



## **19<sup>th</sup> Annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival Doc Spotlight: Transformation and Change**

*VAFF 19 Runs November 5-8, 2015 at the Cineplex Odeon International Village*

**Vancouver, BC—September 24, 2015**—The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF 19) is proud to spotlight seven documentaries that illuminate the empowering transformative nature of change, including five from Canadian filmmakers, in its celebration of Asian diaspora and diversity in film. VAFF 19 takes place November 5–8, 2015 at the Cineplex Odeon International Village Cinemas, 88 W. Pender St., in Vancouver’s historic Chinatown.

In **THE ROOTS REMAIN**, from Canadian documentary filmmakers Andrew Marchand-Boddy (who hails from Victoria, British Columbia - in attendance) and Jean-Sébastien Francoeur, Montreal graffiti artist Fonki returns to Cambodia to paint a giant mural, an emotional tribute to his relatives killed in the Khmer Rouge genocide. During his time there, he connects with a group of Cambodian youth who have also returned, hoping to breathe new life into their destroyed culture. Crafted from over 100 hours of HD footage, as well as 16mm newsreels and propaganda footage shot by the Khmer Rouge, the film follows one member of the Cambodian diaspora who discovers his roots in the heart of modern Cambodia.

**RIGHT FOOTED** from Emmy® winning American director Nick Spark is the story of Philippine-American Jessica Cox, a 29-year-old woman who was born without arms but overcame many physical and emotional challenges to become fully independent—learning to type with her toes, drive a car with her feet, and amazingly, to become the first person in the world to fly an airplane with feet. Shot in the USA, Ethiopia and the Philippines, Right Footed is both a very personal portrait of Cox’s unexpected journey as she becomes an internationally-recognized disability activist and mentor, and an examination of the power of one person’s life story to effect large scale change.

Five more short documentaries, three in competition for this year’s NFB-sponsored Best Canadian Short Award, challenge and inspire. **AWAY FROM THE GRASSLANDS** (American director Khalid Ali) is an intimate, behind-the-scenes look at the ethnic Mongolian band, Hanggai, as they record their new album “Back to You” in Beijing, China—an attempt to preserve the past while creating something altogether new. Four short documentaries are part of our LIFE IN MULTICULTURE Canadian shorts program: **CANTONESE: PASSING** (Vancouver’s Elizabeth Cheong, Lisa Lee), **TASTE OF IDENTITY** (Vancouver’s Derek Kwan), **ON BEING CHINESE, CULTURE AND IDENTITY** (Vancouver’s David Ng, Jen Sunshine), and **SINGING IN DIASPORA** (Toronto’s Sabchu Rinpoche).

“We are extremely excited for this year’s 19<sup>th</sup> festival,” stated Grace Chin, festival director. “VAFF is gearing up for its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration next year, and this year’s program continues to showcase the breadth and depth of Asian diaspora filmmaking beyond the stereotypes and mainstream film festival offerings, with programming that additionally reflects the increasingly borderless creative and industry sensibility of Canada’s west coast. Our industry seminar series launches this year as well, geared toward independent and filmmakers interested in the opportunities presented by the international distribution market for our films.”

**VANCOUVER ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL | 4862 PINE CRESCENT, VANCOUVER, B.C. V6J 4L3**

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VAFF 19 asks, “What’s Your Role [in your Community]?” with a lineup that invites us to examine the complications within the search for personal and cultural identity. The festival’s nine film programs include 37 feature-length and short films of all genres, with English dialogue or English subtitles, from the Asian diaspora—including a world premiere, 5 North American premieres and 13 Canadian premieres. An additional 9 films are Vancouver premieres. Twenty filmmakers, from Canada and internationally, are expected to attend. Organizers anticipate close to 4,000 audience and industry members over the four-day festival.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival will take place November 5–8, 2015, at the Cineplex Odeon International Village Cinemas at 88 West Pender Street in Vancouver’s historic Chinatown. Close to 4,000 audience members and media are expected to attend the four-day festival. New this year, is the VAFF Industry Insight Seminar Series: panel topics include how independent filmmakers can take advantage of Vancouver’s rapid evolution into a post production hub, and how to capitalize on emerging opportunities for international distribution/co-production.

Tickets are available online at [www.vaff.org](http://www.vaff.org) beginning October 8 and at the VAFF Box Office at the Cineplex Odeon International Village lobby starting November 5. VIP passes are available online for \$88 in advance, or \$150 during the festival. All VAFF VIP pass holders will receive priority access to all film screenings and special events at the festival and have the chance to mingle with filmmakers, actors and other industry guests. Media can request screeners, film stills, and further information by emailing [media@vaff.org](mailto:media@vaff.org).

Follow the festival as it unfolds at:

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Twitter/[#VAFF2015](https://twitter.com/VAFFVancouver)

Instagram/[vaffvancouver](https://www.instagram.com/vaffvancouver)

### **About the Vancouver Asian Film Festival**

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. Close to 4,000 people are expected to attend the four-day festival.

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