

**45th Asian American International Film Festival Announces  
“FREE CHOL SOO LEE” as Opening Film and “YUNI” for Centerpiece Presentation**

*Exclusive In-Person Screening and Reception with Safety Protocols,  
Early Bird Gold and Cine Pass on Sale on July 11*



July 7, 2022, NEW YORK – The 45th Asian American International Film Festival (AAIFF45) will take place from Aug. 3 - 13, and combines in-person screenings and events with online programs to make an exciting hybrid festival. The festival will kick off on Aug. 3 with an exclusive in-person screening of its Opening Night film FREE CHOL SOO LEE, directed by Julie Ha and Eugene Yi, at the Asia Society and Museum, with a reception to follow.

FREE CHOL SOO LEE is a documentary which excavates the essential story of 1970s San Francisco, when 20-year-old Korean immigrant Chol Soo Lee is racially profiled and convicted of a Chinatown gang murder. Sentenced to life, he spends years fighting to survive until investigative journalist K.W. Lee takes interest in his case, igniting an unprecedented social justice movement that would unite Asian Americans and inspire a new generation of activists.

"This film uplifts our deeper purpose of this year's festival: to bring stories that may have been lost in history to shed light on how to move forward collectively. Bringing Chol Soo Lee's story back to public attention decades later serves as an homage to the social justice movements that have shaped where we are and adds another layer of history to how we might approach today's rise in anti-Asian violence and injustices. Through the film, we are forced to witness a system that favors the few instead of the many that existed in 1973, while witnessing its continuation in 2022," said Festival Director Kayla Wong.



The film also asks audiences to consider what being an Asian American might mean today. In a conversation with the directors (MUBI, 2022), Eugene Yi discusses his hope that the film will provoke the Asian American community to reflect on questions like, “Who gets included in the term Asian American, who gets forgotten? What issues does one find Asian Americans embracing? Why does the issue of criminal justice reform intersect with Asian American politics less frequently than questions of, say, school admissions? Should that be the case?”

The Festival will also host the New York City premiere of Kamila Andini’s YUNI as its Centerpiece film. The screening will be held at 7:30 PM at the Asia Society and Museum on August 6, with a reception to follow. The film, which was Indonesia’s entry for the 2022 Academy Awards and also earned the Toronto International Film Festival 2021 - PLATFORM PRIZE, tells the story of Yuni, a smart, teenage girl with big dreams of attending university. After two marriage proposals, she sparks gossip about a myth that a woman who rejects three proposals will never marry. Yuni must choose between the myth of a final chance at marriage, or her dream of future happiness.

As demonstrated by its programs, AAIFF continues to honor and support the community of Asian American and Pacific Islander filmmakers and their stories by bringing communities together, motivating civic engagement, and activating change:

“AAIFF45 marks an important milestone anniversary. ACV prides itself in a legacy rooted in championing the voices of Asian diaspora artists. This year’s festival continues to celebrate the collective Asian American and Pacific Islander identity by reflecting on ACV’s achievements since 1977!” said Associate Director Eunice Chen.

More in-person events and the full lineup of AAIFF45 will be announced throughout the month of July. Early bird Gold and Cine Pass will be on sale on July 11 at <https://www.aaiff.org/> with limited-time pricing that ends on July 20, 2022.

### **About the Asian American International Film Festival**

The Asian American International Film Festival (AAIFF) is proudly known as "The First Home to Asian American Cinema." Organized by Asian CineVision, it's the first and longest-running festival dedicated to showcasing the moving image work by media artists of Asian descent for and about the Asian diaspora experience. The Festival takes place in New York City, the second-largest Asian-American market in the U.S. Every year, AAIFF attracts audiences from all five boroughs of New York City, the tri-state region, and around the world.

### **About Asian CineVision**

Asian CineVision (ACV) is a media arts nonprofit devoted to the development, exhibition, promotion, and preservation of Asian and Asian American experiences through storytelling. Our mission is to nurture and grow the community of makers and lovers of Asian and Asian American independent film, television, and digital.

Films submitted and screened at the festival are eligible to participate in our National Tour program, bringing Asian diaspora stories to broader audiences across North America through a rental service for cultural and educational institutions.

### **Thank You**

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### **PRESS CONTACTS**

[Press@asiancinevision.org](mailto:Press@asiancinevision.org)

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