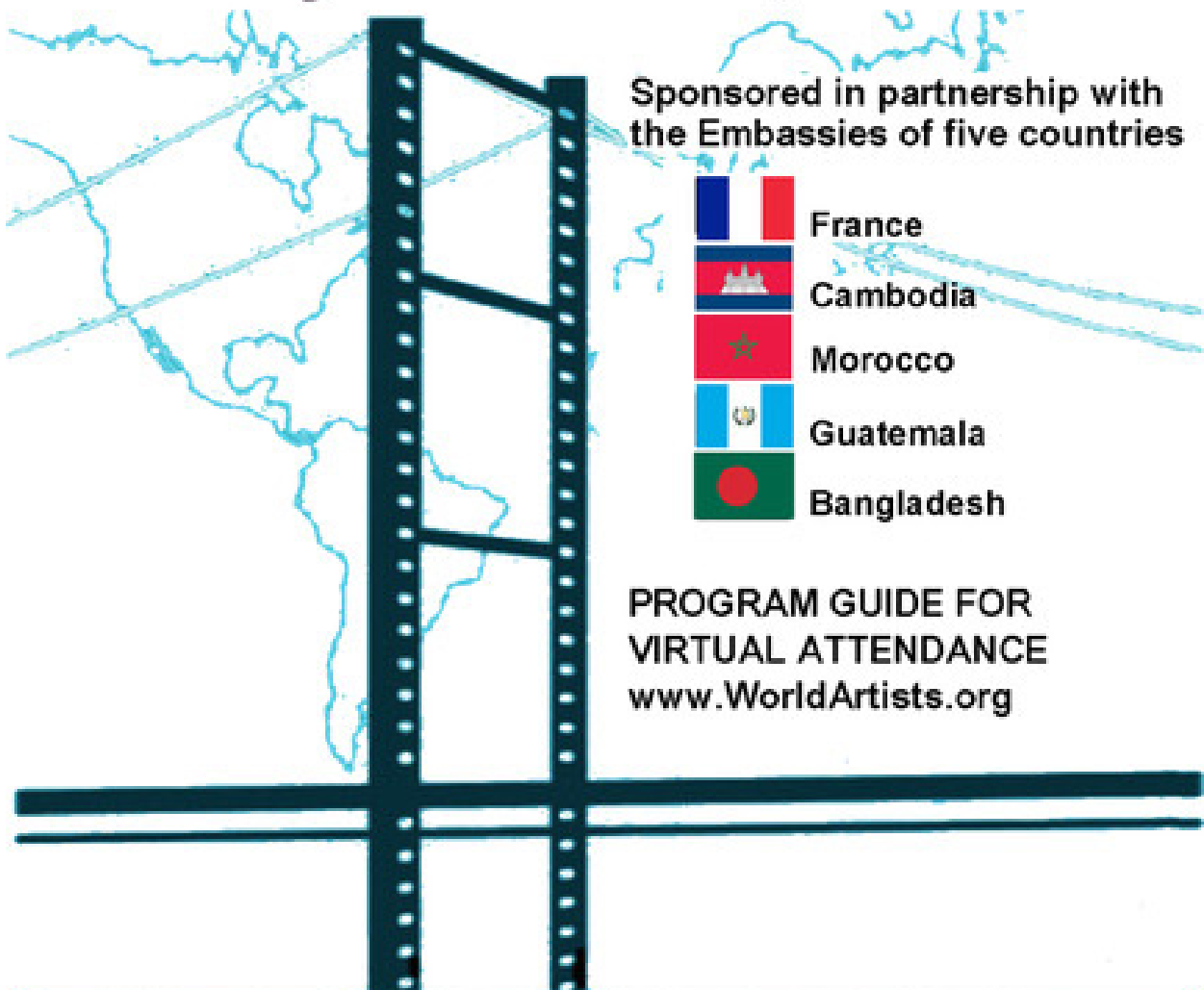


World Artists Experiences Presents



Bridges to the World

International Film Festival
February 1 - March 1, 2022



Sponsored in partnership with
the Embassies of five countries



PROGRAM GUIDE FOR
VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE
www.WorldArtists.org

Arts as a bridge to international understanding

For information: wae@comcast.net www.WorldArtists.org



WORLD
ARTISTS
EXPERIENCES



February 2022

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 14th Annual Bridges to the World International Film Festival, sponsored by World Artists Experiences in partnership with the embassies of France, Cambodia, Morocco, Guatemala, Bangladesh, and the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives. The theme is in recognition of bridging the people and cultures of the world with those in communities throughout Maryland.

The five-week celebration features films from countries in the order they are presented: France, Cambodia, Morocco, Guatemala, and Bangladesh. The films are a means of presenting each country through images and sounds. Our hope is that you will gain the spirit of each country represented. All films were selected by their respective embassies.

For the second year, the festival is being held virtually. In the past, the films were screened throughout the State of Maryland. We recognize the venues who held and supported the festival: Allegany College of Maryland, University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland, Towson University, Salisbury University, Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, and Community Place.

Each film will be introduced by a diplomat, scholar, and/or producer. The audience will then screen the film through the chat box. Following the screening, questions and answers will be addressed by the presenters. This program guide will direct you through the details for attending virtually and provide information on each film www.worldartists.org.

We express gratitude to the planning committee: Greg Faller, June Krell- Salgado, Linda Smith, and Mendy Nitsch. We appreciate Dr. Greg Faller for writing the essays, Patrick McAlister for his technical expertise, Suzanne Jaques and team for communication organization, and Margaret Rose Caro for editing and designing the program guide. We acknowledge all volunteers and in-kind supporters who have generously contributed their time, talents, and resources to make the festival possible. We especially thank the embassies for partnering with World Artists Experiences to produce the 14th annual Bridges to the World Film Festival.

Building bridges with people and countries of the world,

Steven McAdams, Executive Director
Governor's Office of Community Initiatives.

Betty McGinnis
World Artists Experiences

The Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) engages Maryland communities through the governor's seven ethnic and cultural commissions to deliver the voices of Marylanders to the Hogan administration, connect the administration with Marylanders, and alert the administration about real-time needs of communities in Maryland.

Guide for Attending the Virtual Film Festival

In order to attend the 2022 Bridges to the World International Film Festival, attendees will need to follow the Zoom link below and provide a valid name and e-mail address to attend. Zoom Webinars require both a valid name and e-mail address for security purposes.

ZOOM LINK:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_VlcOuAUUSx-NHvnr-ufMhA

If prompted, the webinar ID is **851 5628 9213** and the password is **Bridges**.

World Artists Experiences Webinar



TOPIC:

2022 Bridges to the World International Film Festival

DESCRIPTION:

At 7pm, guests will be invited into the Zoom Webinar room, where we will kick off the screenings with an introduction to that evening's film. After the introduction, we will post the film's screening URL in the chat box of the Zoom Webinar Platform. Guests will then follow that link to screen the film on their own computers. After the film has completed its runtime, guests are invited to return to the Webinar room to participate in a Q&A using the chat feature, if they would like to. We will hold brief closing statements and thank you's at the conclusion of the evening.



February 1, 2022, 7pm

February 8, 2022, 7pm

February 15, 2022, 7pm

February 22, 2022, 7pm

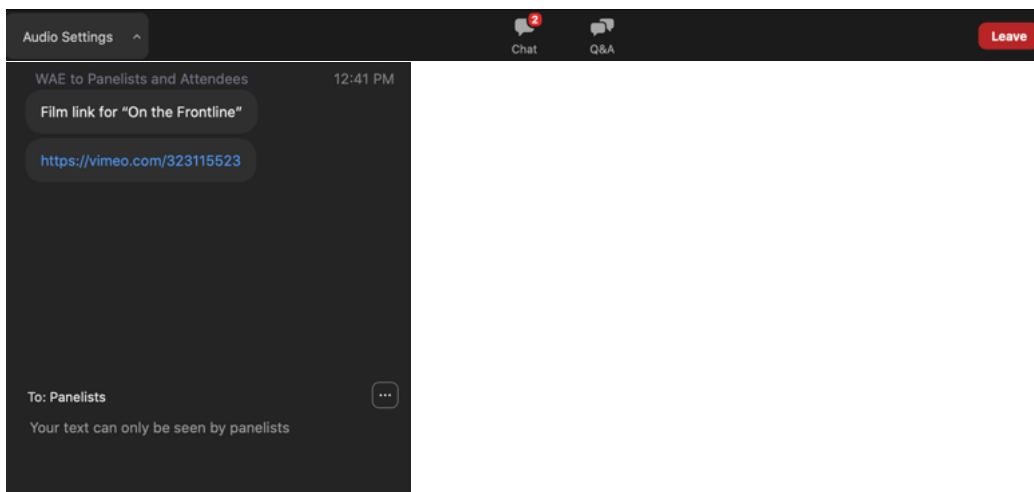
March 1, 2022, 7pm

Time shows in Eastern Standard Time (US and Canada)

Each Tuesday night, screening of the film festival will use the same link listed above and begin promptly at 7pm.

❖ At 7pm, guests will be invited into the Zoom Webinar room, where we will hold a pre-screening introduction.

❖ After the introduction, we will post the link to the film's screening URL in the Chat box of the Zoom Webinar platform. The Chat feature is located in the "Control Bar," either at the top or bottom of your Zoom window. A notification will appear announcing that the link has been posted. When directed, select this box to bring up a new window.

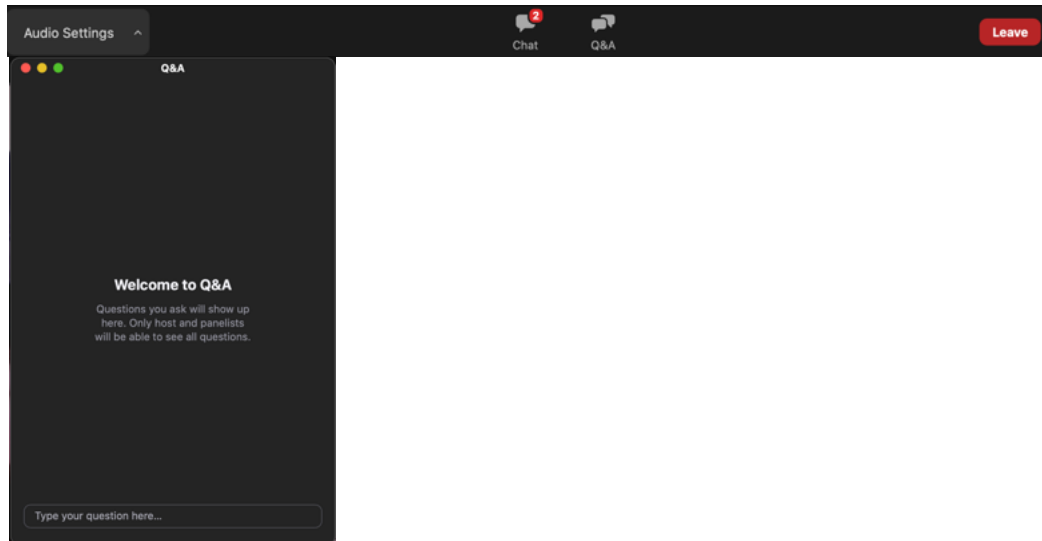


❖ Guests will then follow the link in the Chat to screen the film on their own computers. Selecting the link will bring up an Internet browser window.

❖ We will make an announcement to play the film and expectations for the length of the film's runtime. Guests are invited to come back to the Zoom Webinar at the conclusion of the film's runtime. We will give you an expectation for a specific time to rejoin the Zoom Webinar.

❖ Please leave your Zoom Webinar open and in the background during this time. Be aware that while you will have the ability to pause and resume play of the film at your leisure, we are only allowing for a five-minute buffer before the post-screening discussion. If you close your Zoom Webinar window, you will have to rejoin the Zoom Webinar to participate in the post-screening discussion.

❖ After the film has completed its runtime, guests are invited to return to the Zoom Webinar room to participate in a post-screening discussion using the Q&A feature. Submit questions by writing them in the Q&A box.



❖ We will hold brief closing statements and thank you's at the conclusion of the evening.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

❖ Guests will be muted during the session. If guests have any technical difficulties, they may correspond with WAE Tech Support via the Chat feature. WAE Tech Support will privately message you to respond. Please reserve the Q&A function for the post-screening discussion.

❖ The links to these films will only remain active DURING the screening, so guests will NOT be able to watch these films via the links after the evening of the event.

February 1, 2022

FRANCE



Petit paysan [Bloody Milk] (2017)

Directed and co-written by: Hubert Charuel

Running Time: 85 minutes

Introduced by:

Denis Quenelle, Cultural Attaché, Embassy of France

For 15 years, Denis Quénelle has worked as the Secretary of Foreign Affairs at the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. He has successively held the positions of Editor at the United Nations Directorate, Environment Attaché in Beijing, Deputy Cultural Attaché in Chicago, and Head of Office in the Human Resources Department. In Chicago, he contributed to the creation of the Methode Room residency program in the city's Southside, to the launch of the outdoor festival Films on the Lake, and to the development of Midwestern-wide programs such as the Marianne Series (conferences by French figures broadcast through the network of universities and Alliances françaises) and the French Art Discovery Midwest Network (an educational tool on major museum collections in the Midwest). Since September 2020, as cultural attaché in Washington DC, he has worked on cultural promotion, particularly in the fields of cinema, literature,

debate, and visual and performing arts. In conjunction with the heritage attaché in New York, he will assist Villa Albertine residents in the development of their projects and will develop professional programs in the museum field.

Petit paysan presents a naturalistic and yet suspenseful drama about the challenges faced by a young dairy farmer. This premise may seem rather unusual, but indelible performances by a strong cast generate a low-key thriller and a socio-economic commentary. Pierre, played by two-time César award winner Swann Arlaud (Best Actor for *Petit paysan* and Best Supporting Actor for *Grâce à Dieu*), discovers that one of his cows has contracted the highly contagious “Belgian disease.” If he reports this infection, his entire top-ranked herd will be slaughtered. Rather than lose his farm and livelihood, the conscientious and fiercely independent Pierre makes the risky decision to slaughter the sick cow himself and bury the carcass in his fields. His pragmatic sister (Sara Giraudeau), a local veterinarian, eventually realizes what Pierre has done and yet helps him cover-up the crime. Health inspectors, his prying mother, and an elderly neighbor who may have witnessed the misdeed, pressure Pierre to increasingly drastic measures, and he soon finds himself behaving with the panicked recklessness of a killer covering up a murder. The film asks us to sympathize with Pierre even though he broke the law and, consequently, raises questions about individual authority, familial bonds, community health, and professional ethics.

The original French title, *Petit paysan*, literally translates as “little peasant” or “little farmer” and refers to the small-scale operation of Pierre’s farm in a world of large scale agribusiness. The title may also function as an insult meaning “redneck” or “hillbilly” suggesting the inefficiency of Pierre’s old-school methods — preferring quality over quantity. The English title, *Bloody Milk*, seems to be an attempt to foreground the thriller aspects of the film.

Writer-director **Hubert Charuel**, who grew up on his parents’ dairy farm, studied film at the prestigious French film school La Fémis (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Métiers de l’Image et du Son). After a number of shorts, *Petit paysan* was his first feature-length film and is an impressive debut. It was shot on his family farm and not surprisingly incorporates autobiographical elements. *Petit paysan* was nominated for the Golden Camera Award at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival. It was also nominated for seven César Awards in 2018: Best First Feature Film (won), Best Original Screenplay, Best Director, Best Film, Best Actor (Swann Arlaud, won), Best Supporting Actress (Sara Giraudeau, won), Best Editing, and Best Original Music.

Watch a trailer for *Petit paysan* at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0xM1ox-tJc>

February 8, 2022

CAMBODIA



***Num Banh Chok [Khmer Rice Noodles]* (2007)**

Directed by: Chheng Sovanna

Running Time: 45 minutes

Introduced by:

- Mr. U Hong
Embassy of Cambodia
- Mr. Nop Veasna
Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Cinema Department
- Mr. Huy Yaleng
actor/director

Num Banh Chok is an compelling example of the “edutainment videos” produced by the Women’s Media Center of Cambodia (WMC), a nonprofit media organization

established in 1995. The WMC uses film, television, and radio to promote social transformation in Cambodian society with a focus on the roles and rights of Cambodian women. WMC explores important contemporary issues such as domestic violence, gender equity, prostitution, community development, family health, and women's empowerment. Adapting popular genres such as comedy, melodrama, and documentary, the WMC seeks to positively influence national audiences and enact social and cultural change.

Num Banh Chok is a family melodrama following the lives of a young couple as they expect the birth of their first child. Ryna, a shy seamstress who works from home, increasingly questions her husband's behavior and the gender inequity of Khmer culture. Vuthy, an office clerk, can't understand why his wife isn't able to work, manage the household, and take care of his physical needs. This disparity leads to increasingly heated arguments regarding the expectations of married life touching on issues of money, sharing chores, sex, and fidelity. The film alternates between Ryna's and Vuthy's perspectives using interior monologues, sepia-tinted memories, and conversations with family members and colleagues. Fleeting moments of tenderness and reconciliation can't offset Ryna's mistrust of Vuthy's frequent drinking and partying with "karaoke girls." *Num Banh Chok* builds to a near tragedy that threatens to destroy their marriage. Can they recognize and transcend cultural proscriptions while developing a new understanding and respect for each other?

Vuthy is played by actor/director Huy Yaleng. He is best known for a number of horror films such as *Vikalcharet*, *The Torment of Ghost*, and *The Haunted House*. His most recent dramatic film, *Fathers* (2020), was selected as the Cambodian entry for the Best International Film at the 93rd Academy Awards. He is a passionate advocate for Cambodian film production — to tell Cambodian stories — as a means to counter the high number of imported films.

Num banh chok is the name of the enormously popular — truly national — noodle dish found everywhere in Cambodia. Made of fermented rice noodles, it is served cold (or room temperature), topped with a yellow-green coconut-based fish gravy, and accompanied by fresh herbs, vegetables, and green fruits. Typical accompaniments include snake beans, banana blossom, mint, basil, water lily, and pickled cucumber. You will see this dish several times in tonight's film. For this reason, we will also screen *Taste Cambodia: Culinary Adventures in the Kingdom* (2021).

February 15, 2022

MOROCCO



L'Orchestre des aveugles [The Blind Orchestra] (2014)

Written and Directed by: Mohamed Mouftakir

Running Time: 110 minutes

Introduced by:

Ms. Khaoula El Kasmi

Cultural Counselor, Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco

L'Orchestre des aveugles traces the experiences of 8-year old Mimou (played by Ilyas El Jihani in his feature film debut) and his extended family of musicians and dancers (shikhat). Set against a changing political scene, the film provides a humorous and bittersweet glimpse at circa 1970 Morocco by exploring class, gender, cultural traditions, romance, infidelity, friendship, family, and politics.

Mimou falls in love with Chama (Oulaya Amamra), the neighbor's new maid, while trying to negotiate the educational expectations of his Francophile father Houcine

(Younes Megri), the pro-democracy stance of his uncle Abdellah (Fehd Benchmesi), and the conservative values of his uncle, police inspector Mustapha (Mohamed Bastaoui). Everyone lives together in the house of Mimou's mother, Halima (Mouna Fettou), and the interactions between this ensemble of eccentric and colorful inhabitants — sometimes comical, sometimes tragic — offer a cross-section of life in all its unexpected detours.

Consequently, the film can be seen as more of a character study than a traditional narrative. Through the foibles of everyday people, the film raises questions about cheating and lying and explores the repercussions that inevitably follow. This theme is encapsulated in the film's title; *L'Orchestre des aveugles* refers to the deceit Houcine's band employs so they can perform at parties reserved for women in conservative homes.

~~*L'Orchestre des aveugles*~~ was directed by **Mohamed Mouftakir**, son of the great violinist Houcine Mouftakir. After studying English literature at the University of Casablanca, he became interested in cinema and first worked as an assistant director in TV and cinema. His first feature film, *Pegasus* (2010), won the Grand Prize at FESPACO African Film Festival. *L'Orchestre des aveugles* won top prize, the *Wihr d'Or* (Golden Lion), at the 8th International Oran Festival of Arab Film. His most recent film, *L'Automne des pommiers* (2020), won the Grand Prize at the Tangier International Film Festival. Mouftakir cites David Lynch as his favorite director and says that he "likes films that let the audience think for themselves, not spell it out for them. For me a good film is a film that is thought of and conceived in a cinematographic approach from the very beginning. The pure language of cinema has to be at its essence." *L'Orchestre des aveugles* demonstrates this ideal — and adds a wonderful soundtrack of violin and Moroccan music. It is also semi-autobiographical, allowing Mouftakir to examine his experience and relationship with his father until his father's death when he was 11 years old.

L'Orchestre des aveugles is dedicated to the well-known TV and film actor, Mohamed Bastaoui, who died soon after the film was completed.

Watch a trailer for *L'Orchestre des aveugles* at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_Fmvbq61-U

February 22, 2022

GUATEMALA



Guatemala: On the Edge of Discovery (2018)

Produced and Directed by: Brent Winebrenner with assistance from Jose Antonio and Emilio Faillace

Running Time: 80 minutes

Introduced by:

- * His Excellency Alfonso Quinonez
Ambassador of Guatemala
- Jose Rodolpho Contreras Carrion
Cultural Attaché, Embassy of Guatemala
- Brent Winebrenner
Film Producer

Part travelogue, part anthropological study, and part archeological investigation, *Guatemala: On the Edge of Discovery* offers a bounty of striking images as it

explores a region of Central America rich in ancient culture and traditions. After surveying the geographical diversity of the country, the documentary explores the Mayan civilization, including the deciphering of the Mayan language and recent discoveries of Mayan cities. The film then discusses the impact of Catholicism on Mayan beliefs and the fascinating religious syncretism that developed such as the gigantic, 7,000-pound Holy Week floats of Antigua (carried by up to 60 men), shamanistic ceremonies, and the chain-smoking Maximón (aka San Simón).

Maximón is revered as someone who can answer prayers perhaps too taboo (or too mundane) for conventional Catholic saints. His statue is moved to a new home every year; it's considered the highest honor to host him. His cofrades, or followers, spend their days performing ceremonies and smoking by his side. Finally, the omniscient voice-over guide introduces us to two contemporary artists and local weaving/textile practices. Overall, *Guatemala: On the Edge of Discovery* reveals the beauty, tenacity, history, art, and spirituality of a country and people re-emerging in the 21st century. The film will provide valuable insights into a complex society and one of the world's founding civilizations for a United States audience.

Guatemala: On the Edge of Discovery was directed by **Brent Winebrenner**. After earning a Masters degree in photography, he joined the faculty of the Brooks Institute and taught visual journalism. He has worked in more than 70 countries, shooting for a variety of editorial and corporate clients, including Rizzoli Publications, Kendall Jackson and Lonely Planet. His work has appeared in *National Geographic Traveler*, *Islands*, *Newsweek*, *Santa Barbara Magazine*, the *Washington Post*, and numerous Lonely Planet publications. He was the principle photographer on the *Splendor of Cuba*, a Rizzoli coffee table book that was recognized by the *Washington Post* and the *Daily Beast* as one of the ten best photo books of 2011. His experience and skill is clearly on display in this beautifully shot documentary.

Watch a trailer for Guatemala: On the Edge of Discovery at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYoDoBiZ5c0>

March 1, 2022

BANGLADESH



Guerrilla (2011)

Directed by:

Nasirrudin Yousuff

Running Time: 140 minutes

Introduced by:

- His Excellency M. Shahidul Islam
Ambassador, Embassy of Bangladesh

Guerrilla is an epic historical melodrama about the Bangladesh Liberation War, an armed conflict to win independence from Pakistan (Bangladesh was known as East Bengal/East Pakistan from 1947–1971). The war began when the Pakistani military launched the genocidal Operation Searchlight against the people of East Pakistan on the night of 25 March 1971. This initiative pursued the systematic annihilation of civilians, students, intelligentsia, artists, nationalists, and religious minorities. Up to 3 million Bangladeshis were killed and approximately 10 million fled to

neighboring India. The capital city, Dhaka, witnessed numerous massacres and rural areas experienced extensive fighting. The war of independence also saw a civil war between the Rajakars (who supported Pakistan) and the Muktis (who fought for political self-determination). Compounding this conflict was the ethnic/religious divide between Muslims and Hindus, which most egregiously manifested itself in genocidal rape. Between 200,000 and 400,000 women (mostly Hindu) were raped by the military and the Rajakars; these women are referred to as birangonas. The war ended on 16 December 1971 when the military forces of Pakistan surrendered in what remains to date the largest surrender of soldiers since World War II. December 2021 celebrated the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh independence.

Guerrilla is an adaptation of the novel *Nishiddho Loban* (1990) by Syed Shamsul Haq, a major Bangladeshi writer (a winner of the Bangla Academy Literary Award) augmented by the personal war experiences of director Yousuff. It follows the travails of Bilkis (played by the multi award-winning actor Joya Ahsan) and the heroic actions she takes to support the fight for freedom. The first part of the film occurs in Dhaka and depicts the guerrilla operations in which she participates — including working with cultural hero and revolutionary song-writer Altaf Mahmud — while trying to find her missing husband. The second part of the film traces her dangerous journey to her home village to meet her brother, Khokon, leader of the local resistance. Through horrific events, fond memories, a nagging mother-in-law, new friendships, some humor, musical interludes, and tragedy, we are presented with a complex portrait of an ordinary middle-class woman evolving into a dedicated Bangladeshi patriot.

Nasiruddin Youseuff is a well-known theatre and film director and recipient of the prestigious Ekushey Parak award for contributions to Bangladeshi culture. *Guerrilla* won ten National Film Awards, including best film, director, actress, actor, and screenplay. It provides an excellent and dramatic historical review of the Bangladeshi war of independence and the traumatic impact it had on its citizens.

Watch a trailer for *Guerrilla* at:

<https://youtu.be/WYoDoBiZ5c0>