

ANTI-ARCHIVE

presents



OFFICIAL SELECTION

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM 2024



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## GOLDEN DRAGON

A film by Boren Chhith

Chinnaro Soem

Madeza Chhem

Written by Boren Chhith-Director of Photography Jeremiah Overman-Editor Kavich Neang-Sound Designer Vincent Villa-Colorist Caique de Souza-Original Music Fabrice Evain-1st Assistant Director Danech San  
Producers Daniel Mattes-Davy Chou/Anti-Archive-Executive Producers Lorette Garçon-Rotha Moeng-Associate Producers Steve Chen-Kavich Neang-Park Sungho  
Co-Producers Loy Te-Vincent Villa/Kongchak Pictures-Phare Creative Studio





## **LOGLINE**

In a coastal city, a hospital patient investigates the connections between his father's death and his dreams which overcome him.

## **SYNOPSIS**

Vicheka, 32, returns to Sihanoukville after many years away and after several years of the beachtown's rapid urban transformations, to pay respects to his late father. Waking up in a hospital, he pieces together his presence there while finding his hometown totally transformed. A nurse helps him in this moment stuck between his dreams, memories, and reality.



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Two moments in 2019 are forever tied together in my memory: I witnessed the sudden change of Sihanoukville into a crowded new city, and my mother revealed my father's murder. Yet shock cannot stop memories from resurfacing. My unknown father and the Sihanoukville of yesteryear are reborn in my film.

Sihanoukville, formerly known as Kampong Som (literally "Pleasant Harbor") is a city on the coast of southern Cambodia.

In my memory, in the 2000s, it was a small town by the sea, with fine sand and blue sea surrounded by green landscapes. The water temperature was warm all year round. A natural, calm and relaxed family place. You felt at home there.

Since 2016, the Cambodian government and Chinese investors have transformed Sihanoukville into an urban center. Their idea: the development of Sihanoukville into a new Shenzhen, a Chinese city of 13 million people. They started many infrastructure projects as part of the "New Silk Road" including housing, roads, power plants, industrial parks, hotels, casinos, offices, shops and dozens of new skyscrapers.

The last time I went there was during the shoot of "Onoda, 10,000 Nights in the Jungle". I felt strange, as if there was a border at the exit of the hotel. I did not recognize anything, neither the architecture nor the people in the street, nor even Cambodia.

This new city crushed my childhood memories. I felt lost, drowned.  
Are we in Cambodia still? I feel like a stranger! Am I really a foreigner here?

Around the same time, just after rediscovering Sihanoukville, my mother began to tell me about the story of my father who was murdered before I was born. She had never told me before. A father I never knew and who I never had missed until then.

I naturally realized the parallel: two important losses for me stand out at the same time in my life. My father and the Sihanoukville of yesteryear. The only way for me to find them again is to dream about them.

GOLDEN DRAGON mixes my memories and reality. The scenario is constructed in two parts.

We find the atmosphere of Sihanoukville ten years ago with a small field hospital and street vendors on the beach. The climate is soothing. And then we discover the new face of Sihanoukville with skyscrapers, casinos, and empty buildings.

Paradoxically, I want to keep the same way of filming as in the first part, to contrast and try to slow down the new, burgeoning city. I want to bring the image closer to my memories, even if the city no longer looks like it.

Even skyscrapers cannot stop the memories from resurfacing. Nor can unfinished construction projects erase the path to find the little house of my protagonist's childhood.

I return to find this little house, my unknown father and the Sihanoukville of the past, all of which are reborn in this film.

## **BIOGRAPHY— BOREN CHHITH, DIRECTOR AND WRITER**

Boren CHHITH (b. 1989, Battambang, Cambodia), trained in circus and theatre, took his first steps in film in 2013 as a 3rd assistant director for Régis Warnier's *Time for Confessions*. After a year of film school at Cinécréatis Nantes, Boren Chhith entered the French film industry and has since worked as 3rd assistant on several films: *Anatomy of a Fall* (Justine Triet), *Onoda 10000 Nights in the Jungle* (Arthur Harari), and more. *NEAK MEAS* is Boren Chhith's first film as writer and director.

## **PRODUCTION COMPANY PROFILE — ANTI-ARCHIVE**

Anti-Archive is a Cambodian film production company created in 2014 by filmmakers Davy Chou, Steve Chen, and Kavich Neang, with Park Sungho and Daniel Mattes joining later. Anti-Archive produces and co-produces fiction and documentary films by the emerging, new generation of Cambodian filmmakers, as well as films by international, independent directors shooting in Cambodia and Southeast Asia. Deliberately provocative, the name Anti-Archive invites one to rethink the relationship of films and filmmakers with the past and history. The founders recognized the need for film production infrastructure in this part of Southeast Asia to support young independent filmmakers, some of whom have since shown their first works internationally. The films produced and co-produced by Anti-Archive have premiered and received awards at festivals around the world, including Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Locarno, Busan, Rotterdam, and Torino. Anti-Archive's films include:

Golden Dragon (2023, Boren Chhith, short, premiere: Singapore)

Doi Boy (2023, Nontawat Numbenchapol, feature, premiere: Busan)

Return to Seoul (2022, Davy Chou, feature, premiere: Cannes Un Certain Regard)

Further and Further Away (2022, Polen Ly, short, premiere: Berlinale Shorts)

White Building (2021, Kavich Neang, feature, premiere: Venice Orizzonti)

Onoda - 10,000 Nights in the Jungle (2021, Arthur Harari, feature, premiere: Cannes Un Certain Regard)

Sea within a Sea (2021, Danech San, short documentary, premiere: Doc Edge Film Festival)

Sunrise in My Mind (2020, Danech San, short, premiere: Busan)

Last Night I Saw You Smiling (2019, Kavich Neang, documentary feature, premiere: Rotterdam)

The Taste of Secrets (2019, Guillaume Suon, documentary feature, premiere: Busan)

California Dreaming (2019, Sreylin Meas, short, premiere: Singapore)

New Land Broken Road (2018, Kavich Neang, short, premiere: Singapore)

A Million Years (2018, Danech San, short, premiere: Busan)

Diamond Island (2016, Davy Chou, feature, premiere: Cannes Critics' Week)

Turn Left Turn Right (2016, Douglas Seok, feature, premiere: Torino)

Waxing Moon (2016, Adrien Genoudet, documentary feature, premiere: Entrevues Belfort)

Dream Land (2015, Steve Chen, feature, premiere: Locarno)

Three Wheels (2015, Kavich Neang, short, premiere: Busan)

Goodbye Phnom Penh (2015, Kavich Neang, short, premiere: AFA, Singapore)

[www.antiarchive.com](http://www.antiarchive.com)

## BIOGRAPHIES – PRODUCERS

**Daniel MATTES** is an American-born producer based in Phnom Penh since 2014. He is a partner at the independent production company, Anti-Archive. In 2016, he joined as a co-writer and associate producer on *White Building*, director Kavich Neang's first narrative feature film which later won the Orizzonti award for Best Actor at the 2021 Venice Film Festival. He also produced and managed world sales for Kavich Neang's 2019 documentary *Last Night I Saw You Smiling*, which won awards at Rotterdam, Jeonju, Janela do Recife, and Tokyo FilmEx. He produced Danech San's 2020 short film *Sunrise in My Mind* and Kavich Neang's 2018 short film *New Land Broken Road*, and he served as project coordinator for the three short films produced under Anti-Archive's "Echoes from Tomorrow" portfolio.

He most recently produced Polen Ly's new short fiction, *Further and Further Away*, which held its world premiere at Berlinale Shorts and won awards at Palm Springs, Singapore, Toronto Reel Asian, Laceno d'Oro, Minamalen Norway, and Bangkok-ASEAN. Daniel Mattes also works as a consultant for human rights and justice-related programs in Cambodia.

In addition to Boren Chhith's new short film, he is currently producing *Doi Boy*, the debut feature film from Thai filmmaker Nontawat Numbenchapol, and new projects from Kavich Neang, Danech San, and Chheangkea Ieng.

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**Davy CHOU** is a French-Cambodian director and producer, born in 1983 and based between Paris and Phnom Penh. He is the co-founder of French production company Vycky Films and Cambodian production company Anti-Archive. He gained attention as a filmmaker with his feature-length documentary *Golden Slumbers* (2011) which premiered at Busan International Film Festival and Berlinale Forum, and with his short fiction film *Cambodia 2099* (2014) which was selected for Cannes Directors' Fortnight. His first feature film, *Diamond Island* was selected at Cannes Critics' Week 2016 where it won the SACD Award. In 2022, his feature film *Return to Seoul*, was selected at Cannes Un Certain Regard and was awarded at several festivals. The film was shortlisted as Cambodia's entry for the 2023 Academy Award for best international film.

As a producer, Davy Chou has produced *Boundary* by director Nontawat Numbenchapol (2013, Forum Berlinale), *This is Comedy* by Jacky Goldberg (2014), *Shores – In the Safe Northern Sun* by Irene Dionisio (2015), and *Waxing Moon* by Adrien Genoudet (2016).

With Anti-Archive in Cambodia, Davy Chou has produced several short films by Cambodian directors Kavich Neang, Danech San, Sreylin Meas, and Polen Ly, as well as Kavich Neang's feature-length documentary *Last Night I Saw You Smiling* (2019), which won the Netpac Award at International Film Festival Rotterdam, and his first feature film *White Building* (2021), which won the Orizzonti award for Best Actor award at Venice Film Festival. He also served as line producer for *Onoda - 10,000 Nights in the Jungle*, Arthur Harari's feature, which was entirely shot in Cambodia and which opened Cannes Un Certain Regard in 2021.

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**PRINCIPAL CAST**



CHINNARO SOEM — ‘VICHEKA’



MADEZA CHHEM — ‘NURSE’

## CREW LIST

Boren CHHITH, director and writer

Daniel MATTES, producer

Davy CHOU, producer

Loy TE, co-producer

Vincent VILLA, co-producer

Rotha MOENG, executive producer

Lorette GARÇON, executive producer

Sreylin MEAS, unit production manager

Socheata VAN, location manager

Sokhay CHUK, location scout and assistant

Danech SAN, 1st assistant director

Savunthara SENG, 2nd assistant director and script supervisor

Jeremiah OVERMAN, director of photography

Maty PROM, 1st assistant camera

Pisey NITH, 2nd assistant camera

Bora NGOV, gaffer

Mao SORM, best boy

Sinhor ARN, key grip

Sopheakdey TOUCH, sound recordist

Vayu OUK, boom operator

Bandiddh PRUM, production designer

Chanrithy VORN, prop master

Kanann Sok VINH, assistant prop master

Sreyrov SENG, hair and make-up artist

Kavich NEANG, editor

Vincent BUSO, editing assistant

La KOEM, editing assistant

*Kongchak Pictures, sound studio in Phnom Penh*

Vincent VILLA, sound design, editing and re-recording mix

Sreymoch KIM, assistant sound editor

Thana SAN, assistant sound editor

Fabrice EVAÏN, original music composer

Caïque de SOUZA, colorist and mastering

**Main Contact: Daniel Mattes, Producer**  
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**www.antiarchive.com/goldendragon**

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## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Production Date	December 2023
Production Country	Cambodia
Duration	17 minutes
Genre	Narrative - Drama
Subgenres	Social, Urban, Family, Mental Health
Original Language	Khmer
Subtitles Available	English, French
Aspect Ratio, Frame Rate, Image	4:3, 24fps, Color
Exhibition Formats Available	DCP, Prores, H264
Sound Formats Available	5.1, Stereo
Production Company	Anti-Archive
Co-Production Companies	Kongchak Pictures, Phare Creative Studio

