

Berlinale  
62<sup>nd</sup> Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Competition



POST  
CARD  
SFRO  
M THE  
ZOO  
A FILM BY EDWIN







# POSTCARDS FROM THE ZOO

(KEBUN BINATANG)

Written and directed by EDWIN

babibutafilm in co-production with Pallas Film

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2012, Indonesia / Germany / Hong Kong, China  
96 minutes  
35mm, 1:1.85, Colour, Dolby Digital  
Indonesian with English subtitles

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## Cast

LADYA CHERYL  
NICHOLAS SAPUTRA  
ADJIE NUR AHMAD  
KLARYSA AURELIA RADITYA  
DAVE LUMENTA  
ABIZARS  
IWAN GUNAWAN  
NITTA NAZYRA C. NOER  
HEIDY TRISIANA TRISWAN  
BUDI HIDAYAT  
MAMAN AHADIAT SAFARMAN EFFENDI  
YASFI HAKIM  
BUDI PURBADI

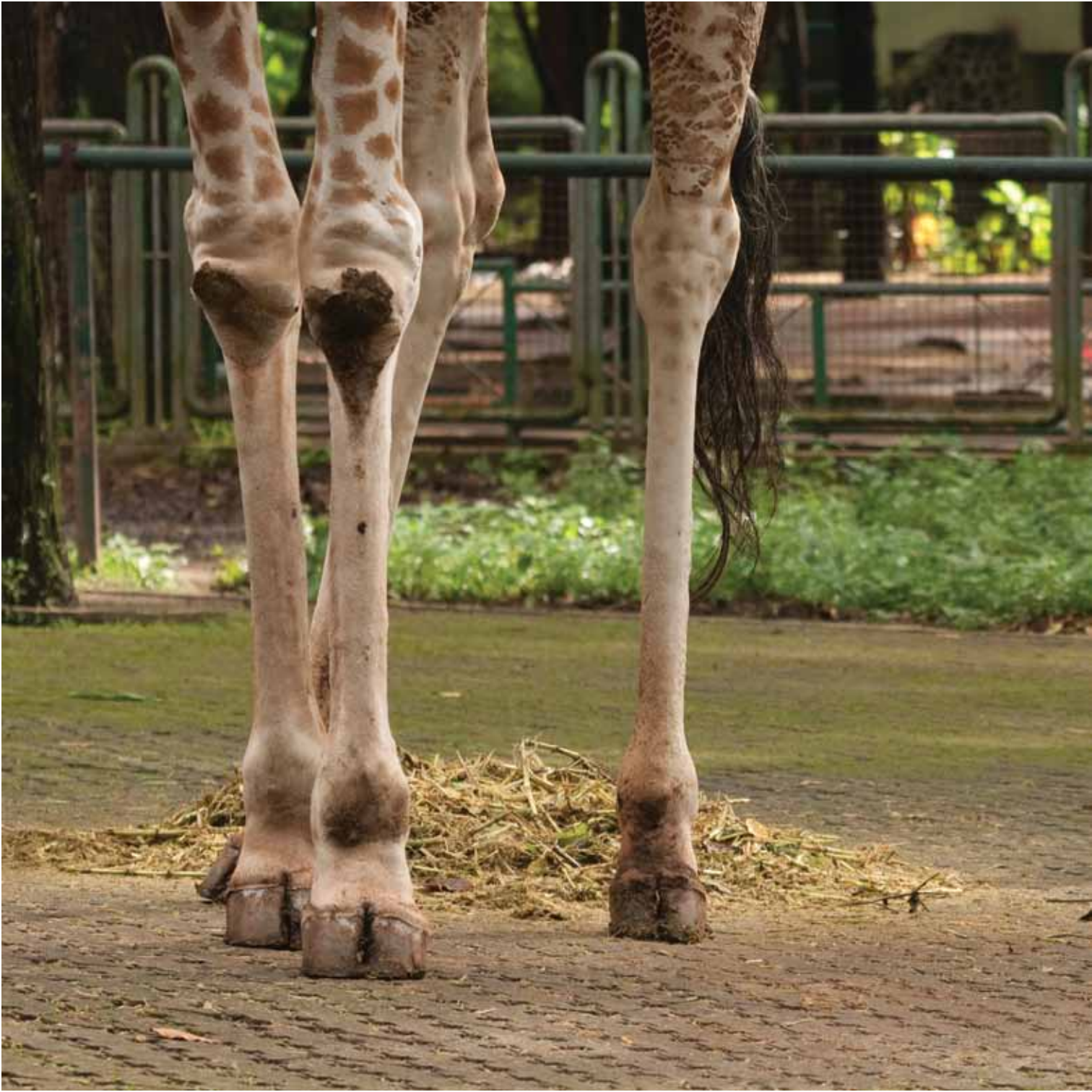
## Crew

Magic Coach	CALLOY SANTIAGO
Make Up	EBA SHEBA
Casting by	NANDA GIRI
Costume Designer	AULIA YOGYANTI
Art Directors	BAYU CHRISTIANTO KURNIAWANSYAH PUTRA
Art Supervisor	EROS EFLIN
Scoring Music by	DAVE LUMENTA
Sound Designer	WAHYU TRI PURNOMO
Animation	TJIPTONINGTYAS,
Editor	HERMAN KUMALA PANCA
Director of Photography	SIDI SALEH
Associate Producer	KEMAL ARSJAD
Co Producers	LORNA TEE THANASSIS KARATHANOS KARL BAUMGARTNER
Line Producer	SARI MOCHTAN
Producer	MEISKE TAURISIA
Co Writers	DAUD SUMOLANG TITIEN WATTIMENA

Written and directed by EDWIN

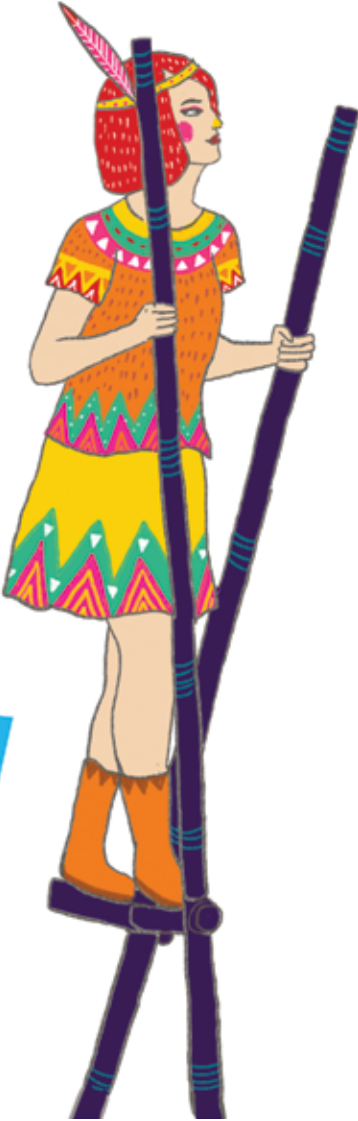
Illustration by Diela Maharanie  
Presskit Editor : Tony Rayns







## SYNOPSIS



**A**bandoned in the zoo by her father when she was a little girl, Lana grew up surrounded by animals, boundaries and the sounds of a subdued wilderness.

Raised by animal trainers, the zoo is the only world she knows. She learns to appreciate the graceful steps of the hippo, the elegance of the giraffe, the dignity of an elephant flipping it's ears. As time passes, Lana forgets her father.

One day, a handsome young man enters her world, a charismatic cowboy who knows some magic tricks and charms her. Lana falls in love and becomes his assistant in performing magic. At his side, she leaves the zoo for the very first time.

But one day, during one of his performances, the magician disappears in a puff of smoke. Lana is hired by a massage parlour to work as a masseuse 'with benefits'. In her heart she sadly longs for the magician and the animals that used to make her world a world full of meaning. Between remembrance of things past and the desire to find her own path Lana has to make up her mind. She slips away from the massage parlour and sets out on a quest for a possibly impossible place: home.

"Postcards From The Zoo" is a story of longing. In a world that was never built to be a home, young Indonesian director Edwin presents an enchanting romance full of myths, magic and memories. A sensual adventure that is at once unsettling and life-affirming, arranged in beautiful and dreamlike images.

If the feeling of loss were a place,  
It would be the Zoo.



## Postcards From The Zoo as seen by Edwin

**A**ll of the animals in it feel a kind of loss. They are not in their natural habitats and they cannot serve all their natural functions. Nonetheless, they adapt to their circumstances and live.

This film is about longing for something lost. The feeling of loss is very dreamlike and surreal: a dazed numbness, a dull, intangible pain. Life goes on and then suddenly you feel as if you're sleepwalking. You don't summon up the feeling of loss but it comes anyway – and without warning.



After her father has abandoned her, Lana's deepest longing is the need to be touched. But the zoo is full of barriers and fences to obstruct her. "Don't Touch the Animals!" When the magician touches her she falls in love, following her own needs. Falling in love is all about intuition and impulse – acting on your own immediate longings. What comes first is whatever you long for.

Lana leaves the zoo to follow the boy she loves. No matter what triggers it, it's part of human nature to leave home and prove ourselves elsewhere. Once we've done that, we feel the urge to return home – maybe not physically, but symbolically through the choices we make or the people we befriend. "Home" also means childhood, the foundation of our lives. Our childhood experiences may be happy or sad. Either way, they're formative.

A physical touch is Lana's link to her father and, consciously or unconsciously, she always longs to be touched.

When the magician who touched her disappears, Lana finds solace in the spa, giving massages to other people who long to be touched. For her, helping others in this way is a kind of remedy.

Lana's return to the zoo reflects the way that experience has completed her. There are always some basic, simple things which you don't understand or accept until you've seen the world and experienced them for yourself. Before Lana saw the wider world, she couldn't touch the giraffe. When she returns to the zoo, she goes to see the giraffe. This time she just knows that she can touch it, and she does.

The way this story is told is dreamlike. The characters around Lana – humans and animals – are like apparitions in her dream. They are there because they mean something to Lana, because they represent her thoughts and experiences.

Edwin  
Jakarta, January 2012



# The hippos, the tigers and the solitary giraffe

## From Interviews with Edwin

*Why did you call the film “Postcards”? Does it relate to the way it feels more like fragments or bulletins from a storyline than a through-told narrative?*

Yes, I suppose the word “postcards” comes from the way I myself perceive cinema. I enjoy fragmentary films that are able to break free from their own structures, films that allow the viewer to exit the narrative, invoking or triggering memories of personal experience. To me, that’s a bit like sending and receiving postcards.

*The film has realist foundations (all shot on location, right?) but a very dreamlike atmosphere. How important to you is the balance between reality and dream?*

Yes, all shot on location. To me, this film is completely a dream. Reality is the raw material for the dream.

*Is there any difference between the humans and the animals in the story?*

No, in in this film they are very much the same. They’re all open to estrangement, abandonment, feelings of loss and the longing for touch.

*You’re interested in psychological states, but not in the kind of conventional drama which most film and theatre directors use to explore psychology. How did you set out to define Lana’s psychology?*

I think I’m talking about a general psychological state (or, as I prefer to say, feeling) ... so I’m not trying to define Lana’s state or feeling in particular. For me, Lana represents the same idea as the lone giraffe in Ragunan Zoo, living in an environment that is not her natural habitat. It’s a question I have for my own life and everyone else’s: we live and work in places where we are actually welcome, so how come feelings of isolation or estrangement still visit us? Maybe these places where we’re supposed to belong are not our ‘natural’ habitat? So we go on our journeys back to “home” – whatever form that may take or feeling that may be.

*What drew you to a zoo in the first place?*

It’s a nexus of energies. So many people go there: people of all ages, cultures, classes, backgrounds, walks of life. They go to a zoo for the same reason they might go to any other public gathering-place, to see and be seen.

But the dynamic is more interesting in a zoo because it's humans and animals looking at each other. In a sense, it's analogous to cinema, which is also about watching and being watched.

There's another aspect to it too. In Indonesia, especially in Jakarta, public places like the zoo tend to attract aimless people. You can see the same syndrome in malls. There's an overwhelming feeling of disorientation. It's as if they've come to terms with the fact, that they have nothing better to do. When large numbers of people gather in that kind of 'ultimate compromise' It's something I feel is interesting to show in a film.

*How did you choose the particular zoo animals which you highlight in the film?*

The giraffe has always been my favourite animal. Its shape and the way it walks are so dreamlike. I've always felt that the giraffe is a creature from a dreamland which has lost its way in this world. And, as I've said, there's only one giraffe in Ragunan Zoo: the only giraffe in Jakarta.

The tiger is an animal that has always appeared in my dreams. It is surely the animal that I dream of the most, no matter which 'genre' of dream it is.

The hippo is a more recent favourite. I'm intrigued by the sound of their tiny ears fluttering. I'm also intrigued by a Ragunan Zoo legend.

They say that the hippo Jackie can leap over the two-metre-high gate of his enclosure, visit other animals in the zoo and then slip back into his own area before anyone notices he's been gone. I spent the whole shoot hoping that we might capture the sight of Jackie doing this. The hippo keeper, Pak Budi, swears that it's true; he says he's seen it happen with his own eyes. I did see Jackie's mate Dania rise on her hind legs and reach the gate. The entire crew was startled to see it, and no-one remembered to start the camera. So that's become a legend too.

*Why did you make the young man a magician? And is there any significance in his choice of a cowboy costume for himself and an 'Indian' costume for Lana?*

The magician can make things disappear and reappear. He takes a ball of red light and swallows it; he creates fire, takes it away, then brings it back by touching Lana. The sensations of disappearance and touch are Lana's deepest longings. When someone's raw, deepest personal longings are touched like that, that's when they fall in love. It defies any logic or explanation. They follow this feeling of love instinctively, round and round until it ends, like a satellite. For the costumes, the caricatured "cowboy and Indian" look is meant to seem as out of place in Ragunan Zoo as it does on the streets of Jakarta – and perhaps even more so in a massage parlour.





*Your previous feature Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly explored the feelings of Indonesia's Chinese minority, mainly their feelings of disorientation. Do you see this film as a continuation of that line of thought?*

They are entirely different films, but it's true that I'm still exploring disorientation and the feeling of being displaced. This time, though, I'm trying to get at the issue at an almost subconscious level, through the zoo animals. In Blind Pig, I drew on my own history and memories.

*Considering how few independent filmmakers there are in Indonesia, do you think of yourself as a political filmmaker?*

I don't think these films of mine can be isolated from their social and political context, whether I like it or not – or even whether I intend it or not. They can't just be about their characters or their plot. As long as my films are personal, they're always going to express (at least subliminally) my convictions and my questions about what's going on.

From interviews by Tony Rayns  
January, 2012





## Edwin (writer - director)



**E**dwin was born in Surabaya, Indonesia. He entered the Jakarta Institute of Arts to study film in 1999, but dropped out to make films independently. He went on to take part in film workshops at the Berlinale Talent Campus and the Asian Film Academy at Busan Film Festival.

He first attracted international attention with a triptych of remarkable short films “about dandruff, love and desire”. In 2005 the third of these, *Kara, Daughter of a Tree*, became the first Indonesian short ever screened in the Cannes Directors’ Fortnight.

His 2007 short *Trip to the Wound* was invited into competition at the 2008 Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival. He returned to competition in Clermont-Ferrand the following year with his next short *Hulahoop Soundings*, a homage to the Coen Brothers commissioned by International Film Festival Rotterdam.

His debut feature *Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly* (2008) premiered at the Busan Film Festival in Korea and went on to screen in many other festivals, including Rotterdam, BAFICI in Buenos Aires, Hong Kong, Karlovy Vary, Vancouver, Vienna, London and Melbourne. During its tour of the festival circuit it picked up numerous prizes, including the FIPRESCI prize in Rotterdam, a Silver Prize at the Festival des 3 Continents in Nantes and the jury Special Mention in Singapore. In 2010, Edwin contributed an episode to the omnibus project *Belkibolang*, which highlighted the work of nine young Indonesian directors.

### Films:

2002: *A Very Slow Breakfast* (short)  
2004: *Dajang Soembi – The Woman who was Married to a Dog* (short)  
2005: *Kara, Daughter of a Tree* (short)  
2006: *Songs from Our Sunny Homeland* (doc)

2006: *A Very Boring Conversation* (short)  
2007: *Trip to the Wound* (short)  
2008: *Hulahoop Soundings* (short)  
2008: *Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly*  
2010: *Belkibolang* (Roller Coaster episode)  
2012: *Postcards from the Zoo* (*Kebun Binatang*)



# BIO - FILMOGRAPHIES

## Meiske Taurisia (producer)

**M**eiske Taurisia was born in Jakarta, Indonesia, 35 years ago. After earning Bachelor degrees in Architecture and Textile Design, she took an MA in Fashion, Design and Strategy in the Netherlands. Between producing films, she still teaches at the fashion school.

She entered the film business in 2004, initially as a costume designer. Collaborations with Edwin on his short films and music videos turned her into a producer, and she produced his debut feature *Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly* (2008), with financing from local partners and international film funds. Also in 2008 she co - produced the collective documentary *9808: Commemoration of 10 Years of Indonesian Reform*, in which local filmmakers reflected on Indonesia's political situation. In 2010 she produced *Belkibolang*, an omnibus feature by nine young Indonesian directors – one of whom was Edwin.

## Lorna Tee (co - producer)

**A**fter cutting her producer's teeth in the New Malaysian Cinema, Lorna Tee became manager of marketing and distribution at Focus Films in Hong Kong, supervising a slate of innovative features by young directors. Pausing only to serve as executive producer of the inaugural Asian Film Awards, she then became Business Development Manager of Variety's Asian bureau. But the lure of production was too great and she returned to the fray as general manager of Irresistible Films, another company focused on new talents.

She is currently working with October Pictures and simultaneously managing her own production company Paperheart, which is active right across Asia. She is a member of advisory panels for various international film festivals including Rotterdam, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Busan and Jakarta. She has served on festival juries at the Berlinale and in Locarno, Hong Kong, Jeonju, Barcelona, Mexico, Durban and elsewhere. Her producing credits (in Hong Kong, Malaysia, China and South Korea) include *The Beautiful Washing Machine*, *The Shoe Fairy*, *Rain Dogs*, *Crazy Stone*, *Love Story*, *My Mother is a Bellydancer*, *At the End of Daybreak*, *Lover's Discourse* and *Come Rain, Come Shine*.



# THE CAST

The two lead actors in Postcards from the Zoo, Ladya Cheryl and Nicholas Saputra, first worked together in Rudy Soedjarwo's What's With Love? (Ada Apa Dengan Cinta, 2002) – the film which gave both of them their screen debuts. The film holds the all-time box office record in Indonesia and has come to be considered one of the best Indonesian movies of all time.

## Ladya Cheryl (as Lana)

After making her screen debut in 2002, Ladya Cheryl developed a close working relationship with Edwin. She has starred in three of his shorts and both of his features to date. Her work in Mouly Surya's Fiksi won her a Best Actress nomination at the 2008 Indonesian Film Awards; the film itself went on to win Best Picture.

### FILMS

- 2002: What's With Love? (Ada Apa Dengan Cinta) dir: Rudy Soedjarwo
- 2003: Biarkan Bintang Bernyanyi dir: Indra Yudhistira
- 2004: Banyu Biru dir: Teddy Soeriaatmadja
- 2005: Kara, Daughter of a Tree (Kara, Anak Sebatang Pohon) short, dir: Edwin
- 2007: Trip to the Wound short, dir: Edwin
- 2008: Hulahoop Soundings short, dir: Edwin
- 2008: Fiksi dir: Mouly Surya
- 2008: Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly (Babi Buta Yang Ingin Terbang) dir: Edwin
- 2012: Postcards from the Zoo (Kebun Binatang) dir: Edwin



## Nicholas Saputra (as the Magician)

**B**orn on 24 February 1984, Nicholas Saputra has become one of the most prominent actors in Indonesia. Trained as an architect, he also has active interests in history and diving. He was named Best Actor between 2005 until 2007 at the MTV Movie Awards, Indonesian Film Awards and Indonesia Movie Award. He was a presenter for Channel [V].

### FILMS

- 2002: What's With Love? (Ada Apa Dengan Cinta) dir: Rudy Soedjarwo
- 2003: Biola Tak Berdawai dir: Sekar Ayu Asmara
- 2005: Joni's Promise (Janji Joni) dir: Joko Anwar
- 2005: Gie dir: Riri Riza
- 2007: Three Days to Forever (Tiga Hari Untuk Selamanya) dir: Riri Riza
- 2008: Hulahoop Soundings short, dir: Edwin
- 2008: Pesantren: 3 Wishes 3 Love (3 Doa 3 Cinta) dir: Nurman Hakim
- 2012: Postcards from the Zoo (Kebun Binatang) dir: Edwin





# PRODUCTION COMPANIES

## **babibutafilm** (jakarta, Indonesia)

**D**uring the making of Edwin's first feature *Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly*, a team formed spontaneously: writer-director Edwin, producer Meiske Taurisia and cinematographer Sidi Saleh. The triumvirate founded the independent company Babibuta Film, which has since co-produced the omnibus movie *Belkibolang* and now *Postcards from the Zoo*.

An avowedly non-commercial independent film, *Blind Pig* was an authentic product of Indonesia's "reform era"; it would have been impossible to make such a film in earlier years. The film inherently challenges local censors, and so the company made no attempt to distribute it through mainstream theatres. Instead it has screened in art centres and on campuses, provoking widespread discussion. Of course, it has also screened in many festivals around the world and won prizes in several. The company accepted from the outset that no commercial investor would be interested in the film, but it was and remains committed to producing an alternative to mainstream entertainment, not only for Indonesia but also for audiences internationally.

## **Pallas Films** (co - production company, Germany)

**P**allas Films was founded in 2003 in Halle, Germany, by the producers Karl Baumgartner and Thanassis Karathanos. From the start, its aim has been to develop and produce films on a high artistic level. The company has collaborated with filmmakers all over the world, giving special attention to countries where support for 'art films' is minimal or non-existent.

The company's co-productions to date have included *Something Like Happiness* by Bohdan Slama, *Gucha – Distant Trumpet* by Dusan Milic, *Irina Palm* by Sam Garbarski,

*The World is Big and Salvation Lurks Around the Corner* by Stephan Komandarev, *A Country Teacher* by Bohdan Slama, *Tulpan* by Sergey Dvortsevoi, *The Light Thief* by Aktan Arym Kubat, *Distant Neighbourhood* by Sam Garbarski, *Marieke, Marieke* by Sophie Schoukens, *The Human Resources Manager* by Eran Riklis, *Alois Nebel* by Tomas Lunak, *Invasion* by Dito Tsin-sadze and *Clean* by Sylvie Michel.













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