

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CENTER FOR ASIAN AMERICAN MEDIA PRESENTS

CAAMFEST2015

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Local Pioneers, Hong Kong Classics and New Feature Films comprise a full slate of Chinese and Chinese American Titles at CAAMFest 2015

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 12, 2015 — Chinese and Chinese American Cinema have always been well represented at CAAM, and this year is no exception. From local film pioneers, Arthur Dong, Ruby Yang and Felicia Lowe, to stories about Chinatown, to international Chinese dramas, CAAMFest 2015 features prominent works from many talented Chinese and Chinese American filmmakers.

LOCAL FILM PIONEERS

CAAMFest is excited to bring together three original festival participants from the first San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival in 1982. Acclaimed filmmakers Arthur Dong (*THE KILLING FIELDS OF DR. HAING S. NGOR*), Ruby Yang (*A MOMENT IN TIME; MY VOICE, MY LIFE*) and Felicia Lowe (*CHINESE COUPLETS*), will all showcase their latest films for this year's CAAMFest audience.

In this year's Spotlight feature, CAAM recognizes Oscar®-nominated and three-time Sundance award-winning filmmaker Arthur Dong. A San Francisco native who has earned a multitude of prestigious awards for not only his work in film, but also for his public service, Dong is known for his prowess in utilizing the art of film as a means to investigate social issues and examine undisclosed parts of Asian American and LGBT history and identity. In celebration of Dong's legacy in film, CAAMFest will present the world premiere of *THE KILLING FIELDS OF DR. HAING S. NGOR* and a new digitally re-mastered version of his 1989 documentary, *FORBIDDEN CITY, U.S.A.*

With two entries in this year's program, Oscar-winning director and San Francisco Art Institute graduate, Ruby Yang presents her new film *MY VOICE, MY LIFE*, a documentary about Hong Kong students from "lower-tier" high schools producing a musical, and her 2009 documentary, *A MOMENT IN TIME*, a retrospective examination of the critical role of Chinatown movie theaters in San Francisco.

Rounding out our trio of local pioneers, CAAM showcases Emmy Award winner Felicia Lowe and the world premiere of *CHINESE COUPLETS*. This deeply personal look at three generations of Chinese women captures Lowe's journey trying to unravel the story of her past.

CHINATOWN

Chinatown is significant for many Chinese American immigrants who at one time or another had ties within these communities. From theaters and nightclubs to neighborhood parks and courts, CAAMFest 2015 highlights these connections with the films *A MOMENT IN TIME*, *FORBIDDEN CITY, U.S.A.* and *9-MAN*.

In Ruby Yang's *A MOMENT IN TIME*, Yang explores the evolving role of Chinatown movie theaters in San Francisco. Through intimate multi-generational interviews and rare film clips, she reflects on how cinema helped to shape the community. In *FORBIDDEN CITY U.S.A.*, Arthur Dong highlights Chinese American nightclub performers who broke down stereotypes and cultural barriers during World War II with lavish performances at the internationally famous Forbidden City nightclub.

In director Ursula Liang's feature debut *9-MAN*, she documents the legacy of a gritty Chinese-only street-ball game born in the alleys and parking lots of 1930s Chinatowns. From the discrimination that many Chinese American immigrants faced in that time to the physical and emotional battles that take place on the courts, *9-MAN* captures the spirit of the game as the players not only battle for a championship, but fight to preserve a sport they love.

CINEMASIA: HONG KONG "CLASSICS"

From classic kung-fu films like *ONE ARMED SWORDSMAN*, to a new crop of international Hong Kong dramas, this year's group of directors bring stories of love, family and home to CAAMFest audiences.

Harping back to the roots of Hong Kong cinema, CAAMFest adds a bit of nostalgia with the renowned Shaw Brothers Studio and acclaimed director Chang Cheh's *ONE ARMED SWORDSMAN*. A kung fu story about honor and sacrifice, it's the first film in Hong Kong history to gross HK\$1 million and features Jimmy Wang, whose rise to stardom was in large part due to this film's success.

Part of the new breed of soon to be classic films, *DOT 2 DOT*, directed by Amos Why, follows Chung, a young man who returns to his childhood home in Hong Kong after living in Canada only to find it is no long familiar to him. As he attempts to reclaim missing monuments of the city he remembers by leaving graffiti of cryptic dot diagrams, he meets a young woman who deciphers his messages. Thus beginning a playful courtship, their solitary paths crisscross as they risk arrest to leave each other a series of public clues.

From Hong Kong Film Awards' Best New Director, Jessey Tsang Tsui-shan, *FLOWING STORIES* is a revelatory tale of one family's ties to a place through the 400-year-old Ho-Chung Village Festival held every 10 years. Grandmother Lau Yu Tam-Kiu frankly recounts the poverty and hardship of farming for a living in the New Territories, as her children reflect upon their immigration and struggle to make a living in Europe.

NARRATIVE AND DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION FILMS

Whether it's the SUPERBAD-esque charm of Justin Chon's MAN-UP! or the mystery of Caryn Waechter's THE SISTERHOOD OF NIGHT, these films defy typical Asian and Asian American stereotypes with moments of comedy, inspiration and secrecy.

In the world premiere of Justin Chon's MAN-UP!, two young deadbeats are forced to grow up quickly as their friendship is tested when unemployed 19-year-old Martin (Kevin Wu) finds out his girlfriend is pregnant. This comedic and eccentric film marks the directorial feature film debut of Justin Chon, who plays Martin's overeager best friend Randall.

"Can you scream a little more, Asian?" is the defining question of Sophie's acting career and the sticking point in Joyce Wu's San Francisco premiere of SHE LIGHTS UP WELL. With dwindling funds and no job prospects, the story follows Sophie, a fiery young actress who reluctantly leaves New York for her family's home in Detroit. There she becomes embroiled in a plot to save the community theater's production of "The Mikado."

With its West Coast premiere, THE SISTERHOOD OF NIGHT, directed by Caryn Waechter and written by Taiwanese-American Marilyn Fu, mysteriously follows the friendship between three high school girls whose decisions lead to a series of increasingly dangerous events, throwing their community into a modern-day witch hunt. THE SISTERHOOD OF NIGHT pulls together a wide variety of cultural touchstones, from the Salem witch trials to cyber bullying, to show the power of silence and finding a voice.

YOUTH STORIES AT CAAMFEST

The Youth Voices on China online video contest is the 1990 Institute's signature education initiative to foster better global awareness among young Americans. Meet the winners from the middle, high school and college divisions and enjoy an exclusive premiere of all the finalists' videos.

TOP SPIN is a sports documentary, directed by Sara Newens and Mina T. Son, about three young athletes trying to fight their way through the rigors of the ping pong world, while balancing the pressures of adolescence. Ultimately, they hope to fulfill their dreams of representing the United States at the 2012 Olympics.

FESTIVAL TICKET INFORMATION

Excluding special events, panels, galas and special screenings, advanced general admission tickets are \$14. Tickets for students, seniors (65+) and disabled adults are \$13 (Limit 1 per program with ID only). Tickets for Center for Asian American Media members are \$12 (Limit 2 per program per ID). Tickets go on sale to CAAM members only on Thursday, February 12, 2015 (online only) and open to the general public beginning Tuesday, February 17, 2015 (online only). Tickets can be purchased in person at our CAAMFest box office at Sundance Kabuki Cinemas starting Thursday, February 26, 2015.

About CAAMFest:

CAAMFest, formerly the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival (SFIAAFF), takes place March 12-22, 2015 in the San Francisco Bay Area. CAAMFest is a celebration of film, music, food and digital media from the world's most innovative Asian and Asian American artists.

About CAAM:

CAAM (Center for Asian American Media) is a non-profit organization dedicated to presenting stories that convey the richness and diversity of Asian American experiences to the broadest audience possible. CAAM does this by funding, producing, distributing and exhibiting works in film, television and digital media. For more information on CAAM, please visit www.caamedia.org.

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