




FRAME

How Asia Pacific Feminist Filmmakers and Artists are Confronting Inequalities

Anida Yoeu Ali Jan Chapman Mattie Do Rubaiyat Hossain
Erica Glynn Leena Yadav Van Ha Anocha Suwichakornpong

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INTRODUCTION

The Asia Pacific is the world's fastest growing region, encompassing 69 countries and areas, and is home to over 4 billion people; just over half the world's population. The region comprises about 60 percent of the world's population with **different historical traditions, cultures and religions**. Three of the four most populated countries of the world are in Asia: China, India, and Indonesia.

The region is playing an increasingly important role in the global economy, international security, and the world's collective efforts to advance human development. Yet, despite these gains, many countries face widening income disparities, the unequal status of women, weak legal protections, persistent poverty, widespread corruption, and growing ethnic and religious conflicts. These facts and the Asia Pacific's growing influence, speak to the critical importance of engaging with the region. **This includes its cultural influence since it produces half the world's film output.**

FRAME showcases eight Asia Pacific feminist screen creatives, exploring their approaches to confronting and addressing inequality through their work, both in front of and behind the camera. Recent times and hashtag social media movements have scrutinized just how profoundly unequal the film industry is. FRAME provides **a platform to highlight, discuss and identify** the strength of women as filmmakers,

and as characters and activists featured on screen, in challenging the pervasive influence of patriarchy. Despite the **powerful feminist talent that exists in the region**, no formal community exists for feminist screen professionals to access resources, share experiences and advocate for change. **FRAME amplifies this talent and identifies the need for a networked collective** to harness this civic and artistic energy to confront the entrenched inequalities that persist both in the film industries of Asia and the Pacific and its societies at large.

Available research data shows that whilst women comprise more than half the population, onscreen in the most popular Hollywood films, female speaking characters are consistently outnumbered by men two to one. According to research from the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, **in the top 1100 Hollywood films from 2007 to 2017, less than a third of all speaking characters were women**, a percentage that barely budged at any point in that time (Salam 2018).

A separate study of the American industry found that in both 2013 and 2014, **women comprised only 1.9 percent of the directors for the 100 top-grossing films**. Excluding their art-house divisions, in 2017 the six major studios released only three movies with a female director. It is hard to believe the number could drop to zero, but **the statistics suggest female directors are slipping backward**. Extrapolating from the data gathered by Martha Lauzen of San Diego State University, journalist Maureen Dowd (2015) says that *'in 2014, 95 percent of cinematographers, 89 percent of screenwriters, 82 percent of editors, 81 percent of executive producers and 77 percent of producers were men'*.



© Rima Das / Writer / Director - India, 12th APSA 2018 nominee, Academy member



FILMMAKING AND MAKING ART WITH A FEMINIST LENS

Rising fundamentalisms, militarism, and dictatorships are some of the factors that contribute to the closing of civil society spaces in many Asian and Pacific countries, restricting opportunities for people to be exposed to different ways of thinking. Film is one of the few mediums that **remains accessible to people**, including those who are poor, marginalized, and discriminated against.

Thus, the role of feminist filmmakers is important in both capturing key issues from a local lens and exposing local, national, and international audiences to key issues and different ways of seeing these issues **to provoke action and changes** in attitudes and behaviour.

It is hard—and perhaps imprudent—to provide a single definition of feminist filmmaking. However, feminist filmmaking may be considered as including the following elements: presenting strong and complex women on screen; seeking both intersectional and intergenerational understandings; challenging positions of privilege; revealing inequality, conscious or unconscious bias, and discrimination; shifting power and resources; questioning rather than answering; and lifting voices.

The filmmakers I interviewed for this exhibition have **their own perspectives on feminism** and what it means to them in the context of their filmmaking, as they shared:

Leena Yadav (India): *I embrace and celebrate being a woman, in my life and in my films in all shades and complexities. Feminism for me means freedom, a basic human right. And through my films and in person, I want to be a small part of the voice that fights for this right.*

Rubaiyat Hossain (Bangladesh): *Being a feminist filmmaker is a political choice. The word has been demonized. There are a lot of women scared to call themselves feminist. I've been excluded because I've called myself a feminist, and I've also been accused of being exclusionary. I do believe in destiny and I believe this is my path. I've experienced inequality since I was four years old. I'm not going to be scared about looking at inequality. I inherit the legacy of the wins of women who fought before me. Our gains are because of the women before us who sacrificed a great deal. I'm a brown woman who lives both in the US and in Bangladesh. As a Bangladeshi woman, as a brown woman, I went to college in the US, where I found a freedom to raise my voice.*

Mattie Do (Laos): *I've been learning a lot more about feminism since being a filmmaker. I used to have this idea of feminists being belligerent, angry, loud and then I realized that they [feminists] were fighting for equality, for a level playing field. Society is quick to ascribe roles. Women need to be rescued, saved, have a love interest or talk about being bored with something or sick of something.*

Jan Chapman (Australia): *I found myself looking up feminist . . . and it described it as the advocacy of women's rights on the grounds of the equality of the sexes and I thought 'yep, that's me! . . . I came to filmmaking in an atmosphere of political activism . . . [and] found myself . . . listening to women really wanting to make films that expressed the situation of women...*



Opening space, taking up space for women to have **vocal, visible and meaningful roles** behind and in front of the camera is a critical part of these filmmakers' feminist approach.

Taking full advantage of their creativity to position women in all their complexity as protagonists, as professionals, is a key focus for these feminist filmmakers in their work to **challenge inequalities and advance gender equality**. As the filmmaker Leena Yadav said, 'This whole experience of directing [my film] Parched relates to a sense of identity. When I saw these women, I connected it to **"this is my story, too"**.'





FRAMING INCLUSIVITY AND CHALLENGING SOCIAL NORMS

It's important to recognize **the role that intersectionality plays** in the choices and framing of issues of inequality by feminist filmmakers. This includes how feminist filmmakers are integrating thinking about **class, gender, age, sexuality, race, and social positioning**. There is also the importance of intergenerational approaches, especially given the matriarchal traditions of countries such as Indonesia and how knowledge and experiences are shared between generations, while also ensuring the space for **a new generation of filmmakers** to challenge and confront gender norms and traditions.

Rubaiyat Hossain (Bangladesh): *For me, filmmaking was a great experiment—with me, and with the stories I tell of women around me. It's a chance to represent women not as objects to please a certain gaze but as powerful individuals.*

Erica Glynn (Australia): *It's always been films. Because our (Aboriginal) people were literally voiceless, no-one captured their way of life. I guess that's been the biggest thing for me. It wasn't on the Richter scale that an Aboriginal person could make film. When Aboriginal people were on the radio, I said, it's not for me, it was too immediate, but film, that was another matter, I could do film.*



© Asia Pacific Screen Awards, 2013

Mattie Do (Laos): *Amongst my Lao peers, I get, 'You're a girl making ghost films (everyone loves a cheap genre flick, right?), and that's why people are interested in you'. So, just because I'm a girl, a woman, I must work doubly hard; as an Asian woman, I must work triple hard; as new talent, I must work quadruple hard. There is a constant undercurrent of racism due to assumptions of not speaking English. 'I didn't realize you were a mother-tongue English speaker!' White male filmmakers, white female filmmakers don't have to deal with this. I hate to say things that might make me seem like a segregationist, but the reality is that I do have to work much harder than the average occidental filmmaker, regardless of gender.*

Anida Yoeu Ali (Cambodia): *It is with a political voice that I speak because I 'pass'. I need to do something with that privilege since with privilege comes power. I am a Muslim woman who is fair-skinned, Khmer-American, articulate, feminist, and a performance artist.*

Anocha Suwichakornpong (Thailand): *I see myself, first and foremost, as a filmmaker. Then as a feminist filmmaker. Then as an Asian filmmaker. It's not easy for people from this part of the world to have any easy connection to the culture here. Most people would identify me as a Thai filmmaker rather than an Asian filmmaker.*

The reflections shared by these feminist filmmakers is a key part of the work of feminist filmmakers in asking the questions and **encouraging audiences to dwell on these questions** rather than seeking easy answers to complex problems. It's from this dwelling space that people can **reconsider their stance** on issues and populations and thus allow **a shift of focus and power**.



CHANGING THE CULTURE OF SILENCE

Mary Beard's book *Women and Power: A Manifesto* is a short, pithy analysis of women in the West and their **ongoing struggles for a voice in the public sphere**. Beard's first example is the character Penelope. In a scene from *The Odyssey*, book one, Penelope enters the communal (read male) space of her husband's palace and complains about a song that is being performed by one of the entertainers. Telemachus immediately orders her to return to her chambers and resume women's work. He further reminds her that **stories are the preserve of men**. Men engage in public discourse. Women face exclusion from it (Beard 2017 pp. 3–6).

The attitudes assumed in these epics from several thousand years ago continue today. Even when women occupy a public platform, they are regularly **met with verbal and written parries** to their voice and perspectives. The power of Beard's writing is that it's a call to women to reclaim public space. To say, 'I will not shut up, in meetings, on the streets, on podiums and in film' is **an act of reclaiming**. It is, of course, what the hashtag #MeToo movement is doing on social media with great success, too. The filmmakers interviewed are changing this culture of silence for women, specifically Asian women:

Mattie Do (Laos): *Women aren't presented as being strong, or as sympathetic, flawed characters. These are the characters I want in my films, and now I feel comfortable being called a feminist filmmaker. Often, a strong woman is portrayed as a badass warrior, but being strong is more than that...I want to make films with strong female protagonists that were independent thinkers, made their own decisions, however flawed they may be. I grew up in the 1980s, where there was no Asian Barbie—if I wanted to have a doll, she just didn't look like me. I just want to see more people and women that I can relate to on screen.*

Sometimes it seems Western people have these stereotypes about us, that they want to see us squat in the jungle and think mystical thoughts. That a woman suffers from a broken heart and is staring and pining for a man's reflection in the water. That's not us. That's a parody of us.

For Erica Glynn, film was a means to **give Aboriginal people a sense of their own agency**, voice and power:

Erica Glynn (Australia): *For me, it's always been about people who are voiceless. My job as a filmmaker has been giving voice to the voiceless. From my time working with CAAMA [Central Australia Aboriginal Media Association] some of the things we did were cajoling people into believing that they could speak in their own language and that we'd record it and put it on television. It made people think for the first time that they had value and could be heard.*

There are many mechanisms used to silence women and, equally, there are many ways that women (and some men) have worked to end that silence, particularly **strategies that help bring women's stories into the public realm**, especially through filmmaking.

Jan Chapman speaks about the power of Ada's character in *The Piano* in not speaking:

Jan Chapman (Australia): *I look at Ada in The Piano and I think I learn to understand more about her every time. I was attracted to the poetry of this woman who had willed herself not to speak, who was married to a man she had not met. I was really attracted, though, to her will . . . When you think about how Jane [Campion] created that character and the fact that she willed her not to speak, not to be part of the patriarchy, I've really understood lately how strong that was . . . what she was also investigating in that film was the uprising in a woman who had no training in it.*



© Woman at Home, Written and Directed by Megan Wonowidjono (Singapore)



The biggest problem facing women filmmakers is cultural. Women have been **disrespected in society for eons**. This disrespect and violence towards women spans physical, structural, emotional and psychological abuse, including silencing women who speak out, the **misrepresentation and under-representation** of women and girls and withholding from women the resources of time, money and recognition.

All these behaviours **affect women's storytelling** in public forums and on screens.

Hossain speaks of the discrimination she felt from a young age because of her gender:

Rubaiyat Hossain (Bangladesh): *In my culture I grew up with the knowledge that I didn't have a brother and that a son was desirable. From the age of four I realised that I was not recognised because of my gender.*

In the current sociocultural milieu of Asian countries, where suppression of women's rights and sexual violence have become major topics, issues surrounding women's empowerment have increasingly found resonance in films made by women filmmakers. These filmmakers are presenting **a diverse range of female protagonists** who can embody complexity.

There is a rising chorus of concern over the polarization of women's roles as **either victim rising to beat the odds or as wonder women with superhuman abilities** to conquer the world, rather than the level of nuance that is naturally accorded to male characters and protagonists, who also happen to constitute most of the main characters on the screen.

This tradition is so deeply embedded that **decision makers do not embrace women** as the writers and directors of the stories. This is what feminist filmmakers are now challenging.

These filmmakers are also challenging the silence in others and, through their films, are **providing space for others to speak**.



© Maxine Williamson



GENDER REPRESENTATION BEHIND THE CAMERA

Globally, women film directors are more strongly represented as makers of documentaries than of narrative features. The study of 1,100 Hollywood films made between 2007 and 2017 shows that just 43 women worked as directors, accounting for **only 4.3 percent of the total number of directors**. Of the 43, only four were women of colour (Smith et al. 2018). The same study found that of the 48,757 speaking roles in 1,100 films examined, **less than 30 percent of them** were women.

For Jan Chapman, those statistics are represented by a lone figure on a stage at the Cannes Film Festival in May 2017:

Jan Chapman (Australia): *Jane Campion was the only woman on the stage for the 70th anniversary of the Cannes Film festival. She says herself that she found it completely shocking. She hadn't kind of realized. I think you need to do things like put in quota systems.*

Most film commissions **do not have a gender equity policy**, and only a few, such as Screen Australia, generate specific gender data to inform their policies and decision-making. Some of the areas where film commissions can change, include ensuring equity of investment in women-directed narrative feature films. This includes short films, feature development funding, and talent-investment programs.

However, **there are signs of progress**. For instance, in 2016, government film commissioner Claude Joli-Coeur announced that the National Film Board of Canada will now allot half of its production spending to female-directed films as part of its **commitment to full gender parity** (Sage 2016).

Women in the film industry are also staging their own interventions. Geena Davis created her own gender institute and commissioned Stacy Smith, a researcher at the University of Southern California, to produce the data to make the case to Hollywood studio heads about what needed to change. Meryl Streep has funded a screenwriting lab for women over age 40.



The trends that discriminate against female filmmakers are very present in many Asian countries. Asian women filmmakers are **profoundly under-represented in feature filmmaking** as directors, including in 'self-funded' feature filmmaking.

Producers **play a key role in creating opportunities** for women's participation, leadership and story focus. Production houses not only shape the writing and producing opportunities for women, they can also be a training ground for women directors, as has been the case with South Pacific Pictures, led by John Barnett. However, even though there is **no shortage of talented women scriptwriters**, many women writers do not contribute to expanding the availability of complex women protagonists and plots involving women as lead characters. Women filmmakers are recognizing the need to mentor, sponsor and proactively source women for key roles in front and behind the camera.

Jan Chapman (Australia): *I was attracted to female directors more than men, as it happened anyway. I mean now I'm making it my business to mentor younger female producers and to more than mentor to enable them to make films because I'm so shocked that, after all these years, there is still so much inequality in terms of the number of women directors. And in what they're being paid.*

Hossain also sees the choices she makes about who works on her films as an essential means to challenge and overcome inequalities:

Rubaiyat Hossain (Bangladesh): *When I make a film, I do so by involving women in every aspect of filmmaking including sound, photography, design, engineering. I try to ensure gender balance in my crew, and to hire women in all my films. I feel comfortable with women working around me and in choosing to tell the stories in a certain way.*



FEMINIST FILMMAKERS CONFRONTING INEQUALITIES



Feminist filmmakers often **draw on the experiences of being empowered or disempowered** to influence their choice of topic together with their take on this issue, and so **choice of subject and approach become a political act**. Some prefer to focus on the narrative of feature film while others prefer documentary to expose realities:

Mattie Do (Laos): *Inequality in Laos is mainly about society and wealth. It doesn't matter how you made your money, you are suddenly elevated and the public worships you and the poor want to be like you. I live on a dirt road, and when I go downtown, I can see cars like a Bentley. Here it's 100 percent tax, and a car that costs \$100,000 in the US would cost \$200,000 in Laos. Filmmaking provides a way to address this type of human nature and to show that, at the very core of it, we're the same. . .*

Van Ha (Vietnam): *With Vietnam opening, I can tell many stories and to use many angles to address issues related to women and inequality. This includes my work as film producer with the Discovery Channel. For instance, filmmaking an old woman who is homeless in the old quarter. The government wanted to take over and establish a new development that would push out many people who had lived there a long time. This is the issue of rapid urbanization and displacement. It's a story about the women who have no voice in an urban environment that is in transition.*

Anocha Suwichakornpong (Thailand): *I want people to think about what the film is about. Not to relax or to feel comfortable. I want to evoke a response. Yes, being a woman does change the way I approach filmmaking. I don't think a Thai male film director would be focused on patriarchy or on the gender composition. When my last film came out,*

the principal characters were all female and people weren't sure what to make of this. Why don't people ever question men? I felt like the characters in this film needed to be female, and I don't think any male filmmaker would have approached the film in this way.

Anida Yoeu Ali (Cambodia): *Working on the narrative and videos, my voice is always there pushing for justice, it is there in the work, integral, and maybe sometimes, tricking the audience into something that is aesthetically pleasing. I have a compulsion to provide another layer.*

Leena Yadav (India): *When I started with Parched and started working with the actor who was playing the widow, I realized these conversations about sex were so honest and unfiltered and real compared to conversation in the city. I thought, 'let's have "Sex in the Village" and blow the pants off Sex in the City!' I was refused permission from 30 villages. One man said 'We don't want more women like you coming to our villages and corrupting our women. This was the younger generation.*

These guys had got educated, got trucks and went to the cities and said 'Oh, these women have become demons. We don't want our women in the villages to become like them.'

These filmmakers are **confronting inequalities using different media** including documentary, feature film and multimedia and with a different lens.

In her filmmaking Mattie Do captures the **phenomenal wealth disparities** that exist in Laos while Van Ha's documentaries have focused attention on the **dislocation of poor people** in Vietnam, especially because of the effects of urbanization and corporatization. Anida Yoeu Ali's work spectacularly **challenges assumptions and discrimination** according to gender, race, religious identity, and class, while Anocha Suwichakornpong uses film to make women visible in their roles in history as leaders and change-makers and to **challenge the dominant narrative**. Leena Yadav's work is **breaking open spaces** for women to embody their desires, ambitions and identity, physically, and emotionally and to challenge patriarchy and power. And Rubaiyat Hossain's filmmaking is forcing us to **see how inequality plays out** in relation to issues of gender and class. As she says, *"I can't tell a story without class being a key element."*



DOCUMENTING CREATIVE RESISTANCE



Japanese actress Shinobu Terajima accepts Jury Grand Prize,
© 2010 Asia Pacific Screen Awards

Equally important to presenting challenging issues and perspectives is **capturing the creative spirit of resistance and disruption** by women and communities and reinstating women in the central frame of history:

Anocha Suwichakornpong (Thailand): *With my film *By the Time It Gets Dark*, centred on the October 6, 1976 massacre in Thailand, that part of history, at least what people talk about, centres on student leaders and political activists. In my film, the female director wants to make a film where she interviews a female student leader by highlighting the role of women in politics. This forgotten part of history, when people even identify it, is often male history. Women's role is erased. There were many women involved, but hardly anyone talks about the women who were involved.*

Featuring videos and photos of performances in both Paris and Hartford, Anida Yoeu Ali's 2015 exhibition *The Red Chador* provoked the question, 'What do you fear?' Ali used this interdisciplinary exhibit to **explore ideas of otherness** (Langlois 2015):

Anida Yoeu Ali (Cambodia): *I'm totally into the idea of 'the gaze', the idea that people gawk and gaze at marginalization. The idea of the spectacle. I'm in full control and I'm looking at my role of witness. With the red chador you kind of think you know what you're looking at but you're not sure if it's serious. What is it? You're supposed to be asking these questions. It's not a traditional chador. It's long, it's sparkly and it's red! Muslim women are supposed to be modest, not ostentatious. This gal is sparkly as if she's going to a gala, a major event to carry this presence. And it has weight, it's long. It's subverting stereotypes. It's being disruptive.*

Hossain draws strength from the perspective of feminist writers and thinkers who **recast how gender is represented and explored**:

Rubaiyat Hossain (Bangladesh): *I gain great strength from calling myself a feminist. Men are great victims of patriarchy, just as women are, which we often don't realize. Our fight is for a better world. I'm influenced by Judith Butler: I like the idea of gender as a performance. And the opportunity to perform it differently. For me to call myself a feminist is all these ideas in play.*

Thus, feminist filmmakers are **exercising their power of reframing and resistance in their filmmaking** as much as the response they invite and invoke from audiences.



A NETWORK OF FEMINIST FILMMAKERS IN ASIA PACIFIC

There are over 4 billion people living in Asia and the Pacific, representing over a third of the world's population and **the genesis of half the world's film**. However, no formal community exists exclusively for feminist screen professionals in this region.

There is **great potential to elevate the role feminist filmmakers play** in addressing inequalities and the role a feminist film network may assume in using the power of storytelling to increase solidarity, raise awareness of critical gender issues and promote creative responses to entrenched norms and behaviour.

When asked about **the possibility of a network** of feminist filmmakers in Asia, the filmmakers' responses were highly positive:

Anocha Suwichakornpong (Thailand): *The network is a great idea and I fully support it, even in its early [conceptual] stage. It's hard to talk about feminism in Thailand as it's not accepted. I don't think it's just in Thailand, even women filmmakers, they don't like to be identified as feminist filmmakers.*

Visibility is very important as it gives a home and encouragement to a younger generation of filmmakers.

Van Ha (Vietnam): *If [there were] a fund that's particularly accessible to women film directors and producers, it would make a huge difference. For Vietnamese filmmakers and producers, we have so much to offer, and this network would give our confidence such a boost.*

It would provide mentoring opportunities and a chance to have more work as well as to network with other filmmakers... (and) to be connected to international film festivals.

Jan Chapman (Australia): *I do see value in the network because it opens you up to knowledge about the diverse ways women make films and the problems they have in making films. . . .*

And, of course, sharing knowledge is important to all of us filmmakers, as is accessing funds.



Anida Yoeu Ali (Cambodia): *Funding is always a challenge. In Asia, and particularly South-East Asia, we need to work with women who are challenging so much with so few resources. The price of making art feels like a hustle, a scramble...*

It would be profound to have resources that allow us to take our work to another level.

Leena Yadav (India): *We do need a . . . 'sisterhood' to navigate the world we live in! I hope [a 'Feminist Film Network'] would give a platform to share, engage, discuss and increase the scope of the lens through which we see the world. I wish this network creates a stage for us to meet, share and give perspectives.*

I also hope that it increases opportunities for female filmmakers tenfold!

Rubaiyat Hossain (Bangladesh): *Any kind of network . . . that strengthens communication between women filmmakers in the world gives strength. You feel like you're not alone, that other filmmakers are experiencing the same issues.*

There's value in solidarity. It's very important.

CONCLUSION

Feminist filmmakers recognize that **institutional change is essential** to increase their power and access to resources. For instance, the gender equity policies being introduced by European film funds and backed by reference to United Nations human rights mechanisms and to domestic laws, and the work of the EWA - European Women's Audiovisual Network. Such changes help to solidify policy and legal change and **take it out of the realm of subjective decision-making**.

FRAME affirms the commitment and achievements of these filmmakers who are **taking charge of telling their own stories and their framing of inequalities**. There's a fearlessness that defines their work and approach and that's supported by a rising momentum for change.

What is needed now is a feminist film network to take this courage, commitment and achievement to a new level of solidarity, funding and profile. This way, these filmmakers and their stories can have **the level of support, connection, influence and impact they deserve** in confronting inequalities—in front of and behind the camera.

In a 2018 interview with Geena Davis for the *Globe and Mail*, journalist Marsha Lederman asked Davis if she felt things were changing, and Davis acknowledged that she finally sees a **'tipping point'**, spurred by the #MeToo movement: *'As someone incredibly cynical and saying I'll believe it when I see it, I think this is one of those moments. I don't know how far we'll get, but I think it's very significant. Because it's okay to talk about it now; it's okay to say I'm not getting the same pay, I'm not being respected, I'm being sexually harassed, sexually assaulted'*.

The interview ends with this exchange:

*So, about that ending. I asked Davis if she thought *Thelma & Louise* could end differently now (or in the future)—with a better environment for women.*

'Absolutely not', she said. 'Because we haven't come that far. . . . Some things are still utterly stagnant. In my industry, if you look at the percentage of female directors, it hasn't improved in decades. It's always in the small, small single digits. If that's how we would measure progress, we would achieve parity in hundreds of years or something.'

And outside of Hollywood, looking at CEOs and corporate boards, she calls the progress *'very, very glacial'*. *Women's representation in government is a problem too.'*

So, no, definitely. They drive off the cliff. And I found sometimes men can't understand what that's about. But it's really a metaphor for retaining control of their fate, being in charge of themselves, which they refuse to give up. So, could they retain control of themselves and surrender today? No'. (Lederman 2018)



Brunei Morning TV Station © Maxine Williamson



Mattie Do, Writer/Director (Laos)
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This essay accompanies the exhibition **FRAME: How Asia Pacific Feminist Filmmakers and Artists are Confronting Inequalities.**

Documenting the stories and perspectives of eight filmmakers and artists, the exhibition opens in Brisbane, Australia, at the Griffith Film School, world premiering on Tuesday 27 November 2018 to coincide with the 12th Asia Pacific Screen Awards—the region’s highest accolade in film. The exhibition also coincides with the 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, also being staged in Brisbane at this time, with all eyes focused on the artistry of Asia Pacific.

The filmmakers featured are Anida Yoeu Ali (Cambodia), Jan Chapman (Australia), Mattie Do (Laos), Erica Glynn (Australia), Van Ha (Vietnam), Rubaiyat Hossain (Bangladesh), Anocha Suwichakornpong (Thailand) and Leena Yadav (India).

The series of interviews with them were conducted between April and October 2018.

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