

For immediate release

HAF SHORTLISTS 33 PROJECTS FOR ITS 18TH EDITION

Hong Kong, 20 January 2020 – The Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) today announces 33 projects shortlisted for its 18th edition, featuring a host of top Asian filmmakers as well as 11 first-feature directors.

HAF18 will take place this year from 25 to 27 March at the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Centre alongside the 24th Hong Kong Filmart.

“We are delighted to present our biggest selection ever, with 24 fictional features and nine projects in the expanded documentary section, covering a wide range of subjects,” said HAF Director, Jacob Wong. “We will see new projects from established Asian filmmakers such as Apichatong WEERASETHAKUL, LIAO Ching-Sung, KIM Ki-duk, Ruby YANG, Giddens KO, OGIGAMI Naoko, YEO Siew Hua, as well as works from many interesting and highly-promising debutants.”

HAF18 received a total of 338 submissions from 17 countries and regions – including, for the first time, a documentary project from Mexico. Some of the project highlights are as follow:

Hong Kong:

Hong Kong offers a strong lineup of seven locally-flavoured projects, including works by PANG Ho-cheung, Derek CHIU and NG Kai-chung. Best known for his *Love in a Puff* trilogy, PANG presents ***The End***, which recounts the story of a psychic medium who seeks help from a dead director for the ending of his unfinished script; Derek CHIU returns after winning the Osaka Asian Film Festival’s Grand Prize with *No.1 Chung Ying Street* (HAF15, 2017) with ***When Youth Departs***, a contemporary social drama about 20 young people in their 20s set in 2020; and NG Kai-chung inspects a spirit tasked to extract evil seeds from humans in his animated feature debut ***Another World***.

China:

With nine titles, China accounts for the most shortlisted projects from a single country this year. They include works by TAO Huaqiao, QIU Sheng (*The Suburban Birds*) and YANG Lina. Produced by South Korean auteur KIM Ki-duk, TAO’s ***Eternal Night*** examines how a young woman morphs into a murderer; QIU’s project, ***Gu and the Ghost***, centres on the controversial Chinese poet Gu Cheng; and YANG’s ***Song of Spring*** evolves around an 85-year-old mother and her 65-year-old daughter who has Alzheimer’s disease, with Taiwanese editor-producer LIAO

Ching-Sung attached as producer. Actress Elaine Jin Yanling (金燕玲) will play a role in the film.

Taiwan:

Three more Chinese-language projects are from Taiwan. They include ***Bad Education***, a high school thriller about shared secrets, by *You Are the Apple of My Eyes* director Giddens KO; while LIN Cheng-Sheng re-examines the topic of autism in ***Among Us***, following his heartwarming 2010 documentary *Twinkle Twinkle Little Stars*.

Southeast Asia:

HAF18 will feature five hot projects from Southeast Asia, including new projects by Singapore auteur YEO Siew Hua, Petersen VARGAS from the Philippines, and Thailand's Sompot CHIDGASORNPONGSE. In the suspense thriller, ***Stranger Eyes***, YEO reunites with producer Fran BORGIA after landing Golden Horse's Best Original Screenplay and Locarno's Golden Leopard awards with *A Land Imagined* in 2018; VARGAS presents ***Some Nights I Feel Like Walking***, the recent winner of the HAF-SEAFIC Award; and Palme d'Or winner Apichatpong WEERASETHAKUL will produce the road movie project, ***9 Temples to Heaven***, for his long-time assistant director CHIDGASORNPONGSE.

Japan:

Japan's lone representative at HAF18 is ***Blind Forest***, from *Close-Knit* director OGIGAMI Naoko, set in a facility where women gathered to create Braille.

South and Central Asia:

New works by Siddartha JATLA, Dalmira TILEPBERGEN and Aboozar AMINI are among the five projects selected from this region. ***In the Belly of a Tiger*** by JATLA (*Love and Shukla*, 2017) tells the story of an elderly Indian couple who must sacrifice one or the other to be devoured by a tiger; ***Lonely Pine***, by *Under Heaven* director TILEPBERGEN, follows a seven-year-old Kyrgyz girl who believes all her wishes would come true; and AMINI, whose documentary *Kabul, City in the Wind* opened IDFA in 2018, merges facts and fiction in ***Ways to Run***.

Documentaries:

Eden BERNAL's ***The Siren Song***, about three generations of Mexican fisherwomen and produced by Hong Kong's Polly YEUNG, becomes the first project from Mexico to take part in HAF. Other projects in HAF18's expanded nine-project documentary section include veteran journalist Dean NAPOLITANO's debut project, ***June Snow***, on New York-born Eliza Li who follows her parents' footsteps in becoming a Cantonese opera performer, with the Academy Award-winner Ruby YANG attached as producer; and Sahra MANI's ***Kabul Melody*** which looks at young Afghan girls who risk their lives playing music.

Awards: Two new prizes from Create Hong Kong

HAF18 offers a total of 13 awards, which amount to HK\$1.2 million in cash and value-in-kind. The awards include two new prizes from Create Hong Kong – the HAF Documentary Award, to be shared between one Hong Kong project and one non-Hong Kong project, and the WIP Fiction Award. Returning sponsors, including Heaven Pictures, Wouter Barendrecht Film Foundation, Udine Far East Film Festival, Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival, Cinerent and White Light Post, will continue to lend their generous support. See **Appendix 1** for a list of the awards and sponsors.

February will see the announcement of projects shortlisted for HAF18's Work-in-Progress (WIP) section which targets to help filmmakers to secure post-production support and funds through meetings with investors, post-production companies, distributors, sales agents, and festival programmers.

Since its inception in 2000, HAF has long established itself as a recognised platform in the region to assist emerging filmmakers seeking financing and distribution opportunities with their latest projects. Notable recent HAF projects include Oualid MOUANESS's *1982* (HAF10, 2012), Lebanon's entry for the Academy Awards' best foreign-language film; Pema Tseden's *Balloon* (HAF10, 2012), Grand Prize winner at Tokyo Filmex; WEN Muye's *Dying to Survive* (HAF14, 2016), winner of Golden Horse's best new director award and one of China's highest-grossing films; and Sunny CHAN's *Men on the Dragon* (HAF15, 2017), which garnered 11 nominations at the Hong Kong Film Awards.

Guest and Media Accreditation for HAF

Investors, financiers and other industry professionals 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. Accredited HAF guests can additionally participate in official networking events, screenings, seminars or other activities.

Media registration begins today and closes on 17 March 2020. For further details, please visit: www.hkiff.org.hk/society/#/media

Please refer to **Appendix 2** for details on all 33 of HAF18's shortlisted projects. 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/hafhkiifs/>.

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About Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF)

The Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) is considered one of the region's most recognised film financing platforms which, since its inception in 2000, annually brings Asian filmmakers to Hong Kong for co-production ventures with financiers, producers, bankers, distributors and buyers. In 2019, HAF17 attracted more than 1,000 filmmakers and industry professionals from 40 countries and regions to participate in the three-day event which featured 23 HAF Projects and 19 WIP Projects. HAF has the added advantage of being held in conjunction with Hong Kong Filmart, Asia's largest film market which regularly attracts over 8,000 professionals.

Over the years, HAF has partnered with many regional and international organisations to provide a range of opportunities to participants. Past and current partners include iQIYI (China), Fox International Productions (Greater China) (US), Cinemart (the Netherlands), Asian Project Market (South Korea), Golden Horse Film Project Promotion (Taiwan), and MIA (Italy). With the support of, among others, the Hong Kong SAR Government's Create Hong Kong and Hong Kong Film Development Fund, HAF has made cash and in-kind awards available to participating filmmakers each year. Notable past HAF participants include China's JIA Zhangke, 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) is a charitable, non-profit and non-governmental organisation dedicated to the discovery and promotion of creativity in the art and culture of film. Annually, HKIFFS organises the flagship Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) and Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) in March and April, and the Cine Fan Summer International Film Festival (Summer IFF) every August. In 2013, HKIFFS launched the repertory HKIFF Cine Fan Programme to enrich and deepen the experience of Hong Kong filmgoers through a year-round bi-monthly programme of contemporary, retrospective and thematic showcases. In 2017, HKIFFS set up the Film Industry Services Office (FIS) to promote the development of non-mainstream cinema through co-production, and to support emerging filmmakers with consultancy on festival strategies and overseas distribution (HKIFF Collection).

Official website: www.hkiff.org.hk

Appendix 1

List of the 18th HAF awards and sponsors

HAF Awards

Create Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Film Development Fund, and HAF will jointly present two cash awards of HK\$100,000 (approximately US\$12,800) each.

HAF's Project Review Committee will select two HAF projects, one from Hong Kong and one from outside of Hong Kong, to receive the cash awards for their originality and creativity.

HAF Documentary Awards (NEW)

Create Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Film Development Fund, and HAF will jointly present two cash awards of HK\$100,000 (approximately US\$12,800) each.

To encourage and promote the development of documentary filmmaking, HAF's Project Review Committee will select two HAF documentary projects, one from Hong Kong and one from outside of Hong Kong, to receive the cash awards for their feasibility, appeal and relevance of the subject matter.

WIP Fiction Award (NEW)

Create Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Film Development Fund, and HAF will jointly present one cash award of HK\$78,000 (approximately US\$10,000).

HAF's Project Review Committee will select a winning project for its originality and creativity. All WIP fiction projects are eligible for this award.

WIP Documentary Award

Create Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Film Development Fund, and HAF will jointly present one cash award of HK\$78,000 (approximately US\$10,000).

HAF's Project Review Committee will select a winning project to encourage and promote the development of documentary filmmaking. All WIP documentary projects are eligible for this award.

Heaven Pictures Young Director Award

Heaven Pictures (HK) Culture & Media Co., Ltd. will sponsor one cash award of HK\$150,000 (approximately US\$19,200).

Representatives of Heaven Pictures (HK) Culture and Media Co., Ltd. will select one HAF

project to receive this award which aims to encourage young Hong Kong directors to create locally-themed projects with unique personal style.

Wouter Barendrecht Award

The Wouter Barendrecht Film Foundation, Create Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong Film Development Fund will jointly sponsor one cash award of HK\$50,000 (approximately US\$6,400).

Representatives of the Wouter Barendrecht Film Foundation will select one HAF project to receive the award dedicated to the memory of the late Wouter Barendrecht, the renowned producer and one of HAF's founders. Only projects with directors under the age of 35 and have not made more than three feature films will be considered for this award.

Udine Focus Asia Award

The Udine Far East Film Festival will sponsor one in-kind award of Euro 7,000 (approximately HK\$62,000).

The objective of this award is to encourage and facilitate co-production between Asia and Europe. The Udine Far East Film Festival will invite one HAF project to participate in Focus Asia 2020. For the selected project, the director will receive one round-trip air ticket to Udine, and hotel accommodation will also be provided for the director and producer.

Network of Asian Fantastic Films Award

The Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival will sponsor one in-kind award of US\$2,700 (approximately HK\$21,100).

The Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival will invite one HAF project to participate in Network of Asian Fantastic Films 2020. The selected project will receive one round-trip ticket and hotel accommodation.

Cinerent Award

Cinerent Beijing Ltd. will sponsor one in-kind award of RMB 150,000 (approximately HK\$175,000 or US\$22,400).

This award aims to support and encourage high-quality film projects. Only HAF projects to be shot in mainland China are eligible for this award.

White Light Post-Production Award

White Light Studio will sponsor two in-kind awards of US\$15,000 (approximately

HK\$117,300) each.

To promote cinematic innovation and promising Asian filmmakers, Bangkok-based White Light Studio will select and present one HAF project and one WIP project each with an in-kind award of post-production services valued at US\$15,000.

HAF Goes to Cannes Program

Presented by HAF and Marché du Film

HAF collaborates with Marché du Film to present a programme offering market screening opportunities to not more than five selected WIP projects at this year's Cannes film festival. The initiative, *HAF Goes to Cannes*, aims to give filmmakers exposures to sales agents, distributors and festival programmers on the international stage.

Appendix 2

Full list of the 18th HAF Projects

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| 1. Among Us 地球迷航記 | Taiwan 台灣 |
| Director 導演： | LIN Cheng-Sheng 林正盛 |
| Producer 監製： | LIN Chi-Chieng 林智祥 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Among We Film Production Co., Ltd. 我們之間影像製作有限公司 |
| 2. Hypnos 睏寐之際 | Taiwan 台灣 |
| Director 導演： | HO Chao-Ti 賀照緹 |
| Producer 監製： | LIAO Ching-Sung 廖慶松, Stefano CENTINI 陳璽文 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Conjunction Films 大照國際影像有限公司 |
| 3. Inspirare 呼吸之間 | China 中國 Canada 加拿大 |
| Director 導演： | KANG Yuqi 康宇琪 |
| Producer 監製： | CAO Xi 曹曦, Dana KALMEY |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Inner Mongolia Lanshanyang Cultural Communication LLC 內蒙古蘭珊洋影視文化傳媒 有限公司 |
| 4. June Snow | Hong Kong 香港 |
| Director 導演： | Dean NAPOLITANO |
| Producer 監製： | Ruby YANG 楊紫燁 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | MBN Pacific Media |
| 5. Kabul Melody | Afghanistan 阿富汗 |
| Director 導演： | Sahra MANI |
| Producer 監製： | Annie OHAYON-DEKEL |
| Production Company 製作公司： | 24images |
| 6. My Genie | South Korea 南韓 |
| Director 導演： | PARK Hyuck-jee 朴赫智 |
| Producer 監製： | EOM Jeong-hwa 嚴貞華 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Hiharbor Pictures |

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| 7. Shimshon, Hasidic in Asia 到此一猶 | Hong Kong 香港 |
| Director 導演 : | Sadie GRANBERG |
| Producer 監製 : | Shmuel JUNGER |
| Production Company 製作公司 : | Pop-up Film Limited |
| 8. The Siren Song | Mexico 墨西哥 |
| Director 導演 : | Eden BERNAL |
| Producer 監製 : | Polly YEUNG 楊寶文 |
| Production Company 製作公司 : | Sinapsis, The Lady Improper |
| 9. Waiting for Winter | Bangladesh 孟加拉 |
| Director 導演 : | Farid AHMAD |
| Producer 監製 : | Salma SONIA |
| Production Company 製作公司 : | Noyakar Productions |
| 10. 9 Temples to Heaven | Thailand 泰國 |
| Director 導演 : | Sompot CHIDGASORNPONGSE 薩波齊嘉索潘 |
| Producer 監製 : | Apichatpong WEERASETHAKUL 阿彼察邦韋拉斯 花古, Kissada KAMYOUNG |
| Production Company 製作公司 : | Kick The Machine Films, At A Time Pictures |
| 11. Another World 世外 | Hong Kong 香港 |
| Director 導演 : | NG Kai-chung 吳啟忠 |
| Producer 監製 : | Polly YEUNG 楊寶文 |
| Production Company 製作公司 : | Point Five Creations |
| 12. Bad Education 黑的教育 | Taiwan 台灣 |
| Director 導演 : | Giddens KO 九把刀 |
| Producer 監製 : | Molly FANG 方曉茹 |
| Production Company 製作公司 : | Crystal Clear Co., Ltd. 非常清楚有限公司 |
| 13. Blind Forest | Japan 日本 |
| Director 導演 : | OGIGAMI Naoko 荻上直子 |
| Producer 監製 : | NAGAI Takuro 永井拓郎, NOZOE Ryoko 野副亮子 |
| Production Company 製作公司 : | RIKI PROJECT |

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| 14. Borrowed Time 人海同遊 | China 中國 |
| Director 導演： | CAI Jie 蔡杰 |
| Producer 監製： | MO Jinjin 莫津津 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Bocut Film Production 廣州薄殼文化傳媒有限公司 |
| 15. The End 結局 | Hong Kong 香港 |
| Director 導演： | PANG Ho-cheung 彭浩翔 |
| Producer 監製： | Daniel YU Wai-kwok 余偉國 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Epik Pictures 艾霹克映業 |
| 16. Eternal Night 五月的青杏 | China 中國 |
| Director 導演： | TAO Huaqiao 陶華僑 |
| Producer 監製： | KIM Ki-duk 金基德 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Onez Picture 山西萬卓影視製作有限公司 Xiang Shi Xiong Di Film 項氏兄弟電影公司 Sensory World Art Studio 感官世界藝術工作室 |
| 17. Fire Room 菲與火 | Hong Kong 香港 |
| Director 導演： | WONG Ka-ki 黃嘉祺 |
| Producer 監製： | Heiward MAK 麥曦茵 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Goodnight Production 菲與飛工作室 |
| 18. Good Deal 好生意 | China 中國 |
| Director 導演： | SHEN Di 申迪 |
| Producer 監製： | Rachel CAI 蔡蓉, ZHAO Jin 趙晉 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Super Player Film & Media Co., Ltd. 大玩家影業, Midnight Blur Films 午夜失焦 |
| 19. Gu and the Ghost 鬼進城 | China 中國 |
| Director 導演： | QIU Sheng 仇晟 |
| Producer 監製： | Tony HAN 韓天 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | CForce Pictures 中力影業 |

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| 20. Happy Journey and Last Will 旅途愉快！ | China 中國 |
| Director 導演： | DAI Xiaolu 戴曉璐 |
| Producer 監製： | HE Bin 賀斌 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Ngorongoro Pictures (Shanghai) Co., Ltd. 上海火山口影業有限公司 |
| 21. IOU 欠債都是爺 | China 中國 |
| Director 導演： | ZHANG Zhonghua 張忠華 |
| Producer 監製： | Julia CHU 朱嘉懿, SZE Kit-ling 施潔玲 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Golden Gate Productions Limited 金門製作有限公司 |
| 22. In the Belly of a Tiger | India 印度 |
| Director 導演： | Siddhartha JATLA |
| Producer 監製： | Vivek KAJARIA, Amanda MOONEY |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Basil Content, Momo Films |
| 23. Lonely Pine | Kazakhstan 哈薩克 Kyrgyzstan 吉爾吉斯 |
| Director 導演： | Dalmira TILEPBERGEN |
| Producer 監製： | Marina DESSIATKINA |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Arno Film LLC |
| 24. The Nurse | South Korea 南韓 |
| Director 導演： | KIM Soo-young 金秀映 |
| Producer 監製： | KIM Dong-hwan 金東煥 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Owl Pictures |
| 25. The River Knows Our Names | Vietnam 越南 |
| Director 導演： | Mai Huyen CHI |
| Producer 監製： | Bui Tran Thanh PHONG |
| Production Company 製作公司： | K'Noy Films |
| 26. Some Nights I Feel Like Walking | The Philippines 菲律賓 |
| Director 導演： | Petersen VARGAS |
| Producer 監製： | Alemberg ANG 蔡怡銘, Jade Francis CASTRO |
| Production Company 製作公司： | vy/ac Productions, Origin8 Media |

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| 27. Song of Spring 春歌 | China 中國 |
| Director 導演： | YANG Lina 楊荔鈞 |
| Producer 監製： | LIAO Ching-Sung 廖慶松 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Moon Bear Culture Creative Studio 上海小熊月亮文化創意工作室 |
| 28. Stranger Eyes 默視錄 | Singapore 新加坡 |
| Director 導演： | YEO Siew Hua 楊修華 |
| Producer 監製： | Fran BORGIA, Dan KOH 許達偉 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Akanga Film Asia 亞綱製作公司 |
| 29. The Sunny Side of the Street 白日青春 | Hong Kong 香港 |
| Director 導演： | LAU Kok Rui 劉國瑞 |
| Producer 監製： | Peter YAM Yin-cheung 任硯聰 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Mee Studio |
| 30. Unreachable Places 南方旅店 | China 中國 |
| Director 導演： | CHANG Biao 常標 |
| Producer 監製： | GONG Jinjin 龔津巾 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Mofei Pictures (Beijing) International Culture & Media Co., Ltd. 莫非影畫（北京）國際文化傳媒有限公司 |
| 31. Ways to Run | The Netherlands 荷蘭 Afghanistan 阿富汗 |
| Director 導演： | Aboozar AMINI |
| Producer 監製： | Jia ZHAO 趙佳, Joost DE VRIES |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Silk Road Film Salon 絲路影視沙龍, An Original Picture |
| 32. When Youth Departs 二十二十 | Hong Kong 香港 |
| Director 導演： | Derek CHIU Sung-kee 趙崇基 |
| Producer 監製： | Derek CHIU Sung-kee 趙崇基 |
| Production Company 製作公司： | Boundary Film Production Limited 界石電影製作有限公司 |

**33. Zsazsa Zaturnnah Vs. the
Amazonistas of Planet X**

The Philippines 菲律賓

Director 導演：

Avid LIONGOREN

Producer 監製：

Avid LIONGOREN, Franck PRIOT

Production Company 製作公司：

Rocketsheep Studio