

IBUKU



**31st BUSAN
International Film Festival**
6–15 October 2026

**COMPETITION
FILM**



A film by Eddie CAHYONO

Indonesia, Japan, Hong Kong
2026 | Color | 96' | 24fps | 1.66:1 | Dolby 5.1



INTERNATIONAL SALES

Maria A. Ruggieri | head of sales | maria@chineseshadows.com
www.asian-shadows.com | contact@chineseshadows.com

IBUKU

LOGLINE

A mother and a daughter, divided by a land of old traditions, deep beliefs, and painful truths, where life is a collective dance that drives them apart.

SYNOPSIS

Sumiati, in her sixties, lives alone in a small remote Java village after her husband's suicide and the scape of Sri, her daughter, to Saudi Arabia to run away from a forced marriage and domestic abuse. When a lost letter reaches her, Sumiati learns that Sri is on death row abroad for killing her employer who tried to rape her. While the village chief helps her to contact the Indonesian authorities and media for support, Sumiati is determined to help and see her daughter one last time. She starts reaching out to friends and relatives for the needed money to travel abroad...

IBUKU

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Eddie CAHYONO

My mother once told me that she left the village to go to the city for a better life. And that touched my heart.

During college, I documented a village celebration and noticed many villagers leaving for city work or as migrants. This sparked my curiosity about why they left and the struggles they faced, especially in terms of family and relationships. This led me to research migrant workers, many of whom hoped working abroad to solve their financial struggles.

I was surprised to learn that those abroad often faced family issues in Indonesia, including domestic violence or forced marriages to settle family debts. As I researched migrant workers, it led me to shift my focus to the families in Indonesia, the families they left behind while living abroad. Parents, mothers, and fathers, what happened to them, how did they feel after their children left? What happens when problems arise while they're abroad? So, I wanted to explore how mothers cope with the absence of their children.

This story delves into the emotional complexities of mother-daughter relationships and into themes of separation, loss, and how to let go. This film is about a mother's impossible choice, the strength of the human spirit, and the desperate realities faced by women migrant workers. Shot on 16mm film, I aimed to capture the raw emotions of love, sacrifice, and memory.

What kind of present must be remembered by the future?

IBUKU

IN CONVERSATION WITH DIRECTOR EDDIE CAHYONO

The film's title, Ibuku, means "my mother" in Indonesian. How did the character of Sumiati, this Indonesian mother, first take shape in your mind?

When I first started writing, I was focusing on a story about migrant workers. Back then, the title was Wasted Land, and it was presented at APM Busan 2015. Even though the plot already leaned toward a mother named Sumiati who wanted to visit her daughter in Saudi Arabia because she was facing the death penalty, I really struggled to capture the emotions of a mother left behind, and how she would deal with a situation like that. And that was the biggest challenge in writing IBUKU (My Mother).

Then I remembered my own mother, who left her village for the city to find a better life. And how my mother yearned for her family. Her story really touched me. That's when I shifted the whole narrative to focus on the mother who was left behind. I cut out most of the daughter's storyline and just focused on the mother's struggles. But still keeping the story about the mother-daughter relationship.

In the film, the daughter, Sri, leaves home to work in Saudi Arabia. Is going abroad for better pay a common choice for Indonesian women? Could you tell us more about the broader situation for migrant workers?

To understand it, we have to go back to the past, a time when the government couldn't provide enough jobs and there was a sudden surge in demand for foreign migrant workers. Since then, people have been flocking abroad for work, a trend that continues to this day. The government even labels them as the country's foreign exchange heroes. To me, that's just a cover-up for the state's failure to provide employment at home.

Later, while I was writing and doing research, I met migrant workers abroad. I found out that many of them faced serious family issues back home—things like poverty, debt, forced marriage, divorce, and domestic violence. Becoming a migrant worker was their fast way of escaping those hardships.

There are around 4.5 to 6 million female workers abroad, mostly working as laborers or manual workers. And up until 2025, there has been an annual deployment of around 180,000 female migrant workers.

IBUKU

How would you describe the specific dynamic between this mother and daughter?

In Javanese culture, children must obey their parents. Especially daughters; sometimes they have no choice but to follow their parents' wishes. We do not know if the parents are right, but shouldn't daughters have choices in life?

It began when Sumiati found out that her husband, Wagiman, had debts due to gambling. There was no other way for Wagiman but to marry off his daughter, Sri, to clear his debt. As a wife and a mother, Sumiati chose to remain silent and obey her husband because she felt it might be the way out of their problem. Without Sumiati realizing it, Sri's marriage did not go as expected. "Be patient," Sumiati advised. This is usually the word spoken by women when domestic problems arise. But Sri chose not to remain silent. It was better to run away and go far away. To me, Sri's choice was an attitude, a form of courage.

What happened to Sri is based on my meeting with a migrant worker who shared her life experience—being forced into marriage to cover a debt and running away to become a migrant worker abroad. Did she blame her family? Her mother?"

Sri resents her mother for marrying her off to an abusive husband instead of selling the ancestral land to clear her father's debt. Why is there such a strong attachment to the land?

I try to connect this with my own family's experience. Although it is not exactly the same, when I was still in elementary school, I remember very well how my mother defended our family land at that time. In Java, ancestral land is something that must be protected, whatever the cost.

The same goes for Sumiati, who remained silent when her husband sold their daughter, Sri, to cover a debt. This is where Sri's deep resentment grew toward her mother. Marriage, which for Sumiati must be endured with acceptance (nrimo) and patience, did not apply to Sri. It wasn't until Sri went abroad and faced the death penalty that Sumiati finally realized.

The villagers face severe water shortages and have to rely on delivery trucks. And Sumiati has to struggle to get water sources. What is the background behind this crisis?

Near my city, Yogyakarta, the Gunungkidul area is a karst mountain region. Every year during the dry season, they are certain to buy clean water because there is no rainfall.

IBUKU

The residents of Gunungkidul, through government assistance or self-sufficiency, chip in to buy water from private tank trucks, twice a month. And that is only for cooking and drinking needs. For other needs, they have to buy much more extra water.

In the Gunungkidul area, there are a lot of caves. When I did my research, there were actually caves that stored water. But when I asked why they didn't take water from inside the caves? They answered that the caves were too narrow for humans to pass through, even though they knew there was water inside those caves.

That is the life experienced by Sumiati and her fellow villagers.

The film blurs the boundary between past and present, memory and imagination. What was your approach to handling time and space in the film?

I imagine how the relationship between two separated characters shapes their respective bonds and memories. The bond between a mother and her daughter does not simply break when distance pulls them apart; instead, that space and time deeply reshape how they remember one another. Their shared memories are no longer filled with warmth, but are continuously driven by the lingering pain of past trauma and hidden guilt, a shifting emotional burden that alters their perception of the past over time. **Is it reality? A memory? Or merely imagination?** This blurs the boundaries between reality, memory, and imagination, as well as between the past and the present. Ultimately, even though they physically exist in two different spaces and times, their hearts and emotions remain profoundly tethered across space and time.

Cinematically, I wrote, visualized, and sharpened this in editing by merging sequences into a seamless flow, utilizing sound, visuals, and parallel editing.

The dialogue is in Javanese. What drew you to make the film in this language?

I wanted the dialogue and language to align with the background and family roots of the characters, making it feel more honest and emotional.

The mother and daughter perform a traditional dance in the film. Could you tell us about this dance and its cultural significance?

Jathilan is one of the oldest traditional performing arts in Java, blending dynamic dance movements with spiritual and magical aspects. The defining characteristic of this folk dance is the use of woven bamboo horses (kepang) as props. In its cultural roots, this woven horse is believed to be a manifestation of a totem animal ("Sang

IBUKU

Hyang Jaran") possessing magical powers. The trance ritual performed by the dancers is believed to hold a spiritual function to ward off misfortune, dispel evil spirits, and protect the village from disaster.

However, in the film IBUKU, I use the Jathilan dance as the most honest emotional bond between two characters, the mother and the daughter. For them, this Jathilan dance is a symbol of memories and pure emotions untouched by pain; instead, it heals their inner wounds. It dispels the evil spirits within them.

Why did you choose to shoot on 16mm film, especially in an era increasingly dominated by digital tech and AI?

The choice of shooting on 16mm film is not merely a stylistic decision, but a visual metaphor for memory itself. The organic texture, grain, and subtle imperfections inherent to 16mm film perfectly mirror the way we look back at the past—memories are often blurred and flawed; yet deeply saturated with emotion. Through this medium, I sought to capture the raw emotional landscape of the mother and daughter's journey. It is a cinematic exploration of their path toward understanding each other's sacrifices, the quiet acts of redemption they make for one another, and celebrating the love that ultimately keeps their souls connected despite the boundaries of space and time.

Christine Hakim and Ayushita star as the mother and daughter in the film. Why did you choose these two prominent Indonesian actresses for the film? Could you share what it was like working with them?

I have admired Christine Hakim since I was a child when I watched the film 'Tjoet Nja' Dien'. Even though I was still young, I was spellbound by her acting in that movie. That is why when I was writing, I already imagined the character of Sumiati being played by Christine Hakim. In 2015, we met and promised to make the film IBUKU. In 2024, I contacted her and sent the script of IBUKU. Christine Hakim liked the story, then said, 'I'm almost 70 years old.' I just realized that the character of the Mother I wrote did not only require strong emotions but also physical strength. Yet, with unwavering spirit, Christine Hakim said, 'Let's do it!' And I am truly grateful to be able to work with her because we discussed, listened, and decided on the best scenes together, even while shooting was underway.

Ayushita is a good friend of my producer, Tika Bravani. When Tika contacted Ayu, she joined the project without any hesitation. So everything went well, as Ayushita is a highly talented young actress. During our rehearsals and discussions, Ayu shared that she had experienced something similar to Sri's character—violence against women.

IBUKU

Honestly, I couldn't bear the thought of Ayu having to recall those painful moments. However, Ayu was fully committed to playing the character of Sri and fighting back.

From SITI to IBUKU, women's stories remain a constant thread. Why is this central focus so vital to your filmmaking?

As a man, I recognize that I view the world from a different perspective. Yet, observing the world around me, I am deeply troubled by how often the roles of women are sidelined. There is an urgent need to give voice to this issue. My film was born from my emotional connection to the daily experiences of the women in my life—moments that often go unnoticed, yet embody extraordinary strength and resilience. Through this medium, I wish to reflect on the meaning of life and pay the highest tribute to their strength within the domestic realm. What the world dismisses as merely "ordinary" or "routine" is, in my eyes, a truly profound inner struggle.

Are there any new projects that you can share with us?

IMAH: The Last Time I Saw Your Face. This project began at the Hong Kong Asia Film Financing Forum, HKIFF 2018, BIFAN Network of Asian Fantastic Films Project Market, Korea 2018, HIFF - Ho Chi Minh City International Film Festival 2024, and received a development grant from the CNC. I hope to be able to continue working on this project again.

IBUKU

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY & FILMOGRAPHY

Eddie CAHYONO



Eddie Cahyono graduated from the Faculty of Recording Media Arts at the Indonesian Arts Institute. His film *Siti* (2014) won the Citra Award for Best Film and received major international recognition, screening at festivals including Rotterdam, Telluride, and Singapore. He later directed *Losmen Bu Broto* (2021) and served as executive producer on *Mountain Song* (2019), *Kucumbu Tumbuh Indahku* (2018), and *Turah* (2015). In 2022, he founded Memorieslight Pictures. *IBUKU* is his fourth feature and first production under the company.

Filmography

IBUKU 2026, Feature, 96 minutes

LOSMEN BU BROTO 2021, Feature, 109 minutes

SITI 2014, Feature, 88 minutes // International Sales: ASIAN SHADOWS

CEWEK SAWERAN 2011, Feature, 84 minutes

IBUKU

THE MAIN CAST

Christine HAKIM as Sumiati

Christine Hakim is one of Indonesia's most acclaimed and influential actresses, with a career spanning more than five decades. She made her film debut in Teguh Karya's *Cinta Pertama* (1973), for which she won her first Citra Award for Best Actress. Throughout her career, she has starred in some of the most significant films in Indonesian cinema, including *Badai Pasti Berlalu* (1977), *Di Balik Kelambu* (1983), *Kerikil-Kerikil Tajam* (1985), and *Tjoet Nja' Dhien* (1988), in which she portrayed the Indonesian national heroine Cut Nyak Dhien. She has won numerous Best Actress awards for her work in Indonesian cinema and many more awards in Europe and Asia. Beyond Indonesian cinema, she has appeared in international productions including *Eat Pray Love* (2010) and HBO's *The Last of Us* (2023).

Christine Hakim is also an Indonesian actress turned producer and one of the most experienced and respected figures in the South East Asian film industry. Her production company Christine Hakim Film has focused on producing projects for theatrical release. Her first film as producer, ***Daun Di Atas Bantal (Leaf on a Pillow, 1998)***, was directed by APSA Academy member Garin Nugroho and selected for the Un Certain Regard section at 51st Cannes Film Festival. It also received the award for the Best Picture at Asia Pacific Film Festival, the Special Jury Prize at the Tokyo International Film Festival and the Grand Prize at the Cinemanila International Film Festival in 1999. Her second film as producer, ***Pasir Berbisik (Whispering Sand, 2001)***, was produced in collaboration with NHK Japan Broadcasting Inc.. Directed by APSA Academy member Nan Achnas, the film received awards for Best Cinematography and Best Sound at the Asia Pacific International Film festival, 2001 and the Asia Trade Winds Special Jury Prize at the Seattle International Film Festival in 2002. ***Serambi (2005)***, co-directed by three young Indonesian directors and set in Aceh, painted a portrait of the lives of ordinary Acehnese people following the tsunami. It was also made with the backing of NHK, premiered in Un Certain Regard at Cannes in 2006 and went on to screen in many other prestigious festivals worldwide.

Her contribution to cinema has earned international recognition. Christine Hakim served as a member of the jury at the Cannes Film Festival in 2002 and has participated as a jury member at numerous international film festivals world wide, including Shanghai, Tokyo, Hawaii, Asia Pacific Film Festival, Sydney, Singapore and Fukuoka. In 2004 she was appointed a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador for Indonesia and in 2008 she began working on behalf of UNESCO. She has received many international acknowledgements including the French Chevalier de Lourdes des Art et Des Lettres and Commandeur dans l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres, 2003. In 2010, she received the FIAPF Award for Outstanding Achievement in Film at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards. In recognition of her enduring contribution to Indonesian cinema, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Indonesian Film Festival in 2016.

IBUKU

THE MAIN CAST

Ayushita NUGRAHA as Sri

Ayushita Widyartoeti Nugraha, better known as Ayushita, is an Indonesian singer, actress and dancer of Indonesian Javanese descent, whose work spans contemporary drama, comedy, and historical cinema. Beginning her career at a young age, she has developed a distinctive presence in Indonesian film through performances that combine emotional sensitivity with a strong sense of character.

Nugraha started her film career in 2005 and she starred in the film ***Me vs. High Heels***. She has appeared in a diverse range of films, including ***Bukan Cinta Biasa*** (2009), ***What They Don't Talk About When They Talk About Love*** (2013), and ***Kartini: Princess of Java*** (2017). Her performance in *What They Don't Talk About When They Talk About Love* earned her a nomination for Best Supporting Actress at the Indonesian Film Festival, further establishing her as a versatile performer capable of bringing nuance to complex characters.

Alongside her film work, Ayushita has pursued music and television. She joined the musical band group BBB, fronted Melly Goeslaw, in 2007. But cinema remains an important part of her artistic journey. Through her evolving body of work, she continues to explore diverse characters and collaborate across generations of Indonesian filmmakers. Ayushita is regarded as one of the notable actresses of her generation, contributing to the vitality and diversity of contemporary Indonesian cinema.

Landung SIMATUPANG as Djatmiko-the Village Chief

Landung Simatupang is an Indonesian actor whose distinguished career spans film, theatre, and television. Known for his commanding presence and nuanced performances, he has become one of the respected figures in Indonesian performing arts.

With a career rooted in theatre, Landung has brought a strong sense of discipline, depth, and emotional precision to his work on screen. He has appeared in a wide range of films, including *Gie* (2005), *Sang Pencerah* (2010), *Soegija* (2012), *Guru Bangsa: Tjokroaminoto* (2015), and *Kartini: Princess of Java* (2017). His performances often reflect his ability to portray authoritative, complex, and historically grounded characters with subtlety and conviction.

Alongside his film work, Landung remains active in theatre and television, contributing to the development of Indonesia's performing arts across generations. His extensive experience and commitment to his craft have made him a significant presence in contemporary Indonesian cinema. Landung Simatupang continues to be recognized for his versatility, theatrical strength, and enduring contribution to Indonesian film and culture.

IBUKU

CAST & CREW

Director, Screenwriter	Eddie CAHYONO
Cast	Christine HAKIM as Sumiati Ayushita NUGRAHA as Sri Landung SIMATUPANG as Djatmiko
Supporting Talents	Udik SUPRIYANTA as Karyo Sri WIDAYATI as Yu Ning Nano ASMARODONO as Wagiman Gati HANDOKO as Foreman Rendra BAGUS as Tedjo Juminten as Rahmi Liek SUYANTO as Pak Noto Intan KEMALASARI as Store Clerk
Supporting Talents	Heru PRASETYA as Store Clerk Noel KEFAS as Store Owner Eko BEBEK as Online Driver Lucky UCOK as Cattle Broker Adi MARSONO as Cattle Broker Ibnu GUNDUL as Store Clerk
With	Naomi SRIKANDI as Ratih Tika BRAVANI as Ratih's Assistant
Casting	Ibnu GUNDUL
Music & Sound Design	Krisna PURNA
Visual Effect	Yusron FUADI
Art Director	Luki JANARKO
Make Up & Wardrobe	Retno Ratih DAMAYANTI
Editors	Greg ARYA, Eddie CAHYONO
Director of Photography	Muhammad FIRDAUS, ICS
Line Producer	Yosi ARIFianto
Creative Producers	Isabelle GLACHANT, LI Xiaorong
Co-Producer	Orlando BASSI
Executive Producers	Aris NUGRAHA, Zunan FARIS, Eddie CAHYONO
Producers	Tika BRAVANI, Shin YAMAGUCHI
Production Companies	Talenta Media
In Association With	Yasa Buana Film Knockonwood Memorieslight Pictures Chinese Shadows
International Sales	Asian Shadows

IBUKU

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Original Title	IBUKU
English Title:	IBUKU
Duration:	96 Minutes
Aspect Ratio:	1.66:1
Format:	DCP
Sound:	Dolby 5.1
Year:	2026
Original Languages:	Javanese
Countries of production:	Indonesia, Japan, Hong Kong
Production Companies:	Talenta Media
In Association With:	Yasa Buana Film Knockonwood Memorieslight Pictures Chinese Shadows
International Sales:	Asian Shadows