



Aperture Festival 2013: The Best Documentaries Exploring the Asia Pacific Region

Shining a light on both the cultures of the [Asia Pacific](#) region and the filmmakers who work in these countries, [Aperture Festival](#) is an exciting new ethnographic documentary film festival that will be held in [Melbourne](#) from the the 21st to the 23rd of November 2013. We recommend ten outstanding films from the festival's official selection.



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Aperture Asia Pacific International Ethnographic Documentary Festival

Taking place for the first time in 2013, [Aperture Asia Pacific International Ethnographic Documentary Festival](#) looks to join the list of acclaimed film festivals on [Australia's](#) cultural calendar. Focusing on documentaries about the [Asia Pacific](#) region as well as filmmakers from this area, Aperture will engage in new and unique ways with the culture of Australia's closest neighbours. The Asia Pacific is vastly underrepresented in the arts industries, with [Taiwan](#) and [Vietnam](#) being the only other countries to hold ethnographic documentary festivals for this region. Free to the public, Aperture hopes to change this, creating new relationships between practitioners and organisations in this area, Australia and the rest of the world.

Gandhi's Children - India

By David MacDougall - Australia

Given the honour of opening the very first [Aperture Festival](#) is David MacDougall's [Gandhi's Children](#). MacDougall is a renowned ethnographic filmmaker and writer, and is also a professor at the [Australian National University](#). His work has covered [East Africa](#), [Australia](#) and [India](#), investigating indigenous communities, individual creative pursuits and education programmes. Some of his standout works include [Photo Wallahs](#) (1991), [SchoolScapes](#) (2007) and [Awareness](#) (2010), which he made with Judith MacDougall. The featured film [Gandhi's Children](#) is the result of a five-part film study exploring schools and shelter homes across India. The film depicts the lives of some of the children at a shelter, revealing their resilient characters and the issues of overcrowding that the institution faces.

Watch the trailer for [Gandhi's Children](#) below:

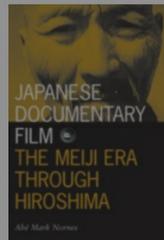
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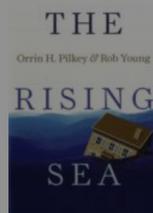
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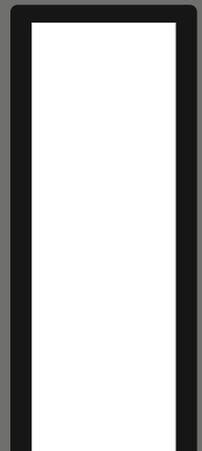


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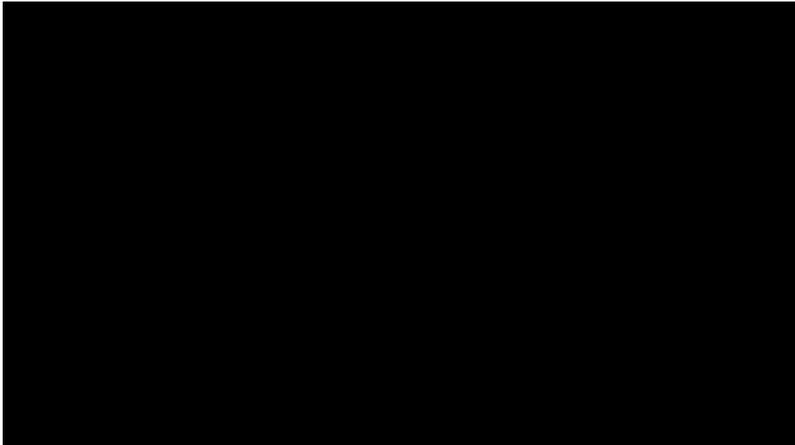


Stori Tumbuna - Papua New Guinea

By Paul Wolfram - New Zealand

Paul Wolfram's *Stori Tumbuna* will close the festival and portrays the lives and stories of the Lak People of Papua New Guinea. Wolfram's portrayal is distinct as it adopts the indigenous narrative structures of Lak mythologies, allowing the documentary to give a unique account of local perspectives instead of presenting an outsider's point of view. Paul Wolfram is a passionate filmmaker who has made many documentaries about the Pacific region, focusing on Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Micronesia and Fiji. He currently lives in Wellington and his films are screened at international film festivals all around the globe.

Watch the trailer for *Stori Tumbuna* below:



Emma Ryan Yamazaki, Still from 'Monk by Blood', Japan, 2013 | Aperture Festival

Monk by Blood - Japan

By Emma Ryan Yamazaki / Japan (currently lives in USA)

Emma Ryan Yamazaki's *Monk by Blood* investigates the balance between tradition and modernity in contemporary Japan. The film follows 21 year old Scion Sasaki as he struggles between his lifestyle of being a DJ and aspiring chef, and his family's expectations for him to take over an

ancestral Buddhist temple in Kyoto, a family tradition which dates back 23 generations. Raised in both Japan and England, Yamazaki is an exquisite filmmaker who is passionate about stories that lie in-between cultures. Her work has been widely broadcasted and screened at festivals around the world, including on HBO, PBS, Cannes Film Festival, Telluride Film Festival and the Director's Guild of America.

Naata (The Bond) - India

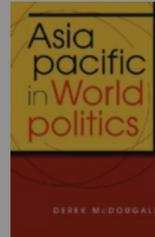
By Anjali Monteiro & K.P. Jayasankar - India

Naata follows two activists who have been working with neighbourhood peace committees in Dharavi, Mumbai, which is widely regarded as 'the largest 'slum' in Asia'. The making of the documentary unearthed controversial questions for the filmmakers about class and modernity, and the showing of the film aims to inspire a 'critical and active viewership'. Anjali Monteiro and K.P. Jayasankar are professors at the Mumbai's Tata Institute of Social Sciences and their filmography is renowned for investigating the divide between 'self' and 'the other'. Between themselves they have won reels of awards and their films have been



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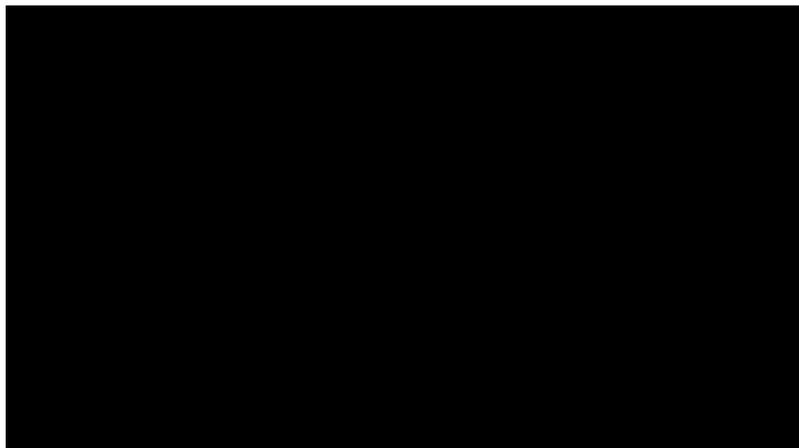
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presented at prestigious venues and festivals around the world. Monteiro and Jaysankar's [Do Din Ka Mela \(A Two Day Fair\)](#) will also be screened at Aperture.

Watch the trailer for Naata below:



Vanna Hem, *Lives Under the Red Light, Cambodia* | Aperture

Lives Under the Red Light - Cambodia

By Vanna Hem - Cambodia

Vanna Hem's *Lives Under the Red Light* is an in depth look at the experiences of some of the LGBT community in Cambodia and the discrimination that these people face.

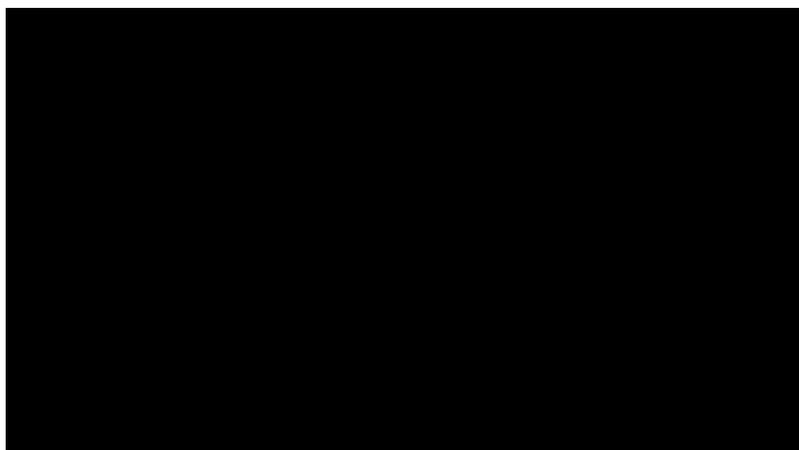
Following a number of sex workers in Phnom Penh, the film explores the harsh realities these workers face and investigates how discrimination from both society and their families have influenced their fates. With a background working for the NGO [Support Children and Young People](#) and for the Cambodian German Cultural Centre, Vanna Hem is a filmmaker whose work is ingrained in humanitarian issues and culture. Hem has worked on multiple projects related to LGTB issues in Cambodia and has been involved in many international and national film projects.

Much Ado About Knotting - India

By Geetika Narang Abbasi & Anandana Kapur - India

Chronicling a predicament that 'almost every Indian faces', *Much Ado About Knotting* explores the marriage-centric culture that a foundation of Indian tradition. The film investigates this cultural phenomenon through three main characters, portraying the challenges they encounter through the endless list of classifieds, matchmaking bureaus, websites and 'the innumerable criteria that determine who is acceptable and who isn't'. Geetika Narang Abbasi and Anandana Kapur are both award-winning independent filmmakers and their union through this film adds an exciting lure. Promoted as 'lighthearted', *Much Ado About Knotting* looks to be a fun and enlightening film.

Watch the trailer for Much Ado About Knotting below:



Promise & Unrest - Philippines & Ireland

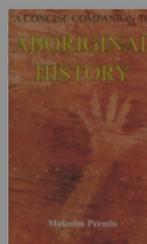
By Alan Grossman & Aine O'Brien - South Africa & Ireland

Promise & Unrest examines the cultural and emotional struggles of migration and family. It



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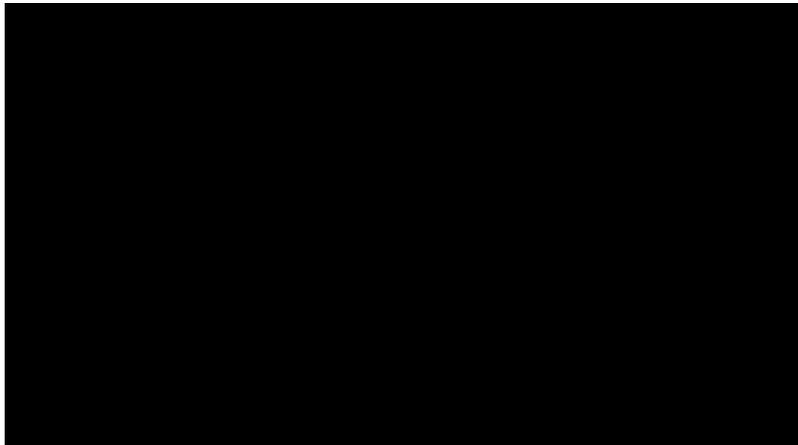
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follows Noemi Barredo, who had to leave the [Philippines](#) and her seven month old daughter Noemi to find work in [Malaysia](#) and then [Ireland](#). The film provides an intimate portrayal of long distance motherhood and the responsibility of providing for extended family. Migration and intercultural experience are major focuses for both directors, with Alan Grossman being a [South African](#) ethnographic filmmaker, academic and Director of the [Centre for Transcultural Research and Media Practice](#), and Aine O'Brien an [Irish](#) academic, filmmaker and Co-Director of [Counterpoints Arts](#) in [London](#). Filmed over the course of five years, *Promise & Unrest* explores the everyday intricacies of Noemi and Gracelle's relationship.

Watch the trailer for *Promise & Unrest* below:

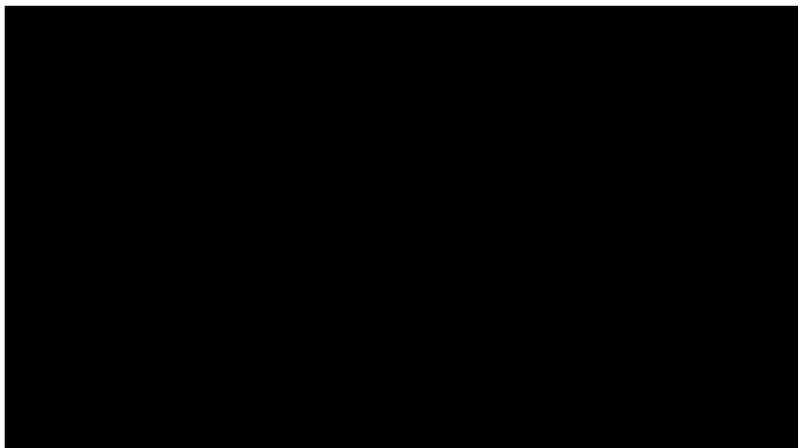


[Wawata Topu Mermaids of Timor Leste - East Timor](#)

By David Palazón & Enrique Alonso - Spain

Wawata Topu Mermaids of Timor Leste depicts the lives of four generations of fisherwomen striving to make a living in the coastal village of Adara, West Atauro, [Timor-Leste](#). Showing stunning visual scenes of the divers underwater, the documentary focuses not only on their daily routines, but also on the significance of their work and practice on household economies and the fishing community. The film offers a unique insight into a tale of tradition vs globalisation, and presents an ethnographic portrait that has been largely unseen.

Watch the trailer for *Wawata Topu Mermaids of Timor Leste* below:

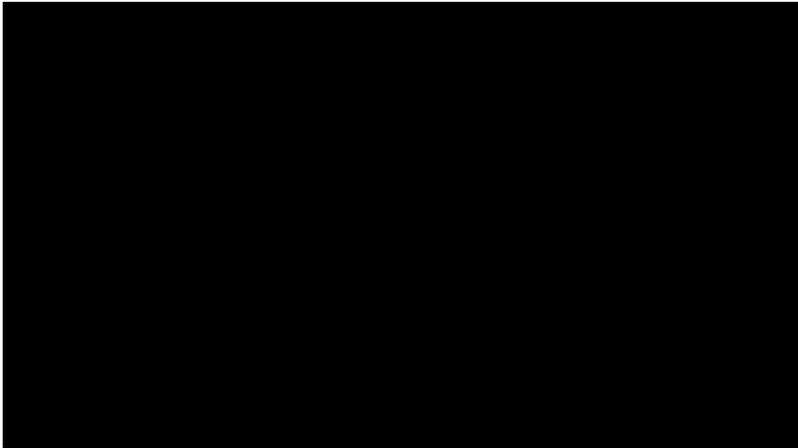


[Writing in Water - China](#)

By Angela Zito - USA

Angela Zito's *Writing in Water* investigates the ancient art of [Chinese](#) calligraphy and its place in the modern world. Following two generations of calligraphy teachers, the film reveals the struggle of committing oneself to an artform that is rapidly being replaced by technology. Zito is a professor at [NYU](#), teaching Anthropology and Religious Studies and Cinema Studies. She is also co-founder and co-director of the [Center for Religion and Media](#) and is passionate about cultural expression, mediation and their place in the media. Peppered with philosophical insight and humour, *Writing in Water* portrays the tensions between Chinese tradition and the country's newly adopted capitalist reforms.

Watch the trailer for *Writing in Water* below:



Antarrengeny Tyepety-akert - Australia

By Mary Kemarr Morton & Katie Kemarr Morton - Australia

Growing up in the Antarrengeny country in [Central Australia](#), Mary Kemarr Morton is a renowned ceremonial and cultural leader in the Utopia homelands and her sister Katie is a highly regarded singer, cultural leader and artist. [Antarrengeny Tyepety-akert](#) depicts the sisters and their kinswomen explaining the meanings and significance of their ancestral songs through the narrative art of tyepety 'sand story'. The film offers unique insight into the Aboriginal community of this area and the Antarrengeny song, one of the most well-known women's ceremonies from this region. A story truly told from the inside, [Antarrengeny Tyepety-akert](#) looks to be an enlightening documentary on Aboriginal culture and ancestral stories.

Watch the trailer for [Antarrengeny Tyepety-akert](#) below:



To find out more about the festival and to see the full official selection please visit [Aperture's website](#).

By Andrew Kingsford-Smith



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