



# PHANTOSMIA



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE  
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA  
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2024  
Official Selection

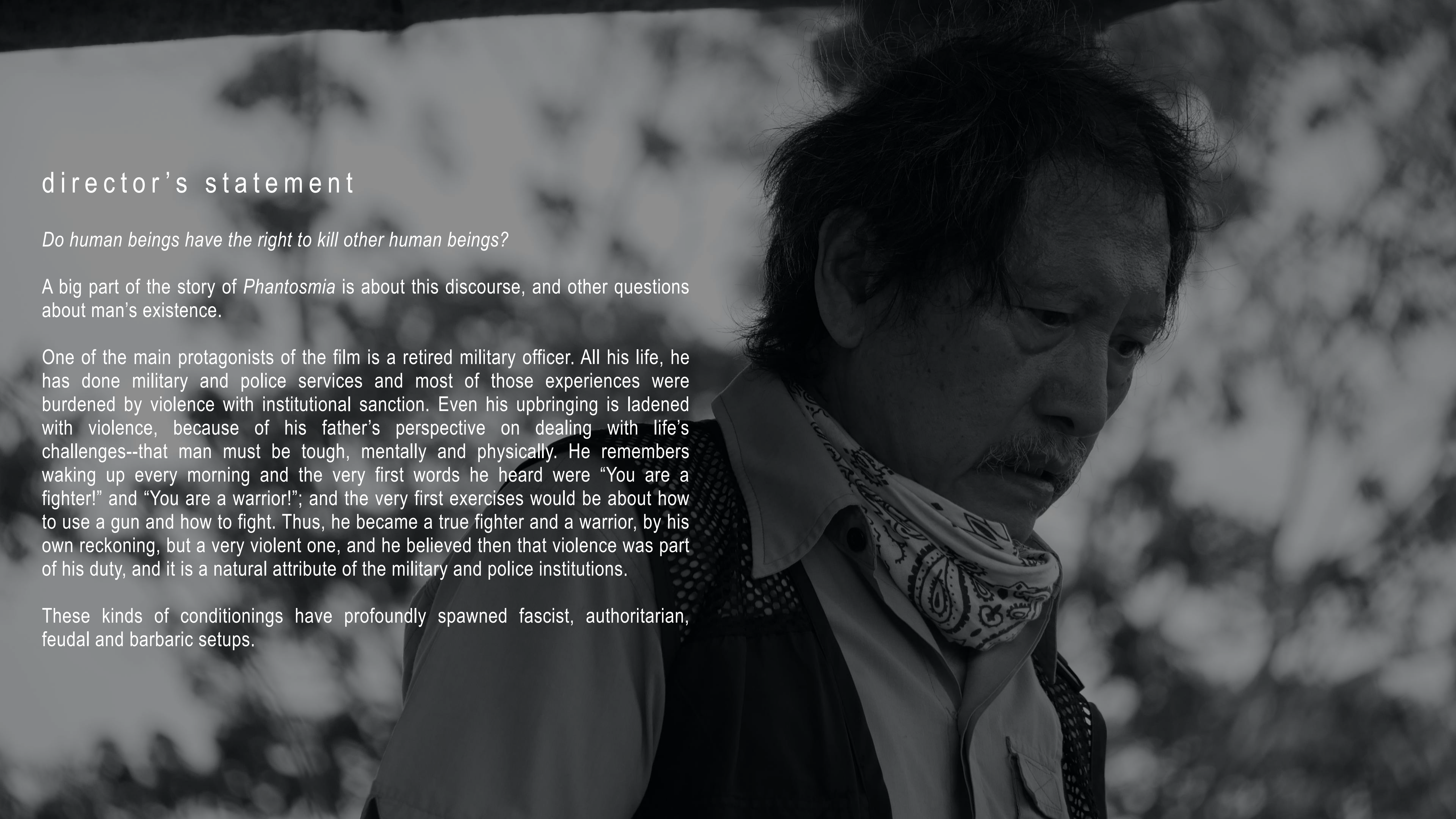




## synopsis

Hilarion Zabala's mysterious olfactory problem has recurred; a counselor/psychiatrist suspects it to be a lingering case of phantosmia, a phantom smell, and possibly caused by trauma, a deep psychological fracture. One recommended radical process to cure the ailment was that Hilarion must go back and deal with the darkest currents of his past life in the military service. Reassigned in the very remote Pulo Penal Colony, he must also confront the horrific realities of his present situation.





## director's statement

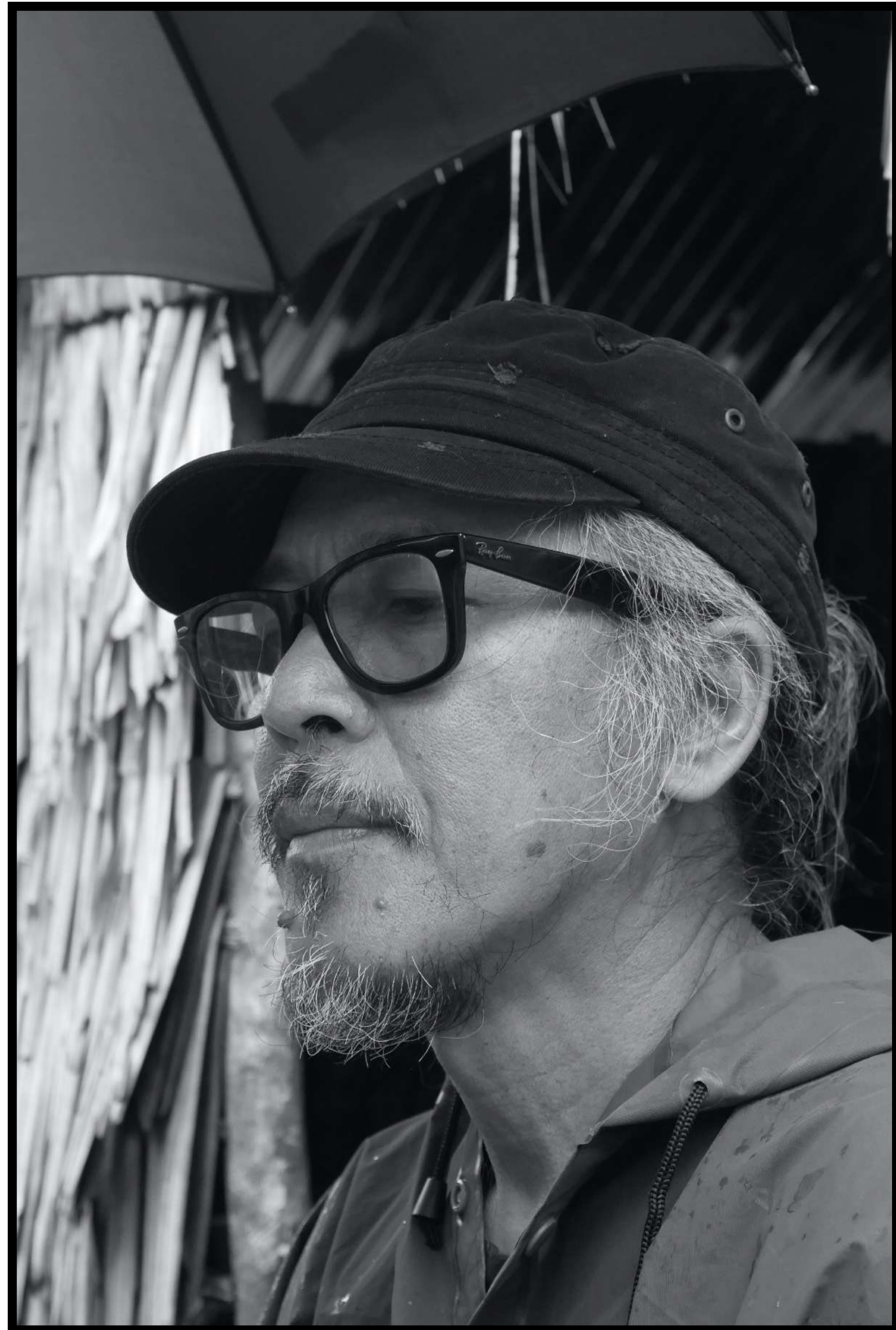
*Do human beings have the right to kill other human beings?*

A big part of the story of *Phantosmia* is about this discourse, and other questions about man's existence.

One of the main protagonists of the film is a retired military officer. All his life, he has done military and police services and most of those experiences were burdened by violence with institutional sanction. Even his upbringing is laden with violence, because of his father's perspective on dealing with life's challenges--that man must be tough, mentally and physically. He remembers waking up every morning and the very first words he heard were "You are a fighter!" and "You are a warrior!"; and the very first exercises would be about how to use a gun and how to fight. Thus, he became a true fighter and a warrior, by his own reckoning, but a very violent one, and he believed then that violence was part of his duty, and it is a natural attribute of the military and police institutions.

These kinds of conditionings have profoundly spawned fascist, authoritarian, feudal and barbaric setups.





## LAV DIAZ (Director)

Lavrente Indico Diaz aka Lav Diaz is a filmmaker from the Philippines who was born on December 30, 1958 and raised in Cotabato, Mindanao. He works as director, writer, producer, editor, cinematographer, poet, composer, production designer and actor all at once. He is especially notable for the length of his films, some of which run for up to eleven hours. That is because his films are not governed by time but by space and nature. His films are about the social and political struggles of his motherland and through these, he has garnered the admiration of the international festival circuit.

Since 1998 he has directed twelve films, and won several international awards. His 2002 film *Batang West Side* won Best Picture at the Singapore International Film Festival, plus awards at the Independent Film Festival of Brussels, Gawad Urian, and Cinemania International Film Festival. He also received a Gawad Urian for his 2005 film *Evolution of a Filipino Family* and Special Jury Prize at the Fribourg International Film Festival in 2006 for *Heremias, Book One*. His film *Death in the Land of Encantos*, was the closing film of the Orizzonti section of the Venice Film Festival 2007, and was awarded a Golden Lion Special Mention. His 2008 eight-hour film *Melancholia*, a story about victims of summary executions, won the Orizzonti Grand Prize at the 65th Venice International Film Festival in 2008, and *Florentina Hubaldo, CTE* has received Best Film at Images Festival, Toronto and Jeonju International Film Festival in 2012. In 2010 he received a Guggenheim Fellowship and in 2011 joined the Board of Directors for Cine Foundation International. The Venice Film Festival calls him “the ideological father of the New Philippine Cinema”.

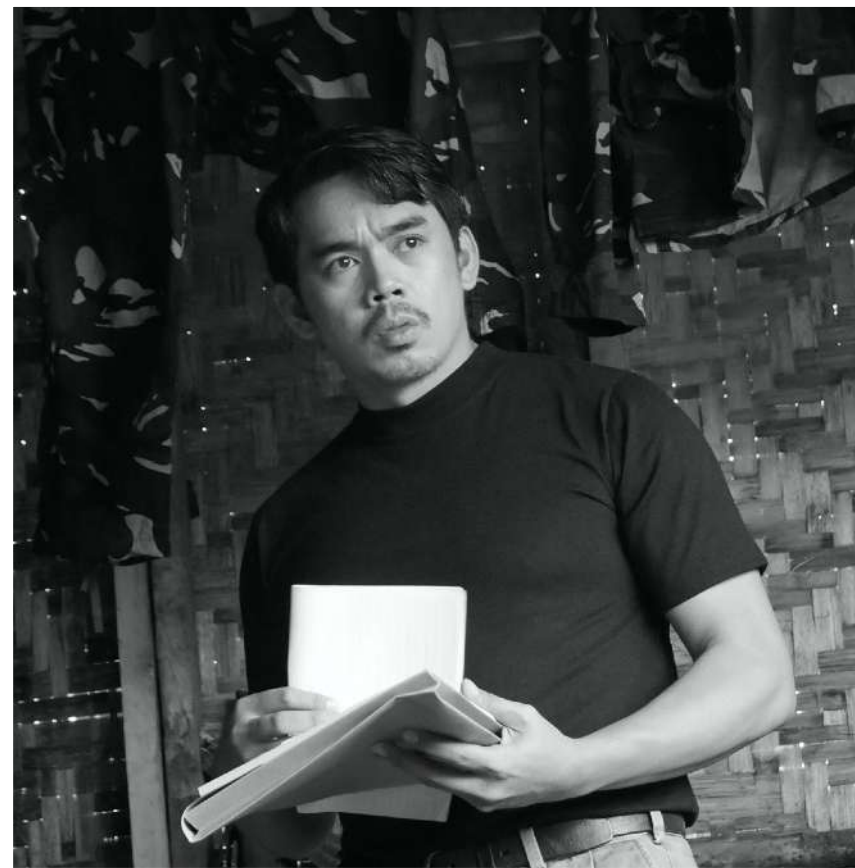
In 2013, his film *Norte, The End of History* is presented at Un Certain regard Cannes Film Festival and considered as “one of the most beautiful film seen in Cannes” (Jacques Mandelbaum, *Le Monde*) or even “quite possibly the best film there” (Daniel Kasman, *Mubi*), a “superb piece of focused narrative” (Jonathan Romney, *Screen*) –a broadened international recognition that earns him to be invited at FID Marseille to be part of the Official Competition Jury and eventually at the 2013 Locarno Film Festival as the President of the Jury. His film “*Mula sa Kung Ano ang Noon*” (From What is Before) won the Golden Leopard in Locarno Film Festival. The following year, his eight-hour film “*Hele sa Hiwagang Hapis*” (A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery) won the Silver Bear Alfred Bauer Prize in Berlin International Film Festival and “*Ang Babaeng Humayo*” (The Woman Who Left) bagged the Golden Lion Prize in the Venice International Film Festival, the oldest film festival in the world.



CAST DELEGATION IN ATTENDANCE  
FOR THE VENICE INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL



RONNIE LAZARO  
As Hilarion Zabala



PAUL JAKE PAULE  
As Major Lukas



JANINE GUTIERREZ  
As Reyna



HAZEL ORENCIO  
As Narda



DONG ABAY  
As Marlo







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