CinemAsia Film Festival: 2022 Edition

I am Doris Yeung, founder and director of the board of CinemAsia film festival, the gateway to Asian films and filmmakers in the Netherlands for last 18 years. Since 2003, CinemAsia’s has helped Asian voices and stories be heard and represented in the Netherlands and Europe through our annual film festival. We also pursue this mission through our educational programs such as FilmLAB, which creates and exhibits Asian diasporic films and trains filmmakers, media creators, and cultural workers to promote Asian visibility in Dutch and European film and media.

This is why organizations like CinemAsia are important. They enable us to tell our own stories of our communities to counter these stereotypes. They help us connect with others to increase understanding within greater society. If Asians do not speak up against these stereotypes and prejudice, then the oppressive power structures that created and perpetuated them risk being maintained.

CinemAsia is not only a festival showcasing the best of worldwide Asian cinema. It is also a platform to empower Asians to create and represent their own narrative and image. Since 2006, CinemAsia has made 35 short films about the Asian-Dutch diaspora through its FilmLAB program. These are voices and stories that are seldom heard or seen in mainstream Dutch society. In order to have a voice and place in the greater community, Asians have to be seen on the small and big screen as much as possible. To do so, we create, exhibit, and distribute our own stories of the Asian diaspora, as no one else is going to do it as authentically as our own selves. Diaspora cinema is representative cinema.

After 18 years, CinemAsia is still one of the only platforms that connects the Asian diaspora with Dutch society. It is the longest-running cultural and community organization with this mission in the Netherlands. A representative and culturally aware community is the sign of a progressive and equitable society. It is our responsibility to educate and inform the new generation against outdated stereotypes and behaviors, especially if they are to be part of an increasingly heterogeneous and integrated world.

I am proud to have seen CinemAsia grow from an idea to a reality with help of the many colleagues, filmmakers, volunteers, and supporters, all of whom have helped us grow through the years. Please help us continue our work in creating and exhibiting Asian stories in film and media and in training storytellers and cultural workers to represent Asian voices in the Dutch and European media landscape. We are always looking for interesting partners and collaborators. Please visit our website or find us on social media.

Website: www.cinemasia.nl

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Film Curation, Collaboration with Partners, and Panel Discussions

By Zero Chou, with an in-depth introduction

Secrets of 1979

politically charged
dominated by cisgender, heterosexual men.
cinema, where much of the industry is still
funding cuts. The film selection included five
years of absence due to the pandemic and
leadership and with a new vision, after two
our community and stay relevant while
festival such as CinemAsia can better serve
also raises questions regarding how a film
This fleeting state of our world gives rise to
ever-changing society, especially in its
up new challenges that came with our
community-led events, and I have learned
I have experimented with organising several
within the festival since 2018. In this role,
into a full-fledged pan-Asian film festival.

The film curation work is not just about selecting films, it is also about understanding the contexts through which these films were made, and the experiences of the communities they represent. This year, CinemAsia was able to present five films in its Queer Asian programme, including Queer Mental Health, which explored the complexities of mental health in the queer Asian community. This programme was co-curated by Professor Anne Sokolsky, Chair of Taiwan LGBTQ+ Community Programme, and Meiske Taurisia, CinemAsia’s former artistic director.

In the second part of the panel discussion, the experiences, achievements, and plans for the future were discussed. The importance of collaboration and partnerships was highlighted, especially during times of economic instability. Panelists shared their experiences of working with Asian film producers and directors, as well as establishing partnerships with international organisations. The panel concluded with a discussion on the future of film curation and the role of film festivals in promoting cultural diversity.

The festival also featured several panel discussions, including one on Queer Asian Tea and Tai-Chi: A Reflection on the Social Functions of Film Festivals, which took place as a part of the Queer Asian programme. This panel discussed the impact of film festivals on the queer Asian community, and how they can be used to promote unity and understanding.

Fig. 1: “Reading My Panties Workshop” with Lu Lin, co-hosted with Dona Daria (Photo courtesy of Sen Yang, 2022).

The festival was also able to host a number of workshops and public events, including the Queer Asian Tea and Tai-Chi workshop, which was co-hosted by Mu Zhe, CinemAsia’s artistic director. This workshop aimed to create a space for discussion and reflection on the social functions of film festivals, and how they can be used to promote cultural exchange and understanding.

This time, over 30 films were selected for the festival, including films from Asia, Europe, and the Americas. The film selection included a diverse range of genres, including drama, documentary, and animation. The festival also featured a number of panel discussions and Q&A sessions, which provided a platform for filmmakers and industry professionals to share their experiences and insights.

The festival was able to achieve its goals of promoting cultural diversity and understanding, and it provided a platform for filmmakers to showcase their work. However, there were also challenges, such as the impact of the pandemic on the film industry, and the need to adapt to new funding sources. Through partnerships and cross-disciplinary collaborations, the festival was able to overcome these challenges and continue to promote cultural diversity and understanding.

Through a spontaneous decision and the support of partners, Panel Discussions were opened with a public group tai-chi exercise. It is a symbol of the ever-changing society, especially in its ever-growing demand for community support and well-being. Panel Discussions were opened with a public group tai-chi exercise that aimed to foster camaraderie and strengthen the Asian LGBTQ+ community. The discussions were co-curated with Professor Anne Sokolsky, Chair of Taiwan LGBTQ+ Community Programme, and Meiske Taurisia, CinemAsia’s former artistic director. They were joined by Erik Glijnis, Claire Zhou, and myself – for a professional panel – consisting of Gwyneth Sleutel, Bo Wang, Tushar Madhov, Meiske Taurisia, and Professor Anne Sokolsky. The discussion lasted for more than one hour, and it was full of insights and ideas. It was a great opportunity to discuss the current issues of Asian LGBTQ+ community and how to address them.

The festival is now entering its 11th year, and it has achieved many achievements. We are looking forward to the future of CinemAsia and the impact it will have on the Asian LGBTQ+ community. We are only at the beginning of a great change.

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