



NEWS RELEASE

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CHINESE FILM INDUSTRY SET TO HAVE EVEN GREATER IMPACT ON THE GLOBAL STAGE SAY EXPERTS DURING SHANGHAI FORUM

SHANGHAI/SINGAPORE: China film market experts, converging in Shanghai for the *5th Global Film Industry Value Chain Development Forum* at Shanghai Jiao Tong University on June 18, concurred that the Chinese market would continue to grow and have a greater impact on the global stage, while there yet remains room for the industry to mature and become more industrialized.

The forum was hosted by the Motion Picture Association (MPA), Winston Baker, the Shanghai International Film Festival (SIFF), and USC-SJTU Institute of Cultural and Creative Industry and held at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. The three panel discussions addressed strategies for building an industry ecosystem, financing project driven deals, aligning interests with new partners worldwide, and monetizing intellectual property.

In the first panel – China’s expanding role in the global film industry, Chinese and international expert speakers shared insights into the globalization of Chinese projects and investments, and numerous alliances with international film businesses and producers. Ulf Israel, President of Production, Senator Film/Wild Bunch, pointed to China’s growing influence given that major films can become financially viable if they succeed at the Chinese box office. On the ability for Chinese films to reach a wider audience, Israel said, “We like to recognize special voices, such as Wong Kar Wai, or Ang Lee, whose work will find an international audience. A story that is really authentic can speak to the world. We distributed *Wolf Totem*, which did very well in France and Italy. We are co-producing a sequel, combining international talent, but it comes down to our Chinese partners to execute a unique local story. At its core is a very dramatic, emotional love story. It’s about authenticity, passion and the unique angle of the story.”

Carrie Wong, Head of Local Production Film & TV, Sony Pictures Greater China, in the second session, *New Approaches to Financing Project Driven Deals*, identified areas for improvement in industry practices. “We have no trouble acquiring foreign IP, but we run into trouble licensing Chinese IP. The author of the work often does not want to waive their moral rights. If we went ahead with the production, and the author took issue with the finished product, we could get sued. So, when it comes to the acquisition of rights, unless we acquire all rights, we have to let (the project) go.”

In the final panel, *Creating a Viable Ecosystem and Building Industry Standards for China’s Motion Picture Industry*, David Lee, Founder and CEO of Leeding Media, highlighted the three key interest groups whose needs must be met in order for continued market growth and increased sophistication; the artists, such as directors and actors, the businesses, such as the distributors and internet companies, and of course, the audience. Sherwood Hu, Director, Producer and Educator, agreed, adding that the introduction of the film law in 2017 helped to provide further guidelines for the management of the industry. However, factors,

such as the need for film completion bonds, prevalent in the rest of the world, would further decrease the risk for investment and improve the commerciality of the industry.

In the afternoon, the MPA Film Workshop kicked off with a keynote conversation hosted by film critic Raymond Zhou; Renny Harlin, award-winning Director *Die Hard 2*, *Cliffhanger*, *Skiptrace*; Stephen Saltzman, Chair of the Asia Entertainment and Paul Hastings, Media Practice. Renny Harlin charmed the audience with anecdotes about working with Chinese film crew. He recalled an episode from his time promoting *Die Hard 2* in Taiwan: “A young filmmaker said to me that it was his dream to be able to make a big movie in Hollywood. He asked if it would ever be possible to produce a similar type of movie in China? I said, if you have talent and you keep trying, anything is possible. The young filmmaker’s name was Ang Lee.”

The MPA’s feature film pitch competition involved new project presentations from seven emerging filmmakers. Taking home first prize was director and screenwriter, Yin Mengyu, for her project *Scavengers*, a revenge story of a woman who goes after a deep web human trafficking group who killed her brother. Ms Yin will participate in the MPA Global Film and TV Program in Los Angeles in November this year. The winner of the President’s Special Recognition Prize was director and screenwriter Liang Mo, for his film *Summer in Hankou*, an intimate family drama centred around an antique shop in Hankou, in the province of Wuhan in central China. Liang Mo will be hosted by the MPA at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards which takes place in Brisbane, Australia in November.

Closing the event, Mike Ellis, President and Managing Director, Asia Pacific, MPA, said, “The Chinese film industry is developing at such a fast pace, it’s important to take a moment and take stock of the latest achievements. This annual forum, hosted during the Shanghai International Film Festival, has become the essential one-stop-shop for film industry leaders to share best practice and clearly gauge the maturity of the Chinese film industry, and its place on the global stage.”

The 5th *Global Film Industry Value Chain Development Forum* speakers included:

Panel 1: Lindsay Conner, Partner and Chair, Media and Entertainment Group, Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP, Daniel Manwaring, Head of Motion Pictures, CAA China, Jiang Wei, CEO of Legendary East Ltd, Gillian Zhao, EVP and Managing Director of Warner Bro. China, Chen Rong, CEO of Perfect World Pictures (USA), Ulf Israel, President of Production, Senator Film/Wild Bunch, and Ren Zhonglun, Chairman of Shanghai Film Group.

Panel 2: Christopher Spicer, Partner and Head, Entertainment and Media Group, Akin Gump, Philip Lee, Co-founder of Facing East Entertainment, Executive Producer of Academy Award-winner *The Revenant*, Li Haifeng, Senior Vice President, Fosun Group and President of Fosun Pictures Group, Bennett Pozil, Executive Vice President, East West Bank, Carrie Wong, Head of Local Production Film & TV, Sony Pictures Greater China, Yang Xianghua, Senior VP of IQIYI, and Zhang Wei, President of Oriental Pearl Group.

Panel 3: Lex Kuo, Counsel, Entertainment, Sports & Media Practice, Latham & Watkins, spoke with Jeffrey Chan, Chief Operating Officer, Bona Film Group, Liu Kailuo, Vice President of Youku, Alibaba Media & Entertainment Business Group, Ren Zhonglun, Chairman of Shanghai Film Group, David Lee, Founder and CEO of Leeding Media, Sherwood Hu, Director, Producer and Educator, Howard Chen, Deputy General Manager, Tencent Pictures/General Manager, Diamond Film Studio, and Libby Savill, Partner, Entertainment, Sports & Media Practice Latham & Watkins.

View images from events [here](#).

About the MPA:

Promoting & Protecting Screen Communities in Asia Pacific

The Motion Picture Association (MPA) and the Motion Picture Association International (MPA-I) represent the interests of the six international producers and distributors of filmed entertainment. To do so, they promote and protect the intellectual property rights of these companies and conduct public awareness programs to highlight to movie fans around the world the importance of content protection. These activities have helped to transform entire markets benefiting film and television industries in each country including foreign and local filmmakers alike.

The organizations act on behalf of the members of the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc (MPAA) which include; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.; Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation; Universal City Studios LLC; Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures; and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. The MPA and the MPA-I have worldwide operations which are directed from their head offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. and overseen in the Asia Pacific by a team based in Singapore. For more information about the MPA and the MPAA, please visit www.mpa-i.org.

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