

## **Big wins for *Raising a Beast* and *Cat Island* at 2017 LPFF Talent Lab, led by Tribeca Film Institute**

**Luang Prabang, 11 December 2017** -- Xaisongkham Induangchanty's *Raising a Beast* and Siege Ledesma's *Cat Island* took home top awards last night at the 2017 LPFF Talent Lab, led by Tribeca Film Institute® (TFI). The Lab, which focused on grant writing and project pitching, was held on the opening weekend of the eighth annual Luang Prabang Film Festival, which kicked off on 8 December and will run through 13 December.

LPFF is a yearly celebration of Southeast Asian cinema held in Luang Prabang, a UNESCO World Heritage town in northern Laos that lacks a single working movie theater. With inclusivity as core to its mission, all festival events are free and open to the public.

Building off the first iteration of the Talent Lab in 2016, this year's Lab was expanded to two days, and included a pitching workshop and pitch forum with feedback from a panel of film professionals.

The jury selected Induangchanty's project, *Raising a Beast*, to attend the TFI Network market at the 2018 Tribeca Film Festival® (18-29 April 2018). Induangchanty attended the Talent Lab with his Filipino producer, Abigail Lazaro.

Hosted annually by TFI, the industry market gives filmmakers the opportunity to build connections with a wide range of industry insiders who can potentially help them advance their projects.

TFI will mentor Induangchanty through the completion of the project. All participants in this year's Talent Lab will also receive preferential consideration for any of TFI's grants.

*Raising a Beast*, which is also co-produced by American producer Steve Arounsack, tells the story of two Hmong siblings, Ying and Neng, who are blessed with beautiful voices and dream of moving to the city to become singers one day. When their father refuses to sell the family's prized bull to help pay for Neng's education in the city, Ying becomes a bull trainer to cover her brother's expenses.

Singapore-based media investment firm Aurora Media Holdings, represented on the jury by Jeremy Sim, selected Ledesma's *Cat Island* as the recipient of their Aurora Producing Award. Ledesma, who attended the Talent Lab with her producer Alembert Ang, will receive \$10,000 USD to help produce her film.

*Cat Island* follows Catherine, who after dedicating almost two decades of her life to the care of her asthmatic, albeit feisty and cat-loving mother, finds herself alone and purposeless when her mother dies. On the eve of her 40th birthday, the ghost of Catherine's mother returns to ask for Catherine's help in completing her "unfinished business": have her remains cremated and scattered over Cat Island, Japan. With a renewed sense of purpose, Catherine travels to Japan to complete her mission on the rural island.

Founded by Justin Deimen, Terence Kong, and Sim, Aurora Media is one of Southeast Asia's leading media and entertainment asset incubation, investment and management specialists.

The announcement of the winning projects was made in a uniquely Luang Prabang fashion: while cruising down the Mekong River at sunset.

Following the afternoon pitch forum, the jury and Talent Lab fellows from the 10 participating projects boarded a boat manned by Mekong Kingdoms, a stylish new boat company that opened operations earlier this year. Fellows took in Luang Prabang's magical mountain views and attempted to relax while the jury deliberated in a private room in the stern.

The jury was comprised of filmmaking professionals from around the world, including Sim; Kenneth Lipper, the Oscar-winning American producer; Victor William of ROKKI, AirAsia's in-flight entertainment provider; and Ho Hock Doong and Siti Helaliana Chumiran, both from the Malaysian distribution company, Astro.

The 10 projects that LPFF selected to participate, which are in various stages of production, come from six countries from the ASEAN region: Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand. The pool was equal parts documentary and narrative features, with five projects of both genres participating. Attendees taking part in the Talent Lab included directors, writers, and producers behind the films.

The participating projects included:

***Autobiography*** (Indonesia), represented by Makbul Mubarak (director) and Yulia Evina Bharas (producer)

***Bai Bibyaon, Lady Warrior of the Lumad*** (Philippines), represented by Cenón Obispo Palomares (director, writer)

***Cat Island*** (Philippines), represented by Siege Ledesma (director, writer) and Ang Aemberg (producer)

***Doi Boy*** (Thailand), represented by Nontawat Numbenchapol (director, writer)

***Going Straight*** (Philippines), represented by Kristoffer Brugada (director)

***It Wasn't an Accident*** (Myanmar), represented by Soe Moe Aung (director)

***Luzviminda*** (Philippines), represented by Inshallah Montero (director)

***Raising a Beast*** (Laos), represented by Xaisongkham Induangchanthy (director, writer) and Abigail Lazaro (producer)

***Song of the Homeland*** (Thailand), represented by Preecha Srisuwan (director, cinematographer)

***Wilderness*** (Malaysia), represented by Nadira Ilana (director, scriptwriter)

In addition to the preferential consideration from TFI for any of their grants, all participants received scriptwriting software from Final Draft.

To read more about the Luang Prabang Film Festival, visit [www.lpfilmfest.org](http://www.lpfilmfest.org).

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**All Luang Prabang Film Festival press enquiries:**

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**LPFF Background:**

Founded in 2009, the Luang Prabang Film Festival (LPFF) is an annual celebration of Southeast Asian cinema held every December in the UNESCO World Heritage town of Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. LPFF is a not-for-profit project that fosters cross-cultural dialogue within the region and supports the burgeoning film industry in Laos. Throughout the year, LPFF organizes a range of cultural events and educational activities, from film screenings to workshops for amateur Lao filmmakers. LPFF also manages the Lao Filmmakers Fund, a publicly-generated granting system that helps local artists realize their film projects.

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