

 62<sup>nd</sup> Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Panorama

for the first time,  
queer Indonesian women  
are breaking the code of silence



# children of srikondi

A film directed by the Children of Srikandi Collective

SRIKANDI FILMS AND CELESTEFILM PRESENT A CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI COLLECTIVE FILM WITH FILMS BY IMELDA TAURINAMANDALA EGGIE DIAN OJI  
YULIA DWI ANDRIYANTI WINNIE WIBOWO HERA DANISH STEA LIM AFANK MARIANI FEATURING KI SUCI SOLEH AND NING ANIK JUWANA  
MUSIC BY YACKO AND JEAN-PHILIPPE COPPENS CONCEPT LAURA COPPENS EDITOR ANGELIKA LEVI ANIMATION FETY FITHRIYA  
PRODUCED BY LAURA COPPENS AND ANGELIKA LEVI EXECUTIVE PRODUCER STEA LIM

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



**Srikandi Films and Celestefilm**

*present*

**ANAK-ANAK SRIKANDI/ CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI**

**A film directed by  
The Children of Srikandi Collective**

Duration: 74 Minutes

Year of Release: 2012

Produced by: Laura Coppens and Angelika Levi

Original Version: Indonesian (with English Subtitles)

Exhibition Formats: HDCAM, DVD

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

**Official Selection Berlinale 2012**



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## »THE FIRST FILM FROM QUEER WOMEN ABOUT QUEER WOMEN FROM INDONESIA!«

### SHORT SYNOPSIS

CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI is the first film about queer women in Indonesia, the country with the world's largest Muslim population. Eight authentic and poetic stories are interwoven with beautiful shadow theater scenes that tell the story of Srikandi, one of the characters of the Indian Mahabharata. This collective anthology transcends the borders between documentary, fiction and experimental film.

### LONG SYNOPSIS

A little girl wants to be a boy. A bench becomes a home and a witness to life. A house does not feel like home anymore. A veil makes you reflect on religion and sexuality. A verse of a poem is like a day in your life. A Love can be in between. A female stereotype can be deconstructed. A label can be changed.

In CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI, participants collectively worked as crew members or actresses in each other's film, with individual stories ranging from observational documentary and concept art to personal essay. We see that change is possible on all levels of the film: personal, political, and formal. Transformation is always inscribed in the narrative; form and identity are fluid; perspectives are shifted.

The moving individual stories are interwoven with the tale of Srikandi, an ancient mythological character of the Mahabharata and well-known Indian epic, which is still frequently used in the traditional Javanese shadow puppet theatre plays (*wayang kulit*). Srikandi is neither man nor woman, moving fluidly between both genders. When she falls in love with a woman, she has to understand that the only way to survive is to become a "female warrior". This story reminds us that same-sex love and gender variety were not imported from the west but in fact form a deep and ancient aspect of Indonesian society.

Soleh (25), the puppeteer and Anik (59), the singer, are both male to female transgendered people that have worked for many years as *wayang kulit* performers in Surabaya, East Java. In the film, Srikandi is embodied and represented by them as an inverted mirror image where the narrative of the *wayang kulit* moves from fiction to documentary and from the past into the present.

CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI started with a workshop which lead to a collaborative film project reflecting the directors' lived experiences as queer women in Indonesia and at the same time provides them with the means for filmic self-representation. Over a period of two years and under the guidance of filmmakers Angelika Levi and Laura Coppens, the filmmaking became a truly collective act.

## THE INDIVIDUAL FILMS



### Hello World!

Imelda Taurinamandala

Shot with her neighborhood as an evolving background, this project is a reflection on the director's childhood experience and her vivid memory of a dream about a little girl who wants to be a boy.



### Jlamprong

Eggie Dian

Life on the streets of Yogyakarta is no bed of roses. A bench becomes your home and a witness to your life. The director shares her difficult early years when family, police and fundamentalist religious groups all turn against her because of her sexuality. In the end, it's the street kids who she first fought with that become her family.



### Acceptance

Oji

When her house didn't feel like home anymore, with no one she could relate to and communicate with, Oji had to decide either to move on and start a new life in a new city or stay behind.



### Edith's Jilbab

Yulia Dwi Andriyanti

The self-reflexive conversation of a young, educated woman with a religious background, questioning ideas of God and religion while coming to terms with her sexuality.





### A Verse

Winnie Wibowo

This is one verse out of Winnie's life poem. The oldest child of a prestigious Javanese family, she ran away from home at the age of 12, started to live on her own and struggled for acceptance. On this bumpy road, Winnie found love in different places.



### In Between

Hera Danish

How does it feel to live in between? Hera has a boyfriend and two children. She is looking for both male and female partners on the Internet. When revealing her bisexual identity, she gets attacked and rejected by men and lesbians alike.



### Deconstruction

Stea Lim

Touching on many stereotypes about Asian women and how they are expected to dress or act in certain ways, the director shot a short video playing with gender stereotypes which portrays the many layers of Asian women, especially queer women in Indonesia.



### No Label

Afank Mariani

Despite the queer community's unwillingness, labels such as butch and femme are commonly used, particularly in Jakarta. Although many identify themselves within this labeling system, there are also others who refuse to be categorized at all. The film touches on identity politics and shows that in the end, using labels or no label is a personal choice.

## PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

Islam in Indonesia is regarded as relatively liberal by international standards. But after the end of Suharto's dictatorship in 1998 and with Indonesia's democratization, conservative Islamic groups could organize freely. This caused some violent groups, which try to determine politics by public pressure.

In 2010, fundamentalist groups have attacked two major LGBT events in Indonesia. In March the 4th International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Association (ILGA) Asia Regional Conference that should have taken place in Surabaya (East Java) had to be canceled following intense pressure from hard-liners grouped under the Islamic People's Forum (FUI) and the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI). Seven months later the FPI demands the cancellation of the Q! Film Festival, Indonesia's LGBT film festival. The FPI staged demonstrations outside three cultural institutions in Jakarta (the Dutch Erasmus Huis, the German Goethe Institute, and the French Cultural Center) to pressure the venues to call off any events related to the festival. FPI warned to burn and destroy the venues if they won't stop the festival within 24 hours. These recent attacks by Islamic hard-liners, which also indicates a failure of the police to protect the rights of citizens to gather and express themselves set the background for CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI.

At the same time, as more news fueled stereotypes about Muslims increase, this film made by eight local filmmakers gives a glimpse of their daily experiences by showing their own point of views. By doing the filming themselves, the women are able to share their feelings and talk about self-identification in an authentic way. Thus the films give voice to a group rarely heard, revealing personal tales of exclusion and struggle, but also of love and happiness. In a country where women are afforded only a very low status and specific roles, there is also meaning at the level of social intervention. The film is both aesthetically engaging and politically empowering. Popular stereotypes about Muslims, and LGBT people are thereby deconstructed and challenged.

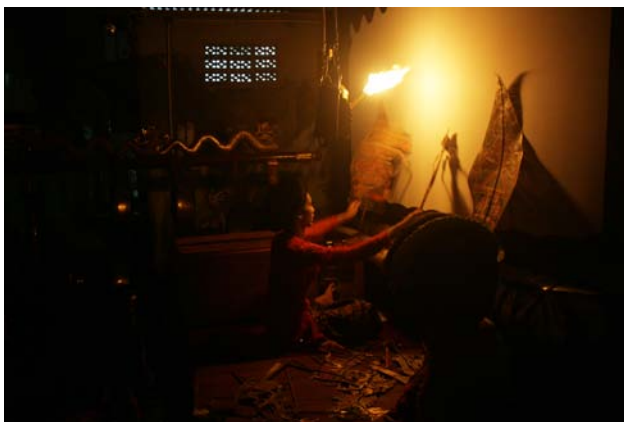
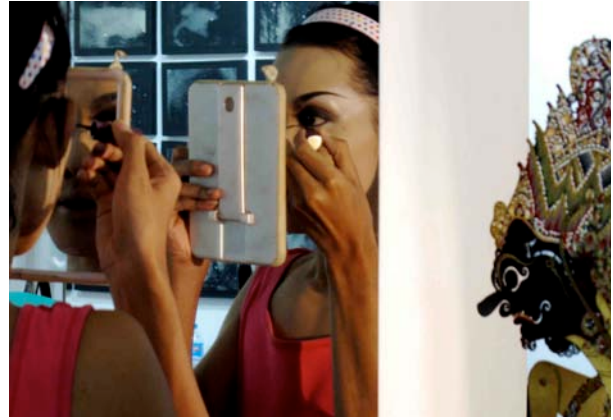
CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI serves to humanize the diversity of ways of life in Indonesia. Due to its interlaced narrative it becomes apparent that the diversity of cultures, languages, identities and ways of life in Indonesia should be regarded as a great chance, and not seen as Western imports or colonial leftovers – as claimed by conservative and fundamentalist Islamic organizations – that have to be fought against. The acknowledgement of this rich diversity in particular means the departure from a bipolar worldview, and from black-and-white thinking in order to break ideological borders and make way for exploring new areas of social perception. Emphasizing multiple layers and transformation is actually an ancient Indonesian perspective as it becomes clear in the character of Srikandi.

## PRODUCTION STILLS – THE WORKSHOP





## THE WAYANG KULIT PERFORMANCE – SOLEH AND ANIK





**A film  
directed by  
THE CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI COLLECTIVE**

**Films by**

Hello World IMELDA TAURINAMANDALA  
Jlamprong EGGIE DIAN  
Via Skype CoS COLLECTIVE  
Acceptance OJI  
Edith's Jilbab YULIA DWI ANDRIYANTI  
A Verse WINNIE WIBOWO  
In Between HERA DANISH  
Deconstruction STEA LIM  
No Label AFANK MARIANI

**Wayang Kulit**

Puppeteer KI. SUCI SOLEH  
Singer NING. ANIK JUWANA

**Karawitan Musicians**

Gender & Demung JOKO NARWONO  
Kendang SAPTONO  
Saron Sandi KACA SADEWA  
Gong/Kempul MARYONO  
Original Music YACKO  
JEAN-PHILIPPE COPPENS

Producer LAURA COPPENS  
ANGELIKA LEVI

Executive Producer STEA LIM  
In Association with Add Word Productions  
Production Manager LELY CABE

Concept LAURA COPPENS

Director of Photography ANGELIKA LEVI  
OJI  
FAOZAN RIZAL

Additional Camera STEA LIM  
IMELDA TAURINAMANDALA  
WINNIE WIBOWO

Sound CoS COLLECTIVE

Montage ANGELIKA LEVI

Assistant Editors LAURA COPPENS  
STEA LIM  
IMELDA TAURINAMANDALA

Animation FETY FITHRIYA

Sound Design and Mix ERIK MISCHIJEW

Color Grading MATTHIAS BEHRENS

Location Manager LELY CABE

Set Photographers STEA LIM  
IMELDA TAURINAMANDALA

Workshop Instructors ANGELIKA LEVI  
LAURA COPPENS

Camera Introduction FAOZAN RIZAL  
Workshop Translator CHANDRA TANZIL  
Workshop Coordinator SOFIA SETYORINI

## BIOGRAPHIES DIRECTOR'S CHILDREN OF SRIKAND COLLECTIVE

**Yulia Dwi Andriyanti** was born in 1987 in Bandung, West Java. She is pursuing her bachelor degree in International Relations at the University of Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran" Yogyakarta. She is actively involved in the YIFoS (Youth Interfaith Forum on Sexuality), a community that was initiated by her and her friends in March 2010 to build a space for young people to share experiences about faith and sexuality. CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI is her first film.

*"Being a person with multiple identities is not always easy. Society and state, through their norms, often put a person in a box or a category which excludes him/her from their other identities. To me, there is no single faith and sexuality for every person and group. Also, there is no single way to express and struggle for every LBT person or group in Indonesia. It is always a good start to be outside of our comfort zone as a way to deconstruct things outside us."*

**Laura Coppens** (producer/ Srikandi Films), born in 1980 in Berlin, is a documentary filmmaker and cultural anthropologist. She is currently doing her PhD on queer women in Indonesia at the University Research Priority Program „Asia and Europe“, Zurich University. Parallel to her work at university she is producing her own films and holds several jobs for both film festivals and film productions. Since 2007 she has been the director and head of the Southeast Asia section as well as the Queer Asia section of ASIAN HOT SHOTS BERLIN, festival for Asian independent film and video art in Berlin, Germany.

**Hera Danish** was born in 1983 and lives in Jakarta. She graduated from Trisaksti Institute of Tourism Jakarta in 2004. Hera is also a volunteer at Q! Film Festival Indonesia, one of the biggest queer film festivals in Asia. CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI is her first film.

*"I am thankful to the 'Children of Srikandi' project, because it gave me a chance to share my feelings and show a little bit of my life that maybe I'm not alone as an 'In between' person. This experience also created a great memory with my second son during the production".*

**Eggie Dian** was born in 1980 in Jakarta. Dian spent most of her teenage life in the street, working as domestic worker, and babysitter for autistic and mentally disabled children. Dian enrolled at Atmajaya University in 2009, majoring in law. CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI is her first film.

*"This is not a sad story since there are still many lesbians who are not as fortunate as I am to tell their stories to the world. I hope that Indonesian LGBT activists will not just be traveling abroad with this project, but more importantly working on finding proper solutions for LGBT problems in Indonesia."*

**Angelika Levi** was born in 1961 in Bonn-Bad Godesberg. She studied (1986-1992) at the German Film and Television Academy in Berlin (dffb). MY LIFE PART 2, her first full-length documentary, won several awards and had its premiere at the Forum/International Berlin Film Festival 2003. She lives in Berlin and is making films since 1983. In addition to making her own films, Angelika works as a script and dramatic advisor, lecturer and film editor.



**Stea Lim** was born in 1980 in Jakarta and graduated at University of San Francisco' School of Business and Professional Studies with emphasis in Marketing and minor in Psychology. Stea lived in Sydney and San Francisco before moving back to Asia in 2006 and is currently based in Jakarta. She was involved in several film productions.

*"Women, especially LBT women are underrepresented in media, their issues and conflicts are swept under the rug. Our goal is to reach out to many LBT women in Indonesia who are afraid to come forward or feel that they are alone. If we can reach just one heart at a time, then we already succeeded."*

**Afank Mariani** is an LGBT activist and lives in Jakarta. In 2005 she and her friends founded Ardhanary Institute, an organization for lesbian, bisexual and transgender women. At Ardhanary she works as outreach coordinator and is in charge for capacity building. CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI is her first film.

*"For me label is not only a label, sometimes it's your life, your choice, your destiny...but still, I won't label myself anymore."*

**Oji** was born in Sumatra in 1983 and lives in Jakarta. Oji graduated from the Gunadarma University Jakarta in 2006. She majored in Industrial Engineering, but prefers to work in the film and media industry. CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI is her first film.

*"I want Indonesian LBT women to not see their sexuality as a hindrance to be whatever they want to be, and accept themselves as whoever they are."*

**Imelda Taurinamandala** was born 1978 in Jakarta. Since 2005 she works as an artist and freelance photographer for several events and film productions. CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI is her first film.

*"My involvement in this film project enabled me to meet and work closely with other queer women both from Indonesia and German, with whom I got to discover the workings of filmmaking, both as a collective process and on a technical level."*

**Winnie Wibowo** was born in 1984 in Bandung, West Java. She majored in architecture from University of Parahyangan. Winnie was an accomplished pool player and a celebrated musician of a local girls' band. The multitallented was also trained as a Balinese dancer. CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI is her first film.

*"Sometimes we have to pursue what we want to do, and I believe we can accomplish that without leaving our identity. I see life like a poem, you have to read thru the verses thoroughly to understand the complete poem."*

## FILMOGRAPHY ANGELIKA LEVI

### Feature Films

**Mein Leben Teil 2** (My life part 2) 2003, 35mm, 90 min, Berlinale/ Forum 2003, Prize of the city of Duisburg, 27. Duisburger Filmwoche, 2. Prize for long documentary feature, 2. Jewish Filmfestival Warschau.

**Absent Present** 2010, Digital, 85 min, Mostra Internacional de Films de Donnes, Barcelona.

**Children of Srikandi** 2012, Digital, 75min, by The Children of Srikandi Collective.

### Selected Short Films

**Ariel** 1984, 16mm, 15 min, Co-Regie: Lilly Grote, Filmtage Oberhausen 1985.

**S.A.R.K. oder die blockdurchquerende Fußwegachse als Stationenweg** (S:A.R.K. or Traversing the block as stations of the footpath) 1987, 16mm, 20min, Berlinale/ Panorama 1987.

**Sexparty**, 1987, Super-8, 10min.

**Faust aufs Auge** (Fist on your eye) Video, 5min, Co-Regie: Antje Schäfer 1988, 1. No Budget Videopreis Hamburg.

**Auf gehts. Aber wohin?** (Off we go. But Where?) 1989, 16mm, 20 min Gay and Lesbian Filmfestival Amsterdam '91.

**Das kleine Objekt a** (The little object a) 1991, 16mm, 30min, Festival internationale de film Locarno '92.

**Desireé & Polylepis** 1994, 35mm, 9 min, Prädikat wertvoll der FBW, Co-Regie: Josef Stöhr.

**Freunde** (Friends) 1995, Super-8, 3 min.

**Hay que gastar dinero** (You have to spend money) 2004, Video, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, 2004

## ABOUT THE MUSIC - YACKO



The movie's theme song "Children of Srikandi" is written and performed by the talented Indonesian hip-hop artist **Yacko**. Yacko signed her first record contract when she was 16 years old. She and her group "Pumpkin Crew" joined a compilation called "Pesta Rap 2" (1996) with a single called "Nongkrong". Then, after finishing her Master degree, Yacko's 1st solo hip-hop album entitled "Refleksi" (EMI Music Indonesia) was released in 2005.

The album was produced by Sydney based DJ and musician DJ Edo under the record label of Arqetech Studios. Two years after, Yacko released "Mendua" (Rizky Rekordz) which was under heavy gauze layers of catchy hooks and melody. Yacko is living a double life, hectic & busy 24/7. She is a college lecturer by weekdays and a musician by night. Having performed at different venues in Indonesia and alongside international artist like Lil Jonin Singapore, Yacko definitely caught people's attention. If you are into a performer that is high-caliber, full of stamina and energy, Yacko's performance is surely not to be missed.



## **Angelika Levi's Statement on „CHILDREN OF SRIKANDI“ 2/2012**

At the beginning of 2010, Laura Coppens asked me if I would like to direct a film workshop for young Indonesian lesbians in Jakarta over the summer. Her idea was to make an omnibus film with six to ten women presenting their personal experiences by means of autobiographic short films. Our first joint meeting took place in Jakarta. Some of the women came from Yogyakarta or Bandung. All of them brought different social and religious backgrounds. Most of them had never met before.

We spent the first weeks of the workshop watching hand-picked documentaries and short films. We discussed different topics: gender, ideology, religion, memory and class. The women began to develop their proper ideas. We worked on the dramaturgic emphasis and narrative style of each tale and developed different narrative strategies.

It was amazing for me to see social and religious borders vanish right from the beginning, while commitment and true interest in the other women's experiences arose. Although most of them had never worked with film before, it was quite easy for everybody to get used to the technique, do the acting and transform personal experience into the medium of film.

The result was a diverse group of short films ranging from poetic and political essay over Direct Cinema to fiction.

After this first meeting we discovered that we needed to do more shooting and dedicate some time to the film cut, so we planned to do a second workshop in summer 2011. By then, we had received only little financial support from a few foundations, so we tried to apply for more promotion in Berlin, which turned out to be useless.

The fact that the project turned into a complete film is due to a collective process which coordinated the group's social intelligence with real economic working conditions. This way of working came at a price: Shortly after the production was finished, one of the women withdrew her contribution. Her short film was replaced by a sequence via skype with the other contributors discussing being queer in Indonesia and the consequences the publication of the film might have on their personal lives.

Right from the beginning, Laura had the idea to combine the autobiographic material with the story of Srikandi, a character of the Indonesian puppet theatre Wayang Kulit. The puppeteer Soleh gave his voice to Srikandi, while the singer Anik expresses the character's emotions.

As transgender queens they reinvent themselves within the classic Indonesian perception of women, while the short films de-construct the classic picture.

It is the opposed representation of gender that creates an impression of a fluid, oscillating advancement of the film. An unspectacular linguistic and religious diversity is revealed: The original languages are Indonesian, standard Javanese, high-Javanese and Sundanese. The religions involved are Muslim, Christian and Buddhist.

Anak-Anak Srikandi addresses the possibility to change. The film's narrative structure does not always allow for a clear division of the films but works as a whole. Despite the different lengths of the films and the genres chosen there is no hierarchy. The assembly is based on an associative logic.

While I joined this project as a teacher, I also learned something new during the process. We developed a way of working which I had never experienced before and which you might call a non-hierarchical pulling-together beyond all difficulties. All filmmakers and producers of the „Children of Srikandi Collective“ possess the same rights on the film.