

Luang Prabang Film Festival Sends Lao Filmmakers to Singapore

Selected winners from the #IWTMekong Short Film Competition travel to Singapore for Symposium on IWT

21 November 2018 -- The UK Government and Luang Prabang Film Festival (LPFF) are sending the top two winners from their #IWTMekong Short Film Competition to Singapore to present their films at a follow-up symposium to the London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade.

Illegal wildlife trafficking represents the third-largest illicit trade in the world, with an estimated value of up to \$19 billion USD per year, and Southeast Asia remains among the most critical in terms of severity and volume of wildlife trade.

The UK Government and LPFF, in cooperation with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), initiated a short film competition in order to draw attention to this crucial issue for the Mekong region. The jury selected the top three films from the main competition and the top student film to win prizes. The UK Embassies in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam selected one Special Prize-winning film per country, as well. Ten films were also chosen to compete on the festival's Facebook page for the Viral Prize, which was awarded to the film with the most shares over a month-long period.

The winning projects include:

- First Prize ***The Children of The Jungle*** by Sonepasith Phanphila
- Second Prize ***Chasing Wildlife*** by Souksamlan Laladeth
- Third Prize ***Bo Bo & Mo Mo*** by Zarchi Damloup

- Special Prize - Cambodia ***Breath*** by Phan Lê Ha Long
- Special Prize - Laos ***A Letter to My Dad*** by Vilayphong Phongsavanh
- Special Prize - Myanmar ***Bo Bo & Mo Mo*** by Zarchi Damloup
- Special Prize - Vietnam ***In Zebedee's Memory*** by Linh Luyen

- Viral Prize/Student Prize ***Breath*** by Phan Lê Ha Long

First and second prize winners Sonepasith Phanphila and Souksamlan Laladeth will travel to Singapore on 23 November to present their films at a symposium focused on outcomes and considerations of illegal wildlife trade.

Earlier this year, London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade brought together global leaders to discuss ways to eradicate illegal wildlife trade and to better protect the world's most iconic species from the threat of extinction. The Singapore symposium, hosted by the British High Commission in Singapore, hopes to follow up on previous topics discussed at the London

Conference, with a focus on tackling IWT as a serious organised crime, building coalitions, and closing illegal markets.

Both Phanphila and Laladeth will discuss the motivations behind their films at the event, which will be held at Eden Hall (the official residence of the British High Commissioner).

Phanphila's short film *The Children of The Jungle* tells the narrative of children and their relationship with endangered animals alongside the story of an illegal wildlife hunter.

"Making this short film has showed me that there are still so many people that don't respect the prohibiting hunting laws," says Phanphila. "I hope that when people see my film, they will understand that the destruction of wildlife does not only affect the ecology of wildlife, but it also affects the education and learning of young people."

Laladeth's short film *Chasing Wildlife* presents a wildlife photographer and his journey into the depths of both the forest and markets.

"Nature is the biggest wonder we can experience during our lives," explains Laladeth. "It was heartbreaking to see how many beautiful animals every day are killed and sold as bushmeat or as 'lucky charm' objects... We hope that *Chasing Wildlife* will help raise awareness in Laos and around the world about illegal wildlife trade and inspire others to change their habits, whether big or small, to save what we love."

All winning films including *The Children of The Jungle* and *Chasing Wildlife* can be found at: www.lpfilmfest.org/IWTMekong.

All Luang Prabang Film Festival press enquiries:

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LFFF Background:

Founded in 2009, the Luang Prabang Film Festival (LFFF) 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, LFFF organizes a range of cultural events and educational activities, from film screenings to workshops for amateur Lao filmmakers. LFFF also manages the Lao Filmmakers Fund, a publicly-generated granting system that helps local artists realize their film projects.