

PRESS RELEASE

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Luang Prabang Film Festival Announces Dates for 7th Edition

Luang Prabang, Laos. 22 March 2016. The seventh Luang Prabang Film Festival will take place on 2-7 December 2016 in the “cultural capital” of Laos, which is holding the chairmanship for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations this year.

Last year, LPFF introduced its SPOTLIGHT program, which was incredibly well received by diverse audiences. The first SPOTLIGHT was on Cambodia, with an entire day of films and discussion on contemporary Cambodian cinema lead by acclaimed Cambodian filmmaker and LPFF “Motion Picture Ambassador,” Sok Visal. Audiences were given an inside look on filmmaking in Cambodia today, what the driving forces are, and where experts see it heading. Marc Eberle added further depth to the discussions, bringing with him his film, *Cambodian Space Project: Not Easy Rock ‘n’ Roll*, which was so loved by audiences that they gave it LPFF 2015’s Audience Choice Award. One of the top regional newspapers, The Nation, devoted a feature article specifically on the SPOTLIGHT, called “Cambodia Unclassified.”

On the back of this great success, LPFF has decided to turn its SPOTLIGHT this year to the Philippines. Not only will new works be shown, but a wide shot perspective on some of the great influences of the past will be included. As one of the region’s most vibrant and prolific industries, this SPOTLIGHT on the Philippines will give audiences a lot to talk about.

These program expansions are being well received, as is evident from the great media coverage of last year’s event. The Wall Street Journal delivered high praise in their post-festival coverage entitled “The Sundance of Southeast Asia.” While this is not the first time this parallel has been made, LPFF is proud to be building upon it.

As LPFF is a curated festival, the programming relies upon the careful recommendations of the following film experts from across Southeast Asia: Sok Visal (Cambodia), Lulu Ratna (Indonesia), Somsanouk Mixay (Laos), Amir Muhammad (Malaysia), Thaidhhi (Myanmar), Francis Joseph A. Cruz (Philippines), Aishah Abu Bakar (Singapore), Kong Rithdee (Thailand), and Cát Khuê (Vietnam). These “Motion Picture Ambassadors” have already submitted their recommendations for this year’s festival, and thus the selection process will begin shortly.

In addition to a lineup of 30 feature films, LPFF will also present several programs of short films, hold multiple public discussions with some of the region’s most important players in media, display exhibitions relating to the region’s cinema, offer master classes for attending filmmakers, and entertain with nightly performances of dance and music.

With all of the festival's screenings free and open to the public, LPFF relies on sponsorships and donations from both corporate and private organizations and individuals. Some of our most generous returning sponsors that have already signed agreements with LPFF are: Indochina Productions, The Asia Foundation, Exo Travel, the US Embassy Vientiane, Chillax Productions, the Nam Theun 2 Power Company, and the Theun Hinboun Power Company. New to LPFF's sponsor roster is Dao Coffee, the country's leading coffee producer and distributor. Negotiations are in place for major partnerships within the beverage, telecommunication, electronics, petrol, and airline sectors. Further announcements will be made once those deals are finalized.

Exo Travel, LPFF's official travel partner, has already developed enticing new travel packages for film buffs planning to join the festival this year. These tours take advantage of exclusive special rates with LPFF's Hotel Partners, and will include a "Friends of LPFF" pass, to be used for exclusive offers and discounts at many participating restaurants and shops in town. Exo has also designed another tour for benefactors of LPFF who will be given an all-access pass, opportunities for audiences with filmmakers, as well as additional personalized activities with the LPFF organizing team and its Board of Directors.

To date, the following properties have signed on to be Hotel Partners for the 2016 festival, granting gratis rooms for Southeast Asian filmmakers whose works will be screened, and special rates for festival attendees who book through Exo Travel: The Apsara, Le Sen Boutique Hotel, Maison Souvannaphoum, Mekong Riverview, Le Residence Phou Vao, Sala Prabang, Sanctuary, Satri House, Sofitel Luang Prabang, and Villa Chitdara.

LPFF's activities are not limited to just its December program. Throughout each year, LPFF produces events and film projects that further its mission of fostering a strong network between Southeast Asian filmmakers and providing opportunities to support them, as well as further developing the burgeoning film industry in its host country of the Lao PDR. Just some of these opportunities for 2016 include LPFF sending Lao film professionals for internships on Thai film productions, and Phase II of the Women and Folktales Project (a collaboration between the Laos-based Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre and LPFF), which records and preserves stories as told by women from various Lao ethnic groups.

LPFF is also very pleased to be launching a channel for Lao films with VIDDSEE, an online video platform exclusively for Asian short films. News on this exciting partnership will be circulated in the coming days.

The Lao Filmmakers Fund, an initiative founded and operated by LPFF in 2013, will also raise and grant support to filmmakers in Laos eager to realize their projects.

The not-for-profit festival is the largest regular international event in Laos, attracting an average of 20,000 visitors to screenings and activities each year. It has proven to be one of the most important platforms and gatherings for Southeast Asian filmmakers and an exciting destination event for audiences from all backgrounds.

For more information on the Luang Prabang Film Festival, please visit the project's website (www.lpfilmfest.org) or stay up-to-date by following its Facebook page (www.facebook.com/lpfilmfest).