its grassroots in Malaysia. We investigate from academia, industry and filmmakers.
- Who are the ultimate beneficiaries of such films?
- And are these innovative funding avenues proof-of-concept as a pathway for a new wave of independent filmmakers in Australia to fund their projects?

An AFTRS Colloquium on The Rise of Independent Filmmaking in Malaysia Resulting from Innovative Funding Avenues

Outcome

- **Outcome:** By the end of the colloquia, it is our hope that attendees will walk away with:
- An in-depth overview into the latest in independent filmmaking in Malaysia
- Academic analyses on the ultimate beneficiaries of such films
- Insights into the pathways of success taken by Malaysian independent filmmakers who have achieved significant global success, and how that can bring positive effects across international screen & media policies in Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

Summary

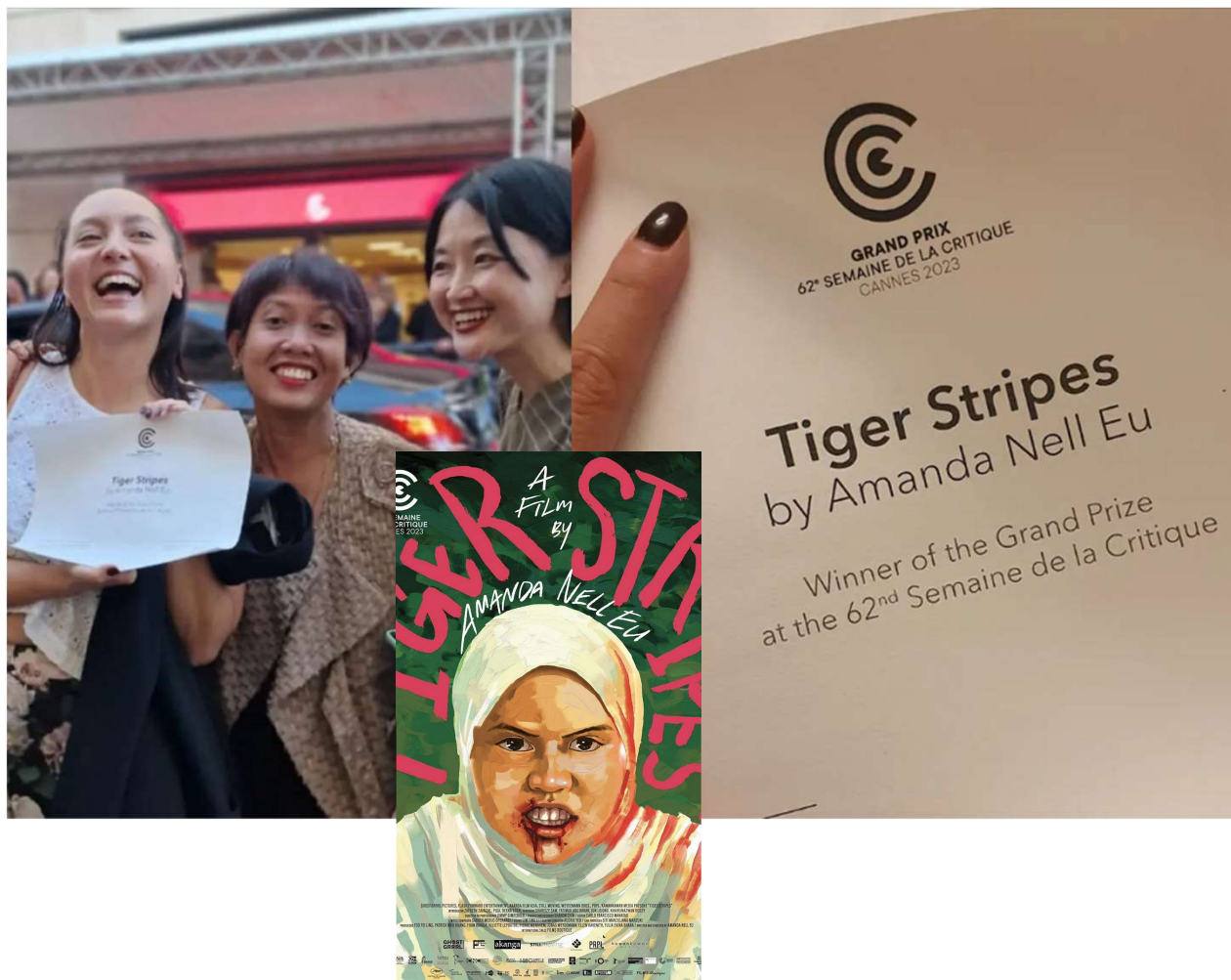
- Coming off the successes of independently made films like *Do the Right Thing* (Dir. Spike Lee, 1989), *Blair Witch Project* (Dir. Daniel Myrick/Eduardo Sánchez, 1999) and *Slumdog Millionaire* (Dir. Danny Boyle, 2008) which won the Best Picture award at the Oscars, Malaysia's filmmakers are finding their voices globally heard and appreciated before returning to their homeland to deal with critics.
- *This is due to the fact that their films circulate in the international '-scape' of global film culture rather than in the cinemas of their home countries, whether by choice or lack of opportunity (Baumgärtel 2012, 25)*
- Moderator **Jasmine Low** invites you in to explore why Malaysia's independent filmmakers are flourishing.



Image copyright: GRIM Films...

HOROLOGIST
GRIM Films Malaysia

Best Animation
San Diego
Comic Con 2023



Tiger Stripes' Malaysian director Amanda Nell Eu receives Women In Motion Emerging Talent Award



Amanda Nell Eu said she feels "incredibly honoured" to have received the award. PHOTO: ALFONSE CHIU

Image copyright:
(Left) Ghost GRRL Pictures
(Right) The Straits Times, Alfonse Chiu



AMIR MUHAMMAD

CO-PRODUCER

Malaysian publisher, filmmaker and occasional writer. His books as writer are *Rojak: Bite-Sized Stories*, *Yasmin Ahmad's Films* and *120 Malay Movies*. As publisher, his company *Buku Fixi* has published over 250 books since 2011, with a focus on urban pulp fiction. The film/TV rights to 7 of the books have been sold, and 4 have been released. He is a partner at *Da Huang Pictures*, which has created several award-winning films such as *Liew Seng Tat's Flower in the Pocket* and *Tan Chui Mui's Love Conquers All*. He is the founder of *Kuman Pictures*, which has completed 5 movies since being set up in 2018, including *Roh* which won Best Film at the 31st Malaysian Film Festival, and has been sold to Netflix worldwide and Shudder. Recipient of the Nippon Foundation's Asian Public Intellectuals grant 2004/5 to study independent film in Japan and Indonesia.

CLOSED

Pendatang Movie

A Malaysian thriller movie on the danger of racial extremism.



Kuman Pictures

1 Campaign | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

\$137,892 AUD

564 backers

128% of \$107,021 Fixed Goal

FOLLOW



- Film title: Pendatang (2023)
- Production Budget: A\$80,000
- Global Streaming via YouTube
- Produced by KUMAN Pictures

Image copyright: KUMAN PICTURES



Keynote Address

Amir
Muhammad



We begin with a pre-recorded message from Adjunct Prof. Hassan Muthalib (Taylors' University School of Media and Communication, "Malaysian Cinema: The Golden Age & The New Wave I Hassan Muthalib" – Source link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMHR80eZ5XE>

Film director, producer and founder of Kuman Pictures has produced multiple horror films/thrillers, including the Malaysian Academy Award entry "Roh". He is a founder of book publisher Buku Fixi and has published over 250 urban pulp fiction books since 2011. He is also a partner at Da Huang Pictures, where and award-winning film director and Malaysian Film Festival 2023 Best Actress Tan Chui Mui and produced multiple award-winning films. In 2022, Kuman Pictures raised a total of RM335,981 (A\$80,000) through the crowdfunding campaign on the platform, Indiegogo and released the film PENDATANG on YouTube for free viewing. The film has since garnered 2 million views.



UNIVERSITI MALAYA STUDIO: Guest 1, Guest 2, Moderator & Guest 3



**MODERATOR AT AFTRS
THEATRE, SYDNEY**

Session Structure

50-MINUTES LIVE-STREAMED PODCAST SESSION

TIME	DURATION	LOCATION	ACTIVITY	SPEAKER
18:00	3-MINS	AFTRS THEATRE	WELCOME & HOUSEKEEPING	JASMINE LOW
18:03	2-MINS	PRE-RECORDED	WELCOME TO COUNTRY	THOMAS MAYO
18:05	1-MIN	YOUTUBE LINK	INTRODUCTION TO MALAYSIA'S INDEPENDENT SCREEN INDUSTRY	JASMINE LOW
18:06	2-MINS	PRE-RECORDED	ORIGIN OF SCREEN INDUSTRY IN MALAYA	ADJ. PROF. HASSAN MUTALIB
18:08	5-MINS	ZOOM - KL STUDIO	KEYNOTE SPEAKER	AMIR MUHAMMAD
18:13	8-MINS	ZOOM - KL STUDIO	GUEST 1: ACADEMIA'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE ULTIMATE BENEFICIARIES OF FILM & TV CONTENT	DINA ZAMAN
18:21	5-MINS	ZOOM - KL STUDIO	GUEST 2: INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE ON THE SYMBIOSIS OF ART & COMMERCE, HOW BOTH CAN GO HAND-IN-HAND	DATIN ORKED AHMAD
18:26	3-MINS	PRE-PREPARED VIDEO	SCREENING OF TVC-MAYBANK & YASMIN AHMAD FILM TRAILERS	DATIN ORKED AHMAD
18:29	8-MINS	ZOOM - KL STUDIO	GUEST 3: FILMMAKER	AMANDA NELL EU
18:37	6-MINS	ZOOM - KL STUDIO	MODERATOR-LED QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION (GUESTS)	DR. ANN LEE
18:43	2-MINS	AFTRS THEATRE	QUESTIONS FROM AUDIENCE	JASMINE LOW
18:45	5-MINS	AFTRS THEATRE	CLOSING REMARKS	STEPHEN JENNER
18:50	1-MIN	AFTRS THEATRE	CLOSE	JASMINE LOW

An AFTRS Colloquium on The Rise of Independent Filmmaking in Malaysia Resulting from Innovative Funding Avenues

Session Format

In a 50-minute Podcast Talk Show streamed via YouTube Live, we will begin with an introductory session presented by a moderator followed by three different segments with an expert. This culminates in a Panel Q&A session with moderator-led questions for the experts and finally an audience Q&A before the session wraps.

Mechanics:

- Guests and Q&A Facilitator are seated in-person at a studio in Kuala Lumpur.
- Moderator will join via teleconferencing from AFTRS studio in Sydney.
- Live Audiences can interact via YouTube live chat.

YouTube Live Podcast Talk Show



RECORD



GO LIVE

An AFTRS Colloquium on The Rise of Independent Filmmaking in Malaysia Resulting from Innovative Funding Avenues

Academic Research into Filmmaking in Malaysia

- “...independent (“indie”) filmmaking in Malaysia, which, since 2000, has been spurred by the digital revolution... although invited to film festivals abroad and winning international accolades, independent films remain relatively unknown or unrecognized within Malaysia.
- In 2005–6 one local columnist in the Malay newspaper Utusan Malaysia even dismissed these film festivals as “mosquito festivals,” making Yasmin Ahmad’s double awards at the prestigious berlin International Film Festival even sweeter in 2007 (Hashim 2007). Indie filmmakers are also accused of “syiok sendiri” (making films to please themselves) - (Khoo, 2015)



Guest Speaker 1
(Academia)
Dina Zaman
MA in creative writing
Lancaster University

Part 1: Why is there a rise of independent filmmakers in Malaysia?

- We learn from Guest Speaker, Dina Zaman, author, researcher and founder of IMAN Research, a think tank focusing on socio-political and security matters, and a founding member of the Southeast Asian Women Peacebuilders who will discuss the theory behind the rise of independent films in Malaysia and right-wing politics.
- Dina is the author of three non-fiction titles - I am Muslim (Silverfish Publishing), Holy Men, Holy Women (SIRD) and Malayland. She was a recipient of the API Senior Fellowship (2012) and a recipient of the British High Commissioner Chevening Award (1998).
- Dina Zaman will question the ultimate beneficiaries of content such as films and television made in Malaysia by independent Malaysian filmmakers. Not all films have Malaysians as target audience and skip local theatrical release, bypassing clergymen. Are the films Malaysian enough for the beneficiaries? Do religious-themed films gain more funding from the film bodies like FINAS?

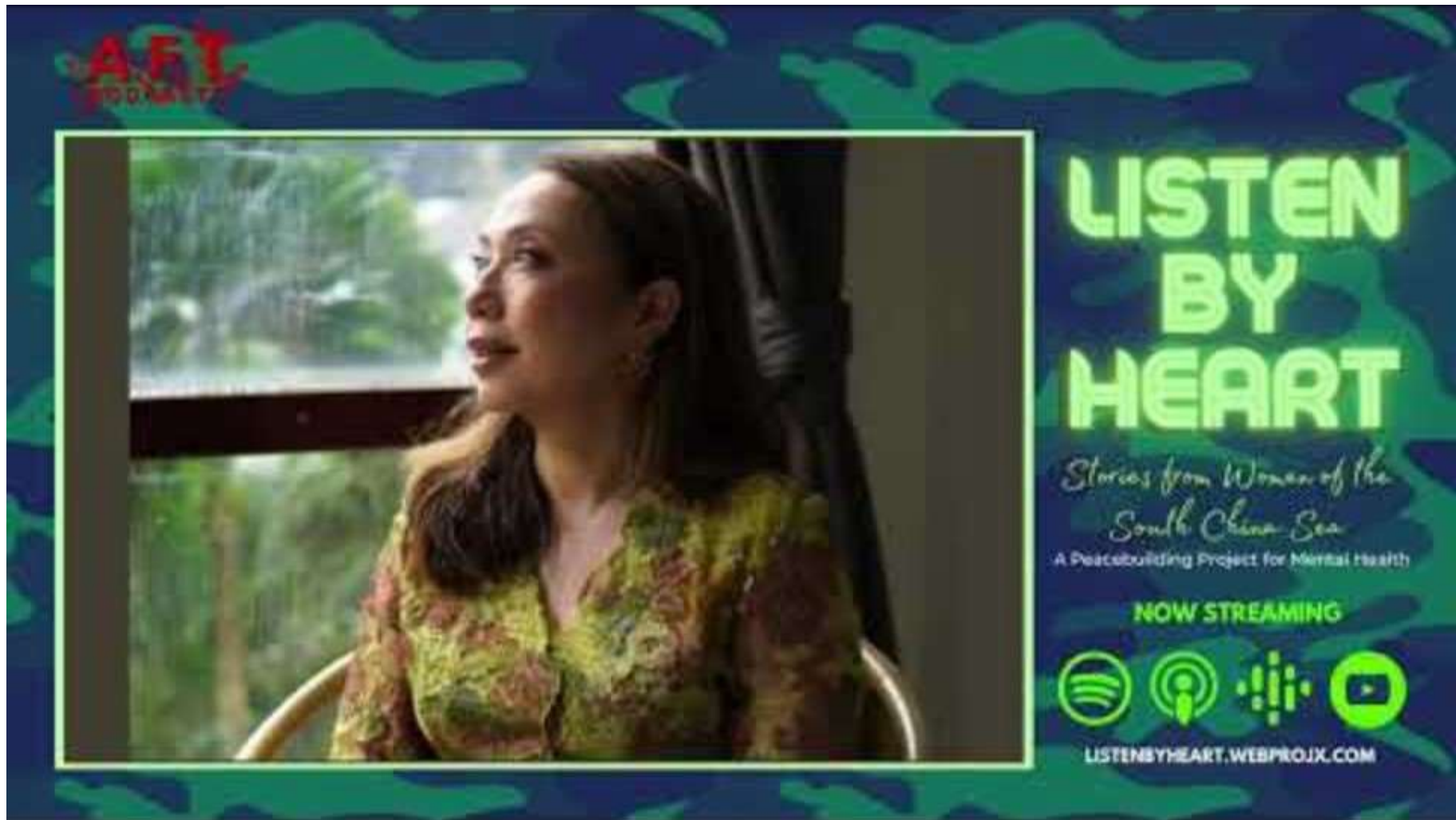


Image copyright: Dina Zaman, Video interview copyright Jasmine Low, Listen by Heart Podcast

Start at 41:20



Guest Speaker 2 (Industry) Datin Orked Ahmad

Part 2: How did the Industry Grow and How were they Funded?

- My sister was an advertising art director. Not just any ad maker. She turned a prolific film director. Her name, was Yasmin Ahmad.
- Lifting stories from our childhood, I concur with the author, [Stan van Hooft](#) of the book, “Cosmopolitanism: A Philosophy for Global Ethics Paperback – 30 May 2009, who said, “Yasmin adopts a consistent post-ethnic and cosmopolitan approach to storytelling, recognizing diversity without discriminating between nationality, ethnicity, religion, language, race or identity.
- Yasmin Ahmad sadly passed away in 2009 and I have represented and carried on her work via Yasmin at Kong Heng, a museum in Ipoh, Malaysia.
- In the next 5-minutes, allow me to share anecdotes and clips to offer you a warm introduction to Yasmin’s creative talent. In closing, I will share how she creatively produced and distributed her films.



**“Energy cannot be destroyed
it just takes different forms.”**

– Yasmin Ahmad

Image copyright: YasminAhmad.com Website



Video copyright: Maybank



Video copyright: Yasmin Ahmad Museum (Not for public screening)

- The Funeral by Yasmin Ahmad
- A Short Film featuring Jo Kukathas as Mrs. Li

An AFTRS Colloquium on The Rise of Independent Filmmaking in Malaysia Resulting from Innovative Funding Avenues



Filmmaker Guest Speaker: Amanda Nell Eu

MA, London Film School

- **Guest speaker (Filmmaker) Amanda Nell Eu**, Malaysian film director, writer and scriptwriter is known for her film *Tiger Stripes*, the 2023 Cannes Film Festival Critics' Week Grand Prize.
- We wish to discuss the *Tiger Stripes* journey of fundraising from eight different countries and what was offered to the investors who funded her film.

Film festivals promote a variety of independent and mainstream cinema art production, seeing their mission in keeping alive cultural alternatives to mass-marketed art consumption such as television and 'blockbuster' movie production (Stringer, 2003)

- We ask Amanda about Cash Rebate Incentives provided by government bodies such as the National Film Development Corporation Malaysia (FINAS) who introduced FIMI (Film in Malaysia Incentive) to provide financial incentive for the production of creative content within Malaysia, to encourage support for the Malaysian production industry and welcome foreign filmmakers to film in Malaysia. FIMI is offering a 30% cash rebate on all Qualifying Malaysian Production Expenditure (QMPE) of MYR 5 million (US\$1.2M) for production and post production. Did she get any of those funds?



Q&A Facilitator: Dr. Ann Lee

PhD Southeast Asia Studies (NUS)

- **Guest Facilitator Dr. Ann Lee**
- Former news broadcast journalist, Born in Tawau, Malaysia, Ann Lee is a playwright, researcher and lecturer. Her plays are published in *Sex, Stage & State: Kuali Works plays* (Parama Adhi Perkasa, 2011) and *Southeast Asian Plays* (Aurora Metro, 2016). She was Artistic Director of Kuali Works, an all-women theatre group, for over a decade, is immediate past Protem Chair of the Women Writers Committee, PEN Malaysia (chapter of PEN international). She is also a committee member of ReformARTsi, an independent coalition of over 100 Malaysian arts organisations and individuals, advocating reform in arts education, arts funding, and freedom of expression.

Tax Breaks & Incentives offered to filmmakers

- Dr. Ann Lee invites the panel of guest speakers to comment on how independent filmmakers can explore co-productions with international production houses in United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, to access these incentives.
- The National Film Development Corporation Malaysia (FINAS) has developed its incentive plans for content development specifically for film, television and other screen production. FINAS introduced FIMI (Film in Malaysia Incentive) to provide financial incentive for the production of creative content within Malaysia, to encourage support for the Malaysian production industry and welcome foreign film-makers to film in Malaysia.
- FIMI is offering a 30% cash rebate on all Qualifying Malaysian Production Expenditure (QMPE) of MYR 5 million (A\$1.5M) for production and post production.
- Qualifying Malaysian Production Expenditure (QMPE) of MYR 5 million (A\$1.5M) for production (inclusive of feature films, animated films and post production).

Source: [Malaysia - Production Link International Production Link International Brighton, UK](#)

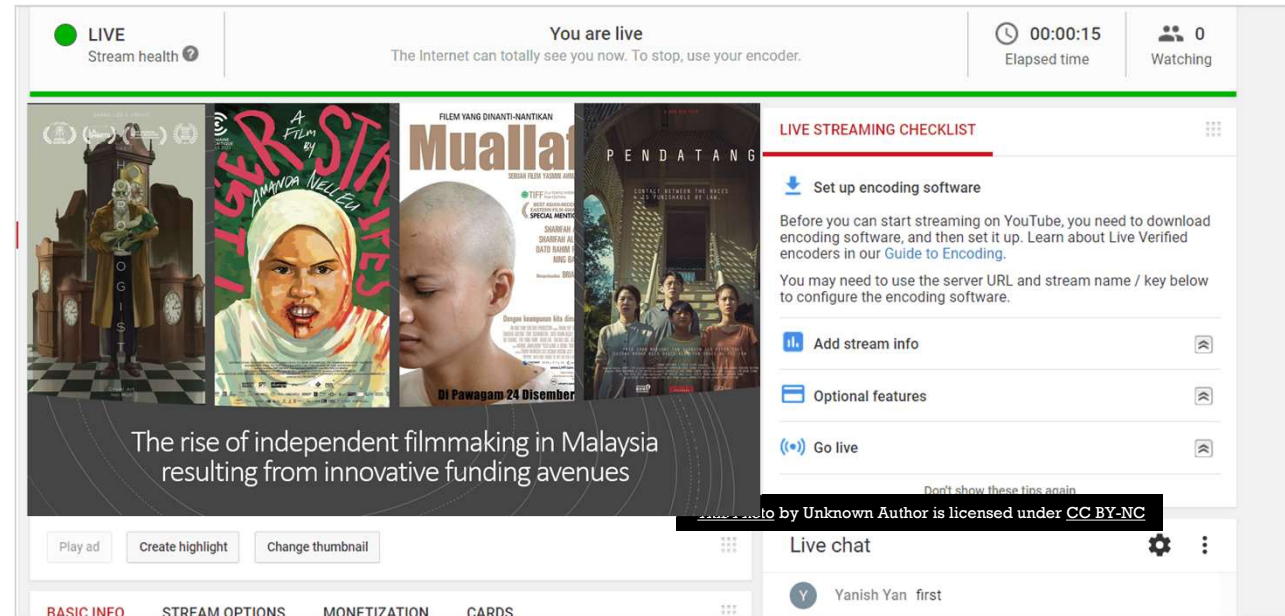


Closing Statement by Stephen Jenner

- **Stephen Jenner is the Vice President, Communications Asia Pacific at the Motion Picture Association Asia Pacific.** He oversees all communications, public relations and educational outreach projects for the MPA APAC, with the objective of promoting and protecting the commercial and creative interests of the MPA's member companies' studios and Asia's screen communities in the digital age. Stephen was Communications and Public Relations Advisor for the Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft (AFACT); and Public Relations Advisor for the Intellectual Property Awareness Foundation (IPAF). Stephen won the Australian Film Institute (AFI) Byron Kennedy Award in 2000 for establishing Inside Film Magazine and the Inside Film Awards. Stephen graduated from the University of Leicester in the UK with degrees in English and Philosophy.
- With his background in copyright protection and intellectual property, Stephen's closing statement will focus on how copyright protection of cultural stories shared by independent filmmakers is an important area, especially where production budgets are tight.

Image copyright: Stephen Jenner, IMDB

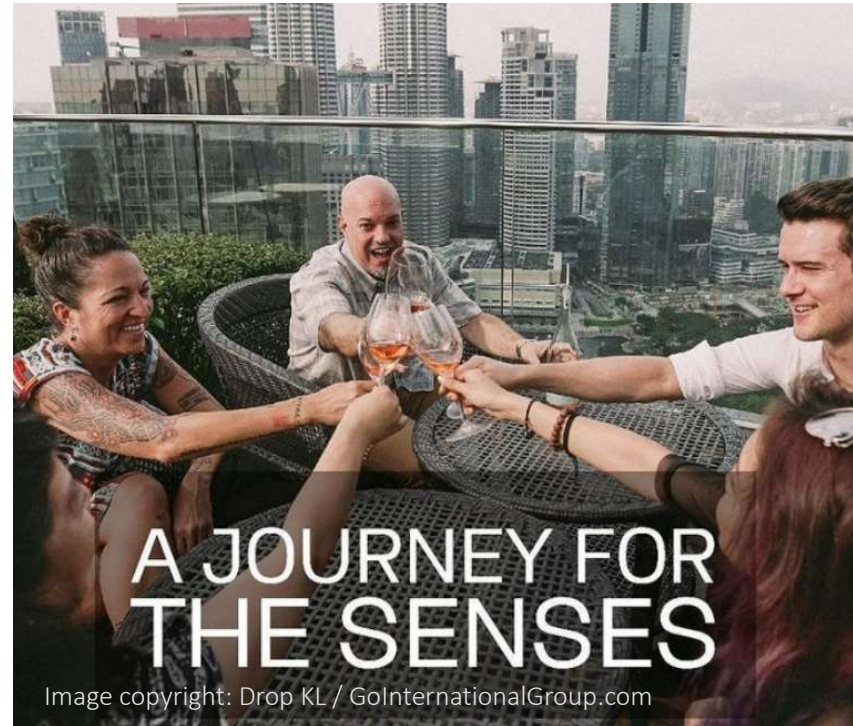
Public Q&A on YouTube Live



Thank you and see you at the
(real) colloquium! Vote for it!

An AFTRS Colloquium on The Rise of Independent Filmmaking in Malaysia Resulting from Innovative Funding Avenues

AFTRS Screen Networking Secret Supper



TWO CITIES, TWO NETWORKING EVENTS IN KL & SYDNEY

Production crew will set up so guests can seamlessly connect via YouTube Live Chat streaming across both cities.

An AFTRS Colloquium on The Rise of Independent Filmmaking in Malaysia Resulting from Innovative Funding Avenues

A1: Colloquium Presentation

Presented to:

AFTRS Peter Herbert & Pieter Aquilla

12 June 2024



Prepared by MASB Student, Jasmine H. Low

Scan the QR to connect.

Email: 2024137@student.aftrs.edu.au

Project Director's statement:

1. Filmed and produced in Sydney, Australia, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the country, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.
2. I acknowledge the copyright owners of the respective content and wish to mention they assert copyright on all footages and images used in this closed-door and unlisted presentation for educational purposes only. Should the Colloquium idea become reality, we will then seek the appropriate copyright and permissions.

An AFTRS Colloquium on The Rise of Independent Filmmaking in Malaysia Resulting from Innovative Funding Avenues