

REEL SUSPECTS

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RUIN

A film by Amiel Courtin-Wilson and Michael Cody

90 min, Australia / Cambodia, 2013, Khmer, Colour, 16:9, DCP



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
la Biennale di Venezia 2013

SYNOPSIS

RUIN is an impressionistic fable- the story of Phirun (Rous Mony) and Sovanna (Sang Malen) - two young lovers inexplicably drawn together who escape a brutal and exploitative world of crime and violence in modern day Cambodia. Fleeing Phnom Penh after a murder, they travel deeper into the jungle. As their vulnerable love ebbs and flows along their journey, they wake from the trauma of their former lives and unleash a violent rage upon the world. Love and death intermingle as they travel deeper into the abyss- their world strangely transforming around the two young lovers on the run.

RUIN DIRECTORS' STATEMENT INTRODUCTION

For Michael Cody RUIN is the culmination of many years fascination and engagement with Asia in a number of film contexts. As a Phd student at the University of Technology Sydney he was researching and writing on cross-cultural cinema and documentary with particular reference to Asian filmmakers. He also spent a period working as a foreign correspondent for APTN Europe's Roving Report and SBS Australia's Dateline programs, primarily producing and directing documentary style programs in Asia. Finally he spent a number of years working in physical production throughout the region. This involved facilitating feature film productions in Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand as well as directing his own work, (his short film entitled Foreign Parts was shot in Vietnam and selected for competition in the Clermont-Ferrand short film festival). After discovering a shared passion for a documentary/drama hybrid aesthetic, Amiel Courtin- Wilson and Michael co-founded the production collective Flood Projects which also includes directors Amy Gebhardt and Justin Kurzel,

REEL SUSPECTS

cinematographers Adam Arkapaw and Germain McMicking, editor Peter Sciberras and composers Steve Benwell and Oren Ambarchi. After directing twenty short films and three feature length documentaries including Chasing Buddha that screened at Sundance in 2000 and his short film CICADA that screened at Cannes in 2009, Amiel Courtin-Wilson's dramatic feature film debut HAIL screened at festivals including Venice, Rotterdam, Istanbul, Seattle, Kalovy Vary, Munich, and Edinburgh- as well as winning the Age Critics Award at the Melbourne International Film Festival, the Jury Prize at the Fantasia Film Festival, Best Film at the Fantaspoa Film Festival and being critically lauded as the best Australian film of 2012 by critics such as Adrian Martin. Amiel wrote and directed HAIL and Michael produced - allowing them to develop a unique and very exciting production methodology, as well as an intensely rewarding working relationship.



After HAIL had its international premiere at Venice in 2011, Amiel and Michael arrived in Cambodia with the objective of collaborating as co-writers, co-directors and co-producers on a feature film. At that nascent stage there was no script, story or financing whatsoever and they began RUIN by deciding to employ a similar documentary development methodology to Amiel and Michael's feature film HAIL. What lies at the heart of this unorthodox drama development and production methodology is that research, writing, production and editing are all able to coalesce- not dissimilar to the way in which a documentary is developed through shooting. Their experience on HAIL led Michael and Amiel to find this an extremely inspiring and fluid way of working- especially when working as co-directors on a project. In the case of RUIN this involved an intensive period of research in Phnom Penh where they conducted in depth interviews with hundreds of people across a broad spectrum of society; high ranking police officials, homeless drug addicts, market vendors, charity workers, child prostitutes and young business entrepreneurs. It was a harrowing, inspiring and humbling period of months of deep conversation and immersion in various pockets of communities in Phnom Penh.

At the same time Michael and Amiel were transcribing these interviews and working on story outlines and script development. Eventually they narrowed the myriad of stories down and co-wrote a fifteen page story outline from which to devise improvisations. Simultaneous to this process, Amiel

REEL SUSPECTS

and Michael also embarked upon a comprehensive casting process that involved working with both actors and non-actors. During this time they tested around 400 prospective cast and collected personal stories that in some instances also became part of the project. This entire process was made possible through the tireless passion of the Cambodian executive producer Kulikar Sotho. Kulikar is the most experienced producer in the local industry. A brilliant emerging filmmaker in her own right and with credits on a range of projects from Tomb Raider to Wish You Were Here. Kulikar is incredibly well connected in Cambodia and was able to steer Michael and Amiel towards who they needed to meet for their research, no matter how sensitive or difficult it was to gain access. Michael and Amiel became increasingly interested in exploring a mythical love story between two teenagers who have escaped mutually hellish backgrounds in modern day Cambodia. They fashioned a very simple fable-like love story road film, examining the way love can temporarily transcend trauma. Working in the nexus between documentary and drama, RUIN has a potency in its fundamental authenticity- laying the foundation for an extraordinary and vital cinematic adventure. Our Australian crew was augmented with local crew provided by an excellent Cambodian production company and our key relationship with Cambodian Executive producer and filmmaker Kulikar Sotho. RUIN was ultimately shot in two twenty day blocks a year apart with an Australian crew and the Cambodian production company Hanuman Films.

"It was an experiment and an exercise in sheer will to see if we could will this thing into being, and it's paid off."



THEMES

The festive organisation of the crowd must be first of all concrete and sensual. Even in the pressing throng, the physical contact of bodies, acquires certain meaning. The individual feels that he is an indissoluble part of the collectivity, a member of the peoples mass body. In this whole, the individual body ceases to a certain extent to be itself. It is possible, so to say, to exchange bodies, to be renewed. - Mikhail Bakhtin

REEL SUSPECTS

All waits undreamed of in that region, that inaccessible land. - Walt Whitman

We dive and reappear in new places. - Ralph Waldo Emerson

The more perfect a thing, the more it feels pleasure and pain. - Dante

RUIN is the story of two lovers who enable one another to become aware of themselves and the untold depths of their inner lives. The surfacing of this emotional magma unleashes a potent transformative love as well as a torrent of chaos that ultimately consumes them- swallowed whole by their own hearts and the malevolent world from which they have sprung. The unique synergy between the opaque and enigmatic natures of Sovanna and Phirun and how the subsequent fissures of love, hate, rage and grief lay their internal emotional tumult bare not only draws you into wanting to know Phirun and Sovanna more intimately but will also ultimately make you desperately want their love for one another to triumph. RUIN is a lush and brutal love story of mythical proportions- a portrait of two human beings inexplicably drawn to one another and thrust into a series of increasingly chaotic dream like encounters with both the outside world and each other. Set against the aftermath of the Cambodian genocide, RUIN uses the poetics of water to offer a lyrical framework through which to explore themes around the unfinished business of past trauma. Juxtaposing an unashamedly operatic emotional palette with an elliptical, poetic visual language RUIN is a transcendent story of companionship and love.

CASTING / REHEARSAL / PERFORMANCE

With an emphasis on raw authenticity, the casting process for the various roles in RUIN has been intensive and lateral. Our leads were real discoveries; while Mony (playing Phirun) is an experienced actor (our only cast member that is), he is rare in Cambodia in that he avoids the local tendency toward an overly theatrical style. He has an incredible range and makes consistently interesting choices. Melan (playing Sovanna), is a natural. Although she's a student at the Phnom Penh school of fine arts she is not in the theatre department, but rather has trained as an acrobat. We tested a great many young women for this role but were completely entranced by Melan's physicality, ability to stay present in any given moment and the complex ambiguity she brought to the role. Before casting our leads we engaged them in extended recorded interviews about their own lives. Both had experienced incredibly deep suffering in their immediate families and were open to these experiences being used to inform the fabric of the film. We also met many of our leads real life family, friends and acquaintances, both for research and as potential cast. This exhaustive approach provided a pool of non- professional actors and allowed the casting brief for each individual character to be extremely flexible. The specific physicality of the performers is assimilated into the roles to give the process as much latitude as possible. In other instances we worked with real people who play themselves in the context of the scene. For example, the metal workshop employees are for the most part actual employees of the workshop that we used as a location. Through the process of making Hail we refined techniques for working with non-actors and these approaches lend an authenticity to the work that is otherwise unavailable. This unique way of working is in effect research, writing and rehearsal all coalescing at once, giving us a chance to work in situ with our actors and develop a culturally sensitive and authentic framework from which to write our script.

CINEMATOGRAPHER'S STATEMENT

RUIN was unlike any other project I had ever come across. In its audacity, potential and scope, completely unconventional from the first incarnation. It was with a nervous excitement that I jumped

REEL SUSPECTS

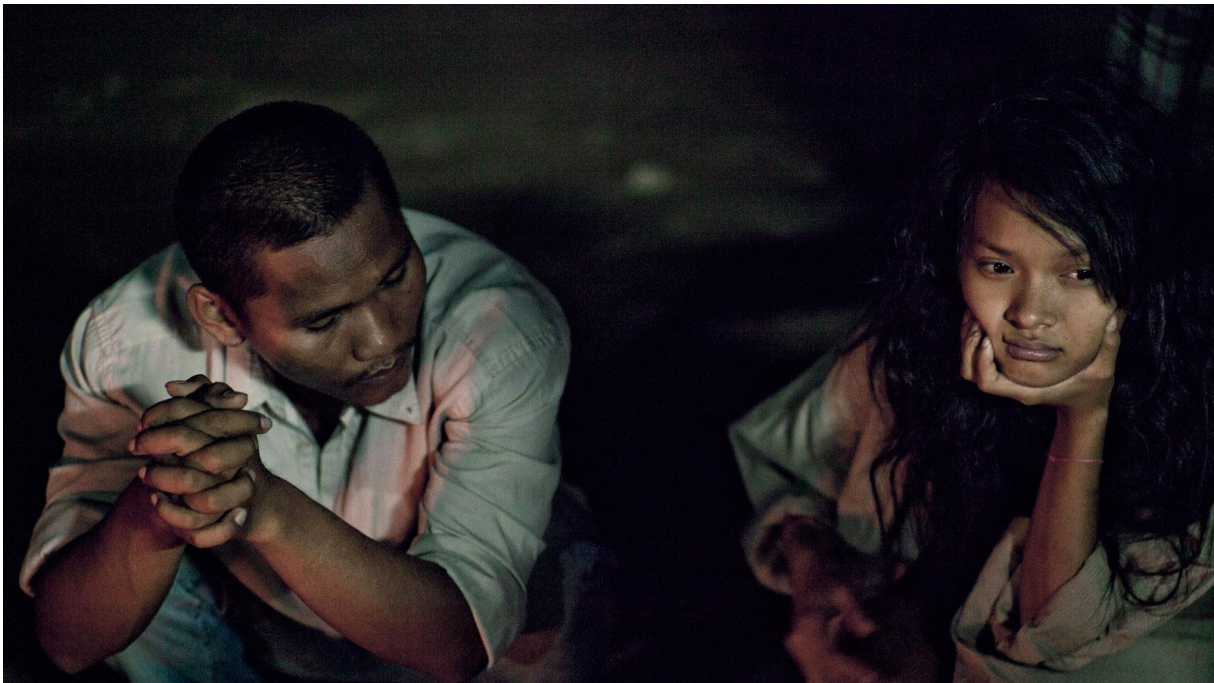
on board when Michael and Amiel proposed it to me. At that stage RUIN was an embryo of an idea, a bunch of notes, a feeling, an energy. No script, plan or schedule. Just a blind faith in a feeling, a hunger to start. Arriving in Phnom Penh just a few weeks after we had first talked about the project, we started shooting almost immediately. Rather than this feeling rushed or premature, it was actually completely liberating - a kind of live script, story and character development; in situ, on camera. As a cinematographer I felt an integral part of this development, a rare feeling on most productions. Free also from the time pressure of a strict shooting schedule and other traditional protocols, we formed a small but tight team, rapidly developing a visual language, our own on-set methods, and a way of capturing the developing story as honestly as possible. With minimal resources; a Canon 5D, lenses and a basket of domestic lights, we had a very small footprint. This intimate and flexible way of working, I believe, was a big factor also in allowing us to have almost complete freedom to be spontaneous and reactive. Working off the energy of Mony and Malen and the spaces they were acting in, I felt I was able to take my cues visually from my instinctual gut reactions to each scene. I sensed where the camera should be and feel, in reaction to how the moment unfolded, morphed and resolved during takes that were at times up to an hour long. Shooting on location with practical lights, the crew and the actors had very few restrictions in terms of our movement - if the scene suddenly moved from a room onto the street it was no cause for cutting, we became skilled in crossing roads and navigating obstacles whilst still rolling.



Along with sound recordist Steve Bond, we were able to create an environment that allowed both Amiel, Michael and the actors to continue the flow of an idea or the intensity of an emotion with everyone still anchored in the moment. And so we continued on in this vein, shooting mostly by night, sleeping (very little) by day. We watched rushes and discussed at length, talked about what we felt was the heart of it, what we were drawn too. We spent many sweaty nights in small rooms and balmy roadsides. We threw around ideas, many outlandish, most came to fruition. It was an intensely satisfying methodology, by definition there was a high percentage of the footage that wouldn't make the cut but with that came a freedom and a kind of inhibition - both visually and conceptually we could take risks that would not have been possible in another model of filmmaking. With us also was 2nd Unit DP Giovanni Lorusso and newcomer Alex Cardy who both worked tirelessly to capture the

REEL SUSPECTS

essence of that time and place. Germain McMicking (HAIL) joined us to shoot the ultra-slow motion sequences on Phantom, adding visuals on a whole other level. By my side was Josh Aylett, a multi-talented co-pilot in the journey who covered many roles including gaffer, grip and camera assistant. Deeper and deeper into the shoot we found ourselves somewhat sleep deprived, physically exhausted, creatively buzzing. It was here that I think we reached something truly innovative and exciting. The ideas, concepts and techniques were deep in the background and in that near totally exhausted state we were forced to act on pure instinct, let ourselves go completely and follow our first, unfiltered reactions. For me, operating the camera, I thrived on this feeling, the rawness of it, tuning in to the actors, the minutia of their movements and dynamics, giving in to the moment, at times forgetting completely that there was a camera between us. After so many hours holding it, it felt part of me, there was no thought process involved in pulling focus or avoiding obstacles. Those hours too built a very close relationship with Mony and Malen. Despite the language barrier, it wasn't long before we had dissolved any sense of personal space and formed a relationship of pure trust. I can say without hesitation that the visual style and energy of RUIN comes directly from my interaction with them through the lens. RUIN was a labour of love, chaos and blind faith. Watching the film now I feel we managed to truly capture a feeling, a spark - that energy that we first felt back in the earliest days of conception. I hope the images honestly reflect the inner turmoils and joys of the characters, and the darkness and light in the world around them.



SHOOTING METHODOLOGY

RUIN was shot mostly in sequence and in real locations. The crew consisted of an extensive Australian team; allowing us to shoot the script chronologically, which was integral to our priority to create an environment that promoted raw, intuitive performance. To work in this manner is to liberate the potential for stunning moments of reality that are not available within traditional production models. This highly orchestrated yet ultimately organic approach injects a unique vitality and authenticity to the material that we believe is the life- blood of this film. Rigorous planning, pre-production and rehearsal processes, laid the groundwork for flexibility on set that made truly inventive collaboration available. Fostering this kind of spontaneity was crucial for the energy of

REEL SUSPECTS

RUIN. All locations were either shot with available light or entirely pre-lit to enable characters to move freely within the space without concern for technical requirements. During in situ rehearsals we blocked out key scenes, giving the actors the freedom to improvise on the day, as well as giving us the knowledge of how scenes would potentially play out. This method of fabricating a situation and then recording observational moments within that scenario enables beautifully naturalistic details to be captured – the impression of the world of the film is all the more convincing when presented with this scope.

SOUND DESIGN

Sound design is integral to the overall style of RUIN and like the restrained sound design in Hail, beautifully bold moments of total silence will be juxtaposed with dense atmospheres and diegetic walls of sound. Working closely again with renowned sound designers Rob Mackenzie, (THE GRANDMASTER, BASTARDY, HAIL) and Sam Petty (SOMERSAULT, ANIMAL KINGDOM, LORE, HAIL) who have amazingly sophisticated sensibilities and who favour coming on board with sound design concepts as early as possible.

VISUAL STYLE

Our approach to the visual style of the film was to retain a very restrained cinematic language. Drawing upon influences in both documentary and drama, we wanted to make something minimal in its visual style but still totally visceral and engaging.

We are frequently with the characters in intimate spaces, observing their reactions to each other as they become acclimatised to the rupturing presence of the other. We also experience details of the physical world as they do – absorbed in the minutiae of their surroundings as a strategy to escape the pain of self. Inspired by the work of Terrence Malick and John Cassavetes with their spontaneous on screen energy, this at times frenetic visual approach drives the pace of the film and mirrors the characters' neurotic states of mind – isolating them from their environments and focusing on the smallest of physical details around them as they ricochet through existence. Shot on 5D, Red and Phantom with prime lenses, the film's organic visual style borrows heavily from observational documentary with extremely intimate floating handheld camera work- inducing a sense of slightly heightened naturalism. Ari Wegner was at the helm as cinematographer and her talent, instincts and grace under pressure made her an absolute inspiration to work alongside.

EDITING

The pace of scenes within RUIN shift greatly throughout the film – the characters move through periods of action, observation and subjective contemplation and this is reflected in the editing techniques used. By developing this floating non linearity throughout the narrative in the edit there was an extremely rich series of possibilities to explore that reflected the innately fractured psychologies of Phirun and Sovanna in the face of a life of trauma. With over one hundred and fifty hours of material taken from forty days of shooting over a two year period, the film's fluidity is a testament to the work of our three immensely talented and committed editors Simon Price, Luca Cappelli & Sally Blenheim. Having worked with Sally Blenheim on Amiel's documentary BASTARDY and Luca Cappelli on HAIL we have an established creative relationship that revolves around constant provocation and keeps the process inventive and exploratory. This feature is our first collaboration with Simon Price but his work on features such as the New Zealand film THE ORATOR (Venice Film Festival 2011) meant that we were able to be extremely rigorous with one another while delighting in each other's instincts and tastes.

REEL SUSPECTS

EDITORS STATEMENT - SIMON PRICE

It is common practise these days to start editing a film as soon as the shoot begins and there are some big advantages to building an initial assembly out on location. One happy accident is that the editor is given an opportunity to meet the real world setting of the film. This year I found myself editing in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on an Australian / Cambodian co-produced feature called RUIN. Like other international co-productions I've worked on, RUIN was aiming to be released in the local language (in this case, Cambodian Khmer) with English subtitles attached directly to a master print.

When translation is required a script is usually provided in both languages. RUIN however had no script. Neither Amiel nor Michael spoke fluent Khmer. They planned to improvise much of the dialogue on set - translating their instructions to a Cambodian cast through local interpreters and then re-translating their ad-libbed Khmer dialogue back into English through the edit suite. It was an exhilarating and slightly dangerous approach to working in a foreign language. In the absence of a full script the writer/director team had released a fifty page treatment for RUIN. The schedule was ambitious – shooting seven days a week for five weeks and mostly at night with a cast that included real murderers, rapists, drug dealers, addicts, pimps and prostitutes. It was a chaotic process driven not only by the necessities of budget and country but also by the inspiring wild spirit of the directors themselves. They listed their influences - Phillippe Grandrieux meets Terrence Malick, Werner Herzog meets Roger Corman, Antonin Artaud. It was a Cambodian “Badlands”. Armed with twenty pages of notes, a hotel address and a yet to be confirmed visa I flew out for Indo-China.



And I landed in a funeral. The Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk was about to be cremated. Millions of Cambodians from the provinces had flocked to the capital- the road was littered with lotus flowers and burnt out incense sticks. The death of the King provided an opportunity for the entire nation to mourn their recent past and share in an unspoken catharsis of sorts surrounding the Khmer Rouge genocide of the late 1970's that saw nearly three million people killed. With a relentless shooting schedule and no days off everything started to blur after that - the real and the

REEL SUSPECTS

virtual, the English and Khmer. Night and day. The past and present. The edit and the shoot. The crew were working eighteen to twenty hour days, shooting sex scenes at 4am in the room next to where I was trying to sleep, mocking up murders in the laundry down the hall. Other guests complained to management about strange and desperate noises they were hearing in the night. One of the local cast, Socheat, started hanging around the edit at night. Socheat spoke no English but he would arrive, slap you on the back and then sit cheerfully behind you just smiling sometimes for hours while you tried to keep on cutting. One night at 3am he appeared above Luca Cappelli one of my fellow editor's beds. He smiled a toothless grin and grunted. Luca, the editor, woke in fright and Socheat ran. In the morning Luca's phone was missing. We never saw Socheat again. His performance in the film is simply remarkable- he had never acted before in his life. The film and the country rushed to greet me. Life and death, an awful past and a flood of rushes on multiple formats that showed an ancient culture, dogs and rubbish, beggars, temples, monks and junkies. We were editing RUIN where we slept on laptops at the Super Star Hotel, a humble institution around the corner from the Royal Palace. The crew were a mix of Cambodian specialists, young Australians, an Italian DOP, an Italian editor and a Californian called Rick Charnoski who flew himself from Hollywood to work on the EPK. 'Editorial' was two double rooms on the fourth floor, just far enough away from the smell of the sewer pipes below. Into here we crammed three editors, a data wrangler, two translators and an assistant editor. Various members of the production crew who were shooting mostly at night would invariably also fall asleep on one of the beds and lie there dead to the world while we worked around them. It was a chaotic process driven not only by the necessities of budget and country but also by the inspiring sheer drive of Amiel and Michael to will this unwieldy beast of a film into existence.



With 150 hours of material and ten weeks to edit with fellow editors Sally Blenheim and Luca Cappelli I threw around the frames in a search for greater meaning but the cut insisted on being way more lyrical than that. In every frame there seemed to be a mercurial kind of catharsis. A trauma. Hope. And desperation. In every frame there was Cambodia. "Just feel me" it said "and don't forget."



BIOGRAPHIES

MICHAEL CODY – WRITER / DIRECTOR / PRODUCER

Michael Cody studied and taught cultural studies, film theory and sound theory at the University of Technology Sydney where he also won the university medal for his honors thesis concerned with cross cultural cinema. During this time he also produced and directed music clips and made radio documentary. After a period spent roaming Asia as a television foreign correspondent for SBS Australia and APTN Europe, he moved to New York City where he worked in feature film development. He currently travels between Australia and Asia working on films and documentaries as well as collaborating on film projects with his partners at Melbourne based production collective Flood Projects. Most recently he produced Amiel Courtin-Wilson's feature 'Hail' which premiered internationally at Venice film festival in 2011. He was also line producer on Mathias Glasners 'This is Love' in Vietnam, Kieran Darcy-Smiths 'Wish You Were Here' in Cambodia, Amiel Courtin- Wilson's 'Catch my Disease' in India as well as Luke Doolan's academy award nominated short 'Miracle Fish'. His directorial debut, the short film 'Foreign Parts' was selected to play in competition at the prestigious Clermont Ferrand film festival in 2010. His feature film debut RUIN that he co-directed with Flood Projects co-founder Amiel Courtin-Wilson will premiere at Venice Film Festival in 2013.

AMIEL COURTIN-WILSON - WRITER / DIRECTOR / PRODUCER

At age 19, Amiel Courtin-Wilson's debut feature documentary, CHASING BUDDHA premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2000 and won many awards including best documentary at the Sydney Film Festival. Having directed over 20 short films and five feature length films, Amiel has directed work for Opera Australia, Chunky Move contemporary dance company, and exhibited his video art internationally. His films have screened at the National Gallery of Victoria, the Gallery of New South Wales and he is a contributor to national and international film and art magazines and journals. After forming the production entity Flood Projects in 2008, Amiel's feature documentary, BASTARDY won the Best Documentary Jury Prize at the 2009 Film Critics Circle of Australia Awards (FCCA), Best Documentary at the ATOM Awards, was released theatrically to huge critical acclaim across Australia and was nominated for three Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards. Amiel's short film CICADA premiered at Cannes Film Festival as part of Directors' Fortnight in 2009 and won a slew of awards in Australia and internationally. Amiel had his first solo exhibition of drawings at Utopian Slumps Gallery in Melbourne in 2009. His dramatic feature film debut HAIL had its international premiere in competition at the Venice Film Festival (Orizzonti, 2011) and has screened at festivals around the world including Rotterdam, Istanbul, Karlovy Vary, and Munich. HAIL also won many awards internationally as well as the Age Critics Award for best Australian feature at the Melbourne International Film Festival. Amiel's most recent feature film RUIN will premiere in competition at the Venice Film Festival in the Orizzonti section in 2013. Amiel was also recently commissioned to create a short film for the 70th Anniversary of the Venice Film Festival as part of a project called "Venice Future Reloaded" alongside directors such as Bernardo Bertolucci, Catherine Breillat, Monte Hellman, Atom Egoyan and Paul Schrader.

ARI WEGNER – CINEMATOGRAPHER

Born in Melbourne, Australia in 1984, Ari is a cinematography graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts School of Film and Television. In her graduating year she attended the Budapest Cinematography Masterclass in Hungary and in 2009, the Berlinale Talent Campus as part of the 2009 Berlin International Film Festival. Her cinematography work extends from feature length drama to

REEL SUSPECTS

short films, music videos, commercials and documentaries. Her short film credits as cinematographer, including Night Shift (2012) by Zia Mandviwalla which premiered at Cannes Film Festival earlier this year, Hawker (2008) by Dustin Feneley, Catch Fish (2006) by Adam Arkapaw, Bino (2011) by Billie Pleffer and Lily (2011) by Kasimir Burgess, which won a Crystal Bear for Best Short Film at the Berlin International Film Festival 2011. Her films have screened at numerous international film festivals including Cannes, Berlin, Sundance, Rotterdam, Tribeca, Locarno, New York, London and Melbourne. Her debut feature film Matière Grise (2011) premiered at Tribeca Film Festival. The film, directed by Kivu Ruhorahoza and shot in Kigali, was also the first feature length film shot in Rwanda by a Rwandan filmmaker. Ruin is Ari's second feature film.

KULIKAR SOTHO – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Kulikar Sotho's entry into film was a baptism of fire, working as Line Producer on Hollywood blockbuster TOMB RAIDER in 2000. It was during this time that she realized she would one day have to direct her own film. Fast forward more than a decade and Kulikar has worked on dozens of films, drama-documentaries, documentaries and commercials. In the last year, she has finally begun to realize her dream and move into the realm of directing in a Cambodian-Australian co-production called RUIN, working alongside Australian co-directors Michael Cody and Amiel Courtin-Wilson. Kulikar has also worked on a number of multi-media theatre projects over the past 15 years, including BEYOND THE KILLING FIELDS with leading Singaporean Theatreworks Director Ong Keng Sen. THE LAST REEL will mark her cinematic debut as a director. Born in 1973, Kulikar grew up during the time of Democratic Kampuchea and the Khmer Rouge, and the subsequent turmoil and civil war. THE LAST REEL will be dedicated to Kulikar's father, Channy, a civilian pilot who was prematurely taken from her by the Khmer Rouge in 1975.



SANG MALEN – LEAD ACTRESS

Actress, Circus Performer, Acrobat, Gymnast, Choreographer....Sang Malen refuses to be labelled and instead has immersed herself in innately intricate storytelling through the use of her mercurial,

REEL SUSPECTS

feline-like presence. Audiences have marvelled at the delicacy of Sang's lyrical and modern style, inspiring performers from all over the world. Melan's circus performing has taken her around South East Asia including international tours to Laos in 2012. One of the most vibrant performers of her generation in Cambodia, Malen is keen to collaborate with Rous Mony, Amiel and Michael to further explore movement through immersive, temporal screen-based works.

ROS MONY – LEAD ACTOR

Ros Mony is one of Cambodia's most exciting young artists. Emerging as one of Cambodia's most in-demand actors, his film WISH YOU WERE HERE, in which he played a small but pivotal role, premiered as opening night film at Sundance in 2011. He has also recently received wide accolades as a drummer and dancer within theatre productions across the country. Ros heads up a new breed of pure and inspired young artists practicing across multiple disciplines who tirelessly represent the voice of a fertile new artistic movement in Cambodia.

SIMON PRICE - EDITOR

Simon Price is a film-maker, editor and story editor who has collaborated on feature films in U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand, Samoa and most recently in Cambodia. Awarded "Most Innovative Graduate" at the VCA School of Film in 1998, Simon has gone on to edit some of Australasia's most recent and notable successes including ELLEN IS LEAVING (dir. Michelle Saville, short - "Best Short Film" at South x SouthWest FF and San Francisco IFF 2013) , THE ORATOR (dir. Tusi Tamasese, feature - "Special Mention" in the Orrizonti Section of the Venice Film Fest 2011, "Best Film" Nara IFF 2012 + "Best Feature" at NZ Film Awards 2012) + BLACKSPOT (dir. Ben Hawker , feature - Winner of "Best Editor" at Rhode Island IFF 2008). His most recent collaboration RUIN (dir. Amiel Courtin-Wilson and Micheal Cody, feature) has just been selected for the 2013 Venice Film Festival.



REEL SUSPECTS

LUCA CAPPELLI – EDITOR

Luca Cappelli is an editor and filmmaker with a background in music.

Born in Pisa, after completing a degree in History of Art he moved to Milan to study directing and scriptwriting at the Scuola Civica for Film and TV with Lara Fremder and Michelangelo Frammartino.

In 2010 he moved to Melbourne and started his collaboration with Amiel Courtin-Wilson and Michael Cody on the feature film HAIL which premiered in the at the 68th Venice Film Festival and screened in many other festivals around the world. Luca progressively became involved with the local film industry, working on short films and music clip with directors such as David Michod, Mirrah Foulkes and Rhys Graham and cutting short movies, trailers, music videos and documentaries. In 2011 he joined Michael Cody and Amiel Courtin-Wilson on their first trip to Cambodia to work on RUIN, a transcendental love story shot completely on location in Phnom Penh and featuring an all Cambodian cast. The editing of RUIN was completed in July 2013, and the film will premiere in the Orizzonti section at the 70th Venice Film Festival. Luca is currently working on FELL, the first feature film directed by Kasimir Burgess and produced by Mary Minas and iconic Australian producer John Maynard.

Luca is developing his own feature film THE VEIL, a meditation on male bonding through the life of an ethnic soccer team in Melbourne Northern suburbs.

SALLY BLENHEIM – EDITOR

Sally Blenheim is a Melbourne based Australian film editor with a background in Fine Art. After completing a degree of Fine Arts at RMIT University majoring in video and animation, Sally then went on to study Honours in Sculpture at Monash University. In 2001 Sally's graduating animation piece Reflect screened at the St Kilda Film Festival and was later broadcast nationally on SBS and ABC television. From 2003 to present, Sally has worked on numerous film projects with Amiel Courtin-Wilson in both production and editing capacities, including Chasing Buddha (1999), Bastardy (2008), Hail (2011) and RUIN (2013). Sally has worked extensively within the Australian film industry on documentaries, short films and music clips with companies including Daybreak Films, Unicorn Films, and Matchbox Pictures (Face, ABC TV 2010) as well as continuing to exhibit her sculptural installations in galleries Australia wide, including ACMI and the National Gallery of Victoria. In 2011 she joined Michael Cody and Amiel Courtin-Wilson on their feature film project RUIN- a metaphysical road movie shot entirely in Cambodia. RUIN is Sally's first feature film as an editor.

STEVE BENWELL – COMPOSER

Sydney based musician and visual artist Steve Benwell has collaborated on his fourth feature score for director Amiel Courtin-Wilson. Their last collaboration (also with RUIN co-director/producer Michael Cody) HAIL featured in Competition at the 68th Venice Film Festival in 2011. A short film of the same period CICADA landed the pair official selection in Cannes in 2009. Since his first feature score (BASTARDY 2009, Director Amiel Courtin-Wilson) he has received much critical interest , generating a growing reputation both in Australia and internationally. He has been composing and performing music since 2003. Steve's background as a visual artist has been integral to his approach as a composer for film. Benwell takes the tactile qualities of minimalist music and combines them with fused traditional forms of music. In preparation for the RUIN score Benwell spent time gleaning inspiration from local Cambodian musicians in Melbourne. He is known for his identifiable off kilter guitar playing, and effective use of drone and poly-chromatic harmony. Utilising guitar, low grade electronics, various string instruments and reel to reel tape, Benwell produces a minimalist multi-

REEL SUSPECTS

textured collection of provocative and mesmerising fragments that are sympathetic and at moments abrasive against the fluid visual movement of the film RUIN. The bare singular instruments and wandering improvisation assume an intimacy and subjectivity while remaining unsentimental. Benwell describes his compositional process as “Similar to Michael and Amiel’s film process as it relies heavily on improvisation to assert a sense of real time.” By the end of 2013 Benwell plans to release a second compilation of music for film as well as currently working on completing an EP of a solo collection of songs under the moniker of The Nightmares.

LEAH POPPLE – COSTUME DESIGNER / PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Leah Popple is a freelance production designer for film and theatre. She has worked as an artist, performer and production manager in addition to developing sets, props and costumes for a variety of performing arts and live events. Leah graduated from The Victorian College of Arts in 2012 where she worked as a set designer, maker and manager earning her high distinctions in design and stagecraft. She has worked with a number of Australia’s top companies; Flood Projects, The Black Lung Theatre Company and Whaling Firm, Southern Star Entertainment, Arena Theatre, Strut and Fret, The Melbourne Festival, as well as numerous independent filmmakers and artists. With a profound love of conceptual art, Leah is a versatile individual with the unique ability to think both creatively and practically. With her newly formed company Leah is developing a conceptual theatre piece that looks to combine her formal training with professional and artistic experience.

GIOVANNI C LORUSSO – 2ND UNIT DIRECTOR / MAIN UNIT 2ND CAMERA

Giovanni is a cinematographer and filmmaker based in Melbourne, Australia. Born in the island of Sardinia, Italy, Giovanni has lived and worked in several cities including Rome, Copenhagen, Stockholm, London, Sydney. He has obtained a Bachelor of Arts (2003), Masters in Literature (Rome 2005), Diploma of Screen and Media (Sydney 2006), and a Masters in Philosophy (London 2009). His personal work has been screened around Europe, South America, Australia and Asia and he has been awarded several prizes, including 4 Australian Cinematographers Society Awards (2011, 2012), an Atom Award (2007) and a Nomination for best experimental film (2011), Best Short Film Award from the Sydney College of the Arts (2006) and several other recognitions and nominations including festivals such as Revelation Perth, Brno 16mm, San Paulo, Seoul. Giovanni has been recently working on several experimental, commercial, long and short form drama projects around Asia, Africa and Australia.

ALEX ROBERTS – LINE PRODUCER

While completing a Bachelor of Communication at RMIT, Alex worked as a producer for community radio and television stations Syn FM and Channel 31. After graduating with Honours and a major in TV Production, Alex began working in house at a Melbourne based production company. Over the next 18 months she worked as Production Manager & Researcher on the controversial documentary 'Such Is Life: The Troubled Times of Ben Cousins' which attracted 1.99 million viewers when it aired in 2010. During this time Alex production managed a number of commercials for some of the most iconic brands in Australia. Taking the next step into freelancing in 2011, Alex worked on a high volume of commercials both throughout Australia and internationally. In late 2012 Alex came on board to work as a Line Producer for 'Ruin' a feature length film shot in Cambodia in January/February. She is currently in the early stages of producing a documentary in NYC, having completed preliminary interviews in June this year. Alex is looking forward to taking on more long form projects in the future.



STEVEN BOND – SOUND RECORDIST

Steven, who is based in Melbourne Australia, has been working as a freelance sound recordist for 8 years. During this time he has worked predominately on Feature Films and Documentaries, which have seen him travel to locations such as Mongolia, Indonesian Borneo, India and Cambodia. He is passionate about his work and enjoys the challenge that location sound recording provides on a daily basis.

KATE LAURIE – CASTING DIRECTOR

Kate Laurie is a producer from Melbourne, Australia who over the past year three years has worked on numerous shorts and feature films. After studying History at the University of Melbourne, Kate has been working with a slew of young directors on short and documentary projects, seeking out the most distinctive voices in Australia. In January 2013 she travelled to Cambodia with the Australian feature RUIN, where she took on the dual role of Casting Director and Production Coordinator. Currently, Kate is producing two short films by directors Alena Lodkina and Luca Cappelli, whilst continuing her work with Flood Projects under the mentorship of Amiel Courtin-Wilson and Michael Cody- this includes Line Producing a short directed by Amiel Courtin-Wilson for the Venice 70 Project at the Venice Film Festival as well as working with him on several upcoming feature projects. Kate is also in development on a feature with James Vaughan, a Melbourne-based writer and director whose latest short film YOU LIKE IT, I LOVE IT, was selected for the 63rd Berlin International Film Festival and the 35th Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival.

RICK CHARNOSKI – DIRECTOR MAKING OF DOCUMENTARY

Rick Charnoski is a lifelong skateboarder and a Los Angeles based filmmaker. He began documenting skateboarding with his friend Coan Buddy Nichols in 1998 in NYC. After the underground success of their first film FRUIT OF THE VINE in 2000, Together they started an independent production company, Six Stair, which operates on the same DIY punk rock ethics of skating... get it done any way you can, but don't do it unless worthy.

Their feature skate docs include Deathbowl to Downtown (2009) Fruit of the Vine (2000) and Tent City (2003) as well as hundreds of shorts that tell the stories of their culture and the people who operate within it. Directors Gus van Sant, Christopher Doyle and Cameron Crowe have called on them for their specialty in super 8mm filmmaking and unique style of storytelling (Paranoid Park, 2007; Pearl Jam Twenty, 2011). Rick met Amiel Courtin-Wilson at Melbourne International Film Festival in 2007 and stayed in touch until In 2012 when Amiel came to Los Angeles to premiere his feature Hail. At the after party there was a promise made to meet in Cambodia to finish shooting Ruin. Upon arrival in Phnom Penh 3 months later, Rick met the cast and crew and began to ride the coattails of the production throughout Cambodia. Rick is now directing "THE MAKING OF RUIN".