

Asia House Pan-Asia Film Festival London, 1 – 13 March 2011



Press Release

THE ASIA HOUSE PAN-ASIA FILM FESTIVAL 2011 ANNOUNCES SCHEDULE AND OPENS WITH NORWEGIAN WOOD PREMIERE

Now in its third year, the Pan-Asia Film Festival returns to London from 1 – 13 March 2011, bringing together some of Asia's freshest, emerging talent alongside work by established filmmakers, reflecting the vibrancy and energy in Asian filmmaking today. Uniquely showcasing pan-Asian contemporary cinema from across the region, the festival programme represents 13 countries and includes 3 UK and 3 English premieres.

Opening with the English premiere of **NORWEGIAN WOOD** by Academy Award® nominated director **Tran Anh Hung** (THE SCENT OF GREEN PAPAYA), adapted from the best-selling novel of the same name by internationally-acclaimed Japanese author **Haruki Murakami**. The Festival is delighted to be welcoming **Tran Anh Hung** along with Academy Award® nominated lead actress **Rinko Kikuchi** and musician and film composer **Jonny Greenwood** (Radiohead) to introduce the opening film in a special Q&A session at BAFTA on 2 March 2011. The Festival will close with the English premiere of **AU REVOIR TAIPEI**, the award-winning debut feature by American-Taiwanese director **Arvin Chen**, with veteran German filmmaker **Wim Wenders** as executive producer.

The Pan-Asia Film Festival is the only festival of its kind in the UK, covering the freshest talent emerging from right across the Asian continent today. The festival is hosted by Asia House, the leading pan-Asian organisation in the UK. Building on the success of the first two Pan-Asia Film Festivals, the 2011 Festival is set to be more high profile, with a number of premieres and special guest attendances. This year's programme covers a range of themes illustrating the diversity of the cultures of Asia. From the Middle East (Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan), to Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan), to South Asia (Bhutan, Burma, India, Tibet), to East Asia (China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan), the Festival highlights filmmaking talent from lesser-known Asian film industries whilst also confirming the influence and breadth of Asia's more established industries. With a diverse programme of romantic tales, realist dramas, coming of age films and offbeat comedies as well as documentaries on human rights and social issues, this year's Festival programme will offer audiences a unique opportunity to engage in the best in new Asian cinema.

Highlights include:

Directorial debut by Iranian director Majid Barvegar, **RAINY SEASONS**, nominated for this month's Tiger Awards at International Film Festival Rotterdam 2011;

THE RICE PADDY, a beautiful coming of age story set amidst the stunning landscape of Guangxi Province in southern China and the first film to be shot in the Dong language, spoken by the local Dong ethnic minority;

HAHAHA by leading Korean director **Hong Sangsoo**, a gentle comedy with his signature motifs of relationships, romantic mishaps and alcohol fuelled reflections on love and life;

UK premiere of **Yang Yonghi's SONA, THE OTHER MYSELF**, offering a rare glimpse into the closed society of North Korea;

Anne Gyrithe Bonne's new documentary, AUNG SAN SUU KYI - LADY OF NO FEAR, offering a unique portrait of the inspiring Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, to be screened on the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day on 8th March.

An events programme with both an industry and educational focus will run alongside the main Festival programme and will include seminars, a filmmaker's masterclass and Q&As.

Sonali Joshi, Artistic Director, commented, "Asian filmmaking is thriving and this exciting selection of films fully reflects the fresh and vibrant cinema coming out of Asia today. These films introduce us to the diversity of its cultures and its peoples, with gritty and realist stories on one hand, enchanting and beautiful stories on the

other, taking us to far-flung corners of the continent. This festival will be a must-see for London audiences with not only an interest in all things Asian, but equally for those with a love of cinema."

Sumi Ghose, Director of Public Programmes at Asia House, commented: "At Asia House we are proud of our programmes celebrating the richness and diversity of Asian cultures. The Asia House Pan-Asia Film Festival reveals the extraordinary depth and creativity of Asian filmmaking today and contributes to a deeper understanding of Asia in the UK."

Tony Rayns, Film Critic and London Film Festival Programmer (East Asian section) commented: "East Asian cinema continues to go through the process of renewal which has made it perhaps the world's most vibrant area of filmmaking in recent years. In one country after another, the old studio systems and filmmaking habits are being swept away. In their place, a new generation of more cosmopolitan and modern-minded filmmakers is producing engaging and innovative work which leaves much western filmmaking looking old-fashioned."

Cary Sawhney, Director of London Indian Film Festival and London Film Festival Programmer (South Asian section) commented: "Indian cinema is at an exciting crossroads, where traditional commercial forms are being challenged, not only by hybridisation with other global media, but also an emerging new wave of independent Indian film culture."

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Images and production notes available on request.

For further information on Asia House, please visit www.asiahouse.org.

www.panasiafilmfestival.org

Notes to Editors:

About the Asia House Pan-Asia Film Festival:

Now going into its third edition, Pan-Asia Film Festival has been dedicated to celebrating and promoting the best in new Asian cinema, from as far West as Iraq to Japan in the Far East, with a specific focus on high-quality independent films from emerging and established directors alike. Whilst many Asian films do not receive theatrical distribution in the UK, Pan-Asia Film Festival offers a platform for promoting Asian cinema in the UK. Previous Pan-Asia Film Festivals have included one of Taiwan's most successful films of all time CAPE NO 7, (+ Q&A with director Re-Sheng Wei), THE NAMESAKE (+ Q&A with director Mira Nair) and HERO (+ Q&A with director Zhang Yi Mou). Acclaimed directors Gurinder Chadha, Chen Kaige and Ken Loach have also featured in past festivals.

Asia House:

Asia House promotes informed understanding and the mutual exchange of ideas, building stronger relationships between Europe and Asia's diverse communities. Through its programming, Asia House aims to shape and contribute to the understanding and knowledge of Asia in the UK. The Asia House Pan-Asia Film Festival forms part of a year-round cultural programme which has a reputation for high quality talks, discussions, performance and film covering the arts, culture and current affairs of Asia. Asia House also runs the UK's leading annual pan-Asian literary festival, the Asia House Festival of Asian Literature.

Programme Summary:

NORWEGIAN WOOD – opening film [Tran Anh Hung | Japan 2010 | English premiere]

BRILLIANT MOON [Neten Chokling | Tibet/India/Bhutan/Nepal/US 2010]

KICK OFF [Shawkat Amin Korki | Iraqi Kurdistan/Japan 2009 | English premiere]

TAIPEI EXCHANGES [Hsiao Ya-Chuan | Taiwan 2010]

HAHAHA [Hong Sangsoo | South Korea 2010]

I AM SINDHUTAI SAPKAL [Ananth Mahadevan | India 2010]

SONA, THE OTHER MYSELF [Yang Yonghi | Japan/South Korea 2009 | UK premiere]

AUNG SAN SUU KYI - LADY OF NO FEAR [Anne Gyrith-Bonne | Denmark 2010]

THE LIGHT THIEF [Aktan Arym Kubat | Kyrgyzstan/Germany/France/Netherlands 2010]

THE RICE PADDY [Xiaoling Zhu | China 2010 | UK premiere]

RAINY SEASONS [Majid Barzegar | Iran 2010 | 86 mins | UK premiere]

AU REVOIR TAIPEI – closing film [Arvin Chen | Taiwan 2009 | English premiere]