

## **17<sup>th</sup> Zurich Film Festival (ZFF)**

**(23 September 2021, Zurich)**

### **Speaking Points for DD(BL)**

- Welcome to the opening of the *WINDOW: HONG KONG* section of the Zurich Film Festival's 17th edition. It has become a good tradition to bring some of the newest gems of the Hong Kong film industry to you at this special occasion. This year, four films will be screened, showcasing typical elements of the cinematic style that Hong Kong films became famous for. And still, each of them is unique in the way it tells its story about the city and the people.
- One of the highlights that you will be able to watch during the Zurich Film Festival is *Raging Fire*, the very last film that icon Benny Chan directed before he sadly passed away last year. Whereas the other three Hong Kong films are *Septet: The Story of Hong Kong* – the film that we will enjoy in a minute, *Drifting* and *Time*. Hopefully you will be able to see some, if not all of them in the coming days, as I am sure all four movies will bring you laughter, make you think, and touch your hearts.
- Being an international centre for business, trade and travel, you can imagine that the pandemic had a strong impact on Hong Kong in many aspects. However, the arts and creative sectors, which obviously includes the film industry, did not stand still.
- Hong Kong celebrates artistic expression and creativity. Our cultural and creative industries have around 137,000 practitioners who are engaging in diverse fields ranging from different professions of design to printing and publishing, interactive games to animation and comics, advertising to architecture, and music to film and TV production.

- We are also further developing hardware and software to reinforce the city's status as an international cultural hub. In terms of hardware, the West Kowloon Cultural District, one of the world's largest cultural infrastructure projects, is taking shape. Blending traditional local culture with international and contemporary elements, the West Kowloon Cultural District showcases the unique identity of Hong Kong as a metropolis where East meets West. One of its flagships, the M+ museum, will open its gates in November this year, and it will be one of the largest museums of modern and contemporary visual culture in the whole world. The M+ will become the home of the *Sigg collection*, a comprehensive and world-renowned collection of contemporary Chinese art, donated by art collector and former Swiss Ambassador to China, Mr Uli Sigg.
- We always welcome film production professionals from around the world including Switzerland to work in Hong Kong. The **Talent List of Hong Kong** has been drawn up with a view to attracting high quality talents from around the world in an effective and focused manner to support Hong Kong's development into a high value-added and diversified economy. Currently the List comprises 11 professions, among them "creative industries professionals" include not only film production professionals but also game developers and others.
- Obviously all these infrastructural support would not be meaningful if there is a lack of funding, and the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region continues to support the creative industries on this front: In the 2021-22 Budget, an additional injection of HK\$1 billion (120 million Swiss francs) into the CreateSmart Initiative to drive the development of the creative industries was announced. On top of that, an additional allocation of HK\$900 million (108 million Swiss francs) was earmarked for the Art Development Matching Grants Scheme to further promote culture and arts from all sectors.
- In terms of software, or in other words events, Hong Kong is also gaining momentum after the slowdown caused by the pandemic. The 45<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong International Film Festival was held in April this year in a hybrid format, which showcased over 190 films from 58 countries and regions.

- And as most of you are probably from Switzerland, you might already know that Art Basel debuted with its first hybrid show since the pandemic in Hong Kong in May this year. The event was very successful with strong sales across all levels of the market and very positive responses from the audience.
- I want to close my welcome remarks with a few words about the film that will be on screen in a few moments. *Sammo Hung, Ann Hui, Patrick Tam, Yuen Wo Ping, Johnnie To, Ringo Lam and Tsui Hark*. Each of these filmmakers is a legend in Hong Kong. And we are so lucky to have the chance to see the story that connects each of them to their hometown all at once in our opening film: *Septet: The Story of Hong Kong*. This might be one of the best ways to take a cinematic trip through the city.
- Thank you again for joining us in this journey to Hong Kong through films. Please sit back and enjoy!
- Thank you!

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