



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

Department
of Asian and
North African
Studies



文化部
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

3rd TAIWAN CINEMA WEEK
New Generations: Women's Perspectives

PROGRAM

Friday, 4 November 2016
(9:45-23:00)

Ca' Foscari University of Venice
Auditorium Santa Margherita
Dorsoduro 3689, Venice

9:45-10:15 Welcome greetings

10:30-13:00 Cho Li presents

THE RICE BOMBER (Baimi zhadanke)

(dir. Cho Li, Taiwan 2014, 118', Chinese with English s/t)

The film is introduced by the director and followed by a Q&A session

Synopsis A bomb explodes in a park in Taipei. Nobody is hurt, but the explosion causes a downpour of rice onto the grass. One of the onlookers is Yang Rumen, known as Ru. A young man from a farming family, Ru has first-hand experience of how the situation of Taiwanese farmers has steadily worsened ever since the government eased import regulations for agricultural products in the late eighties. After 2002, when Taiwan joined the World Trade Organization, local farmers were even told to let their fields lie fallow and to transform them into lakes. Politicians continue to look the other way following incidents of village children drowning in these lakes. In the meantime, Ru makes friends who are willing to help him: a rich girl with a pronounced sense of justice and a wish to revolt, and a farm boy with a similar background to himself. Ru decides to become the voice of these farmers and remind the government of its obligations. Yang Rumen becomes the 'rice bomber'. Cho Li's film tells the true story of this courageous farmer who was to become a hero in his native Taiwan.

Cho Li: a producer-turned-director, graduated with an M.S. degree in Radio/TV/Film from the Indiana State University. After producing critically acclaimed films with producer Yeh Jufeng, she turned to directing with the aim of developing multi-faceted genre films with her unique point-of-view. The suspense feature-length *Zoom Hunting* marked her promising directing debut. In 2011, she also completed her second feature film *The Next Magic in China*. *The Rice Bomber* was selected in the Panorama section of the 2014 Berlinale. She is one of the directors involved in the project *Taipei Factory II* (2014), the first Italian-Taiwanese co-production. *Ace of Sales* (2016) is her newest work and was released theatrically in September 2016. Among the films she has produced, *God Man Dog* (2007) – directed by Singing Chen – has won many international awards.

13:30-15:15

RINA TSOU'S SHORT FILMS

*The short films are introduced by the director
and followed by a Q&A session*

MONSTER (Guaiwu)

(dir. Rina Tsou, Taiwan 2011, 9')

Synopsis: It began as a small stain on her character, when she couldn't keep up with her white lies. For a timid schoolgirl, the pressure of fitting in is heavy. Yuan wants to hang out with the in-crowd and paints a picture of her life with deception. Just small, white lies.

CHICHARON

(dir. Rina Tsou, Philippines, Taiwan, 2013, 30')

Synopsis: Fang Ting, whose mom is a Filipina and dad a Taiwanese, just returned to Taiwan after dad's business in China went down. She couldn't fit in at school, nor at home. Dad was never there, and grandma's always mad at mom. She felt so alone. Then a Filipino boy Jason showed up with the magical Chicharon.

ARNIE

(dir. Rina Tsou, Taiwan, Philippines, 2016, 24')

Synopsis: Docked at the port of Kaohsiung, Filipino seaman Arnie buys a ring with the help of his mates, to propose to his girlfriend back home. The supposedly happiest moment of his life soon takes a downward spiral when he finds out she is pregnant - but he is not the father of the child.

Rina Tsou: Filipina-Taiwanese filmmaker Rina B. Tsou studied filmmaking at Motion Picture Department of National Taiwan University of Arts. Being of two lands, she has an intimate understanding of the East and Southeast Asian situation and has applied her unique sensibilities to the issues raised in her films. This can be seen in her latest short film *Arnie*, about the situation of transient Filipino workers in Taiwan, competing at the 2016 edition of the Cannes Film Festival Critic's Week. Based in Taipei, she is currently working on a short documentary *Ching Mei's Hands*, slated to release next year and developing her first feature film project, titled, *Raining Roses*.

15:30-16:30

Conversation with filmmakers and film scholars

Rina Chou, Cho Li, Liu Chia-hsin, Wafa Ghermani, Elena Pollacchi

17-19:30 *Carte blanche* to Liu Chia-hsin...

GOD MAN DOG (Liulang shen gou ren)

(dir. Singing Chen, Taiwan 2007, 119')

*The film is introduced by producer Cho Li and film director Liu Chia-hsin
and followed by a Q&A session*

Synopsis: A meandering truck full of gods gets mixed up with a cast of outcasts whose lives gradually entwine with each other. Yellow Bull, the owner of the truck, travels around giving shelter to deserted god statues yet can't afford to have his artificial leg fixed. Biung, an alcoholic aboriginal, transports top-class peaches between a remote village and Taipei city yet finds himself less valued than even a peach. Ching, a depressed middle class wife, attempts to redeem her marriage after the death of her newborn. Then there's a fatal car accident caused by a stray dog. Can it change their lives and put an end to the obvious and distinct boundaries between them?

Singing Chen was selected by Directors' Fortnight's Factory to direct a short film which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival. In 2000, her film *Bundled* won awards at both domestic and international film festivals, including Best Drama and Best New Director at Taipei Film Festival. In 2007, *God Man Dog* was selected for screening at the Forum at Berlin Film Festival and later was screened at Busan and Freiburg IFF. In 2012, her TV feature *When Yesterday Comes* was selected for International Competition at Mannheim-Heidelberg Film Festival and International Short Film at Kaohsiung Film Festival Competition. In 2014, her documentary *Mountain Spirit* co-directed with Chiang kuo-liang was making the portrait of the Taiwanese artist Wang Wen-chih. She is also a composer for film and stage play.

19:45-22:30 Cho Li presents

INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE

ACE OF SALES (Xiaoshou qi ji)

(dir. Cho Li, Taiwan, 2016, 129')

The film is introduced by the director and followed by a Q&A session

Synopsis: Long-legged Chen Su-fen, whose talent and life are neither outstanding, is fired by her long-time employer after messing up on the retail price of a product. With no choice, she takes on a sales job at a hypermarket. Her terrible promoting skill gains her atrocious sales and mocking from her senior, Mei-hsiu. Fortunately, she meets Jack, a triad boss, who teaches her a sales technic that eventually transforms her, re-establishes her confidence and gets her recruited into a TV shopping channel together with Mei-hsiu, who Su-fen competes with for the "Ace of Sales." As the showdown between the two finally arrives, Su-fen is held hostage in the midst of a live show. A crazy, breathtaking "sales" reality show goes live on air...

Monday, 7 November 2016

(20:00-23:30)

Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Auditorium Santa Margherita

Dorsoduro 3689, Venice

20:00-21:15

LIU CHIA-HSIN'S SHORT FILMS

*The short films are introduced by the director
and followed by a Q&A session*

19

(dir. Liu Chia-hsin, Taiwan 2006, 4')

Synopsis: A poem for the time of being lonely but free.

MOTHER

(dir. Liu Chia-hsin, Taiwan 2012, 20')

Synopsis: It's been seven years since the incident and Xianyun tries hard to return to normal life. As a counselor, Xianyun hopes to ease her pain of losing her daughter through helping others with their pain. The mother of the killer, Chen Yuan, is a neighbor of Xianyun. They see each other occasionally but never spoke. Xianyun could not bring herself to forgive ChenYuan's mother. As the execution day of Chen is getting closer, all the pains and memories are once again stirred...

FAN FAN

(dir. Liu Chia-hsin, Taiwan 2015, 29')

Synopsis: The anthropology student Fan Fan decides to temporarily take up a job as a sexy karaoke girl at a local gentlemen's club, after a disappointing realization about her love life. When one of her clients treats her with a kindness and respect rarely seen in the sex industry, the lines between business and pleasure start to get blurry.

Liu Chia-Hsin is a Taiwanese-Canadian filmmaker based in Taipei. She graduated from MFA in Film Production from the National Taiwan University of Arts and has worked closely to video/documentary and dramatic genres. The films she writes and directs are a mixture of fiction and true stories. She made a 30min-documentary *Being 30 on alarm* (2010) and another short *Mother* (2012) during her graduate school. Her latest short film, *Fan Fan*, was screened at international film festivals, including at Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival and many other festivals, where it won best film award in Women Make Wave Film Festival in Taiwan. As a writer/director/producer, Chia-Hsin is currently engaged in an artistic collaboration to develop feature film projects: "The sand in her eyes" and 'Moon girls' are female perspective stories located in modern Taiwan.

21:30-23:30 Wafa Ghermani presents

FINDING SAYUN (Bu yiyang de yueguang)

(dir. Laha Mebow Taiwan, 2011, 99')

*The screening is introduced by film scholar Wafa Ghermani
and followed by a Q&A session*

Finding Sayun is anti-aboriginal romance film that revisits the 1943 Japanese propaganda film *Sayon's Bell*. In that propaganda movie an indigenous girl from a rural township in North-eastern Taiwan drowned while trying to carry her luggage across a river for the man she adored: a departing Japanese officer. *Sayon's Bell* wanted to reassure the Japanese public that, a decade after the Wushe uprising in 1930, Taiwan's indigenous peoples had been converted to imperial subjects, and to convince aboriginal braves to fight for the emperor. After the Second World War, the KMT relocated Sayun's people from their old mountain village to a new village on the plain. Laha Mebow is one of Sayun's people, and her new film is ostensibly about finding Sayun, but finding Sayun is not the point of the film. In the film, the search for the ghost of Sayun is the focus though the directors points at many different issues: how to remember a story turned into a legend by the Japanese government? Does the tribe memory survive? How can Aborigines represent themselves and not be objects of representations of others? (Wafa Ghermani)

Laha Mebow is an aboriginal Taiwanese director who graduated from the Department of Radio, Cinema and Television of Taipei Shih Hsin University. She started her career as a film assistant working for Wan Jen and Tsai Ming-liang among others. She first shot documentaries for television, especially a series of portraits of foreigners living in Taiwan for Da Ai (Buddhist television channel). Her screenplay "Finding Sayun" was rewarded but since she could not find anyone to direct it, she decided to try to shoot her first fiction film.

Wafa Ghermani defended a PhD on Taiwan film history at the University of La Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris. She worked at the Cinemathèque française. She is also a consultant and programmer for many festivals including Vesoul International Asian Film Festival, Warsaw Five Flavors Film Festival, Neuchatel Fantastic Film festival and Jean Rouch Ethnographic Film Festival. She also regularly publishes articles on Taiwan cinema.

**Tuesday, 8 November 2016
(20:00-23:30)**

**Ca' Foscari University of Venice
Auditorium Santa Margherita
Dorsoduro 3689, Venice**

20:00-21:40 *Re-discovering films*

HOU HSIAO-HSIEN'S FIRST FEATURE FILM

CUTE GIRL (Jiu shi liuliu de ta)

(dir. Hou Hsiao-hsien, Taiwan 1980)

*The film is introduced by Giovanna Fulvi and Elena Pollacchi
and followed by a conversation on programming Taiwan cinema at film festivals*

Hou Hsiao-hsien made his debut in 1980 with this romantic comedy filled with pop songs. Wenwen is a girl that fled her family in town because she doesn't agree with the marriage her parents have arranged for her. At the countryside, a new world opens up to her and she also falls in love. Although with *Cute Girl*, Hou hasn't yet found the style that characterizes his work from the mid-1980s onwards, the hand of the master is already noticeable. As is the influence of Yasuhiro Ozu, not so much in the mise-en-scène, but in the gags that recall the Japanese director's silent films. *Cute girl* (aka *Lovable You*) was the first of three films that Hou would shoot with the immensely popular Hong Kong singer Kenny Bee in the lead (Cinematek Brussels) *This screening is made possible by courtesy of the Cinematek Brussels.*

Hou Hsiao-hsien: director and screenwriter, Hou Hsiao Hsien is considered one of the foremost directors of the New Taiwan Cinema. Born in China, he grew up in Taiwan where his family moved in 1948, when he was one year old. At the end of the 1908s, he took part in some of the world's most prestigious film festivals, winning many important prizes, like the Golden Lion for *A City of Sadness* at the 46th Venice Film Festival in 1989. With his most recent film *The Assassin* (2015), Hou won the award for Best Director at the Cannes Film Festival.

Giovanna Fulvi has been programming for the Toronto International Film Festival since 2002. She is responsible for discovering and introducing audiences to the newest films and filmmakers of Asian Cinema. Based in Italy, she is currently also a member of the selection committee for the Rome Film Festival.

Elena Pollacchi defended her PhD at the University of Cambridge discussing the changes in the Chinese film industry during the years 1989–2004. She has worked extensively on the development of the film market in the Asian region and its transnational connections. She also serves as a programmer for Chinese-language films and South Korean cinema for the Venice Film Festival. Her current research focuses on documentary films, film festivals in Asia and the circulation of Chinese-language films at European film festivals. Her most recent publications include book chapters in *Taiwan Cinema: International Reception and Social Change* (Routledge, 2017 forthcoming) and *Chinese Film Festivals: Sites of Translations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

21:45-23:30 *Carte blanche* to Rina Tsou...

PINOY SUNDAY (Taipei xingqitian)

(dir. Wi Ding Ho, Taiwan/Philippines, 2009, 84')

The film is introduced by Giovanna Fulvi and Elena Pollacchi

Synopsis: Two lonely men discover what they think is a life-changing windfall in this comedy-drama from Taiwan. Manuel and Dado are a pair of Filipino guest workers struggling to earn a living at a bicycle factory in Taiwan. They work long hours six days a week and are forced to live in a dormitory near the factory, with Sunday the only day where they can indulge their own interests. Manuel wants to win the heart of a beautiful woman, while Dado just wants to make enough money to go back to his wife and kids. One Sunday, after attending church, the men find a beautiful red leather couch that represents the sort of homey touch lacking in their lives. The couch is theirs if they can carry it away, but it's on one side of the city of Taipei and the dorm is on the other, and getting their new piece of furniture home before curfew leads to a series of unexpected adventures.

Wi Ding Ho: Malaysian director Wi Ding Ho was born on 1971. He studied at New York University Film School. His first short movie was premiered at Cannes, where it received the "Kodak Discovery Award". His first feature film, *Pinoy Sunday*, won the "Best New Director Award" at the Golden Horse Awards in Taiwan and awarded as the "Best Feature Film" at Cluj Film Festival.

Program Curator: Elena Pollacchi (Ca' Foscari University of Venice) within the framework of the Spotlight Taiwan Project – Main Investigator Federica Passi (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

A special thanks to film directors Cho Li, Rina Tsou, and Liu Chia-hsin; film scholars and programmers Wafa Ghermani and Giovanna Fulvi; film producers Vincent Wong, Desmond Yang and Eric Xie; film restorers of the Cinematek Brussels Nicola Mazzanti (Director) and Micha Plentickx (Programmer); our current and former students Giorgio Ceccarelli and Camilla Martini.