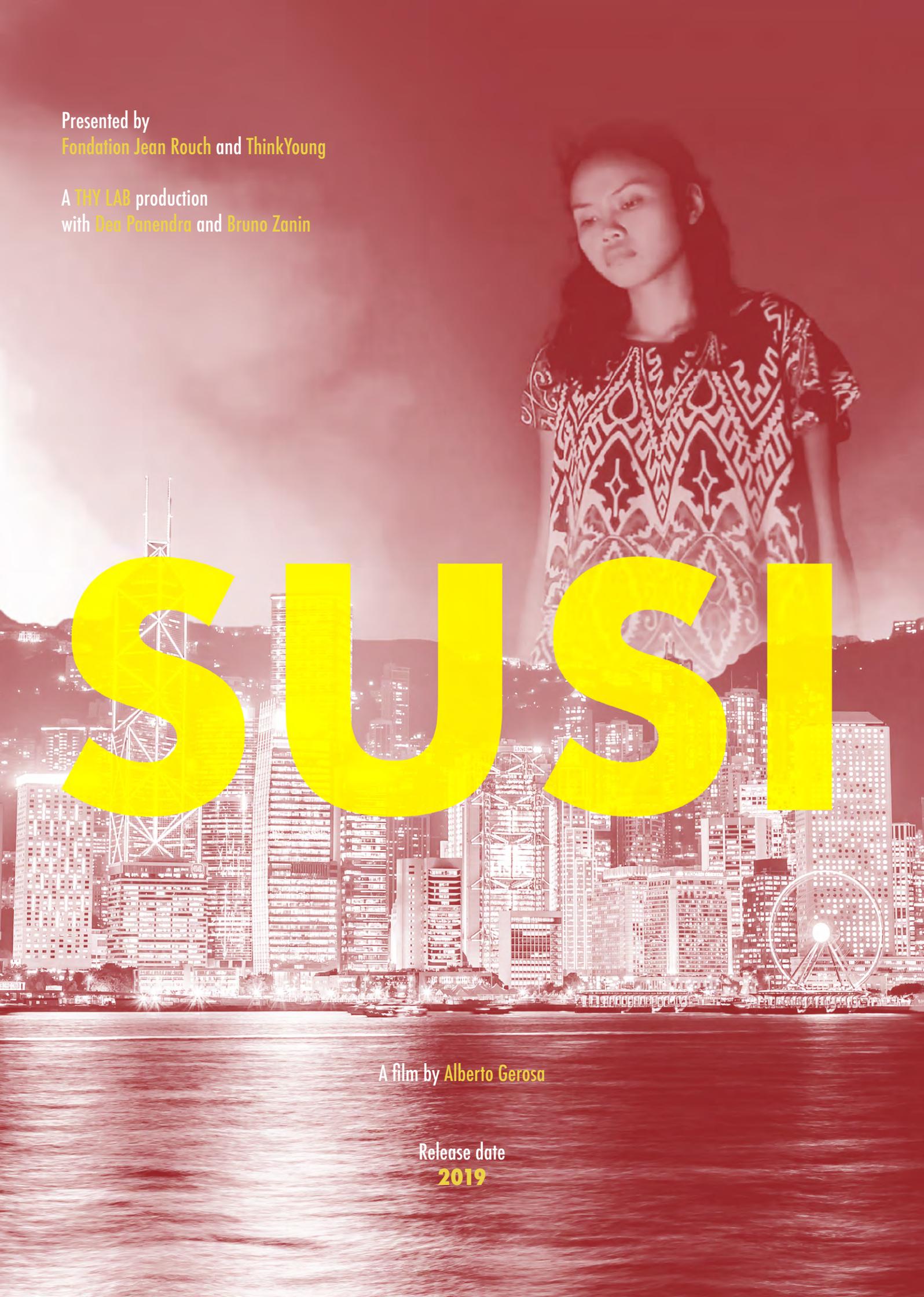


Presented by  
Fondation Jean Rouch and ThinkYoung

A THY LAB production  
with Dea Panendra and Bruno Zanin

# SUSI

A woman with dark hair, wearing a black and white patterned short-sleeved shirt, stands in the foreground. Behind her is a city skyline at night, with numerous lit-up buildings and a Ferris wheel on the right. The water of a harbor is visible at the bottom. The entire image has a reddish-orange tint.

A film by **Alberto Gerosa**

Release date  
**2019**



## CREW

### Director

Alberto Gerosa

### Producers

Jocelyne Rouch  
Andrea Gerosa  
Luca Selva  
Delila Kidanu

### Screenplay

Yuki, Waitie, Vira,  
Sulastri, Septika,  
Judi, Susi, Yanah,  
Dewi, Astri, Avi,  
Giana, Rumi, Putri,  
Lystia, Hannah, Dhea,  
Dachyta, Astutik, Ika,  
Puput, Anik, Adrani,  
Kartina, Sukarmi, Ahar,  
Melly, Yeni, Alyssa,  
Tari, Teni, Dee, Arista,  
Urati, Mawar, Anna  
(Indonesian domestic  
workers in Hong Kong)

### Cinematography

Roberto Pirelli  
Alberto Gerosa

### Editing

Johannes Nakajima

### Sound

Clara Hadstet

## CAST

### Dea Panendra

Susi

### Bruno Zanin

Bruno

### Mas Akri

Stepfather

### Mega

Sister

### Yanah

Stepsister

### Vincent Tsui

Employer

### Abe Ma

Employer's wife

### Icy Tsui

Employer's daughter





## SYNOPSIS

The coming of age story of two sisters from Indonesia, the elder Susi (Dea Panendra) leaves Indonesia to support her family and her younger sister (Yanah G)'s education working as a domestic worker in Hong Kong. After being abused and fired by her employer,

Susi meets Bruno (Bruno Zanin), a traveller, by chance and they form an unlikely friendship.



## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

For this movie, we insert fiction within larger landscapes of reality, working with a classical tragedy plot for the storyline, we will give these reality landscapes the function of the chorus. In our filmmaking practice, the ridge between fiction and documentary has been an opportunity for authenticity rather than a concern.

As the written form is not the primary material of this film script, during pre-production we will work together with many Indonesian domestic workers, starting off from simple outlines of scenes dialogues. Our approach allows an ongoing dialogue, a script forcefully open to reality, formally merging the tools of fiction with those of documentary; inserting fiction within real situations. The protagonists were requested to improvise, in pre-production and during production they proactively fill in the gaps of a loose storyline in order to liberate their personal

experiences and impregnate the final film with their own languages and ways of expression. Real experiences are one of the many raw materials organically melted together in order to make the ritual of this film as a profound and transformative experience for everyone involved.

The search for film locations rigorously include places mentioned by participants during scriptwriting workshops, as places where our Indonesian workers spend their free time, both at the core and outside of Hong Kong, a fragmented global village of our time. The attempt of setting universal themes into this liminal territory means the final movie speaks not one main language, but a mixture of Bahasa, Cantonese, and English. The geography of this film thus speaks for any migrant worker living in a global metropolis, becoming the geography of precarious human feelings, values, and relations.

This movie is an insider's gaze on today's migrant condition.





## PRODUCERS' NOTES

Migrant domestic workers forms the largest group of migrants workers in Hong Kong, and the majority of them are women. According to the Immigration Department there are around four hundred thousand of them living and working in the city, accounting for 10% of her total workforce. Despite their large number, they face debt-bondage, abuse, and racial discrimination.

The unfortunate experiences of Erwiana Sulistyaningsih in Hong Kong and Tuti Tursilawati in Saudi Arabia are only two of the many grievous cases of violence against female migrant domestic workers worldwide. There are 13 million migrant domestic workers around the globe, predominantly women from developing countries, according to a 2015 International Labour Organization report. Their mistreatment is a growing global phenomenon which is what makes this film relatable to different countries and regions.

We hope to reach out to mainstream audiences internationally, and change people's perceptions of women migrant workers. The film is multilingual with Bahasa Indonesia (30%) , Cantonese (10%) and English (60%) dialogues.

We were inspired by the pioneer of ethnographic cinema, Jean Rouch, and his films *Moi, Un Noire* and *Jaguar*. With this film we too want to give migrants a voice. Inspired by Rouch's method of ethnographic cinema, we produced a film together with the people represented in it to best portray their lived experiences.



Over a one year ethnographic laboratory, we wrote the script with these Indonesian migrant workers through acting improvisations and qualitative interviews. With the interviews serving as the backbone of the script, we continuously discussed the script with them during workshops to ensure the film depicts accurately the collective narrative of their hardships.



## DEA PANENDRA

Singer-actress Dea first came to fame in 2010 when she made it as a finalist in the competition show Indonesian Idol. After acting in national musical productions for several years, in 2017 she starred in *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts*, screened in the Directors' Fortnight section at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival, as well as being the 2018 submission to the Oscars from Indonesia.

## BRUNO ZANIN

Bruno played the protagonist role in Federico Fellini's *Amarcord* (1973), 1975 Oscar winner for Best Foreign Language Film. After two decades working with Giorgio Strehler and Luca Ronconi in Italian theatre, he left the scene and participated as a humanitarian volunteer in the Bosnian war. His life experiences were the subject of his novel "Nobody Must Know".

## ALBERTO GEROSA

A filmmaker and visual ethnographer currently affiliated with Image Anthropology LAB at Tokyo University, Alberto has been directing award-winning ethnographic films since 2008, and has taught filmmaking at Chinese University of Hong Kong, Antwerp University, and Polytechnic University of Hong Kong, among others. *Susi* is his first feature film.

## JOHANNES NAKAJIMA

Johannes Nakajima is an award-winning editor based in Cologne in Germany. He attended the documentary school Zelig in Bolzano, Italy and the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome. He has worked on many European feature and documentary films for cinema and television. At the International Film Festival 2013 in Rome, he received the AMC award for Best Editing of the movie *TIR* by Alberto Fasulo which also won the Golden Marc Aurelio for Best Film.



## THINKYOUNG

ThinkYoung is a not-for-profit organisation with the aim of making the world a better place for young people, by producing high quality research on key issues affecting the youth. It conducts trainings and workshops to empower youth with the tools they can use to have a positive impact and make a change. At ThinkYoung Audiovisual Laboratory, young researchers are trained in filmmaking and multimedia projects. So far, our team has produced about 100 ethnographic films on youth in more than 30 countries.

## FONDATION JEAN ROUCH

The Fondation Jean Rouch was created, according to the wish of Jean Rouch, by his wife Jocelyne in 2006, and works under the auspices of the Fondation de France. Its main goal is the promotion of the work and advocacy of Jean Rouch through initiating and supporting related projects such as researches, publications, screenings, and events. The foundation also contributes to development efforts in different countries. *Susi* is the first film produced by the foundation.