



29th BUSAN
International Film Festival
2-11 October 2024
New Currents

SHENINA
CINNAMON

ARSWENDY
BENING SWARA

ANGGA
YUNANDA

YUSUF
MAHARDIKA

TALE *of the* LAND

a film by
LOELOE HENDRA

KAWANKAWAN MEDIA PRESENTS TALE OF THE LAND
IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH POPPLE PICTURES FOCUSED EQUIPMENT AVIEW IMAGES PARTISIPASI INDONESIA
STARRING SHENINA CINNAMON ARSWENDY BENING SWARA ANGGA YUNANDA YUSUF MAHARDIKA
MUHAMMAD BAGUS A. SAPUTRA MOHAMMAD SYABIR DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY FAHRUL TRI HIKMAWAN
PRODUCTION DESIGNER SIGIT D. PRATAMA EDITOR CARLO FRANCISCO MANATAD MUSIC TERESA BARROZO
SOUND L.H. AIM ADI NEGARA VINCENT VILLA CO PRODUCERS ARMI RAE CACANINDIN ROBIN MORAN
PINKAN VERONIQUE KUEK SHEE HENG ALICE YOU PRODUCERS YULIA EVINA BHARA AMERTA KUSUMA
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY LOELOE HENDRA



KawanKawan Media, in co-production with **Popple Pictures, Aview Images, Focused Equipment, Partisipasi Indonesia**. Year of completion **2024**. Running time **98 minutes**. Spoken language **Indonesian and Kutai**, subtitle **English**. **Colour, Aspect Ratio 1.85:1, Format DCP 2K, 5.1 Dolby Atmos**. **Indonesia, Philippines, Taiwan, Qatar**.

After witnessing her parents' death, May develops a condition that renders her unconscious every time she steps on land. Her grandfather, Tuha, shelters her in a lake house. Branded cursed by her village, May is determined to reclaim her life on solid ground.





Synopsis

BORNEO, INDONESIA. Haunted by the memory of witnessing her parents' death on land, May now lives with Tuha, her grandfather, in a floating house - adrift on a lake far from land. Their homeland is now transformed into a mining area. Due to her past, now May is plagued by a mysterious condition that causes her to faint whenever she steps on land. The villagers believe May is cursed, a belief that isolates her further. Deep down, May longs to reclaim her life back on land - but she's unsure how.

When Lawa, a security candidate for the mining company enters her life, May sees a new hope. Lawa can help her get back to the land. But as soon as they try, an ominous incident befalls Tuha. It's a stark reminder that the land remains a dangerous place. As Tuha's health declines and ultimately fails, May is left at a crossroads, torn between fulfilling her grandfather's dying wish to continue her isolated life on the water or risking everything to confront the dangers of the land.





*Loeloe
Hendra*

TALE OF THE LAND TAKES US ON A JOURNEY INTO A WORLD FILLED WITH WONDERS AND FAIRYTALES, WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH TOWARDS THE WORLD IN THE FILM?

I spent my formative years as a child in the heart of Bornean rainforests, my days were filled with stories that are related to nature with its wonders, fairytales, traditions and cultures. My short film *Onomastika* (Berlinale Generation, 2015) was made as my early exploration into the genre of fantasy. In *Tale of the Land*, I was really fascinated to explore how to use the genre of fantasy not only to ignite our imaginations and wonders, but also to sharpen our perception of reality. In Borneo, nowadays, the beautiful landscapes have to live side by side with rampant deforestation, and the indigenous people suffocate in the liminality between traditions and modernity. Through fantasy, I want to create a world where my characters would flourish in this liminal space and continuous tensions between the magic and the reality, between logic and fantasy, and between land and water.

YOU TALK ABOUT LAND, WHAT IS IT THAT FASCINATE YOU ABOUT LAND?

We are educated to think that our primary needs are classified into three main categories: food, shelter, and clothing. But my experience and observation in Borneo has brought me to another question: how could you think about food, shelter, and clothing when your lands are being taken away from you? *Tale of the Land* takes land as a mythical concept, but on the other hand, the film also takes it quite literally: land is more primary than food, shelter, and clothing. Ironically, the 21st century has given us so many food, shelter, and clothing, but lands are growing more scarce, especially in the place like Borneo, and I believe in so many other indigenous lands in other parts of the world.

HOW DO YOU BRING YOUR ACTORS INTO THE WORLD OF TALE OF THE LAND?

What's important for me is to retain a certain aura of purity in the characters. They are genuine people who take care of each other and share a similar trauma. Water is a respond to the trauma that the land had brought upon them. The purity will allow them to survive their trauma and at the same time see and appreciate the world around them with a childlike enchantment. I hope the audiences can feel both the traumatic revenants and the magical wonders that the film seamlessly try to combine.

Q&A

Producers

*Yulia Evina Bhara
& Amerta Kusuma*

YOU HAVE WORKED WITH PLENTY OF DIRECTORS MAKING THEIR DEBUT FEATURES, INCLUDING LOELOE HENDRA IN TALE OF THE LAND, WHAT ATTRACTS YOU TO WORK WITH DEBUT DIRECTORS?

Yulia Evina Bhara (YEB) and Amerta Kusuma (AK): As producer, what I am always looking for is a story that touch me. As it is already been well known, debut directors often starts with a story that is very close and very personal to them. This might be why I get touched really often when I read their story because I could immediately feel that their stories are basically their life. I really enjoy working with directors who bare their life, soul, and feelings on the screen, and this is often the case with debut directors, including Loeloe Hendra. Loeloe is a sensitive person who always sees the world through a childlike perspective, there is something pure and genuine, but also full of wonders, this is what Tale of the Land is all about.

CONTRARY TO WHAT THE TITLE SUGGESTS, TALE OF THE LAND WAS ACTUALLY SHOT ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON WATER. TELL US ABOUT THE PROCESS?

AK: Tale of the Land was shot on an inland river delta that transforms dramatically during the rainy seasons, when the water reaches its peak flow. Our main homework was to find the best moment to shoot, that is when the water is at its highest debit. Then comes the next homework: the rainy season always comes with wind and storms. The production process was always about finding the safest way to shoot within the rainy seasons full of wind and storms.

YEB: As maximum as our prep was, there was always a voice in my head that whispered "how to immediately evacuate these 60 crew members when a storm hits?." We were shooting in the middle of the body of water, right in the middle of a 27 thousand acres of flowing body of water. In the middle of one huge storm, I was telling myself and the crew "let's not die shooting this film." Risk mitigation was of the utmost importance especially knowing that on such a seasonal flooding lake, storm always comes without warning.



*Yulia Evina Bhara
& Amerta Kusuma*

INDONESIAN CINEMA IS VERY WIDE IN TERMS OF VARIETIES AND FLAVORS, DO YOU THINK STORIES LIKE TALE OF THE LAND WILL SPARK MORE FILMS THAT TELL STORIES ABOUT INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN INDONESIA?

YEB & AK: There are more than 1300 ethnic groups in Indonesia. You can only imagine if each of them makes a film about themselves. It would mean that the possibility of films that could come out of Indonesia is endless. But beyond that, what I find more important is how to find a story that is both very specific and universal. In Tale of the Land, such a magical world could only happen within the cosmology of the indigenous Dayak people in Borneo, but the longing, love, familial piety, and the trauma that the characters share in the film are immensely recognizable by any kind of people from any corner of the world.

YOU ARE A VERSATILE YOUNG ACTRESS WHO SEEMS TO EFFORTLESSLY JUGGLE YOUR WAY BETWEEN COMMERCIAL HOMERUN HITS AND AUTEUR-DRIVEN FILMS, HOW DOES YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS LOOK LIKE, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO CHOOSING THE RIGHT PROJECT FOR YOU?

I believe that a relationship between a character and an actress is a relationship that is meant to be. When a character is offered to me, I really do believe that the offer is just a last bit of a long creative discussion between the director and the producer, I always try to reward that trust by giving everything that I could. Secondly, the people behind the project really affect my decision when it comes to considering a project. Thirdly, I always try to find a challenge in a character. I do believe that every character has its own challenge to offer an actress, if I can identify that challenge, I would be even more interested. I don't really see the difference between a commercial and an arthouse film when it comes to acting. You know, an actress is just one little piece among countless other pieces in this puzzle we call filmmaking.

HOW DO YOU EMOTIONALLY FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE CHARACTER MAY?

I believe that a character, just like a human being, harbors his/her own trauma. The difference lies in their way of handling it. When I was introduced to May, I tried to welcome myself into her thoughts and feelings. I learned to agree with every decision that she makes. Mutually, I also tried to welcome her to my world. I let her affect my daily decisions, feelings, and perspectives. In the end, I came to fully understand her way of processing her trauma, her longings for the land, and her method of solving the problems in her life.

WHAT WAS THE SHOOTING PROCESS LIKE, ESPECIALLY IN A FILM THAT REQUIRES YOU TO MASTER VERY SPECIFIC SKILLS, LIKE SPEAKING IN A SPECIFIC DIALECT, DRIVING A LONGBOAT, AND EVEN PERFORMING A TRADITIONAL DANCE?

When I came on board the project, I was already presented with a detailed script and an experienced production team. This helped me a lot in learning the physicality of May. Before the principal photography started, I immersed myself in the routine of the locals in Borneo. I went to their house, joined their activities, spending no day without driving the longboat. I was also helped a lot by the presence of an acting coach, dialect coach, and dance tutor. The "May" you see in the film is not a work of myself alone, but rather a work of so many people that really allow May to come alive. I thank the producer Yulia Evina Bhara and Amerta Kusuma, the director Loeloe Hendra, and the whole team, without whom May would never exist.



Director's Profile



Loeloe Hendra

Loeloe Hendra pursued a Bachelor of Film and Television Major and a master's degree in Indonesian Art Institute Yogyakarta. He directed *ONOMASTIKA* (2014), winner of the best short film in Festival Film Indonesia 2014, competed in Generation Kplus - 65th Berlin International Film Festival, and many others. In 2014 he participated in the Script & Pitch Feature Film Project of Southeast Asia Film Lab, Singapore.

His short film titled *ILALANG INGIN HILANG WAKTU SIANG* (LOST WONDERS) was supported by Yogyakarta Art Council 2017. His short film titled *KIWA* was supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia 2019. He is currently working on his first feature film *TALE OF THE LAND* which developed at FeatureLab Torino Film Lab 2017.

Director's Note

While I was born in a remote village in West Java, I mostly spent my childhood living with my grandparents in Borneo. These experiences deeply shaped my worldview and inspired my journey as a filmmaker. In 2005, I moved to Yogyakarta to study at ISI Yogyakarta, where I committed to exploring the power of storytelling through film.

In 2014, I returned to Borneo to create my short film 'Onomastika', which explores questions of identity and existence through a story of a nameless child. This project ignited a lifelong quest to weave my experiences into my films, highlighting how our personal narratives intersect with the larger tapestry of culture and myth.

My first feature film, "Tale of the Land", delves into the complexities of land and belonging, drawing inspiration from the rich myths of my childhood. This film centres around May, a young girl navigating trauma and loss. She represents a broader inquiry into the relationship between people and their land: What happens when our connection to the ground is severed? How do we find ourselves back amidst displacement and loss?

"Tale of the Land" uses elements of magical realism and fantasy to transform everyday realities into a captivating narrative. It serves as a bridge between the innocence of childhood imagination and the stark truths of life today. The floating house, a central symbol of this film, embodies the struggle between fear and hope, illustrating the resilience of a human spirit in the face of difficulties.

Through May's journey, we witness the silent weight of trauma and the quest for freedom. This story reflects universal themes of loss, recovery, and the enduring power of tales that connect us to our past and guide us toward the future. In sharing these narratives, I hope to illuminate the complexities of the human experience and the transformative nature of storytelling.





Actor's Profile

Shenina Cinnamon is a young talented actress. She won best actress in Festival Film Indonesia 2021. Since then, she has starred in many films. Her latest film is 24 Hours With Gaspar, directed by Yosep Anggi Noen and compete for Jiseok award in Busan International Film Festival 2023.

*Shenina
Cinnamon*



Actor's Profile

Arswendy Bening Swara is a seasoned Indonesian actor with more than thirty years of acting experience under his belt. Growing up in theatre plays, his screen debut was in the film *Opera Jakarta* (1985) directed by the legendary Indonesian director Sjuman Djaja. Since then, he has starred in more than forty feature films and has worked with many of Indonesia's most important directors such as Nya Abbas Akup, Nia Dinata, Riri Riza, Garin Nugroho, etc. He won Best Actor in 2003 Bandung Film Festival for the film "*Eliana, Eliana*" directed by Riri Riza. Aside from acting, he also teaches in acting school and regularly on set as acting coach. He won Best Actor in Marrakech International Film Festival 2022 in the film *Autobiography* directed by Makbul Mubarak.

*Arswendy
Bening Swara*



Actor's Profile

Angga Yunanda is the most wanted actor in Indonesia. He gained popularity for his performances in youth-centric dramas, especially in Indonesia's blockbuster hits "Dilan 1990" and "Dilan 1991". These films not only highlight his notable performances, but also makes him a relatable youth icon.

*Angga
Yunanda*



Actor's Profile

Yusuf Mahardika has made a notable impact in the Indonesian entertainment industry with his dynamic performances in both film and television. Yusuf has showcased his versatility through diverse characters, from romantic leads to more complex roles. His latest roles include Venice-premiered "Autobiography", Toronto-premiered "Crocodile Tears", and "Borderless Fog".

*Yusuf
Mahardika*



Producer's Profile

Yulia Evina Bhara



Yulia Evina Bhara is producer and the founder of KawanKawan Media, a production company based in Jakarta, Indonesia. She produced among others : "Solo, Solitude" (2016) by Yosep Anggi Noen, "The Science of Fictions" (2019) by Yosep Anggi Noen, Documentary "You and I" (2020) by Fanny Chotimah. "Whether The Weather Is Fine" (2021) by Carlo Francisco Manatad, "Stone Turtle" by Woo Ming Jin (2022), "Autobiography" by Makbul Mubarak, "Tiger Stripes" by Amanda Nell Eu, "Dreaming & Dying" (2023) by Nelson Yeo, "Last Shadow At The First Light" (2023) by Nicole Midori Woodford, "24 Hours With Gaspar" (2023) by Yosep Anggi Noen. She is chosen as Variety's Women Impactful 2023 by Variety International.

Producer's Profile



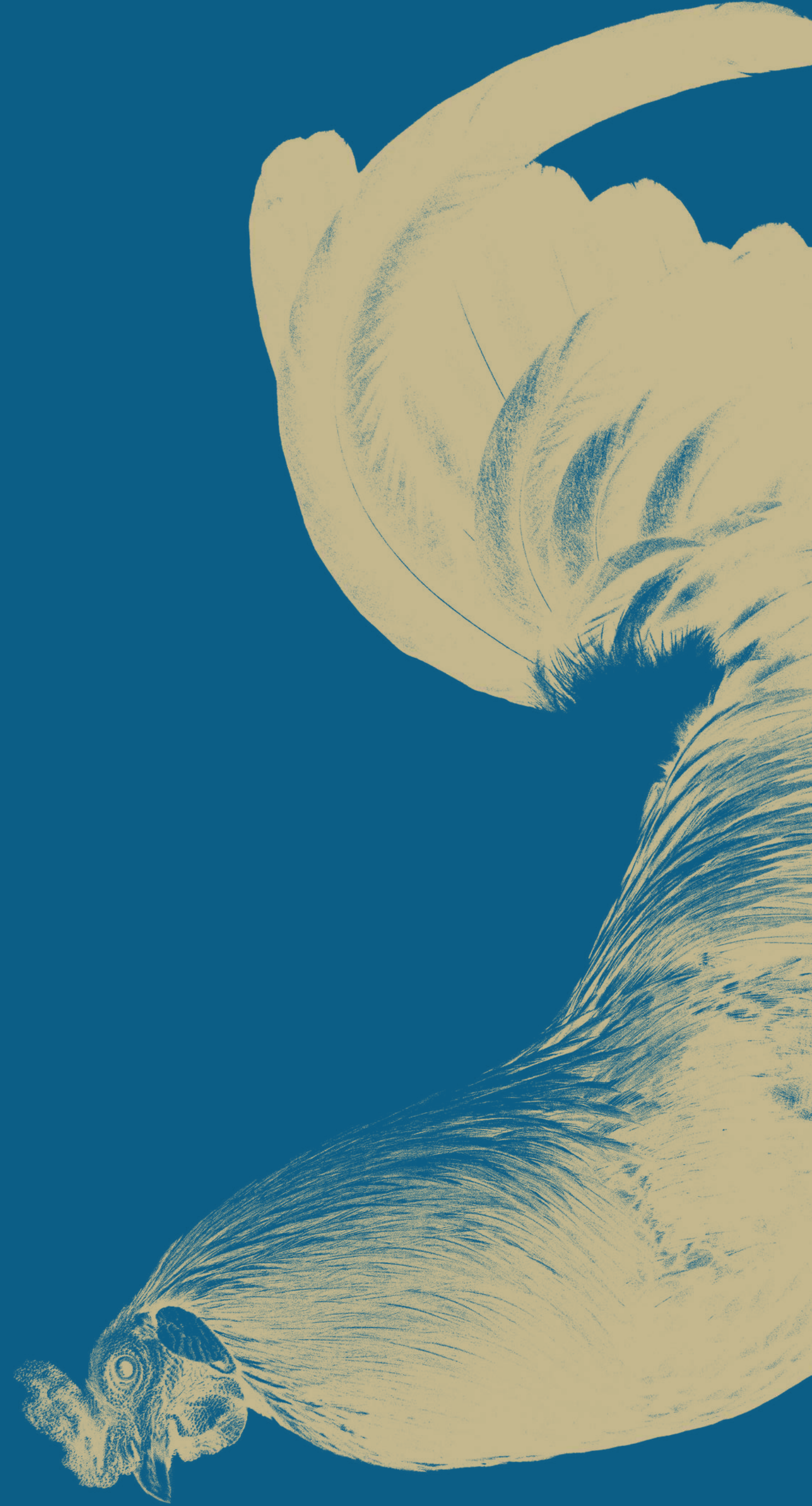
Amerta Kusuma

Amerta Kusuma is producer and founder of KawanKawan Media along with Yulia Evina Bhara. He produced and co-produced among others: "On the Origin of Fear" by Bayu Filemon (Venice 2016), "Solo, Solitude" (2016) by Yosep Anggi Noen, documentary film "You and I" (2020) by Fanny Chotimah.

About KawanKawan Media

KawanKawan Media is a production company based in Jakarta, Indonesia. Produced fiction and documentary among others: "On the Origin of Fear" (Venice 2016) by Bayu Filemon, "Solo, Solitude" (Locarno 2016) by Yosep Anggi Noen, "The Science of Fictions" (Special mentioned Golden Leopard 2019) by Yosep Anggi Noen, Documentary "You and I" (DMZ Doc Best Asian Film 2020 and CPH DOX Next Future Award) by Fanny Chotimah, "Whether The Weather Is Fine" (Locarno 2021) by Carlo Francisco Manatad, "Stone Turtle" by Woo Ming Jin (FIPRESCI Prize Locarno 2022), "Autobiography" by Makbul Mubarak (FIPRESCI Prize Venice Orizzonti 2022), "Tiger Stripes" by Amanda Nell Eu (Grand Prix Cannes Critics Week 2023), "Dreaming & Dying" (Golden Leopard Locarno 2023) by Nelson Yeo, "Last Shadow At The First Light" (San Sebastian 2023) by Nicole Midori Woodford, "24 Hours With Gaspar" (Jiseok Competition Busan FF 2023) by Yosep Anggi Noen, "Don't Cry, Butterfly" (IWONDERFULL Grand Prize Settimana Internationalizionale della Critica 2024), by Duóng Dieu Linh, and "Tale of the Land" (New Currents Busan 2024).

Upcoming titles are "Watch It Burn" (Makbul Mubarak), "The Ballad of Joni and Susi" (Yudi Ahmad Tajudin), "Frame of Sally" (Ninndi Raras), "(Un)Holy" (Reza Fahriyansyah), "The Beer Girl in Yangoon" (Sein Lyan Tun), "The Songsmith" (Bayu Prihantoro Filemon), "Jilah and The Man With Two Names" (Yosep Anggi Noen), and upcoming co-production titles are "The Fox King" (Woo Ming Jin), "Malice" (Lungyin Lim), "Trinity" (Boo JunFeng).



TALE *of the* LAND

KawanKawan Media *presents*

in co-production with **Popple Pictures, Aview Images, Focused Equipment, Partisipasi Indonesia.**

Written and Directed by **Loeloe Hendra**

Starring **Shenina Cinnamon, Arswendy Bening Swara, Yusuf Mahardika, Angga Yunanda**

Producers **Yulia Evina Bhara, Amerta Kusuma**

Co-Producers **Armi Cacainidin, Robin Moran, Pinkan Veronique, Kuek Shee Heng, Alice You**

Director of Photography **Fahrul Tri Hikmawan**

Production Designer **Sigit D. Pratama**

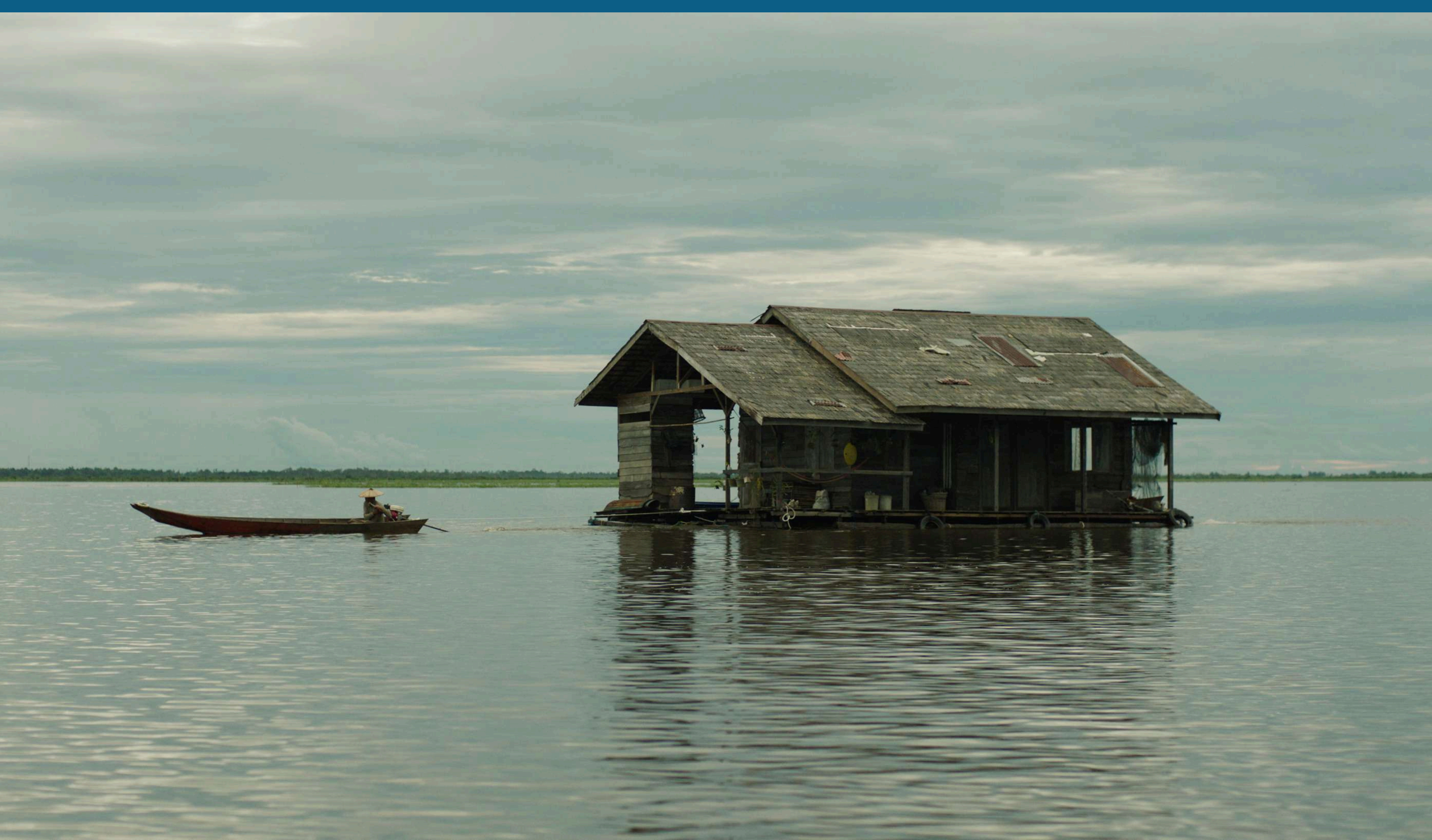
Editor **Carlo Francisco Manatad**

Music **Teresa Barrozo**

Sound **LH Aim Adi Negara, Vincent Vila**

Art Director **Ignatius "Clink" Sugiarto**

Make Up & Wardrobe **Anismcaw**



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