

For immediate release

## HAF RETURNS TO PHYSICAL, SHORTLISTS 28 IN-DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS



**Hong Kong, 12 January 2023** – The Hong Kong International Film Festival Society (HKIFFS) unveils 28 in-development projects today for the 21<sup>st</sup> Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF21).

HAF21 will take place as a physical, in-person event for the first time since 2019 from 13 - 15 March at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre in conjunction with the 27<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong Film & TV Market (FILMART).

The 28 projects, covering a potpourri of genres – horror, fantasy, romance, family drama and animation, are shortlisted from 244 submissions from 38 countries and regions. They include seven projects from Hong Kong and eight that passed through HAF Film Lab. Alongside projects from acclaimed filmmakers and producers such as Arsalan AMIRI, Anthony CHEN, Fruit CHAN, Jakrawal NILTHAMRONG, LIN Yu-Hsien, NAI An, Nader SAEIVAR, Teddy Robin, and TIAN Zhuangzhuang are also 14 by budding first-time directors.

"We look forward to welcoming back filmmakers, industry guests, and friends from the trade media after three virtual editions of the HAF," HKIFFS Industry Office Director Jacob WONG said. "And HAF21 will again showcase itself as an invaluable platform for new talents and upcoming projects from Asia."

HAF21 will announce its work-in-progress (WIP) shortlist after the Chinese New Year.

## HAF Film Lab Projects

HAF Film Lab offers support to new and emerging Chinese-language filmmakers through open lectures, training programmes, and one-on-one bespoke consultations. HAF21 is excited to feature eight Chinese-language projects developed by young filmmakers at last editions' HAF Film Lab.

They include the winners of the fifth Film Lab's three script service awards: **TANG Peiyan's** *A Better Tomorrow*, a coming-of-age drama produced by Anthony CHEN (*Ilo Ilo*); **Frankie LEE's** *Kapok*, a drama about a woman burdened by work and family duties who returns to her hometown to find solace, to be produced by Fruit CHAN (*Three Husbands*); and *The Only Way Out* directed by **YEUNG Leung-chuen** and produced by Jun LI (*Drifting*), about five lost souls in search of a way out.

Other Film Lab alumni include *Hugo in the Pigpen* by **SHEN Sheng-Ting** and **SHIH Jing-Ting**, a Taiwan-US co-production about a boy who raises a pig with a human body; **GUAN Tian's** *The Poison Cat*, produced by YANG Chao (*Crosscurrent*), is about an enslaved woman whose fate entwines with an evil spirit; **FAN Ka-chun's** *Stair-away*, produced by Teddy Robin (*The First Girl I Loved*), revolves around a courier, a father searching for his lost son, and the missing head of a girl's corpse; and *The Walking Bird* by **ZHANG Hanyi** (HKIFF40 Firebird Award winner with *Life After Life*) follows two siblings on a bird hunting adventure.

"We are delighted to bring these projects from Film Lab to the developmental stages within our HAF ecosystem," Jacob WONG said.

## Personal Stories and Adaptations

Two HAF21 projects are drawn from the filmmakers' personal experiences, while award-winning Chinese-language novels inspire another two.

In *The Fruit*, produced by Marco MÜLLER, former festival director of Venice, Locarno and Pingyao, director **LI Dongmei** (*Mama*, The Ingmar Bergman International Debut Award of the Göteborg Film Festival) tracks the joy and sadness of a woman through pregnancy and miscarriage. In *The Last Haven*, producer-turned-director **ZHANG Jun** follows a woman moving back in with her parents after a divorce, only to open old wounds. ZHANG Lu (*Yanagawa*) produces.

Based on a novel by the late LEE Wei-Jing, *The Mermaid's Tale* by **Norris WONG** (*My Prince Edward*, Hong Kong Film Awards Best New Director winner) is about a woman searching for a perfect ballroom dancing partner. While **ZHAO Jin's** directorial debut, *Non-fiction Stories*, adapted from WANG Zhanhei's novel, examines the hardship of the young working class through the life of a delivery rider. NAI An (*The Shadow Play*) produces.

### Love and Scam

Love and scam form the central theme of several HAF21 projects.

*A Divorce* by **Jevons AU** (*Trivisa*) looks at how a fake divorce turns real when love and trust disappear. *Family of Crooks* by **LAI Kuo-An** (whose *A Fish Out of Water* world premiered in Toronto) is about a family of street opera troupe feigning madness in an insurance scam. *The Marriage Drive* by **Lawrence KAN**, produced by industry veteran Cora YIM, tells the story of a couple's marriage spanning over a decade. In **ZHANG Yuxuan's** China-Thailand-France co-production, *Till Forgetfulness Do Us Part*, two estranged lovers travel to Thailand to start over. Meanwhile, China's Fifth Generation great **TIAN Zhuangzhuang** (*The Horse Thief*) joins **HE Bin** (*The Crossing*) in producing **Phakpa's** *Dark Eyes*, a tale of first love between a Buddhist monk and a young blind girl that transcends beliefs.

### Young and Old

Several non-Chinese language projects, including two featuring resilient elderly women, are also in the mix. In *White Snow* by **Praveen MORCHHALE** (*Walking with the Wind*, winner at India's National Film Awards), an old woman embarks on an arduous journey to remote villages to show her imprisoned son's banned film. While in *The Witness* by **Nader SAEIVAR** (a co-writer of Jafar PANAHI's *3 Faces* and director of *No End*, which premiered in Busan), a widow refuses to succumb to political pressure in Iran and publicises everything she knows about a murder.

Pre-teens play the protagonists of *Bhunte* by **Bikas NEUPANE**, about a poor village boy in Nepal who dreams of getting a football. In *Nagahama (working title)* by **TANIGUCHI Mio** (*Hiko and Vega*, Grand Prize winner at Aichi International Women's Film Festival), the friendship of a half-Japanese boy and a boyish Japanese girl leads up to the traditional Nagahama Hikiyama Festival.

### Queer Stories from Southeast Asia

*Skin Coat*, the only animated project in the HAF21 line-up produced by Anthony CHEN for **TAN Wei Keong**, depicts a man donning a woman's skin coat to enter his male lover's village to meet his parents. In *Rhizome*, a Thailand-Laos-France co-production by **Jakrawal NILTHAMRONG** (Tokyo FILMeX Grand Prize winner *Anatomy of Time*), a Hmong woman who returns to Laos to become a deminer and develops intimate feelings for a Laotian volunteer.

### **Guest Accreditation for HAF21**

HAF21 guest registration is now open to investors, festival programmers and other industry professionals through <https://Industry.hkiff.org.hk/guest-registration>. Once accredited, all guests can schedule one-on-one meetings with filmmakers to discuss their projects.

Please refer to the **Appendix** for details on all shortlisted in-development projects. For more up-to-date information about HAF21, please visit our official website at <https://Industry.hkiff.org.hk> or our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/hkiffindustry/>.

### **Some Milestones for HAF Projects in 2022**

- Kai KO's *Bad Education* (HAF18, 2020) won Best Supporting Actor at the Golden Horse Film Awards in Taiwan
- YANG Lina's *Song of Spring* (HAF18, 2020) won Best Actress at the Beijing International Film Festival
- LAU Kok Rui's *The Sunny Side of the Street* (HAF18, 2020) won Best Leading Actor, Best New Director, and Best Original Screenplay at the Golden Horse Film Awards in Taiwan
- HUANG Ji and OTSUKA Ryuji's *Stonewalling* (HAF16, 2018) world premiered at Venice's Giornate degli Autori and won Best Screenplay at the World Film Festival of Bangkok
- Lav DIAZ's *When the Waves Are Gone* (HAF14, 2016) world premiered out of competition at Venice Film Festival

#### **To download information:**

<https://usercontent.hkiff.org.hk/Press/@HAF21>

- END -

#### **For media enquiry, please contact:**

##### **Strategic Public Relations Group (SPRG)**

Janice CHAN

Tel: (852) 2114 4350

(852) 6112 1064

Email: [hafmedia@sprg.com.hk](mailto:hafmedia@sprg.com.hk)

##### **HKIFF Industry**

Lizzie ZHANG

Tel: (852) 2102 7359

(852) 5545 3639

Email: [lizzie\\_zhang@hkiff.org.hk](mailto:lizzie_zhang@hkiff.org.hk)

### **About Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF)**

The Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) is widely recognised as Asia's premier film financing platform. HAF brings Asian filmmakers with upcoming film projects to Hong Kong for co-production ventures with top film financiers, producers, bankers, funding bodies, sales agents, distributors, and buyers. Around 30 in-development projects (IDP) and ten work-in-progress projects (WIP) are selected annually to participate in the three-day event attended by more than 1,000 filmmakers and financiers from over 35 countries and regions. HAF has the added advantage of being held in conjunction with Hong Kong FILMART, Asia's largest film market, attracting over 8,000 professionals.

HAF enhances the prospects of the participating projects through close collaborations with international organisations such as iQIYI (Mainland China), Fox International Productions (Greater China), Cinemart (the Netherlands), Asian Project Market (South Korea), Golden Horse Film Project Promotion (Taiwan), MIA (Italy) and more. Cash and in-kind awards to the value of around US\$250,000 are made with support from Create Hong Kong and Film Development Fund, among others.

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

To promote and support the film industry development more effectively, The Hong Kong International Film Festival Society restructured its industry services and set up Hong Kong International Film Festival Industry Office (HKIFF Industry) in 2021. From polishing up projects with a better appeal (HAF Film Lab) to getting them off the ground and finding post-production assistance (Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF)), to exposing the projects in major international platforms (HAF Goes to Cannes), and on to planning the career of finished films (HKIFF Collection), HKIFF Industry offers independent filmmakers comprehensive services and windows to the world.

### **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's 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 (SummerIFF) 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 HAF21 in-development (IDP) projects

\* First narrative feature projects

^ Winner of script consultation service awards at HAF Film Lab in 2022

<b>1.</b>	<b>* Ah Ji 阿季</b>	<b>Hong Kong 香港</b>
Director 導演：	Leo ZHU 朱智立	
Producer 監製／製片：	HO Ting-wai 何定偉	
Production Company 製作公司：	B00000M	
<b>2.</b>	<b>^* A Better Tomorrow 宇宙風</b>	<b>Mainland China 中國內地</b>
Director 導演：	TANG Peiyan 唐培彥	
Producer 監製／製片：	Anthony CHEN 陳哲藝, XIE Meng 謝萌	
Production Company 製作公司：	Canopy Pictures Shanghai 熱帶雨影業（上海）有限公司	
<b>3.</b>	<b>* Bhunte</b>	<b>Nepal 尼泊爾</b>
Director 導演：	Bikas NEUPANE 比卡斯紐帕恩	
Producer 監製／製片：	Govinda Prasad KHANAL 戈文達普拉薩德卡納爾	
Production Company 製作公司：	Hamrobox Entertainment Pvt. Ltd.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>* A Collapse of Time 時間的褶皺</b>	<b>Mainland China 中國內地</b>
Director 導演：	FENG Yi 馮軼	
Producer 監製／製片：	LIU Jike 劉吉科	
Production Company 製作公司：	Slumber Mountain Pictures 眠山影業有限公司	
<b>5.</b>	<b>* Dark Eyes 盲女與花貓</b>	<b>Mainland China 中國內地</b>
Director 導演：	Phakpa 蒲巴	
Producer 監製／製片：	TIAN Zhuangzhuang 田壯壯, HE Bin 賀斌	
Production Company 製作公司：	General Dream Studio 夢將軍（上海）影業有限公司	
<b>6.</b>	<b>A Divorce 香港式分居</b>	<b>United Kingdom 英國   Hong Kong 香港   Canada 加拿大</b>
Director 導演：	Jevons AU 歐文傑	
Producer 監製／製片：	Catherine WONG 黃敏思, Isis TSO 曹燕茜	
Production Company 製作公司：	Movie Guys Canada Inc., 109G Studio 109G 工作室	

<b>7. Family of Crooks 詐騙一家</b>	<b>Taiwan 台灣</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	LAI Kuo-An 賴國安 Juno TENG 鄧文娟 Dancing Whale Production Co., Ltd. 想飛的魚電影製作有限公司
<b>8. * Fly Me to the Mars 火星計劃</b>	<b>Mainland China 中國內地</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	ZHAO Dadi 趙大地 Jane XIE 謝瑾 Dirty Monkey Studio 壞猴子影業
<b>9. The Fruit 果然</b>	<b>Mainland China 中國內地</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	LI Dongmei 李冬梅 Marco MÜLLER 馬可穆勒, QI Ai 齊艾 Leopard Film Culture and Arts Co., Ltd. 棠乾豹豹文化藝術有限公司
<b>10. * Hugo in the Pigpen 大豬圈</b>	<b>Taiwan 台灣   USA 美國</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	SHEN Sheng-Ting 沈聖婷, SHIH Jing-Ting 施瀟婷 LAI Zhen-Lin 賴珍琳, LIANG Mei-Jou 梁美柔, SHEN Sheng-Ting 沈聖婷 Dot Connect Studio Ltd. 一顆星工作室
<b>11. Janava</b>	<b>Iran 伊朗</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	Arsalan AMIRI 阿薩蘭阿米里 Ruth Yoshie LINTON 貴絵, Ida PANAHANDEH 艾達潘納漢德 Evar Film Studio, Kingyo Films Pte. Ltd.
<b>12. ^*Kapok 木眠</b>	<b>Hong Kong 香港</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	Frankie LEE 李澤恒 Fruit CHAN 陳果 Frankie Lap Production 立芬奇製作
<b>13. The Last Haven 最後的港灣</b>	<b>Mainland China 中國內地</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	ZHANG Jun 張君 ZHANG Lu 張律, XU Jiahua 徐佳含 Zhang Jun Studio 張君工作室

<b>14. The Marriage Drive 紅棉路</b>	<b>Hong Kong 香港</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	Lawrence KAN 簡君晉 Cora YIM 嚴嘉念 Plan C Studio Limited
<b>15. The Mermaid's Tale 人魚紀</b>	<b>Taiwan 台灣   Hong Kong 香港</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	Norris WONG 黃綺琳 Gene YAO 姚經玉, Albert YAO 姚聖洋 MaplessLab Co., Ltd. 無垠有限公司
<b>16. Nagahama (working title) 長濱(暫名)</b>	<b>Japan 日本</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	TANIGUCHI Mio 谷口未央 KATAHARA Tomoko 片原朋子 Kolmio Film
<b>17. * Non-fiction Stories 了不起的全智賢</b>	<b>Mainland China 中國內地</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	ZHAO Jin 趙晉 NAI An 耐安, TONG Wenqun 童文群, Dia WANG Yunzhi 王韻之 Midnight Blur Films 午夜失焦（杭州）文化傳播公 司, Sputnik Entertainment 太空尼克（杭州）娛樂 科技有限公司, TMZ Media 鐵幕真傳媒
<b>18. ^* The Only Way Out 我們不得不如此</b>	<b>Hong Kong 香港</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	YEUNG Leung-chuen 楊兩全 Jun LI 李駿碩 Goodnight Production 菲與飛工作室
<b>19. *The Poison Cat 毒藥貓</b>	<b>Mainland China 中國內地</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	GUAN Tian 關天 YANG Chao 楊超, Vivian BAO 鮑薇薇, DING Ningyuan 丁寧遠 Beijing Guanyu Film 北京觀魚影視文化傳媒有限公 司



<b>20. Racing Storm 狂飆</b>	<b>Taiwan 台灣</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	LIN Yu-Hsien 林育賢 Roger HUANG 黃江豐, Lorraine HO 何麗嫦 Jumpboys Film Ltd. 翻滾吧男孩電影有限公司, Whisper Entertainment Ltd. 妮妮影業有限公司
<b>21. Rhizome</b>	<b>Thailand 泰國   Laos 老撾   France 法國</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	Jakrawal NILTHAMRONG 渣卡華尼譚朗 Chatchai CHAIYON 察齊查揚, Yohann CORNU 尤漢寇努 Mit Out Sound Films
<b>22. * Skin Coat 皮夫</b>	<b>Singapore 新加坡</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	TAN Wei Keong 陳威強 Anthony CHEN 陳哲藝, TEOH Yi Peng 張奕鵬 Giraffe Pictures 長景路電影工作室
<b>23. * Stair-away 梯間 44 層</b>	<b>Hong Kong 香港</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	FAN Ka-chun 樊家駿 Teddy Robin 泰迪羅賓 LOUDPROVISION 聲光製作
<b>24. Tender is the Night 你比夜色迷人</b>	<b>Mainland China 中國內地</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	YUAN Qing 竹原青 JI Wei 季偉, Dia WANG Yunzhi 王韻之, ZHAO Jin 趙晉 Sputnik Entertainment 太空尼克（杭州）娛樂科技 有限公司
<b>25. * Till Forgetfulness Do Us Part 完美伴侶</b>	<b>Mainland China 中國內地   Thailand 泰國   France 法國</b>
Director 導演： Producer 監製／製片： Production Company 製作公司：	ZHANG Yuxuan 張宇旋 ZHANG Fan 張凡, QIU Sheng 仇晟, Clément PELLETIER 克萊 Beijing Bifun Culture Media 北京白飯文化傳媒有 限公司

<b>26. The Walking Bird</b> 海邊的食火鳥	<b>Mainland China 中國內地</b>
Director 導演：	ZHANG Hanyi 張撼依
Producer 監製／製片：	MA Xiaotian 馬小添
Production Company 製作公司：	Rare Pictures 可貴影業
<b>27. White Snow</b>	<b>India 印度</b>
Director 導演：	Praveen MORCHHALE 帕文莫加里
Producer 監製／製片：	Praveen MORCHHALE 帕文莫加里, Suneel SAJNANI 蘇尼爾薩納尼
Production Company 製作公司：	Barefoot Pictures
<b>28. The Witness</b>	<b>Iran 伊朗</b>
Director 導演：	Nader SAEIVAR 娜德沙伊凡
Producer 監製／製片：	Said Nur AKKUS 薩伊德努爾亞古斯
Production Company 製作公司：	ArtHood Films