

The Japan Foundation and Tokyo International Film Festival

Launch “CROSSCUT ASIA+,”

a New Section Highlighting Southeast Asian Cinema

~ Six Films Curated Through Collaboration
Between Southeast Asian and Japanese Film Programmers ~

The Japan Foundation (JF) and the Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) are launching **CROSSCUT ASIA+**, a new section dedicated to Southeast Asian cinema within the festival.

JF is implementing “Partnership to Co-create a Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0,” a comprehensive people-to-people exchange initiative that promotes mutual understanding and appreciation between Japan and Asian countries, particularly ASEAN member states, over a ten-year period beginning in 2024. This project is being carried out as part of that initiative.

Building on the legacy of the Japan Foundation Asia Center presents CROSSCUT ASIA section, which was held at TIFF from 2014 to 2019 to introduce the richness and diversity of Southeast Asian cinema, the new CROSSCUT ASIA+ will feature a curated selection of films jointly chosen by vibrant film programmers from both the region and Japan, centered around a unique, annual theme from their distinct perspectives.

For its inaugural edition, the section welcomes two programmers, Raslene (Indonesia) and UEDA Masayuki (Japan), both participants in the Japan Foundation’s An Open Draft - Asia Film Programmers Lab #1 (2024). Drawing on the knowledge, experience, and professional networks they developed through An Open Draft, the programmers present six films under the theme ‘**Side by Side**,’ featuring a lineup that ranges from timeless classics to recent releases.

Through screenings and engaging panel discussions organized by the two programmers, with Markus Nornes serving as advisor, we hope to offer an opportunity to collectively reflect on current initiatives across Southeast Asian nations. Although geographically side by side, these countries hold distinct histories; this program explores how memories are passed down, film production by collectives, and how accumulated experiences and narratives re-encounter one another through the medium of cinema.

Press inquiries:

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■ Films in the CROSSCUT ASIA+ Program



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Directed by Rafael Manuel (2026 / Singapore, UK, Philippines, France, Netherlands)

A diorama-like country club reflects Philippine societal structures. New worker Isabel must adapt to a systemic heaven-and-earth gap.



Four Seasons in Java

Directed by Kamila Andini (2026 / Indonesia, France, Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Poland)

After prison, Pertiwi returns home. In a stifling village, together with fellow outcasts, she searches for a way to live again.



Becoming Human

Directed by Ly Polen (2025 / Cambodia)

As Cambodia rapidly urbanizes, an old cinema's guardian spirit must decide between rebirth or remaining a homeless ghost with a human friend.



Turang

Directed by Bachtiar Siagian (1957 / Indonesia)

In wartime Tanah Karo, wounded Rusli and caregiver Tipi fall in love. When a traitor aids Dutch attacks, people must resist and live on.



Small Hours of the Night

Directed by Daniel Hui (2024 / Singapore)

A woman is interrogated by a man over one long night, revealing the story of a bizarre tombstone trial in Singapore after independence.



Behind the Flickering Light: The Archive

Directed by Hafiz Rancajale (2013 / Indonesia)

Misbach Yusa Biran left directing to preserve films, founding Sinematek Indonesia. Today, we revisit its deteriorating state through the screen.

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Programmers' Profiles



UEDA Masayuki

The Program Director at Waseda Shochiku, a Tokyo repertory cinema, since 2010. Mainly presenting double features, he programs 50 weeks/year of new and classic films, with 2,000+ films programmed to date. He joined the Japan Foundation's An Open Draft - Asia Film Programmers Lab in 2024, leading to organizing Anocha Suwichakornpong × Payal Kapadia: Gazes That Open the World in 2025 as part of An Open Draft. He is also active in film production: *Super Happy Forever* (line producer), *Black Ox* (screenwriter).



Raslene

A Jakarta-based film programmer and visual artist. She develops film programs for Jakarta Film Week. She also served on the selection committee for the 2026 SeaShorts Film Festival. An alumna of CICAIE Arthouse Cinema Training, Cinemata Community Curators Programme, and the Japan Foundation's An Open Draft - Asia Film Programmers Lab in 2024, her practice spans independent and community programs, research, and cultural initiatives.

Advisor Profile



Markus Nornes

A film scholar, programmer, and filmmaker, and Professor Emeritus at the University of Michigan. He is a Coordinator at the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, having working there since 1990. He has published eight books on Japanese cinema, documentary, and film translation and film festival studies. A founding member of the Kinema Club collective, he serves on journal boards, sits on juries at international film festivals, has organized many conferences and delivered over 100 lectures worldwide.

Members of the media may request interviews with the programmers of this project, Raslene and UEDA Masayuki, during the festival period. English-Japanese interpretation can be arranged upon request.

For further information, please contact the Branding and Communications Department, The Japan Foundation, at press@jpf.go.jp.

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An Open Draft - Asia Film Programmers Lab

The Japan Foundation (JF) is Japan's only institution dedicated to carrying out comprehensive international cultural exchange programs throughout the world. Through culture, language and dialogue, the Japan Foundation creates global opportunities to foster friendship, trust and mutual understanding.

In its film and audiovisual programs, JF works to deepen understanding of Japan and promote international cultural exchange through a range of initiatives, including screenings of Japanese films around the world, JFF Theater, an online streaming service that distributes Japanese films and videos worldwide with multilingual subtitles, and the cultivation of professional talent and networks that support film exhibition and programming.

An Open Draft - Asia Film Programmers Lab is a professional development and exchange initiative for emerging film programmers from Japan and ASEAN countries. The program is implemented as part of the Partnership to Co-create a Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0, a comprehensive initiative aimed at fostering next-generation exchange and human resource development between Japan and ASEAN member states.

The program consists of the following three phases:

First Phase: Workshop and Research in Tokyo

Film programmers from Southeast Asia and Japan participate in an approximately ten-day program in Tokyo. The program includes workshops to develop screening programs featuring Japanese films, which will be implemented in the Second Phase, as well as lectures on Japanese cinema and film programming, visits to Japanese film-related institutions, and participation in screenings and events at international film festivals.

Second Phase: Screenings in Southeast Asia

Building on the results of the First Phase, ASEAN participants plan and organize film screenings, including Japanese films, in their respective local communities, with support from the Japanese participants.

Third Phase: Screenings in Japan and Experience Sharing

With the experiences gained through the First and the Second Phases as a foundation, Japanese participants who wish to do so will develop screening programs featuring films from Southeast Asia — as a general rule from the countries they visited during the Second Phase — and present these programs in Japan along with reports on their participation in the program.

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Through these three phases, participants revisit and build upon their learning and practical experiences while maintaining ongoing communication with one another. By strengthening their professional skills and expanding their networks, the program aims to support the realization of diverse film screening initiatives.

More information about the activities of An Open Draft - Asia Film Programmers Lab is available at: <https://www.jpf.go.jp/e/project/culture/media/asean/>

In April 2026, Waseda Shochiku hosted “Anocha Suwichakornpong × Payal Kapadia: Gazes That Open the World,” a special screening program conceived by UEDA Masayuki, a participant in the An Open Draft program. Inspired by insights gained through the program, Ueda explored differences in how younger audiences in Japan and ASEAN countries engage with independent and experimental cinema. The program attracted significant attention from film enthusiasts and demonstrated the value of cross-cultural perspectives in film programming.

<https://wasedashochiku.co.jp/archives/schedule/1853>

【Tokyo International Film Festival】

The Tokyo International Film Festival started in 1985 as Japan’s first major film festival and is the only competitive feature film festival in Japan accredited by the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF). It takes place every autumn in Hibiya-Yurakucho-Marunouchi-Ginza area. With its mission, *To amplify the possibilities of cinema from Tokyo and contribute to interactions with a diverse world*, the festival has served as a hub where filmmakers and audiences discover talent and evocative storytelling, bringing excellent films from around the world. In 2026, TIFF has been officially distinguished as an “A-Festival”—a designation for international film festivals demonstrating the highest international impact by FIAPF.

<https://2026.tiff-jp.net/en/>



Press materials, including images, are available upon request. Please contact the Japan Foundation (JF) or the Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) for access.

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39th Tokyo International Film Festival www.tiff-jp.net/en

Dates: October 26 (Mon) – November 4 (Wed), 2026

Hosted by UNIJAPAN

TIFFCOM 2026 <https://tiffcom.jp/en>

Dates: October 28 (Wed) – 30 (Fri), 2026

Organized by Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Communications (MIC) and UNIJAPAN

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