

Extra Virgin presents

# AGRARIAN UTOPIA

a film by Uruphong Raksasad

*"How can we dream of utopia while our stomach is still grumbling?"*



extravirgin



**Duration** 122 mins  
**Format** HDV, color  
**Language** Thai with English Subtitles  
**Production / International Sales**  
Extra Virgin Co, Ltd

## Synopsis

*Facing seizure of their own lands, two families found themselves farming together on the same field, hoping to get through just another rice-farming season like every year. But no matter how much the world is evolving, how much the country is going through economic, political and social changes, they still cannot grasp that ideology of happiness.*

*How can we dream of utopia while our stomach is still grumbling?*

## Cast & Crew

### Appearance

Prayad	Jumma
Somnuek	Mungmeung
Sai	Jumma
Nikorn	Mungmeung
Sompong	Jumma
Chakri	Mungmeung
Promchok	Boonkamton
Den	Fusang
Bunyeun	Taka
Piang	Punkam
Chakrit	Intawikul

### Director

Uruphong Raksasad

### Producer

Pimpaka Towira

### Associate Producer

Mai Meksawan

### Cinematographer

Uruphong Raksasad

### Assistant Director

Kriangsak Wittaya-anawat

### Office Coordinator

Narisara Saisanguansat

### Editor

Uruphong Raksasad

### Assistant Editor

Nitivat Cholvanichsiri

### Sound Re-recording Mixer

Akritchalerm Kalayanamitr

## Director's Statement

Apart from filmmaking, what interests me to an equal extent is agriculture. I feel it is among mankind's most noble professions.

To compare, in agriculture we get to produce food from the soil for direct consumption, while other occupations only produce us income for buying food.

I wonder whether all these professions we have in the world (including filmmaking) are really necessary. How much does the world really need them? I feel that the more we complicate things, the more it produces emptiness and unfulfillment in return, one way or another.

Modern agriculture is facing problems on many levels, from land ownership to national policy's focus on economic growth and international competition. What are all these for ultimately? I wonder if globalization forces today have become much more powerful than national governments. I don't know where it will take us.

Agriculture in Thailand today, and perhaps throughout the world as well, is mostly no longer about household use. It's just another industrial business of trades, with an aim to make money for solving other problems that we caused, directly and indirectly. So farmers now need to focus on productivity by using chemicals and machines, and obviously they put less importance on food safety. With this, Thailand no longer has what it takes to claim to be the granary of the world.

I was born a farmer's son. Although my parents didn't expect me to farm for a living, as they see it's hard work and earns little. We can no longer farm in any case for two reasons: one is that the bank has already taken almost all our lands. And second, farming won't help us paying off all our debts in this lifetime. We are not able to live the idealistic, utopian life. We can only do the best we could to get by, that's all.

## DIRECTOR

# Uruphong Raksasad

Born in 1977 to a farming family in the district of Terng, 60 kilometres from Chiang Rai, the northern part of Thailand, Uruphong came to the capital for the first time when he was 18, to further his study at Thammasat's Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications where he majored in film and photography. After graduation in 2000, he had worked as a film editor and postproduction supervisor for several Thai feature films. Since 2004, he left quietly from the industry and has tried to achieve his grassroots filmmaking through the story from his home village.

## Filmography

### ***March of Time***

*19 min, DV, Color, 1999*

- The 4<sup>th</sup> Thai Short Film Festival, Thailand
- Pusan Asian Short Film Festival 2001, South Korea
- New Asian Currents, Yamagata International Film Festival 2001, Japan
- The 4thThessaloniki Documentary Festival 2002, Greece

### ***The Way***

*8 min, DV, Color, 2005*

- The 9<sup>th</sup> Thai Short Film Festival, Thailand
- Rotterdam International Film Festival 2006, The Netherland
- Curtas International Film Festival 2006

### ***The Longest Day***

*13 min, DV, Color, 2005*

- Tampere Short Film Festival 2006, Finland
- The VI Flahertiana International Documentary Film Festival, Russia
- The 49<sup>th</sup> International Leipziger Festival for Documentary and Animated Film 2006, Germany

### ***The Harvest***

*13 min, DV, Color, 2005*

- Tehran International Short Film Festival 2006, Iran

### **Stories from the North**

*88 min, DV, Color, B&W, 2005*

- Bangkok International Film Festival 2006, Thailand
- Won JJ\*Star Award for Digital Film, Jeonju International Film Festival 2006, Korea
- Vienna International Film Festival 2006, Austria
- Vancouver International Film Festival 2006, Canada
- Torino International Film Festival 2006, Italy
- Won 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Award, Lyon Asian Film Festival 2006, France
- Public Award, Nantes 3 continent Film Festival 2006, France
- Won Jury Special Mention Taiwan International Film Festival 2006, Taiwan
- Rotterdam International Film Festival 2007, The Netherland
- Won Most Promising Filmmaker Award, Spokane International Film Festival 2007, USA
- Hong Kong International Film Festival 2007, Hong Kong
- San Francisco International Film Festival 2007, USA

### **The Rocket**

*19 min, DV, Color, 2007*

- 37<sup>th</sup> International Film Festival Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- 17<sup>th</sup> St.George Bank Brisbane International Film Festival, Australia

### **The Planet**

*8 min, DV, Color, 2007*

- 37<sup>th</sup> International Film Festival Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- 17<sup>th</sup> St.George Bank Brisbane International Film Festival, Australia

## PRODUCER

# Pimpaka Towira

Recognised as the first female Thai director to be noticed by international viewers and critics, she is a pioneer on the Thai independent film scene since the early '90s. She studied film at Thammasat University where she was part of an experimental theatre group. Since 1988 she has made a number of experimental short films, mostly depicting women's issues, including, MAE NAK, a deconstruction of the popular Thai ghost story "Mae Nak Phra Kanong". Produced in 1997, MAE NAK, went on to win a Special Jury Prize at the Image Forum Festival in 1998.

Her debut feature, ONE NIGHT HUSBAND, an ambitious attempt to combine an experimental style with an accessible narrative was premiered in the International Forum of New Cinema at the Berlin International Film Festival 2003. Since then, it has been traveling around in festival circuits.

Working as an independent filmmaker since the last decade, she has not been only writing, but also directing and producing all her films. And ONE NIGHT HUSBAND is her success to achieve a collaborative project with a major film studio GMM Pictures.

Apart from film-making, she has worked as a film writer, a film curator and a film lecturer. In addition, she is an active volunteer for the Thai Film Foundation. She also was the program director for the 4th Bangkok Film Festival, 2001 and 2008. She also worked as the video artist collaboration with the all-star cast of Thai artists performing Ramakien: A Rock Opera on July 28-30 2006 at the Lincoln Center Performing Arts in New York.

Moreover, she was also invited as a jury member for many film festivals such as Oberhausen International Short Film Festival in 2001 and Yamagata Documentary Film Festival in 2005.

## **FILMOGRAPHY**

### **AS DIRECTOR**

#### ***Under Taboo***

*9 min, 16 mm, colour, 1992*

- 12<sup>th</sup> Singapore International Film Festival 1998, Singapore
- Thai Short Film Festival 2001, Bangkok, Thailand

## **Mae Nak**

33 min, 16 mm, colour, 1997

- Won a Special Jury Prize, Image Forum Festival 1998, Tokyo, Japan
- 12<sup>th</sup> Singapore International Film Festival 1998, Singapore
- Serendipity : Photography, Video, Experimental Film and Multimedia Installation From Asia, Tokyo, Japan, 2000
- Thai Short Film Festival 2001, Bangkok, Thailand
- 27<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong International Film Festival 2003, Hong Kong

## **One Night Husband (Kuen Rai Ngao)**

114 min, 35 mm, colour, 2003

- International Forum of New Cinema, 53<sup>th</sup> Berlin International Film Festival 2003, Germany
- In Competition, 5<sup>th</sup> Festival Du Film Asiatique De Deauville 2003, France
- In Competition, 25<sup>th</sup> International Women Film Festival of Creteil, France
- In Competition, 27<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong International Film Festival 2003, Hong Kong
- In Competition, 16<sup>th</sup> Singapore International Film Festival 2003, Singapore
- 2003 Jerusalem Film Festival, Israel
- In Competition, Cinefan Film Festival, In Competition, India
- Raindance International Film Festival, United Kingdom
- Focus On Asia 2003-Fukuoka International Film Festival, Japan
- New Currents, 8<sup>th</sup> Pusan International Film Festival, South Korea
- Stockholm International Film Festival, Sweden
- Bangkok International Film Festival 2004, Thailand
- 23 Annual Minneapolis-St.Paul International Film Festival 2005, USA
- 7 Festival Internacional De Cine Las Palmas De Gran Canaria 2006
- 59<sup>th</sup> Locarno International Film Festival 2006, Switzerland
- 17<sup>th</sup> Black Movie Festival 2007, Geneva, Switzerland

## **Tune In ( Sud Thang Rak)**

20 min, DV, colour, 2005

*Supported by Office of Contemporary Art and Culture*

*A short film is made to commemorate the anniversary of the disaster in year 2004*

- *The 11<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong Independent Film&Video Festival, Hong Kong*
- *The 7<sup>th</sup> Jeon Ju International Film Festival, South Korea*
- *The 19<sup>th</sup> Singapore International Film Festival, Singapore*
- *The 7<sup>th</sup> Busan Asian Short Film Festival, South Korea*



### ***The Truth Be Told***

*105 min, DV, colour, 2007*

- 9<sup>th</sup> Jakarta International Film Festival
- 37<sup>th</sup> International Film Festival Rotterdam
- 10<sup>th</sup> Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival
- 21<sup>st</sup> Singapore International Film Festival
- 12<sup>th</sup> Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival
- Hawaii International Film Festival 2008
- Dubai International Film Festival 2008

### ***The Island Funeral***

*Script development*

- Won Huber Bals Fund Grant, Boracay Co-production Meeting, Cinemanila International Film Festival, 2006, the Philippines
- Selected as one of the official projects for the 10<sup>th</sup> PPP (PUSAN PROMOTION PLAN), Pusan International Film Festival, October 2007, Korea

## **AS PRODUCER**

### ***Agrarian Utopia***

*Directed by Uruphong Raksasad*

*122 min, HDV, 2009*

- Won Digital Production Grant from Hubert Bals Fund, Spring 2007

### ***A Voyage of Foreteller***

*Directed by Jakrawal Nilthamrong*

*100 min, HDV, script development, 2009*