



La Biennale di Venezia

Biennale College
Cinema



La Biennale di Venezia presents
a film by Polen Ly

Becoming ជាតិជា Human មនុស្ស

Savorn Serak

Piseth Chhun

ANTI-ARCHIVE PRESENTS BECOMING HUMAN A FILM BY POLEN LY

WRITTEN BY POLEN LY DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY SON DOAN EDITOR KAVICH NEANG SOUND DESIGNER VINCENT VILLA ORIGINAL MUSIC JEAN-CHARLES BASTION, PIERRE ÉDOUARD DUMORA
PRODUCTION DESIGNER BANDIDDH PRUM FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR BARNEY ROBERTS SCRIPT SUPERVISOR DANECH SAN SOUND ENGINEER CHE VILLANUEVA GAFFER PATCHAKRITI SRITUE
COSTUMES SOVETTORN CHEA, SREYNOCH KHUN COLORIST EVY ROSELET LOCATION MANAGER SOCHEATA VAN UNIT PRODUCTION MANAGER MONYSAK SOU LINE PRODUCER SREYLIN MEAS
PRODUCED BY DANIEL MATTES / ANTI-ARCHIVE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER NATALYN ANG / MINRI MEDIA ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS DAVY CHOU, KAVICH NEANG, DANECH SAN / ANTI-ARCHIVE,
LOY TE, VINCENT VILLA / KONGCHAK PICTURES, SON DOAN, PERRINE WENS / CAMESCOOP, TAN SI EN / MOMO FILM CO INTERNATIONAL SALES LIGHTS ON

Synopsis

Thida, the spirit guardian of an old cinema facing demolition, must confront her existence as a ghost and the choice of rebirth. When she meets Hai, a living human with whom she forms a deep bond, their connection forces her to face not only her spiritual destiny but also the realities of a country undergoing profound social change.



Director's Statement

Writing *Becoming Human* was like a meditative journey. It allowed me to reflect on what it means to be a human in a landscape that has gone through trauma and transformation throughout the past and until the present day. I imagined a fantasy universe to explore the real situation around me. My parents' generation lived through a genocide which completely swallowed the life, freedom, and dreams of many people. My generation today is said to be living in peace, but throughout my filmmaking journey, I have witnessed the loss of homes, dreams, voices, and natural landscapes from different unjust forms of development and change. The continuous repetition of destruction and rebuilding have become a vicious cycle. I feel like I have been stuck in a bubble, where people remain haunted by both past and present traumas, with the lingering fear which has silenced our voices and left our wounds unhealed.

However, as a filmmaker in the present day, I want to use my voice to focus not only on past trauma or nostalgia, but to ask and emphasize what does it mean to be a human who carries the past, present, and future within them always. In *Becoming Human*, I develop the interconnection of the lead characters from two different generations. They both share a similar fragility and they learn from one another. Each character is faced with a choice to move forward to the next stage of life. Their shared hope and care provide them with the strength to move forward. In this traumatic landscape where echoes of the past repeat again and again, finding that capacity to thrive with one another, with compassion, that's probably what it means to be human.



Cast and Crew

LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA
presents an ANTI-ARCHIVE film,
written and directed by POLEN LY

With SAVORN SERAK ("Thida")
and PISETH CHHUN ("Hai")

Produced by DANIEL MATTES
Cinematography by SON DOAN
Editing by KAVICH NEANG
Production Design by BANDDIDH PRUM
Sound Design by VINCENT VILLA
Original Music by JEAN-CHARLES BASTION
and PIERRE ÉDOUARD DUMORA

Contacts

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**THE
PROJECT
HAS BEEN
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BIENNALE
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2024 / 2025**
