

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## HKIFFS UNVEILS 26 IN-DEVELOPMENT HAF PROJECTS



**Hong Kong, 18 January 2024** – The Hong Kong International Film Festival Society (HKIFFS) has announced 26 in-development projects shortlisted for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF), scheduled to take place from 11 to 13 March 2024, in conjunction with the Hong Kong FILMART.

These in-development projects (IDP) cover many genres, from comedy and horror to action, romance, family drama, and animation, carefully chosen from 256 submissions from 37 countries and regions.

"We are delighted to present a diverse array of projects, including seven feature directorial debuts, two animations, and a spate of collaborative endeavours across multiple countries," expressed Jacob Wong, the HKIFF Industry Director. "The selection is a testament to the resurgence of diversity and the revitalisation of international collaborations."

This year's three-day HAF will be an integral part of a newly expanded HKIFF Industry Project Market alongside the inaugural HKIFF Industry - CAA China Genre Initiative (HCG), which aims to support the development of Chinese language genre films.

"As the world gradually returns to normality, we eagerly embrace the opportunities ahead. One of our first efforts is to evolve HAF into a more complete and multi-faceted project market," Wong said.

HKIFFS will announce the shortlisted projects for HCG and HAF's Works-in-Progress initiative by early February.

Some of this year's IDP highlights are: -

### New Directors, Acclaimed Producers

More emerging directors are bringing their feature projects to HAF under the watchful eyes and support of acclaimed and experienced producers. This year's line-up includes:

- Wang Xiaoshuai (*So Long, My Son*) will produce Zhang Yushan's ***About Her Hidden Life***: a young woman with an unhappy history tries to start her life anew.
- Peter Yam (*The Sunny Side of the Street*) and Michael J. Werner (*Suk Suk*) will produce Shreyom Ghosh's horror comedy ***The Vampire of Sheung Shui***: a slacker turns into a bloodthirsty vampire.
- Yamamoto Teruhisa (*Drive My Car*) will produce Sakamoto Yukari's teen drama ***White Flowers and Fruits***: Mean Girls in a Christian girls' boarding school.
- Zhang Lu (*The Shadowless Tower*) will produce Zhang Yu's ***Tephra***: a triptych of two men, one woman and a couple of volcanoes. Zhang Yu's *Killing the Violet* won an award at last year's Pingyao IFF.
- Fukase Kazumi (*Key of Life, Japanese Girls Never Die*) will produce Sakashita Yuichiro's ***Blonde***: Teacher Ichikawa has a problem: all his high school pupils have dyed their hair blonde.

### Winners Return with New Projects

After making a mark with their first and second features, several up-and-coming directors return to HAF with their new projects:

- ***Camellia Girl*** by Josh Kim (*How to Win at Checkers (Every Time)*, premiered at Berlin) and produced by Douglas Seok (*Minari*): two Korean American sisters return to rural Texas for their father's funeral. Trouble in paradise!
- ***Naga Swim Upstream*** by Patiparn Boontarig (*Solids by the Seashore*, 2023 Busan New Currents winner): a woman returns home to Chiang Rai and recovers her mythical Naga lineage.
- ***The Sichuan Culinary Chronicles: In Four Chapters*** by Qiu Jiongjiong (*A New Old Play*, Special Jury Prize at Locarno) is a dark and comedic culinary guide to Sichuan cuisine in four chapters and many colours.

### International Co-productions

- ***The Echo of the Leopard*** marks the first Iran-Ukraine project for HAF. Directed by Hanna Jalali and Moeinoddin Jalali, this Iran-set crime drama is about an ageing father who unwittingly reveals his criminal past and throws his son's life into disarray.
- Hong Kong-USA co-production ***Encore*** by Stefanos Tai (*We Don't Dance for Nothing*) follows a man playing along when his ailing grandma mistakes him for her long-lost lover.
- ***Nagi Notes*** by Fukada Koji (*Love Life*), a Japan-France co-production, is a portrait of the friendship between a Tokyo architect and two high school boys whom she meets visiting her sculptor friend in a mountain village.

- ***Staring at Your Back*** by Jang Kun-Jae (*Because I Hate Korea*, 2023 Busan IFF Opening Film), a Japanese high school boy harbours a deep affection for his childhood friend, a Korean boy - also a Korea-Japan co-production.

### **Animated Features**

Added to the mix are two animated features:

- ***The Excreman - On the Road*** by Brian Tse (Hong Kong's McDull animated feature series) is a poop story about Excreman, a humanised dung character who lives in the sewers.
- Hana Zhang's debut, ***Pet Paradise***, is a stop-motion feature animation about a pig-faced girl battling the eerie world of plastic surgery.

### **HAF Film Lab Titles**

This year's IDP shortlist includes five projects developed by the HAF Film Lab. They are:

- ***A Ghost in the Market*** by Chin Chia-Hua (*Trouble Girl*): a woman, beaten to death by her husband, continues to run her market stall.
- ***Sink City*** by Hou Dasheng (*Hani*, in post-production): rival student groups rehearse "Thunderstorm", a classic Chinese spoken drama, in an old mining town.
- Emetjan Memet's wry comedy and character study ***Good Drink Pub***: a Xinjiang tavern boss falls in love with a new waitress.
- Yeung Leung-chuen's ***The Playwright's Stories***: a young man goes to study drama in Taiwan while his girlfriend stays in Hong Kong.
- Yu Haiyang's thriller ***Wake Me Up***: a Korean-Chinese mother reconnecting with the son she left behind in China, only to find out that he may be a murderer.

### **Guest Accreditation**

Investors, festival programmers, and other industry professionals can now register as guests through <https://Industry.hkiff.org.hk/guest-registration>. Upon successful accreditation, all guests can arrange individual meetings with filmmakers to discuss their projects.

For specific information regarding all the shortlisted in-development projects, please consult the **Appendix**. To stay updated on the latest news and details about the HKIFF Industry Project Market, please visit our official website at <https://industry.hkiff.org.hk> or our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/hkiffindustry>.

### **Notable recent HAF projects**

#### **2024**

- ***Brief History of a Family*** by Lin Jianjie will have its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival, followed by the European premiere in Berlin International Film Festival's Panorama section.
- ***The Cursed Land*** by Panu Aree and Kong Rithdee will have its world premiere at the International Film Festival Rotterdam.

## 2023

- ***If Only I Could Hibernate*** by Zoljargal Purevdash, selected for the Un Certain Regard section of the Cannes Film Festival.
- ***A Journey in Spring*** by Wang Ping-Wen and Peng Tzu-Hui won the Silver Shell for Best Director at the San Sebastian Film Festival.
- ***Guras*** by Saurav Rai won the jury prize in the Proxima Competition at Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.
- ***Stonewalling*** by Huang Ji and Ryuji Otsuka won Best Film and Best Film Editing at the 60th Taipei Golden Horse Awards.
- ***Fly Me to the Moon*** by Sasha Chuk won Best New Performer at the 60th Taipei Golden Horse Awards.
- The Busan International Film Festival showcased eight HAF projects, including ***Solids by the Seashore*** by Patiparn Boontarig, winner of the New Currents Award; ***Borrowed Time*** by Cai Jie; and ***The Spark*** by Rajesh S. Jala.
- ***Who Were We?*** by Tomina Tetsuya had its world premiere at the main competition of the Tokyo International Film Festival.
- ***La Luna*** by M. Raihan Halim had its world premiere at the Asian Future competition of the Tokyo International Film Festival.

To download information:

<https://usercontent.hkiff.org.hk/Press/@HKIFFIndustryProjectMarket>

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### **About Hong Kong International Film Festival Industry Office (HKIFF Industry)**

The Industry Office (HKIFF Industry) was set up in 2021 to coordinate the HKIFF Society's film industry activities. It offers a comprehensive range of services to the filmmaking community, including the HAF Film Lab (a boot camp for young filmmakers), (Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF)) for in-development (IDP) and work-in-progress (WIP) projects (co-production market), HAF Goes to Cannes (screening opportunity), and HKIFF Collection (consultative support for festival strategies, sales, and distribution). HKIFF Industry also engages in co-production of both fiction and non-fiction films with third parties.

The HKIFF Industry - CAA China Genre Initiative is the most recent project market endeavour initiated by the Industry Office.

Official website: <https://industry.hkiff.org.hk>

### **About The Hong Kong International Film Festival Society Limited (HKIFFS)**

The Hong Kong International Film Festival Society Limited (HKIFFS) is a charitable, non-profit, and non-governmental organisation dedicated to discovering and promoting creativity in film art and culture. It organises the annual Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) and the Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF). Another highlight is the Cine Fan Summer International Film Festival (Summer IFF), held every August. In 2013, HKIFF introduced the repertory HKIFF Cine Fan Programme to enrich and deepen Hong Kong moviegoers' experience through a monthly programme of contemporary, retrospective, and thematic showcases. In 2021, HKIFFS restructured its film industry services and set up HKIFF Industry to promote and support non-mainstream film industry development through co-production and festival strategies and overseas distribution (HKIFF Collection).

Official website: [www.hkiff.org.hk](http://www.hkiff.org.hk)

**Appendix: Full List of the IDP Projects**

\* First narrative feature projects

^ HAF Film Lab projects

11. \***About Her Hidden Life**, Mainland China

Director: Zhang Yushan

Producers: Wang Xiaoshuai, Zhao Yuan

Production Company: Dongchun Films

12. **Blonde**, Japan

Director: Sakashita Yuichiro

Producer: Fukase Kazumi

Production Companies: Pipeline Co., Ltd., The Klockworx Co., Ltd.

13. **Camellia Girl**, South Korea, USA, Hong Kong

Director: Josh Kim

Producer: Douglas Seok

Production Company: Sea Oak Studios

14. **Children of the River**, Japan

Director: Takeba Lisa

Producers: Nakamura Kazuto, Yoshihara Hiroyuki

Production Company: MARU Co., Ltd.

15. \***The Echo of the Leopard**, Iran, Ukraine

Directors: Hanna Jalali, Moeinoddin Jalali

Producers: Moeinoddin Jalali, Hanna Jalali

Production Company: 2 People Production

16. **Encore**, USA, Hong Kong

Director: Stefanos Tai

Producer: Jonathan Hsu

Production Company: HsuBox Productions

17. **The Excreman – On the Road**, Hong Kong

Director: Brian Tse

Producers: Brian Tse, Samuel Choy

Production Company: Bliss Pictures Limited

18. ^**A Ghost in the Market**, Taiwan

Director: Chin Chia-Hua

Producer: Eva Wang

Production Company: Geppetto Film Studio

19. \*^ **Good Drink Pub**, Mainland China

Director: Emetjan Memet

Producers: Wang Hongwei, Derek Zhang

Production Company: Wuhan Yidapai Culture Media Co., Ltd.

I10. ***Naga Swim Upstream***, Thailand  
Director: Patiparn Boontarig  
Producer: Napakarn Boontarig  
Production Company: Error Brothers

I11. ***Nagi Notes***, Japan, France  
Director: Fukada Koji  
Producer: Osanai Terutaro  
Production Companies: Survivance

I12. ***The Old Woman with the Knife***, South Korea  
Director: Min Kyu-Dong  
Producer: Min Jin-Soo  
Production Company: Soofilm

I13. ***Paraiso***, Japan  
Director: Murase Daichi  
Producer: Aiko Flores Yoshioka  
Production Company: Kingyo Films

I14. ***\*Pet Paradise***, Mainland China  
Director: Hana Zhang  
Producer: Wang Hongwei, Song Dafa  
Production Company: Just One More Drink (Shanghai) Film Co., Ltd.

I15. ***\*^The Playwright's Stories***, Hong Kong, Taiwan  
Director: Yeung Leung-chuen  
Producers: Liao Ching-Sung, Chu Yun-Ting  
Production Companies: Goodnight Production, Studio Lynnchen

I16. ***The Remotes***, The Philippines  
Director: John Torres  
Producers: John Torres, Sherad Anthony Sanchez  
Production Company: Los Otros

I17. ***The Sichuan Culinary Chronicles: In Four Chapters***, Mainland China, Hong Kong  
Director: Qiu Jiongjiong  
Producers: Ding Ningyuan, Zhao Jin, Zhao Jia  
Production Companies: Uluka Productions, Midnight Blur Films, Muye Film

I18. ***Simon Young***, Mainland China, Canada  
Director: Zeng Zhi  
Producers: Ben Lu, Joey Zhu  
Production Company: Pinwu Culture

I19. ***^Sink City***, Canada  
Director: Hou Dasheng  
Producers: Wang Hongwei, Li Zhaoyu  
Production Company: Hani Film Co., Ltd.

I20. ***The Song of the Hills***, Mainland China

Director: Wang Erzhuo

Producers: Gu Zheng, Zhang Guanren

Production Company: N/A

I21. ***Staring at Your Back***, South Korea, Japan

Director: Jang Kun-Jae

Producers: Youn Hee-Young, Imai Taro, Joyce Chou Chia-Yi

Production Companies: Mocushura Inc., Harakiri Films LLC., Rustic Pictures Ltd.

I22. ***Tephra***, Mainland China

Director: Zhang Yu

Producer: Zhang Lu

Production Company: N/A

I23. ***\*The Vampire of Sheung Shui***, Hong Kong

Director: Shreyom Ghosh

Producers: Peter Yam, Michael J. Werner, Shreyom Ghosh

Production Company: Tasia Films Limited, 70 Plus Production Company Limited

I24. ***\*^ Wake Me Up***, Mainland China

Director: Yu Haiyang

Producer: Yun Fei

Production Company: TR. Movie

I25. ***Walled City***, Hong Kong, United Kingdom, Singapore

Director: Hong Khaou

Producers: Raymond Phathanavirangoon, Teresa Kwong

Production Company: ProduSa Limited

I26. ***White Flowers and Fruits***, Japan

Director: Sakamoto Yukari

Producer: Yamamoto Teruhisa

Production Company: Chiaroscuro Co., Ltd.