

35th Singapore International Film Festival Unveils Full Programme, 105 Films from 45 Countries, Over 80% Asian Lineup

Held from 28 November to 8 December, SGIFF 2024 features 105 films from 45 countries, with 80% of selections from Asia.

SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE, October 28, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF) marks its 35th edition, the nation's largest and longest-running film event reinforces its position as a key reference point for Singapore and Asian cinema, while showcasing its unique perspective on contemporary trends in global cinema.

Held from 28 November to 8 December, this year's lineup features 105 films from 45 countries, with 80% of the selections hailing from Asia.

International highlights this year include the horror-comedy *Nightbitch* featuring Amy Adams, *The Shrouds* by master of body horror David Cronenberg, *Grand Tour* by Cannes-award winning director Miguel Gomes, and a newly restored version of Bong Joon-ho's debut feature *Barking Dogs Never Bite*, which will have its international premiere at SGIFF.

The festival's main competition section, the Asian Feature Film Competition, will also see notable past awardees return with new works. They include PS Vinohraj's follow up to his Best Director-winning debut *Pebbles*, which clinched the prize at the 32nd edition of the festival, as well as Truong Minh Quý, who won Best Southeast Asian Short Film with *The Men Who Wait* at the same



The Unseen Sister



Nightbitch

edition, and Déa Kulumbegashvili, who won the competition's Best Director award at the 31st SGIFF.

The festival is also pleased to announce two special presentations this year, each accompanied by a gala reception that features the films' talents in attendance.

The first is *The Fable*, directed by Raam Reddy, a haunting tale set in the Himalayan orchards of India in 1989.

The film follows Dev, played by Bollywood star Manoj Bajpayee, a soft-spoken patriarch whose tranquil existence on his sprawling estate is threatened by a series of mysterious fires, transforming his picturesque estate into a microcosm of larger systematic inequalities. Manoj Bajpayee will also participate in an exclusive dialogue session, where he will dive into the evolution of his craft, and how his portrayal of Dev in *The Fable* reflected his own spiritual and personal transformation.



Lee Kang Sheng in *Stranger Eyes*

The second special presentation is *The Unseen Sister*, a psychological drama from Myanmar-born Taiwanese filmmaker Midi Z, who also marks his return to SGIFF after his previous film, *Nina Wu* (2019), was also featured as a special presentation at that year's edition. Adapted from Zhang Yueran's novel *Qiao Sisters*, the film features Zhao Liying as a star actress haunted by the appearance of her estranged sister, played by Xin Zhilei, forcing her to confront the buried secrets of her past.

The Fable is part of the Horizon section of the festival, which brings together a diverse range of films from both renowned filmmakers and emerging talents alike to offer a bird's eye view of contemporary world cinema. Meanwhile, *The Unseen Sister* stands out as a highlight in the Foreground section, which celebrates popular cinema today, promising fresh perspectives on familiar narrative conventions like genre and visual style.

In celebration of the festival's 35th anniversary, SGIFF is proud to present two Screen Icon Awards this year, honouring the talents of Yang Kuei-mei and Lee Kang-sheng, who are the first Taiwanese actors to win this award.

The Screen Icon Award pays homage to an actor's exceptional contributions to bringing Asian stories to life on screen. Past recipients include notable figures such as Michelle Yeoh (Malaysia), Koji Yakusho (Japan), and Fan Bingbing (China).

Yang Kuei-mei began her career as a singer before becoming an acclaimed actress, earning recognition for her performances in films such as *Once Again With Love* (1981), *Hill of No Return*

(1992) and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994), which was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. A record-holder for the most performance awards at SGIFF, Yang has won the festival's highest acting accolade four times in her career. *Vive L'Amour* — starring both Yang and Lee Kang-sheng — will also be screened as part of SGIFF's Landmark section, which spotlights cult hits and classic films through history.

SGIFF will also honour Taiwanese actor, director and screenwriter Lee Kang-sheng with the Screen Icon Award. Best known as Malaysian-born Taiwanese filmmaker Tsai Ming-liang's frequent collaborator, Lee has earned critical acclaim for his performances in films such as *Stray Dogs* (2013), which won him Best Leading Actor at the 50th Golden Horse Awards. Lee also stars in SGIFF's festival opening film, *Stranger Eyes*, as the supermarket worker who becomes the prime suspect when a girl goes mysteriously missing.

Yang and Lee will reunite at a dialogue session on 30 November held at the National Museum of Singapore, where they explore their decades-long collaboration, particularly in the visionary films of Tsai Ming-liang, the celebrated filmmaker best known for his depictions of urban ennui and alienation.

Jeremy Chua, General Manager of SGIFF, says: "The Screen Icon Award stands as a testament to the remarkable contributions of Asian talents who have enriched the cinematic scene. This year, in conjunction with our milestone edition, we are proud to honour two exceptional personalities, Yang Kuei-mei and Lee Kang-sheng, whose outstanding contributions to Taiwanese and Asian cinema exemplify the incredible talents within our community."

SGIFF is also proud to introduce its inaugural SGIFF Industry Days programme, a three-day knowledge-building platform and conference event tailored for and by film professionals.

Featuring 15 sessions fronted by speakers from around the globe, spanning topics from navigating the global market for Asian-led stories, to how best to choreograph intimate scenes with professionalism and authenticity — all while offering rare opportunities to hear from visionary creators. They include figures like leading Syrian filmmaker Ossama Mohammed, director of *Stars in Broad Daylight* (1988), a newly restored work and the opening film for the festival's Landmark section, and Santosh Sivan, the famed Indian cinematographer who became the first Asian to be awarded the Pierre Angénieux Excellens in Cinematography at this year's Cannes Film Festival.

Held from 3 – 5 December at LASALLE College of the Arts, this will cover a broad spectrum of discussions that span various aspects of film production while providing professionals from around the globe the valuable opportunity to exchange ideas, offering attendees a robust, engaging experience.

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