

MENTAWAI

Souls of the Forest

a film by Joo Peter



MFG
BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

Cinamate Joo Peter Studio in cooperation with Indigenous Education Foundation and Ilona Grundmann Film



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Mentawai – Souls of the Forest

Film by Joo Peter, 52 minutes, 4K

Back to the roots of mankind: indigenous culture of Mentawai, a small archipelago south of Sumatra.

Connect with all your heart and senses: see, feel, touch, smell life in the jungle. The cinematic and compassionate camera conveys an intimate and sensual experience of the indigenous life on Mentawai with its beauty and vulnerability.

Three shamans are the main characters in the film, hunter-gatherers in a culture predating even traditions of weaving or pottery, archaic traditions with their own complexity.

The film portrays daily life of the indigenous tribe, their spiritual cosmos and their commitment to preserving their own culture and natural habitat. Logging companies threaten the fragile eco-system of the islands.

Rare historic footage and archive materials tell the story of decades of oppression of the indigenous culture – but also of the resilience of our main characters and the last tribes living in the jungle. The main character, Father Laulau had been a leader in this struggle for decades, meeting the governor on Sumatra in a key point of history.

The latter part of the film explores the geopolitical context and shows a new generation joining our main characters in the fight for the preservation of both their environment and culture – as part of a larger movement in Indonesia.

The project is supported by renowned researchers, activists and the Indigenous Foundation. The film is one of a planned series of films celebrating the diversity and richness of the Indonesian indigenous culture.



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Characters



Gelei Leleo

The first shaman visited in the film embodies the vitality of a life close to nature, free and down to earth. At every moment, we can feel his empowered physical presence, witty humour and great energy, a man who has been grown up in the jungle in the most natural way possible. He has a playful mind, is a loving father and husband and also a good dancer and singer.



Bei Tiru

Grand-daughter of Gelei Leleo (vocal song).



Aman LauLau

This old Sikerei (shaman and medicine man) teaches young shamans. He witnessed the severe oppression of the early days and was one of the first to fight for the rights of indigenous people. He tells us about the spiritual life in Mentawai and teaches us about healing herbs that grow in the jungle.

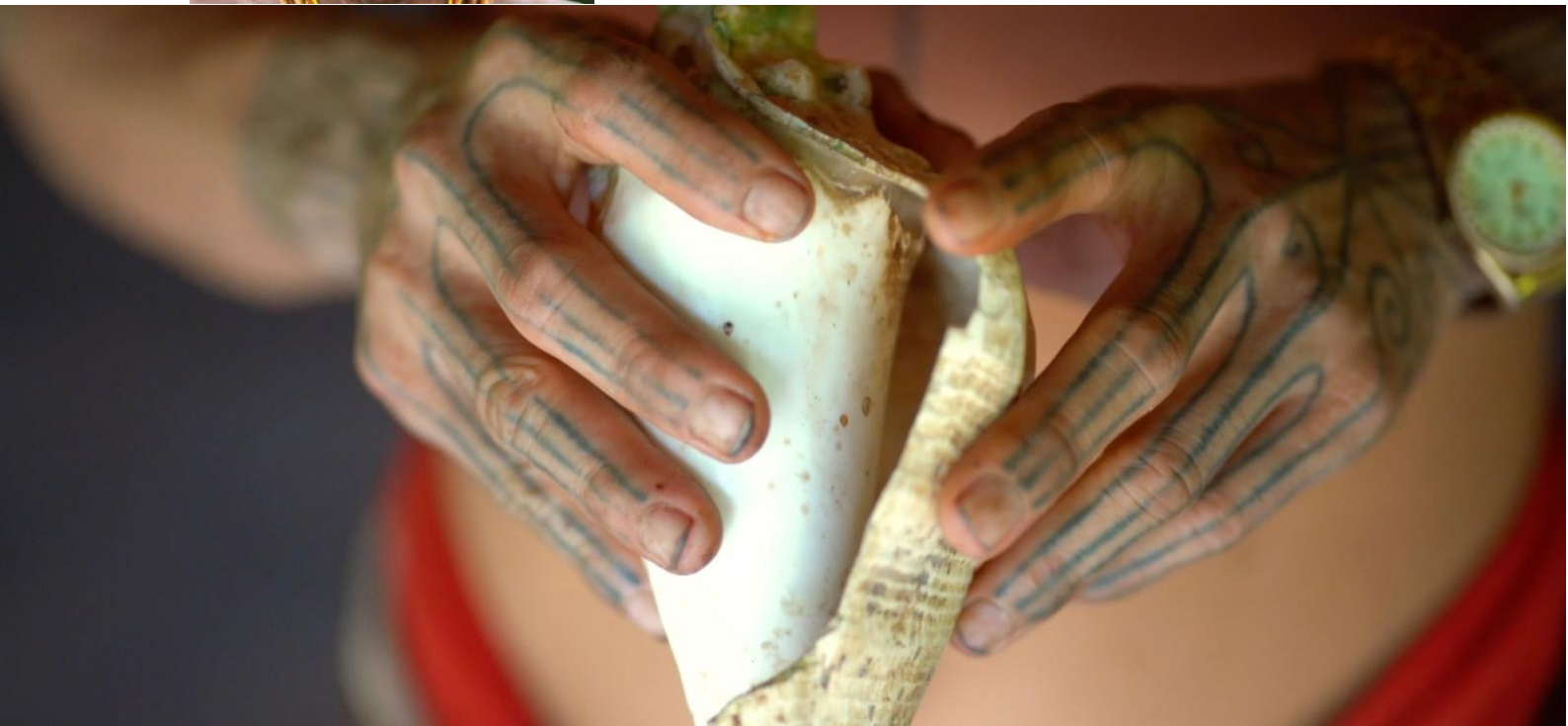


Aman Boroï Ogok

This old shaman tells us in a touching animation sequence of the myth of creation in a single night, when the milky way rises high up above the Uma (clan house) and the stars form the first mother and first son (subsequently the first couple). Afterwards, Aman Boroï Ogok recounts the years of oppression.



Toili Ogok, tells about life in the Uma, the Clan house where everyone is born.



The new Generation



Martison

A young indigenous activist inviting the filmmaker to his archipelago Mentawai.

As part of the new generation, he builds bridges, connections, networks, and initiatives. He is a student in Jakarta and contributes to the development of a Mentawai dictionary.



Aman Goddai

Aman Laulau's son is trying to continue the traditions of his people while facing new difficulties. After returning from a ritual hunt, he tells us of how loggers threaten their life in the forest and how hunters are no longer able to find game. He has joined his father in the political battle to preserve nature and the culture of Mentawai.



Rob Henry

An Australian activist who first came to Mentawai as a surfer. He has been living in the jungle with the indigenous tribes for a more than ten years. He helped to establish a foundation and is committed to the protection of their ancient culture.



Febrianti Yanti

An investigative journalist of indigenous origin. She has a Pulitzer grant and collaborates with international organizations, monitoring and reporting the ongoing extension of logging concessions threatening Mentawai.



CHAPTERS / Scenes

INTRO

- 1 – Intro “Mentawai – Souls of the Forest” 0:00
- 2 – Intro to the series “Tales from Indonesia” 1:16
- 3 – Invitation to Mentawai 2:44
- 4 – 19th century explorers 3:07
- 5 – Introducing the main characters: three shamans 4:41

GELEI LELEO

- 6 – Life in the Forest – making of a loincloth out of the bark of a tree 6:01
- 7 – Fishing 9:06
- 8 – Spirits & belief 10:00
- 9 – Crocodile Spirit 11:30
- 10 – Water – Children 12:40
- 11 – Collecting Caterpillars 13:50
- 12 – My name is Gelei Leleo 16:30
- 13 – Sago 17:23
- 14 – Mother 19:51
- 15 – Myth of the Creation of Mankind 21:14
- 16 – Arrow poison and resistance 23:14
- 17 – Silent movie 1927 - 27:00
- 18 – Independence 1949 - 28:41

AMAN BOROI OGOK

- 19 – Aman Boroi Ogok talks about persecution - 29:26
- 20 – 1954 - the beginning of forced relocation - 31:12

AMAN LAULAU

- 21 – Deeper into the jungle - teacher of shamans - 32:36
- 22 – Medical herbs in the jungle - 34:17
- 23 – Protesting at the center of power
Aman LauLau and Charles Lindsay in Padang - 37:17

THE NEW GENERATION

- 24 – Learning from each other - 39:06
- 25 – a new generation of activists - 39: 37
- 26 – A hunter encounters deforestation
(son of Aman LauLau speaking) - 40:51

ENDANGERED FOREST

- 27 – Deforestation - 43:13
- 28 – It depends on us - 47:23





Director / Producer

Joo Peter, born 1966 in Germany
Studied at Film University HFF Berlin Babelsberg
Art Academy Stuttgart
author, filmmaker, lecturer



Producer / Distributor

Ilona Grundmann is known since decades for her high quality documentary films on a wide range of topics for German/French television and international audience. Werner Herzog and his son Rudolf Herzog have been collaborators since a long time, as well as many others reknown and passionate filmmakers.

In collaboration with

IEF Indigenous Education Foundation, Martison Siritoitet und Rob Henry
Prof. erem. Reimar Schefold, Leiden University, Febrianti Yanti, YCM Mentawai

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