

TIMELESS / JODOH

A Story of Love, Memory and Destiny

Story Treatment

Project	20-minute Indonesian-Dutch short film
Partners	Stichting Art in Motion (AiM) and Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI)
Disciplines	Film, Music and Dance
Format	Two online lectures and an intensive four-day workshop

Prepared for Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), Bandung

Creative Director and Co-Producer: Rob Hammink

Logline

In 2007, fifty-seven years after his father served in Indonesia, a forty-six-year-old Dutch reporter travels to Bandung to uncover the truth behind an unfinished love story between his father and a blind Chinese-Indonesian dancer - only to discover that he himself has never truly learned how to see.

Short Synopsis

TIMELESS / JODOH is a twenty-minute short film set in two interwoven time periods: Indonesia in 1948-1949 and Bandung in 2007. The film follows Rudolph, a young Dutch conscript reserve officer who is sent to Java during the turbulent final years of Dutch colonial rule. Rather than becoming defined by the politics of conflict, he is gradually drawn into a human story that changes the course of his emotional life.

In Bandung, Rudolph meets Annie The, an eighteen-year-old Chinese-Indonesian woman. Annie is blind, although the film does not immediately announce this to the audience. At first, the viewer notices only small details: she often walks with a hand on someone's arm, she pauses at thresholds, she listens with unusual intensity, and her eyes do not always meet the person speaking to her. Rudolph, however, is not distracted by these details. He is drawn to her intelligence, wit, dignity and warmth.

One evening Rudolph attends a dance performance. Annie is among the dancers. Outside the stage she moves carefully, sometimes uncertainly, but when she dances her body opens. She breathes slowly and deeply. Her hands become eloquent. Her gestures are precise, graceful and emotionally charged. Rudolph sees something that others may overlook: not disability, but beauty, concentration and freedom.

Their love remains platonic but profound. The historical circumstances around them make a shared future impossible. Rudolph returns to the Netherlands carrying photographs, notes and a memory he never releases. He dies before he can return to Indonesia.

After Rudolph returns to the Netherlands, the story remains unresolved. In 1964 he dies in a sailing accident before he can return to Indonesia. Through the inheritance he leaves her, Annie is finally able to realise a long-held dream: she establishes a school for blind children in Bandung. In 2007, Rudolph's son Chris, a Dutch reporter aged forty-six, discovers fragments of the story and travels to Bandung. His search leads him to the school founded by Annie, where he meets her as an elderly woman. At first Chris unconsciously sees her through the lens of disability and age. Through Annie's memories, and through what she reveals about Rudolph, Chris gradually understands that his father had seen what he himself had failed to see: that beauty and attraction are not diminished by disability, and that the deepest form of sight is not physical.

Historical and Emotional Context

The historical background of the film is Indonesia in 1948-1949, a period marked by conflict, uncertainty and the painful end of the colonial relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia. The film does not attempt to explain the entire political history of the period. Instead, it uses history as an atmosphere: a world of military movement, social tension, cultural misunderstanding, unexpected friendships and private emotions that cannot be reduced to national categories.

The second time layer, set in 2007, allows the film to examine how history survives in personal memory. Chris does not travel to Indonesia as a historian but as a reporter and son. His professional instinct is to investigate; his personal need is to understand. This duality gives the film its emotional drive.

Main Characters

Rudolph

Rudolph is a young Dutch conscript reserve officer. He is intelligent, observant and increasingly uneasy with the conflict around him. He is not presented as a heroic soldier or as a political symbol, but as a young man trying to remain humane inside a confusing historical moment. His attraction to Annie is not sentimental. He is fascinated by her presence, her inner life and her refusal to be defined by what others might see as limitation.

Annie The

In 1948 Annie is an eighteen-year-old Chinese-Indonesian woman living in Bandung. She is blind and a gifted dancer. Rudolph first notices her during a dance performance and becomes fascinated by her presence, grace and character. Only later does he discover that she is blind.

After Rudolph's death in a sailing accident in 1964, Annie receives an inheritance from him. Using that inheritance, she establishes a school for blind children in Bandung. The school becomes her life's work and later serves as the location where Chris finally finds her in 2007.

Chris does not initially know that Annie was blind. During his investigation he gradually discovers this, and eventually learns that Rudolph saw beyond Annie's disability. Chris realizes that he himself was the one who had been blind in his assumptions.

Annie's dance is not decorative. It is the purest expression of her inner freedom. Her hands become a language: searching, remembering, touching the air as if reading invisible words. Through dance, she temporarily escapes the carefulness that structures her daily life.

Chris

Chris is Rudolph's son, a forty-six-year-old Dutch reporter in 2007. He is used to looking for facts, witnesses and evidence. He begins the story believing that he is investigating his father's past. Gradually, the investigation turns inward. His encounter with Annie reveals his own unconscious assumptions about age, disability and attraction. His final transformation is simple but profound: he learns the difference between looking and truly seeing.

Yong Mi

Yong Mi, Chris's Korean partner, appears primarily through memory or backstory. Her departure or emotional distance functions as a catalyst. Chris begins his journey at a moment when he is already unsettled. This makes him vulnerable enough to be changed by what he finds in Indonesia.

Themes

- Love beyond circumstance: the relationship between Rudolph and Annie is impossible in practical terms but enduring in emotional truth.
- Memory across generations: Chris inherits not only his father's documents but also his unfinished questions.
- Looking versus seeing: Annie is physically blind, but Chris discovers that he has been blind in a moral and emotional sense.

- Human dignity and attraction: the film challenges the assumption that disability makes a person less attractive, less powerful or less complete.
- Intercultural understanding: the Dutch-Indonesian relationship is explored through human connection rather than abstract politics.

Three-Act Structure for a 20-Minute Film

Act I - Arrival and Encounter (approx. 6 minutes)

Rudolph arrives in Java and is confronted with a world he does not fully understand. The atmosphere is tense, but the film quickly moves from military exterior to human interior. In Bandung, he meets Annie as a young woman in the city, before any school for the blind exists in the story. Their first exchange is understated. She surprises him with humour or directness. The audience begins to notice that she navigates the world differently, although this is not yet explained.

Act II - Dance, Love and Separation (approx. 7 minutes)

Rudolph attends a dance performance. Annie is among the dancers. The scene becomes the visual and emotional centre of the first timeline. Rudolph sees her with complete attention. Their connection deepens but remains restrained. Historical circumstances then intervene. Rudolph leaves Indonesia. In the Netherlands, he preserves memories of Annie but cannot return. His death in a sailing accident in 1964 leaves the love story unresolved, but his inheritance allows Annie to create something lasting: a school for blind children in Bandung.

Act III - Chris and Annie (approx. 7 minutes)

In 2007 Chris travels to Bandung. His search leads to the school for the blind that Annie founded after receiving Rudolph's inheritance. There he meets Annie as an elderly woman. He expects answers about his father; instead, he receives a lesson in perception. Annie recalls Rudolph not as a soldier but as someone who truly saw her. Chris realises that his father understood her dignity and beauty immediately, while he, Chris, initially saw only age and disability. The film closes with Chris looking again - this time differently.

Key Scenes

1. Rudolph arrives in Java: brief, atmospheric, not explanatory.
2. First encounter with Annie as a young woman in Bandung: curiosity, wit and subtle signs of blindness.
3. Rudolph observes Annie moving carefully in daily life: a hand on an arm, a pause, a breath.
4. The dance performance: Annie's hands and breathing become the emotional language of the film.
5. Separation: Rudolph leaves, carrying photographs and memory.
6. Chris discovers the diary or photographs in 2007.
7. Chris arrives in Bandung and searches for Annie.
8. Chris meets Annie at the school for the blind she founded after Rudolph's inheritance made it possible.
9. Annie reveals what Rudolph understood.
10. Chris looks at Annie, and at the old photograph, with new eyes.

Visual Style

The 1948-1949 scenes should have a tactile, memory-like quality: warm interiors, textured walls, uniforms that feel lived-in, and a camera that observes hands, faces and small gestures rather than large historical

spectacle. The 2007 scenes can be more investigative and restrained: streets, archives, photographs, interviews, pauses and the school for blind children that Annie founded after Rudolph's death. The contrast between the two periods should not be exaggerated; both are connected by memory and legacy.

The camera should avoid pity when filming Annie. It should never look down on her. In daily movement, the camera may register uncertainty, but in dance it should allow space, dignity and beauty. Close-ups of hands, breathing and subtle facial expression are essential.

The Role of Dance

Dance appears only briefly but meaningfully. It is not a separate performance inserted into the film; it is a narrative revelation. Rudolph understands Annie most deeply when he sees her dance. The audience understands her not as a character defined by blindness, but as someone whose inner freedom becomes visible through movement.

Closing Statement

TIMELESS / JODOH is a story about love, history and perception. It suggests that the greatest blindness may not be the inability to see with the eyes, but the inability to recognise beauty, dignity and humanity when they stand before us. Rudolph sees Annie. Chris learns to see her. The audience is invited to do the same.

Biography - Rob Hammink

Rob Hammink, born in 1961 in Wisch (villa Keizershut), the Netherlands, is a Dutch journalist, photographer, author, actor and cultural entrepreneur. He obtained his pilot licence in 1983 and graduated in Journalism in Utrecht in 1988. During his career as a journalist and senior reporter, he reported from more than one hundred countries. He is the author of *Jodoh - Zielenmaatje* and appeared as an actor in the Indonesian feature film *Bumi Manusia*. Through Stichting Art in Motion (AiM), he develops cultural exchange projects between Indonesia and the Netherlands, with a focus on film, visual arts, education and intercultural collaboration.