

ICAS 11 FILM FESTIVAL

About ICAS 11 Film Festival

The ICAS 11 Film Festival – designed to complement ICAS 11 conference proceedings – will showcase documentary films from Asia. From human interest stories to narratives of caste, community and gender violence and exclusion, these films explore the histories, societies, politics and culture of South, South East and Central Asia. The films attempt to move beyond academic enquiry and could be read as visual documentations of these magnificently and rapidly transforming societies, where tradition and modernity are articulated not as binaries but located in an alternative conceptual universe. The films shortlisted for screening during ICAS 11 come from a diverse range of countries such as India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Japan and Afghanistan.

The festival provides a unique platform for ICAS participants to not only experience the films themselves but also be part of a Q&A session with filmmakers and experts immediately after the screenings.

Festival curator

The ICAS 11 Film Festival is curated by Dr Roshni Sengupta, Fellow, International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS) and Lecturer, Leiden Institute for Area Studies, Leiden University. She works and writes on media and politics and has previously curated film events on neo-realist cinema in India and contemporary Bollywood.

Festival team

Ms Annemarie van Leeuwen, Coordinator Outreach and Lectures, IIAS

Dr Willem Vogelsang, Deputy Director, IIAS

Festival advisors

Dr Paul van der Velde, ICAS 11 Secretary, IIAS

Dr Philippe Peycam, Director, IIAS

Dr Elena Paskaleva, Coordinator Asian Heritages Cluster, IIAS

Dr Naomi Standen, Fellow, IIAS

Dr Britta Ohm, Fellow, IIAS

Dr Aatreyee Ghosh, Fellow, IIAS

Dr Theara Thun, Fellow, IIAS

Dr Faizah Zakaria, Fellow, IIAS

Dr Nurul Huda, Fellow, IIAS

Film details with synopses for programme booklet and online publicity

Cong Binh: the lost fighters of Vietnam

TUESDAY, 16 JULY/ 09:30 – 12:30

Director: Lam Le/2012/118 minutes

On the eve of the Second World War, twenty thousand Vietnamese people were recruited in French Indochina and were forced to work in French weapon factories to stand in for workers who had been sent to fight the Germans. Mistaken for soldiers, they were forced to remain in France after the defeat in 1940; during the Occupation, these workers – called ‘Cong Binh’ – were left at the mercy of the Germans and lived like pariahs. Wrongly accused of betraying their native Vietnam, they were in reality followers of Ho Chi Minh and were rooting for Independence in 1945. The film follows around two dozen survivors in Vietnam and France. Five of them died during the editing of the film. This is a page from the history of France and Vietnam which has shamefully been erased from collective memory.

Meet the Millennials — Episode 1: Inside the Pressure Cooker

TUESDAY, 16 JULY/ 13:30 – 15:15

Director: Joep van Osch/2019/29 minutes

Meet the Millennials is a documentary series by Lucas De Man (BE/NL) and Hyunsin Kim (DE/KOR) about the millennial generation in East Asia. In each episode Lucas and Hyunsin take the audience on a journey to six cities—Seoul, Singapore, Taipei, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Shenzhen—where they meet 100+ millennials who share their stories on camera. Along the way, we get to know this generation and how they’re dealing with the biggest issues facing them. The first episode, *Inside the Pressure Cooker*, is about burn-out and stress. The documentary series is part of a larger multimedia art project by Company New Heroes called Hello Asia. As part of this project, Lucas/CNH has also made a lecture performance about the millennial generation. For more information, please see www.projecthelloasia.com.

Repdeman (ICAS 11 submission)

WEDNESDAY, 17 JULY/ 11:15 - 13:00

Directors: Dandhy Dwi Laksono, Neneng Susilawati and Udrekhan Hanif/2018/63 minutes

‘Repdeman’ is a Mentawai word which means a memory of something that has reminded us of past occurrences. Comprising four main islands – Siberut, Sipora, North Pagai and South Pagai – earthquake events from the past are common in Mentawai family stories with multiple interpretations. On the one hand, earthquakes were a blessing and an opportunity to rebuild; on the other, they were a sign of disaster. For the Mentawaians, the 2010 tsunami that devastated North Pagai, South Pagai and South Sipora was the first such experience in the last 200 years. This pathbreaking documentary provides us with crucial information of how the tsunami victims survived. It is based on the memory of the survivors and chronicles the way in which they rebuilt their lives in their new permanent resettlements and in temporary hamlets. The film is also a

source of valuable knowledge in dealing with natural disasters in the future.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZ2p1_dM8Y

Saving Mes Aynak

WEDNESDAY, 17 JULY/ 14:45 - 16:30

Director: Brent Huffman/2014/45 minutes

The award-winning film follows archaeologist Qadir Temori as he races against time to save a 5,000-year-old Buddhist archaeological site in Afghanistan from imminent demolition by a Chinese state-owned mining company, which plans to destroy Mes Aynak to mine for \$100-billion worth of copper. *Saving Mes Aynak* examines the conflict between cultural preservation and economic opportunity, through the lens of the Afghan archaeologists and local villagers who live and work near Mes Aynak. Called, “a doc of crucial immediacy... advocacy filmmaking at its best and most chilling,” by Indiewire, *Saving Mes Aynak* is both a powerful and moving film, and an inspiring call to action.

Trailer: <http://www.savingmesaynak.com/video-1/>

***Sangharsh* (ICAS 11 submission)**

WEDNESDAY, 17 JULY/ 17:00 - 18:45

Director: Nicolas Jaoul/2018/105 minutes

Shot between 1997 and 2001, *Sangharsh* is a long feature documentary film which takes us deep into the lifeworld of Dalit Panther activists in the late 1990s Uttar Pradesh, India. By following three activists, one is taken on a rough trip in the slums and villages of Kanpur region, where these characters are spreading the revolutionary messages of Ambedkar. It is an emotional journey into the urge to struggle in order to assert one's humanity, when humiliation, exploitation and violence remain an everyday occurrence. The film is the cinematographic version of the director's PhD fieldwork, and reflects on what can be achieved with cinema that remains outside the reach of academic writing.

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/321270509>

***Lukochuri – Hide & Seek* (ICAS 11 submission)**

THURSDAY, 18 JULY/ 11:15 - 13:00

Director: Nasrin Siraj Annie/2018-19/20 minutes

Lukochuri (Hide and Seek in English) is a 20-minute documentary film on Bangladeshi women coming to terms with their sexuality while they ‘hide and seek’ through social pressures and stigma. Women's sexuality is a taboo subject in Bangladeshi society. Nevertheless, three groups of young female migrant workers who participated in a research project on sexual and reproductive health and rights came out to narrate their experiences. Garment workers, sex workers and women from the beauty industry, working in the mega-city of Dhaka relate their experiences of sexual violence, pleasure and desire in the film. The film also traces the bumpy ride the filmmaker had to undertake to find women willing to tell their stories in the film.

Trailer: attached separately as MP4 file

***This Island is Ours* (ICAS 11 submission)**

THURSDAY, 18 JULY/ 14:45 - 16:30

Director: Nils Clauss and Alexander Bukh/2016/54 Minutes

The territorial dispute between Japan and Korea over the ownership of the Dokdo/Takeshima islets is not limited to state-to-state relations. In both countries there are citizens' groups actively engaged in protesting, lobbying and educating the public. *This Island is Ours* follows a Korean kindergarten caretaker with a background in student activism and a recently widowed Japanese housewife as they campaign tirelessly for the sovereignty of the tiny islets that are currently controlled by Korea, but also claimed by Japan. This film creates a rare insight into the lives of the two activists on both sides by presenting their parallel experiences from a neutral point of view.

Trailer: <https://www.collectiveeye.org/products/this-island-is-ours?variant=6470383665179>

Living Like a Common Man

THURSDAY, 18 JULY/ 17:00 - 18:45

Directors: Sanderien Verstappen, Mario Rutten and Isabelle Makay/2011/64 minutes

Living Like a Common Man follows the lives of young Indians who move to the West for a better, more prosperous life but end up in low-status jobs and live in cramped, small houses with other newly arrived migrants. The film follows the daily life in one such house in East London. When they return to visit their relatively well-to-do families in India, they encounter great expectations of their parents and family. Will these youngsters fulfil their own and their families' dreams? *Living like a Common Man* has been screened on NDTV in India, at 16 film festivals, 16 public venues, and 38 academic venues (conferences and courses), and has proved particularly rewarding teaching material in undergraduate courses about migration.

Trailer: <https://www.sanderienverstappen.com/living-like-a-common-man/>

***Rangsa ni tonun* (ICAS 11 submission)**

FRIDAY, 19 JULY/ 11:15 - 13:00

Directors: MJA Nashir and Sandra Niessen/2013/26 minutes

'Rangsa' in the Batak language (North Sumatra, Indonesia) can be translated as 'description' – but it is more than that. The genre is part of the oral repertory of the Batak guru or knowledge specialist (datu/shaman). *Rangsa ni tonun* ('tonun' = weaving) is about the steps in the production of a Batak textile. The 'ransa' closes with a reference to Si Boru Hasagian, the first Batak weaver from whom all Batak weavers are believed to have descended. The film depicts weavers as honourable inheritors/perpetuators of culture – a far cry from their current social position. Sandra Niessen (anthropologist and producer of the film) and MJA Nashir (director) have conducted numerous projects in support of the ailing Batak weaving tradition. With that intent, they screened this film in dozens of villages and other Batak venues and gave more than 100 copies to weavers and aficionados.

Trailer:

<https://www.facebook.com/PulangKampungIII/videos/10151464656169712/?v=10151464656169712>

Revisiting Home: auto-ethnographic artworks of Law Yuk Mui and Tang Kwok Hin in Hong Kong (ICAS 11 submission)

FRIDAY, 19 JULY/ 14:45 - 16:30

Director: Anson HS Mak/2012-17/62 minutes

This experimental visual montage examines Law Yuk Mui and Tang Kwok Hin's – two important emerging artists in Hong Kong – practice-led auto-ethnographic works regarding identity at issue through re-centering tactics geographically, historically and psychologically. Law's solo exhibition titled *Victoria East* (2017) shows a series of experimental ethnographic artworks from the search for the original coastline of Tseung Kwan O (Law's home), east of Victory Harbour – the centre of colonized habitants and the financial centre representing mainstream neo-liberalism. The installations invoke debates on Hong Kong identity and the need for its own community history. Tang's works focus on his identity as an indigenous inhabitant of Yuen Long, far north west of Hong Kong. His works mix moving image, performance, and collection of found objects to question the notion of home and community, express his strong emotions and struggles with history through the studies and representation of the 'everyday-life-ness' of his family, death of his grandfather and collective village events of the indigenous cultural tradition.

Tang Kwok Hin

Grandpa Tang 2015-17 (single channel - <https://vimeo.com/240440282/>)

Installation view 2017 (<http://www.tangkwokhin.com/2019/03/grandpa-tang-2017.html>)

Nancy (single channel) 2012-17 (<http://vimeo.com/220284314>)

Installation view 2017 (<http://www.tangkwokhin.com/2017/06/nancy.html>)

Installation video documentation (<http://vimeo.com/220340542>)

Law Yuk Mui

On Junk Bay, The Plant : 1990 – present

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vaE9rvnoS2Y&feature=youtu.be>)

Installation view (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36MdHbjE0A8&feature=youtu.be>)

Victoria east, 2017, at videotage

Installation view (<http://www.lawyukmui.com/portfolio/victoriaeast/>)

(Slightly longer because this is a film montage and needs some explanation)

Lynch Nation

FRIDAY, 19 JULY/ 17:00 - 18:45

Directors: Ashfaq E J, Shaheen Ahmad, Furqan Faridi, Vishu Sejwal/2018/43 minutes

Ever since the advent of a majoritarian government led by PM Narendra Modi – now in its second term in office – India has experienced relentless communal polarization and violence against minority and marginalised communities. *Lynch Nation* embarks on a visual journey across India and listens to heart-wrenching stories of mob lynching that have torn apart families and shaken the conscience of the nation. The film documents seven incidents of mob lynching by traveling through the personal spaces of the victims and recording testimonies of survivors and their families. It is an independent and crowd-funded project, with no corporate support.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjBRlRX9Oq8>