

(Dao Khanong)

ดิวเคเนอง

BY THE TIME IT GETS DARK

A FILM BY ANOCHA SUWICHAKORNPONG



SYNOPSIS

Two women arrive at a secluded house surrounded by fields and mountains. The younger woman will direct a film about the older one, a writer who led the student movement in the 1970s. The director records their interviews to use as material for her script.

The women dine at a nearby cafe and have an awkward conversation with the girl who serves them. The director begins venturing out alone, and explores a nearby mushroom farm. In the forest, she encounters a glittery blue mushroom.

The director records an interview with herself.

A road leads to another farm, where workers are engaged in the elaborate process of curing tobacco leaves. One farmer gets done with work and leaves in his truck. En route to Bangkok, he's recognized as an actor. When he arrives home, he reads a new script for an indie film. Later, he lies in bed naked with a woman who traces his features. He plays a series of roles, including that of a singing fish. The actor runs into the woman with whom he was in bed. They exchange small talk about their respective acting careers. She tells him she's taking time off from acting to direct her own film.

The first scene of the film recurs with new women who wear full makeup. The season has changed. The woman who was in bed with the actor is there.

The girl who waited on the director and writer is now in Bangkok, where she is working as a cleaner at the actor's gym. She goes from one job to another, never connecting with anyone. Eventually, she arrives at a temple, where she shaves her head, lives alone, and sweeps the grounds.

She enjoys disco dancing.





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Dao Khanong (By the Time It Gets Dark) is my attempt to deal with the impossibility of making a historical film in the place where there is no history. What begins as a single narrative soon becomes fragmented, and ultimately devours itself. There are no beginning or ending points. Time is both transfixed and moving. The four main characters in the film (played by seven actors) relate to one another spatially, as well as temporally. They drift in and out of reality and dreams, suspended at the point where art intersects life – where cinema is born. It is my intention to create in Dao Khanong the fertile time for remembering. It is also an ode to cinema, the recording machine for memory and history.

When I was learning English in primary school, one of the most memorable lessons was the present perfect progressive tense – ‘I have been’, ‘you have been’, ‘she has been’. For native English speakers, it’s evident what this tense is. But as a speaker of Thai, one of many non-tense languages, including Chinese, it was hugely interesting. The present perfect progressive is used for something that is ongoing; for something that happened in the past and continues through the present. I remember how good I felt to be able to add a new tense to the three tenses that I had already mastered: past, present, and future.

Then, as my English got a little more advanced, I learnt that there was yet another tense, the past perfect progressive tense – ‘I had been’, ‘She had been’, ‘They had been’. As opposed to the present perfect progressive, in which something continues to happen, the past perfect progressive signifies that something used to happen in the past and continued to happen for some time, but it finished. Or maybe it didn’t finish. It just hasn’t continued.

Expiration.

There are far too many actions, anecdotes, incidents, and events that take place personally, socially, and historically in one’s lifetime. Perhaps that is why we are bound to forget. For if we could remember everything, how could we ever get out of bed in the morning? We would be so weighed down by the heavy burden of history.

We forget so we can go on living.

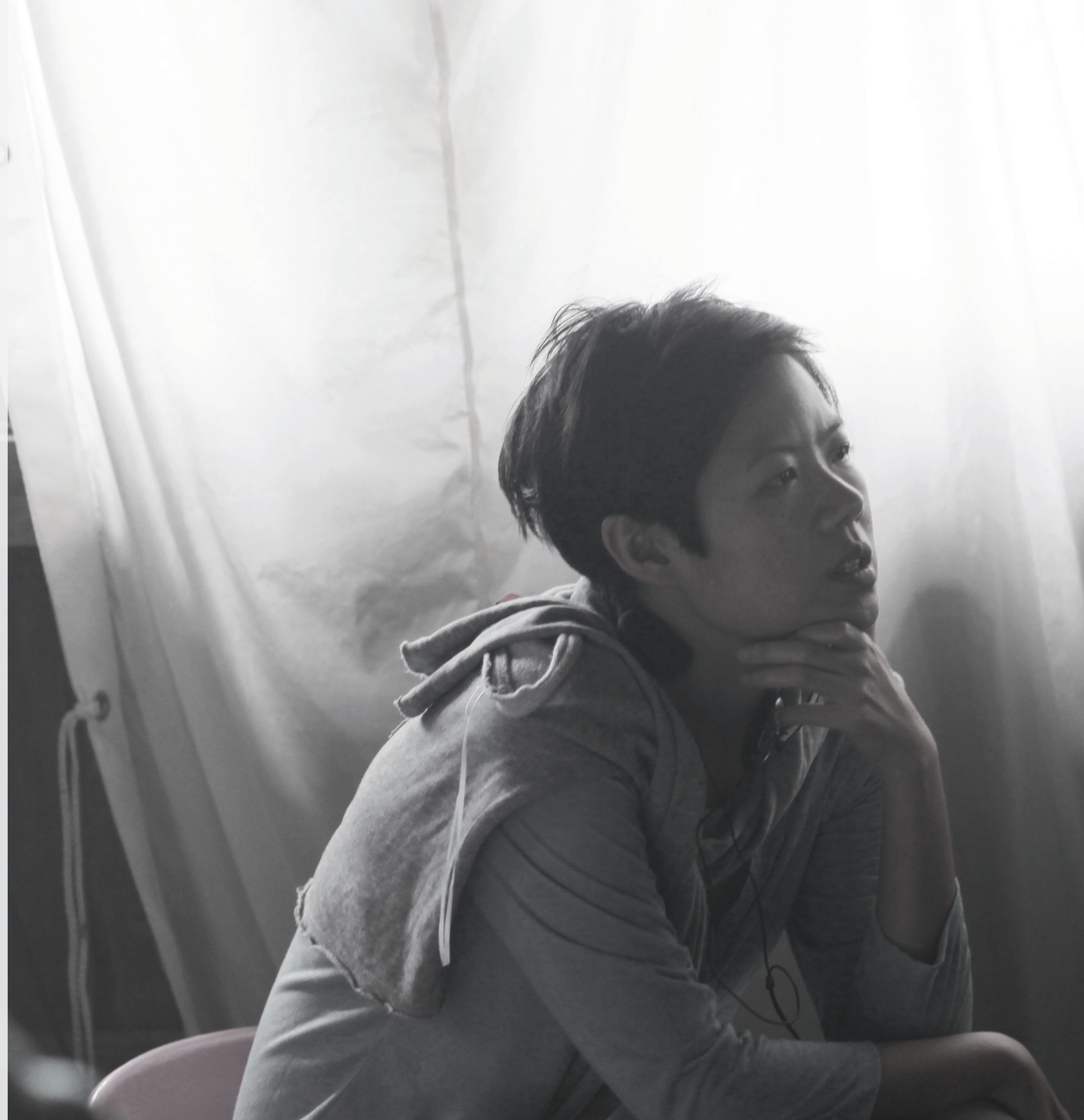
It is just as well.

We forget. It is just as well.

Perhaps only in our *dreams* can we remember.

A. Suwichakornpong
Bangkok, July 2016





ANOCHA SUWICHAKORNPONG

Anocha Suwichakornpong is a film director and producer from Thailand. Her first feature, 'Mundane History' won the Tiger Award at Rotterdam. She is currently working on her second feature, 'By the Time It Gets Dark', which won the Prince Claus Fund from CineMart and received financial support from Ministry of Culture (Thailand), as well as Hubert Bals Fund and Doha Film Institute. She has also produced "In April the Following Year, There Was a Fire" (IFFR 2012), "Concrete Clouds" (IFFR 2014), and "How to Win at Checkers (Every Time) screened at Berlinale 2015.



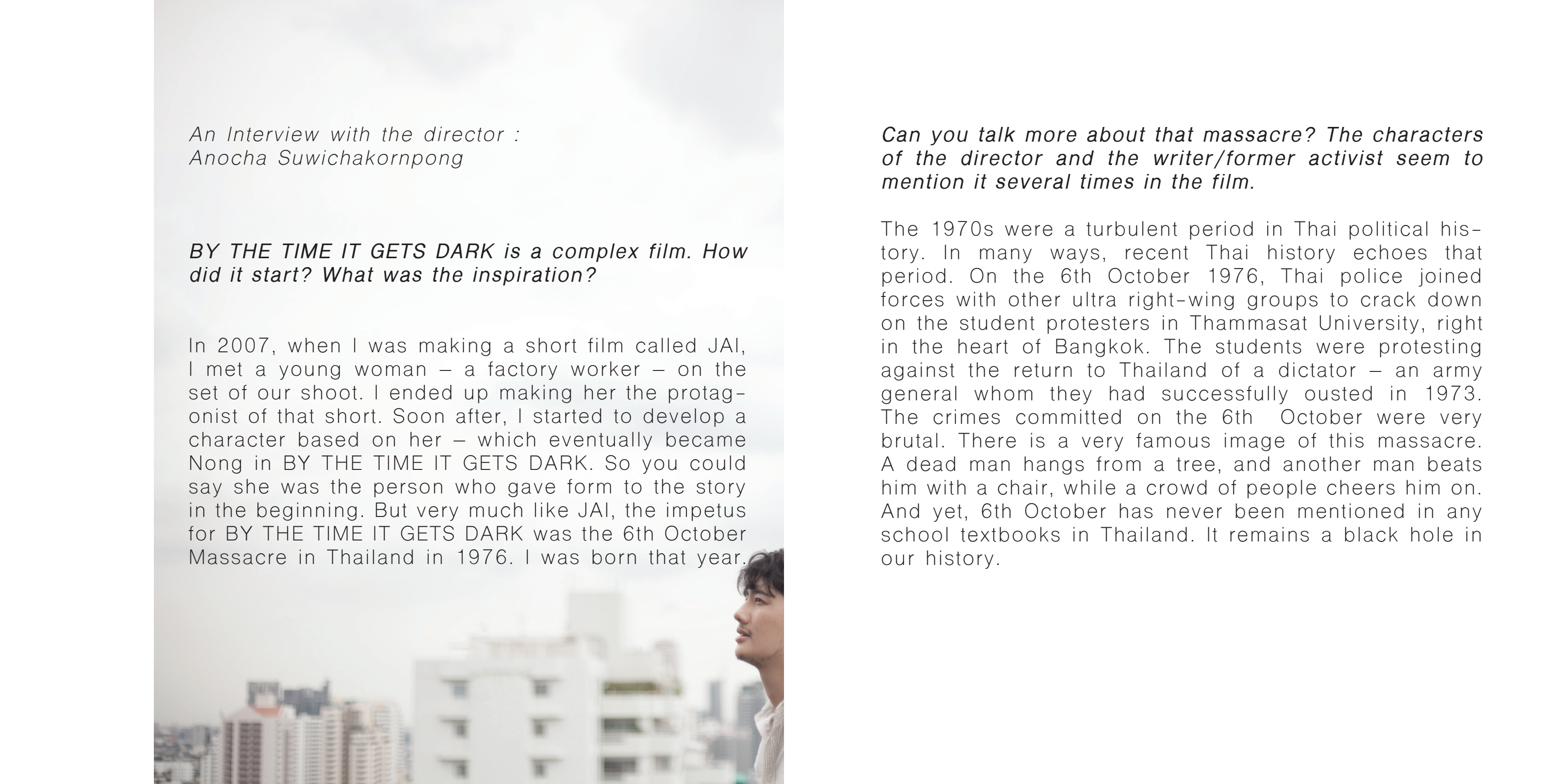
Selected Filmography

2006 Graceland (35mm, 17min)

2007 Jai (DV, 14min)

2009 Mundane History (35mm, 82min)

2012 Overseas (HD, 16min)



*An Interview with the director :
Anocha Suwichakornpong*

BY THE TIME IT GETS DARK is a complex film. How did it start? What was the inspiration?

In 2007, when I was making a short film called JAI, I met a young woman – a factory worker – on the set of our shoot. I ended up making her the protagonist of that short. Soon after, I started to develop a character based on her – which eventually became Nong in BY THE TIME IT GETS DARK. So you could say she was the person who gave form to the story in the beginning. But very much like JAI, the impetus for BY THE TIME IT GETS DARK was the 6th October Massacre in Thailand in 1976. I was born that year.

Can you talk more about that massacre? The characters of the director and the writer/former activist seem to mention it several times in the film.

The 1970s were a turbulent period in Thai political history. In many ways, recent Thai history echoes that period. On the 6th October 1976, Thai police joined forces with other ultra right-wing groups to crack down on the student protesters in Thammasat University, right in the heart of Bangkok. The students were protesting against the return to Thailand of a dictator – an army general whom they had successfully ousted in 1973. The crimes committed on the 6th October were very brutal. There is a very famous image of this massacre. A dead man hangs from a tree, and another man beats him with a chair, while a crowd of people cheers him on. And yet, 6th October has never been mentioned in any school textbooks in Thailand. It remains a black hole in our history.

The Thai title of the film is DAO KHANONG. What does it mean?

‘Dao Khanong’ is the name of a district on the outskirts of Bangkok. In itself, it doesn’t have many attractions, if any, so it’s definitely not a destination unless you live in the area. And yet, if you go on the expressway in Bangkok, chances are you’re very likely to see a sign pointing to Dao Khanong. Hence, I feel it has a sense of journey, of being on a journey, with little to do with the beginning or the end. Also, I do like the meaning and the juxtaposition of the words ‘Dao’ and ‘Khanong’. It literally translates as ‘Wild Star’ – ‘dao’ is star, and ‘khanong’ is wild.

The film has a disjointed narrative. Can you tell us more about this approach?

The film developed rather organically. I spent three years working on the script, and we filmed periodically for two years, during which time the narrative kept growing. But some elements, even characters, also died. I’m not sure if I agree that the film is really disjointed, though. There are enough connections between characters and situations. Admittedly, some connections are more obvious than others.

But I’m usually interested in something incidental. I find small incidents can be very revealing, about characters and situations. They hold truth.





ARAK AMORNSUPASIRI

Arak Amornsupasiri is a Thai singer/songwriter and actor. His film credits include *Slice* (2009), *Best of Times* (2009) and *Cat a Wabb* (2015).



VISRA VICHIT-VADAKAN

Visra is a filmmaker/actress. She graduated from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, where she received the Reynolds Fellowship in Social Entrepreneurship and the Tisch Graduate Fellowship.

Visra's films have been screened at various prestige film festivals including International Film Festival Rotterdam, International Film Festival Oberhausen, Karlovy Vary Film Festival, and Tribeca Film Festival, among others.





RASSAMI
PAOLUENGTONG

Rassami is a renowned dramatist and educator. She was engaged in the student movement during 1970s in Thailand.

ATCHARA
SUWAN

A former barista, Atchara is an up-and-coming actress. She is also a part-time writer.





CAST

ARAK AMORNSUPASIRI *Peter*

ATCHARA SUWAN *Nong*

VISRA VICHIT-VADAKAN *Ann*

INTHIRA CHAROENPURA *Ann*

SORAYA NAKASUWAN *Ann*

RASSAMI PAOLUENGTONG *Teaw*

PENPAK SIRIKUL *Teaw*

THONGDEELERT JAWAREE *Auu*

APINYA SAKULJAROENSUK *Auu*

SAJEE APIWONG *Chompoo*

WAYWIREE ITTIANUNKUL *Female student*

NATDANAI WANGSIRIPAISARN *Male student*



Written and Directed by

ANOCHA SUWICHAKORNPONG

1st Assistant Director

MAENUM CHAGASIK

2nd Assistant Director

NUTTAWAT ATTASAWAT

WICHANON SOMUMJARN

Script Supervisor

PATIDA THIRAATHIPAT

Casting Director

TULAPOP SAENJAROEN

TIPPAWAN NARINTORN

SOIFA SAENKHAMKON

Director of Photography

MING KAI LEUNG

Camera Assistant

CHARAN MUANG-ON

Editor

LEE CHATAMETIKOOL

MACHIMA UNGSRIWONG

Sound Mixer

AKRITCHALERM KALAYANAMITR

Production Designer

PARINDA MOONGMAIPHOL

VIKROM JANPANUS

Art Director

DANAI PASINGCHOB

Prop Master

SITTHIRAT PONGSINPORNRAK

Costume Designer

RUJIRUMPAI MONGKOL

Hair Stylist

THANON SONGSIL

Make-up Artist

KUBOON KUNSOOKSAN

Co-Producer

GUILLAUME MOREL

MAENUM CHAGASIK

Associate Producer

TULAPOP SAENJAROEN

Line Producer

PARINEE BUTHRASRI

Produced by

SOROS SUKHUM

LEE CHATAMETIKOOL

BENJAWAN SOMSIN

ANOCHA SUWICHAKORNPONG

Executive Producer

CHAYAMPORN TAERATANACHAI

EDWARD GUNAWAN

PITHAI SMITHSUTH

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