

WINNER  
2024  
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International Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION  
Toronto  
Documentary Feature  
& Short Film Festival  
2024



# PLASTIC TOURISM

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# SYNOPSIS

"Plastic Tourism" is more than a documentary; it challenges viewers to confront uncomfortable truths. It is a call to action and testament of the delicate balance between human leisure and environmental responsibility.

Our film explores the paradox of a paradise spoiled by plastic waste. Through immersive visuals and interviews, it unveils the crisis of Gunung Sewu area (UNESCO Geopark), Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta. One of Indonesia's stunning coastal destinations. The consequences of uncontrolled tourism, the plastic waste emerges as a pervasive threat to, the natural ecosystem, which is the main reason why people want to visit the area.

The film portrays resilience and hope; highlights grassroots movements and innovative local solutions, from beach clean-ups to the creative recycling of plastic into eco-bricks and toys. These meaningful initiatives are achievable.

Central of narrative are local traditions and spirituality; the "Larungan" (offering) to the ocean ceremony which symbolizes gratitude and harmony with the ocean, emphasizing reconnection with our mother earth.

Traditional shadow puppet performance in the end, serves as purification and self-reflection to our environmental responsibility; the Pandawa (action based on the heart) win the battle against the Kurawa (action follows the ego), a guide to righteous (dharma) living, attainment of inner peace through wisdom and selfless action.

# DIRECTOR STATEMENT

**Media and local culture are a good media to be listen to and build wise character to respect the earth;**

This is about the director's feeling of the Yogyakarta beaches worsening condition. The contrast between massive tourism growth and the insufficient capacity of local human resources to manage it wisely. The government has not provided optimal facilities for the tourism industry. There is a lack of training to handle the increasing visitors and their littering, insufficient waste management infrastructure, which negatively impacts local resident's condition and the environment due to the large amounts of trash.

This documentary wants to raise awareness of the emergency situation; show local residents solutions and life inspiration to tourism stakeholders, government, and visitors.

The hope is with the involvement of all parties, we can restore local culture and wisdom; recognize the imbalance occurring locally in Gunung Kidul (UNESCO site), in Yogyakarta generally, and Indonesia as a whole, which is the world's second-largest producer of plastic waste.

# ABOUT THE MAKING

The producer of this documentary, is also the founder of a small local environmental NGO, LSM Jiwa LAUT. One of the main activities is community base solutions to the plastic waste issues, on the coastal area of Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia. The worsening conditions with mass tourism starting in the area, making the small scales solutions shown in the documentary not enough anymore to solve the problem. Trash left at the beaches every weekend are counted in tons now.

The idea came to make a documentary after visiting a Festival Film, as new way to address it to a larger national and worldwide audience to push the stakeholders to take actions (government, tourism businesses, tourists, bigger NGOs etc...).

Some friends and local young people also impacted in their daily life by mass tourism issues, were enthusiastic to join, bringing their own talent in diverse fields needed to make it. It is a real community team work, nobody had a strict role, it came naturally. We didn't start with any screenplay though, everybody was bringing his ideas. The need of a structure came during the editing.

The direction was taken from the producer with the help of a local artist and musician as assistant which had vlog experience. A young student who is learning "social media" in his IT high school edited and another guy active in making his own social media reels as hobby, made most of the shootings with another one taking the "photography" role. We got help for the translation and subtitles from other friends then. The puppets narrative is in a high level Javanese language not everybody can get it.

We also had a strong deadline which was the Festival Film Dokumenter in Yogyakarta. We had only about two months to make it all. The rough cut/edit was finalized and sent one hour before deadline in July.

The documentary is made out of 4 distinctive parts. First the shooting of the trash on and behind the beaches. The second is the community response, grassroots solutions, to bring hope and positiveness. Local people are very positive and inspiring. The third are the local people traditional life getting their food from the ocean and the tourists sharing the area at same time. The last part came like an inspiration from a higher dimension, just before deadline after the first edit, the traditional ceremonies of the Javanese New Year were taking place at the beach.

First "Larungan" offerings and cleansing to the ocean and then at night, an 8 hours shadow puppet performance (Wayang). It is based on the Mahabharata & Bhagavad Gita, the Hindu sacred books but adapted centuries ago with the Javanese believes of the Hindu-Buddha mystical Kingdoms of Java. This is a way of teaching the life with the positive and the negative energies, like Ying Yang. A battle of the actions based on the ego (brain/monkey mind) and the pure selfless one from the heart. It is giving another unexpected philosophical and spiritual dimension to this documentary.



# ABOUT IRA SETIAWATI



Debut as film Producer and Director, was born in Jayapura, Papua, Indonesia, 1st January 1973.

In 1988, moved to Yogyakarta to SMA 9 High School, after graduated went to Malang joined Brawijaya University. Then worked for manufacturing industry for six years. Went to Cambodia as Organic Food Technology advisor and also had traditional handicraft business there.

In 2011, bought land in Watukodok beach Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta. Developed a center for environmental education; the buildings were awarded as green and sustainable architecture with water tanks for rain catchment, a grey water filtration system, biogas. Promote solar panel & wind mill project as main sustainable energy.

Founded Jiwa Laut non profit non government organization. Its funded from its eco-puncture ecolodges; a social business which the profits are used for social, reduction of plastic waste, environmental & cultural activities. Also supporting the local community by empowering them and using its local natural resources to increase village's income. Promoting local culture as good media to build wise character & respect the earth; where we are born, live & die.

She is very mindful, interested into the traditional local wisdom and spiritualities, learning from the older generations what was already gone in the cities where she grew up.

Making this documentary is the first experience in the movie world & got support by an enthusiastic local community.

# FAQ

## **What have the ceremony at the beach and the traditional puppet show have to do with plastic trash?**

It represents the local traditional philosophy and spiritualities. During centuries it have had melting different traditions from Animism, Shivaism Tantric Hinduism, Chan Buddhism and Islam Sufi. It is a very wise way of living in harmony with their environment and in peace together with people from all beliefs. For thousands of year the earth was clean and fertile but the consumerism life brought by investors and mass tourism from cities is disrupting it. The young people are not any more interested into their traditions but live the “artificial” life they see from movies and social media, which brings to the crisis of our region.

## **There must be any kind of an organized waste management or education?**

No, the trash management an education is left to the local villages responsibility. They don't have the budgets and subsidies to handle tons of trash. Infrastructure were built for small farmers villages not mass tourism. They do what they can as you can see, but now overwhelmed by the amount of trash. Also the city tourist people are not aware of the damaged of throwing their trash everywhere.

## **What material and software did you use to make the film?**

Sony Alfa 6700 and the CAP CUT software for editing.

# LINKS

Watch the trailer:

<https://youtu.be/TGXSM-qCp3g?si=pbXB-g2f1IzAUM60>

LSM JIWA LAUT IG:

<https://www.instagram.com/jiwalaut/>

Promotion for festival on:

<https://filmfreeway.com/PlasticTourism:>

# CREDITS

**Produced & Written by**

Ira Setiawati

**Directed by**

Ira Setiawati

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**Edited by**

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**Music by**

Ribut Subronto

**Crew by**

Sugiyati, Suryono, Tri Utami, Peri Subianto, Guntoyo

**Special thanks to**

Ki Sugiran (puppet master), Mirriam (tourist at the beach), TPS3R (villagers in charge of waste management), Sanggar Lumbung Kawruh community and all people helping to this documentary & caring about our environment