

DIFFERENT VOICES FROM MYANMAR

An Art of Documentary Filmmaking Workshop held by the Yangon Film School in 2011

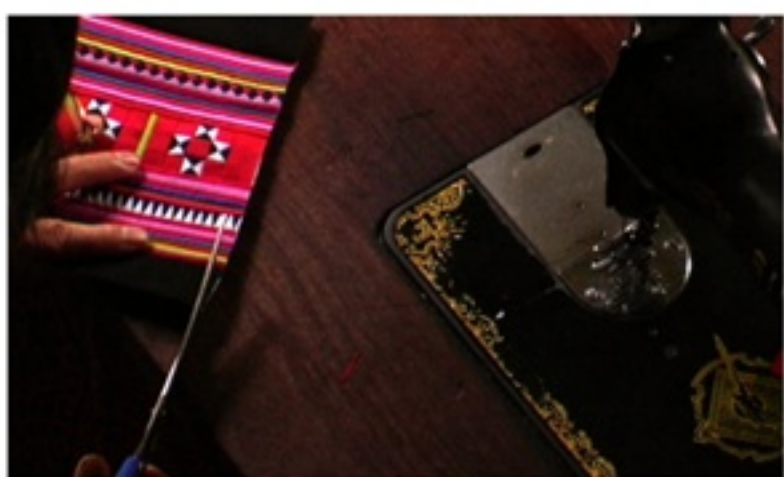


Since its inception in 2005, the non-profit organisation **Yangon Film School** has brought together experienced filmmakers from around the world and young Burmese men and women with little or no prior media experience for residential trainings in all aspects of filmmaking – with a particular emphasis on documentary.

In 2011, the school gathered its most ethnically diverse group of participants yet for the fourth edition of its beginners' workshop, the **Art of Documentary Filmmaking**.

Guided largely by peer trainers and mentors, six women and six men of Lahu, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Shan, Kachin, Myanmar-Muslim and Myanmar-Buddhist extraction began getting to grips with the practical, ethical and artistic aspects of the genre, emerging at the end of almost a month of intensive training with several documentary portraits inspired by Myanmar's different ethnic and religious groups.

This DVD contains the participants' **Final Films** and **First Film Exercises**. Rounded off by two short films, **About the Art of Documentary Filmmaking** and **Introduction to Editing Workshops**, and a glimpse of other YFS workshops on **Film History**, **Film Analysis** and **Post-Production**, the compilation provides another vibrant record of the school's activities, and gives a voice to some of those yet to be heard in today's changing Myanmar.



In 2011 the Yangon Film School Workshops were supported by:



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Empty Nest

Duration: 12'53"

Director & Editor: Zaw Naing Oo, Camera: Tun Lynn, Sound: Salai Tial Awi, Editing Mentor: Melanie Sandford

Daw Ni lang is a Chin national who lives in Yangon with her Chin husband and youngest son. She bustles around her home, laughs with friends at a local café and fondly remembers her early married life in Chin State. And yet underneath her cheerful demeanour lies a deep sense of loss at having had to leave her Chin homeland and part from four of her five children – all of whom have left Myanmar to pursue lives abroad. A familiar story about migration, told in a new context.

Myanmar computer arts graduate **Zaw Naing Oo** had his first brush with film at the well-known Myanmar production outfit, Forever Group. After four years of turning out films in rapid succession for production company Lucky Seven he decided to go freelance. He says that his experience as both director and editor on his YFS directorial debut **Empty Nest** has enabled him to see documentary potential in 'almost everyone' he meets.



Koran and Karate

Duration: 12'35"

Director: War War Hlaing, Camera: Khin Maung Kyaw, Sound Recordist: Jue Jue Than, Editor: Kyaw Myo Lwin
Mentors: Shin Daewe, Melanie Sandford, David Smith

Confident, focussed and elegant, Myanmar Muslim Yi Yi Myint divides her time between looking after her mother, teaching Arabic and practising her faith. An accomplished Karate practitioner to boot, this charming thirty-six year old single woman would seem to have it all – except perhaps for the right marital partner ...

Engineering graduate **War War Hlaing's** family are middle-class Myanmar Muslims. When she's not helping out at the family's market stall, she works as a development volunteer teaching life skills or staging plays with Myanmar interfaith peace group IYCAP. Proud of the liberal upbringing she has enjoyed and having been able to pursue her own interests, she hopes that her first short documentary **Koran and Karate** will help change prevailing prejudices about Muslims in Myanmar today.



My Family

Duration: 9'59"

Director: Thet Su Hlaing, Camera: Isaac, Sound: Zon Zapal Phyu, Editor: Zaw Win Htwe, Project Mentor: Pe Maung Same
Editing Mentors: David Smith, Melanie Sandford

Sisters Marip Sein Ram and Marip Nin Ram are both studying at a boarding school in Yangon – one thousand kilometres away from their native village of Eitone near Putao in northern Kachin State. The measured tones in which the girls tell their story are in sharp contrast to the traumatic life they led in the dysfunctional family they have now left behind. Theirs is a story of courage and resilience, and the determination to make a new start.

The Bag

Duration: 8'37"

Director & Editor: Thet Su Hlaing, Camera: Isaac, Additional Camera: Pe Maung Same, Sound: Zon Zapal Phyu
Editing Mentor: Melanie Sandford

While construction workers build an extension next door, Daw Nar Ku quietly creates a strikingly patterned traditional Lahu bag.

Mon-Christian director and editor **Thet Su Hlaing** came to Yangon from Thanpyhuzayat in Mon State in 1998 to take up studies in religion and feminism at the Myanmar Institute of Theology. A physics graduate, she joined the Myanmar Baptist Convention in 1999, where she now works as an editor. Her own experience as a single mother may well have influenced her choice to depict the world of women in her two workshop films **The Bag** and **My Family**, both of which she directed and edited.



The Dream

Duration: 14'14"

Director: Khin Myanmar, Camera: Seng Mai, Sound: Sai Kong Kham, Project Mentor & Editor: Hnin Ei Hlaing
Editing Mentor: Melanie Sandford

Kachin Baptist Brang Sai from Myitkina in northern Myanmar claims that the idea to found the orphanage he runs with his Lisu wife once came to him in a dream. Blending frank interviews with quiet observation of its driven protagonist, his wife and son and his adopted multi-ethnic family, this portrait helps explain this complex man's somewhat daunting personality.

Twenty-four year old English graduate **Khin Myanmar's** interest in film began as a teenager when her Burmese film editor father U Kyaw Zwar first regaled her with stories of filmmaking. Although she claims she is 'too shy' to be a director and would rather stick to editing in future, she is nonetheless committed to making 'good films' – and to one day founding a television channel in Myanmar to broadcast them.



Sweetie Pie

Duration: 07'14"

Director: Sai Kong Kham, Camera: Seng Mai, Sound: Isaac, Project Mentor: Pe Maung Same, Editor: Hnin Ei Hlaing

An old man babysits his grandson. Granddad adores the little boy and lets him romp all over the place. But from time to time this can be a pain in the ****.

Born in Shan State in 1985, **Sai Kong Kham** has long been interested in the arts, film, music and photography. A sound engineer for various radio stations in Myanmar, he decided to pursue a career in filmmaking in 2011. Made as an exercise during the Art of Documentary Filmmaking workshop, his directorial debut **Sweetie Pie** was an instant hit, winning first prize at the inaugural Wathann Film Festival in Yangon in 2011.

