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## PRESS RELEASE

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The annual Luang Prabang Film Festival (LPFF) will kick off its 6<sup>th</sup> annual program tomorrow, running December 5-9, 2015. This year, the festival coincides with the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UNESCO World Heritage for our ancient northern town, and marks the arrival of 20 elephants from the much-anticipated Elephant Caravan, a convoy marching to raise awareness for the plight of these magnificent creatures.

To make room for all this celebration, the LPFF Night Venue will shift its location at the Handicraft Market to the Luang Prabang Primary School, also located in the center of town. The day screenings will take place, as last year, at the Sofitel Luang Prabang, in a beautifully refurbished century-old traditional Lao wooden house. The Sofitel is also the location for our numerous public discussions, to will be held on the great lawn in the shade of an old tree.

For a town without a cinema, LPFF has again managed great creativity in bringing the big screen to our audience. This year, as every year before, we expect to attendance in record numbers.

As Gabriel Kuperman, festival founder and director says, "Our little festival is not so little anymore. We have been called the Sundance of Southeast Asia: that's a lot to live up to, but we are proud to be building this reputation."

For our 2015 program we bring you 29 feature films from 9 countries across Southeast Asia and as a special presentation we will include a work copy of Laos' own *Dearest Sister*, giving audiences a rare sneak preview of Mattie Do's next film.

Also included in the program: *The Look of Silence*, which has just made it into the next round of the Academy Awards' voting process for this year in the category of documentary film. *The Look of Silence* is a follow up to Director Joshua Oppenheimer's critically acclaimed *The Act of Killing*, which will also be screened.

The docks are full of representation from this year's official selections with over half of the directors and producers attending.

New this year, we give you our SPOTLIGHT program. In the interest of gaining greater understanding of trends and advancements in regional industries, we will devote an entire day to screenings and discussions about films from a single country. This year we offer you: SPOTLIGHT on CAMBODIA. Acclaimed director Sok Visal will lead audiences through screenings of four contemporary films, including *The Last Reel*, Cambodia's submission for next year's Oscar. Visal will start the day with Director Marc Eberle, to discuss his film, *The Cambodia Space Project - Not Easy Rock'n'Roll*. We are pleased to also have in our program Visal's own film, *Gems on the Run*, which will screen on Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, in the 2pm slot.

Complimenting our screenings, we will be offering public discussions in the 2pm slot:

*Encouraging International Production in Laos* on DAY ONE, which brings together Lao filmmakers and the country's Department of Cinema to discuss Laos as a destination for big picture productions.

On DAY TWO, we bring you *Women in Film*: Bianca Balbuena (*That Thing Called Meant-to-Be*), Katy Grose (*The Last Executioner*), Shawn Simon (*Winter's Bone*), Mattie Do (*Dearest Sister*) will discuss what it takes to be a woman in an industry dominated by men.

On DAY FOUR, Hollywood veteran Stephen Lim (*Born on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July*, *The Insider*, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*) will lead a discussion about the role of the producer and the challenges of holding a production together.

Other events include a Master Class for visiting filmmakers hosted by Jean-Stephane Sauvaire (*Johnny Mad Dog*) who will talk about working with non-actors and in remote locations.

In addition to this, we offer four full programs of Short Films. They are:

This year's winning selections from the *Chaktomuk Short Film Festival*: Cambodia is quickly re-emerging as a country of exceptional filmmakers - this shorts festival is really one to look out for.

Laos' own Mini-Vientiane - selections from the only short film festival in the country. Vientiane is an important festival for Lao filmmakers and a huge support to the industry in the country.

Viddsee Shortees - a collection of the most watched Viddsee Shorts from this popular online film venue.

And finally LPFF's own co-production with the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre; a collection of films we are calling *Women and Folktales*. This project was set in motion to document and preserve the fading traditional stories of three ethnic groups in the country.

We will offer live evening performances on our main stage before headline screenings. LPFF will welcome famed French guitarist Jo Dihan and the Elephant Caravan artisans, the top three winning teams of this year's Vientiane-based Urban Youth Dance competition, a performance by the annual Fang Mae Khong international dance festival, and a concert by the Lao pop star and actress, Totlina.

On display will be a new limited edition typology-style portfolio from the lauded Southeast Asia Movie Theater Project, accompanied by a presentation by the initiative's founder, Philip Jablon.

With a newly-opened bottling plant in Laos, Coca-Cola is the festival's biggest sponsor once again this year, having also made a generous donation to LPFF's Lao Filmmakers Fund, a publicly-generated fund that allows filmmakers in Laos to apply for grants to help realize their film projects.

Other major supporters of the 2015 festival are Beerlao Gold, the US Embassy, the Asia Foundation, Exo Travel, Chillax Productions, the Nam Theun 2 Power Company, and Lao Airlines.

For more information on the festival, visit [lpfilmfest.org](http://lpfilmfest.org) or stay up to date at [facebook.com/lpfilmfest](https://facebook.com/lpfilmfest).