

## Five Hong Kong Projects Presented at 16<sup>th</sup> HAF

The 16<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) presented a total of 25 film projects from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Five projects from Hong Kong were among this year's short list: "Deadline" from Kiwi CHOW, "While You Were Working" from LEUNG Ming-kai, "Sex is Guilt" from O Sing-pui, "I Promised" from CHAN Ying-wai and "Love in the Valley of Daughters" from YUEN Han-yan.

"Deadline", directed by Kiwi CHOW, director of "A Complicated Story" (2013), and produced by Jacqueline LIU and Kiwi CHOW, starts with seven students openly issue a suicide pact revealing what will happen; a scandal and a tragedy unravel instead. The director believes the Hong Kong education system has reached a critical point and is now a ticking time bomb. "Deadline" is a response to many issues faced by Hong Kong educators, including exam pressure, drug abuse, integrated learning, student suicides, commercialized education, the "grades above all" culture, and many other issues. It is looking for a way out of the quandary we now seem to be stuck in. Yet, more importantly, it looks at these issues in solidarity with students, from their perspective. Aiming at a budget of USD 1.3million, the film has secured USD 650,000 budget so far.

"I Promised" is a project from CHAN Ying-wai, director of "Landscape on the Other Side: Hong Kong Cinematographer Bill Wong" (2010). It is a story about a teenager departing to fulfill a broken promise he made to a late friend. He meets a runaway girl during the journey and together they realize growing up is never easy. The director explains, although the film centers on a 14-year-old teenager and appears to be a "film for kids", it is about growing up: its desires and its responsibilities, its sweetness and its cruelty. People in all age levels are constantly growing. "To grow" is actually "to choose what kind of a person to become". The target budget of the project is set at USD 900,000.

Directed by YUEN Han-yan and produced by YUEN along with Eric POON and Ruby YANG, "Love in the Valley of Daughters" is a documentary about Zhangling, a white-collar from Foshan, travelling to Yunnan where she met Bingma of the Mosuo and their love story begins on the shores of the Lugu Lake against all odds including the cultural differences and geographical distance between them. The director sees how China has changed in the past 10 years. As the economy grows rapidly, the city/ rural divide in modern China has also become prevalent. The differences and disagreements in the relationship have become apparent over the years, and were truthfully depicted in the film mirroring the larger problems of contemporary China. The film has secured USD 11,539 budget towards its USD 85,257 target.

Directed and produced by veteran filmmaker O Sing-pui, "Sex is Guilt" tells the story of Alan, a sick man who has little time left in his life. His friends, including Ken, hire a part-time girlfriend trying to fulfill Alan's wish. However, instead of a part-time girlfriend, Ken's girlfriend Chamba shows up. According to the director, the film is about teenagers and how they see sex and death. Characters in the film deal with sex quite differently but almost equally absurd.

The approval they have for affairs and one-night-stand is surreal and realistic at the same time. When death comes close, they finally realized they have wasted so much time in life and start to panic; but they still do not understand that desires are even more fearful. Although people would cheat and tell lies to try to maintain harmony in relationships, Alan still believes that there is a bright side in every person. The target budget for this film is set at USD 1,000,000.

Produced by Teresa WONG, CHUN Siu-chun and Kate REILLY, “While You Were Working” is LEUNG Ming-kai’s directorial debut. It tells the story of a Filipino domestic worker prepares for a singing competition with help from her elderly boss who was a retired singer and an American neighbor who does not know Cantonese. But the day of the competition turns out to be a day of search for the missing elderly boss. Like in many Hong Kong comedies, LEUNG’s “While You Were Working” is dense with jokes and absurdities, very down to earth yet blurring the line between reality and fiction. It depicts housing estates and different areas of Hong Kong from a new perspective and through the story of three women, recalling popular culture of the sixties through nineties at the same time. The target budget for this film is set at USD 700,000.

### **About HAF**

Established in 2000 and supported by government agencies Create Hong Kong (CreateHK) and the Film Development Fund, the Hong Kong - Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF) is now the leading film project market in Asia. The HAF brings each year 25-30 selected new film projects and their makers to Hong Kong for co-production ventures with over 1,000 film financiers, producers, distributors and buyers from at least 35 countries and regions in the three-day event.

HAF has partnered with international organizations to provide a range of opportunities to participants. Partners include iQIYI (China), Fox International Productions (Greater China) (US), Cinemart (The Netherlands), Asian Project Market (South Korea), Golden Horse Film Project Promotion (Taiwan), New Cinema Network (Italy) and many others. With support from CreateHK and the Film Development Fund among others, cash and in-kind awards to the value of around USD 150,000 are made.