

Highlight News

[March 28, 2006](#)
[March 27, 2006](#)
[March 26, 2006](#)
[March 25, 2006](#)
[March 24, 2006](#)
[March 23, 2006](#)

News & Views

[National City](#)
[Opinion](#)
[World](#)
[Business](#)
[Features](#)
[Supplement](#)
[Sports](#)
[Gallery](#)
[Weekly Roundup](#)
[Past Editions](#)
Resources
[Acronyms](#)
[Addresses](#)

[Indonesian Cabinet](#)
[Indonesian History](#)
[RI-GAM MOU](#)
[State of the Nation](#)
[Address](#)
[President's Inauguration](#)
[Speech](#)
[Tsunami Declaration](#)
[IMF Reforms](#)
[Anniversary Edition](#)
[2004 Elections](#)

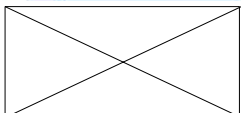
[Links](#)
[Where to go](#)

Members Area

[Register](#)
[Login](#)
[Archives](#)
[Who's Who](#)

About Us

[Company Info](#)
[Online Media Kit](#)



Nia opens yet another closet in 'Berbagi Suami'

Features - March 26, 2006

Paul F. Agusta, Contributor, Jakarta

Nia Dinata's newest directorial offering *Berbagi Suami* follows up on a recent upsurge in Indonesian films with courageously controversial themes.

Cases in point over the past few months have been lesbianism in *Detik Terakhir* (Final second) and the traumatic impact of domestic violence explored *Belahan Jiwa* (Soulmates).

Yet, of the socially conscious cinematic offerings of late, only *Berbagi Suami* (Love for Share), which opened in theaters nationwide on Thursday, March 23, has succeeded in providing a stylistically solid vehicle strong enough to bear the weight of a socially disconcerting topic like polygamy.

Polygamy, although commonly practiced within Indonesian society, is not frequently discussed or even openly acknowledged in most circles. For that reason alone, *Berbagi Suami*, which breaks ground socially, is one of the most significant as well as finely crafted films to emerge in recent years.

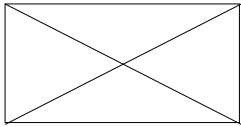
No stranger to difficult subjects, Nia Dinata (who also directed *Arisan* with its gay content in 2004) starts telling three separate stories of polygamous families from different rungs of society with the creation of an engaging and moving screenplay.

Solidly crafted, without the plot holes or lapses in logic ubiquitous to most contemporary screenplays here, *Berbagi Suami's* script focuses on the characters, bringing to life individuals who are at once accessible and sympathetic.

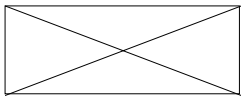
Although Nia's own political stance on men who practice polygamy emerges by the end of the story, it never supersedes the task at hand -- providing a strong basis for the creation of a compelling and entertaining film.

As a director with two feature films already under her belt, Nia is now coming into her own as a notable creative force in Indonesia's reviving film industry. Although many of the visual elements of *Berbagi Suami* are highly reminiscent of the distinct style of Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai, Nia has achieved a distinctly Indonesian feel to the visual texture of the film.

For example, a scene from the story of the film's second family, in which two of the four wives of a low-level film crew employee share a tiny, cramped "bedroom" with several of his children, conveys the



Associates



Search

starkness and desperation of their lives.

Her visual language, like her writing, stays consistently strong throughout the film. In fact, there are scenes in which dialog becomes totally unnecessary.

The director also succeeded in optimally utilizing the beautiful score composed by Aghi Narottama, Bemby Gusti and Ramondo Gascaro, which enhances the power of every shot in Ipung Rachmat Syaiful's flawless cinematography.

Her casting selections, with perhaps only the exception of Tio Pakusadewo as a Chinese husband, were inspired. And even then, Tio fit the bill quite well until he got to typically Chinese-Indonesian colloquialisms, which he just couldn't deliver believably enough.

Clearly having picked carefully from the cream of the crop of Indonesia's senior actors (Tio Pakusadewo, El Manik, Jajang C. Noer, Ria Irawan, Ira Maya Sopha and Nungki Kusumastuti), as well as recently emerged performers (Lukman Sardi, Rieke Dyah Pitaloka and Winky Wiryawan) and newcomers (Shanty, Dominique A. Diyose, Atiqah Hasiholan and Reuben Elishama), Nia built on their strengths and guided them deftly in the exploration of their characters.

Berbagi Suami is only the second of this year's releases in which it is obvious the director paid close attention to developing her actors' performances; director Rudi Soedjarwo's *9 Naga* (Nine dragons) is the other.

Of the actors, Manik and Jajang, as the polygamous husband and first wife in the initial tale of multiple spouses, give what could very well be among the most exceptional performances of their already illustrious careers. Lukman definitely enhances his small yet impressive body of work in the role of a sleazy, low-class Lothario, and hip-hop star Shanty, in her first major film role, puts in a stunning performance as a naive village girl manipulated into a marriage with her uncle.

Berbagi Suami, which can be viewed with English subtitles at the 21 Cineplex in Plaza Senayan, is likely to be remembered as an important stepping-stone in the history of the nation's current cinematic revival.

Berbagi Suami (Drama, 120 minutes) Starring Jajang C Noer, El Manik, Ria Irawan, Tio Pakusadewo, Lukman Sardi, Shanty. Written and directed by Nia Dinata. Released by Kalyana Shira Films. **** out of *****

[National](#) [City](#) [Opinion](#) [World](#) [Business](#) [Features](#) [Supplement](#) [Sports](#)
[Gallery](#) [Weekly Roundup](#) [Your Column](#) [Past Editions](#)
[Acronyms](#) [Addresses](#) [Indonesian Cabinet](#)
[Indonesian History](#) [Links](#) [Where to go](#)
[Archives](#) [Who's Who](#)
[Company Info](#) [Online Media Kit](#) [Print Media Kit](#) [Home](#)

This Website is designed for The Jakarta Post by [CNRG ITB](#).
 All contents copyright © of The Jakarta Post.
webmaster@thejakartapost.com