

LUNG NEAW VISITS HIS NEIGHBOURS



A film by Rirkrit Tiravanija
Presented by estudio de producción
Mexico/Thailand
2011
www.lungneawvisitsfilm.com


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Short description

We follow Lung Neaw living off the land and visiting neighbours in a world of simple realities. His is an existence marked by compassion for his environment and fellow villagers, and in Lung Neaw we see the basic truths of a humble man; another man making our world turn to a better revolution.

Synopsis

At the age of sixty, Lung Neaw (Uncle Neaw) finds himself retired from his life as a rice farmer in a small village in the Northern Thai Province of Chiang Mai away from the chatter and noise of recent political upheaval and demand for democratic reforms in the capital Bangkok. In following Lung Neaw in his daily life we see him living off the land the he has known since he was born: fishing, hunting, and foraging for herbs and vegetation in the open fields and forests nearby his home. He goes about the chores of living, idled time filled with the practicalities of a rural existence, spending the moments in between with neighbours: the local sage, the ailing and aged elephant king deep in the valley, the children who play in his front yard, and the youngsters at the local watering hole. Lung Neaw is known in the surrounding villages and his own as the man without enemies - a fair man without judgment and a modest man living with humility.

We have to ask: "What more can one want when one is already living in Paradise?" In this moment when many people are asking for equality, opportunity, self determination and for Democracy in the hands of the people, we find in Lung Neaw both answers and questions to these demands. We find in him the sustenance of self-awareness and sufficiency in compassion and humility. We find in him the narrative of the real and the simplicity of each day.

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Credits

Cast	Lung Neaw as Uncle Neaw and the Villagers from Ban San Pu Loei Province of Chiang Mai, Thailand
A film by	Rirkrit Tiravanija
Production Company	estudio de producción
Produced by	Cristian Manzutto – Rirkrit Tiravanija
Associated Producers	kurimanzutto – Gavin Brown's enterprise
Camera	Cristian Manzutto – Rirkrit Tiravanija
Sound	Eva Sangiorgi – Chalermrat Kawewattana
Picture and Sound Editing	Cristian Manzutto
Sound Edit and Mix	estudio de sonido
Production Coordinators	Lina Lasso – Eva Sangiorgi - Finella Halligan
Format	Super 16mm / color
Exhibition formats	DCP 5.1 sound HD cam Bluray
Running time	154 minutes (2 hrs. 34 min.)
Language	Northern Thai



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Director's comment

The film is a semi documentary, semi fictional... It was shot without a script and all persons in the film are real people from the location... So they are pretty much reacting and in conversation with each other without plan or direction. There is no narrative except for the fact that we were following Lung Neaw as he would go through his day in his daily life, ie. Walking to his old rice field and resting in his little Sala by the field, picking Ma Kua Puang to sell for some money, going to a local garden/forest to pick up herbs and vegetation to make dinner, bathing in the river in front of his house... Etc.

But in actuality, the time (seasonal) sequence were switch, we shot in the winter (dry season) first and then we shot rain season, but because of flow of time and space we started the film in the rainy season and ended the film in the dry season. However, everything that appear in the film appeared in it order of shots and in order of time/ action continuum.

So it not a documentary and not a narrative, perhaps it's more of a portraiture.

And in that I met Lung Neaw when he came as a part of the construction crew to build our house... (As part of the idea of the house was to build a modern structure with people who are not used to such a construction, and to have the dichotomy effect the house and it sensibility) so, the crew came from Nam Bor Luang, as many were locally involved with the construction of projects at the land foundation.

Since Lung Neaw was already elderly (thought we never really knew how old he is) he was mainly doing light labor helping mainly with keeping things tidy and keeping the construction clean and carrying light things, etc. But I was interested in the way he moves the way he related, his mannerism, his politeness and humbleness, combined with often his very expressive face in both happiness and troubled life...



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I decided to first make a video of his face for Khun Petch's music video a few years back. And after that simple film I then already asked him if I could go and visit him in his village and if I could make a film of him, and he agreed, perhaps out of politeness and perhaps not really understanding the idea. But as I found from the shooting of the film that he, and most of the villagers were pretty open and trusting in giving there time and space for the presence of the camera. As we see their naturalness in front of the camera through out the film.

We started to shoot the film in the winter of 2008, when Cristian and his girlfriend came to CM, with the purpose of doing a test shoot. We were just in the stages of planning the idea of the film and not having made a film in such a way before, we wanted to test the parameter of the idea, and shoot some footage to see the lights and colors and reactions of Lung Neaw himself once the camera was there in front of him. What started to appear quickly was the ease of everyone around us towards the camera... So as each day progress we started to see the film appear in front of us. We shot for a week, and the footage was developed in Bangkok at Kantana and transferred in Mexico. When Cristian and I review the footage we had, we realized that we could construct a film already with the footage we had, from that a second shooting was planned, from what I saw of the first shooting, I started to make mental notes about how or what we would need to shoot the following year in the rainy season, as originally I was only planning to make the film in the rainy season.



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Initially I wanted to make a structure around Lung Neaw relationship to his rice field, and as we know the planting season and the rain would bring many interesting images and color! But with the footage from the dry season I realized that there was much more to the life than just the rice field, and surviving and living on this place required a constant and daily relationship to the surrounding... So we have the film in it present state.

So we shot over a period of two years and another to edit and postproduction, the film was really made very simply and with very little by way of crew and equipment, in that relationship for me very much like a documentary but also very much like how an artist would approach the production, also with very small but coast effective budget. We shot in film (super 16mm) so rather small and light unit but with frames and quality that was not video.

All the sounds (and music) in film are pretty much what was on location, we did not insert music into the film, how ever music is every where in the background air, as it seems (and you see, hear) that everyone have their radio on all the time of days...

Rirkrit Tiravanija

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Director

Rirkrit Tiravanija was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1961, and is based today in New York, Berlin, and Thailand. Tiravanija's installations and actions provide platforms for artistic, public, and private activities—effectively blurring the boundaries that customarily separate them. His projects invite the public to enter into and literally engage with his work; in fact, the active participation of the viewer is necessary for the work to be fully realized.



Producer

Cristian Manzutto, was born in Medellin, Colombia. He is dedicated to sound and image, with a production studio **estudio de producción** in Mexico City, he had collaborated with filmmakers and contemporary artists who work with film.



Production Company

For the last three years, estudio de producción has evolved as a space for independent documentary and contemporary artists film production alongside existing as a sound, video and film production and post-production studio. We are now in a position to be able to independently produce and co-produce a small number of film projects that are of the greatest interest.



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