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NEW YORK ASIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL UNVEILS FESTIVAL LINE-UP FOR 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

July 13, 2007 (New York, NY) – Presented by Asian CineVision, in association with the Asia Society, the New York Asian American International Film Festival (AAIFF) is proud to announce its complete line-up of premiere films and events for its 30th Anniversary year. Representing the latest and best in Asian and Asian American filmmaking, AAIFF will run from July 19–28, 2007, at the Asia Society (725 Park Avenue, at 70th Street).

Festival organizers have planned an exciting and diverse roster of films – a total of 25 new features including one International Premiere, one U.S. Premiere, four East Coast Premieres, and 17 New York Premieres – and events to mark the festival's 30th anniversary. This year's lineup features films from Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan, UK, The Netherlands, United States, among others.

AAIFF opens with the New York Premiere of **FINISHING THE GAME**, a film by acclaimed director Justin Lin (*Better Luck Tomorrow*, *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*). A hilarious "faux documentary," the film documents, cinema vérité style, the frantic search by Hollywood executives to find a replacement for martial-arts star Bruce Lee, after his fatal accident on the set of *Game of Death*. Starring Sung Kang and Roger Fan (*Better Luck Tomorrow*), with appearances by James Franco and MC Hammer, the film features a motley group of Bruce Lee-wannabes all vying to become the next big kung fu star. Lin, Fan, and Kang will be in attendance. A gala reception, presented by Cathay Pacific Airways, will follow the screening. The festival has also scheduled an in-depth one-on-one conversation with director Lin at New York University's Kimmel Center on Friday, July 20, at 6 p.m.

AAIFF closes with the New York Premiere of writer-director Gina Kim's **NEVER FOREVER**, a critical hit at this year's Sundance Film Festival. Vera Farmiga (*The Departed*) stars as Sophie, who is happily married to a successful Korean American lawyer. When her impotent husband falls into depression, Sophie attempts to save their marriage by paying an undocumented Korean worker, Jihah, to impregnate her. A throwback to the melodramas of Douglas Sirk and Frank Borzage, *Never Forever* is an honest and emotional look at female desire and interracial relationships.

The festival will also feature a Centerpiece Presentation of the New York Premiere of **DARK MATTER**, the acclaimed debut feature of Chen Shi-Zheng. Starring Chinese star Liu Ye, Aidan Quinn, and Meryl Streep, the films tells the story of a brilliant Chinese student, Liu Xing, who attends Valley State University to pursue a Ph.D. in cosmology. The talented immigrant finds life in America liberating and his university department becomes a welcome and nurturing home for his scholarly brilliance. A famous cosmologist Jacob Reiser (Quinn) invites him to join his research team and he finds the favor of a wealthy university, Joanna Silver (Streep). But when

Xing's research on "dark matter" challenges his mentor's life work, he is ostracized by those who embraced him, and his desperation soon causes him to take extreme measures. Director Chen Shi-Zheng and Liu Ye will be in attendance.

The AAIFF will also present a retrospective of the works of acclaimed Hong Kong New Wave director **PATRICK TAM**, as well as a One On One discussion with the renowned director. The retrospective will feature four rarely seen films, including Tam's first feature in 17 years, *After this Our Exile* (winner of 5 Hong Kong film awards including Best Film and Best Director, and 3 Golden Horse awards). The film tells the story of the troubled relationship between a restaurant-owner father, hounded by loan sharks, and his young son, who is encouraged by his father to sneak into homes to steal. Also included are *The Sword* (1978), one of the films that launched the Hong Kong New Wave; *Nomad* (1982); and *Miu Kam Fung* which is an episode from *Seven Women* (1976), an early TV movie directed by Tam.

At a Closing Night ceremony on July 28, following the screening of *Never Forever*, AAIFF will present awards in eight categories: a juried award for Emerging Director, both Narrative and Documentary; Audience Awards for both Narrative and Documentary; a juried award for Excellence in Short Filmmaking; a One to Watch Award, open to all youth-made films in the "For Youth By Youth" program; Best Music Video; and juried Screenplay Competition. Nominees for the Emerging Director Award for Narrative include *Dark Matter*, *Driving with My Wife's Lover*, *The Elephant and the Sea*, *Tie a Yellow Ribbon*, and *Undoing* (details below). Nominees for the Emerging Director Award for Documentary include *Bolinao 52*, *Campaign*, *A Dream in Doubt*, *Made in Korea*, *Na Kamale!*, and *New Year Baby* (details below).

AAIFF's outstanding line-up of films also includes:

NARRATIVE:

- **AMERICAN PASTIME** (New York Premiere). Directed by Desmond Nakano. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a Japanese-American family is imprisoned in an internment camp, where the father, against his son's wishes, starts a baseball league to regain a sense of a normal life.
- **BAUMKUCHEN** (U.S. Premiere). Directed by Kensaku Kakimoto. Part black comedy and part love story, a novelist, looking after his orphaned niece, spins a tale of a shy clothing-store clerk, which then spawns another tale about two men and a reticent bartender, who then spins another tale, and so on – as multiple narratives of this clever film intertwine and multiply.
- **BLACKOUT** (East Coast Premiere). Directed by Ato Bautista. Suffering from alcohol-induced blackouts, a man tries to turn his life around for the sake of his young son, but his attempts at sobriety are haunted by the mysterious events of one blacked-out night.
- **DANCING BELLS** (U.S. Premiere). Directed by Deepak Kumaran Menon. From one of the pioneering directors of recent Malaysian cinema, the film narrates a story of an 11-year old girl who dreams of becoming a classical Indian dancer, but her dreams may falter against the threat of the impending demolition of her neighborhood.
- **DO OVER** (New York Premiere). Directed by Cheng Yu-Chieh. On New Year's Eve, in present-day Taiwan, five people's lives intersect, as the film gathers together glimpses of their past, present, and future, while blurring the line between reality and fantasy.

- **DRIVING WITH MY WIFE'S LOVER** (New York Premiere). Directed by Kim Tai-sik. Featuring color-rich cinematography, the film tells the story of a scrawny stampmaker who vows to exact revenge on his wife's lover, a taxi driver, though his efforts are routinely delayed by a series of comedic mishaps.
- **THE ELEPHANT AND THE SEA** (East Coast Premiere). Directed by Woo Ming Jin. Following the mysterious death of the local fish population, two Malaysian fisherman – a middle-aged widower and teenaged petty criminal – are forced to cope with the surrounding death and ruin.
- **ETERNAL SUMMER** (New York Premiere). Directed by Leste Chen. Two high-school friends – smart-guy Jonathan and basketball star Shane – have their friendship tested when a girl expressed interest in both of them. But her overtures only serve to focus the boys' long-dormant feelings for each other.
- **HIDING DIVYA** (New York Premiere). Directed by Rehana Mirza. When a mother returns home with her teenaged daughter, in hopes of getting some inheritance from her late uncle, she must confront what she had ignored long before: her mother's mental illness.
- **KING AND THE CLOWN** (New York Premiere). Directed by Lee Jun-ik. Until recently the highest-grossing film of South Korea, this stylish period piece features a boorish king who falls in love with the gentle jester who mocks him.
- **ONE FOOT OFF THE GROUND** (New York Premiere). Directed by Chen Daming. Filled with light-hearted humor, the film tells the story of a group of opera performers who are forced to take odd jobs when the money that funded their provincial opera trope is stolen.
- **SINGAPORE DREAMING** (New York Premiere). Directed by Colin Goh and Woo Yen Yen. Tired of living in public housing and working as a civil servant, Loh Poh Huat plays the lottery everyday, and finally manages to win the two-million-dollar jackpot. But his family troubles start there as a sudden death and hidden family secrets trouble his newfound financial windfall.
- **TIE A YELLOW RIBBON**. Directed by Joy Dietrich. Adopted from Korea by a white, Midwestern family, Jenny Mason lives a secluded and emotionally remote life, until she meets her new roommate Bea, who seems to have it all: loving parents and a doting boyfriend.
- **UNDOING** (New York Premiere). Directed by Chris Chan Lee. After his friend Joon is murdered during a botched drug deal, a small-time hood, Sam King (Sung Kang), returns to Los Angeles to settle the score.
- **YEAR OF THE FISH** (New York Premiere). Directed by David Kaplan. A critical hit at this year's Sundance Film Festival, featuring a magically realized world by way of rotoscope animation, the film tells the story of a woman who works illegally at one of Chinatown's massage parlors to earn money to send to her ailing father in China.

DOCUMENTARY:

- **BOLINAO 52** (East Coast Premiere). Directed by Duc Nguyen. A powerful documentary that depicts a survivor's testimony as a Vietnamese boat-person who fled the war-torn country in 1975, only to be saved by the villagers of the Filipino town of Bolinao.

- **CAMPAIGN** (East Coast Premiere). Directed by Kazuhiro Soda. A cinema vérité look at the Japanese political machine, as the documentary follows the grassroots campaigning of Yamauchi Kazuhiko as he runs for an open seat on Tokyo's City Council.
- **A DREAM IN DOUBT.** Directed by Tami Yeager. A moving documentary about a man, Rana, whose brother was one of the first victims of post-9/11 hate crimes, and his unyielding efforts to bring together members of the community against racism and violence.
- **MADE IN KOREA: A ONE-WAY TICKET SEOUL-AMSTERDAM?** (New York Premiere). Directed by In-Soo Radstake. A Korean émigré to Holland, In-Soo Radstake documents the emotional journey of his search for his birth mother in Korea.
- **MOTHERLAND KOREA CUBA USA**. Directed by Dai Sil Kim-Gibson. Increasingly isolated in her adopted homeland of the United States, documentary filmmaker Kim-Gibson travels to Cuba to hear the stories of Korean immigrants who have settled there, offering a thoughful exploration of how people determine their national and cultural identities.
- **NA KAMALEI: THE MEN OF HULA** (New York Premiere). Directed by Lisette Marie Flanary and Keo Woolford. During Hawaii's colonial rule, men were forbidden to dance, resulting in the female dominance of hula. The film documents one of Hawaii's oldest and most prestigious male hula groups, reviving the culture of hula dancing for men.
- **NEW YEAR BABY** (New York Premiere). Directed by Socheata Poeuv. The director captures the painful personal history of her parents' escape from the tyrannical rule of the Khmer Rouge, as they revisit the labor camp where they met and the unmarked grave of her aunt.

As the longest-running Asian American film festival, AAIFF has established itself as the premier venue for filmmakers of Asian descent, providing a platform for the latest and best in Asian and Asian American cinema. For three decades, the festival has sought out innovative works by emerging filmmakers and Asian directors, often introducing their films to American audiences for the first time.

Asian CineVision, founded in 1976, is a nonprofit media arts organization dedicated to promoting and preserving Asian and Asian American media expressions. ACV is committed to developing and supporting both emerging and experienced Asian American film and video makers and other media artists working in a range of genres and styles; and to ensure that the full spectrum of Asian and Asian American media works reach diverse audiences in Asian American communities and beyond. For more information, visit AsianCineVision.org.

Asia Society is the leading global organization working to strengthen relationships and promote understanding among the people, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the United States. We seek to enhance dialogue, encourage creative expression, and generate new ideas across the fields of policy, business, education, arts, and culture. Founded in 1956, Asia Society is a nonpartisan, nonprofit educational institution with offices in Hong Kong, Houston, Los Angeles, Manila, Melbourne, Mumbai, New York, San Francisco, Shanghai, and Washington, D.C. For more information, visit www.AsiaSociety.org.

For more information, please visit AAIFF.org.

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