

# PHL grantees and Asian films to compete in revamped QCinema

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NOW ON ITS 7th year, in its bid to become the premier international film festival in the region, the QCinema International Film Festival has revamped this year's main competition to include not only the festival's grantees but also Asian films. The Asian Next Wave competition is replacing both the festival's main Circle competition and Asian New Wave competition.

"Aside from the new films by local filmmakers, we have now invited emerging filmmakers from all over Asia. Hopefully, Filipinos will get acquainted with filmmakers from Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and other neighboring countries with our re-formatting our section of Asian New Wave [and the Circle Competition]. We are making a bid to becoming a serious contender for being the prime film festival in the Southeast Asian region," Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte-Alimurung said during the festival's press conference on Sept. 24 at the Gloria Maris Restaurant in Gateway Mall, Cubao, Quezon City.

Ms. Belmonte also announced plans to erect its own building "so QCinema will have a permanent home" without the fear of "being bumped off in mall cinemas whenever there's a big foreign film showing."

No specific location has been announced but Ms. Belmonte said that she hopes the building can be ready before the end of her term as city mayor in three years.

The QCinema film festival runs from Oct. 13 to 22 at the Gateway Mall cinemas, Ayala Trinoma cinemas, Robinsons Galleria cinemas, the UPFI Cine Adarna, Cinema 76 Anonas, and Cinema Centenario.

The festival opens with Sigrid Andrea Bernardo's *Untrue* while Singaporean director Anthony Chen's *Wet Season* closes the festival.

Together with the change of structure of the main competition, the festival announced that it has chosen three Filipino films to participate in the competition, with each film getting a seed grant of P1.5 million.

The three films are Arnel Barbarona's *Kaaway sa Sulod*, which follows two women (a soldier and a guerrilla fighter) as they cross paths during a mission, in the process uncovering a dark past that unites them in the midst of conflict; Rae Red's *Babae at Baril*, in which a department store saleslady finds a gun at her doorstep and decides that she has had enough of being the underdog; and

*The Cleaners* by Glenn Barit. In his debut feature, Mr. Barit uses photocopied stills to tell a coming-of-age anthology about high school classroom cleaners in a Catholic school in Tuguegarao City.

Also presented in the new main competition are five Asian films:

Nakorn-Sawan by Puangsoi Aksornsawang from Thailand; Ave Maryam by Robby Er-tanto from Indonesia; Fly By Night by Zahir Omar from Malaysia; The Long Walk by Mattie Do from Laos; and Suburban Birds by Sheng Qiu from China.

The QCShorts competition lineup features Judy Free by Jean Cheryl Tagyamon; Tokwif by Carla Pulido Ocampo; Here, Here by Joanne Cesario; SPID by Alejo Barbaza and Mervine Aquino; Excuse Me, Miss, Miss, Miss by Sonny Calvento; and Isang Daa't Isang Mariposa by Norvin De los Santos. The six filmmakers each received production grants of P200,000 for the shorts competition.

Three new Filipino documentary features, recipients of postproduction grants of P500,000 each, will premiere in the DocQC competition. They are For My Alien Friend by Jet Leyco, A is for Agustin by Grace Pimentel Simbulan, and Spring by the Sea by Aleia Garcia.

Non-competition documentary films will also be shown during the festival: The Future Cries Beneath Our Soil by Pham Thu Hang from Vietnam; Talking About Trees by Suhaib Gasmelbari from Sudan; and Kabul, City in the Wind by Aboozar Amini from Afghanistan. In the festival's Screen International section, awardwinning titles from Cannes and Berlin will receive their Philippine premieres. They are

Beanpole by Kantemir Balagov;

By The Grace of God by François Ozon; Nina Wu by Midi Z;

Bacurau by Kleber Mendonça Filho and Juliano Dornelles; Frankie by Ira Sachs;

Synonyms by Nadav Lapid; The Whistlers by Corneliu Porumboiu; God Exists Her Name is Petrunya by Teona Mitevska; On A Magical Night by Christophe Honoré; and, High Life by Claire Denis.

The Special Screenings section will showcase Lingua Franca by Isabel Sandoval; Dogs Don't Wear Pants by J.P. Valkeapää; Top End Wedding by Wayne Blair; No Data Plan by Miko Revereza; The Cave by Tom Waller; Krabi, 2562 by Ben Rivers and Anocha Suwichakornpong; A Girl Missing by Koji Fukada; and recent Locarno International Film Festival winner,

Vitalina Varela by Pedro Costa.

This year, QCinema introduces a new section called New Horizons for debut or second feature films from around the world. The section features The Bare Necessity by Erwan De Luc; Buoyancy by Rodd Rathjen; Homeward by Nariman Aliev; The Red Phallus by Tashi Gyeltshen; Chola by Sanal Kumar Sasidharan; and System Crasher by Nora Fingscheidt.

Continuing its partnership with the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) in promoting equality and representation, QCinema will screen six films representing the LGBTQ+ spectrum in the section, RainbowQC. These are Venice Queer Lion winner Jose by Li Cheng; Song Lang by Leon Le; Port Authority by Danielle Lessovitz; Where We Be-long

by Kongdej Jaturanrasamee; And Then We Danced by Levan Akin; and the Berlinale Teddy awardee, Brief Story from the Green Planet

by Santiago Loza.

Part of the ongoing centennial celebration of Philippine cinema are two QCinema sections reflecting the rich heritage of classic and mainstream works by major directors, including the country's national artists for film.

Centennial Classics will feature digitally restored films by the ABSCBN Film Restoration Project and FDCP. Among the films to be shown are *Biyaya ng Lupa* by Manuel Silos; *Malvarosa* by Gregorio Fernandez; *Insiang and Maynila sa Kuko ng Liwanag* by Lino Brocka; *Noli Me Tangere* by Gerardo de Leon; and *Tisoy* by Ishmael Bernal.

A Special Life Achievement Award will be presented to Vicente del Rosario, Jr., "who established Viva Entertainment as one of the main, enduring pillars in the entertainment industry for more than fifty years," according to a press release.

QCinema is presenting the section, Viva Classics, in recognition of Mr. Del Rosario's outstanding contributions to the industry. Three popular Viva films will be shown: *Bituing Walang Ningning*

by Emmanuel H. Borlaza; *Scorpio Nights 2* by Erik Matti; and *Working Girls* by Ishmael Bernal.

For the complete screening schedule, visit the QCinema website at [qcinema.ph](http://qcinema.ph) or its official Facebook page. —