

Cross Video Days 2015

APPLICATION FOR INTERACTIVE DOCUMENTARY

Submitted by: Marjito Gunawan

TITLE

Sharp Edge: The Ironic Chronicles of Lobster Fishermen

(Nelayan Lobster di antara Himpitan “Karang”)

GENRE

Documentary

PLATFORMS OF PRESENTATION

- Cinema Theater
- Web
- Mobile and Tablet
- Exhibition

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Tumbuh Kembang Films

DIRECTOR & PRODUCER

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TEASER

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41JrUcUw9B8>

SHORT LOGLINE

When lobster fishermen have to face many dilemmatic situations – from a change in climate that effect lobsters supply every season, unstable livelihood, to the paradoxes of national policy and the conflicts of environmental issue, – how will they cope these conditions. This documentary explores the very true experiences from inside of their daily life and chronicles the ironies of becoming fishermen in a large archipelago nation.

SYNOPSIS

A group of lobster fishermen are struggling against harsh nature and limited infrastructures during the harvest period in every rainy season. They are harvesting in one of the most favourite places for this lucrative commodity in Gunungkidul, 40 kilometres southeast of Yogyakarta in Java Island, Indonesia. They use a do-it-yourself cable car to cross into a rocky mound called Watu Panjang, literally means a giant rock.

The condition changes dramatically after the harvest season ended. Lobsters are getting rare and more difficult to find. The fishermen believe that unstable climate condition is the main reason behind it. Apart from that, another situation also affects their livelihood. It is

the establishment of a new regulation coming from Jakarta, the Ministry of Marine and Fishery, who enforces some limitations in fishing due to environmental issue. Conflicts start to emerge in every level, for example, between fishermen and middlemen in villages, and even between middlemen and exporter companies.

How do they deal with this situation? How do they face their daily life? These questions lead to tell their stories from within.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Being a fisherman in an archipelago country, with no less than 80,000 kilometres of coastline like Indonesia, is supposed to be a privilege. But, the variety of tropical biodiversity that this country has does not necessarily make their fishermen's life easier. Lobster fishermen in Gunungkidul, a district in the heart of Java Island Indonesia, are not the exception of this condition too. Metaphorically, their life looks like what happens to a ship in the middle of the ocean. They have been oscillated by many things they have to face: from a change in climate that effect lobsters supply every season, unstable livelihood, to the paradoxes of national policy and the dilemma on environmental issue. This documentary explores the very true experiences from inside of their daily life and chronicles the ironies of becoming fishermen in a large archipelago nation in Southeast Asia.

The main subjects or protagonists are Siswanto and Iman, local lobster fisherman and middleman respectively. They live in nearby of the coastal area in Gunungkidul facing Indian Ocean. We have access to them as we started our initial research for this documentary project. Siswanto is the leader of a fishermen group called "Watu Panjang" consisting of six fishermen from two different districts, Danggolo and Luweng Ombo. This group has built a cable car to help them harvesting lobsters in difficult location. Meanwhile, Iman has been operating as a middleman in the village and regularly buying fishermen catches before selling it to exporter companies. The daily activity will start by the fishermen who put nets in the afternoon before sunset in some coastline. In the middle of the night they go back there to check and catch any lobsters trap in the nets until dawn. In a good day, they can catch a lot, but any other less of luck, they could spend three or more days without any catch at all. Any lobsters they get, then, are brought to the middleman who will buy in various prices depend on the lobster size. Currently, they have a dilemma when the Indonesian government has published a new regulation that limits the minimum weigh of lobster the fishermen can sell. Before this regulation coming to action, fishermen can get any kind of lobster and sell it in full price to the middleman. But, after the regulation both sides face difficult situation. Fishermen who have struggled to catch lobster in harsh condition expect to get income directly, but now they have to be selective in fishing. On the other hand, the middleman feels uncomfortable if he has to refuse for not buying fishermen catch. But, buying their small catch will also make them face another problem: the middleman cannot sell that to exporter companies that will be rejected according to this new regulation. What a dilemma!

In terms of our visual approach, we are going to adopt an observational documentary by creating footages from the daily life of our subjects in their own contexts and locations. During the filming at location, we would like to optimise several supporting equipment, such as tripod, steadicam, and/or drone camera. These equipment will be used to support our visual vision in creating more cinematic engagement with the viewers. Handheld camera will not be our strategy to capture images because we do not intend to grab particular moments only, but we plan to go deeper into experiences and emotions of our subjects. Consequently, we will maximise the pre-production process, especially our visual research before the filming, by observing more on our subject's gestures, regular movements, expressions, and spatial burden in locations. Having said that, our filming planning already covers the exact spots of camera, lighting, microphone, and other relevant equipment without ruin the social and cultural contexts of subjects and moment in

nature. Additionally, the final result of this project will be in four different platforms: cinema theater, webisode/webumentary, mobile application, and exhibition in art gallery or public building.

This documentary is important to be seen globally, not only in Indonesian context, due to its urgent issue that contesting between global environmental concerns and realities faced by local communities. This story is a mirror to see other stories in different part of the world, especially in coastal areas, that could face similar social problems.

BIOGRAPHY

Marjito Iskandar Tri Gunawan is a documentary filmmaker. He was born in Jakarta, 23 November 1981. He built his filmmaking career from independent film community during his bachelor study in Yogyakarta. He was selected to participate in several film workshops, such as Master Class Workshop Program Encouraging Indonesian Documentary – Jan Vrijman Fund IDFA (Yogyakarta, 2009) and Creative Documentary in Erasmus Huis International Documentary Film Festival (Jakarta, 2013). His documentaries as a director as well as videographer are, among others, *Tulang Punggung [Backbone]* (2003) won Best Film in Documentary Film Festival, Yogyakarta, 2003; *Melawan Keterbatasan [Against Limitation]* (2005) won Best Film in Documentary Film Festival, Yogyakarta, 2005; *Perampok Ulung [Sneaky Robber]* (2009) selected as finalist in Documentary Film Festival, Yogyakarta, 2009 and official selection in Arkipel International Experimental and Documentary Film Festival, Jakarta, 2012.

Zaki Habibi is a passionate writer and photographer. He was born in Yogyakarta, 17 July 1981. He holds a master degree, Master of Communications specialising in Media and Cultural Studies from Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia. He is always fascinated by the magic of film, especially documentary, and he builds his obsession on it during his master study in the Down Under. His passion on film brought him to join the committee of Jogja-Netpac Asian Film Festival (JAFF) in 2006-2013 as the Publicist and the Public Lecture Coordinator in this annual event in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. In 2014 his collaborative work with Marjito IT Gunawan, a travel short-documentary entitled *Celebrating Local Values in the 5 Mountains Festival*, has been selected as one of the finalists (The Shortlist) at the 2014 World Nomads Travel Film Scholarship. Currently he teaches and conducts research in the field of media studies and visual culture at the Department of Communications, Islamic University of Indonesia, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.