



MEDIA RELEASE

Singapore International Film Festival Celebrates Asia's Story in Film

The line-up includes two iconic Asian classics celebrating their 20th anniversary

Singapore, 1 September 2015 – Southeast Asia's longest-running international film platform Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) will take place from 26 November to 6 December 2015 to celebrate independent cinema in the region, telling the Asia story in film.

SGIFF Executive Director, Yuni Hadi, said, "The region is rich with an eclectic mix of filmmakers, and SGIFF presents a choice platform for their different voices and styles of expression. It is always exhilarating to discover amazing works, create opportunities for exchanges between emerging talents and industry heavyweights, and connect these independent spirits with the wider regional and international audience."

The 26th edition of SGIFF will take place across various venues, including Marina Bay Sands, National Museum of Singapore, Shaw Theatres Lido, National Gallery Singapore, The Arts House, The Projector and The Substation. Film line-up for this year's edition will be curated from the over 1,400 submissions received since its open call in May 2015.

Line-up to Celebrate Two Iconic Asian Classics

Two iconic films of Singapore cinema will lead the line-up for the Classics segment of the SGIFF. Eric Khoo's *Mee Pok Man* and Yonfan's *Bugis Street* are two well-known works that had been prominent in the 1990s – when a resurgence of independent cinema was noted in Singapore. Both films mark their 20th anniversaries this year.



Eric Khoo's Mee Pok Man (L) and Yonfan's Bugis Street Redux (R)

Hadi added, “*Mee Pok Man* and *Bugis Street* are two classics that not just tell a Singapore story, but also reflect a milestone of an era for our filmmaking industry. They have inspired bolder voices since their premieres in 1995 and are exemplary of the quality storytelling our filmmakers are capable of. As both films mark their 20th anniversaries this year, it is fitting for the Festival to celebrate their legacies that have helped pave the way for the rich cinematic culture we enjoy today.”

Singapore’s Cultural Medallion recipient and award winning filmmaker Eric Khoo’s *Mee Pok Man* was an instrumental film that placed Singapore on the world map in 1995, bringing forth a resurgence for Singapore cinema after a decade of lull in the 1980s. Screened at 35 film festivals between 1995 and 1997, it was widely recognised for its independent spirit and focus on locality, which inspired and influenced Singapore films to come.

This year’s SGIFF also presents the newly restored *Bugis Street Redux* which was groundbreaking for both Asia and veteran film director Yonfan back in 1995. Filmed in Singapore, it illustrated the beginnings of cross-cultural filmmaking within the region. The iconic piece was also Yonfan’s first foray into independent filmmaking, and is an essential filmic document that captures the heartbeat and colour of 1960s Bugis Street as it once existed.



The SGIFF is an event of the Singapore Media Festival, hosted by Media Development Authority (Singapore). SGIFF's Official Sponsors include Presenting Sponsor, Marina Bay Sands and Official Time Partner, IWC Schaffhausen.

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About the Singapore International Film Festival

The Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) is the largest and longest-running film event in Singapore. Founded in 1987, the festival has become an iconic event in the Singapore arts calendar that is widely attended by international film critics, and recognised worldwide for its focus on Asian filmmakers and the promotion of Southeast Asian films. The SGIFF is committed to nurturing and championing local and regional talents in the art of filmmaking. The festival serves as a catalyst in igniting public interest in the arts, and encouraging artistic dialogue and cultural exchanges. The SGIFF is organised by the Singapore International Film Festival Ltd, a non-profit organisation and holds the Institution of a Public Character (IPC) status.

For more information, please visit www.sgiff.com.

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ANNEX

***Mee Pok Man* (1995)**

Eric Khoo

Singapore / 110 minutes



Credits: Zhao Wei Films

Synopsis:

Mee Pok Man is the quintessential film that placed Singapore cinema on the world map after a decade of near silence in the 1980s. It harbours a sense of urgency, rawness and authenticity that defined the defiant face of local filmmaking that emerged during the 1990s.

Based on a short story and script by local writer Damien Sin, the film casts an uncompromising gaze into the marginal losers of society, following a dim-witted mee pok seller who is obsessed



with Bunny, a prostitute who frequents his stall. Bunny dreams of a better life and remains unaware of the man's affections, until circumstances lead to a most unlikely union - a resolution that conflates fatalism and the macabre to unparalleled emotional heights.

An unforgettable start to Eric Khoo's oeuvre, *Mee Pok Man* was awarded the FIPRESCI Special Mention Prize at the 8th Singapore International Film Festival, Special Jury Prize at the 9th Fukuoka Asian Film Festival, and the Best New Asian Director and Special Mention from the Jury at the 1st Busan International Film Festival.

Biography of Director

Award-winning filmmaker Eric Khoo was the first Singaporean to have his films invited to major film festivals such as Berlin, Venice and Cannes. He was awarded the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Letters in 2008. His feature *My Magic* was nominated for the Cannes Palme d'Or, and he recently completed *In the Room*, his 6th feature film.



Bugis Street Redux (1995/2012)
Yonfan
Hong Kong, Singapore / 103 minutes



Credits: Far Sun Films

Synopsis:

The pulsating atmosphere of Singapore's infamous red light district during the 1960s is nostalgically evoked in Yonfan's flamboyant and affectionate portrait of a milieu that was once a notorious tourist spot replete with uninhibited sexual desires and encounters; a famed destination for visiting sailors and American GIs looking for some corporal respite, and a popular location for a number of Western films shot in Singapore, such as *Saint Jack* (Peter Bogdanovich, 1979) and *Wit's End* (Joe M. Reed, 1971).

In Yonfan's *Bugis Street*, we are introduced to a community of transgender women through the eyes of Lian, a youthful girl from Malaysia working in a hotel in the district. On the surface, the



film captures the glamour, seediness and theatricality of the community with unabashed flamboyance and humour. As Lian forms real attachments with these individuals and comes of age, the film gently reveals its humanistic core, capturing the yearning and integrity of a marginal community and the turbulence of life with its inevitable farewells and beginnings.

This iconic co-production between Hong Kong and Singapore is Yonfan's first foray into independent filmmaking after a series of commercial hits, and an essential filmic document that captures the heartbeat and colour of Bugis Street as it once existed.

Biography of Director:

Yonfan was born in Hubei, and grew up in Hong Kong and Taiwan. He is renowned as a photographer and started directing in 1984 with films such as *A Certain Romance* (1984), *A Story of Rose* (1985), *Bugis Street* (1995), *Bishonen* (1998) and his latest feature *Prince of Tears* (2009). He has published four books of memoirs and film criticism.