

**Opening of the 19<sup>th</sup> FILMASIA in Prague, Czech Republic  
(7 December 2023)**

**Speech by DBL**

Dear Karla, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening and a very warm welcome to the opening of the 19<sup>th</sup> *FILMASIA Asian Film Festival* in Prague. I am very glad that the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Berlin has been a partner of the festival for a solid decade. I would like to thank Ms Karla Stojáková and her team for their great collaboration over the years and I look forward to more adventures in the years to come.

2. This year's edition will present an "Ann Hui Tribute" section that is dedicated to our legendary Hong Kong film director, actress, producer and screenwriter Ann Hui. Ann's films span across a wide variety of genres, tackling contemporary social issues in an incisive manner. And that is what makes her a driving force for the Hong Kong film industry, winning great acclaim internationally. This year at the festival, we are delighted to present her classics from *Boat People* to *A Simple Life*, and we even have the honour to welcome Ann herself here on stage in a few moments.

3. But before we hear from the legend herself, let me quickly say a few words about the city where she grew up and started her career, and also where she contributed to the prosperous film industry like hardly anyone else.

4. Hong Kong has always prided itself on its dynamic film industry, for it has put our small city on the international cultural map ever since the

1970s. What I like most about films, is that they can connect people by helping us understand other cultures through a personal angle.

5. To further build on its legacy, Hong Kong is actively positioning itself as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. We are now in the course of mapping out a blueprint for arts and culture and creative industries development, nurturing a diverse talent pool, and upgrading our cultural infrastructure. This will open up plenty of opportunities in Hong Kong's film sector. I sincerely invite all the film and creative professionals from around the world, including those of you here, to come to Hong Kong, and join us in creating even better quality productions that bring a positive impact to the world.

6. Before I finish, I also wish to let you know that we will be hosting the first Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo in October next year. There will be a fruitful five-day programme of performances, international showcases, pitch sessions, leadership talks, artist sharings and so on, so don't miss out if you are also a fan of performing arts!

7. Perhaps I should stop here and give Ann more time to share with us. Thank you once again for joining us tonight to discover Hong Kong and our culture through the eyes of Ann. Please enjoy!

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