



Executive Producers  
 ADAM MCKAY ALAN CUMMING JOEL KIM BOOSTER

# ASOG

a film by SEÁN DEVLIN 叶世民



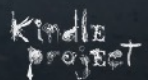
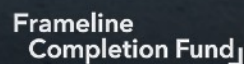
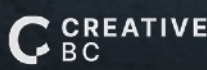
*“This work signals the emergence of an exciting new voice in cinema.”*

- FILMMAKER  
 MAGAZINE



Canada Council  
 for the Arts

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 du Canada



*"When I first saw ASOG I was floored by the world the film took me into, the depth of the artistry, and the feelings I experienced for characters on the other side of the planet. ASOG is a special movie and Sean is a uniquely original filmmaker."*

- Adam McKay, Executive Producer

*"Flipping the conventions of the road movie on its head, Asog is a stunning and profound ode to the power of solidarity amidst struggle. This one-of-a-kind film plays with the line between narrative and documentary to become something entirely new. Co-writer and director **Seán Devlin** has crafted a monument of trans cinema."*

- Tribeca Film Festival





## LOGLINE

JAYA is a non-binary Filipino comedian on a road trip to a drag pageant. En route they meet real Filipinos enduring the impacts of climate change.

## SYNOPSIS

Jaya is a comedian whose job hosting a late-night television show ended due to a natural disaster that devastated the Philippines. In the aftermath they returned to their career as a school teacher. In a last ditch attempt at finding fame, Jaya decides to travel across the country in hopes of winning a beauty pageant and the prize money that comes with it. But before they can leave, a chance encounter with Arnel, a student going the same way in search of family, complicates their solitary plans. As they travel seemingly countless miles together on foot, bike, and boat, the unlikely duo find themselves forever changed by each other and those they encounter on their journey.



## OUR STORY

100% of the cast members in ASOG are Filipinos who survived 2013's Super Typhoon Haiyan. At the time, the strongest storm ever recorded at landfall. That deadly storm was labeled “a warning to the world” and for nearly a decade Filipino-Canadian auteur and Juno-nominated comedian Seán Devlin 叶世民 has been creating deeply collaborative narrative cinema with super typhoon survivors on his Mother’s native island of Leyte. He has been working with the film’s co-stars and co-writers for 9 years. Climate chaos was both an inspiration and an obstacle to our production. In 2021 Tropical Storm Agaton caused landslides that killed hundreds of people in the communities we were filming in, stranding our equipment and some of our crew on a neighbouring island for a week.

*“Uncomfortable and unforgettable. Devlin immerses the comedians in this very real tragedy, where they interact with real victims and give the audience some laughs. It sounds bonkers – but it works.”*

- The Globe & Mail

Review of Devlin’s debut feature WHEN THE STORM FADES (2018)

# OUR CAST



## JAYA

For 20 years non-binary comedian Jaya has been producing live comedy shows across 40+ venues in the Philippines. Often featuring a rotating cast of graduating comedy students also known as THE WONDERGIRLS. Off stage, they spent more than a decade working as a professional school teacher of both elementary and high school students. For two decades they have worked at the intersection of comedy and education. They were formerly the host of their own local TV chat show, until the studio where it was filmed was destroyed by Super Typhoon Haiyan. Honors include ESJEPO Magazine Featured Performer (2012), ALIW CADIZ AWARD Nominee for Best Stand Up Comedian in the Philippines (2013). ASOG is their first film performance.

## ARNEL PABLO

At the age of 12-years-old Arnel saved his entire family during Super Typhoon Haiyan by swimming through the flood waters and finding a rope that allowed them to pull themselves to safety. Despite having no previous acting experience he has been collaborating with writer/director Seán Devlin 叶世民 for nine years, appearing in the 2014 documentary short DEAR POPE ([Read about it in BuzzFeed](#)), then in a supporting role in Devlin's feature debut 2018's WHEN THE STORM FADES ([Read about it in VICE](#)). ASOG marks his first co-starring role and his first screenwriting credit.



# CO-WRITER / DIRECTOR

**Seán Devlin** 叶世民 is a Filipino-Canadian writer / director / producer / comedian. He worked as a Consulting Producer on the Oscar nominated **BORAT: SUBSEQUENT MOVIEFILM**; winner of the Golden Globe for Best Picture - Comedy or Musical. His productions have been featured in *The New York Times*, *VICE* and *The Globe & Mail*. He co-wrote and directed a short doc starring the NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden which was exhibited at Copenhagen's Kunsthal Charlottenborg. For his debut feature **WHEN THE STORM FADES** (2018) The Director's Guild of Canada presented him the prize for Emerging Canadian Director at VIFF 37. The film is currently streaming on Amazon Prime and AMC+ / Sundance TV. The film earned Sean two international festival jury prizes for Best Director and won Best Canadian Film at the 19th Gimli Film Festival as well as two Vancouver Film Critics' Awards. His debut stand-up comedy album **AIRPORTS. ANIMALS.** was nominated for the 2022 Juno award for Comedy Album of the Year. *Paste Magazine's* review of the record raved: *"Devlin breaks apart Western society's racist, capitalist structure with the elegant precision of a Michelin star chef cracking open an egg... His debut ranks among the most thought-provoking and thoroughly funny comedy releases of the year."* In 2023 he will made his television stand-up debut on the Just For Laughs / CBC series **THE NEW WAVE OF STAND-UP**. Seán is an alumni of the 2023 Rotterdam Lab



From 2011 to 2015 Devlin organized a diverse group of comedians and filmmakers to create the satirical comedy site and YouTube channel **ShitHarperDid.com**. The project went live two weeks before the 2011 Canadian federal election and quickly went viral, receiving 4.1 million hits in its first 72 hours online and at one point feature the most shared Youtube video in Canada. *The Globe & Mail* described the tactical media project as a *"a stealth campaign that's been spreading like prairie wildfire"*. *The Huffington Post* called it *"the viral phenomenon that captured the digital zeitgeist."*

In 2011 Devlin's own cousin in the Philippines lost her home in the unprecedented flooding of Typhoon Sendong. The land she lived on was then deemed uninhabitable and designated a "no build zone" by authorities. In the decade since, Devlin has devoted himself to documenting the lives of Filipinos losing their land and homes to climate change. In 2014 Devlin incited national controversy by disguising himself as a waiter and successfully infiltrating the Prime Minister's security detail to criticize the government's inaction on climate change. In response to the action Conservative Senator Bob Runciman called for a crackdown on Devlin and threatened to establish new laws because he *"should face indictable offences with serious fines and/or imprisonment"*. The action immediately sparked national debate on climate change. Devlin appeared on CBC News Network's *Power and Politics*, followed by Conservative MP Peter Braid who proceed to state that recent extreme weather and climate change are connected. CBC reported this as a first by a member of the federal Conservatives Braid also went on to state that: *"Those in the developing world are most seriously impacted by this."* Which is considered the first time the federal Conservatives acknowledged the disproportionate impacts of climate change.

# OUR IMPACT

*“ASOG is—amazingly, remarkably—a comedy, a piece of activist cinema, a statement for trans rights, and a call to both environmental and political action. What does it mean to be a filmmaker? For Devlin, it means actually impacting the situation; after screening the completed film and generating interest in the situation, the film managed to create enough pressure on the developers and government that they finally listened to many of the residents.”*

**- Filmmaker Magazine**

ASOG is a cinematic intervention. A film that imagines a more just world and then dares to turn these visions into reality. The film has yet to be released but it is already making a concrete improvement in the lives of one community on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

In the aftermath of deadly Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, Sicogon Development Corp (SIDEKO) and Ayala Land Inc (ALI), the Philippines’ largest real estate company, swiftly exploited the devastating typhoon to stake their full control of the island. The corporations [blocked 6,000 individuals from returning to their community and barred them from repairing or rebuilding their homes](#) (see notice). Despite this, 784 families on the remote island refused to leave and continued to assert their rights to become owners of the land under the Philippines government’s agrarian reform program, and to seek reparations from the companies. While the companies initially entered into a compromise with the residents, they failed to honor the agreement.

Production on ASOG began in 2019, including scenes filmed with displaced Sicogon residents Raul Ramos and Amelia Dela Cruz, President and Vice President of FESIFFA. Ramos and Dela Cruz wielded the development of an international feature film in their negotiations, and after the film’s second leg of production was completed in 2021, ALI and SIDEKO [signed an amended agreement](#) to meet the residents’ demands, including: developing 33 hectares of agricultural land for the villagers; disbursement of livelihood relief funding (32 million Philippine pesos); and financing the construction of 784 new houses for the displaced families that remain on the island. Despite the agreement, ALI once again continued to drag its feet. In the year following the signing of the agreement, only 6 of the 784 homes they committed to funding had actually been built. However, once the ASOG film crew returned for their final leg of filming in summer 2022, ALI started yielding to the pressure and has since funded the construction of 435 additional homes in the last year.

# CREW

**Anna MacDonald (Cinematographer)** is based in London, England shooting across fiction & documentaries films. Anna studied cinematography at NFTS where her graduation film COME OUT OF THE WOODS won the Panalux Award for Cinematography. Her latest short GOOD THANKS, YOU? screened at Cannes Critics Week 2020 and was nominated for a BIFA.

**Amanda Ernst (Producer)** is a Canadian film producer with over a decade of experience in artist and project management. As a producer at Beb Bingo Entertainment, Amanda oversees projects from the early development stage, financing, pre-production, on set, and through to distribution. She previously worked in the music industry with Atlas Artists, A Division of Evenko & The Montreal Canadiens. There she played strong roles in Artist Relations and Career Development producing in collaboration with renowned international partners The Agency Group, Windish Agency, High Road Touring, CAA UK.

**Aya Garcia (Associate Producer)** was born and raised in Manila where she earned a diploma in Multimedia Arts from College Saint Benilde studying under world renowned Filipino auteur Lav Diaz. This is her first feature film.

**Cecilia Mejia (Impact Producer / Executive Producer)** was born and raised in Brooklyn, a first-generation Filipino-American. Cecilia teaches Impact Producing at NYU Tisch School of the Arts and most recently worked as the impact producer on Netflix's feature documentary SISTERS ON TRACK (2021). Cecilia served as impact producer on Isabel Sandoval's LINGUA FRANCA (2019) as well as PJ Raval's CALL HER GANDA (2018), two of the most prominent films about Filipino trans life made by diaspora artists. Cecilia was recently featured in Forbes Magazine for their work.

**Adam McKay (Executive Producer)** is a film and television director, producer, comedian and Oscar winning screenwriter. He was formerly the Head Writer at SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE before going on to write and direct blockbuster comedies such as ANCHORMAN, TALLADEGA NIGHTS and THE OTHER GUYS. More recently he has achieved critical acclaim with films such as THE BIG SHORT, DON'T LOOK UP and the Emmy award winning HBO series SUCCESSION.

**Alan Cumming (Executive Producer)** is an Emmy, Tony, BAFTA and Olivier award winning Scottish actor.

**Joel Kim Booster (Executive Producer)** South Korean born, American comedian, writer, actor and producer. He was the writer, producer and star of FIRE ISLAND, winner of the 2023 GLAAD award for Outstanding Film - streaming or TV and the Independent Spirit Award for Best First Screenplay.