

Hong Kong Asia Film Financing Forum ■●香港國際電影節協會 HK International Film Festival Society

## The 18<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) Brief Report

The **18<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum** (HAF) was held over three days from 26 to 28 August in conjunction with Filmart Online. Initially scheduled for March, the event had to move its dates following the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and switched to an online platform. The forum was organised by the **Hong Kong International Film Festival Society** (HKIFFS), co-organised by the **Hong Kong Trade Development Council** (HKTDC) and the **Hong Kong Motion Picture Industry Association** (MPIA), and financially supported by **Create Hong Kong** (CreateHK) and **Film Development Fund** (FDF). Held concurrently with **Hong Kong International Film and TV Market** (FILMART) for the fourteenth time, HAF was once again one of the core events of Entertainment Expo Hong Kong.

HAF is widely recognised as one of the most significant film-financing platforms in Asia. Over the three-day period, HAF attracted leading film financers, producers, distributors and buyers, connecting them with talented filmmakers through business meetings and seminar, pitching and networking events for potential co-production opportunities.

### 1. Shortlisted Projects and Filmmakers

This year, HAF has received over 330 submissions in the **HAF Project** section, among which 32 projects from 18 places were shortlisted, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, The Netherlands, The Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. The selection includes 23 fiction film projects and nine projects in the expanded documentary section, covering a wide range of subjects.

On the other hand, the **Work-in-Progress** (WIP) initiative, which enters its fourth edition in 2020, is designed to provide a platform for later-stage projects seeking completion funding, post-production partners, distributors and sales agents, film festival supports, and other industry services. This year WIP line-up covers two sections, including 10 fiction film and 12 documentary film projects, selected from over 160 submissions that have completed or nearly completed shooting or production.

## 2. International Partners (in alphabetical order):

- 1. Asian Project Market (APM), Busan International Film Festival (South Korea)
- 2. CineMart, International Film Festival Rotterdam (The Netherlands)
- 3. CPH:DOX, Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival (Denmark)
- 4. DMZ International Documentary Film Festival (South Korea)
- 5. Festival Scope, Moving Scope SAS (France)
- 6. Focus Asia, Far East Film Festival (Italy)

- 7. Film Bazaar, National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) (India)
- 8. FIRST International Film Festival (China)
- 9. Guangzhou International Documentary Film Festival(GZDOC) (China)
- 10. Golden Horse Film Project Promotion (FPP), Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival (Taiwan)
- 11. Hong Kong Film Awards (Hong Kong)
- 12. International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam(idfa), (The Netherland)
- 13. International IP Commercialization Council (IIPCC) (Hong Kong)
- 14. Marché du Film (France)
- 15. Mercato Internazionale Audiovisio (MIA), International Rome Film Festival (Italy)
- 16. One International Women Film Festival (ONEIWFF) (China)
- 17. Southeast Asia Fiction Film Lab (SEAFIC) (Thailand)
- 18. **Network of Asian Fantastic Films** (NAFF), Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival (South Korea)
- 19. SIFF Project, Shanghai International Film Festival (China)

## 3. Concurrent Events and Advisory:

Concurrent Events:

- Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF)
- HKIFF Cine Fan
- Hong Kong International Film & TV Market (FILMART)

## Advisory:

The 18<sup>th</sup> HAF's advisory is comprised of esteemed industry professionals, including:

- 10 International Advisors
- 1 Honorary Legal Advisor
- 5 Project Reading Committee Members

## 4. Industry participation:

Online business meetings were arranged for the filmmakers of 32 selected HAF Projects and 22 selected WIP Projects. Participating HAF guests included film financiers, film producers, film buyers and distributors, film festival delegates, representatives of film funds and film commissions, production companies and post-production houses.

## HONG KONG / MACAU

 Asian Shadows, Blue Island Production Company, Edko Films Ltd., Emperor Motion Picture Ltd., Fox Networks Group Asia Pacific Ltd., Golden Dragon Pictures Ltd., Good Move Media, Icon Group Ltd., International Film Festival & Awards Macao | Industry Hub, Irresistible Films, M+ Museum for Visual Culture, Mar Vivo Films, Media Asia Films Co., Ltd., Medialink Entertainment Ltd., mm2 Entertainment Hong Kong Ltd. and Sony Pictures Entertainment.

## CHINA

 Blueberry Pictures, Bona Film Group, DongChun Films, Fantawild Pictures Inc., Heaven Pictures (Beijing) The Movie Co., Ltd., FIRST International Film Festival, Guangzhou International Documentary Film Festival (Guangzhou Global Raytur International Public Communication Corp.), Hainan Island International Film Festival, Huayi Brothers International Ltd., JiangSu OMNIJOI Movie Co., Ltd., Mei Ah Interstellar Film Distribution (Beijing) Co., Ltd., The One International Women's Film Festival, Parallax Films, Rediance, Shanghai International Film Festival | SIFF Project, Shanghai Xingyi Film Entertainment Co., Ltd., ShenZhen ShanWei Films, Tencent Video and Universal Pictures.

## TAIWAN

 Flash Forward Entertainment, Machi Xcelsior Studios, MandarinVision Co., Ltd., Million Star Entertainment Inc., Mirror Media, Mirror Stage Films, Perfect Sound Co., Ltd., Taipei Film Commission, Taipei Film Festival, Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival | Film Project Promotion and Taiwan International Documentary Festival.

## JAPAN

• Be Wiz Inc., Documentary Dream Center, Harakiri Films, Osaka Asian Film Festival, Tokyo Convention and Visitors Bureau, Tokyo International Film Festival and UNIJAPAN.

## SOUTH KOREA

 ASIAPD Company, BOM Film Productions, Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival | Network of Asian Fantastic Films, Busan International Film Festival | Asian Project Market, DMZ International Documentary Film Festival, EBS International Documentary Film Festival, Hanmac Culture Group, Seoul Film Commission and Seoul International Women's Film Festival.

## EAST & SOUTHEAST ASIA

 Australian International Documentary Conference (Australia), Film Development Council Of The Philippines (The Philippines), National Film Development Corp. Ltd. (India), Singapore International Film Festival (Singapore), The Southeast Asian Fiction Film Lab (SEAFIC) (Thailand) and White Light Studio (Thailand).

## FRANCE

• Alpha Violet, Arsam, Coproduction Office, Directors' Fortnight, House on Fire and Les Contes Modernes.

## UK

• Celsius Entertainment Ltd., Film Republic, Plaza Mayor Company Ltd. and Scorpion TV.

## EUROPE (OTHERS)

 ANT!DOTE Sales (Russia), Berlinale Co-Production Market (Germany), Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival | CPH:DOX (Denmark), Doclisboa - International Film Festival (Portugal), Far East Film Festival | Focus Asia Project Market (Italy), Films Boutique (Germany), Fortissimo Films (The Netherlands), Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival (Canada), International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (The Netherlands), International Film Festival Rotterdam | CineMart (The Netherlands), Intramovies (Italy), Locarno Film Festival (Switzerland), m-appeal (Germany), Media Luna New Films (Germany), NOISE Film PR (Germany), San Sebastian International Film Festival (Spain), Silver Sword International (Canada), Sweet Spot Docs (Switzerland), TVO (Canada), Vancouver International Film Festival (Canada), Venice Film Festival (Italy) and Visions du Réel (Switzerland).

#### USA

• Illinois Public Media, Imagine Entertainment and SK Global Entertainment.

### **OTHER REGIONS**

• Cercamon (United Arab Emirates), Doc Edge (New Zealand), Juntos Films (Chile) and New Zealand Film Commission (New Zealand).

## 5. Project Accomplishments:

HAF alumni have gone on to enjoy both box office success and critical acclaim at major film festivals around the world with their completed projects, effectively realising the opportunities offered by the forum.

*Verdict* (WIP 2019) by **Raymund Ribat GUTIERREZ** (The Philippines) won the Special Prize in the Horizons, Venice Film Festival 2019, was selected for the Toronto International Film Festival 2019, shortlisted for The Philippines' entry for the Best International Feature Film for the Academy Awards 2020

*The Cloud in Her Room* (Film Lab 2018) by **Zheng Lu Xinyuan** (China) won the Tiger Award in International Film Festival Rotterdam 2020, and the Firebird Award and Best Actress, Young Cinema Competition (Chinese Language) in the Hong Kong International Film Festival 2020.





*The Works and Days (Originally titled Occident's March)* (WIP 2019) by **C.W. WINTER** and **Anders EDSTRÖM** (USA, Sweden, Japan, Hong Kong, United Kingdom) won the Best Film in Berlin Film Festival Encounters 2020 and was selected in the Vision Section in Taipei Film Festival 2020.

*SUK SUK* (WIP 2019) by **Ray YEUNG** (Hong Kong) won the Best Actor and Best Supporting Actress in the Hong Kong Film Awards 2020, nominated for Best Feature Film, Best Leading Actor, Best Supporting Actress and Best Original Screenplay in the Golden Horse Awards 2019, and was selected in the Panorama section of the Berlin Film Festival 2020 and Busan International Film Festival 2019

*To Live To Sing* (WIP 2019) by **Johnny MA** (China) won the NETPAC Award and Best Screenplay Award at the International Film Festival & Awards Macao 2019, and was selected at the Cannes Film Festival, Director Fortnight 2019.

*The Shepherdess and the Seven Songs* (WIP 2019) by **Pushpendra SINGH** was selected in the Berlin Film Festival Encounters 2020 and won the Best Director, Young Cinema Competition (World) in Hong Kong International Film Festival 2020

Please click here for more details.

## 6. Event Highlights

Over the three-day period, HAF organized virtual business meetings and two open pitch sessions to connect global film financers, producers, distributors and buyers with talented filmmakers, encouraging collaboration across borders and facilitating financial support for the Asian cinema.

## A) Project Meetings

Date: 26 - 28 August 2020 Filmart Online Platform

HAF arranged business meetings over the three-day period to connect filmmakers with global investors, distributers and buyers to explore co-production opportunities.

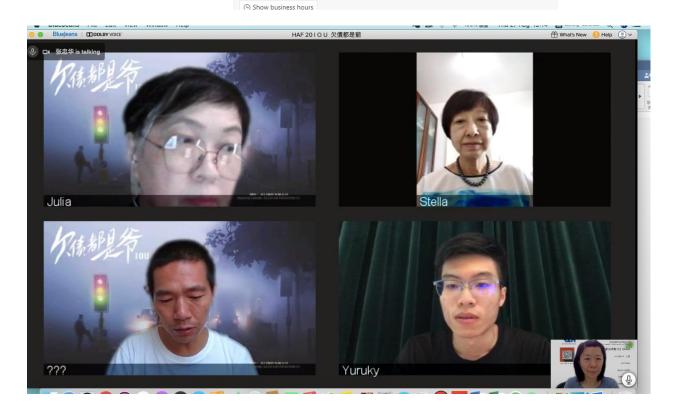








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## **B) WIP Open Pitch**

# HAF Work in Progress Open Pitch - Documentary

Co-organisers: Hong Kong – Asia Film Financing Forum, Hong Kong International Film Festival Society

HAF Work-in-Progress Open Pitch, is designed to provide a platform for later-stage projects seeking completion funding, post-production partners, distributors and sales agents, film festival supports, and other industry services. This year, 22 feature projects shortlisted for WIP, comprising of ten fictions and 12 documentaries from territories including Hong Kong, China, India, Vietnam and the Philippines.





Part I: Documentary Date: 26 August 2020 (Wednesday) Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 noon Website: <u>http://www.hktdc.com/hkfilmart</u>

## HAF Work in Progress Open Pitch - Fiction

#### Co-organisers: Hong Kong – Asia Film Financing Forum, Hong Kong International Film Festival Society

HAF Work-in-Progress Open Pitch, is designed to provide a platform for later-stage projects seeking completion funding, post-production partners, distributors and sales agents, film festival supports, and other industry services. This year, 22 feature projects shortlisted for WIP, comprising of ten fictions and 12 documentaries from territories including Hong Kong, China, India, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Work-in-Progress 2020 Virtual Open Pitch Fiction Projects



Part II: Fiction Date: 26 August 2020 (Wednesday) Time: 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm Website: http://www.hktdc.com/hkfilmart

This year marked the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of "Work-in-Progress" Open Pitch. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the format of open pitch changed to online with pre-recorded video footages. All videos were in three languages: Cantonese, English and Putonghua. The aim of the open pitch was to promote the selected film projects and connect the talented filmmakers with professionals and investors, post-production companies, distribution agents and film festival programmers.

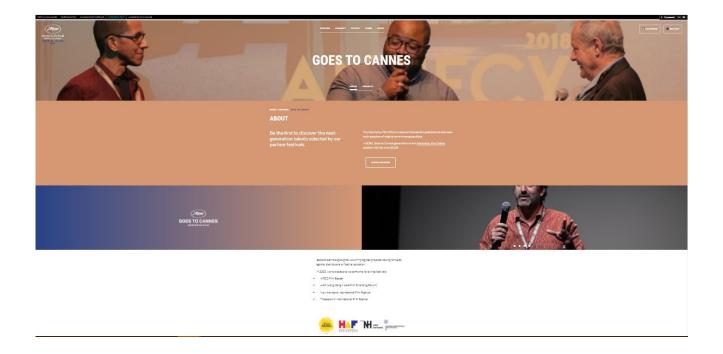
Filmmakers were invited to present their projects in two virtual open pitch sessions on 26 August, 2020. The sessions aimed at the audience of film industry professionals attending FILMART and HAF. 508 audience views were recorded in total. Private meetings with the attendees were also arranged.

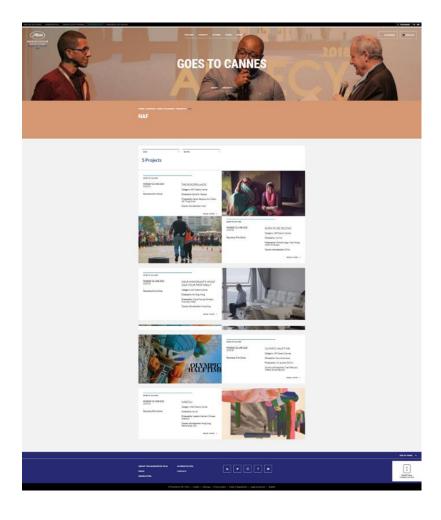


The 22 presented projects included 10 fiction films and 12 documentaries. Fiction projects included Adolfo ALIX Jr.'s *The Double*, Jun LI's *Drifting* and Prasun CHATTERJEE's *Two Friends (Dostojee)*, Antonio TIBALDI's *We Are Living Things*, Kavich NEANG's *White Building*, QIU Jiongjiong's *The Neo-New Adventures*, LEI Lei's *Ningdu*, HAN

Shuai's Summer Blur, NIU Xiaoyu's Virgin Blue, ZHOU Ziyang's Wuhai. Documentary projects included Samarth MAHAJAN's The Borderlands, HA LE Diem's Children of the Mist, Vivek CHAUDHARY's I, Poppy, WONG Fei-pang's Dear Immigrants: How was Your First Meal?, CHAN Ying-wai's In Between Worlds, Waraluck HIRANSRETTAWAT's Kith and Kin, Venice ATIENZA's Last Days at Sea, Haruna HONCOOP's Olympic Halftime, ZHANG Nan's Another Brick on the Wall, LUO Shuai's Being Mortal, FAN Jia's Born to be Second, and YANG Lina's Leap of Faith.

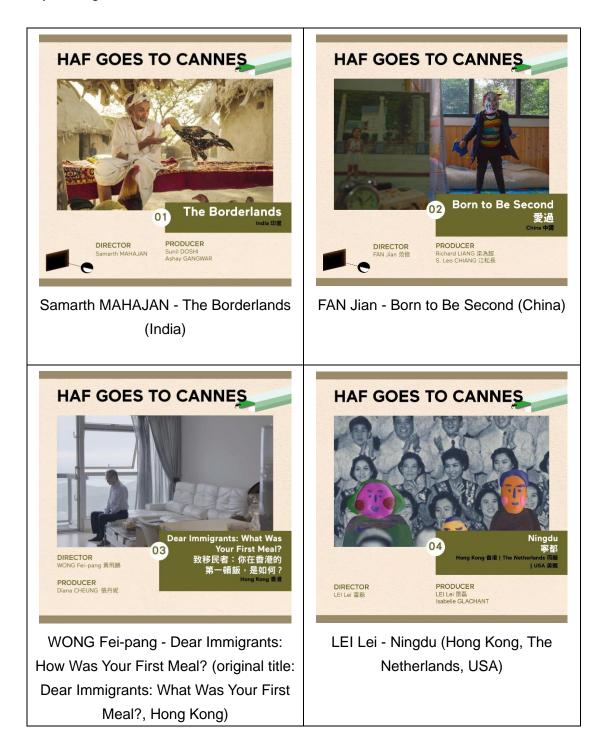
**C) HAF Goes to Cannes** 





HAF partnered with Marche du Film the fourth time and presented the program "HAF Goes to Cannes", where WIP projects *The Borderlands*, *Born to be Second, Dear Immigrants: How was Your First Meal?*, *Ningdu* and *Olympic Halftime* were selected to participate in Marche du Film of Festival de Cannes this June prior to the online HAF this year

(https://www.marchedufilm.com/programs/goes-to-cannes/projects/haf/). Selected WIP Projects enjoyed the benefits of screening the film footage, online meetings with guests and industrial professionals, project exposure, social networks, press release and newsletter mention offered by the organiser.





## **D) Operation Greenlight**

Date: 27 August 2020 (Thursday) Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 noon (Hong Kong Time) Website: http://www.hktdc.com/hkfilmart Attendees: 468 guests

Operation Greenlight, organised by the Hong Kong International Film Festival Society (HKIFFS) for Create Hong Kong (CreateHK) and the Hong Kong Film Development Council (HKFDC), features a bespoke open pitching session to connect Hong Kong young filmmakers with industry professionals and potential investors.

Seven projects, selected from CreateHK and FDC's most recent edition of the First Feature Film Initiative (FFFI), were invited to participate in an online pitching session at the 18<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) in conjunction with FILMART Online on 27 August 2020. After the first run of the session, Operation Greenlight remained accessible online to FILMART and HAF guests until the end of the FILMART Online period.

A total of 468 film industry professionals attended Operation Greenlight Pitch Session. The overall top five viewing countries and regions of the session were Hong Kong (38%), China (9%), Taiwan (8%), USA (8%) and Japan (8%).

The seven film projects included LAU Kok-rui's *The Sunny Side of the Street*, Charis CHU Yeuk-hei's and Ben LIU Ho-chi's *Parental Guide*, Kurt CHIANG Chung-yu's *Knockout*, Isabella LAM's *Disconnected*, Tony WONG Man-kit's *Do You Remember Me?*, Yellow WONG Chi-yeung's *No One World* and WAN Kar-wuen's *Live On Without Me*.





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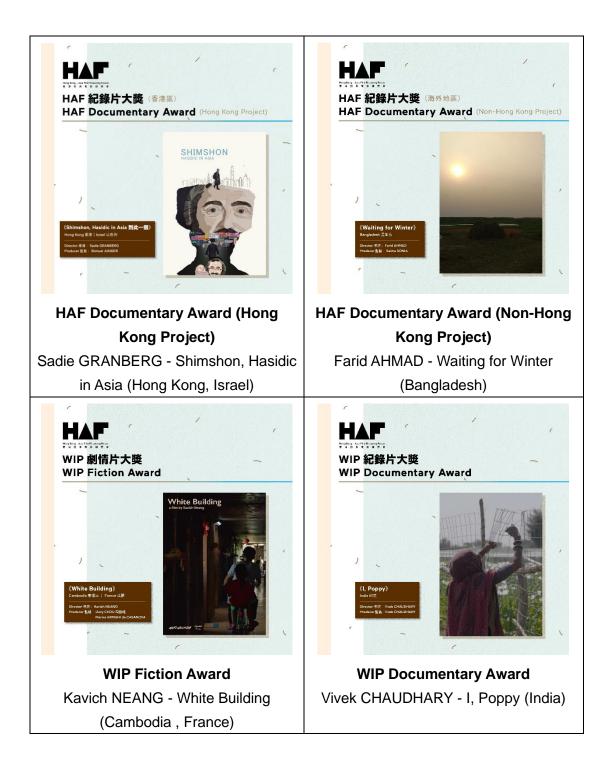


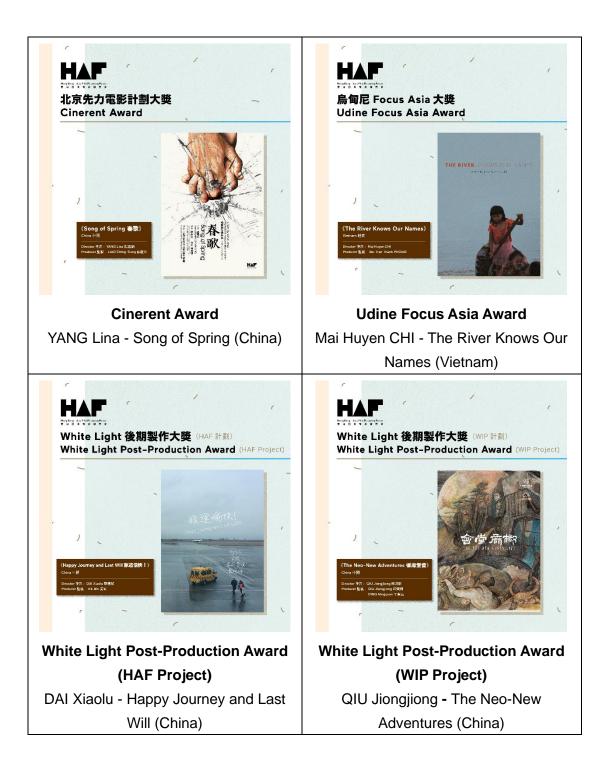
## **E) HAF Awards Announcement**

HAF presented a total of 10 awards, worth over HK\$1 million (approx. US\$129,000) in cash and value-in-kind.



#### The 18<sup>th</sup> HAF Award List





## 7. HAF Statistics

## Projects

Over 330 HAF project submissions and over 160 WIP project submissions were received from around the world. 32 HAF projects and 22 WIP projects were selected to attend HAF Online during 26 - 28 August 2020.

## Financiers and Appointments

The participating guests included film financiers, film producers, film buyers and distributors, film festival delegates, representatives of film funds and film commissions, production companies and post-production houses. Throughout the three days of HAF Online, 597 online meetings were arranged for the projects.