

Los Angeles Filmforum presents
Rajee Samarasinghe: *Your Touch Makes Others Invisible*
Sunday, November 23, 2025, 7:30 pm
At 2220 Arts + Archives

Los Angeles Filmforum is the city's longest running organization dedicated to weekly screenings of experimental film, documentaries, video art, and experimental animation. 2025 is our 50th year. www.lafilmforum.org

Los Angeles Premiere!

In person: Rajee Samarasinghe, in conversation with Meena Nanji

As many as 100,000 people, predominantly members of the minority Tamil community, are estimated to have disappeared during the 26-year-long Sri Lankan Civil War. Through a unique synthesis of interviews, news clips and re-enactments this docufiction reflects on this harrowing history as families search for loved ones that disappeared without a trace.

Prominent among the many unspeakable atrocities marking the 26-year-long civil war in Sri Lanka is the phenomenon of enforced disappearances at the hands of military forces. Estimates suggest that up to 100,000 people, mostly members of the minority Tamil community, may have disappeared since the eighties. Fifteen years after the end of the war in 2009, families are still looking for their vanished loved ones.

In his debut feature *Your Touch Makes Others Invisible*, Sinhalese filmmaker Rajee Samarasinghe reflects on this harrowing history through a combination of direct interviews, newsclips, dramatic re-enactments and abstract, symbolically coded tableaux. Heartrending testimonies of grieving mothers are interwoven with sparse fictional vignettes produced in collaboration with members of the Tamil community.

The film's episodic construction advances a set of propositions around a spectral void, namely the absent bodies of those who are missing. This otherworldly quality is reinforced by present-day drone footage of war-torn areas, seemingly idyllic and scar-free, that has the texture of an alien incursion. Shot in challenging conditions by means of subversion and subterfuge, Samarasinghe's film presents a singular, compelling reflection on crime and bereavement. – Srikanth Srinivasan, International Film Festival Rotterdam, <https://iffr.com/en/iffr/2025/films/your-touch-makes-others-invisible>

Rajee Samarasinghe is a Sri Lankan filmmaker and visual artist born and raised amidst the decades-long civil war in Sri Lanka. He received his BFA from the University of California San Diego and his MFA from the California Institute of the Arts. Much of his work interrogates the sociopolitical landscape of Sri Lanka through the deconstruction of nonfiction modalities and the legacies of colonialism in contemporary media. His practice was born out of a desire to understand the circumstances around his childhood and often navigates the terrain of memory, migration, and impermanence.

Samarasinghe recently completed his debut feature film, *Your Touch Makes Others Invisible*, which explores post-civil war Sri Lanka. The project received support from the Sundance Institute's Documentary Film Program, Berlinale Talents' Doc Station, Field of Vision, and True/False Film Festival's PRISM program, and had its world premiere at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in 2025. Named one of Filmmaker Magazine's 25 New Faces of Independent Film in 2020, Samarasinghe has had solo shows at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA - Modern Mondays), the Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival, and Los Angeles Filmforum, among others.

Samarasinghe's films have been exhibited at venues internationally including the Tiger Short Competition at the International Film Festival Rotterdam, New Directors/New Films by MoMA and Film at Lincoln Center, MoMA's Doc Fortnight, BFI London Film Festival, FIDMarseille, Festival du nouveau cinéma, Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, Slamdance, Media City, Prismatic Ground etc. He's received the New Cinema Award at the Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival, the Tíos Award for Best International Film at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, the Film House Award for Visionary Filmmaking at the Athens International Film + Video Festival, and the Best Video Art & Experimental Award at the Tirana Film Festival among others.

Screening:

The Eyes of Summer (Gimhanaye netra)

Sri Lanka/USA, 2020, color, sound, 15 min.

"The Eyes of Summer" was shot in the filmmaker's mother's village in southern Sri Lanka in 2010, immediately after the civil war. Together with family members, he developed an improvised story around a shy girl who becomes friends with a spirit, based on similar encounters from his mother's childhood. A story from a repressed community that doesn't seem to draw defined boundaries between life and death.

Your Touch Makes Others Invisible

Sri Lanka & USA, 2025, 2.39 Scope, color, 5.1 Surround Sound, 70 min.

Tamil, Sinhala, English, & Russian

A Tamil woman loses her son to a supernatural entity plaguing her community in a war torn village in Northern Sri Lanka and intertwining with her journey are real-life testimonies with women whose family members vanished at the hands of military forces during the civil war.

Los Angeles Filmforum screenings are supported by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture, the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles. This activity is supported in part by the California Arts Council, a state agency. Learn more at www.arts.ca.gov. We also depend on our members, ticket buyers, and individual donors.

Coming soon:

Nov 28 – co-presenting Sky Hopinka's *Malni—Towards The Ocean, Towards The Shore*, at the Philosophical Research Society

Nov 30 - *John Lilly and the Earth Coincidence Control Office*, by Courtney Stephens and Michael Almereyda, at the Philosophical Research Society, Stephens in person

Dec 7 – Filmforum 50: The Women's Gaze: Chick Strand's *Soft Fiction* and Courtney Stephens's *Terra Femme*

Dec 12 - Filmforum 50: Steve Anderson's *Reality Frictions* with Marlon Fuentes's *Bontoc Eulogy*, at the UCLA Film & TV Archive Billy Wilder Theater

Dec 14 – Filmforum 50: *Three Sparks* by Naomi Uman, LA Premiere, Uman in person

Memberships available, \$40 Student \$75 Individual, \$125 Dual, or \$225 Silver Nitrate

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