

a film by RIDHWAN SAIDI

Air Mata Di Kuala Lumpur

LIM PAIK YIN LEE QI LIEW CHEE HEAI EFF HAKIM
RASHID AKHMAL LIM NAM DONG FARAHIN FADZLISHAH LE SU-FEH

a BINFILEM MOKA MOCHA INK SIRING SIRING PRODUCTION co production
directed photographed edited by RIDHWAN SAIDI camera assistant AMIRUL RAHMAN sound design JONI ATARI
additional sound EFF HAKIM KHAIRUL KAMARUL producers NURUL AIZAM TAN CHER KIAN

BinFilem

Moka Mocha Ink

SIRING
SIRING
PRODUCTION

SYNOPSIS

Tze grapples with the mysterious disappearance of her husband, who is prone to recurring sleepwalking episodes. Seeking solace, she immerses herself in an acting class, while Jay, a photographer captivated by the elusive essence of femininity of men, prepares for an upcoming exhibition.

As their paths converge, an inexplicable connection sparks between Tze and Jay, drawing them into a haunting mystery. Against the backdrop of the city's spectral lamentations, echoes of the past intertwine with the present, blurring the lines between dreams and memories.

Amidst the urban landscape's murky confluence, a haunting melody resonates—a poignant reminder of a lost spirit's yearning for resolution. Tze and Jay navigate through their own tangled threads of loss, longing, and history, confronting their innermost fears as they unravel the enigma that binds them.

FILM INFO

Production Country	Malaysia
Production Year	2024
Film Duration	95 minutes (1:35:00)
Aspect Ratio	1.66:1
Sound	Dolby Digital 5.1
Colour / B&W	Colour & B&W
Preview Format	Full HD
Screening Format	DCP 2K
Language	Malay, Cantonese, Mandarin & English
Subtitle	English (srt)
Director	Ridhwan Saidi
Producer	Nurul Aizam & Tan Cher Kian
Cinematographer	Ridhwan Saidi
Camera assistant	Amirul Rahman
Editor	Ridhwan Saidi
Sound design	Joni Atari
Additional sound	Eff Hakim, Khairul Kamarul
Main casts	Lim Paik Yin, Lee Qi, Liew Chee Heai, Eff Hakim
Supporting casts	Rashid Akhmal, Farahin Fadzlishah, Lee Su-Feh, Lim Nam Dong, Hafiz Sahrudi, Adam Taufiq Suharto, SITIS
Production	Binfilem, Moka Mocha Ink, Siring Siring Production

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What led to the creation of this film?

This film is a homage to an unmade (first color) film by P. Ramlee with the same title, while simultaneously reclaiming the title to capture Kuala Lumpur for my time. It balances paying homage—for instance, we visited his grave and shot a scene (without any prior narrative rationale)—with an attempt to portray Kuala Lumpur on a more subterranean level, exploring its underlying history and its inhabitants' personal psychology.

In popular cinema, Kuala Lumpur is often portrayed as a city of sins, with crime and violence woven into its narrative threads. I am proposing an alternative where the pace is slower than it appears, with people finding solace in artistic pursuits. We explore negative spaces, finding complexities in mundane settings.

The film intertwines several narrative threads focusing on two women: one is an aspiring young photographer, Jay, and the other is Tze, a car workshop owner who has lost her husband and tries to heal by joining a theatre workshop class. I intentionally approached this film as if it were a devised theatre process, writing the film as I edited it. After shooting a scene from day one, it would go directly into the editing suite, where I would determine the direction of the story. We held a series of internal screenings as the film evolved to find its form, considering and reconsidering insights from close friends and actors.

Why film and not theatre?

Film is best for capturing the landscape of a city. We can create a character out of a city through cinema and, at the same time, serve as documentation for the future. For this particular project, I can't imagine it in theatrical form. It requires a lot of imagination, and I am certain it would involve videos of Kuala Lumpur. Hence, with this film, I can capture many close-ups of faces, as they represent another kind of landscape as well.

How did you approach the process of developing and refining the film's narrative?

Sometimes the best expression is not through words but through actions and physical contact. The final scene of this film, where the husband and wife reunite, was the first thing we shot. I aimed to portray a connection that feels unstaged, so Paik Yin and Chee Heai improvised during filming.

We shot the black-and-white photography scene with Chee Heai and Lee Qi that same night, which was supposed to be the opening scene in an earlier draft. This scene appears in my vision, so with this film, I will always need to negotiate between the vision that I imagine and the pulsating city life and improvisation by actors that unfold before me during the shooting. It is about being in control but at the same time embracing what chance has to offer.

Eff Hakim was the last addition to the film. I realized the film needed a certain musical quality, evoking the world of the spirit. The film is dark and brooding, yet it should also encompass a peaceful and tender feminine quality.

FILMOGRAPHY

FEATURE

Air Mata di Kuala Lumpur (2024)

Tiada Cinta Selama Muda (2020)

In Competition, 31st Singapore International Film Festival

SHORT FILM

Menjadi Laila dan Sairah (2021)

Official Selection, 16th Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival

Official Selection, London Short Film Festival 2023

Penyiasat Malam (2021)

First place, Wave Awards 2021 (Malaysia)

Sisa Binasa (2019)

First place, FITA Wave Awards 2019 (Malaysia)

FILM ESSAY

Majalah Filem Melayu Lama (2022)

SeaShorts Film Festival 2022

Revisiting Hankyu Jaya (2022)

Kaleidoscope Japan: Online Exhibition



DIRECTOR

Ridhwan Saidi is a Malaysian filmmaker, writer, and theatre maker who explores interdisciplinary experiments and lyrical intimacy in his works. In his debut feature *No Love for The Young* (2020), he blends body movements, documentary footage, and poetry, creating a peculiar audiovisual experience.

CREDITS

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Moka Mocha Ink
binfilem
Siring Siring Production

FUNDERS & SUPPORT

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Air Mata di Kuala Lumpur was a song written by the Malaysian artist P. Ramlee. The song was originally intended for use in a film with the same title. The film, which would have been the first colour film directed by P. Ramlee, could not be completed as he passed away before its production on 29 May 1973.

“A loving tribute to the architecture of the self and city.”

- Amir Muhammad

