

“An intimate and restrained exploration of mother-daughter relations that uses the digital cinema medium to reflect an authentic and ground-level experience of contemporary urban life.”

-- NETPAC/FIPRESCI Jury, Singapore International Film Festival, 2002

“Riri Riza’s Adventure”

An I Sinema Film: *Eliana, Eliana*

Jakarta, 1 Mei 2002

After the commercially successful musical *Sherina’s Adventure*, Riri Riza directs a small indie film. This new adventure is titled *Eliana, Eliana*. The film was premiered internationally at the Singapore Film Festival, on April 23, 2002, and received big applause from critics and audiences. In the same festival, the film received two awards, Silver Screen Award for Best Young Cinema, and Jury Award from Network of Promoting Asian Cinema and Federation of International Film Critics (NETPAC/FIPRESCI). The film will premiere in its home country (Indonesia) in June 2002.

Different from *Sherina’s Adventure*, this new film is a more personal one to Riri. “To me, this film is one of the most challenging project to date. In this film I urged myself to trust my own creative intincts, to work based on my own intuitions as a writer, creator and director,” said Riri about *Eliana, Eliana*.

In this film, Riri didn’t only direct, but he co-wrote the screenplay (with prima Rusdi as his co-writer), and he is also the producer. “Every filmmaker must have a room of his own to express his deepest thoughts, which arises from his daily interactions with other human beings and the world. *Eliana, Eliana* are those thoughts,” said Riri.

Eliana, Eliana tells a story of a one night trip Eliana (Rachel Maryam) had to go through with her mother, Bunda (Jajang C. Noer). Five years ago, Eliana ran away from her home in Padang to live in Jakarta. And in this one particular day she lost her job and being threatened by her landlord, her mother came with two tickets for the first flight back to Padang.

To prove that she is doing fine, she drags her mother along with her in a beaten up Taxi to find her roommate, Heni (Henidar Amroe). This one night trip turns out to be a real journey for Eliana and her mother, and it reveals their past, who they are now, and what they may become.

“To me, this film is more like a statement on how fragile human beings are,” note Riri Riza. “And it never occurs to me that it would be a statement on women, or on communication problems between generations. Because *Eliana, Eliana* is a story about typical human beings, which is being told in a not-so-typical way.”

Eliana, Eliana is an I Sinema production. I Sinema is a movement, a manifesto of 13 filmmakers to explore film as a medium. This exploration could resulted in cinematography techniques or directing treatments, or anything else. But *Eliana, Eliana* does it through the exploration of the story itself, with minimum characters and a short timespan of the story.

ELIANA, *ELIANA* a film by riri

Which is why seeing *Eliana, Eliana* is an adventure in itself. When we sit in the theatres and watch the film, it's really like a one night journey in a beaten up Taxi where we visit the dark corners of Jakarta.

Another difference between *Eliana, Eliana* and *Sherina's Adventure* is in how the film itself is being made. *Eliana, Eliana* is made with a low budget and minimum crews and casts. The film is being shot with digital video, and blown up to celluloid so it can still be viewed with a 35mm projector.

Even though *Eliana, Eliana* has a small number of crews and casts, the people involved in this projects are highly respected in Indonesian film scene. Besides newcomer Rachel Maryam as Eliana, the other actors/actresses are Jajang C. Noer, Henidar Amroe and Arswendi Nasution (who plays Bungaran, the taxi driver) who are considered senior actors in Indonesia. The cinematographer, Yadi Sugandi, is also the cinematographer of *Sherina's Adventure* and *Whispering Sands* which has acclaimed many awards. Adrianto Sinaga is the Art Director of *What's With Love?*, the latest box office hits in Indonesia which also won him best art direction from a local film festival. The music scoring is made by Thoersi Argeswara, which recently received an award for his scoring for *Whispering Sands* from the Asia Pacific Film Festival. While Mira Lesmana, the reknowned producer of Indonesia is also involved as co-producer.

In financing the film, *Eliana, Eliana* receives funding from Miles Films and Prima Entertainment.

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"A gritty slice of emotionally-fraught life set in grimy, chaotic Jakarta, director Riri Riza's digi-debut *Eliana, Eliana* is the film that should – no, make that "must" – put new Indonesian cinema squarely on the map. What at first appears to be a loosely-woven tale of mother/daughter relations (with a pair of breathtaking performances by Jajang C. Noer and Rachel Maryam quickly blossoms into an inter-knit succession of parent-child reunions, each of them crisscrossing the others' intentions during a long night's journey into day. On a variety of visceral and aesthetic levels, Riza's tightly-budgeted, fourteen-day, one-camera production elegantly out-manoeuvres anything going on in American independent cinema today. If it seems to recapture the jagged uncertainties of something like late-career Cassavetes, I'm sure the director would be flattered to hear it, but forget the comparisons and flatter him even more: *Eliana, Eliana* – bitter, tenacious, and ultimately exhilarating – is like nothing you've ever seen. And see it, you must."

-- Chuck Stephens, film critic (Film Comment & Filmmaker Magazine)

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ELIANA, ELIANA – technical details

Indonesian Title : Eliana, Eliana
English Title : Eliana, Eliana
Aspect Ratio : Cinemascope 1 : 2,35
Duration : 83 minutes
Year of production : 2002

Rachel Sayidina : Eliana
Jajang C. Noer : Bunda
Henidar Amroe : Heni
Arswendi Nasution : Cab Driver

Writer/Director : Riri Riza
Screenplay : Riri Riza and Prima Rusdi
Producer : Riri Riza and Mira Lesmana
Cinematography : Yadi Sugandi
Art Director : Adrianto Sinaga
Editor : Sastha Sunu
Sound : Suhadi, Satrio Budiono, Adityawan Susanto
Music : Thoersi Argeswara

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Synopsis:

After five years of separation, Bunda (Jajang) pays her daughter Eliana (Rachel) a surprise visit, with two tickets of the first flight next morning. Not a proper moment for Eliana. With a beaten up Taxi driven by Bungaran (Arswendi) Eliana drags her mother for night trip to find Heni (Henidar), her soul and roommate just to prove that she's doing fine all this time without her mother's help. The trip reveals their past, who they are now, and what they may become.