

# THE **FILMART** **DAILY** No.1 **Hollywood** MARCH 19, 2012 **REPORTER**

THR.COM/FILMART



WITH NEW **HD** MASTER

**1990-2012 FILMS LIBRARY**

 **GOLDEN SUN FILMS DISTRIBUTION LIMITED**  
香港泰吉影業發行有限公司

Rm.477, 11/F Hong Lok House, No. 477 Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

Tel: 852-2385 5939 Fax: 852-2368 3873 **Call us 852-9102 7908**

E-mail: info@goldensunfilm.com www.goldensunfilm.com

# 36<sup>TH</sup> 香港國際電影節 HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



Key art design by Tom Lau

21.3 ~ 5.4.2012  
[www.hkiff.org.hk](http://www.hkiff.org.hk)

Organised by

 International  
HK Film Festival Society

Financially Supported by



## Buff draws buzz ahead of HKIFF bow

By Karen Chu

**M**EDIA ASIA'S *LOVE IN the Buff*, opener of the 36th Hong Kong International Film Festival from director Pang Ho-cheung, has already proven to be a hit at the festival. The film has inked pre-sale deals with China Lion for the U.S. and Canada, Dream Movies for Australia and New Zealand, Encore Films for Malaysia and Singapore and Applause Pictures for Taiwan.

The sequel to the 2010 cult favorite about smoking, *Love*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

### INSIDE

Feature: Anne Hui..... 10  
Director Q&A: Lu Chuan ..... 14  
Reviews ..... 16-18  
Executive Suite: John Chong..... 19

## Pang Twins Unleash *Inferno*

Hong Kong-based Universe Films will back effects-heavy 3D disaster epic from local genre masters Danny and Oxide *By Karen Chu*

**U**NIVERSE FILMS WILL back the US\$18 million 3D disaster film *Inferno* by Hong Kong genre specialists Oxide and Danny Pang. The Pangs were the first filmmakers in Hong Kong to venture into the 3D arena with the *The Child's Eye 3D* in 2010 and followed by *Sleepwalker* the next year.

The Pang twins will direct an ensemble cast led by LauChing-wan and Louis Koo, who will reunite after starring in 2009's *Overheard* and its 2011 sequel, with the former playing a firefighter. Frequent Pang star Angelica Lee will also join the cast.

Scheduled to begin filming in mid 2012 for release at the end of 2013, producers describe *Inferno* as the first of its kind. "There is yet to be a fire disaster



Danny Pang



Oxide Pang

film in 3D made anywhere in the world, we have the courage to try," said producer and Universe COO Alvin Lam. "But to depict a convincing conflagration demands careful coordination and a lot of special effects, so the budget has to be carefully considered."

Set in a commercial building in a major city in contemporary China, the film will feature multiple interweaving storylines involving both fire fighters and those affected by the blaze. Universe is looking for co-producing partners in China,

and has already gained approval from the Chinese government officials. "The authorities are very supportive of the script's portrayal of the heroism of firefighters to avert a disaster," Lam said.

Hong Kong effects house Fat-face, a longtime Pang brothers collaborator, is in charge of post-production and visual effects.

"Technology helps us to create a safer environment for the actors," added Lam. "There will be a real blaze on set so that the actors will know how to react, but the majority of the flames will be added in post-production. We'd want to keep the actors safe, so there won't be flames right under their noses, and we won't ask them to run through real fires."

Despite a slew of 3D films

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## Shadow Dancer

A gripping thriller set in Northern Ireland that demands patience but is worth the effort

By David Rooney

**W**HILE BEST KNOWN FOR THE DOCUMENTARIES *Man on Wire* and *Project Nim* (one a 2009 Oscar winner, the other criminally overlooked in this year's nominations), director James Marsh spreads himself between non-fiction and narrative features. He's working with riveting assurance in the latter field in *Shadow Dancer*, a slow-burning, intricately plotted thriller set during a tense transitional period in Northern Ireland.

A television correspondent in that country in the 1990s, Tom Bradby adapted the screenplay from his novel. He brings a cool-headed understanding of the political canvas and a highly disciplined approach to the drama, both of which mesh well with Marsh's restrained style.

Both the director and writer also show a healthy disdain for pandering exposition, instead shaping atmosphere in early scenes with a minimum of dialogue. That may make the grim film a little challenging for wide commercial exposure, but discerning audiences will find that its carefully crafted



Clive Owen plays an MI5 officer in pursuit of IRA member Andrea Riseborough.

suspense exerts an ever-tightening grip.

A terse prologue set in residential 1970s Belfast shows young Collette McVeigh (Maria Laird) too immersed in the girly pastime of stringing beads to go to the shop for cigarettes as her father requested. Instead she sends her little brother, who gets caught in crossfire and killed. Stunned guilt is written all over the girl's face as she stares mutely at her anguished family gathered around the body,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

## Tse to topline firefighter drama

By Karen Chu

**E**MPEROR MOTION pictures will back an as-yet-untitled firefighter drama to be directed by award-winning helmer Derek Kwok and starring Nicholas Tse. The film marks the first collaboration between Tse and Kwok, who won the best director honor at the 2010 Hong Kong Film Awards (with co-director Clement Cheng). Kwok says he has spent over six months researching the film, which will showcase Tse's own stunts.

Also in the Emperor pipeline is *Angry Kid*, the directorial debut of Huang Lei, son of Huang Jianxin, the veteran director of the recent Chinese historical

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

# Italian Fest Salutes Japan's Tsukamoto

The provocative cult director will be on hand for a retrospective at unique Asian film event based in the city of Reggio Emilia *By Eric J. Lyman*

**R**OME— The tenth edition of the Asian Film Festival in Reggio Emilia, which gets underway Friday, will feature a unique homage and a lifetime achievement award to Japanese auteur Shinya Tsukamoto, who will attend the festival for three days.

Tsukamoto, 52, who brings with him a cult following from Japan and elsewhere and is known for what festival organizers called “insight and courage,” will oversee the screening of his latest project, *Kotoko*, a drama about a single mother’s efforts to care for her infant child while suffering from double vision, which won the Venice Horizons Award last year. The Reggio Emilia festival will also screen the cyberpunk classic *Tetsuo: The Bullet Man*, nominated for Venice’s Golden Lion in 2009, the amnesia thriller *Vital* from 2004 and the psychological thriller *A Snake of June*, from 2002.

“Shinya Tsukamoto is a genius director who has had a great influence on contemporary cinema,” Asian Film Festival artistic director Antonio Termenini told *The Hollywood Reporter*. “It is the first time the Asian Film

Festival will honor a Japanese director in this way, and it is a great honor to have him join us this year.” Tsukamoto burst onto the international film scene in 1989 with the release of the seminal body mod nightmare *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*, which had critics comparing the director to David Lynch and David Cronenberg. *Tetsuo*’s focus on the dehumanizing effects of technology, industrialism and gender perceptions have since

become hallmarks of the bulk of Tsukamoto’s work.

Including the tribute and award for Tsukamoto, the festival will screen 39 films, mostly world, international, and European premieres. That includes the Tsukamoto homage, a 16-film main competition, a sidebar for emerging directors and out-of-competition selections.

The festival will run through March 24. **THR**



Tsukamoto's 2004 release *Vital* will screen as part of the salute to his work.

# Korea's JoyNContents Picks Up Taiwanese Blockbuster *Warriors*

Michael Werner's Fortissimo Films also inks deal for Yonfan's latest and pacts with India's DAR media group for two 3D chillers *By Karen Chu*

**F**ORTISSIMO FILMS HAS inked deal with Korea's JoyNContents for the Taiwan blockbuster *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale* for summer 2012 theatrical release in Korea and multi-platform presentation afterwards. As part of the same deal, the company has also sold Hong Kong auteur Yonfan's remastered *Bugis Street Redux* to JoyNContents. *Bugis* made its premier at the Berlin International Film Festival in February.



Werner

Directed by Wei Te-Sheng and produced John Woo, *Warriors* is currently nominated for six Asian Film Awards, including best film, best director and best actor for star Chen Kun.

Fortissimo also signed a multi-picture deal with DAR Media Group in India for the 3D horror-suspense films *The Shock Labyrinth* and *Tormented* from

Japanese director Takashi Shimizu. DAR will handle the summer 2012 3D and 2D theatrical release throughout India.

“We are thrilled to commence working with these two new, passionate and energetic distributors,” said Fortissimo chairman Michael J. Werner. “JoyNContents and DAR Media are working to break new ground and establish new outlets for up market and auteur cinema in their respective markets.” **THR**

# Thieves Gets Pan-Asian Bow

*By Karen Chu*

**S**HOWBOX'S *THE THIEVES*, the Korean heist film directed by Choi Dong-hoon with a Korean and Hong Kong cast, has closed pre-sold deals with Dream Movie Entertainment for Singapore and Malaysia, Queen International Pictures for Indonesia and Catchplay for Taiwan.

Set for a Korean release in summer 2012, the film revolves around six Korean master thieves joining forces with four Chinese counterparts to steal a priceless diamond from a casino in Macau. The film will feature a who's who of Korean and Hong Kong stars, including Kim Yun-seok (*Punch*), Kim Hye-soo (*Tazza: The High Rollers*), Lee Jung-jae (*The Housemaid*), Gianna Jun (*My Sassy Girl*), Simon Yam (*Ip Man*), Derek Tsang (*Dream Home*) as well as Hong Kong-based Malaysian Angelica Lee (*The Eye*).

Showbox's Filmart slate also includes the US\$20 million creature drama *Mr. Go 3D* from director Kim Yong-hwa. A stereoscopic extravaganza about a gorilla trained to play professional baseball, the film is currently in production for a summer 2013 release. Showbox will also be shopping the romantic comedy *Love On-Air*; this year's Hong Kong International Film Festival selection *From Seoul to Varanasi*, the action thrillers *Confession of Murder* and *A Company Man* and the Korean box office smash *Nameless Gangster: Rules of the Time*. **THR**

## THR AT FILMART

**NEWS**  
**Kevin Cassidy**  
kevin.cassidy@thr.com  
+1 213 840 1896

**Karen Chu**  
kchuwork@gmail.com  
+852 9121 3505

**Gavin Blair**  
gavin\_bliar@yahoo.com  
+81 90 6479 4745

**Patrick Brzeski**  
Patrick.brzeski@gmail.com  
+852 6254 0161

**REVIEWERS**  
**Deborah Young**  
dyoung@mclink.it

**Elizabeth Kerr**  
delizabethkerr@yahoo.ca

**ART**  
**Jackie Rubi**  
jackie.rubi@thr.com

**SALES**  
**Ivy Lam**  
ivy.lam@thr.com  
+852 6176 9272

**Esme Choi**  
asia@thr.com  
+852 2880 3434

To download a PDF of the *The Hollywood Reporter's* Filmart Daily, go to: **THR.COM/FILMART**.

Meet us at Booth 1B-D27



HK Filmart 2012 - LINE UP

# Tianjin Film Studio presents

Academy Award Nominee  
**MICHAEL CLARKE DUNCAN**      **REBECCA BLACK**      **CLAIRE GEARE**

**HIS Screenings**  
3/21, 10:00 - Mtg. Rm N2010  
3/22, 09:45 - Theatre 1  
\*In 35mm Mandarin  
Festival Screening (in Cantonese 3D)  
3/25, 10:30 - The Grand Cinema

**LEGEND OF A RABBIT**  
IN 3D  
**KUNG FU'S NEW TRIO OF HERO**

**LEGEND OF A RABBIT**

IN 3D 2013

TIANJIN FILM STUDIO BEIJING FILM ACADEMY & BEIJING CENTURY COLOURFUL BUTTERFLY ANIMATION DESIGN LIMITED PRESENT "LEGEND OF A RABBIT 2"  
DIRECTED BY PETER KAM PRODUCED BY WANG DAN ZHONG EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS FANG CHENG AND GUANGYUAN WANG CASTING DIRECTOR DONG FA KE LUI YUAN WANG FENG DIAO MUSIC BY GUANGYUAN WANG  
CASTING DIRECTOR ZOU BING ZI ZOU HAN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ZHOU CHAO ELLIOT TONG EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS WANG DA FANG EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DONG FA CHANG SUN LI RUN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS SUN LI RUN  
www.tj-film.com

**COLOR ME LOVE**  
爱出色

YAO CHEN LIU YE GAO YUAN YUAN and JOAN CHEN  
a film by Alexi Tan

Starring: Liu Ye, Yao Chen, Joan Chen, Hei Wong, Monica Mok, Zing      Director: Alexi Tan      Screenplay: Ning Cai Shen  
Producer: Wang Ge Fang, Wang Ang, Huang Bo      Editor: Xiao Yang      Music: Li Jian      Sound: Zhu Xiao Jia      Cinematographer: Cao Yu  
Presented by: Tianjin North Film Group, Angel Wings Entertainment, Dao Culture Investment Ltd.  
Kin Rui Brothers Media&Culture Co., Ltd., Beijing Sunshine Co., Ltd., Hua Xia Film Distribution Co., Ltd.  
www.tj-film.com

All new Kung Fu adventures for the entire family

**LEGEND OF A RABBIT**  
The TV Animated Series  
IN 3D  
11 min. X 100 Epis.  
**TV**

NEWS IN BRIEF



**Fortissimo grabs Full Circle** ▲ Fortissimo Films has acquired international distribution rights to Chinese director Zhang Yang's latest effort *Full Circle*, produced by Ann An, Li Li and Zhang Qiang with the involvement of the China Film Group and Desen International Media. The veteran director and international festival favorite, whose previous work includes *Shower* (1999) and *Getting Home* (2007), will shine a light on a group of energetic senior citizens in China in *Full Circle*. The light comedy is now in post production and set for wide release in China later this year.

**CCTV picks up Golden Sun slate** Hong Kong-based Golden Sun Films has inked a package deal with China's CCTV-6 to sell the IPTV-VOD rights of 500 titles from its classic Hong Kong film library, including the star vehicles of Jet Li, Jackie Chan, Donnie Yen and Andy Lau, for US\$4.4 million.

**FilmAid Honors Reeves** Humanitarian aid organization FilmAid launched their inaugural fundraiser The Power of Film Gala on Sunday, co-chaired by FilmAid Global Artist Council member Donnie Yen. Keanu Reeves was the guest of honor of the night. The humanitarian aid organization was established by New York-based filmmaker Caroline Bacon in 1999; its Asia chapter was set up a year ago in Hong Kong and headed by chairman Tony Steains. The organization brings filmmakers and equipment to the camps to teach refugees skills in filmmaking, and show film from around the world to the resident of the camps. FilmAid Asia now supplies aids to camps along the Thailand and Burmese border. "In Sarajevo, we realized that the biggest problems in the refugees camps is psychological," said Bacon. Steains added: "if the minds are not well, food doesn't help."

The 2012 Filmart Poster Awards

THR pays tribute the most amusing and over-the-top promotional materials from the first day of the market



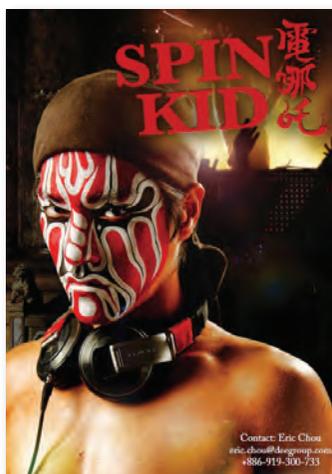
**MOST ORIGINAL USE OF A BEANIE IN A MORGUE**  
*Over My Dead Body*

In this comedy from CJ Entertainment, two members of the 99 per cent look to get their own back by stealing the body of a dead CEO — only to find out the body is that of a guy who faked his own death to escape creditors. *Weekend At Bernie's* for the recession generation.



**BEST 8 MILE MEETS BLACK RAIN MASH-UP**  
*Roadside Fugitive*

In Picture Department Co's rap-to-riches drama, the heart of would-be J-Rap superstar Mighty burns with the desire to make it big, literally. He struggles to make it in Japan's version of *8 Mile* while we struggle to figure out how he can see anything wearing those sunglasses at night.



**BEST OVER-THE-TOP MAKE UP**  
*Spin Kid*

The emo DJ at the center of Double Edge Entertainment's *The Spin Kid* has got issues. There's the clash of cultures between his beloved Techno and traditional Taiwan culture; there's his love/hate relationship with a female DJ and then, to top it off, he's lost his shirt. Will he find suitable upper body coverage and a girl willing to overlook that warpaint?



**BEST BABY-FACED YAKUZA**  
*Ushijima the Loan Shark*

We know Ushijima, the titular Shylock of Stardust Pictures' manga adaptation, is supposed to be a hard ass. But the rimless specs, trimmed goatee and the "Juvenile Delinquent" jacket monogram make this Mafioso look about as imposing as the new IT guy. And that skeleton draped over the Pokomon-esque titling isn't scaring anyone either.

HAF/FOX Announce Cash Award

By Karen Chu

THE HONG KONG ASIA Film Financing Forum (HAF) and Fox International Productions have joined forces to encourage the best and newest of Chinese-language talents with the inauguration of the HAF/FOX Chinese Film Development Award, the winner of which will receive a cash prize of HK\$100,000 and a first-look deal with Fox International.

According to HAF organizer and Hong Kong International Film Festival Society executive director Roger Garcia, the award is established so that "the winner will have a better chance of getting their movies made."

"What Fox is most excited about in China is this emerging new talent," Fox International Production president Sanford Panitch told *The Hollywood Reporter*. "The spirit of this award with HAF is about finding new talent who can become either great storytellers or new filmmakers. Part of what we're trying to do is to encourage and expand the kinds of stories that we're told, to find new voices and original storytellers."

Five HAF/FOX Chinese Film Development Award finalists have been selected specifically for the prize: Hong Kong's *Close Protection* from director Lawrence Lau and producer Fukazawa Hiroshi; China/Taiwan's *Coffee Sweet* from director Wang Hsi-Chieh and producer Jay Chern; China's *Crazy Mother* from director Zhu Minjiang and producers Wu Xiangwei and Wu Hao; *Diaoshuiyan Murder Case*, also from China, directed by Zhang Tianhui and produced by Zhou Hao; and Hong Kong's *Two Graves* from director-producer Sammie Lau and producer Sammi Chan. **THR**

THR.com

To download a PDF of the *The Hollywood Reporter's* Filmart Dailies go to: [THR.com/Filmart](http://THR.com/Filmart).

# BETA CINEMA AT FILM ART 2012



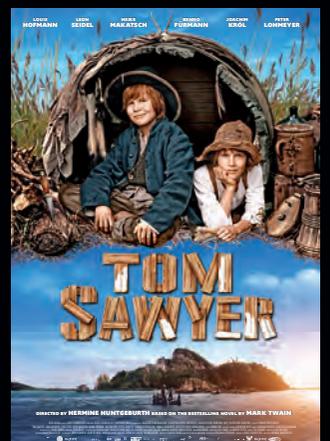
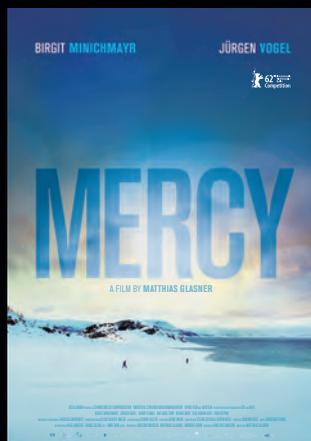
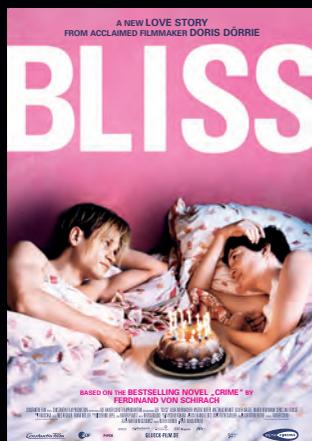
Hong Kong International  
Film & TV Market (FILMART)  
香港國際影視展



## Almanya

A FILM BY YASEMIN SAMDERELI – ASIAN PREMIERE

Friday		March 30th		7:30 p.m.		Macau Cultural Centre
Tuesday		April 3rd		9:30 p.m.		HK City Hall Theatre
Sunday		April 8th		5:00 p.m.		HK Arts Centre

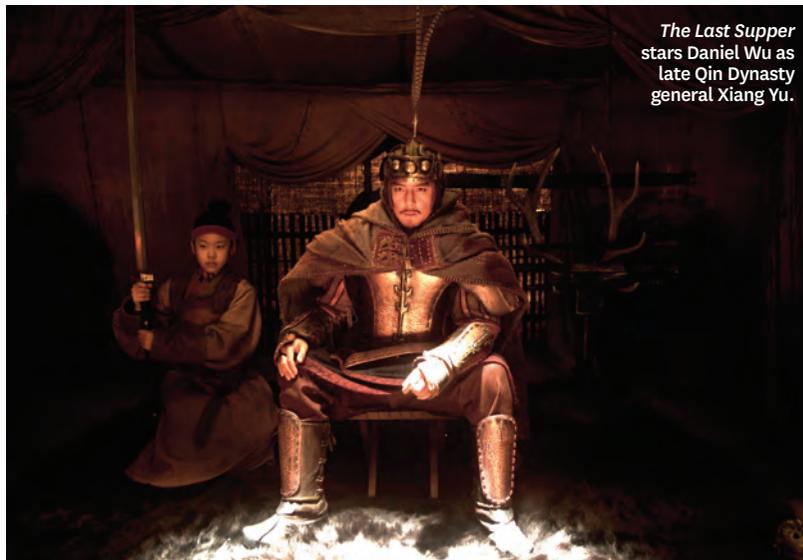


HONG KONG CONTACT 1C-D16 – EFP Umbrella Booth

HEAD OFFICE Gruenwalder Weg 28d / D-82041 Oberhaching / Phone +49 89 673469 - 828 / beta@betacinema.com / www.betacinema.com



Pop singer Joey Yung stars in *Diva*.



*The Last Supper* stars Daniel Wu as late Qin Dynasty general Xiang Yu.

## Emperor

CONTINUED FROM 1

epics *Founding of the Republic* and *Beginning of the Great Revival*, who is producing the US\$1.3 million comedy. With principal photography on the film now complete, *Kid* is scheduled for a summer 2012 release.

The powerhouse studio will also be distributing *Triads*, a

made-in-Hong Kong thriller with local producer Ng Kin-hung (*Love Lifting*, *City of S.A.R.S*) and new director Daniel Chan. Starring singer-turned-actor William Chan, the film recently began shooting.

“From our company’s standpoint, we aim to make a number of films in Hong Kong, whether we’re in charge of the production or distribution, as a means to help the young new directors to make their

first steps in the industry,” Albert Lee told *The Hollywood Reporter*. “Due to the subject matter, not all of the new directors’ films can be made into China-Hong Kong co-productions. Making films in Hong Kong gives them a greater degree of freedom.”

Rounding out Emperor’s slate at this year’s Filmart is the Derek Yee produced and Law Chi-leung-directed *The Bullet Vanishes*, starring Lau

Ching-Wan and Nicholas Tse; Chinese director Lu Chuan’s *The Last Supper*, with Daniel Wu, Chang Chen and Liu Ye in the leads; and Heiward Mak’s *Diva*, starring pop singer Joey Yung.

Emperor Group —celebrating its 70th anniversary this year — will be honored at the Asian Film Awards for its 2010-11 production *Let the Bullets Fly*, which has been named Top Grossing Asian Film. **THR**

## Inferno

CONTINUED FROM 1

emerging in the past couple of years, there is still debate about the box office appeal of the format. Lam has his own take: “If the film is done with heart and a seriousness in production, it’s definitely worth the effort and the extra cost. The technology is improving, and recent 3D films from this region, for example Tsui Hark’s *The Flying Swords of Dragon Gate*, were visually spectacular.”

Before *Inferno* begins shooting, Oxide Pang will first fly solo to helm detective drama *The Conspirators*, a US\$5 million action film based on the characters in his previous *The Detective* and its sequel. The film, a murder mystery about drug cartels, will be shot on location in Malaysia and China, and stars Aaron Kwok (*The Storm Warriors*, *After This Our Exile*) and Nick Cheung (*The Stool Pigeon*, *Beast Stalker*).

Also in the works for Hong Kong-based Universe Films is an untitled Benny Chan cop drama set for the end of 2013, as well as the sequel to the 2002 romantic comedy *My Wife is 18* to mark the tenth anniversary of the first film. The sequel will chronicle the dissolution of the marriage between onscreen couple Ekin Cheng and Charlene Choi. James Yuen will resume directing duties for an April 2012 shoot and fall 2012 release.

Universe’s Filmart slate this year also includes the March 22 release *Love Lifting*, a romantic drama directed by Herman Yau and starring Chapman To (*Inferno Affairs*) and Elanne Kong. **THR**

## Buff

CONTINUED FROM 1

in a *Puff*, *Buff* breaks up the couple from the first film, Miriam Yeung and Shawn Yue, and relocates them to Beijing. The film marks the first major release for the director Pang after his own relocation to the Chinese capitol. “Smoking is no longer the main focus of the film; we’ve strengthened the romantic storyline and incorporated the sights and sounds of Beijing,” said John Chong, Media Asia

executive director.

The company is also presenting *The Blind Detective* at Filmart, a HK\$90 million crime thriller from director Johnnie To, starring Andy Lau (*A Simple Life*) and Sammi Cheng (*Romancing in Thin Air*). Filming is scheduled to start in May.

Also on the Media Asia slate is director Sun Jianjun’s *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*, a contemporary thriller starring Andy Lau and Lin Chilin, for which the company is offering the distribution rights in Southeast Asia. **THR**



*Love in the Buff* stars Shawn Yue and Miriam Yeung as estranged lovers.

YOU ARE  
INVITED  
TO MEET WITH  
NEW PRODUCTIONS of  
**TURKISH  
CINEMA & TV**



WHERE THE FIRE BURNS



FIG JAM



ONCE UPON A TIME IN ANATOLIA



SEABURNERS



LABYRINTH



NIGHT OF SILENCE



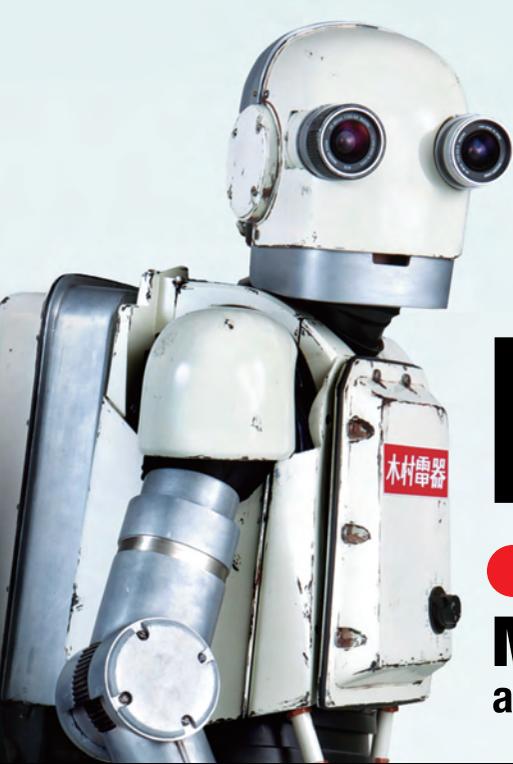
BEHZAT, I BURIED YOU IN MY HEART

We invite you to visit our stand at the International Film and TV Market Hong Kong.  
We will be pleased to offer you a taste of the  
New Turkish Cinema & TV Productions.

**HONG KONG**  
International Film & TV Market  
(FILMART) 19-22 March, 2012  
Stand No: **1C-F01**

[www.turkishcinema.org](http://www.turkishcinema.org)





# ROBO-G

FILMART screenings

**March 19th 18:15**  
at HKCEC Meeting Room N101A

**March 22nd 9:30**  
at HKCEC Meeting Room N101B

FILMART screenings

**March 20th 11:30**  
at HKCEC Meeting Room N101A

# LIAR GAME

REBORN  
— 再生 —



# ROCK'N'ROLL HOUSEWIVES

FILMART screenings

**March 20th 9:30** at HKCEC Meeting Room N101A

**COMING SOON**

**SOUP CURRY**  
by Katsuyuki Motohiro

**LIFE IS DEAD**  
by Kosuke Hishinuma

**ODS live** etc.



PONYCANYON

FILMART booth #1D-E-25/27 Shinji Sakoda

Email: sakoda@ponycanyon.co.jp

Mobile: +81-90-4025-6843

URL: <http://www.ponycanyon.co.jp/intl/>

COMING  
SOON!

# THERMAE ROMAE

阿部寛 上戸彩 北村一輝 竹内力 宍戸開 笹野高史 市村正親

キムラ緑子 勝矢 外波山文明 飯沼慧 岩手太郎 木下貴夫 神戸浩 内田春菊 松尾諭 森下能幸 蛭子能収

原作 ヤマザキマリ「テルマエ・ロマエ」(エンターブレイン刊) 脚本:武藤将吾 監督:武内英樹

音楽 住友紀人 テーマ曲 ラッセル・ワトソン / 誰も寝てはならぬ(ソニー・ミュージックジャパンインターナショナル)

**UMIZARU 4**  
BRAVE HEARTS

**BAYSIDE SHAKEDOWN**  
FINAL

**MASAYUKI SUO**  
new project



PONYCANYON FILMART booth #1D-E-25/27 Shinji Sakoda

Email: sakoda@ponycanyon.co.jp

Mobile: +81-90-4025-6843

URL: <http://www.ponycanyon.co.jp/intl/>



ASIAN FILM AWARDS LIFETIME  
ACHIEVEMENT HONOREE

# A Not So Simple Life

After thirty years of acclaim for chronicling everyday life in Hong Kong, Ann Hui has no desire to rest on her laurels

By Karen Chu

Onsequodis  
quibus ipsum  
nem quiam con  
stetulum ullam

**A**NN HUI IS NOTHING if not modest. As one of Hong Kong's most distinctive and enduring directors, she has thrived against all odds for over 30 years by making keenly observed, intimate dramas about every day life in Hong Kong. But ask Hui for the secret of her success and she refuses to sing her own praises. "It's not easy to survive a success," she says with a rueful laugh.

It's a surprising statement for someone with Hui's resume. After her feature debut, *The Secret*, landed best director and best film nominations from Taiwan's Golden Horse Awards in 1979, Hui went on to become one of the most lauded filmmakers in Asia over the next two decades, winning five best director statuettes from the Hong Kong Film Awards and the Golden Horse Awards, as well as five additional nominations. Her most celebrated films — *Boat People*, *Song of the Exile*, *Summer Snow*, *July Rhapsody* and *The Way We Are* — made her a standout among the famed late-70s Hong Kong New Wave. No small achievement when you

consider Hui's contemporaries include superstar directors like John Woo, Tsui Hark and Patrick Tam.

Now she has another accolade to add to her collection: a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Asian Film Awards, organized by the Hong Kong International Film Festival Society.

When discussing this latest award, which she will receive on March 19, Hui, 64, is characteristically ambivalent.

"It is an honor, but I didn't really want to accept this award, because if I continue to work after receiving a lifetime achievement award, it might seem contradictory," says the director, who grew up in Hong Kong after her family moved from Macau when she was five. "I don't think it's early to look back on a lifetime of work in terms of age; but in terms of achievement, there is still a lot that I want. My main concern is that I still want to work, and I'll continue to work because I can't afford to retire."

If Hui's latest effort, *A Simple Life*, is any indication, retirement is simply not in the cards. But even though the film, which stars



Andy Lau and Deanie Ip, above, star in Hui's Asian Film Awards Nominee *A Simple Life*. Hui, inset, on the set of *Life*, her 26th film.

Andy Lau and Deanie Ip, has once again been showered with awards, including a best actress honor for Ip at the Venice Film Festival and yet another best director honor at the Golden Horse Awards, Hui is reluctant to revel in its success.

"It's in the nature of the job of being a filmmaker that we are not easily content to just settle for what we've already done, for there's always room for improvement," she says of the film, a typically warm relationship drama about a servant who helps raise a boy from a large wealthy

family. "I always sit and think 'I should have made this or that better,' and I imagine I'd be the same even after I retired."

To her admirers, including Roger Garcia, executive director of the Hong Kong International Film Festival, Hui's sense of humility and gift for subtlety can be easily undervalued in the blockbuster age. "As befits a filmmaker of great experience, Ann's films are very accomplished," he says. "She does it in the way that all great artists do it — it doesn't look difficult. Her form is a bit like Eric Rohmer, but it



Hui chronicled domestic abuse in the 2009 drama *Night and Fog*.

“The performances she gets out of the actors, the skill of the direction — it all seems invisible. That’s truly the mark of a great artist.”

— ROGER GARCIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HKIFF

takes a lot of skill and a lot of art to make a movie like that. The performances she gets out of the actors, the fluency of the camera, the skill of the direction — it all seems a little invisible. That’s truly a mark of a great artist, that it’s not noticeable.”

“From the earliest time we met, the Ann I know has not changed at all,” adds Lau, whose film debut was in Hui’s *Boat People* thirty years ago. “Ann’s films are always concerned with [people]. It’s something inherent

in her work.”

Lau is such an ardent supporter of Hui that he boarded *A Simple Life* initially as an investor, but decided to lend his star power to the project to ensure its completion. He also hoped the film’s success would extend his old friend’s career.

“I know it’d been difficult for her to find investors in the last ten years, and I hoped that, when I became involved with *A Simple Life*, that I could contribute in some way in helping her continue her remarkable career,” he says. “I wasn’t supposed to act in the film, but we discussed the project, and I said to Ann, ‘if you don’t mind to let me play the male lead, it might be more convenient for you to get more investment in the future, or find better foreign distribution.’”

For Garcia, *A Simple Life* brings Hui full circle, thus the timing of her Lifetime Achievement Award.

“*A Simple Life* is interesting in the sense that it harks back to

the enduring themes of the Hong Kong New Wave — in which Ann was an essential part — which is the relationship between parents and children,” he says. “In Ann’s films, it’s a constant auteur motif. Is it different now than it was then? What are the constants in life? Now that it’s thirty years on, what are the enduring things in life? It seems to me that, when you talk about great filmmakers, what they’re really looking at are enduring values. Ann is one of the very few filmmakers to do that, and that’s she’s why she deserves a Lifetime Achievement Award.”

In typical fashion, Hui expresses concern about the effect this latest accolade might have on her work. This time around however, she’s trying to endure her latest success with a bit less angst.

“Awards might attract more investors who want to work with me, but it doesn’t necessarily mean I can actually make the films that I want to make,” she says. “I’ve found myself more easily at a loss [after receiving awards], worrying about how this or that might affect me. Now that I’ve been through it a number of times, I’ve learned from those experiences. I hope I wouldn’t make that mistake again, but it’s hard to say.” **THR**

## SIX ANN HUI CLASSICS



### ▲ *Boat People* (1982)

This drama about the plight of the Vietnamese refugees trying to escape through treacherous waters was Andy Lau’s big screen debut. Hui gave Lau the job without even auditioning him. “The first time I met Ann was on the set of *Boat People*,” Lau recalls.

### ▲ *Song of the Exile* (1990)

Starring Hong Kong superstar Maggie Cheung in her first dramatic role, Hui’s semi-autobiographical film about the resentment and reconciliation between a mother and daughter was set against the turbulent times in China and Hong Kong between the 1940s and the 1980s.

### ▲ *Summer Snow* (1995)

This touching and often witty portrait of a working mom’s struggle to take care of her aging father-in-law, *Snow* featured one of the last performances of superstar actress Josephine Siao before her retirement, as well as local legend Roy Chiao, who made an impression on Western audiences as a villain in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* before his death in 1999.

### ▼ *The Way We Are* (2008) and *Night and Fog* (2009)

Companion pieces set in an area of Hong Kong dubbed “City of Sadness” thanks to frequent reports of domestic violence, the former celebrates the beauty in the mundane details of everyday life, while the latter retells a true story of an infamous crime of passion in the district.



### ▲ *A Simple Life* (2012)

Once again teaming with Andy Lau, who also co-produces, Hui’s latest tells the story of a man from a privileged background who reevaluates his life when he becomes the caretaker for the nanny who raised him. After star Deanie Ip was named best actress at the 68th Venice International Film Festival, *Life* went on to take home best director, best actor and best actress at the 48th Golden Horse Awards. The film is also currently nominated for eight Asian Film Awards, including best film, best director and best cinematography.

## 6TH ASIAN FILM AWARDS

**Date:** March 19, 2012

**Venue:** Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

### Best Film Nominees:

*Nader and Simin, A Separation* (Iran); *Postcard* (Japan); *The Flowers of War* (China); *The Flying Swords of Dragon Gate* (Hong Kong/China); *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale* (Taiwan); *You Don’t Get Life a Second Time* (India)

Reynolds  
62 Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Panorama

2011 Taipei  
Golden Horse Film Festival  
Opening Film



# 10 VETERAN MASTERS + 10 NEW TALENTS

WANG TOON	WU NIEN-JEN	WEI TSI-SHENG	CHENG WEN-FANG	SHEN KO-SHANG	WANG SHAUDI	CHEN YU-SUN	STYLIA CHANG	KEVIN CHU	CHEN KUO-HU	CHANG TEO-CHI	CHENG YU-CHIEH	HO WEDING	HOU CHIH-JUAN	LEON DAI	CHUNG WONG-HONG	YANG YACHIE	HSIAO YACHUAN	ARVIN CHEN	HOU HSIAO-HSEN
王童	吳念真	魏德聖	鄭文堂	沈可尚	王小棣	陳玉勳	張艾嘉	朱延平	陳國富	張作驥	鄭有傑	何蔚庭	侯季然	戴立忍	鍾孟宏	楊雅喆	蕭雅全	陳駿霖	侯孝賢

# 10

# 0

# +



## SCREENINGS

DAY : 21ST, MARCH    TIME : 20:00    CINEMA : HKCEC MEETING ROOM N101B

International sales:  
Huayi Brothers Internaional Ltd. [sales@huayimedia.com](mailto:sales@huayimedia.com)

台北金馬影展執行委員會  
Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival Executive Committee

H.BROTHERS  
華誼兄弟



**SCREENING SCHEDULE**

DAY	TIME	CINEMA
MAR. 21	12:00	HKCEC THEATER 1
MAR. 22	14:00	HKCEC THEATER 2



a Doze, Niu Chen-Zer film



♥ **2012**  
VICKI ZHAO  
SHU QI  
ETHAN RUAN  
MARK CHAO  
AMBER KUO  
CHEN YI-HAN  
PENG YU-YAN  
DOZE NIU CHEN-ZER





## Lu Chuan

**The acclaimed director of *City of Life and Death* talks about the making of his next historical epic, *The Last Supper*** *By Karen Chu*

**A**FTER THE CRITICALLY acclaimed hit *City of Life and Death* from last year, Chinese director Lu Chuan began shooting *The Last Supper*; backed the China Film Group, Stellar Megamedia, and Emperor Motion Pictures, exactly a year ago. Chronicling the founding of the Han dynasty in 206 BC, the film focuses on a meeting between generals Liu Bang and Xiang Yu known as the "feast at the Hong gate." Starring Daniel Wu and Liu Ye, the highly-anticipated US\$15 million film carries the director's hopes of widening his international reach. Lu spoke to The Hollywood Reporter about the film's historical basis, his international ambitions and why he has some harsh words for Chinese filmmakers.

***City of Life and Death* was well-received by international critics, including the U.S. What do you want *The Last Supper* to achieve internationally?**

I hope to help bring Chinese culture to foreign audience through this film. I see that as my duty being a Chinese director. It's one of the reasons why we're working with Wild Bunch for international distribution, in order to widen the audience for the film. At the same time, I hope audiences in China will embrace it. I believe that films can cross borders and influence audiences in different cultures.

***City of Life and Death* was in limited release in the U.S. Do you have a higher expectation for *The Last Supper*?**

I hope *The Last Supper* will be in wider release than *City of Life*

## VITAL STATS

**Nationality:** Chinese  
**Born:** February 8, 1971  
**Selected Filmography:**  
*The Last Supper* (2012)  
*City of Life and Death* (2009)  
*Mountain Patrol* (2004)  
*The Missing Gun* (2002)  
**Awards and Nominations:**  
*City of Life and Death:* Best Film, San Sebastian Film Festival, 2009; Best Director, Asian Film Awards 2010;  
*Mountain Patrol:* Best Film, Golden Horse Awards, 2005; Special Jury Prize at the 17th Tokyo International Film Festival

*and Death* in the U.S., because the U.S. has the biggest film industry in the world, and produces the strongest films. It has a special significance to me to be able to show the film in wide release in the U.S.

**What attracted you to the subject of the feast at the Hong gate, a well-known subject in Chinese history?**

*The Last Supper* is based on a historical true story, but I think in the past, the historical dramas in China weren't loyal to historical facts or tried to learn lessons from history. My philosophy in this respect stemmed from a Chinese saying, "One can learn to change our ways by using history as a mirror." We've never properly looked at history as a source of advice. I hope to reflect on our present times and provoke self-examination through a story based on historical truths. The film might lead to discussions in our society.

**Are there any real-life events in recent times that inspired you to tell this story?**

(Laughs) I don't think it's appropriate for me to say.

**The story might not be as well-known to Western audience. How do you make moviegoers outside of China relate to the story?**

The English title is called *The Last Supper*, the cultural significance and relevance of which I hope the audience would sense and grasp. I hope the Western audience would see the parallels between the event in their cultural background that happened in ours. Daniel Wu, who plays Xiang Yu in the film, first suggested *The Last Supper* as the English title. But unlike the story of the Last Supper in Western culture, my film is not about the betrayal

of a particular person, but the betrayal of a belief system.

**The same subject was made into a film called *White Vengeance*, announced after *The Last Supper* but already released last November. What's your view on interpreting the same subject matter?**

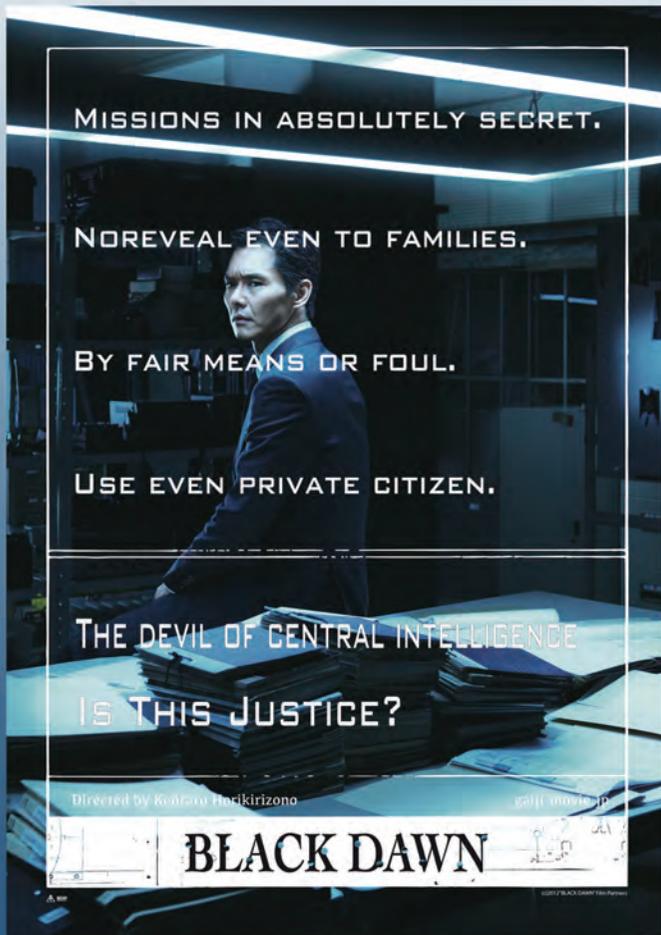
The other film was made by a Hong Kong director [Daniel Lee]. That film wasn't exactly based on historical fact, or has any historical relevance. There is a tradition in Hong Kong historical films, which branded themselves as set in history, but in fact weren't related to history at all. *The Last Supper* is very loyal to historical facts. I've spent more than a year reading historical records. I've always been a history buff.

**The lengthy shoot of *The Last Supper* sparked rumors about being behind schedule. What is the reason for the long shoot?**

We spent 13 months in pre-production and eight months filming. Filming over ran for two months because of a storm on the coast, which flooded the small town we were shooting in. That gave us a lot of problems. But once Stellar Megamedia had seen the footage, they had no cause for complaints anymore, and are satisfied with what they saw (laughs). No director would want to take a long time to shoot a film, unless they want to make everything perfect.

**Are you a perfectionist?**

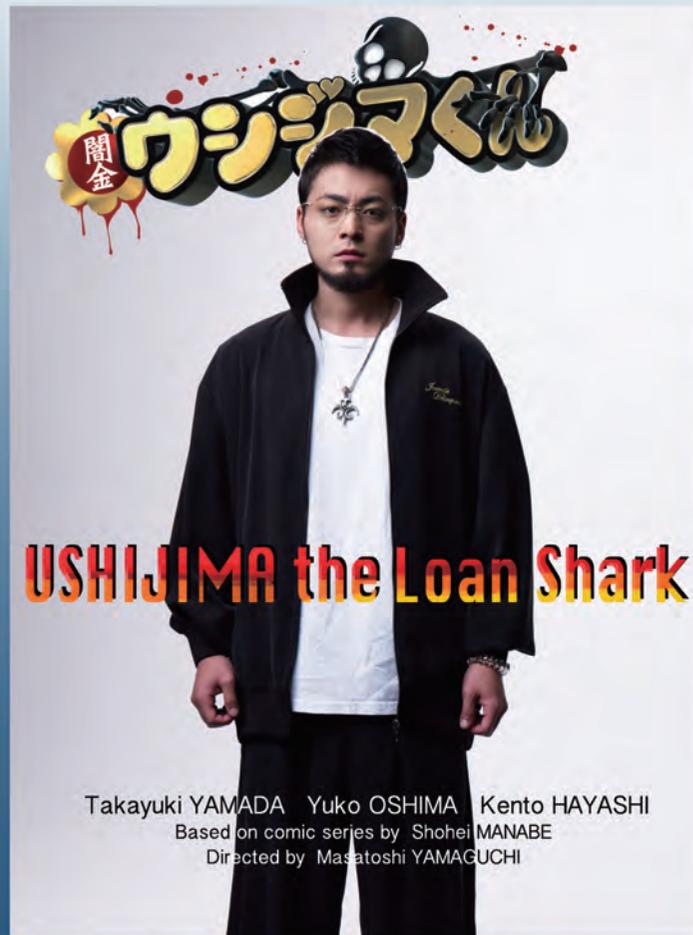
Quality is the priority for me. Especially for now, when Chinese films have increased in quantity, but not quality. There are too few Chinese movies of really high quality per year. American films have taken a big market share in China, but most American films are of high quality. How can we attempt to fend them off if our films don't even match up? American films have high production values; the plots are logical. Even if not every film made there is a good film, they are all well-crafted. But in my opinion a lot of the films made in China or Hong Kong nowadays are joking with the audience and the market. This lack of seriousness in the productions can hurt the audience and the creditability of the market. **THR**



**Market Screening**

Tue 20th March 16:15

@HKCEC Meeting Room N101A



**Market Screening**

Wed 21st March 16:15

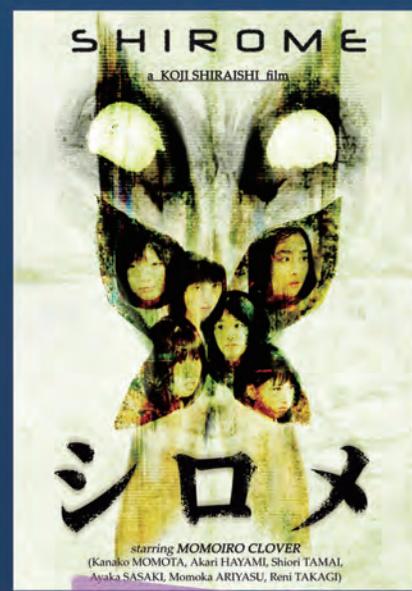
@HKCEC Meeting Room N101A



a film by **Katsuhito Ishii**



a film by **Ryuta Miyake**



a film by **Koji Shiraishi**



Reception was shot in a desolate region of Iranian Kurdistan.

# Modest Reception

Actor-director Mani Haghighi tells a cinematic tale about a strange duo who make their way through Iran distributing bags of cash to needy people *By Deborah Young*

IF THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, “Who wants to be a millionaire?” seems obvious, it’s anything but that in the tongue-in-cheek *Modest Reception*, which tests how much the impoverished inhabitants of a mountainous Iranian border area are willing to sell out for a fat bag of rials offered by two rich loonies from the city. Director-actor Mani Haghighi and Taraneh Alidoosti, among the stars in *A Separation* director Asghar Farhadi’s *About Elly*, pull out the stops in an absurd but engrossing piece of cinematic theater that has high points and hard points, but is difficult to walk out on. This is by far the director’s most daring work and deserves international fest play, though its unflinching study of inexcusable characters doesn’t leave the best taste in the mouth.

Haghighi is a frequent co-writer and actor for recent Iranian Oscar winner Farhadi, and while they have a common interest in middle-class dramas full of moral ambiguity, Haghighi the director has shown a parallel interest in absurdist comic dramas, most notably his 2006 festival hit *Men at*

*Work*. Raising the stakes, *Modest Reception* recounts an increasingly cruel game that Leyla (Alidoosti) and her companion Kaveh (Haghighi) play with a station wagon full of money.

Setting the scene is a brilliantly shot comic opener that starts the game over-the-top, in a tone which only gets shriller and wilder as the story goes on. At a road block on a lonely snow-bound mountain, a poor young soldier uncertain of his authority — practically a stock Iranian film character — stops the city slicker’s car. The attractive, saucy young woman behind the wheel and her good-looking passenger with a broken arm are in the midst of a fast and furious argument, with shocking language used on both sides. To get the soldier off their backs, they toss a couple bags of cash out the window, drive off, and then have a good laugh about their made-up argument at his expense. Kaveh has shot the whole thing on his iPhone so they can childishly enjoy it all over again.

Their next “victim” is a dignified old-timer manning a makeshift road-side stand. Try their best, they can’t get him to accept their money, which they qualify as

“alms to the poor.” Even so, their passing proves to be the kiss of death for the old fellow. Leyla has more luck at a coffee shop, where she leaves a bag in the john, while Kaveh unloads cash on some local kids in exchange for firewood, which they need and he doesn’t.

Though the set-up seems destined to repeat itself, the punchy script by Haghighi and Amir-Reza Koohestani has devilish twists that can’t be predicted. Gradually the black comedy gives way to queasy drama, after these whimsical devils encounter a man whose mule has broken its leg. He is about to shoot it to put it out of its misery, when Leyla poses as a compassionate vet and Kaveh buys his gun, leaving the animal dying on the road.

The reprehensible, immoral conduct of the heroes keeps the viewer from ever finding a comfortable spot to watch the proceedings, which are funny and pathetic by turns. In addition, Kaveh seems increasingly out of his head, as evident in a stomach-churning scene of pure evil when he bargains with two young truck-drivers. Yet this is nothing compared to what he proposes to a man he finds digging a grave

for his infant daughter.

Though the closing scenes work pretty well in bringing the story to some kind of conclusion, where does it all lead? Like *Men at Work*, the screenplay seems to promise some kind of symbolic subtext, but symbolic of what? The film’s inability to take its fable-like set-up to a deeper level is its real Achilles heel. The puzzling title *Modest Reception*, by the way, is a brand of Iranian cookies that appears briefly — signifying nothing, apart from the vain hope it has some redemptive meaning.

In the end, it’s an actors’ film serving up two very juicy roles for Haghighi as the cynical sadist Kaveh and Alidoosti as the deliciously spoiled, enterprising Leyla who may be his sister, though the web of lies they spin leaves room for doubt. Apart from the fun parts, which they handle with easy lightness, the scene of his diabolical taunting in the cemetery and her finally taking responsibility for the mule are chilling performance pieces.

**Cast** Taraneh Alidoosti, Mani Haghighi

**Director** Mani Haghighi

**Screenwriters** Mani Haghighi, Amir-Reza Koohestani

**Producer** Mani Haghighi

**Director of photography** Houman Behmanesh

# The Parade

A hilarious, raunchy comedy about a gay pride parade in Belgrade and a homophobic gangster charged with protecting it *By Karsten Kastelan*

**G**AY-BASHING AND THE AFTERMATH OF CIVIL WAR ARE NOT the easiest subjects to turn into a comedy, but Serbian director Srdjan Dragojevic manages to do just that with *The Parade*, in which a homophobic gangster and a homosexual veterinarian form an unlikely alliance to save a gay pride parade in Belgrade.

Laugh-out-loud funny, brilliantly acted and, towards the very end, also deeply moving, the film deserves all the attention it is sure to get at festivals and in some European art house runs, but will prove a marketing challenge with mainstream audiences.

*The Parade* starts with a meet-cute at gunpoint, when gangster Lemon (Nikola Kojo) rushes his beloved pitbull terrier to the local pet-clinic and demands prompt service from timid veterinarian Radmilo (Milos Samolo). The two part soon thereafter, but are fated to meet again, as every major character in this film is so inextricably linked to everybody else that one quickly assumes Belgrade to be a small hamlet and not a teeming metropolis. When Lemon's fiancée Pearl (Hristina Popovic) demands that he use his influence and muscle to protect a gay pride parade that Radmilo's activist boyfriend Mirko (Goran Jevtic) is organizing, the former soldier suddenly finds himself ostracized by his peers and must now recruit his former foes from Bosnia, Kosovo and Croatia.

Director Dragojevic handles this deft comedy with a sure hand and complete avoidance of political correctness — going so far as to explain the racial slurs of the separate nationalities and the homophobic one shared by all in the title credits — but still manages to keep all characters sympathetic throughout the film. This involves some glossing-over, as he replaces the atrocities of war with funny stories amongst former enemies. He also adds brilliant touches, like revealing the latent homosexuality behind overbearing machismo, down to Lemon's love for William Wyler's Ben Hur and design touches in his office that would not even fly in West Hollywood.

He is also helped by a brilliant cast, led by Kojo, who endows the stoic Lemon with an undeniable decency and Samolo, whose efforts to hide his sexuality are funny and touching at the same time. Popovic also excels as Pearl, delivering a ball-busting performance as a gangster-moll longing for respectability.

Production values are top-notch, with Dusan Joksimovic delivering crisp and colorful images of a city still scarred by war and Igor Perovic's score moving the action along rather nicely and keeping the more dramatic moments from becoming too dark.

**Production companies** Mainframe, Sektor Film, Forum Film Ljubljana, Film & Music Entertainment

**Director** Srdjan Dragojevic



## MAYDAY 3DNA

3/19 16:00-17:35 HKCEC N206-N207



## THE SOUL of BREAD

3/20 14:30-16:15 HKCEC N201B



## THE SPIN KID

3/21 16:00-17:35 HKCEC N204-N205

Contact: Eric Chou  
eric.chou@deegroup.com  
+886-919-300-733



DOUBLEEDGE ENTERTAINMENT

精挑細選 盡在得藝

## Shadow Dancer

CONTINUED FROM 1

her brightly colored new necklace seeming to reinforce her culpability.

Years of self-recrimination are etched into the features of the older Collette (Andrea Riseborough), who reappears 20 years later, a single mother and active IRA member in a family of hard-line radicals. Arrested in London during an aborted 1993 subway bombing attempt, she is presented with a dossier by MI5 officer Mac (Clive Owen), whose detailed knowledge of her life reveals years of close surveillance. He also shows her photographic evidence indicating that her brother may have been killed not by British gunfire but an IRA bullet.

At first, Collette is defiantly uncooperative, demanding a lawyer. But when Mac presents her with the alternative of 25 years in prison hundreds of miles from her son, she reluctantly agrees to return home and act as a mole, reporting on the activities of her brothers, Gerry (Aiden Gillen) and Connor (Domhnall Gleeson).

While *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and, to a lesser extent, David Hare's recent telemovie, *Page Eight*, indicate a possible resurgence of the British espionage thriller, this is something more



Dancer screenwriter Tom Bradby spent three years as the Ireland correspondent for Britain's ITV News.

intimately combustible. Having the spying take place within a deeply scarred family creates an unsettling dynamic of torn loyalties and betrayals both personal and political, with the opposing forces of self-preservation and sibling love ratcheting up the tension.

There's also the traumatic effect on her young son (Cathal Maguire) of Colette's unexplained absences and of watching his mother dragged from her bed by police for questioning after she fails to show for her first meeting

with Mac. These clandestine encounters are atmospherically scheduled on a lonely pier, invariably lashed by rain. Even getting away from the house without triggering the suspicions of her watchful mother (Brid Brennan) becomes nerve-wracking for Collette.

Outside the immediate family unit, other threats are closing in and friction is growing between the moderate and extremist Republican factions. When a planned IRA hit on a British

Security Forces detective is botched and the shooter killed, IRA operatives conclude that the squealer must be someone close to the McVeigh brothers. A scene in which Collette is grilled by an IRA heavy (David Wilmot) while a thug lays plastic sheeting on the floor of the next room to prepare for her possible dispatch is bone-chilling.

The story in itself is first-rate. However, it's the very measured handling that makes it distinctive. Planting spoken and visual clues with methodical patience, Marsh eschews flashy suspense-building tricks. The same goes for the compelling performances, which are contained and for the most part unemotional, in keeping with the story's emphasis on what's hidden.

**Production companies** Unanimous Entertainment, Element Pictures, Wild Bunch Production, in association with LipSync Productions

**Cast** Andrea Riseborough, Clive Owen, Aidan Gillen, Domhnall Gleeson, Gillian Anderson, Brid Brennan, David Wilmot, Stuart Graham, Martin McCann

**Director** James Marsh

**Screenwriter** Tom Bradby, based on his novel

**Producers** Chris Coen, Andrew Lowe, Ed Guiney

## Chicken with Plums

Live-action follow-up to *Persepolis* set in 1950s Iran blends humor and poetry with delightful artistry

By Deborah Young

**B**OTH WINSOME AND SOPHISTICATED, *Chicken with Plums* unfolds like a rich Persian carpet woven of memories and nostalgia in a colorful fantasy Iran of 1958, twenty years before the Islamic Revolution turned the country to somber grays. Though co-directors Marjane Satrapi and Vincent Paronnaud opt to turn Satrapi's graphic novel into a live action film, fans of their animated debut *Persepolis* will find plenty of animation and CGI interludes to spice up the story, which is shot in a magical style of non-realism.

Humor and imagination lead the viewer through the winding story, which flashes forward and backward amid dream sequences and fantasies. The life of Nasser Ali Khan (Mathieu Amalric), a world-famous violinist so unhappy he decides to die, is narrated by

Azrael, the Angel of Death (Edward Baer), a great black caped figure with very white teeth, who makes his actual appearance appropriately late in the tale.

The entire film is a search backwards in time for the reason for Nasser Ali's drastic decision. He blames his wife (Maria De Medeiros) for breaking his prized violin during a quarrel. To find a replacement, he travels with his pestiferous young son up a mountain to reach an antique dealer, who gives them both opium and claims to have Mozart's own Stradivarius for sale. Not even this magnificent instrument is enough to satisfy what ails Nasser Ali, however, and he takes to his bed, waiting for death to carry him off.

In the eight days it takes for the Angel to come for him, the violinist relives his life, from his unsuccessful school career, to a loveless marriage to the math teacher Faranguiss (recounted by Maria de Medeiros) to satisfy his bossy, chain-smoking mother (Isabella Rossellini in a warm cameo.)

In reality, the crux of the film is supposed to be Nasser Ali's ill-starred love story with the beautiful Iran (Golshifteh Farahani) when he was a violin student in Shiraz. It detonates too



Mathieu Amalric stars as a renowned violinist who has lost his will to live.

late and too improbably to be very emotionally effective or heart-rending. Still, the metaphor of a girl named Iran who prematurely ages into a sad, gray-haired granny will not be lost on alert viewers.

**Production companies** Celluloid Dreams in association with The Manipulators, uFilm, Studio 37, Le Pacte, Lorette Productions, Film(s), Arte France Cinema, ZDF-Arte

**Cast** Mathieu Amalric, Edouard Baer, Maria De Medeiros, Golshifteh Farahani

**Directors** Marjane Satrapi, Vincent Paronnaud

## CO-FOUNDER, MEDIA ASIA

## John Chong

The veteran exec discusses surviving the ups and downs of the Hong Kong film sector and the increasing importance of the Chinese market *By Karen Chu*

**F**OR THE LAST EIGHTEEN years, John Chong has been instrumental in turning Hong Kong-based Media Asia into a major force on the global market. Chong has played a key role in promoting Hong Kong films in the international marketplace, including the *Inferno Affairs* trilogy, which became the basis for Martin Scorsese's Academy Award winning *The Departed*. Chong, who shrewdly guided his company through the lean years of the early 2000s when the Hong Kong film industry began to slump, has recently begun to explore the blockbuster capacity of the Chinese market through co-produced hits such as director Feng Xiaogang's *If You Are the One* and its sequel. Having co-founded Media Asia in 1994, Chong ran the studio under its hands-on chairman Peter Lam and saw the expansion of its reach in China. Now the company is expanding into Hollywood with the upcoming Wachowski siblings epic *Cloud Atlas*. Chong talked to *The Hollywood Reporter* about the past, present and future of a film industry he helped define.

**Under your leadership, Media Asia has thrived throughout the ups and downs of the film industry in Hong Kong. Are you confident the company's film slate this year will continue your success?**

The upcoming slate from Media Asia will be all co-productions with China, which is the way it is going to be. The main title is Pang Ho-cheung's *Love in the Buff*. The previous film, *Love in a Puff*, was very original. It became one of our assets, which is not only determined by profit, but also by how it helps build our reputation. *Puff* has been one of our milestone films in the last couple of years. There might be films in Hong Kong that had cost more, or did better at the box office, but they don't belong to this category of pop culture phenomenon.

**Is the idea of making a film strictly for the Hong Kong audience out of**

**your consideration?**

Not necessarily, but we have to be careful. It has to be a deserving project, something like what I mentioned — a project that would become our asset through its cultural significance.

**What's your strategy for Media Asia's investment in foreign films and the distribution of foreign films?**

Our concern about distributing Chinese-language films is that the market susceptibility of martial arts films or police dramas internationally has cooled. The most promising market nowadays is definitely in China. Chinese-language films in Southeast Asia or Europe are not as active.

**How did Media Asia's involvement in *Cloud Atlas* come about?**

Executive producer Philip Lee wanted to work with a studio in Hong Kong, and he chose Media Asia to be involved in the film, and we worked out a deal with them. Media Asia will distribute the film in Hong Kong. We do want to try and explore whether an alliance with a Hollywood film would give us an advantage in this market monopolized by Hollywood films

**Despite the expansion of Chinese box office in 2011, big budget films didn't fare particularly well in China in the last year. Will that influence your decision to green light big budget films in the future?**

At present, our budget ceiling tops at around 100 million yuan (U.S. \$16 million), so the market can still support it if the film is reasonably successful. But it's true that the main problem right now is that the number of theatres has risen, but the gross at each theatre has dropped. So size of a film doesn't necessarily matter. But for a Hong Kong company like ours, our advantage is not in producing the mid-range dramas or light comedies, such as *Love is Not Blind* [the surprise hit which has grossed over U.S. \$55 million at the Chinese box office]. Hong Kong filmmakers are not yet able to break through the



cultural barriers and capture the nuances in China yet. But many of the younger filmmakers are very quick to pick up and capture the zeitgeist in China — Pang Ho-cheung is an example. He's moved to China and displayed some of the local Beijing flavor in *Love in the Buff*.

**What genres are working at the moment?**

We're focusing on the genre films that we're good at traditionally — action films, martial arts dramas or cop dramas. But it's already very difficult to make profitable martial arts films. The actors are too expensive, and the market is saturated with them. The problem of rising actors' pay is the same with cop dramas. The success of surprise hits like [the youth-oriented] *You Are the Apple of My Eye* certainly pinpointed the demographic that the Hong Kong film industry has neglected for a while. There'd been no teen movies from Hong Kong for many years. The same thing is true with *A Simple Life*, when audiences in their 40s and 50s came out in droves to see it. But a miracle like *Apple* is harder to achieve than

any big-budget films; the Taiwan film industry returned after hitting rock bottom, and staying there for years, until [the romantic comedy] *Cape No. 7* revived it. In Hong Kong, everything is still costly — directors and actors demand high fees and the production cost is high. So it's harder for us to make a film as cheaply here.

**What is your take on the Chinese film industry's ambition to make more films for the international market?**

We've witnessed in the past how some Chinese films might try and guess what would fit the taste of the foreign audience, and most of them have failed. The most successful director of Chinese-descent is Ang Lee, who not only lives in the U.S., but also has an American producer [James Schamus], which is much better than trying to guess or imagine what the U.S. or international audience might want. In the past, when Chinese films were not as well-received as imagined in the foreign market, filmmakers would think it was because the subtitles weren't good. In reality that is not the only thing that matters. **THR**



1988

**CHAN THE MAN:**

By the late '80s Jackie Chan was a Hong Kong cinema icon and well on his way to becoming an international action star. The wildly popular *Police Story* and *Project A* franchises were practice runs for 1995's *Rumble in the Bronx*, which was one of the first Hong Kong films to receive wide release in the U.S. *Bronx's* success paved the way for the blockbuster *Rush Hour* franchise, which made Chan the first Hong Kong crossover star since Bruce Lee.

# 亞洲幻想電影網絡

Network of Asian Fantastic Films

# N A F F 2 0 1 2



## ‘It Project’ 征集

世界最初体裁影片 制作支援策划 - It Project  
开始征集2012年的闪亮新方案  
现在就请报名参加!

截止日期: 2012年4月30日  
详细信息请访问 <http://naff.pifan.com>

## Submission for ‘It Project’ is Open Now!

It Project, the world's only genre film project market,  
calls for new projects that will shine through the year  
2012 and beyond

Submission Deadline: April 30, 2012  
For more details, <http://naff.pifan.com>

# Salon Films

Your Global Media Solutions



**T**echnical Equipment & Services /  
**先進**器材及服務

**P**roduction & Services /  
**專業**製作

**F**inance & Distribution /  
**融資**發行

## Salon Films HK Filmart Events

香港沙龍電影公司電視電影展活動



### **CCTV-9's Marketing Presentation /**

### **Salon Films Joint Announcement Press Conference**

中央電視台紀錄頻道營銷會 / 香港沙龍電影有限公司聯合新聞發佈會

Venue: Meeting Room S223, HKCEC 地點: 香港會議展覽中心 S223 會議室  
Date: 20 Mar 2012 (Tue) 日期: 2012年3月20日 (星期二)  
Time: 10 am - 12 pm 時間: 10 am - 12 pm



### **Salon Films Joint Announcement Press Conference**

香港沙龍電影有限公司聯合新聞發佈會

Venue: Event Room, Hall 1, HKCEC 地點: 香港會議展覽中心1號展覽館活動室  
Date: 21 Mar 2012 (Wed) 日期: 2012年3月21日 (星期三)  
Time: 10am - 12pm 時間: 10am - 12pm



### **Salon Films Filmart Forum 2012**

香港國際影視展 2012 專業論壇

Venue: Theatre 1, HKCEC 地點: 香港會議展覽中心1號演講廳  
Date: 21 Mar 2012 (Wed) 日期: 2012年3月21日 (星期三)  
Time: 2:30pm - 6:30pm 時間: 2:30pm - 6:30pm



**SALON FILMS (H.K.) LTD.**  
**香港沙龍電影有限公司**

Tel : (852) 2338 0505 | Fax : (852) 2338 2539 | Web : [www.salonmedia.com.hk](http://www.salonmedia.com.hk)  
Headquarters : 6 Devon Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon, Hong Kong  
Email : [salohq@salonmedia.com](mailto:salohq@salonmedia.com)