72 Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin
Competition

PLAYTIME PRESENTS A CDP PRODUCTION, IN COPRODUCTION WITH ANUPHEAP PRODUCTION & ARTE

EVERYTHING WILL BE OK

A FILM BY RITHY PANH

FRANCE – CAMBODIA / 98 min



INTERNATIONAL SALES

PLAYTIME

5 RUE NICOLAS FLAMEL - 75 004 PARIS - FRANCE
PH.: +33 1 53 10 33 99
WWW.PLAYTIME.GROUP



SYNOPSIS

If animals were in power, would they base their behavior on humans? Would they practice excessive, unfettered consumption to the point of destroying their environment? Would they adopt human flaws? Would they have the same thirst for power;
the same cruelty?
Would they choose to govern through demagoguery, terror, or totalitarianism? What would images mean? Art and cinema, or surveillance and questionable doings? Would they get along with the “ancients” - meaning the humans, or would they enslave them?
Would they have the desire and strength to resist evil tendencies and inclinations? Would they have empathy for their fellow creatures and all the living beings with whom they share the planet?

THE OLD WORLD IS DYING,
AND THE NEW WORLD
STRUGGLES TO BE BORN:
NOW IS THE TIME OF MONSTERS.
Antonio Gramsci

AT TIMES, I HAVE DREAMT
OF AN ERASER WITH WHICH
I COULD EXPUNGE HUMANITY'S
HORRORS.
Louis Aragon

THOSE WHO CAN MAKE YOU
BELIEVE ABSURDITIES
CAN MAKE YOU
COMMIT ATROCITIES.
Voltaire





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



For my latest project, I wanted to make a world come alive. I had hundreds of clay figures made and painted, and then filmed them to explore history through the tragedies and struggles that have punctuated and tainted it – as in the ways of childhood and metaphors.

Animals speak: from Jean de la Fontaine to George Orwell, Reynard the Fox and the Brothers Grimm fairy tales. They live and talk – to each other and to us. A language that speaks to the world: African fabrics patterns, indigenous totems, moai faces on Easter Island, animals everywhere – they are next of kin, antidotes, foils, cousins, moral ancestors, impersonators. "I'll invite you to graze in my pastures," Voltaire wrote mockingly to Rousseau – Mother Nature is everywhere; and facing her is a dominant, lost, pontificating civilization

For many of us, Covid-19 has turned out to reveal our great fragility. While some are calling for us to reflect upon the "post covid world," one that is fairer and takes ecology into account, others are already thinking about relaunching an even more intensive and ubiquitous form of globalization.

But this crisis has also brought us back to a more troubling tendency: the imperceptible shifting from surveillance of the invisible enemy that is the virus to a surveillance of everyday citizen's everyday lives.

We aren't at a loss for words to describe this situation: war, social distancing, tests, identification, surveillance, facial recognition, temperature checkpoints, fake news…

And as Hannah Arendt said: "*Politically, the problem with the argument of choosing the lesser evil has always been that those who choose the lesser evil very quickly forget that they have chosen evil.*"

I wanted to work on the totalitarianism that is creeping into our lives from the perspective of various reflections on the subject through the prism of fables. What does it mean to live together? What are the foundations of society, of a democracy or a republic?

What are submission and revolt, individual freedom and communitarianism, collective fascination and blind obedience, fanaticism and dictatorships? What are politics, populism, revolution? What constitutes the next world, a new tomorrow, a promising future?

Totalitarianism has always relied on progressive and generous ideas. Then the revolutionary machine jams…and the powers that be are corrupt once again.

Like in George Orwell's Animal Farm: "*Are you tired of being exploited? Then become the exploiter.*"

Karl Mark himself warned us: all proletarians dream of becoming bourgeois.

Thus evil insidiously seeps in, settling into utopia. Evil watches us just like video surveillance watches us, in the name of the greater good.

During the first springtime lockdown, I saw animals reclaiming possession of spaces in the ghost towns that our cities had become. I also remember my city, Phnom Penh, emptied of its population by the Khmer Rouge revolutionaries on April 17th, 1975. What was the reason for this massive deportation?

"*Nature hates a vacuum.*" I'm reminded of the Angkor temples, com-



pletely overgrown and swallowed by the jungle when they were “rediscovered” by Henri Mouhaut in 1860. Wilderness, or rather nature had filled up the space left by another life, engulfing the vestiges of an ancient civilization…a transient dream.
Yes, during lockdown birds were singing, speaking to us, as if to remind us that nature was there long before us.
Lockdown also asked us to raise the question of social injustice. It brought to the surface the deep malaise existing within a throwaway society where ethical, moral and philosophical compasses have gone awry.
In Cambodia, we know and love *La Fontaine’s fables* because they have become an element of our oral tradition and because, just like in 17th century France, criticism of society, justice or government is only tolerated through fables and under the guise of humor. I wanted to adopt this way of storytelling, like a fable that will lead us to a humanistic reflection.
I often say that I’m not making a film, but confecting it with my hands as one would knead bread, in order for a story to rise and take shape.
I used all the artistic means available to me to make the story come alive: sculpture, painting, mini-installations; “old-fashioned” special effects taking place directly on the film set like with the Lumière brothers; news broadcasts and various archives. I gave my animal characters personalities inspired by Cambodian tales as well as Aesop’s and *La Fontaine’s fables*. I drew inspiration from mythology and works by Etienne de la Boétie (*Discourse on voluntary servitude*), Voltaire, and Karl Marx… and George Orwell, naturally.
The film is a metaphor: In a big city invaded by plant life, a family of pigs wanders the streets – hunting for the last humans. The dawn of a “New Tomorrow” begins with a purge.
The world is a fable.

RITHY PANH



BIOGRAPHY

Born in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Rithy Panh arrived in Paris in 1980 after fleeing the genocide led by the Khmer Rouge regime. He studied at IDHEC. In 2003, S21, *The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine*, a widely awarded documentary, reviews the policy of systematic elimination orchestrated by the Khmer Rouge between 1975 and 1979. In 2006, he co-founded the Bophana center in Cambodia, allowing archiving Cambodian audiovisual heritage and training in its professions.

In 2013, his film *The Missing Picture* was the first Cambodian film nominated for an Oscar, for best foreign language film. His latest film Irradiated, in competition at the Berlinale 2020, received the award for best documentary. Rithy Panh has co-authored several books including "The Elimination" and "Peace with the Dead" with Christophe Bataille published by Grasset.

BOOKS

2007	*Paper cannot wrap up embers* Grasset - with Louise Lorentz
2009	*S21: The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine,* Flammarion - with Christine Chaumeau
2011	*The Elimination* Grasset - with Christophe Bataille
2020	*Peace with the deads* Grasset - with Christophe Bataille

FILMOGRAPHY

1989	SITE 2
1990	SOULEYMANE CISSÉ
1991	CAMBODGE, ENTRE GUERRE ET PAIX
1994	RICE PEOPLE [NEAK SRE, LES GENS DE LA RIZIÈRE]
1995	THE TAN'S FAMILY
1996	BOPHANA, A CAMBODIAN TRAGEDY
1997	ONE EVENING AFTER THE WAR [UN SOI R APRÈS LA GUERRE]
1997	LUMIÈRES SUR UN MASSACRE - 10 FILMS AGAINST 110 000 000 LAND MINES
1998	50 ANS ET UN MONDE: VAN CHAN, A CAMBODIAN DANCER
1999	THE LAND OF WANDERING SOULS [LA TERRE DES ÂMES ERRANTES]
2000	QUE LA BARQUE SE BRISE, QUE LA JONQUE S'ENTROUVRE
2002	S21: THE KHMER ROUGE KILLING MACHINE
2003	THE PEOPLE OF ANGKOR [LES GENS D'ANGKO R]
2005	THE BURNT THEATER [LES ARTISTES DU THÉÂTRE BRÛLÉ]
2006	PAPER CANNOT WRAP UP EMBERS [LE PAPIER NE PEUT PAS ENVELOPPER LA BRAISE]
2008	THE SEA WALL [UN BARRAGE CO NTRE LE PACIFIQUE]
2010	DUCH, MASTER OF THE FORGES OF HELL
2011	SHIIKU [GIBIER D'ÉLEVAGE]
2013	THE MISSING PICTURE [L'IMAGE MANQUANTE]
	2013 Cannes Un Certain Regard Award
	2014 Oscar® Nominated Film – Best Foreign Language Film
2015	FRANCE IS OUR MOTHER COUNTRY [LA FRANCE EST NOTRE PATRIE]
2016	EXILE [EXIL]
2018	GRAVES WITHOUT A NAME [LES TOMBEAUX SANS NOMS]
	2018 Giornate Degli Autori – Opening Film
	2018 TIFF Docs
	2018 Telluride Film Festival
2020	IRRADIATED [IRRADIÉS]
	2020 Berlin - Documentary Award

CREDITS

Director	Rithy Panh
Authors	Rithy Panh, Christophe Bataille, Agnès Sénémaud
With the voice of	Rebecca Marder
Cinematography	Rithy Panh, Prum Mésarh
Editing	Rithy Panh
Music	Marc Marder
Sound Design	Eric Tisserand
Assistant Director	Cheng Socheat, Mang Sarith
Producer	Catherine Dussart
Co-production	Anupheap Production, ARTE France
With the support of	Creative Europe Programme of the European Union Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée PROCIREP & Société des Producteurs de l'ANGOA
International sales	Playtime

© CDP / ARTE France / Anupheap Production - 2022 - Tous droits réservés