



## MEDIA ADVISORY

### Countdown to the 21st Annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival Begins

*November 2–5, 2017, Vancouver hosts the best of Asian Filmmaking from around the World*

**Vancouver, BC – September 22, 2017** – Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF) is pleased to announce the countdown to its much anticipated 21st Annual celebration of Asian diaspora and diversity in film, set for November 2nd to 5th, 2017 at the Cineplex Odeon International Village Cinemas in Vancouver 88 W. Pender St., in Vancouver’s historic Chinatown district.

With this year's theme "Visual Landscape," we are proud to showcase and celebrate the Asian Canadian cinematic landscape. The perception of Canada, its people and culture is influenced by who makes our films; who/what is featured or left out in our films; whose stories we tell or ignore; and the context for these films and stories. How do Asian Canadian creatives feature in this cultural territory? Does the current Canadian cinematic landscape accurately mirror our diverse reality, or distort it?

***Editor’s Note: Interviews and photo opportunities are available. Additional kits, images, and screeners are also available. Please email [media@vaff.org](mailto:media@vaff.org) for media accreditation forms and other information.***

“We shape the physical reality and perception of our environment—the diversity landscape in Canadian film and television, and in the international film industry, is changing. How are we rising to meet the challenge of social change? At VAFF 21, we’re proud to present a strong program and panel series that signals this change, and advocates for the diverse, inclusive industry we want to see,” stated **Grace Chin, Festival Director**.

“I am so honoured and thrilled to become part of the VAFF family and look forward to sharing Asian cinema with more Vancouverites out there,” stated **Lynne Lee, Festival Director Elect**.

The VAFF program continues to showcase the breadth and depth of Asian diaspora filmmaking beyond mainstream film festival offerings, with programming that reflects the increasingly borderless creative and industry sensibility of Canada’s west coast. We are proud to continue our **VAFF Industry Insight (VAFF I<sup>2</sup>) Panel Series with two panels** that collectively challenge us with burning questions for our “interesting times,” both global and local: Do we share a responsibility, as artists, to wield our craft as an instrument of social change—and how can this be most effective in our entertainment industry? We welcome the return of the **Best Canadian Feature Award**, sponsored by the Directors Guild of Canada, as a companion to our longstanding **Best Canadian Short Award**; and the return of our **VAFF Outstanding Contribution to Diversity in Film Award**, recognizing an individual who has contributed

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significantly toward realizing a more diverse arts and culture environment in our shared industry.

### About VAFF 21

The VAFF 21 lineup presents 13 film programs for 2017, including the public premiere of the **“We Heart Canada” video project** with the Vancouver Immigration Partnership, City of Vancouver, featuring Vancouver’s diversity and the experience of new Canadians; and 35 other feature-length and short films of all genres, with English dialogue and/or English subtitles, from the local and international Asian diaspora. Highlights from the features include:

- our critically acclaimed **Opening Night film, the Western Canada premiere of “Columbus” (starring John Cho)** from video essay auteur Kogonada;
- the **World premiere of the controversial Vancouver Chinatown documentary “Paint it Red”** from director-activist Eva Cohen;
- the **World premiere of local filmmaker Rob Leickner’s bittersweet BC love letter, “The Lonely Light of Home”**;
- the **Canadian premiere of Justin Chon’s “Gook,”** a gut-punching look at the L.A. Riots from a very different family perspective;
- Canadian filmmaker Ashley Duong’s intimate environmental **documentary “A Time to Swim”**; and,
- our Closing Night presentation, the Western Canada premiere of Toronto-based Joyce Wong’s Slamdance sleeper hit (and shout-out to Scarborough, Ontario), **the award-winning “Wexford Plaza.”**

We continue to celebrate Canada 150 on Sunday November 5, 2017, showcasing a total 15 Canadian features and shorts in one day; and are proud to bring Vancouver audiences 20 Canadian or Western Canada premieres; five World premieres, five North American premieres, and an additional two films that are Vancouver premieres. Over thirty filmmakers and panelists, from Canada and internationally, are expected to attend. Organizers anticipate close to 4,000 audience and industry members over the four-day festival.

The **Best Canadian Short Award** will be presented to one of eight nominated eligible short films, and the **Best Canadian Feature Award** sponsored by the Directors Guild of Canada will be presented to one of four nominated eligible feature films. We will also be presenting various **People’s Choice Awards** during the closing night screening and awards ceremony the evening of Sunday, November 5th. The winner of the **Canada 150-China Scriptwriting Competition**, and our **VAFF Diversity Award winner**, will be announced at the opening gala the evening of Thursday, November 2nd. The Saturday, November 3rd afternoon **VAFF Industry Insight (VAFF I<sup>2</sup>) Panel Series** provides a forum for discussion of actionable items for filmmaking of social change, discussion of diversity in Canadian film and television.

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The 21st annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival will take place November 2 to 5, 2017, at the Cineplex Odeon International Village Cinemas, 88 West Pender Street, Vancouver. The entire program schedule will be available online at [www.vaff.org](http://www.vaff.org) starting October 1st. **Tickets will be available online at [www.vaff.org](http://www.vaff.org) starting October 1st**, or at the VAFF table located in the lobby of the Cineplex Odeon International Village Cinemas, 88 West Pender Street, Vancouver, starting November 2.

### **About the Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF)**

The Vancouver Asian Film Festival Society (VAFF) is a not-for-profit organization that celebrates diversity in film. The longest-running Canadian film festival of its kind, VAFF was founded by independent filmmaker and writer Barbara K. Lee in 1995 and debuted in September 1997. VAFF is entirely organized and produced by a group of dedicated volunteers, and is made possible by generous financial support from corporate sponsors, public funders and private donors.

### **Follow the festival as it unfolds at:**

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