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Media contact: Kevin Lee
Asian CineVision
press@asiancinevision.org

AAIFF 2015 Comes to a Close After 10 Days of Inspirational Asian and Asian American Cinema

NEW YORK, August 2, 2015 – After 10 days of Asian and Asian American films, conversations and events, AAIFF 2015 dims the lights to yet another successful year. As the nation’s first and longest running Asian American film festival, AAIFF 2015 welcomed over 150 filmmakers and guests and showcased over 50 films from 9 different countries. With 2 World Premieres, including 15 New York Premieres, AAIFF 2015 featured films from renowned filmmakers such as Oscar Winner Ruby Yang, Sundance Winner and Oscar Nominee Arthur Dong, as well as Centerpiece Presentation SEOUL SEARCHING and the Closing Night Presentation of Wong Fu’s first feature film, EVERYTHING BEFORE US. AAIFF 2015 drew close to 8,000 audience members.

AAIFF 2015 Winners

Emerging Director of Narrative Feature with Official Jury Statements

LA SALADA, dir. Juan Martin Hsu

Jury Statement: “The crack of golf drives is an unlikely proxy for the tick of the clock, but this is an unusual movie that sees and hears attentively and inventively. From the first images that swap foreground and background, the film announces its interests in investigating the quieter elements in a scene (and a life) that might normally be missed. The characters in the film are diverse, but they are united by a balanced, sympathetic eye content to observe their lives without judgment. Loneliness, textured space, layered sounds, relief, movement & stillness, they rotate in and out of prominence in a unique rhythm. This is textbook neo-classicism, using the old lessons of aesthetic harmony alongside a child-like curiosity and joy in discovery of the new”.
–Patrick Wang (Juror)

A GIRL AT MY DOOR, dir. July Jung

Jury Statement: “True to Korean cinema, A Girl At My Door is a heated portrayal of domestic abuse, and I’m very taken by this story’s female heroes set against the backdrop of South Korean rural life. It’s dramatic, but not melodramatic. I admire the filmmaker’s quest in tackling a variety of issues, including migration, abuse, and homosexuality. Film is such a powerful medium, and this team made an excellent attempt to bringing these issues to light”.

Emerging Director of Documentary Feature

LIVE FROM UB, dir. Lauren Knapp

Jury Statement: “I enjoyed this refreshing view of modern “Mongolia” alongside another favorite SUMMER PASTURE and appreciate how it showcases a living culture surviving and thriving -- beyond sweeping (Western-made) epics frozen in the “Golden Horde” past”. – Theresa Navarro (Juror)

Jury Statement: “Thoroughly enjoyable and informative, with some excellent integration of character footage and archival material”.
–John Woo (Juror)

Excellence in Short Filmmaking

THE SURRENDER, dir. Steve Maing

Jury Statement: “Important and powerful documentary. Excellent on so many levels. The film successfully humanizes Stephen, and shows how his life was ruined by the espionage charges”.

Screenplay Competition Winner

EAST OF WESTERN, by Timothy Drain

The screenplay is a story of Alex, a criminal enforcer in LA’s Korea Town neighborhood. As a Hispanic outsider within the Korean mob, he’s earned his keep through service to the mob boss, Hong. Starting as a young child who fetched his cigarettes, Alex grew into a man Hong trusts with his most important criminal tasks. Growing up alongside him are Hong’s two children: Jihyeok, the bright but soft-natured son; and Su-bin the rebellious older sister. After a sudden stroke puts Hong into a coma, Alex must defend his boss’ position and this surrogate family from dangerous challengers to the throne.

For Youth By Youth One to Watch Award

IF THERE IS A REASON TO STUDY, dir. Adler Yang

For Youth By Youth program celebrates works by media makers of Asian descent under the age of 21, articulating their perceptions of life and the world in the most original voice. IF THERE IS A REASON TO STUDY is directed by a then 14 year-old student Alder Yang who has spent 6 years to document a test-driven education’s impact on students. In addition to filmmaking, Alder strives to make a difference in education by means such as writing, journalism, workshop design and facilitation, and entrepreneurship. We are fascinated by his one-man crusade and selected the film for its subject matter as well as the young director’s rarely seen courage and perseverance.

Audience Award (Documentary Feature)

LIVE FROM UB, dir. Lauren Knapp

Audience Award (Narrative Feature)

FACTORY BOSS (by Wei Zhang)

Guests in Attendance

Special guests in attendance at this year’s festival included actor Aaron Yoo, (SOMEONE ELSE, EVERYTHING BEFORE US); director Adler Yang, (IF THERE IS A REASON TO STUDY);

actor Alestair Shu, (PAPER WRAP FIRE); director Allsa Sing, (ON AN INFINITE LOOP); director Angelo Santos, (PAMANHIKAN); director Arthur Dong, (THE KILLING FIELDS OF HAING S. NGOR); director Benson Lee, (SEOUL SEARCHING); actor Byron Mann, (HELL ON WHEELS); actor Christopher Dinh, (EVERYTHING BEFORE US); producer Dave Grabarek, (LOVE ARCADIA); director Dax Phelan, (JASMINE); actor Edwin, (THE PURPLE ONION); actor Eric Tabach, (PIPE DREAM); actor Esteban Ahn, (SEOUL SEARCHING); actor Jason Tobin, (JASMINE); director Joao Inada, (ALMOST TIBETAN); showrunner John Wirth, (HELL ON WHEELS); director Julie Zhu, (THE SWAN TUONELA); actor Kenway Hon Wai Kua, (TALKING TO MY MOTHER); producer Kristy Lin, (THE FLIP); actor Sia Fan Lam, (MY VOICE, MY LIFE); producer Lambert Yam, (MY VOICE, MY LIFE); director Lauren Knapp, (LIVE FROM UB); director Leon Le, (TALKING TO MY MOTHER); director Matt Szymanoski, (THE PURPLE ONION); director Min Ding, (RATTLEFLY); director Ming Zeng, (LAO WONG); director Nelson Kim, (SOMEONE ELSE); director Norah Shapiro, (MISS TIBE: BEAUTY IN EXILE); actor Noreen Lee, (THE PURPLE ONION); director Philip Wang, (EVERYTHING BEFORE US); actor Rachel Lu, (PAPER WRAP FIRE); writer Rishi Bhilawadikar, (FOR HERE OR TO GO?); director Ruby Yang, (MY VOICE, MY LIFE); director Rucha Humnabadkar (FOR HERE OR TO GO?); director Sixing Su, (KARMA); director Steve Maing, (THE SURRENDER); director Steven Liang, (COMING HOME); director Tanya Dua, (ALMOST TIBETAN); editor Taylor Chan, (EVERYTHING BEFORE US); producer Theresa Chiu, (LOVE ARCADIA); director Tiger Chengliang Cai, (SIX DREAMS ABOUT A CITY); actor Tzi Ma, (HELL ON WHEELS); director Vincent Nebrida, (HENERAL LUNA); director Wei Zhang, (FACTORY BOSS); director Wesley Chan, (EVERYTHING BEFORE US); actor Coby Wong, (MY VOICE, MY LIFE); actress Angela Zhou, (HELL ON WHEELS); actor John Arcilla, (HENERAL LUNA); actress Eugenia Yuan, (JASMINE).

Membership

Members support Asian CineVision's year-round programming, including AAIFF. They receive fantastic benefits including discounts on AAIFF tickets, invitations to events throughout the year, and complimentary AAIFF tickets. For more information on membership and upcoming AAIFF events visit asiancinevision.org.

Asian CineVision gratefully acknowledges its sponsors

AAIFF 2015 is supported in part by the following: HKETO, TECO, AMC, SAG-AFTRA, Southwest, AARP, Beam Suntory, Nielsen, Flushing BID, Flushing Chamber of Commerce, NY State of Health, New York Council on the Arts, Emblem Health, United Health, NY Culture Beat, The Korea Times, Chinamerica Radio, Blue Ribbon Sushi, Carma, Eileen's Cheesecake, Fatty Fish Restaurant, Flo Lounge Restaurant, BentOn Cafe, The MasalaWala, The One Hotel, Anokha, Bruce Cost Ginger Ale, Cafe Grumpy, Dr. Jart, Glico, Joe, Purity Organic, Royce Chocolate, Uber, Yu-Be.

General Festival Information

The Asian American International Film Festival (AAIFF) is a presentation of Asian CineVision. The festival is a celebration of inspiring Asian and Asian American works in film and video from innovative artists around the world. AAIFF 2015 takes place July 23-August 1, 2015 in Manhattan and Queens. Manhattan venues include: Cinema Village East (181-189 2nd Avenue); Asia Society (725 Park Avenue); Museum of

Chinese in America (215 Centre Street); Queens venues include: Museum of the Moving Image (36-01 35th Ave, Astoria); and Flushing Town Hall (13735 Northern Boulevard, Flushing).

About Asian CineVision:

Asian CineVision (ACV) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit media arts organization devoted to the development, exhibition, promotion, and preservation of Asian and Asian American film and video.

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