PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

British Council Presents
British Experimental Films in ARKIPEL 2015

Jakarta, 20 August 2015 – British Council – the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities, presents five experimental films from LUX in ARKIPEL, which is held in Jakarta on 19 – 29 Agustus 2015.

LUX is an international arts agency that represents the country’s only significant collection of artists’ film and video and is the largest distributor of such work in Europe. The 5 films are: Weight (2014) by Kate Davis, Depositions (2014) by Luke Fowler, Things by Ben Rivers (2014), Pyramid (2014) by Margaret Salmon, and Taskafa, Stories from the Street (2013) by Andrea Luka Zimerman.

“The programme is exploring the limits of documentary and ethnographic film and the illusion of knowability that contemporary media engenders (one grand illusion). This programme includes some of the key UK artists working with the moving image at the moment, won and nominated for different awards.”, said Benjamin Cook, Director of LUX, in a limited media gathering in Jakarta, Friday.

Cook said that his involvement with ARKIPEL started when he met Yuki in India last year and found how much they had in common in terms of their aims and working practices in the development of experimental film.

“I am very interested in forging closer links between artists and arts organisations in Indonesia and the UK. Moving image is a networked practice that really benefits from these international connections and I believe by working together we can create a expanded field of collaboration that will benefit artists both in Indonesia and the UK.”, said Cook.

This selection of contemporary British artists’ films from the LUX Collection looks at subjectivity in the documentary tradition through a series of portraits of actions, people and animals that explore and raise fundamental questions about the limits of the form and the interplay between fiction and reality.

Programme Manager British Council, Levina Wirawan, said that the arts programme of British Council in Indonesia will be focusing on 3 big sectors: film, fashion, and visual arts. Therefore British Council would like to promote cross discipline artworks: artists’ moving images which is within the scope of experimental film.

“ARKIPEL is the right platform to start our work in promoting the cross discipline of film and visual arts, it is also for us to promote LUX’s collection that represents 4500 works by approximately 1500 artists from 1920s to the present day” said Levina.

In its third occasion, Forum Lenteng will be presenting the theme GRAND ILLUSION on ARKIPEL to reflect on the quite good development of democracy in Indonesia in these recent years and also to the situation of socio-political internationally. That behind it all there are still lots of humanity issues in the history of this nation that have not been solved yet.

ARKIPEL 2015 will present 130 films from 30 countries in the following venues: GoetheHaus, Kineforum, Galeri Cipta III Taman Ismail Marzuki Jakarta, IFI Jakarta, @america, Auditorium Institut Kesenian Jakarta, and also Blitz Megaplex Pacific Place.

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About British Council
The British Council is the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide.

We work in more than 100 countries and our 8,000 staff – including 2,000 teachers – work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year by teaching English, sharing the arts and delivering education and society programmes.

We are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter. A core publicly-funded grant provides 20 per cent of our turnover which last year was £864 million. The rest of our revenues are earned from services which customers around the world pay for, such as English classes and taking UK examinations, and also through education and development contracts and from partnerships with public and private organisations. All our work is in pursuit of our charitable purpose and supports prosperity and security for the UK and globally.

Please visit: www.britishcouncil.or.id for more information. You can also keep in touch with the British Council through http://twitter.com/idbritish and https://id-id.facebook.com/BritishCouncilIndonesia.

About LUX
LUX is an international arts agency for the support and promotion of artists’ moving image practice and the ideas that surround it. Founded in 2002 as a charity and not-for-profit limited company, it builds on a lineage of predecessor organisations (The London Filmmakers Cooperative, London Video Arts and The Lux Centre) which stretches back to the 1960s. LUX is the only organisation of its kind in the UK, it represents the country’s only significant collection of artists’ film and video and is the largest distributor of such work in Europe (representing 4500 works by approximately 1500 artists from 1920s to the present day). LUX works with a large number of major institutions including museums, galleries, festivals and educational establishments, as well as directly with the public and artists. LUX receives regular revenue funding from Arts Council England.

About ARKIPEL
ARKIPEL Jakarta International Documentary & Experimental Film Festival initiates and becomes a space to discuss about cinema and media in general. The approach is either to ‘aesthetic (form), production mode strategy, archiving, film criticism, commercial industry, or economic value of product derived from this media technology (film); to how the role of cinema and media through, issue, or socio-political phenomenon that influences the live of society either in Indonesia or global. Every year, ARKIPEL also showcases specific issue, especially related to development, change, and also issue amidst the Indonesian society and global community that spoken through cinema culture. The festival was first organized in 2013 by Forum Lenteng, a non-profit organization established by artist, communication study students, researcher, and culture observer in 2003. This forum works in the frame of audio-visual study as a learning tool and production of media opened for the public.

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Benjamin Cook is the founder director of LUX, the UK agency for the support and promotion of artists’ working with the moving image. He has been professionally involved in independent film sector in the UK for the past 20 years as a curator, archivist, producer, writer and lecturer. Before founding LUX he held a number of positions including Director of the Lux Centre; Head of Distribution of London Electronic Arts; Director of the London Pan-Asian Film Festival; Avant-Garde Programmer for the National Film Theatre, Film Archivist for Anthology Film Archives, New York, the Northern Film Archive, Gateshead and the Wellcome Institute. He holds a MA in Film Archiving from the University of East Anglia and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Broadcast Journalism from Sheffield Hallam University.

He has taught and spoken widely in the UK and internationally on artists’ moving image and three years ago co-founded a research masters in moving image art with Central Saint Martins and a Leverhulme Trust-supported post-academic programme for artists working with the moving image which he has run for the past six years.

He has produced numerous films by international artists including Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Yang Fudong, Amar Kanwar, Deimantas Narkevicius and Akram Zaatari. He has curated numerous exhibitions and screening series, most recently the ‘Mindaugas Triennial’, the 10th Baltic Triennial of International Art, Vilnius in 2012, also in 2012 he founded the LUX/ICA Biennial of Moving Images London and is the co-programmer of the Experimenta section of the BFI London Film Festival.

As well as writing for periodicals such as Sight and Sound he founded his own LUX imprint in 2004 and has so far edited and published 16 publications including the Animate! Book, rethinking animation (2005), Subjects and Sequences, A Margaret Tait Reader (2006), The Films of Stefan and Franciska Themerson (2007), Rewind+Play. An Anthology of Early British Video Art (2009). He is currently an External Examiner for Kingston University, Chairman of The Elephant Trust and a Founder Director of the Independent Cinema Office and Animate Projects.
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Contemporary media now offers us previously undreamt of levels of access to information about and knowledge the World. From ‘reality tv’ to social media this sense of knowability is heightened by a projection of ‘unmediated’ reality, of immediacy and of access to real people and real situations. But how much is this an illusion? For all of this sense of access are we still not ultimately limited to the making sense of people and things through their external attributes? How can we hope to know other others when their interior selves, their private thoughts and feelings remain fundamentally shut off to us? Do these heightened verité forms in popular media not only perpetuate but deepen an illusion of knowledge and understanding? Are we being manipulated? how well do really we know the others?

The programme begins with two films commissioned by LUX as part of a residency giving artists’ access to the resources and archives of the UK national broadcaster, the BBC in return for making a work within the editorial context and guidelines of the organisation. The project was both interesting and challenging, revealing the profound differences in ideology and working practices between a broadcaster and an independent artist (even though each would profess a commitment to creativity). It is perhaps unsurprisingly that both of the films take a critical perspective on televisual form by using the broadcaster’s own material to subvert and question the way it portrays its subjects. In Weight, Kate Davis questions value and representations of female creativity and domestic labour though the ironic juxtaposition of archive film with a documentary on the British sculptor Barbara Hepworth. While Luke Fowler’s film Depositions explores the representation of traditionally marginalised traveller communities in the Highlands of Scotland, recouping material from patronising documentaries and news items to articulate a more complex narrative of difference and community.

Inspired by the French ethnographic filmmaker Jean Rouch’s aim to explore his ‘own tribe’, the Parisians in his film Chronique d’un été (1960), US artist filmmaker Margaret Salmon attempts an ethnographic portrait of her adopted community in the South East of England. Exploring the rhythms and rituals of domestic life in the framework of psychologist Abraham Maslow’s theory on the hierarchy of human need the film problematises the ethnographic film form. Employing a poetic affection the film subverts the traditional subject of western ethnographic studies by turning the camera on southern English middle class life.

Ben Rivers is know for his series of ‘portrait’ films that often suggest a fundamental interior unknowability of his subjects through lack of commentary, guiding elements or close up perspectives. Things is unique in that it is a self-portrait of sorts, but rather than looking at himself directly, Rivers constructs a personal history through the possessions in his London apartment. However as we start to reach a sense of an identity behind the things he abruptly shifts to a 3D digital rendering of the same space, now stripped of much of the personal detail of the first half of the film, it forcefully suggesting the constructed and manipulated nature of the image, shifted as it is to a now non-human and pure artificial perspective.

The final film in the selection Taskafa focuses on the most ‘other’-ed of beings, animals and specifically the street animals that live alongside humans in many major cities. Animals are the focus for our most anthropomorphic projections and in Andrea Luka Zimmerman’s film these street animals act as a cypher for the lowest order of inhabitants within the modern city, those that face the full brunt of the capitalist drive for development and gentrification. Zimmerman actively challenges traditional narratives around street animals as pests and disruption to the
flow of the city, imbuing them with dignity and an interiority (with quotes from canine narrator of John Berger’s book *King*). The film ultimately makes a passionate utopian proposition for the value of community, mutuality and inter-species care as powerful resistance to a voracious ‘progress’ in the modern world.

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Taking a 1961 BBC documentary about artist Barbara Hepworth as its starting point, 
Weight explores how televised depictions of creativity have contributed to 
understanding of artistic production and other forms of labour. Weight reimagines the value system 
that this documentary is predicated on and 
proposes an alternative vision.

— Zesjaar van der Wall

Kate Davis (b.1974, New Zealand) 
studied at The Glasgow School of Art where she completed 
Selected solo exhibitions include 'Spaces: Temporal 
Gallery, Cologne (2013); The Drawing Room, London (2012); 
Galerie Kaisen, Berlin (2009). Davis has been 
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DEPOSITIONS
Luke Fowler (UK)

Country of Production: UK
Language: English

20 minutes, Colour, 2014

lukfowler@tiscali.co.uk

Luke Fowler’s films dwell on potentiality: what might be, what might have been, what might still be if the world were to turn in a different direction? But film time runs in many directions, as do arguments. Film made only recently can be seen as confused with the archival vintage of washed-out or saturated tones and blurred edges. Only the disjunction between sounds that live close within the extrathematic voice of a fading past distinguish archive from present. Gradually the pieces converge: our nostalgia for ancient folkways, traditional song and the romance of freedom, all underpinned by scientific rationalism and the pressure of normativity bring low to bear on lives resistant to conformity. What is an archive if not a collection of letters to ourselves?

— Benjamin Cook

Luke Fowler (b. 1973 in Glasgow, 1995 graduate with a BA (Hons) in Fine Art from Napier College of Art and Design, Edinburgh, and 1997 graduate with a MA in Fine Art from the Royal College of Art, London) is a British artist, curator and critic. His work focuses on the World Wide Web in the context of modern and contemporary art. He is currently based in London, United Kingdom.

Luka Fowler is known for his video and performance works, which often involve the use of technology and digital tools. He is a member of the group The Expanded Followings, which includes artists from around the world. He has exhibited his work in numerous venues, including the British Council, London, and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh.

Extracted from ARKIPEL 2015 catalogue

Pyramid is a film work on Abraham Maslow’s theory on the hierarchy of human needs filmed through the rhythms and choreography of middle class South England. Filmed in color and b&w on 16mm film, it continues Salmon’s interest in the performance of the artist: cinematographer within both spontaneous and constructed situations and incorporates methods developed by various movements within documentary and avant-garde history. Using an array of sounds, music and conversation as well as silence, Salmon constructs an abstract documentary which both develops and challenges the themes presented in Maslow’s theory as well as her own interest in human iconography, stereotype and domestic rhythm. The image of Maslow’s pyramid and his pragmatic discussion of human needs and possible motivations provides a system of organization for the family and a philosophical framework for the video.

— Sequence Civic


"This film was a challenge set by a friend, to make something in my home over the course of the year. Coming from a country where the seasons are very evident, I am interested in how they affect people's sense of time, mood, and our understanding and relationship to our environment. These mood changes feed into the film—in the Winter section the film is very internal and reflective, looking at the details around the house, and to the things I've collected. In Spring, the atmosphere brightens, there are humans, hands holding a book or drawing, an eye reading. Summer is a mix of both: the joy of these things, countered with a sense of loss. Autumn then becomes a further removal of representational of the space I live in, and in an uncertain time—are the walls crumbling around me? Is this future, partly forecast in Fabula, the book read in Spring." —Ben Rivers

Ben Rivers (b. in 1973), grew up in London. He studied Fine Art at Goldsmith School of Art, where he is now teaching. He is an independent filmmaker and photographer. His work has screened in many festivals around the world.
In TASKAFA, stories from the street, Andreas Laku Zimmerman (UK)

Taska is an artist’s essay film about memory and the most necessary forms of belonging, both to a place and to history, through a search for the role played in the city by Istanbul’s street dogs and their relationship to its human populations. Through this exploration, the film opens a window on the contested relationship between power and the public, community and categorization (in relation and identity), and the ongoing struggle/resistance against a single way of seeing and being.

Andreas Laku Zimmerman is a British film writer and cultural theorist based in London. She has been making films since 1990, including a part of the film collective Yummi Racine, exploring the impact of globalization and its relationship with photographic material and working. Pozadzelski is an independent artist and filmmaker in London, who also recently completed her latest short film, The War, a fable (2019).