



CENTER FOR LAO STUDIES

**SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
LAO STUDIES FILM FESTIVAL**

Friday May 4, 2007

Memorial Union, Arizona State University

8:05-11:00pm

The Center for Asian Research at Arizona State University (ASU) and the Center for Lao Studies in San Francisco are proud to present the Second International Conference on Lao Studies Film Festival. We are pleased to showcase films that depict the acculturation experiences of the Lao diaspora, the traumas of war, and the social and cultural dynamics in Laos. The Film Festival showings include: *Nerakhoun: Betrayal*, our feature film, and *Laos: Roads to the Future*, *The Life and Times of a Teenage Gambler*, and *Pierre-Pierrot*, our short documentaries. Due to participant suggestions during the first conference, we have decided to run *Bombies* again; many participants missed it during the first showing in DeKalb, Illinois. We hope to build upon the successes of the first film festival and provide a canvas for a spectrum of perspectives, ranging from independent filmmakers to larger production groups. We hope you will enjoy our selection of films this year.

Dr. S. Steve Arounsack
Film Festival Coordinator/Host

Note: The Center for Lao Studies, the Center for Asian Research, and the Second International Conference on Lao Studies committee do not necessarily endorse or promote the views expressed by these films.

PROGRAM

8:05-8:10 pm, Opening Remarks by Dr. S. Steve Arounsack

Room A

Capacity: 200 seats

8:15 - 9:45 pm: *Nerakhoun: Betrayal*
9:45 - 10:10 pm: *Laos: Roads to the Future*
10:10 - 10:40 pm: *Pierre-Pierrot*

Room B

Capacity: 100 seats

8:30 - 9:00 pm: *The Life and Times of a Teenage Gambler*
9:00 - 9:30 pm: *Palm Leaf Project*
9:30 - 10:30 pm: *Bombies*

*This tentative schedule of films is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

FILM SYNOPSES

Nerakhoun: Betrayal

Documentary (Work in Progress Edition)

Twenty years in the making, this personal narrative examines the life of Thavisouk Phrasavath as he and his family escape Laos during the secret bombing campaign. Images and sounds from the early resettlement years conjures raw and powerful emotions. The land of dreams and promises—known as America—turned out to be a mirage. Drugs, apathy, and broken promises welcomed them instead. Acclaimed director of photography, Ellen Kuras, co-directs this documentary with Mr. Phrasavath. This documentary is set to air on national PBS in 2007 and 2008.

*Please note that this is a work-in-progress edition and that the final cut may differ substantially from this version.

Language: Lao and English, Subtitles: English

Directors: Ellen Kuras and Thavisouk Phrasavath. 2007. RT: 90 Min.

Laos: Roads to the Future

Documentary

The young people in Laos would like to earn more money and embrace the material world. But most are poor and uneducated, and have few options to pursue their dreams. Crossing over to nearby Thailand as unskilled workers, they become easy prey to narcotics, crime, prostitution and HIV. Concerned community groups have recently moved in to help those affected, while others are trying to prevent thousands more from making the same mistakes.

Language: Lao and English, Subtitles: English

Produced by Truth Talking Project. 2002. RT: 26 Min.

Pierre-Pierrot

Documentary

Two brothers, Pierre and Pierrot, were separated during their family's escape from Laos. Pierre eventually ended up in France while Pierrot remained stuck in Laos. They have not seen each other since the tragic separation. Producers were able to interview Pierrot in Laos and show his brother, Pierre, in France the footage. This is a story of reconciliation between the Lao diaspora and those left behind in the motherland.

Language: Lao and French, Subtitles: English

Produced by Nith Lacroix. 2006. RT: 26 Min.

The Life and Times of a Teenage Gambler

Documentary

Kae Saephan, a 19 year-old Mien refugee from Laos, explores the issues of gambling among the Southeast Asian youth in his Seattle community. Through self-reflections and interviews with peers, relatives, and gaming industry workers, Kae addresses the monetary and emotional costs of "making the bet," whether its card games with friends or underage gambling at casinos. This film takes viewers inside the world of teenage gambling to detail the reality of this addiction. Viewer discretion is advised: this film contains explicit language.

Language: English

Producers: Joseph Mills and Kae Saephan. 2006. RT: 36 Min.

Palm Leaf Project

Documentary

Palm leaf manuscripts form an important part of Buddhist countries' cultural heritage. In the past decades these manuscripts that are usually stored in monasteries have fallen into oblivion. Harald Hundius has toured all provinces of Laos to collect, classify and photograph as many manuscripts as possible. This project has met with great enthusiasm from the villagers and the Lao government. The film describes this revival of an important Lao tradition.

Language: Lao and English, Subtitles: English

Produced by Peter Ohlendorf. RT: 30 Min.

Bombies

Documentary

Between 1964 and 1973 the United States conducted a secret air war, dropping over 2 million tons of bombs and making tiny Laos the most heavily bombed country in history. Millions of these 'cluster bombs' did not explode when dropped, leaving the country massively contaminated with 'bombies' as dangerous now as when they fell a quarter century ago. *Bombies* examines the problem of unexploded cluster bombs through the personal experiences of a group of Laotians and foreigners and argues for their elimination as a weapon of war.

Language: English and Lao, Subtitles: English

Produced by Lumiere Productions. 2000. RT: 56 Min.

BIOGRAPHY of HOST

In over 10 years of multi-media experience in video, web, and print, Dr. Arounsack's productions have aired on PBS, satellite TV, at universities, and theatre venues. He is the founder and former president of Pacific Arc Media LLC, a company focused on Southeast Asian media and culture. Dr. Arounsack hosted the film festival at the first International Conference on Lao Studies in Dekalb, Illinois. He served as the first Editor-in-Chief of the national Lao-American hybrid publication, *Lao Vision* and was elected to the 2003-05 Laotian American National Alliance (LANA) board of directors. He was also part of the inaugural class of national Gates Millennium Scholars and has published numerous articles and papers on Lao history and identity. Dr. Arounsack teaches at California State University, Stanislaus. Currently, he is developing a multi-media interactive program for the Legacies of War national traveling exhibition. For inquiries or future film suggestions, email Dr. Arounsack at sarounsack@csustan.edu.

Luk Isan (Child of the Northeast) VCD, which was shown during the First International Conference on Lao Studies Film Festival, **DVD of the first conference** and **DVD of the Cultural Night** held during the first conference are available for purchase at the Center for Lao Studies table.