

= Andjar Asmara =

Abisin Abbas ([aʔbisʔn aʔbas] ; 26 February 1902 ? 20 October 1961) , better known by his pseudonym Andjar Asmara ([anʔdʔar asʔmara]) , was a dramatist and filmmaker active in the cinema of the Dutch East Indies . Born in Alahan Panjang , West Sumatra , he first worked as a reporter in Batavia (modern @-@ day Jakarta) . He became a writer for the Padangsche Opera in Padang , where he developed a new , dialogue @-@ centric style , which later spread throughout the region . After returning to Batavia in 1929 , he spent over a year as a theatre and film critic . In 1930 he joined the Dardanella touring troupe as a writer . He went to India in an unsuccessful bid to film his stage play Dr Samsi .

After leaving Dardanella in 1936 , Andjar established his own troupe . He also worked at a publishers , writing serials based on successful films . In 1940 he was asked to join The Teng Chun 's company , Java Industrial Film , helping with marketing and working as a director for two productions . After the Japanese occupation , during which time he stayed in theatre , Andjar made a brief return to cinema . He directed three films in the late 1940s and wrote four screenplays , which were produced as films in the early 1950s . He published a novel , Noesa Penida (1950) . Afterward he worked for the remainder of his life writing serials based on local films and publishing film criticism . Historians recognise him as a pioneer of theatre and one of the first native Indonesian film directors , although he had little creative control of his productions .

= = Early life and theatre = =

Andjar was born Abisin Abbas in Alahan Panjang , West Sumatra , on 26 February 1902 . He gravitated toward traditional theatre at a young age after visits from the wandering Wayang Kassim and Juliana Opera stambul troupes ; he pretended to act with his friends in stage plays which they had seen . After completing his formal education up to the Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs (junior high school) level ? first in Malay @-@ language schools then Dutch ones ? he moved to Batavia (modern @-@ day Jakarta) . He worked as a reporter for two daily newspapers , Bintang Timoer and Bintang Hindia ; he may have also worked on a farm .

Around 1925 , having had little success in Batavia , Andjar moved to Padang , where he was a reporter for the daily Sinar Soematera . At the same time , he worked with the city 's Padangsche Opera , writing stage plays . In contrast to the standard musical theatre of the time , bangsawan , he promoted a more natural style , using dialogue instead of song to convey the story ; he referred to this as toneel , based on the Dutch word for theatre . Among the works he wrote for the Padangsche Opera were adaptations of Melati van Agam , a 1923 work by Swan Pen , and Sitti Nurbaya , a 1922 novel by Marah Roesli . These works were well received .

In the late 1920s , after spending some two years in Medan with the daily Sinar Soematera , Andjar returned to Batavia and in 1929 helped establish the magazine Doenia Film , a Malay adaptation of the Dutch @-@ language magazine Filmland ; although an adaptation , Doenia Film also contained original coverage of the domestic theatre and film industry . At the time , the cinema of the Indies was becoming established : the first domestic film , Loetoeng Kasaroeng (The Lost Lutung) , was released in 1926 , and four additional films were released in 1927 and 1928 . Andjar wrote extensively regarding local cinematic and theatrical productions ; for example , the Indonesian film critic Salim Said writes Andjar inspired the marketing for 1929 's Njai Dasima , which emphasised the exclusively native cast . In 1930 Andjar left Doenia Film and was replaced by Bachtiar Effendi .

Andjar became a writer for the theatrical troupe Dardanella in November 1930 , working under the group 's founder Willy A. Piedro . Andjar believed the troupe to be dedicated to the betterment of the toneel as an art form and not only motivated by financial interests , as were the earlier stambul troupes . He wrote and published many plays with the group 's backing , including Dr Samsi and Singa Minangkabau (The Lion of Minangkabau) . Andjar also worked as a theatre critic , writing several pieces on the history of local theatre , sometimes using his birth name and sometimes his pseudonym . In 1936 Andjar went with Dardanella to India to record a film adaptation of his drama Dr Samsi , which followed a doctor who was blackmailed after an unscrupulous Indo discovered he

had an illegitimate child . The deal fell through , however , and Andjar left India with his wife Ratna .

= = Film career and death = =

Upon his return to the Indies , Andjar formed another theatrical troupe , Bolero , with Effendi , but left the troupe around 1940 to work at Kolf Publishers in Surabaya . Effendi was left as the head of Bolero , which then became more politicised . At Kolf Andjar edited the publisher 's magazine Poestaka Timoer . As his work entailed writing synopses and serials based on popular films for Kolf 's magazine , he became increasingly involved in the film industry . He was soon asked by The Teng Chun , with whom he had maintained a business relationship , to direct a film for his company Java Industrial Film (JIF) ; with this Andjar became one of several noted theatrical personnel who migrated to film following Albert Balink 's 1937 hit Terang Boelan (Full Moon) .

After handling the marketing for Rentjong Atjeh (Rencong of Aceh , 1940) , Andjar made his directorial debut in 1940 with Kartinah , a war @-@ time romance starring Ratna Asmara . Academia was critical of the film , believing it to lack educational value . In 1941 he directed Noesa Penida , a tragedy based in Bali , for JIF ; the film was remade in 1988 . In these films , he had little creative control , and performed as what the Indonesian entertainment journalist Eddie Karsito describes as a dialogue coach . Camera angles and locations were chosen by the cinematographer , who was generally also the producer .

During the Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945 , the nation 's film industry nearly ceased to exist : all but one studio were closed , and all films released were propaganda pieces to assist the Japanese war effort and promote the Greater East Asia Co @-@ Prosperity Sphere . Andjar was not involved in these but was excited by the artistic merits of Japanese films . Although he wrote several short stories during this time , three of which were published in the pro @-@ Japanese newspaper Asia Raja in 1942 , Andjar focused on theatre , forming the troupe Tjahaya Timoer . He often visited the Cultural Centre (Keimin Bunka Sidosho) in Jakarta , where two employees , D. Djajakusuma and Usmar Ismail , discussed filmmaking with him . Both became influential film directors during the 1950s .

After Indonesia 's independence , Andjar moved to Purwokerto to lead the daily Perdjoengan Rakjat . After the paper collapsed , he returned to film , film a piece entitled Djaoeh Dimata for the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration in 1948 . This was followed by two additional films , Anggrek Bulan (Moon Orchid ; 1948) and Gadis Desa (Maiden from the Village ; 1949) , both based on plays he wrote several years earlier . In 1950 , Andjar published his only novel , Noesa Penida , a critique of the Balinese caste system , which followed lovers from different levels of the social hierarchy . Meanwhile , he continued to write and publish paperback serials adapted from local films .

Andjar 's screenplay Dr Samsi was finally adapted as a film in 1952 by Ratna Asmara , who had become Indonesia 's first female film director with her 1950 film Sedap Malam (Sweetness of the Night) . The adaptation starred Ratna and Raden Ismail . It would prove Andjar 's last screenwriting credit during his lifetime . Although no longer writing films , Andjar remained active in the country 's film industry . In 1955 he headed the inaugural Indonesian Film Festival , which was criticized when it gave the Best Picture Award to two films , Usmar Ismail 's Lewat Djam Malam (After the Curfew) and Lilik Sudjio 's Tarmina . Critics wrote that Lewat Djam Malam was easily the stronger of the two and suggested that Djamiluddin Malik , Tarmina 's producer , had influenced the jury 's decision .

In 1958 Asmara became the head of the entertainment magazine Varia , where the fellow director Raden Ariffien served as his deputy . Asmara held the position until his death ; among other roles , he wrote a series of memoirs on the history of theatre in the country . He died on 20 October 1961 in Cipanas , West Java , during a trip to Bandung and was buried in Jakarta .

= = Legacy = =

Andjar 's toneels were generally based on day @-@ to @-@ day experiences , rather than the tales of princes and ancient wars which were standard at the time . Regarding Andjar 's toneels , the

Indonesian literary critic Bakri Siregar writes that Andjar 's stage plays , as well as those of fellow dramatist Njoo Cheong Seng , revitalised the genre and made the works more realistic . However , he considered the conflict in these works to have been poorly developed . Andjar believed that the Padangsche Opera 's performances influenced other troupes in West Sumatra to adapt the toneel format , which later spread throughout the Indies .

Matthew Isaac Cohen , a scholar of Indonesian performing arts , describes Andjar as " Indonesia 's foremost theater critic during the colonial period " , noting that he wrote extensively on the history of theatre in the Indies . Cohen also believes that Andjar also worked to justify the toneel style and distance it from the earlier stambul . Even after entering the film industry , Andjar considered the theatre more culturally significant than cinema . However , the Indonesian journalist Soebagijo I.N. writes that Andjar remains best known for his film work .

Andjar was one of the first native Indonesian film directors , with Bachtiar Effendi , Soeska , and Inoe Perbatasari . Said writes that Andjar was forced to follow the whims of the ethnic Chinese film moguls , which resulted in the films ' shift toward commercial orientation , rather than the prioritisation of artistic merit . The film historian Misbach Yusa Biran writes that Andjar and his fellow journalists , upon joining JIF , brought with them new ideas that helped the company flourish until it closed after the arrival of the Japanese ; the company and its subsidiaries released fifteen films in two years .

= = Filmography = =

Kartinah (1940) ? as director , scriptwriter , and story writer

Noesa Penida (1941) ? as director and story writer

Djaoeh Dimata (Out of Sight ; 1948) ? as director and story writer

Anggrek Bulan (Moon Orchid ; 1948) ? as director

Gadis Desa (Maiden from the Village ; 1949) ? as director and story writer

Sedap Malam (Sweetness of the Night ; 1950) ? as story writer

Pelarian dari Pagar Besi (Escape from the Iron Fence ; 1951) ? as story writer

Musim Bunga di Selabintana (Flowers in Selabintana ; 1951) ? as story writer

Dr Samsi (1952) ? as story writer

Noesa Penida (Pelangi Kasih Pandansari) (Noesa Penida [Pandansari 's Rainbow of Love] ; 1988) ? as story writer (posthumous credit)