

For Immediate Release

## **The 17<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum Project Announcement New Partnership And Award Sponsors Unveiled Along With 23 New Projects**

**Hong Kong, 15 January 2019** – The 17<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) has short-listed 23 projects for presentation at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from 18 to 20 March 2019, it was announced today.

Concurrently, HAF announced a new strategic partnership with the Udine, Italy-based Far East Film Festival, as well as two new award sponsors in Heaven Pictures (HK) Culture and Media Co., Ltd. and Artention-Vanke Cultural Industries Corp.

HAF is one of the most prominent film-financing platforms in Asia. It provides an organized structure for filmmakers to meet financiers, producers, bankers, distributors and buyers for potential co-production ventures.

The projects making this year's short-list, selected from more than 330 submissions, hail from 10 countries and territories across the region, including Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines and South Korea. With production budgets ranging from US\$200,000 to US\$10 million, they come from established directors of popular mainstream cinema, veteran independent filmmakers and young talent, all of whom seeking funding and industry partners.

“The number of first-time directors, along with returning and established filmmakers, coming to this year's Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum stands as testament to our ability to help develop and promote cinematic and artistic creativity in the region,” said **Jacob WONG, HAF Director**. “HAF is also proud to expand its list of partnerships and sponsors, which will offer filmmakers even greater opportunities for financing and contacts with film-industry professionals from around the world.”

### **Hong Kong Projects to Be Presented**

Projects this year include four films from Hong Kong. **Barbara WONG Chun-chun** – director of the box-office hits *Perfect Wedding* (2010), *The Stolen Years* (2013), *Girls* (2014) and its sequel, *Girls vs. Gangsters* (2018) – teams up again with producer **Gus LIEM** for *The Wedding Celebrant*, a US\$10 million romantic drama about a marriage officiant who begins to wonder if she herself has married the right man. In the drama *The Secret Diary of a Mom to Be*, writer-

director **LUK Yee-sum**'s second feature following *Lazy Hazy Crazy* (2015), a married corporate-climbing businesswoman finds herself unexpectedly and reluctantly pregnant.

**CHEUNG Siu-hong**, an award-winning costume designer and production designer for such acclaimed filmmakers such as **WONG Kar-wai** and **Johnnie TO**, makes his directorial debut with the drama *Solitary Kills*, a Hong Kong parable about seven lonely souls interwoven into three stories. Director **WONG Hoi** celebrates Hong Kong culture with the comedy-drama *Wong Tai Sin Assassination*, set at one of the territory's most iconic temples where thousands of worshippers visit annually to hear their fortunes.

### **Mainland Chinese Directors Unveil Productions**

Six projects from Mainland China reflect on family dynamics, tentative love and shifting traditions in a fast-changing society. **ZHAO Liang**'s new documentary *Ship of Fools – Pandora's Box* creates a present day allegory through a visual narrative of both the apocalyptic landscape and human's daily lives in the ruined areas after nuclear disasters, questing how human trajectory has been, is being and will be changed due to our reliance on nuclear technology. **ZHAO Wenjia**'s comedy-drama *A Story of Hers* – based on a chapter from her latest novel, "Ladies" – explores the life of an aspiring journalist as she seeks to become her own person while maintaining the connection she has with her loving but conservative mother. **LIU Miaomiao** taps her own personal experience with bipolar disorder for *12 x 4*, a drama about the self-salvation of a woman stricken with the mental condition in her confrontation with society as a whole. Director **Renai WEI Yongyao** ventures into the supernatural in his suspense-drama *The Priest in the Village*, about a cleric caught between a private family matter and community duty.

**ZHU Xin** describes his second feature, *Who is Sleeping on My Pillow*, about a disabled painter, his caretaker and a former girlfriend, as a "film in which Southern and Northern China are intertwined, linked by a great waterfall, reconnecting the memories and illusion, just like in Escher's landscape paintings." **CHEN Cheng**'s *Through the Crack of the Parallel Universe* is an atypical love story set in Beijing about young lovers – a painter and a poet – who work at low-end jobs.

### **HAF Highlights Projects From Japan and the Philippines**

Japanese director **HAMAGUCHI Ryusuke**, whose *Asako I & II* screened in the main competition at Cannes last year, returns to the theme of youthful love with his latest project, *Our Apprenticeship*, about a young woman studying at an arts school in Paris and the international students she encounters. In examining non-traditional sexual orientations, HAMAGUCHI says,

“This film tells a story of love and friendships, which also shows that they might be [the] only power to change one’s viewpoint very radically and gently.”

An elderly Chinese woman travelling to Japan in an effort to find the missing Japanese daughter whom she adopted in post-World War II China in mainland is director **SONG Pengfei’s** *Seeing Nara Again*; In **SATO Yoshinori’s** drama *Forgiveness*, a widow questions her decision to forgive the woman who killed her husband 20 years earlier; **KAWAJIRI Masanao’s** tentatively-titled animated feature *Cherry and Virgin* takes a bittersweet look at romance and breakup.

Three previous HAF participants from the Philippines will return to the forum this year: **Jun Robles LANA** with the survival drama *Between Sea and Sky*, the true-life story of a Filipino fisherman who was rescued in Papua New Guinea after drifting at sea for 56 days; and **Adolfo ALIX JR.’s** *Circa*, about a legendary (and fictional) figure in the Philippine film industry as it prepares to celebrate its centenary. Also from the Philippines, another real-life drama: *The Grandstand* from **Mikhail RED**, about the 2010 Manila hostage crisis, in which a disgruntled police officer seized a bus filled with Hong Kong tourists.

### **Taiwanese Hip-Hop, South Korean Suspense and the Rohingya Crisis in Bangladesh**

Director **Tom LIN Shu-Yu’s** musical biography looks at the life of Taiwanese rapper Shawn “M80” Sung, who died of cancer in 2002, and his younger brother Ting, both living in Los Angeles as parachute kids, and how he came to create the most famous Mandarin hip-hop song in history, *Life’s a Struggle*, from which the film gets its title.

Following her debut film *A Haunting Hitchhike* (2017), **JEONG Hee-jae** returns with *Living*, an action-suspense drama about a female contract killer who decides to protect her target’s daughter and finds herself on the run from gangsters.

**Abid Hossain KHAN** examines the tragedy of the Muslim-majority Rohingya people in *Belonging*, his debut documentary that follows 6-year-old Nushaida as she starts a journey to find her parents at refugee camps in Bangladesh after becoming separated from them while fleeing Myanmar.

### **That’s Amore: A New Partnership, Two New Awards, and other Prizes**

The **Far East Film Festival** (FEFF) in Udine, Italy, now in its 21<sup>st</sup> year, joins with HAF for a new strategic partnership in which organizers of the largest film festival in Europe devoted entirely to popular Asian cinema will select one project from this year’s HAF for presentation at Focus

Asia, FEFF's project market that is dedicated to “films of tomorrow,” with the potential for co-production and co-financing in Europe or Asia.

“We are thrilled about our new partnership with HAF, and we are looking forward to selecting the project that will be presented in Udine next April,” said **Sabrina BARACETTI, President of the Far East Film Festival**. “This new collaboration will strengthen even more the connections between the industries of our two continents. We think that this will be just the beginning of a new fruitful collaboration.”

HAF is also proud to announce two new award sponsors in **Heaven Pictures (HK) Culture and Media Co., Ltd.** and **Artention-Vanke Cultural Industries Corp.**, a joint venture between Artention Group and Vanke Group.

**Heaven Pictures (HK) Culture and Media Co., Ltd.** will present the **Heaven Pictures Young Director Award** which aims to encourage young Hong Kong directors to create local-themed projects with unique personal style. The winner will receive a cash prize of HK\$150,000. “Hong Kong International Film Festival and HAF have been supporting and promoting Chinese young filmmakers and China’s film scene for a long time. It’s time that we contribute something in return by setting up this award, with the aim of nurturing young Hong Kong filmmakers as well as encouraging quality local productions such as *A Simple Life*, which reflects Hong Kong’s current phenomenon and people experiences under the city’s economic and social changes”, **LOU Weihua, Chairman of Heaven Pictures** noted.

**Artention-Vanke Cultural Industries Corp.** will present the **Artention-Vanke Film Award** which aims to encourage the development of film projects that exhibit both commercial and artistic qualities, thereby identifying and supporting more outstanding young filmmakers and film projects. In addition to a cash prize of HK\$100,000, the winning project will also receive free access to designated space in the Artention-Vanke Creative Arts Incubator in Shenzhen, China, getting fully linked with high-quality resources from Artention and Vanke, to create world-renowned projects.

Other returning award sponsors include the Wouter Barendrecht Film Foundation; China Film Foundation-Wu Tianming Fund for Young Talents; White Light Studio; G2D Co. Ltd.; the Network of Asian Fantastic Films (NAFF) of the BiFan Industry Gathering; and mm2 Asia Limited.

## **Guest and Media Accreditation for HAF**

Investors, financiers and other film-industry guests are now able to register for HAF at <https://www.haf.org.hk/guest.php> and schedule individual meetings with filmmakers to discuss their projects. Guests will be given access to HAF, in addition to joining official networking events, screenings, seminars or other activities.

Registration for the event among members of the media will begin on 21 January, with further details here: <http://www.hkiff.org.hk/society/#/media1Clone>

A complete list of the selected HAF projects for the 17<sup>th</sup> HAF can be found in the **Appendix**. For more information about HAF, please visit the official website at <http://www.haf.org.hk/> and the HAF Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/hafhkiffs/>.

HAF's Work-in-Progress initiative, which is designed to help directors and producers secure post-production support and funds through meetings with investors, post-production companies, distribution agents and film festival programmers, will be announced soon.

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

The Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) is widely recognized as an established film financing platform in Asia. HAF brings Asian filmmakers with upcoming film projects to Hong Kong

for co-production ventures with top film financiers, producers, bankers, distributors and buyers. Attracting more than 1,000 filmmakers and financiers from at least 35 countries and regions, around 25 to 30 projects are selected annually to participate in the three-day event. HAF has the added advantage of being held in conjunction with Hong Kong Filmart, Asia's largest film market which attracts over 8,000 professionals.

HAF has partnered with international organisations to provide a range of opportunities to participants. Partners include iQIYI (China), Fox International Productions (Greater China) (US), Cinemart (the Netherlands), Asian Project Market (South Korea), Golden Horse Film Project Promotion (Taiwan), New Cinema Network (Italy) and others. Cash and in-kind awards to the value of around US\$150,000 are made with support from Create Hong Kong and Film Development Fund among others. Past participants include China's JIA Jiangke, JIANG Wen, LU Chuan and NING Hao; Hong Kong's Peter CHAN, Stanley KWAN, Ann HUI, Fruit CHAN and PANG Ho-cheung; Taiwan's TSAI Ming-Liang, WEI Te-Sheng, CHUNG Mong-Hong and Leon DAI; Japan's KORE-EDA Hirokazu, KUROSAWA Kiyoshi, KAWASE Naomi and IWAI Shunji; South Korea's PARK Chan-wook, KIM Jee-woon, BONG Joon-ho and IM Sang-soo; as well as Thailand's Apichatpong WEERASETHAKUL, Ekachai UEKRONGTHAM, Nonzee NIMIBUTR and Pen-ek RATANARUANG.

### **About The Hong Kong International Film Festival Society Limited**

The Hong Kong International Film Festival Society Limited (HKIFFS/Society) is a charitable, non-profit and non-governmental organisation dedicated to the discovery and promotion of creativity in the art and culture of film.

The Society is committed to making world cinema accessible and affordable to the public. It organizes the annual flagship the Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) and the Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) in March and April. Another annual highlight is the Summer International Film Festival (SummerIFF) held every August. The repertory HKIFF Cine Fan Programme was launched in April 2013 with the aim to enrich and deepen the experience of Hong Kong moviegoers through a monthly programme of contemporary, retrospective and thematic showcases.

Through its annual programmes, the Society promotes international appreciation of Asian, Hong Kong and Chinese film culture; introduces world cinema to Hong Kong audiences; and continues to underline Hong Kong's key position in the international film community.

HKIFFS's dedication to quality and intelligent programming, its devotion to the discovery of new areas of filmmaking in Asia and China, its exceptional work for Hong Kong cinema, seminars and acclaimed publications, gives it a unique and respected international reputation that helps promote Hong Kong cinema at home and abroad.

**Appendix: The 17<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum Project List**

<b>1. 12 x 4 12 乘 4</b>	<b>China 中國</b>
Director 導演：LIU Miaomiao 劉苗苗	
Producer 監製：TIAN Zhuangzhuang 田壯壯, ZHAO Jin 趙晉, CAO Liuying 曹柳鶯	
Production Company 製作公司：MIDNIGHT BLUR FILMS 午夜失焦(杭州)文化傳播有限公司	
<b>2. Away We Go 離·島</b>	<b>Malaysia 馬來西亞, Taiwan 台灣, Hong Kong 香港</b>
Director 導演：KANG Sze Wen 江詩雯	
Producer 監製：WONG Kew Soon 黃巧順	
Production Company 製作公司：Janji Pictures 匠子映畫	
<b>3. Belonging</b>	<b>Bangladesh 孟加拉</b>
Director 導演：Abid Hossain KHAN	
Producer 監製：Rubaiyat HOSSAIN, Aadnan Imtiaz AHMED	
Production Company 製作公司：Khona Talkies	
<b>4. Between Sea and Sky</b>	<b>Philippines 菲律賓</b>
Director 導演：Jun Robles LANA	
Producer 監製：Ferdinand LAPUZ	
Production Company 製作公司：The IdeaFirst Company	
<b>5. Cherry and Virgin</b>	<b>Japan 日本</b>
Director 導演：KAWAJIRI Masanao 川尻將由	
Producer 監製：NAKAMURA Yosuke 中村陽介	
Production Company 製作公司：Nekonigashi.inc	
<b>6. Circa</b>	<b>Philippines 菲律賓</b>
Director 導演：Adolfo ALIX JR.	
Producer 監製：Didier COSTET	
Production Company 製作公司：Swift Productions	
<b>7. Forgiveness</b>	<b>Japan 日本</b>
Director 導演：SATO Yoshinori 佐藤慶紀	
Producer 監製：SUZUKI Masaki 鈴木雅貴	
Production Company 製作公司：Aerial Films	

## 8. The Grandstand

Philippines 菲律賓

Director 導演：Mikhail RED  
Producer 監製：Pauline ZAMORA  
Production Company 製作公司：Globe Studios

## 9. I Wish I Could Hibernate

Mongolia 蒙古

Director 導演：Zoljargal PUREVDASH  
Producer 監製：TAN Chui Mui 陳翠梅, Dulguun BAYASGALAN  
Production Company 製作公司：Da Huang Pictures 大荒電影, No Wonder Films

## 10. Life's a Struggle 宋岳庭傳

Taiwan 台灣

Director 導演：Tom LIN Shu-Yu 林書宇  
Producer 監製：Emma LIN Mei-Lun 林媿倫  
Production Company 製作公司：M80 Film Co., Ltd. 宋岳庭傳電影有限公司

## 11. Living

South Korea 南韓

Director 導演：JEONG Hee-jae 鄭喜在  
Producer 監製：KIM Ji-yeon 金智連  
Production Company 製作公司：Breathe Film, Crankup Film

## 12. Our Apprenticeship

Japan 日本

Director 導演：HAMAGUCHI Ryusuke 濱口龍介  
Producer 監製：YAMAMOTO Teruhisa 山本晃久  
Production Company 製作公司：C&I Entertainment Co., Ltd.

## 13. Pandora's Box 潘多拉魔盒

China 中國, France 法國

Director 導演：ZHAO Liang 趙亮  
Producer 監製：ZHAO Liang 趙亮, Serge LALOU 塞爾日·拉魯, Ruby CHEN 陳玲珍  
Production Company 製作公司：Zhao's Image Production Limited 杞人影像

## 14. The Priest in the Village 大祭司

China 中國

Director 導演：Renai WEI Yongyao 韋永垚  
Producer 監製：ZHAO Jin 趙晉, XU Jiahao 徐佳含  
Production Company 製作公司：MIDNIGHT BLUR FILMS 午夜失焦(杭州)文化傳播有限公司



**15. The Secret Diary of a Mom To Be BB 復仇記** Hong Kong 香港

Director 導演：LUK Yee-sum 陸以心  
Producer 監製：Jacqueline LIU Yuen-hung 廖婉虹  
Production Company 製作公司：One Cool Film Production Limited  
天下一電影製作有限公司

**16. Seeing Nara Again 又見奈良** Japan 日本

Director 導演：SONG Pengfei 鵬飛  
Producer 監製：KAWASE Naomi 河瀨直美  
Production Company 製作公司：Nara International Film Festival Organizing Committee  
奈良國際電影節

**17. Solitary Kills 寂寞有害** Hong Kong 香港

Director 導演：CHEUNG Siu-hong 張兆康  
Producer 監製：WANG Jing 王婧  
Production Company 製作公司：East Eighteen Limited 東十八有限公司

**18. A Story of HERS 太后與我** China 中國

Director 導演：ZHAO Wenjia 趙文佳  
Producer 監製：Homber YIN 尹紅波  
Production Company 製作公司：Haining Sunshine Films Limited 海寧盛夏影業有限公司

**19. Through the Cracks of the Parallel Universe  
穿過平行宇宙的縫隙** China 中國

Director 導演：CHEN Cheng 陳橙  
Producer 監製：HU Mengchu 胡夢楚  
Production Company 製作公司：Lumieria Pictures 昭融電影公司

**20. The Wedding Celebrant 証婚人** Hong Kong 香港

Director 導演：Barbara WONG Chun-chun 黃真真  
Producer 監製：Gus LIEM 林克仁  
Production Company 製作公司：Real Pictures Entertainment 真·映畫

**21. Who is Sleeping on My Pillow? 晚歌** China 中國

Director 導演：ZHU Xin 祝新  
Producer 監製：ZHANG Lu 張律, ZHAO Jin 趙晉, CAO Liuying 曹柳鶯  
Production Company 製作公司：MIDNIGHT BLUR FILMS 午夜失焦(杭州)文化傳播有限公司

**22. Wong Tai Sin Assassination 刺殺黃大仙**

**Hong Kong 香港**

Director 導演：WONG Hoi 黃鏞

Producer 監製：Derek KWOK Tsz-kin 郭子健

Production Company 製作公司：12 Production 實現工作室

**23. Zalava**

**Iran 伊朗**

Director 導演：Arsalan AMIRI

Producer 監製：Ida PANAHANDAH, Yoshie Ruth LINTON (Co-Producer)

Production Company 製作公司：Evareh Film Studio