

LES FILMS D'ICI - SÉBASTIEN ONOMO et BAC FILMS  
PRÉSENTENT

Sélection officielle  
**ANNECY** 2018

CAMBODJA,  
APRIL 1975

met de stemmen van **BÉRÉNICE BEJO & LOUIS GARREL**

# FUNAN

EEN FILM VAN **DENIS DO**  
VANAF 11 JULI IN DE BIOSCOOP

design studio / 2018

**CONTACTGEGEVENS:**

Cinemien  
Gedempt Hamerkanaal 139  
1021 KP Amsterdam  
020 - 577 60 10  
[info@cinemien.nl](mailto:info@cinemien.nl)

Voor bioscopen en filmtheaters:  
Annemiek de Jong  
020 - 577 60 15  
[annemiek@cinemien.nl](mailto:annemiek@cinemien.nl)

Voor pers:  
Manon de Weerd  
06 - 81 79 07 14  
[manon@cinemien.nl](mailto:manon@cinemien.nl)

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LES FILMS D'ICI - SÉBASTIEN ONOMO & BAC FILMS  
*PRESENT*

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# FUNAN

*A FILM BY DENIS DO*  
*WITH THE VOICES OF BÉRÉNICE BEJO & LOUIS GARREL*

FRANCE - LUXEMBOURG - BELGIQUE - CAMBODGE 2018





## SYNOPSIS

Funan won de prijs voor beste animatiefilm tijdens het Annecy International Animated Filmfestival en ontving twee Emile Awards.

De geschiedenis van het Rode Khmer-regime wordt door regisseur Denis Do tot leven gewekt in Funan, geïnspireerd op het leven van zijn eigen moeder.

De film vertelt het verhaal over een jonge Cambodjaanse moeder, die ten tijde van de Rode Khmer revolutie vecht voor haar leven en dat van haar zoon. De kinderen worden door het meedogenloze regime van hun ouders gescheiden, terwijl vader, moeder en de rest van de familie samen in een kamp belanden. Ze proberen de gruwelen van het kamp te ontvluchten om zo de zoektocht naar hun kind te starten.

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*1975, during the Khmer Rouge revolution. Fighting for her own survival, Chou, a young Cambodian mother, looks for her 4-year-old son who was taken away from her by the regime.*

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## **THE MOVIE**

*Funan recounts the life of Chou, a young Cambodian separated from her son Sovanh in the early days of the Khmer Rouge revolution in 1975.*

*Like so many others, Chou will be deported and sent to a forced-labor camp.*

*One by one, hers will be torn from her. She will experience injustice, dismay and helplessness. She will have to face hunger, fear... death. As a woman, a mother and a wife, Chou will have to find the strength to exist, to decide and to survive. To resist the daily atrocities imposed by the Khmer Rouge, she will have to force herself and learn to be assertive. Then the couple she forms with her husband Khuon will acquire a much broader dimension. In suffering and adversity, they will tear each other apart, rediscover and love each other, and they will learn to fight. Together.*

*Chou will become an entirely new woman in order to find this son the regime has taken from her. Strong and determined, she will reveal herself. To others, but also to herself. Despite missing her son and being powerless, she will never give up. Because somewhere out there, Sovanh needs her.*





# **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

*The story told in Funan unfolds in Cambodia immediately after the Khmer Rouge coup on April 17<sup>th</sup> 1975.*

*An authoritative state is brought forth under the leadership of “Angkar” (meaning “the organisation”). The revolution is brutal and justice is forsaken, transforming the country into the communist idea of a perfect society. City-dwellers are forced to work the land. Young minds are brainwashed with propaganda. The country shelters itself from foreign influences and exchanges, especially from the “imperialist” West. Intellectuals and well-educated people are murdered.*

*Paranoia grows, like in any autocratic state, leading to the killing of those considered to be traitors. This takeover and this revolution crushed the hopes carried by the recent rebirth of the Cambodian culture, its economy and industry. A golden era suddenly turned into the darkest nightmare.*

*The regime will cause between 1.7 and 2 million victims. An additional half a million will manage to go into exile.*





# DIRECTOR STATEMENT /// DENIS DO

*Funan is the story of a family. Of a woman... My mother.*

*This movie recounts her sacrifices, her heartbreak, and her survival under the Khmer Rouge. Through this sto-ry, I wish to explore feelings, relationships, the whole complexity of human connection in a context of ex-treme oppression. Good and evil is not the point. The movie immerses us into the lives of normal people, ex-hausted by suffering.*

*It doesn't judge nor blame, it tries to understand. Be-cause understanding is the first step on a long road to forgiveness. We did not intend to talk about the poli-tical context of the time, and turn this film into a his-tory lesson. Certain elements are obviously integrated, quoted and expressed, and contribute to the reading of the film. But altogether the historical-political infor-mation remains succinct. The documentation on this period exists and the film urges to get involved in it. Isn't a film also a half-open door that invites you to push it wide open?*

*As for me, this film is completely anchored in my research on the past. It allows me to question a memory that I have fantasized or rejected. Knowing that you are, in a way, the product of this type of event inevitably brings its share of questions and challenges. I deliberately avoid the term "trauma" which I find difficult to bear. There is a form of guilt about not having experienced this with one's family. Funan allowed me to reconstruct characters and their lives from my mother's testimony. This creative process got me into the characters to experience a little with them all they went through.*

*I've chosen animation as it is a passion of mine. But I also prefer to see my mother drawn rather than played by a real actress, because that implies more universa-lity. The heroine of Funan is Cambodian, but first and foremost a woman. A mother.*

*Animation is an ideal medium to captivate the audience by giving them perspective from reality. The film is realistic while preserving space for interpretation. In subtle ways, it will provoke, and evoke.*



*I wanted the staging to be sober. With its calm atmospheres and the immensity of the Cambodian landscapes, Funan dives into interiority and conveys the paradoxes of the character's souls. Their tortured spirits contrast with the peaceful and various landscapes. Funan tells the story of a country and a culture that is rich yet starving and barbaric. Pure, magnificent, with large open spaces, torn apart by violence, and the uproar of revolution. In my opinion, Cambodia resembles a woman. Beautiful within its nature, its essence and its sensuality. Funan will pay tribute to it. To its people too, who lost everything but still exist, thanks to their determination and faith in life. I wish Funan to be not "only" an animated film, but a film, full stop.*







# THE DIRECTOR /// DENIS DO

*Denis Do is a director born in Paris in 1985. He has a passion for images and drawing, and graduated in 2009 from the Gobelins school of images.*

*The Ribbon, the graduation film he co-directed that is about a love story during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, reinforced his desire for cinema.*

*Funan, a family story set during the Khmer Rouge period, and inspired by his own mother's journey, is his first feature film.*

*His stories, set at a human scale, are inspired by his triple Franco-Sino-Cambodian culture and are intimate and strong. They anchor the small story in the big one through a sober and realistic staging.*



## CAST & CREW

*a film by*  
*with the voices of*  
*script*  
*with the participation of*  
*art director*  
*original soundtrack*  
*produced by*

Denis Do  
Bérénice Bejo et Louis Garrel  
Denis Do et Magali Pouzol  
Elise Trinh  
Michael Crouzat  
Thibault Kientz Agyeman  
Sébastien Onomo  
David Grumbach  
Annemie Degryse  
Louise Génis Cosserat  
Justin Stewart





# PRODUCTION DU FILM / FILM PRODUCTION

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