

Film festival returns to Dubai showcasing Hong Kong's cinematic brilliance (with photos)

With the support of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Dubai (Dubai ETO), the Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency and the Film Development Fund, the Hong Kong film festival returned to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, for the fourth consecutive year, bringing Hong Kong's cinematic gems and timeless classic to the Middle East community.

Presented by the Asian Film Awards Academy, the week-long film festival kicked off the "Hong Kong Film Gala Presentation" with eight Hong Kong films of different genres from March 22 to 28 (Dubai time), at Cinema Akil at Alserkal Avenue in Dubai to showcase Hong Kong's vibrant and diverse film culture to local audiences.

In the light of the Ramadan period, the Dubai ETO kicked off the film festival with a unique Iftar-style opening reception, where local audiences and members of the Hong Kong community gathered to share Middle East and Asian delicacies and celebrate the spirits of friendship and harmony during Ramadan, strengthening people-to-people bonds and cultural exchange between the two places. The Iftar dinner was followed by the screening of the opening film "An Abandoned Team", as film enthusiasts interacted with director Thomas Lee to explore themes of loneliness, redemption, and the unexpected bond between a man and a stray dog portrayed in the drama.

The festival also showcased other genres including gripping thrillers and thought-provoking narratives, with the screening of "Blossoms Under Somewhere", "Montages of a Modern Motherhood", "Last Song for You", "Cesium Fallout", "Papa", "The Last Dance" and the classic film "The Bride with White Hair", which offered viewers a nostalgic glimpse into the iconic martial arts fantasy world.

Director Oliver Siu Kuen Chan from "Montages of a Modern Motherhood", and actress Sheena Chan from "Blossoms Under Somewhere" also travelled to Dubai to attend the opening reception of the film festival as well as post-screening sharing sessions to interact with local film enthusiasts. Veteran film critic Patrick Suen also shared valuable insights into the featured films.

Speaking at the opening reception to over 100 guests, the Deputy Director of the Dubai ETO, Mr Leo Poon, highlighted the unique charm of Hong Kong cinema, as well as the measures of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government in supporting the cultural and creative industries.

"The Government is committed to promoting the development of cultural and creative sectors. A total of over \$1.3 billion has been approved by the

Film Development Fund to support more than 120 film projects which have won more than 180 awards, a testament to our film industry's excellence. This January, the Government also launched the Film Production Financing Scheme 2.0, with the goal of continuing to provide subsidies and incentives to film productions with budgets of up to \$25 million, thereby boosting the sector's long-term growth. With these efforts, we look forward to bringing more of the best from Hong Kong's creative industry to this region," said Mr Poon.

The Dubai ET0 will continue to collaborate with partners in the region to promote Hong Kong's creative and cultural industries through its regular offerings as well as novel events.

