



NEWS RELEASE

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2ND TROPFEST SOUTH EAST ASIA WON BY SELF-TAUGHT CAMBODIAN FILMMAKER

Day-long Tropfest Roughcut film seminar draws hundreds of young filmmakers from region

PENANG/SINGAPORE: On February 1, Cambodian filmmaker Polen Ly claimed first prize at the second 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).

Polen Ly's film *Colourful Knots* is a beautifully poignant story about a friendship that develops between children from very different backgrounds in Phnom Penh. Polen received his prize from Tropfest SEA judge and actor, Sullivan Stapleton (*300: Rise of an Empire*, *Animal Kingdom*, *Gangster Squad*), together with President and Managing Director Asia Pacific MPA, Mike Ellis, in front of thousands of enthusiastic film fans at the Esplanade, Penang, Malaysia.

Accepting his prize, Polen said, "I am surprised to win. There are so many good films here made by talented filmmakers from all over Southeast Asia. I'm so glad to have the opportunity to share more of my stories with people all over the world." Polen was born in 1989 in rural Cambodia. He fell in love with storytelling through moving images after producing his first short film in 2012. While he has never attended film school, Polen is self-taught, experimenting with his craft while producing a number of short films. His films have won prizes at international film festivals around Asia, Europe, and the United States, including his film *Duetto*, which won Second Prize at the inaugural Tropfest SEA in 2014.

Tropfest SEA's Managing Director Joe Sidek said, "We're pleased to see our second Tropfest SEA come to life and see a wide variety of short films screened to our live audience here in Penang, Malaysia. We hope that this platform will assist the growth and development of emerging filmmakers as they find their on-screen voice and build creative relationships across the Southeast Asia region to build sustainable careers and produce great content. Our thanks go to the MPA for their support of these emerging filmmakers and the 'money-can't-buy' prize of a fully immersive film industry trip to Los Angeles. 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 Polen 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 February 2, the 16 finalist films including winning film *Colourful Knots*, will be available to view on the dedicated Tropfest SEA channel [here](#) - powered by Asian short film platform Vidsee, the festival's first ever online screening partner. Viewers will be able to view and vote the films for the Audience Choice Award until voting closes on February 16.

On January 31, MPA supported Tropfest South East Asia Roughcut at the Jen Hotel, Penang, which engaged directors, producers, actors and film executives on a wide range of subjects of interest to emerging filmmakers.

Speakers and guests at the event included actor Sullivan Stapleton (*300: Rise of an Empire*, *Animal Kingdom*, *Gangster Squad*), who shared the story of his big break into Hollywood, taking him from his work as a builder and production crew grip to high profile feature film and television series drama star.

Tropfest Managing Director Michael Laverty, 2014 Tropfest SEA winner Sothea Ines, Indonesian film director Lucky Kuswandi (*Selamat Pagi Malam*, *Madame X*), and director Hannah Espia (*Transit*), revealed their inspiration for entering the film industry and defined the importance of mentorship to support their career.

Chairman Thai Animation and Computer Graphics Association - Lak Taechawanchai, Harry Yoon - Senior Executive MDeC - Yang Mee Eng and Malaysian MD and Executive Producer, Giggle Garage - Juhaidah Joemin, considered the opportunities of co-production between Southeast Asian markets on quality animation projects that can reach a pan-Asian audience.

Indonesian actor and presenter Marissa Anita discussed the serious business of making people laugh with Singaporean comedian Kumar, while industry development subjects such as growing creative economies, promoting copyright and balancing classification and censorship issues were deliberated by VP Regional Acquisitions & Distribution, Astro - Teng Lee Yein, Director General Finas - Dato' Kamil Othman, and President & Managing Director Asia Pacific MPA - Mike Ellis, effectively moderated by Indonesian producer Sheila Timothy.

The day concluded with renowned cinematographer Christopher Doyle (*Hero, In the Mood for Love, 2046*), sharing his journey as an artist, and illuminated for the audience his creative process and passion for filmmaking.

View images from Tropfest SEA 2014 competition [here](#) and Tropfest Roughcut [here](#).

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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 Southeast Asia; the free-to-attend film festival premiered in Penang, Malaysia in 2014, with a celebration of short films, music and in support of the culture of storytelling and creativity.

The winner receives a USD12,000 cash award from Tropfest SEA courtesy of Yaysan Sime Darby and a five-day film industry immersion trip in Los Angeles supported 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.

For more information, please contact

Stephen Jenner

MPA Asia-Pacific
(65) 6253 1033

June Tan
MPA Asia-Pacific
(65) 6253 1033