

For Immediate Release

Restored World Classics at HKIFF45

26 February 2021 (Hong Kong) – World cinema has been a cornerstone of the Hong Kong International Film Festival since its inception 45 years ago. This year, an exciting selection of newly-restored classics, ranging from a rarely-seen silent crime epic to a long-lost censored Iranian gem, promises to surprise modern audiences with their timeless ingenuity.

Renowned for his hugely popular silent era crime serials such as *Fantômas* (1913-14), *Les Vampires* (1915), and *Judex* (1917), pioneering French filmmaker Louis FEUILLADE extended his successful formula to the 12-episode adventure epic, *Tih Minh* (1918). Newly-restored by Gaumont from a rare print, this cinematic treasure distils a sense of mystery and menace into a rumination of humanitarian crises in the aftermath of the First World War.

Inheriting FEUILLADE's thriller techniques while imbuing his expressionist style into social realism, Austrian master filmmaker Fritz LANG elevated his recurring theme of fate and destiny in a superb film noir, *You Only Live Once* (1937), his second American feature that heralded an early yardstick of the man-on-the-run picture.

Revitalising the spirit of film noir, Jean-Luc GODARD stunned the world with *Breathless* (1960), a startling example of the French New Wave that challenged cinematic conventions. Beautifully restored in 4K for its 60th anniversary, this landmark film is as provocative and original as ever, and its influential experimentation in filmmaking remains a precursor for generations of future filmmakers.

Sharing the non-conformist spirit, Tomás GUTIÉRREZ ALEA, one of Cuba's foremost filmmakers, impressed with *Death of a Bureaucrat* (1966), a black comedy about institutionalised bureaucracy, expressing an outright criticism of Castro's regime in Buñuelian absurdity.

Two Iranian filmmakers offered allegorical insights into their society before and after the Islamic Revolution. Mohammad Reza ASLANI's *Chess of the Wind* (1976), banned after one screening and presumed lost for decades, evoked the political and moral deterioration through a gothic family thriller refined by decaying aristocracy and class struggle. The late maestro Abbas KIAROSTAMI transformed a simple case of classroom discipline into an inspiring disclosure on the social dilemmas in *First Case, Second Case* (1979) as well as two short films, *Two Solutions for One Problem* (1975) and *Tribute to the Teachers* (1977).

The 45th Hong Kong International Film Festival will adopt a new hybrid format for the first time, featuring screenings and audience-engagement events simultaneously in-theatre and online from 1 to 12 April. The festival will unveil its full programme on 9 March. The public can purchase tickets online (<http://www.hkiff.org.hk/>) and through all URBTIX outlets from 18 March.

HKIFF45's Restored World Classics

- 1918 *Tih Minh* by Louis FEUILLADE
- 1937 *You Only Live Once* by Fritz LANG
- 1960 *Breathless* by Jean-Luc GODARD
- 1966 *Death of a Bureaucrat* by Tomás GUTIÉRREZ ALEA
- 1976 *Chess of the Wind* by Mohammad Reza ASLANI
- 1975 *Two Solutions for One Problem* by Abbas KIAROSTAMI (short)
- 1977 *Tribute to the Teachers* by Abbas KIAROSTAMI (short)
- 1979 *First Case, Second Case* by Abbas KIAROSTAMI

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About The Hong Kong International Film Festival

The Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) is one of Asia's oldest and most reputable platforms for filmmakers, film professionals and filmgoers from all over the world to launch new work and experience outstanding films. The Festival is the largest cultural event in Hong Kong. It introduces world cinema to local audiences with the aim to enrich and deepen the experience of Hong Kong moviegoers. Committed to discovering new talent, the Festival premieres the breadth of Chinese cinema and showcases Asian talent. Festival-goers have the opportunity to enjoy world-class films, attend seminars hosted by leading filmmakers from around the world, visit film exhibitions, participate in receptions and parties, and more. The Festival draws extensive coverage from the local and international media. It continues to grow in importance as one of the premier platforms to launch films in Asia.

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 film's art and culture. It organises the annual flagship, the Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) and the Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF)

in March and April. Another annual highlight is the Cine Fan Summer International Film Festival (Summer IFF) held every August. Launched in 2013, the repertory HKIFF Cine Fan Programme aims to enrich and deepen Hong Kong moviegoers' experience through a monthly programme of contemporary, retrospective and thematic showcases. In 2017, HKIFFS set up the Film Industry Services Office (FIS) to promote non-mainstream film industry development through co-production and support of festival strategies and overseas distribution (HKIFF Collection).

Official website: www.hkiff.org.hk

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