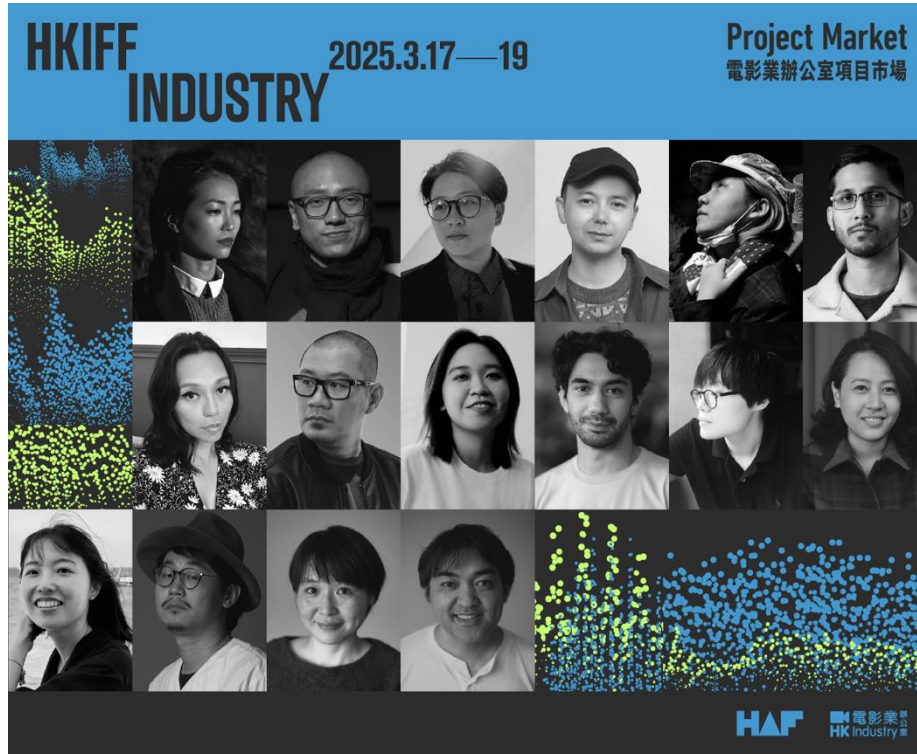


For Immediate Release

**HAF23 ADDS 15 WIP PROJECTS,
FOUR ALUMNI HEAD TO EUROPE**



Hong Kong, 10 February 2025 - The Hong Kong International Film Festival Society (HKIFFS) has shortlisted 15 work-in-progress (WIP) feature projects for the 23rd Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF23).

The list includes the latest films by award-winning auteurs such as Huang Ji, Qiu Jiongiong, and Chong Keat Aun, with a cast of veteran actors and rising stars from Lee Kang-Sheng to Kadowaki Mugi, Jennifer Yu, Jack Tan, and Qu Chuxiao. Among them are emerging filmmakers such as Tracy Choi, Tribeny Rai, and actor-turned-director Reza Rahadian.

As part of the expanded HKIFF Industry Project Market, HAF23 will take place from 17 to 19 March at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre alongside the 29th Hong Kong International Film & Television Market (FILMART).

Meanwhile, four alumni projects are making waves in Europe, confirming HAF as a notable film financing platform that propels talented filmmakers into the international limelight. The three projects heading to the Berlin International Film Festival are Chinese director Huo Meng's *Living the Land*, which will compete for the prestigious Golden Bear, Hong Kong director Jun Li's *Queerpanorama* in the Panorama section, and *Pag-wa* (aka *The Old Woman with the Knife*) by South

Korean director Min Kyu-dong in the Berlinale Special section. The fourth, *The Fruit* by China's Li Dongmei, recently premiered at the International Film Festival Rotterdam's Tiger Competition.

Some of HAF23's WIP highlights are:

ACCLAIMED DIRECTORS

A Woman Builds marks the latest feature by Huang Ji and her regular collaborator, Otsuka Ryuji, after winning Best Film at the 60th Golden Horse Awards for *Stonewalling*. The new film follows a Chinese woman who commits herself to building a house in her hometown while living a pseudo-single life, separated from her Japanese husband and child, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following his acclaimed *A New Old Play* (winner of Locarno's Special Jury Prize and HKIFF's Firebird Award for Best Film), Qiu Jiongjiong brews a dark comedic culinary guide to Sichuan cuisines in *FUXI: Joy in Four Chapters*. The narrative spans four millennia and through four festivities involving the living, the dying, the dead, and the long dead. The cast includes Lee Kang-Sheng, Lee Hong-Chi, and Annie Chen.

Mother Bhumi by Chong Keat Aun (Golden Horse's Best New Director winner for *The Story of Southern Islet* and HKIFF's Firebird Award for Best Film winner with *Snow in Midsummer*) features a widowed farmer who lives peacefully with her children. Yet, the mystery shrouding her husband's death resurfaces when the land dispute escalates.

PROMISING TALENT

Citra award-winning actor Reza Rahadian from Indonesia tackles the social issue of men having a woman sitting on their laps as they drink coffee in his directorial feature debut, *PANGKU*. The protagonist is one such woman who fights for a better life for her illegitimate child. The cast includes Claresta Taufan, Fedi Nuril, and Christine Hakim.

Tribeny Rai's Nepali feature debut, *Shape of Momo*, explores the nuanced dynamics of patriarchy through an unconventional woman caught between conformity and finding her independence. It was named India's NFDC Film Bazaar WIP lab's Best Project.

Starring Jennifer Yu, Fish Liew and Natalie Hsu, *Girlfriends* by Macau-born director Tracy Choi (*Sisterhood*) chronicles three love stories spanning over 15 years of a girl as a teenager in Macau, a university student in Taiwan, and a career woman in Hong Kong.

Emetjan Memet's feature debut, *Good Drink Pub*, is a romantic comedy about a pub owner who avoids falling for a new waitress but finds himself sinking deeper into loneliness when she leaves. The Xinjiang-set project was previously featured in both HAF Film Lab and HAF IDP.

YOUTH AND ROMANCE

Gong Yiwen uses an amateur cast and adopts a documentary style in her first feature, *Her First Taste*, to capture the raw emotions of adolescence and the shifting desires of youth. The teenage female protagonist, passionate about writing, tastes the bittersweet bond with a boy for the first time.

Name and Hair by Li Jing is a coming-of-age drama about a boy with a strange haircut and a teenage girl who, to her parents' surprise, wants to change her name at all costs. The renaming process is not easy, but it is her journey of growth in search of an identity.

Say My Name by Liu Xing is about a girl who impersonates an exchange student to start a fling with a rich boy but quickly loses herself in her new identity. Cannes award-winning DOP Lyu Yue is producing, with Yoyo Tse, Jack Tan and Cai Jie in the cast.

Drawn from her personal experience, Singaporean director Ang Geck Geck tells the story of a broken family from a child's perspective in her feature debut, *AH GIRL*. The seven-year-old protagonist is under pressure to choose between living with her mother or father, a decision that will affect her life.

FANTASY AND THE SUPERNATURAL

Set in a toll booth station on a highway in India, *The Ink-Stained Hand and the Missing Thumb* by Yashasvi Juyal follows a migrant worker who dies in a tragic work accident, only to reappear later to pass a poignant letter to his lover before vanishing again. Veteran critic, journalist, and expert in Hindi cinema, Anupama Chopra, produces.

White Flowers and Fruits by Sakamoto Yukari explores teenage suicide in a Christian boarding school for girls. Two girls attempt to unravel the mysterious suicide of a fellow student who was also a popular dancer when the deceased reappears in the form of floating flames. Yamamoto Teruhisa from the Oscar-winning *Drive My Car* produces, starring Kadowaki Mugi.

THRILLS AND CHILLS

Wild Nights, Tamed Beasts by Wang Tong tells the story of a zookeeper who falls in love with his father's caregiver, unaware that she is a serial killer of the elderly who is terminally ill. Wan Qian and Qu Chuxiao head the cast.

Moonglow by Isabel Sandoval (*Lingua Franca*) is about an ex-cop assigned with her ex-lover to investigate a break-in at the mansion of a corrupt police chief, only to confront the ghosts of their past. Sandoval also stars alongside Arjo Atayde in the film set in Manila in the 1970s.

OPEN PITCH SESSION

Part 1:

Date: 17 March 2025 (Monday)

Time: 16:00 - 18:00 (Hong Kong Time)

Venue: Starlight Theatre, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

Part 2:

Date: 18 March 2025 (Tuesday)

Time: 10:30 - 12:30 (Hong Kong Time)

Venue: Starlight Theatre, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

All shortlisted WIP projects (refer to the **Appendix** for details) will participate in two open pitch sessions at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on 17 and 18 March 2025. The selected WIP teams will be given an opportunity to take centre stage and present their projects, including a five-minute first look at their projects, to a key industry audience searching for original content.

We welcome distributors, producers, investors, festival programmers, and representatives of funding bodies with an HKIFF Industry Project Market or FILMART badge to participate.

GUEST AND MEDIA ACCREDITATION

Investors, festival programmers, and other industry professionals can now register as guests through <https://Industry.hkiff.org.hk/guest-registration>. Upon successful accreditation, all guests can arrange individual meetings with filmmakers to discuss their projects.

Media registration details can be found here: <https://www.hkiff.org.hk/accreditation/media>.

For more up-to-date information about the HKIFF Industry Project Market, please visit our official website at <https://industry.hkiff.org.hk> or our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/hkiffindustry>.

To download information:

<https://usercontent.hkiff.org.hk/Press/@HKIFFIndustryProjectMarket>

HKIFF Industry Project Market

Inaugurated in 2024, the HKIFF Industry Project Market incorporates the long-running Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF), the biennial HKIFF Industry - CAA China Genre Initiative (HCG), and the new Animation section added in 2025.

The new setup continues HAF's mission to create a supportive ecosystem for filmmakers with working projects for co-production ventures. Attracting more than 1,000 filmmakers and financiers from at least 35 countries and regions, around 25 in-development projects (IDP), 15 work-in-progress projects (WIP) and five animation projects are selected annually to participate in the three-day event. The HKIFF Industry Project Market occurs during FILMART, Asia's largest film market, with over 8,000 professionals in attendance.

Official website: <https://industry.hkiff.org.hk>

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 film art and culture. It organises the annual Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) and the Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF). Another highlight is the Cine Fan Summer International Film Festival, held every August. In 2013, HKIFF introduced the repertory HKIFF Cine Fan Programme to enrich and deepen Hong Kong moviegoers' experience through a monthly programme of contemporary, retrospective, and thematic showcases. In 2021, HKIFFS restructured its film industry services and set up HKIFF Industry to promote and support non-mainstream film industry development through co-production, festival strategies, and overseas distribution (HKIFF Collection).

Official website: www.hkiff.org.hk

Appendix: Full list of the HAF23 work-in-progress (WIP) projects

* First feature projects

^ HAF In-Development projects

HAF Film Lab projects

W1. ***AH GIRL**, Singapore

Director: Priscilla Ang Geck Geck

Producers: Charlyn Ng, Wendy Lie

Production Companies: Aggregate Films, In-Focus Asia Pte. Ltd. (IFA Media)

W2. **^FUXI: Joy in Four Chapters**, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, France

Director: Qiu Jiongjiong

Producers: David Tang, Ding Ningyuan, Zhao Jin

Production Company: Rise Pictures Co., Ltd.

W3. **Girlfriends**, Macau, Taiwan, Thailand, Hong Kong

Director: Tracy Choi

Producers: Estela Valdivieso Chen, Jacqueline Liu

Production Company: Serendipity Films Ltd.

W4. ***^#Good Drink Pub**, Mainland China

Director: Emetjan Memet

Producers: Wang Hongwei, Zhang Puzhongtian

Production Company: Hangzhou Yidapai Culture Media Co., Ltd.

W5. ***Her First Taste**, Mainland China

Director: Gong Yiwen

Producer: Qian Yini

Production Company: Yiwen Films, Sparks Production

W6. ***The Ink-Stained Hand and the Missing Thumb**, India

Director: Yashasvi Juyal

Producers: Anupama Chopra, Yashasvi Juyal, Viraj Sikand

Production Companies: Film Companion Studios, Silvercord Films

W7. **Moonglow**, The Philippines, United States, Taiwan, Japan

Director: Isabel Sandoval

Producers: Alembert Ang, Isabel Sandoval

Production Company: Daluyong Studios

W8. ***Mother Bhumi***, Malaysia, Italy, Hong Kong

Director: Chong Keat Aun

Producers: Wong Kew Soon, Stefano Centini

Production Companies: Janji Pictures Production Sdn Bhd, Volos Films Italia SRL

W9. ****Name and Hair***, Mainland China

Director: Li Jing

Producers: Liu Chang, Zhang Qianqian

Production Company: Beijing Magic Time Film Company Limited

W10. ****PANGKU (On Your Lap)***, Indonesia

Director: Reza Rahadian

Producers: Arya Ibrahim, Gita Fara

Production Company: Gambar Gerak

W11. ****Say My Name***, Mainland China, Hong Kong

Director: Liu Xing

Producers: Lyu Yue, Mo Jinjin, Duan Tingting

Production Company: Star Lab Production

W12. ****Shape of Momo***, India

Director: Tribeny Rai

Producers: Kislay, Geeta Rai

Production Companies: Kathkala Films LLP, Dalley Khorsani Productions

W13. ****White Flowers and Fruits***, Japan

Director: Sakamoto Yukari

Producer: Yamamoto Teruhisa

Production Company: Chiaroscuro Co., Ltd.

W14. ****Wild Nights, Tamed Beasts***, Mainland China

Director: Wang Tong

Producer: Wang Xueyin

Production Companies: Emei Film Group Co., Ltd., Shenzhen Yi Yi Yi Yi Culture Media Co., Ltd.

W15. ****A Woman Builds***, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore

Directors: Huang Ji, Otsuka Ryuji

Producers: Otsuka Ryuji, Kuo Ming-Jung, Fran Borgia

Production Companies: YGP-FILM, Island X Pictures, Akanga Film Asia