

For immediate release

## HAF SELECTS 29 PROJECTS, GOES VIRTUAL FOR THE SECOND YEAR

**Hong Kong, 18 January 2021** – The Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) today unveils the lineup for its 19<sup>th</sup> edition (HAF19), with 29 projects from established Asian directors and producers such as HUR Jin-Ho, KAWASE Naomi, NING Hao, OGIGAMI Naoko, WANG Bing, YEE Chih-Yen, emerging filmmakers like CAI Chengjie, Oliver CHAN, Roya SADAT, YANG Mingming, as well as nine first-feature directors.

Returning to its regular March slot, HAF19 will run concurrently with the 25<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong Filmart (FILMART) from 15 to 17 March. It will again take place online following HAF's first-ever virtual edition held in August 2020.

"Despite the challenging circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, HAF remains strongly committed to filmmakers," HAF director Jacob WONG said. "We will have our dedicated online meeting platform this year for accredited HAF and FILMART participants to schedule and conduct meetings directly. It's hassle-free and user-friendly, requiring no download or additional log-on."

HAF19 selected the 29 projects, including nine documentaries, from 321 submissions from 80 countries and regions. Early next month, HAF19 will announce additional projects chosen for its Work-in-Progress (WIP) section which targets filmmakers seeking post-production fundings, distribution opportunities and festival support. Together, these projects will be eligible for HAF19's 17 awards, with a combined cash and in-kind value of HK\$1,200,000 (approximately US\$157,000). Please refer to **Appendix 1** for a full list of the awards and sponsors.

The highlights of some of HAF19's shortlisted projects are as follows:

### **Hong Kong:**

Hong Kong promises a strong lineup of six projects, the majority of which are by woman directors. In *Her Lullaby*, Oliver CHAN tackles motherhood's challenges after her critically-acclaimed debut *Still Human*. Renowned TVC director Susie AU returns to the big-screen with *HERs*, in which a dying photographer takes her actress friend on a journey to discover the hidden past. Teaming up with producer Teresa KWONG (*Suk Suk*), media executive Bud-ming aims to make her directorial debut with *The Way We AD*, a documentary tracing the Hong Kong advertising industry's development since the 1970s. Another debutant joining them is last

year's HAF Film Lab winner, HO Ching-yi, telling the story of how a middle-aged man bonds with his mother through marathon running in ***Hit the Wall***.

### **China:**

With eight shortlisted projects, China is well-represented at HAF19. Among them, CAI Chengjie, the winner of the Rotterdam Tiger Award with *The Widowed Witch*, brings ***Splash***, an edgy, sexual assault drama. *Girls Always Happy* director YANG Mingming presents ***Getting Nowhere***, focusing on a woman who travels on the road with her truck-driving husband. LIU Hao (*The Poet*) follows three generations of a Tajik family in the Xinjiang-set ***Soft Whispers Over Time***. NING Hao (*Dying To Survive*) will produce XU Lei's ***The Peacemaker***, which tells the story of a villager acting as a mediator to settle private disputes.

### **India and Afghanistan:**

India has a significant presence, too, with six projects. They include ***Birthmark***, by *Labour Of Love* director Aditya Vikram SENGUPTA, which explores the present-day Hindu-Muslim tension. Rishi CHANDNA plans to make his feature debut with ***The Catch***, a comedy-drama about a fisherman who makes a fortune with his catch, with Dina DATTANI (*Hotel Salvation*) producing. Meanwhile, Afghan director Roya SADAT (*A Letter To The President*) examines two women's friendship in pre-civil war Afghanistan in ***The Forgotten History***.

### **Taiwan and Southeast Asia:**

TSAO Shih-Han's feature debut ***Beautiful Days In The South***, another winner of last year's HAF Film Lab, is a coming-of-age drama set in 1996 amid Taiwan's missile crisis, with YEE Chih-Yen (*Blue Gate Crossing*) attached as a producer. From Indonesia is ***108 Days*** by Lucky KUSWANDI (*Madame X*), tracking the police detention of a French-Canadian teacher accused of sexually assaulting his young charge. Joining them is the Philippines' Alistaire Christian "Zurich" CHAN, whose ***Cangrejos*** recounts the fight for survival on a small island by a father, a crab catcher, and a young daydreamer.

### **Japan and South Korea:**

HAF19 will feature two projects from Japan. ***Blind Forest***, by *Close-Knit* director OGIGAMI Naoko, is set in a special facility where women gather to create Braille texts as a healing process for their dark past. MURASE Daichi's Nara-set ***Beyond The Fog***, which will be produced by KAWASE Naomi, is about a boy who is the first baby born in his remote village for over two decades. Korean director HUR Jin-Ho (*The Last Princess*) examines two brothers who have to confront each other when their children are involved in a murder in ***The Dinner***.

**Documentaries:**

HAF19 features nine documentaries covering a broad and diverse range of topics. There are four projects from India, including Vikram DASGUPTA's *Vrindavan: City Of Widows*, which documents three banished women who seek refuge in the holy city of Vrindavan. In Tushar MADHAV's *Another World*, animation and documentary combine to explore the enigma of the suicide of the iconic Indian painter Jangarh Singh Shyam. Other documentary projects include Arun BHATTARAI's *Gross National Happiness*, which looks at how Bhutan shapes its national identity based on happiness. Meanwhile, renowned Chinese documentarian WANG Bing examines the African community's harsh living conditions in Guangzhou, China, in *I Come From Ikotun*, with Isabelle GLACHANT producing.

**Guest Accreditation for HAF:**

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

Please refer to **Appendix 2** for details on all shortlisted projects. For more up-to-date information about HAF, please visit our official website at <http://www.haf.org.hk/> or our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/hafhkiffs/>.

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

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 2020, HAF18 attracted more than 350 filmmakers and industry professionals from 40 countries and regions to participate in the three-day online event which featured 32 HAF Projects and 22 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 participants with a range of opportunities. 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 discovering and promoting 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 Hong Kong filmgoers' experience 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 non-mainstream cinema through co-production and support emerging filmmakers with consultancy on festival strategies and overseas distribution (HKIFF Collection).

Official website: <http://www.hkiff.org.hk/>

## Appendix 1

### Full list of the HAF19 awards and sponsors

With the generous support of stakeholders, partners and sponsors, HAF will present a total of 17 cash and in-kind prizes, worth approximately HK\$1,200,000 (about US\$ 157,000).

#### HAF Fiction Awards

**- presented by Create Hong Kong, Hong Kong Film Development Fund and HAF**

Two HAF fiction projects – one from Hong Kong and one from outside of Hong Kong – will receive a cash prize of HK\$100,000 each (about US\$12,900) for their originality and creativity.

#### HAF Documentary Awards

**- presented by Create Hong Kong, Hong Kong Film Development Fund and HAF**

Two HAF documentary projects – one from Hong Kong and one from outside of Hong Kong – will receive a cash prize of HK\$100,000 each (about US\$12,900) for their originality and creativity.

#### WIP Fiction Award

**- presented by Create Hong Kong, Hong Kong Film Development Fund and HAF**

One WIP fiction project will receive a cash award of HK\$78,000 (approximately US\$10,000) for its originality and creativity. All WIP fiction projects are eligible for this award.

#### WIP Documentary Award

**- presented by Create Hong Kong, Hong Kong Film Development Fund and HAF**

One WIP documentary project will receive a cash award of HK\$78,000 (approximately US\$10,000). All WIP documentary projects are eligible for this award which aims to encourage and promote documentary filmmaking.

#### Heaven Pictures Young Director Award

**- presented by Heaven Pictures (HK) Culture & Media**

Representatives of Heaven Pictures (HK) Culture and Media will select one HAF project as the recipient of a cash award of HK\$150,000 (approximately US\$19,350). This award aims to encourage young Hong Kong directors to create local-themed projects with unique personal style.

#### Udine Focus Asia Award

**- presented by Udine Far East Film Festival**

Representatives of the Udine Far East Film Festival would select one HAF project to participate in its project market, Focus Asia. The in-kind award is worth Euro 7,000 (approximately

HK\$62,000), comprising of a round-trip air ticket and hotel accommodation for the director and hotel accommodation for the producer. This award aims to encourage and facilitate co-production between Asia and Europe.

### **Network of Asian Fantastic Films Award**

#### **- presented by Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival**

Representatives of Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival will select one HAF project to participate in its project market, Network of Asian Fantastic Films. The in-kind award is worth US\$2,700 (approximately HK\$21,000), comprising of one round-trip ticket and hotel accommodation.

### **Cinerent Award**

#### **- presented by Cinerent Beijing Ltd**

Representatives of Cinerent Beijing will select one HAF project with plans to shoot in mainland China as the recipient of an in-kind award of RMB 150,000 (approximately HK\$175,000) in equipment rental and services.

### **White Light Post-Production Award**

#### **- presented by White Light Studio**

To promote cinematic innovation and promising Asian directors, White Light Studio offers two in-kind awards of US\$15,000 (approximately HK\$117,300) to one HAF project and one WIP project each. The recipients will receive post-production services at White Light's facilities in Bangkok, Thailand.

### **HAF Goes to Cannes Programme**

#### **- presented by HAF and Marché du Film**

In collaboration with Marché du Film, Festival de Cannes, HAF will invite up to five WIP projects for market screening presentation and pitching at the Cannes Film Festival. This programme aims to facilitate projects already in production to secure post-production funding, sales agents and film-festival support.

## Appendix 2

### Full list of the HAF19 Projects

#### 01-09 Documentaries 紀錄片

- |                                    |                                                            |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Afloat*</b>                  | <b>India 印度</b>                                            |
| Director 導演：                       | Arkus                                                      |
| Producer 監製：                       | Gargi CHAKRABARTI                                          |
| Production Company 製作公司：           | Arkus Entertainment                                        |
| <b>2. Another World</b>            | <b>India 印度   Japan 日本</b>                                 |
| Director 導演：                       | Tushar MADHAV                                              |
| Producer 監製：                       | Tushar MADHAV, Shilpi GULATI                               |
| Production Company 製作公司：           | Basic Bae Films                                            |
| <b>3. Gross National Happiness</b> | <b>Bhutan 不丹</b>                                           |
| Director 導演：                       | Arun BHATTARAI                                             |
| Producer 監製：                       | Arun BHATTARAI, Noémi SZAKONYI                             |
| Production Company 製作公司：           | Sound Pictures                                             |
| <b>4. I Come from Ikotun</b>       | <b>France 法國   Hong Kong 香港</b>                            |
| Director 導演：                       | WANG Bing 王兵                                               |
| Producer 監製：                       | Isabelle GLACHANT                                          |
| Production Company 製作公司：           | Chinese Shadows, Wil Productions                           |
| <b>5. The Baby Carriers 合約媽媽*</b>  | <b>USA 美國</b>                                              |
| Director 導演：                       | CHEN Lingwei 陳令瑋                                           |
| Producer 監製：                       | NING Hao 寧浩                                                |
| Production Company 製作公司：           | Dirty Monkey Productions 壞猴子影業                             |
| <b>6. The Sinking Island</b>       | <b>India 印度</b>                                            |
| Director 導演：                       | Sourav SARANGI                                             |
| Producer 監製：                       | Sourav SARANGI, George KALOMENOPOULOS,<br>Riccardo BIADENE |
| Production Company 製作公司：           | Son et Lumiere                                             |

**7. The Way We AD\*** **Hong Kong 香港**  
**香港這樣廣告過**

Director 導演： Bud-ming 畢明  
Producer 監製： Teresa KWONG 鄭珮詩  
Production Company 製作公司： Ideas Un Limited

**8. Vrindavan: City of Widows** **India 印度 | Canada 加拿大 |  
New Zealand 紐西蘭**

Director 導演： Vikram DASGUPTA  
Producer 監製： Alex Yoke-sun LEE, Marilyn McFADYEN  
Production Company 製作公司： Yalla Media Ltd.

**9. When Clouds Gather 嚮往之地\*** **China 中國**

Director 導演： Clarissa ZHANG 張昱程  
Producer 監製： Clarissa ZHANG 張昱程, Yve Vonn LEE 李穎文  
Production Company 製作公司： Golden Lining Films 上海夢騰影視文化工作室,  
Afternoon Pictures 午後映畫

**10-29 Fictional features 劇情片**

**10. 108 Days** **Indonesia 印尼**

Director 導演： Lucky KUSWANDI  
Producer 監製： Muhammad ZAIDY, Meiske TAURISIA  
Production Company 製作公司： Palari Films

**11. All About My Father\*** **China 中國**  
**關於父親的一切**

Director 導演： HU Guo 胡果  
Producer 監製： WANG Jing 王婧  
Production Company 製作公司： IMAGE X Productions 上海俊睿文化傳播有限公司

**12. Beautiful Days in the South\*** **Taiwan 台灣**  
**南方時光**

Director 導演： TSAO Shih-Han 曹仕翰  
Producer 監製： YEE Chih-Yen 易智言  
Production Company 製作公司： Life Scenery Films 百景映畫有限公司

**13. Beyond the Fog** **Japan 日本**

Director 導演： MURASE Daichi 村瀨大智  
Producer 監製： KAWASE Naomi 河瀨直美  
Production Company 製作公司： Nara International Film Festival 奈良國際電影節

**14. Birthmark** **India 印度**

Director 導演： Aditya Vikram SENGUPTA  
Producer 監製： Anshulika DUBEY, Priyankar PATRA  
Production Company 製作公司： For Films

**15. Blind Forest\*\*** **Japan 日本**

Director 導演： OGIGAMI Naoko 荻上直子  
Producer 監製： NAKAYAMA Keiko 中山惠子  
Production Company 製作公司： Fuji Creative Corporation 富士創意公司

**16. Cangrejos** **The Philippines 菲律賓**

Director 導演： Zurich CHAN  
Producer 監製： Gale OSORIO  
Production Company 製作公司： Binisaya Movement Inc., Southern Lantern Studios

**17. Donna, Donna** **China 中國**  
**老田賣掉了我的駱駝**

Director 導演： QI Rui 漆銳  
Producer 監製： ZHU Dan 朱丹  
Production Company 製作公司： Beijing BigFish Cine Co., Ltd.  
北京大魚映像影視文化傳播有限公司

**18. Getting Nowhere** **China 中國**  
**哪兒也不去**

Director 導演： YANG Mingming 楊明明  
Producer 監製： YANG Jing 楊競  
Production Company 製作公司： Beijing Trend Cultural Investment Co., Ltd.  
北京傳燈文化投資有限公司

**19. Her Lullaby 虎毒不** **Hong Kong 香港**

Director 導演： Oliver CHAN 陳小娟  
Producer 監製： Oliver CHAN 陳小娟  
Production Company 製作公司： No Ceiling Film Production Limited  
無際電影製作有限公司

<b>20. HERs 眾裡尋她</b>	<b>Hong Kong 香港</b>
Director 導演：	Susie AU 區雪兒
Producer 監製：	Joe CHAN 陳善之
Production Company 製作公司：	Handmade Films Ltd. 自己制造
<b>21. Hit the Wall 撞牆*</b>	<b>Hong Kong 香港</b>
Director 導演：	HO Ching-yi 何靜怡
Producer 監製：	MAK Ho-pong 麥浩邦
Production Company 製作公司：	A Dot Creative Studio 加一點創作
<b>22. Love to Bits 愛的暴育*</b>	<b>Hong Kong 香港</b>
Director 導演：	WONG Wan-sze 王韻詩
Producer 監製：	WONG Wan-sze 王韻詩, LEUNG Kin-pong 梁健邦
Production Company 製作公司：	Electric Diamond Production Limited 電鑽重創影像有限公司
<b>23. Soft Whispers Over Time 輕語流年</b>	<b>China 中國</b>
Director 導演：	LIU Hao 劉浩
Producer 監製：	ZHANG Han 張晗
Production Company 製作公司：	Beijing Cornerstone Entertainment Co., Ltd. 北京長弓文化傳媒有限公司
<b>24. Splash 水花</b>	<b>China 中國</b>
Director 導演：	CAI Chengjie 蔡成杰
Producer 監製：	CAI Chengjie 蔡成杰
Production Company 製作公司：	Seshizi (Beijing) Motion Pictures 澀柿子（北京）影業有限公司
<b>25. Sunfire 陽焰</b>	<b>China 中國</b>
Director 導演：	YANG Rui 楊蕊
Producer 監製：	FANG Li 方勵
Production Company 製作公司：	Beijing Shu Shu Shu Screen Culture Co., Ltd. 北京樹樹樹影視文化有限公司
<b>26. The Catch*</b>	<b>India 印度</b>
Director 導演：	Rishi CHANDNA
Producer 監製：	Dina DATTANI
Production Company 製作公司：	Furaha Pictures Limited

<b>27. The Dinner</b>	<b>South Korea 南韓</b>
Director 導演：	HUR Jin-Ho
Producer 監製：	KIM Won-Kuk
Production Company 製作公司：	Hive Media Corp.
<b>28. The Forgotten History</b>	<b>Afghanistan 阿富汗  Spain 西班牙</b>
Director 導演：	Roya SADAT
Producer 監製：	Alba SOTORRA CLUA, Roya SADAT
Production Company 製作公司：	Roya Film House, Alba Sotorra Cinema Productions
<b>29. The Peacemaker 中間人</b>	<b>China 中國</b>
Director 導演：	XU Lei 徐磊
Producer 監製：	NING Hao 寧浩
Production Company 製作公司：	Dirty Monkey Productions 壞猴子影業

\* First-feature projects

\*\* *Blind Forest* was initially one of HAF18's shortlisted projects. It withdrew when HAF18 went online and subsequently resubmitted for HAF19.