



## INDRIVE'S "ALTERNATIVA FILM PROJECT" ANNOUNCES THE JURY FOR ITS INAUGURAL SOCIAL IMPACT AWARDS

**Jury for the Awards' First Edition To Be Led By Cannes Award-Winning Filipino Director Brillante Mendoza, Alongside Gita Saedi Kiely, Udaya Prasanna Vithanage and Rintu Thomas**

The newly launched, global non-profit film initiative Alternativa Film Project, founded by global technology company inDrive, announced today the Jury for the first edition of its Alternativa Film Awards, which are taking place in December 2023 and aim to recognise the social impact of films from developing industries across local feature films, animated films, documentaries, and short films. The Awards are one of the three strands of Alternativa's new film initiative, which is dedicated to supporting emerging filmmakers from less developed screen industries, with Central Asia taking center stage in 2023 for its maiden edition.

The Awards Jury will consist of socially responsible filmmakers, thought leaders and industry professionals, presided over by director and producer, **Brillante Mendoza** as Head of the Jury – the first Filipino to receive the 'Best Director' award at Cannes Film Festival for his film *Kinatay* in 2009 and the only Filipino to receive France's "Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres" (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters). His films have also competed and won at Venice and Berlin Film Festivals, with his credits including *Mindanao* (2019), *Ma Rosa* (2016), *Trap* (2015), *Thy Womb* (2012) and *Lola* (2009). He is a strong supporter of young Filipino filmmakers and an advocate of film literacy in the Philippines, and has also established a film foundation, founded a film festival and conducted filmmaking workshops across the country.

The Jury will also include **Gita Saedi Kiely**, who is Director of the non-profit humanitarian organization FilmAid, which uses film to educate and entertain underprivileged people around the world. She also produced the acclaimed PBS series "The New Americans" that follows immigrants and refugees from across the world through their first years in the US. Additional members include Sri Lankan filmmaker, **Udaya Prasanna Vithanage**, who is considered one of the pioneers of third generation Sri Lankan cinema. He has directed eight feature films including *Death on a Full Moon Day* (1997), *August Sun* (2003), *Flowers of the Sky* (2008) and *With You, Without You* (2012) and won national and international awards. He has battled against the censorship in Sri Lanka, worked as an educator of cinema and has conducted many masterclasses in the subcontinent for young filmmakers and enthusiasts.

The Academy Award-nominated, Peabody Award winning Indian filmmaker **Rintu Thomas** also joins the Jury. Her recent IDA, PGA, and Grierson-nominated feature documentary 'Writing With Fire' (2021) was India's first feature documentary to be nominated for an Academy Award. Rintu is a Co-Founder of Black Ticket Films, an award winning production

company invested in the power of storytelling.

The Alternativa Film Awards aim to provide an alternative system of recognition that honors artistic merits, filmmaking potential, and work that amplifies the social impact of cinema, as well as more mainstream films with wide audience appeal. The Jury will present winners with cash prizes to further develop their filmmaking skills. The total prize fund stands at \$100,000, to be equally divided among the five festival winners, so as not to establish hierarchy.

The Awards accept submissions from all Asian countries (except for the Shorts category, for which only Central Asia is eligible), with the goal of supporting cinema that brings change to the world and society through both its aesthetic and ethical impact on viewers. Rather than the traditional “Best Picture,” “Best Director,” and “Best Actor” prizes, the ceremony will bestow awards for titles and talents exemplifying cultural, societal, and industry impact.

Evergreen awards include the “Spotlight Award,” which honors a film that shines a light on a topic or story under the public’s radar, and the “Future Voices Award,” given to a debutant filmmaker with the potential to contribute to changes in the film industry and society in general. Other distinctions include the “Alter Award,” which commemorates a film that addresses critical social issues (such as human rights, migration, war crimes, and the environment), and the “Nativa Award,” which designates a film that touches upon topics of national or cultural identity.

Liza Surganova, Head of Alternativa Film Project, said: “As we head towards the first edition of our Alternativa Film Awards, we’re delighted to welcome such an esteemed collective of industry trailblazers to our Jury, led by the inspiring creator and advocate Brillante Mendoza. They each bring a remarkable track record igniting important social conversations as well as an unwavering commitment to uplifting voices from underrepresented communities. We’ve had hundreds of submissions across 23 countries for the awards, and look forward to reviewing the projects in contention with our Jury.”

The full Alternativa Film Project also includes educational programming in the form of “Film Labs,” including the “Teen Lab” bootcamp, which aims to cultivate young artistic talent by educating participants about the basics of cinema and the importance of teamwork, and the “Impact Lab,” designed to teach working producers how to create more impactful, sustainable, inclusive films. The Film Labs will be held between 26-30 November 2023 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and provide training to uplift and upskill the next generation of filmmakers.

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### **About Alternativa Film Project**

Alternativa Film Project is a new system of initiatives aimed to support and promote filmmakers, as well as discover new voices from developing but less visible film industries. Our mission is to help talents whose work can enrich our perception of the world enter the limelight. Committed to inDrive’s mission to challenge injustice, we seek to build an impactful international project that will transform the status quo in the world of cinema by boosting the development of local industries and communities.

