

[MAGAZINE](#) > Indonesian Films in Slovakia

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[INDONESIA](#) [SLOVAKIA](#)

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Indonesian Films in Slovakia

SEA-Images presents a series of portraits on the Slovak film industry and its regional integration.

FILMS IN SLOVAKIA - PART 2

The decade that followed the collapse of the Socialist States of Czechoslovakia was marked by a general state of apathy where neither the mechanisms for film funding, nor the cinema attendance were doing their jobs (Read more in [FILMS IN SLOVAKIA - PART 1 OVERVIEW OF THE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT](#))

It was in this contest that film festivals have been created in Slovakia as a sort of alternative distribution system for the world cinema, as well as for the slowly resurrected local production. The ARTFILM festival of Trenčianske Teplice started quite modestly in 1993 with four hundred viewers and five accredited journalists to watch 35 competitive films from 11 countries. The programme also included a student's film section called "On the Road".

During the last years, film festivals have mushroomed in Slovakia. The [Bratislava Film Festival](#) launched its International Competition for the First and the Second Feature Films in 1999. This festival can count today with an audience of about 20 thousand people.

If the general conditions are not any longer for apathy, much still remains to do in order to offer to the Slovak audience a chance to see Asian films.

One of the most interesting initiatives to bring Asian films to the Slovak audience was recently taken by ARTFILM the Trenčianske Teplice International Film Festival at its 14th edition.

I have asked Ivana Petrikova - the section compiler to tell us more about the origin and the development of the Asian films selection. The section counted not less than nine Indonesian movies made between 1998 and 2006. The selection of these films went eventually through a film exchange story where John Badalu - a famous Indonesian film agent was also involved.

GGG: Ivana, you have been working on the selection of the Indonesian Films programme for the ARTFILM festival in Trenčianske Teplice in Slovakia. How did it all started?

IP: I was studying film history and film theory at the film faculty of [the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts of Bratislava](#) ([Read more in the Slovakia Resource Directory](#)). It was during the last year of my studies that I found an information from the Indonesian Ministry of Education for a Scholarship programme called [Darmasiswa](#). This Indonesian programme allows foreign students to study Indonesian traditional music, Indonesian traditional dances, and Indonesian traditional handicrafts in 36 Indonesian higher learning institutions.

I choose traditional music and I was selected in 2002 to study traditional music in Java. When I came back home after a year, I had the feeling that I really want to experience Indonesia - where I already had some friends, again. I first return for a couple of months and begun thinking on how to get involved with an interesting project for a longer period in this country. Some research on the internet led me to contact with the director of the [Jakarta International Film Festival \(JIFFEST\)](#). I proposed him to work as a volunteer and I was accepted there for the hospitality department, taking care of the guests.

The year previous to my work at the Indonesian **JIFFEST** I had already some job for the Slovakian ARTFILM Festival. It was because of this experience with the Slovak film festival that I thought I could

ARTFILM festival. It was because of this experience with the Slovak film festival that I thought I could eventually do something about Indonesian Films in Slovakia. This is how I started looking for people who could orientate me to Indonesian film productions. The idea was to make a kind of Indonesian film compilation to be released in Slovakia. This is how I met John and other people from the **JIFFEST** festival.

GGG: John, what were you doing during the same period?

JB: When I met with Ivana, I was mostly working in the promotion and marketing for JIFFEST. Soon after the festival, Ivana and I started to email to each other with the perspective of having an Indonesian Films programme for ARTFILM in Slovakia. I am regularly contacted by local filmmakers who ask me to help them to present their films in festivals abroad. You know, for Indonesian filmmakers even the postal cost for sending their film abroad is sometime too high. So, I became a sort of agent for filmmakers to promote their films outside of Indonesia. Slovakia would have been a new opportunity in Europe.

My domain of expertise is obviously Indonesian films that I help presenting abroad. Six years ago, I helped the Roma Asian Film Festival to organise a selection of Indonesian films for their festival. I then became their correspondent and representative in South East Asia. Recently also, and since we did not have any catalogue on Indonesian filmmakers, I decided to publish one.

I asked to all the interested Indonesian film directors to contribute partly for the publishing. This worked quite well if we judge the reactions outside Indonesia. I first brought this catalogue to Pusan International Film Festival where people shown exited to find all these information on Indonesian films published. During the same period, some people founded the Indonesian Film Committee ([KISI – Komite Sinema Indonesia](#)), and I became one of the members there.

The objective of this organisation is actually to push the government to change some law in the film industry. We worked together politically for example to change the law on the import of film material, and we have been successful with some of the recent changes brought by the government. We continue to work on other issues such as; film distribution, censorship, exhibition and promotion to other film festivals. Recently; the State decided to support the new edition of the catalogue, which was presented to Cannes. This was also good for Ivana, who could find information for her film selection for the Indonesian section of the ARTFILM festival.

GGG: Ivana, how did ARTFILM organizers react to your idea for an Indonesian selection?

IP: I sent a proposal for an Indonesian films programme to the director of the ARTFILM who immediately reacted positively in favour. As you probably know, here in Slovakia we don't have any chance to see Indonesian films. The only recent Indonesian film that we could see at the Bratislava International Film Festival was "[ARISAN](#)" by Nia diNata presented two years ago out of competition.

Obtaining the approval from the festival director meant that I had free hands to do what I wanted. I gave to the festival director the list of guests and films that I wanted to bring to Slovakia. The only precondition was to make sure that the all programme could be done within the budget of the festival. From then on, the email exchanges with John started once again, and preview DVD were sent to finalize the selection.

When doing the job of a film festival compiler, it is of the most importance to having a reliable agent on the ground. In the present case, John follows the film situation in Indonesia every day. As an outsider; it is not easy to get the best of a production in a foreign country.

GGG: Ivana and John, you helped bringing Indonesian films to Slovakia. Can the film exchange process also go from Slovakia to Indonesia?

IP: Before our meeting, we could say that both countries were unknown to our respective audience. Slovakia is a very small country and Indonesia is very far. But, last year at JIFFEST we could see Martin Sulik film "*THE CITY OF THE SUN*". Also since two years already, the Slovak embassy in Indonesia participates to the European Union Film Festival – a part of JIFFEST. These were the only opportunity to see Slovakian films there as far as I know.

JB: Our action is like an open door for Slovakian films to be presented at JIFFEST, and for Indonesian

films to be presented here in Slovakia. Even if not within the framework of a special section, I hope that we could count on a couple of films of both countries to be presented every year "here and there".

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The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Bratislava would like to inform that the Government, c.q. the Department of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia has decided to grant 8 (eight) Slovak Students for the Darmasiswa Scholarship (NOT Dharmasiswa PLUS Program), academic year 2006 - 2007

[Dharmasiswa Application Form Scholarship For Non Degree Programs](#)

[About John Badalu QFilm festival from the Jakarta Post](#)

The Indonesian film selection at [ARTFILM](#) Slovakia

"Indonezsky Film": this section counted, six feature films, plus a block consisting of one documentary and two short films made by young directors.

1. "9 NAGA", 9 Drakov, 9 Dragons by Rudy Soedjarwo (2005)
2. "BANYU BIRU", Prebudeny Banyu, Waking Banyu by Teddy Soeriaatmadja (2005)
3. "DAUN DI ATAS BANTAL" - List na vankusi - Leaf on a Pillow (1998)
4. "IMPIAN KEMARAU" - Cakanie na dazd - The Rainmaker by Ravi Bharwani (2004)
5. "JANJI JONI" - Joniho Slub - Joni's Promise by Joko Anwar (2005)

6. "KARA, ANAK SEBATANG POHON" - KARA dcera stromu -Kara the daughter of a tree by Edwin (2005)
7. "PASIR BERBISIK" - Sepkajuce piesky - Whispering sands by Nan Triveni Achnas (Indonesia - Japan 2001)
8. "STILL" by Lucky Kuswandi (2005)
9. "TERIMA KASIH DAN SELAMAT MALAM, IBU" - Vdaka a dobru noc mama - Thanks and good night Mother by Ivan Handoyo (2006)

Among the Indonesian guests invited at the festival, Film director Joko Anwar and his main actor Nicholas Saputra presented their film " JANJI JONI" – MTV Indonesia Movie Awards 2005.

Next article:

[FILMS IN SLOVAKIA - PART3, SARIS AND THE OTHER WORDS - Films on the "regional Integration"](#)

Last of the SEA-Images portraits on the Slovak film industry "The Regional Integration".

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