

= The Mirror Never Lies =

The Mirror Never Lies (also known by the Indonesian name Laut Bercermin , meaning The Ocean Reflects) is a 2011 Indonesian film directed by Kamila Andini and co @-@ produced by Andini 's father , Garin Nugroho , and former Miss Indonesia Nadine Chandrawinata . Starring Gita Novalista , Atiqah Hasiholan , and Reza Rahadian , it follows a young Bajau girl named Pakis who has lost her father at sea and uses mirrors to unsuccessfully search for him . It has several interpretations , including as a coming @-@ of @-@ age story and as an environmentalist piece .

Filed over a period of two months after nearly three years of research , The Mirror Never Lies was sponsored in part by the Indonesian branch of the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Wakatobi regency government . The first feature film to star the Bajau , it used their language extensively . Although a commercial failure domestically , it has been screened at many international film festivals and won several awards both inside and outside of Indonesia . Critical reviews have generally been positive , mostly emphasising the film 's visuals .

= = Plot = =

Pakis (Gita Novalista) is a young girl from a fishing community of the Bajau people in Wakatobi , Sulawesi , part of the Coral Triangle . She lives with her mother , Tayung (Atiqah Hasiholan) . As Pakis ' father has been lost at sea , Tayung works hard to support her daughter . Pakis , however , is determined to search for her father , a quest which brings the two into conflict . Pakis regularly visits a local shaman , who conducts a ritual allowing Pakis to search for her father in a mirror 's surface . The ritual never shows Pakis his location but she remains determined to keep trying . Meanwhile , Tudo (Reza Rahadian) has broken up with his fiancée . Struggling to cope with the loss , he takes a new job in Wakatobi studying dolphins . There he becomes involved with the Bajau community , staying at Tayung 's home . Eventually Pakis is able to realise that her father is dead and continues with her life .

= = Production = =

The film was directed by Kamila Andini , who also wrote the script and , in collaboration with Dirmawan Hatta , the screenplay . For her feature film debut , Andini chose to write about the sea ? a topic which had long interested her and on which she had previously recorded documentaries . She had also had a long @-@ held interest in environmental issues . It was produced by former Miss Indonesia , Nadine Chandrawinata , together with Andini 's father , the director Garin Nugroho . Andini has stated that she only consulted with her father and that he was not directly involved in the production , while Chandrawinata described herself as assistant producer , with Nugroho in charge . Artistic direction was handled by Timothy D Setyanto , with costumes by Retno Ratih Damayanti and make @-@ up by Erwin Wijaya . Cinematography was completed by Ipung Rachmat Syaiful . Editing was handled by Wawan I Wibowo , while Thoersi Argeswara provided music and Khikmawan Santosa provided sound effects .

The Mirror Never Lies was a collaboration between the Indonesian branch of the World Wide Fund for Nature , the Wakatobi regency government , and SET Film Workshop , with the former two providing funding . It focused on the Bajau people , also known as " sea gypsies " for their nomadic maritime lifestyle . Little Indonesian @-@ language documentation was available to the crew , and as such production took over two years , most of which was research . Andini later recalled that the crew had to " go directly to Wakatobi back and forth to get to know everything about the [Bajau] tribe " . Originally planned for the second quarter of 2010 , shooting was further delayed until September owing to an extended rainy season . Unlike most contemporary Indonesian films , which are often completed in a matter of days , the crew shot on site over a period of two months . They faced poor weather , including typhoons and large waves , and had difficulty manoeuvring over the wooden walkways and bridges used by the Bajau .

The film cast three Bajau teenagers , Gita Novalista , Eko and Zainal , in their feature film debuts ;

the three were the first Bajau to play in a feature film . More experienced actors , including Atiqah Hasiholan and Reza Rahadian (who had received two Citra Awards) , were also cast . Hasiholan later stated that it had been her most challenging role yet , citing the cultural differences between the Bajau and what she was familiar with as well as her unprecedented need to act as a mother . In preparing for their roles , Hasiholan exercised slicing and dicing fish , while Rahadian went to Ancol in North Jakarta to learn about dolphins .

The Mirror Never Lies uses the Bajau language heavily , with its Indonesian spoken in a Bajau accent and , in domestic screenings , Indonesian @-@ language subtitles when Bajau is spoken . The use of pre @-@ recorded music is minimal . Instead , much of the film 's soundtrack consists of " folk songs and chanting " in Bajau . Hasiholan had to undergo tutoring to learn her lines , learning from the Bajau people on location .

= = Themes = =

In a 2012 interview Andini stated that she considered The Mirror Never Lies and the Bajau people symbols of unity ; she expressed that the sea should not separate the different ethnic groups in the nation , but serve to connect them . Likewise , in an interview with Antara Nugroho stated that the film was intended to remind Indonesians that theirs is a maritime nation , which has influenced the country 's culture . The regent of Wakatobi , Hugua , added in an interview with the Indonesian newspaper Kompas that Indonesian films had historically only presented land based cultures .

Triwik Kurniasari , writing for The Jakarta Post , considered the film a criticism of " destructive fishing practices and climate change " in Wakatobi ; she believed that this is shown through the director 's " respect for the environment " in the film . Writing for Kompas , Teguh Prayoga Sudarmanto noted that such a theme is representative of realities faced by Bajau fishermen , who must travel ever further as the fish supplies diminish . He further suggested that the film depicts the sea as capable of both friendliness and hostility , a force with which the Bajau must deal every day . The critic Lisabona Rahman , writing for the Indonesian film database filmindonesia.or.id , contrasted The Mirror Never Lies with the plot of " tourist " (" turis ") films : unlike in such films , where a city @-@ dweller changes the traditional lifestyle in a village , Tudo is able to adjust himself to village life and follow their ways .

Benny Benke , writing for the Semarang @-@ based Suara Merdeka , drew a parallel between The Mirror Never Lies and Samuel Beckett 's play Waiting for Godot . He suggests that they both have the same message : that awaiting somebody who never comes is ultimately futile . Benke further suggests that the film is centred around the conflict between the " utopian " Pakis and her " realistic " mother . Meanwhile , Maggie Lee , reviewing in The Hollywood Reporter , considered the film more of a coming @-@ of @-@ age story , with Pakis " discovering her womanhood just when the most significant man in her life is gone " . Lee also noted Pakis ' burgeoning sensuality and " nascent physical stirrings " for her friend Tudo . Ultimately , Lee suggested that Andini was expressing her desire to " break away from her father ' [sic] artistic influence and swim alone " through the film .

= = Release and reception = =

The Mirror Never Lies was premiered at the XXI Cineplex at FX Life Style in Jakarta on 26 April 2011 , followed by a wide release on 5 May 2011 . According to Lisa Siregar of The Jakarta Globe , the film was one of the first to document the Bajau people , including several of their rituals . It was a commercial failure domestically , seeing little viewership .

Puput Puji Lestari , writing for the Indonesian entertainment website KapanLagi.com , praised The Mirror Never Lies , concluding that it was " highly recommended " [sic] and that , despite some scenes which were out of focus , it " showed its quality from the first minute " . Kurniasari considered the performances by the Bajau youth well done and praised the visuals as a " sneak peak into the beauty of Wakatobi " . She found , however , that the film had several events with unclear motives . Lee likewise praised the film 's " breathtaking underwater cinematography " and Novalista 's performance , considering the youth 's performance " convincingly embodying the uncertainties of a

girl on the brink of adolescence " . She found some faults in the film , including its ecological message which made " some scenes look rather Discovery Channel " and the " artificial " manner in which traditional songs were included in the film . Siregar also praised the visuals , writing that " every frame of the film is filled with the natural beauty of Wakatobi " and that *The Mirror Never Lies* would likely attract tourists to the islands .

Writing for *Tempo* magazine , Nunuy Nurhayati found that Andini had " done pretty well " with the film , praising its storyline and the children 's acting . She considered the film 's main strength to be the " beauty and uniqueness of Wakatobi 's panoramas " and wildlife . Benke found that the film was full of symbolism , similar to the works of Nugroho ; Benke stated , however , that *The Mirror Never Lies* much easier to decipher than works by Andini 's father . Rahman gave the film six out of ten . She praised Hasiholan and Novalista 's performances , but found Rahadian 's to be lacking . Although admitting the technical difficulties in filming on @-@ site , she wrote that the cinematography could have been better .

The film was screened at numerous international film festivals , including the Busan International Film Festival in Korea , the Vancouver International Film Festival in Canada , the Mumbai Film Festival in India , the Tokyo International Film Festival in Japan (where it received a special mention) , the Seattle International Film Festival in the US , and the Melbourne International Film Festival in Australia . It was one of two Indonesian films screened at the 2012 Berlin International Film Festival , playing to full cinemas in the Generation category ; Kompas reported that it was recommended viewing for German schoolchildren at the time .

= = Awards = =

The Mirror Never Lies has won several awards in both domestic and international film festivals . Before its domestic release , it won a special mention from the Global Film Initiative for its aesthetics and cultural content . For her directorial debut , Andini won a " Bright Young Talent Award " at the 2011 Mumbai Film Festival . At that year 's Indonesian Film Festival the film was nominated for eight Citra Awards , winning two . It lost four , including Best Film , to Ifa Isfansyah 's *Sang Penari* (*The Dancer* ; 2011) , while Hanung Bramantyo 's ? (2011) surpassed *The Mirror Never Lies* for cinematography .

At the 2012 Bandung Film Festival *The Mirror Never Lies* received four awards from a total of ten nominations . At the 2012 Asia Pacific Screen Awards , it was one of two Indonesian works to compete , winning a single award from a single nomination . That year the film competed at the Asian Film Awards , receiving nominations for Best Cinematographer and Best Newcomer . The former award was ultimately captured by Chin Ting @-@ Chang of *Warriors of the Rainbow : Seediq Bale* (2011) , while the latter was taken by Ko Chen @-@ tung of *You Are the Apple of My Eye* (2011) .

= = Explanatory notes = =